

Getting rid of the parties vs. having more parties

Jack Santucci
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Why are we here?

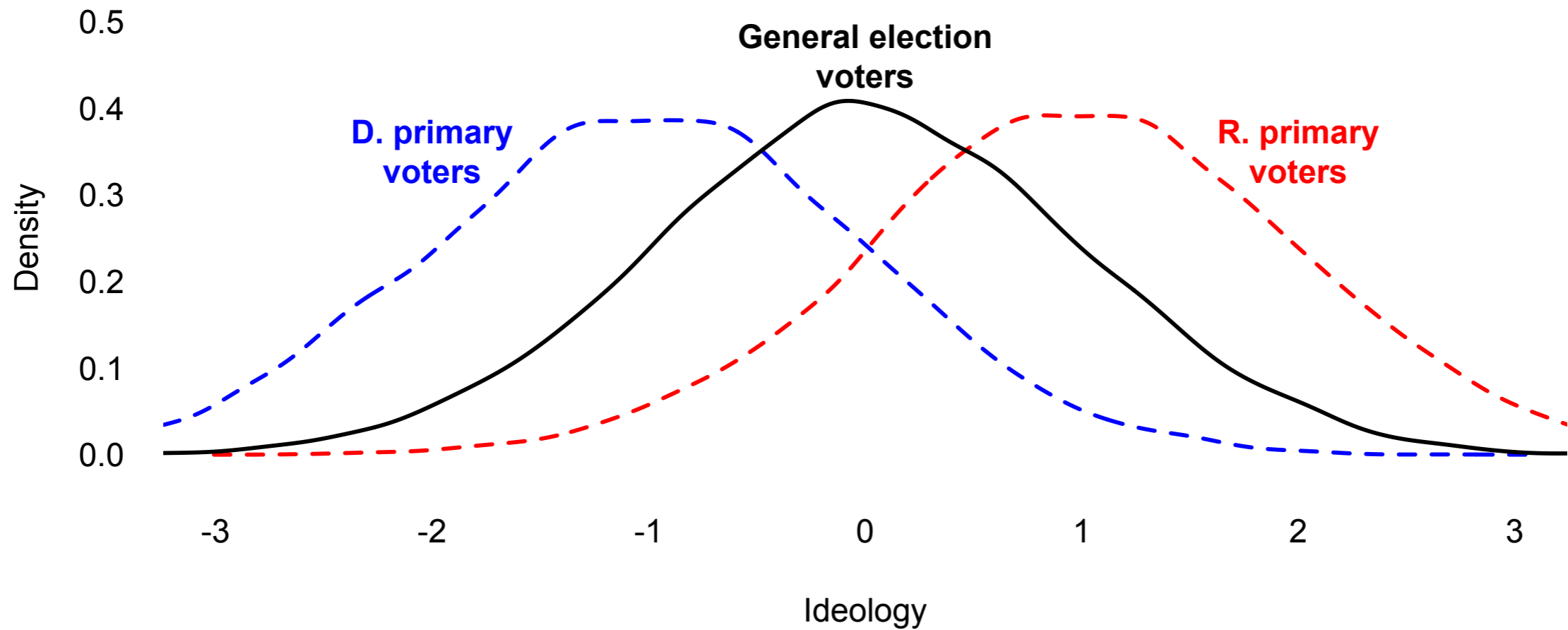
- Politics have become mean and violent.
- Everyone worries about their kids' future.
- Government resists change.

Key points

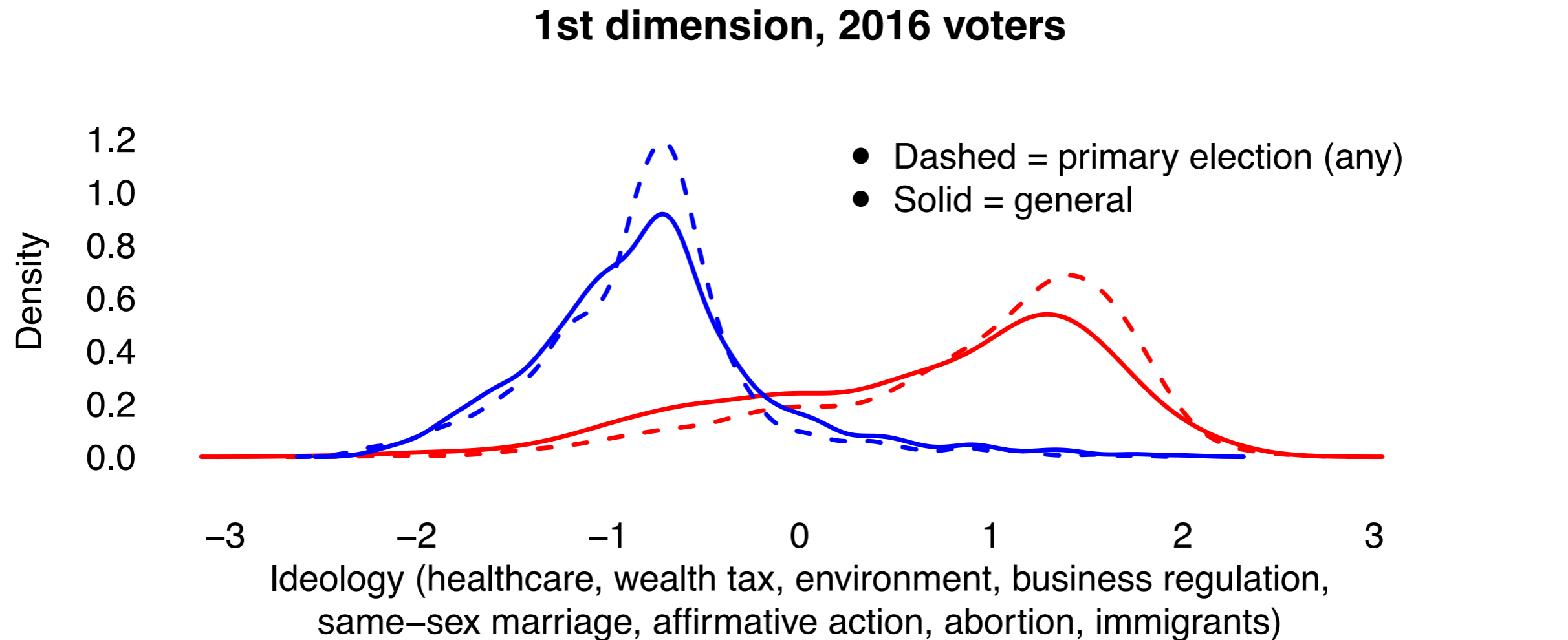
- Think in two dimensions, not one.
- The #PrimaryProblem is not our main problem.
- Voters probably can't solve a two-dimensional problem on their own.

How we might be thinking about recent elections

The #PrimaryProblem

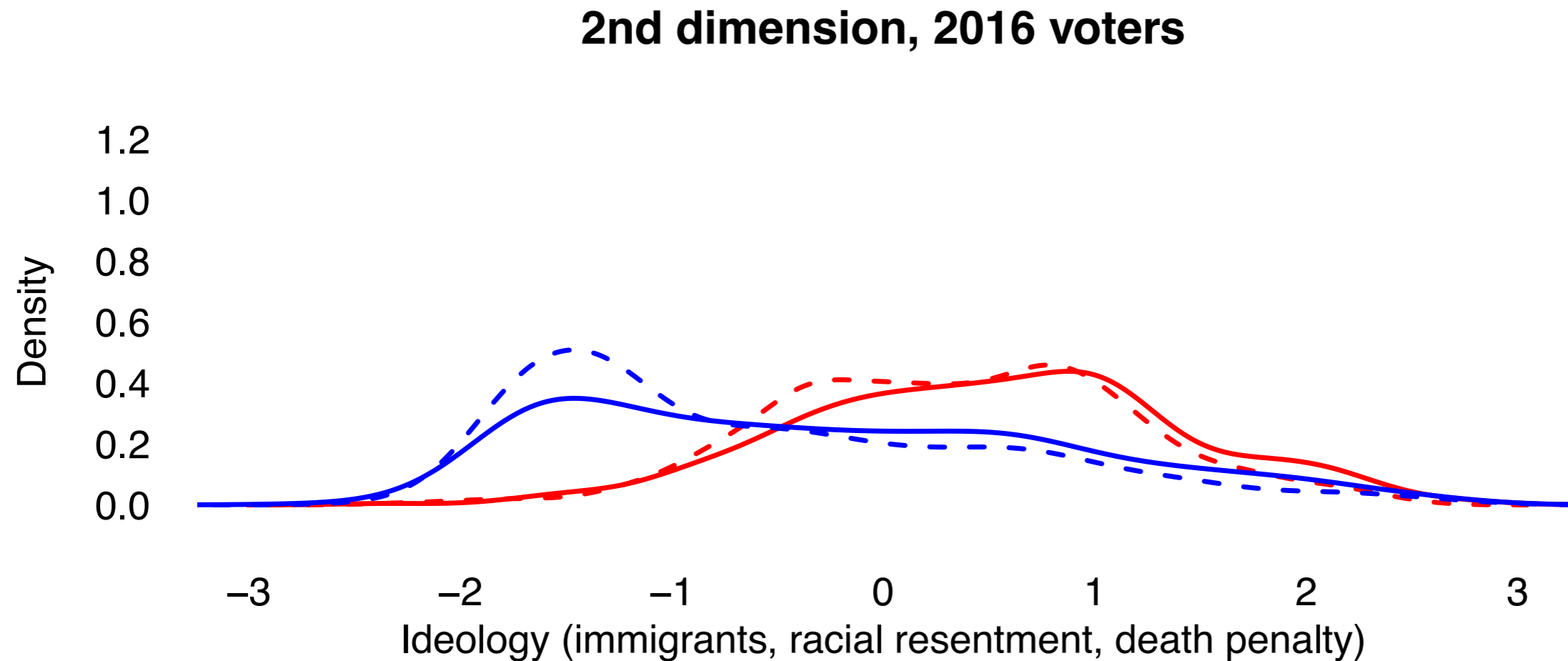


Data from a recent election: Primary voters are mostly representative



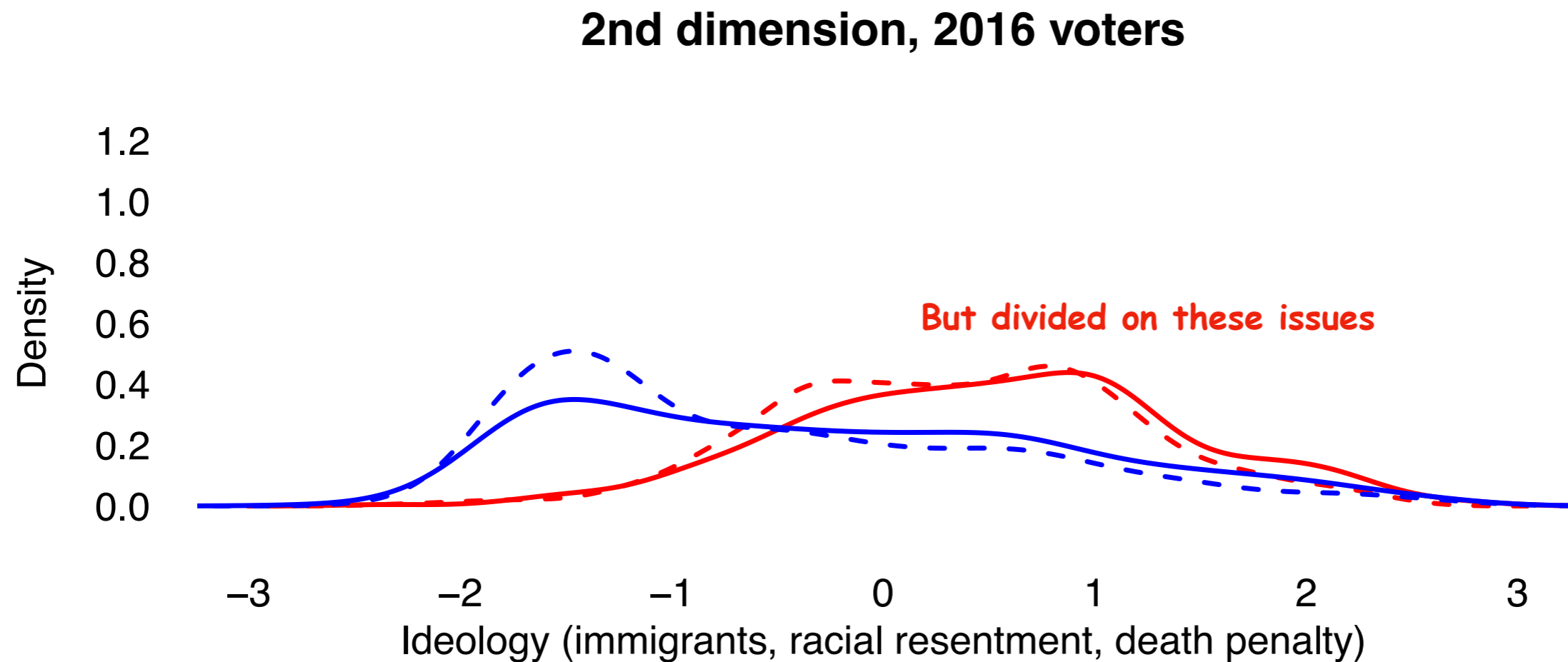
*includes independent identifiers

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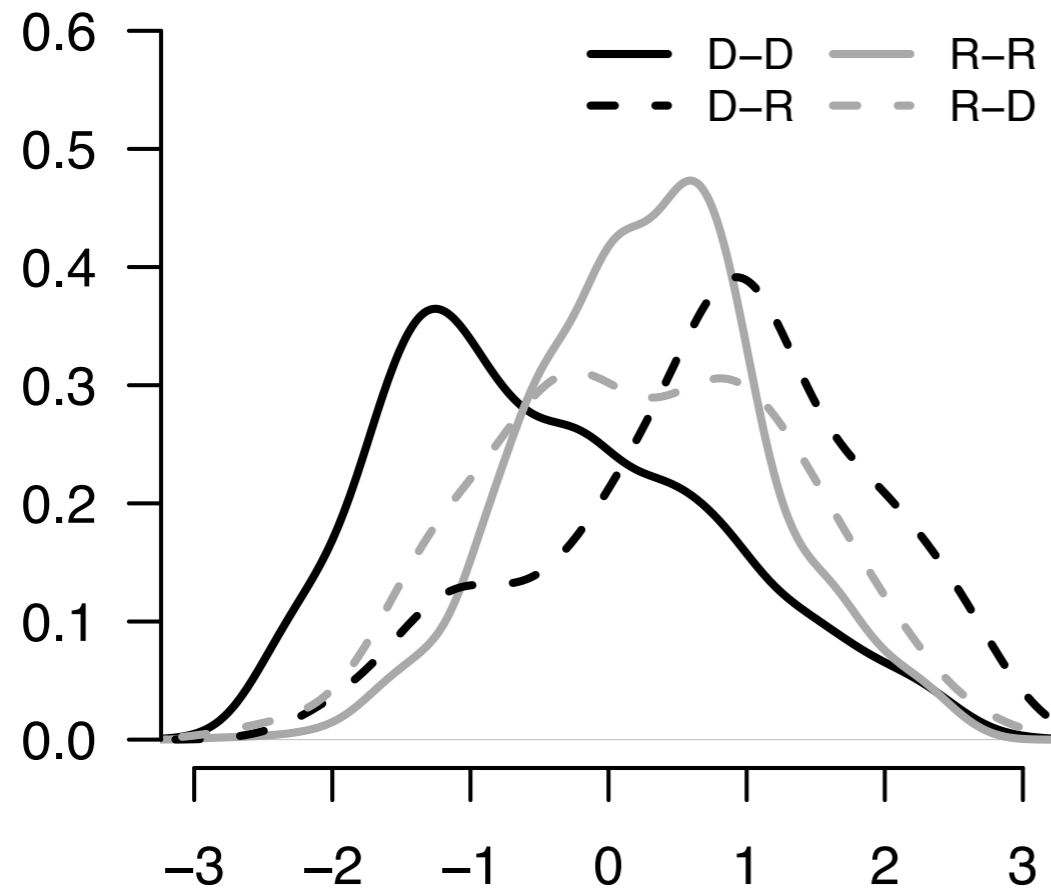
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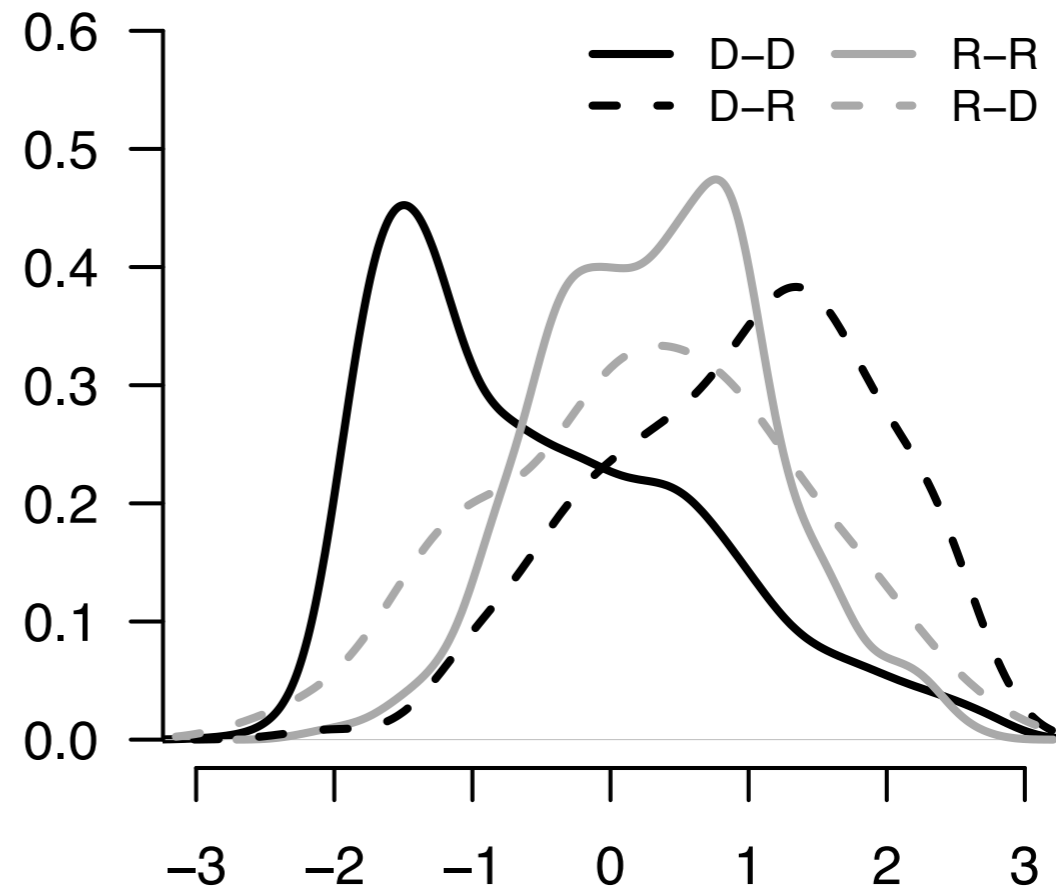
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Influx of right-populists

2012 2nd Dimension



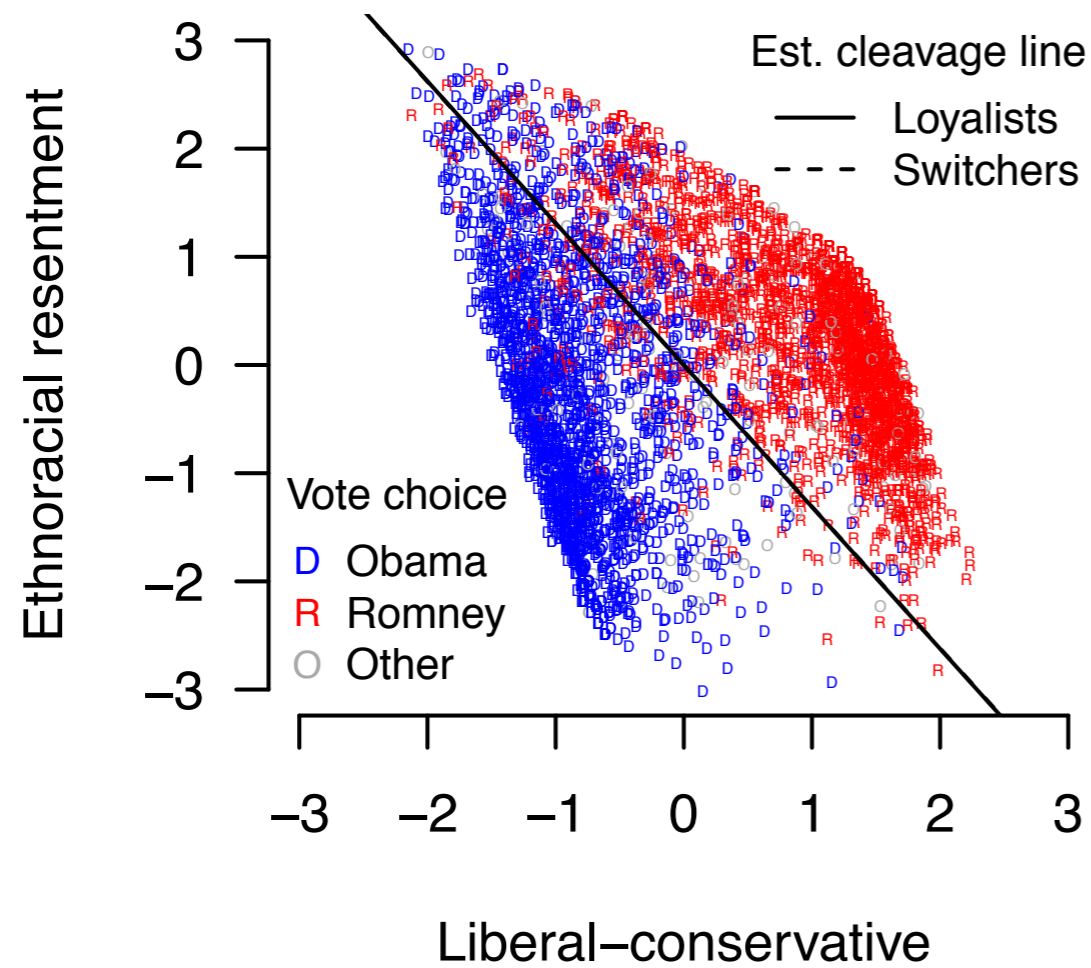
2016 2nd Dimension



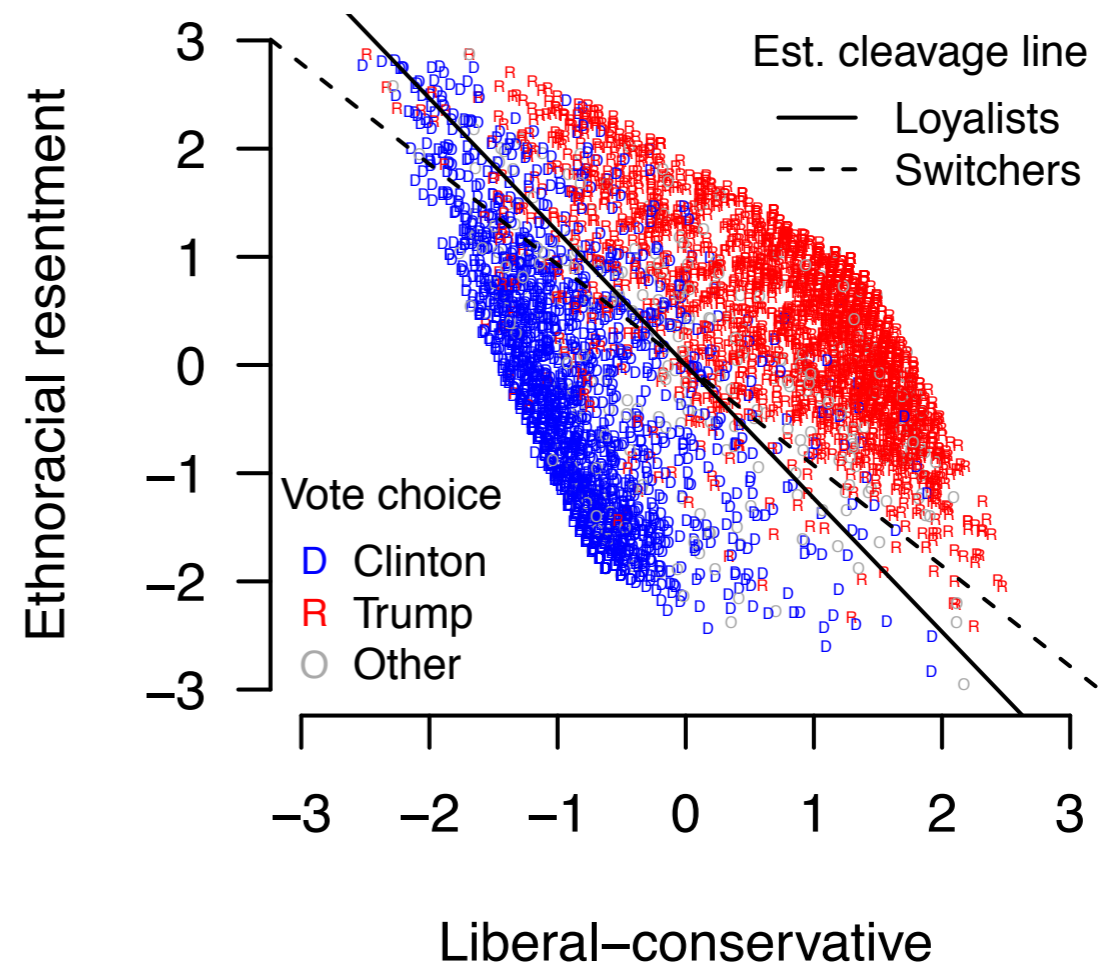
Letters denote vote history
(e.g., "D-R" means Obama-to-Trump).

Small changes have big consequences

2012 Electorate



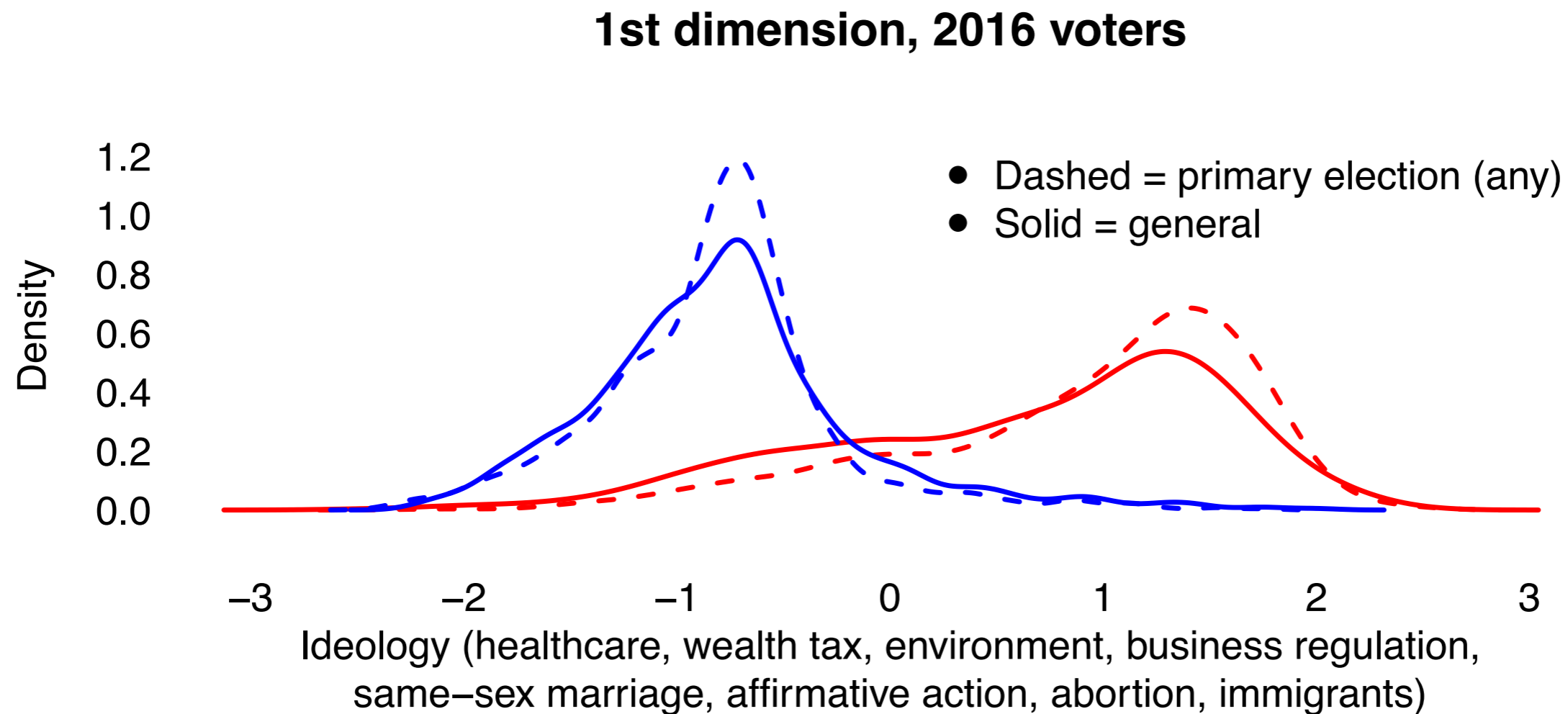
2016 Electorate



Possible approaches

- **Ask voters for a better winner:** open primaries (bipartisan nominations), top-X (no nominations), nonpartisan ballot (eliminate party label).
- Have **more parties**, and **let them negotiate:** proportional representation, larger legislatures.

Can voters overlook these differences when choosing just one winner?



Other issues with ‘anti-party’

- Nonpartisan elections reduce turnout.
- Single-party general elections reduce turnout.
- Things that reduce turnout may not help beat populists.
- Parties teach people about issues (such that having more might change the opinion distribution).

Further reading

- Lee Drutman, *Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop* (2020).
- Noam Gidron, et al., *American Affective Polarization in Comparative Perspective* (2020).
- Jack Santucci, *Review of The Politics Industry* (2021).
- Matthew Shugart, “Emergency electoral reform: OLPR for the U.S. House” (2021).
- And for data in these slides, a recent paper.