VALUE CONFLICT AND AMBIVALENCE IN PARTY IDENTIFICATION

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Abstract

Are some people more prone to instabilities in partisanship due to the ways they rank and organize their core values? We investigate the mechanisms of partisan volatility, considering whether instabilities reflect value-driven ambivalence in party identification. Our expectation is that when the basic values of the American ethos come into conflict in elite discourse, citizens become ambivalent about partisan beliefs when they cannot reconcile their own value arrangement with that of elites. To this end, we use several heteroskedastic regression and ordered probit models to explore whether the conflict of competing values explains the response variance and over time instability of individual level partisanship and ideology. To construct measures of value conflict, we rely on data from the 1992, 1994, and 1996 American National Election Studies. We find that while instabilities in partisan identification reflect low information for some, the competition of core values generates ambivalence in partisan affiliations for others. In deliberating the value tradeoffs of politics, people may end up conflicted even about central beliefs such as party identification.

A paradox of partisanship lies in perceptions of its stability. On one hand, partisanship is an enduring attribute, among the most central and most stable beliefs people hold about politics. But on the other hand, party identification is not impervious to change, and may be movable in the face of an evolving political context. How can partisanship be so stable, yet still be influenced by political events? While the roots of partisan stability can be traced to political socialization and the reinforcement of its use in politics, the mechanisms of the changeability of partisanship remain comparatively elusive. Here, we investigate whether the volatility of partisanship reflects ambivalence from the conflict of competing core principles.

Core values are the currency of politics, influencing how individuals structure their political priorities as well as how elites frame political discourse. Both encompassing and enduring, these principles define the kinds of outcomes people seek from government and society. When raised singly, they can inform policy preferences. But when multiple and competing values are raised in political discourse, their utility in informing preferences is curtailed. We suggest that the occurrence of this value conflict will vary across individuals, dependent on how they rank and organize their values. For those who structure their values in a way that echoes that of political elites, values can have direct application to political choices. But for those who organize core values in ways contrary to that of conventional political discourse, politics will produce a chronic conflict between competing values, resulting in ambivalence in partisan choice.

Investigating ambivalence toward party identification is important for several reasons. First, ambivalence informs the stability of beliefs, and correspondingly, assessments of citizen competence. In contrast to cases where instabilities in opinion reflect uncertainty or measurement error, ambivalence describes opinion instability as thoughtful and deliberative. In the case of partisanship, a finding of ambivalence has particular significance. Previous research identifies ambivalence in opinions toward specific presidential candidates and policy issues (Alvarez and Brehm 2002; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Lavine 2001; Meffert, Guge and Lodge 2000; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000). To find value conflict within partisanship suggests ambivalence of a more general and more extensive sort, con-

fined not to a few issues but relevant to a wide range of political choices. For while individuals do occasionally face policy decisions on the issues posed in ballot initiatives, they are called on much more frequently, and consequentially, to make partisan based choices. Thus, ambivalence in partisanship has even more weighty implications for assessments of civic competence than the presence of ambivalence in isolated issue opinions or candidate evaluations.

A second motivation for investigating the mechanisms of partisan instability lies in the centrality of partisan opinions in political decision-making. Partisanship is one of the most useful weapons individuals hold in simplifying a complicated political environment. Party identification is a ready heuristic, highly accessible, and applicable to numerous political situations (Huckfeldt et al. 1999; Lodge and Hamill 1986; Rahn 1993). Thus knowing what weakens partisan stability informs the ways people process and evaluate political information. In addition, identifying ambivalence within partisan beliefs may provide a partial answer to how a traditionally stable force like partisanship might evolve over time or move in response to current events. If partisan views are shown to be instable in at least some segment of the public, then we can see why the dynamics of political debate may generate instability in responses to partisan questions.

Finally, considering the influence of value conflict on attitudinal instabilities also extends our understanding of the importance of values and the consequences of value conflict. For elites, the competition of rival values is central to how political issues are framed (Brewer 2001), and the allocation of contested values can define politics itself (Easton 1953). For individuals, value conflict may prove more disruptive than defining. If individuals organize their value priorities in a way that amplifies the conflict between competing principles, then the utility of values informing preferences may be limited. Given the centrality of values in how people think about politics, this type of internalized value conflict may diminish the utility of core principles in determining choice.

We begin by reviewing the nature and stability of partisanship, motivating a mechanism of partisan volatility with the potential to capture both its remarkable steadiness as well as its potential fluctuations in the face of a changing political environment. Next,

we discuss value conflict and ambivalence, and the consequences of conflicts between core principles. We then develop a theory based on the gaps between elite organization of politics and the public's own value organization for why value conflict should lead to ambivalence in partisan beliefs. We also consider the consequences of information and value conflict on the stability of ideology as a corollary. To construct measures of value conflict, we rely on data from the 1992, 1994, and 1996 American National Election Studies. These value conflict measures are then used in several heteroskedastic regression and ordered probit models to explore the degree to which ambivalence explains response variance and over time instabilities in partisanship and ideology. We find that while instabilities in partisan identification reflect low information for some, many others are sophisticated enough to recognize the value trade-offs inherent in politics, and in deliberating the value alternatives raised in partisan dialogue, end up conflicted about party identification.

1 The (In)Stability of Partisanship

A standard expectation is that partisanship should be essentially invulnerable to attitudinal ambivalence. Party identification has been traditionally regarded as extraordinarily stable – individuals inherit a party identification at an early point, and this identification serves as a touchstone for relating to the political world (Campbell et al. 1960; Miller and Shanks 1996). Because of its roots both psychological and social, partisanship is often seen as immovable in the face of outside pressures. And compared to other political opinions such as presidential evaluations and issue preferences, partisanship is much more stable (Achen 1975; Converse and Markus 1979). Even so, increasingly, survey evidence highlights the presence of partisan instabilities within individuals. At the individual level, party identification has been shown to be instable over both in the short term and long term. As panel studies of the American National Election Studies show, a *majority* of individuals polled moved at least one step on a seven point scale of partisanship across panel waves in a single election (Brody and Rothenberg 1983) as well as across three-wave biennial studies (Rice and Hilton 1996).

Disagreements remain as to the degree to which these observed partisan instabilities can be explained by factors such as measurement error (Green and Palmquist 1990; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 1998; Green, Palmquist and Shickler 2002; Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 1998) and question wording effects (Miller 1991; Abramson and Ostrom 1991). While Green and colleagues argue that the instabilities of partisanship reflect errors of measurement, others find evidence that partisanship is influenced by the nature of the times and the electoral context. At the individual level, party identification has been shown to be responsive to campaign effects, assessments of party policy positions, and factors such as the economy (Fiorina 1981; Franklin and Jackson 1983; Howell 1981). And at the aggregate level, movements in partisanship appear collectively rational, and responsive to the dynamics of contemporary events (Allsop and Weisberg 1988; MacKuen, Erikson and Stimson 1989).

Given the potential for the electoral environment to influence partisan dynamics, we look to identify the conditions in which partisan responses are most movable. Appraisals of party performance and evaluations of issue positions help explain why partisanship may be instable in an evolving electoral context, but not why partisanship may also retain its steady character. We investigate the theoretical mechanisms of partisan instability, looking for the underlying factors that help explain both the steady and changeable nature of party identification. Our starting point is a set of beliefs both central to politics and persistent across election cycles - core values.

2   Value Conflict and Ambivalence

Rooted in American political culture, core values are guiding dispositions that inform the kinds of outcomes people seek from society. These principles define individuals' political and economic priorities, including values such as moral traditionalism and the humanitarian desire to help others. Like ideology, core values carry meaning beyond specific scenarios, and thus serve as a way to structure political beliefs and priorities. But unlike ideology, which tends to be meaningful for only the politically sophisticated,

values inform political preferences across individuals, regardless of political sophistication (Goren 2001). Because of their centrality, generalizability, and utility across individuals, values are strong influences on people's perceptions of the political world and the kinds of political decisions they make, including tolerance judgments, candidate evaluations, and policy preferences (Feldman 1988; Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Kinder and Sanders 1990; McClosky and Zaller 1984; Peffley and Hurwitz 2001; Sniderman and Piazza 1993).

To apply values to political questions, citizens rely on value hierarchies, rankings of value preferences that can vary significantly across individuals (Jacoby 2003; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1996). When the weight of the evidence falls to one side of the argument, choice is relatively easy – one selects the alternative closest to his or her preferred values. When competing sides both find support, values cannot be easily translated into choice. If value preferences are not fully hierarchical, individuals may find the values underlying competing sides of the debate as equally attractive (or equally repugnant). In simultaneously supporting competing values, the consequence is ambivalence about the choice one needs to make.

Beginning with Converse (1964), researchers have seen stable, crystallized beliefs as common only to a minority, with inconsistent opinions and response instabilities prevalent among the majority. Ambivalence marks a middle ground between attitude certainty and uncertainty, where instabilities in opinions reflect indecision rather than indifference. If citizens appreciate the sides of the argument but cannot reconcile their competing interests, then the consequences are attitude instability and inconsistency, manifested in over time instability in opinions, less predictable survey responses (Alvarez and Brehm 2002), moderation in attitudes (Meffert, Guge and Lodge 2000), and delays in the formation of electoral choice (Lavine 2001).

Ambivalence can be generally defined as internalized conflict that is difficult to resolve. The elements in conflict may include discordant emotional reactions, competition among recalled considerations, inconsistent perceptions or beliefs, conflicting assessments of candidate traits, or opposing cognitive and affective orientations (Lavine 2001; Lavine and Borgida 1998; Meffert, Guge and Lodge 2000). To investigate the instabilities in

7

central beliefs such as partisanship and ideology, we focus on the consequences of the competition among core values. We select this route for two reasons. First, value conflict suggests a more enduring and pervasive type of ambivalence, one not limited to current officeholders or party figures, one apart from the current state of the times. Previous explanations of partisan instability note the influence of short term electoral forces. But underlying the influence of any short term forces may be a general predisposition to partisan instability, rooted in conflicts in one's own value priorities. Second, given the early roots of partisanship and its affective elements, it may be that people are not able to recall the specific considerations that motivate their partisan choice. Recall may simply reflect rationalizations, so instead we turn to the influence of more innate predispositions, ones more central than partisanship itself.

Evidence of value-based ambivalence has been surprisingly limited, however. Among policy issues, only a small subset of issues, including abortion and euthanasia, reveal evidence of value-driven ambivalence, while many other policy opinions prove resistant to the destabilizing effects of value conflict (Alvarez and Brehm 1995, 1997, 2002; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000). Outside ambivalence in evaluations of specific issues, we know little about the potential presence of ambivalence in general political beliefs such as partisanship and ideology. To explain how the competing values of politics may erode the stability of partisan preferences, we next discuss how competing values affect the variability of partisan preferences.

3   A Theory of Ambivalence in Partisan Identification

While it is straightforward to see why knotty issues such as abortion or euthanasia may fall across fault lines of competing core principles, it is less apparent how value conflict may similarly underlie central opinions such as partisanship and ideology. To explain the mechanism by which this occurs, we first develop the route by which people might inherit competing value priorities and then explain how internalized value conflict leads

to partisan instabilities.

The roots of citizens' value structures are found in the American political culture or ethos, the shared norms and beliefs about politics that define the basic starting points of political debate. While one's value attachments are initially shaped through political socialization, elites play an important role in influencing how citizens rely on these core principles (Chong 2000; McClosky and Zaller 1984). By using interpretations of core values to justify their policy positions, political elites connect contemporary partisan and policy debate to citizens' core principles.

We argue that competing values will result in ambivalence in partisan opinions specifically when individuals endorse values that cross the fault lines of partisan dialogue. We focus on four values common to political decision making: egalitarianism, limited government, moral traditionalism, and humanitarianism. The first, egalitarianism, represents an individual's support for ideas of equality. This includes a commitment to the equality of all people, as well as support for the equal access to the political process (McClosky and Zaller 1984). The second, limited government, refers to the degree to which an individual supports government intervention, particularly in the economic sphere. While big government is often seen to interfere with the free enterprise system (Devine 1972; Lipset 1979), most Americans also believe at some level that there is need for government intervention in the economy (Shapiro and Gillroy 1984; Feldman 1988). Taken broadly, this core value relates to values of individual liberty and freedom from government interference (Markus 2001).[1] Third, moral traditionalism considers what role government should assume some role in cultivating the moral life of its citizens, a core principle that is influenced heavily by religious beliefs. The fourth core value, humanitarianism, is related to the willingness to compassionately extend assistance to others in unfortunate circumstances. Humanitarianism is closely related to questions of whether people who are suffering deserve to be helped (Feldman and Steenbergen 2001).

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[1]We acknowledge that in some ways, the value of limited government does not represent a personal principle or vision of a desirable societal end state in the same way that values such as egalitarianism or humanitarianism do. At the same time, it is common to treat this as a core principle in the literature on values. Because this is a value implied in partisan choice, we follow the literature in treating it as a core value as well.

Research on core values shows that people tend to organize related values together in sets (Schwartz 1996). One such organizational system in politics is ideology. While values and ideology are independent concepts (Hochschild 2001), values can be generally organized along a left to right dimension of ideology, where certain values will tend to be supported in liberal arguments, while other values will tend to be the principles underlying conservative dialogue (Zaller 1992). At one end of the ideology dimension, we would expect a liberal to score high on a scale of egalitarianism as well as humanitarianism, while holding lower support for the principles of moral traditionalism and limited government. Conversely, we would expect a conservative to support limited government and moral traditionalism, but not the liberal values of humanitarianism and egalitarianism.

For political elites, we expect that values will align with ideology in consistent and predictable ways. But for the less politically sophisticated, this same ideological ordering of values should be less common. While the mass public understands and uses values, ideology remains much less understood in the mass public (Converse 1964; Luttbeg and Gant 1985). If citizens tend not to be ideologically adept, it seems unlikely that ideology will structure the value priorities for most. The result is a disjoint between the ideological constraint of elite values and the limited ideological literacy of the public. Faced with elite rhetoric along ideological lines, citizens may internalize values from both ends of the ideological spectrum. Indeed, because ideological constraint is social, and not logical, citizens need not be irrational to organize core values in a way inconsistent with ideology (Converse 1964).

This disconnect between ideology and value organization informs how citizens may have value priorities inconsistent with those of political elites. By what mechanism does this produce partisan instability? We expect that citizens will experience value conflict and become ambivalent toward party identification when their personal value organization is non-ideological. Our expectation is predicated upon on assumption that we explicitly acknowledge. We assume that the two major parties in American politics are closely aligned with the ideological spectrum. That is, the Democratic Party implies a liberal ideology, while Republicans imply a conservative ideology. Research on Congress

has demonstrated that the voting patterns of members of Congress have become increasingly ideologically pure (Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991). As such, party alternatives are increasingly congruent with the ideological spectrum. If this assumption is correct, then a Democratic choice will conform to liberal values of egalitarianism and humanitarianism, while a Republican choice will conform to conservative values of moral traditionalism and limited government.[2]

For those who have an ideological value orientation, the division of partisan discussion along ideological lines causes no conflict. But for individuals who support some of the values endorsed by liberals as well as some principles of conservative arguments, discussion along ideological lines creates internal value competition. This conflict in turn will be manifested in ambivalence toward central partisan preferences.[3] For example, one voter may feel very strongly about equality, but at the same time, be suspicious of a large and intrusive government. Faced with the campaign speech of a Democratic candidate, the voter may embrace the politician's commitment to equality, while at the same time worrying that the candidate will use large government programs to pursue equal opportunity goals. Citizens who identify with the values raised in both liberal and conservative arguments should thus find it more difficult to choose a party to identify with. This disjuncture between one's own value organization and the value structure one perceives in political debate may lead to conflict and ambivalence.

As a corollary, if our expectation about the mechanism underlying party ambivalence is true, then value conflict should have minimal impact on the stability of ideological self-identification. Partisanship is a meaningful identification for nearly all citizens, while a much lower share of the public is ideologically adept. In the case of partisanship,

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[2]One might argue for a different ordering of effects here, in that partisanship may drive value priorities. For instance, McCann (1997) finds evidence that suggests candidate preferences may shift core value priorities in campaign seasons. While the political environment may influence on how people prioritize values, we argue that values primarily serve to structure and inform other specific opinions. This argument follows the literature on values that defines these core principles as deep and pervasive preferences that anchor other political beliefs (Feldman 1988; Rokeach 1973). Such a perspective is also in line with other research that uses core values to predict attitudes toward policy issues (Feldman 1988; Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; McClosky and Zaller 1984) and even partisanship (Carmines and Layman 1997).

[3]Given that values are a core part of the American political ethos, we expect ambivalence to be more likely than either uncertainty or equivocation. Uncertainty is less likely since most citizens can relate to value laden political dialogue, and since competing values seem unlikely to reinforce partisan principles, the probability of observing equivocation is also diminished.

people connect values to their party preferences and face conflict. In the case of ideology, those who fail to understand and use ideological labels will be unlikely to recognize the mismatch between their personal values and ideology. If citizens fail to connect their values to ideology, then value conflict will have little influence on the volatility of ideological preferences. Instead, the response instability in ideology is expected to be solely a function of political sophistication.

In sum, values and their organization should have important consequences for party identification. In inheriting the value frames of elite rhetoric, citizens may end up endorsing values from both sides of the partisan divide. Because the fault lines of partisan debate tend to persist over time, the chronic and systematic conflict of core values may be sufficient to destabilize beliefs even as stable as partisanship. We consider the effects of value conflict on two aspects of partisan stability - the response variance of partisanship as well as the likelihood that a person will shift his or her party identification over time.

First, we expect value conflict to manifest itself as choice heterogeneity in response to party identification survey items. In cross-sectional data, individuals often have various degrees of variability in their responses to survey questions. This heterogeneity in response variance can arise from factors such as varying levels of political information or differing amounts of socialization, among others. Here, we expect differences in the response variance of party identification survey items to reflect value conflict, as citizens with ideologically inconsistent value structures struggle with the question of party affiliation. Across individuals experiencing such value conflict, we should observe unequal variances across observations, which is know as the familiar problem of heteroskedasticity. We model this heteroskedasticity to consider whether those who experience value conflict reveal less predictable responses to party identification survey items than those with ideologically consistent value priorities. We also model the response variance in ideology, with the expectation that information, rather than value conflict, drives response variability here.

Second, we consider whether value conflict contributes to greater over time instability in partisanship. We expect that those who struggle with competing value choices will

have greater variability in partisan responses, such that in repeated sampling, these individuals offer different responses to the same survey item. Certainly, a number of factors may cause partisan responses to vary over time, including political performance of the incumbent government (Fiorina 1981; Franklin and Jackson 1983; Howell 1981) and measurement error or question wording effects (Green, Palmquist and Shickler 2002; Miller 1991; Abramson and Ostrom 1991). We consider whether the ambivalence produced by competing values offers another explanation of why partisan response may vary over time. In sum, we examine citizens' struggle to match their values to those of ideologically oriented political parties, and the consequences for both their response variability and over time stability in partisanship.

4   Measuring Value Conflict

Given these expectations regarding the consequences of conflict between core principles, we next consider how value conflict might be measured. Our measures for these values, egalitarianism, limited government, moral traditionalism, and humanitarianism, are derived from a set of questions from the 1992 and 1996 National Election Studies. The 1996 ANES has items related to all four of the values, while the 1992 ANES has coverage of three values, with humanitarianism as the omitted value. The core principles are measured as additive scales each composed from a set of three to six questions. Each composite value item was centered and rescaled from -1 to 1. The questions used are found in the Appendix, and all scale well.[4]

In our theory, ambivalence occurs when individuals organize their value beliefs in a way inconsistent with the value structure presented in political debate. Because we are interested in the consequences of opposing values, our value conflict measure is the product of a respondent's scores on two oppositional value scales.[5] The definition of oppositional

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[4]Some authors have argued that the NES egalitarianism items have two dimensions (Sears, Henry, and Kosterman 2000). We found some limited evidence for this and created two separate egalitarianism scales and adjusted the conflict measures. We substituted these alternate scales in the analyses and found it made no difference to the results in any of the models.

[5]The selection of appropriate measures of value conflict and ambivalence has been debated (Peffley and Hurwitz 2001; Miller et al. 2001). The most common measures used are the multiplicative measure used here (and in work by Alvarez and Brehm (1995, 1997) and Griffin's ambivalence index (Thompson

values is based on an ideological organization, where conflict arises when individuals support both traditionally liberal and traditionally conservative core principles. As such, we created four measures of ideologically conflicting values: egalitarianism and moral traditionalism, limited government and egalitarianism, limited government and humanitarianism, and moral traditionalism and humanitarianism[6]. Higher scores on the value conflict measures indicate an increased level of conflict between the two values. Questions about humanitarian values were not included in the 1992 ANES, so for these analyses, we have only two measures of value conflict: one of the conflict between egalitarianism and moral traditionalism and a second measure of conflict between egalitarianism and limited government.

In the 1996 survey, we find that the highest level of value conflict occurs between moral traditionalism and humanitarianism, with a majority of the sample (63%) experiencing some level of value conflict between the two core values. The least common point of value conflict occurs between egalitarianism and traditional moral values, with 24% experiencing some clash of views. In balancing support for limited government with egalitarianism, 32% are conflicted, while 35% experience some conflict between limited government and humanitarianism. In the 1992 survey, 27% are conflicted between egalitarianism and limited government, while 29% are conflicted between egalitarianism and moral traditionalism. Clearly, value conflict is quite common.

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and Griffin 1995). The Griffin index measures ambivalence = (P + N)/2 - |P - N|, where P equals positive comments and N corresponds to conflicting negative comments. Theoretically, the Griffin measure seems best suited for ambivalence produced by counts of pro and con arguments and opposing recalled items, and less appropriate in looking at the absolute conflict between two core principles. As Steenbergen and Brewer (2000) note however, their rescaled Griffin index correlates very highly with the multiplicative measure, and produces results consistent with those generated by this measure as well. In our case, however, we can only use the multiplicative measure since we do not have counts of positive and negative comments for each value.

[6]A correlation matrix between the four core values, shown in the Appendix, supports this. In terms of value conflict, we see for instance that support for limited government is negatively correlated with egalitarianism, while egalitarianism is negatively associated with moral traditionalism. When values fall into the expected ideological orientation, we find positive correlations, such as the correlation between egalitarianism and humanitarianism.

5 Modeling the Consequences of Value Conflict

Ambivalence may be manifested in various ways. We focus on two ways in particular. The first is the predictability of survey response, and whether value conflict induces response instability in party identification. Those ambivalent about the values underlying partisan choice are expected to have more volatility in survey responses about partisanship. Second, we test whether value conflict explains movements in party identification over time. Those who have greater amounts of value conflict should reveal more fluctuations in their partisan preferences at different time points. We test the two empirical expectations of our theory separately. First, we use heteroskedastic modeling techniques to model the response variance of party identification and ideology, relying on survey data from the 1992 and 1996 ANES. Second, we rely on panel data to assess whether value conflict also causes over time change in party identification, relying on 1994 and 1996 panel studies of the ANES.

To see whether value conflict drives instabilities in responses to party identification survey questions, we model not citizens' directional responses to partisan questions but instead their response variance. To model the response variance of party identification (and ideological self-identification in our corollary), we use models with a component for multiplicative heteroskedasticity. Such models require the specification and estimation of two simultaneous equations, where one equation models either the mean or probability of the dependent variable (here, a seven-point party identification scale and the seven-point ideological self-identification scale), and the second equation models the error variance of the choice model. The first equation, the choice model, relies on known predictors of the dependent variable of interest to produce the response variance that we model in the second equation, the variance model. The variance modeled is not the variance across the sample, but the variance in the individual respondents' answer. Because the choice model serves only as a mechanism to produce our equation of interest, the results of the choice model have no independent theoretical interest. For a review of these models, see work by Alvarez and Brehm (1995) and Harvey (1976).

For the specification of the choice models for both party identification and ideology,

we use several demographic variables including age, race, income, and education, as well as prospective and retrospective economic evaluations (Fiorina 1981). We also include the four value scales since we expect them to be relevant to the choice of both ideology and party identification. The dependent variables are the seven point party identification and ideological self-identification scales. For the partisanship model, ideology is included as a regressor, and for the ideology model, party identification is included as a regressor.

For the variance model, we maintain the same specification across models, since we expect the same value conflict mechanism to underlie both of the processes we consider. The specification of the variance model includes the four value conflict measures discussed earlier. In each model, we rely on two relevant tests of whether value conflict affects partisanship. First, we consider the individual value conflict coefficients, to see whether a single non-ideological dimension of value conflict predicts partisan instability. Second, we consider whether the total amount of value conflict affects partisan stability by testing the total effect of all the value conflict measures. We also consider for one important alternative explanation for response instability in the variance model – uncertainty. Rather than reflect the conflict of values, instabilities in partisan opinions may instead reflect voters uncertain about their partisan preferences (Alvarez and Franklin 1994; Alvarez 1997). Any response instability we observe may be a product of door-step opinions, explained by low levels of political sophistication. We include political knowledge, measured as an additive scale of questions that test factual political knowledge, to capture any response variance that may be due to uncertainty or doorstep opinions.[7]

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[7]Alvarez and Brehm (1995) suggest that information predicts heightened response variance in the case of ambivalence, by making competing considerations more salient. Because their measure of ambivalence is based on recalled comments, information should have a more potent effect on ambivalence than in our model, where the elements in conflict are core values that are widely shared by citizens across differing levels of political sophistication. As a result, we expect the coefficient for political knowledge to take a negative sign indicative of uncertainty.

6 Results

6.1 Value Conflict and the Response Variance of Partisanship

We first estimate the heteroskedastic regression models for party identification. Results are shown in Table 1, with results from the 1996 ANES in the first two columns and results from the 1992 ANES in the third column. We find first that the choice model appears to do an effective job capturing known sources of variability of partisanship, with the slate of predictors accounting for 53% of the variance in the partisanship model in 1996 and 39% of the variance in 1992. The choice model predictors themselves are of little theoretical interest, so we turn next to the results of the variance model. We test the models for heteroskedasticity, and find evidence of significant unequal variance across individuals. Results from the likelihood ratio test indicate that the χ^2 values for the models exceed the .01 critical value required to reject the null hypothesis of homoskedasticity.

Table 1: Explaining Response Variance in Party Identification

Variance Model	1996		1992
Egalitarianism x Limited government	0.82*	0.79*	0.70 ∗∗
	(0.27)	(0.25)	(0.23)
Limited government x Humanitarianism	−0.12	–	–
	(0.26)		
Egalitarianism x Moral traditionalism	1.47*	1.25*	0.36
	(0.34)	(0.31)	(0.28)
Moral traditionalism x Humanitarianism	−0.62	–	–
	(0.37)		
Joint Value Conflict Test	.00	.00	.001
F-Test *p*-value			
Knowledge	−0.32	−0.30	−0.11 ∗∗
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.03)
Egalitarianism	−0.45*	−0.35	−0.26
	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Limited government	0.07	0.02	−0.08
	(0.15)	(0.09)	(0.08)
Humanitarianism	0.08	–	–
	(0.21)		
Moral traditionalism	0.61*	0.31*	0.01
Continued on Next Page			

17

	1996		1992
	(0.22)	(0.12)	(0.10)
Constant	0.99∗	1.05∗	1.37 ∗ ∗
	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.11)
Choice Model			
Ideology	0.56∗	0.56∗	0.47 ∗ ∗
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Race	−0.68∗	−0.68∗	−1.00∗
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.15)
Gender	−0.04	−0.05	−0.06
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Income	0.03∗	0.03∗	−0.001
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.009)
Education	0.10∗	0.11∗	0.10 ∗ ∗
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Age	−0.007∗	−0.006	−0.01 ∗ ∗
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Prospective economic evaluations	−0.13	−0.14∗	0.09
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Retrospective economic evaluations	−0.29∗	−0.28∗	0.08∗
	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Egalitarianism	−0.62 ∗ ∗	−0.57∗	−0.84 ∗ ∗
	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Limited government	0.86 ∗ ∗	0.86∗	0.69 ∗ ∗
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Humanitarianism	0.10	–	–
	(0.15)		
Moral traditionalism	0.40 ∗ ∗	0.41∗	0.39 ∗ ∗
	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Constant	0.68∗	0.70∗	1.97 ∗ ∗
	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.27)
R^2	.57	.57	.42
N	1018	1018	1216
Heteroskedasticity Test			
Likelihood ratio test $\chi^2_{(df=10)}$	74.16†	74.11†	63.45†

Maximum likelihood estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. Two tailed test.
† indicates χ^2 significant at .01 level.
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

What we find is that the endorsement of ideologically competing values does explain

heightened response variance in partisan identification. Considering the results from the 1996 survey first, we see that the four value conflict measures in concert are highly significant, as indicated by the block F-test ($p < 0.01$). Considering the value conflict measures individually, the competition between egalitarianism and limited government is significant, as is the interaction of egalitarianism and moral traditionalism. Neither of the conflict measures with humanitarianism is significant, which reflects the fact that humanitarianism does not appear to be significantly related to partisanship in the choice model (Lavine 2002). In the second column of Table 1, we test the same model excluding the humanitarianism conflict measures and find similar results.

Turning to results from the 1992 ANES, we again find that value conflict explains response instabilities in party identification. The effect of the two value conflict measures taken together is highly significant in a block F-test ($p < .001$), an impressive result considering only two of the value conflict measures were available for inclusion. Individually, both value conflict measures are correctly signed, but only the egalitarianism/limited government measure is statistically significant. In both samples, we find evidence that people do wrestle with the conflicting core principles raised in political dialogue, which is then reflected in ambivalence in partisan identification. We also consider an alternative explanation for response variance in partisanship – uncertainty. As the negative coefficients for political knowledge in the variance models indicate (-0.32 in the 1996 model), some are indeed uncertain about partisan labels. Only in the 1992 case, however, is political knowledge significant, with a coefficient of -0.11. So we do find some evidence that low levels of political information are linked to higher levels of response variance, and as information increases, this response instability declines. Despite the centrality of partisanship in politics, some appear not to relate to the political world in partisan terms.

6.2 Value Conflict and the Response Variance of Ideology

Given evidence of value-driven ambivalence in partisanship, we next consider whether our corollary about ideological self-identification holds. Our expectation is that while

the response instabilities of partisanship reflect value conflict, the response instability of ideology would instead reflect low information. Table 2 contains the results from the choice and variance models for ideology in 1992 and 1996. The choice models indicate also explain large amounts of the response variance for the dependent variable, with the predictors explaining 52% of the variance in the 1996 model and 41% of the variance in the 1992 model. We again test for heteroskedasticity in the choice models, finding evidence of significant unequal variance across individuals. Both models exceed the .01 critical value in the likelihood ratio test that is required to reject the null hypothesis of homoskedasticity.

Table 2: Explaining Response Variance in Ideology

Variance Model	1996		1992
Egalitarianism x Limited government	-0.09	-0.17	0.14
	(0.27)	(0.25)	(0.23)
Limited government x Humanitarianism	-0.14	$-$	$-$
	(0.26)		
Egalitarianism x Moral traditionalism	0.35	0.43	0.34
	(0.34)	(0.31)	(0.28)
Moral traditionalism x Humanitarianism	0.26	$-$	$-$
	(0.37)		
Joint Value Conflict Test	.61	.38	.25
F-Test p-value			
Knowledge	$-0.91*$	$-0.91*$	$-0.18**$
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.03)
Egalitarianism	-0.12	-0.17	0.06
	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Limited government	-0.21	$-0.29*$	-0.05
	(0.15)	(0.09)	(0.08)
Humanitarianism	-0.16	$-$	$-$
	(0.21)		
Moral traditionalism	-0.002	0.12	-0.01
	(0.22)	(0.12)	(0.10)
Constant	$0.50*$	$0.44*$	$0.78**$
	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.11)
Choice Model			
Party Identification	$0.26**$	$0.26**$	$0.22**$
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Race	$0.45**$	$0.45**$	$0.33*$
Continued on Next Page			

	1996		1992
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Gender	−0.16∗	−0.17∗	−0.04
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Income	−0.008	−0.008	0.003
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Education	−0.06∗	−0.06∗	−0.05∗
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age	0.003	0.003	0.004∗
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Prospective economic evaluations	0.03	0.03	0.07
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Retrospective economic evaluations	−0.03	−0.03	0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Egalitarianism	−0.69 ∗∗	−0.69 ∗∗	−0.71 ∗∗
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.11)
Limited government	0.21 ∗∗	0.21 ∗∗	0.29 ∗∗
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Humanitarianism	−0.09	–	–
	(0.10)		
Moral traditionalism	0.75 ∗∗	0.75 ∗∗	0.64 ∗∗
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Constant	2.69 ∗∗	2.69 ∗∗	2.48 ∗∗
	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.17)
R^2	.52	.52	.41
N	1018	1018	1216
Heteroskedasticity Test			
Likelihood ratio test $\chi^2_{(df=10)}$	74.16†	74.11†	63.45†

Maximum likelihood estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. Two tailed test.
† indicates χ^2 significant at .01 level.
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Considering the 1996 results first, we find little influence for value conflict on the response variance of ideology. As a block, the value conflict measures have an insignificant impact on ideological response variance. Individually, we find the same, with none of the value conflict measures significant. Rather than value conflict, our expectation was that response instabilities in ideology would instead be driven by political sophistication, and indeed, political knowledge is shown to be an important predictor of response variance. Instable responses to ideology items seem to be driven less by the value mismatch of

individuals, and more by the tendencies of voters to not use ideology in a meaningful way.
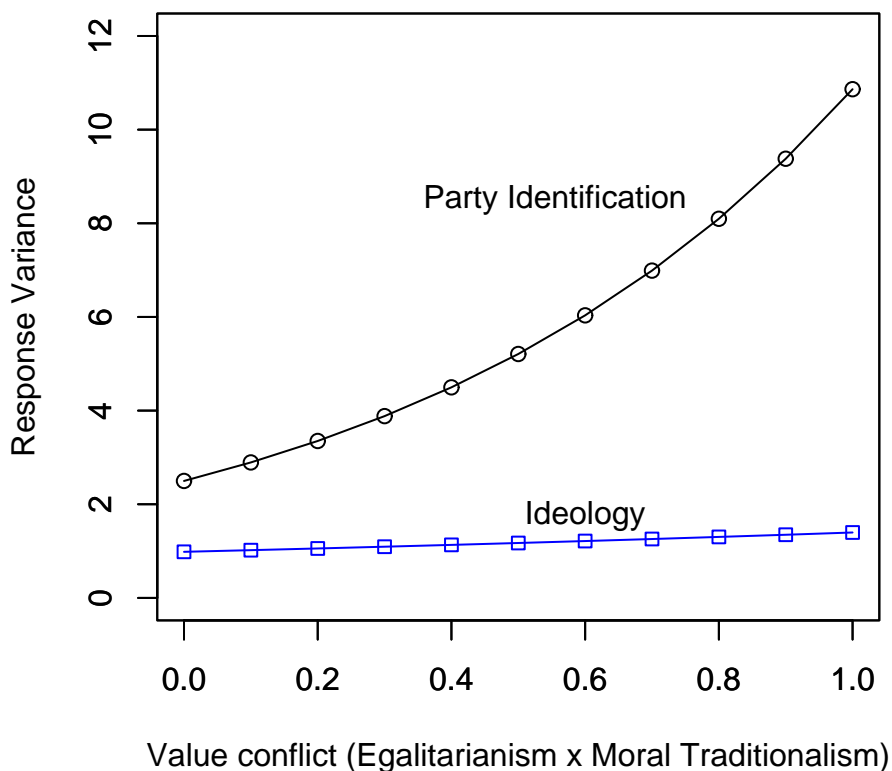

Figure 1: Differences in Response Variance Across Party Identification and Ideology.
Note: Y-axis represents individual level survey response variance.

The 1992 ideology variance model echoes these conclusions. The value conflict measures are insignificant both individually and as a set. Instead, response instability is from a single source – low levels of political information. As evidenced by the negative and significant coefficient on the political information variable, response instability in ideological self-placement reflects uncertain doorstep opinions about ideology. The evidence, here, is undeniable. Party identification, often assumed to be a rock solid political orientation, is subject to value-driven instability. As citizens are faced with identifying with a political party, they may be conflicted by the mismatch between their own values and the value alternatives posed by the parties.

Figure 1 underscores the differing effects of value conflict on the response variance of

party identification and ideology. We see that across levels of value conflict, and here, specifically across the single dimension of moral traditionalism and egalitarianism, the response variance of ideology remains flat. But for party identification, as value conflict increases, there is a dramatic increase in response variance for the same dimension of value conflict. The evidence thus far confirms what our theory would lead us to expect - instabilities in ideology reflect low information, while value conflict heightens the response variance of partisanship.

6.3   Value Conflict and Over Time Partisan Instability

In the previous analyses, we find that value conflict heightens the response variance of partisanship, reflecting greater variability and lesser predictability of partisanship. Another way ambivalence may affect preferences is in the stability of survey responses over time. For those torn between competing value priorities, we expect weaker partisan stability. As different values predominate political discourse, these conflicted voters may experience fluctuations in partisan preferences.

To consider whether ambivalence contributes to the over time stability of party identification, we rely on the 1994-1996 ANES panel study. To build a measure of party change, we subtract placement on the 1994 seven point party identification measure from placement on the 1996 party measure and fold the scale. The resulting measure is scaled from 0 to 6 with each additional value on the scale representing an increment of change in party identification. Considering the degree of partisan change among respondents, we find evidence of both stability and change. The median respondent did not waver in partisan preference between 1994 and 1996, indicating stable partisanship for many. At the same time, we also find evidence of partisan change of a not insignificant degree, as 44% moved at least one position on the seven point scale over this period. Among those who shifted on the scale, the average change was 1.55 points.

To explore whether competing value preferences explain this change, we fit an ordered probit model including the four value conflict measures of egalitarianism/moral traditionalism, egalitarianism/limited government, humanitarianism/limited government, and hu-

manitarianism/moral traditionalism as regressors. In addition, we include a measure of partisan strength, since those with stronger partisan ties will be less likely to exhibit over time change in party identification. Ambivalence is one of many possible explanations for partisan instability, and as such, we also include controls for important rival explanations for partisan instability. Some argue that the mobility of partisanship is an artifact of measurement error and uncrystallized opinions resulting from low levels of political sophistication (Achen 1975). To control for the possibility that over-time movement reflects door-step opinions, we include a measure of political knowledge, again a scale of factual questions on politics. Others have argued that people change their political party depending on the performance of the two parties, with citizens gravitating toward whichever party is perceived as performing better (Brody and Rothenberg 1983; Fiorina 1981; Franklin and Jackson 1983). To control for changes in party performance across the panel, we also include measures of changes in presidential approval and retrospective economic evaluations. Both measures are the difference between the 1994 and 1996 measures of presidential approval and retrospective economic evaluations in the panel study. If value conflict contributes to over-time change in party identification over and above the effects of measurement error and party performance, it will underscore the lasting salience of value conflict in partisan choice.

Results from the ordered probit model are shown in Table 3.[8] In the first column, we test a restricted model that includes only the effects of values and value conflict. When we test for an effect across all the measures of value conflict, we find a highly significant effect, as the p-value for the F-test exceeds the .01 critical value. These value conflict measures as a set show that when people endorse values from both the left and right, partisanship is more variable over time. In tests of the individual coefficients, the conflict between egalitarianism and moral traditionalism has a significant effect, indicating that it is a value conflict dimension that seems particularly salient to respondents as they settle on a party affiliation. To see whether these results from the naive model persist even

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[8]We also estimated a model using change in a three-point partisanship measure as the dependent variable. In this more conservative test of our hypothesis, we found a similar pattern of results, though of weaker statistical significance. We present the models with the seven point measure of partisan change as a better assessment of the consequences of ambivalence on partisan instability (over partisan change).

Table 3: Partisan Change and Value Conflict 1994-1996

	Limited Model	Full Model
Egalitarianism x Limited government	0.01	−0.19
	(0.21)	(0.21)
Limited government x Humanitarianism	0.26	0.18
	(0.19)	(0.20)
Egalitarianism x Moral traditionalism	1.04∗	1.01∗
	(0.34)	(0.28)
Moral traditionalism x Humanitarianism	−0.27	−0.36
	(0.29)	(0.29)
Joint Value Conflict Test	.00	.01
F-test p-value		
Egalitarianism	−0.27	−0.36∗
	(0.17)	(0.17)
Limited government	−0.18	−0.15
	(0.11)	(0.11)
Moral traditionalism	0.21	0.30
	(0.17)	(0.18)
Humanitarianism	−0.08	0.11∗
	(0.16)	(0.17)
Political sophistication	–	−0.38∗
		(0.15)
Partisan strength	–	−0.25∗
		(0.04)
Clinton approval change	–	0.004∗
		(0.002)
Economic evaluation change	–	0.04
		(0.03)
N	1124	1110
χ^2	23.15†	86.10†

Ordered probit estimates. Standard errors in parentheses.
†indicates χ^2 significant at .01 level
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

after controlling for information levels and performance evaluations, we next consider the results from the full model specified in the second column of Table 3.

Even after including controls for both political knowledge and party performance, the results from the naive model are unchanged. Of the individual measures, value conflict between egalitarianism and moral traditionalism remains significant, and the joint test of the coefficients has a p-value mirroring that of the naive model.[9] To find such a robust result gives us confidence that the value differences between citizens and parties plays an important role in how party identification moves over time. As citizens use their own value arrangements to decide which party to identify with, they struggle with a choice that leaves them ambivalent. Moreover, we have evidence that value conflict is a pervasive aspect of partisan choice. Value conflict causes citizens to struggle with their response at the time of the survey interview, but also contributes to an over time instability over and above that caused by measurement error and changes in party performance.

7   Conclusions

Within the political landscape of the 1992 and 1996 elections, we find evidence of ambivalence in partisan identification. While instabilities in political views reflect low information for some, the trade-offs of the political world lead to conflict and ambivalence in the evaluations of others. And the consequences of value conflict on the stability of partisanship extend across multiple situations, influencing the individual response variance of partisan responses as well as the likelihood of movement on the partisan scale over time. For those who have value structures that match those of political elites, we should expect partisanship to exhibit a rather stable quality. Division of political discussion along ideological lines should prompt little value conflict, and perhaps even reinforce one's own value structuring. But for those who have internalized a value organization that does not match with that of political elites, the values projected in political discussion will gen-

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[9]We also considered whether the effects of value conflict on partisan stability varied by region. Through the 1990s, the South saw pronounced shifts in partisanship toward the Republican Party compared to northern states (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998). To assess whether value conflict is particularly successful in explaining these shifts, we ran the same analyses in subsamples of the South and non-South. We found no remarkable differences.

erate value conflict and ambivalence. In this way, values offer a mechanism of partisan instability that fits with competing expectations of party identification as both highly stable and movable in the face of a changing political climate.

Our results also underscore the deliberative nature of public opinion. The ambivalence we find clearly implies that some part of the electorate wrestles with the decisions that confront them in politics. While citizens may not always be able to resolve their ambivalence, the mere fact that they struggle with such choices implies that they are offering more than doorstep opinions. In evaluating specific issues and candidates, voters may be conflicted when weighing competing considerations. The kind of conflict we consider here is one of an even more pervasive and durable character - not tied to specific electoral events, but instead to the underlying nature of elite political debate. When people support core principles endorsed by both the right and the left, this ideological inconsistency disrupts the stability of partisan identification.

These results also underscore the power of values in explaining the structure of public opinion. The fact that ambivalence occurs along the fault lines of competing values indicates that these core principles are powerful concepts in politics. When political debate is structured in value terms, it has important consequences for the stability with which individuals hold their partisan beliefs. While our results do not offer a definitive answer to the question of the amount of instability in partisan beliefs, they do suggest a theoretical pathway by which these perceived stable beliefs might be found instable and influenced by external events. The finding of ambivalence underlying party identification reveals that instability in partisanship may not be a product of measurement error alone, and may instead represent a meaningful product of the value trade-offs found with politics. In this way, this micro-level account fits in with macro-level investigations, where movements in partisanship at the aggregate level are seen as driven by the ways elites define of the value conflict lines of politics (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Macdonald and Rabinowitz 1987). The choices candidates make in framing values may affect the stability with which citizens hold central political opinions.

Appendix

A   Value Survey Items

Egalitarianism:

- Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

- We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country.

- One of the big problems in this country is that we don't give every one an equal chance.

- This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are.

- It is not really that big a problem is some people have more of a chance in life than others.

- If people were treated more equally in this country we would have many fewer problems.

Limited government:

- One, the less government the better; or two, there are more things that government should be doing.

- One, we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems; or two, the free market can handle these problems without the government being involved.

- One, the main reason government has become bigger over the years is because it has gotten involved in things that people should do for themselves; or two, government has become bigger because the problems we face have become bigger.

Moral traditionalism:

- This country would have fewer problems if there were more emphasis on family ties.

- The newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of our society.

- The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes.

- We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are very different from our own.

Humanitarianism:

- One should always find ways to help others less fortunate than oneself.

- A person should always be concerned about the well-being of others.

- It is best not to get too involved in taking care of other people's needs.

- People tend to pay more attention to the well-being of others than they should.

Table 4: Correlations between value scales, 1992

	Limited government	Egalitarianism	Moral Traditionalism
Limited government	1.000		
Egalitarianism	−0.282	1.000	
Moral traditionalism	0.254	−0.311	1.000

Table 5: Correlations between value scales, 1996

	Limited Gov't	Egalitarianism	Humanitarianism	Moral Trad.
Limited government	1.000			
Egalitarianism	−0.231	1.000		
Humanitarianism	−0.005	0.296	1.000	
Moral traditionalism	0.172	−0.377	0.038	1.000

B   Heterogenous Choice Models

In cross-sectional data, different individuals often have various degrees of variability in their responses to survey questions. This survey response variance, or heterogeneity, can arise from income differences, education levels, or differing amounts of socialization to name a few. In our case, we have theoretical reasons to believe that some respondents have greater underlying and unobserved variability in their responses to survey questions on party identification than other respondents. We argue that these differences across respondents underlying variance is due to value conflict. If this is true, we have unequal variances across observations, which is known as the familiar problem of heteroskedasticity. In other words, we expect that those who experience value conflict will be less predictable about their party identification, and those who do not experience value conflict will be more predictable in their choice of party identification. The effect of value conflict will occur in differences in σ^2, which tells us how much variability there is around the expected value of y, across respondents. Respondents who are not conflicted will have smaller σ^2 than respondents who are conflicted.

We now need a statistical model that incorporates the assumption that σ^2 will vary systematically across respondents as a function of a set of covariates. We use the variance model developed by Harvey (1976):

$$y = X_i\beta + \varepsilon_i \tag{1}$$

where:

$$Var(\varepsilon_i) = {\sigma_i}^2 = exp(Z_i\gamma)^2 \tag{2}$$

$$Std.Error(\varepsilon_i) = \sigma_i = exp(Z_i\gamma) \tag{3}$$

Harvey uses this functional form since it is has a number of properties that are well suited to the known properties of σ^2. This model of the variance is then incorporated into the log-likelihood for a regression model. Substantively the model tells us whether the predictability in a the expected value of y is a function of the variables that we have specified in the variance model. Here we test whether the variability in the expected value of party identification is a function of value conflict. If it is, then measures of value conflict will exert significant and positive effects on the variance implying that as value conflict increases we will be less able to predict a respondent's choice of parties. However, with these types of models we cannot give a substantive interpretation of the metric of the error variance. What we can do is look at the patterns of how changes in the independent variables affects the general movement in the error variance. This is the standard method for interpretation that was established by Alvarez and Brehm (1995) and is what we do in Figure 1.

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