

State of Disunion:

Party Disunity, Moderate Voting and Ideological Variety. A New Methodology for Scoring
Congressional Polarization.

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As a thesis for the degree of
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Signature: Benjamin Barry Jones.

* In memory of Audrey James and George Cooper. With thanks to Gabriel Katz and Kirsty Evans.

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Abstract.

Much of the literature and methodology of polarization emphasises party mean-ideology points and/or party unity. Using this approach alone neglects a vital aspect of polarization; namely, remaining ideological variety and party disunity among both Democrats and Republicans today. I measure both of these factors in a new methodology, the Independence (I)-Score. This methodology scores each legislator in a single figure on how often they vote against their party, and also how moderate they are ideologically. This blends elements of DW-NOMINATE and party unity scores into one scoring system, which emphasises those left behind by polarized parties, who are also under-represented in the literature. I argue that these independent outliers may yet play a key role in bridging the gap between the two parties, whilst the I-Score methodology finds their decline to be a crucial aspect of polarization and demonstrates why. This is a fresh take on the history and problems of polarization, particularly because it considers the vital (if not numerically large) groups of moderates who still remain in Congress. In a time when intra-party debates are increasingly important, the I-Score provides a new take on polarization to supplement the use of one-dimension, left-right party-average points.

In Chapter One I provide an overview of the polarization literature to date. In Chapter Two I survey the state of party heterogeneity and ideological variety in the 110th Congress. In Chapter Three I consider the endangered and numerically weak groups which 'modify' their party behaviour and provide some much needed high I-Scores, I assess how far these groups alleviate polarization. Finally, in Chapter Four, I conclude with an analysis of three issues which demonstrate how polarization works on typical domestic themes, whilst breaking down along non-party lines on national security. I also suggest further refinements for the I-Score method, and provide ideas for its future use.

CHAPTER ONE: Literature Review.

Chapter Abstract

This chapter will provide an overview of the literature on polarization in American politics, to situate my research against the broader discussion and debate. The literature review will begin by discussing different definitions of ‘polarization’ and consider how definitions of ‘polarization’ inform the academic debate and its content. I will consider the conditions necessary for Congress to be called ‘polarized’ and then synthesize a definition of ‘polarization’ from the literature. The review will consider the ongoing dispute over whether polarization even exists at all at the mass level, identify key debates in the field over the causes and consequence of elite-level polarization, assess different explanations for polarized politics in Congress today and acknowledge the relationship between mass ideology (or lack of it) and the legislature. Whilst this paper is concerned with elite polarization, theories of mass polarization are considered here too, for the reason that elite behaviour and ideology cannot be entirely insulated from mass opinion and public partisan affiliation.

This chapter serves as the backdrop to my own research and in this literature review I will identify the space where my methodology and focus make an original contribution to the field. This chapter will note key research methodologies and how my methodology can supplement them.

What is ‘Polarization’, and who is ‘Polarized’?

Hetherington writes that much of the academic debate over polarization ‘can be understood as a question of definition.’¹ In any piece of academic writing it is clearly vital to define one’s terms, but in the study of polarization failing to define what is meant from the outset can lead to a wildly different discussion from other research on ostensibly similar topics. Without defining the terms now it would be impossible to discuss where polarization comes from, what it looks like or indeed if it actually exists at all. Even on the definition of this vital term, consensus among scholars is lacking.

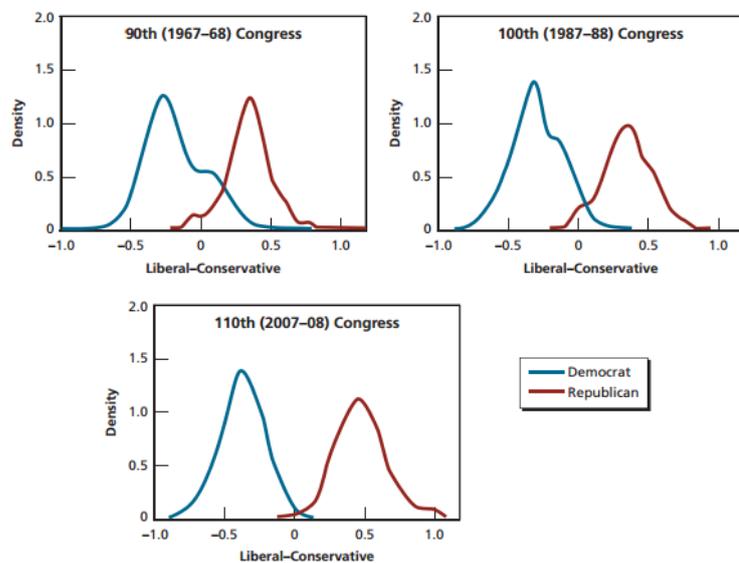
¹ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 415.

Because different academics use the word polarization to describe different political strata within American society, debate over what the word means seeps into discussion of whether polarization exists and, if it does, who we consider to be polarized. For this reason it would be artificial to draw a line between the definition of polarization and the ostensibly separate debate over who we consider to be polarized or where polarization exists, so I will therefore review both questions here in one discussion.

Firstly then, what does polarization mean? A number of different definitions have been offered by academics but Poole and Rosenthal, in their 1984 paper ‘The Polarization of American Politics’ offer a comprehensive definition. In their abstract they name two conditions which we can take here as their definition of what polarization entails, and what it means. The first condition is that ‘elected officials in the United States appear to represent relatively extreme support coalitions rather than the interests of middle-of-the-road voters.’ The second is that ‘there is now competition between equally balanced but extreme support coalitions throughout most of the United States.’² So these two factors, the relative extremism of elite-level representatives (congressmen and senators) when compared to the centre, and the existence of ‘extreme support coalitions’ in the mass public, equate in Poole and Rosenthal’s view, to a polarized political-electoral system. In their later book, *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll*

Call Voting, Poole and Rosenthal identify a third condition of polarization, that ‘for parties to be polarized they must be far apart on policy issues, and the party members must be tightly distributed around the party mean.’³ Later debates fall largely within the bounds of this definition; in any case it is a useful starting point from which to review subsequent literature. I will consider the first of these two propositions below, in terms of overlap between the two

Figure 1.1- Polarization in 90th, 100th, and 110th Congresses.



SOURCE: Carroll et al., 2008.
RAND OP291-7

² Poole and Rosenthal, ‘The Polarization of American Politics’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 4, (Nov, 1984), p. 1061.

³ Poole and Rosenthal, *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*, (Oxford, 1997), p. 81.

parties in Congress. However, the distribution of congressmen and senators around a party mean is particularly relevant to this thesis, as I consider that ‘[tight] distribution’ from the perspective of voting independence, rather than as an ideological mean point.

Poole and Rosenthal have identified what we might call the “diagnostic criteria” for polarization, but what level of partisan division is outright polarization, with all of the negative connotations that implies, rather than the normatively appropriate debate of a functioning democracy? Poole and Rosenthal discuss the concept of ‘overlap’ between the two parties and establish the reasonable criteria that, ‘if parties have a high degree of overlap- with the left wing of the “conservative” party overlapping the right wing of the “liberal” party- then they are less polarized than if they have no overlap whatsoever.’⁴ So, for Poole and Rosenthal, less overlap between parties means more polarization. Between 1997, when their book was published, and the 110th Congress (which is the subject of Chapter Two), the overlap between the parties had shrunk away rapidly. Figure 1.1⁵ demonstrates the receding common ground between Democrats and Republicans in both the House and the Senate. By 2011 the *National Journal* reported that ‘for only the second time since 1982... every Senate Democrat compiled a voting record more liberal than every Senate Republican- and every Senate Republican compiled a voting record more conservative than every Senate Democrat.’⁶ Therefore American politics today, at the elite-level, certainly meets Poole and Rosenthal’s criteria of having no ideological overlap. So, the elite have no ideological cross-over (Figure 1.1), but what of the ‘equally balanced but extreme...coalitions throughout most of the United States’⁷ required for polarization? Is this condition also met, are the American public also polarized?

Whilst this paper is explicitly focused on elite-level polarization, disputes in the literature over whether the electorate is polarized must be considered as well. This also leads into the question of whether a polarized elite has radicalised the electorate, or whether the inverse is true and an increasingly partisan mass public has elected more and more ideological candidates. Of course the relationship need not be that explicit, and as we get into the literature more nuanced explanations are reviewed.

So, when we speak of a ‘polarized’ America *who* are we actually talking about? Here, we find that establishing a definition seeps into the debate as even the terminology of polarization is contested. In recent years a school of thought advocated by Morris Fiorina, dubbed the ‘elite theory of

⁴ Poole and Rosenthal, *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*, (Oxford, 1997), p. 81.

⁵ Carroll et al., ‘Who is More Liberal, Senator Obama or Senator Clinton?’ referenced in J. A. Thomson, ‘A House Divided/ Polarization and Its Effect’ from *RAND Corporation* (2010, California), p. 9.

⁶ Brownstein, ‘Pulling Apart’ in *National Journal*, (24th February, 2011).

⁷ Poole and Rosenthal, ‘The Polarization of American Politics’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 4, (Nov, 1984), p. 1061.

polarization⁸ by critic Alan Abramowitz, has conceptualised an America split not into ‘red’ and blue,’ but into two, distinct political classes. The first of these two classes are the aforementioned ‘elite.’ This group is comprised of elected officials like congressmen and senators, (our subject), as well as party activists (and arguably, to a lesser extent, primary voters). The second category or strata is the vast ‘silent majority’⁹ of “ordinary” Americans, (or the “mass”/”mass public”).

Fiorina’s argument is that most ordinary Americans do not live overtly political lives, nor do they view events from a particularly ideological worldview, so most Americans are not radical or polarized.¹⁰ They are essentially moderate and ‘the great majority of the American citizenry rejects extreme positions.’¹¹ To demonstrate this Fiorina et al. discuss numerous examples in *Culture War?*, from social issues like gay marriage¹² and abortion,¹³ to show that, ‘rather than adhere to a bright-line principle, Americans once again revealed their pragmatic mentality, preferring to make decisions on a case-by-case basis.’¹⁴ Levendusky and Pope use a different methodology, finding ‘that there is only limited polarization and a good deal of common ground-between red states and blue states,’¹⁵ echoing what Fiorina et al. had described. It is promising for their model that a different methodology has arrived at the same (or similar) conclusions.

Back in the 1960s, ‘the authors of *The American Voter* partially blame cognitive limitations for Americans’ lack of ideological sophistication’¹⁶ and this is an argument which many academics maintain today, indeed Abramowitz calls it the ‘conventional wisdom’ of ‘students of American political science.’¹⁷ Hetherington argues that ‘although scales of elite and mass opinion are not directly comparable, we should expect that mass preferences will tend to bunch closer to the middle than those of elites because of the massive differences in ideological sophistication [between the elites and the mass public].’¹⁸ In other words, we should anticipate public opinion to be more centrist than elite (or in this case, congressional) opinion. However Levendusky questions the role of voter

⁸ Abramowitz and Fiorina, ‘America’s Polarized Public: A Reply to Fiorina’ in *Polarized or Sorted? Just What’s Wrong With Our Politics, Anyway?* From *The American Interest* (11th March, 2013).

⁹ This phrase of the 1968 Nixon campaign still has remarkable currency.

¹⁰ Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011).

¹¹ Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), p. 93.

¹² Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), Chapter 6.

¹³ Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), Chapter 5.

¹⁴ Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), p. 159.

¹⁵ Levendusky and Pope, ‘Red States vs. Blue States: Going Beyond the Mean’ in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No.2, (Summer, 2011), p. 227.

¹⁶ Hetherington, ‘Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 621.

¹⁷ Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*, (Yale, 2010), p. 15.

¹⁸ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 433

knowledge and argues that of all the ‘numerous theories [which] argue that voters with more information behave fundamentally differently from those with less...nearly all of the empirical support for these theories... comes from cross-sectional data. As a result, these findings are typically biased, and systematically overstate the effect of information on behaviour.’¹⁹ Levendusky finds that ‘[the adjustments made in his study] cause the estimated effect of information to shrink dramatically, often falling to one-half to one-quarter of its former size.’²⁰

Fiorina, and those who follow or develop his line of argument (such as Levendusky,²¹ Abrams and Pope),²² argue that ‘[America is] a nation whose people share a great deal of common ground’²³ but whose small class of elite, elected officials have become more divided ‘than at any time since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.’²⁴ For Fiorina, the view that America is a ‘50:50 nation’²⁵ made up of two irreconcilable ‘red’ and ‘blue’ voting blocks, is a falsehood and the product of Americans being presented with increasingly radical, polarized choices at elections by their elected elite.²⁶ In Fiorina’s view, to speak of a polarized American public is to ignore that ‘increased [elite] polarization of electoral choices results entirely from movement by the candidates, not the voters.’²⁷ In other words, as elites have radicalised (spurred on by increasingly radical, ideological²⁸ primary voters who ‘favour more ideologically extreme candidates’)²⁹ the American public have been forced to choose between increasingly sharply divided alternatives. The subsequent use of polling and voting data by political scientists to construct the red state/blue state-divided America thesis has led to the logical fallacy that voters who cast their ballot for an extremely ideological Republican (in the absence of a moderate alternative in the general election) are considered to be as partisan as their voting choice. Fiorina believes this recurrent methodological error has led to significant

¹⁹ Levendusky, ‘Rethinking the Role of Political Information’ in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 1, (Spring, 2011), p. 42.

²⁰ Levendusky, ‘Rethinking the Role of Political Information’ in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 1, (Spring, 2011), p. 42.

²¹ Levendusky, *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans*, (Chicago, 2009).

²² Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, ‘Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 70, No. 2, (April, 2008), p. 556.

²³ Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), p. xii.

²⁴ Haberlig, Hetherington and Larson, ‘The Price of Leadership: Campaign Money and the Polarization of Congressional Parties’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 68, No. 4, (November, 2006), p. 992.

²⁵ ‘On His High Horse’, *The Economist*, November 9th 2002 cited in Fiorina, Abrams and Pope in *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011) p.4.

²⁶ Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), p. 25.

²⁷ Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), p. 29.

²⁸ Hirano, Snyder and Ting, ‘Distributive Politics with Primaries’ in *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 71, No. 4, (October, 2009), p. 1467.

²⁹ Brady, Han and Pope, ‘Primary Elections and Candidate Ideology: Out of Step with the Primary Electorate?’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* Vol. 32, No. 1, (February, 2007), p. 79.

misunderstanding of politics and mass ideology. Perhaps Bafumi and Shapiro fall into this trap with their article on the ‘New Partisan Voter’ in which they cite the ‘visible strength of partisan voting’³⁰ as evidence for a newly ideological American electorate, in contrast from that described in *The American Voter*. In turn this exciting mythology of split and division has been perpetuated by the media, whose ‘culture war frame fits the news values of journalists who cover American politics’ and who seek ‘conflict [which is] high in news value.’³¹ The extreme left/right fringes of the very partisan media are often identified as generators of ideological, polarizing content, but Levendusky points out that ‘like-minded media should primarily polarize those who want to watch it.’³² Such outlets are unlikely to change minds then, but simply to reinforce opinions and ideological frames for more partisan voters. Nonetheless, the existence of outlets like Fox News and MSNBC is pointed to regularly as one reason for polarization.^{33,34,35,36} In any event, with the mainstream, relatively centrist, moderate media, as DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson note, ‘polarization, fragmentation and division have become familiar themes in American political discourse.’³⁷

So, in Fiorina’s view, polarization only applies to this small cabal of elected officials and party activists, whom he emphatically reminds us, ‘are not normal people’³⁸ in terms of their ideological sophistication. For Fiorina and sympathetic thinkers, this group cannot be used as an indicator of mass politics in the way that it has been before. It seems that Congress’ approval rating backs up Fiorina’s point. As the gap between the parties has widened over time³⁹ (which fits with Poole and Rosenthal’s definition of polarization) Congressional approval has sunk.⁴⁰ Clearly the debate is already bleeding into the definition, which perhaps ought to be a relatively easy foundation to establish. In the study of polarization even the definition is subject to fundamental disagreements.

³⁰ Bafumi and Shapiro, ‘A New Partisan Voter’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 71, No. 1, (January, 2009), p. 1.

³¹ Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), p. 3.

³² Levendusky, *How Partisan Media Polarize America*, (Chicago, 2013), p. 79.

³³ DellaVigna and Kaplan, ‘The Fox News Effect: Media Bias and Voting’ in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 122, No. 3, (August, 2007).

³⁴ Morris and Francia, ‘Cable News, Public Opinion, and the 2004 Party Conventions’ in *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 4, (December, 2010).

³⁵ Arceneaux, Johnson and Murphy, ‘Polarized Political Communication, Oppositional Media Hostility, and Selective Exposure’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 74, No. 1, (January, 2012).

³⁶ Groeling, ‘Who’s the Fairest of them All? An Empirical Test for Partisan Bias on ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox News’ in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 4, (December 2008).

³⁷ DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson, ‘Have Americans’ Social Attitudes Become More Polarized?’ in *American Journal of Sociology*, (Chicago, 1996), p. 690.

³⁸ Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), p. 16.

³⁹ See Figure 1.1.

⁴⁰ Saad, ‘Congress’ Job Approval Ratings Grow More Polarized/ Democrats Approve; Republicans and Independents increasingly disapprove’ in *Gallup Politics*, (20th August 2009) taken from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/122399/congress-job-approval-ratings-grow-polarized.aspx> accessed on 30th March 2014.

Fiorina's ideas will be returned to again, but for now his view that polarization only applies to a small elite is the important point to take away from the discussion; as well as his identification of several self-reinforcing factors that cause and then strengthen the elite-level ideological divide, and the (in his view) common misconception that the American public are divided. These factors include the polarized elite and the media narrative of polarization, which the press has a clear self-interest in promoting; polarized politics is much more "exciting" than moderate, centrist, consensus politics.

For Abramowitz, author of *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization and American Democracy*, Fiorina's argument is a non-starter because of 'important changes in American society such as increasing racial and ethnic diversity, the decline of the traditional family and growing economic inequality'⁴¹ which have all contributed to a stark division between the 'orthodox' and 'progressive' Americas identified by James Davison Hunter in *Culture Wars: The Struggle To Define America*.⁴² For Abramowitz, the distinction between the masses and the elite made by Fiorina and other proponents of "elite polarization" 'absolves the public of any responsibility for the polarized state of our nation's politics'⁴³ and ignores 'the evidence ... that states have become much more sharply divided along party lines since the 1960s: red states have been getting redder while blue states have been getting bluer. While the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections were highly competitive at the national level, the large majority of states were not competitive.'⁴⁴ The use of state results in presidential elections as evidence for polarization is dealt with in the next section of this chapter, under the topic of re-alignment. Suffice to say for now that it has its limitations. For the moment the difference between seeing polarization as an elite phenomenon (Fiorina), or viewing polarization as both a mass and elite phenomenon (Abramowitz) is the important dispute to consider. The nature of this paper means it will naturally be concerned with elite polarization, but the interaction between the elite and the mass, and the question of who radicalises whom, is a recurrent theme of the literature.

One of the questions that Hetherington raises is the 'salience'⁴⁵ of issues. If Americans are in a 50:50 divide on an issue (for instance gay marriage) then they may appear polarized, but if most only rank gay marriage very low on their list of priorities, then are they really as deeply divided as it appears? Americans consistently rate gay marriage very low on their list of priorities, even if

⁴¹ Abramowitz and Fiorina, 'America's Polarized Public: A Reply to Fiorina' in *Polarized or Sorted? Just What's Wrong With Our Politics, Anyway?* From *The American Interest* (11th March, 2013).

⁴² Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), pp. 2-3.

⁴³ Abramowitz and Fiorina, 'America's Polarized Public: A Reply to Fiorina' in *Polarized or Sorted? Just What's Wrong With Our Politics, Anyway?* From *The American Interest* (11th March, 2013).

⁴⁴ Abramowitz and Saunders, 'Is Polarization a Myth?' in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (April 2008), p. 548.

⁴⁵ Hetherington, 'Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective' in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 436.

‘progressive’ and ‘orthodox’ America are in disagreement. So can we really call them polarized? This is the argument advanced by Fiorina.⁴⁶ For this reason, Hetherington suggests ‘another way to consider the relative degree of polarization caused by an issue is as the product of distance between groups and the salience of the issue.’⁴⁷ Salience must factor into a reasonable definition of polarization because ‘salience helps to determine the weight that opinions carry.’⁴⁸

Another dispute over the definition of polarization is the literalist reading of the word as ‘polar’-ization. This is a definition which Hetherington critiqued on the following grounds; ‘the DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson definition [of polarization as polar-ization] also suffers from the fact that there is no agreed amount of distance between groups necessary for popular polarization to exist. Do their preferences, on a scale from 0 to 100, need to cluster around 90 and 10, 70 and 30, or something else? Can groups be polarized if they are far apart but are on the same side of the midpoint?’⁴⁹ Do Americans have to occupy literally ‘polar’ opposite views to be labelled ‘polarized’? In that case not even Congress could be described as polarized, which seems incongruent with the widely accepted evidence⁵⁰ that it is. Because of this, setting the threshold for polarization at a literal grouping of parties around the two ideological poles is an unreasonable standard, and I accept the more commonly held view (put forward by Poole and Rosenthal) that the required ideological difference between party elites be set at no (or extremely little) overlap; which is currently the case.

Brewer, Mariani and Stonecash offer an alternative⁵¹ definition of polarization which leads well into the research angle taken here, and they identify four potential measures/conditions of polarization. They write that, ‘polarization may be measured as the percentage of party votes (majorities of each party voting against each other), party cohesion (the percentage of members voting with their party), liberal-conservative DW-Nominate voting scores, or the average ratings of an interest group such as the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA).’⁵² For my purposes their acknowledgement of ‘party cohesion’, which is also scored as ‘party unity’, is crucial. Much of the

⁴⁶ Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), Chapter 6 ‘A Closer Look at Homosexuality’, pp. 110-111, pp. 122-123, p. 125.

⁴⁷ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 436.

⁴⁸ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 435.

⁴⁹ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 433.

⁵⁰ See Figure 3.1 in Chapter Three which is derived from Poole and Rosenthal’s DW-NOMINATE scores and taken from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2013/house-and-senate-partisanship> and last accessed on 6th July 2014.

⁵¹ Though not dissimilar from Poole and Rosenthal’s.

⁵² Brewer, Mariani and Stonecash, ‘Northern Democrats and Party Polarization in the U.S. House’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (August, 2002), p. 423.

literature to date focuses on the divide between the average scores of the two parties;⁵³ my research aims to supplement this by investigating the inverse of party unity scores within the two parties; what I term ‘Independence Scores’ (or I-Scores). So including party cohesion/unity as Brewer, Mariana and Stonecash do is very important. At what threshold then, does a party become united enough to be considered ‘polarized’ against its rival (and also homogenous) party? If a party only votes cohesively 70% of the time, and/or has regular defections and a large internal split between mavericks/moderates/ideologues/interventionists (as is the case in the modern GOP) then can we really describe it, on the basis of its average DW-NOMINATE score, as polarized? Even if the two parties have no ideological overlap on any measure (such as the Poole and Rosenthal scores), there may still be some ideological variety which is hidden by simply considering aggregate party scores, which much of the literature on polarization does. This is why my scoring system, which I introduce fully in Chapter Two, measures independence (or party dis-unity) to examine the pockets of ideological variety within the parties. These clusters may be missed if the study of polarization focuses on mean party positions. To consider whether Congress is polarized according to the definitions of Poole and Rosenthal, or Brewer et al, investigations of party unity are essential. The literature does consider this, and various party unity scores exist,^{54,55,56} but by considering it from another angle, from party disunity, we can focus on the (once significant yet still important) minority who regularly break party ranks. By focusing on these independent minorities within the two parties, we can explore how the broader causes of polarization set out throughout this chapter have affected them, and in turn how they modify the behaviour and position of their party mean (if at all). This points us towards later discussion of whether these independent clusters have any hope of breaking the gridlock in the near future. Average or mean scores for legislators, such as the DW-NOMINATE series can obscure some relevant details. For instance, a hypothetical Republican legislator may be extremely conservative, but moderate on one or two issues. His average DW-NOMINATE position could then place him on the far right, obscuring his other moderate views. We might then find that he votes with Democrats on some issues, which would be at odds with his DW-NOMINATE position on the far end of the right wing. These aggregate legislator scores are then accumulated to derive party

⁵³ Poole and Rosenthal’s DW-NOMINATE series is perhaps the most important measure of this in academia, though on individual issues ‘scorecards’ on a legislator’s voting record (say on gun ownership rights or civil liberties) also score legislator ideology, albeit in a much more limited form.

⁵⁴ Ornstein, Mann, Malbin and Rugg, ‘Party Unity Scores in Congressional Voting, 1954-2012’ in *Vital Statistics on Congress*, (8th March 2013) taken from <http://www.brookings.edu/vitalstats> accessed on 28th April 2014.

⁵⁵ ‘CQ Roll Call’s Vote Studies – 2013 In Review’, 3rd February 2014, taken from <http://media.cq.com/votestudies/> accessed on 6th June 2014.

⁵⁶ ‘The U.S. Congress Votes Database’ in *The Washington Post* taken from <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress/> accessed on 1st May 2014.

mean points, which will hide some of this detail and on an even larger scale, particularly because when showing differences between mean party scores the second dimension sometimes used in plotting votes or chambers with DW-NOMINATE is lost and the data is “flattened” to produce a left-right spectrum only.⁵⁷ The DW-NOMINATE series is of immense value to political scientists, but because of the way these average scores stack and the dimension is lost, the mean points cannot show us the whole picture. Indeed Poole and Rosenthal write that the ‘second dimension is no longer important’.⁵⁸ In Chapter Four I argue that a second dimension (libertarian-authoritarian) is in-fact increasingly salient. The I-Score contributes to the literature by considering polarization through the prism of legislator disloyalty and independence, rather than ideological average points on a ‘liberal-conservative’⁵⁹ scale. Though I do consider I-Score average points, this is primarily to demonstrate that party heterogeneity still exists rather to make broader arguments about the raw distance between the two parties. Party disunity is not a well-developed part of the contemporary polarization literature, largely because party unity and polarization are so dominant in US politics today. However, as the I-Score analysis shows, ideological variety (as a function of party disunity) still exists. The other advantage of the I-Score is that it is firmly grounded in, and derived from, “real-world” votes (and voting patterns); whereas much of the literature based on DW-NOMINATE has been criticised for not ‘convert[ing] the estimated [DW-NOMINATE] coefficients into a quantity that maps directly into real-world voting behaviour’.⁶⁰ The I-Score aims to complement what DW-NOMINATE tells us about relative party distance by analysing intra-party factions and identifying specific groups, regions and caucuses that drive or decrease these distances, thus effecting the gulf between parties and mitigating or exacerbating the extent of polarization. How significant are these moderators?⁶¹

Some of the main debates within the definition of polarization can be summarised as follows. When we say American politics is polarized do we mean American voters are irreconcilably split or do we mean American leaders have no middle ground between them in Congress? When we say the ‘elite’ are polarized from each-other do we include congressmen and activists in the same category, or do elected officials constitute an elite within an elite? When we use the word ‘polarization’ do we just mean ‘have strong disagreements’ or do we mean have totally incompatible and unsympathetic

⁵⁷ Poole and Rosenthal, ‘The Polarization of the Congressional Parties’, (19th January, 2014) taken from http://voteview.com/political_polarization.asp accessed on 3rd July 2014.

⁵⁸ Carroll, Lewis, Lo, McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, ‘DW-NOMINATE Scores With Bootstrapped Standard Errors’, (17th February, 2013) taken from <http://voteview.com/DWNOMIN.HTM> accessed on 23rd June 2014.

⁵⁹ Poole and Rosenthal, ‘The Polarization of American Politics’, in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 4, (November, 1984), p. 1061.

⁶⁰ Fowler and Hall, ‘Conservative Vote Probabilities: An Easier Method for the Analysis of Roll Call Data’, (25th July 2014), p. 4, taken from <http://polmeth.wustl.edu/media/Paper/FowlerHallCVP.pdf> accessed on 30th June 2014.

⁶¹ Chapter Three delves into more detail on this point.

worldviews? When we say ‘polarization’ do we mean a literal -50 to +50 split on the left-right spectrum; in which case how do we factor emerging libertarian-authoritarian debates like those over state surveillance? And most importantly for this research, what level of internal party cohesion must be achieved for parties to be polarized? Must parties be homogenous on all issues, and when can we safely take average mean ideology points as evidence for polarization? The methodology I have developed here, the I-Score, will test how united the parties actually are and consider the outliers which resist the parliamentary-style conformity of polarization. For the purposes of this research I accept an elite-level definition of polarization. There is an overwhelming academic consensus that the American elite is polarized.⁶² Within this consensus other questions remain, like whether Congress is the most polarized it has ever been, or whether it is simply the most polarized it has been in a long time. Hetherington, for instance, argues for the latter; ‘the stakes in 1860 were much higher than they are in the early twenty-first century. Then, the republic itself was in grave peril. Today, feelings run deep, but cross-party compromises still occur regularly, and, even if they ceased, the future of the nation would not hang in the balance.’⁶³ Whether or not the civil war is a reasonable base-line for comparison, it is clear that spikes in partisanship are historically common. ‘Although elites polarized by party may seem new because the post-Second World War era was atypically consensual, it is more the norm.’⁶⁴ Despite their other disagreements a polarized elite is a view common to both Fiorina and Abramowitz; whilst they both dispute mass polarization they agree about the elite. I am not convinced by the literalist reading of ‘polar’-ization and accept that given the two parties now have no overlap in Congress at all,⁶⁵ we can call them ‘polarized’ and indeed argue it would be reasonable to use that term even if there were some minute, surviving space of consensus. Quantitative arguments to one side, other factors like the highly toxic rhetoric used in American public life (one of the most egregious moments perhaps being Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC) heckling President Obama during the State of the Union), mean that polarization is a reasonable and useful term of analysis. To argue for a literal ‘polar’-ization definition seems to be a semantic debate and a reasonable definition of the term need not be contingent upon it.

Despite lively disagreements over what polarization means and who it describes, some conclusions can be drawn from the literature and the evidence. Firstly, American politicians are more

⁶² See (cited above) Poole, Rosenthal, Hetherington, Fiorina, Abramowitz, Levendusky, Theriault, Pope, Abrams.

⁶³ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 419.

⁶⁴ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 415.

⁶⁵ See Figure 1.1.

divided today than they have been in a generation⁶⁶ and both ‘Democrats and Republicans in Congress are becoming increasingly ideological.’⁶⁷ Secondly, most American voters are not closely enough involved in politics to frame their decisions ideologically;⁶⁸ as Hetherington puts it, ‘...a relatively small percentage of Americans will have the cognitive ability and/or the political certainty to cluster towards the poles of a distribution.’⁶⁹ That said, as Fiorina argues, Americans do make pragmatic, non-ideological judgements along the lines described by Alvarez and Brehm; ‘most [survey] respondents have many preferences, but... these preferences vary over policy areas.’⁷⁰ So, whilst Americans make political judgements, most Americans do not make ideological decisions. They respond to issues on a case-by-case basis. However, in an increasingly charged elite environment information cues from Congressmen and Senators (and other elected officials for that matter)⁷¹ may increasingly influence mass opinion,⁷² and voters will likely respond to elite cues.⁷³ Therefore an increasing polarization in the American mass public is possible, if in no other way than through the radicalisation of their electoral choices. The final common conclusion we can draw is that Congress is divided now in such an extreme way that virtually no middle ground exists between the two parties.⁷⁴ Therefore, my working definition of polarization (drawn from a synthesis of the literature) is an elite with little-to-no ideological overlap in Congress. The elite distorts its issue priorities, promoting (for instance) social issues despite the fact they have little salience with the public.⁷⁵ Elections are characterised by polarized electoral choices for voters. Whilst the public do not have the ideological frame of the elite and activist strata, the potential for mass polarization exists, should these conditions continue (given the power of elite opinion to shape the mass public’s ideological preferences). Finally, and most crucially in the context of this paper, party unity is a

⁶⁶ Galston and Nivola, ‘The Great Divide: Polarization in American Politics’, Brookings Institute, (November-December, 2006).

⁶⁷ Theriault, ‘Party Polarization in Congress’, paper prepared for presentation at Rice University, Texas 14th October 2005 taken from <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~lmartin/Speakers/Theriault.pdf>, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Glazer and Grofman, ‘Why Representatives are Ideologists Though Voters Are Not’ in *Public Choice*, Vol. 61, No. 1, (April, 1989) p. 29.

⁶⁹ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 433.

⁷⁰ Alvarez and Brehm, *Hard Choices, Easy Answers: Values, Information, and American Public Opinion*, (Princeton, 2002), p. 17.

⁷¹ Deckman, ‘Religion Makes The Difference: Why Christian Right Candidates Run For School Board’ in *Review of Religious Research* Vol. 42, No. 4, (June, 2001).

⁷² Schneider and Jacoby, ‘Elite Discourse and American Public Opinion: The Case of Welfare Spending’ in *Political Research Quarterly* Vol. 58, No. 3, (September, 2005).

⁷³ Jacobs, ‘The Recoil Effect: Public Opinion and Policymaking in the U.S. and Britain’ in *Comparative Politics* Vol. 24, No. 2, (January, 1992).

⁷⁴ Poole and Rosenthal, *Ideology and Congress* Second Edition, (New Jersey, 2012), p. 64.

⁷⁵ Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics*, (Oklahoma, 2009), p. 28.

contingent part of polarization. It is identified by Poole and Rosenthal's data as a condition of polarization and Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski use DW-NOMINATE to show a 'very strong relationship'⁷⁶ between party unity and the level of polarization. The flip side of that party unity, legislator independence and party disunity, is at the heart of this thesis. This research places the minority of relatively disloyal, independent-voting legislators at the heart of the study, to explore the aspects of polarization which are less well developed (or omitted) in the broader literature. Congress at the present time meets all of the requirements of polarization drawn out from the literature here, but the last point on party unity scores and their inverse, what I call independence (I-)Scores, is the aspect of the debate this paper will primarily concern itself with. As I (and much of the extant literature) identify the increase in party unity with the rise of polarization, a review of the literature of polarization is almost synonymous with a review of the literature on party unity.

Realignment and 'sorting'.

Having established a definition, and set out the boundaries of the debate in the literature, I will now consider some of the causal factors of polarization identified by academics.

At the macro-level, large geopolitical changes coming out of the Civil Rights era have been singled⁷⁷ out as the primary reason for the 'ideologically driven'⁷⁸ 'partisan sort'⁷⁹ which saw southern conservatives move into the Republican Party and northern liberals defect to the Democratic Party. The effect of this has been that, 'Republican gains in the South and the diminished influence of Northern moderates have made the Republican Party more conservative and the loss of Southern conservatives has made the Democratic Party more dominated by Northern and Western liberals.'⁸⁰ This change in the caucus/conference membership has filtered into congressional leadership, who are increasingly drawn from the more extreme wings of the ideological spectrum, as both parties re-align geographically, demographically and philosophically.⁸¹ Two primary explanations of this exist,

⁷⁶ Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski, 'Where Measures Meet History: Party Polarization During the New Deal and Fair Deal' in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Representation in America*, p. 17, taken from https://my.vanderbilt.edu/joshclinton/files/2013/06/CKL_Mayhew-Conference.pdf accessed on 17th April 2014.

⁷⁷ Nardulli, 'The Concept of a Critical Realignment, Electoral Behaviour, and Political Change' in *American Political Science Review*, Vol.89, No.1, (March, 1995).

⁷⁸ Levendusky, *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans*, (Chicago, 2009), p. 115.

⁷⁹ Levendusky, *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans*, (Chicago, 2009).

⁸⁰ Harris and Nelson, 'Middlemen No More? Emergent Patterns in Congressional leadership Selection' in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 2008), p.51.

⁸¹ Harris and Nelson, 'Middlemen No More? Emergent Patterns in Congressional Leadership Selection' in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (Jan, 2008), p. 49.

realignment and sorting. Realignment emphasises changes in the electoral map, whilst sorting deals with mass changes in voter identification. As historian Geoffrey Kabaservice notes, ‘moderate Republicans had particular reason to fear the impact of realignment on their party. Every defection from the moderate ranks had the effect of pushing the Republican centre to the right, leaving the remaining moderates and progressives more exposed and less influential. The influx of Southerners and Westerners threatened to make the GOP not only more conservative, but fundamentally a different kind of party.’⁸² The inverse can also be said of the Democratic Party, as an infusion of former liberal Republicans entered the party. The realignment model has tended to focus on the South but the influx of northern liberals into the Democratic Party is also very important.⁸³ In any case, this new network of party coalitions tipped the electoral map upside-down. Debate exists over whether it was a national or regional phenomenon.⁸⁴ In either case the effects were stark.

However, the realignment perspective has been criticised, with Carmines and Stimson arguing that, ‘the closer we look [at the realignment model] the more these “simple” realignments become movements over time, taking decades or multiples of decades to achieve their final form. When precursors and after-shocks are added, the multiple decade processes overlap, and the continuing effects of old movements are still manifested while new and different movements toward a still new alignments are underway.’⁸⁵ Of course one reason for this delay between re-alignment in presidential election voting and actual re-alignment in the institutions of American government, what Carmines and Stimson call the ‘multiple decades [process]’ is due to incumbency, which has great powers to slow-down and distort at the congressional level that which appears far more quickly at the presidential level. As Bullock put it, ‘an incumbent can delay the consequences of [an electoral] realignment for years after the control of other positions has changed hands.’⁸⁶ So it perhaps isn’t fair to dismiss realignment on the basis of holdouts in the “wrong” party/region, (like Maine Republicans Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins). That said, it would clearly be insufficient to view polarization through the prism of electoral realignment alone, and Theriault writes that ‘future polarization studies

⁸² Geoffrey Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin/ The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party from Eisenhower to the Tea Party*, (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 339.

⁸³ Brewer, Mariani and Stonecash, ‘Northern Democrats and Party Polarization in the U.S. House’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (August, 2002), p. 423.

⁸⁴ Levendusky, *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans*, (Chicago, 2009), p. 53.

⁸⁵ Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*, (Princeton, 1989), p.21.

⁸⁶ Bullock, ‘Regional Realignment from an Officeholding Perspective’ in *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 50, Issue 3, (August, 1988), p.554.

must go beyond electoral explanations.’ He adds, ‘currently, congressional observers focus too much on the electoral side, though to ignore it would be equally imprudent.’⁸⁷

In the intervening decades between Carmines and Stimson’s 1989 critique, new conceptual explanations have been advanced and one of the most significant of these is known as ‘party sorting.’⁸⁸ Party sorting is a theoretical explanation aimed at supplanting a mass-polarization narrative

Figure 1.2- Electoral College vote allocation of North Eastern states from 1948 to 2012.

North Eastern States	Presidential Election Year:																
	1948	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
New York	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Blue	Red	Red	Blue						
New Hampshire	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue
Maine	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
New Jersey	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Connecticut	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Massachusetts	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Pennsylvania	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Vermont	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Rhode Island	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Simple Majority :	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue

by explaining mass politics in terms of voter identification with “correct” and “incorrect” parties. In other words as the Republicans became more conservative and the Democrats became more liberal, conservative voters sorted themselves into the Republican Party and liberals sorted themselves into the Democratic Party. This means ‘that mass partisans are following what are now clearer elite cues to sort themselves into the “correct” party, which decreases intra-party heterogeneity and increases the difference between party adherents.’⁸⁹ In turn as elites have polarized (through sorting themselves into the correct liberal/conservative party), the public have responded to these elite cues (which were increasingly partisan, and thus clearer) and sorted themselves into the “correct” ideological party. The elite-level sort is a key theme of this paper, and is measured by my methodology in subsequent chapters through declining I-Scores. As the electoral cleavage of civil rights broke-up the old party coalitions, conservative Democrats stopped identifying with the Democratic Party and defected to the Republicans, and liberal Republicans stopped identifying the GOP and moved to the Democrats (as in the standard re-alignment explanation). These mass changes can be seen in presidential election results of North Eastern states in Figure 1.2, as the North-East dramatically defects (or so it appears at

⁸⁷ Theriault, *Party Polarization in Congress*, (Cambridge, 2008), p. 220.

⁸⁸ Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), Chapter 4 ‘A 50:50 Nation? Beyond the Red and the Blue States’, pp. 61-70.

⁸⁹ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 436.

the presidential/ Electoral College level) from the GOP to the Democrats. Whilst it is important to grasp the macro-level changes, the ‘red-blue’ map also distorts our view by presenting a simplified result. Fiorina, Abrams and Pope criticised the use of Electoral College results as evidence for political scientists in the following way:

‘A state is a large aggregation, a gross unit of comparison. California is a blue state, but most of the state’s counties are red. Similarly, Texas is a red state, but there is considerable blue in its large cities and along its border with Mexico. For this reason, few professional analysts take the red states/blue states distinction very seriously.’⁹⁰

In a limited, qualified sense I agree with this but the utility of the red/blue state model depends on the nature and subject matter of the research in question. For the study of electoral strategy in presidential elections, for instance, the fact that California is geographically (by county) more red than blue is of little significance (in the current electoral alignment) during a discussion of which party will win its Electoral College votes. It is clear that, for now, California is a safe Democratic stronghold. So in some fields it is demonstrably more useful than in others, but as Fiorina, Abrams and Pope point out it is a blunt analysis indeed if a thesis depends upon the state as an indicator of public opinion or mass ideology. For the study of polarization then, the red-blue macro level view tells us how party coalitions have flipped (or ‘sorted’) but it can’t tell us much more than that. The danger of exclusively viewing polarization from a re-alignment perspective is that the detail is lost through the use of monolithic voting blocs, states, as indicators for voter preference. This criticism is at the heart of Levendusky and Pope’s paper rebutting ‘difference-of-means test to determine when [red and blue states] are polarized.’⁹¹ In a rebuttal to Abramowitz and Saunders’ critique of their theory, Fiorina et al. also argued that ‘if red-blue polarization was as deep as Abramowitz and Saunders believe it to be, why would voting patterns for other offices not produce exactly the same red-blue map that presidential voting does? But “red” states elect Democratic governors and “blue” states elected Republican ones. And half the states have divided party control of the state government.’⁹² This is a powerful rebuttal; clearly the realignment explanation of polarization has its limits, and split-ticket voting in the manner described by Fiorina et al. does weaken the validity of the standard realignment model.

⁹⁰ Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011), p. 57.

⁹¹ Levendusky and Pope, ‘Red States vs. Blue States: Going Beyond The Mean’ in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2, (Summer, 2001), p. 227.

⁹² Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, ‘Polarization in the American Public: Misconception and Misreadings’ in *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 70, No. 2, (April, 2008), p. 558.

Whilst they arrive at the same conclusions, the party sorting hypothesis is an important refinement of the standard geopolitical realignment model. Sorting helps to explain the transformation of American politics over the last half century in terms of voter movements from and to parties, rather than describing change in terms of monolithic state voting blocs; which while useful for the purposes of presidential election strategy or explanatory short-cuts, do not offer a sophisticated model of party makeup or voter behaviour, primarily because they consider whole state outcomes at the presidential level. The seemingly drastic change seen in Figure 1.2 does mask a more nuanced pattern which Fiorina describes as party sorting. Hetherington writes that ‘contemporary American politics is probably best described as polarized on the elite level and increasingly well sorted in the electorate.’⁹³ Furthermore, Theriault writes that whilst ‘the degree to which Americans are divide into red and blue states is rigorously debated, few question that Americans have politically sorted themselves ideologically.’⁹⁴ Among others, Abramowitz has spent considerable time refuting Fiorina’s analysis. In one article for *The Atlantic*, Abramowitz identified a few key pieces of evidence which he claims undo the central tenet of Fiorina’s thesis that the American public are not polarized, but sorted. Abramowitz cites a statistic from American National Election Studies that ‘the percentage of voters who place themselves in the centre of a seven-point liberal-conservative scale has decreased, while the percentage who place themselves near the left and right ends of the scale has increased considerably since the 1970s.’⁹⁵ The NES surveys also formed a key part of Fiorina’s argument.⁹⁶ The other critical factor Abramowitz cites in support of the widely-held view that Americans are polarized is race. In terms of electoral politics Abramowitz notes that, ‘as the American electorate has become more racially diverse, the racial divide between the Democratic and Republican parties has widened considerably and this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The Democratic Party today depends heavily on votes from African-Americans, Hispanics, and other non-whites. About 45 percent of Democratic presidential and congressional voters in 2012 were non-white, compared with only 11 percent of Republican voters.’⁹⁷ The difference in the issue profile between white and non-white voters is also staggering, unsurprisingly. ‘The growing dependence of the Democratic Party on non-white voters, who generally hold much more liberal views on the role and size of government than white voters, has helped to drive racially and economically conservative whites toward the

⁹³ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 446.

⁹⁴ Theriault, *Party Polarization in Congress*, (Cambridge, 2008), p. 49.

⁹⁵ Abramowitz, ‘What If The Pundits Are Right After All? A Reply on Polarization and Sorting’ in *The Atlantic*, 4th March 2013.

⁹⁶ Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011).

⁹⁷ Abramowitz, ‘What If The Pundits Are Right After All? A Reply on Polarization and Sorting’ in *The Atlantic*, 4th March 2013.

Republican Party, thereby deepening the ideological divide between the parties.’⁹⁸ This racial component of re-alignment is important, and it is closely related to another indicator of political party allegiance, income inequality.⁹⁹

McCarty et al. note that ‘blacks now compose a greater portion of both of the extreme income quintiles.’¹⁰⁰ The high rate of identification with the Democrats among African-Americans, since President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, is the most striking instance of racial-economic and ideology correlation. Perhaps this was one of the most significant “elite cues” in modern history, heralding (along with Barry Goldwater’s nomination in 1964) the start of the mass voter sort which came to define the post-realignment era. These issues are not at the heart of this paper, but do provide important context and heed Bartel’s advice that ‘students of party politics would do well to examine more closely the interrelationships of mass-level and elite-level trends.’¹⁰¹

The older re-alignment model would likely phrase this transfer of voters in terms of the Old South flipping to the Republican Party over Civil Rights. The ‘sorting’ school of thought would probably call tight racial-party identification a natural result of sorting into “correct” parties. Mass-level explanations would stress the role of race and income. Abramowitz asserts this as evidence for polarization whilst Fiorina argues this term applies only to the elite. The same facts have led to different explanations; there are however obvious similarities in each rationalisation of events. It is not clear what the difference between ‘sorting’ and re-alignment actually is in practical terms. In both the sorting and realignment models conservatives and liberals defected en masse to join the more appropriate party. So is ‘sorting’ just a description of the mechanism of realignment? In fact the main difference between these two theories seems to be one of emphasis; a re-alignment understanding favours consideration of politics through large aggregate units (states), whilst sorting deals mainly with the voter-level ideological judgements made by the American people. Realignment is a more useful model for presidential elections, whilst sorting is more useful for the study of Congress. In any case the end result is the same, and the elite are certainly sorted and therefore polarized from one another in an ideological exaggeration of mass-level trends. This dramatically increased elite-level party unity.

At the mass level, as voters ‘sorted’ themselves into the ideologically appropriate party, elite-level changes accelerated. But a number of other factors have been identified by scholars interested in

⁹⁸ Abramowitz, ‘What If The Pundits Are Right After All? A Reply on Polarization and Sorting’ in *The Atlantic*, 4th March 2013.

⁹⁹ Bonica, McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, ‘Why Hasn’t Democracy Slowed Rising Inequality’ in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (Summer, 2013), p. 107.

¹⁰⁰ McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*, (Cambridge, 2006), p. 90.

¹⁰¹ Bartels, ‘Partisanship and Voting Behaviour, 1952-1996’ in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (January, 2000), p. 44.

the origins of polarization. Hetherington sums up some of the main explanations for political polarization as follows:

‘In identifying the causes of partisan polarization in Congress, Jacobson suggests sorting them by those that occur outside political institutions, such as changes in the electorate or electoral system, and those that occur inside them, such as rule changes or changes in the character of party leadership. Poole and Rosenthal demonstrate that the lion’s share of change in party preferences can be explained by the replacement of old [Congressional] members with new ones. And, as Fleisher and Bond and also Grose and Yoshinaka, demonstrate, party switching by [Congressmen and Senators] whose ideological profile is inconsistent with their party is more likely in recent years compared with the several decades after the Second World War. Moreover, Nokken and Poole demonstrate that these party switchers, especially recent ones, exhibit large changes in their voting behaviour, reinforcing polarization.’¹⁰²

Therault listed additional explanations cited by scholars in his book, *Party Polarization in Congress*, including, ‘redistricting, income inequality, changes in House procedure, political migration and segregation, the ideological sorting of voters, Newt Gingrich’s combative style, Clinton’s impeachment, the breakdown in social connections between members’ families and changes in the Washington community.’¹⁰³ These explanations are by no means mutually exclusive, and indeed some of them have distinct causal relationships. For instance, ‘McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal have demonstrated the most concrete policy consequence of elite polarization. In addition to being caused by income inequality, they demonstrate that polarization increases income inequality.’¹⁰⁴ There are of course other reasons for polarization which have been identified, however those listed above are the most dominant explanations in the current literature. What follows now is an overview of these explanations in the extant literature.

Mass level trends (race, gender and income inequality).

¹⁰² Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 419.

¹⁰³ Therault, *Party Polarization in Congress*, (Cambridge, 2008), p. 220.

¹⁰⁴ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 429.

As for the causes of polarization, there are other factors cited behind the polarization surge that are not particularly salient to this paper but which ought to be referred to; I will note them extremely briefly now (principally because they are mass level explanations and this paper is explicitly concerned with the elite and dominant mass level explanations have been set out above). Income inequality is one such factor and McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal write that ‘partisanship and presidential vote choice have become more stratified by income.’¹⁰⁵ Given that income inequality has rapidly increased since the 1970s¹⁰⁶ this is particularly worrying. Race is another, related factor. Gender is the next of these mass-level explanations and ‘is something Stimson traces back to the ‘1980 [Republican] platform written for the Reagan campaign’ which opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. Stimson argues that the ‘platform sent a signal that conservatism and feminism would be on opposite sides’. He goes on to state that before this event Americans were ‘accustomed to gender not being relevant to politics.’¹⁰⁷ The so-called “gender-gap” between the two parties is significant, but nowhere near as vast as the racial distribution of party affiliation. Demographic trends may exacerbate this racial divide if the Republican Party remains on its present course, as Latinos and African-Americans come to dominate elections as white America and the GOP base shrink.

In a sense, elites have undergone a party “sorting” of their own; and all too often this has meant the exodus of moderates, to be replaced by far more ideological members. This tightens party unity, and decreased party heterogeneity (as my I-Score analysis shows). Innumerable Senators and Congressmen have left (or been driven out) by Congress’ turbulent operating environment, citing partisan division and polarization¹⁰⁸ and further depreciating the small pool of legislators who served before the Gingrich revolution and who can remember how Congress used to function in a bipartisan way. Given the way in which experience and practices are transmitted from old members to new ones, and given this extended recent experience of procedural polarization in Congress and the extreme becoming the “new normal,” it appears as though the cycle of radical polarization will be self-perpetuating within the legislature. The gerrymandering of congressional districts is also a near guarantee for ideological congressmen that their constituents will not provide as much check on their relative extremism (compared to the median voter). Granger points out that ‘as districts become

¹⁰⁵ McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, ‘Political Polarization and Income Inequality’, (November, 2002), taken from <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/seminars/rosenthal.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*, (Cambridge, 2006).

¹⁰⁷ Stimson, *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 73.

¹⁰⁸ For one prominent example from the Senate see Avlon, ‘How partisan politics drove Olympia Snowe away’ in *CNN*, (3rd March 2012).

“safer,” legislators tend to take more extreme voting positions.’¹⁰⁹ Even if gerrymandering doesn’t lead directly to polarization, the clumping of constituents into homogenous blocks will in all likelihood contribute to high levels of party unity, which is one major result found in Poole and Rosenthal’s DW-NOMINATE series over the course of the last fifty years.¹¹⁰ Criteria for “diagnosing” a highly polarized political environment must therefore include high levels of party unity. In a sense the choice boils down to the paradox between the (small ‘r’) republican and (small ‘d’) democratic methods; should congressmen be ideological mirrors of their constituents, or should they obey the Burkean invocation that, ‘your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.’¹¹¹ In the meantime, whilst this tension remains unsolved, there is a danger that polarization will become even more firmly entrenched, now that an entire generation of the political elite has gone through the divided Congress. Whilst Fiorina explains that at the mass voter level, it isn’t all that bad currently, ‘elite polarization... appears to be a potential engine for change at the mass level’¹¹² and there is a distinct danger that in responding to elite cues, given the extremely limited choices available at the ballot box and the polarization of choices, the mass public will become truly polarized at the mass level, and that this polarization will not just be philosophical, but partisan as well.

Rules Reform, Congressional Norms and Politicised Procedural Votes.

As we have now considered discussion of changes in the electorate (via realignment and/or party sorting), the next set of explanations identified in the literature to be considered here are the changes internal to Congress. Rules reform is a particularly current topic and the so-called ‘nuclear option’ deployed by Senator Reid (D-NV) in November of 2013¹¹³ marked a concerning new height of polarization in the Senate. Theriault identifies procedural debates as the main culprit for ‘the overwhelming growth in the voting disparity between Democrats and Republicans in both the House and the Senate since the early 1970s’¹¹⁴ and also insists that ‘future polarization studies must explain

¹⁰⁹ Grainger, ‘Redistricting and Polarization: Who Draws the Lines in California’ in *Journal of Law and Economics* Vol. 53, No. 3, (August, 2010), p. 1.

¹¹⁰ From Clinton et al.’s analysis of the DW-NOMINATE series.

¹¹¹ Burke, ‘Speech to the Electors of Bristol’, 3rd November 1774.

¹¹² Hetherington, ‘Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 623.

¹¹³ Kane, ‘Reid, Democrats trigger ‘nuclear’ option; eliminate most filibusters on nominees’ in *The Washington Post*, 21st November 2013.

¹¹⁴ Theriault, *Party Polarization in Congress*, (Cambridge, 2008), p. 221.

the increasing frequency of and polarization on procedural issues.¹¹⁵ Theriault makes an interesting set of points around procedural votes and identifies them as a primary reason for increasing polarization as ‘the majority party implements... highly restrictive [rules]’¹¹⁶ governing amendments, who can add them and when. This has resulted in procedural votes and arcane parliamentary strategy being used just to make what Theriault calls ‘substantive’¹¹⁷ points of argument. This worrying growth in polarized procedural votes and parliamentary obstructionism (such as widespread use of the filibuster) seems to be fairly bipartisan,¹¹⁸ as with gerrymandering, both sides play the rules when they are in a position to do so.¹¹⁹ If partisan polarization has filtered down into even the procedural matters, which it certainly now has done, it is easy to see how the trend will get worse.

In 1973 Herbert B. Asher wrote that, ‘the institution, be it the House or Senate or a state legislature, must transmit its norms to legislative newcomers in order to insure the continued, unaltered operation of the institution and that the member himself must learn these norms if he is to be an effective legislator.’¹²⁰ Given the stark deterioration since then, both in terms of raw polarization between the parties in Congress and the use (and misuse) of procedural tactics by both Republicans and Democrats it is hard to see how, given the transmission of these ‘norms’ in the manner Asher describes, the damage can be undone. This polarization is becoming a new normal, and new members will become quickly acclimatised to this as older congressmen and senators pass these tactics on to their younger colleagues, as Asher describes. The abuse of procedural rules is most worrying because it means that polarization is being institutionalised. Binder notes that ‘as contemporary alignments of partisanship register themselves in chamber rules- and as inherited rules temper their effects- each chamber develops an institutional history. When unpacked, these histories are arguably no more than the accumulation of past procedural choices.’¹²¹ Given the sharp uptake in partisan polarization (and partisan polarization of procedural voting choices) it is readily apparent that the institutional history/memory that Binder explores will be tainted (almost completely) by the past twenty (plus) years of historically extreme partisanship. Whilst the misuse of procedural votes is properly a symptom of polarization, the way in which information and practices are transmitted from older to

¹¹⁵ Theriault, *Party Polarization in Congress*, (Cambridge, 2008), p. 222.

¹¹⁶ Theriault, *Party Polarization in Congress*, (Cambridge, 2008), p. 222.

¹¹⁷ Theriault, *Party Polarization in Congress*, (Cambridge, 2008), p. 221.

¹¹⁸ Binder and Mann, ‘Slaying the Dinosaur: The Case for Reforming the Senate Filibuster’ in *The Brookings Review* Vol. 13, No. 3, (Summer, 1995), p. 42.

¹¹⁹ Schaffner, Wagner and Winburn, ‘Incumbents out, Party in? Term Limits and Partisan Redistricting in State Legislatures’ in *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* Vol. 4, No. 4, (Winter, 2004).

¹²⁰ Asher, ‘The Learning of Legislative Norms’ in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 67, No. 2, (June, 1973), p.499.

¹²¹ Binder, *Minority Rule, Majority Rule: Partisanship and the Development of Congress*, (Cambridge, 1997), p. 209.

newer members clearly means that it can also become an exacerbating factor. Other internal factors have been identified for driving up party unity in Congress. For instance Rohde and Sinclair both identified the resurgence of '[party] leadership organizations in congress'¹²² who are empowered by conformist and homogenous parties.

Party Identification and the Benefits of Polarization.

The last twenty years have seen marked moments of partisan escalation. From Hunter's identification of a 'culture war,'¹²³ through the divisive election of George W. Bush and into the rise of the Tea Party, polarization has been the dominant narrative in both academia and the press.¹²⁴ However, all of this came out of a period in which there had been a significant block of academic opinion arguing that American's two-party system was crumbling. These academics argued that moderate, non-ideological and non-partisan voters with casual party attachments heralded an end to America's two-party system. Writing in 1994, Green and Palmquist summed up this thinking on party affiliation as follows: 'partisan affiliation was originally thought to be something of an unmoved mover, a psychological attachment that remains highly stable over time. This view came under attack during the 1970s and 1980s, when party identification was found to respond to retrospective evaluations of presidential performance (Fiorina, 1981; Brody and Rothenberg, 1988).'¹²⁵ This instability in party identification and an increase in votes for third parties¹²⁶ led to a relatively widespread theory of party decline.¹²⁷ In turn this theory of collapsing party identification fell by the wayside as the 'culture war' theory came to the fore. The theory of decline in party identification had something of a fierce undoing during 1990s and 2000s. In 2001 Hetherington noted, on the differences between the late Clinton years and the broad coalitions of Reagan and Nixon, that 'Americans in the 1990s are more likely to think about one party positively and one negatively, less likely to feel neutral toward either party, and better able to list why they like and dislike the parties

¹²² Cantor and Herrnson, 'Party Campaign Activity and Party Unity in the U.S. House of Representatives' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 3, (August, 1997), p. 395.

¹²³ Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, (Michigan, 1991).

¹²⁴ In the case of the press there is a manifest self-interest for them to report on US politics with the rhetoric of 'schism', 'split', 'gridlock' etc. because it is far more interesting than bipartisanship (as Fiorina argues). Partisan news sources also have an additional self-interest in only reporting news that their audience likes hearing, arguably perpetuating polarization, (see Bernhardt, Krasa and Polborn, 'Political polarization and the electoral effects of media bias' in *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 92, Issues 5-6, (June, 2008).

¹²⁵ Green and Palmquist, 'How Stable Is Party Identification?' in *Political Behaviour*, Vol. 16, No. 4, (1994), p.437.

¹²⁶ This arguably reached its zenith with Ross Perot's candidacy.

¹²⁷ For instance, Broder, 'The Party's Over' in *The Atlantic*, (March, 1972).

than they were ten to thirty years ago.’¹²⁸ Paradoxically this chimes with Fiorina’s view of ‘sorting’, a result (or mechanism) of realignment but could also be seen as evidence for Abramowitz’s view of mass-level polarization. Hetherington notes that ‘people in the 1990s are better able to array the parties ideologically,’¹²⁹ demonstrating the widening political gap and the effect of party sorting. Hetherington goes on to explain that ‘from 1984 until 1990, only about 50% of the public [matched ideology to party] correctly, but this figure reached 63% in 1996.’¹³⁰ Clearly as the Clinton presidency and Gingrich speakership went on, punctuated by acute moments of paralysis (the government shutdown and Monica Lewinsky scandal perhaps chief among them), voters become more ideologically attuned. Finally Hetherington writes that ‘in addition to arraying the parties correctly, respondents perceive a widening ideological gulf between them. According to data from the NES Cumulative File (Sapiro et al. 1997), the mean signed ideological distance between the parties rose from 1.52 points in 1984 to 1.94 points in 1992 and 1996, an increase of 28%.’¹³¹ The ‘mood’ of the country was certainly increasingly partisan from the early 1990s, and the rhetoric matched this. But is this a bad thing? In the eyes of the American people, substantiated by innumerable polls¹³² that report extremely weak congressional approval ratings, it clearly is. But Abramowitz takes a contrary view. In his book *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*, he sums up the conventional view as such;

‘In recent years a number of pundits and political commentators have claimed that ordinary Americans are turned off by the hyperpartisanship and polarization that they see in Washington. In their view, most Americans have little interest in the ideological battles that preoccupy the politicians and their activist supporters, and they have become increasingly frustrated that Democrats and Republicans are unable or unwilling to work together to address the major problems facing the country. As a result, we are told, ordinary Americans are losing faith in the political process.’¹³³

¹²⁸ Hetherington, ‘Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 628.

¹²⁹ Hetherington, ‘Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 623.

¹³⁰ Hetherington, ‘Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 623.

¹³¹ Hetherington, ‘Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 623.

¹³² There are a very large number of such polls, for instance; Jones, ‘Congress Job Approval Starts 2014 at 13%/ Essentially unchanged since December’ in *Gallup*, (14th January 2014), Newport, ‘Congressional Approval Sinks to Record Low/ Current approval at 9%; 2013 average now 14%’ in *Gallup*, (12th November 2013).

¹³³ Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*, (Yale, 2010), p. 18.

Abramowitz refutes this argument and cites ANES data from 2004 which, ‘casts serious doubt on this argument.’¹³⁴ Namely because the ‘ANES time series shows that the level of political engagement among the public has been increasing.’¹³⁵ Piecing together some of the strands of this literature review so far we can now see a pattern emerging. In his seminal book *The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics*, Converse notes that ‘the common citizen fails to develop more global points of view about politics’¹³⁶ and that most voters are uninformed and inconsistent in their ideological beliefs. He was writing at a time when party-polarization was not a factor in American political life; it is important to note that polarization did exist on issues like civil rights, but that the polarization was across parties (i.e. there were pro- and anti- segregationists in both parties, and therefore significant overlap between the two parties and large divisions within them).¹³⁷ So, in this period of significant party overlap, public engagement with politics was low (as were levels of voter information and voter ideology). However, by the 21st century when party polarization was extremely high, Abramowitz argues that voter interest in politics was much higher as well. He notes that ‘political information and political participation... are closely related’¹³⁸ and that because of polarization, voters are actually more interested and engaged with political debates, and with elections. Abramowitz cites the example of George W. Bush and finds that ‘the intense polarization of voter opinion about President Bush was directly responsible for the extraordinarily high level of public engagement in the 2004 presidential election.’¹³⁹ This is because ‘the larger the difference that voters perceive between the candidates and parties, the greater their stake in the election outcome, and the more engaged in an election they are likely to be.’¹⁴⁰ So what Fiorina calls the polarization of ‘choices’¹⁴¹ actually engages the electorate with political decision making at the ballot box. Abramowitz is not alone in this position, among others Levendusky agrees and wrote in 2010 that ‘elite polarization, by clarifying where the parties

¹³⁴ Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*, (Yale, 2010), p. 18.

¹³⁵ Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*, (Yale, 2010), p. 18.

¹³⁶ Converse, *The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics*, (Michigan, 1962), p. 247.

¹³⁷ See Figure 1.1.

¹³⁸ Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*, (Yale, 2010), p. 21.

¹³⁹ Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*, (Yale, 2010), p. 29.

¹⁴⁰ Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*, (Yale, 2010), p. 29.

¹⁴¹ Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics*, (Oklahoma, 2009), p. 55.

stand on the issues of the day, causes ordinary voters to adopt more consistent attitudes.’¹⁴² On the other hand, Claassen and Highton reject this argument and assert that ‘only the well informed responded to the growing elite polarization by becoming more partisan in their opinions. Apparently, in the absence of the motivation to develop coherent opinions, even a simplification of the political environment does not close the gaps between those who are more and less aware about politics.’¹⁴³

So is this level of elite polarization a desirable feature of the political system; or is the current dysfunction too high a price to pay for an engaged electorate? Abramowitz points out positive effects of polarized choices (see above).¹⁴⁴ In a sense this brings us back to the contradiction at the core of American legislative/electoral politics, that Americans strongly disapprove of a partisan congress, but almost always favour¹⁴⁵ (and re-elect)¹⁴⁶ their increasingly partisan representatives; this can be a symptom of gerrymandering, posited as a cause of polarization quite frequently¹⁴⁷ and discussed next. In principle most Americans want a bipartisan, cooperative congress, but in reality they are more heavily invested in elections when presented with two easily distinguished, ideologically polarized candidates (as in Abramowitz’s example of the 2004 presidential election). Perhaps the clearer and further apart the two parties are, the easier it is for voters (and especially low information voters) to respond to these elite information cues, to accrue political and ideological knowledge and ultimately to vote for the most appropriate candidate for them, even if they are only choosing the “least bad” option from a polarized ballot. Rogowski rejects this and finds that ‘increasing policy differences between candidates [in Senate and House races] significantly reduce voter turnout.’¹⁴⁸

This is really the essence of party sorting: ‘mass partisans are following what are now clearer elite cues to sort themselves into the ‘correct’ party.’¹⁴⁹ Though, given the polarization of choices, the ‘correct’ party may in fact just be the “least bad” party for many voters. Intriguingly Nicholson finds

¹⁴² Levendusky, ‘Clearer Cues, More Consistent Voters: A Benefit of Elite Polarization’ in *Political Behaviour*, Vol. 32, No. 1, (March, 2010).

¹⁴³ Claassen and Highton, ‘Policy Polarization among Party Elites and the Significance of Political Awareness in the Mass Public’ in *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 3, (September, 2009).

¹⁴⁴ Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*, (Yale, 2010), p. 29.

¹⁴⁵ Mendes, ‘Americans Down on Congress, OK With Own Representative’ in *Gallup* (9th May, 2013).

¹⁴⁶ Carsom, Engstrom and Roberts, ‘Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress’ in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 101, No. 2, (May, 2007).

¹⁴⁷ McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, ‘Does Gerrymandering Cause Polarization?’ in *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 53, No. 3, (July, 2009), p. 666.

¹⁴⁸ Rogowski, ‘Increased polarization in politics reduces voter turnout’ in *LSE American Politics and Policy* taken from <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2013/12/04/increased-polarization-in-politics-reduces-voter-turnout/> accessed on 28th June 2014.

¹⁴⁹ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 436.

that ‘in-party leader cues do not persuade by that out-party leader cues polarize.’¹⁵⁰ He gives the example of George Bush in 2008, noting that the outgoing president’s ‘endorsement did not persuade Republicans but it polarized Democrats.’¹⁵¹ This seems to be an active case of voters (in this case Democratic leaning ones) identifying with the party they find least bad of all; a true polarization of choices. Indeed McGhee and Krimm note that ‘the strongest trend by far is not growing polarization [in the public] but the large and pervasive increase in registered independents.’ They attribute this partially to the fact that ‘voters have no viable alternative to the major-party candidates;’¹⁵² which Fiorina identifies as a polarized choice. Perhaps the low party identification theory is not wholly discredited, if we accept this hybrid of Fiorina’s polarized choice theory and McGhee and Krimm’s finding that even the 2008 election had some (albeit ‘ambiguous’) impact on increasing independent voter registration trends.¹⁵³

From this we can raise a broader objection to Fiorina; if elites are polarized and extraordinarily high rates of re-election for incumbents exist¹⁵⁴ then does it matter whether the public are polarized or ‘sorted’, if the end result is the same? Of course Fiorina offers us a new explanation of the mechanism, but given that all of the real power lies with the elite (given the extraordinary rates of incumbency re-election),¹⁵⁵ because electoral choices are polarized¹⁵⁶ and districts are ideologically homogenous,¹⁵⁷ and the elite are unanimously considered to be polarized, then can we not say that American politics is polarized? We can take that as given even without recourse to Abramowitz et al.’s rebuttal of the non-polarized electorate component of Fiorina’s theory. The next polarizing factor we must consider is that of redistricting and gerrymandering.

Redistricting and Gerrymandering.

¹⁵⁰ Nicholson, ‘Polarizing Cues’ in *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 56, No. 1, (January 2012), p. 52.

¹⁵¹ Nicholson, ‘Polarizing Cues’ in *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 56, No. 1, (January 2012), p. 52.

¹⁵² McGhee and Krimm, ‘Party Registration and the Geography of Party Polarization’ in *Polity*, Vol. 41, No. 3, (July, 2009), p. 345.

¹⁵³ McGhee and Krimm, ‘Party Registration and the Geography of Party Polarization’ in *Polity*, Vol. 41, No. 3, (July, 2009), p. 345.

¹⁵⁴ Friedman and Holden, ‘The Rising Incumbent Reelection Rate: What’s Gerrymandering Got To Do With It?’ in *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 71, No. 2, (April, 2009).

¹⁵⁵ This is very large field in its own right. For instance, see ed. Huckabee, *Reelection Rates of Incumbents* (New York, 2003) or for a contrary take see Stonecash, *Reassessing the Incumbency Effect*, (Cambridge, 2008).

¹⁵⁶ Rogowski, ‘Voter Decision-Making With Polarized Choices’, (6th March 2014) taken from http://pages.wustl.edu/files/pages/imce/rogowski/polarization_partisanship_mar14.pdf accessed on 28th June 2014.

¹⁵⁷ For example, Desilver, ‘Partisan Polarization, in Congress and among public, is greater than ever’ in *Pew Research Center*, 17th July 2013.

Carson and Crespin note that whilst the ‘United States Constitution requires that a census be taken every 10 years to reapportion representation in the United States House of Representatives... the Constitution implicitly leaves the drawing of political districts... to the states.’¹⁵⁸ This has led to a situation where different states have ‘set the responsibility for this inherently political task to different officials (McDonald 2004).’¹⁵⁹ Each of these different methods will produce wildly different results and therefore a diffuse academic literature exists. Clearly such a vast set of local regulations, state and federal laws have blossomed into a large academic literature which cannot be taken in its entirety here. Some key debates from the literature are reviewed here as fully as space allows, particularly geared of course to the subject of polarization and its relationship (if any) with gerrymandering. In general I take three methods of drawing district lines; partisan, bipartisan and non-partisan.

One of the arguments in favour of using states as measures of public opinion, and thus one of the defences of their use as evidence in the realignment model, is that states cannot be gerrymandered. Their boundaries are fixed and their constituents cannot be exchanged in the service of political expediency for the elite. Congressional districts on the other hand are notorious for often blatant,¹⁶⁰ partisan (and racial)¹⁶¹ redistricting; though academics differ quite widely on the effect (if any) this has on polarizing Congress. Before considering extracts from the sizeable academic literature on this matter, let us turn to the account of one legislator who found himself on the wrong side of the redistricting process. The geographical contortions of some re-drawn House districts are quite extraordinary,¹⁶² as now-retired eight-term congressman Mickey Edwards (R-OK) reports:

‘I, a city dweller with no rural experience, found myself representing farmers, ranchers and small-town merchants after a legislature dominated by a different party redrew my district to stretch from the middle of Oklahoma to the Kansas border and then, in an upside-down "L" halfway to Arkansas, all to strengthen their party in other districts.’¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Carson and Crespin, ‘The Effect of State Redistricting Methods on Electoral Competition in the United States House of Representatives Races’ in *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (Winter, 2004), p. 455.

¹⁵⁹ Carson and Crespin, ‘The Effect of State Redistricting Methods on Electoral Competition in the United States House of Representatives Races’ in *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (Winter, 2004), p. 455.

¹⁶⁰ Center, ‘Top 5 Ugliest Districts: Partisan Gerrymandering 101’ in *RollCall*, (10th November, 2011).

¹⁶¹ Engstrom and Wildgen, ‘Pruning Thorns from the Thicket: An Empirical Test of the Existence of Racial Gerrymandering’ in *Comparative Legislative Research Center* Vol. 2, No. 4, (November, 1977).

¹⁶² Hodge, Marshall and Patterson, ‘Gerrymandering and Convexity’ in *The College Mathematics Journal* Vol. 41, No. 4, (September, 2010).

¹⁶³ Edwards, ‘Can we fix a hyper-partisan Congress’ in *CNN News*, (16th August 2012).

Edwards blames this on a partisan redistricting process, though in truth both parties have faced accusations of gerrymandering in recent years.¹⁶⁴ That said, Republicans seem to have faced more accusations than Democrats not least of which because the configuration of House districts has returned Republican majorities despite Democrats polling higher on generic ballots nationally.¹⁶⁵ The sum total of the gerrymandered House was felt in the 2012 congressional elections. Sean Trende writes that ‘one of the most striking aspects of the 2012 elections is that Republicans won their third-largest House majority since the late 1920s while losing the popular vote.’¹⁶⁶ Obviously in the Congressional system voting is not proportional and we cannot expect the party with the most votes nationally to win overall control, but the disparity is startling. The left wing blog *Think Progress* argues that ‘in order to take control of the House, Democrats would have needed to win the 2012 election by 7.25 percentage points.’¹⁶⁷ Clearly, the current districts favour the Republicans, though as Congress is not elected by a proportional representation system we should therefore not expect proportional outcomes. That said, some Republicans have attempted to transform this congressional advantage into a presidential one, by changing state Electoral College laws to allocate votes by congressional district,¹⁶⁸ lending credence to allegations of a partisan redistricting process on their part. Whilst demonstrably unfair on a proportional basis, and blatantly corrupt if taken to the presidential level, the crucial question is, does partisan redistricting lead to polarization?

Theriault and Rohde write that the gerrymandering/redistricting argument is ‘popular especially among the political pundits and politicians;’¹⁶⁹ as in the example of Congressman Edwards cited above. But there is also support among scholars for the theory. Drawing on the work of Carson, Crespin and Finocchiaro, Theriault and Rohde summarise the basic argument as follows: ‘the purposive creation of safe districts through redistricting has lead ideologically purer districts to elect more conservative Republicans and more liberal Democrats.’¹⁷⁰ This has an impact on the ideological homogeneity of the parties which I explore with I-Scores throughout this thesis. In their paper on this topic Carson et al. do find ‘districts that have undergone significant changes as a result of redistricting

¹⁶⁴ For example: Wasserman, ‘“Perrymander”: Redistricting Map That Rick Perry Signed Has Texas Hispanics Up In Arms’ in *National Journal*, (19th August, 2011); Wang, ‘The Great Gerrymander of 2012’ in *The New York Times*, (2nd February, 2013).

¹⁶⁵ Ohlemacher, ‘GOP has built-in advantage in fight for US House’ in *AP*, 31st March 2014.

¹⁶⁶ Trende, ‘Why Republicans Lost the Vote But Kept the House’ in *RealClearPolitics*, 16th May 2013.

¹⁶⁷ Millhiser, ‘Thanks to Gerrymandering, Democrats Would Need To Win The Popular Vote By Over 7% To Take Back The House’ in *Think Progress*, 2nd January 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Abramowitz, ‘Republican Electoral College Plan Would Undermine Democracy’ in *Centre for Politics*, (24th January, 2013).

¹⁶⁹ Theriault and Rohde, ‘The Gingrich Senators and Party Polarization in the U.S. Senate’ in *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 73, No.4, (October, 2011), p. 1014.

¹⁷⁰ Theriault and Rohde, ‘The Gingrich Senators and Party Polarization in the U.S. Senate’ in *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 73, No.4, (October, 2011), p. 1014.

have become even more polarized’, whilst conceding that ‘the effect is relatively modest.’¹⁷¹ Perhaps the most egregious aspect of gerrymandering is that, given few credible general election challenges in incumbent-favourable, reapportioned districts, electoral competition increasingly comes from the more ideological flank of congressional candidates during primary contests,¹⁷² (particularly in the age of the Tea Party). Given the dilemma between a relatively moderate electorate and extreme primary voters, Brady, Han and Pope find that ‘congressional candidates... position themselves closer to the primary electorate.’¹⁷³ This means that ‘primaries pull candidates away from median district preferences’¹⁷⁴ and that given the clear fundraising advantages of more extreme candidates,¹⁷⁵ more ideological behaviour by representatives is rewarded both by “king-making” primary voters (who radicalise general election choices for everyone else) and by donors alike; who often contribute on the basis of a single, salient issue.¹⁷⁶ This clearly exacerbates the problem; as the most ideological group of voters among a party-homogenous district select and then elect a more ideological candidate.

Another longer-term impact of gerrymandering can actually be felt in the Senate. Theriault and Rohde draw attention to a group of Senators they label as the ‘Gingrich Senators’, who had ‘served in the House after 1978’¹⁷⁷ before passing into the Senate subsequently. Theriault and Rohde note the ‘effect of House experience on Senator ideology’¹⁷⁸ and cite the work of Sinclair who finds that ‘the 1990s saw an influx of ideologically committee conservatives into the Senate, with many of them being veterans of the highly partisan House.’¹⁷⁹ Given the acknowledgement above of how working practices and institutional memory are transmitted across generations, it is very important to adopt Theriault and Rohde’s caution that these norms will transmit across chambers too. The high levels of

¹⁷¹ Carson, Crespín, Finocchiaro and Rhode, ‘Redistricting and Party Polarization in the U.S. House of Representatives’ in *American Politics Research*, Vol. 35, No. 6, (November, 2007), p. 878.

¹⁷² Carson, Crespín, Eaves and Wanless, ‘Constituency Congruency and Candidate Competition in Primary Elections for the U.S. House’ in *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* Vol. 12, No. 2, (June, 2012), p. 127.

¹⁷³ Brady, Han and Pope, ‘Primary Elections and Candidate Ideology: Out of Step With the Primary Electorate?’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* Vol. 32, No. 1, (February, 2007), p. 79.

¹⁷⁴ Brady, Han and Pope, ‘Primary Elections and Candidate Ideology: Out of Step With the Primary Electorate?’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* Vol. 32, No. 1, (February, 2007), p. 79.

¹⁷⁵ Heberlig, Hetherington and Larson, ‘The Price of Leadership: Campaign Money and the Polarization of Congressional Parties’ in *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 68, No. 4, (November, 2006), p. 992.

¹⁷⁶ Francia, *The Financiers of Congressional Elections: Investors, Ideologues, and Intimates*, (Columbia, 2003), p. 97.

¹⁷⁷ Theriault and Rohde, ‘The Gingrich Senators and Party Polarization in the U.S. Senate’ in *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 73, No.4, (October, 2011), p. 1011.

¹⁷⁸ Theriault and Rohde, ‘The Gingrich Senators and Party Polarization in the U.S. Senate’ in *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 73, No.4, (October, 2011), p. 1016.

¹⁷⁹ Sinclair, ‘Chapter Four: The Senate Leadership Dilemma: Passing Bills and Pursuing Partisan Advantage in a Nonmajoritarian Chamber’ in eds. Campbell and Rae, *The Contentious Senate/ Partisanship, Ideology and The Myth of Cool Judgement*, (Oxford, 2001), p. 75.

polarization found in the modern Senate by Poole and Rosenthal's DW-NOMINATE scores confirm this worrying trend.

There are dissenting voices however. McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal summarise their finding that 'gerrymandering has increased the Republican seat share in the House [but] this increase is not an important source of polarization.'¹⁸⁰ They criticise some of the prior literature for overlooking that;

'Reapportionments since 1980 have shifted seats from the Northeast where polarization is moderate to more polarized regions, the South and Southwest, while the relatively unpolarized Midwest has neither lost nor gained seats. Consequently, new congressional districts and those significantly redrawn are not a random sample of all districts, but are heavily concentrated in polarized regions.'¹⁸¹

Furthermore, Masket, Winburn and Wright argue that the 'effects of partisan redistricting on competition and polarization are small... and overwhelmed by other aspects of the political environment.'¹⁸² Even if polarization was largely attributable to redistricting, some scholars have identified potential positive consequences of this (beyond the "clearer elite cues" argument already outlined). Gelman and King found that as 'partisan redistricting produces additional districts that the party in control of redistricting is likely to win' then that party 'finds it easier to field better candidates, which, in turn, produces more votes for those candidates.'¹⁸³ This chimes with what Hetherington, Larson and Globetti conclude in their paper on redistricting and candidate decision, with the added qualification that 'quality challengers are less likely to emerge as the redistricting cycle progresses' but vulnerable congressmen are 'more likely to face quality challengers toward the beginning of the redistricting cycle than the end.'¹⁸⁴ In other words once a partisan redistricting process has taken place more quality challengers are likely to emerge in the manner Gelman and King describe. In a sense this is more democratic; the ideological correlation between constituents and representative will be much higher than if congressmen were elected from districts with roughly even

¹⁸⁰ McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, 'Does Gerrymandering Cause Polarization' in *The American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 53, No. 3, (July, 2009), p. 666.

¹⁸¹ McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, 'Does Gerrymandering Cause Polarization' in *The American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 53, No. 3, (July, 2009), p. 668.

¹⁸² Masket, Winburn and Wright, 'The Gerrymanderers Are Coming! Legislative Redistricting Won't Affect Competition or Polarization Much, No Matter Who Does It' in *PS: Political Science and Politics* Vol. 45, No. 1, (January, 2012), p. 39.

¹⁸³ Gelman and King, 'Enhancing Democracy Through Legislative Redistricting' in *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 88, No. 3, (September 1994), p. 552.

¹⁸⁴ Hetherington, Larson and Globetti, 'The Redistricting Cycle and Strategic Candidate Decisions in U.S. House Races', in *Southern Political Science Association* Vol. 65, No. 4, (November, 2003).

numbers of Democrats, Republicans and Independents. Indeed, as Yoshinaka and Murphy explain, ‘redistricting can foster electoral competition, but it can also sever representational ties between constituents and their representatives.’¹⁸⁵ But the price of this increased representation in balanced districts is ideological units of voters electing increasingly ideological candidates (all too often what Gelman and King call ‘better candidates’ will mean more and more extreme candidates, given the political landscape), thus populating Congress with the intractable red and blue blocs that we see today in both the House and Senate.¹⁸⁶ Whilst partisan redistricting might alleviate what Bafumi and Herron call the ‘leapfrogging’¹⁸⁷ problem, (where elections become simple swaps of partisan of one flank for ideologues of another), the price of this seems to be more severe polarization in the manner described by the majority of academics writing on polarization and its causes.

Whilst bipartisan redistricting might sound appealing, in fact many scholars believe this could be even worse at generating a polarization feedback. Lyons and Galderisi find that ‘incumbents do indeed benefit from party controlled redistricting and more so under bipartisan than under partisan redistricting.’¹⁸⁸ The implication here is that the two parties would conspire to protect their incumbents and maximise electoral outcomes for themselves. It is in both parties’ rational self-interest to divide the electorate into homogenous blocks of Republican, Democratic and Independent voters because this strengthens the incumbency effect, protects their legislators and permits the election of more ideological candidates than would otherwise be possible in a moderate district.

This criticism of the bipartisan redistricting model fits in with the ‘cartel’ description of American party politics advocated by Cox and McCubbins (among others). Strong representative identification with party will exacerbate polarization, as the two parties increasingly behave like ‘cartels’¹⁸⁹ designed to maximise outcomes for their in-group by ‘[directing] legislative activity to enhance the collective electoral fortunes of their members.’¹⁹⁰ In the case of gerrymandering we might also include using redistricting to maximise outcomes for their ‘in-group’. McCarty, Poole and

¹⁸⁵ Yoshinaka and Murphy, ‘The Paradox of Redistricting: How Partisan Mapmakers Foster Competition but Disrupt Representation’ in *Political Research Quarterly* Vol. 64, No.2, (June, 2011), p. 435.

¹⁸⁶ From Poole and Rosenthal’s DW-NOMINATE, inspired by Resnick, McGill and Krivichenko, by Ingraham for *The Brookings Institute*, ‘Historical House Ideology and Party Unity, 35th-112th Congress 1857-2012’ taken from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2013/historical-house-ideology-and-party-unity>, 25th November 2013.

¹⁸⁷ Bafumi and Herron, ‘Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress’ in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No. 3, (August, 2010).

¹⁸⁸ Lyons and Galderisi, ‘Incumbency, Reapportionment, and U.S. House Redistricting’ in *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 4, (December, 1995), p. 857.

¹⁸⁹ Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House* Second Edition, (Cambridge, 2007), p. 257.

¹⁹⁰ McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, ‘The Hunt for Party Discipline in Congress’ in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 673.

Rosenthal describe the ‘primary function of such a cartel [as] to build a collection reputation on which its members can run’¹⁹¹ and the in-out, us-v-them mentality (demonstrated in procedural votes and stalling tactics by both parties during both majority and minority status) will make worse the already considerable problems in elite-level American politics. In a sense the only difference between partisan and bipartisan redistricting processes is the introduction in the latter case of a second corrupt party. If the objective of a corrupt partisan redistricting is to unite groups of allied voters into ideologically homogenous, partisan districts (thereby protecting incumbents), then it follows that both parties will want similar electoral maps. If Republicans want all Republican voters grouped together in the same districts and all Democrats in their own constituencies where they can’t endanger (or moderate) Republican candidates/representatives, then the desired Republican reapportionment outcome is virtually identical to the desired Democratic outcome: Republicans vote for Republicans in Republican districts, Democrats vote for Democrats in Democratic districts. The two cartels can work together on this, in a particularly cynical example of “bipartisanism”. The link between political parties as ‘cartels’ and the reapportionment process is one identified by Samuel Issacharoff.¹⁹² On non-partisan commissions, if they achieve their aim of producing competitive districts with weakened incumbency advantages and (presumably) roughly equivalent sets of Democratic and Republican voters, are we not returned to the same problem identified before; namely that half of the electorate will not be ideologically represented by their congressmen? Is it better to have a system of district division where voters are represented by an ideologically sympathetic congressmen, or one where the electorate is ‘leapfrogged’ and balanced districts introduce an element of democratic deficit? I do not seek to provide an answer here, merely to draw attention to what seems to be an intractable conflict between good intentions and the reality of American politics; indeed this evokes the recommendation of the authors of *The American Voter* in the 1960s that ideologically homogenous parties might be beneficial, and lead to high voter engagement.¹⁹³ Perhaps one answer to this question lies in the structural advantages of American politics, for the voters within a congressional district are represented not just by a Congressman but by two Senators, a Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, state senators, school board representatives, the President and Vice President of the United States and inordinate local and county officials. A congressional district is not an exclusive zone of representation. Overlapping spheres of representation are at the heart of American democracy and the presence of multiple legislative and representative actors per district is crucial in negating the impact

¹⁹¹ McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, ‘The Hunt for Party Discipline in Congress’ in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 673.

¹⁹² Issacharoff, ‘Gerrymandering And Political Cartels’ in *The Harvard Law Review* Vol. 116, No. 2, (December, 2002).

¹⁹³ Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, *The American Voter*, (Michigan, 1965), p. 185.

of democratic deficit. Given this, perhaps balanced districts are the least bad of all other options; if voters are ‘leapfrogged’¹⁹⁴ at the congressional level they have recourse to other types of representation, and ultimately to the ballot box two years later.

Conclusion.

This literature review has provided an overview of the key debates in polarization relevant to this study (as permitted by the space available), and it provides a bedrock to rest my own research on.

One of the criteria for defining polarization that Poole and Rosenthal identify, party unity, is the one that concerns us most here. One of their justifications for including party unity is as follows, ‘two Senators from the same state and party tend to be very similar. In contrast, senators from the same state but from different parties are highly dissimilar suggesting that each party represents an extreme support coalition in the state.’¹⁹⁵ The current party system is an engine of high party unity (dependent upon it for fundraising, issuing “elite cues” for voters and establishing clear cartel-like “branding”) and within the literature of Congressional polarization ‘the focus on collective action has generated much interest in the cohesiveness of parties as floor coalitions. The principal prediction is that a party produces a more cohesive coalition than would be possible if members were to act on their individual preferences.’¹⁹⁶ Party cohesion is increasing with polarization and (as shown above) much of the literature has focused on it. I will take a different approach, building on the existing work, to consider party disunity which I measure as the I-Score. I consider the advantages of this in the next chapter in far greater detail.

Many (even if historically few) legislators are still acting on many of their own individual preferences, (as I will show in Chapters Two, Three and Four), in breach of party unity. Furthermore, new cleavages on issues like national security, individual liberty and the fourth amendment have led to unlikely voting coalitions in Congress, further unsettling the conventional picture of polarization (I address this in Chapter Four). The literature has placed a great emphasis on mean ideological points as measures of polarization, and the use of party unity scores to demonstrate homogeneity. However, small but significant groups of legislators still cross party lines and are currently a neglected part of the polarization puzzle. To fully grasp why polarization exists we must not just consider the rise of

¹⁹⁴ Bafumi and Herron, ‘Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress’ in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No. 3, (August, 2010).

¹⁹⁵ Poole and Rosenthal, ‘The Polarization of American Politics’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 4, (Nov, 1984), p. 1061.

¹⁹⁶ McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, ‘The Hunt for Party Discipline in Congress’ in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 673.

party unity, but where the decline in independent voting has come from and how this drives polarization. I explore the unique insights of I-Scores throughout this paper, and consider how they can supplement established methodologies in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: Introducing the ‘I-Score’ Methodology with a Case Study of the 110th Congress.

Chapter Abstract

For the purposes of introducing my methodology and analysis, this chapter will consider the 110th Congress in detail. As the last Congress before the Obama Administration and the rise of the Tea Party, it is a good starting point to consider how polarization of the preceding decade manifested itself in Congress. The 110th Congress is also at the very start of a period of Democratic power. This chapter will serve as an entry point into the methodology by demonstrating the reasoning and application of the I-Score. Here I address what the I-Score is, how it works and from what data it is derived. I also acknowledge and resolve potential methodological objections and demonstrate with reference to DW-NOMINATE why a high I-Score is a valid measure of ideological moderate, demonstrating why the I-Score is a valuable contribution to the existing literature and how it supplements major scoring methods. In terms of the 110th Congress, I explore I-Scores in the House and Senate, a breakdown of House and Senate delegation I-Scores and a regional analysis of I-Scores.

Introducing the ‘I-Score’.

Many scholars have drawn attention to party unity as a measure of elite-level polarization,¹⁹⁷ and a substantive literature exists to explain why high party unity occurs.¹⁹⁸ Most credible explanations of elite-level polarization incorporate realignment and party sorting to some degree. Abramowitz, for instance, notes ‘the Southern revolt against the national Democratic Party [which]

¹⁹⁷ For instance; Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski, ‘Where Measures Meet History: Party Polarization During the New Deal and Fair Deal’ in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Representation in America*, p. 17, taken from https://my.vanderbilt.edu/joshclinton/files/2013/06/CKL_Mayhew-Conference.pdf accessed on 17th April 2014 or Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, ‘The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress; in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (July, 2010).

¹⁹⁸ Naturally this literature coincides with the study of polarization and its origins; see Theriault, Fiorina, Abrams, Pope, Ambramowitz, Poole, Rosenthal etc.

manifested itself in a high level of disloyalty on party votes.’¹⁹⁹ Ultimately these conservative Democrats defected en masse to the GOP, tightening the ideological range of both parties and producing ideological homogeneity in party conformity. Other academics identify factors like the fundraising advantage for ideologically homogenous parties. Cantor and Herrnson note the effect this had on those Democrats ‘who received substantial assistance’²⁰⁰ from national-level party organisations and committees finding that they were ‘more likely than others to vote with their party on key votes.’²⁰¹ More unified parties have greater advantages in signalling their agenda to voters, by proving less diffuse and more precise messaging, and they fit neatly into the ‘cartel’ theory of party behaviour advocated by Cox and McCubbins.²⁰² Historians and political scientists alike note the discrete historical periods in which levels of party unity fluctuate, identifying recent times like the ‘highly ideological and polarizing politics of the Reagan era’²⁰³ for breeding higher levels of party unity than had existed in the polarized, but not partisan, 1950s and 60s.²⁰⁴ In a sense high levels of party unity are both a cause and a symptom of polarization. There is a consensus that polarization has increased,²⁰⁵ and as I set out below the data clearly correlates this trend to higher party unity. In this paper I consider inverse of this and look at independent voting trends within the two parties in recent years; which is important given the emphasis on party unity within the literature. This is an attempt to restore these ideological outliers to the fore of the polarization/party unity debate. Despite almost all of the contemporary literature focusing on the homogenous majority as a measure of polarization, these I-Score high outliers can tell us a lot about why polarization has happened, how it has develop through high party unity and perhaps identify where it might be reverse (principally from these poorly sorted ideological outliers). To explore this I have developed the ‘I-Score’. The I-Score is a measure of how often a legislator votes against their party line in any given Congress, and I contend that a high I-Score will typically indicate an ideologically moderate legislator. Before further discussion of the

¹⁹⁹ Abramowitz, ‘Is the Revolt Fading? A Note on Party Loyalty among Southern Democratic Congressmen’ in *Southern Political Science Association* Vol. 42, No. 2, (May, 1980), p. 568.

²⁰⁰ Cantor and Herrnson, ‘Party Campaign Activity and Party Unity in the U.S. House of Representatives’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 3, (August, 1997), p. 393.

²⁰¹ Cantor and Herrnson, ‘Party Campaign Activity and Party Unity in the U.S. House of Representatives’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 3, (August, 1997), p. 393.

²⁰² Cox and McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*, (Cambridge, 2005).

²⁰³ Leyden and Borrelli, ‘Party Contributions and Party Unity: Can Loyalty Be Bought?’ in *The Western Political Quarterly* Vol. 43, No. 2, (June, 1990), p. 344.

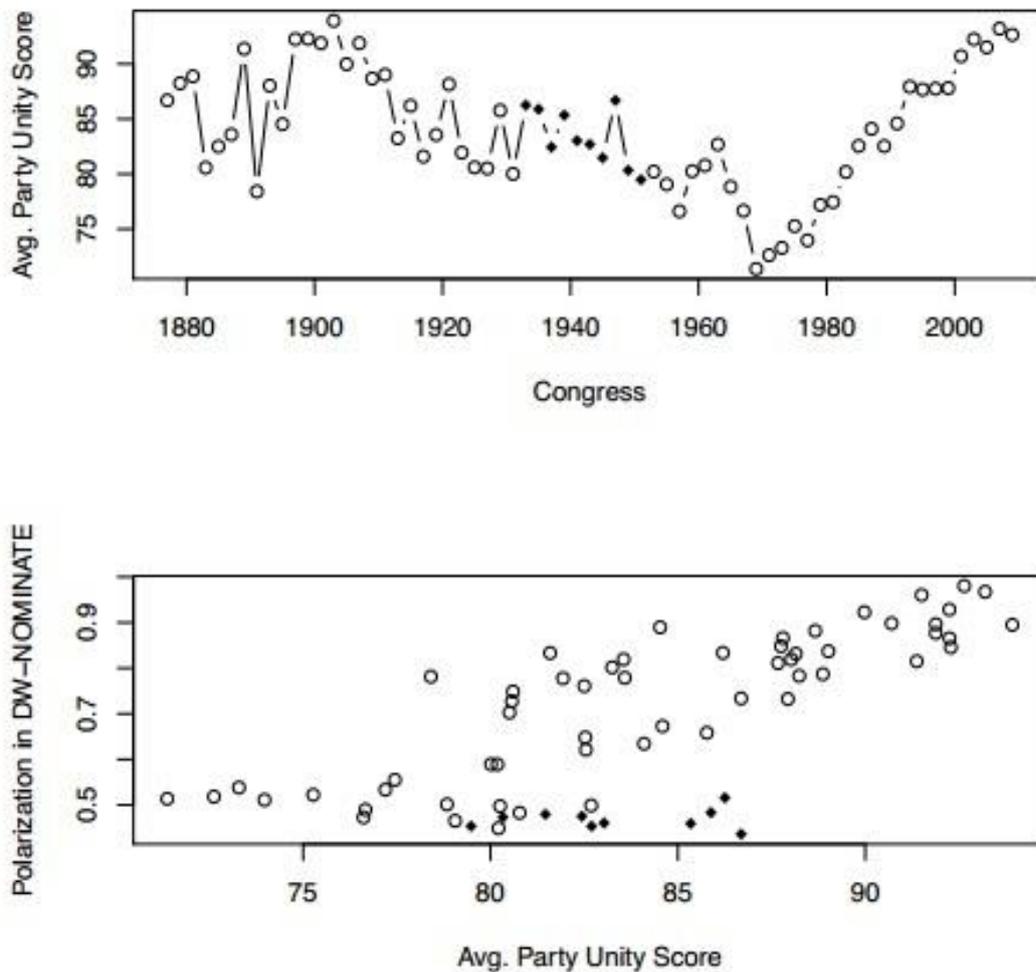
²⁰⁴ Han and Brady, ‘A Delayed Return to Historical Norms: Congressional Party Polarization after the Second World War’ in *The British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (July, 2007).

²⁰⁵ Debate may rage over the causes of polarization (see Fiorina et al. and Abramowitz, for example), but that elite-level polarization exists (documented primarily by the Poole and Rosenthal scores) is as close to fact as any political science theory can be.

score, I will demonstrate the empirical basis for its link between high I-Scores and ideological moderation.

Are independent voters in Congress really moderates? Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski demonstrate that an individual legislator's party unity²⁰⁶ has a very high correlation with their having high levels of ideology. Clinton et al. use evidence from Poole and Rosenthal's DW-NOMINATE series²⁰⁷ to prove their contention. Figure 2.1 compares polarization in party-mean DW-NOMINATE

Figure 2.1- Relationship between Party Unity and DW-NOMINATE Scores.



²⁰⁶ Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski, 'Where Measures Meet History: Party Polarization During the New Deal and Fair Deal' in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Representation in America*, p. 17, taken from https://my.vanderbilt.edu/joshclinton/files/2013/06/CKL_Mayhew-Conference.pdf accessed on 17th April 2014.

²⁰⁷ Carroll, Lewis, Lo, McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, 'DW-NOMINATE Scores With Bootstrapped Standard Errors', (17th February, 2013) taken from <http://voteview.com/dwnomin.htm>.

scores with average party unity, and finds a compelling relationship between polarization and party unity. My analysis rests on the logical extension of their proof; that low levels of party unity will typically indicate low levels of ideological extremism (i.e. moderation). Clinton et al. note that ‘party unity voting slowly declined from 1877 through the early 1960s until it fell rather dramatically, then began a steep ascent in the 1970.’²⁰⁸ This corresponds with the peaks and troughs of polarization in Congress (see Chapter Three, ‘I-Scores Over Time: The 102nd to 112th Congresses’). For instance, Hetherington notes that ‘Congressional behaviour...changed in the late 1970s. With the 95th Congress, ideological polarization between the parties began a steady rise’²⁰⁹ and this is reflected in the steep climb in the standard deviation of DW-NOMINATE scores. Polarization is mirrored in the rising levels of party unity from this time period, offering some evidence for Clinton et al.’s important finding. Excluding the New Deal and Fair Deal eras, Clinton et al. find that ‘the correlation between average party unity and polarization measured using DW-NOMINATE is... 84.’²¹⁰ The correlation is particularly strong from the 1970s onwards. The fact that the correlation is not perfect indicates that there is some underlying ideological variety which is obscured by using mean ideological points to demonstrate polarization. This is because, for instance, a socially conservative Republican may be liberal on economic matters but still hold an overall conservative DW-NOMINATE score (depending on how many dimensions are used) because of their strength of feeling on the socially liberal-socially conservative axis. On an individual legislator basis DW-NOMINATE compensates for this by using two dimensions, but these mean left-right scores are then used to find average party mean points. These are almost always one dimensional across a single left-to-right axis to show how many NOMINATE points are between the two party mean points. But this can hide where ideological heterogeneity still exists in Congress because it loses the second dimension, and thus the nuance of the individual legislator’s ideological position.²¹¹ This is where I-Scores come in, to demonstrate where legislators are still breaking with the party line and to examine why. This heterogeneity, or variety, is an important part of understanding where polarization has come from and areas where it may be turned back in the future. DW-NOMINATE scores show that the parties are polarized, but by

²⁰⁸ Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski, ‘Where Measures Meet History: Party Polarization During the New Deal and Fair Deal’ in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Representation in America*, p. 17, taken from https://my.vanderbilt.edu/joshclinton/files/2013/06/CKL_Mayhew-Conference.pdf accessed on 17th April 2014.

²⁰⁹ Hetherington, ‘Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 622.

²¹⁰ Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski, ‘Where Measures Meet History: Party Polarization During the New Deal and Fair Deal’ in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Representation in America*, p. 18, taken from https://my.vanderbilt.edu/joshclinton/files/2013/06/CKL_Mayhew-Conference.pdf accessed on 17th April 2014.

²¹¹ Sometimes referred to as the libertarian-authoritarian axis.

Poole and Rosenthal's own definition (see above) party conformity is a contingent criteria of polarization. Nonetheless, the correlation of 84% between high party unity and relatively extreme ideology is clearly compelling. Indeed, McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal state that 'party discipline is manifest in the location of [a] legislator's [DW-NOMINATE] ideal point'.²¹²

Back in 1960 Campbell et al. noted the links between diffuse party identity and low levels of elite polarization²¹³ in *The American Voter*, and given the DW-NOMINATE correlation their finding remains applicable to this day. This clearly validates an approach to understanding polarization based on party unity (which is common in the literature) and, therefore, one based on party disunity (which this paper scores as 'independence') and which does not have very much in the way of contemporary study. For the 1950s and 60s, during the height of the bipartisan congress,²¹⁴ there is ample literature on the various civil rights coalitions, liberal Republicans, Southern Democrats and so on, but even in this height of polarization some variety remains within the party (as I will show here), and to examine this I have developed my own scoring method, in contrast with conventional party cohesion scores²¹⁵ which emphasize the oft-studied majority. Instead I focus on the vital minority of high I-Scorers, whose decline relative to their historic size and influence are a key (and neglected) part of understanding polarization.

Now that I have shown the reasoning behind the I-Score, I will explain the methodology in more detail. Throughout my research I have assigned all Senators and Congressmen from the 102nd to 112th Congresses,²¹⁶ an 'independence' (I-)Score derived from the inverse of their conventional 'party unity' (PU-) score. For instance, during the 110th Congress, Roger Wicker (R- MS) had a PU-Score of 78% from which we derive an I-Score of 22%. This means that Wicker cast 22% of his votes against the Republican Party line. The party unity (PU) is only used to determine an I-Score, and is not the main thrust of this research. Many other measures of party unity exist; such as the scores compiled by the Brookings Institute,²¹⁷ or OpenCongress.org²¹⁸ so simply developing a new party conformity score would offer little to an already well developed literature. The figures I use here to generate PU-scores and the corresponding I-scores have been taken from *The Washington Post* online Congress

²¹² McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, 'The Hunt For Party Discipline in Congress' in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 3, (September, 2001).

²¹³ Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, *The American Voter*, (Michigan, 1965), p. 185.

²¹⁴ Han and Brady, 'A Delayed Return to Historical Norms: Congressional Party Polarization after the Second World War' in *The British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (July, 2007).

²¹⁵ Like those used by the Brookings Institute for instance.

²¹⁶ Including non-voting members and members elected/appointed mid-session, though non-voting members were not used to calculate average I-Scores for parties/caucuses or other groupings.

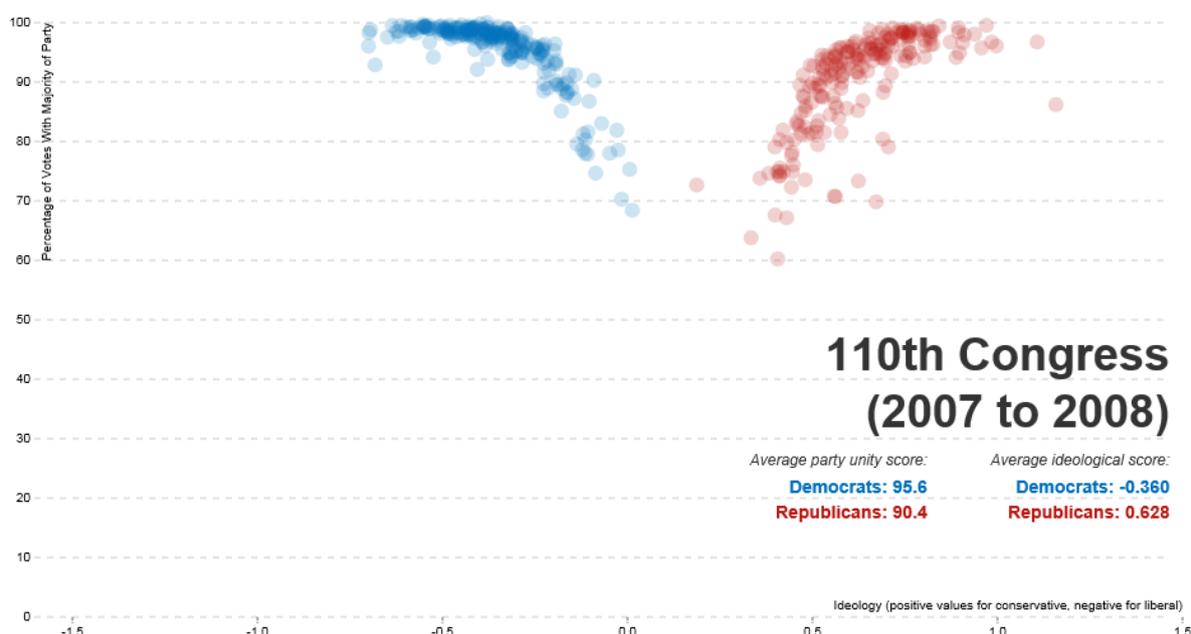
²¹⁷ Ornstein, Mann, Malbin and Rugg, 'Vital Statistics on Congress' for the *Brookings Institute*, (8th March 2013).

²¹⁸ Taken from <http://www.opencongress.org/> accessed on 17th April 2014.

database²¹⁹ which in turn has information compiled from the ‘House clerk, the U.S. Senate and the Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress.’²²⁰

The statistical correlation between party unity and polarization is high (84%), and to demonstrate qualitatively that the inverse is true, I have identified several case studies from Brookings Institute research. Brookings, using Poole and Rosenthal’s scores, Brookings have plotted the ideological distribution of each party over every Congress since 1857. Arraying each congressman across a left-right axis and a party unity (high-low) axis to show ideology and party unity, (derived from DW-NOMINATE rather than the official Congressional figures used in this paper from the

Figure 2.2- 110th Congress, 2007 to 2009, DW-NOMINATE (ideology) by Party Unity.



Washington Post database), these graphs show us which congressmen were most moderate and which were more independent in their voting during the 110th Congress. Figure 2.2²²¹ demonstrates the high correlation between low party unity and high moderation; validating the approach taken here based on the similar link found by Clinton et al. The correlation between PU-scores and polarization/partisan behaviour found in two independent analyses of the DW-NOMINATE series (Clinton et al. and Brookings), and the examples I give of highly independent, moderate members, both serve to defend

²¹⁹ Taken from <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress/110/> accessed from 28th November 2012 to 25th June 2014.

²²⁰ Taken from <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress/110/> accessed from 28th November 2012 to 25th June 2014.

²²¹ Taken from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2013/historical-house-ideology-and-party-unity> accessed on 1st May 2014.

the connection I make in this paper between high independence and high levels of political moderation.

I will now address a potential objection that could be raised to the methodology. Could it be the case that high I-scores actually indicate more extreme behaviour than the party aggregate? For instance, take a hypothetical Democrat voting against a restrictive gun control bill supported by their leadership and the majority of their party. We could conclude that they are more moderate than the rest of their party, and therefore vote against the bill because it is too politically liberal and is too prohibitive. However, it could equally be the case that they find the bill does not go far enough in banning certain firearms, and therefore vote against it because it is insufficiently liberal. A roll-call vote is a simple binary ‘yes’ or ‘no’ so if applied in the way cited above it could lead us to the wrong conclusion. Given the high correlation between party unity and more polarized voting we know this is unlikely, though not impossible. There are naturally some outliers where congressmen are more extreme than their leadership and the majority of their party, and therefore score as more rebellious/independent whilst clearly not more ‘moderate’, but these cases are (according to Clinton et al’s analysis of Poole and Rosenthal’s DW-NOMINATE) extremely rare, given the high correlation between ideology and party unity. In addition, Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young found that ‘legislators who are more extreme have a tendency to increase their level of [party] unity from one Congress to the next.’²²² This further strengthens the relationship I identify between high party unity and polarization; and high I-Scores with ideological moderation. Carson et al. find the same result as Clinton et al. and conclude that ‘ideological extremity is correlated with party unity.’²²³

However, to further demonstrate the connection between high I-Scores (or low PU-Scores) and moderate (rather than even more extreme voting), we must take into account some contextual information. This information can include voting profiles, issue positions, records of prior votes, records of speeches on related topics, and lifetime rating scores by organisations like the NRA, the NRLC, the ACU, the NARAL or the ACLU. Indeed there is such a proliferation of this information available on the internet that the difficulty is not applying such information but sifting through it. One final point on this subject is the widespread consensus among scholars that the two parties in Congress now occupy relative ideological extremes,²²⁴ and that within the parties the leadership are

²²² Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, ‘The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress’ in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (July, 2010), p. 610.

²²³ Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, ‘The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress’ in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (July, 2010), p. 615.

²²⁴ Poole and Rosenthal, ‘On Party Polarization in Congress’ in *Deadalus*, Vol. 136, No. 3, (Summer, 2007).

even more polarized than their respective congressional parties are;²²⁵ this alone indicates that members who vote against their party are far more likely to be more moderate than their party aggregate, rather than more ideological. Given this infusion of contextual and qualitative information, and the high correlation found by Clinton et al.²²⁶ the connection between a high I-Score and moderate political/ideological/voting behaviour is tenable. The use of qualitative data to support the findings of I-Score analysis heeds Hall and Fowler's criticism of other ideological scores like DW-NOMINATE for not incorporating the 'political content of each bill'.²²⁷ My method explicitly incorporates political content by weighing a legislators voting (dis)loyalty to increasingly polarized party leadership. In Chapter Four I offer suggestions for further refinements of this method by developing a thematic I-Score, to incorporate even greater 'political content' into roll call analysis.

Case Studies: Independents as Moderates?

Here I consider some case studies of moderate legislators with commensurately high I-Scores. Just over two years before the 110th Congress was elected, Fleisher and Bond wrote that there were 'substantial numbers of... partisan non-conformists in both parties and in both chambers until the early 1980s when the middle began to shrink.'²²⁸ So at this point some moderate, independently-voting legislators still remained in both parties. As the literature does not focus on them and instead considers the great majority who have conformed to party unity pressures, these individuals (and groups) are the focus here. Fleisher and Bond note that through 'replacement and conversion' these moderate, 'cross-pressured members' or poorly sorted legislators were 'likely to be [replaced by] mainstream partisans.'²²⁹ The few survivors of this process, whose persistence can often be attributed to incumbency²³⁰ and the tremendous benefits that provides,²³¹ are the subject of these case studies

²²⁵ Heberlig, Hetherington and Larson, 'The Price of Leadership: Campaign Money and the Polarization of Congressional Parties' in *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 68, No. 4, (November, 2006).

²²⁶ Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski, 'Where Measures Meet History: Party Polarization During the New Deal and Fair Deal' in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Representation in America*, pp. 17-18, taken from https://my.vanderbilt.edu/joshclinton/files/2013/06/CKL_Mayhew-Conference.pdf accessed on 17th April 2014.

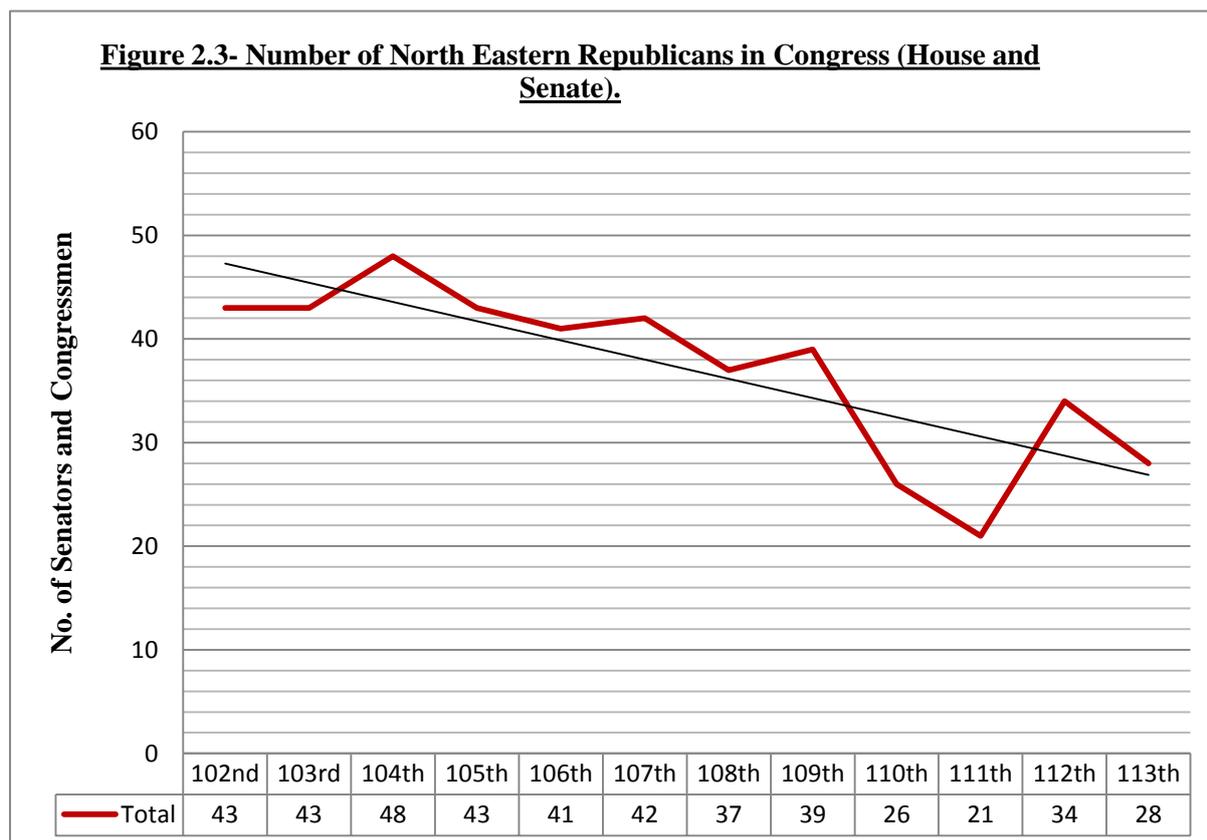
²²⁷ Fowler and Hall, 'Conservative Vote Probabilities: An Easier Method for the Analysis of Roll Call Data', (25th July 2012) taken from <http://polmeth.wustl.edu/media/Paper/FowlerHallCVP.pdf> accessed on 30th June 2014.

²²⁸ Fleisher and Bond, 'The Shrinking Middle in the US Congress' in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 34, Issue. 3, (July, 2004), p. 429.

²²⁹ Fleisher and Bond, 'The Shrinking Middle in the US Congress' in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 34, Issue. 3, (July, 2004), p. 429.

²³⁰ Bullock, 'Regional Realignment from an Officeholding Perspective' in *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 50, Issue 3, (August, 1988), p.554.

and this paper. These examples seek to provide some qualitative justification for treating high I-Scores as evidence of moderate voting behaviour (in addition to the high statistical correlation found by Clinton et al. in the Poole and Rosenthal scores). I have identified these legislators from the Brookings Institute analysis of the Poole-Rosenthal scores and these examples from both chambers of the 110th Congress and entirely from the Republican Party.²³² I consider examples from across the I-Score/high moderation trend, with three moderates first and then an example of a legislator on the



relative extreme.

Firstly, I will consider two examples of moderate, centrists with independent voting records from the Senate. Since the 1960s North Eastern Republicans (known for their moderation and often

²³¹ A very large literature exists on incumbency advantages/the incumbency effect, for instance see Carson, Engstrom and Roberts, ‘Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress’ in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 101, No. 2, (Mar, 2007); Anderson and Glomm, ‘Incumbency effects in political campaigns’ in *Public Choice*, Vol. 74, No. 2, (1992); Krashinsky and Milne, ‘The Effects of Incumbency In U.S. Congressional Elections, 1950-1988’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3, (August, 1993).

²³² I have chosen the GOP because it had a broader range of I-Scores in the 110th Congress (see below) and because focusing case studies on just one party helps elucidate the trend identified in the DW-NOMINATE scores more clearly.

liberal stances)²³³ have been significantly reduced in strength, as shown in Figure 2.3. Two of the few surviving North Eastern Republicans in the Senate are Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Susan Collins (R-ME). Snowe was elected to the House in 1991 and then to the Senate in 1995. Collins followed, elected in 1997. Throughout their time in the legislature these two Senators have been considered moderate and independent-minded by the press,²³⁴ but labelled by their detractors as ‘Republican in name only’²³⁵ for their consistent record of voting against the majority of their party. These two senators sit at the low end of the polarization scale, and therefore rate commensurately high in independent-moderate voting. In a sense they are a classic case of moderate, independent-minded legislators. Snowe and Collins fit the moderate profile of the party unity-extremism correlation neatly; indeed Snowe cited polarization as the reason for her departure.²³⁶ Both Republican Senators have retained impressively high I-Scores, likely a key factor in keeping their seats, despite the near-extinction of the North Eastern GOP contingent elsewhere. During the 110th Congress Snowe had an I-Score of 35% and Collins an I-Score of 32% (see Figure 2.4). Maine, therefore, had an average delegation I-Score of 33.5% making it by far the most moderate delegation in both the House and the Senate of the 110th Congress. The American Conservative Union gave lifetime ratings of 49.12 and 52.24 to Snowe and Collins respectively, further pointing to a moderate legislative record in both cases. The internal party splits quantified by analysis of party unity scores are revealing. OpenCongress.org finds that Collins votes least often with Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), a member of her own party. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) votes least often with both Collins, and Bernie Sanders (I-VT), an independent democratic-socialist.²³⁷ This is another example of why I-Scores are worthwhile, because based on their legislative mean points alone it might not be clear that Sanders and Collins have anything in common at all, but by rating their willingness to rebel we can find similarities in their ideology and behaviour not apparent on a left-right spectrum. The propensity of a legislator to rebel against party leadership is an important part of a legislator’s profile. The I-Score blends the ideological-measurement component of DW-NOMINATE²³⁸ with the conventional party unity scores to measure this. From Snowe and Collins’ political profile, we can conclude that high I-Scores are the result of political moderation. They correlate to the trend demonstrated by Clinton et al, and by

²³³ Carmines and Berkman, ‘Ethos, Ideology, and Partisanship: Exploring the Paradox of Conservative Democrats’ in *Political Behaviour*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (June, 1994), p. 204.

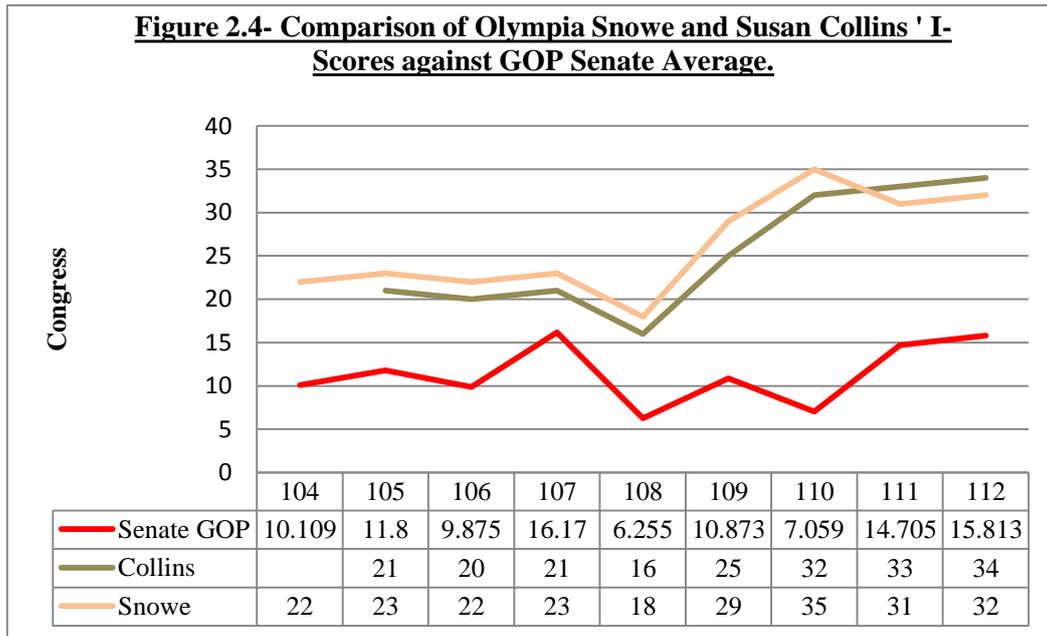
²³⁴ Cillizza and Blake, ‘Maine Sen. Olympia Snowe to retire in blow to GOP’ in *The Washington Post*, (28th February 2012).

²³⁵ Weinger, ‘9 Olympia Snowe votes that angered the GOP’ in *Politico*, (29th February 2012).

²³⁶ Klein, ‘Olympia Snowe is right about American politics. Will we listen?’ in *The Washington Post*, (28th February, 2012).

²³⁷ Taken from http://www.opencongress.org/people/show/300025_Susan_Collins, accessed on 26th April 2014.

²³⁸ Through the correlation between party unity and ideology found by Brookings and Clinton et al.



Brookings²³⁹ and clearly sit at the independent-moderate end of the scale. This is a quick demonstration of how qualitative data can help to substantiate the statistical basis of this paper's claims about the intersection of high I-Scores with political moderation (and vice versa). As cited above this correlation is at 84% in the last century.²⁴⁰

The most centrist Republican by DW-NOMINATE score was Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD). By the Brookings party unity score (rather than the official congressional figures used in my methodology) Gilchrest voted with his party 60% of the time in the 110th Congress. My methodology scores him at 25% independent voting and the difference in the two I-Scores is likely due to different methodologies and the incorporation of different types of vote in the two different datasets.²⁴¹ As with the data I use in my PU-score from the Clerk of the House, the Brookings rating scores party cohesiveness by how often a congressman voted with/against the majority of their party, in common with most measures of party cohesion.²⁴² Gilchrest has a 63% lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union²⁴³ indicating a relatively moderate profile compared to the GOP House conference as a whole. This is a fairly rare example of a very moderate, centrist legislator; from what would once have been an abundance.

²³⁹ In both cases taking data derived from the Poole and Rosenthal DW-NOMINATE series.

²⁴⁰ Barring the New Deal and Fair Deal periods.

²⁴¹ For instance all roll call votes, cloture motions, nomination votes, procedural votes etc. In any case both sets of data produce the same trend.

²⁴² Roberts and Smith, 'Procedural Contexts, Party Strategy, and Conditional Party Voting in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1971-2000' in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 47, No. 2, (April, 2003).

²⁴³ Taken from <http://votesmart.org/candidate/26886/wayne-gilchrest#.U2XvYldWS0> accessed on 4th May 2014.

I will now review a case at the other end of the spectrum and look at one of those legislators who had extremely low (even 0%) I-Scores to assess whether they could be labelled as ideological extreme, as the correlation would predict. Just above the densest area of the Republican distribution on the Brookings Institute DW-NOMINATE analysis we find congressman Broun (R-GA) with a DW-NOMINATE score of 0.970, among the highest of the entire 110th Congress. Brookings assigns a party unity score of 99.5% to Broun, and from his issue profile it is quite clear that a low I-Score is indicative of a high level of ideological extremism. Broun received the American Conservative Union Award for his 99% lifetime ACU rating,²⁴⁴ nominated Allen West (R-FL) as Speaker of the House (despite West then being an outgoing congressman),²⁴⁵ and has made a number of incendiary speeches condemning evolutionary science and the theory of man-made global warming.²⁴⁶ Broun holds a 23% lifetime rating from the ACLU²⁴⁷ affirming his status as a hard-line conservative. Interestingly from a methodological point of view Broun is to the right of his party (he is a Tea Party favourite)²⁴⁸ but still maintains high party unity. This could indicate that the I-Score is an even stronger measure of polarization than I argue above, because in this case even a legislator to the ideological extreme of their party still registers very low levels of independent voting. This further negates the potential methodological objection I discuss above.

Space is limited here, but by concentrating solely on the median ideological scores of the congressional parties to demonstrate polarization, there is a danger that some of the variety between representatives is obscured. To be sure this variety is much less than it was in the 1950s and 60s,²⁴⁹ but it is still a feature of modern American politics. If only just to measure the rise of polarized parties, the study of variety (in this context through the I-Score), can be valuable. These case studies help to demonstrate qualitatively the validity of the quantitative evidence cited above. We can conclude that legislators with high I-Scores are more centrist than their parties, and are not therefore, more extreme. I refer to legislators of note throughout this paper, including a small number of outliers,²⁵⁰ some other case studies will be cited. In short, from this qualitative data, it is clear that the correlation found by Clinton et al. holds true in Brookings' analysis of the Poole-Rosenthal scores.

²⁴⁴ Taken from <http://broun.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=298305> accessed on 3rd May 2014.

²⁴⁵ Harrington, 'Boehner Re-Elected Speaker—As Broun and Gohmert Vote for Allen West Instead' in *CBS News*, 3rd January 2013.

²⁴⁶ Wing, 'Paul Brown Expects To Remain On Science Committee After Calling Science "Lies" From "The Pit of Hell"' in *The Huffington Post*, 12th April 2012.

²⁴⁷ Taken from <http://votesmart.org/interest-group/1378/rating/6618?of=rating#.U2SuFvldWSo> accessed on 3rd May 2014.

²⁴⁸ Blake, 'Tea party group backs Broun in Georgia Senate race' in *The Washington Post*, 11th February 2014.

²⁴⁹ See <http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2013/historical-house-ideology-and-party-unity>.

²⁵⁰ The number of outliers is extremely small in the 110th Congress. The Brookings infographic shows a tight trend.

Within the study of polarization it is vital that we consider these internal party dynamics, to assess whether the polarization label is accurate and if so, how it came to be and whether it might be undone. For future studies along these lines, plotting the parties along a libertarian-authoritarian axis as well as a left-right axis would yield a far more detailed, and revealing, picture. Whilst the Democrats are more homogenous ideologically (see analysis below, particularly of the 110th House), the Republicans have a very broad range of internal factions. Plotting DW-NOMINATE against a similar measure of libertarianism-authoritarianism would allow the I-Score and the various party unity scores to measure rebellious voting within the different coalitions. We would anticipate, for instance, neoconservatives to have higher levels of party unity during the Bush administration, whilst Republicans leaning towards the libertarian axis might vote more in common with liberal Democrats. These strange coalitions have come to the fore in recent years (particularly in the Senate)²⁵¹ and are the focus of the final chapter of this paper. This is a good example of where I-Scores can supplement DW-NOMINATE.

Overview of I-Scores in the 110th Congress.

The 110th Congress was the unlucky beneficiary of several trends which led towards tighter party unity and a commensurately high level of polarization between the two parties. These trends, elucidated in the literature review, culminated in a largely conformist House, increasingly conformist Senate and record disapproval levels from the public.²⁵² I will demonstrate this here, in a brief, broad overview, before delving deeper into the data and analysis for the remainder of this chapter; which will explore I-Scores by House and then by Senate, I-Scores between the two chambers, I-Scores across parties and variations in independent voting across ‘red’ and ‘blue’ states.

I will deal with the aggregate figures here, which are averages of I-Scores and corresponding Party Unity (PU)-Scores derived from the database of the *Washington Post*. The 110th Congress, from January 2007 to January 2009, had an average, bicameral, bipartisan I-Score of 8.79%. In other words, from 2007 to 2009, 8.79% of all votes cast in both chambers by both parties were cast by legislators voting against their party line. Despite all the moves toward a tightly conformist Congress, almost one-in-ten votes were cast against party line. Though conformity is clearly the dominant behaviour, these 8.79% of votes are still an important part of the picture; not least of which because analysing them with I-Scores can tell us a lot about which groups of legislators drive party unity and thus polarization. This is an area where the literature, which emphasis party unity, can be developed

²⁵¹ Nocera, ‘Rand Paul filibuster blasted by John McCain, Lindsey Graham’ in *Politico*, 7th March 2013.

²⁵² Newport, ‘Congress Returns to Mostly Disapproving Constituency’ in *Gallup*, (17th November 2008).

much further. Equally, 91.2% of all votes were cast along party lines (a PU-Score of 91.2%). Within these figures, the Democrats in the House and Senate combined had an I-Score of 5.365%, whilst the Republicans in the House and Senate of 12.220%. As separate chambers but across both parties, the Senate had a bipartisan mean I-Score of 11.07% and the House a bipartisan average of 6.5%. These figures provide a simple starting point to contextualise the analysis. At the very least they establish an important baseline for comparison. I will now consider the House and Senate separately, given the important constitutional and historical precedents which separate them, before considering both together in a brief, comparative analysis.

I-Scores in the 110th House.

In total, in the House of Representatives during the 110th Congress, there were 246 Democrats and 207 Republican members, including those who served only partial terms. As shown below in Figure 2.5, the House had a bipartisan average I-Score of 6.5%, a corresponding PU-Score of 93.49% and significant differences in these two measures between the two parties. The Democratic Majority had an average I-Score of just 3.66%, whilst the GOP Minority had an I-Score average of 9.34%. This contrasts with Sinclair’s assertion that the Democratic Majority was more ‘ideologically heterogeneous than their Republican counterparts.’²⁵³ Sinclair doesn’t offer any basis for this claim and the distribution of the I-Scores seem to refute it; indeed Sinclair acknowledges that much of the early Democratic programme for the ‘100 hours’ plan was chosen for ‘[commanding] unified Democratic support’²⁵⁴ rather than for specific bipartisan appeal. I will now consider structural factors and more politically localised, transient explanations for this disparity. The larger forces at work in American politics (namely polarization) are considered in the preceding literature review.

Leadership within the House is one factor signalled by

Figure 2.5- 110th House, I-Scores and Party Unity Scores.			
Averages			
Democrats:		Republicans:	
PU-Score:	I-Score:	PU-Score:	I-Score:
96.337%	3.663%	90.657%	9.343%
Bipartisan			
PU-Score:	I-Score:		
93.497%	6.503%		

²⁵³ Sinclair, ‘Leading the New Majorities’ in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (January, 2008), p. 89.

²⁵⁴ Sinclair, ‘Leading the New Majorities’ in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (January, 2008), p. 89.

academics Harris and Nelson for Democratic party unity. They note that, whilst once ‘House Democrats had selected ideological “middlemen” for top leadership posts’²⁵⁵ by the time of the 110th Congress ‘only little more than one-quarter of the Democratic Caucus was more liberal than Nancy Pelosi (D-C.A.) at the time she was selected as Speaker.’²⁵⁶ This is truly a barometer of polarization as much as it may be a cause (and then only a contributory one). The (by historic standards) liberal Democratic Caucus elected a more liberal leader in Nancy Pelosi than it had ever done in the past to reflect the modern ideological mainstream of its caucus. So in effect the Democrats are still selecting “middlemen” from within their own Caucus, it just so happened that the middle of their caucus is now significantly further to the left than it had been in the past. Certainly this fits into the pattern of elite polarization identified throughout the literature. As with many aspects of the polarization debate the question hinges on your definition; if Harris and Nelson mean that Democrats were selecting leaders who were “middlemen” by national standards, then certainly their thesis is correct and that is no longer the case; however if they are referring to “middlemen” strictly within the context of the Democratic Caucus then Speaker Pelosi is still a (relative to the Democratic Caucus) moderate, middle-of-the-road leader, as they themselves acknowledge.

With so much talk of political extremism in the Republican Party dominating the news coverage of recent years, it is surprising to find that during the 110th Congress they were in fact more independent minded than the Democrats in voting against their leadership. Historically speaking these I-Scores are very small in the 110th Congress (see Chapter Three), but there is still a sizeable portion of the Republican Party which behaves more moderately than its national leadership does. The plummeting approval ratings of Republican President George W. Bush and the unpopularity of the Iraq War likely provided strong incentives for surviving moderate Republicans (and/or those elected from relatively moderate districts) to distance themselves from the national Republican leadership. Given that much of the Democratic victory in the 2006 midterm landslide had been at the expense of 61 districts ‘that President Bush had won in 2004,’²⁵⁷ the remaining moderates were presumably keen to distinguish themselves from the President and, by implication, their party leadership. This effect must have been particularly acute given the ‘referendum effect’²⁵⁸ at play in the 2006 congressional

²⁵⁵ Harris and Nelson, ‘Middlemen No More? Emergent Patterns in Congressional Leadership Selection’ in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (Jan, 2008), p. 49.

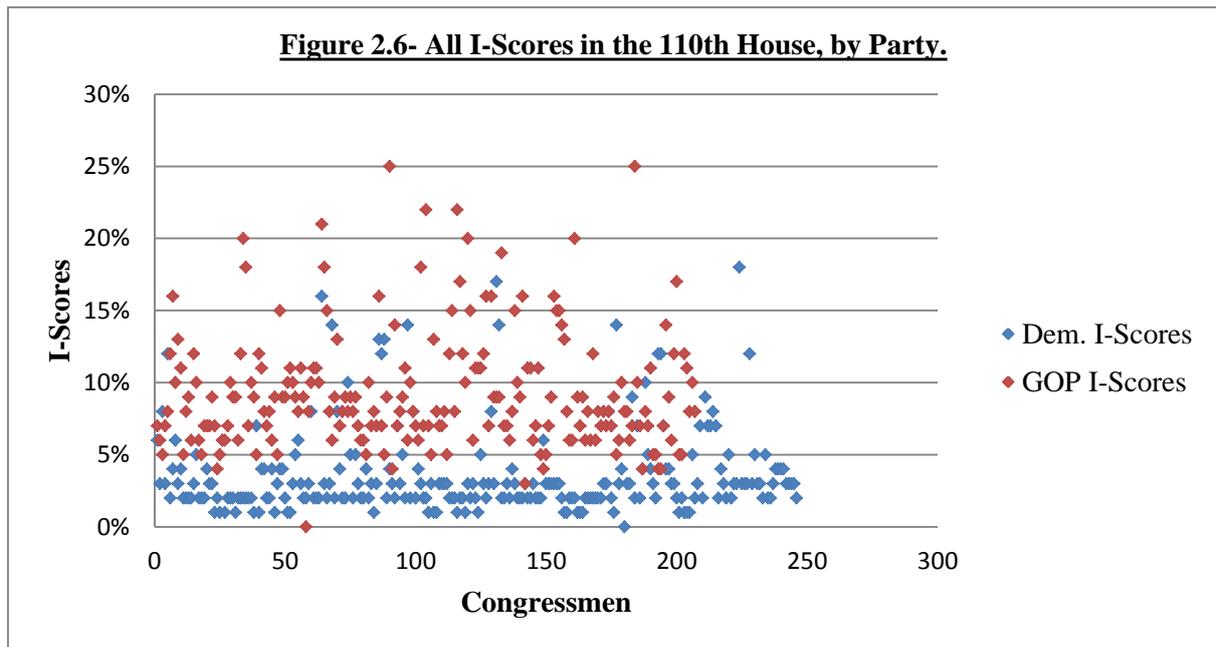
²⁵⁶ Harris and Nelson, ‘Middlemen No More? Emergent Patterns in Congressional Leadership Selection’ in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (Jan, 2008), p. 50.

²⁵⁷ L. A. Becker and V. G. Moscardelli, ‘Congressional Leadership on the Front Lines: Committee Chairs, Electoral Security, and Ideology’ in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (January, 2008), p. 77.

²⁵⁸ Cohen, ‘The Polls: Presidential Referendum Effects in the 2006 Midterm Elections’ in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (September 2007).

elections, lensing attention away from individual legislators and towards the unpopular president. This could help explain a localised spike in GOP independence during the 2007-2009 Congress, and given that in the two prior Congresses, the 108th and the 109th, the GOP exhibited lower average I-Scores (6.28% and 7.64% respectively) the “George Bush factor” does seem a likely contributor. However, one other factor that emerges from my analysis is whether a given party holds of Minority or Majority status. In the 110th Congress the GOP minority was decidedly more independent in its voting record than the Democratic Majority (9.343 to 3.663), and I consider this trend from the 102nd to 112th congresses in Chapter Three.

Returning to the crux of this section, the overview of I-Scores in the 110th House, we find further evidence of the imbalance between Republican disunity and Democratic conformity. It is hard to establish empirically in the space this paper allows whether some intrinsic characteristic of the two parties causes this, but Majority v. Minority status seems a significant part of the explanation (see Chapter Three). Nonetheless, there are some striking differences between the two parties during the 110th Congress. To investigate these differences I have divided the House by I-Score percentile, so that I consider the congressmen in blocks according to their independent voting rating. So, in the first block I consider those with 0% I-Scores, and then those with 1% I-Scores and then those with 2% I-Scores and so on until I-Score 25% (held by Ron Paul (R-TX) and Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), the highest I-Scores of the 110th Congress). This approach allows a demonstration of the range of the I-Scores within each party but is also to establish patterns for where Democratic and Republican congressmen are more likely to fall in the distribution of I-Scores. This analysis finds a preponderance of Democratic Party I-Scores in the very low range during the 110th Congress and most Republicans clustered slightly higher on the I-Score distribution; this conforms to the pattern of past behaviour by Majority and Minority parties (a trend I consider in more detail in Chapter Three). Figure 2.6 shows the distribution of I-Scores by party in the 110th Congress and finds that the mode of Democratic I-Scores is 2%, (86 Democratic Congressmen voted with their party in 98% of all votes during the 110th Congress), whilst the mode of Republican I-Scores is 7% (at the significantly lower number of 33 legislators). As noted above, the mean-average for each party is 3.663% for the Democrats and 9.343% for the GOP. The Democrats evidently spike in the 1-3% (inclusive) range whilst the Republicans have a much broader range of I-Scores from 0 to 25%. The Democratic range is from 0 to 18%, though 81.74% of their Caucus appear in the lowest five percentage points for I-Scores. On the other hand 80.97% of the Republican Conference appears in the 0 to 12% I-Score range. Historically speaking these I-Scores are quite low, but the gap between the Republicans and the Democrats is interesting as is the fact that I-Scores still exist in some number, validating an approach based on remaining party variety and voting independence. The range of I-Scores perhaps gives credence to the argument that intra-party divisions are due to the large range of constituencies and



factions within the Republican Party, and the fact that these groupings are uniquely ill-at-ease with each-other, often with little in common.²⁵⁹ Democrats, on the other hand, are demonstrably more homogenous; something that Cantor and Herrnson found as early as 1997²⁶⁰ and which Smith’s analysis of DW-NOMINATE confirms; Smith finds that (in the words of Mathews) ‘[Democrats have] grown more ideologically coherent than the Republicans’.²⁶¹

I now consider those legislators with the highest and lowest I-Scores. Out of the 100 congressmen with the lowest I-Scores, 99 are Democrats and 1 is a Republican. The only two congressmen who achieved the dubious distinction of a 0% I-Score are Marcia Fudge (D-OH) and Charles Norwood (R-GA); though the next 175 lowest I-Scores all belong to Democrats. At the other end of the spectrum, of the 100 congressmen with the highest I-Scores, 18 are Democrats whilst 82 are Republicans.

I-Scores and All House Delegations.

In this section I have broken down the I-Scores in the 110th Congress by state delegation. This is to identify which states were the most independent, which parties within each delegation were most independent, how elite behaviour changes in the face of district ideology, and to demonstrate

²⁵⁹ Geoffrey Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin/ The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party from Eisenhower to the Tea Party*, (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 339.

²⁶⁰ Cantor and Herrnson, ‘Party Campaign Activity and Party Unity in the U.S. House of Representatives’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 3, (August, 1997), p. 395.

²⁶¹ Mathews, ‘Are Political Parties growing more unified?’ in *The Washington Post*, 6th September 2012.

Figure 2.7- Bipartisan Average I-Scores Within All House Delegations:

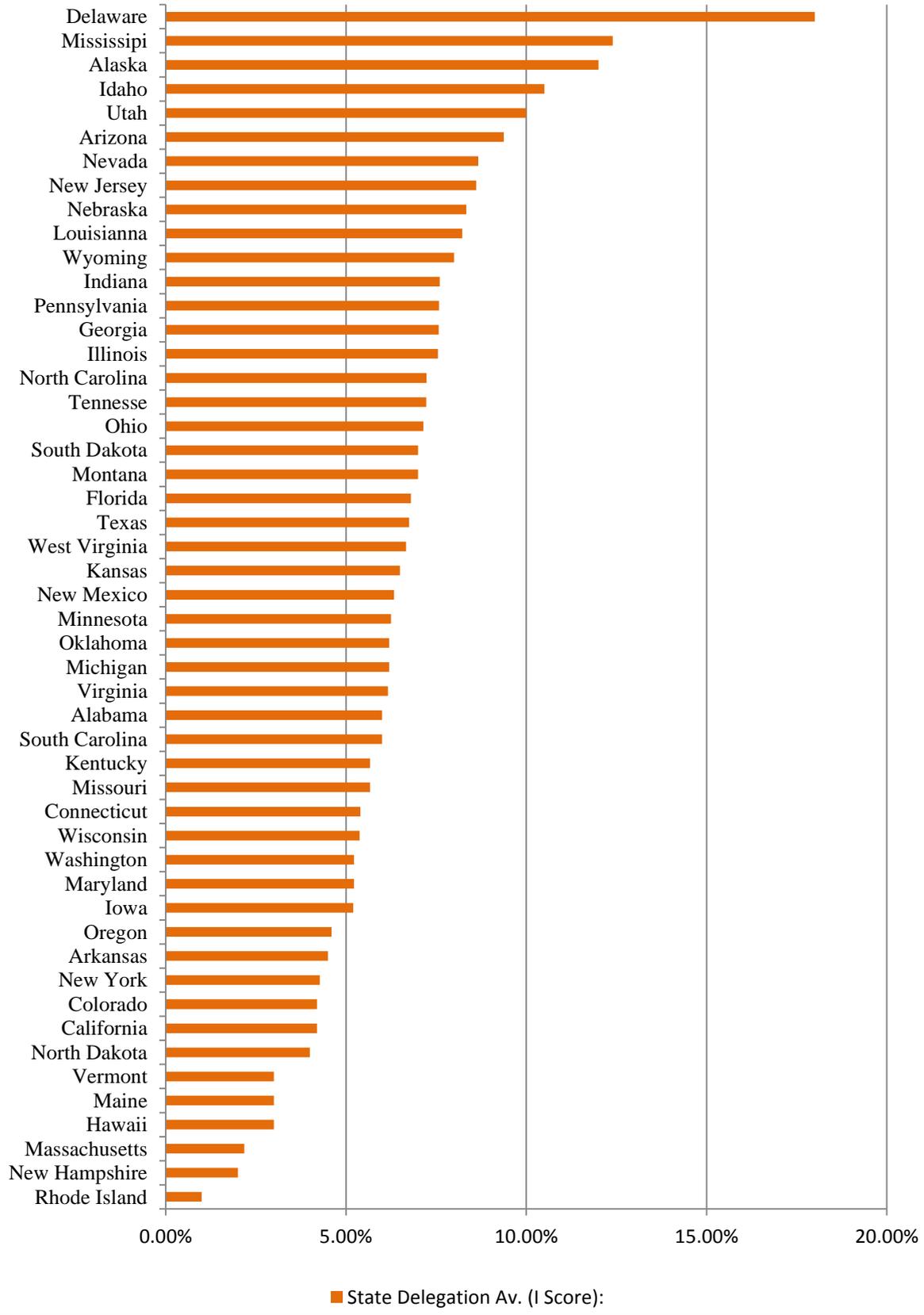
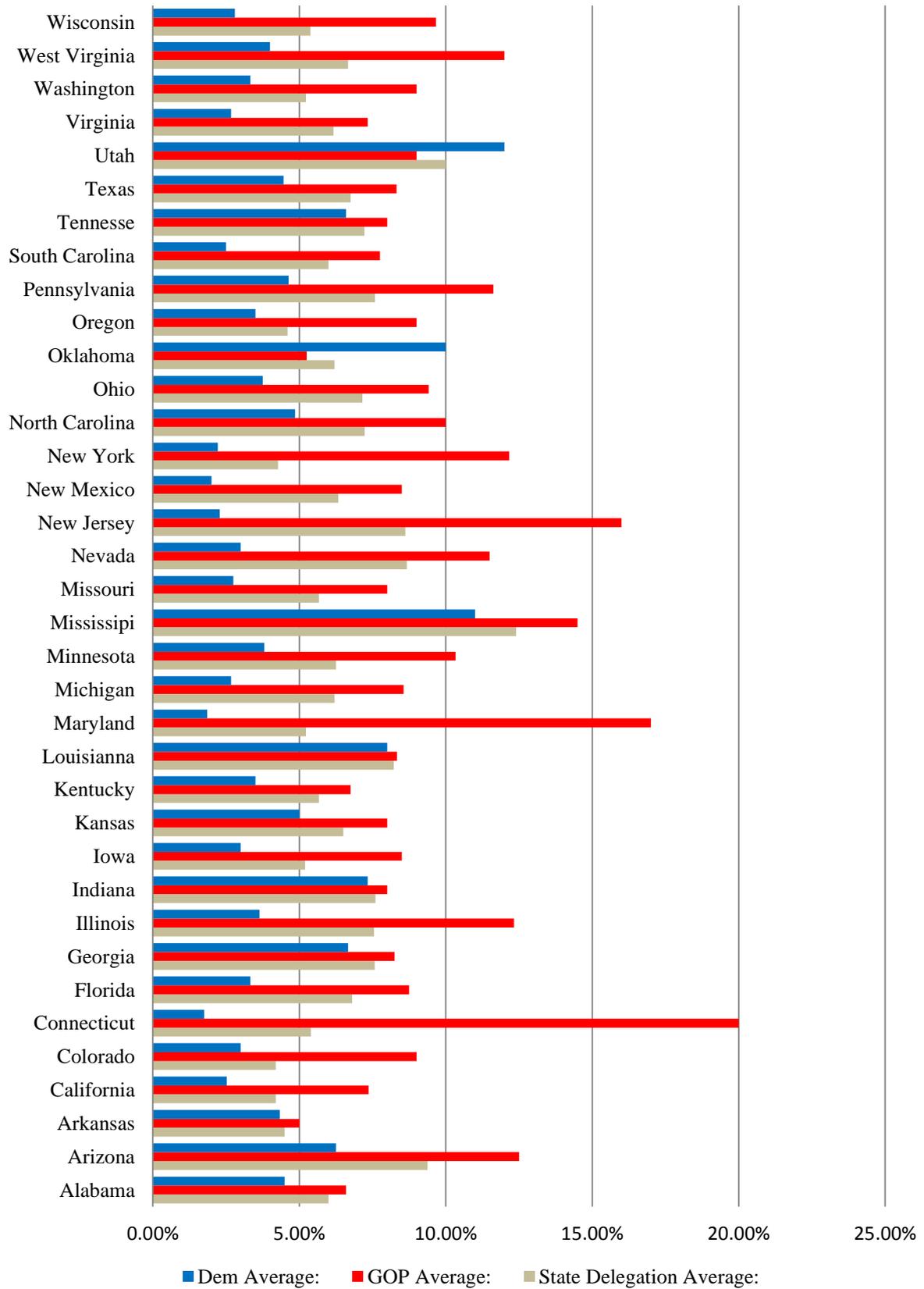


Figure 2.8- Average I-Scores Within Party-Mixed House Delegations:



practically how the I-Score helps shed light on both realignment and elite-level party sorting. Neither of these processes are “finished”, and exceptions to realignment/sorting still remain; preserved largely by the effects of incumbency²⁶² and moderate voting to offset the electoral costs of party loyalty.²⁶³ Using the I-Score, we can identify where the regional variations exist in party cohesion, which states have the best record for independent/moderate-voting and where moderate pockets of legislators still exist (despite the realignment of the past half century). Albeit in a different political age, Cohen and Nice also considered party unity by state delegation as a measure of polarization and its mechanisms (realignment and party sorting).²⁶⁴ This validates breaking down the analysis into state-delegation blocks, but in this case I will be considering the opposite of party unity, to measure independent-moderate voting at the end of the polarization process, whereas Cohen and Nice wrote about it at its inception. I consider the Senate, along similar lines, subsequently.

Firstly, Figure 2.7 ranks all states by how independently their House delegation voted (including legislators of both parties within each state delegation). The highest I-Score average for a state delegation is from Delaware, where that state’s sole congressman (Mike Castle (R-DW), voted against his party 18% of the time. As the representative of a district-at-large for a state that has voted Democratic in every presidential election since 1992, it is unsurprising that Congressman Castle voted moderately and against his party leadership in almost every 1 vote out of 5. This places him among the most independent voting of all congressmen in the 110th Congress. As Castle represents a district at large he has to appeal to progressive/liberal and centrist voters in the same way a Republican Senator from a “blue” state might have to. For most congressmen representing ordinary districts from states with fuller House delegations, I anticipate this behaviour being considerably less common at the present time. The least independent delegation was from another North Eastern state, Rhode Island, where that state’s two Democratic members each voted with their party in 99% of all votes. As noted above the cross-party average I-Score in the 110th House was 6.503%, whilst the mean for all House delegations was the narrowly higher 6.55%. The median state in terms of House delegation voting averages was Oklahoma at an I-Score of 6%. Oklahoma was also significant in other ways I shall identify next.

Of all of these House delegations to the 110th Congress, thirty-six contained members from both parties. I have identified the average I-Score of these thirty-six delegations (as above) but also

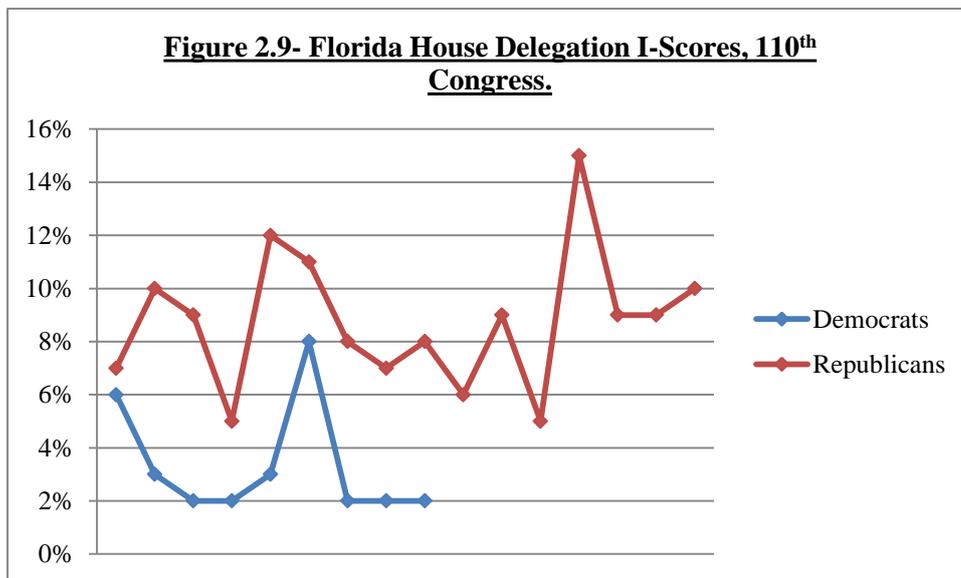
²⁶² Bullock, ‘Regional Realignment from an Officeholding Perspective’ in *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 50, Issue 3, (August, 1988), p.554.

²⁶³ Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, ‘The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress’ in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (Jul, 2010).

²⁶⁴ Cohen and Nice, ‘Changing Party Loyalty of State Delegations to the U.S. House of Representatives. 1953-1976’, in *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (June, 1983).

the average I-Score for each party within each delegation (see Figure 2.8). On immediate examination of Figure 2.8 it is clear that the Republicans are the highest independent-voters of 34 out of 36 delegations featuring members from both parties. The Democrats are the most moderate-independent group of only two delegations, the aforementioned Oklahoma and the deeply Republican state of Utah. The sole Democratic member of Utah’s House delegation, Jim Matheson, voted against his party leadership in 12% of votes; over three times the national I-Score average for the Democratic Party during this Congress. According to the Cook PVI report Matheson’s district, the Utah 4th, had a rating of R+16²⁶⁵ by the 113th Congress; making it one of the most conservative seats in the country held by a Democratic congressman. Jim Matheson was one of the few remaining ‘Blue Dog’, fiscally conservative Democrats in the Congress (whose caucus I review in Chapter Three).

Case Studies of Regional Variations in the 110th Congress: Florida.

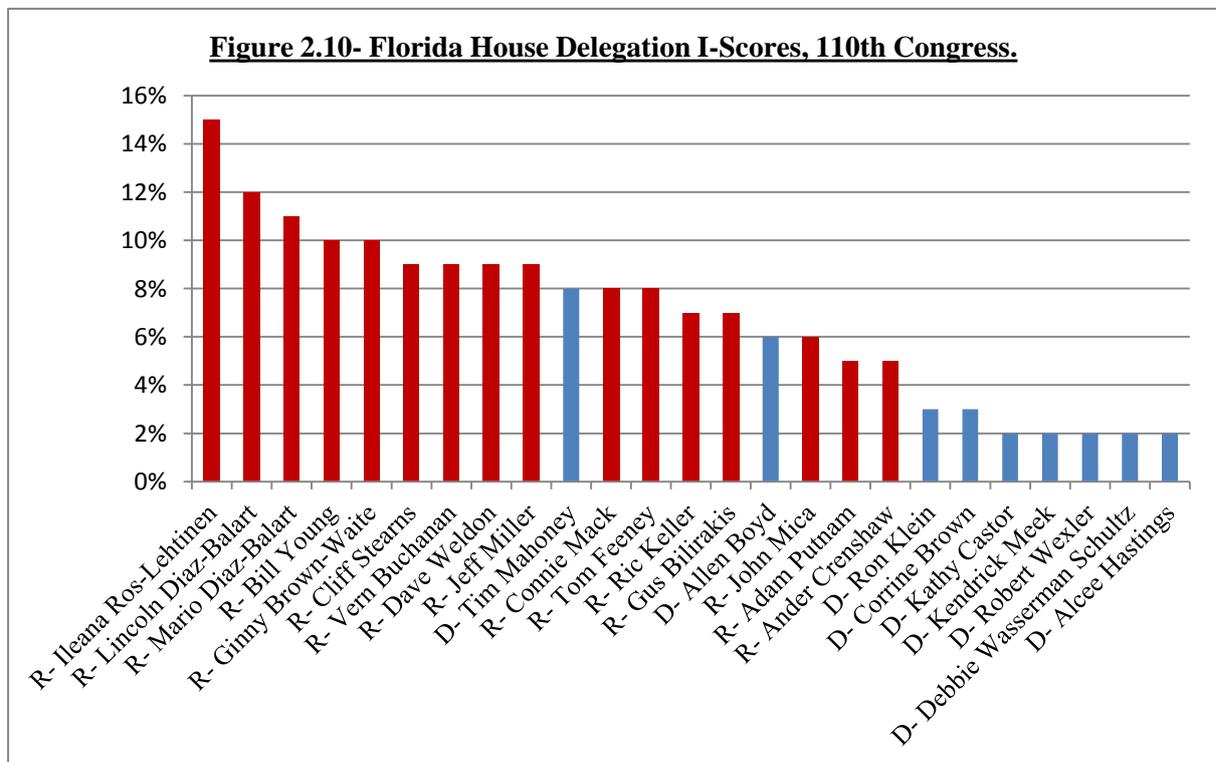


In the analysis above I have considered the most and least ideologically Democratic and Republican states in the House. Now I will consider two ‘swing states’ and the trends found in their congressmen’s I-Scores. The House delegation from Florida for the 110th Congress consisted of nine Democrats and sixteen Republicans. Figure 2.9 shows the distribution of I-Scores within this delegation and it is immediately obvious that the Republicans, on average, have higher I-Scores than do the Democrats, but also that the range of I-Scores among the GOP members is much greater. The Republicans of the Florida delegation have a 10% range of I-Scores (from 5% independence to 15%

²⁶⁵ The Cook Political Report, ‘Partisan Voting Index Districts of the 113th Congress’ taken from <http://cookpolitical.com/file/2013-04-48.pdf>.

independence) compared to the Democrats who have a narrowly smaller 6% range (from 2% independence to 8% independence). Whilst the difference in range between each parties mean I-Scores is only 4%, the distribution of I-Scores point to a much tighter pattern of party unity and discipline in the Democratic Caucus, mirroring the national results. This fits the general finding that in the 110th Congress Republicans exhibited a greater ideological variety (according to I-Score heterogeneity) than the Democrats did. In Chapter Three I consider which groups of legislators drive or diminish this heterogeneity, which in turn increases mean party polarization by roll call vote (a key metric of polarization found throughout the literature).

Within the Florida delegation, we find that of the ten most independent members, nine were Republicans; but of those ten the member with the lowest I-Score (8%) was a Democrat; Tim Mahoney (D-FL). Conversely, of the ten least independent members we find that seven were Democrats; and of those ten the three with the highest independence scores were all Republicans. This is not quite as striking as the national rankings of highest and lowest scores-by-party, but it is broadly consistent with Democrats occupying the more conformist points of the distribution. Figure 2.10 displays this distribution very clearly; all Florida congressmen are ranked in order by I-Score and towards the higher levels of independence we find a strong preponderance of Republicans, and towards the lower figures we find a much larger Democratic presence. The average I-Score for the entire House delegation, including both parties, is 7% so I take this to be the midpoint. This point is occupied by two Republican congressmen, Rik Keller (R-L) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL). Looking on



either side of this middle ground (and excluding the two Republicans we find sitting right on it), we find eleven Republicans and one Democrat on the more independent half of the distribution; whilst on the other side of the midpoint towards the lower I-Scores, we find eight Democrats and three Republicans.

The Republicans in Florida have an average I-Score of 9%, which is a full 6% above the Democrats' score of 3%. Whilst I am keen to move this research beyond the study of party mean points, they are useful in this case to demonstrate that ideological disunity (and therefore variety) still exists, before progressing to more advanced I-Score analysis in Chapter Three. This might be an indication of more ideological variety within the Republican Party than the Democratic Party. I consider a real-world example of this variety in Chapter Four. The I-Score figures and analysis from Florida broadly fit the national picture found earlier in this chapter; that Republicans were more rebellious than Democrats during the 110th Congress and more independent/moderate in their voting.

The topography of the ideological variations in Florida mirrors the landscape of the national parties in Congress and provides an insight from a crucial 'battleground' or 'bellwether' indicator-state. The similarity between Florida's House delegation and national averages bear out the method of using so-called "swing states" in analysis of national patterns. With this correlation between the regional and the federal in mind, I proceed now to consider Ohio.

Case Studies of Regional Variations in the 110th Congress: Ohio.

Ohio conforms to the pattern found in the Florida data, and confirms a number of key observations which inform our understanding of the entire House. In the 110th Congress, Ohio was represented by eight Democrats and thirteen Republicans. So, whilst the GOP held a majority within the congressional delegation, both parties had reasonably proportionate (and comparable) representation within the state delegation.

In presidential elections and national politics Ohio is widely considered to be one of the most crucial swing-states²⁶⁶ and the last candidate to be elected or re-elected president without winning Ohio was then-Senator Kennedy in 1960, half a century ago. Furthermore, no Republican has ever won the presidency without taking Ohio.²⁶⁷ Ohio voters have successfully predicted the winner of

²⁶⁶ Jonathan Easley, 'Snapshot: The crucial swing states' in *The Hill* (5th November 2013) taken from <http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/266049-a-snapshot-of-the-crucial-swing-states> accessed on 1st July 2013.

²⁶⁷ Chris Ciliizza, 'Why Ohio is the most important state in the country' in *The Washington Post* (11th October 2012) taken from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2012/10/11/why-ohio-is-the-most-important-state-in-the-country/> accessed on 1st July 2013.

fourteen consecutive presidential elections; an impressive record. For our purposes this means that Ohio is a very good barometer for national politics. It is, if you like, a microcosm of America's political landscape. This suggests that the Congressmen elected from Ohio's twenty-one congressional districts are likely to be a reliable, sample with lessons that can be drawn for the entire House of Representatives, provided that the data is analysed carefully and conclusions applied diligently.

From Ohio we find that, as in Florida, the Republicans have significantly higher I-Scores than the Democrats. The average of all Democratic I-Scores was just 3.75% compared to the Republicans' I-Score of 9.23%. This is nearly identical to the Florida average scores, and extremely close to the national scores of 3.66% for the Democrats and 9.343% for the Republicans. Additionally, the Republicans have a much greater range of I-Scores than the Democrats. The Republicans had an I-Score range from 3% to 16%. In contrast the Democratic range was a substantially limited 0-9%. The most independent voting record of the Ohio delegation belongs to Steven LaTourette (R-OH), the Republican Congressman who voted against his party line 16% of the time. The least independent score from the Republicans of the Ohio delegation was 3%, belonging to Robert Latta (R-OH). However this was something of an outlier as the two next lowest scores were 6 and 7 percent. In Ohio, as was the case nationally, the most conformist Congressman was a Democrat; Marcia Fudge (D-OH).²⁶⁸ The most independent Democrat was only equal to the average Republican level of independence; this was (Denis Kucinich (D-OH) at 9%. By contrast five Democrats had scores at or below 3%.

The I-Score analysis shows that the Ohio Democratic contingent are much more tightly ideological than their Republican colleagues, and the Democrats exhibited significantly less ideological range; exacerbating the distance between party mean points found in DW-NOMINATE.²⁶⁹ Of course the implication of this is that the Democratic contingent have higher levels of party unity than do Ohio Republicans, and therefore were more ideological in the 110th House. It is concerning, from the perspective of polarization, that moderate (or ideologically mixed) states are electing representatives who drive down I-Scores and reinforce party unity, which is one of the crucial preconditions of polarization.

I-Scores in the 110th Senate.

²⁶⁸ Who was also among the most conformist of all congressmen in the entire US House of Representatives; not just in the 110th Congress, but in the entire period from the 102nd to the 113th Congresses.

²⁶⁹ For data see, Poole and Rosenthal, 'The Polarization of the Congressional Parties/ Graphs' from http://voteview.com/political_polarization.asp (19th January, 2014) accessed on 3rd July 2014.

On average the 110th Senate voted against party leadership in 11.078% of votes. As with the House, the incumbent Majority (the Democratic Party) were more conformist in their voting, crossing the floor in only 7.059% of votes; whilst the Republican Minority voted against their party in 15.098% of all votes. From this it may well be that the emerging theory of tighter party-line voting whilst in the Majority also applies to the Senate, (see Chapter Three). This theory could not be tested with DW-NOMINATE and only analysis of party (dis)unity could examine this question; I-Scores contribute something unique here, over party unity scores, because I-Scores emphasise the important outliers and their effect on mitigating polarization, rather the dominant majority of party conformists.

From these figures we can tease out two trends, which also presented themselves in the prior analysis of the House. Firstly, in the 110th Congress, the Republican Party was more rebellious than the Democratic Party and thus, according to the correlation found by Clinton et al, it was more centrist in this Congress. These I-Scores are still relatively low, making it especially important that high I-Scoring legislators are studied now whilst appreciable numbers of them still exist (even in their historically diminished numbers). Nevertheless, given the factionalist nature of the modern Republican Party²⁷⁰ and the prerequisite of ideologically united parties for polarization,²⁷¹ the internal dynamics and disobedience of large sections of the party should be of current interest to academics, even, (or perhaps especially), in this comparatively homogenous era. By only considering the average ideological scores of the two parties to measure polarization, a vital part of the puzzle is being missed. Variety does still exist within the two parties, though in the 110th Congress this variety lay with the Republican Party and not with the more conformist House and Senate Democrats. The second trend is that Majorities are more ideologically united than Minorities; I test this more exhaustively in Chapter Three.

As with the House, a partisan disparity in I-Scores emerges. Of the ten most independent voters in the 110th Senate, all are Republicans. Whilst at the other end of the scale the bottom thirty-two I-Scores are all held by Democrats, with Patty Murray (D-WA) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) holding the joint lowest I-Scores of the entire Senate (2%). Interestingly Bernard Sanders (I-VT), technically an Independent (though one who caucuses with the Democrats), voted along Democratic party lines 95% of the time with an I-Score of just 5. Then Illinois Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) voted with his party in 96% of all votes, giving him an I-Score of just 4%. This places Senator Obama 85th in the Senate for independent-moderate voting. The least independent Republican was Johnny Isakson (R-GA) with an I-Score of 7%; which still places him above thirty two Democrats. The most independent

²⁷⁰ Notably, even in the 110th Congress, before the Tea Party, the I-Scores present evidence of considerable heterogeneity and ideological variety in the GOP.

²⁷¹ Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, *The American Voter*, (Michigan, 1965), p. 185.

Democrat was Ben Nelson (D-NE) with an I-Score of 19%, placing Senator Nelson twelfth highest in terms of independent-moderate voting. Also of note was Nelson's fellow Nebraskan Senator, Chuck Hagel. Senator Hagel voted against his party in 21% of votes, foreshadowing his bipartisan role as President Obama's Secretary of Defense and the dubious distinction of being the first DoD nominee to have their confirmation filibustered- and then by his own party.²⁷² This incident goes to show how important the study of intra-party splits is, particularly in a time of relatively high polarization when a few votes can be extremely significant to nominations and legislation.

Whilst the Republicans were significantly more independent than the Democrats during the 110th Congress, it was not to last long. To put the 110th Congress into some broader context, I will briefly consider the fate of the most moderate legislators in the Senate. Of the top ten most independent senators (all Republican) very few now remain. Olympia Snowe retired and was replaced by Angus King (I-ME), an independent with a mixed history²⁷³ but who votes along Democratic party lines in 94% of votes (in the 113th Congress).²⁷⁴ King is reportedly considering a defection to the GOP for the purpose of committee assignments after the 2014 midterms,²⁷⁵ but holds an ACU rating of just 13/100.²⁷⁶ As *The Washington Post* notes, King is a 'more reliable Democratic vote than 11 Democratic senators including Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Mark Warner (D-VA) and Joe Manchin (D-VA).'²⁷⁷ Should King successfully defect after the midterms he would become the most independent voting member of the Republican caucus, if they were to accept him. Maine's other senator, Susan Collins still sits in the Senate. Next on the list is Arlen Specter (R-PA) who defected and went on to vote with the Democratic party line in 71% of votes in the 111th Congress. Gordon H. Smith (R-OR) with an I-Score of 28% lost his re-election bid and was replaced by Jeff Merkley (D-OR) who voted with the Democratic party 95% of the time and had an I-Score of just 5%. George Voinovich (R-OH) was succeeded upon retirement by Rob Portman (R-OH). Portman held an I-Score of 10% in the 112th Senate, whereas Voinovich voted against his party line 31% of the time in the 111th Congress. Richard Lugar (R-IN), who crossed the floor in 21% of votes, remained an independent voter but increasingly voted with his party (18% I-Score in the 111th Congress, and 16% in the 112th). Lugar was defeated in a Republican primary by Tea Party candidate Richard Mourdock, who then lost the general election to

²⁷² See Kane, 'Senate Republicans filibuster Hagel nomination' in *The Washington Post*, 14th February 2013 for a good example of Republican factionalism, ideological variety or heterogeneity (depending on interpretation).

²⁷³ He endorsed George W. Bush for President in 2000.

²⁷⁴ See <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress/113/senate/members/>, accessed on 8th May 2014.

²⁷⁵ O'Keefe, 'Angus King suggests he may caucus with GOP if it retakes Senate' in *The Washington Post*, (10th April 2014).

²⁷⁶ The American Conservative Union, '2013 Ratings of Congress', taken from <http://www.conservative.org/legislative-ratings/2013-congress> accessed on 8th May 2014.

²⁷⁷ O'Keefe, 'Angus King suggests he may caucus with GOP if it retakes Senate' in *The Washington Post*, (10th April 2014).

Democrat Joe Donnell, who voted with his party in 91% of all votes in the 113th Congress. Norm Coleman (R-MN) lost his re-election bid to Al Franken (D-MN), who went on to vote with the Democratic Party in 97% of all votes during the 111th Congress, resulting in an I-Score of just 3%, and making him the 15th most liberal Senator in the Democratic Party. Chuck Hagel (R-NE), referenced above with an I-Score of 21%, was replaced by Mike Johanns (R-NE) who voted independently in just 8% of votes. Tom Coburn (R-OK) remains in the Senate to this day but is now due to retire. He had a strangely fluctuating roll call record, in keeping with his unique brand of independent (though staunchly conservative) voting.²⁷⁸ In the 110th Congress Coburn voted against his party in 20% of votes, by the 111th it was just 9%, by the 112th it was 15% but by the 113th Congress his I-Score had dropped again to 11%. The late Ted Stevens (R-AK) was beaten in 2008 by Mark Begich, who had an I-Score of just 6% in the 111th Congress.

In two of these cases, Senators Lugar and Stevens, incumbency was not enough to hold-off the election of a far more ideological candidate. What Bafumi and Herron call the ‘leapfrogging effect’²⁷⁹ is actually an intra-party problem as much as an inter-party one. From the ten examples above it is clear that ideological Democrats don’t just replace ideological Republicans as Bafumi and Herron describe. In fact ideological Democrats replace moderate Republicans, and extreme Republicans replace their more moderate fellow Republicans. Even senators like Rob Portman, sometimes considered a relatively moderate senator,²⁸⁰ have far less independent, and therefore far less moderate voting records than their predecessors. This process of replacement is both a symptom of polarization (as a result of realignment and elite-sorting),²⁸¹ and a cause (because it increases party unity). I consider the full historical context of this I-Score decline in the next chapter.

I-Scores and all Senate Delegations.

The figures from the 110th Senate are just as compelling as those from the House. Of the fifteen senate delegations equally split between parties, i.e. those states represented in the senate by both a Democrat and a Republican,²⁸² thirteen had more independent-voting Republicans than

²⁷⁸ ‘Dr No retires’ in *The Economist*, 25th January 2014.

²⁷⁹ Bafumi and Herron, ‘Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress’ in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No. 3, (August, 2010).

²⁸⁰ For instance, Blake, ‘Rob Portman announces support for gay marriage’ in *The Washington Post*, 15th March 2013.

²⁸¹ Theriault, ‘Party Polarization in the US Congress: Member Replacement and Member Adaptation’ in *Party Politics*, Vol. 12, No., 4, (July, 2006).

²⁸² These states are: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Virginia.

independent-voting Democrats (see Figure 2.10). The only two Democrats from mixed delegations more moderate than their Republican counterparts hailed from Louisiana and Missouri, both Southern Republican strongholds. These two Senators, Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Claire McCaskill (D-MS), had I-Scores of 17% and 16% respectively. This places both senators 1 and 2 points above the average Republican I-Score, and over double the average Democratic I-Score for the 110th senate. In fact these two Senators alone count for 0.4 of the Democratic Party's average Senate I-Score. Without Louisiana and Missouri, the Senate Democrats fall from an I-Score of 7.0588% to 6.6735% (see Chapter Three for a detailed breakdown of what I call the 'modifier effect' of ill-sorted legislators from ideologically incongruous regions). In these two cases we can likely attribute their moderate, centrist voting to what Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young identify as the 'electoral costs of party loyalty.'²⁸³ Though they were writing about the House, the principle Carson et al. identify is equally valid to the case of these two Southern Democratic Senators. Namely, 'party unity is almost twice as costly for members from moderate districts compared to lopsided districts [or in this case, ideologically incongruent states].'²⁸⁴ Carson et al. also find that 'many legislators face electoral penalties for voting too often with their parties on divisive issues.'²⁸⁵ This explains Landrieu and McCaskill's moderate voting.

Of all senate delegations irrespective of party control, Maine (represented by the aforementioned Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins) was the most moderate with a delegation average I-Score of 33.5% (see Figure 2.11). The New York and Illinois delegations were tied for least independent, each with an average I-Score of just 3%. The four senators from these two states were Dick Durbin (D-IL), Barack Obama (D-IL), Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY). Clinton and Schumer both scored 3% I-Scores, whilst Obama held a score of 4% and Durbin a score of just 2%. Of course the most striking thing about this group is that it includes the two major 2008 Democratic candidates for President. By contrast, John McCain (R-AZ) voted against his party 12% of the time in the 110th Congress. I hypothesize that McCain's relatively low I-Score (for a supposed maverick Republican) was due to the neoconservative policies of the Bush White House, which he supported. This is just a point of conjecture however. In the case of then Senator Obama, it is worthwhile noting his very high level of party cohesion. Given his rhetoric about uniting America²⁸⁶ and putting aside partisan division, Obama had a strikingly conformist voting record.

²⁸³ Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, 'The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress' in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (Jul, 2010).

²⁸⁴ Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, 'The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress' in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (Jul, 2010), p. 615.

²⁸⁵ Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, 'The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress' in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (Jul, 2010), p. 615.

²⁸⁶ Particularly of note is Obama's 2004 speech to the Democratic National Convention.

Returning to a state-by-state breakdown of the 110th Senate, the GOP had a delegation I-Score mode of 12%, a range of 26% and a median of 13.5%. The Democrats had a mode of just 4%, a range of 16% and a median of 6%. In all of these averages the Republicans have a higher I-Score than the Democrats, however the most interesting figure might be the range of I-Scores in each party. By ten percentage points the Republicans had a greater variety within the I-Scores (26%). This points back to a very conformist Democratic Party; which is at least in part down to their holding the Majority after a long period in the “wilderness”. See Chapter Three for more analysis of the ‘Majority effect’.

The five most moderate Democratic delegations were from Nebraska (I-Score 19%), Louisiana (I-Score 17%), Indiana (I-Score 16%), Missouri (I-Score 16%) and Arkansas (12.5%). Each is a traditionally Republican state and all of them voted for George Bush in the 2004 election. It makes sense, therefore, that these states’ Democratic senators should behave moderately. As Carson et al. note these legislators could face electoral reprisals for voting too often on liberal, Democratic Party lines. On the other side of the aisle, the five most moderate Republican delegations were from Maine (I-Score 33.5%), Pennsylvania (I-Score 30%), Oregon (I-Score 28%), Ohio (25%) and Minnesota (21%). The two most moderate Republican delegations, Maine and Pennsylvania, both came from the North East and both have extraordinarily high I-Scores, even by the standards of the highly independent-minded Republican Minority of the 110th Congress. Historically the North East has been a vital source of Republican moderates and ‘Rockefeller Republicans’. These I-Scores show that even in this highly polarized time that is still the case. North Eastern states were still supplying GOP moderates (albeit in ever decreasing numbers, see Figure 2.3).

To demonstrate the importance of broad-based parties and a high range of I-Scores to more representative, democratic parties let us quantify the impact of the North Eastern moderates to Republican party, and also the remaining Southern legislators to the Democrats. I call this a ‘modifier effect’ and explore the effect fully over the whole period in Chapter Three. If we remove all North Eastern states with GOP Senators from the Republican averages²⁸⁷ we find the total GOP I-Score average for the Senate dips slightly from 15.10% to 13.985. However the range of I-Scores within the Republican Party drops significantly from 28% to just 21%. Conversely for the Democratic side of the aisle, if we remove all Southern Senators²⁸⁸ we find that the range of scores is unaltered (owing to Nebraskan Senator Ben Nelson’s I-Score of 19%), but the average scores fall by 0.9%. So, the remaining North Eastern Republicans moderate their party as a whole by 1.2%, whilst the Southern Democrats moderate their party by slightly less at 0.9%. I weight these modifiers in Chapter Three.

²⁸⁷ In the 110th Congress these are Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Iowa.

²⁸⁸ These Senators are from Arkansas, Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri and Virginia.

Figure 2.11- Average I-Scores Within Party-Mixed Senate Delegations.

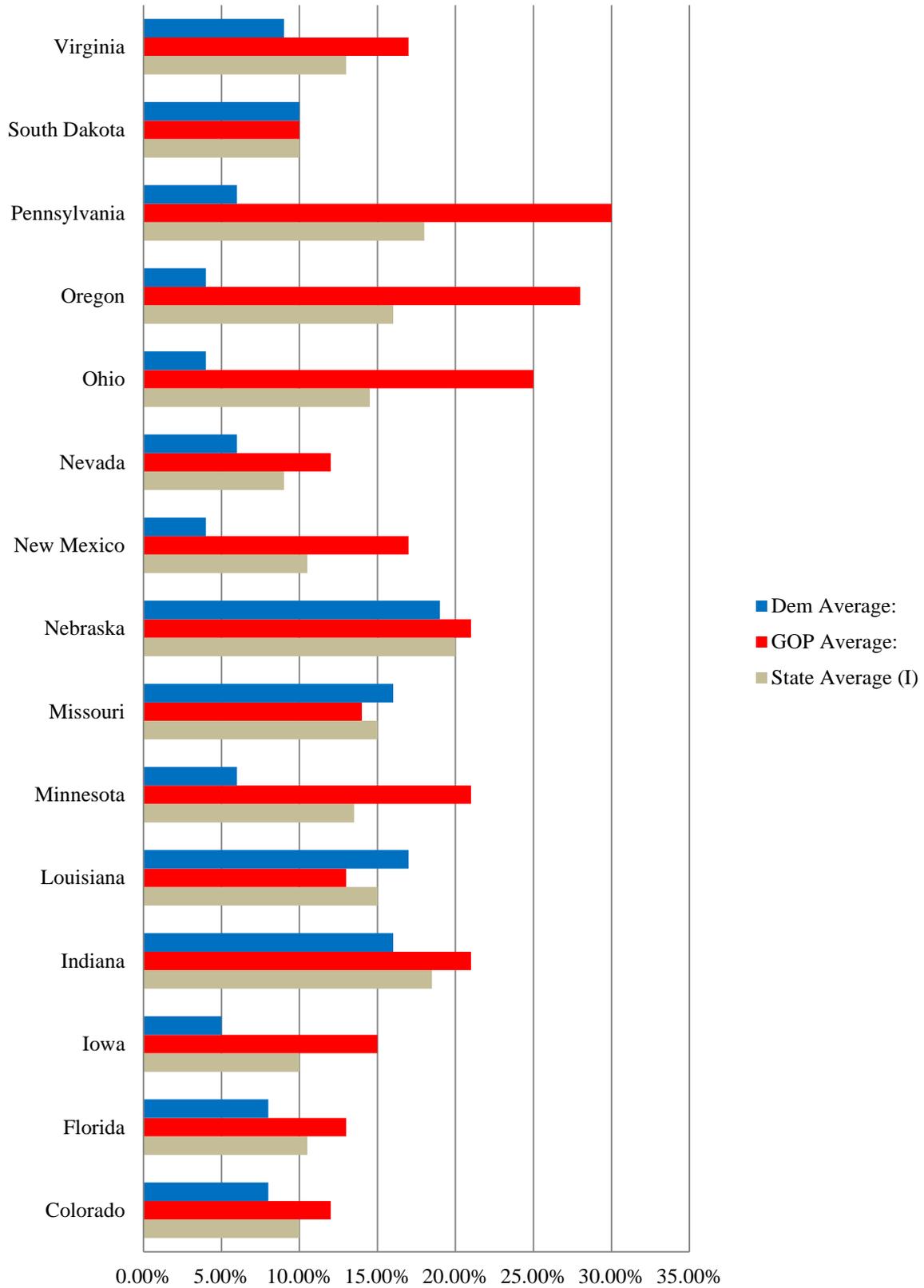
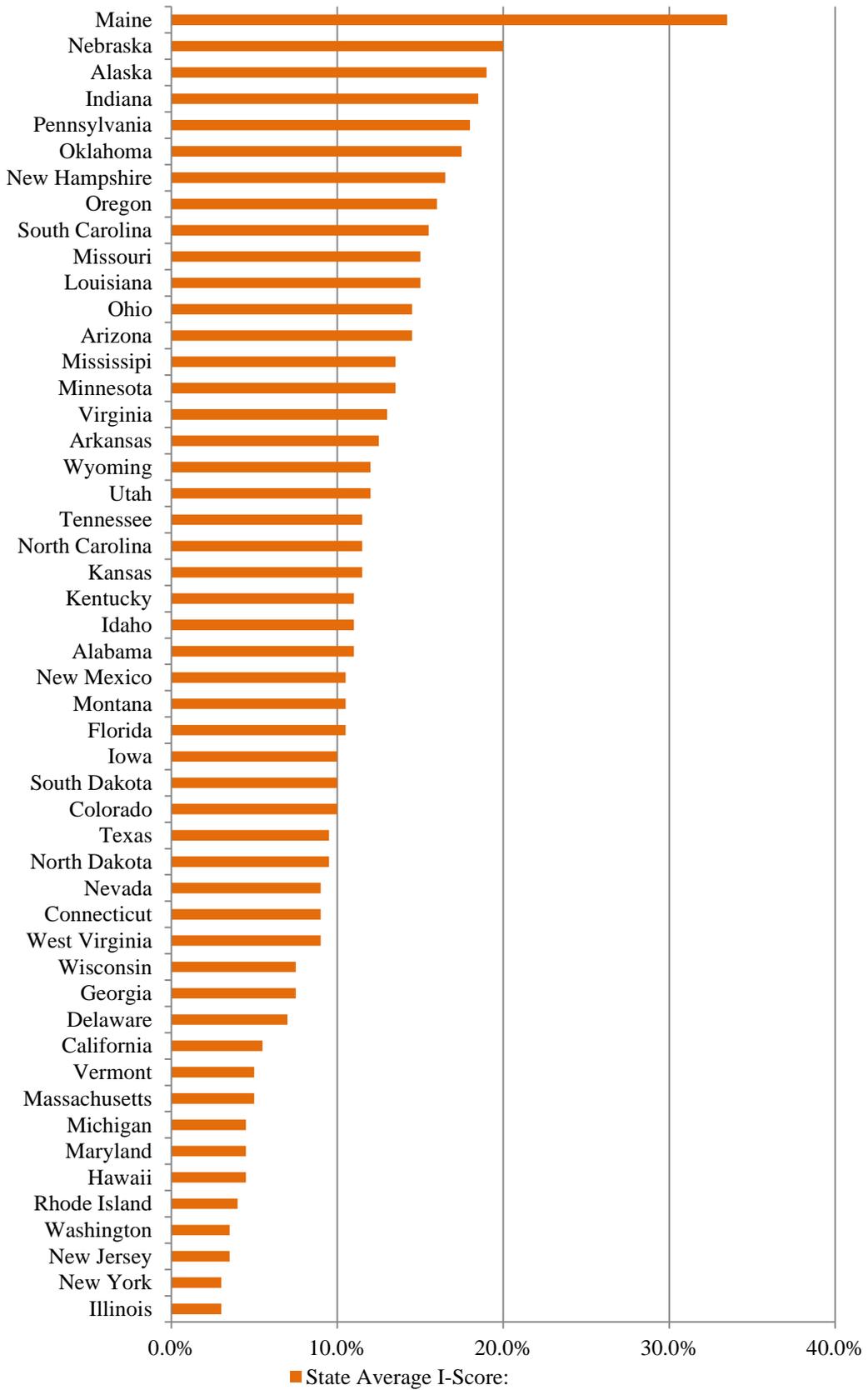


Figure 2.12- Average Bipartisan I-Scores Within All Senate Delegations.



From the five most moderate state Senate delegations (see Figure 2.12), Maine, Nebraska, Alaska, Indiana and Pennsylvania there were three Democratic Senators and seven Republicans. From the least independent-moderate state delegations, (Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Washington, Rhode Island), there were no Republicans and ten Democrats. On a state-by-state basis it is clear that the Republicans were more independent than the Democrats during the 110th Congress. The fact that such consistent partisan differences in I-Scores exist points to the dangers of using DW-NOMINATE (or other one-dimension roll call) mean points as a sole measure of polarization, without also taking in other contextual and quantitative evidence. The I-Score is explicitly based on real world voting data and finds significant differences between Democratic and Republican voting behaviour in the 110th Congress which a comparison of ideological mean points would not reveal, and a party unity analysis might not emphasise; geared as they are to using party cohesion to demonstrate polarization.

Comparing the Senate and the House.

I will briefly consider some general points of difference (as regards polarization and party unity) between the House and the Senate. The Senate was designed to be a less combative and more deliberative body than the House, and meant to be a ‘stable institution of government.’²⁸⁹ In essence, the Senate was designed to be less partisan than the House; the House was to be democratic, the Senate to be republican.²⁹⁰ Historically this balance was achieved with the method in which Senators were selected by the States, via election from the State Legislatures. With the passage of the 17th Amendment and their election by popular vote, the Senate became more susceptible to public opinion. Since the Gingrich Revolution, many academics have noted how the Senate has become increasingly partisan.²⁹¹ By 2011 Theriault and Rohde conclude that ‘the political parties in the Senate are almost as polarized as they are in the House.’²⁹² There is a very large literature on this subject, both on the causes²⁹³ of heightened Senate polarization and on its effects.²⁹⁴ In an age of diffuse, elite-level ideological-partisan affiliation like the 1950s, when there was broad overlap between the parties and low scores of party unity, the aspiration of a bipartisan Senate was plausible. But ‘since 1973, the

²⁸⁹ Madison, Federalist Paper No. 63, (1st March, 1788).

²⁹⁰ In the non-partisan sense; the House was to be the “People’s House” and the Senate was to be a moderating influence on the passions of the voters.

²⁹¹ Lee, ‘Agreeing to Disagree: Agenda Content and Senate Partisanship, 1981-2004’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 2, (May, 2008).

²⁹² Theriault and Rohde, ‘The Gingrich Senators and Party Polarization in the Senate’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 73, No. 4, (October, 2011), p. 1101.

²⁹³ Barber and McCarty, ‘Causes and Consequences of Polarization’ taken from <http://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/Publications/Chapter2Mansbridge.pdf> accessed on 11th May 2014.

²⁹⁴ McCarty and Razaghan, ‘Advice and Consent: Senate Responses to Executive Branch Nominations 1885-1996’ in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 43, No. 4, (October, 1999).

Senate has become 29 percent more polarized and House polarization has increased 47 percent.²⁹⁵ But in an age of extremely high and rising polarization, the evidence shows that the Senate has followed the same trend as the House. In part this is due to ideological House members moving up to the Senate.²⁹⁶ In the 110th Congress the Senate had a cross-party I-Score of 11.078% and the House a cross-party I-Score of 6.503%. Both parties in the Senate were more independent in their voting than their House colleagues of the same party. Clearly the Senate was still slightly more moderate than the House (by 4.575%) during the 110th Congress, but if the trend to greater polarization seen over the past thirty years continues, then one imagines that the Senate will soon conform to House standards. Given the truly extraordinary polarization of the Obama era,²⁹⁷ I anticipate finding an accelerated movement in this direction. Many academics now see the levels of polarization in both chambers converging at a worryingly high level.²⁹⁸ Indeed Snyder and Groseclose (back in 2000) found ‘strong evidence of party influence in both the House and the Senate [and no] systematic differences in [party] influence between the House and the Senate’.²⁹⁹ In other words, party unity has a similar grip on both chambers; this correlates with the decline of I-Scores in both chambers.

Conclusion.

The Democratic majority elected in the 2006 midterms were in large part seated due to public disapproval of Republican President George W. Bush’s Iraq War and his deeply unpopular second-term. Sixty or so conservative or moderate districts who had voted for Bush in 2004 contributed to the 2006 Democratic landslide.³⁰⁰ From this we would expect to find a Democratic Party with a large contingent of centrists in the House with low levels of party loyalty (as we do in the Senate with Senators Landrieu and McCaskill). This would conform to the analysis of electoral costs for

²⁹⁵ Theriault, ‘Party Polarization in the US Congress: Member Replacement and Member Adaptation’ in *Party Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 4, (July, 2006).

²⁹⁶ Theriault and Rohde, ‘The Gingrich Senators and Party Polarization in the Senate’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 73, No. 4, (October, 2011).

²⁹⁷ Though as Hetherington points out, whilst extreme, the polarization of the Obama presidency is not the historic height of polarization. See Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009).

²⁹⁸ For example see Uslaner, ‘Is the Senate More Civil Than The House?’ paper prepared for Conference on ‘Civility and Deliberation in the Senate’, 16th July 1999.

²⁹⁹ Snyder and Groseclose, ‘Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting’ in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 2, (April, 2000), p. 193.

³⁰⁰ L. A. Becker and V. G. Moscardelli, ‘Congressional Leadership on the Front Lines: Committee Chairs, Electoral Security, and Ideology’ in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (January, 2008).

legislators from contested districts with high party unity by Carson et al.³⁰¹ Instead the Democratic Party is extremely conformist and exhibits very high levels of party unity. Of the 100 most ideological, tightly partisan I-Scores in the entire House, irrespective of party, 99 were Democrats and only 1 was a Republican. On the other hand, the Republicans, led in the Executive Branch by an unpopular president and ousted after a long period of rule, demonstrated very low levels of party unity; at least by modern standards.

The very low I-Scores found in the Democratic Party during the 110th Congress come at a time when increasingly ideological leadership choices were made by congressional Democrats. Becker and Moscardelli find that that congressional leaders have been selected from the most liberal/left wing of the Democratic Caucus.³⁰² These leaders were the beneficiaries of higher party cohesion, which created an environment where more ideological leaders could be selected without the risk of schism. This, in turn, can worsen polarization. In Ohio and Florida, Democrats are demonstrably less independent than their Republican counterparts and this closely matches the pattern found at the national level during the 110th Congress (within a single percentage point). The picture being painted from Ohio and Florida, found within the 110th Congress as a whole, is that Congressional Democrats did not exhibit the same variations in voting loyalty in the way that Republicans did. From my analysis of the I-Scores it is clear that whilst both parties have become more ideological, the Democrats were (in the 110th Congress) far less independent and heterogenous than the Republicans were. In the next chapter I consider a number of factors which explain (and predict) when a party will become more or less conformist; including control of the Majority and the presence of poorly sorted or ideologically incongruous Northern Republicans/Southern Democrats.³⁰³

Although I identify (and criticise) an emphasis in the literature on ideological mean points and seek to offer something new, much of this past chapter has concerned itself with similar, I-Score averages. This has been to show that ideological variety does still exist in some way, and that even if it is historically low there are still large segments of Congress which vote independently and therefore

³⁰¹ Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, 'The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress; in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (July, 2010).

³⁰² L. A. Becker and V. G. Moscardelli, 'Congressional Leadership on the Front Lines: Committee Chairs, Electoral Security, and Ideology' in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (January, 2008), p. 77.

³⁰³ At the mass level Schiffer identifies the 'popular stigmatization of the word "liberal"' as one reason for the 'puzzling...persistence of self-identified conservative Democrats'. He notes that the 'rate of discrepant identification is not mirrored by Republicans, only a tiny minority of whom take the "liberal" label' in Schiffer, 'I'm not *that* liberal: Explaining Conservative Democratic Identification' in *Political Behaviour*, Vol. 22, No. 4, (December, 2000), p. 293. At the elite level the unpopularity of the word "liberal" could be an important motivator for centrists Democrats to self-describe as "conservative". Even members who are not really appreciably conservative could perhaps benefit from use of this label in southern or other conservative-leaning districts. It may be a way for incumbents of reducing electoral costs associated with Democratic Party identification in Republican-leaning districts.

moderately. Now that the presence of ideological variety and moderation (measured in I-Scores) has been shown, and the methodology demonstrated, I will consider in Chapter Three what is driving the decline of I-Scores and where they may yet be resurgent. This will further clarify what is being missed about polarization by placing perhaps too much emphasis on the difference between ideological average points.

CHAPTER THREE: Regions, Caucuses and Ideological Variety. Modifying Party I-Scores from the 102nd to the 112th Congress.

Chapter Abstract

The purpose of the preceding chapter was to introduce my methodology and demonstrate some of the unique insight it provides. It also demonstrated the presence of significant independent-voting behaviour. Now I will turn to different groupings within the two parties, in both the House and Senate, from different regions and ideological backgrounds, to establish which “clusters” of legislators provide the most in raising average party I-Scores and thus providing ideological moderation, and variety. I consider a period beginning with the 102nd Congress and ending with the 112th, a period which sees striking, elite-level sorting of North Eastern Republicans and Southern Democrats, the rise and relative decline of the Blue Dog Coalition and the start of the Tea Party. I begin with an overview of I-Scores across the whole period, before considering the Tea Party, the Blue Dog Coalition, Southern Democrats, Northern Republicans and finally an I-Score analysis of how Majority party status effects party unity. With all of these groups I consider, through the I-Score methodology, how they affect the behaviour of their parties. I term these modifying (or polarizing) effects ‘modifiers’ and quantify how each of these groups, regions or caucuses influences party unity behaviour through their own independent voting.

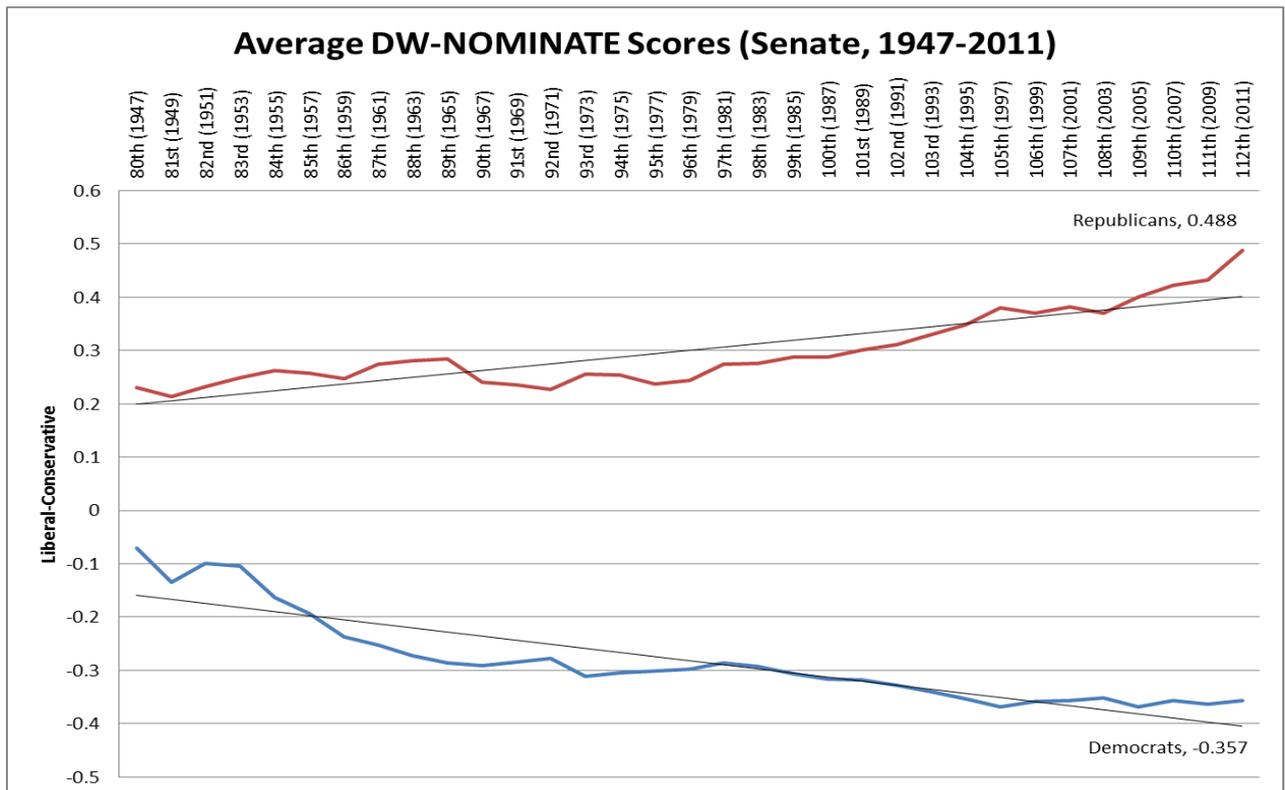
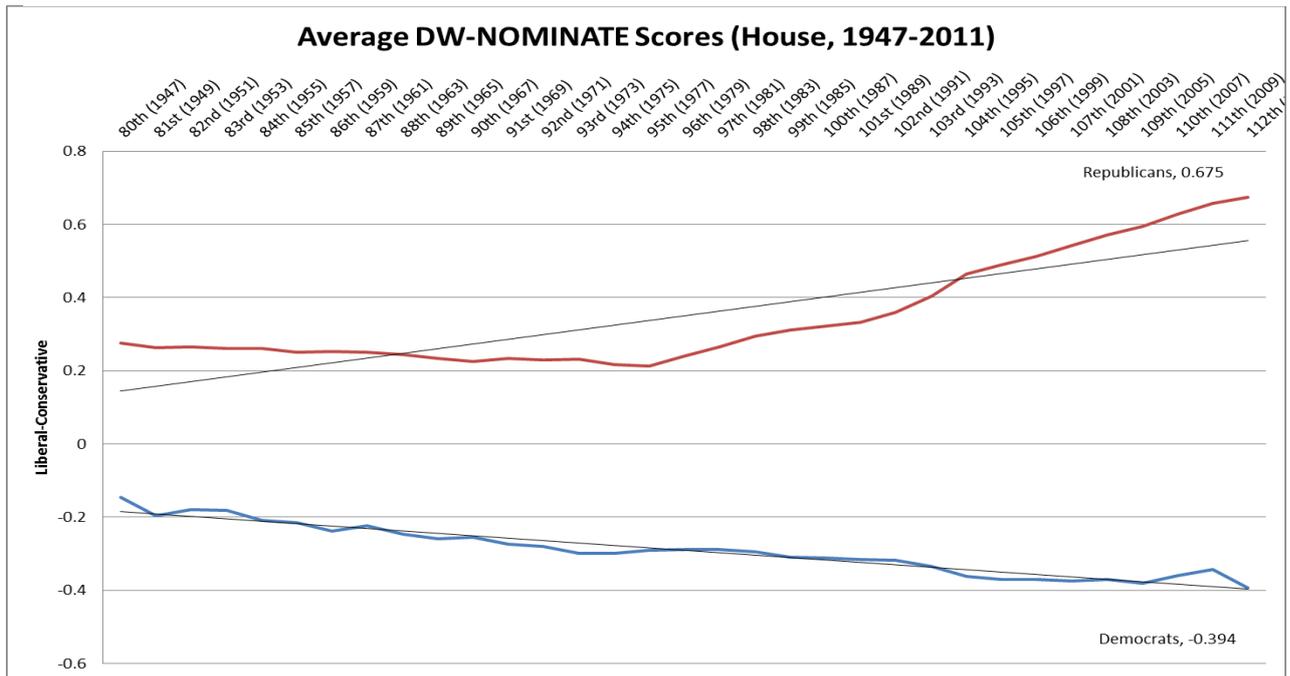
I-Scores Over Time: The 102nd to 112th Congresses.

As Figure 3.1 shows from the DW-NOMINATE scores, polarization in terms of distance between party mean points has increased steeply since the 102nd Congress. There is a broad consensus that polarization at the elite level exists and has increased in the past twenty years, though some (like Hetherington)³⁰⁴ note that, historically speaking, things have been worse. Given the correlation between high party unity and polarization,³⁰⁵ we would anticipate finding I-Scores decline over a

³⁰⁴ Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009).

³⁰⁵ Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski, ‘Where Measures Meet History: Party Polarization During the New Deal and Fair Deal’ in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Representation in America*, pp. 17-18,

Figure 3.1- Average DW-NOMINATE Scores, House and Senate (1947-2011).



taken from https://my.vanderbilt.edu/joshclinton/files/2013/06/CKL_Mayhew-Conference.pdf accessed on 17th April 2014.

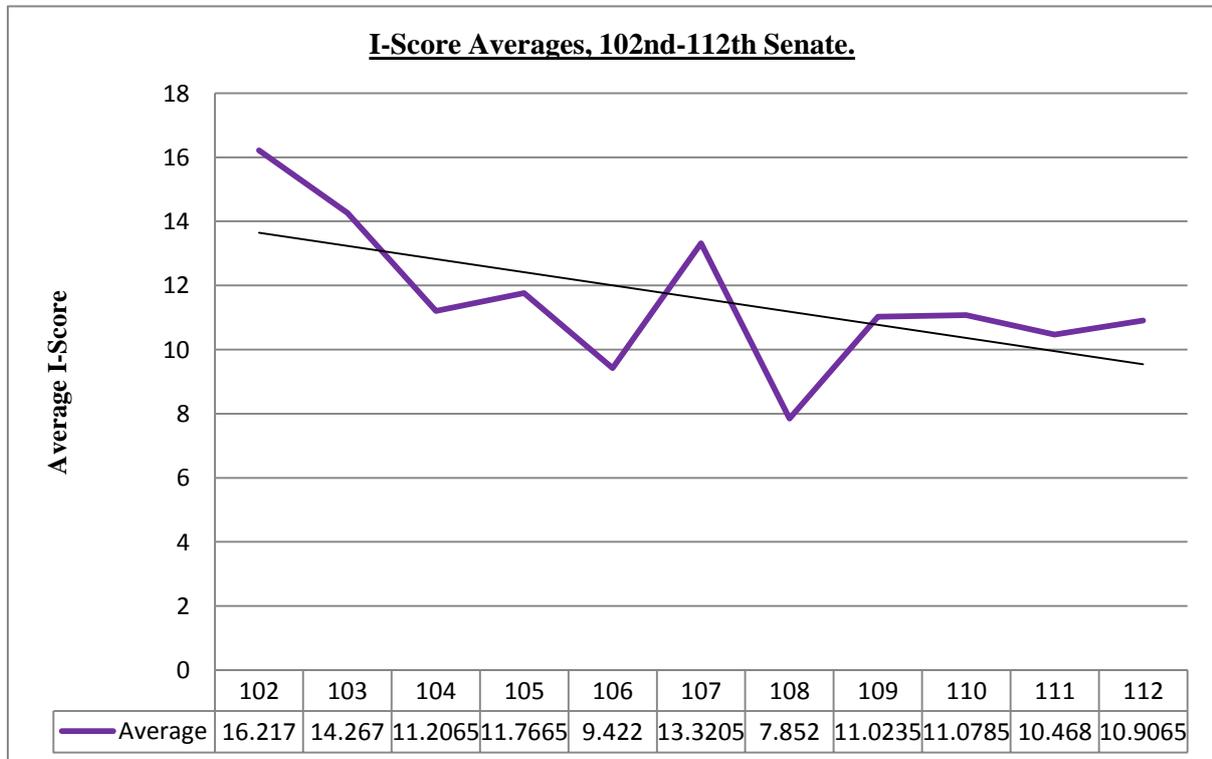
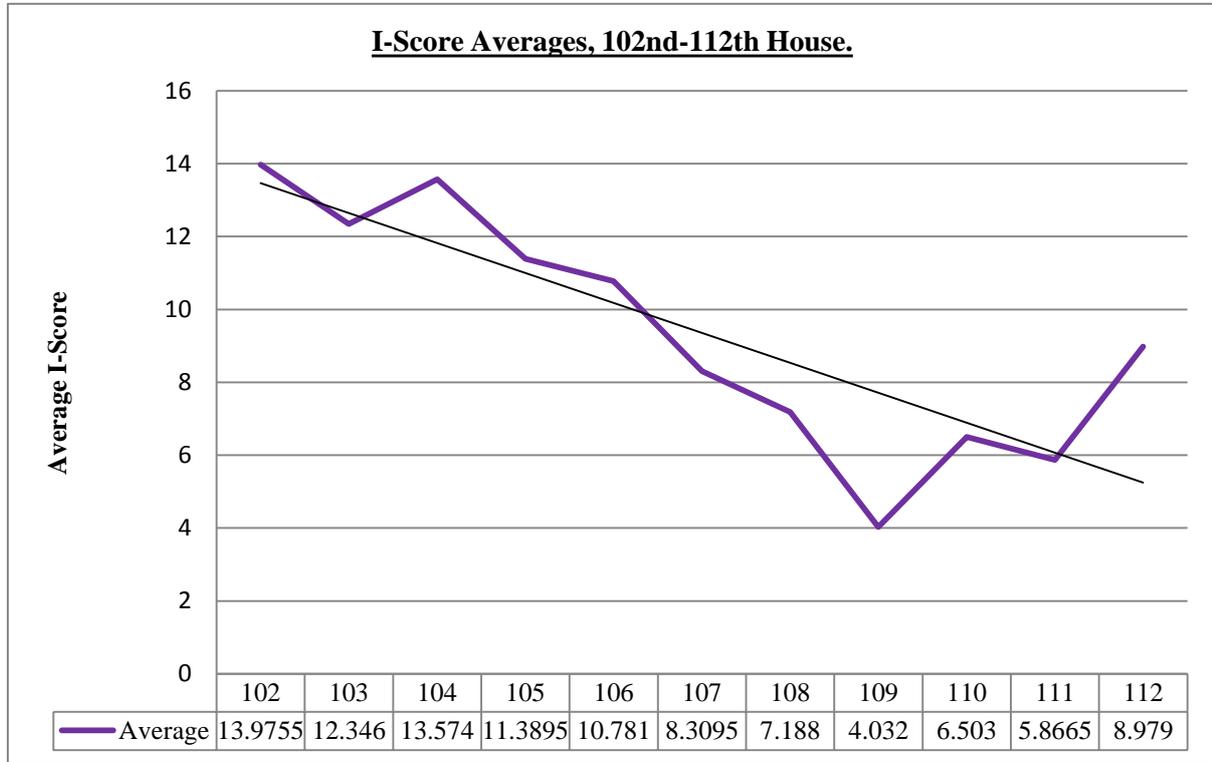
similar period. Figure 3.2 shows bipartisan I-Score averages from the 102nd Congress to the 112th. Since 1991 House I-Score averages (of both parties) fell from just under 14% to a low of just 4% in the 109th Congress. Since the 109th Congress there has been a modest resurgence in independent voting and the 112th House's average stood at 8.979. In the Senate, a similar picture emerges though the drop is far more gradual, at six points from the 102nd to 112th congress. As the DW-NOMINATE party mean scores become more polarized, independent voting decreased, despite a brief surge in the 107th Senate, perhaps attributable to the split party control of the senate ameliorating the effects of Majority control driving up party cohesion (see 'The Impact of Majority House/Senate Control on Average Party I-Scores').

Figure 3.3 shows the Republican and Democratic average I-Score in the House over the past twenty years, from January 1991 and the start of the 102nd House. The Republican I-Scores are quite volatile, and exhibit sharp spikes. From the entire period of the 102nd to 112th Congress, the Republican Party had a maximum average I-Score of 16% in the 102nd Congress, and a lowest average I-Score of 4% in the 109th Congress. The Democratic scores decline more evenly, until a sharp increase during their time in the Minority of the 112th Congress. I will explore the relationship between party cohesion and majority status over this twenty year period subsequently, having touched on it in relation to the 110th Congress in Chapter Two. It is worth noting that the ousted GOP of the 110th Congress was far more rebellious than the Tea Party infused 112th House GOP Conference. In a rigid two party system this is, in fact, to be desired. The wider the distribution of I-Scores and ideologies, the more representative Congress is as a whole. This is especially valid considering the record numbers of voters identifying as independents.³⁰⁶ In a political system where the law (from local to Federal levels)³⁰⁷ explicitly favours two parties, ideological breadth should be preserved. It is therefore a negative development that I-Scores are in a general pattern of decline, as the trend lines in Figure 3.2 attest to. As party DW-NOMINATE mean points polarize, decreases in I-Score mean more legislators conform to the relatively (and historically) extreme ideology of their parties.

³⁰⁶ Jones, 'Record-High 42% of Americans Identify as Independents/ Republican identification lowest in at least 25 years' in *Gallup*, 8th January 2014.

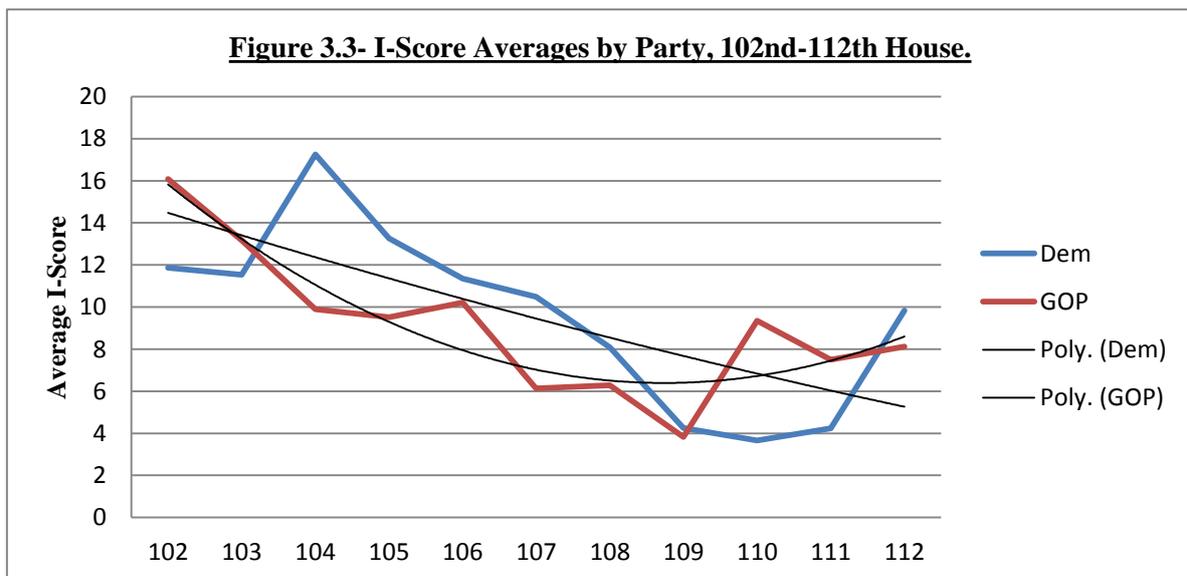
³⁰⁷ There is a very large literature on the how various legal structures reinforce (or even enshrine) the American two-party system. For example see Wildgen, 'Electoral Formulae and the Number of Parties' in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 34, Issue 3, (August, 1972) or Disch, *The Tyranny of the Two-Party System*, (Columbia, 2002).

Figure 3.2- Bipartisan I-Scores in the House and Senate, 102nd to 112th Congress.



The Democrats' score fell to just below the 4% mark in the 111th Congress, at a time of high polarization when the Democratic Leadership and President Obama passed several pieces of legislation with little to no Republican support (see Chapter Four on the ARRA and ACA). The polarization of the two parties on legislation like these two bills is another real-world example of why Majority status parties are more likely to exhibit higher levels of party unity than Minority parties. This is because every vote is crucial when opposition party votes cannot realistically be expected, meaning party unity is crucial to achieve large pieces of legislation which offer 'cartel'³⁰⁸ benefits to the whole caucus. When gifted with rare control of both chambers and the White House³⁰⁹ (with only a precarious grip on the Senate), the Democrats literally counted on every vote to pass legislation which even moderate Republicans did not support (such as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, see Chapter Four).

Approaching the figures chronologically now that an overview of each party has been considered, we find interesting correlations between historically high periods of polarization and commensurately low I-Scores. This further demonstrates the reliability of the methodology, whilst the I-Score itself lets us consider the unity, cohesion, loyalty and ideology of the two parties in Congress



in a novel way (and with a single measure); building upon the understandable proliferation of party-mean point analysis of polarization that exists within the literature. One such historic high was the so-

³⁰⁸ A model I spend more time discussing subsequently. See, Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan*, 2nd Edition, (San Diego, 2007).

³⁰⁹ Carsey and Layman find 'clear support for the policy balancing argument' for why voters split their tickets, thus leaving 'divided party control of government [as] one of the defining features of contemporary American politics' in Carsey and Layman, *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 4, (December, 2004), p. 541.

called Gingrich revolution.³¹⁰ In the Republican backlash of 1994 against President Bill Clinton, Gingrich's incoming conservatives saw the GOP House I-Scores drop from 16% in the 102nd Congress to 10% in the 104th. To put this in context, the House Republicans dropped more points in the space of two congresses as the average bipartisan Senate scores fell in twenty years. Such an abrupt drop is clearly (given the other evidence) a sound example of low I-Scores indicating high (or relatively extreme) ideology. Again, as with prior examples, this supports the link made in this paper between independent voting and political moderation. As the GOP lurched to the right under Speaker Gingrich,³¹¹ the I-Scores fell quite sharply. The only other drop in independent voting of a comparable size is the Democratic fall from 10% in the 107th Congress to just below 4% in the 110th. It is also worth noting in this period that the Democratic Minority of the 109th House was only slightly (less than a single percentage point) more independent/moderate in its voting than the Democratic Majority of the 110th House. This lends further credence to an explanation of I-Scores that stresses the greater breadth of ideological opinion within the House Republican Conference than the Democratic Caucus: because in the Minority the Democrats were virtually as conformist as they were in the Majority of the subsequent Congress. In Chapter Two I briefly discussed a 'regional modifier'- the percentage impact of certain regional groups of moderates on their congressional parties as a whole, a theme I develop in this chapter in far more detail. I will also consider whether there is a 'majority-minority modifier.' In other words, can the impact of holding Majority Status be quantified, and in which party does this status have most impact in limiting independent voting, thus fuelling polarization?

In the early years of the period being considered here, around the time of the 102nd Congress, there was a sizeable block of academic opinion still advocating the 'Party ID decline' theory. Analysis of the NES series showed that party relevance to the public declined 'between 1952 and 1972, but that it rose well above the 1952 level by the 1980s only to drop dramatically again in 1992.'³¹² Because of this drop, many academics were anticipating an end of the two party system like that described in the 1970s.³¹³ Ross Perot's candidacy further reinforced a picture of the declining salience of political parties to the American public. In truth of course, Perot's role in the 1992 election was unique, and only possible because of his own personal wealth allowing him to 'draw on resources rivalling those of the major parties.'³¹⁴ Thus, Perot was something of a red-herring for academics arguing for party decline. After 1992, the ID decline theory began to fall apart. Writing in 2001, and drawing from the

³¹⁰ Theriault, *The Gingrich Senators: The Roots of Partisan Warfare in Congress*, (Oxford, 2013).

³¹¹ See '104th Congress' in Figure 3.1.

³¹² DeSart, 'Information Processing and Partisan Neutrality: A Re-examination of the Party Decline Thesis' in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 57, No. 3, (August, 1995), p. 776.

³¹³ Broder, 'The Party's Over' in *The Atlantic*, (March, 1972).

³¹⁴ Gold, 'Third Party Voting in Presidential Elections: A Study of Perot, Anderson and Wallace' in *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 4, (December 1995), p. 751.

same NES studies that the decline theory originated from, Hetherington showed that in fact ‘a movement towards greater partisanship is... evident’³¹⁵ not least of which because ‘Americans in the 1990s [were] more likely to think about one party positively and one negatively [and] less likely to feel neutral toward either party... than they were ten to thirty years ago.’³¹⁶ Nonetheless, during the independent peak of the 1990s, the 1992 presidential election, the House voted against party lines 14% of the time, and the Senate voted against party lines 16% of the time. At the time of writing, these average figures have never been surpassed. Perhaps some of the independent, non-party sentiment had filtered into congress from the electorate (given these relatively high levels of party disunity). Nonetheless, since 1992, I-Scores have declined and polarization has risen. By 2013, *Congressional Quarterly* noted that ‘Senate Democrats voted unanimously on 52 percent of the [party unity votes in 2013- an all-time high for either part in either chamber, up from 40 percent in 2012.’³¹⁷ Whilst the 112th Congress has been promisingly independent in its voting behaviour compared to its immediate predecessor, particularly on the Democratic side with an uncharacteristic 10-point I-Score, the average I-Score for the entire House is still five points below its peak from the 102nd Congress. Whilst the I-Score drops across the period may only appear slight, they are sizeable (and consistent) reductions from figures which were not particularly great anyway (when compared to the 1960s for instance). I will now consider several clusters of legislators which have had a significant effect on I-Scores through their ‘pull’ or ‘modifier’ effect on net party unity.

The Tea Party.

Following the 2008 economic crash and a sequence of deeply controversial Obama Administration policies (like the \$1 trillion stimulus package and perhaps most importantly The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act),³¹⁸ the grassroots movement known as the “Tea Party” took shape. I consider this phenomenon here, to assess their impact on the Republican Party and congress as a whole in terms of I-Scores. The Tea Party is overwhelmingly a Republican phenomenon,³¹⁹ but as with many grassroots “organisations” it is actually quite diffuse ideologically.

³¹⁵ Hetherington, ‘Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 620.

³¹⁶ Hetherington, ‘Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 628.

³¹⁷ ‘CQ Roll Call’s Vote Studies – 2013 In Review’, 3rd February 2014, taken from <http://media.cq.com/votestudies/> accessed on 6th June 2014.

³¹⁸ See Chapter Four.

³¹⁹ Williamson, Skocpol and Coggin, ‘The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism’ in *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (March, 2011).

Arceneaux and Nicholson note that ‘in spite of appeals to freedom and liberty... a strong authoritarian pulse exists among its most ardent supporters,’ that they are ‘strongly opposed to tax increases... [but are not] simply libertarians’ and that despite ‘evidence [of] racial resentment... racial animus does not appear to be the primary force behind [Tea Party] opposition to government aid.’³²⁰ In other words it has all of the contradictory philosophical features you would expect from a grassroots structure that doesn’t have much in the way of centralised leadership.³²¹ The Tea Party are principally imagined as being to the right of the Republican Party³²² and thus Gervais and Morris describe them as ‘ideologically oriented toward limited government and lower taxes.’³²³

We would anticipate then that between the 111th Congress (which passed the most hotly contested elements of the Obama agenda) and the Tea Party infused 112th Congress the GOP should become more ideological. There is a minute increase in average, Republican DW-NOMINATE scores between the 111th Congress and the 112th but this increase is actually far less than the corresponding Democratic Party increase in ideology scores across the same period. What then for the widespread assumption that the Tea Party drags the aggregate GOP to the right? Well aside from the inflammatory rhetoric of many Tea Party candidates, the DW-NOMINATE scores (arguably the bedrock on which modern American political science rests) already show that the average Republican score increases by just a fraction, far lower than the Democratic DW-NOMINATE scores over the same two congresses, and in fact the 112th Congress with its Tea Party Caucus becomes more ideological at a slower rate than the two preceding congresses did. Perhaps this tiny increase is attributable to the Tea Party; in which case their influence on actual roll call behaviour has been drastically overstated (at least in the 112th Congress- the point at which my dataset ends). In any case, the fact that the Democrats polarized from the centre at a greater speed points to deeper problems than the likely transient impact of the Tea Party.³²⁴

³²⁰ Arceneaux and Nicholson, ‘Who Wants to Have a Tea Party? The Who, What, and Why of the Tea Party Movement’ in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 4, (October, 2012), p. 700.

³²¹ There is debate on this point about whether the Tea Party is truly a mass-driven phenomenon, with Williamson et al. pointing to ‘Republican business elites... [and] a network of conservative media sources’ in Williamson, Skocpol and Coggin, ‘The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism’ in *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (March 2011), p. 25.

³²² For instance see Boatright, *Getting Primaried: The Changing Politics of Congressional Primary Challenges*, (Michigan, 2013), p. 2, on primary challenges from the ideological right flank.

³²³ Gervais and Morris, ‘Reading the Tea Leaves: Understanding Tea Party Caucus Membership in the US House of Representatives’ in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 2, (April 2012), p. 245.

³²⁴ There is debate in academia and the press over how permanent a feature of the American political landscape the Tea Party will be. It is likely far too soon to tell, and that debate is not crucial to this analysis.

My analysis of independent voting supports this finding of the Poole and Rosenthal DW-NOMINATE series. Additionally, I find that far from fracturing the GOP as the media describe³²⁵, the Tea Party Caucuses' average I-Score was actually less than the congressional Republican Party as a whole. Excluding Tea Party endorsed congressmen; in the 112th House we find a Republican average I-Score of 8.13, whilst the Tea Party Caucus itself has an average of 8.11. This Tea Party conformity might be because they have shifted the ideological basis of the party (though only narrowly at the elite level during the 112th Congress) and thus conform more tightly to the new, more right-wing agenda of the party leadership in opposition to the Obama administration. If we had the data to plot I-Scores on multiple dimensions, which sadly lies beyond the scope and size of this paper but which would be a logical advancement of the method, we might find that on some issues the Tea Party has far higher I-Score than the average of the total Republican conference (see Chapter Four for an issue-specific breakdown of polarization along three key themes). Future studies could make use of an 'issue I-Score' to assess this.

In summary then, the Tea Party modified the GOP I-Score towards greater conformity by just -0.02% in the 111th House. Interestingly, the bridge between the 111th and 112th House is the only case where the Minority Party transitioned into the Majority and became *more* independent in their voting. Usually majority status leads to tighter party conformity (presumably due to increased leadership incentives to pass legislation). However in this case the Republican Minority of the 111th House voted against party lines 7.503% of the time, but when they held the Majority in the 112th House they voted against party leadership in 8.118% of cases. This may point to an interesting conclusion. Whilst the Tea Party Caucus only modified the average GOP scores of the 112th House by -0.02%, the jump of 0.615% between the 111th House and the 112th could point to a broader "Tea Party" effect. Given the febrile political climate in which the 112th Congress was elected, perhaps Republicans who were not formally endorsed by the Tea Party saw an electoral incentive to vote against the party line of Speaker Boehner. If this is the case, then it would be impossible to quantify the true effect of the Tea Party "environment" on I-Scores in Congress. At least, however, I-Scores point to a Tea Party Caucus that was relatively ineffectual. It is also worth noting that the net decrease in GOP independence scores between the 110th and 112th congresses is significantly less than the increase in Democratic I-Scores between the 111th and 112th Congress. In other words, for the Democrats, holding the Majority seems to have a bigger impact on I-Score averages than the infusion of the Tea Party into the GOP did on Republican I-Scores. This gives the impression that the Tea Party are something of a historical

³²⁵ The press has published countless stories on right wing primary Tea Party challenges to establishment Republican figures, intra-party disputed within the legislature, Tea Party intransigence and failure to compromise etc. In the literature see Boatright, *Getting Primaried: The Changing Politics of Congressional Primary Challenges*, (Michigan, 2013).

blip, and that their aggressive rhetoric masks a limited long-term impact. In summary, the Tea Party seem to be something of an anomaly. They are considered more right wing than the GOP average, yet the DW-NOMINATE scores for the 112th congress increased only slightly, and the Tea Party members were actually fractionally more independent than the average Republican. Given the very small difference between the two scores they are not significant.

As Poole and Rosenthal argue, ‘legislatures become more polarized not when individual politicians adopt more extreme views, but when they are unseated by more extreme politicians. Polarization... is an effect of replacement, not conversion.’³²⁶ Since that was written however, Republicans have exerted significant energy in moving right to confront Tea Party challenges just as liberals have ousted moderate or conservative Democrats.³²⁷ This may explain why the Tea Party actually conformed to the majority of House votes; even if the Tea Party’s numbers preclude significant drag on Republican roll call votes, the threat of a primary challenge from the right may have contributed to a rightward move in the GOP ideological mean score (as recorded in the DW-NOMINATE series, even if this move was less than the Democratic change over the same period). Next, I will consider the I-Scores of another group, this time of Democrats, who also reveal something of how polarization has happened and among which groups of legislators its effects are felt most strongly.

The Blue Dog Caucus.

Conservative southerners once formed a large wing of the Democratic Party. As late as 1988 ‘25 percent of Democratic identifiers considered themselves to be conservatives.’³²⁸ Resistant to the ongoing process of party sorting into ideologically ‘correct’³²⁹ parties, these conservative Democrats remained in the ‘increasingly liberal’³³⁰ Democratic Party for a number of reasons including ‘symbolic values [and] “party ethos.”’³³¹ At the elite level, in the early 1990s, several conservative Democrats remained in Congress- giving these voters elite-level representation. Eventually, through

³²⁶ Ellenberg, ‘Growing Apart/ The mathematical evidence for Congress’ growing polarization’ in *Slate*, (26th December, 2001).

³²⁷ Although this phenomenon is relatively new, a significant literature already exists on this topic. For example, see Boatright, *Getting Primaried: The Changing Politics of Congressional Primary Challenges*, (Michigan, 2013) or Dumbrell, *Issues in American Politics: Polarized Politics in the Age of Obama*, (Routledge, 2013), p. 118.

³²⁸ Carmines and Berkman, ‘Ethos, Ideology, and Partisanship: Exploring the Paradox of Conservative Democrats’ in *Political Behaviour*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (June, 1994), p. 203.

³²⁹ Fiorina et al., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011).

³³⁰ Carmines and Berkman, ‘Ethos, Ideology, and Partisanship: Exploring the Paradox of Conservative Democrats’ in *Political Behaviour*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (June, 1994), p. 203.

³³¹ Carmines and Berkman, ‘Ethos, Ideology, and Partisanship: Exploring the Paradox of Conservative Democrats’ in *Political Behaviour*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (June, 1994), p. 204.

replacement, retirement, adaptation³³² or defection these numbers plummeted. As Jacobson notes, ‘moderates who do manage to get elected are the first to exit when national forces create headwinds; a large majority of the centrists Democrats elected to the House in 2006 and 2008- virtually all of them from balanced or Republican-leaning districts- are now gone’.³³³ High profile defections like those of Nathan Deal (D-GA), Gregory Laughlin (D-TX), Mike Parker (D-MS), Billy Tauzin (D-LA) and Jimmy Hayes (D-LA) led to a much more homogenous Democratic Party by the early 2000s. Their incongruence with the rest of the Democratic Party can be shown quite clearly by their I-Scores. In the 104th Congress these five men had an extraordinary average I-Score of 79%; compared to a Democratic average of 17.258% for the same period. These five men alone increased the whole Democratic House average by 2.2%. For comparison, this meant they modified their party’s House I-Score average by 110 times more than the entire Tea Party Caucus did for the Republicans during the 112th Congress. These five defectors are perhaps an inevitable result of what Abramowitz called the ‘high level of disloyalty on party votes [of Southern Democrats to the party leadership].’³³⁴ These five examples are clear examples of the outliers Bullock talks about when he discusses the effects of incumbency in delaying ‘realignment,’³³⁵ or what we might now term ‘sorting’. It is clear from the existence of party disunity towards the end of the period that the incumbency of poorly-sorted legislators who do not fit into the ideological makeup of the modern parties also delays the party movement towards high party cohesion.

Attempting to buck this trend with their consistently high (compared to the Democratic average) I-Scores, is the Blue Dog Caucus, formed in 1995 by ‘fiscally conservative Democrats that are deeply committed to the financial stability and national security of the United States.’³³⁶ Since their founding in 1995 however, the Caucus’ numbers have plummeted³³⁷ as party sorting, replacement, conversion and defection filtered the parties. In the 112th Congress *The Washington Post* archive records twenty six House Democrats as caucusing with the Blue Dogs with a range of I-Scores from 49% to 5%. The most independent member of the entire Democratic House was a Blue Dog, Dan Boren (D-OK) with an I-Score of 49%; making him the second most independent member

³³² Boatright, *Getting Primaried: The Changing Politics of Congressional Primary Challenges*, (Michigan, 2013).

³³³ Jacobson, ‘Partisan Polarization in American Politics: A Background Paper for Oxford Conference on Governing in Polarized Politics’, (Oxford, April 16th-17th 2013), p. 23.

³³⁴ Abramowitz, ‘Is the Revolt Fading? A Note on Party Loyalty among Southern Democratic Congressmen’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 42, No.2, (May, 1980), p. 568.

³³⁵ Bullock, ‘Regional Realignment from an Officeholding Perspective’ in *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 50, Issue 3, (August, 1988), p.554.

³³⁶ ‘About the Blue Dogs’ from <http://bluedog.schrader.house.gov/about/> accessed on 24th May 2014.

³³⁷ For instance see Blake, ‘Why the Blue Dogs’ decline was inevitable’ in *The Washington Post*, 25th April 2012.

of the entire 112th House after GOP congressman Dean Heller (R-NV) with an astonishing I-Score of 59%. In the 112th House the Democrats had an average I-Score of 9.84%, whilst the Blue Dog caucus had an average of 24.42%. If one excludes the Blue Dogs from the Democratic average, (given their current state of collapse this seems a reasonable indicator of where things will go, barring some unpredictable change in Congress), we find an I-Score of 7.88%. The Blue Dog modifier in the 112th House is 1.96%. By comparison, the minute 0.02% modifier of the Tea Party Caucus means that the Blue Dogs make the House Democrats 1.94% more conservative than the Tea Party makes the GOP.

This does strengthen the case for viewing the Tea Party as a transient feature of US politics; one which makes the atmosphere more polarized with its fiery, American Revolution-rhetoric, but which actually exerts little quantifiable influence on the elite of the Republican Party, bar primary challenges which are, in any case, increasingly unsuccessful at the primary stage, much less in general elections.³³⁸ It is noteworthy that several Blue Dogs have faced ideological primary challenges of their own, though of course from the liberal left.³³⁹

The Blue Dogs seem increasingly out of place in the modern, homogenous Democratic Party. Whilst their influence is impressive, their numbers are not, and it may well be that the caucus faces imminent extinction as the inexorable process of replacement, retirement and defection (sorting) continues. Jenkins and Monroe describe the endangered position of moderates like the Blue Dogs in the terminology of Cox and McCubbins 'Party Cartel Theory.'³⁴⁰ Jenkins and Monroe find that 'majority-party [members]... closest to the floor median are hurt on a pure policy basis by the cartel arrangement.'³⁴¹ In other words, moderates from contested districts face higher risks of electoral punishment for supporting legislation at odds with their median district ideology. This is ameliorated by party leadership via 'side payments in the form of campaign contributions'³⁴² however given the precipitous decline in the two moderate regional groups I have considered below (Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans), this mitigation of electoral dangers seems to be increasingly less significant- further endangering surviving moderates. This electoral danger for moderates must be

³³⁸ Hall finds that when an extremist is nominated in a primary, 'the party's general-election vote share decreases by approximately 11-14 percentage points, and the probability that the party wins the seat decreases by 40-48 percentage points' in Hall, 'What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?' taken from http://www.polmeth.wustl.edu/media/Paper/Hallextremistprimaries_1_2_3.pdf accessed on 4th July 2014.

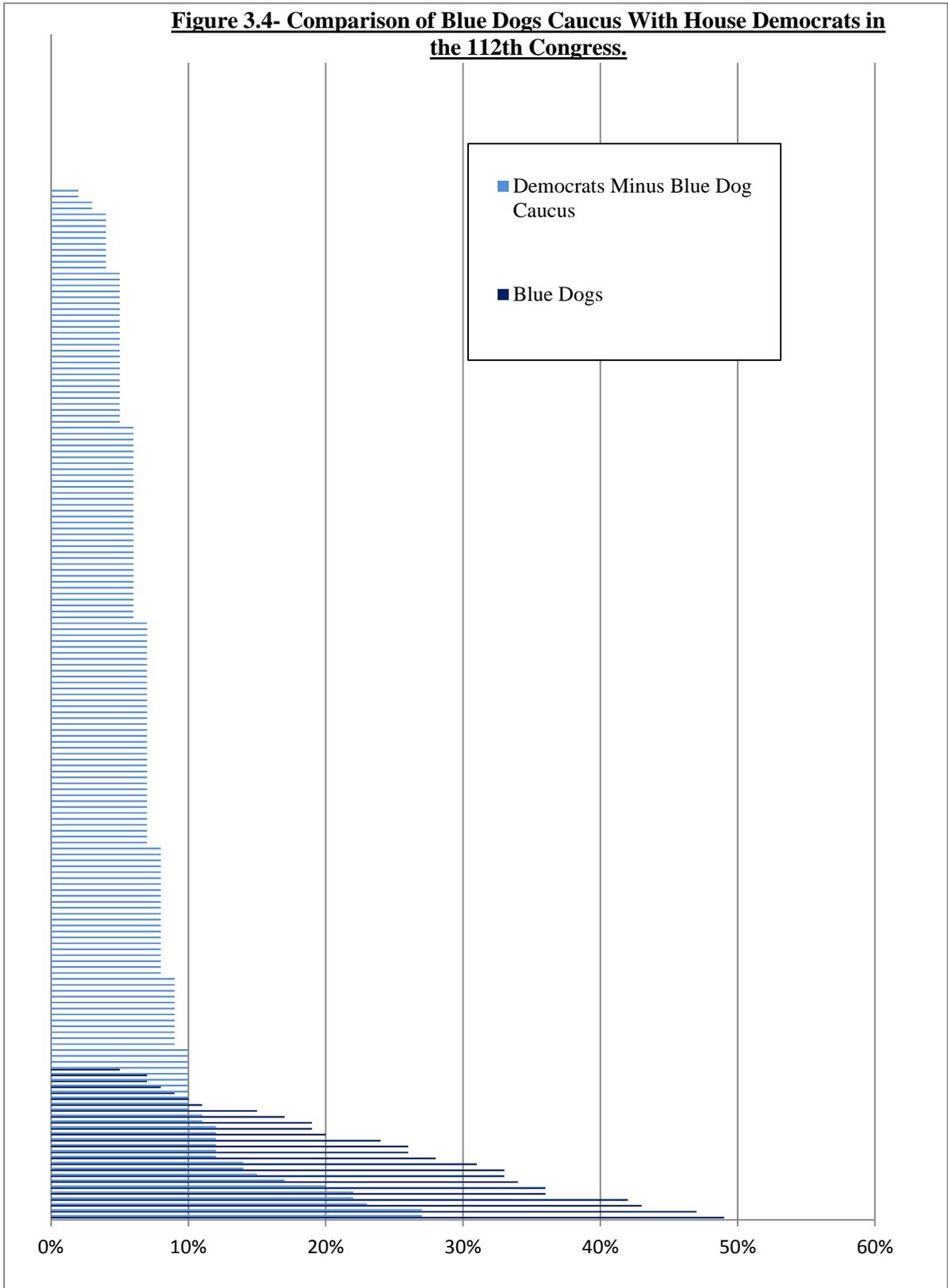
³³⁹ Such as Jason Altmire (D-PA) and Tim Holden (D-PA).

³⁴⁰ Cox and McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*, (Cambridge, 2005).

³⁴¹ Jenkins and Monroe, 'Buying Negative Agenda Control in the U.S. House' in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 56, No. 4, (October, 2012), p. 897.

³⁴² Jenkins and Monroe, 'Buying Negative Agenda Control in the U.S. House' in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 56, No. 4, (October, 2012), p. 897.

Figure 3.4- Comparison of Blue Dogs Caucus With House Democrats in the 112th Congress.



particularly potent in a highly polarized environment where party cohesion to more liberal/conservative leadership is increasing (on average since the 102nd Congress).

Figure 3.4 shows just how significant the Blue Dog Caucus was in the 112th House for moderating the Democratic Party, in terms of I-Scores. But it also shows how increasingly insignificant they now are numerically and how out of sorts they were in the Democratic Party. Given the various structural factors which build-in advantages for the two main parties, and the impenetrability of the two-party system for third party challengers, I argue that variety within the two parties, both moderation and even at the price of ideological extremism, are both vital to a functioning, representative democracy. The Blue Dog Caucus has provided much needed variety to otherwise homogenous parties, and continued the tradition of the Democratic Party having a sizeable wing of fiscal conservatives. Sadly, elite-level party sorting on the left is culling Democratic moderates just as Tea Party challengers are purging Republican moderates, and this important caucus *appears* to be in near-terminal decline.

Regional I-Scores from the 102nd to the 112th Congress (Southern Democrats).

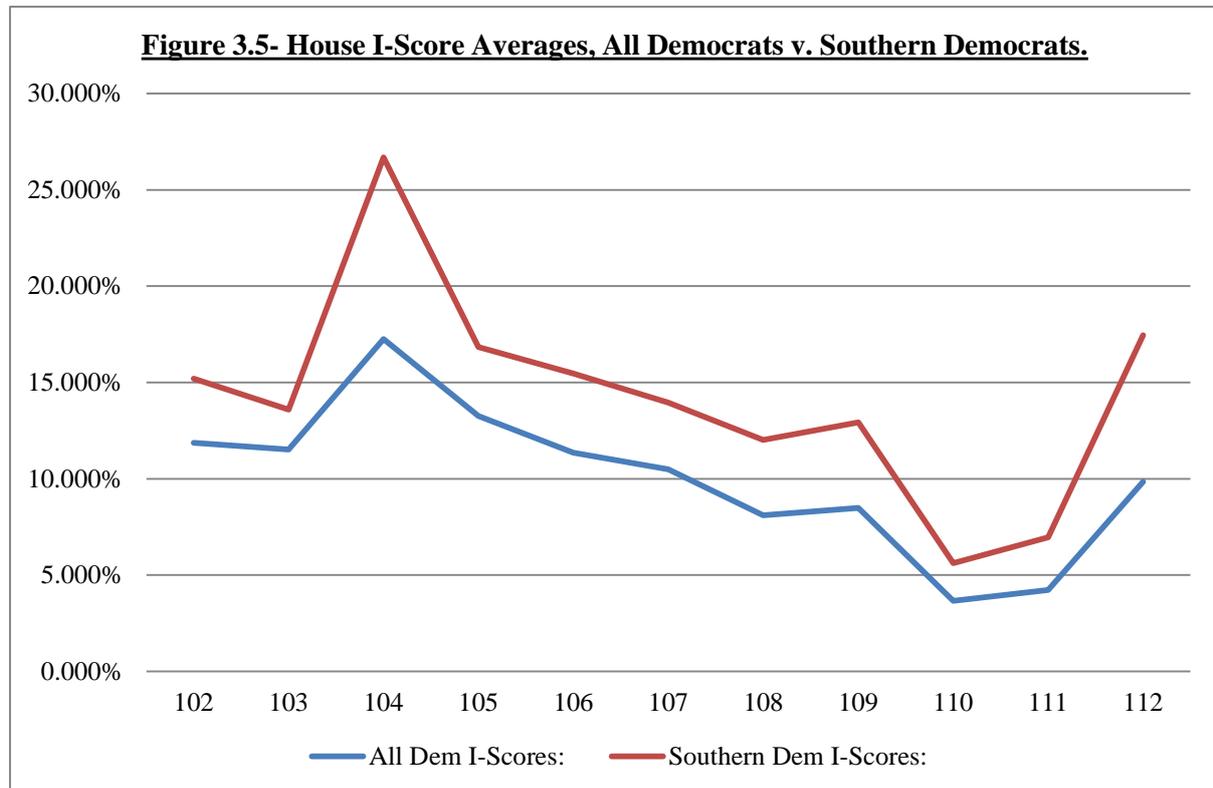
Above in Chapter Two I note the importance of two specific regions to moderating their two parties, and thus delaying the elite-level sort which has led to the low I-Score levels of the present day. These regions are the North East, and the South. Going (more or less) by the US Census bureau definition the South includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. The North East consists of Maryland, Delaware, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.³⁴³ In this section I just consider the House; given its biannual elections it is a better measure of public opinion,³⁴⁴ realignment and elite-level party sorting than the Senate, which is relatively insulated from these effects by its six-year terms.³⁴⁵ Here I will establish how far the Southern Democrats moderated average Democratic votes in the

³⁴³ The only difference here from the Census Bureau divisions is that I consider Maryland and Delaware to be North Eastern, not Southern as the Census Bureau does. For the purposes of discussing the two regions' political differences this makes more sense. Maryland and Delaware are far more like the other North Eastern states politically than they are the Southern ones. I have also excluded Florida from the 'Southern' region as it is a swing state, and therefore not truly Southern in the political sense of 'conservative'.

³⁴⁴ For a specific example see Bartels, 'Constituency Opinion and Congressional Policy Making: The Reagan Defense Build-up' in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 85, No. 2, (June, 1991).

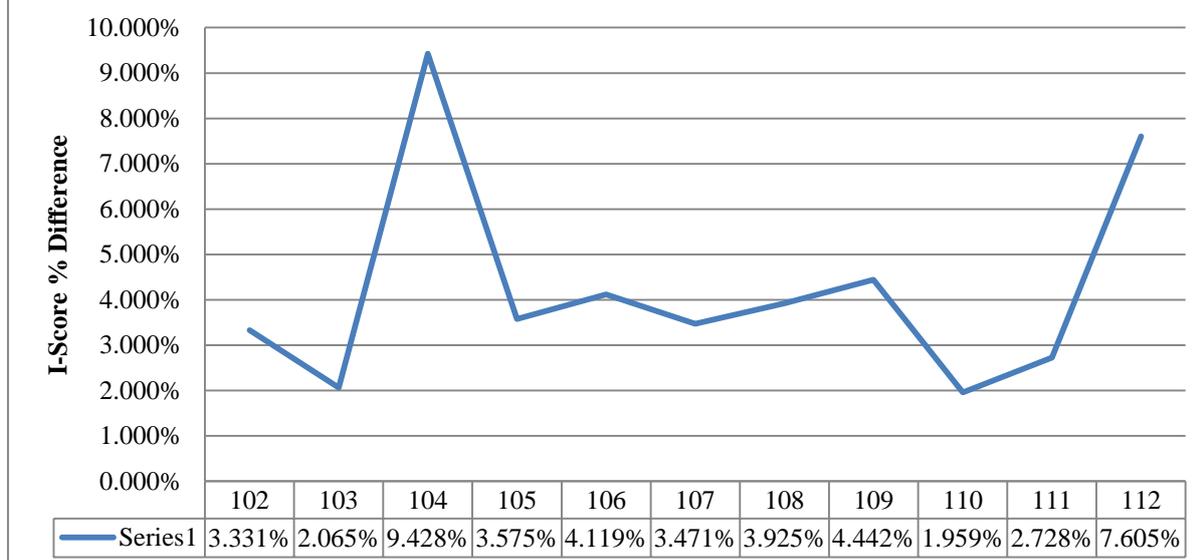
³⁴⁵ Fishkin, *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy*, (Yale, 1995), p. 58 and, for a specific example, Burstein and Freudenburg, 'Changing Public Policy: The Impact of Public Opinion, Antiwar Demonstrations, and War Costs on Senate Voting on Vietnam War Motions' in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 84, No. 1, (July, 1978).

House, and consider to what extent they provided independent/moderate voting and ideological variety in a political climate where tight cohesion is on the rise. Firstly, over the entire period of the 102nd to 112th House, how have Southern Democratic I-Scores compared with the averages of the entire Democratic Party? Figure 3.5 shows us several interesting trends. I have plotted the I-Scores of Southern Democrats in each Congress against the average of the entire House Democratic Party from



the 102nd to 112th Congresses. First of all, in every single congress the Southern Democrats had higher mean I-Scores than the Democratic Party as a whole. This hints at the political pull of the southern block, and given what we have established already about the influence of the Blue Dog Coalition at its height and the overlap between this fiscally conservative caucus and the southerners of the Democratic Party, we can safely identify that southern moderates exert some ideological power over the Democrats. This power is certainly still present from the start of the 102nd – 112th Congress period, and even to some extent at the end. The greatest difference between the Southerners and the entirety of the Democratic House Caucus was in the 104th Congress, where the southern average was almost ten points higher than the Democratic average. This was the Congress in which the aforementioned Blue Dog Caucus was formed, and given the disparity between the Southern block (much of the Blue

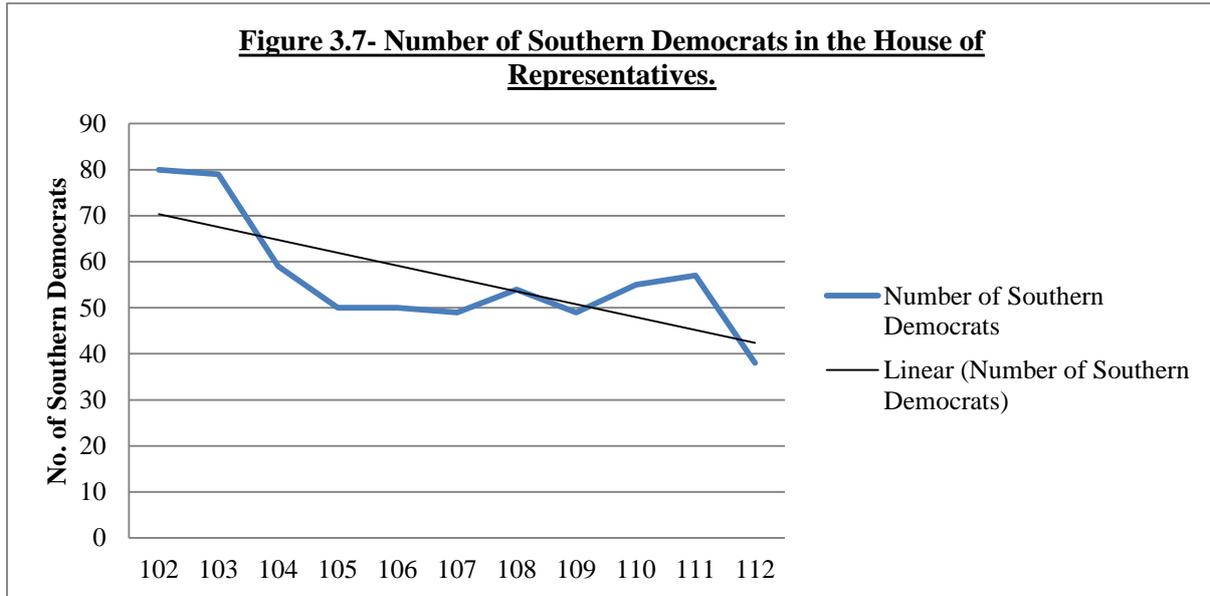
Figure 3.6- I-Score Difference between 'Southern Democrats' and 'All Democrats'.



Dog Coalition was drawn from the South) and the rest of the party, it is unsurprising that these fiscal conservatives formed their own caucus at this point. The point of least difference between the South and the Democratic Party average came, unsurprisingly given the inexorable process of polarization at this time, much later in the 110th Congress. In the 110th Congress, Southern Democrats were only 1.95% more independent in their voting than their party average. The gap between the South and the rest increased slightly to 2.728% in the 111th Congress, before the South gained a significant 7.6% lead over the Democratic Caucus average in the 112th Congress. The next noteworthy trend from Figure 3.5 is that in every single congress from 1991 onwards when the Democratic Party I-Scores increased, the Southern scores increased; and every time the Democrats' I-Scores fell, the Southerners I-Scores fell. To identify the aforementioned 'Southern modifier', i.e. the degree to which the southern block influenced the party as a whole, I begin by tracing the difference between the Southern contingent and the whole party over time (as in the case of the figures cited above). Figure 3.6 shows the difference between the average I-Score for the whole Democratic Party and the average I-Scores for that party's southern contingent. As noted the greatest spike is in the 104th Congress. Many of these independent/moderate/conservative Democrats in fact defected to the Republicans (see above for several noteworthy examples from the Blue Dog Caucus).³⁴⁶ As the numbers of southern Democrats plummeted (see Figure 3.7), the survivors became much more willing to break with the

³⁴⁶ Grose and Yoshinaka find that 'over the long run...primaries in the [party] switcher's new party are less competitive than those in the old party before the switch' in Grose and Yoshinaka, 'The Electoral Consequences of Party Switching by Incumbent Members of Congress, 1947-2000' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (February, 2003), p. 55.

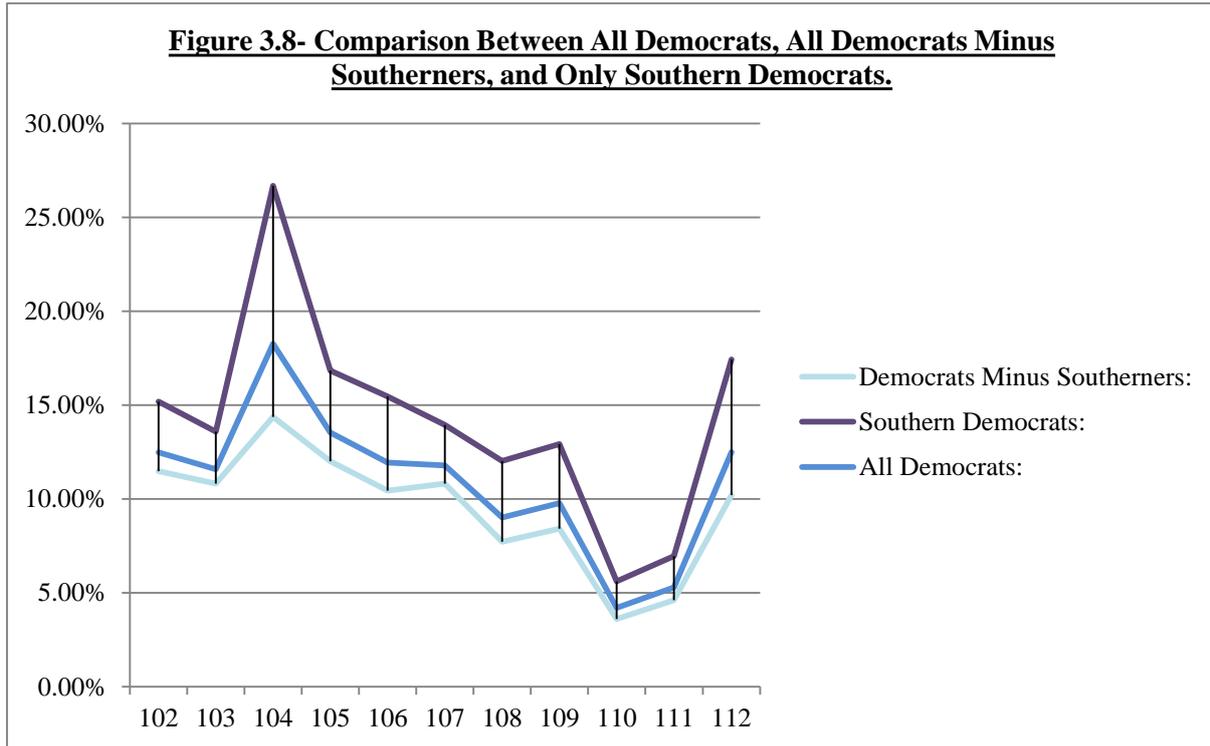
Figure 3.7- Number of Southern Democrats in the House of Representatives.



party line; likely to maximise their electoral chances in competitive districts and avoid what Carson et al call the ‘electoral costs of party loyalty.’³⁴⁷ Similarly to my analysis of the Blue Dog Caucus, I will consider the I-Scores of the southern Democrats against the I-Scores of the Democratic Party as it would if it had no southerners at all. Because we have established that Southerners are (on average) more moderate than the mainstream of the Democratic Party elite, this is the best way of actually quantifying the southern influence on the party. I have already considered a comparison of southern scores and all Democratic scores, but by removing the southern states from the Democratic average figure, we can gauge how statistically important the southerners are to moderating the party, and perhaps most crucially, to providing ideological variety. How much ‘pull’ do the southerners actually exert, once I-Scores are weighted for the numbers of Southern Democrats? Figure 3.8 shows three averages over the 102nd to 112th congresses. Firstly, the Democratic Party’s scores in the House without any southern states represented; secondly, southern Democratic scores on their own; and, thirdly, all Democratic scores. This is distinct from Figure 3.5 which just shows southern Democratic scores against all Democratic scores, because it allows us to weight the influence of the southerners. In every single congress from the 102nd through to the 112th, the average of Southern I-Scores was higher than the average of ‘Democratic Party minus southern state’ I-Scores. This approach may have some forecasting potential as well; we know that numbers of southern democrats are in a long term decline, Fiorina et al. have set out their comprehensive theory of party sorting on the mass level, the retirement and replacement of old southerners means that the process of realignment is finally overcoming the obstacle of office-holders with their incumbency advantage, therefore ‘elite sorting’ is

³⁴⁷ Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, ‘The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress’ in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (July, 2010).

Figure 3.8- Comparison Between All Democrats, All Democrats Minus Southerners, and Only Southern Democrats.



now taking place. I have also established a consistent trend for higher levels of party unity and correspondingly low I-Scores. Therefore considering the Democratic Party without its historically moderate-to-conservative southern wing makes for an unfortunately relevant exploration of how the party is likely to look in the near future, should current trends continue. That said, many southern Democrats represent small pockets of liberal voters in Southern states, so the extinction of the entire southern wing of the party is extremely unlikely. Instead these members will likely become more liberal as they represent gerrymandered urban districts with little-to-no rural areas. It is possible that the southern wing of the party will still exist, it just simply won't be conservative and/or centrist anymore. For instance, southern Democrats in the 111th Congress included congressmen like Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX) and Al Green (D-TX) who had I-Scores of just 1%; placing them on the same I-Score percentile as Californian, New Yorker and Rhode Island liberal Democrats. Obviously we cannot infer that a district is conservative or liberal based solely on its state, (as shown by the startling loyalty of those southern Democrats named above). However we can draw from this that redistricting has had a tremendous effect in tightening party unity. On the Democratic side, even in the South, liberal constituents are grouped together and elect increasingly liberal representatives, who chose increasingly liberal leadership once in Congress. This is the cycle of decreasing I-Scores. This occurs on both sides of the aisle. Given this degenerating I-Score cycle, and the continued decline in Southern numbers, the increasing party unity of the surviving representatives is probable. Figure 3.9 shows the historic significant of the southern wing, with an eye towards what will happen to the larger party when this historically vital constituency is no more, or else is severely weakened. As with

Figure 3.9- Weighted 'Pull' of Southern Democrats.

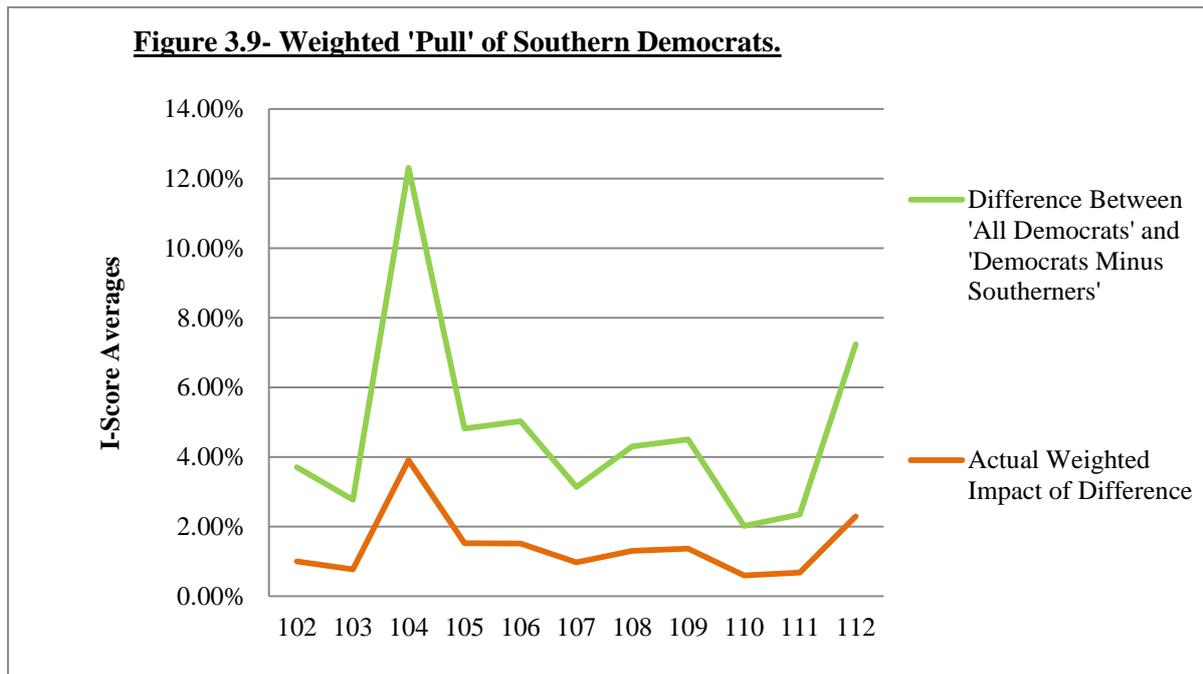


Figure 3.5, which compared all Democrats (including the South) with just southerners, Figure 3.8 shows the impact of removing the southern conservative branch from the party as a whole. My analysis also finds that where I-Scores for the non-southern democrats rise, the I-Scores for southern democrats rise too. Equally when they drop for the non-southern congressmen they drop for the southern ones. This seems to strengthen the explanation for party unity as a function of majority House control because even ill-sorted members respond to majority control with slightly lower I-Scores and higher party cohesion. The difference between ‘All Democrats’ and ‘Democrats Minus Southerners’ in Figure 3.8 also reveals the precise extent to which the baseline scores are pulled up by the presence of the southern contingent. The impact is not gigantic, but it is consistent across the entire twenty year period. The southern moderate/conservative branch of the Democratic Party exerts a pull of 1 or 2% on the I-Scores of the whole party across the twenty year period from the 102nd congress. See Figure 3.9 for the “Southern Modifier,” weighing the ‘All Democrats’ line in Figure 3.8 against the ‘Democrats Minus Southerners’ line to quantify how much actual impact they have on moderating the whole party average I-Score. This accounts for their actual impact in Democratic mean I-Scores, rather than just showing the difference between the South and the rest as in Figure 3.5. Unfortunately, after weighting the Southern average for how many of them there actually are and then considering the difference between ‘All Democrats’ and ‘Democrats Minus Southerners’ we find that the large differences between the two groups actually have very little impact- owing primarily to the very low numbers of Southern Democrats still in Congress during this period. For instance, during the 104th Congress the Southern Democrats had an average gap of 12% from the rest of their party, but after weighting this only translates into a 4% “pull” on the whole party average. That such a small coalition can have any effect at all is impressive, and certainly worthy of academic study, but we can

see that as time goes on the ‘Weighted Impact’ line of Figure 3.9 shows that the Southerners have very little pull. To extend the allegory, they are a small, low mass trying to exert a gravitational pull on a much larger body (the Democratic Party as a whole). The southerners can create “waves” (registering at less than 2% in all congresses save the 104th and 112th), but they cannot change the direction of the party as a whole without much greater numbers than they have now. Any ideological moves further away from the left would likely result in successful primary challenges in a mirror image of the Tea Party threat to the Republican establishment.

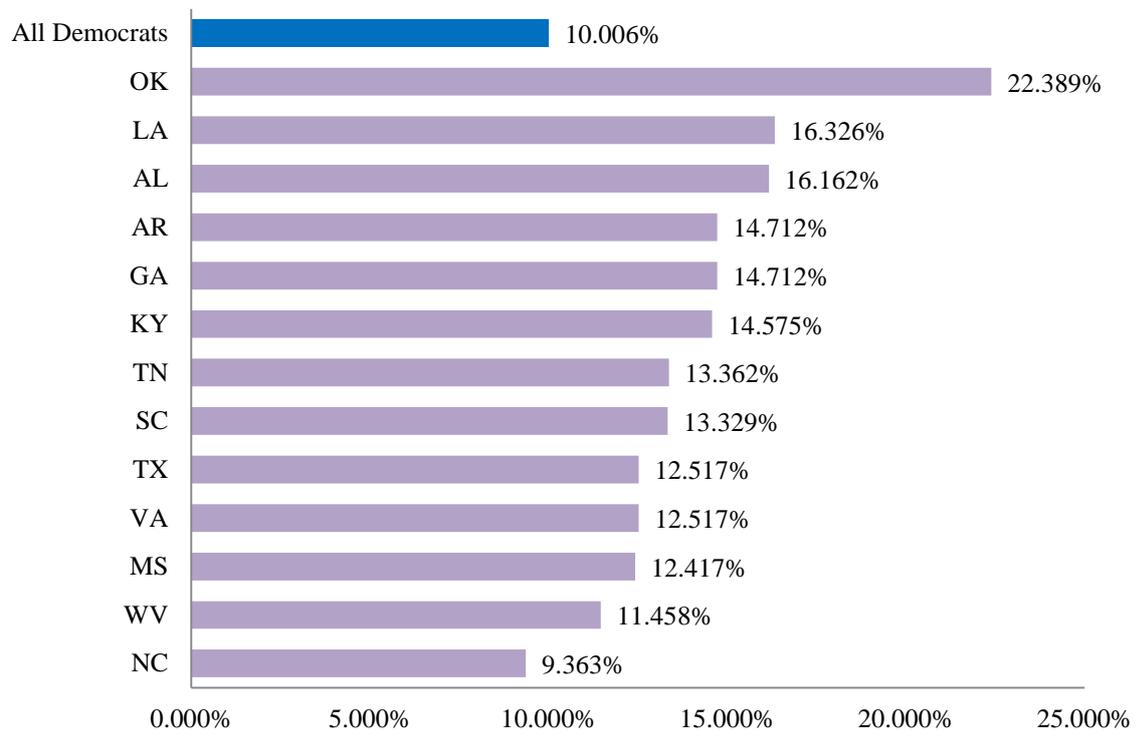
In a time when party cohesion is at record highs (a symptom, cause and measure of polarization), any group or caucus which mitigates against party unity and injects some independent voting into Congress must be welcome. As with other trends, the 112th congress offered some hope for great party disunity and commensurately high independence; the I-Scores of the southerners rocketed up, mirroring and exceeding an increase in I-Scores in that congress. It is interesting to note this rise in southern Democratic I-Scores during the 112th Congress. Despite the increase in difference between the south and the rest of the caucus, the Democratic Party as a whole became markedly more rebellious in the 112th Congress (likely in part a result of losing the Majority status).³⁴⁸ The Southern Democrats therefore conform to the pattern alluded to by the data on the 110th Congress in Chapter Two, that majority parties are (almost always in this period) more conformist than minority ones. However, despite this influence, like the Blue Dog Caucus, the numbers of Southern Democrats are declining. The linear trend of Figure 3.7 shows the pattern of decline in Southern Democratic numbers. Since the 102nd Congress first met in January 1991, the southern block has declined by over half from 80 members to a lowly 38. Brief increases of southern numbers during the 108th, 110th and 111th congresses have not changed the trend of decline, and I wager that the “referendum effect” on President Obama has been a significant obstacle on down-ticket races for conservative-moderate Democrats in competitive districts.³⁴⁹

Across this twenty year period, a state by state breakdown shows which states are more conservative/moderate/independent, compared to the Democratic baseline. Taking the simple average of every state’s I-Score over the period of the 102nd to 112th congresses, we can put the states into a roughly coherent hierarchy of which had the most independent, and therefore most moderate (or in this case centrist-conservative) delegations over the entire twenty years. For the sake of comparison, I have also included an average of all Democratic House members over that same period. The Democratic “average of averages” is less moderate than every state save North Carolina, which it beats by 0.643% (see Figure 3.10). Figure 3.10 visualises simply why the Southern Democrats are

³⁴⁸ I develop this argument later in the chapter.

³⁴⁹ For example see Romano, ‘Obama’s Down-Ticket Effect’ in *Newsweek*, (8th May, 2008).

Figure 3.10- Average Southern Democratic I-Scores, 102nd-112th House

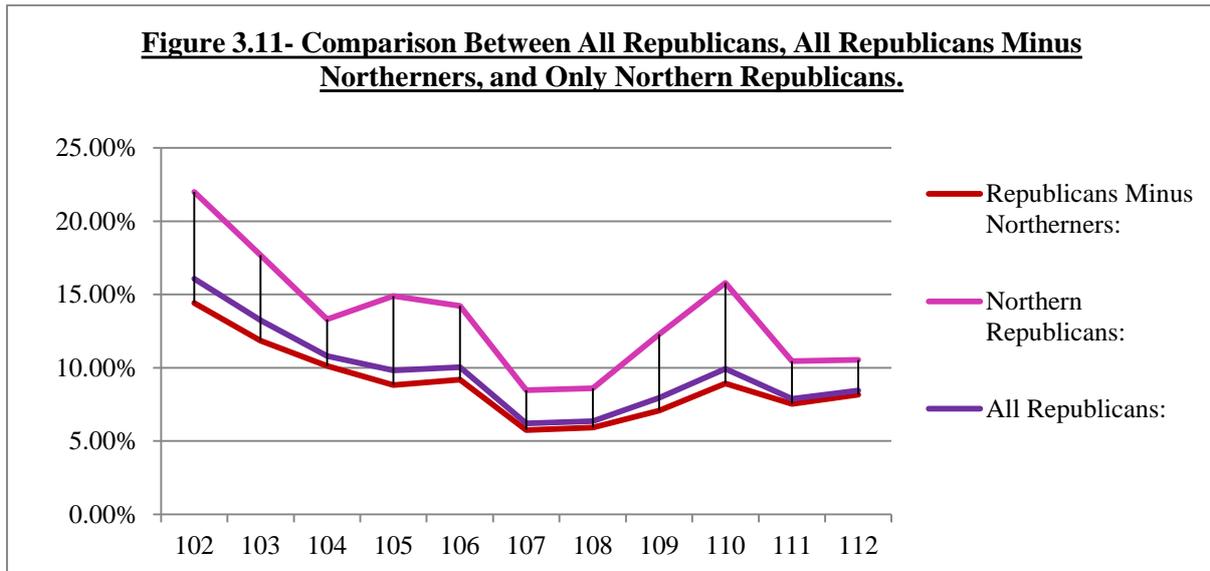


such an important component of American politics. In a two party system with an extremely high threshold for third party candidates/parties,³⁵⁰ variation within the two dominant groups is preferable to tight party unity and low independence scores (and far more proportional to the American electorate as a whole). Representing a broader range of ideological opinions in Congress, rather than simply the two doctrines espoused by the party leadership in Congress, should be the aim of a democratic system. The Southern Democrats are a key part of that system but are being driven out of politics by the partisan-polarization of the current climate. I will consider another incongruent group now, North Eastern Republicans.

Regional I-Scores from the 102nd to the 112th Congress (Northern Republicans).

As with the above sections on the Blue Dog Caucus and the Southern Democrats, I will limit my analysis here to the House only. Future studies could develop the I-Score methodology by considering Senate and House comparisons within (and between) the various groupings I consider here. For our purposes though, the House is a much better barometer of short-term peaks and troughs

³⁵⁰ There is an extensive literature on this topic and only limited space here. See, for instance, Hirano and Snyder, 'The Decline of Third-Party Voting in the United States' in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69, No. 1, (February, 2007) or Gold, 'Third Party Voting in Presidential Election: A Study of Perot, Anderson, and Wallace' in *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 4, (December, 1995).



in I-Score behaviour. The Senate is more insulated from these effects, as indeed it was designed to be.³⁵¹ The North Eastern (sometimes just called Northern or Eastern) wing of the GOP was traditionally the ‘liberal’³⁵² branch of the Republican Party and home to groups like the Rockefeller Republicans. A lively policy debate existed within the GOP³⁵³ as a broad ideological coalition co-existed under one party. The 1964 defeat of radical Barry Goldwater led to a period of moderate Republican rule under Richard Nixon,³⁵⁴ but eventually the conservative wing of the GOP seized the advantage under Ronald Reagan and George Bush Senior, finally achieving a conservative majority in Congress with Newt Gingrich and his “Contract with America” in 1994. As a result of this elite sorting of the Republican Party, the once substantive liberal wing, concentrated primarily in the North, was virtually wiped out. These Northern states, Maryland, Delaware, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, saw a precipitous collapse in their Republican representation. Figure 2.3 in Chapter Two, shows this trend of decline in full. Along similar lines to my analysis of the Southern Democrats, I will show here how the Northern Republicans have historically moderated the more conservative tendencies of their party by finding a ‘Northern Modifier’ to quantify the effect the Northern contingent had on the

³⁵¹ Madison, quoted in Koch, ed., *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787 Reported by James Madison* (Ohio, 1984), p. 194.

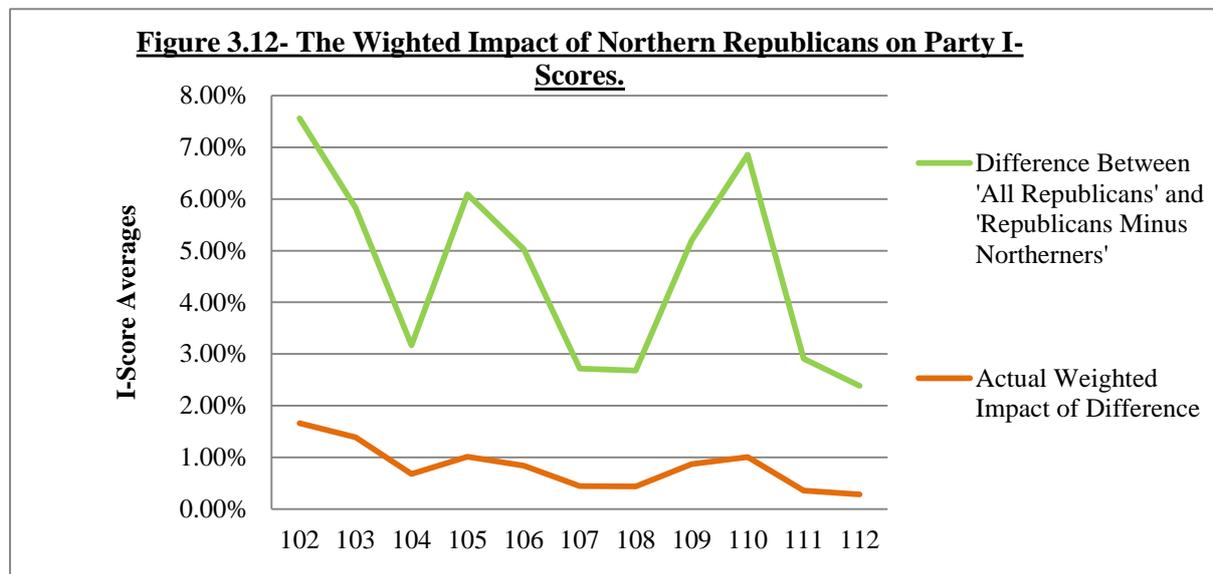
³⁵² Rae, *The Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans, From 1952 to the Present*, (Oxford, 1989), p. 96.

³⁵³ Costantini and Craik, ‘Competing Elites within a Political Party: A Study of Republican Leadership’ in *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 4, (December, 1969), p. 879.

³⁵⁴ Nixon’s domestic achievements included the creation of the EPA, OSHA and other initiatives like the Safe Drinking Water Act and an expansion of the Foot Stamp program. (See Miller Center, ‘Richard Nixon/ Domestic Affairs’ taken from <http://millercenter.org/president/nixon/essays/biography/4> accessed on 5th May 2014.

Republican Party as a whole. Firstly then, how do Northern Republican scores compare to the Republican Party without its liberal/moderate Eastern wing?

Figure 3.11 shows a similar pattern to the corresponding analysis of Southern Democrats. Except in the 105th and 106th congresses, when the ‘Republican minus Northerners’ I-Scores go up, so too do the Northern I-Scores. Equally, when the ‘Republican minus Northerners’ scores go down, the Northern figures drop. Aside from the two congresses mentioned, there is a tight correlation between the movement of the Northern scores and the movement of the party as a whole. However, whilst the northern scores might rise and drop with the party average, they are significantly higher than the GOP mainstream. The two greatest differences between the Republicans without the Northern congressmen and the Northern contingent alone occurred in the 102nd and 110th congresses. In these two cases the gap was 7.56 and 6.86 I-Score points respectively. The lowest difference between the two groups was in the 112th congress, where the gap was only 2.38%, a testament to the efficacy of elite level sorting.



From Figure 3.12, we can see that the Northern Republicans are significantly more independent (and therefore more moderate according to the correlation found by Clinton et al) than the party average. However when we consider the difference between ‘Republicans Minus Northerners’ and ‘All Republicans’, we can see that the effect, once weighted, of this Northern contingent starts at a low level and grows increasingly diminished by the time of the 112th Congress. Over the entire period the North Eastern Modifier is an average of just 0.82%, compared with a difference between ‘All Republicans’ and ‘All Republicans Minus Northerners’ of 4.59%. As with Southern Democrats, we can already see how the Northerners’ limited numbers mitigate the impact of their high I-Scores, though their mitigating effect is consistent. Figure 3.11 shows just how high the Northern scores are compared to the party average however when weighted (as in Figure 3.12) the analysis reveals how insignificant the Northern Modifier (the degree to which Northern I-Scores

moderate the whole Republican House Conference) now is. In every single Congress from the 102nd onwards, the Northern Republicans moderated their party by less than 2%. Despite some large gaps between the average scores of the Northerners v the ‘GOP minus Northerners’ group, (7.56% and 6.86% in the 102nd and 110th Congresses respectively), the modifier starts low and then stagnates as Northern GOP numbers decrease (again see Figure X in Chapter Two). Again I reiterate the argument that a range of ideology is normatively good for a democracy, particularly one which operates in a rigid two-party system. The sadly shallow (though consistent) effect of the Northern Republicans, despite their proven independence from party control and (relatively) high I-Scores, is a new way of measuring polarization, not in terms of differences between parties, but differences within them. By simply comparing DW-NOMINATE party mean points (for instance) to demonstrate that polarization is taking place, we risk obscuring *how* polarization occurs and within which ideological groups it is taking place. We also risk obscuring which groups and caucuses are driving the process, either through the success in radicalising parties, or their failure in moderating them. With so much attention on the Tea Party I wonder if the more important story, the contribution of remaining southern Democrats and northern Republicans, has been somewhat (if not entirely) neglected. Given that the Tea Party only modified Republican I-Scores by -0.02% in the 112th Congress, perhaps the modifying effect of the Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans (2.3% and 0.28% respectively) should be considered more prominently in the analysis of polarization. The Tea Party *may* only be a temporary presence, but the decline of these two large regional constituencies is far more significant. We can see this as, even given their historically low, stagnating modifier effects, these two groups still score higher than the Tea Party does in influencing their parties in hard, quantifiable I-Score averages.

Comparing Regional and Tea Party Modifiers: Who Influences Party I-Scores Most?

Figure 3.13- Comparison of Southern Democrat, Northern Republican and Tea Party Weighted I-Score Modifiers (%).

Congress:	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112
<u>Southern Democrat</u> Modifier:	1.00%	0.77%	3.90%	1.52%	1.51%	0.97%	1.30%	1.36%	0.60%	0.68%	2.30%
<u>Northern Republican</u> Modifier:	1.66%	1.39%	0.68%	1.02%	0.84%	0.44%	0.44%	0.87%	1.00%	0.35%	0.28%
Tea Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Minus 0.02%

Figure 3.13 above compares the modifier of the Southern Democrats, the Northern Republicans and the Tea Party. As the data for my study only considers a range from the 102nd to the

112th congress, change after that time cannot be considered, but would present an opportunity for further study on how different caucuses affect I-Score and intra-party polarization. The numbers marked in bold are the larger of the two (or three) modifiers considered, whilst those in italics are smaller. In eight of the eleven congresses I consider, the southern Democrats moderated their party more than the Northern Republicans moderated theirs. The limited impact of the Tea Party (at least in quantifiable I-Score terms) can be seen in their very low minus 0.02% modifier during the 112th congress; this is the lowest modifier for any regional grouping/caucus I considered across the entire period. This indicates that the Tea Party was almost identically positioned on the conformist-independent axis as the rest of the Republican Party and if anything made it more conformist, albeit by a statistically insignificant amount. Given the small increase in DW-NOMINATE scores for the GOP between the 111th and 112th congress the Tea Party seems to have had relatively little outright impact on the Republican House I-Scores in the 112th congress (perhaps due to their relatively small numbers compared to the entire congressional Republican Party). As with what we see in Northern Republican influence on the House Republican average, even wild variations in I-Scores between groups can have very little impact on the party as a whole if the numbers of the minority caucus are insufficient to pull the average I-Scores away from party conformity/unity. What is clear however is that the modifying effect of both Northern Republicans and Southern Democrats is in decline. Both groups have had a consistent, if limited, effect on their parties in the past twenty years. Elite level sorting, mirroring the mass trend described by Fiorina et al,³⁵⁵ is pushing the moderates out of both parties. It is crucial to emphasise that this is not just a Tea Party phenomenon whereby radical right candidates push out “establishment”, more mainstream Republicans. In fact, at the end of this period, the impact of the Tea Party on Republican I-Scores in the 112th congress was almost negligible. Given the very small increase in DW-NOMINATE scores these two measures point to limited ideological achievements of the Tea Party caucus. Indeed, from the 111th Congress to the 112th, the decline of Northern Republicans had a far larger detrimental effect on Republican I-Score diversity than did the meagre minus 0.02% contribution of the Tea Party towards party homogeneity. This is not to say that the Tea Party has had no effect, far from it; their ability to block nominations, filibuster, deploy extremist rhetoric all contributed to the further toxification of the 112th congress from the already polarized 111th, but the scope of the rebellion is very small, and likely transitory (though as I acknowledge my data for this study only extends to the 112th congress). Given the obstacles to a third party in the American electoral system,³⁵⁶ diversity within the two parties so that they can represent a

³⁵⁵ Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011).

³⁵⁶ There is a very large literature on both third parties and Independent candidates. For instance see Gillespie, *Politics at the Periphery: Third Parties in Two-party America*, (South Carolina, 1993); Rosenstone, Behr and

broader range of American public opinion (of which there is a particular deficit in the centre) is crucial. It is clear that this philosophical diversity is decreasing, as gerrymandering leads to more ideological representatives being elected, tightening party conformity in both parties and both chambers allowing a stronger and more polarized party leadership to dominate. Whilst much public (and press) attention has focused on the Tea Party, the decline of the Southern Democrats and the Northern Republicans actually has far worse long-term consequences for American politics and policy-making in Congress. This is clear from the dwindling potential of these two regional groups to modify the average I-Scores of their respective parties. Future analysis of I-Scores could consider modifiers based on legislator ethnicity, committee membership and/or seniority, legislator experience and Senators who previously served in the House (among other factors) to further breakdown which segments of Congress are driving increases in party unity and which clusters are still resisting with relatively high I-Scores. The modifiers I develop here, and the examples I suggest of further research, demonstrate the contributions of I-Scores to the literature, and distinguish I-Scores from typical measures of party unity (both in methodology, analysis and the emphasis they place on the important dissenters). Though the modifiers of these moderate groups are shrinking along with their numbers, the fact that they still exist as late as the 112th congress, and that the 112th saw a general increase in I-Scores, both make these dissenter-groups worthy of study; and indeed, vital to understanding how congress has ‘sorted’ at the elite level into the two polarized blocks seen today. If there is to be any move back to heterogeneous parties,³⁵⁷ careful monitoring and study of these high I-Scoring groups is vital to explaining it, whilst the methodology itself provides the means to do this.

The Impact of Majority House Control on Average Party I-Scores.

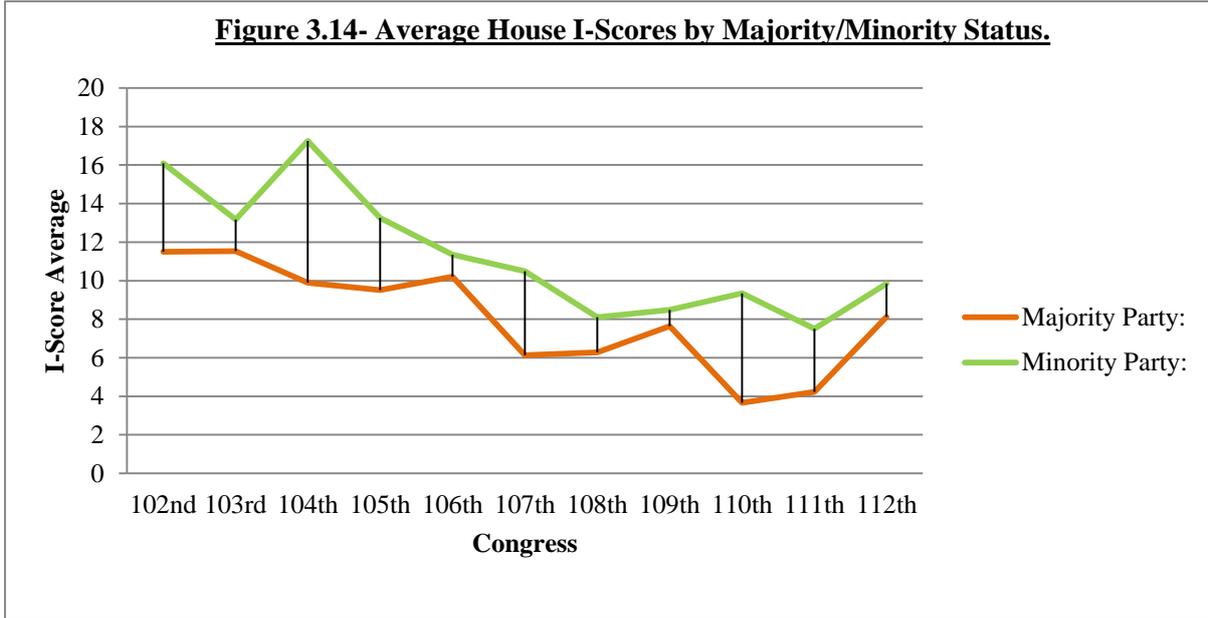
I have referred several times to the theory or expectation that parties in the Majority exhibit stronger party unity, and lower I-Scores. I expand upon this now and present I-Score evidence for it. This tighter party unity may well be a result of Lawrence et al.’s finding that of all models to explain party loyalty in Congress a ‘model based on majority party agenda control works well’.³⁵⁸ To control

Lazarus, *Third Parties in America* 2nd Edition, (Princeton, 1984); Sifry, *Spoiling for a Fight: Third Party Politics in America*, (Routledge, 2003).

³⁵⁷ American politics has shown a cyclical pattern of polarization, heterogeneity, and polarization. As Hetherington argues in Hetherington, ‘Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective’ in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009).

³⁵⁸ Lawrence, Maltzman and Smith, ‘Who Wins? Party Effects in Legislative Voting’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1, (February, 2006), p. 33.

Figure 3.14- Average House I-Scores by Majority/Minority Status.



this agenda, high levels of party unity are required; which then yield cartel benefits³⁵⁹ in the form of legislation passed. Rather than presenting Republican or Democratic I-Scores, I organise the data irrespective of party label into ‘Majority Party’ or ‘Minority Party’ (see Figure 3.14). I find that from the 102nd to the 112th Congress the Majority Party in the House has an average I-Score of 7.75%, whilst the Minority Party has an average I-Score of 10.966%. Whilst this does not seem a particularly large difference, it does lead to some interesting results, and it is consistent. In every single Congress from 1991 to 2013, the Minority Party has had a higher I-Score than the Majority Party. There are no exceptions to this rule in the period of my dataset (102nd to the 112th congresses). The closest the Minority Party came to having an equal or higher I-Score than the Majority was in the 109th Congress, when the Democrats ranked at 4.244%, compared with the Republicans 3.82%. From the 109th Congress through to the 111th, the Democrats ranked 4.244% (Minority), 3.663% (Majority) and 4.23% (Majority); indicating that the high levels of party unity found in the 109th Congress’ Democratic Minority were part of a broader, six-year period of more conformist Democratic voting. These last two years in the minority (the 109th Congress) and the six year period as a whole (109th to 111th Congresses) are in stark contrast to the Democrats’ “wilderness” period from the 104th Congress to the 108th, when they achieved I-Scores of 17%, 13%, 11%, 10% and 8%. Controlling the house has a clear relationship to lower I-Scores; but within this trend another can be seen. Though I-Scores are in a period of decline (see Figure 3.2), Figure 3.14 finds one unusual, though not explicitly anomalous result. Though the trend of Majority status meaning lower I-Scores remains unbroken, the 112th

³⁵⁹ Cox and McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*, (Cambridge, 2005).

Congress might indicate a change in fortune. In that Congress the House saw increased I-Scores in the Republican Party (despite them transitioning from Minority to Majority status) and a fairly dramatic increase in Democratic Party I-Scores (doubling from 4.23% to 9.84%) after a long period of party unity (from the 109th to 111th congresses in particular). Interestingly, the 112th congress is the only time when the incoming Majority is more independent than the outgoing Minority. However, the 112th Congress had its own political landscape, at least partially shaped by the Tea Party³⁶⁰ and extraordinary levels of polarization around healthcare and the economy,³⁶¹ so we cannot take the 112th congress alone as evidence for a U-turn in party cohesion. Further studies in the future could consider a later period from the 112th congress to establish whether the trend from 1991 towards lower I-Scores is maintained or reversed; the data available at present does not permit such a study here, though the methodology does.

There are some “common-sense” reasons for why this relationship exists, such as thwarting a Senate and/or White House controlled by the opposition party (i.e. the Democrats in the 110th Congress, or the Republicans in the 112th Congress), pushing through an agenda whilst in possession of all three branches of government for only a short period of time (i.e. the Democrats in the 111th Congress),³⁶² holding only a narrow majority of seats or simply one party being of a more narrow ideological range than the other. Indeed there is evidence aside from my own I-Score analysis to suggest that the Democratic Party has become more cohesive than the GOP. Using data from DW-NOMINATE Dylan Matthews of the *Washington Post* finds that ‘the trend has been for Democrats-especially in the Senate - to grow more unified as the Republicans stay the same’. ‘if anything, in recent years [Democrats] have grown more ideologically coherent than the Republicans.’³⁶³ Although my analysis of the House finds that Democrats were narrowly more independent than Republicans over the entire period (9.972 to 9.097) such a crude average cannot tell us much about continuity and change over a twenty year period which has seen record polarization (and within that trend extreme levels of party unity). Just taking the last six congresses, from the 107th to the 112th, we find that the Democratic I-Score lead falls from 0.875 over the whole period to just 0.559 over the 107th-112th period, yet in the time from the 110th Congress to the 112th (inclusive) we find a Republican I-Score

³⁶⁰ Though arguably shaped by the Tea Party to a lesser extent than popular press coverage might have led one to believe (see Chapter Three, ‘Tea Party’ above).

³⁶¹ Chapter Four will explore these issues in more detail.

³⁶² Although Carey takes a contrary view and argues that presidential power can increase party disunity, there is no evidence for this in the 111th Congress and given that both President Obama and Vice President Biden were recently serving as Senators, this perhaps undoes the ‘competing poles’ argument that Carey makes. See, Carey, ‘Getting Their Way, or Getting in the Way? Presidents and Party Unity in Legislative Voting’, for presentation to the American Political Science Association (August, 2002), p. 27.

³⁶³ Matthews, ‘Are political parties growing more unified?’ in *The Washington Post*, 6th September, 2012.

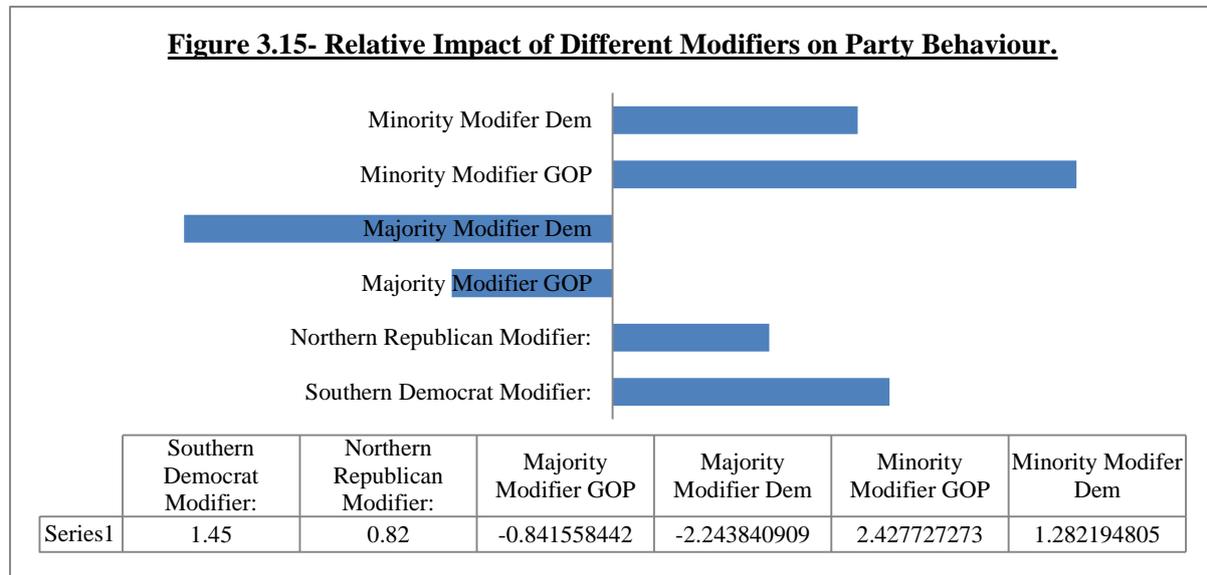
lead of 2.41; quite a reversal. This suggests that the Democrats are becoming more conformist more quickly than the GOP are, despite the GOP's Northern contingent collapsing and exerting just a meagre average 0.543% pull over the entire Republican House Conference.

In other words, despite losing most of their Northern/North-Eastern representation in the House the GOP still exhibits a wider range of I-Scores than the Democrats do with their comparatively healthy Southern cohort (which exerted a 1.19% pull over the whole Democratic House Caucus over the period of the 110th-112th congress). Both parties are becoming more conformist (save the upsurge in the 112th congress, which may be anomalous), but the Democrats are becoming more conformist more quickly than the Republican Party is. The question to ask from this finding, therefore, is whether there is some feature of the Republican Party which makes them intrinsically more rebellious in their voting, and their Conference more ideologically varied than the Democrats? Clearly Majority status exhibits some "pull" over I-Scores as individual regional groups do (I calculate this below), but is there some contingent feature of the GOP which makes them less willing to follow the party line?³⁶⁴ In Chapter Four I consider one possible dimension for exploring this, along a libertarian-authoritarian voting axis. As for the Democrats in the House, they only controlled the House in four of the congresses I study, so when they were in power the party leadership had obvious reasons to control the party more tightly in order to further their agenda. I will turn to this question after discussing the impact of Majority control on Senate I-Scores.

As with the sections above on 'modifiers' pulling aggregate party I-Scores, I will now consider whether 'Majority-control' and 'Minority-control' modifiers exist. I will quantify the difference over the entire period between a party in Majority and Minority, to see (on average), by how many I-Score percentage points a party changes its behaviour when it controls the levers of power in the House. Intriguingly, despite the Democrats being narrowly (less than a percentage point) less cohesive than the GOP over the whole period, we find that Majority or Minority status has a far greater impact on the Democratic Party than on the Republicans. Taking scores from the whole period, I find that on average Majority status modified the Democratic Party average by -2.243%; meaning that when in the Majority the Party loses (on average) 2.243% from its I-Score rating. Minority status on the other hand, increases the Democratic Party average I-Score by 1.282%. As for the Republicans, Majority status takes a slight 0.841% off their aggregate I-Score, whilst Minority status increases their disobedience to party leadership by 2.427 I-Score points. Worryingly, Majority status completely eclipses the I-Score contribution of the Southern Democrats, their average +1.45% contribution to stalling party cohesion is wiped out completely by Majority status inducing a -2.24

³⁶⁴ Much has been made of this in the media in recent years, with intra-party debates over immigration, national security, drone warfare, warrantless surveillance to name but a few.

drop in Democratic I-Score behaviour over the same time frame. On the other hand the Northern Republican contribution of +0.82% is narrowly overtaken by a GOP “Majority Modifier” of -0.84%. When parties enter government, they become more, not less, extreme. Figure 3.15 shows how each “Modifier” has contributed to (or mitigated against) decreasing I-Scores of the party average in the House.

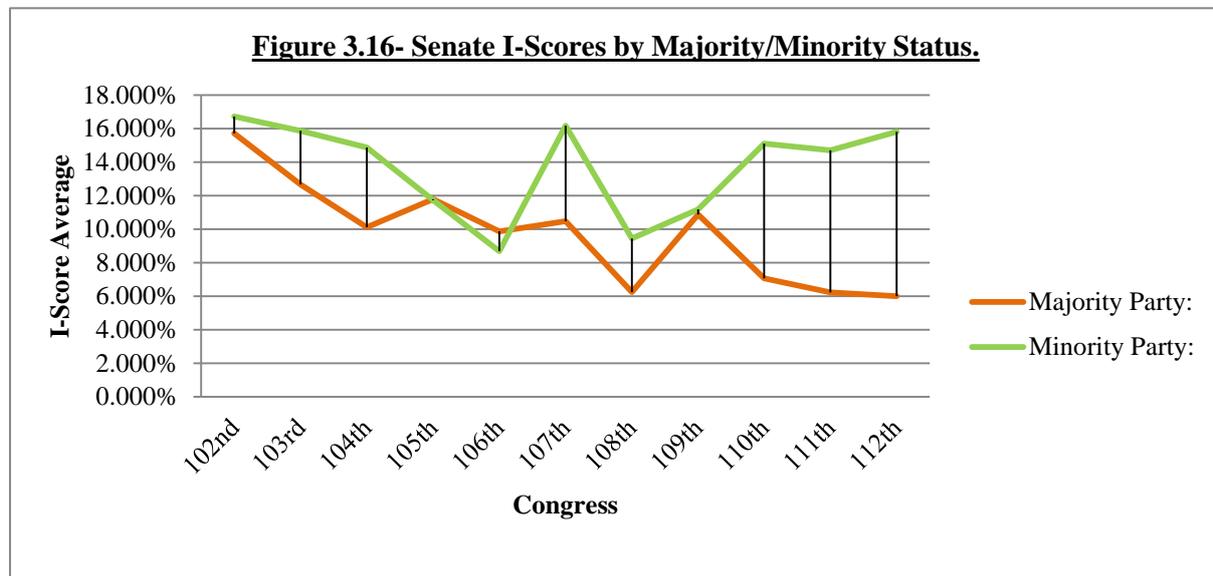


This figure visualises how the advantages of the various regional moderates within the party are neutralized by Majority status. This is quite perverse given that to achieve majority status a party will often rely on electing moderates from competitive districts; and yet the I-Score contributions of these independent minded congressmen are completely undone by the impact of Majority control on the net average. To conclude for now, there are any number of reasons why a party would be more tightly regulated by the leadership in Majority status, and I find clear evidence that party cohesion increases in the House. In every single Congress of my dataset I-Scores fell below their opposition when a party entered the Majority. Clearly in the House, Majority status is a reasonable predictor of which party will be more independent in its voting; across the period of the 102nd to 112th congress the Majority was less independent every time. Is this true of the Senate?

The Impact of Majority Senate Control on Average Party I-Scores.

Having considered the House, our attention now turns to the Senate in order to ascertain whether holding the Majority affects the more independent-minded Senate in the same way it does in the House. To test whether holding the Majority has the same impact on Senate conformity as it does on House conformity, I have conducted the same analysis for the Senate as I ran for the House and considered Majority v Minority I-Scores irrespective of party. From this I find a similar result in the

Senate as in the House. In all but two congressional sessions (the 105th and 106th senates) the Minority Party had a higher I-Score than the Majority Party. Figure 3.16 plots the average I-Scores of Majority and Minority parties in the Senate, and despite the two outliers the Minority Party was consistently more independent in its voting behaviour than their Majority counterparts.



Interestingly, despite party cohesion increasing over time from the 102nd congress, from the 110th congress onwards a large c.10% gap opened between the Senate Majority and the Senate Minority. As I advocated towards the start of this paper, by using qualitative information to inform the data analysis, I would attribute this phenomenon to the Democratic Majority in the 110th, 111th and 112th Senates trying to push their agenda in a highly partisan environment where deals between the two parties were virtually unheard of. The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) is perhaps the best example of this, (see Chapter Four). Meanwhile, individual Republican Senators sought to distance themselves from the unpopular Bush White House in the 110th Senate (leading to high Minority Party I-Scores) and then in the 111th and 112th Senates, without control over the Executive Branch, they did not have as strong a policy-incentive for tight party unity; the Democrats’ hold over the House and Presidency meant that the Republican agenda was stalled, thus there were no legislative inducements for high party unity. It might be said then that losing the Majority status impacts on the ‘cartel’ behaviour described by Cox and McCubbins,³⁶⁵ perhaps loosening the bonds between members because one incentive (legislation and policy) is no longer within the gift of the party leadership. This is an

³⁶⁵ Cox and McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*, (Cambridge, 2005).

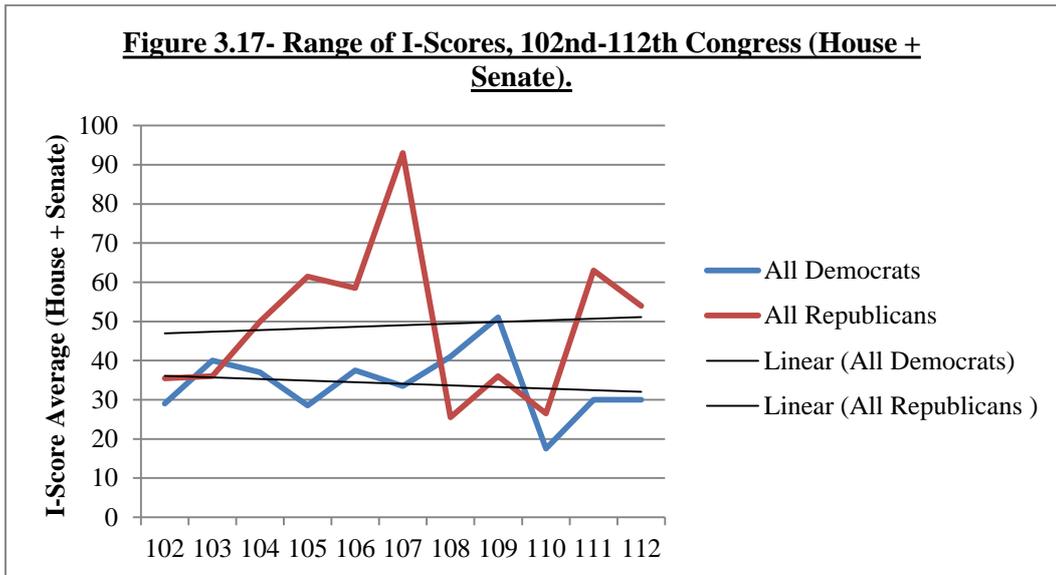
example of what Cox and McCubbins call the ‘benefits’³⁶⁶ of office-holding; when these benefits are lost I-Scores are the beneficiary and party unity declines (if only relative to the Majority Party).

As for a party-by-party breakdown, on average, from the 102nd to 112th congresses, the Republican Party had a Senate I-Score of 13.026%. Whilst in the Majority their I-Score average over this period was over three points lower, at 9.782%. Whilst in the Minority however, their I-Score average was 15.730%. Clearly holding Minority rather than Majority status makes a significant difference in voting behaviour in the Senate as in the House. For the Democratic Party the average for both Minority and Majority status over the twenty year period was 10.369%, three percent lower than the comparable Republican Party average for both Majority and Minority status. The Democrats held the Senate in six of these eleven senates, so this could influence their total average; as they were in the Majority for two years longer than the Republicans were in the same time frame. Though, as noted above as two exceptions to the general rule of Majority status indicating lower I-Scores, in both the 105th and 106th Senate the Republicans were in the Majority but were still more independent/moderate in their voting than the Democratic Minority. Whilst holding Majority status the Democratic average I-Score was 9.689, which is just fractionally lower than the Republican equivalent score (9.689 to 9.782 respectively). As the Minority Party the Democrats voted against their party in 11.185% of votes; 4.545% less than the Republican figure of 15.730%. Given this, is there just something innate to the GOP which makes them less loyal to central party leadership, and more fractious, given the heterogeneity of their scores?

Party Variety in the GOP, or Minority/Majority Status?

To answer the question posed above I consider the range (i.e. the difference between the highest and lowest score) of I-Scores of each party, in both the House and the Senate, across the entire period. Figure 3.17 was derived from finding the highest and lowest I-Score of each party per Congress in both the House and Senate, and then finding the average of the two numbers. For instance in the 102nd Congress the highest Republican I-Score in the House was 43%, the lowest was 3% giving a difference of 40. Whilst in the 102nd Senate the difference between the highest and lowest Republican I-Score was 31. The average of 31 and 40 is 35.5, which is plotted below in that manner for both parties across the entire period. Further research could conduct a large-scale I-Score analysis along these lines. Clearly, the Republican Party exhibits a much wider range of I-Scores than the Democratic Party does.

³⁶⁶ Cox and McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*, (Cambridge, 2005), p. 46.



Even in the 104th House, when the Democrats were far more independent than the Republicans were, (an I-Score of 17.258 compared to a GOP score of 9.890), and where 94 of the top 100 most conformist congressmen were Republicans³⁶⁷ the GOP still had a higher *range* of I-Scores than the Democrats did. So even whilst the Republican Conference was more united, it still had a very wide range of scores. The Democrats on the other hand, are growing more conformist (see above) and exhibit a much smaller range of I-Scores across the period. There is some considerable volatility in the figures, particularly in the first half of the period considered, and I attribute this to those ideological outliers who (at that time) were yet to be “sorted” into the “correct” part (as Fiorina et al. describe it, simply at the elite rather than mass level). There is only limited space here and this is not a predominantly qualitative study, but this evidence does point to some innate quality of the modern Republican Party which is more factional than the modern Democratic Party is. There is an extremely voluminous literature on the makeup of both members and supporters of each party but our focus is on the elite level. Are Republicans more ideologically varied than the modern Democrats? I will consider party variety through the prism of one key issue in the next chapter, namely the national security state and civil liberties.

Conclusion.

³⁶⁷ A stark contrast to the picture found in the 110th Congress, (see Chapter Two).

Given the state of the two increasingly distant, polarized parties, academics have derived a variety of methodologies to explain why American politics has become so partisan. DW-NOMINATE is perhaps the most important of these, whilst a variety of party unity scores exist to measure party cohesion and homogeneity. In this chapter the I-Score approaches the polarization puzzle from the perspective of intra-party splits. Which groups and regions are contributing most to I-Scores, and how have they declined? We know that as polarization increases, party unity goes up and I-Scores fall,³⁶⁸ so it is vital to study which groups, caucuses, states and regions provide the most in the way of moderating the party cohesion tendencies of the modern American parties in Congress. As well as internal groups like the Tea Party or Blue Dog caucus, the power of a given party (whether it is in the Majority or Minority) also plays a large role in a party's average I-Score for that Congress. These internal splits (one of which, on national security, I shall dissect in Chapter Four) are not necessarily "fractures" or "rows" in a negative sense, but a vital part of representative Democracy. Short of some drastic reformation, internal party democracy and vibrant internal party debates are among the most potent tools against a model of American politics where two homogenous (and extreme) parties vie for votes from a disenchanting centre, whilst any hope of a third party challenge is suppressed by the intricate web of state and national law which privileges the established duopoly on electoral power.

Despite the broad academic consensus on elite polarization, as late as the 110th, 111th and 112th Senates, the GOP were still voting (on average) 15, 14.7 and 15.8 percent of the time against their party leadership. The Democrats have become more conformist, and as my analysis shows the extinction of their Southern wing and the decline of the Blue Dog Caucus is largely to blame for this. If there is hope for undoing the damage of polarization, these groups must be part of the answer, and are therefore worthy of study, even if they are numerically weaker than they were a generation ago. If anything, that makes academic attention even more pressing.

³⁶⁸ As I write above, party unity is both a symptom and cause of polarization.

CHAPTER FOUR: I-Scores in Practice; Three Issue Case Studies.

Chapter Abstract

I will now consider polarization through the prism of three legislative case studies, to demonstrate what I-Scores can tell us about party heterogeneity and variety in the modern Congress. I review two domestic issues from the early days of President Obama's first term, which produced unanimous (or near-unanimous) party-line voting; these are healthcare reform in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the \$1 trillion stimulus in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. I will then consider a third issue, national security, which has broken the familiar frame of polarized parties. I also offer some suggestions for refining and developing the I-Score methodology because of this unusual, non-partisan polarization.

Introduction.

Many votes in Congress today are near-perfect expressions of party unity.³⁶⁹ Whilst most debates fall on left or right divisions,³⁷⁰ the exposure of the NSA's mass surveillance programme has developed new, elite-level cleavages in Congress which do not fall on party lines.³⁷¹ Analysis of polarization on an issue-by-issue basis demonstrates what I-Scores reveal about party unity- and fault-lines where the left/right divide plotted by DW-NOMINATE is no longer sufficient on its own. *Congressional Quarterly's* breakdown of 'party unity' votes reveals that by 2013 'House Republicans voted unanimously [in] 25 percent of party unity votes...[and] House Democrats voted unanimously [in] 22% of the party unity votes'³⁷² which was an all-time high. Over in the Senate, Democrats voted 'unanimously on 52 percent of the party unity votes in 2013- an all-time high for either party in either

³⁶⁹ As early as 2000, Snyder and Groseclose found 'strong evidence of party influence' on 'key procedural votes' and numerous 'substantive' issues. See Snyder and Groseclose, 'Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting' in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 2, (April, 2000).

³⁷⁰ As argued by Poole and Rosenthal, 'Voting in Congress is now almost purely one-dimensional' in 'The Polarization of the Congressional Parties', (19th January, 2014) taken from http://voteview.com/political_polarization.asp accessed on 4th June 2014.

³⁷¹ Such as the very public split between John McCain and Rand Paul (among many other examples).

³⁷² 'CQ Roll Call's Vote Studies – 2013 In Review', 3rd February 2014, taken from <http://media.cq.com/votestudies/> accessed on 6th June 2014.

chamber’ whilst for Republicans this figure (in the Senate) was 31%.³⁷³ The I-Scores develop this analysis and explores how the decline of specific groups, regions and factions within the two parties have actually led to this phenomenon of low independent-voting and the incredible levels of party cohesion that exist today (see Chapter Three above). By now exploring polarization through the prism of three specific issues we can see how Congress actually functions (or fails to function) in this environment. I have picked these three issues to illustrate two cases of “typical” polarization in action, and one to demonstrate where I-Scores may succeed in offering some fresh insight not provided by other more established methodologies. I also offer some suggestions refining I-Scores and developing them for further study.

Clearly it is somewhat artificial to consider a political issue in detachment from others. For instance, Alter notes that the Obama administration began its healthcare messaging by ‘framing [healthcare] as a cost issue’³⁷⁴ and Admiral Mike Mullen said that the federal deficit was the greatest threat to American national security in the world.³⁷⁵ Mullen’s exact remarks, made to a meeting of Business Executives for National Security, were that, ‘I’ve said many times that I believe the single, biggest threat to our national security is our debt, so I also believe we have every responsibility to help eliminate that threat.’ This view was shared by then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as well as the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, Richard Haas, who said ‘we’ve reached a point now where there’s an intimate link between our solvency and our national security. What’s so discouraging is that our domestic politics don’t seem to be up to the challenge. And the whole world is watching.’³⁷⁶ Healthcare was a titanic cost issues, and that cost was driving up America’s national debt which in turn affected the national security of the United States. Nonetheless, to break-down how polarization affects the policy-making process we must reduce it to manageable, meaningful blocks of policy. My method in this chapter is to look at some of the key votes within the three issues identified, and then single-out noteworthy, individual legislators as case studies to show how the standard polarization model works; and how it breaks down on modern national security matters. This will tie in the themes and groups I have discussed throughout my research with practical examples of how low I-Scores have contributed to the high levels of polarization in recent years; and equally, how those remaining

³⁷³ ‘CQ Roll Call’s Vote Studies – 2013 In Review’, 3rd February 2014, taken from <http://media.cq.com/votestudies/> accessed on 6th June 2014.

³⁷⁴ Jonathan Alter, *The Promise: President Obama, Year One*, (London, 2010), p.33.

³⁷⁵ Remarks by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Mike Mullen, Department of Defense Press Release ‘Debt is Biggest Threat to National Security, Chairman Says’ (22nd September, 2011) taken from <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=65432> accessed on 31st July 2013.

³⁷⁶ Gerald F. Seib, ‘Deficit Balloons Into National Security Threat’ in *The Wall Street Journal*, (2nd February, 2010).

legislators with high I-Scores offer the most hope for bipartisan negotiation on the sizeable issues facing the American government at present.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, 2010.

Given that American healthcare policy is an extraordinarily convoluted subject-area I do not attempt to engage in the details of the actual policy itself; this study's focus is on how the Affordable Care Act was passed and what the Act's passage can tell us about polarization. I will discuss this through the prism of I-Scores, which offer a handy breakdown of the votes needed to secure passage. To show how bipartisan law-making efforts have declined over time I will begin by comparing the Affordable Care Act with another (similar) piece of liberal legislation, the Social Security Amendment Act of 1965 which created Medicare and Medicaid. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 compare the final House votes on passage of these two bills, two of the most significant health reforms in American history. The 1965 bill came out of a long tradition of Democratic Party reform (from Roosevelt's 'New Deal' to Johnson's 'Great Society', but even so 23% of its supporters in the House were Republicans. Many of these supporters were Northern Republicans, whose high I-Scores historically exerted a great influence on the aggregate Republican I-Score (as shown in Chapter Three). This

Figure 4.1- % Breakdown of House 'Yes' vote on Social Security Amendment Act of 1965.

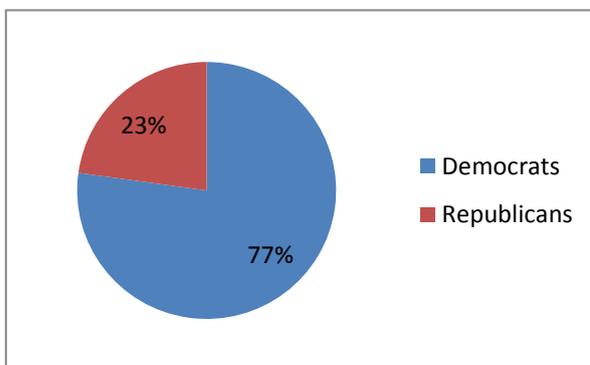
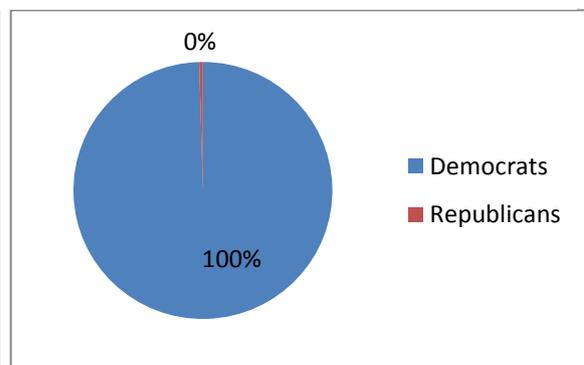


Figure 4.2- % Breakdown of House 'Yes' votes on Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, 2010.



significant GOP force lent some significant Republican support for the passage of several moderate (or even liberal-left) pieces of legislation, and even voted against their own party to stop cuts aimed at liberal programs.³⁷⁷ But, by 2010, we can see the practical impact of this I-Score-moderating, Northern cluster being lost (or significantly degraded). Not a single House Republican voted for the Affordable Care Act which they and their base derided as 'Obamacare'. The Act was ultimately passed in both chambers on almost pure party lines. In the House the vote came down to a slim 219-

³⁷⁷ Rae, *The Decline and Fall of Liberal Republicanism*, (Oxford, 1989), p. 183.

212 vote in favour. Every ‘yes’ vote was from a Democrat, 178 of the ‘No’ votes were Republican and they were joined in their opposition by 34 Democrats. In the Senate, after a tumultuous congress in which the Democrats struggled to maintain their control over the 60th vote following the death of Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA), the vote was entirely on party lines with no defections. It is ironic that the Senate, designed to be the more deliberative and bipartisan body,³⁷⁸ voted on party lines whilst the House did not entirely do so. Clearly the ‘electoral costs’³⁷⁹ of support for many of the remaining Southern and/or conservative Democrats were such that their support for the Affordable Care Act was impossible to give. Such is the polarization of modern Congress that since passage of the Affordable Care Act the House Republicans have voted 54 times to repeal (as of 21st March 2014).³⁸⁰ The Affordable Care Act (and the struggle to pass it) is indicative of the wider political climate of high party unity that prevails. Given that the 111th House had an overall I-Score of just 5.867% and that the two party’s leaderships were completely at-odds on this bill, it is not surprising that they had their way and steered both of their caucus to near-homogenous votes. In parliamentary-style, the two parties voted in an extremely conformist way as is increasingly common. Figure 4.3³⁸¹ shows the number of votes ‘on which a majority of voting Democrats opposed a majority of voting Republicans’ as a score of how many ‘party unity’ votes took place in each Congress.³⁸² As the graph shows there has been a steady increase since the 1950s with significant spikes in the past ten years. The Affordable Care Act is a good practical example of how declining I-Scores lead to polarization, but as I will show, it also reveals the influence still wielded by moderates on both sides of the aisles. To demonstrate this I will now consider the Senate passage of the Affordable Care Act and several high I-Scoring senators.

The Democratic-controlled Senate saw extraordinary procedural manoeuvres used to secure reconciliation between the House and Senate bills- a particularly extreme example of the procedural polarization that Theriault identifies.³⁸³ To ensure a filibuster-proof Super-Majority of 60 the Democrats needed the support of both moderate Democrats like Ben Nelson (D-NE) and perhaps even the support of moderate Republicans. Both sides (in the Senate) made ultimately failed attempts at

³⁷⁸ James Madison wrote that the Senate was designed to ‘protect the people against the transient impressions into which they themselves might be led’ taken from https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Origins_Development.htm accessed on 1st May 2014.

³⁷⁹ Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, ‘The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress; in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (July, 2010).

³⁸⁰ O’Keefe, ‘The House has voted 54 times in four years on Obamacare. Here’s the full list.’, *The Washington Post*, 21st March 2014.

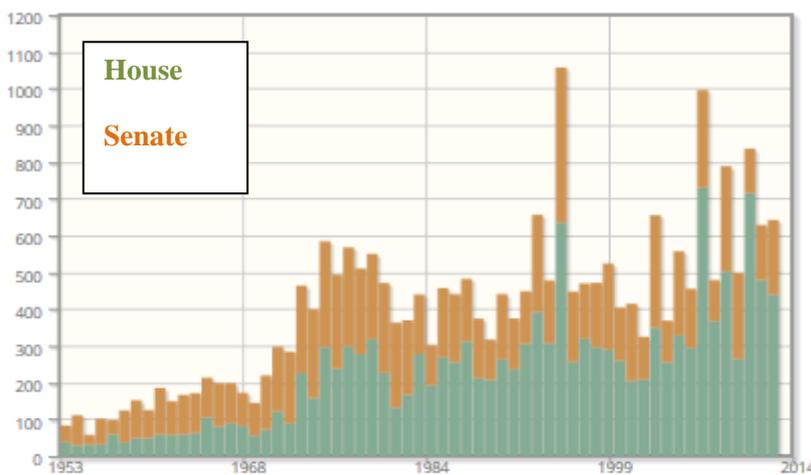
³⁸¹ Taken from <http://media.cq.com/votestudies/> accessed on 14th June 2014.

³⁸² Taken from <http://media.cq.com/votestudies/> accessed on 14th June 2014.

³⁸³ Theriault, *Party Polarization in Congress*, (Cambridge, 2008), p. 221.

courting moderate votes. In the end this process led to a pure party line vote on final passage (if we class Lieberman (I-CT) and Sanders (I-VT) as Democrats, given that they caucused with them during the 111th Congress and exclude Olympia Snowe’s (R-ME) vote to release the bill from committee). The final vote was won for the White House by Senator Reid and the Democratic leadership successfully courting moderate Democratic votes like Ben Nelson (D-NE) after the failure of the Democrats’ negotiations with (relatively) centrist Republicans. Who were the moderate votes on both sides that both Republican and Democratic leadership sought? I identify four potential moderate votes, all of whom have high the I-Scores we would expect of moderate centrists. These four are Joe Lieberman (I-CT), Arlen Specter (R then D-PA), the aforementioned Olympia Snowe of Maine (R-ME) and Ben Nelson (D-NE), the conservative Democrat from Nebraska. I will consider these crucial senators now. To put these essential moderates in perspective I have ranked all Senators in the 111th congress by I-Score and Party. Figure 4.4 plots all I-Scores in the 111th Senate by party, with higher I-Scores towards the middle. Republicans are more independent in their voting throughout the 111th Senate and from this the White House had a reasonable chance of peeling away some moderate Republican votes. However, for every moderate Republican vote secured liberal votes on the left were jeopardised. This meant that the Democratic Party, with an average I-Score of just 6.231% in the 111th Senate, was put in the position of splitting the party by reaching out across the aisle, or relying on securing a 60th vote (and/or procedural tactics) to pass a more liberal bill than any hypothetical health

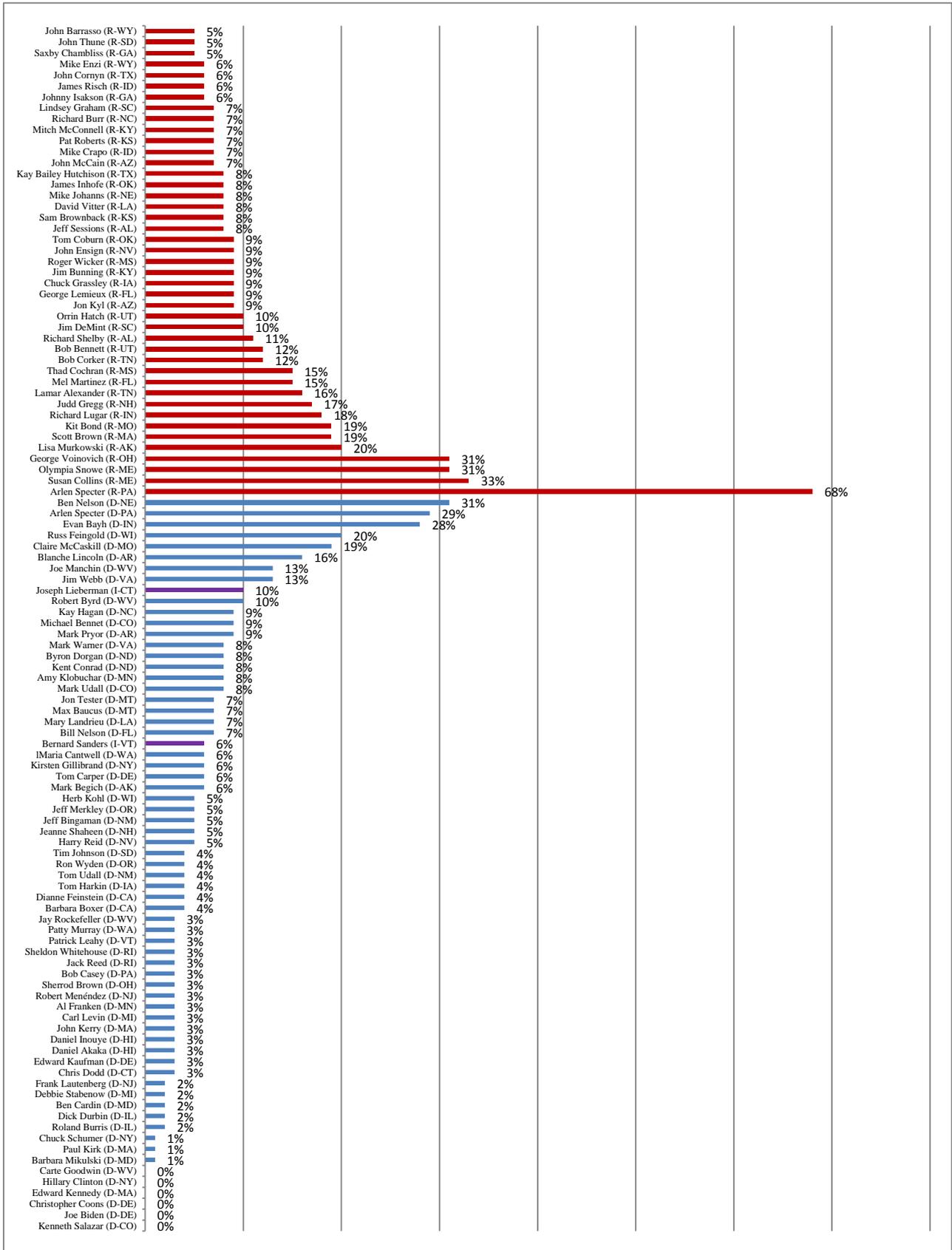
Figure 4.3- Number of Party Unity Votes, House and Senate.



reform which could carry Republican support as well. The initial strategy was to reach out to moderate Democrats and Republicans.

The first of the moderate voters I consider here is Arlen Specter (R-NE), who held a remarkable I-Score of 68% as a Republican (signalling his inevitable defection to the Democratic Party), and an I-Score of 29% as a Democrat once he had finally defected. Senator Specter is a good example of elite level sorting as he had clearly become distant from the average Republican ideological point, and his I-Score reflects this. The only other Republican, and indeed the *only* Republican prospect after Nelson swapped his party allegiance, was Senator Snowe (R-ME). Olympia Snowe voted against the party leadership in 31 percent of votes

Figure 4.4- 111th Senate. All I-Scores.



in the 111th Senate as she came towards the end of a long career as a moderate centrist (see Chapter Two for a case study in her I-Score profile). Snowe was considered as a potential ‘yes’ vote for longer than any other Republican, as she had voted to release the Affordable Care Act from the Finance Committee, though as she noted at the time this did not mean she would vote for the final bill. Snowe was the third most moderate Republican of the 111th Senate, after Specter and fellow Maine Senator Susan Collins R-ME).³⁸⁴

On the Democratic side Ben Nelson (D-NE), who voted against his party leadership 31% of the time, nearly ‘doomed’³⁸⁵ the healthcare bill before announcing his retirement and ‘speaking out more favourably.’³⁸⁶ In this case, once the ‘electoral costs’ were removed Nelson clearly felt more able to cast a more ideologically liberal vote than he would otherwise of done had he to confront Nebraska voters with his decision. Nelson secured concessions on abortion³⁸⁷ and negotiated the infamous ‘Cornhusker Kickback’ in pork-barrel Medicaid funding for Nebraska. Lieberman was also considered crucial to the Democratic effort after early signs of dissent, but as Figure 4.4 shows he was well within the Democratic fold in terms of party unity, and despite his Independent status he is only the 9th most independent minded senator in the Democratic Caucus.³⁸⁸ Lieberman had initially declared his opposition to a ‘government-created insurance company’³⁸⁹ and put the coveted 60th Democratic vote at risk by announcing that he would support the Republican filibuster.³⁹⁰ Nonetheless, he eventually reversed course and voted in favour, reporting in 2013 that he ‘stands by’ his vote for Obamacare.³⁹¹ The fact that these four Senators were the crucial votes validates the I-Score methodology, these four senators account for four of the five highest I-Scores in the 111th Senate. To develop this methodology in future studies and to add a predictive capacity to the scoring system, legislators could be scored on party disunity along issue-based lines. So, every legislator would be given an I-Score derived from their votes on key issues. For example, there could be an ‘economic I-Score’, a ‘national security I-Score’ a ‘gay rights/social issues I-Score’. Whilst this paper seeks to advance understanding of polarization through the study of party disunity and independent-voting, this could be expanded by designing thematic scores of party unity in future research. Then

³⁸⁴ Collins also voted against the ACA and despite her moderate record was not significantly courted by the White House or Democratic leadership.

³⁸⁵ Millman, ‘Ben Nelson: From 60th vote to ACA’s implementation’ in *Politico*, 23rd January 2014.

³⁸⁶ Millman, ‘Ben Nelson: From 60th vote to ACA’s implementation’ in *Politico*, 23rd January 2014.

³⁸⁷ Henderson, ‘Sen. Ben Nelson on being the 60th vote, abortion’ in *Politico*, 20th December 2009.

³⁸⁸ ‘Lieberman is not a right-wing Democrats. He is a moderate Democrat.’ See McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, ‘Joe Lieberman in Polarized America’ taken from

http://voteview.com/Joe_Lieberman_in_Polarized_America.pdf accessed on 6th July 2014.

³⁸⁹ Raju, ‘Joe Lieberman: I’ll block vote on Harry Reid’s plan’ in *Politico*, 27th October 2009.

³⁹⁰ Raju, ‘Joe Lieberman: I’ll block vote on Harry Reid’s plan’ in *Politico*, 27th October 2009.

³⁹¹ Wright, ‘Lieberman stands by Obamacare vote’ in *Politico*, 29th December 2013.

factions within the two parties could be better identified. As I argue, ideological variety and high I-Scores are crucial to un-doing polarization in a two-party system and the refinement of the methodology in this way would be the logical next step in the study of I-Scores, party variety and polarization. In this case we could, for instance, score Susan Collins on how often she votes against her party in general (her standard I-Score) before then tallying up in what percentage of the time she votes with her party on matters of healthcare. We might find that on healthcare votes Senator Collins is actually quite conformist to the Republican Party line whilst on other issues she is not. This would add another dimension to the analysis set out here. Whilst I-Scores are clearly very good predictors (four out of five senators in this vote) scoring on ideological themes/issues would be a sound next step.

Returning to the Affordable Care Act, this cluster of four moderate votes was urgently sought by both sides, but in an eventual capitulation to powerful party leadership they all voted on party lines. Whilst they had large potential power, in the final vote their “modifier” on the vote was nil. Another expansion of the analysis, prevented by the limited space available here, would be to consider the “modifier” effect of the groups reviewed in Chapter Two (for instance the Blue Dog Caucus, the Tea Party, Northern Republicans and Southern Democrats) on specific issues and votes. This would allow a cross-comparison of where each group, faction or caucus has the most impact. Perhaps whilst the Tea Party, for instance, has a large economic modifier on net Republican party unity (on matters like tax and deficit reduction) it has little or no impact on other issues. This could explain its low total modifier, as it has large impact on some issues which is negated by its limited impact on others. In the case of the Affordable Care Act, why did the four moderates all side with their party in the final vote? A number of factors can be identified beyond the general climate of declining I-Scores and tighter party unity I explore throughout this paper. Two distinct incentives are identified in the literature as exerting pull on party unity behaviour. Firstly, we must recognise a legislator’s reliance on incentives from leadership to fund their campaigns.³⁹² Where leadership incentives (such as pork-barrel spending) exceed electoral costs, legislators will support party leadership and thus decrease net I-Scores. Additional fundraising incentives exist for legislators of the Majority party, thus vesting the legislator with another financial incentive for party cohesion and “cartel” behaviour.³⁹³ The more united the party, the more likely it is to succeed in its agenda and retain majority control; thus netting these additional campaign funds. Theoretically phrased, leadership, cartel and campaign finance incentives all exceeded potential electoral costs for these four senators. Other factors also exist of

³⁹² Carson, Koger, Lebo and Young, ‘The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress’ in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (July, 2010).

³⁹³ Cox and McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*, (Cambridge, 2005).

course; Gerber, Huber, Doherty and Dowling raise ‘differences in policy confidence’ as one explanation for a legislator’s willingness to ‘adopt incongruent policy positions’.³⁹⁴ Unfortunately for Senator Specter he had miscalculated, and lost his seat, whilst the other three (Snowe, Lieberman and Nelson) all retired; thus negating electoral costs as a downside for their support. Without these costs Snowe and Nelson, who both represented states that typically vote for their opposition party in presidential elections, had no prospect of electoral reprisal from their constituents and were thus free to vote along the party line that would otherwise have jeopardised their prospects for re-election. Despite some prospects for high profile defections on this vote, there were none (save Specter’s switch in party allegiance- hardly surprising given his rather extreme disunity from the rest of the Republicans in the Senate). Figure 33 shows the I-Scores of the four most independent Senators in the 111th Senate (with Specter as a Democrat)³⁹⁵ plus Lieberman who was the other swing-vote and slight outlier, given his relative conformity, and compares these five scores to the averages of the two parties. Collins, despite having the highest (and therefore most promising I-Score) was only seen as potential vote if the White House and Democratic Leadership could secure Olympia Snowe. In conversation with then Congressman Weiner (D-NY), President Obama argued that securing Snowe’s vote ‘gets me [both] Snowe and Collins’. Jonathan Alter claims that ‘the president thought the moderate Republicans would also give him cover to nail down moderate Democrats like Ben Nelson, Mary Landrieu, and Blanche Lincoln’³⁹⁶ (all of whom did ultimately vote for passage, despite no moderate Republicans doing so). Nelson, Landrieu and Lincoln had I-Scores of 31, 7 and 16 percent respectively. It may well be the case that they were all likely to vote for the bill from the outset, but could use their status as crucial swing-votes to secure important concessions. Collins was ultimately not a key factor in the ACA vote negotiations after Snowe withheld her support, the two Senators are known to vote together very frequently.³⁹⁷ As posited above I would suggest a further development of this methodology breaking down I-Scores into thematic scores, so that legislators can be scored on their party unity along key votes. This could answer the question over whether the moderate Democrats were all secure votes or not (pending concessions) by comparing their economic/deficit hawk I-Scores with their healthcare I-Scores.

³⁹⁴ Gerber, Huber, Doherty and Dowling, ‘Citizens’ Policy Confidence and Electoral Punishment: A Neglected Dimension of Electoral Accountability’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 73, No. 4, (October, 2011), p. 1026.

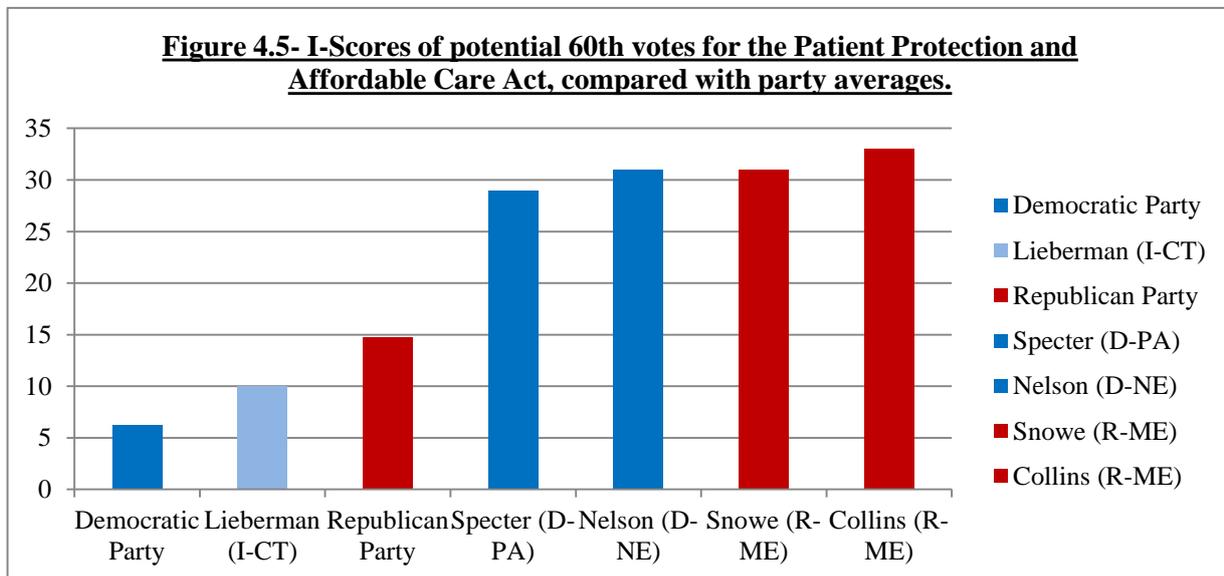
³⁹⁵ In Figure 4.4 I show Specter’s Democratic and Republican I-Scores.

³⁹⁶ Alter, *The Promise: President Obama, Year One*, (New York, 2010) p. 405.

³⁹⁷ ‘For years they have been treated as conjoined twins’ (Issenberg 2008) in Harris and Fried, ‘Maine’s Political Warriors: Senators Snowe and Collins, Congressional Moderates in a Partisan Era’ in *The New England Journal of Political Science*, p. 118 taken from http://nepsanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Maines_Political_Warriors.pdf accessed on 6th June 2014.

Given the large gulf between the averages of the Democratic swing votes (principally Nelson and Lieberman), and the average I-Score of the entire Democratic Senate Caucus, we can see just how hard it was for the Democratic Leadership to corral enough moderates to vote for passage without losing their left flank. In the end, as is the trend over the past decade, party unity won out after the moderates extracted concessions to limit the electoral costs of their support. Despite high levels of Republican disunity³⁹⁸ the Republican leadership prevented any Republican support for Obamacare in the Senate, despite the two blips of Arlen Specter’s defection (thus making his vote on Democratic lines a Democratic party unity vote rather than a vote against Republican party leadership) and Olympia Snowe’s support for the bill in committee (though not, ultimately, for passage).

Republican anger at Obamacare helped fuel the Tea Party,³⁹⁹ despite similar legislation being enacted by Republican Governor Mitt Romney, and Republicans like Richard Nixon and Nelson Rockefeller proposing similar (or even more liberal programmes)⁴⁰⁰ in the past. Though we know that the Tea Party had a limited (even negligible) modifier effect on the Republican Party I-Score from comparison of the 111th to 112th congresses, my dataset ends before we can consider their longer term impact. An issue-by-issue I-Score would be the next step in identifying which areas they had the most impact, we may find interesting results were we to consider a ‘Tea Party healthcare I-Score’ derived from all Tea Party Caucus votes on healthcare. Would they move the whole GOP right and increase



party unity in frequent repeal votes, before eventually exhibiting higher I-Scores in this behaviour as more mainstream Republicans moved away from efforts to repeal ‘Obamacare’? Would the

³⁹⁸ Due to a variety of reasons including Minority status and its 0.84% modifier for Republicans.

³⁹⁹ Dimaggio, *The Rise of the Tea Party*, (New York, 2011), p. 152.

⁴⁰⁰ Henderson, ‘10 past Republicans who’d never make it in today’s crazy GOP’ in *Salon*, 3rd October 2013.

correlation between high party unity and ideological polarization still hold under these conditions? Further use and refinement of the I-Score would be an excellent way of testing this. DW-NOMINATE is an excellent measure of polarization, but in this instance I-Scores sorted by theme or issue could offer a supplementary analysis of how and where the Tea Party influence party disunity. Presently, the I-Score methodology I use here demonstrates how, despite the swing-votes holding relatively moderate DW-NOMINATE scores, party unity (through incentives from party leadership to reduce electoral costs) trumped independent voting- even among this group of moderates. This fits the pattern of polarization described in the literature, and the I-Score decline found in this paper. In the Affordable Care Act vote we see the real-world effect of this; not a single Senator felt able to defy their party whip. Despite relatively high I-Scores, every swing-vote returned to the party fold. Nonetheless, I-Score to identify potential votes; this may be another example of their forecasting potential.

Whilst DW-NOMINATE is peerless when considering polarization through the prism of ideological distance between parties, I-Scores contribute to the debate by showing how the collapse of specific moderate groups and the rise of party unity drive polarization. By concentrating on ideological distance alone this might be overlooked; I-Scores also points to areas where polarization might be broken down (by a resurgence of Blue Dog Democrats, for instance). A caucus and/or thematic I-Score would allow much deeper analysis than the overview and demonstration permitted by the length of this paper.

The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, 2009.

The atmosphere in Washington in the weeks prior to Barack Obama's inauguration in 2009 was dominated by the uncertainty of the on-going financial crisis. The Obama administration's early focus was on passing a massive stimulus bill 'in the range of \$800 billion to \$1.2 trillion'⁴⁰¹ in order to kick-start the economy. It is this stimulus package that I consider here, which ultimately became known as the 'American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (of 2009)'. I will look at both House and Senate passage of this bill. Some early motions were made towards the idea of bipartisan cooperation, but as the febrile post-election environment settled into more familiar Washington routines the two parties fell into an aggressively partisan tug-of-war over the bill with the predictable low I-Score features. As with Obamacare this was a 'normal' vote by modern standards; that is to say it fell on almost perfect party lines in both chambers. What can I-Scores reveal about this vote? I will use I-

⁴⁰¹ B. Woodward, *The Price of Politics*, (New York, September 2012), p.5.

Score analysis of dissenting votes (legislators who voted against their party line either for or against) to show how the groups identified in the preceding chapter attempt to exert influence over their otherwise conformist parties. I begin with the House of Representatives, where the stimulus package was known as HR 1.

The final vote tally in the House was 244 ‘yes’ (all Democrats) and 188 ‘no’ (11 Democrats and 177 Republicans). The only defections in this vote were the 11 Democratic ‘no’ votes, which are my focus here. All but one of the defectors was a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, the outlier being Paul Kanjorski (D-PA). Kanjorski is a strange case in this vote; over the 111th congress his I-Score was only 3%, and he was not a Blue Dog. His defection on this issue is something of an anomaly. The other member of note is Parker Griffith (D-AL) who later defected to the Republicans shortly after the ARRA passed, due in part to his opposition to the later Affordable Care Act. Griffith’s I-Score of 26%, the third-highest in this group, is a good indicator of poor party sorting on his part (and of some relatively rare Democratic Party ideological variety, at least before his defection). The score shows that Griffith was increasingly at-odds with the majority of the Democratic Party. Whilst DW-NOMINATE would show his ideological differences with the party, by scoring his independence from the leadership we can see how that centrist (or even conservative) voting record actually manifests itself in percentage of roll call votes against his party. His transfer to the more ideologically appropriate Republican Party is an example of elite-level sorting, as ideologically misfit holdovers from the more heterogeneous parties of the past move to the more philosophically ‘correct’⁴⁰² party. Of course there are many such moderates who are not poorly sorted but simply don’t fit into either party, given their ideological extremity. The two legislators in this group who were more independent than Griffith are southerners Bobby Bright (D-AL) and Walt Minnick (D-ID), both of whom remained with the Democratic Party in spite of their incongruent voting record. For the ARRA vote however, Griffith too was still a Democrat.

Not every Blue Dog voted against the ARRA but a significant portion of their (dwindling) caucus did. Though they didn’t affect the final passage of the bill it is, for our purposes, a good example of a moderate group caught in the middle between the two parties without a well matched ideological home. As is consistently the case with other such groups (like liberal Republicans) the Blue Dogs do not have the “gravitational pull” (what I call a ‘modifier’) to actually do very much in moderating their party caucus/conference. As was the case in this vote, the Blue Dogs did not alter the outcome. Without the numbers to move the bill to the centre the Blue Dogs move to outright opposition. From the perspective of the party leadership, given a significant enough majority (like that

⁴⁰² Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011).

in the 111th House) it makes far more sense to rely on secure, numerous ideological votes on the left, rather than making large sacrifices to win a smattering of votes in the centre. This is why understanding party disunity through the I-Score method is important to understanding polarization as a whole. I-Score analysis shows how the collapse of specific factions has intensified party unity, leading to the highly polarized DW-NOMINATE party mean scores recorded over recent years. Of course these factions are identified in the literature, but this methodology emphasises them in a way that party unity scores don't.⁴⁰³ In the Democratic Party there were 185 congressmen with an I-Score of 3% or less. This extraordinary figure demonstrates how the very low numbers of fiscal conservatives in the small Blue Dog Caucus can exert any influence at all. Of course a parallel argument could be made for the GOP as well. The fact that only eleven Democratic votes (and zero Republican votes) could be prized away from their leadership is another indictment of high party unity, and the failure of the Blue Dogs to sink or modify the bill is another demonstration of moderates losing influence. The eleven Democratic dissenters represent just 2.5% of the total votes on this bill. As gerrymandering crafts liberal and conservative-only districts, moderates will continue to dwindle as redistricting erodes their support and opens them up to the threat of primary challenges.⁴⁰⁴

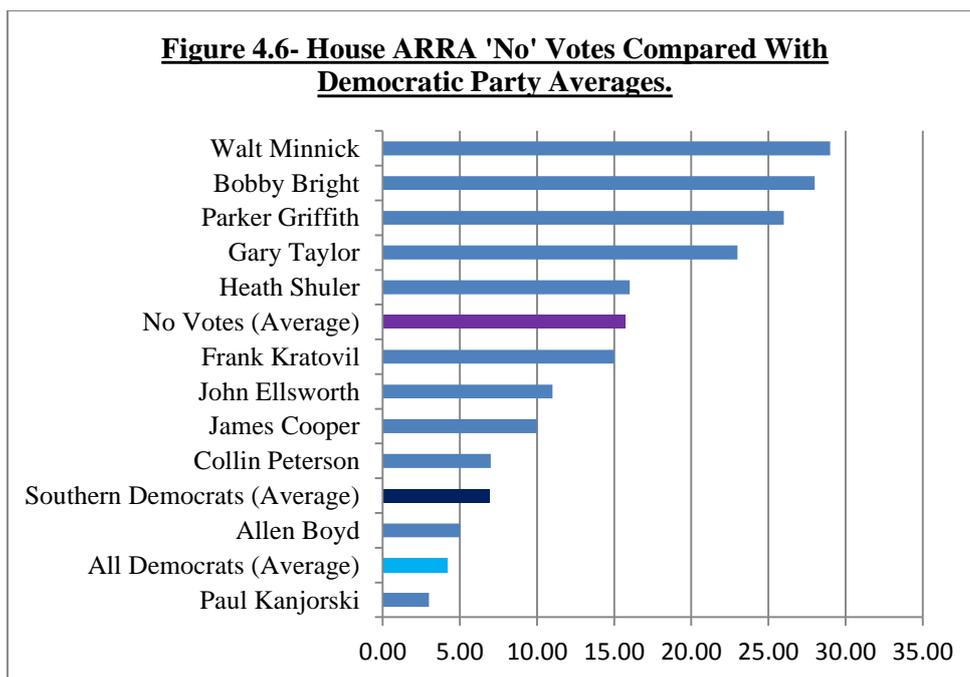


Figure 4.6 plots all Democratic 'no' votes, along with the average Democratic (House) scores for the 111th congress, the average Southern Democrat score and an average of all Democratic 'no'

⁴⁰³ Party unity scores are often used to show polarization; whereas my focus here is been on demonstrating that some heterogeneity still exists (albeit in very small numbers by historic standards).

⁴⁰⁴ Boatright, *Getting Primaried: The Changing Politics of Congressional Primary Challenges*, (Michigan, 2013).

votes. The only real anomaly is the aforementioned Kanjorski, who is less independent than the average Democrat, less independent than the average southern Democrat and far less independent than the average of ‘no’ votes on this bill. Allen Boyd, the next lowest I-Score for any no-vote is slightly more independent than the average Democrat, but only barely. Figure 4.6 shows the large gulf between the Blue Dog ‘no’ votes and the average of the Democratic Party.

In the Senate we have an inverse of what happened in the House. The final vote was 61 ‘yes’ and ‘37’ no. Every ‘no’ vote was Republican, whilst the yes vote was comprised of 56 Democrats, three Republicans and two independents. The two independents were Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and Bernard Sanders (I-VT). The three Republican defectors were Susan Collins (R-ME), Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Arlen Specter (R-PA). All three names are familiar by this point. It is surprising, however, that unlike in the House not a single Democrat voted ‘no’. I would anticipate the Senate being less partisan than the House⁴⁰⁵ and the I-Scores show that the Senate generally exhibits higher I-Scores than the House, however on this vote that was not the case. It is also surprising that Democrats from the South, with relatively high I-Scores, also stayed the course along the party line. For instance, both Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), with I-Scores of 7% and 16% respectively, both higher than the Southern Democratic House average of 6%, both voted along party lines. Other evidence exists to suggest that House polarization is filtering into the Senate⁴⁰⁶ (for instance through ex-House members winning Senate seats),⁴⁰⁷ and my I-Score analysis also suggests this given steadily falling I-Scores in both chambers.

One of the most important political effects of the stimulus was the rise of the Tea Party.⁴⁰⁸ The size of the stimulus package fed the discontent which culminated in the Tea Party protest movement, who saw the unprecedented \$1.2 trillion act as the most egregious example of Congressional pork-barrel spending in history.⁴⁰⁹ Phillip Dennis, founder of the Dallas Tea Party and adviser to the National Tea Party Coalition wrote for CNN that ‘Tea Party groups viewed the stimulus bill as the crowning moment of decades of irresponsible government fiscal behaviour. The federal

⁴⁰⁵ Uslaner, ‘Is the Senate More Civil Than The House?’, prepared for the Conference on “Civility and Deliberation in the Senate”, sponsored by the Robert Dole Institute through the Pew Charitable Trusts, (Washington DC, 1999).

⁴⁰⁶ Campbell and Rae, *The Contentious Senate: Partisanship, Ideology, and the Myth of Cool Judgement*, (Oxford, 2001).

⁴⁰⁷ Theriault and Rohde, ‘The Gingrich Senators and Party Polarization in the U.S. Senate’, in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 73, No. 4, (October, 2011).

⁴⁰⁸ Williamson, Skocpol and Coggin, ‘The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism’ in *Perspective on Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (March, 2011).

⁴⁰⁹ Foley, *The Tea Party: Three Principles*, (Cambridge, 2012), p. 226.

government is addicted to spending, and the consequences are now staring us in the face.’⁴¹⁰ As with the Affordable Care Act, an I-Score breakdown by issue would show us where Tea Party Republicans in successive congresses (after the end of my dataset) influenced policy most. Did they raise I-Scores by increasing ideology (rather than the conventional pattern seen since 1991 here, where high I-Scores indicate moderation) or did they increase DW-NOMINATE scores and lower I-Scores, by moving the centre of mass in the Republican Conference to their agenda? This is another example of what is being missed about the process of polarization by simply concentrating on aggregate party ideology scores. Party disunity is a crucial measure of polarization but it also shows the most and least conformist blocks, indicating exactly which sections of a party are driving polarization. This has produced surprising results. A thematic I-Score would allow an even more precise identification of where this is taking place.

As for some context to the passage of the ARRA, let us consider briefly the role of the White House. During the preliminary conversations between the then-President-elect and Congressional leadership, the incoming President made a number of rhetorical overtures to the Republican leadership. Two-weeks before his inauguration during a meeting with the President-elect, Vice President-elect Biden and senior Democratic and Republican congressional leadership figures, Obama made his opening moves to elicit the support of Republicans for his economic recovery agenda. Speaking of the need to ‘‘build in medium and long term fiscal discipline’’ to tame the growing federal deficit⁴¹¹ the President-elect asked for ‘everyone’s ideas’, going on to state that ‘if it works, we don’t care whose idea it is.’⁴¹² These are clear appeals to Republican priorities like fiscal restraint, which shortly went on to become a key Tea Party mantra. Whilst paying lip-service to bipartisanship, Obama’s brief Senate record speaks for itself. In the 109th Senate he had an I-Score of 5%; in the 110th he had an I-Score of 4%. This was six points below the average (11.174%) Democratic I-Score in the 109th Senate, and three points below the significantly reduced Democratic Senate I-Score of 7.059% in the 110th Senate. This makes Obama the third least independent Senator of the 109th Senate, and the ninth least independent Senator of the 110th Senate. As he served for such a brief time in the Senate a pattern is hard to discern, but from the two Senates he did serve in, Senator Obama was amongst the most ideological Democratic Senators. As for the Vice President, Joe Biden had an extensive Senate career, but by the 110th Senate (directly before assuming office as Vice President) he had an I-Score of just 3% (ranking him third worst in terms of high party unity). Whilst DW-NOMINATE plots legislator ideology, a distinct measure of how often congressmen and senators vote against their party

⁴¹⁰ Phillip Dennis, ‘Tea Party leader: What we want’ in *CNN* (16th April 2013) taken from <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/04/15/dennis.tea.party.goals/index.html> accessed on 31st July 2013.

⁴¹¹ B. Woodward, *The Price of Politics*, (New York, September 2012), p. 6.

⁴¹² B. Woodward, *The Price of Politics*, (New York, September 2012), p. 6.

line offers unique insights into how bipartisan they are actually likely to be. The I-Score, being firmly grounded in (and derived from) real-world roll call voting data contributes to the field here by measuring past behaviour and a legislator's propensity to break ranks with their party, as we have seen throughout, this has been a reliable indicator of future behaviour. At the party-level, rather than just measuring polarization with average DW-NOMINATE scores of each party on one dimension, I-Scores blend elements of party unity scores with measures of ideology, to score legislators on what essentially amounts to how likely they are to be bipartisan.

Obama's own position on deficit reduction and the economy generally was initially quite mixed. Viewed with hindsight, from an I-Score perspective and given that the deficit and the national debt both surged under the Obama administration (as they had under Bush), Obama's private claim in the negotiations about 'fiscal discipline' was ultimately rather reminiscent of Pelosi's similar promise in 2007 of 'no new deficit spending';⁴¹³ under her tenure and the least years of the Bush presidency, the US national debt increased by almost \$5 trillion.⁴¹⁴ The major priorities of the early Obama Administration from 2009 onwards (namely the ARRA stimulus and the Affordable Care Act), show that the Democratic leadership (in the White House and Congress) clearly put economic growth through stimulus above deficit reduction, and subscribed to the view that a large stimulus package would "kick-start" the economy (as President Bush also argued).⁴¹⁵ Indeed in 2013 President Obama remarked in an interview with ABC News that the country did not have a 'debt'⁴¹⁶ problem. As for Obama's personal ideology, he described himself as a 'Blue Dog' Democrat in private⁴¹⁷ (despite never caucusing with them) but this seems completely at odds with his Administration's economic policy. One of the first major economic decisions of Obama's presidency was a \$1.2 trillion stimulus; hardly the actions of a fiscally conservative Democrat. Obama's I-Scores over the two-senate period he served point to a consistently low record of independent-voting, and given the correlation between high party unity and high ideology found by Clinton et al⁴¹⁸ and cited at the start of this paper, Obama's efforts to reach out to Republicans before taking office (whether genuine or not) were never

⁴¹³ T. P. Jeffrey, 'Debt Has Increased \$5 Trillion Since Speaker Pelosi Vowed, 'No New Deficit Spending'' in *CNS News* taken from <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/debt-has-increased-5-trillion-speaker-pelosi-vowed-no-new-deficit-spending> accessed on 2nd March 2013.

⁴¹⁴ Taken from <http://www.usgovernmentdebt.us/> accessed on 6th July 2014.

⁴¹⁵ Bush signed a \$700 billion stimulus bill.

⁴¹⁶ ABC News interview transcript, conducted by George Stephanopoulos taken from <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2013/03/transcript-president-obamas-interview-with-george-stephanopoulos/> accessed on 29th April 2013.

⁴¹⁷ Matt Bai, 'Debt-Busting Issue May Force Obama Off Fence' in *The New York Times*, 30th November 2010.

⁴¹⁸ Clinton, Katznelson and Lapinski, 'Where Measures Meet History: Party Polarization During the New Deal and Fair Deal' in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties, and Representation in America*, p. 17, taken from https://my.vanderbilt.edu/joshclinton/files/2013/06/CKL_Mayhew-Conference.pdf accessed on 17th April 2014.

likely to involve serious compromise on the contents of the bill by the Democrats; as evidenced by the opposition of key Blue Dog Democrats and the overwhelming support of liberal, mainstream Democrats. Unfortunately the ARRA is evidence of further decline of the Blue Dog Caucus, and a reaffirmation of the fact that there are no 'liberal' Republicans left in Congress. Some centrists remain, but both parties are increasingly well sorted leaving little place for these un-adjusted moderates. On the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, high party unity ensured a near-total grip by party leadership over intra-party splits.

National Security.

In the two preceding sections I have presented two fairly straightforward examples of party unity votes. Now I turn to an area of debate where traditional party labels are increasingly unhelpful. In recent years, national security and the powers of the government to tap without warrant and detain American citizens (or even to target them for death abroad), have divided opinion. Crucially however, they have divided them across party lines. Strange coalitions, not unlike the bipartisan moments of the 1950s or 60s, have formed to advance or repel government power in the realm of national security. These divisions have split the Republican Party along a libertarian-authoritarian axis, with Tea Party favourites like Rand Paul (R-KY) and Justin Amash (R-MI) leading the charge against neo-conservative hawks like John McCain (R-AZ) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC). On the Democratic side of the aisle leadership and inside figures like Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) now support policies not unlike those which led to Democratic calls for impeachment when they were advocated by President Bush.⁴¹⁹ On the far left, Democratic-caucusing Independent Bernie Sanders (I-VT) contests the national security agenda of his caucus leadership along with fellow Democrats like John Conyers (D-MI). This raises an interesting anomaly and is completely at odds with the picture of polarization found in the academic literature. There is still huge ideological polarization, but it is not partisan or party-based. Intra-party splits now come to the fore, validating I-Scores and an emphasis on party disunity and ideological heterogeneity.

Although beyond the dataset of this study, the Amash-Conyers amendment of the 113th Congress is a peerless example of this anomaly. I consider this amendment principally because it is such a good example of intra-party ideological variety, and I use it to demonstrate the merit and

⁴¹⁹ 'Some House Democrats, including ranking Judiciary Committee member John Conyers Jr. of Michigan, have called for impeachment hearings into allegations that Bush misled the nation about Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction and the he violated federal law by approving warrantless wiretaps on Americans' from Babington, 'Democrats Won't Try To Impeach President' in *The Washington Post*, (12th May 2006).

advantages of the I-Score methodology, and to put forward a potential advancement of the I-Score methodology. Rather than breaking down I-Scores and analysing them as I have in the previous two case studies, I instead use the amendment vote to show how I-Scores inform our understanding of polarization, and to offer a refinement of the measure for future study (the aforementioned issue-by-issue I-Score, which is not possible in a thesis of this length which also covers such a large period of time). The amendment, aimed at blocking warrantless NSA surveillance, was heavily attacked by the White House who argued that, ‘the blunt approach [of the Amendment] is not the product of an informed or deliberative process’ and stating that ‘[the White House] oppose[s] the current effort in the House to hastily dismantle one of our Intelligence Community’s counterterrorism tools.’⁴²⁰ The White House urged the House to reject the Amendment. What followed was a baffling display of bipartisanship, and a complete breakdown of the party unity model we have come to expect.

Whereas Wildavsky found that ‘presidents have had much greater success in controlling the nation’s defense and foreign policies than in dominating its domestic policies,’⁴²¹ Fleisher and Bond argued in 1988 that presidential ascendancy in foreign and defense policy existed ‘only for Republicans’.⁴²² Shortly before the War on Terror, Fleisher, Bond, Krutz and Hanna concluded that ‘foreign policy voting has become considerably more partisan’.⁴²³ Whilst 9/11 saw dramatic displays of presidential power⁴²⁴ over congress along the lines of the ‘two presidencies’ thesis, this subsided in the near decade and a half since, and what we find now is not just a partisan divide over foreign policy and national security, but very entrenched intra-party divides. This has made the foreign and defense policy arena in Congress a far more convoluted space than that described half a century ago by Wildavsky; this is epitomised in the Amash-Conyers amendment vote. This is where I-Scores can be of immense use in tracing these fractures; I also suggest enhancements on my current methodology which would make I-Scores an even more useful tool for political scientists, in addition to established methodologies.

When the House finally voted on the Amash-Conyers Amendment (HR 2397) it saw Michelle Bachmann (R-MN), Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Paul Ryan (R-WI), Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL), John Boehner (R-OH) and Steny Hoyer (D-MA) all vote together on the same side, to continue the

⁴²⁰ Remarks by White House Press Secretary Jay Carney quoted from, Logiurato, ‘The White House Blasts The ‘Amash Amendment’ That Would Hamper The NSA’s Surveillance Powers’ in *Business Insider*, (23rd July 2013).

⁴²¹ Wildavsky, ‘The two presidencies’ in *Trans-Action*, Volume 4, (December, 1966), p. 7.

⁴²² Fleisher and Bond, ‘Are There Two Presidencies? Yes, But Only for Republicans’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 50, Issue 3, (August, 1988).

⁴²³ Fleisher, Bond, Krutz and Hanna, ‘The Demise of the Two Presidencies’ in *American Politics Research*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (January, 2000), p. 3.

⁴²⁴ Such as the PATRIOT Act.

NSA surveillance program. This was an extraordinary display of bipartisanship and was attacked vociferously by those campaigning against warrantless surveillance. As Glenn Greenwald, who first reported the Snowden leaks, argues, ‘when it comes to foreign policy, war, assassinations, drones, surveillance, secrecy, and civil liberties, President Obama’s most stalwart, enthusiastic defenders are often found among the most radical precinct of the Republican Party’.⁴²⁵ This is not an accurate rendering of how Obama’s foreign policy is received by Republicans as the ‘two presidencies’ theory of Wildavsky breaks down under polarization,⁴²⁶ but on the issue of civil liberties Greenwald does have something of a point, as the roll call vote shows. On the final HR 2397 vote, the 205 ‘yes’ votes consisted of 111 Democrats and 94 Republicans; whilst the 217 ‘no’ votes contained 83 Democrats and 134 Republicans.⁴²⁷ The number of Democratic ‘yes’ votes represent an extraordinary display of independent voting; more Democrats defied their party leadership than voted for it. 57% of Democrats voted against their party; and so in the parlance of I-Scores we would say the Democratic Caucus as a whole had an I-Score of 57% on this issue, for this vote. Considering that the actual Democratic I-Score average across all votes in the immediately preceding 112th Congress was only 9.84%, this figure of 57% is astounding. As for the ‘no’ votes, more Republicans voted to support President Obama’s position than voted against. The Republicans had an I-Score, on this vote, of 41%; again an extraordinary figure. This was a remarkable vote in which a liberal Democratic President relied completely on right-wing Republican votes to defeat his own party on a crucial national security vote. In the unlikely event that this was repeated on other issues, it would ameliorate the concern spelled out by Parker and Dull that ‘divided government generates more and more-intensive congressional investigations’ but that this oversight is ‘contingent on partisan... factors’.⁴²⁸ In other words, polarization would make legislative oversight of the executive explicitly partisan in nature. The vote on the Amash-Conyers Amendment, despite the Amendment’s defeat, is a reassuring example of bipartisan willingness to hold the executive branch to account. Though, as I state in the beginning of

⁴²⁵ Glenn Greenwald, ‘Democratic establishment unmasked: prime defenders of NSA bulk spying’ in *The Guardian*, (25th July 2013).

⁴²⁶ Canes-Wrone, Howell and Lewis note Wildavsky’s ‘emphasis on bipartisanship as a key predictor of whether the president will enjoy greater influence in foreign policy’ in Canes-Wrone, Howell and Lewis, ‘Towards a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Re-evaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis’ in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 70, No. 1, (January, 2008), p. 7.

⁴²⁷ Clerk of the House, ‘Final Vote Results for Roll Call 412/ HR 2397’, 24th July 2013.

⁴²⁸ Parker and Dull, ‘Divided We Quarrel: The Politics of Congressional Investigations, 1947-2004’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3, (August, 2009).

this section, in the present climate this vote was exceptional. There are few other signs that the legislature's oversight role is being conducted in a bipartisan way.⁴²⁹

This vote marks a milestone for the issue of privacy in American political debate. Hetherington points to 'salience'⁴³⁰ of an issue to question whether the American public can really be divided over something that they don't particularly care about.⁴³¹ Others have also made this point.⁴³² Surveillance was typically far less salient than national security. However a Pew Polling Report in 2013, released two days after the Amash-Conyer vote, found that for the first time in 'Pew Research polling... more [respondents] have expressed concern over civil liberties than protection from terrorism since the question was first asked in 2004'.⁴³³ This meant that for many legislators the issue was (if not already) important for them too and not what Chris Christie called, an 'esoteric, intellectual debate'.⁴³⁴ The increasing salience of civil liberties and the public split over security on the one hand and civil liberties on the other may have interesting consequences for polarization. The bipartisan nature of the ideological divide over warrantless surveillance is such that two coalitions have formed; one broadly authoritarian on surveillance, and one broadly libertarian on surveillance. Indeed this topic has received attention in the literature already, 'Hetherington and Weiler suggest that the parties are also sorting on another... dimension, namely authoritarianism'.⁴³⁵ Given the increasing salience of these issues and the (currently informal) formation of two rival blocs on this debate, votes like the Amash-Conyers amendment roll call will likely become increasingly common as the two coalitions grapple for control over policy. The experience of bipartisan cooperation may bleed across into other themes and issue clusters, and as legislators gain their first experience of cooperating with the other party the practices of a functioning, bipartisan congress may once again become normalised. There is no way to be sure, however and only time will tell. Another structural shift has muddied the waters somewhat, further clouding the otherwise clear-cut picture of elite-level polarization found by this thesis, and throughout the literature. The loss of Republican 'ownership' of national security is

⁴²⁹ For instance John Boehner's announcement of a lawsuit against the President, who denounced it as 'a stunt'. Ample news coverage, for instance, Breitman, 'Barack Obama: John Boehner's lawsuit 'a stunt'' in *Politico*, 27th June 2014.

⁴³⁰ Hetherington, 'Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective' in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 436.

⁴³¹ Hetherington, 'Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective' in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), p. 436.

⁴³² Wroe, Ashbee and Gosling, 'The Culture War and Issue Salience: An Analysis of American Sentiment on Traditional Moral Issues' in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2, (May 2014).

⁴³³ 'Few See Adequate Limits on NSA Surveillance Program But More Approve Than Disapprove' in *Pew Research*, 26th July 2013.

⁴³⁴ Gold, 'Chris Christie: Rand Paul 'dangerous'' in *Politico*, 26th July 2013.

⁴³⁵ Hetherington, 'Review Article: Putting Polarization in Perspective' in *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2009), pp. 440-441.

also at play. Identified by Goble and Holm⁴³⁶ in the mid-2000s, a new Democratic Party ascendancy on national security issues is something the party leadership are clearly keen to cultivate and retain where possible; the distribution of votes on the Amash-Conyers roll call is telling, the size of the Republican defection points to the emergence of civil liberties as an equally (or even more) salient issue in their conference than national security is. This may further endanger the “traditional” Republican lead on matters of national security. As shown, both parties harbour deep divisions over this. The national security v. civil liberties debate is a rare example of very poor party sorting⁴³⁷ in the modern era.

What can I-Scores tell us about this non-partisan, but deeply ideological schism? At the moment we know that party leadership on both sides is currently defending the established practices of the National Security Agency to conduct “bulk” spying. Significant blocks of Democratic and Republican votes are defying their leadership on these issues. This may encourage further defections on other issues as legislators become used to breaking with the party line (establishing new norms, or returning to old ones); I-Scores will be effective at measuring these defections when they occur, and a larger, subsequent study can break-down the analysis thematically to see where and why defections are occurring and on what issues. This will begin to establish whether revolts on civil liberties are bleeding across into related areas like the limits of presidential power, broader American foreign policy and interrelated Fourth Amendment debates. This is not standard polarization because the gulf is philosophical, not partisan. This limits the applicability of DW-NOMINATE series single-dimension party mean points because measures of aggregate ideological distance between members or parties will not tell us where defections are likely to occur.⁴³⁸ As we have seen, very liberal Democrats are allying with very libertarian (and conservative) Republicans. As civil liberties become more salient to voters and thus to legislators, the I-Score will be crucial in picking out clusters, caucuses, groups, regions and states where civil liberty defectors can out-vote national security conformists. A low national security I-Score will be a better indicator of voting behaviour on issues of civil liberties than a legislator’s position in a DW-NOMINATE series left-right distribution because the I-Score is derived from past propensity to rebel, and is thus a reliable indicator of future roll call choices. The two methodologies complement each-other of course, but in this situation a thematic I-Score will be of more use than establishing how liberal or conservative a legislator is; which is often the sole scale

⁴³⁶ Goble and Holm, ‘Breaking Bonds? The Iraq War and the Loss of Republican Dominance in National Security’ in *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 2, (June, 2009).

⁴³⁷ Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 3rd Edition, (Longman, 2011).

⁴³⁸ Though DW-NOMINATE can of course plot in more than one dimension, as a measure of polarization it is often used to show the difference between party mean points on a one dimension scale (see Figure 3.1 for an example of this).

used to assess the aggregate difference between the two parties. Equally, traditional party unity scores will be of limited use here because, for instance, a hypothetical liberal Democrat who votes with his party in 98% of votes may regularly defect on matters of privacy and civil liberties. An aggregate-legislator-party unity score would not show this, where a thematic I-Score breakdown of a legislators voting history would. We miss a part of the polarization puzzle by concentrating on average ideological scores (be they of legislators or whole parties).

Another unique feature of this issue theme is that debate is taking place among those with high I-Scores. High I-Scoring Republicans like Rand Paul (R-TX) are on the other side of the debate from other high I-Scoring Republicans like John McCain (R-AZ). This is because the debate takes place away from the traditional left-right scale. As I-Scores effectively measure legislator distance from two poles (the left wing Democratic Party Unity average and the right wing Republican Party average), they can perhaps predict engagement in the debate, but not which side a legislator will come down on. This is where we have to use qualitative data (as set out in Chapter Two) to place legislators in the correct context. It is also an argument for refining the I-Score methodology into a series of issue-by-issue scores in subsequent research.

Conclusion.

At the beginning of this paper I note the emphasis on mean party ideology scores within the literature. I also note that party unity is considered a precondition of polarization; unless parties are homogenous, they cannot be said to be polarized. DW-NOMINATE is peerless for establishing these relative party positions and shows convincingly that in broad terms the parties are polarized, if only at the elite level (whilst mass polarization is currently disputed by academics). Whilst I do not dispute the validity of an approach focusing on mean party scores (and indeed partially use mean scores of my own design here), this approach alone does have the unintended effect of crowding out the remaining moderates, absorbed as they are by the ideological mass of their party's mean score. This means that a significant piece of the polarization "puzzle" is being neglected by focus on majority behaviour. Instead, my focus has been on the few remaining clusters of legislators who are not well sorted, and who remain ideologically incongruent with their party. In Chapter Two, with reference to the literature and to Poole and Rosenthal's data, I show that a high I-Score will almost always indicate a moderate/centrists voting record and demonstrate (with mean I-Score points) that ideological variety still exists, albeit in relatively small pockets.

The collapse of conservative, southern Democrats and liberal, northern Republicans (for example) is a heavily researched area; but less attention is paid in the literature to their current state, save to say that they are "extinct" or otherwise negligible. I have devoted significant research (and developed a new methodology) to situate these remaining moderates against their party averages and provide a detailed analysis of how they vote, and what impact they have on their two parties today. Using the I-Score I have quantified their impact on mean party unity, and place it into a historical context. I have developed weighted 'modifiers' for several significant groups of moderates, and suggest areas where future I-Score analysis could be conducted.

My reasoning for focusing on these outliers is three-fold. Firstly, these groups were once historically significant and are now significantly depleted. This makes study of their decline and current state not merely interesting but urgent, before expectations of total party unity by party leadership and ideological activists make ideological moderation impossible in the two-party system and the remaining moderates leave office. The second main reason for focusing on this minority is because the pattern of their numerical decline (through comparison of different I-Scores) can tell us a lot about how polarization (in the form of high party unity) has come about. In which states, regions and caucuses has moderate decline fed ideological extremism most? This brings us onto the third justification for a focus on the heterogeneous minority; if I-Scores can identify where moderates once existed and where some still remain, might it also point to where they may one day make a resurgence?

In Chapter Four I address this point with study of unusual bipartisan-voting on national security and civil liberties, which can be visualised with DW-NOMINATE scores but which is well understood in terms of actual voting disloyalty to party leadership, which the I-Score is derived from.

Much of the literature uses only one axis (liberal-conservative) of DW-NOMINATE to show that congress is polarized, but several debates now fall down on lines which are not left or right. Whilst DW-NOMINATE can demonstrate this on the basis of individual votes to show which legislators voted together, it may mean that visualizing polarization with only one dimension and party mean points becomes less useful in the future. Polarization is great on civil liberties, but it is not partisan between Democrats and Republicans, it cuts across party lines. The I-Score is well suited to identifying and analysing independent-minded legislators who defy their respective leadership on these issues, but a thematic or issue-by-issue I-Score for each legislator would greatly increase the methodologies utility, in concert with DW-NOMINATE. This refinement of the I-Score methodology could advance their use now that this paper has introduced the system and provided a broad overview of I-Score behaviour in the last twenty years. Future studies could make use of two-dimensional DW-NOMINATE vote analysis along with thematic/issue-cluster I-Scores.

This paper aims to complement DW-NOMINATE and party unity scores, but cautions against using DW-NOMINATE in one dimension with party mean scores as a definitive proof that polarization exists and is getting worse. This is true on the whole, but I-Scores show that the picture is more complex than that and the methodology demonstrates that party variety and ideological heterogeneity still exist; a feature of American politics which is not well developed in the literature given the understandable focus on the conformist majority. There is a danger of over-emphasis on party unity, where in fact party disunity (I-Scores) can tell us a great deal about sorting, realignment and where elite-level polarization has come from. As I write above, I-Scores may also offer some forecasting potential for showing where moderate legislators may yet be elected in the future if current trends are ever to be reversed.

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