
Don't Blame Donors for Ideological Polarization of Political Parties: Ideological Change and Stability Among Political Contributors, 1972-2008

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Abstract

Are campaign contributors to parties and candidates in the United States becoming more ideological? Popular and scholarly accounts suggest that political contributors have disproportionate influence in politics, which suggests an important role for them in shaping party ideology and widening the divide between the major American parties. Using the American National Election Studies (ANES) time series data from 1972 to 2008, we find that although the importance of ideology in motivating donations fluctuates from election to election, there is substantial ideological stability in the donor population over time until 2002 when the proportion of ideological donors sharply increases. Ideological extremism has not become a stronger predictor of contributing money. We conclude that mass donors are not necessarily driving partisan polarization. The implication is that politicians are not so much *responsive* to ideological extremism as they are *strategic* in mobilizing ideologues in pursuit of resources and electoral goals.

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There is widespread consensus that the major political parties in the United States have become ideologically polarized in the past two decades. Scholars, however, have a tentative grasp on the causal mechanisms underlying this transformation and continue to investigate various explanations for polarization (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008; Fiorina, Abrams, & Pope, 2008; Ladewig, 2010; Layman, Carsey, & Horowitz, 2006). One prominent set of theories is that the dynamic is caused by partisan activists pushing an ideological agenda. Studies of party activists—those who participate regularly in partisan politics beyond voting—show clearly they have become more ideological than rank-and-file partisans (Jacobson, 2000; King, 1997; Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, & Cooperman, 2010; Saunders & Abramowitz, 2004; Sinclair, 2006). These studies typically define activists as those who engage in at least one additional campaign activity beyond voting (Saunders & Abramowitz, 2004; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). Curiously, however, there have been no studies that focus on political donors, an important subset of activists, to assess how they might be a factor in partisan polarization.

Popular and scholarly accounts suggest that political contributors have disproportionate influence in politics (Verba et al., 1995), which suggests an important role for them in shaping party ideology (Miller & Schofield, 2003). If donors, like other kinds of activists, are becoming more ideological then this dynamic is plausibly a source of partisan polarization (Francia, Green, Herrnson, Powell, & Wilcox, 2005). Research shows that donors are, in fact, more ideological than rank-and-file voters (Francia, Green, Herrnson, Powell, & Wilcox, 2003) and that strategic politicians in some contexts may adopt ideologically extreme positions to attract contributions (Aldrich, 1983a, 1995; Gimpel, Lee, & Pearson-Merkowitz, 2008; Moon, 2004). These findings all suggest the possibility that political donors are a source of growing ideological polarization between the parties. In this article, we begin to assess whether this argument has merit by looking at the dynamics of donor ideology. Specifically, has the population of political contributors become more ideological over time? We also look at whether ideologically extreme citizens are more likely to give money than in the past, independent of other factors. Addressing these questions provides additional leverage in understanding how and why American political parties are becoming more polarized.

This analysis posits two distinct alternatives. One is that the donor population is becoming increasingly ideological over time, a dynamic that may cause *responsive* politicians to move to the extremes to satisfy prospective contributors. The alternative suggests that politicians are not so passive. Instead, *strategic* politicians mobilize latent ideological elements of the donor population when it suits their needs, and thus the proportion of ideological donors varies from election-to-election with no discernable trend over time.

Examining change or stability of donor ideology over time helps address at least two important puzzles. First, it provides greater understanding about the causal mechanisms of ideological polarization between the major parties. If donors are becoming more ideological, then additional research is merited to assess whether they are contributing to the ideological distancing of the parties. If, however, donor ideological profiles remain relatively stable, then scholars might focus elsewhere to explain polarization. Additional research would need to examine more precisely what it is that activists do to make the party tilt one way or the other.

Second, this analysis addresses broader claims about the influence of political contributors. Conventional accounts claim that donors have special influence in politics. The scholarly findings are mixed, although these studies tend to focus on targeted interest group contributions, for example, political action committees (PACs) rather than individual contributions, which comprise the vast majority of contributions to politicians (Milyo, Primo, & Groseclose, 2000). Two important studies suggest, by inference, that aggregate individual political donations affect economic policies without examining over time how fluctuations in the donor pool might influence politics (Bartels, 2008; Gilens, 2005). This study aims to understand stability and change by focusing on ideological variation in the population of donors. In doing so, it raises questions about the bias of the campaign finance system and broader normative questions about equality.

In the following analysis, we review the literature on how the ideology of activists affects ideological polarization of parties. We then explain how these theories apply to political contributors and how politicians might behave in response to these contributors. Next, we examine data from the American National Election Studies (ANES, 2010) for the elections between 1972 and 2008. Although these data are invaluable for understanding political change, they have some constraints. For example, we are not able to isolate large or frequent donors who are presumably more important to politicians as the ANES does not include such questions. Thus, our findings speak to evidence about ideological polarization among *all* donors (small, large, frequent, infrequent, etc.) rather than a subset of “super” donors who might have

disproportionate influence. These super donors may, in fact, be increasing in importance as elections get more expensive, even though the Internet has helped candidates attract increasing numbers of small donations (Corrado, Malbin, Mann, & Ornstein, 2010). We also note that measuring ideology over time is fraught with difficulties. A “strong” conservative or liberal today may not be the same as in the past. To be sure, this analysis would benefit from additional measures of ideology and an oversampling of political donors that distinguishes between large and small contributors. However, we exploit several different models to address such concerns and arrive at similar results.

With these theoretical and empirical caveats in mind, our findings suggest that the financiers of American politics are not necessarily a source of increasing polarization. We observe relative stability in the ideological character of political contributors until the 2002, 2004, and 2008 elections when there appears to be a unique surge in the proportion of ideological donors. Prior to these recent elections, the analysis reveals a punctuated pattern in which ideological donors are mobilized in some elections, while not in others. Overall, the results suggest that donors have not been a source of growing polarization. We discuss the implications of these findings in the discussion and suggest future avenues of research, particularly with a focus on large donors.

Partisan Activists and Ideological Polarization

Leading explanations of the sources of ideological polarization tend to focus on the relationship between party activists and politicians (Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, & Cooperman, 2010; Layman et al., 2006). These studies indicate that party activists have pushed the parties in government to ideological extremes in recent decades (Aldrich, 1995; Burden, 2001; Fiorina, Abrams, & Pope, 2005; Jacobson, 2000; King, 1997; Layman & Carsey, 2002; Masket, 2009; Saunders & Abramowitz, 2004; Shafer, 2003). Activists typically care strongly about cultural issues such as abortion, homosexual rights, or school prayer. The influence of activists is enhanced by the resources they provide to the party, including contributions of time, money, and effort to electing party candidates whereas the typical citizen only votes for a candidate (Fowler & Shaiko, 1987; Green & Guth, 1991; Masket, 2007; Miller & Schofield, 2003). The disproportionate influence of party activists means that the parties do not converge on policies that satisfy the median voter (as might be expected in a two-party system) but instead occupy positions somewhere between the median voter and ideological extremes of the party (Aldrich, 1983a; Aranson & Ordeshook, 1972; Burden, 2001; Miller & Schofield, 2003; Shafer & Claggett, 1995).

There are several reasons why activists have become especially important in the past few decades. First, studies suggest that partisan activists have become more motivated since the 1950s by purposive incentives rather than material or solidary rewards and that policy issues play a bigger role in attracting activists to the party than previously (Polsby, 1983; Shafer, 2003; Wilson, 1962). Second, the participatory and open nomination processes inaugurated in the 1970s for presidential elections gives policy-oriented activists potentially greater influence over the selection of candidates and the party's agenda (Polsby, 1983). Finally, not only do activists traditionally hold more ideological views than ordinary voters but they have also become more extreme ideologically over time (Jacobson, 2000; King, 1997; Layman et al., 2006; Saunders & Abramowitz, 2004). Several studies indicate that the growth of partisan policy differences has been greater among activists than among the parties' mass identifiers (Fiorina et al., 2005; Jacobson, 2000; Saunders & Abramowitz, 2004). These studies support the conclusion that activists are pushing the political parties further apart, even as the rest of the electorate remains relatively unchanged in their political views.

The Role of Ideological Donors

The motivations of activists might be applied usefully to the study of political contributors, who are a subset of political activists.¹ Political donors fall somewhere in the middle range between mass and activist participants. They tend to be more engaged and interested in elections (Verba et al., 1995) and—by virtue of giving money—perform a political act that is done by less than 10% of the population. However, 60% of donors do not engage in anything beyond making a political contribution (ANES, 2010). The study of donors therefore provides an opportunity to observe an “outer circle” of influentials, beyond the core of engaged activists who contribute time as well as money to political campaigns.

Donors, of course, give for a variety of reasons: material, solidary, and purposive. However, it is plausible that donors, like other activists are motivated increasingly by purposive, that is, ideological goals, although there has been no research to demonstrate this trend. One cross-sectional study of major congressional donors during the 1996 congressional elections estimates that as many as one third gave for “purposive” or ideological goals that are concerned with enacting general public policies (Francia et al., 2003). A donor from this study is worth quoting to illustrate the attitude:

I make campaign contributions for one reason and one reason only: to influence the philosophy of government. I look for candidates who share my perspective. If a politician won't come clean on his basic philosophy, then no money from me. (p. 50)

The prevalence of such attitudes among many donors plausibly has an impact on the behavior of candidates and parties. Political contributors are singularly important for politicians, and increasingly so, given the growing cost of elections. Candidates need money to pay for expensive broadcast advertising and to mobilize an unenthusiastic electorate. Without money, incumbents risk losing their seat, whereas challengers are not taken seriously. Studies that demonstrate how politicians bend increasingly to the will of activists on policy matters (e.g., Masket, 2009) provide a credible explanation for why politicians might also lean ever more toward the ideological preferences of those who provide campaign contributions. However, making this argument first requires that we understand the historical dynamics of ideologically motivated giving.

Below, we develop two alternative models for how politicians behave when trying to secure campaign contributions. In both models we assume ideological donors are a salient feature of the campaign environment. However, in one model we assume they are a large and growing source of political contributions, whereas in the other we assume ideological donors are significant but that the ideological motivation is not increasing over time.

Responsive Politicians

Given how vital money is for winning elections, candidates might be induced to take positions away from the median voter to attract funds from ideological donors (Aldrich, 1983b; Aldrich & McGinnis, 1989; Moon, 2004). Empirical work provides some legitimacy for this argument by demonstrating that a sizeable portion of contributions to congressional candidates from out-of-state donors reflects the ideological stance of the candidate. A one-standard deviation increase in ideological extremism by a candidate generates an additional US\$30,000 from out-of-state donors (Gimpel et al., 2008). In this way, potential donors serve as passive gatekeepers of the electoral process; they can give or withhold contributions depending on the ideological position of the party candidates (Ferguson, 1995).

To the degree that donors are increasingly motivated by ideological considerations, there is a plausible case that these donors are a source of growing polarization (Schier, 2000). There are compelling reasons to believe they are.

First, citizens who follow and engage in politics—which characterizes citizens who donate money (Verba et al., 1995)—have become much more polarized along partisan and ideological dimensions than the least active citizens who tend to remain centrist (Abramowitz, 2010). Second, demographic changes reflect a population with disposable income that is older, more educated, and female. These subgroups are more likely to be motivated to give money for policy-based reasons (Francia et al., 2003; Gimpel et al., 2008). Finally, changing technologies, namely the growing use of the Internet for fundraising, allows ideologically motivated citizens to send contributions easily to candidates anywhere in the nation (Gimpel et al., 2008). If the donor pool has become more ideological as a result of these political, demographic, and technological changes, then what we call “responsive politicians” might be pulled away from centrist positions to appease highly ideological contributors on either side of the liberal–conservative spectrum.

Strategic Politicians

An alternative perspective to explain the presence of ideological donors is that politicians strategically mobilize them when it suits their needs. Although donors tend to be more ideological than rank-and-file partisans (Brown, Powell, & Wilcox, 1995), they are not necessarily extreme on social issues the way that partisan activists are who volunteer considerable time for politicians (Claassen, 2008; Masket, 2009). Research shows that political opinion among major donors—who are much sought after by politicians—does not appear to diverge widely from the national average. Among politically active citizens, major donors reveal moderate opinions compared with the distinctively populist stances that galvanize grassroots supporters on the right and left (Bramlett, Gimpel, & Lee, 2010).

Citizens often give routinely because they are politically interested, partisan, and have high incomes (Francia et al., 2005; Grant & Rudolph, 2002). Politicians typically solicit donors because of these characteristics rather than their ideological stances. Not surprisingly, the level of income is the most important attribute that predicts whether an individual will be contacted by parties and candidates (Brady, Schlozman, & Verba, 1999) and the economic bias in the donor pool has not changed (Shields & Goidel, 2000), which raises the possibility that characteristics related to ideology remain stable as well. More importantly, perhaps, donors give because they are part of social networks in which they are frequently *asked* to contribute by friends, neighbors, and associates at work (Brown et al., 1995; Cho, 2003; Cho & Gimpel, 2007). Given the nonideological nature of many of these relationships, donors may

have less extreme views on policy issues than the dedicated core of activists who show up for caucuses and organize get-out-the-vote campaigns.²

Research also suggests that the pool of donors changes substantially from year to year, which undermines the notion that there is a small but dedicated army of ideological donors who habitually support the parties. One broad survey of donors shows that less than one in three who gave to presidential candidates in 2004 also gave in the 2000 elections (Malbin, 2006). This finding opens the possibility that “strategic politicians” may activate ideological elements in the donor population when it serves their needs. Nonincumbents and officeholders with limited power tend to mobilize ideological donors because they lack strong ties to moderate donor groups seeking access to government (Johnson, 2010; Moon, 2004). Thus, politicians may shape the year-to-year ideological composition of a donor pool, which remains relatively stable ideologically over time.

In summary, we present two alternative outcomes for this analysis: ideological extremism is becoming more salient for political donors, or ideological extremism only matters in certain elections, with no temporal-linear increase in ideologically motivated giving. To the degree that donors have become more ideological, it is possible to link donor characteristics to the ideological distancing of the parties. In this scenario, *responsive politicians* take their cue from donors who provide an essential electoral resource. The alternative scenario is that donors have not become more ideological but that ideologically motivated giving fluctuates from election to election. To the degree we observe a punctuated pattern of ideological giving, there is a plausible case for arguing that *strategic politicians* take an active role in shaping the ideological pool of donors.

Data and Method

Data for this study come from the cumulative file of the ANES for election years from 1972 to 2008 (including midterms) as well as from the cross sections of the ANES for each of those years. The data include responses to questions that have been asked in each year between 1972 and 2008.³ The dependent variable is whether the respondent made a political contribution to either a political candidate or party (coded 1 for a contribution). In this sample of 31,523 respondents, 9.8% reported making a contribution and 90.2% said they did not. The study would benefit from an oversample of donors since the average number of donors in a given year is 172 based on an average sample size of 1,751. Regrettably, this is not possible and our estimates may be less efficient, thereby making it harder to detect relationships. However, the

results below strongly suggest—in all iterations of the model—that no patterns exist, even in the pooled models, which increase the number of observations.

The key independent variable of interest is the respondent's ideological self-placement on the traditional conservative–liberal continuum. The question has been asked on the ANES since 1972 and includes a 7-point scale that ranges from *extremely liberal* to *extremely conservative*. As we pool Democrats and Republicans in some models and our hypothesis concerns ideological extremity, we folded the scale into four categories.⁴ In this sample, 5.7% self identify as “extremely” conservative or liberal, 28.9% as liberal or conservative, 31.5% as “slightly” liberal or conservative, and 33.9% are “moderate.” Ideally, the analysis would extend back to the 1960s to include additional years that predate the trend in partisan polarization. However, most research demonstrates that polarization began roughly in the late 1970s or early 1980s—and then accelerated throughout the 1990s (Adams, 1997; Bartels, 2000; Layman, 2001; Legee, 2002; Lindaman & Haider-Markel, 2002; Shafer & Claggett, 1995). For this reason, we feel reasonably confident that the analysis will capture several elections prior to the observed period of ideological distancing between the parties.

In addition to observing descriptive data between 1972 and 2008 to show the proportion of ideological donors over time, we employ a series of logistic regression models to test whether ideology plays a more prominent role in predicting whether an individual makes a contribution. To avoid bias in the estimates of our key independent variable of interest, we use control variables that have been consistently shown to be predictors of making political contributions and which tend to be correlated with ideology. These include education, income, age, gender (male), political interest, strength of partisanship, race (White), party contact,⁵ marital status (married), and if the respondent lives in the south (Brown et al., 1995; Grant & Rudolph, 2002; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Shields & Goidel, 2000; Verba et al., 1995). With the exception of living in the south, all these control variables are positively associated with making a political contribution. Detailed information on each of the variables can be found in Appendix A.

In the analysis that follows, we examine if ideological extremism is growing among political donors by examining ideological change over time among all donors. We also observe changes in the marginal effect of ideological strength on contributing using cross-sectional analyses and whether there is an increasing relationship over time between ideology and contributing using a pooled analysis. The analysis makes no distinctions about different types of donors and thus can only make claims about a broad class of citizens who contribute money, however small, large, or frequent.

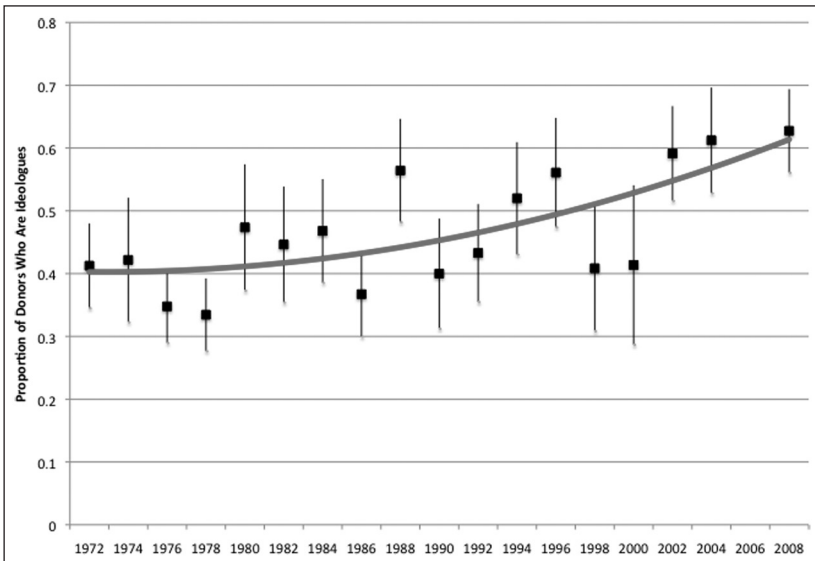


Figure 1. Proportion of donors who are ideologues, 1972-2008

Source: The American National Election Studies (2010).

Note: Ideologues are respondents who identify as liberal/conservative and extremely liberal/conservative. High-low lines: 95% confidence limit.

Findings

We first examine whether the share of donors who are ideologues has been increasing over time. Figure 1 shows the proportion of donors who are “ideologues” (they self-identify as liberal/conservative, or extremely liberal/conservative) between 1972 and 2008. Although it is clear that the proportion of donors who are ideologues increased during this period, the surge appears to begin in the 2002 elections when 59% of donors were ideologues, compared with 42% in the baseline midterm of 1974. The proportion of ideological donors remains at peak levels in both the elections of 2004 (61%) and 2008 (63%).⁶ The proportions in the last three election cycles are statistically different from the elections in the 1970s (with 95% confidence limits). In contrast, there appears to be a very slight increase in the proportion of ideological donors prior to 2002, with only the presidential elections of 1988 and 1996 standing out as statistically different from the lowest proportion of donor-ideologues in 1976. Overall, the proportion of ideologues in the donor population appears to fluctuate around a mean of 44% between 1972 and

2000 (low of 35%, high of 56%). As recently as the 2000 election, an estimated 41% of donors considered themselves ideologues, which was about the same as in 1972.

The sharp increase in ideological donors in recent elections might reflect a short-term shift (perhaps catalyzed by the war in Iraq) or the *beginning* of longer trend (stimulated by the growing use of Internet-based technologies to raise money). Overall, however, there is no strong pattern to suggest that the pool of donors has become more ideological over the previous three decades. In fact, the proportion of donors who are the most extreme ideologues—those who say they are extremely liberal or conservative—remains fairly flat and never exceeds 10 between 1976 and 2000 (data not shown in Figure 1). This is precisely the period when most research suggests ideological polarization emerged between the parties (Layman et al., 2006).

Figure 1 suggests, at best, only a slight rise in ideological extremism among donors, with the most significant change occurring in the past three elections. To understand more clearly the potentially changing dynamics of ideological motivations in giving money, we also ask whether ideological extremism has become a stronger predictor of contributing. In other words, are ideological citizens more likely to donate today than similarly ideological citizens in the past? After all, if the importance of ideology in motivating people to give money has grown (independent of other factors), then politicians may choose to tailor their political messages and policies to attract donors on the basis of ideological extremism rather than for material (e.g., access) or solidary (e.g., partisan) purposes. To explore this possibility, we examine whether the proportion of ideologues who donate to parties and candidates has changed over time. That is, we look only at respondents who self-identify as liberal/conservative or extremely liberal/conservative to see whether such ideologues are more likely to contribute money. Figure 2 shows that, if anything, the proportion of ideological citizens who donate appears to *decrease* throughout much of this period, with sharp increases beginning, once again, in the 2002 election. Among respondents who were ideological (liberal/conservative or extremely liberal/conservative) just 11% made contributions in the 2000 elections compared with 20% in 1972 or 22% in 1976. Once again, we observe a surge, starting in the 2002 election, when a greater proportion of ideologues contributed money compared with the previous decade.

To observe whether ideological strength has become a stronger predictor of giving money, independent of other factors, we ran separate cross-sectional regressions for each cycle, from 1972 to 2008. Table 1 indicates no apparent pattern across election years with respect to ideological motivations.

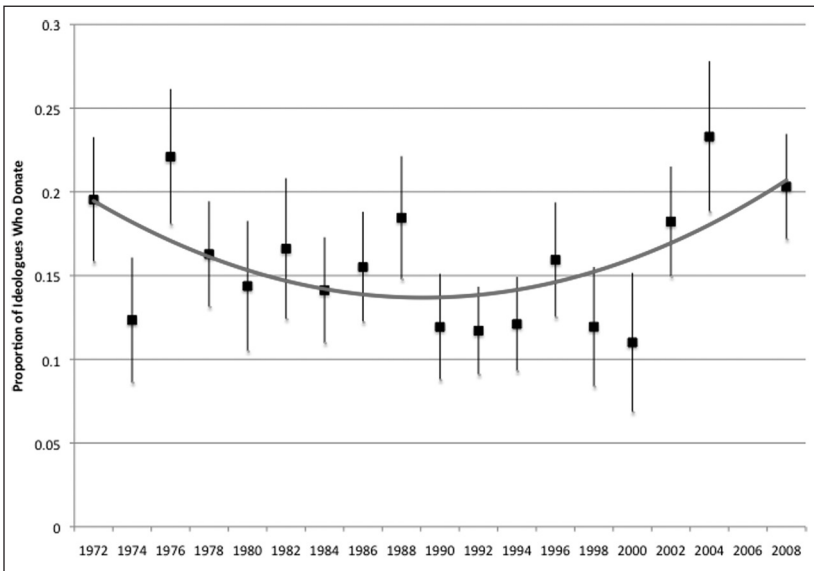


Figure 2. Proportion of ideologists who donate, 1972-2008

Source: The American National Election Studies (2010).

Note: Ideologists are respondents who identify as liberal/conservative and extremely liberal/conservative. High-low lines: 95% confidence limit.

The coefficients fluctuate with little consistency, and the highs and lows mirror the data in Figure 2. Only four elections achieve standard levels of statistical significance and they are all presidential election years: 1972, 1980, 1988, and 1996. Ideologically motivated contributions appear only in presidential elections rather than congressional midterms. The strength of the partisanship variable during midterms (and less so in presidential elections) suggests that partisan loyalty drives contributions in low-salience elections, whereas other factors come into play during presidential elections. To observe differences between the parties, we ran the regressions separately for Democrats and Republicans (analyses not shown) and found that Republican conservative ideologists were more likely to give in 1988 and 1996, whereas Democrats liberal ideologists were more likely to contribute in 1972, 1980, and 1996. We speculate that the importance of ideology in these elections is related to the party nominations, which often attract factional candidacies (discussed later).

Table 1. Cross-Sectional Logistic Regression Models of Financial Contributions 1972-2008

	1972	1976	1978	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2004	2008
Strength of ideology	0.392*** (0.145)	-0.001 (0.088)	0.037 (0.089)	0.307* (0.147)	0.149 (0.142)	0.095 (0.126)	-0.014 (0.109)	0.395** (0.121)	0.058 (0.129)	0.183 (0.107)	0.013 (0.137)	0.474*** (0.143)	0.077 (0.147)	0.086 (0.207)	0.280 (0.154)	0.172 (0.139)
Strength of partisanship	0.390* (0.175)	0.463*** (0.112)	0.129 (0.109)	0.183 (0.170)	0.589*** (0.175)	0.199 (0.142)	0.411*** (0.122)	0.226 (0.140)	0.223 (0.144)	0.166 (0.125)	0.486** (0.154)	0.137 (0.150)	0.436* (0.174)	-0.055 (0.207)	0.345* (0.169)	0.179 (0.164)
Democrats	0.207 (0.262)	0.017 (0.169)	-0.331* (0.167)	-0.768** (0.271)	0.095 (0.265)	0.156 (0.224)	-0.040 (0.192)	0.154 (0.229)	0.031 (0.231)	0.169 (0.206)	-0.217 (0.246)	0.211 (0.237)	-0.075 (0.270)	0.098 (0.374)	0.163 (0.286)	0.665* (0.307)
Independent	-0.824 (0.845)	0.575 (0.346)	-0.359 (0.369)	-0.682 (0.660)	-0.151 (0.859)	-0.300 (0.631)	0.442 (0.468)	0.590 (0.570)	-0.636 (0.839)	0.440 (0.463)	-0.169 (0.822)	-1.462 (1.097)	-0.953 (1.117)	-0.534 (0.949)	-0.654 (1.121)	-1.155 (1.125)
Education	0.392*** (0.089)	0.318*** (0.058)	0.206*** (0.061)	0.102 (0.098)	0.378*** (0.103)	0.442*** (0.103)	0.219*** (0.069)	0.419*** (0.083)	0.298*** (0.087)	0.256*** (0.075)	0.236* (0.093)	0.300** (0.098)	0.329** (0.116)	0.184 (0.169)	0.222* (0.109)	0.482*** (0.105)
Income	0.642*** (0.161)	0.236* (0.097)	0.496*** (0.089)	0.468** (0.142)	0.406** (0.147)	0.333** (0.128)	0.535*** (0.111)	0.710*** (0.139)	0.431** (0.143)	0.290* (0.118)	0.740*** (0.148)	0.506*** (0.143)	0.373** (0.140)	0.570** (0.211)	0.276* (0.136)	0.510** (0.158)
Age	0.088 (0.052)	0.047 (0.032)	0.087** (0.032)	0.044 (0.045)	0.042 (0.050)	0.091* (0.047)	0.091* (0.039)	0.027 (0.041)	0.182*** (0.054)	0.047 (0.039)	0.109* (0.051)	-0.024 (0.045)	0.197** (0.063)	-0.061 (0.073)	0.006 (0.049)	-0.019 (0.047)
Age squared	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.002** (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)	0.001 (0.000)	-0.002** (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Male	0.137 (0.248)	0.463** (0.157)	0.177 (0.157)	-0.185 (0.255)	0.207 (0.245)	0.045 (0.212)	0.023 (0.179)	0.081 (0.214)	-0.306 (0.224)	0.203 (0.193)	0.012 (0.229)	0.388 (0.229)	0.039 (0.257)	0.578 (0.362)	0.095 (0.272)	0.078 (0.262)
Interest in election	0.350 (0.197)	0.250* (0.126)	0.556*** (0.229)	0.970*** (0.229)	0.954*** (0.209)	0.908*** (0.194)	0.763*** (0.141)	0.733*** (0.172)	0.895*** (0.182)	0.750*** (0.181)	0.581*** (0.191)	0.879*** (0.189)	0.779*** (0.212)	0.835** (0.300)	0.646** (0.237)	1.174*** (0.286)
White	-0.202 (0.428)	0.072 (0.277)	-0.241 (0.292)	0.289 (0.488)	0.437 (0.465)	0.215 (0.335)	0.378 (0.285)	-0.069 (0.316)	0.404 (0.323)	0.755* (0.322)	0.238 (0.398)	0.155 (0.367)	0.410 (0.388)	0.392 (0.597)	0.239 (0.381)	-0.306 (0.291)
Party contact	0.507* (0.249)	0.477** (0.155)	0.351* (0.160)	0.410 (0.262)	0.618** (0.246)	0.967*** (0.211)	0.579*** (0.182)	0.283 (0.216)	0.729** (0.228)	0.652*** (0.196)	0.782*** (0.226)	0.641** (0.223)	0.428 (0.260)	1.138*** (0.372)	0.511 (0.284)	0.900** (0.274)
Married	-0.110 (0.327)	0.295 (0.195)	-0.261 (0.194)	-0.300 (0.295)	0.211 (0.301)	-0.206 (0.245)	-0.336 (0.203)	-0.329 (0.235)	-0.115 (0.251)	0.138 (0.224)	-0.187 (0.263)	0.108 (0.263)	-0.195 (0.289)	-0.772* (0.386)	-0.285 (0.306)	-0.284 (0.285)
South	-0.726* (0.351)	-0.411* (0.206)	-0.271 (0.181)	-0.761* (0.325)	-0.037 (0.273)	-0.129 (0.258)	0.019 (0.206)	-0.246 (0.265)	0.357 (0.270)	0.381 (0.260)	-0.058 (0.246)	-0.307 (0.250)	-0.298 (0.298)	-0.141 (0.405)	0.054 (0.259)	0.060 (0.266)
Constant	-10.519*** (1.452)	-7.025*** (0.942)	-7.540*** (0.861)	-8.472*** (1.410)	-11.879*** (1.526)	-11.185*** (1.297)	-10.458*** (1.073)	-11.273*** (1.302)	-3.079*** (1.529)	-10.241*** (1.174)	-12.833*** (1.604)	-9.891*** (1.396)	-14.380*** (1.956)	-7.261*** (2.171)	-8.699*** (1.502)	-10.464*** (1.531)
Number of cases	758	1,207	1,447	807	812	1,231	1,461	1,150	1,179	1,493	1,222	1,099	936	479	619	685
Pseudo-R ²	.2309	.1204	.1412	.17	.2463	.1916	.184	.2212	.2114	.1478	.2333	.2197	.2226	.1981	.1775	.2587

Note: Cell entries are logit coefficient estimates, standard errors are in parentheses.

*p < .05, two-tailed. **p < .01, two-tailed. ***p < .001, two-tailed.

Any suggestion that ideological extremism, per se, is becoming a stronger basis for attracting money has little support in these findings. In fact, the weakness of ideology as a predictor in many elections suggests that the donor pool is relatively diverse ideologically and not static.⁷ This finding supports prior research on financiers of congressional elections that demonstrates multiple and cross-cutting cleavages on policy interests among donors (Francia et al., 2005). Donors may be more polarized ideologically than nondonors, but ideological extremism is not necessarily associated with a higher probability of donating money, independent of other factors.

Demographic variables such as age, income, and education are consistent predictors of contributing, and, interestingly, none suggest a change in marginal effect on whether to give over time. Given concerns about a rising wealth gap in the United States, the observation that one's income bracket has no greater likelihood of contributing in 2008 as in 1972 should be reassuring to many.⁸ Our results confirm a prior study that analyzed class biases in donations (Shields & Goidel, 2000). Partisan identification appears to be a more important factor in motivating contributions than ideological strength.⁹ As mentioned, the pattern across time indicates that partisanship is particularly important in midterm elections (the coefficient achieves standard statistical significance in cross-sections for 5 of the 6 midterm elections and only 4 of the 10 presidential elections). The widely divergent values on the coefficients suggest that some elections tend to mobilize partisan ties more than others (Grant & Rudolph, 2002; Saunders & Abramowitz, 2004).

Pooled analysis. As an additional test to see whether ideology becomes a stronger predictor of contributing over time, we used a pooled sample of the ANES (16,637 cases). In the analysis presented in Table 2, we introduced an interaction term for ideology and year to see if a linear relationship exists between this term and making political contributions. A positive relationship between "Ideology \times Year" and political contributions would imply that ideological extremism is getting more important over time.

Model 1 offers a "base model" using the same explanatory variables from the cross-sectional models in Table 1. To account for any changes in the political context from election to election, a dummy for each election year is included in the model, with 1972 serving as the reference year. Not surprisingly, the results of Model 1 closely parallel those of the cross-sectional models.

Models 2 and 3 seek to uncover a temporal pattern in the importance of ideological strength by including two different types of interactive terms. Model 2 inserts interactive terms for each year of the time series. The yearly

Table 2. Pooled Logistic Regression Models of Financial Contributions 1972-2008

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Strength of ideology	0.144*** (0.030)	0.359** (0.136)	-7.419 (6.425)
Strength of ideology × Year			0.004 (0.003)
Strength of partisanship × Year			0.007* (0.003)
Strength of partisanship	0.269*** (0.035)	0.216** (0.077)	-13.300* (6.555)
Democrats	0.033 (0.056)	0.033 (0.056)	0.044 (0.055)
Independent	0.004 (0.144)	-0.050 (0.147)	-0.035 (0.145)
Education	0.294*** (0.021)	0.293*** (0.021)	0.277*** (0.021)
Income	0.453*** (0.032)	0.453*** (0.032)	0.456*** (0.032)
Age	0.036*** (0.010)	0.037*** (0.010)	0.036*** (0.010)
Age squared	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Male	0.114* (0.053)	0.117* (0.053)	0.102 (0.053)
Interest in election	0.684*** (0.044)	0.683*** (0.044)	0.685*** (0.043)
White	0.169* (0.084)	0.167* (0.084)	0.142 (0.083)
Party contact	0.592*** (0.053)	0.591*** (0.053)	0.632*** (0.053)
Married	-0.111 (0.061)	-0.110 (0.062)	-0.118 (0.061)
South	-0.167** (0.061)	-0.171** (0.062)	-0.156* (0.061)
Year			-0.061*** (0.012)
1976	0.442** (0.141)	1.226*** (0.373)	
1978	0.304* (0.142)	1.263** (0.479)	
1980	-0.412* (0.170)	-0.369 (0.631)	
1982	-0.299 (0.165)	-1.071 (0.650)	
1984	-0.527*** (0.156)	-0.129 (0.564)	
1986	-0.081 (0.147)	0.353 (0.519)	
1988	-0.332* (0.155)	-0.268 (0.554)	
1990	-0.458** (0.159)	-0.047 (0.589)	
1992	-0.716*** (0.152)	-0.041 (0.520)	
1994	-0.766*** (0.161)	-0.755 (0.590)	
1996	-0.600*** (0.160)	-0.944 (0.604)	
1998	-0.740*** (0.172)	-1.017 (0.652)	
2000	-0.890*** (0.204)	0.383 (0.710)	
2004	-0.510** (0.176)	-0.836 (0.657)	
2008	-0.300 (0.171)	-0.187 (0.616)	
Ideological strength × 1976		-0.376* (0.161)	
Ideological strength × 1978		-0.298 (0.162)	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Ideological strength × 1980		-0.061 (0.196)	
Ideological strength × 1982		-0.182 (0.189)	
Ideological strength × 1984		-0.214 (0.181)	
Ideological strength × 1986		-0.371* (0.172)	
Ideological strength × 1988		0.007 (0.178)	
Ideological strength × 1990		-0.288 (0.182)	
Ideological strength × 1992		-0.178 (0.172)	
Ideological strength × 1994		-0.333 (0.185)	
Ideological strength × 1996		0.038 (0.191)	
Ideological strength × 1998		-0.246 (0.195)	
Ideological strength × 2000		-0.287 (0.229)	
Ideological strength × 2004		-0.149 (0.203)	
Ideological strength × 2008		-0.264 (0.189)	
Partisan strength × 1978		-0.117 (0.112)	
Partisan strength × 1980		0.020 (0.155)	
Partisan strength × 1982		0.362* (0.162)	
Partisan strength × 1984		0.021 (0.137)	
Partisan strength × 1986		0.113 (0.124)	
Partisan strength × 1988		-0.036 (0.136)	
Partisan strength × 1990		0.066 (0.147)	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Partisan strength × 1992		-0.097 (0.125)	
Partisan strength × 1994		0.227 (0.152)	
Partisan strength × 1996		0.064 (0.149)	
Partisan strength × 1998		0.252 (0.170)	
Partisan strength × 2000		-0.213 (0.187)	
Partisan strength × 2004		0.198 (0.172)	
Partisan strength × 2008		0.146 (0.157)	
Constant	-8.928*** (0.316)	-9.246*** (0.469)	111.785*** (22.976)
Number of cases	16,585	16,585	16,585
Pseudo-R ²	.1734	.1767	.1646

Note: Cell entries are logit coefficient estimates, standard errors are in parentheses. **p* < .05, two-tailed. ***p* < .01, two-tailed. ****p* < .001, two-tailed.

indicator is multiplied by strength of ideology. If highly ideological donors are becoming more likely to contribute, we would expect to see a recognizable pattern in marginal effects of these interactive terms. We also include variables with the interactive term “Partisanship × Year” to control for possible changes in the relationship between partisanship and ideology. The null findings suggest that ideology is not necessarily an increasingly important predictor of donating. Not only do we fail to see an increasingly positive pattern but the two terms that are statistically significant are also negative. This implies that, relative to 1972, respondents in 1976 and 1986 with more extreme ideologies were less likely to contribute, *ceteris paribus*. Had the donor pool been moving toward the ideological extremes, we would expect positive coefficients relative to 1972. To account for the possibility that 1972 might have been a particularly ideological election relative to subsequent elections, we tried different baseline years with similar results.

The final model presented (Model 3) introduces a linear interactive term of year multiplied by strength of ideology and an interaction of year

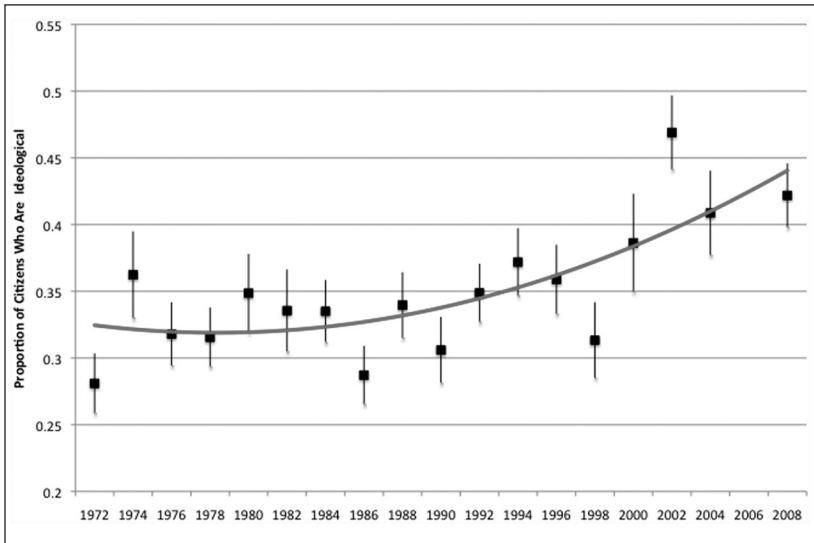


Figure 3. Proportion of citizens who are ideologues, 1972-2008

Source: The American National Election Studies (2010).

Note: Ideologues are respondents who identify as liberal/conservative and extremely liberal/conservative. High-low lines: 95% confidence limit.

multiplied by partisanship for a control. Should the hypothesized temporal pattern exist, the “Ideology \times Year” term would be both significant and positive. Again, as is the case in Model 2, there is no temporal pattern regarding the importance of ideological strength. This is not to say that the strength of ideology has no predictive power—Model 1 clearly shows that ideology matters. However, the results reveal little evidence that ideological strength has become more important for contributing money to politicians.

Another possibility remains. Although it may be true that ideology, per se, is not becoming a stronger predictor of contributing, it is possible that the percentage of ideological extremists has grown. In other words, if the total number of conservatives and liberals has increased relative to moderates, then politicians will be relying on them more for campaign funds (even if ideologues have not increased their rate of giving). Figure 3 shows the proportion of ideologues between 1972 and 2008. The data indicate, in fact, an increase over time, which suggests that any growth in ideological giving is not necessarily driven by an increased motivation by extremists to donate but simply by the greater proportion

of Americans who are ideological compared to previously. At the same time, it is important to note that the surge in the proportion of ideological citizens is relatively recent, starting in 1994, with a major spike in 2002. The timing does not correspond to the emergence of ideological polarization between the parties, which began at least a decade earlier.

So far, it appears that the shifts in ideological giving are slight and come mostly since 2002. It is plausible that our analysis fails to uncover important differences *within* the donor population; major donors might have become more ideological starting in the 1970s or 1980s. Regrettably, the ANES does not allow us to explore differences between small and large donors. One study demonstrates that the most frequent contributors are, indeed, the most ideologically extreme (Francia et al., 2005) but does not use data over time to demonstrate changes among this subgroup of donors. Similarly, a study of donors in the 2002 elections shows that individuals who contributed large amounts of so-called “soft money” tended to be more extremist (McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal, 2006).¹⁰ We analyzed cross-sectional data from 2008 CCES, which asked respondents how much money they contributed in the most recent election, to see if we could observe differences across donors. It appears that major donors (giving excess of US\$200) appear somewhat more ideological than small donors (see Appendix B). The fact that there is a difference, however slight, between small and large donors suggests that future studies should try to observe whether these large (or frequent) donors have become more ideological over time.

Discussion

The proportion of ideological donors in the United States has increased somewhat, with most of the increases coming in the previous 3 to 4 elections. These changes appear to be driven by an increase in the proportion of citizens who are ideologues rather than stronger motivations by ideologues to give money. In short, the analysis reveals no clear trends in the likelihood that ideologues will give money, controlling for other factors. To be sure, the last few elections appear to indicate a high degree of ideological giving, but it will be necessary to review data in 2012 and beyond to observe if these recent elections reflect a trend or the usual fluctuations documented in this analysis. It is possible, of course, that the continued refinement of Internet fundraising might stimulate ideological giving as fundraisers become more sophisticated at identifying prospective donors. Thus, we would observe a structural break in the time series, starting in 2002-2004, which could be related to rapid technological change. Overall, however, we find little evidence that the ideological polarization observed between party elites, starting

in the late 1970s and 1980s, is mirrored in the donor population during this time. The timing of these changes does not correspond; the increase in ideological donors appears to come much later.

What are the implications of these findings? It appears that mass donors are widely dispersed across the ideological spectrum. Neither have they been the hardcore ideologues like party activists in the past nor do they seem to have become so over time, at least not until recently. This observation suggests that the donor population is not necessarily a direct source of growing partisan polarization, though we hasten to add that additional research should look closely at the largest donors to candidates and parties. Donors have traditionally been more ideological than the rest of the electorate, but our null findings suggest (though do not prove) that donor extremism relative to the electorate has not changed. Partisan extremity, rather than ideological extremity, is more important in the decision to give money, and future work should continue to observe how this factor affects party behavior. To be sure, partisanship and ideology appear increasingly linked, which means that the donor population may become more ideological, even if the marginal effect of ideology is not necessarily growing.

Given the punctuated pattern of ideological giving, our results lend support to the thesis that ideology matters when political elites want it to matter. In other words, politicians may selectively mobilize ideological donors (and other activists) depending on the electoral environment (Grant & Rudolph, 2002; Saunders & Abramowitz, 2004). The presence of more ideological donors in some elections may reflect the simple fact that particular candidates activate the most ideological elements in the donor population (Johnson, 2010; Moon, 2004). For example, in 1988 and 1996 elections (the years for which ideology was significant for Republican donors), very socially conservative candidates for the Republican presidential nomination did not come close to winning the nomination but they came in second place in the money race. Pat Robertson raised US\$26 million (75% of the amount of the eventual nominee, George H. W. Bush), whereas Buchanan raised US\$33 million (57% of the amount raised by nominee, Bob Dole).¹¹ On the Democratic side, the 1972 nominee, George McGovern, was extremely liberal and raised almost twice as much money (US\$62 million) as the runner-up Ed Muskie (US\$36 million). In 1980, the incumbent president Jimmy Carter faced a rebellion from the liberal flank of the party when Ted Kennedy challenged him for the nomination. Kennedy raised US\$32 million (or 67% of what Carter raised). Thus, we speculate that party primaries with highly ideological candidates tend to draw out ideological donors. In some elections, such candidates do well raising money (see Appendix C for fundraising comparisons across presidential candidates).

Our findings suggest a plausible model for understanding the relationship between political contributions and ideology. Given the ideological

variability of the donor population in any given election year, we are less inclined to support the model of the *responsive politician* who shifts his or her ideology to reflect the ideological character of donors. Instead, we believe there is more merit in the model of the *strategic politician* who shapes the ideological profile of the population of contributors in a given election cycle, depending on the nature of the election. In short, the direction of causation appears more likely to run from politicians to donors, rather than the other way around. The recent surge in ideological giving since 2002—well after the emergence of ideological polarization of party officeholders—suggests as well that donors are responding to politicians. When the stakes are high for who wins office (based on stark policy differences between candidates) ideological donors have a greater incentive to give money.

Since individual donors do not necessarily appear to be serving as ideological gatekeepers—at least at the mass level—this implies that money may not necessarily “count” for as much as other things that activists do. This observation, if true, might be reassuring from a normative perspective, as money is unevenly distributed in society. It would suggest that money does not easily translate into the favored ideological positions of contributors as others have suggested (Verba et al., 1995). We are quick to add, however, that our analysis does not look separately at the largest donors who may, in fact, be ideological gatekeepers. As we have suggested, within the population of donors there are the casual one-time donors who give money when asked by politically active friends or fundraisers. The ideological moderation of casual donors may mask underlying trends among the hardcore fundraisers who are most likely to attract the attention of politicians.

Paradoxically, given the relative stability of ideological giving, donors at the mass level may be a moderating force on politics, especially in comparison with super donors or highly ideological activists who try to influence the party in other ways (Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, & Cooperman 2010; Shafer & Claggett, 1995). Making a political contribution is a fairly easy way to participate (if you have financial resources, of course). In contrast, intensive forms of participation (which include attending caucuses or raising money for candidates) tend to attract those with strong ideological and partisan preferences. Such citizens are willing to give up considerable time for causes they believe in.

The stability of ideological preferences for donors versus activists has implications for future proposals to reform the campaign finance system. For example, some proposals are circulating in Congress to use public funds for campaigns (see, for example, The Fair Elections Act).¹² Reforms that attempt to remove or severely limit private financing might attenuate the role of mass

contributors. This dynamic could increase the value for candidates of other electoral activities performed by activists who attend caucuses, canvass voters, and help raise money for party organizations and so-called 527 organizations and Super-PACs that can accept soft money. In theory, at least, generous public financing of elections could augment partisan polarization by displacing a moderating element of political donors who give primarily on the basis of partisan loyalty or because a friend or acquaintance asked them to give (Brown et al., 1995; Cho, 2003; Cho & Gimpel, 2007).

As we are fully cognizant of the limitations of our study, we believe an analysis of political contributors merits additional study. Two future research strategies come to mind as a way to probe further. First, it is worth peeling back additional layers to observe whether *habitual* donors or *major* donors are becoming more ideological. After all, the size and frequency of their donations should attract greater attention from politicians and party leaders (Magleby & Nelson, 1990). These donors are likely to have the strongest relationships with the party in government and serve as central nodes in fundraising networks through their social and professional relationships (Brown et al., 1995; Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008; Francia et al., 2003). Regrettably, data over time do not exist yet to conduct such a study. Our analysis of cross-sectional data from the 2008 CCES suggests that major donors are more ideological than smaller donors, but we have no way of ascertaining whether either small or major donors have become more ideological over time.

A second strategy looks more promising. This would involve an organizational “network” approach to understanding whether or how political donations affect polarization. Although the donor population may not have changed, it is plausible that political organizations *have* changed as well as their relationship to the party. Such organizations might mobilize donations and channel them to targeted races in ways that influence candidacies and party policies (Cohen et al., 2008; Masket, 2009). It is plausible, for example, that political groups tap a population of donors, which has not changed ideologically over time, but that the groups selectively use their position as financial “brokers” in ways that push the parties further apart. There is, in fact, solid evidence that political organizations in the United States reflect two distinct partisan networks (Grossmann & Dominguez, 2009; Koger, Masket, & Noel, 2009; Schwartz, 1990; Skinner, 2007). Organizations within these two clusters—but not across—share donor lists and mobilize jointly to raise and spend money in elections.¹³

The primary deficiency of recent network analyses is that they do not study changes over time for lack of data. Thus, we do not know how and

when the two clusters became more distinct if, in fact, they did *become* more distinct. Nevertheless, we urge an ongoing focus on how partisan and issue activists, through organizations and networks, mobilize resources and put pressure on politicians to conform to ideological principles. This approach would help link the behavioral research on individual contributors to the broader institutional literature on interest groups and party organizations.

Appendix A

List of Variables

Dependent variable:

Contribution to party or candidate—coded 0, 1; used ANES variable VCF0721 with a correction for a coding error.

Independent variables:

Education—education level coded 1 (*8 grades or less*), 2 (*some high school*), 3 (*high school diploma or equivalency*), 4 (*high school diploma or equivalency, plus non-academic training*), 5 (*some college, no degree*), 6 (*BA-level degree*); used variable VCF0140 unaltered.

Income—ordinal coding 1-5; used variable VCF0115 unaltered.

Age—in years; used variable VCF0101 unaltered.

Male—male respondents coded 1; derived from variable VCF0104.

Interest—ordinal interest in current election coded 1-3 (*highest interest = 3*); used variable VCF0310, “DK” responses coded missing.

Strength of ideology—ordinal coding 1-4 (*highest strength = 4*); folded variable VCF0803.

Strength of partisanship—ordinal coding 1-4 (*highest level = 4*); used variable VCF0305 unaltered.

White—all self-identified White respondents coded 1; derived from variable VCF0106a.

Contact—respondents that reported being contacted by a major party coded 1; used variable VCF9030a after recoding 0, 1.

Married—respondents that were currently married coded 1; derived from variable VCF0147.

South—respondents living in the political south coded 1; used variable VCF0113 unaltered.

Appendix B

Cross-Sectional Logistic Regression of Large Versus Small Contributors (>US\$200) in the 2008 Elections

Strength of ideology	0.063* (0.030)
Strength of partisanship	0.059* (0.023)
Age	0.049*** (0.009)
Age squared	-0.000*** (0.000)
Male	0.276*** (0.043)
Interest	0.540*** (0.076)
Education	0.182*** (0.015)
Income	0.140*** (0.007)
White	-0.037 (0.061)
Married	-0.255*** (0.048)
South	-0.030 (0.048)
Constant	-6.121*** (0.326)
Number of cases	10,584
Pseudo- R^2	.0775

Note: Cell entries are logit coefficient estimates, standard errors are in parentheses. Sample includes those who said they made a political contribution.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed. *** $p < .001$, two-tailed.

Presidential Elections Fundraising, 1972-2008 (Adjusted in 2008 Dollars)

	Nominee	US\$ million	Closest fundraiser	US\$ million
Democrats				
1972	McGovern	62	Muskie	36
1976	Carter	47	Wallace	40
1980	Carter	48	Kennedy	32
1984	Mondale	54	Hart	30
1988 ^a	Dukakis	19	Gephardt	8
1992	Clinton	58	Brown	14
1996	Clinton	52	—	
2000	Gore	62	Bradley	53
2004	Kerry	46	Dean	58
2008	Obama	337	Clinton	207

(continued)

Appendix C (continued)

	Nominee	US\$ million	Closest fundraiser	US\$ million
Republicans				
1972	Nixon	103	—	
1976	Ford	51	Reagan	48
1980	Reagan	56	Bush	44
1984	Reagan	56	—	
1988	Bush	34	Robertson	26
1992	Bush	58	Buchanan	19
1996	Dole	58	Buchanan	33
2000	Bush	118	Forbes	60
2004	Bush	181	—	
2008	McCain	121	Romney	60

Source: Federal Election Commission.
 *The 1988 data are fundraising only through 1987.

Appendix C

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Notes

1. To be sure, many activists participate in a variety of ways: organizing campaigns, fundraising, joining interest groups, and attending party meetings. Most donors, however, do not engage in other forms of electoral participation besides making a contribution and voting (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995).

2. A study of donors to the 1972 presidential campaigns by Brown, Hedges, and Powell (1980) revealed that just 9% were intense participants in all forms of political participation, including mobilizing voters, working various aspects of campaigns, and contacting elected officials.
3. Year 1974 is omitted as it did not contain the ideological self-placement measure; 2002 is excluded as it used a different metric of income.
4. We also tried other iterations, such as running the models separately for Republicans and Democrats, as well as liberals and conservatives. The results did not change substantially.
5. An obvious question regarding party contact is the possibility of a simultaneous relationship, or two-way causality. We assume such a relationship is weak based on Rosenstone and Hansen's (1993) finding that there is far less continuity in the donor pool than is often assumed (p. 172, footnote 11).
6. The ANES did not conduct a study for the 2006 elections.
7. It is, of course, plausible that our folded measure of ideological extremism confounds the behavior of liberals and conservatives, but we tried modeling them separately with no substantive change in the results. There were also no differences when we tried separate models for Republicans and Democrats.
8. A less sanguine view is that reforms designed to broaden the donor pool have not encouraged more Americans of modest means to contribute money. The relevant reforms include amendments to the Federal Elections Campaign Act in 1974 and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002.
9. To assess whether partisanship was really driving behavior, we ran separate models, one with the ideological measure alone and one with the partisan measure. In comparing the two models, partisanship was clearly related to whether someone made a contribution but ideology was not, similar to results reported in Table 1.
10. Soft money was donations to political parties in excess of the federal contribution limits capped at US\$2,000 for individual candidates.
11. Data are from the Federal Election Commission (FEC), available at <http://www.fec.gov/>
12. The Fair Elections Now Act (S. 752 and H.R. 1826) was introduced in March 2009 in the Senate in by Sens. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Arlen Specter (D-Pa.) and in the House of Representatives by Reps. John Larson (D-Conn.) and Walter Jones, Jr. (R-N.C.).
13. The role of political contributions in causing polarization might also be mediated by how members of Congress raise and distribute their political funds (see Heberlig, Hetherington, & Larson, 2006).

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