Spring 5-1-2015

Meeting in the Middle: The Impact of Single-Party Dominance on Partisan Politics

William Samuel Adcock
University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/masters_theses

Part of the American Politics Commons

The University of Southern Mississippi

MEETING IN THE MIDDLE: THE IMPACT OF SINGLE-PARTY

DOMINANCE ON PARTISAN POLITICS

by

William Samuel Adcock

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

Approved:

Dr. Marija Bekafigo
Committee Chair

Dr. Troy Gibson

Dr. Kate Greene

Dr. Karen S. Coats
Dean of the Graduate School

May 2015

ABSTRACT

MEETING IN THE MIDDLE: THE IMPACT OF SINGLE-PARTY

DOMINANCE ON PARTISAN POLITICS

by William Samuel Adcock

May 2015

Polarization within the American government has reached near historic levels in recent decades. One of the most readily apparent results of this partisan atmosphere is the increase in the number of American states that are almost totally controlled by one of the two major political parties. This study seeks to examine the effect this single-party domination has on the policy positions of Senate candidates of the minority parties in these states. It is hypothesized that minority party candidates seeking election in these states will be more likely to adopt policy positions more commonly associated with the platforms of the majority party in an effort to remain viable, leading to increased levels of political homogeneity.

In an effort to measure these policy deviations, the campaign websites of Senate candidates for each state over three elections will be examined, and positions regarding five typically polarized issues will be recorded. These positions will then be compared to the official platforms of the two parties' national organizations. Candidates will be scored on a party loyalty scale according to their adherence to or deviation from their party's official position. Using these scores, candidates from single-party dominated states will be compared to their counterparts from more competitive states to gain a clearer picture of the true nature of political competition.

DEDICATION

This thesis could not have been completed without the patience and assistance of several people:

Thank you, Barbara Adcock, for your constant encouragement throughout my entire academic career. You believed in me even when I didn't, and never let me quit.

Thank you, Desiree Lowry, for always being there when I was at the end of my rope, for your limitless patience with me, and for your invaluable Excel expertise. I honestly could not have done it without you.

Thank you, Elizabeth Cranford, for knowing the answer to every single question asked, no matter how esoteric, obscure, or downright weird. I don't know how the department would run without you there.

Thank you, Dr. Bodhi Ronin, for your tireless enthusiasm and encouragement. Also, for the Jack Daniel's and Corona.

Finally, thank you Ernie, Jean, and David Adcock. I couldn't have wished for a better family. You'll never know how much you taught me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without my friend and colleague, Joshua Adam Freeman. His assistance with statistical data, formatting, and general refinement was deeply appreciated.

Thank you, Dr. Marija Bekafigo, Dr. Troy Gibson, and Dr. Kate Greene for your guidance and your willingness to answer panicked emails at all hours of the night.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Tables

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the 2014 election, a long-term incumbent Senator in Mississippi faced a challenge from a Democratic candidate. Thad Cochran was a Republican running in one of the most solidly Republican states, for a seat he has held since the early 1970's. His Democratic challenger, Travis Childers, was never considered more than the longest of long shots to win, considering the deep and abiding loyalty enjoyed by the Republican Party in the South in general, and especially in deep red Mississippi.

However, as the race unfolded Travis Childers began hewing further and further from the generally understood Democratic Party policy stances. From his opposition to marriage equality, to his extremely conservative stance regarding abortion, Childers began to look less and less like a Democrat and more and more like a conservative Republican. In a state that is so clearly dominated by the Republican Party, perhaps Mr. Childers thought his only chance to remain at all viable as a candidate lay in adopting the conservative policies he knew the constituency he was vying to represent favored. This raises an important question: Are minority party candidates more likely to adopt policies of the majority party in single-party dominated states?

There are certain logical benefits to a candidate abandoning the typical policy positions of the national party to which he belongs. There are also obvious downsides to such policy deviations. There is a great deal of electoral math and strategy calculation that must be done in order to decide if the rewards outweigh the risk for each particular candidate, not least among them the electoral makeup and policy desires of the constituency they hope to represent.

I argue that in states dominated by one of the two major political parties, minority party candidates would consider this a necessary tactic. To abandon the generally held policies of the party a candidate ostensibly represents seems to fly in the face of the entire purpose behind political parties. However, if clinging to the positions of a candidate's national party is tantamount to political suicide, there is certain logic in abandoning those policies in favor of positions the candidate knows to be preferred by the electorate. This phenomenon is most likely to present itself in states where the challenger stands little to no chance of beating an entrenched incumbent in a primary election or clawing his or her way into an established majority party hierarchy. In the case of the aforementioned Mississippi Senatorial race, Thad Cochran has held his seat since 1978, and is currently the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, giving him a strong hand in spending legislation within the Federal government. This is the kind of influence that can make an incumbent much more difficult to defeat in a primary. Attempting to run as a member of the minority party removes the roadblock of a long-term incumbent, who has had an entire career to accrue power and influence to help maintain a massive incumbent advantage.

It is important to incorporate the current understanding of political campaigns with the behavior of modern candidates. As there is little evidence to show that the modern partisan climate will moderate any time soon, the effect that these single-party dominated states are having on candidate policy positions will likely be an important consideration for candidates for years to come. It is important to understand if these policy deviations are having any effect on the actual governance of the country as well.

In the second chapter, this thesis will review the theories and studies that have established our current understanding of political campaigns and the motivations that drive men and women to seek office, despite the rigorous and punishing road to election. The growth in the number of single-party dominated states will also be examined, including factors that lead to political homogeneity within a state's citizens. It will also lay out the historical advantages of party identification for candidates, as well as the modern climate of party and ideological purity. Of particular interest will be the influence of the modern Tea Party wing of the Republican Party and its effect on policy deviation by Republican Party candidates. Finally, factors other than being a member of the minority party that can contribute to ideological deviation will be discussed, such as a candidate's personal beliefs and the weight of local concerns that may not be addressed in national party policy.

The third chapter will explain the methods by which such policy deviations will be measured. Additionally, the factors that establish a state as single-party dominated or politically competitive will be discussed. Also found within this chapter will be a breakdown of the specific policies that will be used to compare individual candidate positions to those of their national parties, as well as a guide to the scoring system that will be employed to quantify those positions. As this scoring system is unique to this thesis, it is important to understand how the candidates have been scored and how the challenges regarding subjectivity have been addressed.

The fourth chapter will contain the results of this study. These results will be broken down by party affiliations as well as the political competition levels of the states. The results of the examination of the fluctuations in the number of single-party dominated states will also be presented and discussed.

The fifth chapter will explain the significance of the observed results. Possible explanations for any unexpected results will be offered, along with an examination of where this thesis fits into the preexisting literature and understanding of campaigns and party competition. Finally, avenues for additional study will be explored, including the expansion of the years studied and the inclusion of data from campaigns for the House of Representatives.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Election and Reelection

My hypothesis hinges on two primary ideas in the political science scholarship. The first is that the established nature of Congressional elections help to explain the behavior of minority party candidates facing a largely unfriendly electorate. The second is the party identification literature shows a competing set of theories revolving around the benefits of the heuristic nature of party identification, and the detrimental effects of single-party domination in American politics. This thesis seeks to explain how these two factors collide in the modern political atmosphere.

David Mayhew literally wrote the book on Congressional elections. He argues that Congressional service has become an attractive long-term career citing the "good pay and high prestige" offered to those serving in the Congress (Mayhew 1974). Some authors have attempted to quantify the actual monetary value of a Congressional seat, as a function of the value of private sector jobs rejected by representatives in favor of remaining in Congress (Diermeier, et al. 2005). Surely, the paycheck of a Congressman (a base salary of $174,000, as of 2014) is an attractive benefit, but hardly a king's ransom, considering the cost of maintaining residence in Washington D.C. in addition to a representative's home district. Additionally, the strain placed upon candidates for such offices during campaigns for election make the salary seem even less attractive, when measured against the constant stress, pressure, and scrutiny that is now focused on even the most mundane of Congressional contests. Logically, there must be a perk beyond simple monetary remuneration and the stellar health plan.

Certainly, the power offered by a seat in Congress must have a powerful draw for those who seek such appointment. Whether they seek such power for altruistic purposes, such as making good public policy, as Fenno suggests (1996) or for more venal reasons (ego, or power for power's own sake), the ultimate reward for those who are elected is a seat at the table and a say in the operations of the Federal government. Dodd sees this as the basis for Mayhew's assertion of representatives being so reelection minded, though he stops short of Mayhew's accusation of being "single-minded" (Dodd 1977). He argues that a desire to accrue personal power underscores the desire for election and, subsequently, reelection beyond all other concerns.

So, for this study, the research question becomes, why would a candidate in a single-party dominated state run as a member of the minority party while adopting the policy positions of the majority party instead of simply running as a member of the majority party? It would seem counter-intuitive to align oneself with a party that suffers from a general disadvantage in elections by virtue of its general policy positions, such as the Democrats in the state of Alabama. However, there are logical reasons for a candidate, especially a relative neophyte, to align with a party that consistently finds itself in the minority in a given state. When confronted with the challenge of an entrenched incumbent, minority party status can be a necessary gamble.

If Congressmen are, indeed, "single-minded seekers of reelection" (Mayhew 1974), it stands to reason that challengers would be single-minded seekers of *election*. Candidates must be wholly focused on the positioning and execution that will see them accepting a concession speech on election night, rather than delivering one. A primary concern in this pursuit is the initial strength of the challenger. One of the most important

factors for a challenger seeking election is the strength of the incumbent candidate (Lazarus 2007). As politically experienced candidates have waded through the difficulties of elections already, they are more likely to choose to participate in races they stand a good chance of winning, rather than tilting at electoral windmills. They also often benefit from an established base from which to raise campaign funds, as well as a level of name recognition that is not often available to non-experienced candidates (Maestas and Rugeley 2008). Beginning a race in a favorable position to receive money and recognition, while targeting a vulnerable incumbent is the optimal situation for any challenger; however, it is not a common situation.

Incumbency offers a myriad of advantages in an election. From the franking privilege to the opportunities for constituent service that come with holding Congressional office, once a candidate is elected they instantly improve their chances for reelection. Voters see those who have already attained elected office as more desirable, and research has shown that the mere impression of incumbency strength can deter even qualified potential challengers from throwing their hats into the ring (Ashworth and de Mesquita 2008; Stone and Maisel 2003). As incumbents increase their time in office, their advantage typically grows, commensurate with their stature. Committee assignments, chairmanships, and greater visibility all contribute to a powerful protection against upstart challengers, as these all offer a greater number of opportunities for advertising, credit claiming, position taking, and constituent service from which the incumbent gathers a major advantage (Mayhew 1974). This can have the effect of scaring away even high quality challengers.

This obstacle is even more daunting for those who would challenge an incumbent from within the incumbent's own political party. In the case of a Republican challenger attempting to unseat a Democratic incumbent, at the very least the challenger can rely on the heurisitic differences between the two parties to provide *some* voter support. Republican voters will most likely vote for the Republican candidate. What reason, however, does a Democratic voter in this hypothetical situation have for voting for another Democratic candidate who would challenge the incumbent Democrat in the primary? Considering all the advantages a long-term Congressman can offer his district, trading that person out for a freshman doesn't seem logical. Also, assuming the challenger succeeds, the incumbency advantage is lost in the general election, potentially opening up the seat to the Republican challenger (Bianco 1984).

Additionally, the national party organization is unlikely to financially or logistically back a challenger versus a seated incumbent. As a party organization is a logical extension of the individual candidates' single-mindedness when it comes to election, the organization's focus must remain with winning as many campaigns as possible (Jacobson, 1985). In fact, Damor and Hansford (1999) find that, despite the fact that a vulnerable incumbent would seem to be the most logical target for a challenger, research shows that national party organizations are more likely to pump larger sums of money into the campaigns of those incumbents they see as most in danger of losing their seat. This can have the effect of making the challenger's task even more difficult.

Essentially, a candidate who finds himself in a political situation dominated by long-term incumbents could logically find an easier path to election by bypassing the entrenched political structure of the dominant party by attempting to align with the

minority party that may have a lower quality pool of candidates from which to recruit.

Additionally, the hypothetical candidate could use policy overlap between themselves

and the majority candidates to position themselves as a "moderate" or "centrist"

candidate, a synthesis of the policies favored by the majority party of the state and the

less divisive policies of the minority party. For instance, the aforementioned Senatorial

campaign that found Travis Childers attempting to unseat incumbent Thad Cochran saw

Childers assuming strong pro-gun and pro-life stances, among others. These positions,

heavily favored by the Republican majority in Mississippi, were tempered with positions

in favor of a higher minimum wage and increasing education spending, issues which

typically see less vociferous opposition from conservative voters. Through this hybrid of

policy positions, Childers positioned himself as a more "centrist" alternative to the

entrenched Republican leadership of the state. By positioning himself at this crossroads

of policy positions, Childers stood a chance to syphon Republican votes away from

Senator Cochran, as well as maintain his minority Democratic base through party loyalty.

Party Identification

The literature regarding the value of heuristics as they concern political parties is

well documented (Brady and Sniderman 1985; Lodge and Hammill 1986), and the

usefulness of these heuristics *to* those parties is common knowledge. However, this

study seeks to show that party identification is less useful as a heuristic when that

identification results in a death blow to a campaign before it even begins. Downs (1957)

described political parties as creators of a kind of "brand name", a general understanding

of what the party stood for, and what could be expected of those candidates that

campaigned under the party's banner. When a voter is not perfectly informed as to the

policy stances of the candidates in an election, a quick glance at the political party they identify with can answer a myriad of questions. This reliance on heuristics can play a key roll for challengers to established incumbents. Even though heuristics can often cause voters to make "bad" decisions (voting for a member of the voter's preferred party, lacking the knowledge that the candidate holds positions that are not in line with their party's generally understood stances, for instance), research has indicated that citizens continue to rely on them (Dancey and Sheagley 2013; Lau and Redlawsk 2001).

If a challenger runs as a member of "Party A", less informed or uninformed voters who favor the generally understood policy positions of that party are likely to vote for the candidate, unaware that the heuristic shortcut they are using is not accounting for the policy deviations that candidate may make. In fact, Goren (2005) suggests that, even knowing about deviations made by candidates, voters may still vote for a candidate of their preferred party. Goren finds that party identification is more stable among voters than even their self-described core political values, and that party identification may even shape many core political values, rather than the reverse. This dedication to a political party identification could serve to insulate a candidate from a certain amount of backlash from his political base, as the voter will often rationalize their party preference despite policy divergences (Rahn, et al. 1994). This is especially true of relatively uninformed voters, as their reliance on the heuristic nature of party identification is stronger than the informed voter's.

However, there is a counter argument to the protective nature of party heuristics that has emerged in the highly partisan atmosphere of modern day American politics. The two major parties of the American political system have never been farther apart

(Poole and Rosenthal 2007), and the disagreements of the political elites have trickled down to the electorate (Abramowitz 2010). Murakami (2008) argues that the widespread use of new communication technologies has combined with the relative homogeneity within each party to produce significant levels of partisan disagreement. Since its genesis in the slow takeover of the South by the Republican Party, the two parties have both gravitated to their respective ideological extremes.

A symptom of this divide is a new focus on party purity, or the insistence that members of the parties not deviate from the national party's positions. This de facto litmus test that is applied to candidates seeking election or reelection has resulted in upheaval among even historically safe incumbents. Influential ideological groups such as Club for Growth and MoveOn.org make no secret of their distaste for those they see as ideologically impure, going to far as to label them "traitors" to the cause (Murakami 2008). Indeed the recent Tea Party movement has famously ousted long-serving, influential incumbents based on accusations that they lacked records that were sufficiently conservative. The effect of this purity test on candidates of minority parties that espouse positions more in line with the majority party has not been sufficiently studied, but it is fairly safe to say that is could strike a death blow to the campaign of an ideologically flexible candidate in a party primary election.

I believe this Tea Party induced purity requirement will make it far less likely that Republican candidates will feel comfortable deviating from their national platform, as the threat of a primary challenge is much more overt. Democrats, on the other hand, lack such a powerful hardline contingent within their party to enforce party discipline and loyalty, which I believe will result in more frequent and extreme examples of policy

deviation within the Democratic Party. The modern theoretical framework that this thesis

seeks to address finds definition in factionalism within political parties. Despite early

research that indicated a tendency towards factionalism among the dominant party in

single-party dominated states (Key 1949; Hopper 1975; Canon 1978), a glance at the

modern political atmosphere would appear to disagree. The Republican Party remains

startlingly united in policy if not in personality, even in states in which they find

themselves firmly in the majority, while Democrats find themselves split along several

policy fault lines.

A possible explanation for this seeming paradox in the literature is the difference

in the fundamental basis for each party. Whereas the Republican Party is generally an

"agent of an ideological movement whose supporters prize doctrinal purity", the

Democratic Party is more accurately seen as a collection of varied and disparate interest

groups, all seeking to incite government action (Grossman and Hopkins 2015).

Grossman and Hopkins further argue that the American people, while generally left-

leaning in terms of specific policy, simultaneously favor smaller government (ibid). This

divide between the more "ethereal" and more "concrete" policy desires of the American

public offers a powerful context for the cohesion of the Republican Party in contrast to

their Democratic colleagues. When policy is seen as an ideology instead of a mere

political direction, the purity tests applied to modern day politicians are much more easily

understood.

I argue, however, that, in states that are politically dominated by one or the other

major party, candidates of the minority party that engage in policy deviation are less

likely to suffer from a purity test. As the minority party is starting each campaign from

an underdog position, the chance to win the election is often a more powerful factor than the desire for policy purity. This is essentially the mirror argument made by Stone and Maisel (2003) that states that, in the case of a party that finds the partisan balance of a given district strongly against it, the party's primary will be easier to win, as there is less quality competition for the nomination. A party that is more heavily favored within a district will see greater competition within the primary, due to the strong likelihood of winning the general election. This strong competition would likely see a more stringent application of such a purity test, to differentiate between several high quality candidates. I extrapolate from this argument that a minority candidate would likely be granted more room for policy divergence in the hopes that he could break the stranglehold of the historically majority party in the district. This phenomenon can be seen in the example discussed in the first chapter, as Democratic candidate Travis Childers became the nominee despite multiple major deviations from the national Democratic Party platform. The fact that Childers was a quality candidate with previous Congressional experience offered enough incentive for Democratic voters and the state party to forgive his oppositional stances in favor of a mere chance at winning the Senate election.

The cumulative effect of this purity requirement is to perpetuate and exacerbate the polarized atmosphere of the current Congress (Thomsen 2014). Potential candidates who see themselves as "moderate" may not only see their chances of winning an election as extremely slim, but also their chances for leadership positions if they were to win. Both major parties have had a significant shift toward more starkly ideological leadership (Jessee and Malhotra 2010), increasing the likelihood of a purity test being applied to legislators seeking leadership positions.

Single-Party Dominated States

Madison, in Federalist #10, expresses concern for the possibility of a single faction (or party, in the modern parlance) becoming so powerful as to subvert the desires of large populations of the United States in favor of their own goals (Hamilton and Jay 2011). Though it appears Madison was most occupied with the possibility of the poor rising up to redistribute the wealth and land of the privileged class, the idea of a political party wielding near-absolute influence and power is a modern day fear as well.

The United States Congress has not been the only indicator of the modern era of hyper-polarization. Over the last several decades, there has been an apparent realignment of partisanship among the states that comprise the Union, as well. Entire regions of the country, in fact, have become indelibly associated with one of the two major parties in the American political system. The average voter has an immediate assumption that a state located in the Deep South will be dominated by the Republican Party, and states along the north-east coast are typically bastions of the Democratic Party. Very few states are left in which there is true competition among the parties.

Is this assumption true? Have single-party dominated states become the majority? Or is it simply a matter of optics, reinforced by stereotypical views of Republicans and Democrats and their supporters? If it *is* true, is it unprecedented in modern times, or simply the result of cyclical forces, destined to ebb and flow? In this era of partisan bickering, a thorough analysis of the individual states and their political flexibility could provide insight into the next few decades of political gamesmanship in the United States. If there truly are only a few states left that are in play during a Presidential election, the implications for campaigns and legislation could be massive.

What point is there in listening to the concerns of citizens in a single-party dominated state? If a candidate is a member of the party they support, then he knows he has them in his corner and has little reason to spend time and energy there. If they are aligned against his party, what would be gained by paying them any attention if they reliably vote in opposition? Only a state who's support is seen as attainable is worth the time and capital expenditure of active campaigning. This possibly leaves a great deal of power in the hands of a very small number of states and, consequently, in the hands of a very small number of *voters*.

If, however, this perception of states' loyalties is only a myth, or if that loyalty can be broken over the course of two or three election cycles, the electoral math becomes a great deal more open. There is a possibility that the "loyalty" of these states to a particular party is over-sold, and that the party dominance that is anecdotally observed is not nearly as ironclad as it appears. Regardless, a thorough examination will reveal historic trends that can give better insight into the two party system in the United States.

There is no single factor that explains political homogeneity in a state. The phenomenon of single-party dominated states has been attributed to several variables, none of which offer a perfect predictor. However, there are a few factors that explain a great deal of such polarization. Each of these factors carries different weight in different regions, making a comprehensive ranking difficult to pin down. The following factors are some of the most widely cited for contributing to political homogeneity (Knoke and Hout 1974; Franklin 1984; Jacoby 1988; McDaniel and Ellison 2008).

Religion

Religion has long been seen as a powerful uniting force, and that certainly appears to be the case when it comes to American politics. Studies have indicated that those who identify with more doctrinally orthodox religions or denominations are more likely to consider themselves Republicans, and that those with more liberal doctrinal beliefs gravitate towards the Democratic Party. For instance, American Jews tend to vote for Democratic candidates by a wide margin (Cohen and Liebman 1997), and white American evangelical Christians are strongly in favor of the Republican Party (McDaniel and Ellison 2008).

Much of this divide can be attributed to stances on "value" issues, and the emphasis placed on them by different religions and denominations (Langer 2005). Many of the modern value issues that most clearly divide the two parties are either directly referenced or strongly alluded to in the sacred texts of the major religions represented in the United States. Voters' stances on abortion, same sex marriage, and, obviously, religious freedom and establishment issues such as prayer in school are all heavily influenced by interpretations of religious tenets, whether their own or those of their religious officials. As both of the major parties have taken strong opposing stances regarding these issues during the last 30 years, a clear line has been drawn between the more orthodox religious voters and the more liberal religious voters.

These religious attitudes toward voting are magnified by the tendency of people who share a religious denomination to concentrate geographically. Pew research data shows a strong tendency of the major religious faiths and denominations to dominate certain states and, at times, certain regions (U.S. Religion Map and Religious

Populations). Protestant evangelicalism throughout the southern states correlates strongly

with Republican success in the region, just as the concentration of Jews in New York

State is consistent with the advantage that Democrats typically enjoy there. This

religious concentration lends weight to the assertion that religious homogenization and

party dominance are strongly related.

Industry and the Rural/Urban Divide

Prominent industry in a state or region plays a large role in political ideology as

well. Certain industries tend to be favored by one party or the other, and that favor is

often returned by those who rely on those industries. So too is the clear and striking

divide between voters in rural areas and their urban counterparts (McKee 2008).   Though

there is a certain level of endogeneity between the urban/rural variable and the others

mentioned here, there is evidence that such an attribute figures heavily in voting

decisions, especially since the 2004 election (McKee 2008).

Farmers overwhelmingly vote for Republican candidates, so states that rely on

agriculture, such as Mississippi and Nebraska tend to be reliably Republican. This

clearly re-enforces McKee's argument of a conservative rural mindset. Conversely, the

strong relationship between the Democratic Party and organized labor has resulted in

strong Democratic performance in states whose primary industries rely on organized

labor, such as the automotive industry in Michigan. Again, this dovetails with McKee

and his analysis of urban environments.

This relationship is obviously fluid, as such coalitions can change along with

adjustments in party positions. As the Democratic Party has begun to focus on promoting

"clean" energy, Democrats have lost influence in states that rely on coal and oil. As

legislative priorities shift within the parties, so too can the industries that back them, potentially putting previously single-party states back into play.

Ethnicity

In the previous section addressing religion, the qualification of "white" evangelical Christians is purposeful and deliberate. Ethnicity is an important factor in voting behavior. While whites have historically been fairly evenly divided between the two major parties, African-Americans overwhelmingly vote Democratic. This is true across the United States, despite the domination of evangelical protestantism in the black community (Mangum 2008). Additionally, industry and income seem to have little effect on this phenomenon. African-Americans overwhelmingly vote Democratic. Though there is no state in which African-Americans constitute a majority, the solid nature of their voting habits can have a dramatic impact on states that have other factors that favor Democrats.

The same can be said for the Latino population. Despite a generally conservative religious leaning, Latinos are predominantly supporters of the Democratic Party (Gibson and Hare 2012). As the number of immigrants from Central and South American countries has grown, this factor has helped to solidify the Democratic control of California and has kept in play some states that otherwise would be solidly Republican (Barreto, et al 2008). This apparent dissonance between racial and religious partisan tendencies provides a kind of mitigating circumstance regarding the polarization of states into single-party dominance. A high concentration of evangelicals can be prevented from pulling the state to the political right if a large part of that population is made up of African-Americans and Latinos voting for Democratic candidates.

Polarization

It has been suggested by Fiorina et al. (2008) that the impression of a polarized American public is largely a myth, and that it is only the party elites and candidates themselves who find the ideological extremes. However, more recent research by Abramowitz and Saunders (2008) has found the polarization of the involved electorate has been growing at essentially the same rate. As earlier discussed, this increased polarization of the electorate has fed the polarization of two parties. Whereas major disagreements between the Democrats and Republicans used to be relatively few and far between, contention has grown between the parties since the 1960's, exemplified by such social issues as civil rights, abortion and welfare spending (Garner and Palmer 2011).

This increased polarization of the two parties had the effect of marginalizing and even eliminating moderate voices within each party. This becomes a self-perpetuating cycle, as the more extreme members of each party become more visible and less restrained, owing to the lack of cross-pressured members of their caucus (Fleisher and Bond 2004). This observance can be extrapolated to the state level without significant changes. As a state comes more under the control of a single political party, the controlling party finds less and less resistance to its more extreme policies, as there are fewer viable alternatives. This acceptance of extremism fosters the continued domination of the state by a single party, as possible qualified candidates of the minority party see themselves more out of step with the mainstream voters of their constituency and do not enter the race (Abramowitz and Saunders 2005).

This atmosphere, as previously discussed, discourages policy deviation by members of the majority party. As there are likely to be many strong candidates willing

to enter the primary election, the purity test becomes more stringently applied. While there are certainly circumstances that represent a forgivable policy deviation, party leadership is not likely to allow a consistent pattern of contrary voting, as will the offending candidate's constituency. However, this study will show that the purity test is a much less effective threat to a candidate of a minority party in a single-party dominated state. With so little to lose, these candidates may in fact find party purity to be a stone around their neck.

<center>Sources of Policy Deviation</center>

This study makes no claims as to *why* candidates may seek to buck their national party's platforms, only that it is more common to find such tendencies in minority party candidates campaigning in single-party dominated states. To argue that political expedience is the *only* basis for defying party policy expectations is, obviously, foolish. Party loyalty is not the only influence exerted on candidates and legislators as regards their stances on issues. Those who seek to represent a constituency in the Congress must strike a balance between their roles as delegates of the wishes of those they speak for and as trustees, leading from their own perspectives, knowledge, and values.

It can be reasonably assumed that a candidate's personal ideology will, generally speaking, align with those of the party with which he identifies (Levitt 1996). After all, party identification is primarily based on an assessment of the perceived goals of the party as compared to one's own. However, it is rare that a national party, whose policies are composed by numerous individuals with input from dozens of interested parties, will align 100% with any single person. In this circumstance, the personal values and beliefs of a candidate come to play a role. Levitt assigns a great deal of importance to the

personal ideology of Representatives as it pertains to the votes they cast. He finds that, particularly in districts that heavily favor their own party, Senators exhibit a strong pattern of voting in line with personal ideology.

A recent example can be seen in Senator Mark Pryor (D-AR). In 2013, Senator Pryor voted against an amendment that would expand background checks for purchasing firearms. Despite polling that indicated a strong majority of his constituency supported the measure, the Senator explained his belief that the measure would have no measurable impact on gun crime (Miller 2013). The Senator voted against the amendment based on his own personal ideology and beliefs concerning the legitimacy and effectiveness of the legislation.

This same logic can be applied to candidates for office. Those candidates who see distinct ideological differences between themselves and the party they identify with will sometimes express those differences during their campaigns. However, as these candidates have more limited means and opportunities to explain these differences than those who already hold a seat, it is considerably more politically risky for them to do so. While incumbents have been found to vote often along the lines of their personal ideology, this only benefits a challenger if the voting public sees the challenger as more "in-step" than the incumbent (Hollibaugh et al. 2013).   Therefore, if a challenger deviates substantially from the party line, he loses any ability to exploit the deviations of the incumbent.

Another powerful influence on voting behavior comes in the form of constituency influence. Cohen and Fleisher (2006) focus on the difficulty faced by legislators in discerning between *global* political attitudes and *specific* attitudes as they pertain to the

constituency the legislators represent. The authors find that specific issue attitudes of a legislator's constituency held a great deal of weight when it came to the ultimate roll-call voting of the representative in question. It stands to reason that these attitudes would have a similar effect on the campaign stances of challengers. When a representative's constituency holds policy opinions that strongly diverge from those of the representative's party, that representative is likely to face enormous pressure from both party and people. The same would hold true for any challenger seeking to unseat an incumbent.

An easy example of such an issue comes in the form of immigration policy. The national Democratic platform of 2008 expressed support for comprehensive immigration reform, as well as a plan to legalize those immigrants that had already come illegally to the country (Democratic Platform 2008). However, a Democratic candidate involved in a tough race in a state with a generally conservative stance regarding immigration, such as Tom Udall of New Mexico, might find it expedient to temper their opinions or even assume positions more closely associated with the conservative Republican Party.

For instance, during his 2008 campaign, Udall rejected the possibility of a path to legalization for undocumented immigrants during the 2008 campaign. Considering its proximity to the border, New Mexico has a more immediate concern with illegal immigration than, say, Tennessee. This regional concern and the strong opinions of the citizens of the state of New Mexico regarding immigration could logically pressure Udall to break with the Democratic Party on this issue to bolster his chances of winning the election. These regionally important issues can be found all over the country, from the coal versus clean energy debate in Kentucky to military spending policy in states that

depend of military bases for tax revenue. Each opens a window to possible policy

deviation on the part of candidates.

CHAPTER III

DATA AND METHODS

Single-Party Dominated States

The first step to determining the effect the single-party domination of a state has

on policy homogeneity is to determine which states are competitive and which are single-

party dominated in each election year. For the purposes of this study, the data and

methods of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) will be employed. The

NCSL combines the party identification of the Governor of a given state combined with

the party holding a majority in each House of the state legislature. If a majority in both

Houses as well as the Governor identify with the same political party, the state is

considered single-party dominated.

This focus on state level offices offers a more appropriate view of state

partisanship than focusing on more national indicators, such as the results of consecutive

Presidential elections. By using this measurement, two views of party competition are

analyzed. Within the state legislatures data, a more "micro" view of the voting

tendencies of a state is discerned. The relatively small districts that make up state

legislatures provide context for the more "macro" view provided by the statewide voting

that goes into selecting a governor. This dual measurement prevents a small majority of

citizens in a state creating the appearance of a strong party preference. For instance, if

the last three governors of Nevada had all been Republican, taking only that data into

account would appear to show a strong allegiance to the Republican Party in that state.

However, if each of those elections had been decided by less than three percentage

points, it would be difficult to consider these results as particularly compelling.

Factoring in the dominance of each party within the upper and lower Houses of the state legislature goes a long way towards preventing such spurious assumptions.

Some measures of state party competition include data reflecting the outcome of Presidential elections over time for each state. While an argument for this inclusion can be made, for the purposes of this study it serves only to muddy the waters in the same way as taking only gubernatorial results into account. This statewide measure is too susceptible to small majorities creating an inaccurate impression as to party competition. For instance, taking Presidential election results into account on the case of Mississippi would create the appearance of a consistently Republican dominated state. However, until 2012, at least one House of the Mississippi legislature was controlled by Democrats, and a Democrat held the Governorship from 2000 until 2004. This can hardly be seen as single party domination. Additionally, as this thesis is studying the policy positions of Senate candidates, party preferences for state level offices are more applicable to such elections. Voters often have different criteria for Presidential candidates than they do for Senate candidates. A President is unlikely to make public statements regarding, or have a direct hand in affecting, local concerns, whereas a Senate candidate will be much more likely to include such issues in their campaign. With this in mind, the inclusion of data regarding the assigning of each state's electoral votes could well serve to skew the results of this study, and has therefore been rejected.

With this formula in place, party competition in each state has been examined for the years 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014. A nominal measurement was then assigned. If the state in question is not dominated politically by either party, the state is encoded as "0". If Democrats control both Houses of the legislature, as well as the governorship, the

state is encoded as "1". If the Republicans hold both Houses and the governorship, the state is encoded as a "2".

<div align="center">Policy Positions</div>

To compare the policy positions of each Senate candidate, a baseline must be established. Many state branches of the national political parties have their own platforms that specifically address the concerns and issues facing the constituents of that state. This obviously creates a patchwork of policy positions that is impossible to apply to all the candidates that self-identify under the umbrella of the national party. For this reason, using the platforms of each state is an unwieldy and unworkable option. To establish the necessary policy baseline, the platforms of the national party organizations will be referenced. Every two years, the national organizations representing the two parties publish a revised platform that specifically addresses the policies and positions favored by the party. As the overarching authority regarding the goals and strategies of the two major parties, these documents present the clearest, most cohesive road maps that the parties as a whole intend to follow. These national organizations also produce and reinforce the heurisitics associated with each party, as they play a major role in promoting candidates the party supports.

In the case of the Democratic Party, the Democratic National Committee constitutes the national face of the party platform. The national platforms they publish are archived at The American Presidency Project. The Republican National Committee represents the policy of the GOP as a whole, and the platforms of the election years in question are archived on their page as well, at The American Presidency Project. These

platforms will be used to establish the assumed policy positions of the Republican candidates.

As previously mentioned, these platforms are not concrete. Every four years, coinciding with Presidential election years, each party publishes a new platform. These changes are usually iterative, for the most part, often refining and revising policy positions rather than making large, sweeping changes. However, even relatively small changes in language can represent important distinctions, not only between the two parties, but also between the previous and currents goals and methods within the same party. For this reason, each election year examined will have policy baselines drawn from the platform that was the most recently published at the time of the campaigns. The campaigns examined that took place in 2006 will be compared to the national platforms published in 2004, while the campaigns that took place in 2008 and 2010 will both be compared to the platforms published during the run-up to the 2008 election.

For each issue selected for observation, specific policy statements will be extricated from the parties' national platforms. The positions must be clear and precise, and present a concrete action or belief, such as statements that include phrases such as "we support", "Democrats/Republicans condemn", "we will work to" or "the Party intends to". General attitudes, such as "the Party believes in smaller government" will not be used as a baseline, as there is far too much subjectivity involved in quantifying candidates' positions and policies. However, the phrase "the Party believes in smaller government, and will work to reduce the number of federal agencies" is a *specific* path to accomplishing a general attitude. It would therefore be considered for a baseline policy.

Even within the highly polarized political atmosphere of the last decade, the two major political parties in the United States have a many positions in common. Policies regarding terrorism and the treatment of military veterans are, for the most part, reasonably universal. As these issues cause little disagreement between the two national parties, examining the expressed positions of the candidates for Senate regarding them provides no insight as to the effect of the political climate they find themselves in. Taking this into consideration, five policy areas have been chosen for this thesis that represent clear and significant policy divides between the two parties. By choosing such controversial subjects, not only are the baseline policies of the parties more easily discerned, policy deviations will be more obvious.

Second Amendment Rights

Few policy areas engender as much rancorous dialogue as the limits or lack of limits that should be placed on the second amendment to the American Constitution. During recent decades, the Republican Party has become a nearly unqualified supporter of the belief that the right to own and carry a firearm is universal and inviolate. In contrast, the Democratic Party has generally favored laws that would limit who can purchase a firearm, the maximum rate of fire a firearm is capable of, ammunition capacity, and the locations in which a firearm can be legally carried. The obvious disconnect between the two platforms makes this issue an easy choice for observations. The specific positions that will be applied to the candidates observed are as follows:

Republican Platform, 2006

- o "We support efforts by the Administration and Congress to enhance the instant background check system for gun purchases and to ensure that records of lawful transactions are destroyed in a timely manner."
- o "We applaud Congressional Republicans for seeking to stop frivolous lawsuits against firearms manufacturers, which is a transparent attempt to deprive citizens of their Second Amendment rights."
- o "We oppose federal licensing of law- abiding gun owners and national gun registration as a violation of the Second Amendment and an invasion of privacy of honest citizens."

(Republican Party Platforms 2004)

Republican Platform, 2008-2010

- o "We urge immediate action to review the automatic denial of gun ownership to returning members of the Armed Forces who have suffered trauma during service to their country."
- o "We condemn frivolous lawsuits against firearms manufacturers, which are transparent attempts to deprive citizens of their rights."
- o "We oppose federal licensing of law-abiding gun owners and national gun registration as violations of the Second Amendment."

(Republican Party Platforms 2008)

Democratic Platform, 2006

- o "We will protect Americans' Second Amendment right to own firearms, and we will keep guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists by fighting gun crime, reauthorizing the assault weapons ban, and closing the gun show loophole, as President Bush proposed and failed to do."

(Democratic Party Platforms 2004)

Democratic Platform, 2008-2010

- o "We believe that the right to own firearms is subject to reasonable regulation, but we know that what works in Chicago may not work in Cheyenne."
- o "We can work together to enact and enforce commonsense laws and improvements – like closing the gun show loophole, improving our background check system, and reinstating the assault weapons ban…"

(Democratic Party Platforms 2008)

Immigration

Though both parties express fondness for legal immigrants and the contributions they make to the United States, they express completely different attitudes when it comes to the proper methods for dealing with the influx of undocumented immigrants that has occurred in recent years. The Republican Party has generally presented plans that focus on deportation and restriction of benefits for undocumented immigrants. The Democratic Party has taken a less stark position, indicating a willingness to work with undocumented immigrants and a desire to bring them out of hiding. The specific positions regarding immigration that will be examined are:

Republican Platform, 2006

- o "A growing economy requires a growing number of workers, and President Bush has proposed a new temporary worker program that applies when no Americans can be found to fill the jobs. This new program would allow workers who currently hold jobs to come out of the shadows and to participate legally in America's economy."
- o "We oppose amnesty because it would have the effect of encouraging illegal immigration and would give an unfair advantage to those who have broken our laws."

(Republican Party Platforms 2004)

Republican Platform, 2008-2010

- o "Our determination to uphold the rule of law begins   with more effective enforcement, giving our agents the tools and resources they need to protect our sovereignty, completing the border fence quickly and securing the borders…"
- o "We oppose amnesty."
- o "A phased in requirement that employers use the E-Verify system must be enacted. "

- o "…nor does it mean that illegal aliens should receive social security benefits, or other public benefits…"

o "We support English as the official language in our nation…"

(Republican Party Platforms 2008)

Democratic Platform, 2006

o "Undocumented immigrants within our borders who clear a background check, work hard and pay taxes should have a path to earn full participation in America."
o "As we undertake these steps, we will work with our neighbors to strengthen our security so we are safer from those who would come here to harm us."

(Democratic Party Platforms 2004)

Democratic Platform, 2008-2010

o "We need comprehensive immigration reform, not just piecemeal efforts."
o "We also need to do more to promote economic development in migrant-sending nations, to reduce incentives to come to the United States illegally."
o "For the millions living here illegally but otherwise playing by the rules, we must require them to come out of the shadows and get right with the law. We support a system that requires undocumented immigrants who are in good standing to pay a fine, pay taxes, learn English, and go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens."
o "…we will increase the number of immigration visas for family members of people living here and for immigrants who meet the demand for jobs that employers cannot fill…"

(Democratic Party Platforms 2008)

Environmental Policy

Another clear divide that has emerged between the two parties centers around the balancing of environmental protection and the free market. While both parties espouse commitment to protecting the environment as well as promoting American businesses, the policies that each supports provide another undeniable schism. Republicans are

widely seen as choosing business over environmental concerns, both in their enthusiasm

for oil exploration and with their limited focus on climate change and its effect on the

planet. Democrats, on the other hand, are often seen as strongly supporting pro-

environment policy, often to the detriment of businesses. The specific quotes from the

two parties' platforms that will constitute the baseline for this policy area are:

Republican Platform, 2006

- o "Our President and our Party strongly oppose the Kyoto Protocol and similar mandatory carbon emissions controls that harm economic growth and destroy American jobs."
- o "Our Party continues to support energy development in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)…"
- o "We believe nuclear power can help reduce our dependence on foreign energy and play an invaluable role in addressing global climate change."
- o "Republicans are committed to meeting the challenge of long-term global climate change by relying on markets and new technologies to improve energy efficiency."

(Republican Party Platforms 2004)

Republican Platform, 2008-2010

- o "We support accelerated exploration, drilling and development in America, from new oilfields off the nation's coasts to onshore fields such as those in Montana, North Dakota, and Alaska."
- o "As part of a global climate change strategy, Republicans support technology-driven, market-based solutions that will decrease emissions…"
- o "In addition, the public should have access to public lands for recreational activities such as hunting, hiking, and fishing."

(Republican Party Platforms 2008)

Democratic Platform, 2006

- o "We will reduce mercury emissions, smog and acid rain, and will address the challenge of climate change with the seriousness of purpose this great challenge demands."
- o "We support balanced development of domestic oil supplies in areas already open for exploration, like the western and central Gulf of Mexico."

o "We support tax credits for private sector investment in clean, renewable sources of energy, and we will make ethanol credits work better for farmers."

<div align="right">(Democratic Party Platforms 2004)</div>

Democratic Platform, 2008-2010

o "We will implement a market-based cap and trade system to reduce carbon emissions by the amount scientists say is necessary to avoid catastrophic change and we will set interim targets along the way to ensure that we meet our goal."
o "We will make it a top priority to reduce oil consumption by at least 35 percent, or ten million barrels per day, by 2030."
o "And this is how we'll solve the problem of four-dollar-a-gallon gas—with a comprehensive plan and investment in clean energy."

<div align="right">(Democratic Party Platforms, 2008)</div>

Marriage Equality

As Evangelical Christians have become one of the most reliable voting blocs for the Republican Party, the GOP has not wavered significantly in their position regarding same-sex marriage in the United States. The calls for a Constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage and/or define marriage as a union between one man and one woman have been a constant feature of GOP platforms since the late 1990's. The Democratic Party, however, has evolved its positions from one that simply wanted marriage to remain defined at the state level, to calling for an end to the Federal ban on same-sex marriage (the Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA) and that homosexuals be afforded the same benefits and protections as heterosexuals.

Though data shows that the American public as a whole have become more accepting of same-sex marriage, the policies of the two parties have remained at odds for

some time, and are often couched in terms of "morality" and "values". The specific

platform policies that will be examined are:

Republican Platform, 2006

- o "After more than two centuries of American jurisprudence, and millennia of human experience, a few judges and local authorities are presuming to change the most fundamental institution of civilization, the union of a man and a woman in marriage. Attempts to redefine marriage in a single state or city could have serious consequences throughout the country, and anything less than a Constitutional amendment, passed by the Congress and ratified by the states, is vulnerable to being overturned by activist judges."
- o "President Bush will also vigorously defend the Defense of Marriage Act, which was supported by both parties and passed by 85 votes in the Senate. This common sense law reaffirms the right of states not to recognize same-sex marriages licensed in other states."

(Republican Party Platforms 2004)

Republican Platform, 2008-2010

- o "…we call for a constitutional amendment that fully protects marriage as a union of a man and a woman, so that judges cannot make other arrangements equivalent to it."
- o "A Republican Congress enacted the Defense of Marriage Act, affirming the right of states not to recognize same-sex marriage licensed in other states. Unbelievably, the Democratic Party has now pledged to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, which would subject every state to the redefinition of marriage by a judge without ever allowing the people to vote on the matter."

(Republican Party Platforms 2008)

Democratic Platform, 2006

- o "We support full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of our nation and seek equal responsibilities, benefits, and protections for these families. In our country, marriage has been defined at the state level for 200 years, and we believe it should continue to be defined there. We repudiate President Bush's divisive effort to politicize the Constitution by pursuing a 'Federal Marriage Amendment.'"

(Democratic Party Platforms 2004)

Democratic Platform, 2008-2010

- o "We oppose the Defense of Marriage Act and all attempts to use this issue to divide us."
- o "We support the full inclusion of all families, including same-sex couples, in the life of our nation, and support equal responsibility, benefits, and protections."

(Democratic Party Platforms 2008)

Abortion

Since the rise of the religious right as a core voting bloc in the 1980's, Republican and Democratic Presidents and legislators have been locked in battle over its implementation. Republicans have often sought to limit the circumstances under which a woman can obtain an abortion, and completely overturn *Roe* in its entirety. Democrats have vocally resisted allowing any limitations to be imposed on the procedure, arguing that restricting the right of a woman to make a private medical decision is paramount. Within this divide, little has changed but the methods employed to achieve each side's desired outcome.

The policy stances of each party that will be examined are as follows:

Republican Platform, 2006

- o "…we support protecting the rights of families in international programs and oppose funding organizations involved in abortion. "
- o "We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life."
- o "We join the President in supporting crisis pregnancy programs and parental notification laws. And we applaud President Bush for allowing states to extend health care coverage to unborn children."
- o "We strongly support the President's policy that prevents taxpayer dollars from being used to encourage the future destruction of human embryos."

(Republican Party Platforms 2004)

Republican Platform, 2008-2010

- o "We assert the rights of families in all international programs and will not fund organizations involved in abortion. We strongly support the long-held policy of the Republican Party known as the 'Mexico City policy', which prohibits federal monies from being given to non-governmental organizations that provide abortions or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning in other countries."
- o "We lament that judges have denied the people their right to set abortion policies in the states and are undermining traditional marriage laws from coast to coast."
- o "Because the family is our basic unit of society, we fully support parental rights to consent to medical treatment for their children including mental health treatment, drug treatment, alcohol treatment, and treatment involving pregnancy, contraceptives and abortion."

(Republican Party Platforms 2008)

Democratic Platform, 2006

- o "Because we believe in the privacy and equality of women, we stand proudly for a woman's right to choose, consistent with Roe v. Wade, and regardless of her ability to pay. We stand firmly against Republican efforts to undermine that right."

(Democratic Party Platforms 2004)

Democratic Platform, 2008-2010

- o "The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports *Roe v. Wade* and a woman's right to choose a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay, and we oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right."

(Democratic Party Platforms 2008)

These policy statements from the national platforms of the two major United

States political parties serve as the "control," or baseline policy platforms for the

candidates that were investigated. They are concrete, quantifiable statements of purpose

and direction that can then be sought within the policy positions taken by the candidates during their campaigns, making them ideal for a basis of comparison between the national party and the individual would-be legislators.

Candidate Policy Analysis

To ascertain how closely candidates adhered to the national message of their respective party over time, the election years of 2006, 2008, and 2010 will be examined. For each of these years, the Republican and Democratic candidates for Senate in each of the 50 states were studied.

Gathering and interpreting the policy stances of candidates for the United States Senate presents several challenges. The first is, ironically, the wealth of available sources from which to collect quotes and literature regarding candidate's policies. The problems that arise from such a banquet are two-fold: the implementation of such data, and the providence of the information. To combat these issues, restrictions must be placed on the sources and timing of the expressed policy positions.

To ensure that the positions attributed to the candidates are applicable to the election year being examined, a time limit must be imposed. This makes a certain amount of subjectivity unavoidable, as the line must be draw at some point. For the purposes of this thesis, the line for statements of policy for challengers to be included is drawn at two years prior to the day of that year's election. As many campaigns actually begin before a candidate officially enters a race, the final third of a given Senate term offers a reasonable span of time to include positions expressed by challengers that may predate their actual entry into the electoral contest. If, however, the challenger was previously a member of a legislative body (such as a state senator) and has a record of

votes that is applicable to the issue in question, that record will be treated with the same rules as a United States Senate incumbent, as addressed in the following section.

For incumbents, the line must be blurred a bit further. An incumbent candidate must run not only on the statements made during the actual election in question, but also on the record that Representative has accrued during their time in office. As a challenger is almost guaranteed to challenge the incumbent on his record of legislating, this record must be considered when compiling policy positions. While current statements of policy supersede previous roll-call votes or previous policy stances, if an incumbent does not address one of the previously mentioned issues within actual campaign literature or speeches, the record he or she has previously accrued on such subjects will be used to determine adherence to or deviation from national party policy. For instance, if a hypothetical Democratic Senate incumbent voted in favor of a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage in 2005, but does not mention it during their 2006 reelection campaign, the vote will be scored as a deviation from the national Democratic platform. If, however, they voted in favor of the ban in 2005, but then campaign on a position of rejecting such a ban, the later policy position will be the one assigned to that candidate for the purpose of this study. The same rules will apply to conflicting votes if the candidate has offered no clarification of their position since the latest vote. If two votes indicate a conflicting position on an issue in question, the later vote will be recorded as the Representative's campaign position.

Even more challenging than the issue of a policy position's proximity to the actual campaign is the issue of providence. While the technological age in which we live has given the public unprecedented access to records and quotes of candidates, it also

increases the chances of misrepresentation of those records and quotes, whether malicious or unintended. A candidate's expression of support for a woman's right to choose *in certain trimesters* can be characterized by his opponent or the press as "support for abortion", full stop. The candidate's actual quote would therefore be a slight deviation from the national Democratic position, but the position attributed to him by his challenger would seem to align the candidate perfectly to the national Democratic platform.

To combat this challenge, only two sources for each candidate have been examined to seek out policy positions. The primary source is the candidate's campaign website. Challengers and incumbents alike have increasingly turned to the internet to help promote their messages and policy positions to the public. The Library of Congress has created and maintained an archived database of these campaign pages that spans each election year from 2000 to 2010 (Library of Congress). Each candidate's entire website was examined to glean any positions expressed therein that applied to those policy areas in question.

In the event that any of the policy areas being examined were not addressed within the candidate's official campaign website, the non-partisan policy website "On The Issues" (ontheissues.org) was consulted. The site catalogues not only the statements made on official campaign websites for each and every candidate, but previous role-call votes of incumbents, as well as public statements made in interviews and speeches. Each entry is linked to source material for verification of authenticity. If a policy area was not addressed on either of these two sites, that policy area was omitted from that candidate's entry, and was not factored into their average partisan score.

It is not expected, in this modern age of candidate-centered elections, for an individual candidate to parrot, word for word, the position of the national party to which they belong. Again, this introduces a certain level of subjectivity to these measurements that is unavoidable. If a candidate's national party is on record supporting "reasonable" regulation of the right to carry a firearm, the candidate's statements regarding such regulation must be examined with a reasonable amount of subjectivity. For instance, if a candidate says they support a longer waiting period to obtain a handgun, the language may not be the same as the national policy, but an extension of a waiting period can be interpreted as a "reasonable" regulation and would therefore be coded as a policy consistent with the national platform.

Once a candidate's campaign policy position was determined, it was compared to the specific national platform agenda items listed previously. Each policy section was scored on a scale from 0 to 4, indicating where on the partisan spectrum they fell for each policy area. The scores represent the following alignments:

Score of 0: Strong adherence to the Democratic national platform. No deviations from Democratic national platform policies.

Score of .5: Strong adherence to the Democratic national platform. Minor deviation from Democratic national platform policies.

Score of 1: Weak adherence to the Democratic national platform. Multiple minor deviations or a major deviation from Democratic national platform policies.

Score of 1.5: Weak adherence to the Democratic national platform. Several minor and major deviations from Democratic national platform.

Score of 2: Independent or centrist policies that do not significantly adhere to either national party platform.

Score of 2.5: Weak adherence to the Republican national platform. Several minor and major deviations from Republican national platform.

Score of 3: Weak adherence to the Republican national platform. Multiple minor deviations or a major deviation from Republican national platform policies.

Score of 3.5: Strong adherence to the Republican national platform. Minor deviation from Republican national platform policies.

Score of 4: Strong adherence to the Republican national platform. No deviations from Republican national platform policies.

To be scored as a "0" or "4" a candidate needn't express support for every part of the national platform being considered. If a candidate actively supports most of the examined policy priorities without offering any contradictory policy priorities, they were scored as a "0" or "4". Once the five scores for each candidate were assigned, they were averaged to find each candidate's overall position on the partisan spectrum. This is the score that was used to determine and compare the level of policy deviation that occurred in single-party dominated states as opposed to competitive states.

Control variables were added to account for other factors affecting policy deviation. These include the gender of the candidate, which was assigned a nominal value of "0" for female candidates and "1" for males. Candidates were also assigned a nominal value for their status as a challenger or incumbent. Challengers were coded as a "0", incumbents as a "1". The percentage of each state's population that lived in urban areas was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau (census.gov), and was assigned to the candidates in each state using a ratio measurement. Finally, the percentage of citizens of each state that identified as evangelical Christians was obtained from the Association of Religious Data Archives, and assigned to the candidates using a ratio measurement. (thearda.com). These variables are included to ensure that the results are representative

of the actual causes of policy deviation, and not just a spurious connection. My hypotheses are as follows.

H_1: United States Senate candidates running in states that that are dominated by their own political party will adhere more closely to their national Party's policy platform than those in competitive states.

H_2: United States Senate candidates running in states that that are dominated by the opposing political party will adhere more closely to the opposing Party's policy platform than those in competitive states.

H_3: United States Senate candidates running in states that that are dominated by their own political party will adhere more closely to their national Party's policy platform than those in states controlled by the opposing party.

H_4: United States Senate candidates running in states that that are dominated by the opposing political party will adhere more closely to the opposing party's policy platform than those in states controlled by their own party.

H_5: In all cases, Republican candidates will exhibit more consistent adherence to the national Republican Party's policy platform than will Democratic candidates.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

According to the NCSL formula for determining party competition by state, the number of single-party dominated states is easily discovered. In 2006, 27 states fit the criteria for single-party domination (Table 1). Unexpectedly, many states that would typically be associated with Republican dominance are, in fact, competitive or even controlled by the Democratic Party when evaluated by the NCSL measurements. States such as Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee all evidence split control of state government. Louisiana, though firmly positioned within the Deep South, and steeped in conservative Evangelical Protestant and Catholic traditions, was dominated by the Democratic Party. Additionally, the state of Texas was found to be firmly within the control of the Republican Party, despite a similar religious makeup as Louisiana and a much larger Latino population, per capita. Similarly, states that are widely seen as Democratic strongholds, such as California and Rhode Island, were found to be competitive as well.

These unexpected results seem to put the literature regarding racial minorities and religious traditions and their effect on political homogeneity into perspective. Though such variables may have a powerful effect on a state's political leanings, they are far from the only deciding factors. The years 2008 and 2010 feature similar patterns, though the number of single-party dominated states rises, as expected. In 2006, ten states were dominated by the Republican Party and 17 states were dominated by the Democratic Party, with 23 states having mixed or competitive state governments.

Table 1

Distribution of Party Competition in 2006

State	2006 Party Control Of State Government		Competition Level
	Legislature	Governor	
AL	D	R	Competitive
AK	R	R	SPD (R)
AZ	R	D	Competitive
AR	D	D	SPD (D)
CA	D	R	Competitive
CO	D	D	SPD (D)
CT	D	R	Competitive
DE	SPLIT	D	Competitive
FL	R	R	SPD (R)
GA	R	R	SPD (R)
HI	D	R	Competitive
ID	R	R	SPD (R)
IL	D	D	SPD (D)
IN	SPLIT	R	Competitive
IA	D	D	SPD (D)
KS	R	D	Competitive
KY	SPLIT	R	Competitive
LA	D	D	SPD (D)
ME	D	D	SPD (D)
MD	D	D	SPD (D)
MA	D	D	SPD (D)
MI	SPLIT	D	Competitive
MN	D	R	Competitive
MS	D	R	Competitive
MO	R	R	SPD (R)
MT	SPLIT	D	Competitive
NE	N/A	R	Competitive
NV	D	R	Competitive
NH	D	D	SPD (D)
NJ	D	D	SPD (D)
NM	D	D	SPD (D)
NY	D	D	SPD (D)
NC	D	D	SPD (D)
ND	R	R	SPD (R)
OH	SPLIT	D	Competitive
OK	R	D	Competitive

Table 1 (continued).

OR	D	D	SPD (D)
PA	SPLIT	D	Competitive
RI	D	R	Competitive
SC	R	R	SPD (R)
SD	R	R	SPD (R)
TN	R	D	Competitive
TX	R	R	SPD (R)
UT	R	R	SPD (R)
VT	D	R	Competitive
VA	SPLIT	D	Competitive
WA	D	D	SPD (D)
WV	D	D	SPD (D)
WI	D	D	SPD (D)
WY	R	D	Competitive
Total Single Party Dominated States			27

The data show only a slight increase in the net number of single-party dominated states, from 27 in 2006 to 28 such states in 2008 (Table 2). The interesting results come from a closer look at how that increase came about. In 2008, Democrats lost control of Louisiana, as it became competitive after electing a Republican governor, while gaining control of Delaware, for no net change in the number of states controlled. The Republican Party, however, gained control of Arizona and Kansas as they took control of the governorship of both states, while losing only Alaska when that state's legislature split, boosting their total number of controlled states to 11. This shift began a consolidation of state level power within the Republican Party that would continue in 2010.

In 2010, the number of single-party controlled states dropped (Table 3). The Republican Party lost control of Kansas and Missouri when those states elected

Table 2

Distribution of Party Competition in 2008

| State | 2008 Party Control Of State Government | | Competition Level |
	Legislature	Governor	
AL	D	R	Competitive
AK	SPLIT	R	Competitive
AZ	R	R	SPD (R)
AR	D	D	SPD (D)
CA	D	R	Competitive
CO	D	D	SPD (D)
CT	D	R	Competitive
DE	D	D	SPD (D)
FL	R	R	SPD (R)
GA	R	R	SPD (R)
HI	D	R	Competitive
ID	R	R	SPD (R)
IL	D	D	SPD (D)
IN	SPLIT	R	Competitive
IA	D	D	SPD (D)
KS	R	R	SPD (R)
KY	SPLIT	R	Competitive
LA	D	R	Competitive
ME	D	D	SPD (D)
MD	D	D	SPD (D)
MA	D	D	SPD (D)
MI	SPLIT	D	Competitive
MN	D	R	Competitive
MS	D	R	Competitive
MO	R	R	SPD (R)
MT	SPLIT	D	Competitive
NE	N/A	R	Competitive
NV	D	R	Competitive
NH	D	D	SPD (D)
NJ	D	D	SPD (D)
NM	D	D	SPD (D)
NY	D	D	SPD (D)
NC	D	D	SPD (D)
ND	R	R	SPD (R)
OH	SPLIT	D	Competitive
OK	R	D	Competitive

Table 2 (continued).

OR	D	D	SPD (D)
PA	SPLIT	D	Competitive
RI	D	R	Competitive
SC	R	R	SPD (R)
SD	R	R	SPD (R)
TN	R	D	Competitive
TX	R	R	SPD (R)
UT	R	R	SPD (R)
VT	D	R	Competitive
VA	SPLIT	D	Competitive
WA	D	D	SPD (D)
WV	D	D	SPD (D)
WI	D	D	SPD (D)
WY	R	D	Competitive
Total Single Party Dominated States			28

Democratic governors, while gaining control of no other states. The Democratic Party

lost control of New Jersey when they lost that state's governorship to Republican Chris

Christy resulting in a net loss of three single-party dominated states. With these three

states moving into the "competitive" category, the total number of single-party dominated

states dropped to 25.

Though the individual candidates from the years 2012 and 2014 were not studied

for this thesis due to a lack of time and resources, the data regarding party competition

for those years was compiled and analyzed. 2012 showed an impressive jump in the

number of single-party dominated states. The Republican Party took control of Alaska,

Arizona, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma,

Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Wisconsin and Wyoming, while losing control of none, for a

Table 3

Distribution of Party Competition in 2010

| State | 2010 Party Control Of State Government | | Competition Level |
	Legislature	Governor	
AL	D	R	Competitive
AK	SPLIT	R	Competitive
AZ	R	R	SPD (R)
AR	D	D	SPD (D)
CA	D	R	Competitive
CO	D	D	SPD (D)
CT	D	R	Competitive
DE	D	D	SPD (D)
FL	R	R	SPD (R)
GA	R	R	SPD (R)
HI	D	R	Competitive
ID	R	R	SPD (R)
IL	D	D	SPD (D)
IN	SPLIT	R	Competitive
IA	D	D	SPD (D)
KS	R	D	Competitive
KY	SPLIT	R	Competitive
LA	D	R	Competitive
ME	D	D	SPD (D)
MD	D	D	SPD (D)
MA	D	D	SPD (D)
MI	SPLIT	D	Competitive
MN	D	R	Competitive
MS	D	R	Competitive
MO	R	d	Competitive
MT	SPLIT	D	Competitive
NE	N/A	R	Competitive
NV	D	R	Competitive
NH	D	D	SPD (D)
NJ	D	R	Competitive
NM	D	D	SPD (D)
NY	D	D	SPD (D)
NC	D	D	SPD (D)
ND	R	R	SPD (R)
OH	SPLIT	D	Competitive
OK	R	D	Competitive

Table 3 (continued).

OR	D	D	SPD (D)
PA	SPLIT	D	Competitive
RI	D	R	Competitive
SC	R	R	SPD (R)
SD	R	R	SPD (R)
TN	R	D	Competitive
TX	R	R	SPD (R)
UT	R	R	SPD (R)
VT	D	R	Competitive
VA	SPLIT	D	Competitive
WA	D	D	SPD (D)
WV	D	D	SPD (D)
WI	D	D	SPD (D)
WY	R	D	Competitive
Total Single Party Dominated States			25

gain of 14 states. The Democrats, however, gained control over only California, Connecticut, Minnesota, and Vermont, while losing Arizona, Iowa, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, and Wisconsin, for a total of 2 states lost. In all, only 12 states remained competitive by the NCSL's measurements. In 2014, the total number of single-party dominated states remained static, with the Democratic Party taking control of New York and Rhode Island, and Maine and Missouri becoming competitive.

This explosion in the number of single-party dominated states coincides with the rise of the Tea Party as a political powerhouse in the United States. Though it would be unwise to attribute all the credit for this shift to one group in the world of American politics, it seems unlikely that the rise in prominence of a hyper-conservative wing of the Republican Party and the evident domination of state level politics by the Republicans would be a total coincidence.

National Party Policy Deviation

After analyzing the individual candidates' data, a definite pattern emerged. In 2006, Democratic candidates for Senate in states that were not politically dominated by one party or the other scored anywhere from a perfect 0 to 3.3 on the partisan scale with a median score of 1.16. In states dominated by their own Democratic Party, the candidates ranged from 0 to 2.2, with the median falling at .655. Finally, in Republican dominated states, Democratic candidates scored in a range from .6 to 1.87, with a median score of -.96. Taken at these values, there does not appear to be much deviation, with means remaining firmly within the "Democratic" side of the partisan line.

However, when the three sets of data are viewed together as box plots, the real difference can be easily seen. As evidenced by the box plot for 2006 (Figure 1), Democratic candidates in states that were dominated by the Republican Party have a strikingly less Democratic low score of .6, measurably higher than Democrats running in the competitive or Democrat dominated states. Furthermore, the scores of these Democratic candidates clustered clearly higher (or "more Republican") than those in the states dominated by their own party, supporting H_2 and H_4. H_1 is also supported, as the Democratic candidates saw clustering further into the "Democratic" side of the partisan line in states controlled by their own party than in competitive states.

In the case of Republican Senate candidates in the 2006 election, the results are even more interesting. In competitive states, Republican candidates received scores ranging from .3 to a perfect 4 with a median score of 3.04. This places half of the candidates in these states above a 3.04 score, indicating a very strong adherence to the Republican national platform. However, in states that were dominated by their own
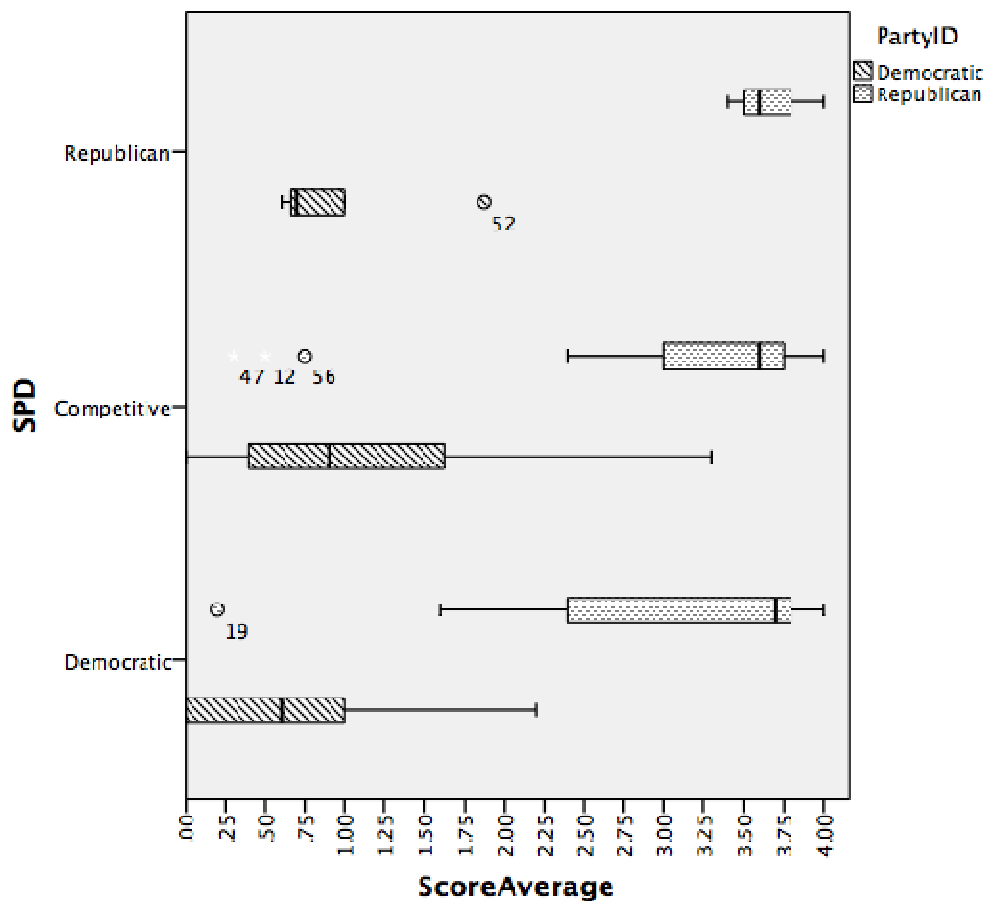
Figure 1. Average Partisan Scores 2006

party, the scores never come close to crossing the line into "Democratic" scores. With a

low score of 3.4, a high score of a perfect 4, and a median score of 3.66, Republicans

were much more in line with their national Party platform in states dominated by their

own party than were the Democrats, showing support for all five hypotheses. While 3/4

of Democratic candidates running in Democratically controlled states had average scores

of 0 to 1, Republicans running in Republican controlled states never dropped lower than a

3.4. In states controlled by the opposition party, Republican candidates had a score range
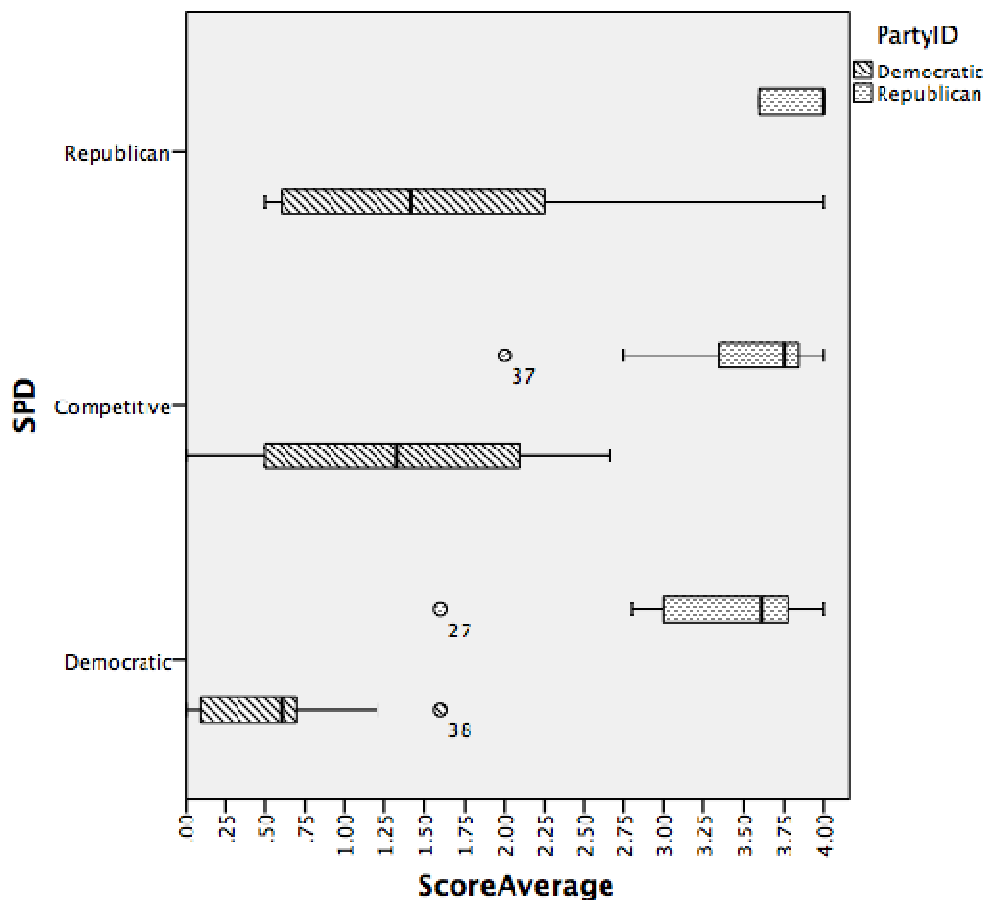
Figure 2. Average Partisan Scores 2008

of .2 to a perfect 4, with a median of 3. Again, the first and second quartiles cluster at a

more "Democratic" level along the partisan line, indicating support for H_2. Similar

patterns repeat in 2008 (Figure 2). Democrats running in Republican controlled states

never achieve a partisan score lower than .5, clearly more "Republican" than the 0 they

reach in the other two categories of states. They also reach a top score of a perfectly

"Republican" 4 in Republican controlled states, while never scoring higher than 2.6

elsewhere. Also, the box plots show clustering at higher scores in Republican states than

in any others. This indicates a clear tendency for policy deviation among Democratic

candidates to be more frequent and more extreme when running in solidly Republican states. Once again, all hypotheses are supported by these findings.

The Republican candidates show an even greater tendency to remain adherent to their national Party platform in 2008. Indeed, only a single Republican candidate (Senator Susan Collins of Maine) skewed into the "Democratic" side of the partisan line The median score for each category never drops below a 3.35. Though the data does show clustering at lower scores in states controlled by Democrats, the fact that this clustering is still solidly within "Republican" score territory is telling, and lends support for all hypotheses.

Again, Republican candidates remain committed to the national Party platform to a much greater degree than do Democratic candidates, even in states in which they face unfavorable odds, supporting H_5. While Democrats were shown to be willing to move into the more conservative side of the partisan scale in both Republican and Democratically controlled states, only two Republican candidates found their average scores crossing that line, and both constitute statistical outliers. Finally, in 2010 (Figure 3), Democratic candidates in competitive states received scores ranging from a perfect 0 to a perfect 4, with a median score of 1.06.

In states controlled by the Democratic Party, Democrats still had wide ranging scores, from 0 to 3.75. With the two outliers removed, scores ranged from -2 to -.5. Finally, in those states controlled by Republicans, Democrats scored between 0 and 3, with no statistical outliers. Fully 25% of Democratic candidates scored 0 or higher in Republican states, a surprisingly high portion of the population. These results support all hypotheses, in the case of Democratic candidates in 2010.
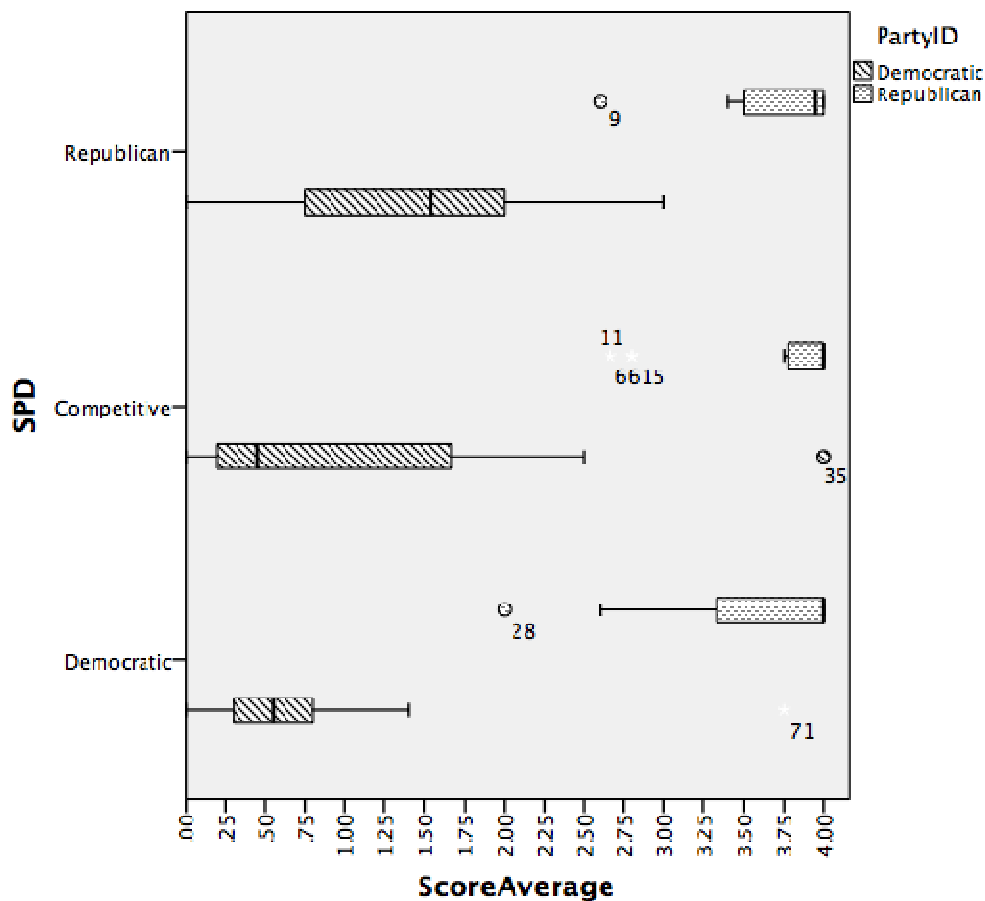
Figure 3. Average Partisan Scores 2010

Once again, party cohesion was much stronger within the Republican Party. Candidates running in competitive states never dropped below a score of 2.66, with 9 of the 16 candidates scoring a perfect 4. In Republican controlled states, Republican candidates ranged from 2.6 to a perfect 4, with a median score of 3.68. In states controlled by the Democratic Party, scores ranged from 2 to a perfect 4, with a median score of 3.63. Fully 25% of candidates scored between 2.5 and 3.3, indicating a clear tendency for policy deviation as compared with Republican and competitive states. However, only a single candidate scored in the "Democratic" range. Nearly all

hypotheses are once again supported. However, in this case, there is some dissonance. In 2010, Republican candidates in Republican dominated states actually had a slightly more "Democratic" low score than those in competitive states. Additionally, the median score was just slightly lower in Republican controlled states at 3.68, as opposed to the median score of a perfect 4 in competitive states. So, in the case of Republican candidates in the 2010 election, H_1 is not supported.

While the support of these hypotheses seems on its face to be significant, once control variables are introduced to the model, the significance of the party competition variable is seriously reduced (Table 4). When the regression is controlled for the variables mentioned in the second chapter, single-party domination loses all significance. The more fascinating outcomes arise from the variables that do show significance.

For instance, the classification of a candidate as a challenger rather than an incumbent was found to be significant at the .01 level. This indicates that incumbent candidates are more likely to deviate from national policy platforms than challengers. As addressed in the second chapter, this is likely due to several factors, including the safety associated with the incumbency advantage and the tendency of challengers to attack incumbents from their partisan extreme. For instance, Tea Party backed candidate Jonathan Karl defeated the powerful Republican incumbent Eric Cantor by attacking him from his conservative flank on the issue of immigration. The aforementioned desire for party purity likely leads challengers to remain wedded to the national party platform as a method of subverting the incumbency advantage.

Table 4

Regression Results

VARIABLES	COEFFICIENTS
	Model 1
Single Party	0.112
	(1.27)
Incumbent	-0.377
	(3.08)***
Party ID	-0.476
	(3.94)***
Religiosity	-0.001
	(0.96)
Sex	-0.142
	(0.0896)
% Urban	-0.014
	(3.16)***
Constant	2.467
	(5.83)***
R Squared	.16
Observations	205

Note: *, **, and *** indicate significance at the .1, .05, and .01 significance levels

Additionally, the party identification of a candidate was also found to be significant at the .01 level. Candidates that identify as Democrats were found to be more likely to deviate from party policy. This provides evidence to support H_5, as well as Grossman and Hopkins' (2015) data that shows a greater tendency towards policy cohesion among Republicans. This begs the question, is this a modern phenomenon exacerbated by the Tea Party, or does Grossman and Hopkins' theory apply to Republicans of earlier time periods as well? This would benefit from further research,

pushing back the years studied into previous eras, such as the 1980's and the emergence of the religious right as a force within the Reagan Republicans.

Finally, the percentage of state population classified as "urban" was found to have significance at the .01 level as well. This is to be expected, considering the close ties of minority and union voters to the Democratic Party and the connection between rural voters and the Republican Party. With party identification having such a strong significance, it is not surprising to find that a factor that so clearly defines voters' self-identification would be just as significant.

However, the evidence that the Republican Party has indeed become less likely to deviate from national policy is striking. To observe this, I assigned a score to each candidate that represents the distance between the average partisan score assigned in this study and the "perfect" score of their respective party (0 for Democrats, 4 for Republicans). For instance, a Democrat who obtained an average partisan score of 1.1 would have a deviation score of 1.1, the difference between 0 and the average partisan score obtained. A Republican with a 2.6 average partisan score would be assigned a 1.4 deviation score, as they are 1.4 away from their perfect score of 4.

In 2006, Republicans had higher average deviation scores than Democrats in both competitive states, and in states in which the Democratic Party held control, though in both cases their median deviation score was lower than the Democratic candidates' medians, especially in competitive states (Figure 4). This clustering of candidate scores
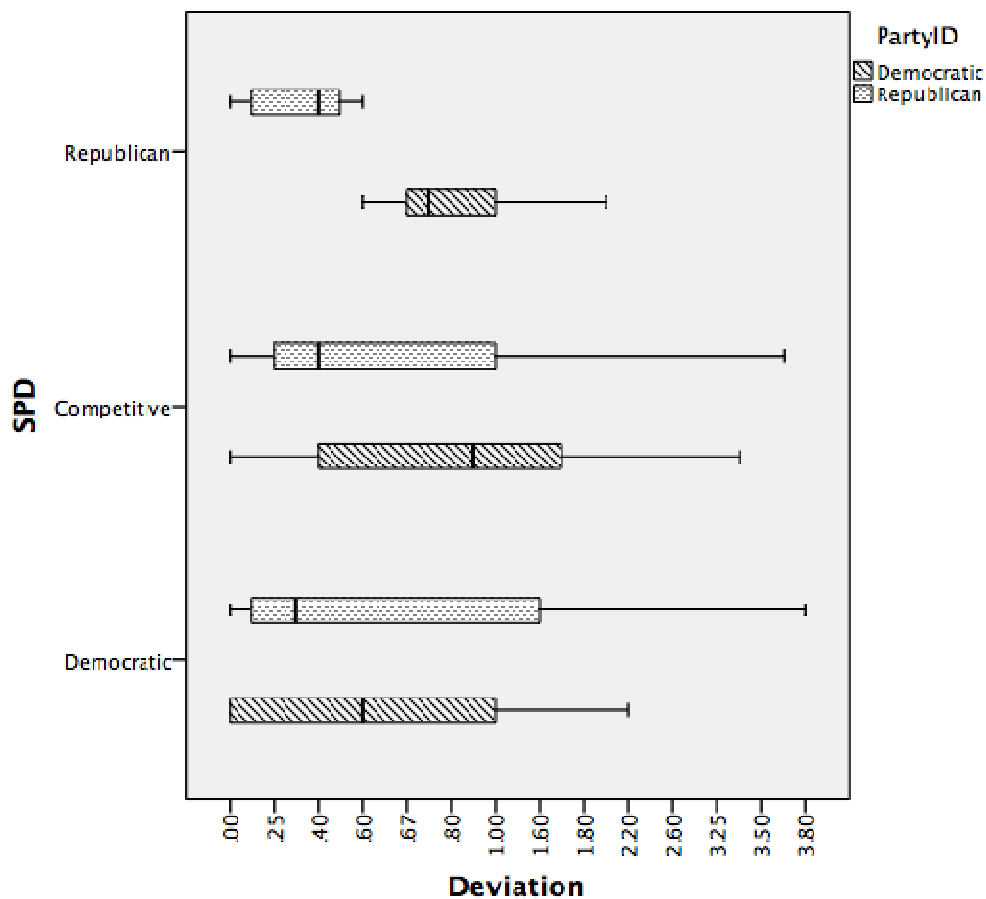
Figure 4. Policy Deviation Scores for 2006

towards the bottom end of the scale evidences a powerful drive, even in the most

unfriendly of states, to remain adherent to the national party platform.

By 2008, the phenomenon has become even clearer (Figure 5), as Republicans

now only exceed Democratic deviation scores in Democratically controlled states, which,

as the literature and hypotheses discussed previously indicate, is expected. Again, even

in Democratic states, the Republican mean deviation score is lower than that of the

Democrats, showing clustering at lower levels of deviation, despite circumstances
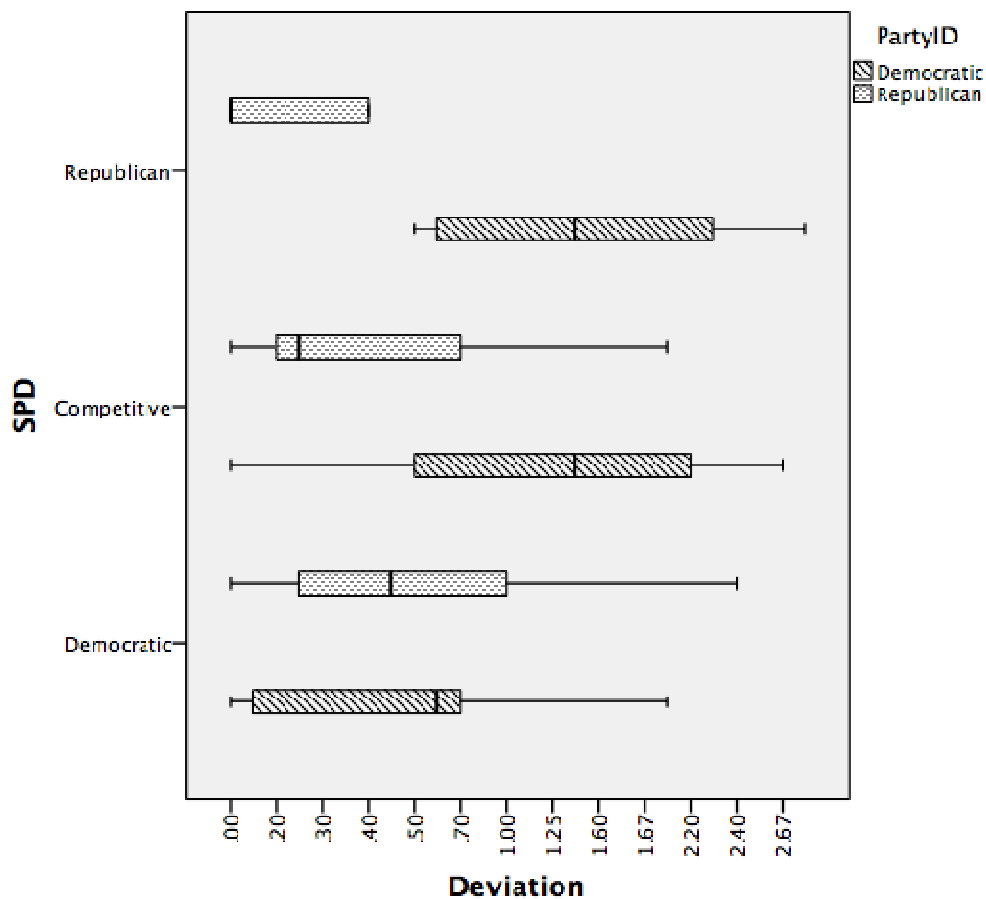
generally unfavorable to the Republican Party.

Figure 5. Policy Deviation Scores for 2008

Finally, by 2010 the Republican policy cohesion has become even more stark (Figure 6). Once again, only in states in which they constitute the minority party are the Republicans found to have higher deviation scores than Democrats. However, in this case the mean deviation score of the Republican candidates is significantly lower than that of the Democrats, indicating that the higher deviation scores are observed in a smaller number of candidates. In Republican and competitive states, Republican scores are strikingly lower.
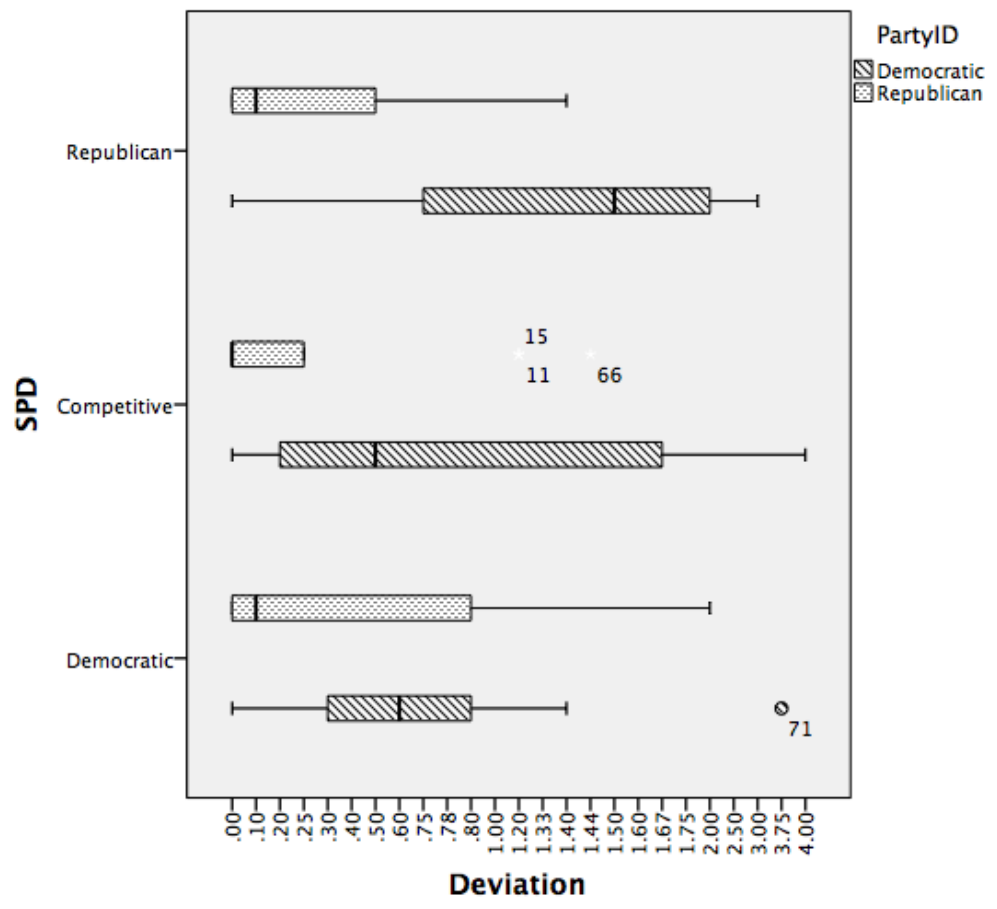
Figure 6. Policy Deviation Scores for 2010

This observation of deviation scores lends even more weight to H5, as well as the literature than undergirds it. The reductions in Republican policy deviation are truly striking and research that includes the years 2012 and 2014 are likely to find even more clear policy adherence.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The growth in the number of single-party dominated states shows no sign of slowing. The explosion in the number of single-party dominated states in 2012 and 2014 shows a powerful schism in the American electorate that provides a window into the hyper-partisan atmosphere of national politics. As mentioned earlier, this elimination of competition within a state political system encourages more extreme partisanship in candidates, as purity tests and competitive party primaries require more strict adherence to the national platform.

The results of examining candidate policy positions support all five hypotheses, with one minor exception in the year 2010. Policy deviation among candidates was more commonly found in states in which those candidates constituted a partisan minority. It would be unwise to attribute this phenomenon solely to the factor of party control within a state, as there is no way to quantify the exact reasoning behind a candidate's policy choices. However, the data show a fascinating connection between party policy deviation and the existing political climate within a state. In nearly every instance, minority candidates were found to be more likely to deviate from national party policy than either their counterparts in the majority party or their fellow party members running in competitive states or those dominated by their own party.

The sole deviation from the expected outcome occurred in 2010. Republican candidates in that year show more policy deviation in states dominated by their own party than in states with a competitive partisan environment. This could be due to the fact that 2010 was a mid-term election year, as the party in control of the White House regularly

loses seats in Congress in mid-term elections (Abramowitz et al. 1986; Calabresi and Lindgren 2006; Bafumi et al. 2010). In 2008, Democrat Barack Obama took power, and began proposing and supporting controversial legislation, such as the Affordable Care Act, inciting a great deal of public debate. It is possible this encouraged Republican candidates in competitive states to stick closer to the national platform in an effort to capitalize on the expected backlash against the party in power.

The impact and importance of the single-party domination factor is lessened by the significant results of the control variables, indicating that perhaps the party competition levels in the states is less the controlling factor for these deviations and simply another symptom of the true causes. Though the party competition data did not appear to have a significant effect, the levels of party competition in the individual states is still a powerful indicator of electoral outcomes and candidate party deviation, even if it is not the direct cause. In future research, a variable could be included to account for the ethnic makeup of the state in question. Time and resources did not allow for such a consideration in this thesis.

The combination of the growth in these single-party states and the likelihood of minority candidates within them to deviate from national party policy create some interesting possibilities for future elections. As the majority party candidates become more loyal to their national policies and the minority party candidates deviate more, it is possible that a new sort of "moderate" or "centrist" candidate will emerge to become an actual player within the political system. This possibility is limited by the evidence that it is really only the Democratic Party candidates that are deviating in any meaningful way. Further, the runaway success of the Republican Party in winning seats in Congress over

the last few elections cycles offers them no reason to moderate their stances. As long as Republicans continue to dominate statewide elections to the extent that they currently do, it is unlikely that they will see any advantage is softening policy stances. The continued influence of the Tea Party and their demands for party purity make moderation even more unlikely.

The more likely result of such deviation is a weakening of the Democratic Party within Congress. If the party platform is being watered down by candidates and incumbents who deviate significantly from overall party goals, they are unlikely to be able to effectively challenge a much more united Republican Party when it comes to divisive legislation and close floor votes. This could become a self-perpetuating cycle, as the weakened Democratic Party finds winning Congressional seats more and more difficult as they fracture over policy.

Though I believe the insight provided by this study is an important addition to the understanding of the modern climate regarding Congressional elections, it is certainly not complete. Given more time and resources, there are several ways in which this study can be expanded and improved. The scope of the data observed was necessarily limited by both deadline requirements and the difficulty associated with retrieving cached versions of defunct campaign websites.

Primarily, the years examined could be expanded. Though retrieving the data used to determine the number of single-party dominated states for the years 2012 and 2014 was a simple process, the Library of Congress archives did not offer access to the campaign websites of Senate candidates for those years. If the data for those years could be obtained, it would offer a more precise examination of the effects imposed by the

examined variables. Additionally, collecting data for earlier elections could offer perspective on how this phenomenon has evolved and its true impact on elections. Being able to examine campaigns that took place during earlier midterm elections could help to deepen our understanding of differences between midterm and Presidential election years when it comes to Congressional elections and state politics.

Additionally, the study could be expanded to include candidates for the House of Representatives. As this chamber is considered "the people's house" and has two year election cycles as opposed to a staggered six year election cycle, examining these campaigns could significantly sharpen the view of candidate policy deviation. A two year election cycle is necessarily more reactionary than a six year cycle, as candidates face reelection more often and are not as likely to be able to ignore acute political situations. If a controversial issue emerges in the middle of a Senator's six year term, that representative has a longer window of time to allow that issue to leave the national consciousness. A Congressman, however, is not as able to ignore such issues, as they must begin campaigning again almost immediately after the end of the previous election. This would widen the sample size by an enormous margin. The two Houses could be compared separately for each year to gauge possible differences between the two types of campaigns, as well as combined for a better overview of the two parties.

Furthermore, the policy positions examined could be expanded. This study faced deadlines that necessitated a streamlined number of policy areas to be examined. An expanded study could include more areas, as well as adjust the policies examined year by year to reflect issues that emerge between platforms. For instance, the Affordable Care Act emerged during the years between the 2008 and 2012 party platforms, and is

therefore not directly addressed in 2008. However, it became a major source of political

upheaval almost immediately and could therefore be used as a more appropriate

comparison between the parties in the 2010 campaigns. This more fluid policy

examination could also be used to highlight the subtle, iterative changes in each party's

platforms, especially in the realm of issues like climate change and immigration.

Additionally, a more in depth examination of the factors that lead to political

homogeneity in states would be possible with more time and resources. The observed

campaign positions could then be compared to the data regarding racial makeups,

religious populations, and rural/urban divides to attempt to explain some of the outcomes.

While those factors were discussed in a general way within this study, time and funding

limitations restricted the actual examination of these factors on a state-by-state basis.

Future research could correlate the actual data on these factors not only to the campaigns

of the candidates, but to the eventual winners of these elections to examine the effects

they may have. The data could also be expanded to include statewide offices other than

state legislatures and governors to provide a more nuanced view of party competition

within a state.

Finally, the actual outcomes of these elections could be examined to determine

the value of these policy deviations. Each race could be examined on its own to

determine not only for the origin and frequency of policy deviation, but what advantage,

if any, such deviations offer a candidate, either of the majority or minority party. If these

deviations from national party policy are not providing any real electoral advantage to

candidates, then there may be another reason for candidates to abandon their party during

tough competitions. Also, the actual voting behavior of such divergent candidates after

election could be recorded to determine if these policy deviations are simply a tool to win election, or if they actually translate into legislative action down the road.

It is my belief that this study offers an understanding of recent political trends that has been lacking in the modern literature. Though there have been studies regarding political competition in states and studies regarding policy deviation, the two factors have never been combined to attempt to explain the effect they have on one another and campaigns in general. This study can offer a springboard into a new way of looking at the way political candidates moderate their policy positions when faced with an unfavorable political landscape.

WORKS CITED

Abramowitz, Alan I., Albert D. Cover, and Helmut Norpoth. 1986. "The President's Party
in Midterm Elections: Going from Bad to Worse." *American Journal of Political
Science* 30, no. 3: 562-76.

Abramowitz, Alan, and Kyle Saunders. 2005. "Why Can't We All Just Get Along? The
Reality of a Polarized America." *The Forum* 3, no. 2: Article 1.

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization A Myth?" *The
Journal of Politics* 70, no. 2: 542-55.

Abramowitz, Alan. 2010. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and
American Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ashworth, Scott, and Ethan Bueno De Mesquita. 2008. "Elections with Platform and
Valence Competition." *Games and Economic Behavior* 67, no. 1: 191-216.

Bafumi, Joseph, Robert S. Erikson, and Christopher Wlezien. 2010. "Balancing, Generic
Polls and Midterm Congressional Elections." *The Journal of Politics* 72, no. 3:
705-19.

Barreto, Matt A., Luis R. Fraga, Sylvia Manzano, Valerie Martinez-Ebers, and Gary M.
Segura. 2008. "Should They Dance With The One Who Brung 'Em?" Latinos And
The 2008 Presidential Election." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 41, no. 4: 753-60.

Bianco, William T. 1984. "Strategic Decisions on Candidacy in U. S. Congressional
Districts." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 2: 351-64.

Brady, Henry E., and Paul M. Sniderman. 1985. "Attitude Attribution: A Group Basis for
Political Reasoning." *The American Political Science Review* 79, no. 4: 1061-78.

Canon, Bradley C. 1978. "Factionalism in the South: A Test of Theory and a Revisitation
of V. O. Key." *American Journal of Political Science* 22, no. 4: 833-48.

Calabresi, Steven G., and James Lindgren. 2006. "The President: Lightning Rod or

    King?" *The Yale Law Journal* 115, no. 9: 2611-22.

"Census.gov." Census.gov. Accessed April 13, 2015. https://www.census.gov.

Cohen, Steven M., and Charles S. Liebman. 1997."American Jewish Liberalism:

    Unraveling the Strands." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61, no. 3: 405-30.

Cohen, Jeffrey E., and Richard Fleisher. 2007. "Global Versus Specific Opinion and

    Senator Roll Call Voting: The Case of Immigration Policy, 2006." Paper prepared

    for delivery at the Midwest Political Science Association, Palmer House,

    Chicago, Il, April 12-15, 2007.

    http://faculty.fordham.edu/fleisher/Global_and_Specific_Constituency_Opinion_a

    nd_Immigration_%203-08-07.pdf

Damore, D. F., and T. G. Hansford. 1999. "The Allocation of Party Controlled Campaign

    Resources in the House of Representatives, 1989-1996." *Political Research

    Quarterly* 52, no. 2: 371-85.

Dancey, Logan, and Geoffrey Sheagley. 2013. "Heuristics Behaving Badly: Party Cues

    and Voter Knowledge." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 2: 312-25.

"Democratic Party Platforms: Democratic Party Platform of 2004." Democratic Party

    Platforms: Democratic Party Platform of 2004. Accessed April 13, 2015.

    http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29613."Democratic Party Platforms:

"Democratic Party Platforms: 2008 Democratic Party Platform." Democratic Party

    Platforms: 2008 Democratic Party Platform. Accessed April 13, 2015.

    http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=78283.

Diermeier, Daniel, Michael Keane, and Antonio Merlo. 2005. "A Political Economy
    Model of Congressional Careers." *American Economic Review* 95, no. 1: 347-73.

Dodd, Lawrence C. 1977. *Congress and the Quest For Power*. Vol. 1. Washington, D.C.:
    CQ Press.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.

Fenno, Richard F. 1996. *Senators on the Campaign Trail: The Politics of Representation*.
    Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2008. "Political Polarization
    In The American Public." *Annual Review of Political Science* 70, no. 2: 563-88.

Fleisher, Richard, and John R. Bond. 2004. "The Shrinking Middle In The US Congress."
    British Journal of Political Science 34, no. 3: 429-51.

Franklin, Charles H. 1984. "Issue Preferences, Socialization, and the Evolution of Party I
    dentification." *American Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 3: 459-78.

Garner, Andrew, and Harvey Palmer. 2011. "Polarization and Issue Consistency Over
    Time." *Political Behavior* 33, no. 2: 225-46.

Gibson, Troy, and Christopher Hare. 2012. "Do Latino Christians and Seculars Fit the
    Culture War Profile? Latino Religiosity and Political Behavior." *Politics and
    Religion* 5, no. 1: 53-82.

Goren, Paul. 2005. "Party Identification and Core Political Values." *American Journal of
    Political Science* 49, no. 4: 881-96.

Grossman, Matt, and David A. Hopkins. 2015. "Ideological Republicans and Group
    Interest Democrats: The Asymmetry of American Party Politics." *American*

Political Science Association 13, no. 1: 119-39. Accessed March 18, 2015.

    http://matthewg.org/ideologicalrepublicans.pdf.

Hamilton, Alexander, and John Jay. 2011. *The Federalist Papers*. Auckland: Floating

    Press.

Holbrook, Thomas M., and Emily Van Dunk. 1993. "Electoral Competition in the

    American States." *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 4: 955-62.

Hollibaugh, G. E., L. S. Rothenberg, and K. K. Rulison. 2013. "Does It Really Hurt to Be

    Out of Step?" *Political Research Quarterly* 66, no. 4: 856-67.

Hopper, S. D. 1975. "Fragmentation of the California Republican Party in the One-Party

    Era, 1893-1932." *Political Research Quarterly* 28, no. 2: 372-86.

Jacobson, Gary C. 1985. "Money and Votes Reconsidered: Congressional Elections,

    1972-982." *Public Choice* 47, no. 1: 7-62.

Jacoby, William G. 1988. "The Impact of Party Identification on Issue Attitudes."

    American Journal of Political Science 32, no. 3: 643-61.

Jessee, Stephen, and Neil Malhotra. 2010 "Are Congressional Leaders Middlepersons or

    Extremists? Yes." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 3: 361-92.

Key, V. O. 1949. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. New York: A.A. Knopf.

Knoke, David, and Michael Hout. 1974. "Social and Demographic Factors in American

    Political Party Affiliations, 1952-72." *American Sociological Review* 39, no. 5:

    700-13.

Langer, G. 2005. "Voters And Values In The 2004 Election." *Public Opinion Quarterly*

    69, no. 5: 744-59.

Lazarus, Jeffry. 2007. "Incumbent Vulnerability and Challenger Entry in Statewide

Elections." *American Politics Research* 36, no. 1: 108-29.

Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. 2001. "Advantages and Disadvantages of
Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making." *American Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 4: 951-71.

Levitt, Steven D. 1996. "How Do Senators Vote? Disentangling the Role of Voter
Preferences, Party Affiliation, and Senator Ideology." *The American Economic Review* 86, no. 3: 425-41.

Lodge, Milton, and Ruth Hamill. 1986. "A Partisan Schema for Political Information
Processing." *The American Political Science Review* 8, no. 2: 505-20.

Maestas, Cherie D., and Cynthia R. Rugeley. 2008. "Assessing the Experience Bonus
Through Examining Strategic Entry, Candidate Quality, and Campaign Receipts in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 3: 520-35.

Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale
University Press.

Mangum, M. 2008 "The Ties That Unbind: Exploring The Contradictory Effects Of
Religious Guidance And Church Attendance On Black Partisanship." *Journal of Black Studies* 38, no. 6: 916-31.

McDaniel, E. L., and C. G. Ellison. 2008. "God's Party? Race, Religion, And Partisanship
Over Time." *Political Research Quarterly* 62, no. 2: 180-91..

McKee, Seth C. 2008. "Rural Voters in Presidential Elections, 1992-2004." *The Forum*
41, no. 1: 101-08.

Miller, Jake. 2013. "Pryor Wears Opposition to Gun Control as Badge of Honor."
CBSNews. May 31, 2013. Accessed February 8, 2015.

http://www.cbsnews.com/news/pryor-wears-opposition-to-gun-control-as-badge-of-honor/.

Murakami, Michael H. 2008 "Divisive Primaries: Party Organizations, Ideological Groups, and the Battle over Party Purity." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 41, no. 4: 918-23.

Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal. 2007 *Ideology & Congress*. 2nd Rev. ed. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal. 2007. "On Party Polarization In Congress." *Daedalus* 136, no. 3: 104-07.

Rahn, Wendy M., John H. Aldrich, and Eugene Borgida. 1994. "Individual and Contextual Variations in Political Candidate Appraisal." *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 1: 193-99.

"Republican Party Platforms: 2004 Republican Party Platform." 2004 Republican Party Platform: A Safer World and a More Hopeful America. June 11, 2004. Accessed March 13, 2015. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/papers_pdf/25850.pdf.

"Republican Party Platforms: 2008 Republican Party Platform." Republican Party Platforms: 2008 Republican Party Platform. September 1, 2001. Accessed January 9, 2015. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=78545.

"State Partisan Composition." NCSL.org. February 14, 2015. Accessed January 15, 2015. http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/partisan-composition.aspx.

Stone, Walter J., and L. Sandy Maisel. 2003. "The Not-So-Simple Calculus of Winning: Potential U.S. House Candidates' Nomination and General Election Prospects." *The Journal of Politics* 65, no. 4: 951-77.

Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. "Ideological Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters

For Partisan Polarization In Congress." *The Journal Of Politics* 76, no. 3: 786-97.

"U.S. Religion Map and Religious Populations - U.S. Religious Landscape Study - Pew

Forum on Religion & Public Life." U.S. Religion Map and Religious Populations

- U.S. Religious Landscape Study - Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Accessed March 13, 2015. http://religions.pewforum.org/maps.