

Why We're Polarized

- The American political system is rational and based on incentives individual actors face.
 - It's not really "broken", some people just understand it better.
- "Identity politics" is only used when the marginalized speak up.
- Political parties are shortcuts for citizens to vote without having to be completely informed on every issue.
- Negative partisanship is partisan driven by opposition to the other party, not allegiance to your own.
- Polarization is not just sorting (values being aligned in categories) but the gravitation of values around two separate and distinct poles.
 - Extremism and polarization is not the same thing - moderates are often the most extreme because their views don't align with either party (which is how moderates are defined, *not* a meet-in-the-middle opinion).
- Parties are dividing over *identity* not just issues.
- Southern Democrats in the post-Civil War era (Dixiecrats) had immense influence over the National Democrats. They prioritized anti-race legislation above all, while National Democrats focused on a lot of other things too (causing them to accommodate Southern Democrats to get their votes). Republicans usually fought for pro-equality bills, but when they didn't support the Civil Rights Bill and the Democrats did, Dixiecrats migrated to the Republican Party.
- Landslide counties are much more common now.
- Urban settings vote Democrat, rural vote Republican, and this correlation is stronger than ever.
 - That's why Democrats always get more of the popular vote.
- Our psychologies aren't different, it's how we align those psychologies with regards to politics that is.
 - It's like taking magnets and stacking them on top of each other in two clean piles that repel each other.
 - We now participate politics to express who we are.
- Engaged citizens are the ones that associate identity with politics, while the disengaged mainly care about what certain policies do for them.
 - Which is why Republicans continue to get a large share of votes even though their economic brand is fundamentally opposite of their voters.
- Political affinity is like a virus.