

The Polarization of Contemporary American Politics

Christopher Hare

Keith T. Poole

**Department of Political Science
School of Public and International Affairs
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia**

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ABSTRACT

The elites of the United States are deeply polarized. Polarization of the Democratic and Republican Parties is higher than at any time since the end of the Civil War. This essay describes how the modern polarization trend emerged and its implications for mass political behavior and public policy outcomes. We contend that contemporary political polarization must be understood in terms of both the ideological divergence of the parties as well as the expansion of the liberal-conservative dimension of conflict to encompass a wider set of social and cultural conflicts in American society. We close with the speculation that the Republican Party has become the more fractured of the parties along the liberal-conservative dimension at both the elite and mass level.

INTRODUCTION

In this essay we apply the NOMINATE statistical procedure to document the dramatic increase in political polarization in the United States since the 1970s. NOMINATE (for Nominal Three-Step Estimation) is an unfolding method¹ that jointly estimates the positions of legislators and policy outcomes in latent ideological space from observed roll call voting behavior.² The recovered dimensions correspond to ideological divisions within Congress and legislators' scores on these dimensions are useful measures of their ideological positions. Specifically, we use DW-NOMINATE scores as the DW- (for dynamic, weighted) NOMINATE procedure uses overlapping cohorts of legislators to “bridge” between legislators who have not served together, thus allowing ideological scores to be compared over time.³

The results from DW-NOMINATE indicate that the level of polarization in Congress is now the highest since the end of the Civil War and shows no sign that it will abate. Alternative measures of legislative ideology, like Adam Bonica's application of campaign contribution data and Boris Shor and Nolan McCarty's analysis of roll call voting in state legislatures, support the claim that American politics has grown more polarized over recent decades.⁴ Before discussing these measures of polarization we first

¹ Clyde H. Coombs, *A Theory of Data* (New York: Wiley, 1964).

² Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal, *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³ Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal, *Income Redistribution and the Realignment of American Politics* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1997).

⁴ Adam Bonica, “Ideology and Interests in the Political Marketplace,” *American Journal of Political Science* 57 (April 2013): 245-260. Adam Bonica, “Mapping the Ideological Marketplace,” *American Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming. Boris

briefly discuss some important characteristics of the political party system that evolved from the British colonial era.

THE POLARIZATION OF THE AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEM

Representative democracy, plurality elections, geographic-based representation (the tradition of the representative living with those he represented), and private property rights were established from the beginning of the British colonies and shaped everything that was to follow.

Representative democracy and capitalism in North America evolved together in an environment of almost unlimited natural resources. Private property rights and representative democracy have cooperatively cohabitated since the earliest British colonial settlements and no real European style socialist party ever gained a lasting foothold in the United States. This is what Louis Hartz called the “Liberal Tradition in America.”⁵ In addition, due to the nature of the earliest settlements, geographic based representation in representative assemblies became the norm. The sharp break with British tradition was that legislators lived in the district/town that they represented rather than being assigned by a political party to represent a district. This was written into the Constitution. Because the political parties were active throughout the United States, regional interests were incorporated within the parties and that tended to dampen conflict

Shor and Nolan McCarty, “The Ideological Mapping of American Legislatures,” *American Political Science Review* 105 (August 2011): 530-551.

⁵ Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1955). See also Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York: Vintage Press, 1948).

between the parties. For example, before the Civil War Southern Whigs and Southern Democrats shared an interest in representing the economic concerns of the South against high tariffs because the Southern states were commodity exporters (Cotton, Rice, Naval Stores, Indigo). In addition, the U. S. always utilized the English style plurality election system which tends to produce only two dominant political parties (Duverger, 1951).⁶ These electoral characteristics coupled with the emergence of mass based political parties in the 1820s and the colonial legacy of private property rights formed the basis of the U. S. political-economic system that has survived into the twenty-first century.

The interaction of these four factors account for the periods of polarization in U. S. history. First, the plurality election system coupled with the requirement that representatives live in their districts, tended to produce two political parties that were usually divided internally due to regional interests. The primary division between the two parties was almost always economic regulation, taxes, tariffs, and so on. The regional interests cut across these traditional left vs. right divisions thereby dampening down the conflict between the parties. Further dampening this conflict between the two parties was the powerful norm of private property rights. This limited the extent of the division between the two parties on the primary economic dimension because never in U.S. history has private property rights been seriously challenged. The periods of polarization have occurred when conflict between the two parties became completely one-dimensional; that is, when the regional division within the parties becomes the primary

⁶ Maurice Duverger, *Les Partis Politiques* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1951).

focus of conflict or disappears altogether. The former occurred in the 1850s and the result was the Civil War. The latter occurred to some extent after the Civil War to the 1930s and then the regional division re-emerged from about 1937 into the 1980s.

The persistent liberal-conservative dimension dividing the parties over the fundamental issue of the role of government in the economy is also the first or primary dimension recovered by NOMINATE. Legislators' positions on this dimension indicate their relative levels of liberalism or conservatism. The second dimension recovered by NOMINATE differentiates the members by region mainly over race and civil rights but in the latter part of the nineteenth century it picked up regional differences on bimetallism and the free coinage of silver.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the parties in Congress began to move further apart on the liberal-conservative dimension. More Democrats staked out consistently liberal positions, and more Republicans supported wholly conservative ones. Congress began to polarize. Figure 1 show the dispersion of the parties along the liberal-conservative dimension between the end of Reconstruction (1879) and 2013 by plotting the 10th and 90th percentile first dimension DW-NOMINATE scores in each party. For instance, 10% of Democrats will have higher (more moderate) scores than the 10th percentile score and 10% of Democrats will have lower (more liberal) scores than the 90th percentile score. 80% of Democrats will have scores within this range. As can be seen, the parties began to diverge in the mid-1970s and this trend has continued unabated into the most recent Congress. The ideological center has hollowed out and the outer edges of the parties --- especially the Republican Party --- have moved ever further towards the

ideological poles. Whether we gauge congressional polarization by the difference of party means, the difference between the parties' 10th percentile scores, or any number of alternative measures, Congress is now more polarized than at any time since the end of the Civil War.

Figure 1 About Here

The roots of the modern trend to greater polarization can in part be found in the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Southern Whites began voting for Republican candidates as the process of issue evolution over race played out.⁷ First at the Presidential level, then for the Senate and House, and finally most of the Southern State legislatures became dominated by Republicans. The old southern Democratic Party has, in effect, disintegrated. The exodus of conservative Southerners from the Democratic Party at both the elite and mass levels has created a more homogenously liberal party. The net effect of these changes is that race has been drawn into the liberal-conservative dimension because race-related issues are increasingly questions of redistribution.⁸

But the Southern realignment does not fully account for the increase in polarization. The Republican Party became much more conservative across regions of the United States. The 1964 Goldwater presidential primary campaign was a key turning

⁷ Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

⁸ Poole and Rosenthal, *Congress*.

point.⁹ The Goldwater insurgency created a national cadre of activists like Newt Gingrich who slowly shifted the Republican Party to the right across the whole country.

The steady growth in income inequality and changes in immigration trends in the US over the last half century also have implications for political polarization.¹⁰ Poorer citizens routinely exhibit lower levels of political participation, and the influx of immigrants who are low income workers and/or noncitizens has further increased the proportion of nonvoters at the bottom end of the income distribution. In effect, this has shifted the position of the median income voter upward along the income distribution and dampened popular support for government spending on redistributive social welfare policies.¹¹ This helps explain how the Republican Party has been able to move steadily rightward over the last forty years without major electoral consequences.

Finally, as we show in the following section, “social/lifestyle” issues are increasingly being drawn into the main dimension of conflict. The end result is that the Democrat and Republican parties have become more ideologically homogeneous and are now deeply polarized. Moderates in Congress have virtually disappeared during the past 40 years as the parties have pulled apart.

⁹ Rick Perlstein. 2001. *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

¹⁰ Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez, “Income Inequality in the United States, 1913-1998,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 118 (February 2003): 1-39.

¹¹ Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

Analyses of campaign contribution data by Adam Bonica also show that the parties have polarized since the 1970s.¹² Indeed, the difference of party means on the liberal-conservative dimension that are estimated from DW-NOMINATE and Bonica's CF scores are correlated at $r = 0.85$ between 1980 and 2012.¹³ Bonica's CF scores, in addition to providing an external validity check, also provide some insight into how polarization is sustained and exacerbated by showing that donors themselves are a deeply polarized group. Small donors --- who comprise a large proportion of campaign receipts in competitive congressional districts --- are particularly ideologically extreme.¹⁴

HEIGHTENED IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRAINT AND THE CHANGING CONFLICT SPACE OF AMERICAN POLITICS

One of the underappreciated aspects of contemporary political polarization has been how a diverse set of policy conflicts --- from abortion to gun control to immigration --- have collapsed into the dominant economic liberal-conservative dimension of American politics. That is, not only have the parties moved further apart on this ideological dimension in recent decades, but the meaning of the dimension itself has changed as it now encompasses a wider range of issues. The phenomenon has been termed "conflict

¹² Bonica, "Ideology and Interests." Bonica, "Mapping the Ideological Marketplace."

¹³ Bonica, "Mapping the Ideological Marketplace."

¹⁴ James G. Gimpel, Frances E. Lee, and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, "The Check Is in the Mail: Interdistrict Funding Flows in Congressional Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (April 2008): 373-394. Adam Bonica, Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, "Why Hasn't Democracy Slowed Rising Inequality?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27 (Summer 2013): 103-124.

extension” by Geoffrey Layman and Tom Carsey and its occurrence among party activists and strong partisans in the electorate has been thoroughly documented by Layman, Carsey and colleagues.¹⁵

Of course, the notion that there are now fewer socially or culturally conservative Democrats and socially or culturally liberal Republicans in Congress is hardly controversial and probably obvious to any casual observer of contemporary American politics. However, we can more methodologically trace the evolution of “conflict extension” since the 1970s in Congress by examining the over-time fit of roll call votes on non-economic issues to one and two-dimensional spatial models of ideology estimated by the DW-NOMINATE procedure.

Roll call votes that strongly tap into the primary liberal-conservative divide among legislators are good fits to a one-dimensional model. That is, we can correctly classify most legislators’ vote choices using only their positions on the first (liberal-conservative) dimension. Roll call votes that correspond to cross-cutting divisions represented by the second dimension are good fits to a two-dimensional model but poor fits in a single dimension. Finally, roll call votes with non-ideological voting patterns are poor fits in

¹⁵ Geoffrey C. Layman and Thomas M. Carsey, “Party Polarization and “Conflict Extension” in the American Electorate,” *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (October 2002): 786-802. Geoffrey C. Layman and Thomas M. Carsey, “Party Polarization and Party Structuring of Policy Attitudes: A Comparison of Three NES Panel Studies,” *Political Behavior* 24 (September 2002): 199-236. Thomas M. Carsey and Geoffrey C. Layman, “Changing Sides or Changing Minds? Party Identification and Policy Preferences in the American Electorate,” *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (April 2006): 464-477. Geoffrey C. Layman, Thomas M. Carsey, John C. Green, Richard Herrera, and Rosalyn Cooperman, “Activists and Conflict Extension in American Party Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 104 (May 2010): 324-346.

both models. An example of a vote with a good one-dimensional fit would be the 2010/2011 votes on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), an example of a vote with a poor one-dimensional fit but a good two-dimensional fit would be the 1964 vote on the Civil Rights Act, and an example of a vote with a poor fit in both models would be the 2008 votes on the \$700b financial industry bailout package.¹⁶

Below we measure the over-time fits of congressional roll call voting on four social/cultural issues --- abortion, gay rights, gun control, and immigration --- in one and two dimensions. The statistic we use to measure fit is the Aggregate Proportional Reduction in Error (APRE). Proportional Reduction in Error (PRE) measures a model's improvement in classification over a null model in which all choices are classified at the modal (i.e., majority) category. The APRE simply aggregates the PRE values of multiple roll call votes indexed by j ($j = 1, \dots, q$):

$$APRE = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^q \{Minority Vote - Classification Errors\}_j}{\sum_{j=1}^q Minority Vote_j}$$

APRE ranges between 0 and 1: a value of 0 indicates that the model provides no improvement in classification beyond placing all votes in the modal (majority) category, and an APRE value of 1 indicates the model perfectly classifies all choices (i.e., 0 classification errors). We calculate APRE values for roll call votes concerning each of

¹⁶ Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, *Political Bubbles: Financial Crises and the Failure of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

these issues in the 93rd through 112th Houses (covering the period from 1973 to 2013) when at least three issue-relevant roll call votes were conducted. This means that APRE values are missing for Congresses in which there were an insufficient number of roll calls on the issues, but on these issues this problem is not severe enough to be troublesome.

The findings are presented in Figure 2. **APRE1** is the APRE value from the one-dimensional model, while **APRE2 --- APRE1** measures how much improvement in classification the two-dimensional model provides over the one-dimensional model. Across all four issues, we see a dramatic improvement in fit to the one-dimensional model (i.e., along the liberal-conservative dimension) between the 1970s and the present. The **APRE1** values for roll call votes on these four issues all exceeded 0.76 in the 112th House, whereas in the 1980s these issues generally had one-dimensional fits in the 0.3 to 0.5 region, and as recently as the 1990s abortion votes had APRE values centered around 0.6 and gun control votes had APRE values centered around 0.5. These results provide strong evidence for the rapid growth in ideological constraint between economic, social, and cultural issues among members of Congress during the last 40 years.

Figure 2 About Here

Interestingly, the addition of a second dimension never provides much of a boost in model fit on these issues during this period. On abortion, gay rights, and gun control votes, the second dimension improves classification most during the 1990s and early 2000s, but even in this period the **APRE2 – APRE1** values never exceed 0.2. The contribution of the second dimension to model fit for roll call voting on immigration jumps during the mid-to-late 1980s, but the role of the second dimension has evaporated

for all four of the issues in recent Congresses as these issues have been absorbed into the expanding liberal-conservative divide between the parties.

At the mass level, there is less evidence that issue attitudes have collapsed onto a single liberal-conservative dimension as has been the case for political elites. However, this claim needs to be tempered: politically informed and engaged citizens exhibit greater ideological constraint, and this group as well as wealthier citizens and strong partisans have grown more constrained in their issue attitudes since the 1970s.¹⁷ Of course, this environment has made it more difficult for ideological moderates and cross-pressured citizens (i.e., socially liberal and economically conservative) to gain representation, and there has been some evidence that both groups have become less likely (relative to ideologically consistent citizens) to be politically active.¹⁸

Elite-level polarization has also produced greater recognition of ideological differences between the parties, which in turn has facilitated partisan sorting.¹⁹ But

¹⁷ James A. Stimson, "Belief Systems: Constraint, Complexity, and the 1972 Election," *American Journal of Political Science* 19 (August 1975): 393-417. Thomas R. Palfrey and Keith T. Poole, "The Relationship between Information, Ideology, and Voting Behavior," *American Journal of Political Science* 31 (August 1987): 511-530. Alan I. Abramowitz and Kyle L. Saunders, "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics* 70 (April 2008): 542-555. Delia Baldassarri and Andrew Gelman, "Partisans without Constraint: Political Polarization and Trends in American Public Opinion," *American Journal of Sociology* 114 (September 2008): 408-446.

¹⁸ Edward G. Carmines, Michael J. Ensley, and Michael W. Wagner, "Issue Preferences, Civic Engagement, and the Transformation of American Politics," in *Facing the Challenge of Democracy: Explorations in the Analysis of Public Opinion and Political Participation*, ed. Paul M. Sniderman and Benjamin Highton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 329-354.

¹⁹ Martin Gilens, Lynn Vavreck and Martin Cohen, "The Mass Media and the Public's Assessments of Presidential Candidates, 1952-2000," *Journal of Politics* 69 (November 2007): 1160-1175. Matthew Levendusky, *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals*

partisan sorting is only one type of sorting that has been induced by political polarization. Geographic sorting has also increased as Republicans and conservatives have become more likely to emigrate to “red” districts and Democrats and liberals to “blue” districts, a process that is facilitated by the confluence of cultural and political orientations in contemporary America.²⁰ Indeed, there has been a considerable amount of sorting in the electorate based on religious and value divides as well.²¹ The fact that these cleavages align with income differences between the parties in the electorate suggests that the greatest influence of elite polarization on voters may not be to polarize attitudes *per se*, but to divide or sort mass partisans along a diverse set of salient cleavages.

CONCLUSION

Both components of contemporary political polarization --- the growing distance between the parties on the liberal-conservative spectrum and the redefinition of the liberal-conservative dimension itself to encompass a wider set of social and cultural

Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

²⁰ Bill Bishop, *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008). Ian McDonald, “Migration and Sorting in the American Electorate: Evidence from the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study,” *American Politics Research* 39 (May 2011): 512-533. Wendy K. Tam Cho, James G. Gimpel, and Iris S. Hui, “Voter Migration and the Geographic Sorting of the American Electorate,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103 (July 2013): 856-870.

²¹ Geoffrey C. Layman and Edward G. Carmines, “Cultural Conflict in American Politics: Religious Traditionalism, Postmaterialism, and U.S. Political Behavior,” *Journal of Politics* 59 (August 1997): 751-777. William G. Jacoby, “Individual Value Structures and Personal Political Orientations: Determining the Direction of Influence,” Paper presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

conflicts --- have profound implications for American politics. Issues like abortion and gay marriage tap into fundamental worldview divides, inject added passion into partisan conflict, and make compromise between the two sides more difficult.²² That this cleavage reinforces an already-widening schism between the parties over questions of economic regulation and redistribution further hampers the ability of the political system to address problems like regulation of the finance industry, balancing the federal budget, and addressing income inequality.²³

One of the consequences of polarization has been the movement of policy outcomes away from the ideological center and greater oscillation in policy outcomes between left and right when party control of Congress changes. Figure 3 illustrates both patterns by showing the mean first-dimension (liberal-conservative) DW-NOMINATE score of the House and the Senate overall and of the winning coalitions in each chamber between 1879 and 2013. In both the House and Senate, the chamber means are more stable and closer to the center than the winning coalition means. But the divergence between the two is largest in polarized eras; namely, the late nineteenth/early twentieth century and roughly the last 25 years. Note, for example, that the winning coalition means closely tracks the chamber mean during the 1950s-1970s. This reflects the large number of moderates in each party and the frequency with which winning bipartisan

²² James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, (New York: Basic Books, 1991). Marc J. Hetherington and Jonathan D. Weiler, *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²³ McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, *Polarized America*. McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, *Political Bubbles*.

coalitions were formed; hence, legislation needed to appeal to centrist members to win passage. This is not true during periods of ideological polarization when party unity is higher and winning coalitions are built with a majority of the majority party. As one example, Medicare passed the House in the 1965 with the support of 237 Democrats and 70 Republicans, while President Obama's health care reform package passed the House in 2010 without a single Republican vote and despite defections from 34 of the more moderate members of the Democratic caucus.

Figure 3 About Here

The elimination of Rule XXII and the filibuster in the Senate would greatly exacerbate the fluctuation of policy outcomes by eliminating the need to attract Senators in the minority party in order to enact legislation. The combination of a majoritarian Senate with a polarized party system would produce a Westminster-style Congress with non-centrist policy outcomes and wider policy swings between transitions of party control. While this would promote a responsible two-party system by more closely tying parties to public policies, it would also create a more unpredictable policy environment that would almost certainly hamper economic growth.²⁴

Of course, a strong regularity of the American two-party system is that because parties are coalitions of diverse and sometimes competing interests, internal cleavages routinely arise within one or both of the parties. In most cases these are simply minor

²⁴ Alberto Alesina, Sule Özler, Nouriel Roubini, and Phillip Swagel, "Political Instability and Economic Growth," *Journal of Economic Growth* 1 (June 1996): 189-211. See also Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) for a discussion of the negative economic effects of policy swings between nationalization and de-nationalization of the British steel industry.

stresses that create some inter-party conflict, but at times they can “break” the parties and lead to a realignment. Over the last half-century, Democrats have been the more fractured of the two parties with an uneasy marriage of the New Left with the New Deal coalition of unions, the white working class, Southern Democrats, and racial minorities.

However, we speculate that the Republicans will be the more fractured of the two parties moving forward. Republicans in Congress have moved further to the right than Democrats to the left over the last 40 years and the Republican Party now covers more ideological territory from center-right to far-right. That is, contemporary Republicans appear to be primarily divided not over a new issue or regional concerns, but on the degree of their conservatism.

We find evidence in support of this claim at both the elite and mass level. Figure 4 shows the distribution of Democrats and Republicans in the 113th Congress along the first (liberal-conservative) dimension recovered by the DW-NOMINATE Common Space procedure. In both chambers, Republicans are further away from the center and have wider variances than the Democrats ($F = 1.83$, $p < 0.01$ in the 113th House, $F = 3.33$, $p < 0.01$ in the 113th Senate). It is difficult to identify distinct ideological clusters of Democratic MCs, but it is easy to do so for Republicans; for instance, moderate-conservatives like Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and former Senator Robert Dole (R-KS), solid conservatives like Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI), and far-right Republicans with close ties to the Tea Party movement like Senators Rand Paul (R-KY) and Ted Cruz (R-TX). With the possible exception of foreign policy and domestic surveillance issues, these groups hold conservative positions over a range

of economic and social/cultural issues.²⁵ The differences seem to lie primarily in the *extremity* of their positions; for instance, how much they would like to cut from entitlement programs and the federal budget to achieve deficit reduction or whether they are willing to risk a government shutdown by insisting on eliminating funding for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Figure 4 About Here

We see a similar cleavage among Republicans in the electorate, as well. The Pew Research Center's January 2013 Political Survey includes several measures that we think are useful to examine this divide among Republican Party identifiers and leaners.²⁶

Namely, the survey asks for attitudes toward the Tea Party (Agree, Disagree, or No Opinion) and whether respondents prefer elected officials who make compromises with people they disagree with or elected officials who stick to their positions. Demographic information and the makeup of issue attitudes are provided for both subsets of Republican identifiers and leaners in Table 1.

²⁵ If the most conservative group of congressional Republicans were breaking from other Republicans on new issue dimensions, we would expect that they their fit to the existing spatial model would be poorer. However, the correlation between first dimension DW-NOMINATE Common Space score and Geometric Mean Probability (a measure of fit of legislators' observed choices to the spatial model) is $r = 0.20$ among House Republicans and $r = 0.37$ among Senate Republicans in the 112th Congress and $r = 0.05$ among House Republicans and $r = 0.06$ among Senate Republicans in the 113th Congress. Hence, there is at most a weak relationship between ideological extremity and spatial fit among Republican MCs in the last two Congresses, and to the extent a relationship does exist, it is positive (meaning more conservative legislators have a better fit to the model).

²⁶ Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, *January 2013 Political Survey*, available for download at: <http://www.people-press.org/2013/01/13/january-2013-political-survey/>.

Table 1 About Here

As we would expect, there is considerable overlap between the Tea Party and preferred type of elected official: 86% of respondents who prefer elected officials who stick to their positions agree with the Tea Party, and 65% of those who agree with the Tea Party prefer elected officials who stick to their positions while 66% of those who disagree with the Tea Party prefer elected officials who compromise. This schism also corresponds to both economic and social conservatism, with Republicans who agree with the Tea Party and favor sticking to one's position over compromising rating themselves as more conservative on a five-point ideological scale, supporting restrictions on abortion and opposing gun control measures at higher rates, and in particular displaying greater levels of animosity towards the federal government and concern about the scope of federal power.²⁷ This bundle of issue positions aligns with the present liberal-conservative dimension, it is simply further to the right than most of the Republican Party. In the electorate as well as Congress, then, there appear to be greater internal stresses within the Republican Party between the ideological center and right.

²⁷ See also Gary C. Jacobson, "The President, the Tea Party, and Voting Behavior in 2010: Insights from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study," paper presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Seattle, WA.

FIGURE 1: IDEOLOGICAL DISPERSION OF THE PARTIES IN CONGRESS

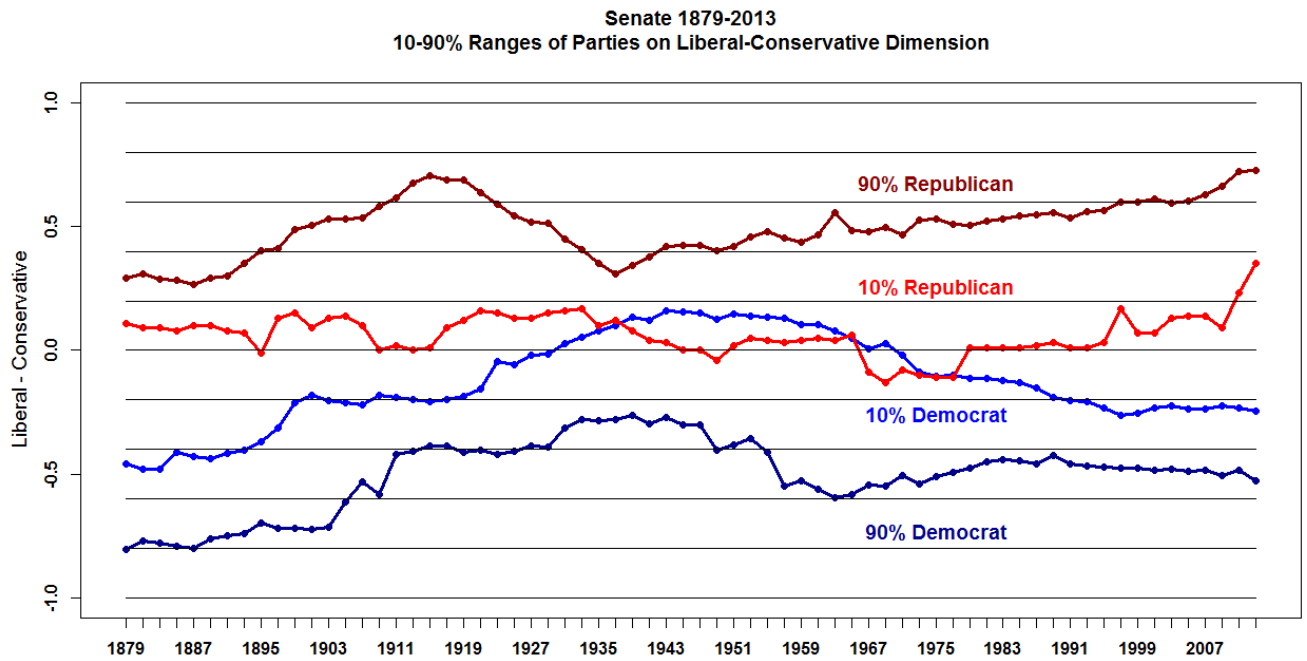
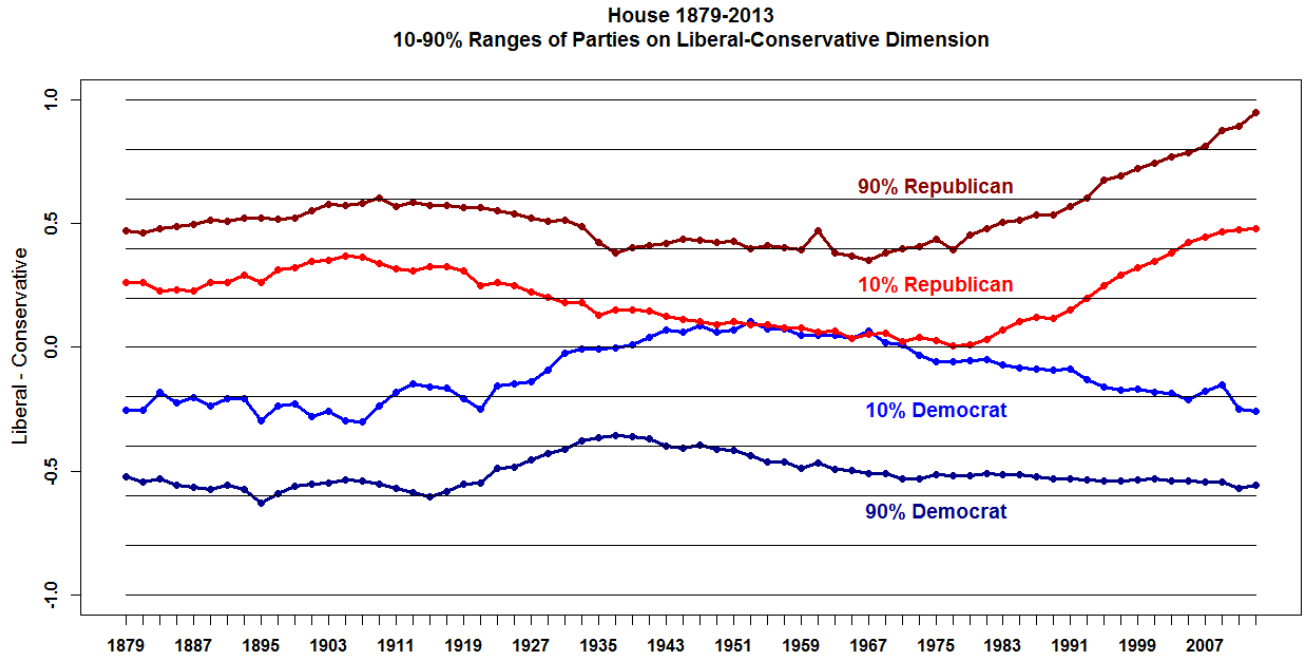


FIGURE 2: SPATIAL FIT OF HOUSE ROLL CALL VOTES ON SELECTED ISSUES

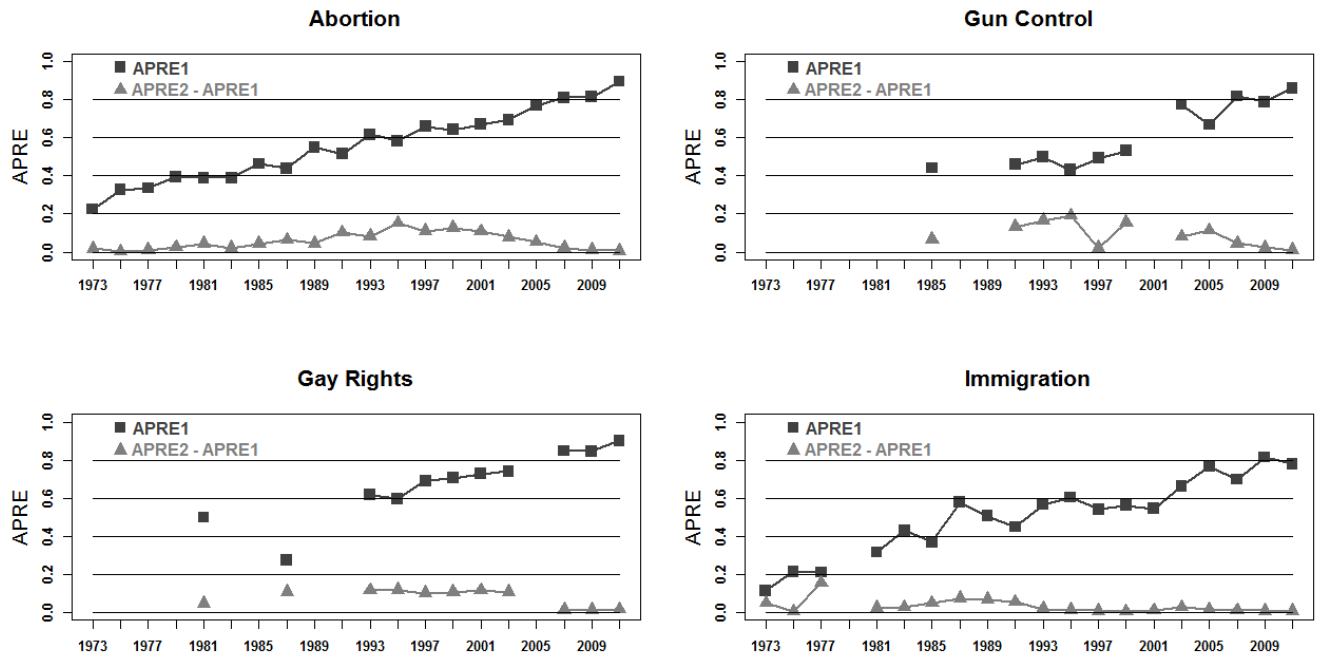


FIGURE 3: CONGRESSIONAL POLICY OUTCOMES AND POLICY SWINGS

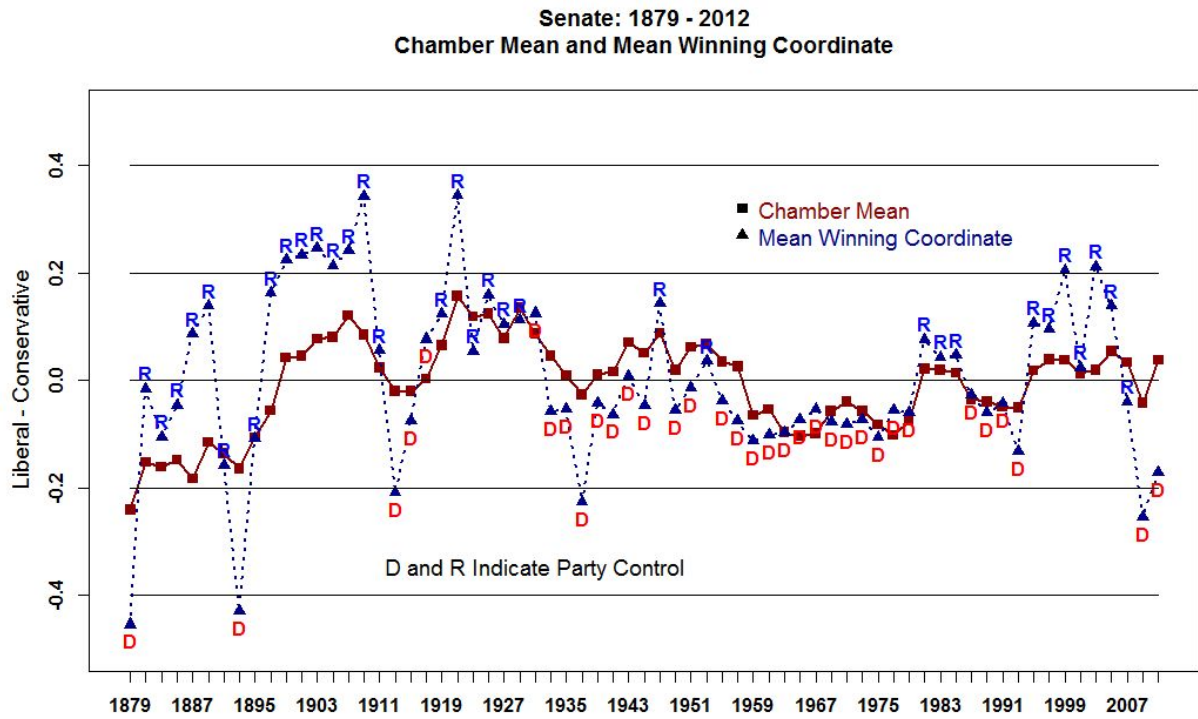
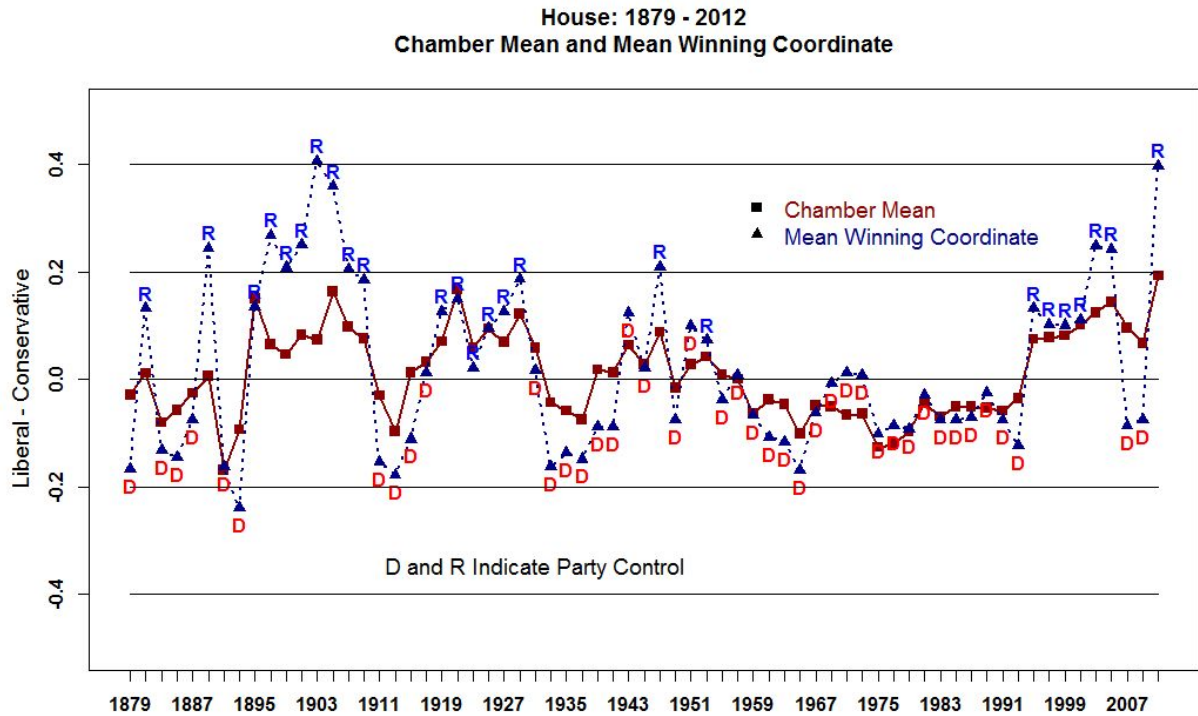


FIGURE 4: IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES IN THE 113TH CONGRESS

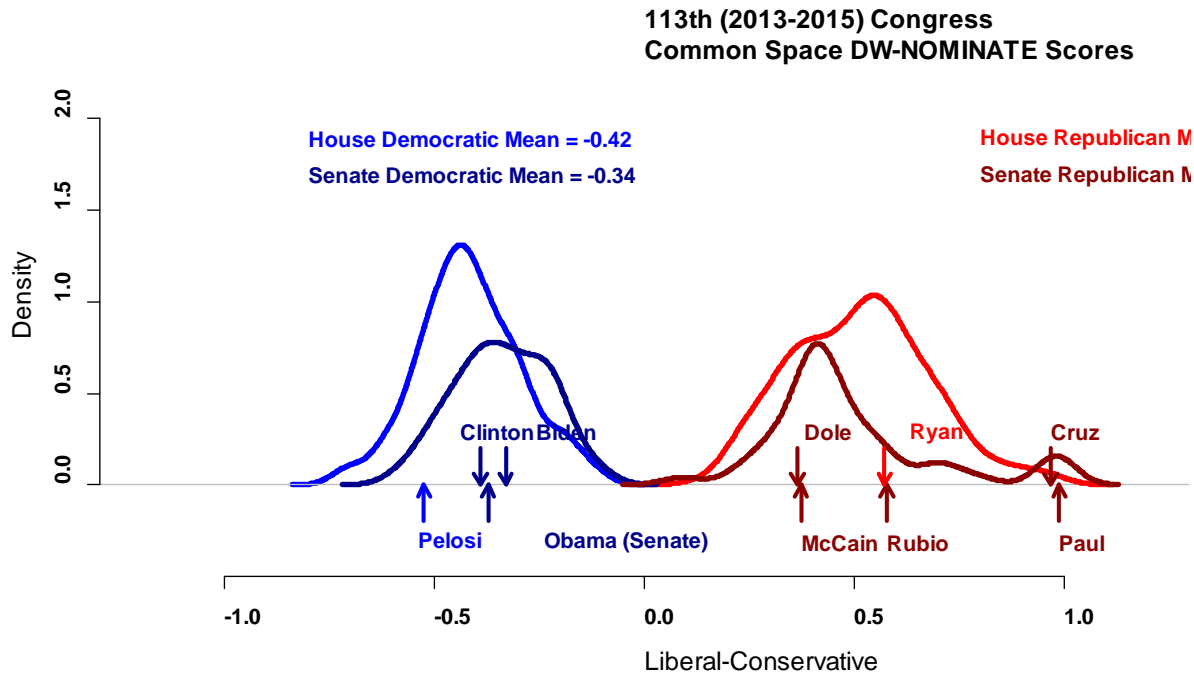


TABLE 1: ATTITUDES AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF REPUBLICANS IN THE ELECTORATE

	Agree Tea Party (N = 247)	Disagree Tea Party (N = 71)	No Opinion Tea Party (N = 299)	Stick to Positions (N = 331)	Compromise (N = 262)
Agree with Tea Party				86%	64%
Prefer Politicians who Compromise to Those Who Stick to Positions	35%	66%	46%		
The Federal Government is a Major Threat to Personal Rights and Freedoms	66%	44%	38%	55%	40%

Angry with the Federal Government	44%	28%	21%	36%	23%
Demographics					
Income > \$75k	41%	39%	27%	32%	38%
Age (median)	56	54	52	54	53
White	93%	89%	83%	84%	88%
Born Again	50%	47%	48%	57%	38%
Attend Religious Services at Least Weekly	51%	49%	46%	51%	44%
Ideology					
Self-Placement on 5-point scale (mean)	4.02	3.43	3.59	3.84	3.61
Rating of Republican Party on 5-point scale (mean)	3.45	3.86	3.51	3.70	3.41
Very Conservative	26%	4%	10%	19%	11%
Conservative	54%	44%	48%	54%	46%
Issues					
Overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i>	51%	46%	40%	53%	38%
Abortion is Not that Important Compared to Other Issues	43%	43%	51%	45%	61%
Favor Ban on Semi-Automatic Weapons	38%	48%	56%	43%	61%
Favor Ban on High-Capacity Ammunition Clips	40%	63%	54%	44%	71%

Dealing with Moral Breakdown Should be a Top Priority	55%	41%	52%	51%	51%
Smoking Marijuana Morally Wrong	48%	35%	48%	52%	39%
Reducing the Deficit Should Be a Top Priority	96%	81%	75%	84%	85%

Source: Pew Research Center, January 2013 Political Survey (Republican identifiers and Republican leaners only).