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Partisan strength, political trust and generalized trust in the United States: An analysis of the General Social Survey, 1972-2014

Abstract

The literature on political parties suggests that strong partisan identities are associated with citizens' effective interaction with the political system, and with higher levels of political trust. Traditionally, party identity therefore is seen as a mechanism that allows for political integration. Simultaneously, however, political parties have gained recent attention for their role in promoting societal polarization by reinforcing competing and even antagonistic group identities. This article uses General Social Survey data from 1972 – 2014 to investigate the relationship between partisan strength and both political and generalized trust. The findings show that increases in partisan strength are positively related to political trust, but negatively related to generalized trust. This suggests that while partisan strength is indeed an important linkage mechanism for the political system, it is also associated with a tendency toward social polarization, and this corrosive effect thus far has not gained sufficient attention in literature on party identity.

Key words: Political trust; generalized trust, partisan strength; social polarization; General Social Survey

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Introduction

The concept of party identity has been one of the most influential theoretical contributions to the study of electoral behavior, and early empirical studies on this topic beginning in the 1950s considered stable party identity as a shortcut for citizens to develop their political preferences (Campbell et al., 1960; Johnston, 2006). In the more recently published criticism of the party identity model, two different positions emerged, particularly for studies that focus on the relationship between the mass public and political institutions in the United States.

An empirically-based argument claims that party identity has become less salient in the past few decades, as fewer citizens report a stable party identity (Heath and McDonald, 1988; van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke, 2012; Winneg, Jamieson and Hardy, 2014). Even as U.S. political elites have become more strongly partisan (Lee, 2015; Theriault, 2006), there is less consensus about how to interpret trends in mass partisanship in the U.S., largely due to differing definitions in the literature on mass political polarization (Hetherington, 2009), and the evidence of continued partisan strength among voters (Bartels, 2000). There is no doubt, however, that there has been a meaningful increase in the proportion of the population that self-identifies as independent or non-partisan in the U.S. in the past few decades (Clarke and Stewart, 1998; Klar and Krupnikov, 2016; Petrocik, 2009; Pew Research Center for People and the Press, 2009).

A second line of criticism is based on normative arguments about affective ties and social identities. In the early writings of what became known as the "Michigan School," party identity was seen as a positive concept because of its contribution to political stability, but precisely this stabilizing function has been regarded as potentially problematic for broader social cohesiveness in the more recent literature (Iyengar, 2016; Mason, 2015). Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes (2012) have argued that partisan identities can weaken an encompassing identity of U.S. citizenship that includes a common bond to society, and therefore partisans will be more strongly inclined to

develop a negative attitude toward supporters of competing political parties. Following this reasoning, partisan identity could contribute to group rivalry and social polarization (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015; Jacoby, 2014; Levendusky, 2013; Miller and Conover 2015). These findings about the role of affective group rivalry are reminiscent of the classic concern articulated by Madison (1787) that strong partisan cleavages will contribute to a mischief of factionalism within a nation.

Building upon these literatures, our goal is to investigate the attitudinal correlates of partisan identity strength in the U.S. in recent decades, with a particular attention to political trust and generalized trust. The traditional insights of the Michigan School lead to the assumption that partisans will develop a more positive outlook on the political system as their partisan identity allows them to express their political preferences in an effective manner, thereby augmenting political trust. The growing literature on group polarization, however, predicts that partisans will develop an increasingly hostile outlook toward (a substantial part of) society, as they are more likely to develop antagonistic feelings against a substantial part of the population. In this manner, the polarization that is apparent among U.S. political elites might also become more visible within U.S. society in general, and become evident in central attitudinal measures such as generalized trust, that can be considered as a positive judgement toward society as a whole (Nannestad, 2008). Some of the literature suggests that especially among Republicans, a more polarized view on society has become more prevalent, as illustrated by the rise of the Tea Party movement within that party (Bailey, Mummolo & Noel, 2012), and evidence that Republicans are more likely than Democrats to associate with those who agree with them ideologically (Boutyline and Willer, 2017).

In this paper, we first briefly review the literature on partisan strength and trust with a focus on the lacuna of research that integrates investigations of political trust and generalized trust. We then analyze the General Social Survey data from 1972 to 2014 to investigate the relationship between partisan strength and these two types of trust. The findings indicate that partisan strength is positively related to political trust but negatively related to generalized trust. The results also identify no change in the strength of these relationships over time, and no substantive differences between Republicans and Democrats. We close with some observations about the contribution of these findings in light of the well-known role of partisan strength as a linkage mechanism for the political system, along with its less-studied association with social polarization.

Literature

As a consequence of partisan attachment, citizens are expected to identify more strongly with the political system, to be motivated to follow political events, and to act as stakeholders in the political system (Campbell et al., 1960). If citizens identify with a specific political party, this is expected to have a strong impact on their perceptions, evaluations and actions with regard to the political system as a whole (Bartels, 2000).

In the debate on partisanship trends in the U.S., some authors suggest an increase in mass polarization (Abramowitz, 2010; Abramowitz and Webster, 2016; McCright et al. 2014) while others note that the partisanship strength of citizens has changed very little (Fiorina and Abrams, 2008; Levendusky and Malhotra, 2016). A consensus has emerged amidst this debate that even if Democrats and Republicans have not grown farther apart in their ideological stances, party identity has become more clearly sorted on a variety of issues into the partisan stances of the two

main parties (Hetherington, 2009; Hill and Tausanovitch, 2015). There is no question, however, that political parties have become a weaker linkage mechanism between citizens and the state in the U.S. and other advanced democracies in recent decades when investigated from the perspective of official membership figures and active involvement of rank and file members (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Hooghe and Kern, 2015). In addition, a variety of empirical sources show that partisan identity has weakened in the U.S. in terms of the marked increase in those who identify as non-partisan or independent (Clarke & Stewart, 1998; Dalton, 2007; Petrocik, 2009; Winneg et al., 2014).

It is not clear, however, what this increased trend in non-partisan identification implies for the attitudinal ties between citizens and the political system, as trust in the political system in the U.S. has remained persistently low since the Great Society era (Hetherington and Rudolph, 2008). Some authors have argued that the rise of non-partisan identifiers in the overall population signifies increasing political sophistication and independence (Dalton 2012, 2014) or perhaps an unwillingness to publicly proclaim a partisan identity despite attitudinal evidence to the contrary (Keith et al. 1992; Klar & Krupnikov, 2016; Petrocik, 2009). Other authors are less sanguine about the political implications of rising non-partisanship. These authors depart from a functionalist perspective and claim that if individual citizens do not identify with political parties, they will not be able to relate in an effective manner to the political system (van Biezen and Poguntke, 2014).

Political trust is an important attitudinal indicator to evaluate the relation with the political system. It can be conceptualized as an overall assessment of the functioning of the political system, and the norms governing the conduct of political actors, distinct from satisfaction with individual office-holders (Easton, 1965; Hooghe, 2011). Although it has to be

expected that voters place more trust in government if their favored party gains a majority (Anderson et al., 2005), the overall correlation between partisanship and political trust is assumed to be positive, even controlling for this incumbency effect. The positive view on party identity would therefore predict that partisans have higher trust levels with regard to the political system as a whole.

The shifted role of parties over time from societal integration to electoral contestation is well-established (Scarrow, Webb and Farrell, 2002, 129), but a new question has arisen as to whether parties may actually act as a force for societal *dis*-integration in terms of increased polarization of American society (Layman and Carsey, 2002; Layman et al., 2006, 84). While recent research shows a relation between party polarization and individual partisanship (Lupu, 2015), it remains unclear whether increased party polarization has any effect on societal polarization (Lee, 2015, 263).

In light of the wealth of research on the relationship between partisan strength and political trust, the relative dearth of research on the relationship between partisan strength and generalized trust is all the more surprising. The investigation of this relationship is particularly salient in the United States, given its central role in debates about declining social cohesion, including various measures of social capital and trust (Putnam, 2000; Robinson and Jackson, 2001). Various non-partisan causes for the decline of generalized trust have been researched extensively, including ethnic diversity, income inequality, religious affiliation and media use (Fairbrother and Martin 2013; Hooghe et al. 2009; Hooghe and Oser 2015; Wright 2015). A cross-national investigation of moral opinion polarization that demonstrated a negative effect on trust (Rapp 2016) raises the question of how partisan strength might affect generalized trust over time. The following section spells out how we integrate these two separate literatures to

simultaneously investigate the relation between partisan strength and political trust, as well as between partisan strength and generalized trust.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

Partisan strength and political trust

Given the evidence that citizens' strength of party identification in the United States is weakening over time, it is important to investigate whether this trend is related to their trust in the political system. Political distrust was seen as a potentially troubling attitudinal phenomenon by scholars such as Converse (1964) and research has shown that high levels of political trust provide citizens with a "decision rule" to support government intervention (Hetherington and Husser, 2012, 313). Findings that show the various policy impacts of this decision rule suggest the importance of understanding what factors have had an effect on levels of political trust over time (Chanley, Rudolph and Rahn, 2000; Hetherington, 2005; Rudolph and Evans, 2005).

It has been suggested that strong party identification—regardless of which party one identifies with—should be related to high levels of political trust. The stronger individuals see themselves as identifying with a specific political party, the more they would be expected to trust the democratic functioning of the political system (Hooghe and Kern, 2015). The assumption in this line of literature is that citizens who do not identify with a specific political party, are at risk of being alienated from the political system. If party identity strength is indeed associated with citizens' positive relationship with the political system as a whole, we should observe that the weakening of partisan identity in recent decades is associated with a similar trend in political trust. This literature, therefore, leads to the hypothesis:

H1. Partisan identity strength is positively related to levels of political trust.

The traditional Michigan approach to the relation between partisanship and political trust assumes that partisanship will be positively associated with trust in the political system, even controlling for incumbency effects. In recent decades, however, relations between the main parties on Capitol Hill have become increasingly hostile (Lee, 2015; Theriault, 2006; Uslaner, 1993), leading to repeated periods of political gridlock. This rivalry would imply that the positive association between partisan strength and trust in the political system will grow weaker over time. This leads to our second hypothesis:

H2: Over time the positive relationship between partisan strength and political trust has weakened.

Partisan strength and generalized trust

The traditional cleavage approach would assume that parties act to facilitate social integration because they can be used by social groups as a tool for political mobilization. To the extent that citizens feel more closely integrated within these social groups, a positive relation should be evident between party identity and generalized trust (Kriesi, 1998). The more recent literature on the polarization of American politics, however, would lead to the opposite assumption. Given the strained relation between the two major parties in U.S. politics, it can be expected that those who identify more strongly with one of the major parties will also develop a more negative attitude toward the proponents of competing political parties (Ahler, 2014). This negative attitude toward a substantial part of public opinion should be associated with lower levels of generalized trust.

As indicated by prior empirical research, generalized trust tends to extend to all groups within society (Reeskens, 2013) which suggests a wide scope for investigating generalized trust (Delhey, Newton & Welzel, 2011; Putnam, 1993, 2000).

A strongly debated question in the literature is to determine whether increased party polarization actually represents strong divisions within public opinion (Born, 2008; Hetherington, 2009) or whether partisanship is best understood as a form of social group identification (Green, Palmquist and Schickler, 2004; Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes, 2012). Iyengar and Westwood (2015) investigate the role of political elites in cultivating an increasingly negative attitude among partisans toward the other, competing, group. This process of "group loathing" (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015) is assumed to be induced by the media and by political elites. Jacoby (2014) reached similar conclusions in his analysis of cross-sectional data from 2006, concluding that "people connect their partisan affiliations and issue preferences to their basic beliefs about what is good and bad in the world" (Jacoby, 2014, 769). Similarly, Miller and Conover (2015) show that strong partisan identity is associated with strong affective polarization in the form of anger and party rivalry.

It remains to be seen, however, whether this kind of social polarization affects central attitudinal measures such as generalized trust. Building upon recent studies, we hypothesize that party identity will be negatively associated with generalized trust (H3). In the literature on social capital and social cohesion, generalized trust is routinely used as the single most powerful indicator for social integration, as the trust judgment summarizes one's view about the trustworthiness of society and major groups within society (De Vroome, Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Nannestad, 2008). In addition to the importance of generalized trust as a central indicator of social integration, scholars such as Uslaner (2002, 2004) have shown the important

consequences of generalized trust on a wide variety of social and political outcomes, ranging from education measures to poverty rates.

In addition to our expectation of a negative association between partisan strength and generalized trust, the literature suggests that this negative association has become stronger over time. While political parties almost by definition are competitors, recent research suggests that they contribute to social polarization when this competition leads to mutual distrust and what has been called "group loathing". Given the trend toward elite polarization, it seems plausible that this corrosive effect has become stronger also among the general population (H4). The third and fourth hypotheses leading our research can therefore be stated as:

H3. Partisan strength is negatively associated with generalized trust.
H4. Over time, the negative relation between partisan strength and generalized trust has strengthened.

Data and methods

Although much of the research on political trust in the United States has been based on the American National Election Study (NES) data, there are a number of advantages of the General Social Survey (GSS) data for testing these hypotheses (Marsden 2012; Smith et al. 2015; Smith et al. 2016).[1] The core battery of NES questions on political trust are fairly general in nature (items include: "how much of the time do you think you can trust the government in

[1]. The AAPOR response rate from 1975-2014 has ranged from 69% to 82%. (see Smith et al 2016, p.3011 for details of AAPOR response rate calculation). It is important to note that the variables we use were part of rotating modules and split-file designs, limiting the total number of observations. In the online appendix we demonstrate that this did not have an effect on the robustness of our findings.

Washington?", "do you think the people in government waste a lot of money we pay in taxes" and "would you say that government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all the people"). The GSS questions, by contrast, focus on trust in specific political institutions, which offers a more valid operationalization of the theoretical concept of political trust as a form of diffuse support for the political system (Hetherington 2005, 14; Marien, 2011). More specifically, the GSS asks respondents about their level of trust in federal government, the Supreme Court and the U.S. Congress, and these three items are closely related, with a Cronbach's alpha of .66. It can be noted that trust in the Supreme Court, too, clearly loads on this scale, despite the fact that the composition of the Court is not directly influenced by electoral results. An additional advantage of the GSS for trust indicators is that the questions do not share the NES's outdated wording (e.g. "Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked?"). For generalized trust, we rely on the three routine measurement items of whether most people can be trusted, and whether they are helpful and fair. The Cronbach's alpha of these three items is strong at .67. These items have been used repeatedly to measure generalized trust (Nannestad, 2008; Sturgis and Smith, 2010) and they offer a valid operationalization of this concept.

In the multivariate analysis, we investigate the association between partisan strength and two kinds of trust (political and generalized), controlling for other relevant factors. The analysis controls for specific party identification (i.e., Democrat or Republican) given the expectation in some of the literature that especially among Republicans, ideological polarization has increased (Layman et al., 2010, 336; Lee 2015, 264; Skocpol and Williamson, 2012). Respondents were also asked whether they "lean" toward a specific party, or feel weakly or strongly related to that party, allowing us to include the strength of party identification in the analysis, ranging from

"leaning" to feeling strongly related. Based on research that shows the polarizing effect of mass media exposure (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015; Prior, 2013), the analysis controls for amount of exposure to television and newspaper reading. In addition, drawing on research which suggests that political trust levels tend to be higher among supporters of the governing party (Anderson et al., 2005), we also control for whether the party one supports is in charge of the White House or not during that specific survey wave. Controls were also included for socio-demographic factors that have been found to have an impact on trust, including age, gender, education, income, race, size of geographic location and religious attendance (Smith, 1997). The variables used in the analysis are reviewed in Table 1 (see Appendix Table A1 for descriptive statistics).

[Table 1 About Here]

First, it is important to investigate trends over time. If party identity levels and trust levels evolve in a divergent manner, it would be unlikely that these two measurements could be causally related. Figure 1 depicts the evolution of partisan strength, political trust and generalized trust for the 1972-2014 period. For political trust (Figure 1a) the time trends show that both measurements are structurally declining. Both started from a high level in 1972, and although an upward trend could be observed in the late 1980s, all measurements from the 1990s onwards are clearly at a lower level than in 1972, with the sharpest decline in the 1990s. Both measurements seem to be caught in a similar downward movement, and indeed, the correlation between the year averages for both measurements is 0.62. It is clear, therefore, that during the past four decades, party identity and political trust have had similar trends of decline.

The relationship between generalized trust and party identification over time (Figure 1b) is less straightforward. From 1972 to 1988 both measurements seem to evolve in different directions, as generalized trust levels go up, while the strength of party identity is being eroded. During the past two decades, however, both party identity and generalized trust seem to decline in a similar manner.

[Figure 1 About Here]

The trends depicted in Figure 1 relate to fluctuation over time from the starting point of 1972 of partisan strength and trust, regardless of specific party identity as Republicans, Democrats or Independents. In order to gain a better sense of partisan differences, Figure 2 depicts mean levels of trust over time with separate trend lines for partisan groups (lowess smoothing implemented to ease visual presentation by fitting a curved line to data points). A clear observation from these figures is that no partisan group has experienced an increase in political trust or generalized trust throughout the observation period. The overall trend line of trust (both political and generalized) is negative, regardless of specific party identity. For political trust (Figure 2a), Democrats and Independents experience a similar moderate secular decline. In contrast, Republicans have a higher starting point of trust, experience more fluctuation over time, and since the late 2000s have experienced a fairly steep 0.4 point decline in political trust out of a total 3 point scale. For generalized trust (Figure 2b) Republicans again have the highest starting point, but for the generalized trust scale the figure shows that all partisan identity groups experience a similar downward trend line.

[Figure 2 About Here]

The trend lines in Figures 1 and 2 are of course only a visual depiction of bivariate relationships between partisan identity and trust, without taking into account additional socio-demographic and political factors that have an impact on the phenomena under investigation. For example, in relation to generalized trust, it is clear from the literature that Republicans as a group have socio-demographic characteristics that would lead us to expect them to have higher levels of generalized trust (e.g., race, income, religious attendance). As it is important to control for these sociodemographic characteristics, we proceed to multivariate analyses to test our hypotheses.

Results

We use multivariate analysis to investigate the association between partisan strength and political trust (Table 2), and between partisan strength and generalized trust (Table 3). The tables present findings for ordinary least squares regression (Models I and II) and parallel models with fixed effects by year (Models III and IV), thus controlling for the fact that we rely on multiple waves of the GSS, conducted over the period of four decades. In our subsequent investigation of the over-time interaction effect in Tables 4 and 5, we present OLS regression findings and note that the parallel fixed effects models are consistent with these findings. We opt for this presentation for Tables 4 and 5 because the year dummy variables and their interactions with partisan identity (PID) strength are important for testing our hypotheses, but a fixed effects specification makes the reported output very long and unwieldy. In the Appendix Tables A2 through A5, we also report on parallel diagnostic models to those presented in Tables 2 through 5 with standard errors clustered by year for all models that do not use fixed effects by year. The findings using these alternate specifications all yield results that are substantively indistinguishable from the findings reported in the article. As recommended, relevant weights were applied to all models to account

for the GSS's use of a cluster sampling design for face-to-face interviewing (Smith et al. 2016, 3115-3134; Solon, Haider and Wooldridge 2015).

[Table 2 About Here]

First, we explain the level of political trust (Table 2). Model I includes a full battery of control variables, including a control for an incumbency effect, and it can be observed that those who report a party identity as "weak" or "strong" have similarly high levels of political trust. In this model we test for whether differences exist for Republican and Democratic identifiers, and therefore exclude Independents in order to include a control for specific party identification, resulting in a lower number of observations. The findings show that there is no significant distinction between Republicans and Democrats in their levels of political trust. Therefore, while in our bivariate explorations in Figure 2, we observed some differences between Republicans and Democrats in their levels of political trust over time, the findings in Table 2 indicate that these differences can be fully attributed to the different background characteristics of both groups. The year of the survey does have a significant negative association with political trust, thereby confirming that political trust is declining over time in the U.S. (Hetherington and Husser, 2012). Those who attend religious services on average have higher political trust levels, while African-Americans have lower levels of political trust. We observe a positive relation between newspaper reading and political trust, while low or very low levels of watching television are positively related to this indicator.

Since our findings in Model I show no difference between Republicans and Democrats, in Model II we therefore omit the specific party ID control (i.e., Republican or Democrat), which allows us to more fully test the impact of partisan strength by using Independents as the

reference group.[2] The findings show that there is indeed a strong and linear relationship between partisan strength and political trust: the lowest levels of political trust can be found among Independents (the reference group), and the highest level among those who identify strongly with a political party. This can also be illustrated by plotting the predicted values of political trust (Figure 3, based on fixed effects Model IV). This figure clearly shows that partisan strength is associated with a more trusting attitude toward the political system.[3] The effect size is quite substantial, with a .11 gap between independents and strong partisans, on a 1-3 scale. The idea that partisan strength functions as a gateway toward trust in the political system therefore seems to be confirmed.

[Figure 3 about here]

Subsequently we proceed to analyze generalized trust as a dependent variable (Table 3). The results reported in Model I suggest that the relationship between partisan strength and generalized trust is exactly the opposite from political trust, as a strong party identity is negatively associated with generalized trust. Similar to the findings for political trust, specific party identity (i.e. Democrat versus Republican) is not related to generalized trust. In Model II it is evident that the highest levels of generalized trust are among those who "lean" to a specific

[2] Model II's addition of Independents is responsible for the increase of the number of observations by 2,401. Note that the sample for Models I and II are therefore not identical, which should be taken into account in comparison of these models. The same procedure holds for the sample size in Models III and IV, and also for the parallel investigation of four models of generalized trust in Table 3.

[3]. When the effect of partisan strength on political trust is analyzed separately for Democrats and Republicans, the findings yield two identical curves, confirming that there is no significant difference between the parties.

political party, while those who more closely identify with a party (i.e. "weak" and "strong" party identifiers) are indistinguishable from the reference group of Independents. In addition, the effect sizes are much small than was the case for political trust. A curvilinear relation is apparent when we plot predicted values (Figure 4, based on fixed effects Model IV), with equally low levels of generalized trust among Independents as among those who identify strongly with a party.

[Table 3 & Figure 4 about here]

We now proceed to test our hypotheses about the expectation that the association between partisan strength and these two types of trust would change over time during this four decade observation period. These findings are presented in Tables 4 and 5 as ordinary least squares regressions with a focus on the interaction effect between the year dummy variables and their interactions with PID strength.[4] Regarding political trust, Table 4 shows that the interaction between survey year and the strength of party identity is not significant, and comparisons of Democrats and Republicans shows that this process is not different for either party (pairwise comparison using Bonferroni adjustment has a 95% confidence interval of -.004 to 0.045). The alleged tendency toward ideological radicalization within the Republican Party, apparently does not lead to a distinctive association with political trust over time.

[Table 4 about here]

[4] Parallel models with fixed effects specifications corroborate these findings. For the sake of parsimony we do not report on these models in tabular form, as the fixed effects specification complicates and lengthens the reported output.

For generalized trust we proceed in the same manner to test the relationship with partisan strength over time. The association with the year of the survey remains negative (Table 5), whereas the interaction effect between the year of the survey and the strength of the party identity is not significant. Also for generalized trust, the findings again indicate that this process does not differ for Democrats and Republicans (pairwise comparison using Bonferroni adjustment has a 95% confidence interval of -.014 to .055). In contrast to what we had hypothesized, therefore, the socially polarizing characteristics of partisan strength have not changed significantly over time.

[Table 5 about here]

Discussion

In the literature of the 1960s party identity was considered as a major building block for stable democracies. Strongly identifying with a political party was understood as a form of commitment to the basic values of the political system. In an era when Talcott Parsons stressed the role of identification to ensure social stability and reproduction, party identity fulfilled the same role for political stability. Since that time, however, the proportion of Americans that consider themselves as non-partisan has continued to rise. The fact that a substantial proportion of politically sophisticated voters now consider themselves non-partisan is a theoretically relevant trend in this regard. Traditionally it was assumed that especially those with low levels of political knowledge and interest would refrain from identifying with a political party, while some recent studies have argued that identifying as a non-partisan is, on the contrary, increasingly common among those with high levels of political sophistication.

In the current analysis, we investigated the political and social consequences of partisan strength between 1972 and 2014, and our results are mixed. On the one hand, throughout the

observation period there is a strong positive association between partisan strength and political trust, and this is true for both Democrats and Republicans, even controlling for incumbency effects. The findings suggest that Independents remain distrusting toward the political system in comparison to those who identify with a political party. The current study therefore provides evidence for the claim that partisan strength continues to function as an important linkage mechanism between citizens and the political system. Contrary to our expectations that this positive linkage would become weaker over time, the evidence indicates that the positive association between partisan strength and political trust has remained stable.

In contrast to the positive impact of partisan strength on political trust, however, the results of the analysis show that increased partisan strength is negatively associated with generalized trust. Theoretically this is a highly relevant finding. Although the literature suggests that partisanship strength may have positive effects on generalized trust given the fact that political parties are important building blocks for contemporary democracy, the current study does not support this assumption. However, we should also pay attention to the fact that political parties, by definition, are involved in an almost continuous power struggle. Given the fact that parties are inherently in competition with each other for power, citizens who identify with one party are likely to have a negative relation with another political party and its supporters. Strong partisanship, therefore, is often associated with a more divisive society. The clear conclusion from these longitudinal analyses is that the contribution of increased partisan strength to a process of social polarization is not a new phenomenon, regardless of Americans' specific party identity as Democrats or Republicans.

In the current analysis, it has to be observed that we can only establish a correlation between the structural and the attitudinal component of this kind of party-initiated linkage, and

therefore cannot determine the causal mechanism that drives this complex relationship (Levi and Stoker 2000). Evidence from Denmark suggests that the causal direction flows from trust in state institutions to social trust, and not in the opposite direction (Sønderskov and Dinesen, 2016), and our research highlights the importance of further causal research on this topic in varied contexts. In a separate analysis, based on the panel design of the GSS waves beginning in 2006 and 2008, we did not find any significant results in a specific direction, leaving the question of causality in the U.S. in recent years undecided.[5] While it has been argued that the media transmit polarized attitudes from professional politicians toward citizens in general, the current analysis does not support the occurrence of strong media effects with regard to the level of political or generalized trust.

The results of our analysis highlight that in the study of the relationship between partisan strength and trust in the U.S. in recent decades, it is imperative to distinguish between political trust versus generalized trust. Regarding political trust, the findings support the expectation that partisan strength is positively related to political trust. These findings support studies that show that a decline of partisan strength contributes to lower levels of political trust, which in turn, might erode popular support for government intervention (Hetherington & Rudolph, 2015). Regarding generalized trust, however, the findings in this article show that increased partisan strength detracts from social cohesion since the highest levels of partisan strength are associated with lower levels of generalized trust. While political parties obviously constitute an important

[5]. Repeated measures panel data are available in the GSS beginning in 2006. The findings from the 2006-2008-2010 wave are similar for 2008-2010-2012: no time-determinant causal effects of partisan strength on various kinds of trust were identified in either study. While this finding does not identify individuals' partisan strength as the motivating force behind levels of trust (social and political), it is possible that such condensed waves of repeated measures covering a small time span do not allow for the longer time horizon needed to empirically study the impact of shifts in partisan identity.

linkage mechanism between citizens and the political system, the findings in this article show that parties also embody and express social divisions.

Our results therefore are in line with the literature claiming that the division between both major parties contributes to the polarization within U.S. society among strong partisans. We find no indication however, that lower levels of generalized trust for the strongest partisan identifiers has become more pronounced over time. Further, we find no evidence that the relationship between partisan strength and trust (political or generalized) differs for Republicans versus Democrats. Although our findings support the assumption that partisanship is a mechanism for political mobilization, the findings in this article also show that the highest levels of partisan strength are associated with increased social division. The continued relevance of the mischief of factionalism argument is evident in the current study's findings, even though it is all too often forgotten in the contemporary scholarship on partisanship.

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Table 1. Variables Used in the Analysis

Political trust	Mean scale of confidence (from 1 to 3) in political institutions: the federal government, the supreme court and congress (alpha: 0.66).
Generalized trust	Mean scale of generalized trust (from 1 to 3): fairness, helpfulness and generalized trust (alpha: 0.69).
Partisan strength	Party identification; recoded based on strength of affiliation (regardless of whether the identification is as Democratic or Republican). 0=Independent, 1=Leaner, 2=Weak, 3=Strong.
Incumbent party	Identifies with party of the current President.
Year of Survey	Year in which survey was conducted.
Age	Continuous, from 18 to 89.
Gender	0 = male, 1= female.
Education	Highest year of school completed; continuous, 0 to 20.
Income	Inflation-adjusted family income in constant dollars; continuous $383 to $180,386.
TV watching	Average hours per day of TV watching; coded into quartiles.
Newspaper reading	Frequency of newspaper reading, ranging from (1) never to (5) every day.
Religious attendance	Frequency of attending religious services; (0) none or less than once a month; (1) once a month or more.
Race	Control variables for "Black" and "Other race".
Size location	Size of respondents' geographic location, in thousands. Logged variable accounts because of highly skewed functional form.

Note: See Table A1 for descriptive statistics

Table 2. Determinants of Political Trust

	OLS		*Fixed effects*	
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Partisan strength, leaner		0.063***		0.065***
		(0.016)		(0.016)
Partisan strength, weak	0.053**	0.110***	0.048**	0.109***
	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Partisan strength, strong	0.057**	0.113***	0.056**	0.113***
	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.016)
Specific party ID, Republican	0.029		0.024	
	(0.020)		(0.020)	
Party ID weak * Republican	-0.012		-0.007	
	(0.025)		(0.024)	
Party ID strong * Republican	-0.014		-0.014	
	(0.028)		(0.028)	
Year of survey	-0.003***	-0.004***		
	(0.001)	(0.000)		
TV watching, very low	0.065*	0.064**	0.061*	0.060*
	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.024)
TV watching, low	0.064*	0.061*	0.059*	0.057*
	(0.028)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.025)
TV watching, high	0.065*	0.055*	0.063*	0.053*
	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.027)
TV watching, very high	0.029	0.028	0.026	0.024
	(0.029)	(0.026)	(0.029)	(0.026)
Newspaper reading	0.019***	0.014***	0.017***	0.013**
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Age	-0.003***	-0.002***	-0.003***	-0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.004	0.007	0.001	0.005
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)
Education, years of schooling	0.003	0.005**	0.003	0.005**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Income, household	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/month+	0.041***	0.043***	0.041***	0.042***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Race, black	-0.038*	-0.044**	-0.042*	-0.048**
	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.015)
Race, other	0.130***	0.146***	0.131***	0.148***
	(0.027)	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.024)
Size location	0.003	0.004	0.004	0.005*
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Incumbency	0.083***	0.083***		
	(0.011)	(0.010)		
Constant	8.471***	8.904***	1.824***	1.748***
	(1.007)	(0.938)	(0.047)	(0.041)
Observations	12452	14526	12452	14526
Adjusted R^2	0.039	0.044	0.052	0.057

Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are regression coefficients, followed by standard errors in parentheses. Models I and II, OLS; Models III and IV, fixed effects with year dummies (coefficients not shown).
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3. Determinants of Generalized Trust

	OLS		*Fixed effects*	
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Partisan strength, leaner		0.063**		0.062**
		(0.022)		(0.022)
Partisan strength, weak	-0.039	0.028	-0.038	0.027
	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.020)
Partisan strength, strong	-0.062*	0.003	-0.063*	0.003
	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)
Specific party ID, Republican	0.009		0.010	
	(0.027)		(0.027)	
Party ID weak * Republican	0.005		0.007	
	(0.034)		(0.034)	
Party ID strong * Republican	0.010		0.015	
	(0.038)		(0.038)	
Year of survey	-0.009***	-0.009***		
	(0.001)	(0.001)		
TV watching, very low	-0.010	0.005	-0.003	0.014
	(0.037)	(0.033)	(0.037)	(0.033)
TV watching, low	-0.015	-0.005	-0.010	0.002
	(0.039)	(0.035)	(0.039)	(0.035)
TV watching, high	-0.056	-0.038	-0.050	-0.030
	(0.041)	(0.037)	(0.041)	(0.037)
TV watching, very high	-0.089*	-0.077*	-0.082*	-0.068
	(0.040)	(0.036)	(0.040)	(0.036)
Newspaper reading	0.023***	0.028***	0.024***	0.030***
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Age	0.008***	0.008***	0.008***	0.008***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.064***	0.061***	0.064***	0.061***
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Education, years of schooling	0.061***	0.060***	0.062***	0.060***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Income, household	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/month+	0.059***	0.060***	0.058***	0.060***
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Race, black	-0.360***	-0.341***	-0.359***	-0.341***
	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.020)
Race, other	-0.174***	-0.139***	-0.169***	-0.134***
	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.033)	(0.029)
Size location	-0.009**	-0.010**	-0.009**	-0.010**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Incumbency	0.002	0.004		
	(0.015)	(0.013)		
Constant	18.249***	18.035***	0.909***	0.850***
	(1.338)	(1.235)	(0.062)	(0.054)
Observations	13191	15462	13191	15462
Adjusted R^2	0.174	0.170	0.176	0.172

Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are regression coefficients, followed by standard errors in parentheses. Models I and II, OLS; Models III and IV fixed effects with year dummies (coefficients not shown). * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4. Partisan Strength and Political Trust Over Time

Year centered at mean	-0.004***
	(0.000)
Partisan strength	0.025***
	(0.007)
Year*Partisan strength	-0.000
	(0.000)
Democrat	0.041*
	(0.020)
Republican	0.061**
	(0.021)
TV watching, very low	0.064**
	(0.024)
TV watching, low	0.062*
	(0.025)
TV watching, high	0.055*
	(0.027)
TV watching, very high	0.028
	(0.026)
Newspaper reading	0.014***
	(0.004)
Age	-0.002***
	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.009
	(0.010)
Education, years of schooling	0.005**
	(0.002)
Income, household	0.000
	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/month+	0.041***
	(0.010)
Race, black	-0.040*
	(0.016)
Race, other	0.149***
	(0.024)
Size location	0.004
	(0.002)
Incumbency	0.083***
	(0.010)
Constant	1.713***
	(0.042)
Observations	14526
Adjusted R^2	0.044

General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are OLS regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

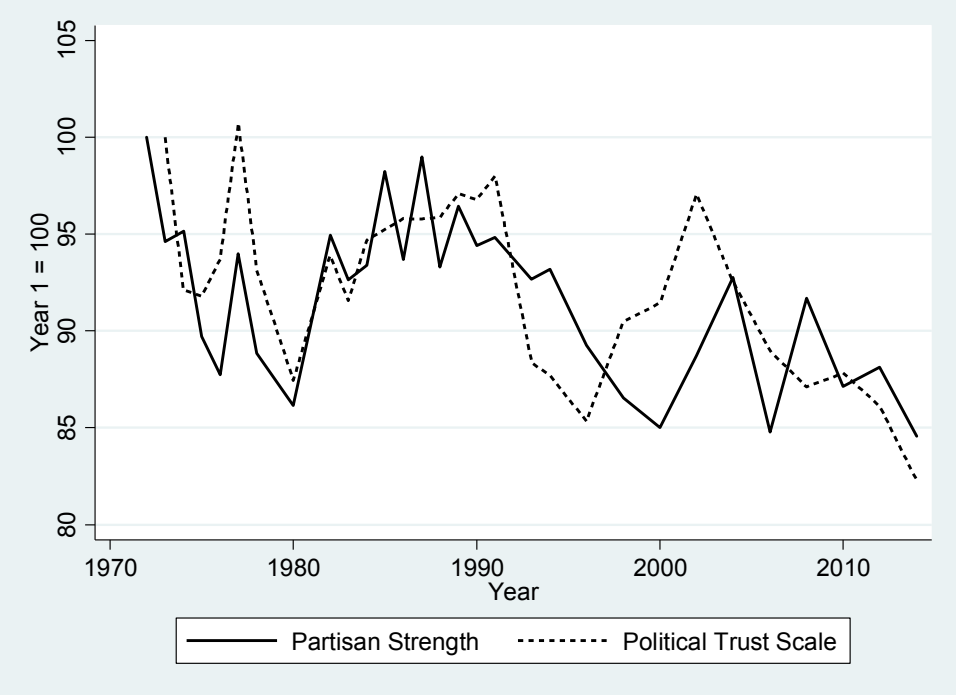
Table 5. Partisan Strength and Generalized Trust Over Time

Year of the survey	-0.009***
	(0.001)
Partisan strength	-0.030**
	(0.010)
Year*Partisan strength	0.001
	(0.001)
Democrat Identifier	0.081**
	(0.027)
Republican Identifier	0.101***
	(0.027)
TV watching, very low	0.004
	(0.033)
TV watching, low	-0.007
	(0.035)
TV watching, high	-0.040
	(0.037)
TV watching, very high	-0.078*
	(0.036)
Newspaper reading	0.028***
	(0.005)
Age	0.008***
	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.062***
	(0.013)
Education, years of schooling	0.059***
	(0.002)
Income, household	0.000***
	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/mo.+	0.058***
	(0.013)
Race, black	-0.335***
	(0.020)
Race, other	-0.135***
	(0.029)
Size location	-0.010**
	(0.003)
Incumbency	0.004
	(0.013)
Constant	0.668***
	(0.055)
Observations	15462
Adjusted R^2	0.170

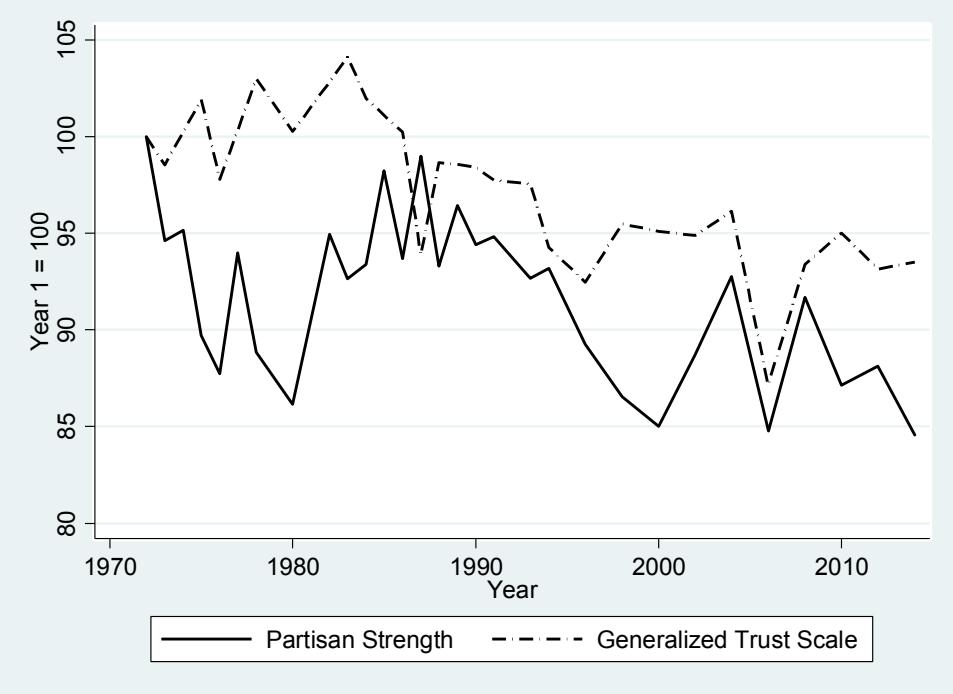
General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are OLS regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 1. Trends in Partisan Strength, Political Trust and Generalized Trust GSS 1972-2014

a. Partisan Strength and Political Trust



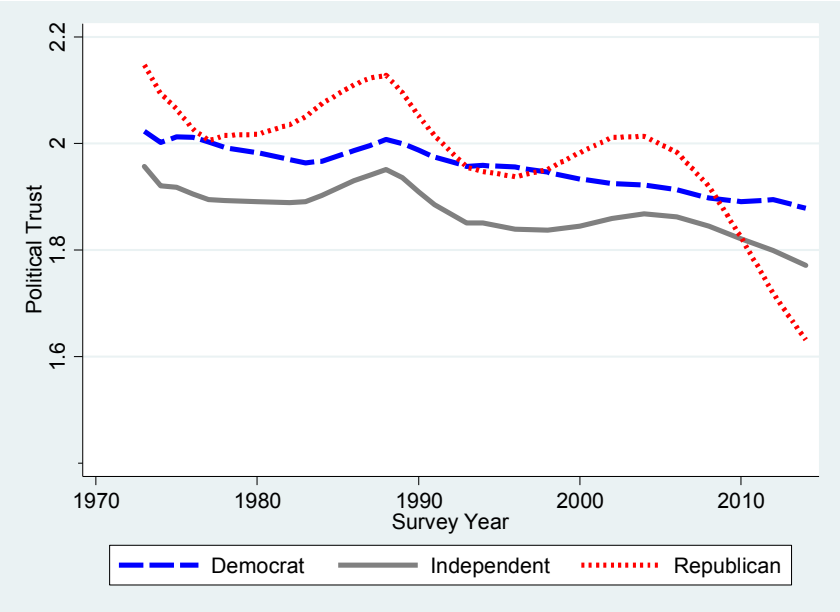
b. Partisan Strength and Generalized Trust



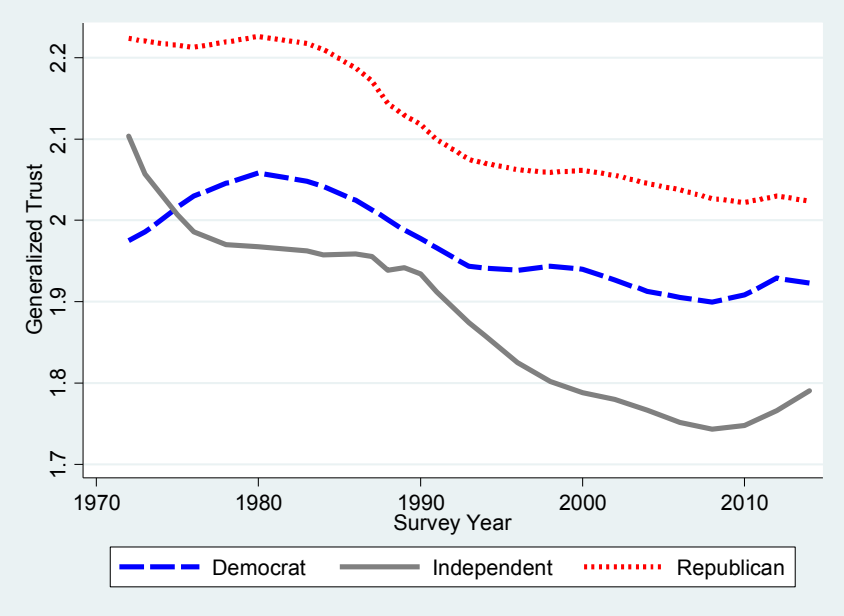
Source: GSS 1972-2014. Note: For all measurements, the score in the 1972 GSS was set at 100 to allow for a comparison over time. Observations for Fig 1a (n=39,204); Fig 1b (n=39,279)

Fig 2. Trends in Political and Generalized Trust, by Party Identity

a. Political Trust

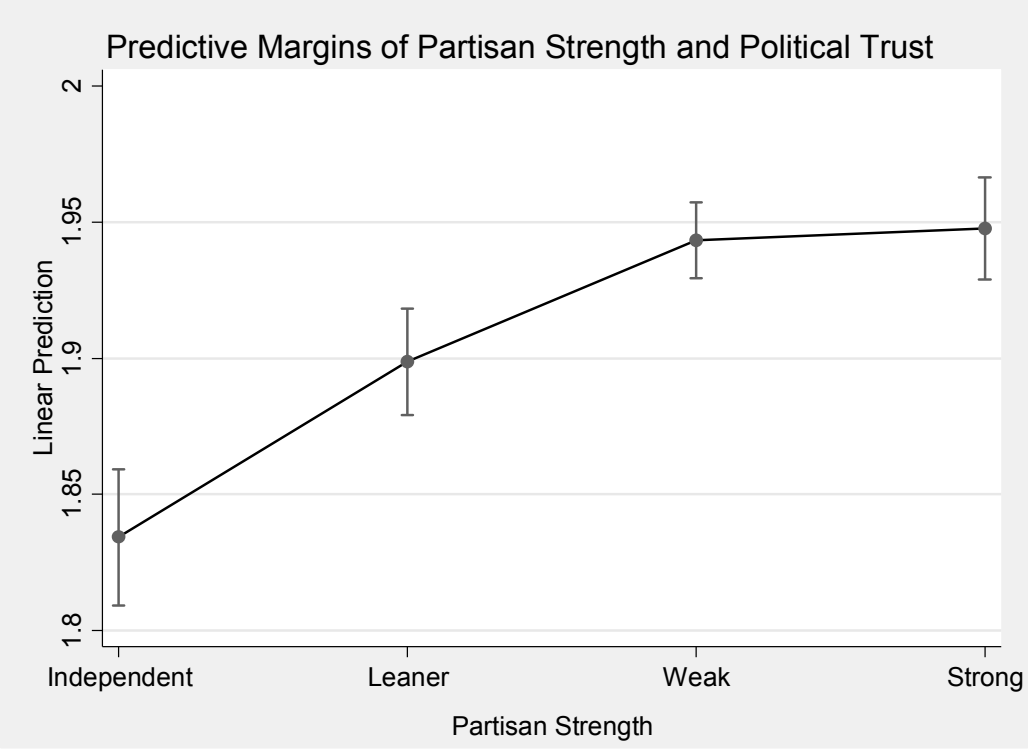


b. Generalized Trust



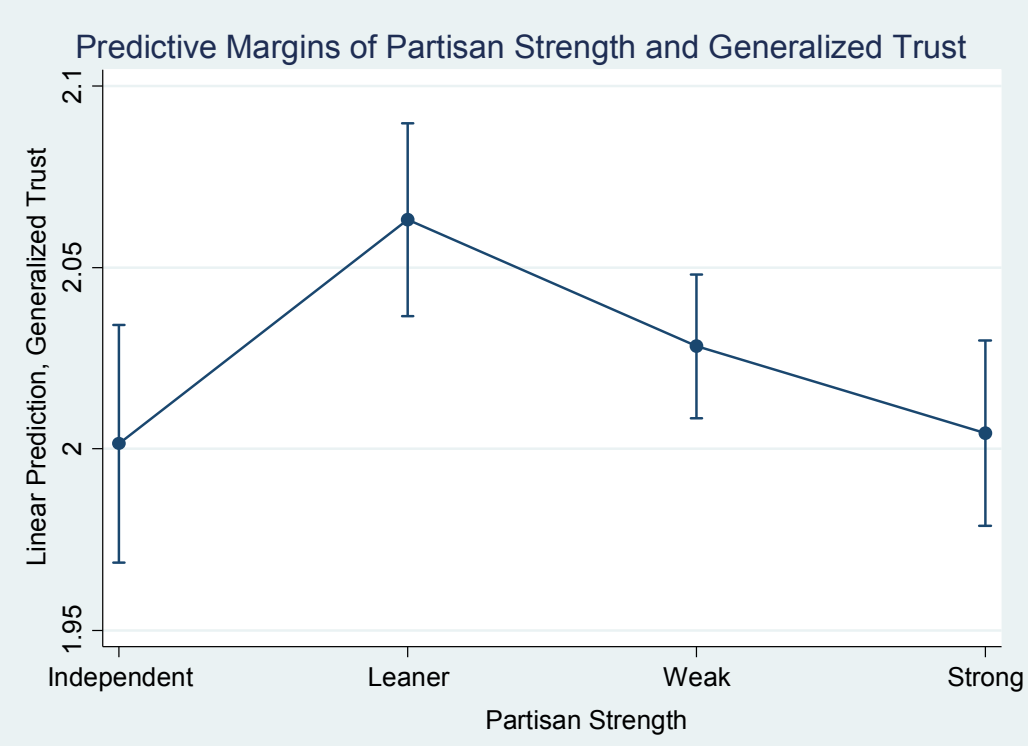
Notes: Source is the GSS 1972-2014. Trust scales range from 1 to 3 for both political trust and generalized trust, and figures represent smoothed raw data with no controls (lowess smoothing). Observations for Fig 2a (n=39,204); Fig 2b (n=39,279)

Figure 3. Partisan Strength and Political Trust



Source: GSS 1972-2014. Predicted values based on fixed effects specification, Table 2, Model IV. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 4. Partisan Strength and Generalized Trust



Source: GSS 1972-2014. Notes: Predicted values based on fixed effects specification, Table 3, Model IV. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

APPENDIX

The replication code for all analyses in article and appendix can be found in the following file archived in the Harvard Dataverse:

Hooghe, Marc; Oser, Jennifer, 2017, "Replication for 'Partisan strength, political trust and generalized trust in the United States: An analysis of the General Social Survey, 1972-2014'", doi:10.7910/DVN/DEUQRY, Harvard Dataverse.

Table A1. Descriptive Statistics and Missing Data

Variable	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Political trust	40,007	1.95	0.51	1	3
Generalized trust	40,116	2.00	0.76	1	3
Partisan strength	58,323	1.74	1.01	0	3
Incumbent party	59,599	0.59	0.49	0	1
Year of Survey	59,599	1993.02	12.30	1972	2014
Age	59,388	45.84	17.48	18	89
Gender	59,599	0.56	0.50	0	1
Education	59,434	12.79	3.18	0	20
Income	53,546	44683.68	36296.54	369.5	180386
TV watching	35,524	1.90	1.21	0	4
Newspaper reading	37,364	3.87	1.34	1	5
Religious attendance	59,037	0.49	0.50	0	1
Black	59,599	0.14	0.35	0	1
Other race	59,599	0.05	0.22	0	1
Size location	57,956	3.50	2.15	0	9.00884

Note: See Table 1 for variable coding and value ranges

Summary of missing data issues for GSS cumulative file

Basic sociodemographic variables noted in the descriptive statistics that are missing 1% or less of data are "permanent items" that were included for all cases in all years (namely age, gender, education, religious attendance, race and size location). As evident from Table A1 there are a number of variables central to the analyses in the article that have substantial missing cases, namely the dependent variables of political trust and generalized trust, as well as the control variables of TV watching, newspaper reading, and income.

There are three distinct reasons for missing data on these variables in the GSS cumulative file, as documented in the GSS codebook (Smith et al. 2016), and in our analysis replication file:

1. **Item non-response:** This is an issue only for the income variable, which is missing 10% cases for the cumulative data file, ranging from a low of 6% missing cases in 1975 to a high of 14% missing cases in 2006. Missing data on questions related to income is a common problem for this type of survey, and the GSS proportion of missing cases on income are fairly low in comparison to other high quality surveys.

2. **Rotation design:** From 1972 through 1987, the GSS used a "rotation design" that included many items in two out of every three surveys waves (Smith et al. 2016). Table A1a below documents the years in which variables in our analyses were omitted from the GSS survey due to this sampling design.

Table A1a. GSS rotation design - omitted questions in specific years, 1972-1987 (O= omitted in that specific year)

Year	Political Trust	Generalized Trust	Television	Newspaper
1972	O		O	
1973			O	O
1974		O	O	O
1975				
1976			O	O
1977		O		
1978				
1980				O
1982		O		
1983				
1984			O	O
1985	O	O		
1986				
1987			O	

3. **Split-ballot design**: Beginning in 1988, the GSS implemented a split-ballot design that conducts different versions of the survey for different random sub-samples of respondents. For the same four variables documented in Table A1a, the split ballot design implemented beginning in 1988 randomly assigned the questions to different subsets of the sample. The proportion of missing data due to the split ballot design was 1/3 or less for most survey waves from 1988 through 2014, and the sample size was sufficient for valid statistical inference throughout this period. The years in which more than 1/3 of the data on these four variables are missing data due to the split ballot design was in 2002, 2004 and 2006 when missing data due to split ballot design ranged between 1/2 and 2/3 of the sample. Notably, the total sample size during these years was large enough to ensure robust statistical inference even with this relatively high proportion of missing data due to sample design (for 2002, n=2765; for 2004, n=2812; for 2006, n=4510). Missing data due to non-response is negligible (less than 5%) for variables in our analyses that were subject to the split ballot design.

Analytic strategy for addressing missing data

Based on this summary of the missing data issues with the GSS cumulative data, we implemented the following strategies for addressing missing data:

a. **Listwise deletion due to rotation sample and split ballot design:** For the years in which the GSS rotation sample omitted a variable from our analysis, this year is omitted from all regression analyses through listwise deletion. Thus, in accordance with Table A1a, analyses are not conducted for the years 1972, 1973, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1985 and 1987. In addition, as the split-ballot design was implemented for random subsamples (Smith et al. 2016), we use listwise deletion as the missing data due to this design qualifies as “missing completely at random," and therefore listwise deletion does not introduce bias.

b. **Non-response for income**: Multiple imputation or maximum likelihood can produce approximately unbiased estimates when data are missing at random, but prior research indicates that income data are often not missing at random, with lower response rates for those with very low and very high socio-economic status. In contrast, listwise deletion produces unbiased estimates even if the data are not missing at random. In addition, because income is a predictor variable in the regression, listwise deletion is a less biased approach than multiple imputation or maximum likelihood (Allison 2001, 2009). We therefore use listwise deletion for the income variable in the models reported in the manuscript, with robustness tests performed with and without income as a control variable which showed no substantive difference in the findings.

c. **Full information maximum likelihood (FIML)**: In order to address the possible effects of any missing data that was not completely at random, we repeated the analysis using FIML. The FIML estimator, unlike the usual least squares or maximum likelihood estimators under listwise deletion, uses all available information from respondents. FIML is also preferable over multiple implementation, which is sensitive to mis-specified imputation models (Enders 2001, 2010). This estimation was conducted using the sem

command in Stata 14 with the method(mlmv) option for maximum likelihood with missing values. In the Appendix Tables A6 and A7, we report on models that parallel the main findings tables of the manuscript (Tables A2 and A3) but with a FIML estimator. Tables A6 and A7 have a larger number of observations, as expected, (between about 33,000 and 39,000 depending on the model) and all support the substantive interpretations and conclusions in the manuscript. We can safely conclude, therefore, that these missing data do not pose a challenge for the validity of our findings.

Table A2. Determinants of Political Trust

Parallel to Table 2, with clustered standard errors by year for Models I and II

	Clustered standard errors		*Fixed effects*	
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Partisan strength, leaner		0.063***		0.065***
		(0.012)		(0.016)
Partisan strength, weak	0.053**	0.110***	0.048**	0.109***
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Partisan strength, strong	0.057*	0.113***	0.056**	0.113***
	(0.020)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.016)
Specific party ID, Republican	0.029		0.024	
	(0.033)		(0.020)	
Party ID weak * Republican	-0.012		-0.007	
	(0.024)		(0.024)	
Party ID strong * Republican	-0.014		-0.014	
	(0.033)		(0.028)	
Year of survey	-0.003*	-0.004*		
	(0.001)	(0.001)		
TV watching, very low	0.065	0.064	0.061*	0.060*
	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.026)	(0.024)
TV watching, low	0.064	0.061	0.059*	0.057*
	(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.028)	(0.025)
TV watching, high	0.065	0.055	0.063*	0.053*
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.029)	(0.027)
TV watching, very high	0.029	0.028	0.026	0.024
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.029)	(0.026)
Newspaper reading	0.019**	0.014*	0.017***	0.013**
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Age	-0.003***	-0.002***	-0.003***	-0.002***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.004	0.007	0.001	0.005
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.009)
Education, years of schooling	0.003	0.005	0.003	0.005**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Income, household	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/month+	0.041**	0.043**	0.041***	0.042***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Race, black	-0.038	-0.044	-0.042*	-0.048**
	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.017)	(0.015)
Race, other	0.130***	0.146***	0.131***	0.148***
	(0.029)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.024)
Size location	0.003	0.004	0.004	0.005*
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Incumbency	0.083*	0.083*	0.000	0.000
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(.)	(.)
Constant	8.471**	8.904**	1.824***	1.748***
	(2.839)	(2.777)	(0.047)	(0.041)
Observations	12452	14526	12452	14526
Adjusted R^2	0.039	0.044	0.052	0.057

Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are coefficients of ordinary least squares regression, followed by standard errors. For Models I and II, standard errors are clustered on year; robust standard errors in parentheses. For Models III and IV, standard errors are not clustered; fixed effects specification is used with year dummy (coefficients not shown).
Sig: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.001, * p<0.05.

Table A3. Determinants of Generalized Trust

Parallel to Table 3, with clustered standard errors by year for Models I and II

	Clustered standard errors		*Fixed effects*	
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Partisan strength, leaner		0.063**		0.062**
		(0.020)		(0.022)
Partisan strength, weak	-0.039*	0.028	-0.038	0.027
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.020)
Partisan strength, strong	-0.062*	0.003	-0.063*	0.003
	(0.025)	(0.015)	(0.025)	(0.021)
Specific party ID, Republican	0.009		0.010	
	(0.027)		(0.027)	
Party ID weak * Republican	0.005		0.007	
	(0.028)		(0.034)	
Party ID strong * Republican	0.010		0.015	
	(0.036)		(0.038)	
Year of survey	-0.009***	-0.009***		
	(0.001)	(0.001)		
TV watching, very low	-0.010	0.005	-0.003	0.014
	(0.037)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.033)
TV watching, low	-0.015	-0.005	-0.010	0.002
	(0.050)	(0.046)	(0.039)	(0.035)
TV watching, high	-0.056	-0.038	-0.050	-0.030
	(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.041)	(0.037)
TV watching, very high	-0.089*	-0.077	-0.082*	-0.068
	(0.042)	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.036)
Newspaper reading	0.023**	0.028***	0.024***	0.030***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Age	0.008***	0.008***	0.008***	0.008***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.064***	0.061***	0.064***	0.061***
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Education, years of schooling	0.061***	0.060***	0.062***	0.060***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Income, household	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/month+	0.059**	0.060***	0.058***	0.060***
	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Race, black	-0.360***	-0.341***	-0.359***	-0.341***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.022)	(0.020)
Race, other	-0.174***	-0.139***	-0.169***	-0.134***
	(0.028)	(0.018)	(0.033)	(0.029)
Size location	-0.009*	-0.010**	-0.009**	-0.010**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Incumbency	0.002	0.004	0.000	0.000
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(.)	(.)
Constant	18.249***	18.035***	0.909***	0.850***
	(2.152)	(1.942)	(0.062)	(0.054)
Observations	13191	15462	13191	15462
Adjusted R^2	0.174	0.170	0.176	0.172

Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are coefficients of ordinary least squares regression, followed by standard errors. For Models I and II, standard errors are clustered on year; robust standard errors in parentheses. For Models III and IV, standard errors are not clustered; fixed effects specification is used with year dummy (coefficients not shown).
Sig: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.001, * p<0.05

Table A4. Partisan Strength and Political Trust Over Time

Parallel to Table 4, with clustered standard errors

Year centered at mean	-0.004*
	(0.001)
Partisan strength	0.025**
	(0.008)
Year*Partisan strength	-0.000
	(0.000)
Democrat	0.041*
	(0.017)
Republican	0.061
	(0.031)
TV watching, very low	0.064*
	(0.030)
TV watching, low	0.062
	(0.031)
TV watching, high	0.055
	(0.034)
TV watching, very high	0.028
	(0.035)
Newspaper reading	0.014*
	(0.006)
Age	-0.002***
	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.009
	(0.007)
Education, years of schooling	0.005
	(0.003)
Income, household	0.000
	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/month+	0.041***
	(0.010)
Race, black	-0.040
	(0.021)
Race, other	0.149***
	(0.026)
Size location	0.004
	(0.003)
Incumbency	0.083*
	(0.029)
Constant	1.713***
	(0.066)
Observations	14526
Adjusted R^2	0.044

Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are coefficients of ordinary least squares regression with standard errors clustered on year; robust standard errors in parentheses. Sig: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.

Table A5. Partisan Strength and Generalized Trust Over Time

Parallel to Table 5, with clustered standard errors

Year of the survey	-0.009***
	(0.001)
Partisan strength	-0.030**
	(0.009)
Year*Partisan strength	0.001*
	(0.000)
Democrat Identifier	0.081**
	(0.027)
Republican Identifier	0.101**
	(0.030)
TV watching, very low	0.004
	(0.034)
TV watching, low	-0.007
	(0.046)
TV watching, high	-0.040
	(0.044)
TV watching, very high	-0.078
	(0.039)
Newspaper reading	0.028***
	(0.006)
Age	0.008***
	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.062***
	(0.014)
Education, years of schooling	0.059***
	(0.002)
Income, household	0.000***
	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/mo.+	0.058**
	(0.015)
Race, black	-0.335***
	(0.027)
Race, other	-0.135***
	(0.019)
Size location	-0.010**
	(0.003)
Incumbency	0.004
	(0.022)
Constant	0.668***
	(0.060)
Observations	15462
Adjusted R^2	0.170

Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are coefficients of ordinary least squares regression with standard errors clustered on year; robust standard errors in parentheses. Sig: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. Note that in contrast to Table 5 in the article, the findings in this table show that when clustered standard errors are added to the model specification, the interaction between year and partisan strength becomes marginally significant (p<.05), but is substantively inconsequential in size.

Table A6. Determinants of Political Trust, FIML Estimator
Parallel to Table 2, with full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimator

	OLS		*Fixed effects approximation*	
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Partisan strength, leaner		0.058***		0.058***
		(0.013)		(0.013)
Partisan strength, weak	0.047***	0.107***	0.045***	0.105***
	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Partisan strength, strong	0.052***	0.106***	0.053***	0.105***
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Specific party ID, Republican	0.009		0.007	
	(0.016)		(0.016)	
Party ID weak * Republican	0.005		0.005	
	(0.019)		(0.019)	
Party ID strong * Republican	-0.010		-0.013	
	(0.022)		(0.022)	
Year of survey	-0.003***	-0.003***		
	(0.000)	(0.000)		
TV watching, very low	0.073**	0.073**	0.071**	0.071**
	(0.025)	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.022)
TV watching, low	0.073**	0.074**	0.071**	0.072**
	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.024)
TV watching, high	0.074**	0.064*	0.071*	0.062*
	(0.028)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.025)
TV watching, very high	0.044	0.042	0.041	0.039
	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.025)
Newspaper reading	0.021***	0.016***	0.019***	0.014***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Age	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.001	0.006	0.002	0.006
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Education, years of schooling	0.004**	0.005***	0.004*	0.005***
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Income, household	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/month+	0.045***	0.045***	0.045***	0.044***
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Race, black	-0.022	-0.021	-0.022	-0.021
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Race, other	0.120***	0.135***	0.120***	0.135***
	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.016)
Size location	0.005*	0.006**	0.005*	0.006**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Incumbency	0.097***	0.095***	0.097***	0.095***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Year (Mean Centered)			-0.004***	-0.004***
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Year Squared			-0.000***	-0.000***
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Year Cubed			-0.000	0.000
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	7.039***	7.066***	1.752***	1.693***
	(0.851)	(0.793)	(0.039)	(0.034)
Observations	32929	38958	32929	38958

General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are regression coefficients, followed by standard errors in parentheses. Models I and II, OLS; Models III and IV, year as cubic spline to approximate fixed effects.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table A7. Determinants of Generalized Trust, FIML Estimator
Parallel to Table 3, with full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimator

	OLS		*Fixed effects approximation*	
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
PID: Lean		0.047**		0.045**
		(0.016)		(0.016)
PID: Weak	-0.001	0.055***	-0.001	0.054***
	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.015)
PID: Strong	-0.016	0.031	-0.016	0.030
	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.016)
PID: Republican	-0.006		-0.005	
	(0.021)		(0.021)	
PID Republican X PID Weak	0.019		0.020	
	(0.026)		(0.026)	
PID Republican X PID Strong	-0.000		0.004	
	(0.029)		(0.029)	
Year of survey	-0.009***	-0.009***		
	(0.001)	(0.001)		
TV View: 1st Quartile	-0.014	-0.004	-0.011	-0.000
	(0.035)	(0.032)	(0.035)	(0.031)
TV View: 2nd Quartile	-0.016	-0.012	-0.015	-0.010
	(0.037)	(0.033)	(0.037)	(0.033)
TV View: 3rd Quartile	-0.072	-0.059	-0.070	-0.055
	(0.039)	(0.035)	(0.039)	(0.035)
TV View: 4th Quartile	-0.096*	-0.090**	-0.093*	-0.086*
	(0.038)	(0.034)	(0.038)	(0.034)
Newspaper reading	0.026***	0.030***	0.028***	0.032***
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Age	0.008***	0.008***	0.008***	0.008***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Gender, female	0.058***	0.049***	0.058***	0.048***
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Education, years of schooling	0.056***	0.054***	0.056***	0.055***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Income, household	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Religious attendance, 1/month+	0.067***	0.069***	0.067***	0.068***
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Race, black	-0.359***	-0.340***	-0.358***	-0.339***
	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Race, other	-0.168***	-0.127***	-0.165***	-0.125***
	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.020)
Size location	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Incumbency	-0.022*	-0.019	-0.018	-0.013
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Year (Mean Centered)			-0.012***	-0.013***
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Year Squared			0.000***	0.000***
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Year Cubed			0.000***	0.000***
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	19.483***	19.439***	0.688***	0.643***
	(1.108)	(1.020)	(0.051)	(0.044)
Observations	32929	38958	32929	38958

General Social Survey, 1972-2014. Entries are regression coefficients, followed by standard errors in parentheses. Models I and II, OLS; Models III and IV, year as cubic spline to approximate fixed effects. Note that in the FIML specification, the "weak" level of partisan strength becomes significant, but consistent with the findings of Table 3, the highest level of partisan strength ("strong") has a lower level of generalized trust in comparison to those who have weaker partisan strength. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

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