

Measurement:

*Where did we get all these **numbers**?*

Concepts are the ideas we want to study

Measurements are tools we use to study them

Always be asking:

What *rules* produced these numbers?

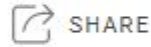
Do these rules reflect the *concept*?

Two eminent political scientists: The problem with democracy is voters

Why almost everything you think about democracy is wrong.

By Sean Illing | @seanilling | sean.illing@vox.com | Updated Jun 24, 2017, 12:12pm EDT

Fareed Zakaria made a scary prediction about democracy in 1997 — and it's coming true



Democracy is rising, but not the good kind.

By Sean Illing | @seanilling | sean.illing@vox.com | Updated Jul 4, 2017, 9:29am EDT



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Trump's flailing incompetenc



The development and decay of democracy

The fate of social democracy should worry not only those on the left, but anyone concerned with democracy in Europe.

By Sheri Berman | Jun 18, 2019, 7:00am EDT

Twenty years ago, **CNN's Fareed Zakaria** wrote an **essay** in Foreign Affairs titled "The Rise and Fall of Illiberal Democracy." His thesis was that democracies around the world were surrendering to

it could be a mirage

We need political parties. But their rabid partisanship could destroy American democracy.

We're trapped in a frightening "doom loop" of mutual distrust.

By Lee Drutman | Sep 5, 2017, 8:20am EDT

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Javier Zarracina/Vox

MOST READ



Trump's flailing incompetence makes coronavirus even scarier



Bernie Sanders looks electable in surveys — but it could be a mirage

THE **BIG IDEA**

It's December 2020, and President Donald Trump has still refused to concede that he

It's a good time to be writing books about the death of democracy.

DEMOCRACY

What is it?

Exercise

- 1. Get into groups of 2 or 3**
- 2. Write down a definition of “democracy”**
- 3. Develop easy-to-follow rules to classify a particular country in a particular year as a democracy (1) or non-democracy (0)**
 1. Think about it as a series of conditions---if a country meets (or doesn't meet) some number of them, we can code that country as a democracy.
 2. Make sure you can check them simply (like with Wikipedia)
- 4. Code the following Countries**
 1. The United States in 1848, 2000, 2016
 2. The United Kingdom in 1848
 3. Russia in 2012
 4. Canada in 2000

Concept

Polyarchy: A regime with high levels of
contestation and ***inclusion***

Does this match *your* conception?

Some of Robert Dahl's Criteria:

- **Every** member votes
- Each vote weighted **equally**
- Choice with **most** votes wins
- **Anyone** can put forth an alternative
- All individuals possess **identical** information about alternatives
- **All** orders of executives are followed

A Simple measure:

For any state in any year, add up the number of criteria met, and divide by 6.

Is this a useful measure?

Why the death of democracy may be overhyped

A political scientist pushes back against the doom-and-gloomers.

By Sean Illing | @seanilling | sean.illing@vox.com | Jul 2, 2018, 8:00am EDT

For instance, as of 2016, 59 percent of countries were democracies, **according to the Polity measure** — up from 57 percent in 2010 and 50 percent in 2000. I looked at four common measures of democracy, compiled by separate teams of experts, and the latest data for each showed the proportion of democracies worldwide to be within 4 percent of the all-time peak.

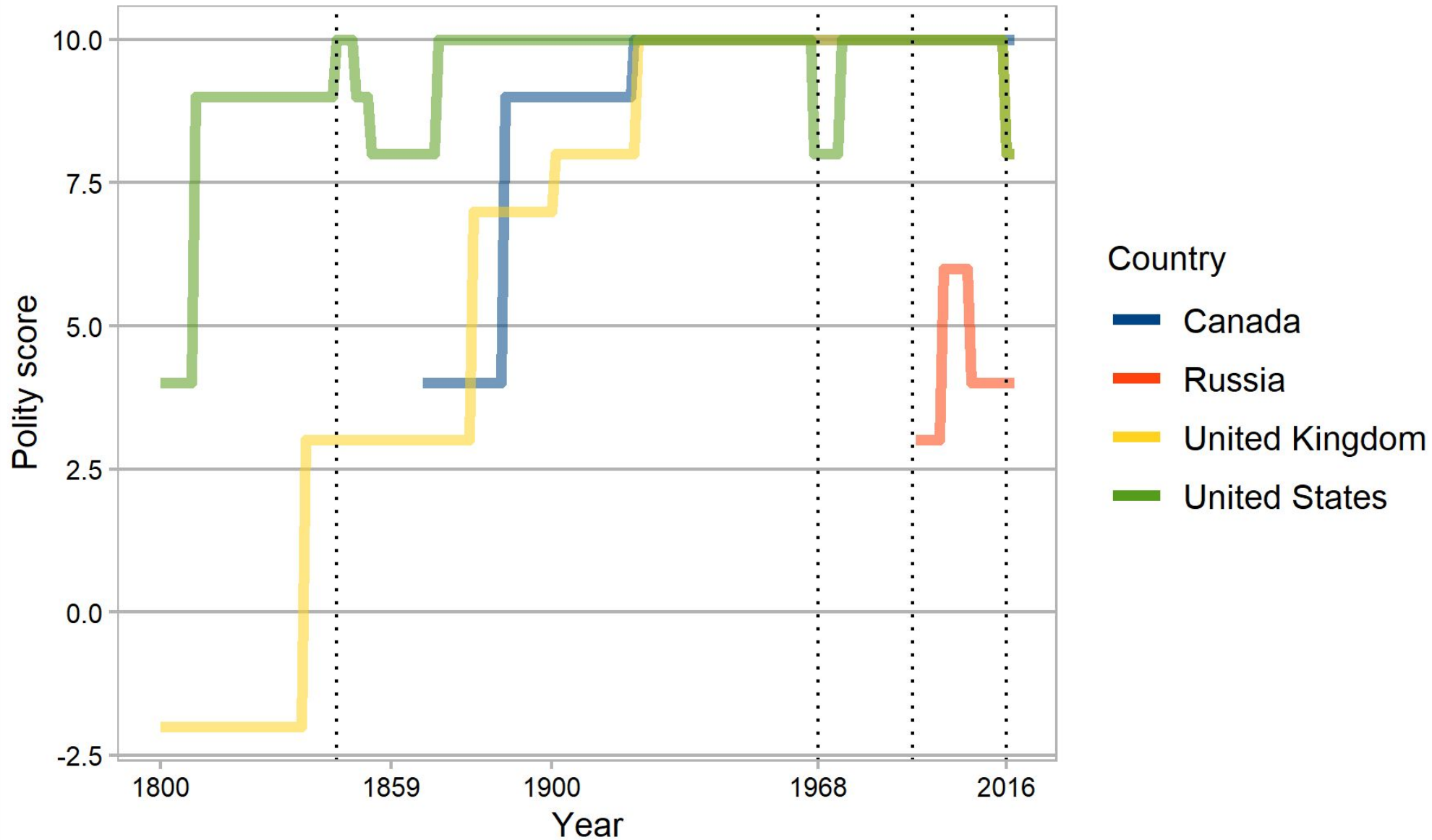
Polity IV: A Very Famous Measure

Measures the level of executive constraint and overturn

Does this match *your* conception?

Polity Scores Over Time

What do You Notice?



Concepts are how we think about and describe the world

Measurements are how we quantify concepts

Conceptualization is refining and specifying concepts

When we don't carefully define our *concepts* it is difficult (impossible) to make *meaningful measures*

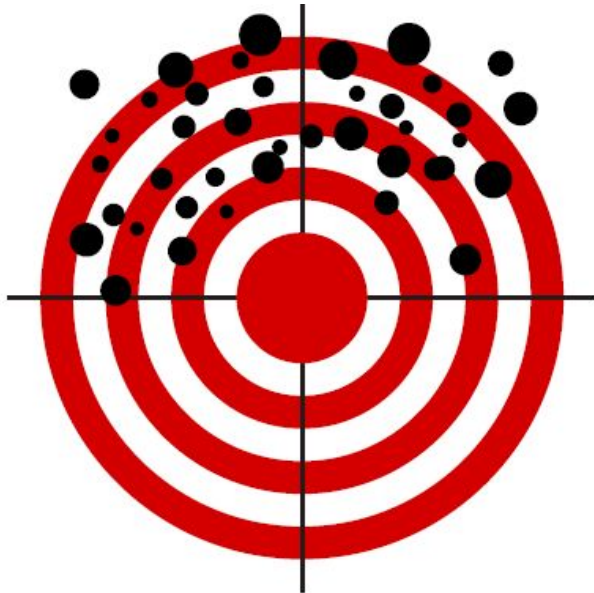
When we don't know what our *measures* represent, we can (will) come to *misleading conclusions*

How *good* are our measures?

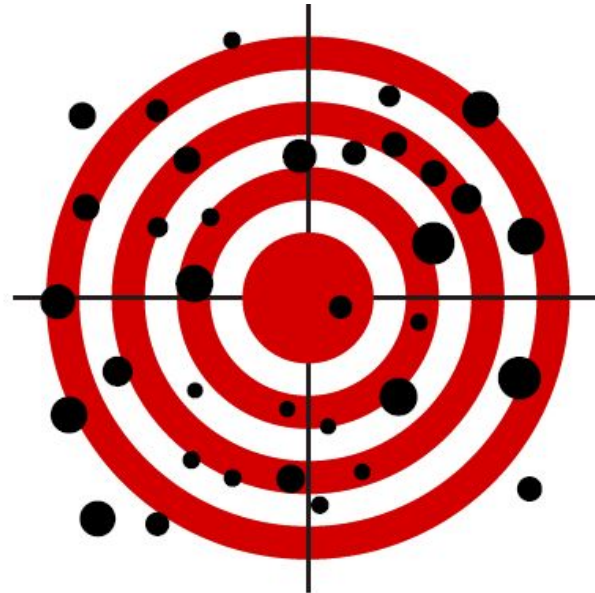
individual measurement = actual value + bias + chance error

Validity: How well our measurement reflects our concept

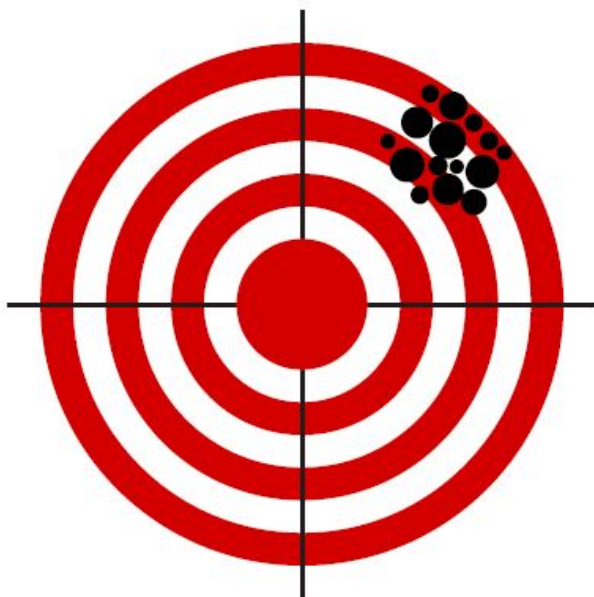
Reliability: How consistently do we get the same score for a case?



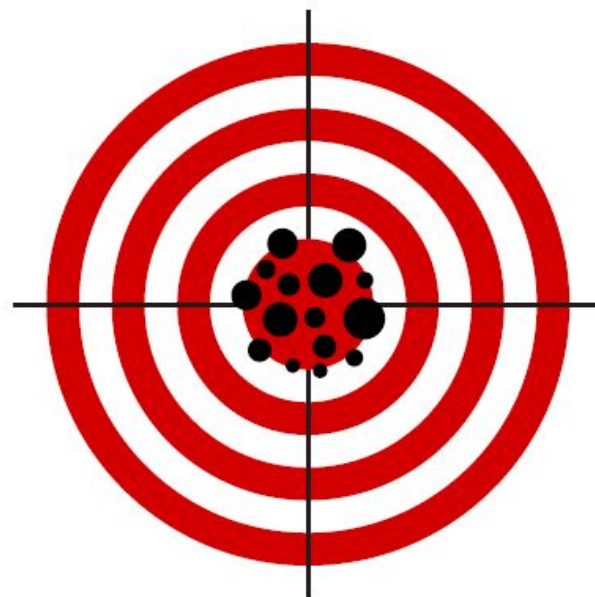
Unreliable and Invalid



Unreliable, but Valid



Reliable, but Invalid



Reliable and Valid

Levels of Measurement

- ***Qualitative***

- ***Dichotomous***: two categories (Democracy, Not Democracy)
- ***Nominal***: unordered categories (Oligarchy, Parliamentary Democracy, Presidential Democracy)
- ***Ordinal***: numeric, the ***order*** of the numbers matters

- ***Quantitative***: numerical and mathematically comparable; the ***distance*** between the numbers matters.

Polarization

What is it?

Conceptualizing Polarization

Who is polarized?

- *Elites?*
- The *Public?*

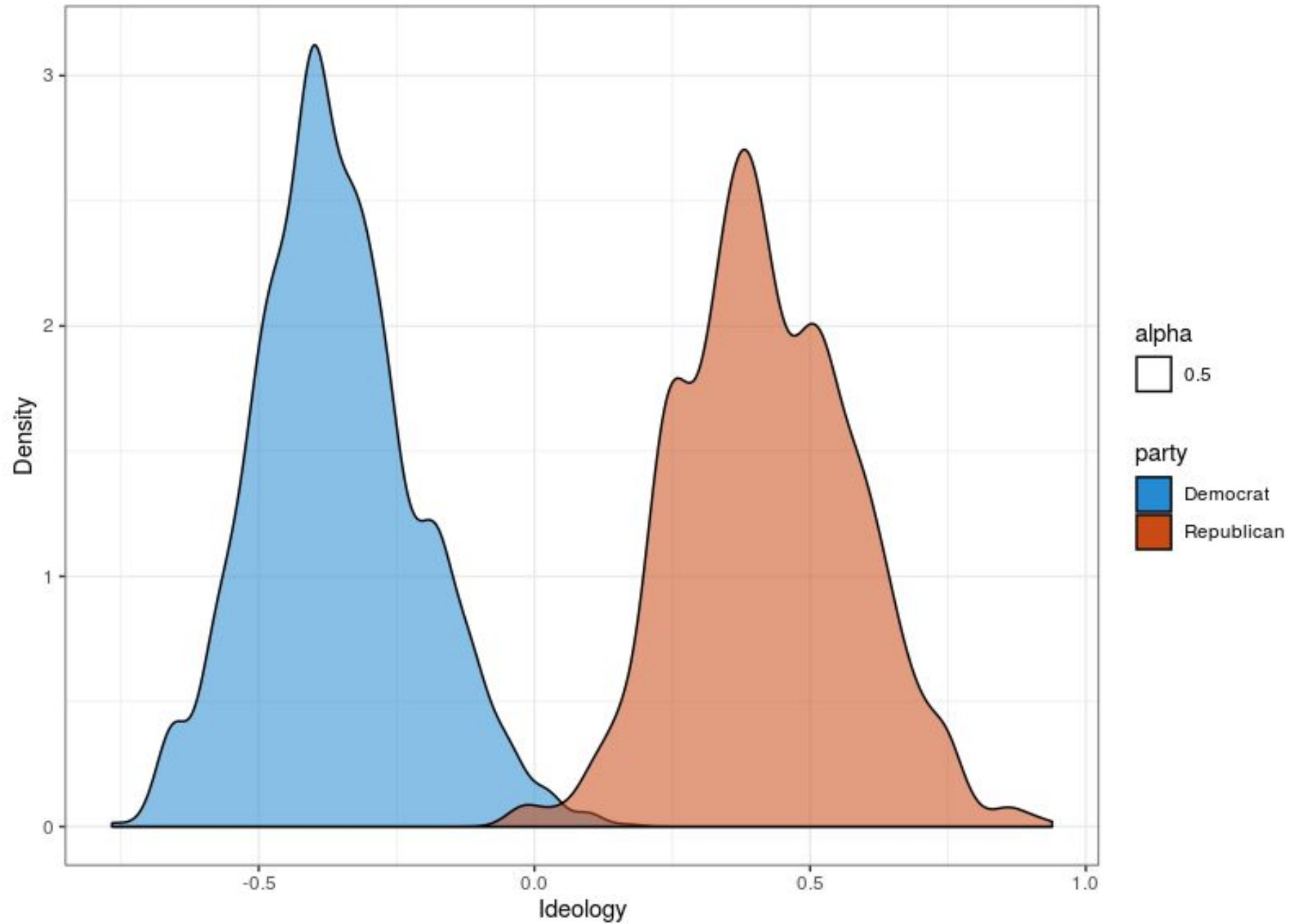
What is polarized about them?

- *Ideology?*
- Their *feelings?*

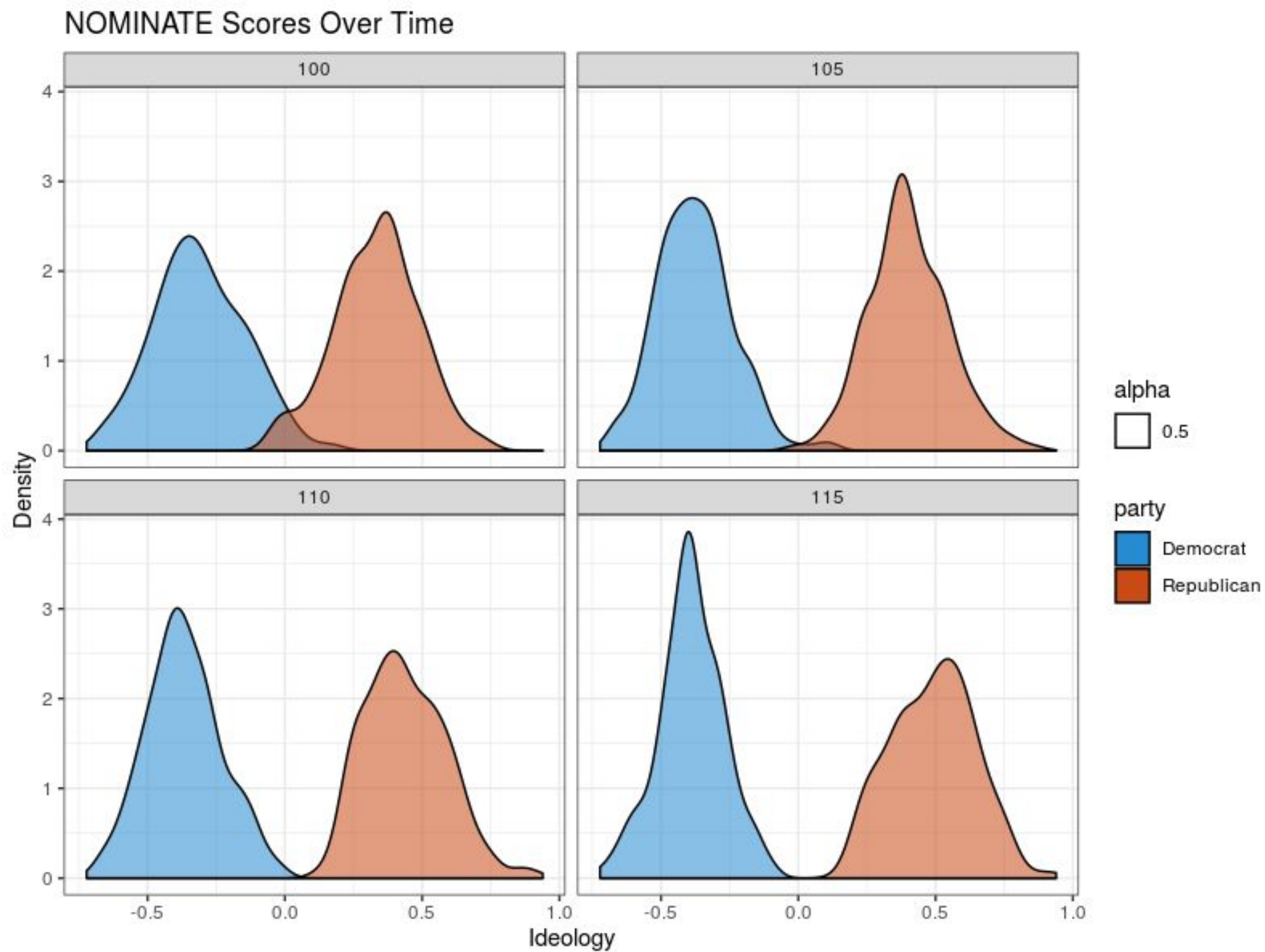
Is it changing over time?

Elites:

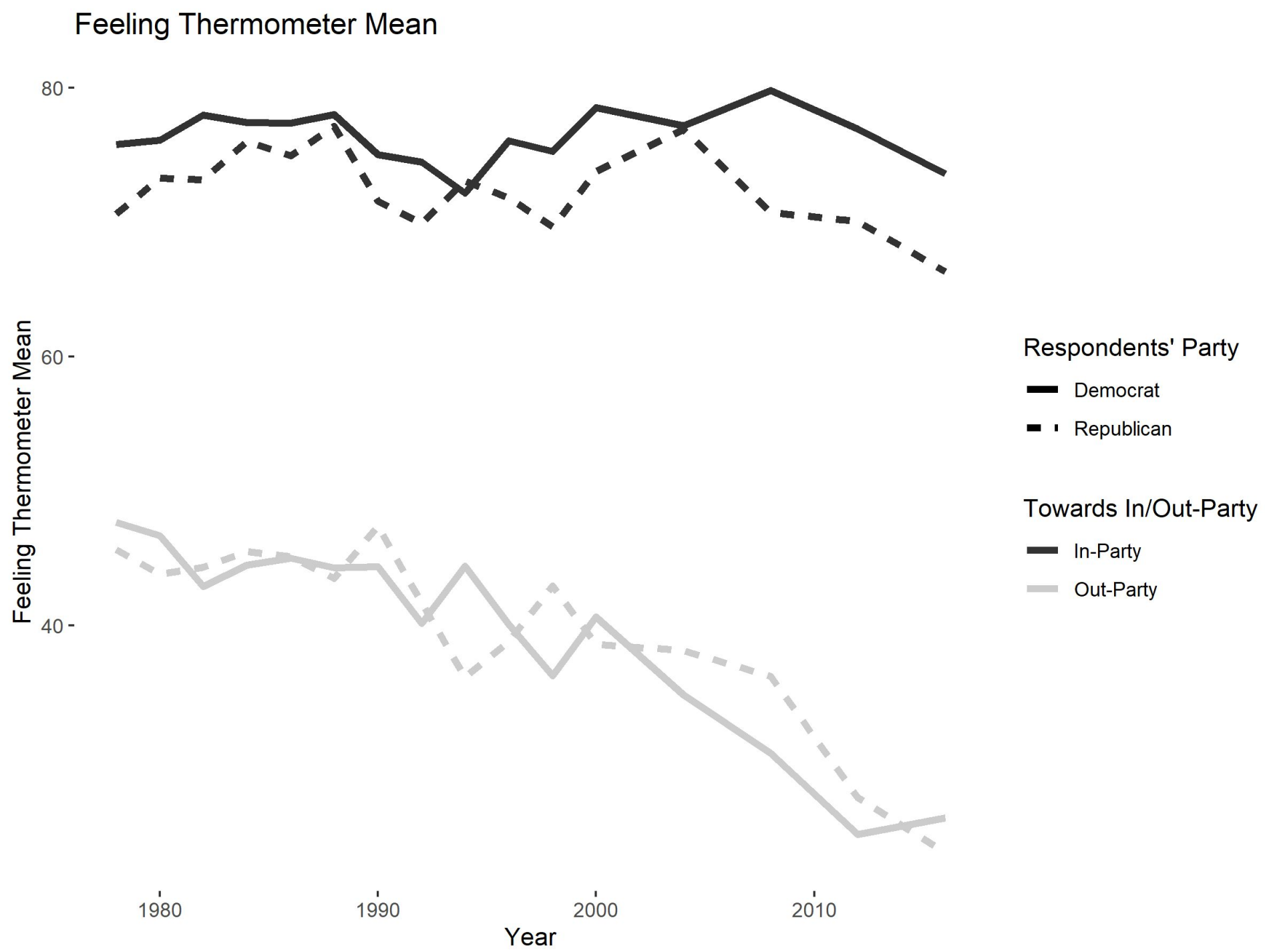
NOMINATE Scores



Elites:

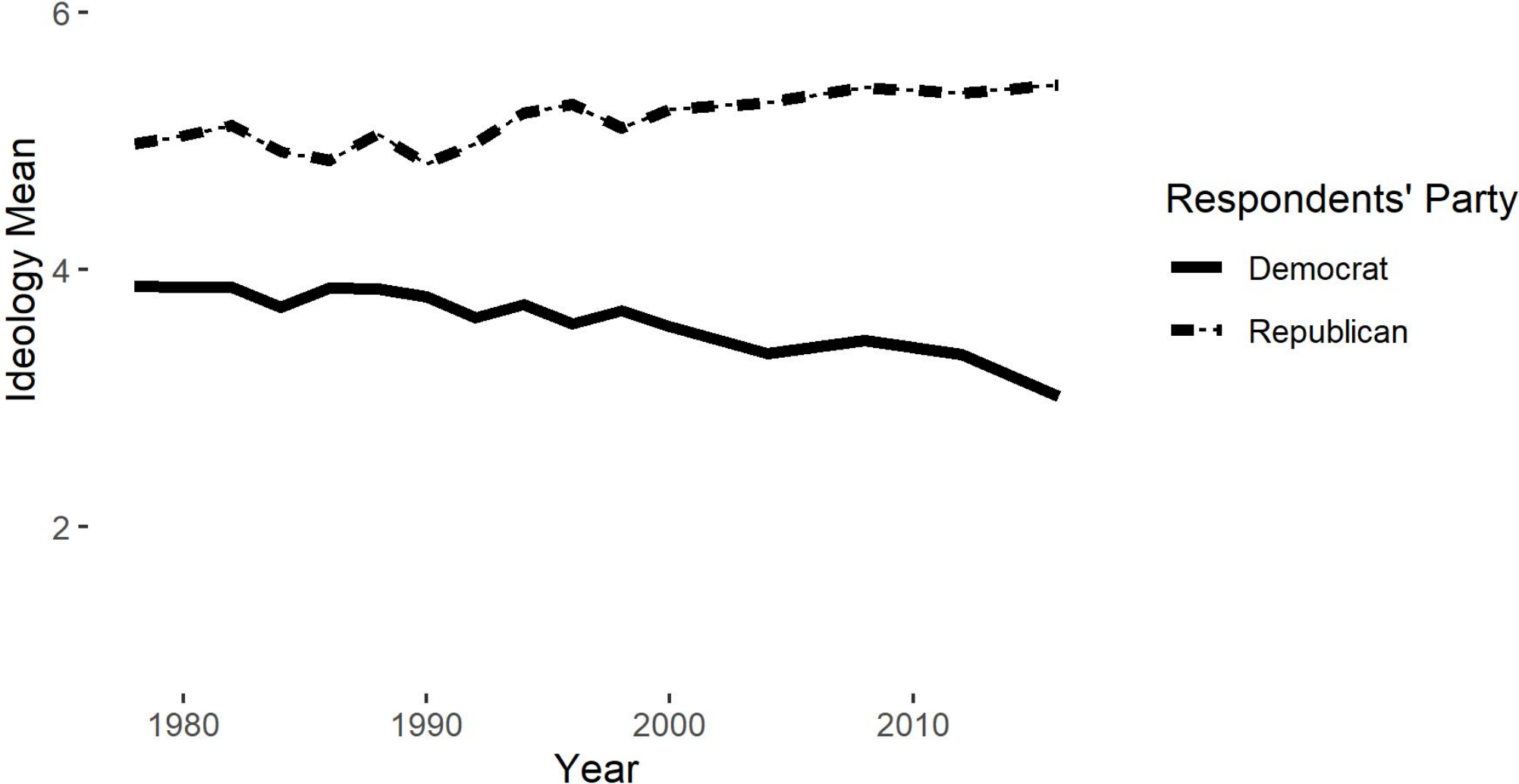


Public:



Self Assessed Ideology Over Time

Public:



Review Exercises 1:

1. Describe the differences between ordinal and quantitative measures. Provide two examples of each.
2. Suppose we are trying to measure voters' ideology on a left-right spectrum with a measure that is reliable but not valid. Would we expect our estimates to be incorrect at random, or would we likely see a pattern to our mistakes?
3. If that measurement was reliable but not valid how would your answer to #2 change?
4. **Challenge:** can you think of any situation where a reliable but invalid measure would be useful to a researcher?

Review Exercises 2:

5. For each of the following statements, write whether a ***dichotomous***, ***nominal***, ***ordinal***, or ***quantitative*** measurement is used (if more than one measurement is used, specify each one).

- A runner finished a sprint in 3rd place.
- A runner finished a sprint in 24 seconds.
- In a rural county, there are 537 Republicans, 234 Democrats, 140 Independents and 78 Libertarians.
- It takes a satellite 102 minutes to orbit Earth.
- Libertarians are more economically conservative than Democratic Socialists.
- I didn't vote in the student government elections.

Review Exercises 3:

6. My concept of a democracy is: “A country with few barriers to political participation”. I propose the following criteria by which to code countries “democratic” or “non-democratic”. For each, write whether or not you think they are valid, given my conceptualization of Democracy and explain.

- All adults can vote in any election.
- Political campaigns receive some amount of public funding.
- All elected officials must have term limits.
- All ballots cast must be secret.
- Any adult can run for office.
- The government must subsidize education.