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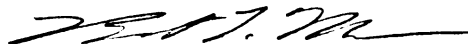
Pressures, Priorities, and Legislative Behavior:
Roll-Call Voting in The House of Representatives

presented by

Suzanne M. Gold

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**PRESSURES, PRIORITIES, AND LEGISLATIVE BEHAVIOR:
ROLL-CALL VOTING IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

By

Suzanne M. Gold

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

PRESSURES, PRIORITIES, AND LEGISLATIVE BEHAVIOR: ROLL-CALL VOTING IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

By

Suzanne M. Gold

In this three-essay dissertation, I test the bonds of representation between members of the House of Representatives and their constituents by employing the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey, which has yet to be fully exploited in political science. First, I argue that district preference, party pressure, and national preferences have a significant and independent impact on representative voting behavior. Because of progressive ambition, members of the House balance national preferences with party pressure and district preference when voting on the floor. Next, I posit that representative are responsive to district preference on salient issues but not responsive to district preference on non-salient issues. Looking at the 2000 election cycle, where education was the most salient issue, and defense spending was one of the least salient issues, I find district preference on education has a significant and independent effect on representative's education spending roll-call votes. Finally, I illustrate that incongruence, or mismatch, between district preference and House member roll-call behavior entices quality challengers and causes a decrease in incumbent vote share. More specifically, representatives that are considered extreme, consistently vote the party line, and deter quality challengers resulting in an increase in vote share because voters actually prefer more extreme incumbents.

This dissertation is dedicated to those who supported me and believed in me - even when
I did not believe in myself.

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Striking a Balance: Conflicting Pressures and Legislative Voting 1994-2004

“What is the primary purpose of a political leader? To build a majority. If voters care about parking lots, then talk about parking lots.”

-Newt Gingrich

Introduction

As political leaders, members of the House of Representatives wear many hats. Members of the House are representatives of their parties who are constantly trying to work the majoritarian system, while concurrently acting as transplanted locals from their districts. Toeing both the party and constituency lines creates a delicate juggling act for members of the House. Stay in step with both, and members can help ensure their seat safety. However, when balancing these two often times conflicting pressures, which one weighs heavier? Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart (2001) examined this question in the context of candidate positioning and found, “congressional candidates have primarily espoused the ideology associated with the national party, moderating very little to accommodate local ideological conditions” (136). In other words, candidates position themselves closer to the national party than their own individual districts. In this instance, party wins over district. However, if members of the House stray too far away from district preference in favor of the party line, they face lower vote shares (Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002). Moreover, another dimension to this argument that has received much less attention in the literature on representative decision-making is that of the Median Voter Theorem. Downs (1957) told us that at the national level, in order to garner as many votes as possible, candidates should converge to a common point in the middle. In addition, Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) found that representatives

who voted moderately were more successful at the polls. Between the party, the district, and the nation, where should a candidate in a U.S. House election place themselves to keep all actors happy? The answer I provide – between all three. Members need to take into account all three.

In this paper, I argue that in order for members of the House to ensure seat safety, they should balance all three aspects. The party, the district, and the nation do exercise more or less influence across elections, but overall, members will balance all three in order to protect their electoral fortunes. Representatives do not have to sacrifice the party for the voters, both at the district and national level, or vice versa. They can consciously balance it all in order to ensure electoral fortunes. With reelection as the proximate goal of members of Congress (Mayhew 1974), securing ones seat is essential to gaining seniority, building a reputation with the voters, and eventually running for higher office. While literature has separately looked at the influence of party (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 1999; Aldrich 1995; Jacobson 1999; Aldrich and Rohde 1999, 2001; Aldrich, Berger, and Rohde 2002; Sinclair 2002) and constituency (Miller and Stokes 1963; Jackson 1971; Kingdon 1973; Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1974; Fenno 1978; Page et al. 1984; Wright 1989; Jackson and King 1989; Arnold 1990; Bartels 1991; Bianco 1994) over congressional roll-call behavior, none has looked at them coupled with national constituency pressures. Because progressive ambition can affect House member behavior (Hibbing 1986), we should expect members to consider present national preferences in preparation for relying on larger a constituency for future election to higher office. Candidates must balance the idea of the national Median Voter Theorem with party and district in order to safeguard current and future electoral fortunes.

In this study, I examine incumbent positioning during the 103rd-108th Congresses (1994-2004). Using roll-call data, I look at the impact of the nation, the party, and districts on the voting behavior of members of the House of Representatives. Previous literature has told us that all three are important, but which one do the representatives themselves think is the most important? Do they balance them, and if so, how? Building upon the findings of Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001), I add a discussion of the importance of national constituency when it comes to legislative voting. Members are aware of the possibility of punishment from all sides, and in order to secure reelection now and in the future, will not give the voters or the party any reason to turn to another candidate. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: The first section outlines the literature on congressional decision-making and position taking. The second section discusses the data and measures used in this study. Next, I discuss the results, and finally I offer conclusions and comments on future research.

Party

Members of the House face party pressure for several reasons: representatives feel compelled to vote with the party to improve the party reputation (Cox and McCubbins 1993), create rules that benefit the party (Sinclair 1998), provide more power to the leadership through party homogeneity (Aldrich and Rohde 1999, 2001), and advance the policy and electoral goals of the majority party (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991, Rohde 1991, Cox and McCubbins 1993, Rohde and Aldrich 1995, Sinclair 1995, Aldrich, Berger, and Rohde 2002, Sinclair 2002). Because the House is a majoritarian institution in which the party in power has almost complete institutional control, the single goal of the majority party is to *stay* in the majority, while the single goal of the

minority party is to *gain* the majority. Therefore, members of the House should always vote the party line. The following is a graphical representation of the relationship between congressional voting and district preference *if* members of the House were to always vote the party line.¹

[Figure 1 About Here]

Members who do not toe the party line in order to further the policy and electoral causes of the party may face some sort of punishment. Since the party leadership controls committee assignments (Cooper and Brady 1981), rank-and-file members know that party loyalty is the best way to ensure being assigned to their desired committees. The party leadership also can impact the diffusion of pork to congressional districts (Krutz 2001), so party loyalty help keeps pork coming into a representative's district. Finally, and most severely, members who continually buck the party line run the risk of losing party support in the primary. For example, The Republican Party abandoned Representative Joe Schwarz (R-MI) in favor of Tim Wallberg in the 2006 Republican primary. Schwarz was considered a more moderate Republican, and after only one term, the Republican Party decided to throw their support behind a more conservative candidate. As a result, Schwarz lost his seat. The Republican Party discarded Schwarz for a candidate that would more closely toe the party line, and that shift in support lead to Schwarz's defeat. Members of the House could face the same fate if they consistently voted against the party.

¹ The y-axis represents House member behavior (0,1) where 0 is the most conservative and 1 is the most liberal. The x-axis represents district preference as Republican presidential vote in the district (0,1), where 0 is the most liberal district and 1 is the most conservative.

District

While party exerts a significant force on congressional decision-making, it is tempered by constituency constraints (Jacobson 1999). There is an interactive relationship between party-line voting and constituency preference. Therefore, party pressure must be coupled with district preference. Many scholars have argued that constituency influence does motivate legislative behavior (Jackson 1971; Kingdon 1973; Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1974; Fenno 1978; Page et al. 1984; Wright 1989; Jackson and King 1989; Arnold 1990; Bartels 1991; Bianco 1994). According to these narratives, in order to secure reelection, members of the House should vote according to district preference. The following is a graphical representation of the relationship between congressional floor behavior and district preference *if* representatives always voted with their district.

[Figure 2 About Here]

While the party can exercise punishment over members, the most devastating punishment comes from voters. The best way to punish a member of Congress is simply to vote for the challenger (Erikson and Wright 1980; Page, et al. 1984; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995; Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002). Empirical evidence showed that House members vote closely with the preferences of their district in order to avoid losing electoral support (Miller and Stokes 1963; Wright 1981; Jackson and King 1989; Kingdon 1989; Arnold 1990; Bartels 1991; Jacobson 1992; Overby et al. 1992), and do believe that their behavior on the floor has an impact on their chances of winning reelection (Matthews and Stimson 1975;

Aldrich 1995; Jacobson 1996; Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002). Members of the House must balance party and constituency in order to have the best possible chance to retain their seat.

Progressive Ambition

While the national constituency usually is discussed in terms of presidential and even senatorial elections, it is a consideration for members of the House if they want to run for higher office in the future. Rohde (1979) described progressive ambition as a politician who holds an office and attempts to gain another regarded as more attractive. Almost all members of the House hold this ambition. The expected value of running for an office is the function of the probability of winning, the value of the office, and the cost of running (Rohde 1979). A member only will run if the expected utility is positive. Part of the probability of winning is the way in which the larger constituency views the candidate. A member of the House with his or her sights set on higher office must take into consideration the preferences of the larger constituency from almost the very beginning of their tenure. Lublin (1994) argued that challengers act strategically when deciding to enter based on local and national forces. Incumbents must consider those national forces when voting on the House floor in preparation for running for a higher office. Strategically, Downs (1957) told us that the best way to encompass as many voters as possible is to moderate. Previous research posited that members of the House who moderate are less likely to be punished at the polls (Schoenberger 1969; Erikson 1971; Johannes and McAdams 1981; Erikson and Wright 1993; Brady et al. 1996; Jacobson 1996; Canes-Wrone, Brady, Cogan 2002). Therefore, when progressive ambition is at play, members should place themselves directly in the middle of the

national spectrum. The following is a graphical relationship between congressional floor behavior and district preference *if* a member always followed national preferences.

[Figure 3 About Here]

Combining Pressures

The best way to ensure reelection in the present and future is to balance district, party, and national preferences. Sinclair (2001) found that members of the House vote in a manner that balances party, policy, and district goals. Crespin, Gold, and Rohde (2006) also argued that multiple factors such as party and district have independent and significant effects on House floor voting. Members of the House are aware the party (Cooper and Brady 1981) and the voters (Kingdon 1989) are constantly monitoring their voting behavior, and therefore, the best way to satisfy all actors involved is to balance the preferences of those actors equally. The following is a graphical representation of the relationship between congressional floor behavior and district preference *if* members of the House balance all three.

[Figure 4 About Here]

Figure 4 is a hybrid of the previous three figures. The slopes of the lines in Figure 4 merely are an equal combination of the slopes of Figures 1, 2, and 3. In the case of Figure 4, we see representatives giving consideration to voting the party line, voting the district line, and moderating in order to appease as many national voters as possible.

Striking a Balance

The theoretical expectations that result from this literature are straightforward. Members of the House want to be reelected both for their current seat and in the future for a higher seat. In the face of party pressure, district pressure, and national forces, the best way for representatives to secure their electoral fortunes is to balance these often times competing and conflicting priorities. Punishment can come from all sides involved if at any time one of those sides feels neglected. Parties will abandon representatives either by revoking rewards or backing another candidate. Additionally detrimental is the possibility that voters will cease to cast votes for House incumbents running for their current seat or a higher seat who have not furthered their interests. Rather than sacrificing one priority for another, representatives can appease all actors by weighing party, district, and national goals. Therefore, in a multivariate context, the party, the district, and the nation should all have an independent and significant effect on House members' voting behavior.

Data

To examine these theoretical expectations, I concentrate on the 103rd – 108th Congresses (1994-2004). During this time of Republican control, we saw a significant increase in both the rate at which incumbents were getting reelected and the margin at which they were winning (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2002). Therefore, incumbents were keeping both the voters and the party happy. This time period is ideal in order to determine the best strategy for representatives to continue to receive the support of the party and the voters. What can we learn from the successes of the representatives from the 103rd – 108th Congresses? How were they balancing party, district, and nation and

securing solid reelection? The answer I provide is that they were balancing all three factors – party, district, and nation – equally.

Measures

District

I use Republican presidential vote measured as the two-party vote in the district from the 1994-2004 elections as the measure of district preference.² Congressional scholarship has long used presidential vote in the district as a proxy for district preference.³

House Member

I use first dimension DW-NOMINATE scores from the 103rd – 108th Congresses (1994-2004) as a measure of overall legislator behavior on a liberal-conservative scale. The scale goes from -1 to +1 (Liberal to Conservative) with extreme partisans at the poles. For the purposes of linearity, I rescale the scores [0,1]. I also control for representative partisanship by coding Democrats as 0 and Republicans as 1.⁴

Nation

Because I am employing OLS regression, I will measure national preferences using the constant. The constant is the predicted value of the dependent variable when all other variables are 0. So in the model where a representative only follows the national preference, the coefficient on party and district are 0, and therefore, the constant becomes our indicator of national preference.

Results

In this section, I plot the data and discuss the empirical expectations. Next, I present a series of OLS regressions and discuss the theoretical implications of my

² I use the most recent two-party Republican presidential vote in the district as the measure of district preference for each election.

³ Erikson and Wright 1989, 1993, 1997; Brady et al. 1996, Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002; Crespin, Gold, and Rohde 2006.

⁴ Bernard Sanders (I-VT) is coded as a Democrat.

findings. I expect the coefficients on the three predictors of House roll-call behavior (district, party, and nation) to be positive and statistically significant.

How Are Members Voting?

According to the mixed model, and referring back to Figure 4, representatives should strategically position themselves between party pressure, district preference, and overall national preferences. In other words, they should combine voting the party line, voting district preference, and moderating to garner as much of the national preference as possible. The outcome, as represented in Figure 4, is one that appeases each individual actor in play. Upon plotting the actual data from 1994-2004 against Figure 4, we see that members are balancing according to my theoretical expectations.

[Figure 5 About Here]⁵

Figure 5 illustrates that members of the House are consciously taking into consideration which actors they must cater to in order to secure present and future electoral fortunes. Representatives were able to balance voters and party during this time period when Republicans were cracking the party whip, and the nation was moving in a more conservative direction. While Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001) found that the district is abandoned in favor of the national party, it appears that representatives truly do not have to pick and choose between the two. Members of the House do not have to sacrifice district preference in order to show party loyalty. Moreover, representatives do

⁵ District preference is represented by Republican presidential vote in the district, and representative behavior is represented by the 1st Dimension DW-NOMINATE scores rescaled [0,1].

not have to run the risk of losing a pork project in order to appease the voters in either the nation or the individual district.

Estimating the Model

Representatives in the House during the time period of this study are striking the appropriate balance. When estimating a model of roll-call voting, what are the expectations of the coefficients on the explanatory variables under the partisan, national Downsian, district Downsian, and mixed models? Table 1 shows the expected coefficients for party of the representative, Republican presidential vote in the district, and the national preference (the constant) for all four models.

[Table 1 About Here]

In the partisan model, since representatives cast roll-call votes based solely on where the party line is, the coefficient on party of the representative should be one, while all other coefficients should be zero. In the district Downsian model, since members of the House are following the median district preference, the coefficient on Republican presidential vote in the district should be one, while all others should be zero. Looking at the national Downsian model, the coefficient on the constant should be 0.50. This represents a perfectly moderate member who is voting right in the middle in order to cast the net as wide as possible. The predictive model, (the mixed model), provides coefficient estimates that are one-third of each of the other three models. Theoretically, I argue that members of the House balance party, district, and nation in order to secure current and future seats of government. Balancing all three provides for coefficient estimates that are one-third of the estimates of the other models. Therefore, in the mixed

model the coefficients on party of the representative and Republican presidential vote in the district should be roughly 0.33, and the coefficient on the constant (national preferences) should be roughly 0.17.

Value of the Mixed Model

Table 2 reports the results of an OLS regression with the 1st Dimension DW-NOMINATE scores of all incumbents rescaled [0,1] as the dependent variable. The independent variables are party of the representative, Republican presidential vote in the district, and national voter preferences as measured by the constant. The results tell us a few important things. First, holding all else constant, Republican representatives are more likely to cast more conservative roll-calls. Second, the higher the Republican presidential vote in the district, the more conservative a representative votes. The relationship between party, district, and roll-call votes are as expected. The model has an R^2 of 0.82, telling us that party, district, and national influences explain 82% of the variation of representative roll-call behavior.

Most importantly, these results illustrate that as predicted by the mixed model, party, district, and the nation each exert a positive, independent, and statistically significant effect in representative floor behavior. The coefficient on party of the representative (0.31) is almost identical to the expected estimate (0.33). The coefficient on district preference (0.45) is a bit higher than predicted by the mixed model (0.33). Nonetheless, this is not a surprise since voters in the district exercise the most immediate and damaging electoral threat over members of the House. If a member had to choose between losing a committee assignment or losing his or her seat, the choice is simple – go with the district to avoid the electoral threat. In regard to national preferences, the

coefficient on the constant (0.14) is very close to the estimate provided by the mixed model (0.17). Because progressive ambition is held by most members of the House, the national constituency is in their minds right along with their party and their districts. The national constituency helps temper the extremity of voting the party line as well as voting with the popular passions of individual districts.

[Table 2 About Here]

To add to the predictive value of the mixed model, Figure 6 plots the individual party regression lines from the results in Table 2 against the plotted data from Figure 5. As the figure shows, while the regression lines may be a bit steeper, the regression results follow the estimates from the mixed model almost perfectly. This also is a graphical representation of the slightly stronger relationship between district preference and roll-call behavior. The lines are steeper because the districts are pulling their representatives in their direction than the direction of the party. This is exactly the opposite of what Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001) argue. During the time period they study (1976-1996), members may have abandoned their districts in favor of the national party, but since then, members have been more responsive to the district than the party.

[Figure 6 About Here]

In order to further analyze the slightly stronger effect of district preference and roll-call voting, in Table 3 I run a bivariate OLS regression of Republican presidential vote in the district on the rescaled DW-NOMINATE to examine the predictive value of

adding party of the representative to the model. The starkest difference is the coefficient on the national preferences (constant). In the model without party, the relationship between national preferences and roll-call behavior is no longer statistically significant. Perhaps most importantly, the R^2 drops dramatically from the 0.82 in the mixed model to 0.53. While the results in Table 2 illustrate that district preference is marginally more important than party, not including it in a model of roll-call voting dramatically decreases its predictive value. Party is one of the most important determinants of congressional roll-call voting coupled with district and national forces.

[Table 3 About Here]

Conclusion and Discussion

Former Speaker Gingrich was correct when he discussed the importance of party and constituency. Building, keeping, or trying to win back the majority in the House of Representatives requires party loyalty from all members. Nonetheless, district preferences and pressures temper this allegiance. Voters expect that their elected representatives will reflect their preferences in their floor behavior, even in the face of party pressure. Parties expect that their rank-and-file members will reflect their preferences in their floor behavior, even in the face of district pressure. Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001) found that in the face of these two pressures, district preference is abandoned for the national party. What I have presented tells a different story. Representatives can balance the two conflicting priorities in a manner that keeps both happy. In fact, my empirical results show that representatives are choosing to follow district preference more than party loyalty. Even during a time when party loyalty

was more important than ever, (1994-2004), both Republican and Democratic members of the House still balanced party and district.

However, there is another dimension of this juggling act that had been previously unexamined. The Median Voter Theorem argued that at the national level, candidates should converge to a common middle point to gain as many votes as possible. Why would members of the House have to take the national constituency into consideration if they are only running in their specific districts? Progressive ambition, held by almost all members of the House, makes it extremely important to begin voting early on in a manner that is attractive to as many voters in the national constituency as possible. Moreover, casting the net as wide as possible by moderating cannot come at the expense of appeasing the extreme voting the party requires and the sometimes varying voting the districts want. All three aspects must be in a representative's voting calculus. This mixed model predicts representative roll-call behavior between 1994-2004 extremely well. While the empirical results show that representatives do favor district over party, withholding party in a model predicting roll-call behavior dramatically decreases its predictive value. Members of the House of Representatives know they are being monitored and face punishment from all sides; therefore, they consciously consider all the sides when casting a roll-call vote.

Examining the different forms of punishment from the party, the district, and the nation is the next step in analyzing the factors that influence representative roll-call behavior. We would expect members of the House who neglect the party to receive less pork, not receive preferred committee assignments, and even lose party support in the primary. Additionally, we could see the entrance of a quality challenger in the primary

and the general election as a form of district electoral punishment. Loss of vote share and even loss of reelection are the most extreme forms of electoral punishment, and if a representative is out of step with district preference for too long, this can occur. Finally, those members of the House who do run for higher office, and have not considered the national constituency may have a more difficult time getting elected than those incumbents who took into account national preferences. Examining punishment is the next step in appreciating the equilibrium that members of the House must maintain in order to secure current and future electoral fortunes. This delicate balance between conflicting and competing forces impacts all aspects of congressional politics. From roll-call voting, to committees, to elections, representatives must juggle it all in order to achieve the ultimate goal – retaining or gaining a seat.

Tables

Table 1: Expectations for Models of Roll-Call Influence

	Partisan	District	National	Mixed
Republican Presidential Vote	0	1	0	0.33
Party of the Representative	1	0	0	0.33
Constant	0	0	0.50	0.17

**Table 2: Party, District, and National Forces on Roll-Call Behavior
1994-2004**

Party of the Representative	0.31*** (0.005)
Republican Presidential Vote	0.45*** (0.016)
Constant	0.14*** (0.007)
N	2587
F	5890.11***
Root MSE	0.09
R ²	0.82

Dependent variable – 1st Dimension DW-NOMINATE score, rescaled to [0,1].

*** $p < 0.001$

(Robust standard errors in parentheses)

**Table 3: District Preference and Roll-Call Behavior (without Party)
1994-2004**

Republican Presidential Vote	1.14*** (0.02)
Constant	-0.03 (0.01)
N	2587
F	2867.36***
Root MSE	0.15
R ²	0.53

Dependent variable – 1st Dimension DW-NOMINATE score, rescaled to [0,1].

*** $p < 0.001$

(Robust standard errors in parentheses)

Figures

Figure 1

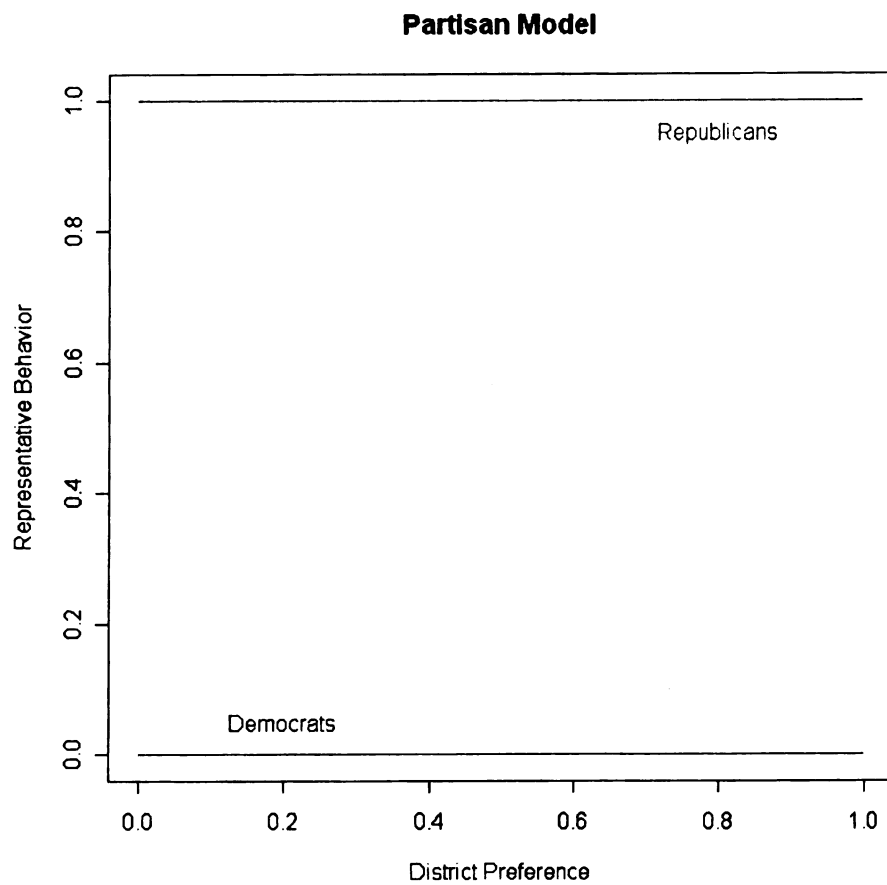


Figure 2

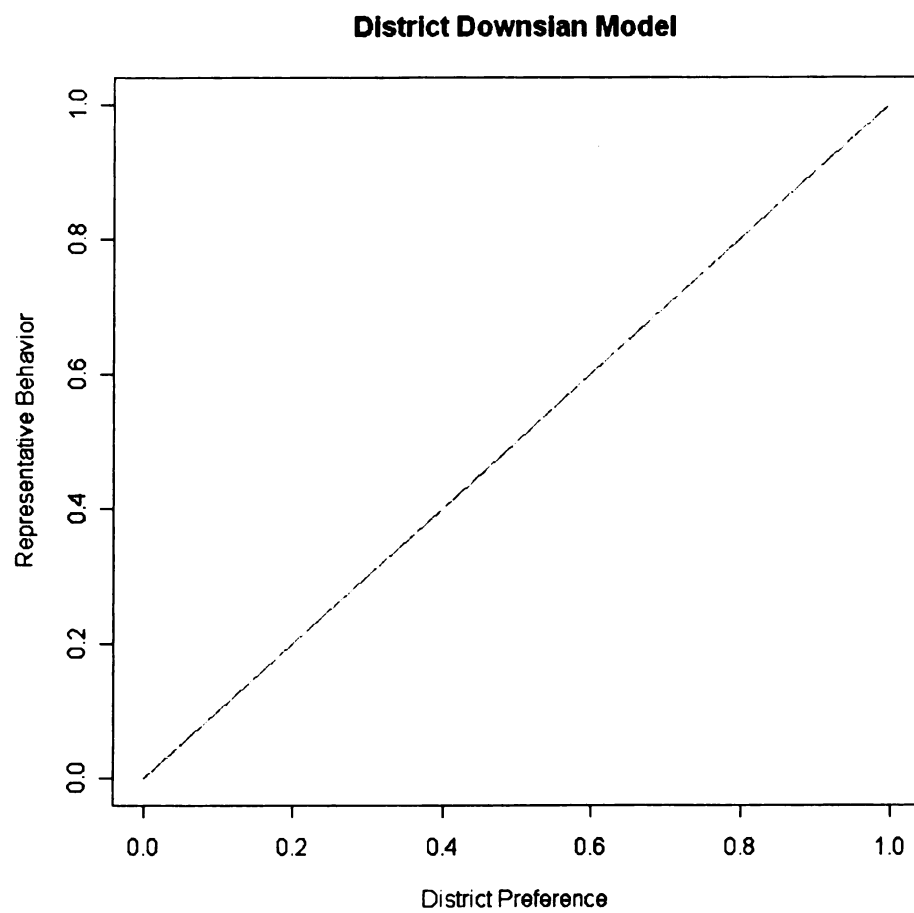


Figure 3

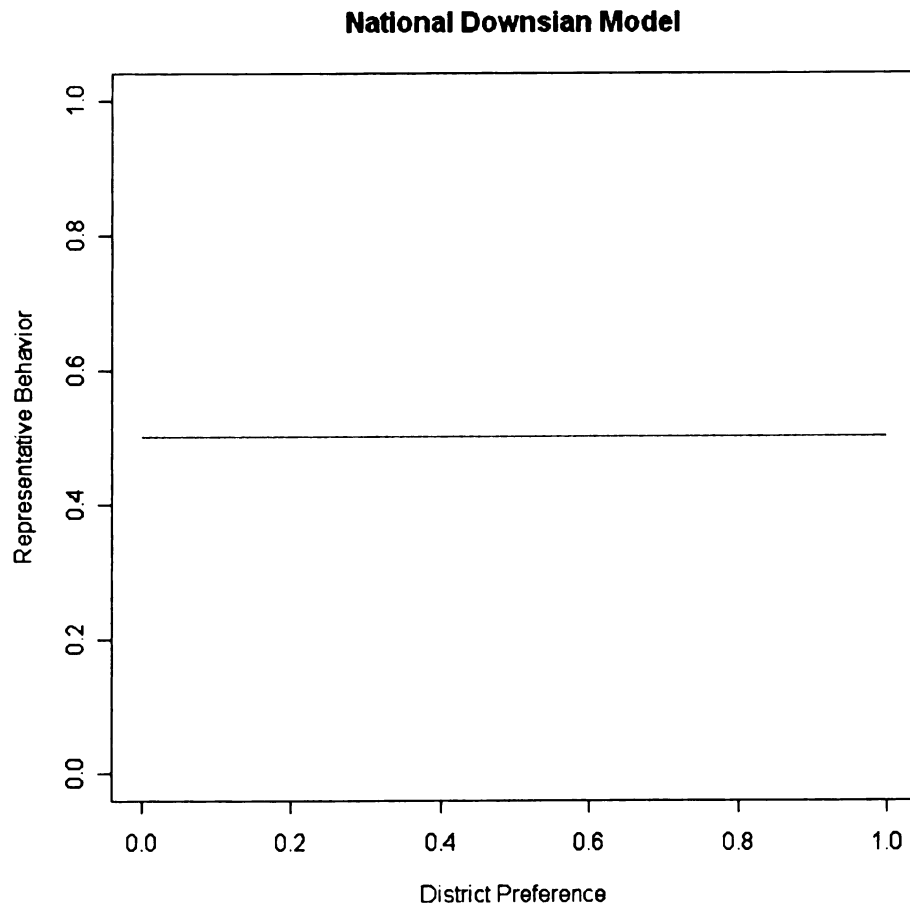


Figure 4

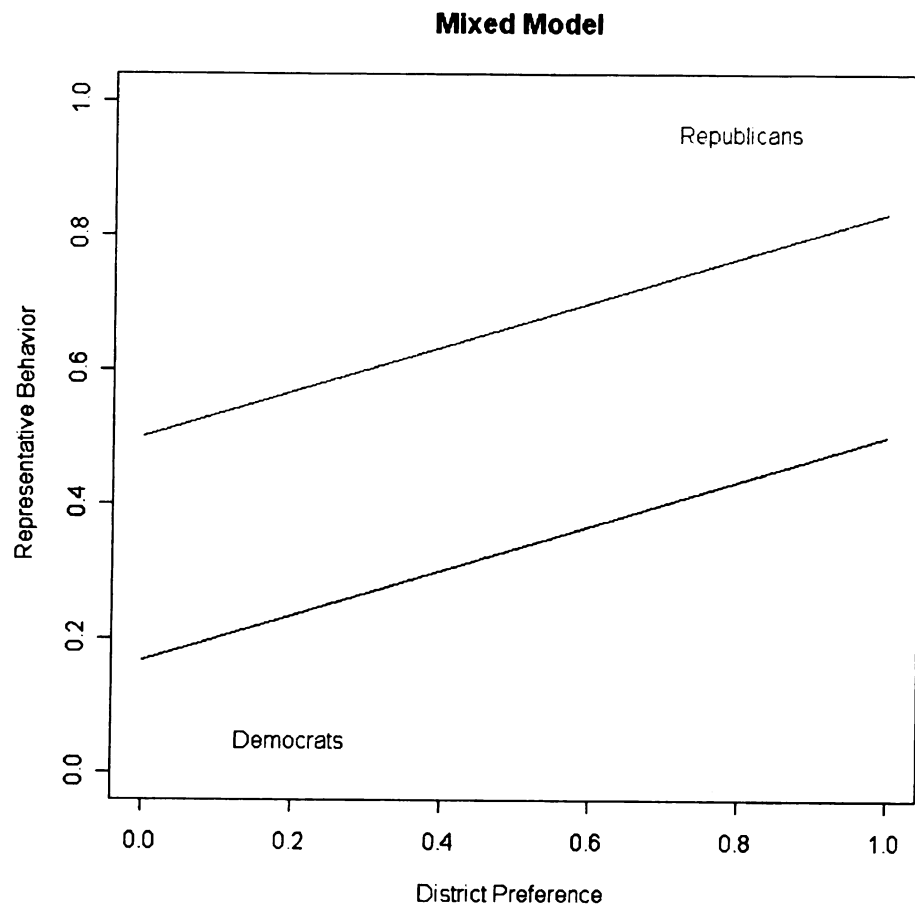


Figure 5

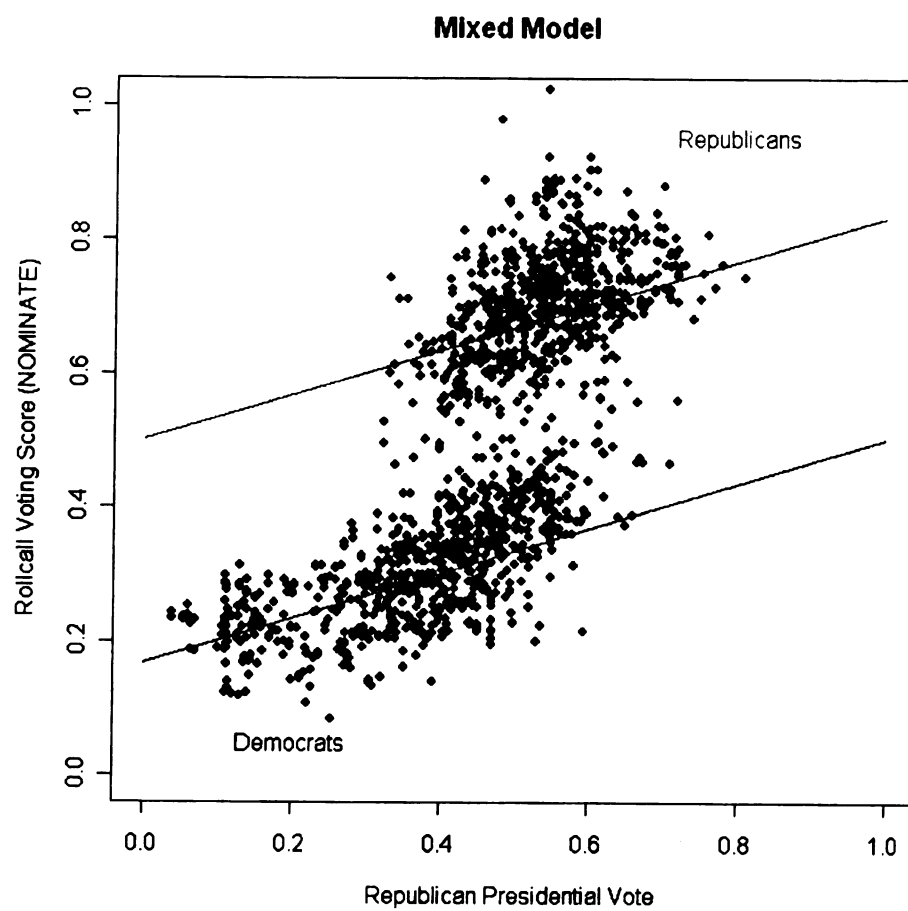
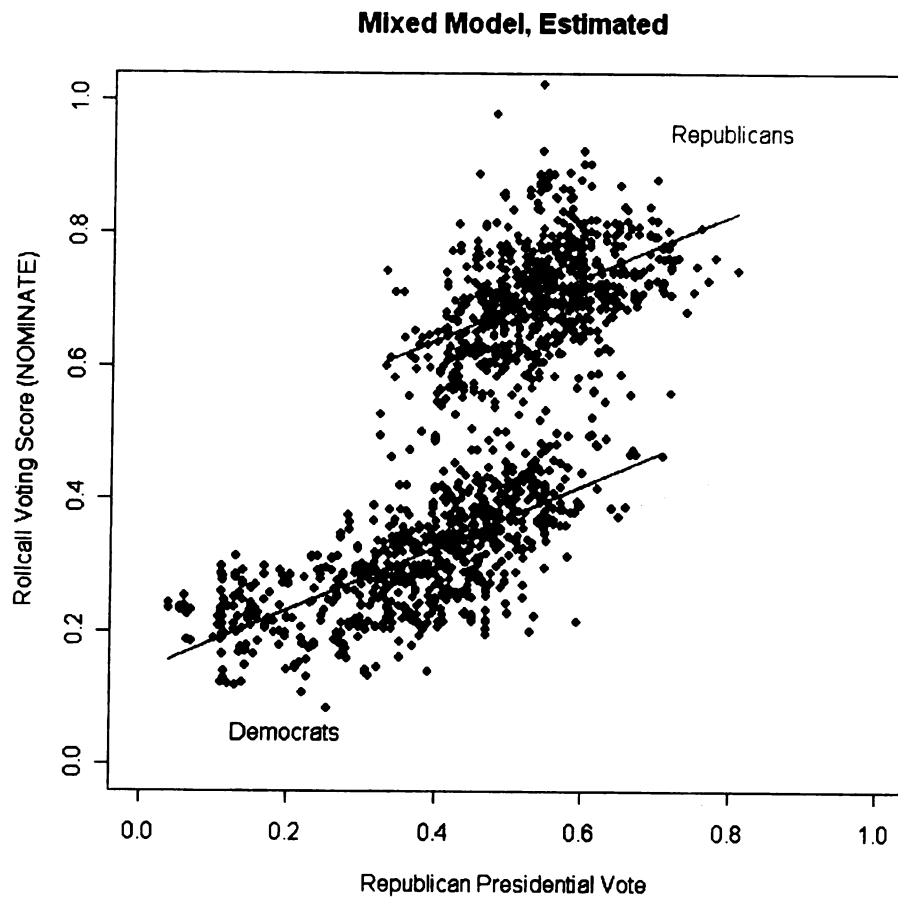


Figure 6



Education v. Defense: Issue Salience and the 106th Congress

Introduction

In a survey in the late 1970's of more than 150 members of the House of Representatives, a majority of those surveyed agreed with the statement, "I seldom have to sound out my constituents because I think so much like them that I know how to react to almost any proposal" (Davidson and Oleszek 2006, p. 122). This implies that members of the House know their districts so well that they will almost always behave in Washington the way their district wants. However, such *congruence*, agreement between district preference and legislator behavior is not automatic. Conflicting pressures and priorities faced by members of the House, coupled with district changes, create a tenuous relationship between the representative and the represented. Therefore, the question becomes: Under what circumstances do members of the House best reflect the preferences of their district? Miller and Stokes (1963) were the first to provide quantitative evidence that there is partisan, ideological, and issue preference congruence between congressional representatives and their voters. While subsequent studies have discussed this relationship, there are some dynamics that have been unexplored due to data limitations.

One such dynamic is the importance of issue salience on voters' evaluation of representatives. The 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) asked the question, "In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing our country today?" The answer given most often was education. During this time, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was due to be renewed, and the federal government had been discussing not only renewing it, but revamping it. This issue was on the minds of the voters and elite members of government. Conversely, according to

the NAES, the least important problem facing the nation during this same time period was defense spending. Since the end of the Cold War, Americans had turned their attention to domestic issues such as education, social welfare programs, and the environment (National Annenberg Election Survey). Defense issues were not at the forefront of the public conscience or the public debate because the country was not involved in a war or international crisis. Because voters did not see issues of defense as *salient* and did not form strong preferences, there would be no expectation that voters would punish members of Congress for voting with the party or their own personal ideology and preferences. However, since education was the most salient issue facing the nation during this time, would voters hold an electoral threat over representatives?

There has been much research examining the theoretical influence of issue salience on legislator behavior. While most scholars agree that the more salient the issue, the more responsive a member of Congress should be to district preference, there have been difficulties quantifying which issue or issues are the most salient to the district. The main contribution of this study provides for an alleviation of such data concerns by employing reliable constituency preference data. In this study, I utilize the 2000 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES). Most research examining the relationship between constituency opinion and representative behavior has used the National Election Study (NES) to approximate district opinion (Page et al. 1984; Hurley 1989; Bartels 1991; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2003), or presidential vote in the district (Erikson 1971; Deckard 1976; Hurley and Kerr 2000; Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2000, 2001). Using the NES is not a reliable measure since there are so few respondents per congressional district. There are excluded districts and those that are included have only a handful of

respondents at best. Using presidential vote in the district as a proxy for district preference is problematic because it varies both by the distribution of district preferences and the positions of the presidential candidates (Clinton 2006). Most importantly, these two measures capture partisan preference *not* issue preferences. While the NES does ask issue salience questions, there are so few respondents per congressional district and not all districts are represented. However, the NAES, provides a substantial increase in respondents per district and includes all districts, thereby increasing the reliability of a measure of district issue salience. Using the NAES, I employ both open and closed-ended policy questions posed to more than 79,000 respondents to assess district policy preferences and aggregate the individual responses to determine district preferences. The large amount of respondents per congressional district provides an unprecedented estimate of district preference and issue salience and a reliable insight into whether those preferences impact legislator behavior.

This paper analyzes the relationship between district issue preference, issue salience, and representatives' roll-call votes. Using the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey, I examine the extent to which members of the House of Representatives in the 106th Congress (1998-2000) voted with district preference on both salient and non-salient issues. The paper is organized as follows: The first section discusses congressional behavior and voter information, and congressional decision-making on all issues and specifically on salient issues. The second section outlines the survey data and measures used to examine the theoretical relationship between representative behavior and district preference. The third section presents the results from the empirical analyses.

And finally, I discuss the implications of the results for congressional representation as well as future research.

Congressional Decision Making

Since Miller and Stokes (1963), additional research has argued that constituency influence does motivate legislative behavior (Jackson 1971; Kingdon 1973; Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1974; Fenno 1978; Page et al. 1984; Wright 1989; Jackson and King 1989; Arnold 1990; Bartels 1991; Bianco 1994). Other scholars have stated that congressional members simply follow their own personal ideologies (Bernstein and Anthony 1974; Kau and Rubin 1979, 1993; Kalt and Zupan 1984; Peltzman 1984; Dougan and Munger 1989; Bernstein 1989; Poole and Rosenthal 1991; Poole and Romer 1993). However, it is not so simple. Literature also has argued that congressional members' behavior is influenced by a combination of multiple factors such as party pressure (Cox and McCubbins 1993; Aldrich, Berger, and Rohde 2002; Sinclair 2002), personal preferences (Aranson and Ordeshook 1972; Aldrich 1983, Wittman 1983; Calvert 1985; Francis, Kenny, Morton, and Schmidt 1994; Crespin, Gold, and Rohde 2006), party activists (Aldrich 1995; Fiorina 1999; Jacobson 2000; Layman and Carsey 2000; Aldrich and Rohde 2001), and policy orientation (Kingdon 1973; Fenno 1973; Rohde 1991; Aldrich 1995; Aldrich and Rohde 2000). Crespin, Gold, and Rohde (2006) found that all of the above factors play a part in congressional member behavior, but the district median opinion has an independent and significant impact on legislator behavior.

Knowing that there are multiple and conflicting priorities and pressures driving congressional members' behavior, the most effective way for constituents to keep their member of the House representing their views when voting is simply to vote for the

challenger (Erikson and Wright 1980; Page, et al. 1984; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995; Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002). Since voters evaluate representatives based on their floor behavior, (and members know this), then the electoral threat is both present and also keeps members of the House inline with their districts' preferences.

Voter Preferences, Salience, and Representative Behavior

The debate as to whether or not voters even know or understand issues and candidates' policy position has been ongoing since the 1960s. While some research argued that voters did not understand policies, issues, or the differences between political candidates (Converse 1964; Popkin 1991; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991) and that voters were incapable of educating themselves in order to become informed on policies and issues (Converse 1964; Sniderman 1993), more recent research has found that voters can use cues or heuristics to educate themselves and make more informed judgments regarding policy (Carmines and Kuklinski 1990; Grofman and Norrander 1990; Mondak 1993; Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). With the presence of cues, citizens are capable of learning in order to form preferences and express those preferences to elected government officials (Druckman 2001).

Moreover, the representatives themselves must believe that the voters in their district are paying attention to their actions in Washington. Kingdon (1989) argued that members of Congress are aware that at least *some* voters in their district are informed and monitoring legislative behavior and evaluate their members of the House accordingly. Empirical evidence found that House members vote closely with the preferences of their district in order to avoid losing electoral support (Miller and Stokes 1963; Wright 1981;

Jackson and King 1989; Kingdon 1989; Arnold 1990; Bartels 1991; Jacobson 1992; Overby et al. 1992) and do believe that their behavior on the floor has an impact on their chances of winning reelection (Matthews and Stimson 1975; Aldrich 1995; Jacobson 1996; Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002). Therefore, representatives are concerned with congruence when *reelection* hinges upon it because the higher the congruence, the more likely a representative is to get reelected. According to this narrative, members of Congress *are* concerned with the electoral impact of their roll-call behavior.

Furthermore, members of Congress do monitor constituency opinion in order to foresee and evade problems of casting the “wrong” vote, especially when the specific issue is salient to the district (Kingdon 1989). The degree to which issues matter is based on the level of saliency (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Schattschneider 1960; Kuklinski and Elling 1977; McCrone and Kuklinski 1979; Alpert 1979; Page and Shapiro 1983; Wlezien 1995; Jacobs and Page 2005). The salience of an issue dictates whether a representative will take on the role of trustee, delegate, or politico. The issues at the forefront of the constituency’s mind will trigger representatives to act more as delegates and follow the instructions of his or her constituency.⁶ Representatives are more likely to vote with their district on a particular issue when it is salient (Hutchings 1998; Kollman 1998; Canes-Wrone 2001). Members' roll-call behavior regarding fairly salient issues may have a larger electoral impact than votes on less salient issues (Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002). When the weight of an issue increases, so should representative responsiveness.

⁶ For a further discussion of issue saliency and representational role theory, see Kuklinski and Elling (1977) and McCrone and Kuklinski (1979).

Drawing upon the Hill and Hurley (2003) issue classifications for the specific issues in this study, we can categorize education as an easy cross-cutting issue since it is uncomplicated and the parties held similar positions. These types of issues call for the one-way linkage from the masses to elites (Hill and Hurley 2003). It is expected that representatives would be responsive to district preference since members of Congress who are unresponsive to their district's opinion on a salient issue are more likely to be the target of electoral punishment (Schattschneider 1960). Again using Hill and Hurley's classification, defense is a complex party-defining issue. Defense and foreign policy issues are the most difficult for voters to understand, and the parties take distinct stances that are integral to their platforms. This type of issue calls for a one-way linkage of elites to the masses (Hill and Hurley 2003). In this case, we would not expect representative responsiveness since the elites make the decisions.

Because of the NAES, we are able to obtain a consistent measure of district issue preference to first garner reliable insight into the most salient issue areas, and second, determine if district issue preference on such issues has a significant and independent effect on legislator behavior. The congruence between district preference on salient issues and legislator behavior should be higher than district preference and non-salient issues and legislator behavior because the more salient the issue, the higher the electoral threat. In a multivariate context, when controlling for district partisanship, district issue preference on salient issues should have an independent and significant effect on legislator behavior, while district issue preference on non-salient issues should not.

Education and Defense Spending in the 106th Congress

The theoretical expectations that develop out of the previous research are straightforward. When voters feel an issue is salient, voters *do* evaluate representatives based on their floor behavior and expect their issue preferences to be reflected in roll-call votes. When this is the case, we observe congruence. Conversely, when voters feel an issue is not salient, voters *do not* evaluate representatives based on their floor behavior and representatives have more freedom to act as a trustee. Therefore, holding all else constant, because education spending is a salient issue, district preference on education spending should have a significant and independent impact on legislator floor behavior. On the contrary, since defense spending is a non-salient issue area, district preference on defense spending should not have a significant and independent impact on legislator floor behavior. Congruence is absolutely necessary when voters *require* it, but when it comes to non-salient issue areas, representatives can act as trustees.

Data

To evaluate these theoretical expectations, I focus on the 106th Congress (1998-2000) and the 2000 House of Representatives elections. This allows me to measure district preferences using individual-level data from the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES). The survey employed nationwide random digit dialing sampling frames executed between December 1999 and January 2001. As mentioned previously, there were around 79,000 respondents with 20 (FL-23) to 227 (MI-1) per congressional district. The respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the 2000 presidential and congressional elections as well as governmental policies and demographic questions. Some of the questions included favorability of increasing or decreasing taxes, Social Security and Medicare benefits, and program spending, as well

as demographic questions such as age, race, religion, and partisanship. For the purposes of this study, I utilize the education and defense spending questions as well as partisan ideology questions to obtain district ideology and district issue preferences on salient (education) and non-salient (defense spending) issues. The NAES provides an unprecedented estimate of district issue preference in order to examine the relationship between district preference, issue salience, and congressional behavior.

Measures

District

To control for overall district ideology, I construct mean district ideology using the ideology of each respondent in a congressional district as asked on the NAES.⁷ To measure district issue preferences on salient and non-salient issues, I use the education and defense spending questions on the NAES to construct mean district education and defense spending preferences. The education spending question asks, “Providing national assistance to public elementary and secondary schools – should the federal government spend more money on this, the same as now, less, or no money at all?”⁸ The defense spending question asks, “Maintaining a strong military defense—should the federal government spend more money on this, the same as now, less or no money at all?”⁹ I drop those who answered “Don’t Know” or “No Answer.”

House Member Behavior

I use First Dimension DW-NOMINATE scores from the 106th Congress (1998-2000) as a measure of overall legislator behavior on a liberal-conservative scale. The scale goes

⁷ The NAES asks, “Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as: very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal?” 1= Very Liberal, 2=Liberal, 3=Moderate, 4=Conservative, 5=Very Conservative.

⁸ The question is scaled 1 to 4: 1=More, 2=Same, 3=Less, 4=Nothing

⁹ The question is scaled 1 to 4: 1=Nothing, 2=Less, 3=Same, and 4=More.

from -1 to +1 (Liberal to Conservative) with extreme partisans at the poles. Using the Rohde/PIPC Roll Call Database, I search bills in the 106th Congress (1998-2000) to construct a W-NOMINATE score for each representative based on how they voted on education and defense spending.¹⁰ I study the 106th Congress because respondents from the 2000 NAES evaluate their representatives based on their floor behavior between 1998-2000.

Results

In this section I present a series of regression models examining the impact of district issue preference, both salient and non-salient, on issue-specific roll-calls as well as on overall representative behavior. I expect district issue preference on salient issues to have an independent and significant impact on legislative behavior, while district preference on non-salient issue areas will not have a significant and independent impact.

Issue Salience and Legislator Behavior

In Table 1, I present OLS regression results with representatives' education w-NOMINATE scores from the 106th Congress (1998-2000) as the dependent variable. The main explanatory variable is the mean district preference on education spending, while the control variables are overall district ideology and party of the representative. As I hypothesized, because education spending is a salient issue, mean district preference on education spending exerts an independent and statistically significant effect on representative roll-call voting. The coefficient on mean district education spending is significant at $\alpha < .04$ and positive. This illustrates that Republican representatives vote more conservatively on education spending, while Democratic representatives vote more

¹⁰ I used authorization and appropriations votes to construct the W-NOMINATE scores.

liberally on the same issue. This translates to Democrats more often voting to increase education spending. In regard to model fit, the model accounts for about 75% of the overall variation or representatives' legislative behavior. In the case of the 106th Congress, because education was a very salient issue during this time, representatives had to toe the district line. As hypothesized, we see congruence between district preference and legislator behavior because representatives know that if they stray outside the bounds of district preference on *salient* issues, they may face electoral punishment.

[Table 1 About Here]

What about non-salient issues? Table 2 reports the results from a second OLS regression focusing instead on defense spending. As expected, since defense spending was the least salient issue to voters, district preference on defense spending does not exert an independent or statistically significant impact on representatives' defense spending roll-calls. However, we also see that representatives are able to follow other pressures such as party. For example, the coefficient on party of the representative is highly significant at $\alpha < .0001$, telling is that representatives chose to toe the party line as opposed to the district line when voting on defense spending. Previous research examining the impact of foreign policy preferences on legislator behavior have concluded that because foreign policy is the least salient issue area, (Almond 1950; Boyd 1985; Burnham 1985; Ladd 1985; Shanks and Miller 1985; Weisberg 1985; Light and Lake 1985; Abramson, Aldrich, Rohde 1987), representatives are free to vote their own ideology (McCormick 1985), party (Lindsay 1990, 1991; LeoGrande and Brenner 1993),

or personal policy preferences (Burgin 1994). In the case of the 106th Congress, defense issues were the least salient, voters did not evaluate their representatives based on their roll-call behavior on such issues, and in turn representatives voted the party. District preference-legislator behavior congruence is not necessary if there is no electoral threat at play, which is illustrated in this example.

[Table 2 About Here]

Additional Issues

While education was the most salient issue to voters, and defense was the least salient, what about issues in between? Upon further examination of the NAES question, “In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing our country today?” the environment and taxes were issues that were barely mentioned. While the environment has never been a salient issue, taxes traditionally have been at the top of the list. However, during the time of this study, the economy was thriving, unemployment was low, and tax rates were steady. While foreign policy is almost always the least salient issue area, and we should expect there to be no relationship between district preference and roll-call behavior on such issues, taxes are almost always salient. Issue salience is not absolute. It is variable, contextual, and time dependent.

In order to illustrate the variability of issue salience, Table 3 reports a series of regressions with the representative’s issue specific W-NOMINATE scores as the dependent variable. The main explanatory variable is the mean district issue preference on the corresponding W-NOMINATE score constructed from the issue specific questions on the

NAES.¹¹ The control variables are mean district ideology and party of the representative. What we see is that in both the environment and taxes models, district preference does not exercise an independent and significant impact on legislator behavior. However, in both models we again see the coefficient on party of the representative $\alpha < 0.001$. The environment and taxes were not salient issues, and since legislators are not being evaluated based on their roll-call votes on issues that are not salient, they can act as trustees and vote based on other priorities such as party. Representatives are electorally safer as long as they are responding to and congruent with district preference on the most salient issue. It is not about *which* issue it is, it is how *salient* it is.

[Table 3 About Here]

Issue Salience and Overall Behavior

The previous results have show that when an issue is the most salient to voters, it affects the way in which representatives vote on those particular issues. Conversely, when issues are non-salient, members of the House have more freedom to act as a trustee and vote according to other pressures and priorities aside from the district. But what about overall legislator behavior? Does district preference on salient issues impact overall legislator behavior? In order to maintain alignment with district preference, or remain congruent, members must balance the multiple and conflicting pressures and priorities including district preference. Members of the House must take into account

¹¹ The environment question states, “Protecting the environment and natural resources—should the federal government do more about this, the same as now, less or nothing at all?” and is coded: 1=More, 2=Same, 3=Less, 4=Nothing. The taxes questions states, “The amount of money Americans pay in taxes—is this an extremely serious problem, serious, not too serious or not a problem at all?” and is coded: 4= Extremely serious problem, 3=Serious problem, 2=Not too serious, 1= Not a problem at all.

partisan, ideological, and issue specific district preference when casting all roll-calls. For example, if the voters in a district want the federal government to spend more money on education, the representative would need to vote to increase education funding, which affects votes on appropriations and the budget. The weight a member of the House places on issue specific district preferences varies based on the level of issue salience. Therefore, we would expect district preference on salient issues to have an independent and significant impact on overall legislator behavior, while non-salient issue preferences should not.

Expanding the analysis to all four issues: education, environment, taxes, and defense, I run another OLS regression to examine the effect of district issue preference on overall legislator behavior. I measure the dependent variable as the 1st Dimension DW-NOMINATE score of each member from the 106th Congress (1998-2000). The main explanatory variables are the issue specific mean district preferences, and I control for party of the representative and mean district ideology. As expected, the coefficient on mean district education spending is significant at $\alpha < 0.02$, while none of the other issue specific measures are statistically significant. These results tell us that district issue specific preferences only impact overall legislator behavior when the issue preferences are on salient issues. Representatives know that they may be electorally vulnerable if they are incongruent with district preference when it comes to salient issues. The fear of losing ones seat is enough to keep a member of the House in line, and not only affects issue specific roll-calls, but also carries over to all floor votes. Legislators know that while they are faced with pressures and priorities other than district preference, the most severe punishment comes from the district: voting for another candidate.

[Table 4 About Here]

Conclusion and Discussion

In this paper I examined the relationship between district issue preference, issue salience, and legislator behavior. My results demonstrate that district issue preference only exerts a significant and independent impact on representative roll-call behavior when it is in regard to salient issues. While previous literature had studied this question, data problems made it extremely difficult to quantify issue salience and obtain a true grasp on district preference. Employing the 2000 NAES provided a reliable measure of district issue preference and issue salience to examine the impact of issue salience on representative behavior. Using presidential vote in the district or the NES as proxies for district issue preference has been problematic, and therefore any conclusions drawn were suspect. The NAES has alleviated the sample size and scope problems in order to provide a clear estimate of district issue preference, and therefore, an answer to the question of district preference-legislator behavior congruence. Because issue voting does occur on salient issues, and therefore impacts House member reelection, there is congruence between district issue preference and representative behavior. On the other hand, there is no expectation of congruence when dealing with non-salient issues since voters do not form strong preferences and hold the electoral threat over their representatives' heads. Acting as a trustee in regard to voting on individual issues only works if the issue is non-salient. Salience, on the other hand, calls for a delegate.

Issue salience is variable and contextual. At any given time an issue like taxes that is stereotypically salient could be of little or no concern to voters. Conversely, an

issue like education that has historically been a state and local issue could be pushed to the forefront and become the most important problem facing the nation. Since September 11, 2001, almost nothing has been more important to the electorate than foreign policy and defense issues. Securing our borders and our troop placement in the Middle East are in their forefront of the minds of most voters. The post-9/11 environment is the ideal situation to conduct further research on the relationship between issue salience and legislative behavior. The 2006 midterm election highlighted that the War in Iraq was absolutely the most important issue, and some representatives that alienated their voters on this issue lost their seats. The 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey has recently been released. Using this data, further analysis can be conducted comparing the pre and post-9/11 electorate, representatives and issues to obtain an accurate understanding of the importance of issue salience on district preference and legislative behavior. What we should see is that district foreign policy preference *does* demand representative responsiveness *when* the issues are salient. We witnessed electoral punishment in the 2006 midterm, and by using the both the 2000 and 2004 NAES to track the movement of district preference on foreign policy, we can observe how the salience of issues has changed.

The next step in assessing the linkage between districts and legislators is the electoral impact on non-responsive or out of step members. If there is congruence between district issue preference on salient issues and representative floor behavior, then there should be some sort of punishment for out-of-step members. Whether this punishment is in the form of a representative receiving lower vote margins over time, or eventually losing reelection, voters will inflict some form of electoral punishment if they

feel their interests are not being met. The core of the district-representative relationship is a somewhat simple exchange – districts feel represented, and legislators secure reelection.

Tables

Table 1: Education Spending and Legislative Behavior

Constant	0.25 (0.16)
Mean District Education Preference	0.11* (0.05)
Party of the Representative	0.45* (0.01)
Mean District Ideology	0.30* (0.04)
N	425
F-statistic	407.62*
R ²	0.75
Root MSE	0.15

Dependent Variable – 1st Dimension Education Spending W-Nominate

* Significant at $p < 0.04$

(Robust standard errors in parentheses)

Table 2: Defense Spending and Legislative Behavior

Constant	0.03 (0.36)
Mean District Defense Preference	0.06 (0.08)
Party of the Representative	0.56* (0.02)
Mean District Ideology	0.25* (0.07)
N	431
F-statistic	364.27*
R ²	0.71
Root MSE	0.196

Dependent Variable – 1st Dimension Defense Spending W-Nominate

*Significant at $p < 0.001$

(Robust standard errors in parentheses)

Table 3: Additional Issues, Salience, and Legislator Behavior

Taxes		Environment	
Constant	0.63* (0.22)	Constant	1.63* (0.28)
Mean Taxes	0.02 (0.06)	Mean Environment	0.02 (0.09)
Party of the Representative	0.90* (0.02)	Party of the Representative	0.56* (0.03)
Mean District Ideology	0.31* (0.05)	Mean District Ideology	0.72* (0.07)
N	431	N	424
F-statistic	1697.34*	F-statistic	376.77*
R ²	0.92	R ²	0.69
Root MSE	0.142	Root MSE	0.234

Dependent Variables – Issue Specific 1st Dimension W-Nominate

* Significant at $p < 0.01$

(Robust standard errors in parentheses)

Table 4: Issue Preference, Salience, and Overall Legislator Behavior

Constant	0.26 (0.48)
Mean Education	0.19* (0.08)
Mean Defense	0.06 (0.11)
Mean Environment	0.08 (0.07)
Mean Taxes	0.02 (0.08)
Party of the Representative	0.69* (0.02)
Mean District Ideology	0.40* (0.08)
N	432
F-statistic	358.07*
R ²	0.80
Root MSE	0.196

Dependent Variable –1st Dimension DW-Nominate

* Significant at $p < 0.03$

(Robust standard errors in parentheses)

Extremity and Incongruence: The Impact of Party and District Preference on House Elections, 1994-2000

"A congressman has two constituencies – he has his constituents at home. And his colleagues here in the House. To serve his constituents at home, he must also serve his colleagues here in the House" – Speaker Samuel Rayburn (Dulaney and Phillips 1978, pp. 263-264)

Introduction

The dual nature of Congress, one part lawmaking body and one part representative assembly that depends on the voters, presents members of Congress with a juggling act. This is especially true for members of the House of Representatives since the House is "intended to be the more representative element of the government" (Davidson and Oleszek 2006, p. 12). The House was designed to answer to the people, and because its members are elected every two years, this accountability to the people is a constant balancing act between lawmaking and representation. Consequently, members of the House are faced with this question: When do I vote with the district, when can I vote outside the bounds of district opinion, and under what circumstances do I need to worry about losing reelection? The most comprehensive study of this question told us that the more a member of the House voted with his or her party, defined as extremity, the more likely he or she would see a drop in vote share regardless of district preference (Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002). In other words, in order to avoid electoral punishment, representatives should become more moderate even if district preference is not moderate. The question that arises from the answer the authors provides is: What if the district is extreme? Should a representative moderate anyway? The answer I provide: No.

In taking on this widely accepted argument, I combine voter information and voter behavior literature, such as elite cues and directional voting, with congressional

behavior literature and develop the concept of incongruence. The degree that House member behavior corresponds to district preference, or congruence, affects the likelihood of both the entrance of a quality challenger and a decrease in vote share. The more congruence, the less likely an incumbent will draw a quality challenger, and the less likely voters will cast their ballots for any challenger. House members who vote with the party will not be automatically punished because they are extreme, but rather they will be punished if those votes do not fall within the bounds of district preference. Conversely, if an incumbent is incongruent, the more likely he or she will draw a quality challenger and see a drop in his or her vote share. Representatives can be incongruent, or not fall within the bounds of district preference, and suffer a loss of vote share because they are too moderate. In fact, directional theory (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989) and policy balancing (Kedar 2005) suggest that voters prefer more extreme candidates.

While I provide another take on the Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) argument, I also provide additional empirical insight that may change the way in which we model the relationship between district preference, legislative behavior, and vote share. Because challenger quality and relative campaign spending are post-causal treatment variables, including these factors in a model of electoral punishment may underestimate the true causal affect (Gelman et. al 2003). Therefore, it may be inappropriate to include such variables in models of electoral punishment.

This paper analyzes how the voting behavior of members of the House of Representatives affects the two phases of electoral punishment: the entrance of a quality challenger and a decrease in vote share. I examine the voting records of members of the House of Representatives in the 103rd - 106th (1994-2000) Congresses and compare those

votes to district preference in order to access extremity, incongruence, quality challengers, and dropping vote shares. First, I test how extremity and incongruence affect the likelihood of drawing a quality challenger. The second test focuses on decreasing vote share for members that are incongruent with district preference. Finally, I discuss the consequences of the results as well as directions for future congressional research.

Voter Information and House Member Behavior

The need to balance representation and lawmaking only exists if voters evaluate members of Congress based on floor behavior. Previous research has suggested that voters are ignorant about representatives' policy voting (Converse 1964; Popkin 1991; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). This would allow members of Congress to vote as they pleased since their constituents are not evaluating them based on their policy positions. There would be no electoral threat present.¹² And while Downs (1957) stated that obtaining information is too costly for voters, this cost can be somewhat alleviated by the presence of cues (Carmines and Kuklinski 1990; Grofman and Norrander 1990; Mondak 1993; Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998, Druckman 2001).

Even if voters can obtain information on the behavior of their representatives using cues, representatives have to believe that they are being evaluated based on that behavior. Much congressional research has argued that members of the House do believe that roll-call voting affects their chances of reelection (Matthews and Stimson 1975; Aldrich 1995; Jacobson 1996; Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002).

¹² See Erikson and Wright (1980); Page, et al. (1984); Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson (1995); Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001); and Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002).

Since voters evaluate representatives based on their floor behavior, and members know this, then the electoral threat is both present and keeps members of the House inline with their districts' preferences. Members must consider this representation in the face of multiple and conflicting lawmaking priorities and demands such as party pressure (Cox and McCubbins 1993; Aldrich, Berger, and Rohde 2002; Sinclair 2002), personal preferences (Aranson and Ordeshook 1972; Aldrich 1983, Wittman 1983; Calvert 1985; Francis, Kenny, Morton, and Schmidt 1994; Crespin, Gold, and Rohde 2006), party activists (Aldrich 1995; Fiorina 1999; Jacobson 2000; Layman and Carsey 2000; Aldrich and Rohde 2001), and policy orientation (Kingdon 1973; Fenno 1973; Rohde 1991; Aldrich 1995; Aldrich and Rohde 2000). However, when does voter preference affect for whom they cast their ballot?

Previous Research on Electoral Punishment

Research examining electoral punishment based on legislative floor behavior has been mixed. Some studies focusing on vote share found that safe members or incumbents in general need not worry about the electoral impact of legislative voting (Bernstein 1989; Gaines and Nokken 1999). While other literature has found empirical evidence that holding district ideology constant, incumbents' vote shares were lower when they increased the extent to which they voted with the extreme of their party (Schoenberger 1969; Erikson 1971; Johannes and McAdams 1981; Erikson and Wright 1993; Brady et al. 1996; Jacobson 1996; Canes-Wrone, Brady, Cogan 2002). In other words, when members of Congress stray away from the median positions of their districts, there was a decrease in electoral support.

More specifically, Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) found that holding all else constant, representatives who consistently voted the party-line, or what they identified as extreme, were more likely to experience a drop in vote share. This extremity is detrimental *regardless* of district preference because representatives should always moderate. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of their argument.

[Figure 1 About Here]

The authors' analysis is somewhat problematic for a few reasons. First, they do not take into account district preference. Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan argued that holding district preference constant, House incumbents should vote moderately because extreme members are punished at the polls. We know that district preference does impact legislative behavior and subsequently impacts electoral fortunes. While Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) title their article "Out of Step, Out of Office," there is no discussion of the role of district preference. The authors argue that even if a district prefers a more extreme incumbent, that incumbent should still moderate in order to avoid electoral punishment for being too extreme.

Second, the authors include both challenger quality and a measure of relative spending in their model of electoral punishment. While it is widely accepted in the literature to incorporate both challenger quality¹³ and challenger/incumbent spending¹⁴ in any model of electoral punishment, it may be inappropriate to incorporate such variables because they may create post-treatment bias. Controlling for the effects of challenger

¹³ Jacobson and Kernell 1983; Bianco 1984; Bond, Covington and Fleisher 1985; Jacobson 1989, 1990.

¹⁴ Jacobson 1978, 1980, 1985; Banks and Kiewiet 1989; Green and Krasno 1990; Abramowitz 1991; Epstein and Zemsky 1995; Cox and Katz 1996; Erikson and Palfrey 1998.

quality and campaign spending may underestimate the true causal affect (Gelman et. al 2003).

“For instance, in the incumbency advantage example, what if we were to include a control variable for campaign spending, perhaps the logarithm of the number of dollars spent by the incumbent candidate's party in the election?...For the purposes of estimating the incumbency advantage with a regression, however, total campaign spending should not be included, because much spending occurs after the decision of the incumbent whether to run for reelection” (Gelman et. al 2003, pp. 368-369)

Roll call votes affect vote share indirectly by encouraging the entrance of a quality challenger and greater relative challenger spending. Both challenger quality and campaign spending is associated with predictions that incumbents have made about possible vote share. The dependent variable, vote share, ends up predicting the independent variables – in this case challenger quality and campaign spending. While it is theoretically correct that both challenger quality and campaign spending play a large role in election returns, both variables are accounted for in the measure of vote share itself. Moreover, using such controls in a model of vote share causes endogeneity and post-treatment. For this reason, I exclude challenger quality and spending variables from the model of vote share.

Finally, Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) use Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) scores as their measure of legislative voting. However, research has argued that interest group scores exhibit a substantial amount of stretching over time (Groseclose, Levitt, Snyder 1999). In addition, different interest group ratings select different votes for consideration (Brunell et al. 1999). There is not much overlap in votes selected by different interest groups. Using a measure such as Poole and Rosenthal's NOMINATE provides the most systematic approach to measuring roll-call behavior.

Since the authors use ADA scores, they are measuring extremity by national standards. If these scores are extreme by national standards, they do not hurt a representative when his or her district is locally extreme. But if the scores are moderate by national standards, and the district is extreme, it does hurt the incumbent. Members of the House need to represent their district, not the nation, which reinforces the fact that they do not take into account district preference. When district preference is extreme, it does not serve a representative well to moderate, as Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) argued, because the representative would not be inline with district preference. The only time a representative should moderate is when district preference calls for it.

As opposed to voters preferring moderation, other literature argued that voters actually prefer extreme candidates. Directional theory has suggested, “In the case of the majority supporting a particular policy direction, a candidate who takes strong and aggressive stands in favor of that policy is likely to be advantaged against a centrist candidate” (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989, p. 110). In fact, candidates that take more extreme positions are more likely to win House races (Achen 1978; Powell 1982). Therefore, candidates that converge to the median voter are less successful than those who take positions somewhat more extreme. If this is the case, moderating neither serves the district’s best interest nor helps the representative’s chances of reelection.

But *why* would voters prefer extreme candidates? The success of more extreme candidates may stem from a voter’s need to counterbalance “watered down” policies by voting for a candidate that is somewhat more extreme than the voter herself (Kedar 2005). Since most voters prefer more extreme candidates, district preference calls for

more extreme incumbents, and said incumbents will vote more extreme because it corresponds to district preference. This concept is what I refer to as *congruence*.

[Figure 2 About Here]

While Kedar discussed policy balancing in a parliamentary context where the parties are battling for control of the government, policy balancing is appropriate to apply to the American context during times of divided government. Under divided government, the legislative and executive branches are engaged in bitter partisan battling over policy outcomes. This lack of consensus among the branches creates policy outcomes that may be more moderate than what the voters prefer due to partisan compromising. Under these circumstances, voters will support candidates that take more extreme policy stances in order to overcompensate for watered down compromised policies. If this line of research is correct, being extreme actually should increase an incumbent's vote share as opposed to decreasing it as Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) argued. Therefore, extremity should not account for the entrance of a quality challenger and dropping vote share, and in fact should account for an increase in vote share.

Extremity, Incongruence, and House Elections

The theoretical expectations that develop from the previous research are straightforward. Voters evaluate representatives based on their floor behavior and will exercise the electoral threat if they do not feel their preferences are being reflected by their representative. As opposed to centrist candidates, voters prefer candidates that take more extreme stances. Therefore, I expect that representatives that are extreme will be

less likely draw a quality challenger and will see an *increase* in their vote share. I expect that representatives that are incongruent are *more* likely to draw quality challengers and see a *decrease* in vote share. If extremity affects incumbents positively, and it is incongruence that affects incumbents negatively, then this provides a new perception of the relationship between voter preference and legislator behavior.

Data

To examine these theoretical expectations, I focus on the 103rd-106th (1994-2000) Congresses. Since I claim that voters prefer extreme candidates and will not punish representatives for voting with the party, there is no better time period to test the affects of extreme polarization. There were 73 Republican freshmen elected in 1994 from heavily Republican districts as well as competitive districts with Democratic incumbents (Crespin, Gold, and Rohde 2006). The so-called “Republican Revolution” has endured, and as Fenno (1997) posited, the polarization of the House has become increasingly bitter while members consistently vote their party lines. If Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) are correct, and incumbents are punished for being extreme, then we should have seen a drop in the House incumbency advantage since 1994. In fact, the percent of House incumbents reelected increased from 90.2% in 1994 to 97.8% in 2000 (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2002).

Measures

District

I use Republican presidential vote measured as the two-party vote in the district from the 1994-2000 elections as the measure of district preference.¹⁵ Congressional scholarship has long used presidential vote in the district as a proxy for district

¹⁵ I use the most recent two-party Republican presidential vote in the district as the measure of district preference for each election.

preference.¹⁶ While there has been criticism of using presidential vote in the district as a measure of district partisanship,¹⁷ the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey has shed new light on the debate. The NAES conducts multiple rolling cross section studies from December 1999 to the beginning of January 2001. Overall, the survey had approximately 79,000 respondents with anywhere from 20 (FL-23) to 227 (MI-1) respondents per district. The respondents were asked partisanship, ideology, and issue questions as well as candidate preference questions. In order to analyze how presidential vote in the district compares to a more direct measure of district partisanship, I constructed the mean partisanship from the 2000 NAES and correlated it with the 2000 Republican presidential vote in the district. The two measures are correlated at 0.85.

[Figure 3 About Here]

Both the correlation and Figure 4 convey that presidential vote in the district is an appropriate proxy for district partisanship.

House Member and Challenger

I use first dimension DW-NOMINATE from the 104th–106th Congresses (1994-2000) as a measure of overall legislator behavior on a liberal-conservative scale. The scale goes from -1 to +1 (Liberal to Conservative) with extreme partisans at the poles. I also control for representative partisanship by coding Democrats as 0 and Republicans as 1.¹⁸ Challenger quality is coded 1 if the candidate has held elective office and 0 if not.

¹⁶ Erikson and Wright 1989, 1993, 1997; Brady et al. 1996, Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002; Crespín, Gold, and Rohde 2006.

¹⁷ See Clinton 2006.

¹⁸ Bernard Sanders (I-VT) is coded as a Democrat.

Incongruence and Extremity

The main explanatory variables are extremity and incongruence. Extremity is measured as the absolute value of the first dimension DW-NOMINATE score. Incongruence is constructed by a bivariate regression of DW-NOMINATE on the Republican presidential vote in the district. Next, I predict the residuals from the regression. Because I am using residual estimates from a regression as an explanatory variable, I bootstrap the standard errors in all models. With nonparametric bootstrapping, the obtained data is treated as if it is a precise reflection of the entire population, and then draw many bootstrapped samples by repeated sampling with replacement (Efron and Tibshirani 1993). Once the OLS regression computes the bootstrapped standard errors, the absolute value of the residuals reflects the degree of incongruence.¹⁹ What I expect to see is that the higher the residuals for each district, the more likely an incumbent is to draw a quality challenger and the lower the incumbent's vote share should be. In other words, the more variation around the regression, the more incongruent the representative is with his or her district, and therefore the more likely they are to draw a quality challenger and see a decrease in vote share in subsequent elections.

Results

In the first section I present a series of Probit models examining the impact of incongruence and extremity on the entrance of quality challengers in House races. I expect that more extreme incumbents are *less* likely to draw quality challengers, while incongruent incumbents are *more* likely to draw quality challengers. After discussing my findings, I move on to analyzing the second phase of electoral punishment: decrease in vote share. In this section, I present a series of OLS regression models analyzing the

¹⁹ For each model I conducted 2000 replications.

impact of incongruence and extremity on vote share. I expect that more extreme members will experience an *increase* in vote share, while incongruent members will experience a *decrease* in vote share.

Phase 1: Enter the Quality Challenger

In Table 1, I pool the elections (1994-2000) and run three Probit models: one with only extremity, one with only incongruence, and one with both incongruence and extremity.²⁰ The dependent variable is whether or not there was a quality challenger (1=yes, 0=no). I also control for party of the representative in each model. It is clear from Table 1 that being extreme is beneficial to representatives since it decreases the likelihood of drawing a quality challenger. In the first model with no measure of behavior relative to district preference, extremity is both negative and statistically significant. As I predicted, the more extreme a member is, the less likely he or she is to draw a quality challenger. In the second model, my prediction that being incongruent will increase the chances of drawing a quality challenger also holds. The third model, with extremity and incongruence, shows that when taking into account representative-district match and degree of extremity, incongruence entices quality challengers and extremity deters them.

There are a few important conclusions to draw from these results. The model with extremity only has the lowest Wald Chi-Square estimate (15.29) of all the models. While extremity does exert a negative and independent effect on the entrance of quality challengers, including a measure of incongruence strengthens the effect of extremity. Substantively, this illustrates that extremity is not the most important determinant of

²⁰ Since I pool the elections, I run fixed models for both Congress and district. Models show that neither district type nor individual Congress account for a significant amount of model variance.

whether or not a House incumbent draws a quality challenger. Extremity is most influential in deterring a quality challenger when it is coupled with incongruence.

These findings support my theoretical argument but are antithetical to the logic set forth by Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002). If in fact being extreme was detrimental to representatives, then we should see quality challengers enter races with extreme members. Instead, what we see is that because voters prefer extreme candidates, House members who consistently vote the party line are rewarded. On the other hand, incumbents who are incongruent are punished. Extremity is most damaging to an incumbent when in conjunction with incongruence.

[Table 1 About Here]

In order to further parcel out the effects of extremity and incongruence, Table 2 reports the predicted probabilities of drawing a quality challenger in two categories: incumbents who are incongruent because they have moderate DW-NOMINATE scores in extreme districts, and incumbents who are incongruent because they have extreme DW-NOMINATE scores in moderate districts. This table provides an illustration of the probability of an incumbent drawing a quality challenger holding party of the representative at its mean and varying the degree of extremity and incongruence.²¹ The results in Table 2 show that the probability of incongruent members drawing quality challengers is much less when they are too extreme (0.19) than when they are too moderate (0.41). Again, as policy balancing and directional theory states, being extreme

²¹ Since party of the representative is coded 1 for Republicans and 0 for Democrats, I set it 0.50 for the mean. Extreme members are 0.70 and moderate members are 0.50 on the absolute value of the NOMINATE scale.

is better than being too moderate. Extreme members in moderate districts have a lower probability of drawing a quality challenger, illustrating that even if a member is incongruent with district preference, being too extreme is beneficial to seat safety. Overall, the most vulnerable incumbents are moderates in extreme districts. Incumbents who are not extreme enough face the biggest threat of a quality challenger, while extreme members' seats remain safer. Therefore, the Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) argument that moderate members are safer than extreme members ceases to be accurate. Moderating does not help an incumbent, but rather it is detrimental. Now that I have examined the first stage of electoral punishment, I will discuss decreasing vote shares.

[Table 2 About Here]

Phase 2: Decrease in Vote Share

In Table 3, I pool the elections (1994-2000), and run three OLS regression models: one with extremity, one with incongruence, and one with both extremity and incongruence.²² The dependent variable is the incumbent share of the two-party vote, and the main explanatory variables are extremity and incongruence. I control for party of the representative, and in the models with extremity I control for district partisanship using Republican presidential vote in the district.²³ As mentioned previously, I do not use challenger quality or any form of campaign spending because they create a post-treatment bias. Post-treatment variable bias may well be the largest overlooked component of bias in estimating causal effects in political science (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994). According to King and Zeng (2001), to avoid such bias, either a model

²² Since I pool the elections, I run fixed models for both Congress and district. Models show that neither district type nor individual Congress account for a significant amount of model variance.

²³ I do not include a measure of district partisanship in the model with only incongruence because it is accounted for in the measure itself.

must not contain post-treatment control variables, or included post-treatment control variables must not vary with the dependent variable. While excluding certain control variables may cause omitted variable bias, including them will cause a post-treatment bias. In the case of a regression model that predicts vote share, challenger quality and relative campaign spending do vary with the dependent variable since predictions of vote share will have an effect on both the quality of a challenger and incumbent spending.

Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) includes such control variables in their models of vote share, and therefore underestimated the true causal effect of their regression model of vote share. In recreating the authors' model, I found that when excluding challenger quality and relative campaign spending, the coefficient on extremity became positive and statistically significant.²⁴ In other words, when correctly specifying the model, extreme members actually increase their vote share as opposed to decreasing it.

As illustrated in Table 3, in all three models, extremity is both positive and statistically significant, while incongruence is both negative and statistically significant. All else equal, incongruent members will *decrease* their vote share while extreme members will *increase* their vote share. Again, extreme members are only in electoral danger if they are extreme and incongruent. Similar to the models of quality challengers, the model with only extremity has the lowest Wald Chi-Square (71.97).

In the model with both extremity and incongruence, holding all else equal, moving two standard deviations “up” in incongruity, or about 0.15 up or down on the NOMINATE scale, lowers incumbent vote share by about 4 points. Along the same lines, holding all else equal, moving two standard deviations to the extremes on the NOMINATE

²⁴ See appendix for the full model and results.

scale increase incumbent vote share by almost 3 points. In the models with just extremity and just incongruence, this effect is not as substantial since the coefficients are smaller than in the model with both explanatory variables. Again, we must look at extremity coupled with incongruence to capture the full effect of both concepts. As I predicted, because voters prefer extreme candidates, incumbents who consistently vote the party line are rewarded at the polls. Moreover, incumbents who are incongruent will be punished at the polls.

[Table 3 About Here]

These results coincide with the incumbent election returns during this time period. As stated, the post-Republican takeover Congresses were extremely polarized, yet the incumbency rate increased. Even more convincing than the increasing incumbency advantage is the consistent increase in incumbent vote share since 1994. From 1994-2000, House incumbent vote share increased from 62.8% to 65.1% (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2003). In a time when both incumbents and challengers became more extreme, Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) would tell us that incumbent vote share should have decreased since voters prefer moderate candidates. Not only has the rate at which incumbents are reelected increased, but they have been winning by larger margins. Overall, being extreme is not only acceptable, but also welcomed by voters.

In order to further examine the effects of extremity and incongruence, Table 4 reports the predicted values of vote share in two categories: incumbents who are incongruent because they have moderate DW-NOMINATE scores in extreme districts, and

incumbents who are incongruent because they have extreme DW-NOMINATE scores in moderate districts. This table provides an illustration of incumbent percent of vote share holding party of the representative at its mean and varying the degree of extremity and incongruence.²⁵ This shows incumbents who are moderate in extreme districts, thereby incongruent, have the lowest percent of vote share (57%); while incumbents are incongruent due to extremity have the highest vote percentage (67%). If an incumbent is going to be incongruent, it is best to be too extreme rather than too moderate.

Extreme members, even when incongruent, are electorally more successful than moderate members, providing evidence that voters do prefer extreme representatives as opposed to moderate ones. These findings, which coincide with my theoretical expectations, are in direct opposition to those of Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002). The contrary findings are mostly from the authors overlooking the importance of legislator behavior in relation to district preference.

[Table 4 About Here]

What about partisan differences? Which party would we expect to be more incongruent with district preference? During the course of the Congresses in question, the Republican party median increased from 0.395 to 0.435 on the NOMINATE scale. Moreover, between 1994 and 2000, the average Republican presidential vote in districts with Republican incumbents increased from about 50% to about 51%. Republicans were mostly staying congruent. Meanwhile, the Democratic party median increased from

²⁵ Since party of the representative is coded 1 for Republicans and 0 for Democrats, I set it 0.50 for the mean. Extreme members are 0.70 and moderate members are 0.50 on the absolute value of the NOMINATE scale.

–0.33 to –0.403 even though the average Republican presidential vote in district with Democratic incumbents increased from about 40% to about 42%. Democrats were polarizing and becoming incongruent with district preference, thus helping to explain the election returns during the second half of the 1990s. The incongruent Republican incumbents were not as incongruent as the Democratic incumbents, and therefore fared better at the polls. In order to empirically test this, I run another OLS regression, but this time I include a measure of incongruence that separates the representatives by party. In other words, in Table 5, I use the signed residuals along with the absolute value of the residuals to see specifically which party was rewarded at the polls.

[Table 5 About Here]

Table 5 corroborates the results in Table 3 in that the coefficient on extremity is both positive and statistically significant, and the coefficient on incongruence is negative and statistically significant. This reinforces the concept that extremity increases vote share and incongruence decreases vote share. In regard to vote share, incongruence, and party, representatives that were more conservative than their districts experienced increased vote share. The more conservative a representative, the better he or she fared at the polls. Holding all else equal, moving two standard deviations “up” in incongruity, or about 0.15 toward the more conservative end on the NOMINATE scale, increases incumbent vote share by almost 1 point. Democrats were more incongruent than Republican incumbents; and therefore the more liberal a representative, the more incongruent, and the more likely to receive a decrease in vote share.

Conclusion and Discussion

The Republican takeover in 1994 activated an increased polarization between Democrats and Republicans that still continues today. Extreme House incumbents and challengers are the norm rather than the exception. While Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) argued that extremity was detrimental to electoral fortunes, it appears the exact opposite is true. Both directional theory and policy balancing stated that voters prefer extreme candidates, and past congressional research has concurred. Extremity, when it corresponds to district preference, is beneficial to incumbents in two ways. First, it deters quality challengers, and second, it increases vote share. Members who are extreme are not automatically punished, as stated by Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002), but rather they are rewarded for being in-line with district preference. The key is remaining in-step with district preference. Incumbents should try to stay as congruent as possible, and most of the time, this requires some extremity. Moderate members are more likely to face quality challengers regardless of congruence and are the most likely type of incumbent to face quality challengers when they are in extreme districts. Extremity is harmful only when it is not what the district wants.

The second way in which extremity is advantageous is that it increases incumbent vote share. Voters prefer to vote for candidates who are more extreme than they are; and therefore more extreme incumbents will pick up more votes than moderate incumbents. Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) assume that incumbents and candidates need to appeal to the median members of the district. In fact, moderate members are the most vulnerable. Even if voters themselves are in the middle of the partisan continuum, they cast their ballots for candidates at the ends of the continuum. Incumbents need not fear voting the party line if it is congruent to district preference, which it often is.

Incumbents do not need to, and in fact should not moderate unless the district calls for it. The threat is incongruence, *not* extremity. The results Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) reported did not account for one of most important determinants of legislator vote choice – district preference. The relationship between floor behavior and election returns is more complex than they present. What I have provided is a more nuance view between the relationship of district preference and legislator floor behavior. During the time period of this study, district preference highly influenced legislative floor behavior. Also, most voters wanted representatives to vote the party line, which eased some of the tension created by pressure from the congressional parties. The juggling act just got easier.

The next step in assessing extremity, incongruence, and vote share is to examine whether or not the relationship varies by issue area. Kedar (2005) argued that voters feel policies are watered down due to partisan congressional bargaining and therefore prefer candidates that take more extreme policy stands. The question arises as to whether or not this preference varies by issue area and salience of the issue. While this may not have been possible before due to data limitations, the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey taps into an unexploited area of voter preference. The fundamental reality, nonetheless, remains the same – incumbents who follow the beat of their districts drumming will keep their seats.

Tables

Table 1: Extremity, Incongruence, and Quality Challengers (1994-2000)

Extremity		Incongruence		Extremity & Incongruence	
Constant	-0.50* (0.10)	Constant	-1.24* (0.08)	Constant	-0.84* (0.11)
Extremity	-0.93* (0.24)	-	-	Extremity	-1.44* (0.24)
-	-	Incongruence	1.48* (0.20)	Incongruence	1.89* (0.23)
Party of Representative	-0.03 (0.07)	Party of Representative	-0.04 (0.07)	Party of Representative	0.04 (0.07)
N	1728	N	1728	N	1728
Pseudo R ²	0.01	Pseudo R ²	0.03	Pseudo R ²	0.05
Wald χ^2	15.29*	LR χ^2	53.50*	Wald χ^2	86.18*

Dependent Variable – If there was a quality challenger in the election (0,1)

* Significant at $p < 0.001$

(Bootstrapped standard errors in parentheses)

Table 2: Probability of Drawing A Quality Challenger (1994-2000)

Congruence/Incongruence	Probability of Drawing a Quality Challenger with Confidence Intervals
Incongruent with a moderate DW-NOMINATE score in an extreme district	0.41 (0.34, 0.49)
Incongruent with an extreme DW-NOMINATE score in a moderate district	0.19 (0.14, 0.23)

Average probability across all four elections (1994-2000)

Table 3: Extremity, Incongruence, and Vote Share (1994-2000)

Extremity		Incongruence		Extremity & Incongruence	
Constant	69.02* (2.03)	Constant	73.94* (0.78)	Constant	70.75* (1.86)
Extremity	12.65* (2.48)	-	-	Extremity	19.56* (2.44)
-	-	Incongruence	-24.03* (2.21)	Incongruence	-27.33* (2.28)
Republican Presidential Vote	-0.17* (0.04)	-	-	Republican Presidential Vote	-0.09* (0.04)
Party of the Representative	2.36* (0.85)	Party of the Representative	-0.68 (0.72)	Party of the Representative	0.19 (0.95)
N	1535	N	1535	N	1535
Wald χ^2	71.97*	Wald χ^2	118.01*	Wald χ^2	236.08*
R ²	0.04	R ²	0.07	R ²	0.13

Dependent Variable – Incumbent Two-Party Percent of the Vote

* Significant at $p < 0.01$

(Bootstrapped standard errors in parentheses)

Table 4: Predicted Values of Vote Share (1994-2000)

Congruence/Incongruence	Predicted Value of Vote Share (%) With Confidence Intervals
Incongruent with a moderate DW-NOMINATE score in an extreme district	57.0 (54.9, 59.0)
Incongruent with an extreme DW-NOMINATE score in a moderate district	67.0 (65.3, 68.2)

Average probability across all four elections (1994-2000)

**Table 5: Extremity, Incongruence, and Vote Share (1994-2000)
with Party of the Representative**

Extremity & Incongruence	
Constant	69.45** (2.03)
Extremity	19.23** (2.46)
Incongruence without Party	-27.74** (2.32)
Incongruence with Party	5.03* (2.58)
Republican Presidential Vote	-0.03 (0.05)
Party of the Representative	-2.88 (1.87)
N	1535
Wald χ	249.85**
R	0.13

Dependent Variable – Incumbent Two-Party Percent of the Vote

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

** Significant at $p < 0.001$

(Bootstrapped standard errors in parentheses)

Figures

Figure 1

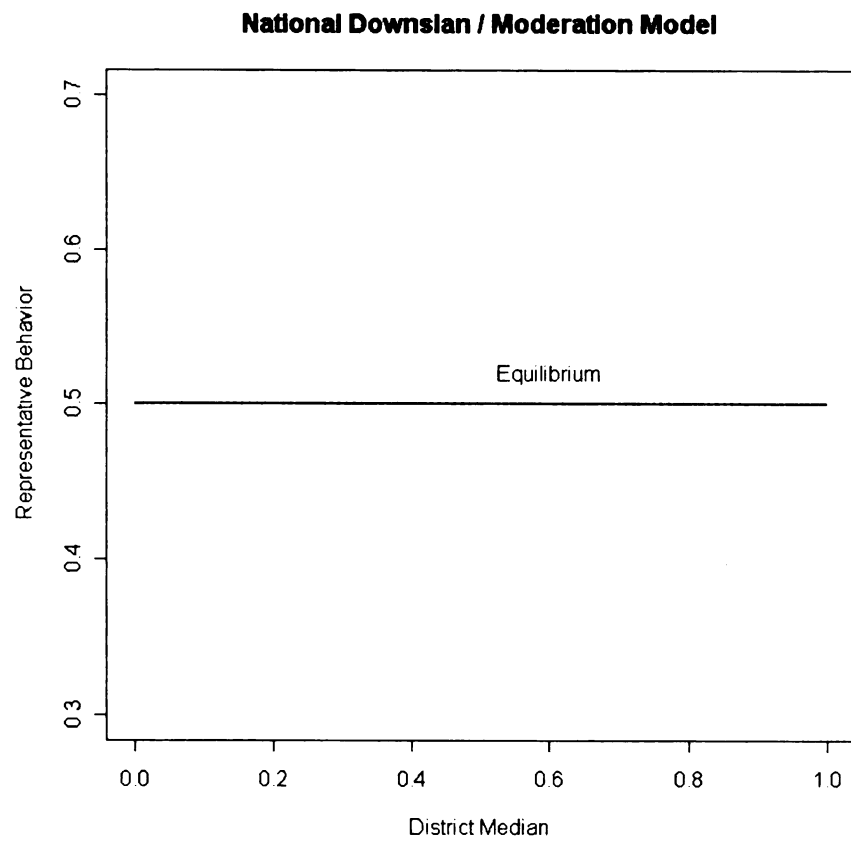


Figure 2

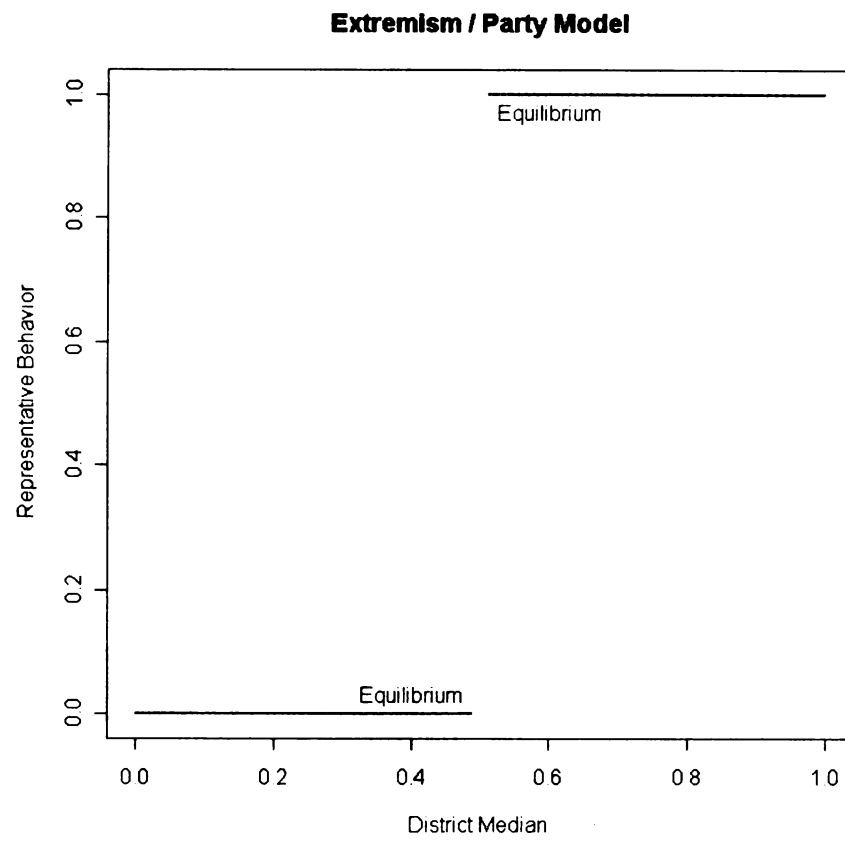
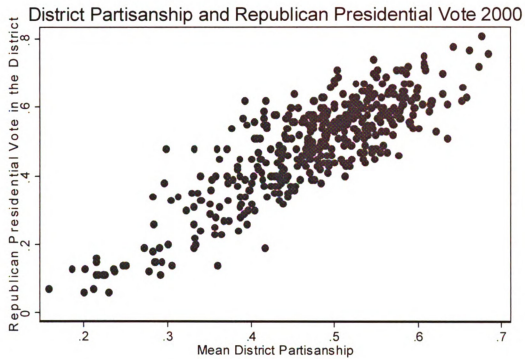


Figure 3



Appendix

National Annenberg Election Survey Questions

Taxes a Problem:

The amount of money Americans pay in taxes – is this an extremely serious problem =4, serious =3, not too serious =2, or not a problem at all =1?

Federal government should spend on military and national defense:

Maintaining a strong military defense – should the federal government spend more money on this =4, the same as now =3, less =2, or no money at all =1?

Federal government should spend on spending on schools:

Providing national assistance to public elementary and secondary schools – should the federal government spend more money on this =1, the same as now =2, less =3, or no money at all =4?

Federal government should expend effort to protect the environment:

Protecting the environment and natural resources – should the federal government do more about this = 1, the same as now =2, less =3, or nothing at all =4?

Excluded Districts and W-NOMINATE Scores

Alaska and Hawaii were excluded. There were no W-NOMINATE scores generated for the Illinois 14th. There were no scores generated for education for the Arkansas 3rd, California 32nd, Massachusetts 9th, South Carolina 2nd, Virginia 4th, and Wyoming 1st. For environment, there were no scores produced for the Arkansas 3rd, Florida 1st, Indiana 6th, Massachusetts 9th, Oklahoma 1st, and South Carolina 2nd.

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