

Introduction

- Abortion is among the most controversial and frequently debated issues in American politics today (Rolfes-Hasse & Swers, 2022).
- The abortion issue regained national attention in 2021 with the passing of restrictive abortion laws in Texas and Mississippi, along with arguments in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that eventually led to the U.S. Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade*.
- There is strong evidence that abortion views are pivotal to shifting votes in midterm elections. Americans who favored abortion were more likely to shift from voting Republican in 2020 to voting Democratic in 2022 and vice versa (Mutz and Mansfield, 2024).
- A similar study found that in an environment where abortion was made salient, the weight voters placed on their pre-existing abortion beliefs when voting in elections increased (McCabe, 2022).
- While extensive research has been done on the relationship between abortion views and political identity shifts among individuals, little is known about the direct association between one's political ideology and how that influences the value they place on abortion as a political priority.

Research Questions

- Is political ideology associated with priority of the abortion issue?
- Does the association between political ideology and abortion priority differ with gender?

Methods

Sample

- U.S. citizens (age 18 or older) who responded to the 2020 pre-election survey (n=8,280) were drawn from the American National Election Studies (ANES).
- ANES is a nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized U.S. citizens aged 18 or older living in the 50 U.S. States or the District of Columbia, specifically at a residential address where mail is delivered.

Measures

- The variable *abortion priority* was created based on the question titled "Importance of Abortion Issue to R," which asked, "How important is this issue to you personally?"
- Abortion priority was coded dichotomously as either prioritizing abortion (by rating it as either an important or extremely important issue) or not prioritizing abortion (by rating the issue from neutral to not at all important).
- The *political ideology* of participants was measured on a self-reported scale of 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative).

Results

Fig. 1 Association Between Abortion Priority and Political Ideology

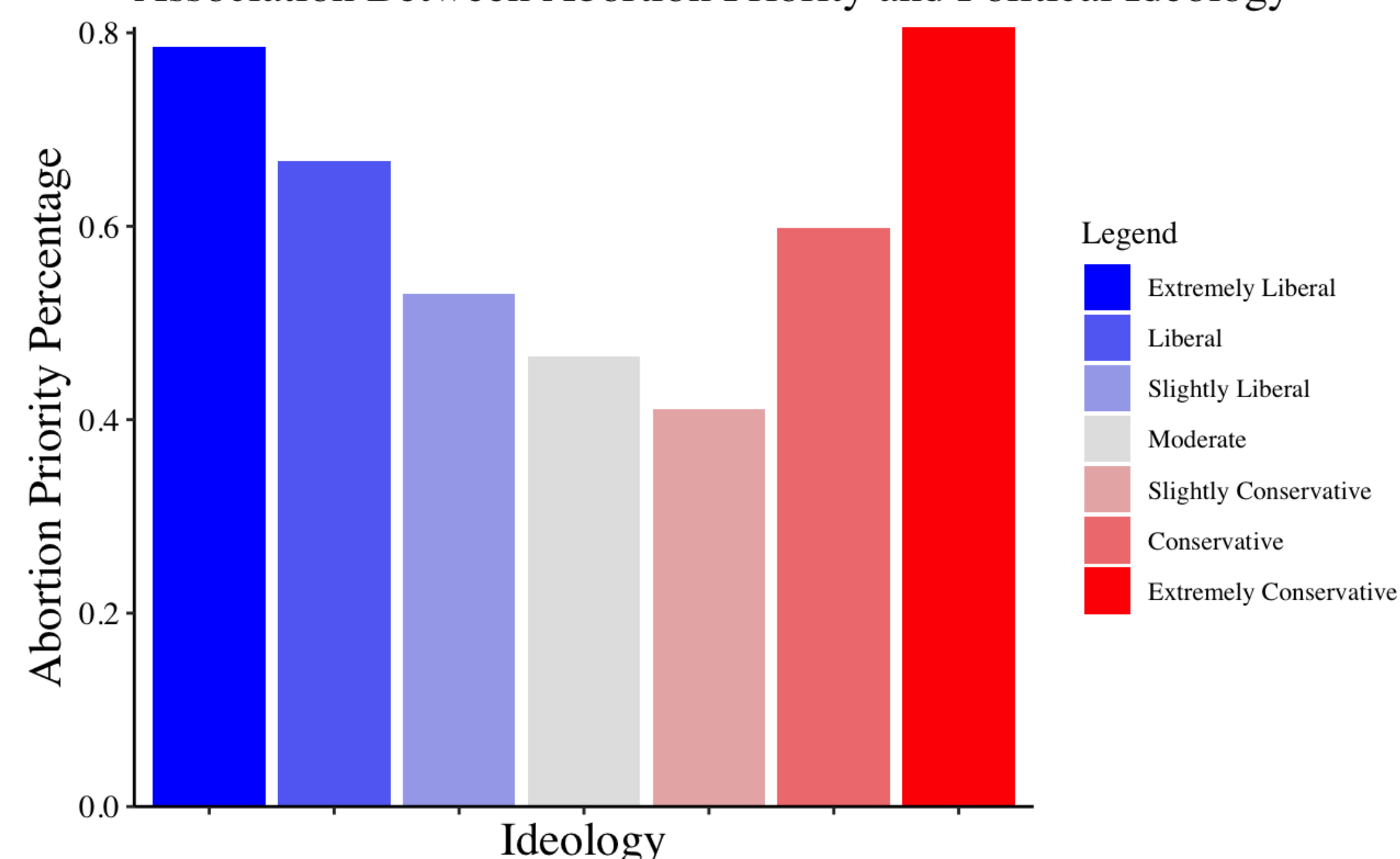
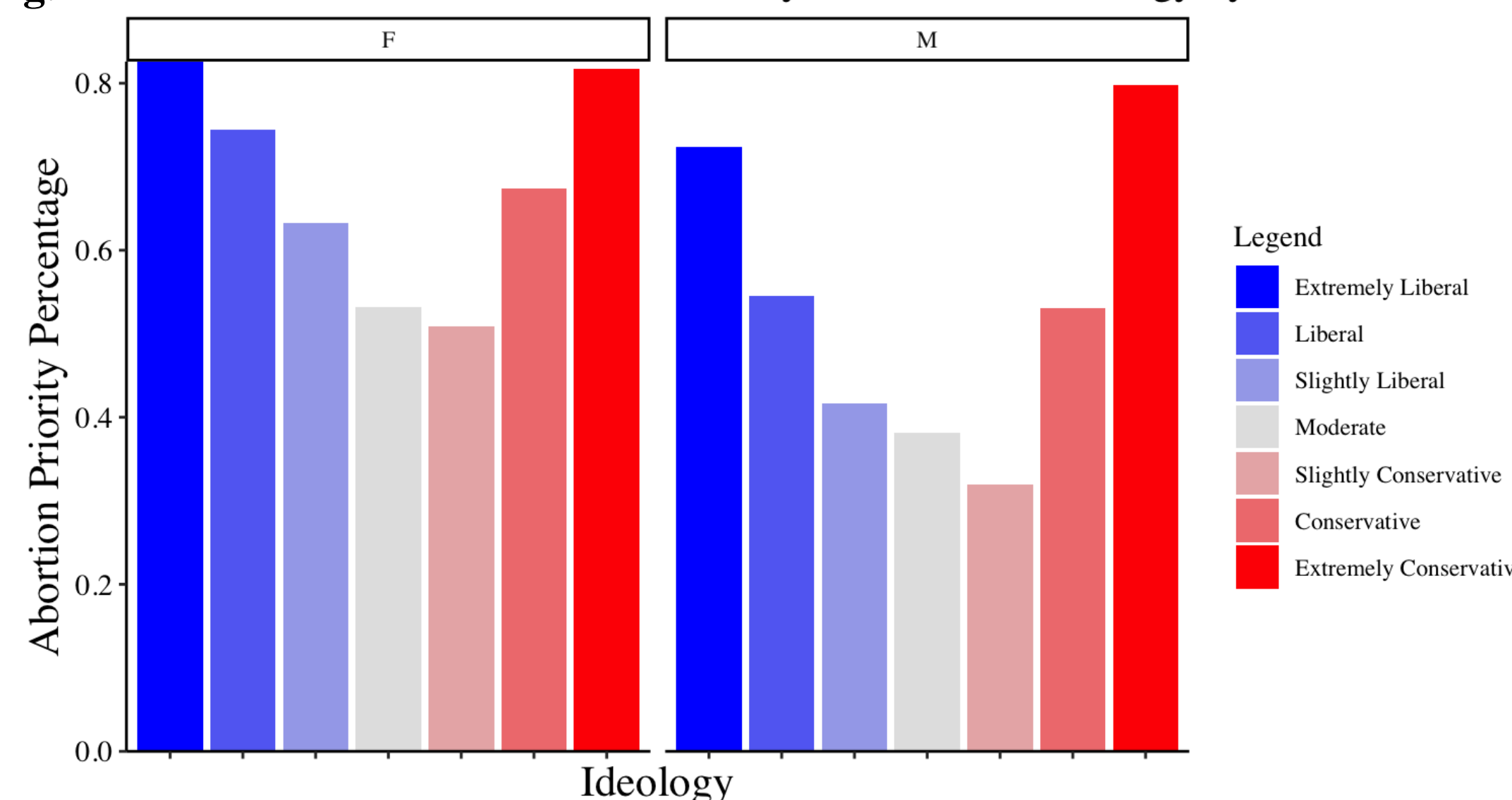


Fig. 2 Association Between Abortion Priority and Political Ideology by Gender



References

- McCabe, K. T. (2022). Can we learn from 2012? Priming and abortion's influence on voting decisions. *Electoral studies*, 79, 1-8.
- Mutz, D. C., & Mansfield, E. D. (2024). Inflation in 2022 did not affect congressional voting, but abortion did. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences – PNAS*, 121(21).
- Rolfes-Hasse, K. L., & Swers, M. L. (2022). Understanding the Gender and Partisan Dynamics of Abortion Voting in the House of Representatives. *Politics & gender*, 18(2), 448-482.

Univariate

- 54.2% of the sample was female, with 45.8% being male.
- 55.4% prioritized abortion as a political issue, while 44.6% did not prioritize abortion.
- 5.2% classified themselves as extremely liberal, 17.2% were liberal, 13.0% were slightly liberal, 25.8% were moderate, 11.6% were slightly conservative, 21.1% were conservative, and 6.1% were extremely conservative.
- The political category with the most responses was "moderate," while the least responses were at both extreme levels.

Bivariate

- In figure 1, a bimodal distribution exists at the ends of the ideological spectrum, with those at the extremes prioritizing abortion the most, with extreme conservatives prioritizing it just a bit more.
- As individual political ideology strays toward "moderate," abortion priority decreases, with slight conservatives prioritizing abortion the least out of any group.
- When examining the association between political ideology and abortion priority, a chi-square test of independence reveals that among the sample, those who are extremely liberal or conservative were more likely to prioritize abortion compared to those belonging to any other political category ($X^2=389.54$, $df=6$, $p=4.958e^{-81}$).

Multivariate

- Looking at figure 2, men and women that are either extremely liberal or extremely conservative both prioritize abortion highly, with liberals prioritizing it more than conservatives regardless of gender.
- The trend of the graph across genders is very similar, with peaks at the extremes; however, every ideological stance from the female perspective prioritizes abortion higher than their male counterparts.

Discussion

- Here, we show a significant association between political ideology and abortion priority, even when controlling for gender.
- Individuals who identify as extreme liberals or conservatives prioritize the abortion issue more than anyone, suggesting that those who are more radical care more and have stronger beliefs towards sensitive issues like abortion.
- While abortion is a key component in contemporary politics, it is understandable for women to prioritize the issue more than men because it heavily concerns their rights and reproductive freedoms specifically.
- Further research is needed to determine if there is a causal relationship between political ideology and abortion priority.
- Future studies should consider evaluating different political issues and how priorities for each issue differ across the political ideological spectrum.