Has Party Identification Changed in Utah?

Devin Johanson
Brigham Young University - Provo, devnjo@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/fhssconference_studentpub

Part of the Political Science Commons

The Annual Mary Lou Fulton Mentored Research Conference showcases some of the best student research from the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences. The mentored learning program encourages undergraduate students to participate in hands-on and practical research under the direction of a faculty member. Students create these posters as an aide in presenting the results of their research to the public, faculty, and their peers.

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/fhssconference_studentpub/319

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Family, Home, and Social Sciences at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in FHSS Mentored Research Conference by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
Has Party Identification Changed In Utah?

An Analysis of Utah Party Identification from 2012 to 2016

By: Devin Johanson
Faculty Mentor: Jay Goodliffe
Department of Political Science

Introduction

Three weeks before the 2016 election, Utah was labeled as a swing state by most mainstream media outlets. The offensive rhetoric from both the Trump and Clinton campaigns and the rise of a popular independent candidate increased the potential for changes in the party identity of the Utah electorate. My research question is as follows:

How has each 2012 party ID group changed in 2016?

The above graph shows each 2012 party ID group and the percentage of people who either remained in that same group or shifted to another group in 2016. Strong partisans generally retained their party identification with only a 20% dispersion into other identifications. Weak partisans were more prone to shifting than strong partisans or pure independents. In total, 95% of voters changed identity from 2012 to 2016. As is shown below, the aggregate shift is much less; however, it is skewed demonstrating a larger shift away from Republican Identities toward more moderate ones.

Changes By Demographic

Percent Change by Party ID 2012 to 2016

- Active LDS Republicans drop significantly in 2016; however, most people move toward independent lean Republican instead of a Democratic identity
- Hispanics shift toward independent lean Democrat more than any other group. They do not move toward conservative identities
- Millennials decrease in the strong partisan groups and increase significantly in the independent groups
- Females moved from the strong partisans and increased in identification groups closer to the center

Conclusion and Limitations

- Utah voters are shifting away from strong partisan identities toward independent identities.
- Many Utah voters were dissatisfied with the 2016 candidates and may have shifted party ID as a result

Limitations

- Small shifts in party identification do not signify a permanent adjustment or realignment
- This analysis is prone to bias because of the self-assessment question measuring party ID in 2012
- Permanent shifts are difficult to discover without future data

Data Source: Utah Colleges Exit Poll 2016

Why did some people leave their 2012 party?

- Republicans left their party because of a poor view of Trump or a positive view of Clinton, and Obama
- Millennials were more likely to leave the Republican Party
- McMullin had no effect on leaving either party
- Democrats left their party mainly because of a negative view of Clinton
- The logit analysis below explains the details of why some people left their party.
- The binary dependent variable is whether or not someone left their 2012 party
- Independent leaners are included in the party

How has party identification changed in the state of Utah between the 2012 and 2016 elections?

Data and Methods

While working with a group called the Utah Colleges Exit Poll, I helped organize and implement a survey of approximately 29,000 Utah voters in the 2016 election. Each voter responded with a self-assessment question about their current and past party identification. They also responded to a variety of opinion and demographic questions. These voter responses provide the basis for this analysis.

Changes in the Utah electorate both the Trump and Clinton campaigns and the rise of a popular independent candidate increased the potential for changes in the party identity of the Utah electorate. My research question is as follows:

assessment question about their current and past party identification.

The identity of the Utah electorate

active LDS Republicans drop

34)

3.2

3.41

3.5

3.8

4.4

5.6

1.2

1.4

1.8

2.2

2.7

2.8

3.5

4.4


don't vote for

Does not think

Share your Values

Millennials

Females

Male

Hispanic

Millennial (Age 18-34)

Active LDS


does not move toward conservative identities

of Romney

of Obama

of Trump

of Clinton

Democrats

Republican Party


dissatisfied

was dissatisfied

positive view of Clinton, and Obama

of Trump

of Clinton

positive view

of Trump

demanding
toward more moderate tones.

demonstrating a larger shift away from Republican Identities toward more moderate ones.

percentage of people who either remained in that same group or shifted to another group in 2016. Strong partisans generally retained their party identification with only a 20% dispersion into other identifications. Weak partisans were more prone to shifting than strong partisans or pure independents. In total, 95% of voters changed identity from 2012 to 2016. As is shown below, the aggregate shift is much less; however, it is skewed demonstrating a larger shift away from Republican Identities toward more moderate ones.

The above graph shows each 2012 party ID group and the percentage of people who either remained in that same group or shifted to another group in 2016. Strong partisans generally retained their party identification with only a 20% dispersion into other identifications. Weak partisans were more prone to shifting than strong partisans or pure independents. In total, 95% of voters changed identity from 2012 to 2016. As is shown below, the aggregate shift is much less; however, it is skewed demonstrating a larger shift away from Republican Identities toward more moderate ones.

The above graph shows each 2012 party ID group and the percentage of people who either remained in that same group or shifted to another group in 2016. Strong partisans generally retained their party identification with only a 20% dispersion into other identifications. Weak partisans were more prone to shifting than strong partisans or pure independents. In total, 95% of voters changed identity from 2012 to 2016. As is shown below, the aggregate shift is much less; however, it is skewed demonstrating a larger shift away from Republican Identities toward more moderate ones.

Changes in the Utah electorate both the Trump and Clinton campaigns and the rise of a popular independent candidate increased the potential for changes in the party identity of the Utah electorate. My research question is as follows:

assessment question about their current and past party identification.

The identity of the Utah electorate