ABSTRACT

Title of Document: REPRESENTATION IN STATE LEGISLATURES: SEARCHING FOR RESPONSIVENESS IN AN AGE OF POLARIZATION

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The purpose of this dissertation is to assess the degree to which state legislators are responsive to their various constituencies. The guiding research questions are: 1) Under what circumstances are state legislators most responsive to their districts, parties, and interest group supporters? 2) What drives certain legislators to take extreme issue positions? And 3) What explains and what are the consequences of state legislative polarization? I propose a theory of conditional responsiveness that specifies circumstances (issue type, electoral competition and legislative professionalism) under which responsiveness is most likely to occur. I systematically test my hypotheses using an original data set that includes information on over 4,000 state legislators and their districts in 30 different states.

I find legislators to be most responsive to constituents on high salience social issues. On lower salience economic issues, state representatives are much more responsive to their interest group supporters. In addition, I find members from electorally safe districts to be most responsive to their districts as safe members are more likely to reflect their district's demographic and political homogeneity. Legislative

professionalism if found to enhance responsiveness. This discovery supports the view of many scholars who saw the professionalization of state legislatures in the latter half of the 20th century as a healthy development.

Across the country, I find a good deal of ideological extremism among state legislators. This legislative extremism, when aggregated, results in chamber level polarization. This polarization cuts into the productivity of the legislatures, making stalemate a more common legislative outcome.

Policy responsiveness occurring in state legislatures is a reassuring finding; responsiveness, however, is conditional. Certain conditions influence the degree to which constituency opinion really matters. Perhaps the most important condition is the level of public interest on a given policy issue – when people care, legislators respond. This observation has practical implications for our democratic system of government. Representatives, without an informed or caring citizenry, can get away with straying from the wishes or needs of their constituents. As such, a necessary component of representative democracy must be an informed and vigilant citizenry.

REPRESENTATION IN STATE LEGISLATURES: SEARCHING FOR RESPONSIVENESS IN AN AGE OF POLARIZATION

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2006

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I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Patricia Dennis. It is her love, support, encouragement, and fine example that sustains and guides my work.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of many individuals. First and foremost, I want to thank my advisor Paul Herrnson. Throughout graduate school, his guidance, support, and friendship have been invaluable. Paul brought me on board at the Center for American Politics and Citizenship (CAPC) in the fall of 2001, where I remained throughout my time in graduate school at the University of Maryland. I estimate the quality of my graduate education to have doubled by virtue of my tenure at CAPC. The CAPC community of undergraduates, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows provided a lively intellectual atmosphere with countless opportunities to learn research skills that I now use everyday. I owe a special debt to Peter Francia, previously Research Coordinator at CAPC and now Assistant Professor at East Carolina University. I have many fond memories of working on research projects with Peter and will always be grateful for the countless ways in which he helped me over the years.

I would like to thank Ric Uslaner for being an exceptional teacher, for always taking a great deal of interest in me and my work, and for offering exceptionally insightful comments on each chapter of my dissertation. Geoff Layman and Frances Lee, although new faculty members at Maryland, very generously agreed to serve on my dissertation committee. I was lucky to have them and they signal a bright future for the Government and Politics Department. Fellow graduate students Juliana Menasce-Horowitz and Joshua Dyck are great friends and are always quick to offer encouragement and help. Over the past several months, Elizabeth Bentley-Smith has been extremely generous with her time and proofreading skills.

I would not have attempted the Ph.D. program at Maryland it not for the fine example set by my mentors at the University of Akron. John Green continues to exercise a tremendous influence over my academic life. He was the first person to show me the joys of academic research. Rick Farmer, Stephen Brooks, and Fran Buntman also deserve special recognition and my sincere thanks.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank my family for their loving support. My mother Patricia and stepfather Michael have been my biggest supporters for the longest time. I owe them more than I can ever express. My brother Matthew, and sisters Mary and Martha are my best friends and I thank them very much. The single person to whom I owe the most, however, is without question my wife. Denise has supported me every day, believed in me without question, and been willing to uproot her life on more than one occasion as we try to make our way successfully through life.

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Chapter 1: Responsiveness in State Legislatures

The laws and processes of state governments intimately affect the lives of all Americans. Assisting us into this world are doctors and nurses licensed and certified by the state; assisting us out are state licensed and certified morticians. In-between, state laws and processes concerning such things as education, welfare, transportation, the consumption of alcohol, and the ability to marry, influence the lives of state citizens. The devolution revolution of the 1980s and 1990s made state governments even more relevant by transferring responsibility for many policies away from the federal government and into the hands of the states. Food stamps, Medicaid, and welfare programs – that states administer through federal block grants – are examples of policies once primarily the domain of the federal government but now largely managed at the state level.

The oft-cited justification behind the politics of devolution is that state governments are "closest to the people." The assumption is that at this low level of government, representatives are particularly attuned to their constituents and uniquely able to represent their interests. But, how in touch are they? Certain conditions exist in the states including: largely uncompetitive elections (Key 1949; Ranney 1976; Weber, Tucker, and Brice 1991; Holbrook and Van Dunk 1993); a citizenry with very little information about state politics (Boynton, Patterson, and Hedlund 1969; Jennings and Zeigler 1970); and, in some states, only part-time legislative institutions (Rosenthal 1998). These factors may make this "closest to the people" idea a myth. In this detached political environment, it is possible that constituency representation suffers. Furthermore,

such an environment seems a perfect setting for elite influence over legislative decision-making.

Representative Lenore Barrett (R-ID-26th) and Majority Leader Barbara Currie (D-IL-25th) legislate at different ends of the ideological spectrum. Barrett is overwhelmingly conservative in her roll call voting behavior, while Currie is a strong liberal. Both are ideologically extreme. What differentiates these women politically? One is a Democrat and one a Republican, but is that the end of the story? They both ran in electorally safe districts (Currie ran uncontested in 1998; Barrett won by a 40 percent margin) perhaps making it easier for them to gravitate towards ideological extremes. Furthermore, both came from homogeneous districts, as Currie's was overwhelmingly Black and liberal, while Barrett's was almost entirely White and conservative. Although herself a Southern Baptist, Barrett represented a majority Mormon district, which likely supports and nurtures her brand of social conservatism.

Just the opposite of these strong ideological women, Representative Don Moffitt (R-IL-94th) and Representative Ben GiaQuinta (D-IN-80th) were very moderate in their roll call activity. What made these two men so at home in the ideological middle? Unlike Currie and Barrett, GiaQuinta ran in a competitive race in 1998 winning by just a 10 percent margin. Moffitt, however, won by a comfortable 40 percent margin. Both come from districts that are relatively diverse economically and religiously. Moffitt raised 43 percent of his funds from labor organizations, a real exception among Republicans. Both of these men served in divided governments. Could these various facts offer some clue to a more systematic pattern behind legislative voting behavior? Throughout this study, I will return to these individuals to explicate my findings.

The purpose of this dissertation is to broadly assess the roll call responsiveness of state legislators to their districts, through a quantitative assessment of approximately 3,500 legislators in 30 states. In addition to the district, I assess legislative responsiveness to more elite party and interest group constituencies along with the influence of different demographic and institutional variations on these relationships. The guiding research questions are: 1) Under what circumstances are state legislators most responsive to their districts, parties, and interest group supporters? 2) What drives certain legislators to take extreme issue positions? And 3) What explains and what are the consequences of state legislative polarization?

Democracy through Representation

Representation is a necessary feature of contemporary democracies. The democratic ideal of mass decision-making, what has come to be known as "direct democracy," has, according to James Madison, "little basis in practice."[1] Citizens only know or care about a certain number of issues, leaving the rest to be sorted out by a subset of the population – our representatives. Acting on behalf of those they represent, these officials engage in democratic decision-making on a manageable scale. Not only is representation a practical form of government, Madison also suggests that it is a safer form of government as it mitigates the violence of faction that can arise through direct democracy (Schwartz 1988).

[1] Even in ancient Greece, direct democracy was limited to a certain subset of its citizens (Rosenthal 1998, p. 7). Besides Athenian democracy, and perhaps town hall meetings in New England, we have few examples of pure democracies.

The Representational Ideal

In its simplest form, the ideal representative process goes as follows: Through free and fair elections (inclusive suffrage, the right to run for offices, freedom of expression, authoritative dissemination of information) citizens periodically choose leaders who most closely hold their policy views. Once in office, those elected representatives act with a self-interest to be responsive to their constituents. If their actions in office prove unpopular back home, they risk being replaced in the next election. In *An Economic Theory of Democracy,* Anthony Downs developed both an elegant theory of voting behavior and perhaps the clearest statement of this representational ideal. When two parties or candidates are competing for majority support, they converge on the mass ideological middle with the winner being the party or candidate closest to the majority position or the median voter in their district. From the individual voter's perspective, this theory offers them a clear rubric for making a self-interested voting decision. From the perspective of the system as a whole, this theory results in the perfect representation of the entire constituency.

This model, while useful as a template for research on voting behavior and representation, is by its design simplistic and not entirely accurate in explaining representation in the contemporary United States. Voters are not particularly cognizant of matters concerning ideology and public policy (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960), and parties along with their aligned interest groups are full of policy-motivated activists (Schattschneider 1942; Morehouse 1981; Aldrich 1995; Miller and Schofield 2003) that work to pull their parties and candidates away from the median voter. According to Uslaner (1999) "Public officials don't stand naked before an

undifferentiated mass public. Nor do they jump through ideological hoops. They are pushed – by their partisans, party activists, and fellow officeholders.” In primary elections, candidates rush to extremes to solidify their base partisans and then, depending upon general election competition, run back towards the center. Some critics go so far as to argue that instead of representing the interests of ordinary citizens, legislators often act as conduits for elite influence over policy outcomes. This fear of elite hegemony is illustrated in opinion surveys that show many Americans worry about politicians who are acting in a self-interested way that runs contrary to the public good (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002).

The true nature of representation in the United States likely falls somewhere between the representational ideal and elite hegemony. But how to assess representation? How do we know representation when we see it? How should representation work? Surely, it is not enough to simply examine the electoral process and, once satisfied that elections are free and fair, conclude that the representational ideal has been met. “Unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all this talk about democracy is nonsense” (Key 1961).

Identifying “Ideal” Representation

Edmond Burke famously dichotomized representation as a struggle between *delegate* and *trustee* notions of representation. Borrowing on what Hobbs termed *authorization* theory, and similar to what Pitken (1967) would term *independence* theory, Burke described his *trustee* as someone whom citizens authorize to act in their place. This legislator takes a great deal of autonomy in carrying out the tasks of representation and must only justify positions to their constituents, not consult them before making

decisions. Burke found this type of legislator most appealing because he worried that ordinary people, given the charge of dictating legislative behavior, would not have the necessary knowledge or expertise to properly direct their representatives.

While Burke found the trustee to be a more practical solution to effective representation, in the face of a politically unsophisticated population, this prescription falls short of the representational ideal. At the other end of Burke's continuum, the *delegate* theory suggests that legislators act only on instruction from their constituents. In this formulation, there is no room for legislators' personal opinions, nor for issues concerning the quality of the policy or how it may affect the state or country as a whole. This prescription of delegate style behavior is much more inline with the representational ideal. Observing that in reality representatives fall somewhere between trustee and delegate models, others have employed *politico* theory, which suggests that legislators engage in both trustee and delegate behavior depending on the circumstances (Pitkin 1967). Politico theory takes into account all possibilities and thus predicts very little. One important reformulation of the delegate/trustee approach adds a third dimension by including actions aimed at the good of the state regardless of delegate desires or district wants – what Schwartz (1988) calls *transmission belt* theory.

Pluralism, as a theory of representation, focuses on the relationships between representatives and organized interests. Under this framework, legislators need not try to understand their constituents as a whole, but instead focus their attention on those citizens concerned enough about a particular issue to organize. Legislators operating under this theory can carry out a more streamlined representational approach because the interest group community offers a convenient simplification of the concerns and desires of the

citizenry. Critics argue that these groups are potentially unrepresentative and elitist (Schattschneider 1960). As such, representatives are misled if they are counting on the interest group community to be a microcosm of their district.

Descriptive representation, in the words of John Adams, values legislators who are "an exact portrait, in miniature, of the people at large, and should think, feel, reason and act like them." In short, to be like your constituents, demographically, is the surest way to meaningful representation. Opponents of this theory argue that looking like one's district is only a poor substitute for *substantive* representation in which the constituency and legislator share similar policy interests and ideologies regardless of race or ethnicity (Fenno 2003).

In practice, the idea of descriptive representation exists more as a normative claim of what some would like to see as opposed to a real description of the way things actually are. Overall, legislators come from more privileged and achieving sectors of society. They have better education (almost half have a graduate degree and 82 percent have a college degree) and higher salaries ($85,000 in their outside or previous job) than those they represent (Rosenthal 1998). While all legislators tend to come from the upper echelons of society, women and African Americans have made important gains in state legislatures. In 1940, only 2 percent of legislators nationally were women. By 1970, this number increased to 4 percent, and by 2000, 22 percent of state legislators were women. African American representation has also increased. In 1970, African Americans accounted for just over 1 percent of all state legislators but by 2000 that number had increased to nearly 7 percent (U.S. Statistical Abstract).

Representation as Responsiveness

Most understandings of representation, including Downs, require some notion of responsiveness of representatives to the wishes of those they represent (Eulau et al. 1959; Key 1961; Pitken 1967; Dahl 1989). That is, for any form of democratic government to be legitimate, it must respond in some meaningful way to public sentiment. As such, a popular strategy in assessing representation has been to assess the policies that governments adopt and measure the degree to which those policies align with mass preferences. Scholars call this *policy responsiveness* (Eulau and Karps 1978; Jewell 1982).[2] Responsiveness is conceptually distinct from delegate style representation, although the two are intuitively similar. Jewell (1982), in clarifying the concept of policy responsiveness, states, "we are interested in how representatives respond to both the articulated demands and the unarticulated interests of their constituents." In this sense, responsiveness draws on both delegate (demands) and trustee (interests) notions of representation.

Research has in fact found that policy output, at the state level, often corresponds to aggregate mass preferences (Dawson and Robinson 1963; Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993). This, however, is aggregate level congruence that runs the risk of violating the ecological fallacy.[3] The key for studies of representation is to find individual legislator responsiveness. This is the level of study where representation occurs. If

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[2] Because of convention, in this chapter I will call this type of responsiveness "policy responsiveness" even though a more accurate term may be "roll call responsiveness" as government output is policy and legislators' preferences are roll calls. Throughout the rest of the study I use "roll call responsiveness" but the two should be thought of interchangeably.

[3] Forces at play in the aggregate are not necessarily emblematic of individual level behavior.

legislators are indeed being responsive to their districts through their roll call activity, then the resulting policy output of government should be an accurate measure of policy responsiveness. However, because districts are not perfectly apportioned, and because legislative chambers have rules and processes, through which legislation must flow, the potential exists for aggregate outcomes that are not the sum of their individual parts. Therefore, these studies of policy responsiveness should be taken with a grain of salt and more studies of roll call responsiveness, at the individual legislator level are needed, especially in the states.

At the congressional level, many studies find evidence supporting a link between legislative behavior and district opinion (Miller and Stokes 1963; Eulau and Karps 1978, Erikson 1978, McCrone and Kuklinski 1979; Glazer and Robbins 1985; Stimson, Mackuen, Erikson 1995). At the state legislative district level, studies tend to focus on just one state (Erikson, Luttbeg and Holloway 1975; McCrone and Kuklinski 1979; Snyder 1996) thus limiting the generalizations we can draw from the findings (but see Uslaner and Weber 1977; 1979, 1983). More recent work by Gerald Wright and coauthors Jon Winburn and Tracy Osborn find evidence of constituents' preferences influencing legislative roll-call positions either directly, or through parties acting as a linkage mechanism connecting people to their state legislators (Wright and Osborn 2002; Wright 2005).

Policy responsiveness is not the only type of responsiveness noted by scholars. Others include *symbolic, service*, and *resource* responsiveness. Links between legislators and districts that emphasize these traits, while perhaps pleasing to constituents and important to economic development back home, are by their nature less important than

policy responsiveness – from the standpoint of democratic theory. At least since Hobbs, and certainly since Madison, the concern of democratic theorists who employ a system of representation has been how to approximate the needs and wishes of the people with an assembly of the few. While policy responsiveness strikes at the heart of this concern, I argue that these other forms of responsiveness at their best are subservient and at their worst actually work to undermine the representational ideal.

"Being one of them," what Ealau and Karps (1978) call *symbolic responsiveness* and what Fenno (1977) would go on to call member's "homestyle" is a form of responsiveness where members try to become the stereotype of their district. Symbolic responsiveness is more a psychological than a behavioral bond that legislators use to generate trust and support among their constituency. This may involve a representative putting on a cowboy hat in a parade, changing the patterns of their speech, or kissing a baby, to name but a few. The success and effect of these symbolic efforts on behalf of legislators are exceedingly difficult to measure (Jewell 1982), but Fenno (1977) convincingly shows that "homestyle" related activities dominate the efforts of certain members in their districts. "Being one of them," however, is certainly not enough for the proper functioning of a democratic system. In fact, it may serve to harm policy responsiveness. If legislators need to use symbolism to generate trust and support, the implication is that they are searching for authority to shirk away from a district held policy preference.

Service responsiveness, more commonly called "casework," is another popular form of representation. This involves legislators and their staff members helping individuals with problems they are having with government. It often involves help with

welfare, health and hospitals, unemployment compensation, drivers' licenses, taxes, and public jobs (Rosenthal 1998). In certain states, such as Louisiana, Maryland, and Illinois, legislators can give out a number of college scholarships; this is usually done based on merit, but occasionally for outright political gifts (Squire 1992). Evidence suggests that casework is becoming an increasing focus of legislators at both the national (Fenno 1977) and state level (Rosenthal 1998).

In state legislatures, the amount of casework is directly related to the number of staff members legislators employ, but even less professional states are entering into the casework game. Some state legislators even incur out-of-pocket expenses, usually in the form of long-distance telephone, in helping their constituents (Rosenthal 1998, 17). As for the affect of service responsiveness, some are concerned that it can grow to border on an abuse of power when legislators begin advocating a particular decision rather than simply helping to cut through red tape (Rosenthal 1998). Usually, however, these activities are benign, neither undermining nor enabling the representational ideal.

Allocative responsiveness refers to the ability of the legislators to get goods and services for their districts. As opposed to the individual nature of casework, these benefits are usually more general like park funds, money for police and fire departments, convention centers, community colleges, courthouses or perhaps some new government facility. These efforts are commonly referred to as "pork," but known in New York as "member items," in Pennsylvania as "walking-around money," and in Florida as "turkeys." Efforts by legislators to bring in new resources, or prevent some from being taken away, are sometimes viewed as an offensive activity. These goods are usually zero-sum in nature - one districts gain is another's loss. Rosenthal (1998, 18) warns "in these

situations, such a thing as state interest is almost completely lost from view." This implies that allocative responsiveness has the potential to work against the public good, which is an implicit good in the notion of policy responsiveness.

While *symbolic, service*, and a*llocative* responsiveness are clearly forms of representation, they do not further any notion of the representational ideal and in specific instances may in fact do it harm. As such, this dissertation will focus on policy responsiveness, what I will call *roll call* responsiveness (see footnote 2) as a rubric for measuring representation in state legislatures. Although this helps in limiting the scope of inquiry, the task is nonetheless complicated.

Can a representative truly be responsive to their district? In state legislative districts, this involves not one principal, but a constituency of perhaps several hundred thousand principals (Rosenthal 1998). Pitkin (1967) notes that a constituency is not a single unit with one expressed opinion on every topic. On some topics, a small group may hold a strong opinion while the rest of the district does not care or holds a contrary opinion. In this case, what legislative choice would be considered responsive? These concerns will reappear in the next chapter and when I discuss measures of district ideology and district homogeneity in Chapter 3.

States as Laboratories and State Legislators as Lab Mice

Why study roll call responsiveness at the state legislative level? In 1932, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis referred to states as "laboratories of democracy" suggesting that through experimentation with different solutions, states show the way in providing answers to questions of social and economic policy. Political scientists who study state level politics often view states in much the same way.

As mentioned above, a good number of studies of responsiveness exist at the national level and a number of important contributions exist at the aggregate state level. Studying state legislators; along with their states, their districts, and their supporters; combines the strengths of both the national and aggregate state level studies. Like the national studies, which focus on individual members of Congress, studying state legislators puts the focus on the most useful level of analysis, the individual legislator; which allows for the inclusion of legislator, district, election, interest group, and donor related characteristics. Like the aggregate state studies, studying members across states employs the considerable variation that exists between the states, including the level of chamber competition between the parties, the presence of divided government, and the level of legislative professionalism.

I intend to use the variation that exists between states to increase what is known about legislative responsiveness more generally. Is responsiveness greater in professional legislatures? Is responsiveness greater in chambers that are closely divided? How does divided government relate to responsiveness? The answers to these questions are as useful to understanding representation at the national level as they are to representation in the states. Congress goes through periods of close partisan division, calls for reforms aimed at amaturizing their institutions, and periods of divided government. We need not wait for these conditions to occur in Congress to get a handle on the effects they will have on representation. We can simply look to the state legislatures, where all these patterns are currently at play in one state or another, and employ the states as laboratories of democracy.

The Plan of this Study

This study is an assessment of the functioning of representative democracy, as understood through the lens of policy responsiveness in the American states. Based on work at the congressional and aggregate state level, my expectation is that a considerable amount of responsiveness will be revealed in the state legislatures. I do not, however, expect it to always jump right out of the data. I expect that forces at play at both the district and state level condition responsiveness.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the actors and conditions that likely influence roll call responsiveness. The actors include the legislators themselves, their constituents, their parties, and their interest group supporters. The conditions include the distinctive types of issues they consider, as well as electoral characteristics, and the designs of their legislative chambers.

In Chapter 3, I present the operationalization of the various components of responsiveness. This chapter introduces my composite measurement of legislator liberalism, extremism, and state legislative polarization. It also introduces my measure of district ideology, district homogeneity, interest groups activity, as well as various state and chamber characteristics. In addition to specifying the methods, Chapter 3 presents a descriptive account of the data in this study.

In Chapter 4, I examine the first research question, regarding ideological responsiveness, and find that legislators are indeed conditionally responsive to their various constituencies. As one would expect, in an era of strong partisan polarization, the party affiliation of legislators is a strong indicator of legislative roll call activity. On social/culture war issues, legislators are greatly influenced by their districts, while on

economic issues, legislators are more likely to fall in line with their interest group supporters. I find the professionalism of the institutions in which legislators serve to facilitate greater responsiveness of legislators to their districts.

In Chapter 5, I assess the ideological chasm that exists between legislators of the two major parties on the major issues of the day asking: What leads some legislators to ideological extremes while others remain more moderate. The findings suggest that district diversity is a primary indicator of legislative extremism. More homogeneous districts elect extremist legislators while districts that are more heterogeneous elect legislators more predisposed toward roll call moderation. The findings also suggest that party leaders are more extreme than rank and file members and that greater legislative professionalism leads to roll call extremism.

In Chapter 6 I take on the third research question focusing on the causes and effects of polarization in state legislative chambers. I show that both mass and elite polarization affect the level of polarization in state legislative chambers. As the party elite and the masses polarize, so too do their legislative chambers. I find this polarization, in turn, influences the policy output of the chambers.

In the concluding chapter, I tie together the major findings of the study, which focus on the striking level of polarization in state legislative chambers, especially on contentions social issues. The discussion focuses on the overall moderate distribution of district ideology, the bimodal distribution of legislator ideology and the implications of these dynamics in light of responsiveness, representation, and democracy.

Chapter 2: Conditional Responsiveness

How responsive are legislators to their various constituencies? To begin, consider a legislator faced with a roll call vote. Although free to vote their own preference, they are also faced with the views of their districts, their party, and their interest group advocates. When the preferred outcomes of all these actors align, the legislator's decision is relatively simple, but when the actors are at odds, the legislator's roll call vote becomes a difficult balancing act. In such a case, the legislator must gauge the relative interest of the issue to all the different actors and consider the degree to which upsetting them might come back to haunt their reelection effort or preclude future legislative support (Kingdon 1973).

Legislators "jumping ship," or abandoning, their various constituencies, however, is not the norm. A liberal legislator is likely to be a Democrat, have a liberal leaning district and accept campaign money from left leaning interest groups. Likewise, a conservative legislator is likely to be a Republican, have a conservative leaning district and accept money from rightward leaning groups. Legislators who deviate from this model are the exceptions (Kingdon 1973; Lascher, Kelman, and Kane 1993; Uslaner 1999). As a generalization, however, this only cuts in half the ideological positions to which a legislator will likely adhere, with Democratic legislators mostly falling on the left half of the continuum and Republicans on the right. Their constituents, parties, and interest group supporters, however, may occupy very different ideological space on that half of the continuum.

District ideology, while likely reflecting a general sense of liberalism or conservatism in the district, is likely less ideologically extreme than that of the more activist constituencies (Converse 1966; Fenno 1978). Elite constituencies drive Democrats to the ideological left and Republicans to the right. Everything else being equal, however, legislators need not be overly concerned with this division. If they were to split the ideological difference between the elites and their constituencies, legislators would still be safe in their reelection, especially when given a lack of primary competition.[4]

Yet, not everything is equal. In this study, I focus on three specific contextual variations that may complicate the generalization that legislators are equal servants of their multiple constituencies. First, not all legislation is the same. Some issues elicit strong constituency opinions while they largely ignore other policy items. Do legislators shirk their districts when their constituents do not care about a certain policy? Second, not all legislators face the same electoral circumstances. Some districts are so safe that a legislator need only protect his district lines every 10 years to assure a lifetime of reelection; others are so competitive that even the youngest lawmaker, upon starting their career, needs an immediate prescription for blood pressure medicine. Do legislators shirk their districts when they need not worry about reelection or are they at that point so similar to their districts that they are in fact a walking-talking portrait of those they represent? Finally, not all legislative institutions are the same. Some, like the California

[4] In state legislative elections, primary challenges are not often successful. Jewell (1983) finds that more than half of all incumbents run unopposed, about 10 percent run in competitive primary races (10 point Margin) and around 2 percent are unseated in primary elections.

and New York legislatures are extremely professional, while others, most notably New Hampshire, are extremely amateur in their design. A debate exists as to whether lawmakers in professional legislatures are more or less likely to represent their district constituents, as opposed to those from amateur districts. Likewise, party and interest group power relates to their ability to permeate different types of legislative institutions. Do legislators serving in professional legislatures serve their various constituencies differently than legislators serving in amateur legislatures?

I divide this chapter into two major sections. The first focuses on three legislative constituencies, the ideological desires of which likely account for a significant amount of the variation in legislative voting behavior – their districts, parties, and interest group supporters. The second section analyzes the various conditions that may influence responsiveness to these various groups – issue type, electoral competition, and legislative professionalism. The final section, brings together the previous two and synthesizes the theory of conditional responsiveness used to posit hypotheses related to the conditions under which legislators are most likely to be responsive to their various constituencies and why certain legislators can afford to become ideologically extreme.

The Actors

Besides their own predispositions, three primary actors influence the voting behavior of state legislators: their district constituents, their parties, and their interest group supporters.[5] I make a basic assumption that the direction of communication is one way – from the various groups to their members. This clearly is the case for the

[5] While I directly analyze these three actors, others may want to include such actors as committees, staff, and the Governor.

geographic constituency, as they are not attentive enough, cohesive enough, or trusting enough to be swayed by their state legislator to alternative issue positions.[6] Using these same three criteria, it is also likely (although perhaps less so) that the direction of communication flows from the parties and interest groups to the legislators. While interest groups may be attentive and cohesive, they likely do not trust legislators enough to change their positions, as they are accountable to their own constituencies. A Democratic legislator, for example, not happy with the AFL-CIO's goal of increasing the minimum wage would have a hard time convincing unions to change their issue positions. Likewise, a Republican legislator who wants to cast a pro-choice vote would have a hard time getting the Christian Coalition to come around to their position. Parties are similarly not likely to change issue positions to meet that of an individual or group of state legislators when they must be concerned with the ideological orientation of the entire party.[7]

The District

A legislator's formal, or geographical, constituency includes all voting age residents within the physical bounds of their legislative district. As outlined in the previous chapter, constituency opinion explains a significant portion of legislative

[6] These criteria were proposed by Uslaner (1999, Chapter 1).

[7] The only office holder that could possibly rearrange the ideological goals of a political party might be a sitting president. That individual state legislators are so distant from a position of such party power only underscores the fallacy of this counter-argument. In a study of presidential elites, my coauthors and I show that party delegates adjust their positions in response to different presidents. Clinton for example temporarily changed the nature of the Democratic Party during his tenure to one of relative moderation (Jackson, Bigelow, and Green 2006).

behavior (Miller and Stokes 1963; Eulau and Karps 1978, Erikson 1978, McCrone and Kuklinski 1979; Glazer and Robbins 1985; Stimson, Mackuen, Erikson 1995). Were the political science literature to appeal to a mass audience, this finding would be welcome news, as overwhelming majorities of citizens wish their representatives to be responsible delegates.[8] Because it is the explicit design of government to represent citizens, and because this is such a consistent finding in the literature, the reasons why constituency influence matters are not always discussed. Yet the question should be asked: Why do legislators follow the wishes of their constituency?

For several reasons, it would seem perfectly reasonable for state legislators not to care much about constituency opinion. When walking down the street, pull aside a friendly looking person and ask them if they know the name of their state representative. Polls from the 1960s showed that about 25 percent of people could correctly identify their state legislator (George Gallup 1967) and Jewell (1982, 167) generalized from data on name recall and recognition, that at any time about half the people who can name their U.S. House member can also name their state legislator. In 2000, this means that about 10 percent of citizens can correctly identify their state legislators.[9] Many fewer constituents contact their legislators (Jewell 1982). Furthermore, even if constituents were to monitor the behavior of their state legislators and decide to hold their member accountable, voters may find their member running unopposed or against a candidate with little chance of winning (Jewell 1982). Finally, even well intentioned legislators may have a difficult

[8] A 1993 *Time-CNN* poll found 68 percent of respondents wanted members of Congress to vote the district line, while just 24 percent would prefer to leave them to their own devices (cited in Uslaner 1999, 17).

[9] In the 2000 ANES, 30 percent of respondents said they could recall their house members name, approximately 10 percent were wrong, leaving about 20 percent who could recall their member.

time “voting their district” if their constituencies are deeply divided or fragmented on an issue (Ingram, Laney, and McCain 1980). This, however, is the exception rather than the rule, as most districts are comfortably homogenous (Patterson 1996).

Contrast this rather grim reality about citizen’s lack of knowledge and lack of electoral choice concerning state legislators with the attitudes and behaviors of legislators:

> “They start running the day they take their oath of office,” explained one observer in Illinois. “The thought of reelection may not occur to a first-term legislator within the first five minutes after winning the election,” writes a Michigan legislator, “but I would not count on that” (Patterson 1996, 169-69).

Legislators, as a matter of expressed fact, are overwhelmingly preoccupied with what their constituents are thinking (Mayhew 1974; Fenno 1978; Jewell 1982; Miller and Stokes 1963). From the legislator’s point-of-view, the fact that constituents do not know much about them, care enough to contact them, or rise up to support or become an opposition candidate, is evidence that they are successfully representing their districts (see Fenno 1989, 31), what is sometimes called an “investment in political office holding” (Davis and Porter 1989; Erikson 1971). The constant fear among legislators is that deviations from the district may wake up a “sleeping giant” costing them an election (Uslaner 1999, 19).

Focusing on responsiveness as a struggle between legislator and constituents oversimplifies a more complicated political reality. Fenno (1978) described the full district as just one, and in fact, the most remote, of several constituencies conceived of in terms of concentric circles. Fenno’s study of congressional representation finds

representatives are closest to the innermost activist circles of their districts and only concern themselves with their more remote constituencies if needed, to assure reelection. For example, a legislator from a one party dominated district would likely focus no further out than their primary constituency.

Other congressional studies describe a similar "two-constituencies" perspective, finding that congruence is much stronger between legislators and core supporters than between legislators and the district as a whole (Huntington 1950; Fiorina 1974; Markus 1974; Achen 1978; Powell 1982; Bullock and Brady 1983). These inner circles are by no means a representative sampling of a legislator's district. Party elites and interest group activists hold more polarized views of policy than do the mass public (Aldrich 1983; Stimson, Mackuen, and Erikson 1995; Jackson, Bigelow, and Green 2006).

These elite constituencies, no matter how influential, are normatively and practically less important than the constituency as a whole. Normatively, as discussed in the previous chapter, district congruence is most critical to notions of representative democracy. Our system was designed to represent the many through the few, and anything less brings into question what we mean by "democracy." Practically, the district is most important because formally, they have the last say in who holds the seat. Districts alone have the authority to say "enough is enough" and throw the rascals out.

Political Parties

Representation, conceived of in terms of responsible party government, is often considered the opposite of district control notions of representation (Key 1956; Miller and Stokes 1963). In the responsible party model, legislators should ignore the median district opinion and instead present voters with two diametrically opposed party positions

(APSA 1950). Key to responsible party government is strictly disciplined and ideological roll call voting by legislators along party lines. As discussed, however, district and party ideology is often not fundamentally different; liberal districts elect Democrats, and conservative districts elect Republicans.

Research consistently finds that the party identification of legislators is essential to understanding the positions taken by members of Congress. Over the last twenty years, and due in large part to the alignment of the South with the Republican Party, Congress has polarized along party lines (Bartels 2000, Poole and Rosenthal 1997). One study goes so far as to say there is virtually no overlap between the policy positions of the parties (Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart 2000).

State legislative research from the 1950s and 1960s explored the different levels and causes of party voting (for example see MacRae 1952; Keefe 1954; Jewell 1955; Becker et al 1962; Sorauf 1963; Flinn 1964). In the 1970s, however, this line of research turned increasingly to Congress. Recent research finds that party is still extremely important to understanding the motivation of state legislators (Jenkins forthcoming; Wright and Osborn 2002).

How do parties influence the activity of state legislators? They do so through psychological bonds and practical processes. Concerning the latter, parties give structure to mass issue preferences and over the past several decades, that structure has become increasingly ideological in nature (Poole and Rosenthal 1984; Rohde 1991). Party identifiers pull legislators toward the extremes and party activists push them even further (McCloskey, Hoffman, and O'Hara 1969; Lengle and Shafer 1976; Aldrich 1995; Jackson, Bigelow, and Green 2006). These partisan supporters are the front-line of

legislator support networks. They are the first constituency recruited as the primary approaches, they are the group most likely to communicate their views to the legislator, they share a collective fate with the success or failure of the member, and they are likeminded sorts of people with similar viewpoints and often close personal bonds (Fenno 1978; Cox and McCubbins 1993; Uslaner 1999).

As a practical matter, parties in chambers across the country set up leadership structures designed to "whip" members into line with the party. Parties in the United States, however, do not have all of the tools they might want to control the votes of their members. For instance, parties cannot remove a member for voting against their expressed wishes; they can, however, offer benefits to members who toe the party line. Parties must use the carrot rather than the stick (Hershey and Beck 2003). Such carrots include prime committee assignments, chair assignments, help in introducing/passing legislation, help delivering pork, and help finding jobs and appointments for constituents (Rosenthal 1998).

The power of parties in state legislatures varies greatly, but in many ways, it is greater than that of parties in Congress. At the state legislative level, party leaders have more direct control over the day-to-day workings of the legislatures than congressional leaders have over Congress. Furthermore, they usually do not have to defer to powerful steering committees or policy committee chairs and are freer to appoint committee chairs of their choosing, regardless of seniority (Jewell and Morehouse 2000).[10]

[10] Congress, however, is increasingly acting in the same way as power has shifted from committees to party leaders (Sinclair 2000).

Interest Groups

The influence of constituents and parties dominate the literature on legislative responsiveness. Political interests groups, however, can substantively influence policy-making. Indeed, early pluralist theory contended that competition between groups is the main way policy forms, with institutions acting simply as the referees in their game (Bentley 1970; Latham 1952; Schattschneider 1935; Truman 1951). Fenno (1989) found that groups were mentioned (in his interviews with members of congress) just slightly less (31 percent of the time) than fellow members (40 percent) and constituencies (37 percent) as being important influences on members' votes (146). In their survey of legislators from the "four-corners" state legislatures, Ingram, Laney, and McCain (1980) found that legislators viewed interest groups as either having too much or about the right amount of influence, but most members agreed they were powerful influences on legislative voting behavior.

State legislatures are inundated with groups and lobbyists all trying to get something from government (Patterson 1996; Gray and Lowery 2000). Some states have a single or major economic interest and legislative policy likely bends to their wishes (Ingram, Laney and McCain 1980). Agricultural interests, for example are likely to dominate states like Iowa, just as labor unions have a special place in Michigan politics, as do oil companies in Oklahoma and Texas (Patterson 1996). The relative lack of scholarly attention paid to the influence of groups, as a component of legislative responsiveness, is shocking given the incredible influence of group politics in the broader literature (but see Denzau and Munger 1986; Gray and Lowery 2000, 246-257).

Classic works argue that business interests are especially powerful and over-represented in our lawmaking bodies (Schattschneider 1960; Bauer, Pool, and Dexter 1963; Lindblom 1977). Journalists go a step further charging the political activity of business with "the breakdown of contemporary democracy" (Greider 1992). Businesses, however, are not the only groups trying to influence government. Labor unions and citizens groups also are active at both the federal and state level (Berry 1999; Francia 2005; Gray and Lowery 2000).

How do groups attempt to influence policymakers? The most traditional way they insert themselves in the policy making process is through direct lobbying (Rosenthal 1993). Lobbyists work to gain access and develop a rapport with legislators (Ainsworth 1993). The old model of "wining and dining" legislators, while not extinct, has given way to a more professional relationship – focusing on the production and transfer of specialist information and campaign donations (Rosenthal 1998, 219). As issue specialists, lobbyists can become a trusted source of information for legislators who are stretched thin concerning their ability to know all the necessary information on all legislation (Hansen 1991; Rosenthal 1998, 216). The ability of lobbyists to sway legislative behavior, however, likely relates to their overall standing in relation to the constituency. Jewell (1982) contends that when legislator's view groups as not necessarily representative of the majority district opinion, or perhaps if a group is not from the district, their lobbying influence decreases markedly.[11] The implication here is that groups may not be very influential once district opinion is considered.

[11] Fenno (1989) also finds this response from members of Congress.

It could be that groups are simple service agents of sympathetic legislators – associating mainly with legislators who share their own policy predispositions (Milbrath 1963, 210; Dexter 1969; Hall and Deardorff 2006). Other research shows that groups strategically pass on information to legislators concerning the opinions held by people in their district and that this can affect legislator behavior (Hansen 1991). More recent studies suggest that groups concentrate their lobbying efforts on their weak allies and weak enemies (Austen-Smith and Wright 1994). At the ideological margins, groups hope they can take those weak partisans muddling around the middle and push them toward ideological extremes and congruence with the group's position.

Citizens overwhelmingly view interest groups and their lobbyists with disdain, buying into the stereotype (correct or not) that groups have considerable and unfair influence over legislators and legislation. A poll conducted by the *Hartford Courant* found 40 percent of citizens in Connecticut felt "they would be better off in all respects if there were no lobbyists (cited in Rosenthal 1998, 217; see also Hibbing and Theiss-Morse. 2002). These results are likely echoes of a press that is equally suspicious of the lobbying system (Rosenthal 1996).

While relationship lobbying may be the "dinosaur" model of lobbying influence, campaign contributions are increasingly a part of groups strategies aimed at both influencing legislative votes and helping to elect friendly members (Herrnson 2004). There is, however, much dispute concerning the influence of interest group money on policy at the congressional level (Wright 1985). Like congressional studies, some state legislative studies often find only marginal influence (Grenzke 1989; Dow and Endersby 1994), while others, particularly case study analyses, show a great deal of influence

(Moore et al. 1994). The trouble with inferring influence is establishing that the legislator's predispositions were actually altered by the money (see Roscoe and Jenkins 2005). The consensus is that money usually does not buy votes, but does facilitate access, create attitudinal tendencies, and works at the margins to create slight changes in legislative behavior (Snyder 1992; Rosenthal 1998, 223).

If interest groups can influence policy, in what direction is that likely to occur? Interest groups, especially citizen groups, are ideological outliers within their own party coalitions. Parties and legislators may find it frustrating, because they want to pursue a vote maximizing strategy, but interest groups want them to emphasize their issues (Berry 1997, 58). The Christian Coalition, antiabortion groups, and the NRA are not moderating influences on Republican legislators; just like women's groups, civil rights organizations, environmentalists, and gay rights organizations are not moderating forces on Democratic legislators. Their influence is strengthened because parties do not control nominations, and candidates must build personal coalitions, of which these groups are often critically important (Polsby 1983; Herrnson 2004).

Constituents, parties, and interest groups are three independent actors that share, through their ideological inclinations, similar, but not identical, goals. Legislators must traverse the moderating influence of constituents and the polarizing forces of parties and interest groups. Actor preferences, however, are only a part of a comprehensive explanation of legislative voting behavior. How responsive legislators are to these groups likely depends upon issue, electoral, and institutional contextual variation.

The Conditions

Policy responsiveness does not happen in a bubble and legislators do not have a universal formula to calculate their issue preferences. A vast number of factors influence roll call decisions and the relative weights legislators give to the opinions of the groups seeking out their support. I consider in this study what might be termed the "big three" conditions - the type of issue considered, the electoral circumstance of the member, and the type of legislature in which they serve. In the following three sections, I present a discussion of each condition and propose specific legislative outcomes under each.

Issue Type

On February 22, 2006, the legislature of South Dakota, with the signature of the Governor, passed legislation outlawing abortion, except for cases involving threats to a woman's life; no provisions were included for cases of rape and incest or even the health (accept life – implying impending death) of the woman. This law represents a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade* and will likely make its way to the Supreme Court in the coming years. Other states are waiting to see what will become of the case as culturally conservative legislators, and their supporters from the religious right, draft similar bills in state legislatures across the country.[12] Local and national media devoted extensive ink and airtime educating the public to the happenings in Pierre. Over the past six months (prior to March 9, 2006), 137 articles in major newspapers were devoted to the abortion legislation in South Dakota. In the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, national news outlets, 31 stories appeared about the legislation. Compare this to another important piece

[12] On March 10, 2006 the Tennessee Senate passed a proposed amendment to the state constitution to outlaw abortion.

of legislation in South Dakota that would increase the state's minimum wage; in a state where the average personal income falls below $26,000 a year. Only two stories have appeared on this legislation, both of which simply mention it in passing. This is not just an isolated trend. The number of major newspaper stories on the issue of abortion in state legislatures, during the 1990s, totaled 1,649. In the same papers, over the same period, only 179 stories covered the issue of minimum wage in state legislatures.[13]

Thus, generalizing about the demands and focus of responsiveness requires special attention be paid to the different types of policy issues. Legislators do not weigh every issue equally as they know their various constituencies do not consider them equally. Some issues are extremely salient to the public, striking at deep held beliefs, and perhaps prejudices, that resonate at an emotional level. Historically, these issues might include civil rights legislation like school busing or ratification of the ERA. More recent examples include reproductive rights, gun rights, capital punishment, gambling, flag burning, and gay rights. Other issues are less salient floating below the radar screens of all but the most interested of observers. These might include collective bargaining agreements or public employee salaries (Jewell 1982).

In *A Policy Approach to Political Representation*, Ingram, Laney, and McCain (1980) suggested that attitudes of voters on issues are fragmented and multidimensional, and legislator attentiveness to and agreement with constituent opinion varies by issue cluster. They show that certain issues cluster together making it possible for legislators to grasp citizen preferences. If all citizens had random issue clusterings, the task of

[13] All these numbers come from simple keyword searches in Lexus-Nexus. "Abortion," "State Legislature," "Minimum Wage," "South Dakota" and date specifications were the search terms.

responsiveness, they suggest, would be overwhelming. When issues are related or clustered, as opposed to discrete, legislators are able to trade off issue positions against one another allowing responsive action. Indeed, the authors show that as issues cluster together, legislators become more responsive; but on issues that fail to meld into a coherent cluster, legislative action is less likely and responsiveness does not happen. The authors note the growing tendency (in the early 1980s) of issues to take on a singular ideological cluster and speculate that if taken to extremes, ideology will end up the predominant cluster, making responsiveness much easier.

Ingram, Laney, and McCain (1980) also suggest that legislators will pay more attention to their constituency on issue clusters that they believe to be more salient and even on less salient issues that relate to a salient issue cluster. These issue domains "activate certain cues because of the basic interests and concerns of the persons and groups involved" (13). Others have noted the importance of issue type to legislative responsiveness. One of the most important findings in the classic study of responsiveness by Miller and Stokes (1963) was that issues of greater saliency result in greater congruence between constituent attitudes and their member's roll call vote choice on such issues. In their study, higher salience issues were civil rights legislation, on which members produced congruence, and the lower salience issues related to foreign policy, which resulted in less congruence.

Kingdon's (1977, 1989) work also takes into account issue type. His model of legislative decision-making starts with the level of controversy on any given issue. If the member decides that it is controversial, they will move to carefully examine the positions of the various actors in their political environment (including the constituency). Kingdon

(1977) states, “the congressman considers the constituency interest first. He may not end up voting with the constituency, but he always considers it when it is above the minimum level of importance (578). It is the saliency of this issue to their constituents, or significant group within it, that motivates member responsiveness.

What types of issues would we expect to be the most salient, and as such, can we expect to see the most congruence? Jewell (1982) categorizes issues into three categories: 1) major issues that affect important groups of citizens generally, 2) narrow, parochial issues of concern to specialized groups, and 3) issues, however broad or narrow in scope, that are not salient even to organized interest in the district. In his interview with legislators, Jewell found that economic issues would sometimes enter the first category, but often fell into the second.

> A number of traditional economic issues seldom produce much interest from constituents. Broad questions of budgetary policy generate little response, although proposed cuts in specific areas will arouse complaints from citizen – particularly employee groups. Legislation affecting the regulation of business or labor is of direct concern to specific interest groups but seldom arouses large numbers of constituents…Constituents are more likely to grumble generally about high taxes than to express their views about specific proposals to change the tax laws (80).

This corresponds to contemporary public opinion polls that often show economic issues (generally stated) to be a high priority, but specific economic issues to fall much lower on the systemic agenda.[14] Jewell (1982) goes on to note the “relatively new” social issues

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[14] See *Gallup Poll* release May 12, 2003.

mentioned by legislators, including abortion, capital punishment, and the ERA, produced some of the strongest emotional responses. What Jewell noticed as an emerging trend circa 1983 is today a full-blown reality. Contemporary social issues, sometimes called "culture war" issues, carry with them strong emotions on the part of legislators, citizens, parties, and organized interests.

I contend that citizens need not have sophisticated political views, or an abundance of political knowledge, to have deeply held views concerning these issues. Abortion, the death penalty, and gay rights elicit visceral or "gut level" responses rooted in ones psychological and social orientations: they are issues that Carmines and Stimson (1989) might refer to as "easy issues." These issues are salient and tap into all the criteria discussed above that lead scholars to suggest that legislators will seek out congruence. Highly salient social issues are also issues on which congruence will likely come most naturally. Elections tend to highlight culture war issues, and the winning candidate is likely to be close to their constituencies on these matters. Furthermore, social issues do not lend themselves to compromise positions. In most cases, legislators are forced to be either pro or anti…you pick the issue. Citizens identify themselves similarly, as do groups and parties.

Economic issues (like tax, labor, and health care policy), which only a handful of experts fully understand, attract much less direct public attention. These are typically "hard issues" and of much lower salience to citizens. With the district not paying attention, legislators are provided the opportunity to operate more autonomously or perhaps in congruence with supportive interest groups. The public may not be aware of a proposed change in pay for public employees, but it is likely front and center on the

minds of unions. These issues, as opposed to most social issues, can produce compromise, as these are not usually simply “pro” or “anti” issues but amiable to degrees of support or opposition. Legislators may choose a middle of the road alternative, or “log roll” with other members, promising support on one issue for a promise of future support on another.

All of this suggests that issue type is a key factor that conditions responsiveness. Issue type, as a condition, is most important in determining the responsiveness of legislators to their district constituency. On high salience, “gut level” and polarizing social issues, legislators need to be especially concerned with their districts opinion. Lower salience “hard issues” that float under the radar screen of public attention allow much more leeway on the part of legislators. When freed from public scrutiny, legislators can drift to a more natural ideological equilibrium, which is likely proximate to the elite level party and interest group constituencies.

Electoral Competitiveness

Political scientists have long argued that increased party competition results in greater responsiveness (MacRae 1952; Deckard Sinclair 1976; Sullivan and Uslaner 1978; Stimson, Mackuen, and Erikson 1995). The logic here is that elected officials who run in competitive races will pay especially close attention to their constituents because failure to do so may result in them losing their next election. Stimson, Mackuen, and Erikson (1995) specify that legislators have a personal ideal point in the space of policy options and an expediency point or position they feel will most likely optimize future reelection chances. Those who feel safe at home will choose their personal ideal point and those who are worried about reelection will choose their expediency point.

Empirical evidence for this link, however, has been hard to find (Miller 1964; Fiorina 1974; Jones 1973). Critics of the "marginality thesis" suggest an opposite logic. They contend that legislators in safe districts may well be more responsive to their constituents because opinion in homogenous districts is easier to assess and there is less chance of multi-dimensional constituency opinion (Miller 1964; Jones 1973; Powel 1982; Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001). Furthermore, legislators in homogenous districts are more likely to be "of their districts." The idea that responsiveness is more likely to flourish in safe districts has come to be known as the "homogeneity thesis."

What both sides of this argument have in common is a belief that electoral margin matters to the responsiveness of legislators to their districts. Which side is correct, however, has important implications for reformers who wish to adjust redistricting plans to facilitate greater competition. The popular view is that redistricting plans that favor safety create unnecessarily polarized chambers. Polarized and ugly politics, however, does not necessarily mean less responsive politics – if the "homogeneity thesis" is correct.

Party leaders tend to be from safe seats. When party caucuses meet to elect leaders, one important consideration is the likelihood that the nominees for leadership post will still be in office after the next election.[15] These legislators, who are usually electorally safe and therefore more ideologically extreme, have a heavy hand in defining the ideological planks of the party. In addition to being run by what are likely ideological outliers, legislative parties are also creatures of their activist components (McCloskey, Hoffman, and O'Hara 1969; Aldrich 1995; Jackson, Bigelow, and Green 2006) making

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[15] Tom Daschle might not agree.

parties more extreme, ideologically, than typical district opinion. As such, legislator deference to the party position is likely less common when they have to worry about their chances for reelection.

Similarly, interest groups may be better able to influence legislators in safe seats when a member has nothing to fear from setting aside district opinion. Danzau and Munger (1986) develop a formal model where policy outcomes depend on comparative advantages of three participants (groups, constituents, and legislators). They theorize about the amounts of money interest groups must offer a legislator (in order to support their position) to depend on the legislator's productivity and the preferences of their districts. Groups pay a much lower price when the voters are less hostile – as they tend to be in safe districts.

The electoral competition facing members may relate to their ideological alignment with interest groups. They may be more likely to fall inline with interest groups when they face minimal competition for the same reasons they align with their party – if left unchecked they will align themselves with more ideologically extreme actors. On the other hand, members running in competitive races have a greater need to raise campaign money (Herrnson 2004). So, it is possible that, in an effort to increase their war chest, in order to persuade voters to support them, they may need to ignore their voters and grow more extreme – a real Catch-22 for legislators.

Legislative Professionalism

Regarding the link between legislative professionalism and responsiveness, a similar difference of opinion exists. Critics of legislative professionalism (often term limit advocates) argue that professionalism serves to insulate representative s from their

constituents, leaving legislators less responsive to district interests (Hickik 1992; Luttbeg 1992; Opeim 1994). Those espousing this view believe that amateur, or citizen legislatures, filled with legislators not bound by selfish, careerist, aspirations, are better equipped to represent the average citizen. In this view, closeness is the key ingredient to successful responsiveness. Most scholars, however, hold the view that without the necessary resources (staff, salary, session length, space, structure) legislators cannot effectively represent their constituencies. They view the professionalization of legislatures over the past 50 years as a positive development that they hope will increase institutional resources and attract a more diverse and more capable set of members that will increase policy-making capabilities (Squire 1992; Rosenthal 1996; 1998, Chapter 2; Maestas 2000). In this view, it is capacity that facilitates responsiveness.

Professionalism in state legislatures enables deliberation, an important component of representative government (Rosenthal 1998). Legislators in professional legislatures are presented with more information, develop a greater skill set, can link bills together contextually, can bargain and compromise, and in the end be responsible for their decisions. The opposite of professionalism is direct democracy in which voters make policy choices without a skill set, the ability to contextualize policy, the ability to bargain, or the ability to be held responsible (Rosenthal 1998). Furthermore, when asked policy questions, 4 out of 5 citizens do not have stable opinions; they instead invent answers on the spot (Fishkin 1991). Legislators in amateur legislatures are not as handicapped as typical voters, but they are not as sophisticated as their professional counterparts either. They do not legislate full time, are not expected to become policy

experts, do not have much of a staff, and in many states are forced out of office after a limited number of terms, thus limiting their accountability.

Regarding the constituency responsiveness of legislators serving in professional as opposed to amateur legislatures, divergent possibilities exist. Perhaps, as term limits advocates suggest, a more amateur legislature comprised of "ordinary citizens" with fewer political career ambitions are better able to represent the "common man or woman." In other words, just keeping members "ordinary" might be enough to make representative democracy responsive. On the other hand, perhaps professional, career oriented legislators, with ample resources for legislating are the best equipped to respond to their constituents – as the proponents of professionalism (mostly political scientists) argue. Throughout this project, I test both possibilities.

No scholarly work, that I can find, directly studies the influence of legislative professionalism on party voting. Some peripheral observations, however, lead to the expectation that parties have a greater affect on legislators in professional, as opposed to amateur, legislatures. Urban and industrial states are typically more partisan than agrarian states (Patterson 1972), as are highly staffed legislatures (BeVier 1979). Furthermore, states with stronger party organization also seem to have stronger party control in chamber. For example, party votes are more common in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, and New York than they are in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi (Patterson 1994; Little 1995; Mahtesian 1997; Rosenthal 1998, 186-87). Perhaps coincidentally, perhaps not (as Mahtesian 1997 would likely suggest), legislative professionalism is closely related to all of these observations. Greater staff, urban and industrial states, and organizationally strong parties are all highlights of

professional legislature states. As such, professionalism may account for increases in party loyalty among legislators and increasing the significance of political parties on roll call outcomes.

Some scholarly work investigates the influence of interest groups in professional versus amateur chambers. The prevailing wisdom is that interest groups gain power when parties are weak (Rodgers, Sittig, and Welsch 1984; Wiggins, Hamm, and Bell 1992) and legislators serving in professional chambers are thought to be more impervious to interest group pressure (Patterson 1996, 195). Legislative staff, it is thought, provide members with expertise making interest group issue specialists less relevant. Furthermore, as legislatures become more professional, lobbyists are more likely to make contact with staff members instead of the legislators themselves. This dynamic precludes the establishment of meaningful relationships between legislators and lobbyists.

For at least six reasons this traditional thinking about the weak role of interest groups in professional legislatures may be wrong. First, as discussed, campaign contributions are increasingly a complementary part of the lobbying game. Legislators in professional states (like California, New York) spend much more on their reelection campaigns than legislators in amateur states. Interest group money is therefore important to legislators in professional states. Second, amateur states are less likely to have partisan issues that groups would rally against (Patterson 1972; Mahtesian 1997) as they tend to be more homogenous, parochial, states. Third, interest group density is greater in professional states (Gray and Lowery 2000) perhaps acting to counter any reduced capacity brought on by virtue of staff acting as a buffer between groups and members. Fourth, professional states have longer (or perhaps continuous) legislative sessions. This

makes interest groups more likely to develop a permanent presence at the statehouse (as their increased density in professional states would indicate). Fifth, professional chambers have more access points (more committees and subcommittees) where groups can attempt to insert themselves. Sixth, professional chambers induce members to stay in office longer (Rosenthal 1998). This offers groups more time to develop a rapport with legislators. For all these reasons, the prevailing wisdom regarding interest groups irrelevance in professional chambers may in fact be wrong.

Conditional Responsiveness to the Various Actors

Voters want legislators to be delegates, while legislators want to follow their own ideologies (Uslaner 1999). In addition, parties want their members to toe the line, and interest groups want their positions represented. What do legislators do when the preferences of their various constituencies are inconsistent? Everything else being equal, they likely follow their own interests and shirk their constituents' interests in favor of more common ideological ground they find with parties and interest groups. However, not everything is equal. Legislators face differing pressures that likely effect their roll call behavior by empowering their various constituencies. The key to understanding their support of the various actors is in understanding context. Representatives are conditionally, not intrinsically, responsive.

Best Friends with Constituents

Legislators are only conditionally best friends with their district constituents. What in not known is exactly how the various conditions empower the district. It is quite likely that on social/culture war issues legislators pay much closer attention to their districts as these are issues that tend to matter to the greatest number of their citizens, the

ones they pay the most attention to, and therefore the ones for which they are most likely to hold members accountable. These are the issues most critical to their friendship. Legislators running in competitive races may fear the electoral wrath of their districts and be bullied into being responsive. Or perhaps safe, homogeneous, districts send members to the statehouse "born and raised" to be the best of friends with their district constituents. Legislators in professional legislatures may have the requisite resources respond to district opinion and nurture their friendship. On the other hand, legislators in amateur legislatures may be, by virtue of their "sameness," more like the citizens they represent and therefore unconsciously very friendly.

Married to the Parties

Legislators are married to their parties, but sometimes they do not make the best spouses. Under certain conditions, they will abandon their party and submit to constituency pressure, interest group coercion, or both. Legislators are likely "of their parties" ideologically, but they also need to be reelected, and for that they need support from other constituencies. When they perceive the district as paying particular attention to an issue at odds with their party, legislators will usually fold to that pressure. Just ask all but two of the 64 members voting on the House Appropriations committee who bolted from the White House sponsored deal on the sale of a U.S. port to a company based in Dubai, UAE. The two holdouts, as one might expect, were members who are considered electorally safe.[16] It is not clear exactly what effect professionalization has on the power of parties. Some argue that given increased individual member capacity, which comes

[16] James Moran, a Democrat, and Jim Kolbe a Republican each had victory margins in 2004 of over 10 percent.

with professionalism, parties become less relevant to legislators. However, parties are stronger, and partisanship sharper, in professional as opposed to amateur states.

Affairs with Interest Groups

From time to time, legislators may stray from their parties, abandon their districts, and have affairs with interest groups. It is tempting for legislators to stray into an affair with interest group supporters as they likely share similar views on policy issues. Just as spouses may cheat when the other is not paying attention, legislators too are more likely to stray when their districts are not paying attention – perhaps on issues of less salience to the average voter. Furthermore, legislators may be able to get away with their affair if they are so safe in their reelection that they need not worry about losing a few votes. To extend the metaphor, their spouse may not have the money to hire a divorce lawyer. Although some think that members may be less likely to come in contact with interest group harlots in professional states, there are several reasons to expect groups are even more likely to set up their houses of ill repute in the capitols of states with full-time, year-round, legislating.

This study addresses the forces that play on the minds of legislators as they make decisions on legislation. What forces lead legislators to ideological extremes? Under what circumstances do district constituencies matter the most? What are the implications of ideological extremity in regards to the operation of the legislatures?

I devote the next chapter to the operationalization of the key concepts in this study of responsiveness. In Chapters 4 and 5, I present my findings and relate them back to the ideas presented in this chapter. Legislators are found to be conditionally responsive to their districts, their parties, and their interest group supporters. Often, however, the

relationship between the condition and responsiveness will come as a surprise to readers and reformers. The counterintuitive findings will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion.

Chapter 3: Measuring Responsiveness

Measuring the components of responsiveness has been a major preoccupation of scholars over the past half-century (Miller and Stokes 1963, Poole and Rosenthal 1993, Ardoin and Garand 2003). In an ideal world, we would know the precise motivation behind the roll call votes of every member and have detailed information on all of the different constituencies those legislators attempt to represent. Even at the congressional level, this ideal does not exist. Legislators are not routinely open about their motives, and opinion surveys, even pooled over time, are not large enough to infer much below the state level. The only recourse is innovative measurement.

Some of the concepts in this study of responsiveness are perfectly clear, including such things as the party affiliation of legislators and the number of women serving in any given chamber. Others, including the nature of legislator's roll call votes and characteristics of those living within state legislative districts, are much more difficult concepts to operationalize. This is especially true at the state legislative level where roll call and census data are relatively scarce, compared to Congress and congressional districts. Due to the complexity of many of these measures, and the rather elaborate techniques used, this chapter is dedicated exclusively to the measurement techniques used throughout the rest of the study. Particular focus is paid to issues of reliability and validity.

The data in this study are classified in four broad categories: the legislative activity of members, information related to their districts, characteristics of legislative elections, and state level institutional and opinion variation. Some of the data are largely

self-explanatory, and as such, I include brief descriptions of these variables in an appendix at the end of this chapter. What follows is a description and presentation of the less intuitive measures.

Roll Call Voting Behavior in State Legislatures

To measure the roll call voting behavior of state legislators, I collected scorecards from a variety of state level interest group organizations. These groups included state chapters of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the Chamber of Commerce (COC), the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), Right to Life (RTL), the National Association of Reproductive Rights and Liberties (NARAL), Planned Parenthood (PP), and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). If the interest group organization(s) existed in the states, I attempted to contact each of them in all 50 states. I called and emailed the organizations and completed Internet searches for the scorecards until either receiving it by fax or email, finding it on the internet, discovering that it does not exist, or in rare cases having my request turned down.

Project Vote Smart also collects these scorecards, but unfortunately only posts the scores of legislators currently serving, making their scores for 2000 (the primary year of analysis in this study) incomplete. Project Vote Smart, however, was a useful resource for phone numbers and Internet addresses for the various groups and provided a good indicator of which groups exist and are active scorers in any given state.

Once collected, it became clear the scorecards were not of equal value. Some groups collected several dozen roll call votes, while others collected as few as one. Upon closer analysis, I decided to exclude any scorecards with fewer than five roll call votes, as

they tended to become unreliable when compared to other scorecards from the same state.[17] Some groups provided simple endorsements of candidates. Because these scorecards do not have variation similar to those with a 0-100 percent support score, I removed them from the analysis. Finally, some groups surveyed members and either endorsed or provided some sort of support scale. I excluded these as theresponse rates were usually very low. Table 1 reports the remaining scorecards included in the study. Clearly, economic policy groups are much more prolific than social policy groups in generating scorecards. In addition, the South has many fewer groups, especially social groups, engaged in scoring vis-à-vis other regions.

[17] The incidence of scores not meeting the .750 Cronbach's Alpha threshold went up exponentially when scorecards with 5 or fewer votes were included.

Table 3.1:
States and Interest Group Scorecards Included in this Study

	Year	NFIB	COC	AFL	ALPHA	CC	RTL	PP	NARAL	ACLU	ALPHA
Arizona	2000	X	X		.841						--
California	2000	X	X	X	.979		X[1]	X	X[2]	X	.996
Colorado	2000	X		X	.872				X[3]		--
Connecticut	2000	X	X	X	.901						--
Georgia	2000	X			--	X[4]					--
Idaho	2000	X			--			X			--
Illinois	2000	X	X	X	.955			X			--
Indiana	1998	X	X	X	.973			X		X	.750
Iowa	2000	X	X	X	.920		X	X			.945
Kansas	1998		X		--						--
Kentucky	2000	X			--						--
Maine	2000	X	X		.957		X	X[5]			.891
Michigan	2000	X	X	X	.958			X			--
Minnesota	2000	X	X	X	.955		X[6]		X[7]		.917
Missouri	2000	X			--						--
Montana	1999	X	X		.957						--
New Mexico	2000	X			--						--
New York	2000	X			--	X[8]			X		--
North Carolina	2000	X			--						--
North Dakota	1999	X		X	.593						--
Ohio	2000	X			--						--
Oregon	2000	X	X	X	.921					X	--
Pennsylvania	2000	X		X	.794						--
South Carolina	1998	X			--						--
Utah	2000	X			--						--
Vermont	2000	X		X	.925						--
Washington	2000	X		X	.861						--
West Virginia	2000			X	--						--
Wisconsin	2000	X	X	X	.941		X	X			.956
Wyoming	2000	X									
AVERAGE ALPHA					.900						.909

1. Life Priority Network of California; 2. California NOW PAC; 3. Colorado Women's Agenda; 4. Georgia Conservative Coalition; 5. Family Planning Association of Maine; 6. Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life; 7. Minnesota NOW, 8. New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms PAC

Roll Call Liberalism

Each group assigns legislators an average support score with a range from 0 to 100 based on the overall percent of votes that align with the groups position. For the liberal groups (AFL-CIO, PP, NARAL, ACLU), this is a roll call liberalism measure; for the conservative groups (NFIB, COC, RTL, CC) this amounts to a roll call conservatism measure. The scholarly precedent is to compute roll call or policy liberalism (Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993) therefore, I recoded the conservative scores to point in a liberal direction. Based on the theoretical discussion in the last chapter, I have decided to treat economic and social policy separately. As such, I split these scorecards based on their issue focus. The economic policy groups include the NFIB, COC, and AFL-CIO and the social policy groups include the RTL, NARAL, PP, and ACLU.

Because the same group scorecards do not exist in every state, and because scoring groups measure different votes from state to state, indexing these scores may create threats to internal reliability and validity through instrumentation problems (Campbell and Stanley 1963). As such, it is necessary to provide evidence that the scorecards are reliably measuring a common concept and that they are valid.

To assess reliability, I computed a Cronbach's Alpha score for each set of scorecards within each state (see Table 3.1). This creates a measure of the inter-correlations of the scores where a coefficient of 1 would indicate identical measures between scorecards. Most scholars consider an Alpha of .750 an acceptable level to allow indexing and in all but one state (North Dakota), this minimum threshold is met.[18] In fact,

[18] The NFIB in North Dakota chose bills that were unusually bipartisan while the AFL chose bills which provided more variation. Subsequent models (in Chapter 4 and 5) were run with ND excluded and the

the average Alpha scores across states is above .9 indicating that these group scores are overwhelmingly measuring the same concept. Paying special attention to states that had both liberal and conservative scoring groups (AFL-CIO and NFIB for example), no systematic reduction in reliability is found. In addition, the ACLU, which is somewhat distinct among the social policy groups in that their focus includes more issues than reproductive and gay rights, no systematic reduction in reliability is present.

Across states, the reliability does not diminish. Economic scores with all three scoring groups present have an overall Alpha of .920. When only the NFIB and COC scorecards exist, the Alpha is .872; when only the NFIB and AFL exist, the Alpha is .870. The levels are similar among the social policy scoring groups with the overall Alpha never dropping below the .750 standard. This pattern of reliability provides confidence on two fronts. First, where more than one scorecard exists in a state, this demonstrates the groups are measuring a very similar construct. Second, it allows the assumption that when only one scorecard exists for any given state, it will reliably tap into the same construct that exists in states with more than one scoring group.

This evidence suggests reliability, but are these scores valid? In other words, are they measuring the intended concept? The most common standard for validity involves "face validation." That is, do the measures yield results that reasonable people would agree are proper measures of the desired concept. A more stringent test of validity is "criterion validity" – that the measurement predicts or agrees with similar external measures (Cook and Campbell 1979). Ideally, this would involve coming up with another

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changes, while working against my expectations, were not significant. I chose to keep ND in the model to preclude any notion that I am cheating with the scores I keep.

measure of roll call liberalism, or perhaps roll call partisanship, and comparing it to the scorecard data. In my case, this is unfortunately not possible.

I can, however, compare state aggregated lower house (house or assembly) scores to aggregate upper house (senate) scores to see if one might predict the other. This is similar to what survey researches do when they break a sample by even and odd numbered respondents to look for similarities. The resulting correlation coefficient is .834, suggesting at the aggregate level the scores in one chamber are highly related to those in the other. Although this indicates that scorecards are measuring the same construct between chambers, it is admittedly only a weak test of validity.

A second, a more stringent test of validity is the correlation between state aggregated roll call liberalism and state policy liberalism (as measured by Erikson Wright and McIver 1993). These measures are nearly a decade apart, but a correlation would nonetheless help to confirm validity. In this case, the correlation is .350 ($p<.001$), indicating a modest relationship between similar, but far from identical, constructs. Resulting policy, of course, involves the governor's consent as well as the traversing of many institutional barriers before actual policy adoption. Therefore, the correlation between aggregate roll call liberalism and resulting policy liberalism (from a different time) should be taken with a grain of salt.

Finally, Wright, and McIver (1993) found an impressive correlation between statewide opinion liberalism and state policy liberalism. As such, I would expect (if these roll call liberalism measures are valid) a solid relationship between roll call liberalism and state opinion liberalism. Unlike Erikson, Wright and McIver's policy liberalism measure, which is essentially lost to time because of its unique components; Gerald

Wright continually updates the state opinion liberalism. The resulting correlation between my state aggregated roll call liberalism scores and state opinion liberalism in 2000 is .627 and .624 (both $p<.001$) for economic and social policy roll call liberalism respectively. These three criterion test, combined, offer substantial evidence of validity for my roll call liberalism measures.

Beyond criterion validity, it is important for these measures to have "face validity." In other words, to a reasonable observer, do these scores seem valid? To present the roll call liberalism of state legislators in a manageable way, I aggregate and present the average state roll call liberalism (see Table 3.2 an Table 3.3). The states scoring most liberal on economic roll calls are California, Connecticut, Illinois, West Virginia, Vermont (especially the VT Senate), and Minnesota (especially the MN Senate). The states scoring the most conservative are Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Montana, South Carolina, Utah, and Ohio. All of these scores make sense with the exception of Ohio, which is notably more conservative than expected for a state with a good number of liberal Democratic legislators and relatively strong labor organizations.

Table 3.2:
Economic Roll Call Liberalism in State Legislatures

	Lower Chamber (House or Assembly)					Upper Chamber (Senate)				
	N	Ave.	Min.	Max.	S.D	N	Ave.	Min.	Max.	S.D
Arizona	60	30	0	74	22	29	35	0	83	24
California	79	53	1	94	37	40	58	2	99	40
Colorado	65	36	0	84	35	35	38	0	89	35
Connecticut	150	50	7	95	22	36	53	18	90	16
Georgia	159	41	0	80	23	54	46	0	83	28
Idaho	68	15	0	73	21	33	16	0	43	13
Illinois	117	53	4	100	28	58	51	6	100	26
Indiana	100	47	2	90	28	50	47	10	100	30
Iowa	100	38	0	89	32	50	42	0	95	37
Kansas	116	16	0	50	16	--	--	--	--	--
Kentucky	100	25	0	57	14	37	11	0	37	11
Maine	149	37	0	95	32	34	32	0	89	29
Michigan	110	38	0	88	35	38	42	5	100	36
Minnesota	132	48	7	93	31	66	56	16	100	25
Missouri	153	37	0	86	37	31	45	0	83	40
Montana	100	26	0	91	37	50	24	0	89	28
New Mexico	69	38	0	75	26	42	35	0	67	22
New York	149	46	10	56	13	61	48	8	57	10
North Carolina	112	44	0	100	25	--	--	--	--	--
North Dakota	98	28	8	65	18	49	42	11	100	21
Ohio	93	20	0	80	22	33	14	0	90	20
Oregon	59	32	0	86	28	30	39	0	91	36
Pennsylvania	202	52	15	79	18	50	49	0	100	36
South Carolina	110	16	0	83	26	--	--	--	--	--
Utah	75	31	0	80	25	29	28	0	62	22
Vermont	145	45	0	100	35	30	62	21	95	25
Washington	94	29	0	100	30	49	46	0	88	34
West Virginia	95	62	16	100	24	16	54	33	88	18
Wisconsin	99	46	18	89	25	33	53	16	75	25
Wyoming	57	42	0	80	18	--	--	--	--	--

Table 3.3: Social Roll Call Liberalism in State Legislatures

	Lower Chamber (House or Assembly)					Upper Chamber (Senate)				
	N	Ave.	Min.	Max.	S.D	N	Ave.	Min.	Max.	S.D
California	79	63	8	98	36	40	67	7	100	39
Colorado	65	36	10	100	34	35	75	38	100	22
Idaho	36	38	0	100	39	14	42	0	100	45
Illinois	106	68	0	100	32	53	46	0	100	41
Indiana	86	46	0	100	27	50	37	10	87	23
Iowa	100	36	0	100	34	50	34	0	100	32
Maine	147	56	0	100	42	32	60	0	100	38
Michigan	110	34	0	100	46	37	30	0	100	43
Minnesota	132	42	0	100	40	66	53	0	100	43
New York	140	63	0	100	44	61	42	0	100	47
Oregon	59	38	0	100	41	30	43	0	100	37
Wisconsin	98	34	0	100	40	29	55	0	100	41

The states consistently scoring the most liberal on social roll calls are California, Maine, and Illinois while those scoring the most conservative are Iowa and Michigan. One peculiarity is Colorado, which has a conservative score in the State House and the most liberal score in the State Senate.[19] Despite these few oddities, there appears to be "face validation" for the operationalization of scorecards as proxies for the ideology of state legislators' roll call votes across states. One might be concerned that the scale of conservatism to liberalism is completely different from state to state, but that does not appear to be the case. These groups have a relatively standard idea of what is, and what is not, support for their issue positions and they enforce their view across the states and they do not appear to adjust their ideology based on characteristics related to their home state.

A district level graphic presentation of roll call ideology offers further evidence of "face validity." Mapping out the distribution of roll call ideology in Oregon (see Map 3.1) reveals expected variation. East of the Cascades, are a conglomeration of rural districts where a predominantly moralistic and individualistic conservatism prevails.[20] This conservatism is most apparent on social issues. Areas west of the Cascades are dominated by much more liberal cities descending from Portland in the north, down through Salem and Albany to Eugene in the middle of the state – west the Cascades. Thus, the cultural divide along the Cascades is represented in the roll call voting behavior of Oregon's legislators. This geographic distribution of roll call liberalism, lends further

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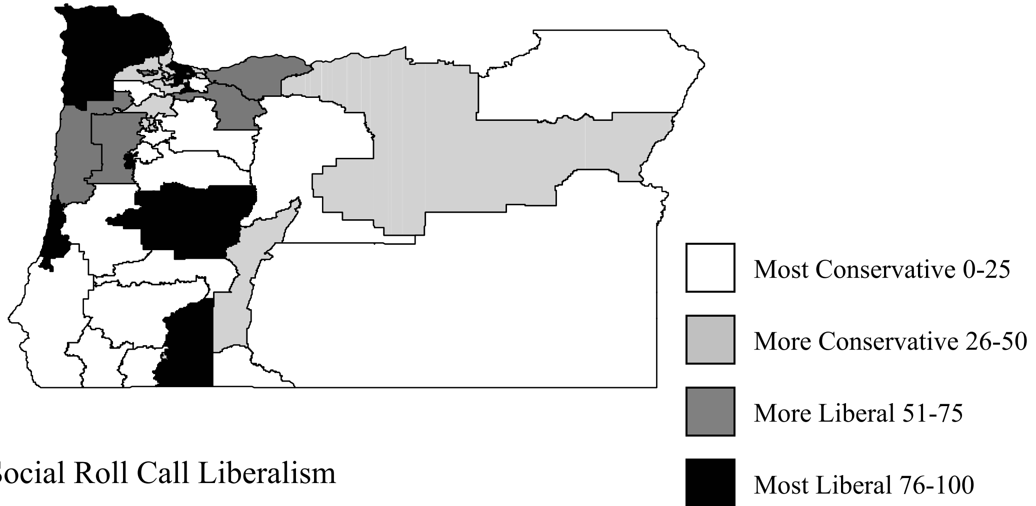
[19] This likely relates to the fact that the Colorado House was controlled by Republicans and the Senate controlled by Democrats. The ability to control the agenda, in this case, affected the level of roll call liberalism.

[20] Elazar's field notes on Oregon are available at http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles3/oregon.htm

evidence scorecards having sufficient “face validity” to be used as measures of roll call ideology.

Map 3.1:
Roll Call Liberalism among Members of the Oregon House

Economic Roll Call Liberalism



Social Roll Call Liberalism

One important caveat is in order regarding the use of scorecards. No groups exist, and thus no scorecards are made, relating to non-controversial or non-salient issues. Simply the fact that these groups exist suggests that the issues they care about, and thus the scorecards they produce, are measuring the ideology of members on the most contentious issues of the day. As such, a built in salience exists in these measures. This almost certainly means that these measures overestimate the amount of conflict in state legislatures, but this is a benefit for studies of roll call responsiveness. It is more useful to examine the roll call responsiveness of members to their constituents on matters that are of pressing public concern as opposed to the least salient issues. If the inclusion of non-salient issues were to result in congruence, the implications for representation would be far less than congruence discovered on the most salient issues.

Roll Call Extremism and Chamber Polarization

Derived from the policy liberalism scores are two additional variables key to this study – roll call extremism and chamber polarization. By folding in half the roll call liberalism measure, I generate a roll call extremism measure for each legislator. Instead of the ideological range, conservative to liberal, extremism measures ideological intensity from moderate to extreme. For example, if a legislator received a score of 100 from the AFL-CIO and a 0 from the NFIB, the legislator would have a 100 percent liberal economic roll call ideology (NFIB is recoded in a liberal direction). That legislator would also have a 100 percent extremism score. On the other hand, a legislator with a 50 percent economic roll call liberalism score (average of group scores) would have a roll call extremism of 0. The same procedure applies to my creation of social roll call extremism.

Analyzing the state averages for levels of roll call extremism yields intuitive results with states like California (ranking high in levels of economic extremism) and Connecticut and West Virginia (ranking relatively low). On social roll call extremism California, Michigan and New York rank among the most extreme, while Colorado and Indiana rank relatively low.

California, Michigan and New York, the most extremist oriented states overall have competing urban and rural areas, are diverse racially, and have professional legislatures; characteristics that likely lead to extremism. Each of these states also contains an individualistic component in their political culture (Elazar 1972). Such states are noted for viewing politics as a "dirty" game and where parties are strong and the divisions on issues tend to fall along partisan lines. Colorado, Connecticut, and West Virginia are more noted for the moralistic component in their political cultures where politics is viewed as a healthy exchange of ideas on issues, as opposed to entrenched partisanship (Elazar 1972).

Table 3.4:
Economic Roll Call Extremism in State Legislatures

	Lower Chamber (House or Assembly)					Upper Chamber (Senate)				
	N	Ave.	Min.	Max.	S.D	N	Ave.	Min.	Max.	S.D
Arizona	60	53	1	100	27	29	40	0	100	38
California	79	72	10	98	19	40	80	39	98	12
Colorado	65	71	2	100	26	35	67	2	100	29
Connecticut	150	37	0	90	22	36	27	3	80	18
Georgia	159	41	0	100	29	54	52	0	100	24
Idaho	68	76	0	100	32	33	67	14	100	27
Illinois	117	51	1	100	20	58	46	7	100	23
Indiana	100	54	7	97	19	50	57	1	100	20
Iowa	100	65	6	100	23	50	74	40	100	16
Kansas	116	69	0	100	31	--	--	--	--	--
Kentucky	100	50	0	100	27	37	77	26	100	22
Maine	149	61	0	100	32	34	57	12	100	35
Michigan	110	69	1	100	25	38	70	1	100	18
Minnesota	132	59	10	86	18	66	48	11	100	16
Missouri	153	72	14	100	29	31	74	0	100	28
Montana	100	63	2	100	34	50	68	12	100	32
New Mexico	69	48	0	100	30	42	39	0	100	35
New York	149	68	0	90	25	61	62	0	94	19
North Carolina	112	43	0	100	28	--	--	--	--	--
North Dakota	98	49	0	85	28	49	41	8	100	17
Ohio	93	66	0	100	34	33	76	12	100	29
Oregon	59	61	8	100	27	30	70	15	100	25
Pennsylvania	202	33	0	70	13	50	66	20	100	29
South Carolina	110	79	0	100	31	--	--	--	--	--
Utah	75	53	0	100	35	29	50	0	100	38
Vermont	145	67	4	100	25	30	49	0	90	26
Washington	94	65	1	100	33	49	34	6	100	24
West Virginia	95	43	0	100	32	16	29	0	76	21
Wisconsin	99	47	0	75	17	33	47	7	69	15
Wyoming	57	32	0	100	20	--	--	--	--	--

Table 3.5:
Social Roll Call Extremism in State Legislatures

	Lower Chamber (House or Assembly)					Upper Chamber (Senate)				
	N	Ave.	Min.	Max.	S.D	N	Ave.	Min.	Max.	S.D
California	79	73	0	96	12	40	82	17	100	18
Colorado	65	64	0	100	33	35	52	0	100	40
Idaho	36	86	20	100	22	14	85	38	100	23
Illinois	106	64	0	100	35	53	77	0	100	25
Indiana	86	49	7	100	49	50	48	5	80	21
Iowa	100	68	0	100	27	50	64	0	100	31
Maine	147	79	0	100	29	32	72	0	100	32
Michigan	110	95	16	100	13	37	91	8	100	24
Minnesota	132	76	2	100	31	66	81	0	100	29
New York	140	86	0	100	31	61	91	0	100	23
Oregon	59	81	14	100	29	30	67	14	100	34
Wisconsin	98	83	0	100	25	29	75	0	100	34

To compute chamber polarization, I find the absolute distance between the average policy liberalism score of both parties in each chamber. As expected, states scoring high on economic chamber polarization include California and Michigan, states scoring low include Connecticut and particularly Kansas and Kentucky. The chambers are overall much more polarized on their levels of social polarization, with California, Michigan, Minnesota, and Oregon being the most polar, while Colorado, Illinois, and Maine are much more moderate.

Table 3.6:
Economic Policy Polarization in State Legislative Chambers

	Lower Chamber (House or Assembly)			Upper Chamber (Senate)		
	Dem. Ave. Liberalism	GOP Ave. Liberalism	Polarization	Dem. Ave. Liberalism	GOP Ave. Liberalism	Polarization
Arizona	51	19	32	53	21	32
California	83	9	74	88	8	80
Colorado	77	10	67	73	11	62
Connecticut	63	27	36	66	40	26
Georgia	53	27	26	64	15	50
Idaho	51	7	44	27	15	12
Illinois	77	27	50	76	30	16
Indiana	72	23	49	80	25	55
Iowa	73	10	63	86	13	74
Kansas	18	14	4	--	--	--
Kentucky	27	23	4	18	5	13
Maine	66	5	61	51	6	45
Michigan	74	6	68	84	15	69
Minnesota	80	20	60	74	27	47
Missouri	67	2	65	79	4	76
Montana	53	8	45	50	13	37
New Mexico	59	11	48	50	13	37
New York	80	24	56	85	23	62
North Carolina	62	23	39	--	--	--
North Dakota	50	17	33	66	28	39
Ohio	55	4	51	60	6	54
Oregon	61	10	51	69	16	53
Pennsylvania	68	36	32	87	23	65
South Carolina	34	2	32	--	--	--
Utah	61	19	42	45	17	29
Vermont	71	13	58	81	38	44
Washington	53	5	48	75	11	63
West Virginia	69	40	29	57	39	19
Wisconsin	71	25	46	75	29	46
Wyoming	42	43	1	--	--	--

Table 3.7:
Social Policy Polarization in State Legislative Chambers

	Lower Chamber (House or Assembly)			Upper Chamber (Senate)		
	Dem. Ave. Liberalism	GOP Ave. Liberalism	Polarization	Dem. Ave. Liberalism	GOP Ave. Liberalism	Polarization
California	92	22	70	95	20	75
Colorado	98	42	56	95	59	36
Idaho	73	17	56	85	38	48
Illinois	83	52	31	79	20	59
Indiana	65	26	39	56	24	32
Iowa	59	17	41	60	18	42
Maine	75	35	40	66	52	14
Michigan	67	5	62	70	3	67
Minnesota	77	10	67	77	13	65
New York	83	24	58	81	14	67
Oregon	82	6	77	77	16	61
Wisconsin	70	6	64	84	21	63

Mass Opinion in State Legislative Districts

Perhaps the greatest methodological struggle for scholars of responsiveness, at both the congressional and state legislative level, is their ability to operationalize citizen opinion in legislative districts. As mentioned, national surveys typically have 2,000 or fewer respondents while the nation has more than 7,500 state legislative districts. Aggregating dozens of opinion surveys may provide valid measures of state level opinion (Erikson, Wright and McIver 1993), but they fall far short of providing valid district level measures of opinion.

District Liberalism

Approximations of district liberalism take many forms. Presidential election results are a frequently used surrogate for district opinion (Fleisher 1993; Glazer and Robbins 1985; LeoGrande and Jeydel 1997; Nice and Cohen 1993). The problem associated with using election results as a measure of district opinion is that depending on the year and the candidate, wide swings can occur which are likely a reflection of the candidate and not an underlying ideological orientation in the district.

Demographics are a common substitute for district liberalism (Pool, Abelson, and Popkin 1965; Sinclair-Deckard 1976; Weber and Shaffer 1972). Using demographics to approximate district opinion typically involves the use of Census information, often racial composition, education, income, age, class, urbanization etc., to model the roll-call behavior of legislators. This approach assumes that individuals' demographics relate systematically to their policy preferences, and that aggregate demographic characteristics and aggregate policy preferences are a reflection of the individual level. Ardoin and

Garand (2003) warn that this has the potential to violate classic notions of the ecological fallacy – that processes operating at the individual level need not happen at the aggregate level. The evidence suggests the use of demographics alone is only imperfectly related to policy preferences of citizens and always predicts just a small portion of the variance (Ardoin and Garand 2003).

The more promising use of "bottom-up" simulations (Weber and Shaffer 1972; Sullivan and Uslaner 1978; Uslaner and Weber 1979) use demographic data available at the district level, as well as knowledge of the relationship between individuals' demographic characteristics and their policy positions, to approximate district liberalism. This procedure involves obtaining individual level regression estimates and then substituted these means into regression models that predict district-level opinion. Potential problems associated with this model include exceedingly low levels of fit with the data. Adjusted R^2 levels often fall below .20, leaving district-level opinion measures with a large amount of random error (Ardoin and Garand 2003).

The measure I use in this study was developed by Ardoin and Garand (2003) at the congressional district level and is a "top down" simulation of district opinion. Their approach has two basic steps. First, using OLS regression, state ideological liberalism (as measured Wright's aggregation of CBS/NYT in 2000) is predicted using various state level demographic and political variables. Second, this 50 state OLS equation is applied to analogous district level demographic and political variables with the resulting predicted values representing the ideological orientation of the districts. The fifty states are essentially used as a template that is applied at the district level.

The challenge for applying this method at the state legislative level is developing enough analogous demographic and political variables at the district level that also produce a 50 state, first stage, model with a good deal of explained variance. I will first present the 50 state model, before explaining the method used to obtain the same measures at the district level. The first stage model is:

State Opinion Liberalism = $a+b_1$*(vote for Gore)*$+b_2$*(vote for Nader)*$+ b_3$*(vote for Buchanan)* $+b_4$*(percent service workers)*$+b_5$*(percent farm workers)*$+b_5$*(percent receiving pubic assistance)* $+b_5$*(percent with a college degree)* $+b_6$*(percent living in poverty)*$+ b_7$*(percent Evangelical)*$+b_8$*(Northeast)*$+b_9$*(West)*$+b_{10}$*(south)* $+e$.

For the first stage to be an accurate predictor of district liberalism, particular attention must be paid to the adjusted R^2 of the model. Ardoin and Garand's simulation of congressional district opinion produces a state level model with an adjusted R^2 of .701. The model I employ produces an adjusted R^2 of .877 with a good fit (see Table 3.8). The residual predictors are not biased in any systematic way and tests for heteroscedasticity are insignificant.

Table 3.8:
Modeling Opinion Liberalism at the State Level (for use in Predicting District Level Ideology)

	β	(se)	P >|z|
Vote for Gore	.597	.100	.001
Vote for Nader	.857	.360	.012
Voter for Buchanan	-3.175	1.476	.020
Percent Service Workers	.267	.162	.054
Percent Government Workers	-.305	.333	.184
Percent Farm Workers	.527	.218	.011
Percent Receiving Public Assistance	1.147	.701	.056
Percent with a College Degree	-.281	.169	.052
Percent Living in Poverty	-.905	.257	.001
Percent Evangelical	-.175	.079	.017
Northeast	3.257	1.720	.034
West	4.562	1.561	.003
South	3.408	1.713	.028
Constant	-46.856	10.794	
Adjusted R^2	.877		
N	47		

Method: OLS Regression.

The second stage of the model requires district level independent variables analogous to the state level independent variables. The measures for region are simply dummy variables for the census categorization of region and the district values for percent with a college degree and the various economic sectors come from the *Almanac of State Legislatures* (Lilley, DeFranco and Diefenderfer 1994). The election totals, percent receiving public assistance, percent living in poverty, and percent Evangelical, required the use of Graphic Information System software to compute at the district level. Election totals and percent Evangelical at the county level were obtained from Lublin and Voss (2001) and Jones et al (2001) respectively.[21] The percent receiving public assistance and percent living in poverty at the census tract level were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau.

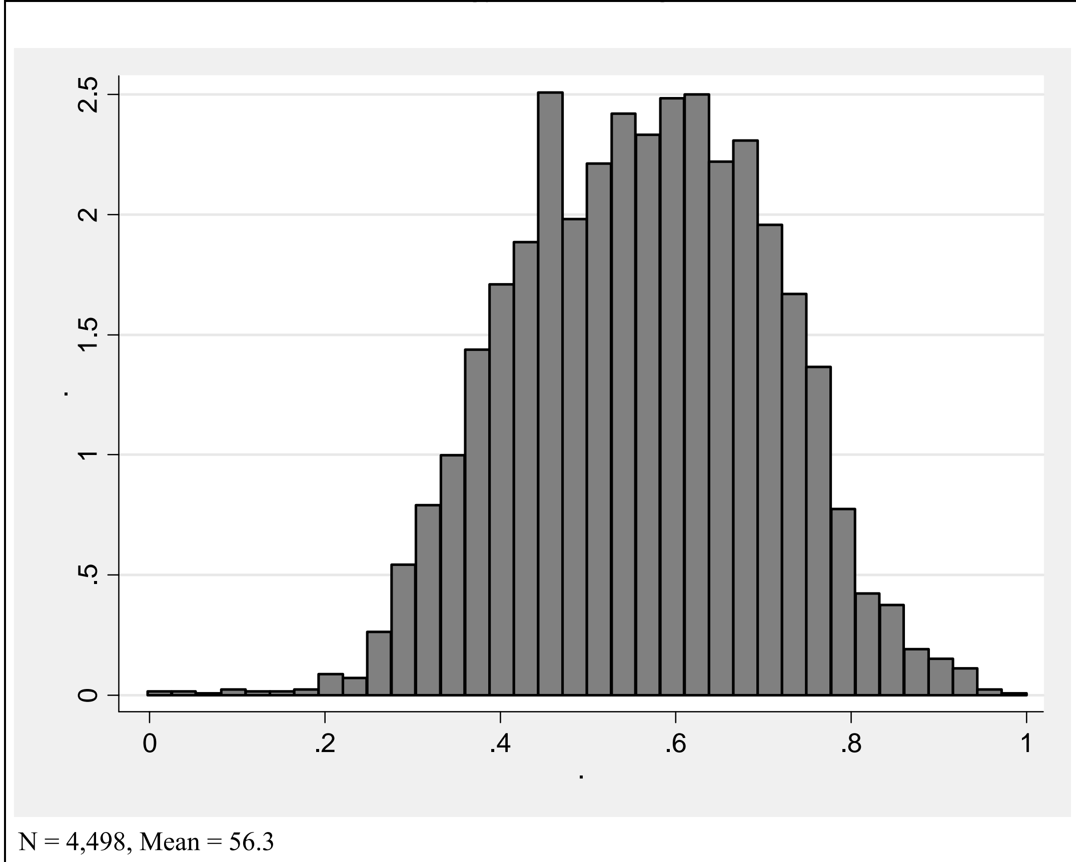
All of these values were mapped and state legislative shape files overlaid. By identifying the legislative district that the centroid of each county or tract shape file occupied, I then expanded the various data files to the overlaid district level. This provided a close approximation of these characteristics in each district. In the case of census tract data, these tiny units were easily centered in legislative districts and when expanded to the district level are likely to be very reliable estimators. For county level data, the method is more reliable in large (rural) legislative districts, and less reliable in

[21] Percent Evangelical is the number of adherents in the districts who belong to a denomination determined to be Evangelical as opposed to Mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Liberal Non-Traditional, Conservative Non-Traditional, Orthodox, and other (Hindu, Muslim, Eastern, .etc.). For a list of the 99 different Evangelical denominations, and/or the denominations fitting into the other categories, please contact the author.

counties with several legislative districts (urban). It is, however, the only method available.

Like studies of mass ideology (Fiorina 2005), the resulting district liberalism measure takes on a normal, not bimodal, distribution (see Figure 3.1). Unlike national samples of opinion liberalism, however, the center of the district liberalism distribution is slightly to the left of center. This is a function of the sample of states in this study. Northern, Midwestern and Western states are over-sampled vis-à-vis Southern states. Because of the extremely good fit in the first stage model, I am certain that if more Southern states were included in the study the mean of the distribution would move slightly to the right and be centered between .4 and .5 on the liberalism scale and fall closer inline with national survey data. It is aggregated national surveys, after all, upon which estimates from the first stage are based.

Figure 3.1:
The Distribution of Citizen Ideology in State Legislative Districts



N = 4,498, Mean = 56.3

The state averages of district liberalism fall inline closely with what we would expect from mass ideology in states (see Table 3.9). The correlation between these averages and Wright's aggregate state ideology measures is .895, which is to be expected as Wright's measure is a component of the estimation. States like New York, California, Vermont, and Connecticut are the most liberal while Georgia, North Dakota, Wyoming and Utah are the most conservative.

Table 3.9:
Mass Ideology in State House Districts

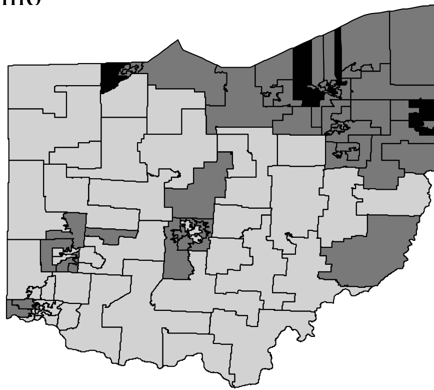
	N	Ave.	Min.	Max.	S.D
Arizona	60	.53	.31	.68	.9
California	79	.67	..48	.91	.11
Colorado	65	.59	..40	.78	.10
Connecticut	150	.73	.53	.85	.6
Georgia	159	.45	.18	.76	.13
Idaho	68	.41	.11	.54	.8
Illinois	117	.63	.36	.83	.12
Indiana	100	.46	.16	.71	.10
Iowa	100	.61	.31	.78	.8
Kansas	116	.45	.16	.77	.10
Kentucky	100	.47	.21	.82	.13
Maine	149	.66	.7	.83	.8
Michigan	110	.60	.34	.82	.11
Minnesota	132	.62	.37	.81	.9
Missouri	153	.50	.27	.71	.10
Montana	100	.50	.18	.78	.11
New Mexico	69	.57	.33	.80	.11
New York	149	.73	.47	.100	.12
North Carolina	112	.45	.28	.64	.9
North Dakota	98	.39	.21	.55	.8
Ohio	93	.54	.37	.76	.10
Oregon	59	.65	.38	.87	.12
Pennsylvania	202	.64	.21	.94	.12
South Carolina	110	.40	.5	.60	.10
Utah	75	.44	.0	.63	.14
Vermont	145	.72	.34	.87	.7
Washington	94	.66	.50	.79	.8
West Virginia	95	.54	.39	.86	.9
Wisconsin	99	.57	.38	.78	.9
Wyoming	57	.44	.29	.62	.8

Only the lower chamber is shown because these aggregate values are almost identical between chambers, never varying more than 2 percent.

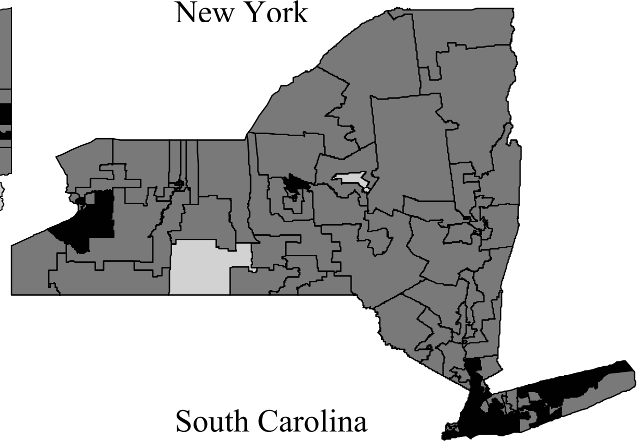
More important, the districts within states where we would expect to see ideological variation seem intuitively aligned (see Map 3.2). The most liberal districts of Ohio are in Cleveland, Toledo, and Youngstown; with the northeast section of the state being the more liberal region overall. Pockets of liberalism are also identifiable around Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati. In New York, the most liberal sections are in New York City and Long Island as well as Buffalo. Oregon is most liberal in greater Portland, with the overall ideological division running along the Cascades (notice the only liberal eastern districts extend into the west). South Carolina, as expected, has mostly conservative districts with small clusters of liberal districts around Columbia and Myrtle Beach. Between states, the dynamics also seem intuitive. Ohio and Oregon show regional diversity (they were picked for presentation because of these political divisions). New York is overall more liberal with its pockets of extreme liberalism. The opposite is true of South Carolina, which is comparatively conservative.

Map 3.2:
The Ideology of Citizens Living in State House Districts

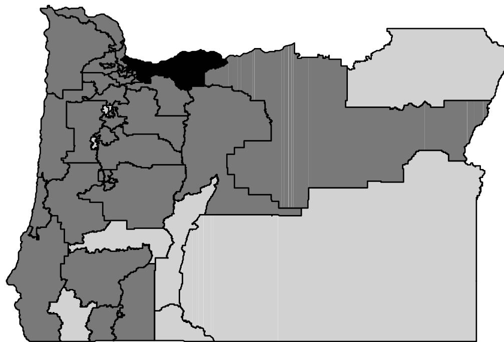
Ohio



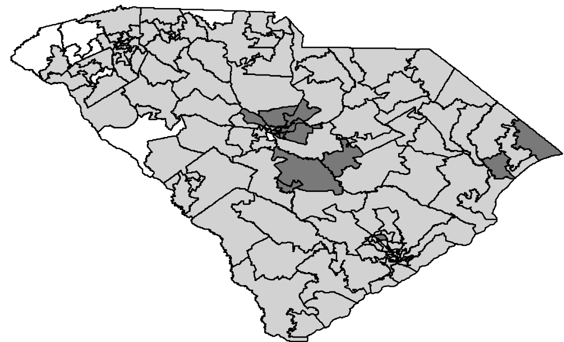
New York



Oregon



South Carolina



Most Conservative 0-25 Conservative 25-50 Liberal 51-75 Most Liberal 75-100

District Diversity

Another dimension of opinion relates to district diversity. To what extent are districts homogeneous or heterogeneous? State diversity is known to correlate with party competition, inequality, and public policy output (Sullivan 1973). District diversity likely relates to the extremism of roll calls at the district level. To measure district diversity, I employ the Sullivan's diversity index at the district level.[22] I create three measures of diversity: economic, racial, and religions. The data for these measures come from the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2000 Glenmary Religion data (Jones et al 2002).

The computation formula for the Sullivan (1973) diversity index is: $A_W=1-(\sum Y_k^2 / V)$ where A_W represents the probability that a randomly selected pair of individuals will differ in their holding of the measured characteristic. Y_k represents the proportion of the population falling into a given category within the variable and V represents the number of variables. For example, to measure the racial diversity of District X (60 percent White, 30 percent Black, 5 percent Latino, and 5 percent Asian): $\sum Y_k= [(.60^2) + (.30^2)+(.05^2)+(.05^2)$; therefore, $A_W=1-(.455/1)$ or .55. The probability that if an infinite number of pairs were selected randomly from a finite population, the average proportion of unshared race of these pairs would be .55. In real world terms: this district has a moderate amount of racial diversity.

I follow this procedure for each district. For economic diversity, the categories are the percent of the population in manufacturing, service, government, and farm sectors. For racial diversity, the categories are percent of population White, Black, Latino, and

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[22] Although commonly referred to as the Sullivan Index, it was actually developed by Lieberson (1969).

Asian (see example above). For religious diversity, the categories are percent of the population Evangelical, mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, other.

These three measures of diversity measure distinct constructs (see Figure 3.2). Economic diversity is normally distributed with a mean of .39, while racial diversity has a sharp right skew with an average of .18, and religious diversity is left skewed with an average diversity of .62.[23] Economic and religious diversity reveal primarily intra-state variation as their aggregate totals at the state level show few signs of variation (see Table 3.10). Racial diversity, however, show some expected inter-state variation. The most racially diverse states are California, New Mexico, and South Carolina; the least diverse are Maine, Vermont, Montana, and Iowa.

[23] The highest correlation between these measures is only .10, between economic and religious diversity.

Figure 3.2:
The Distribution of Diversity in State Legislative Districts

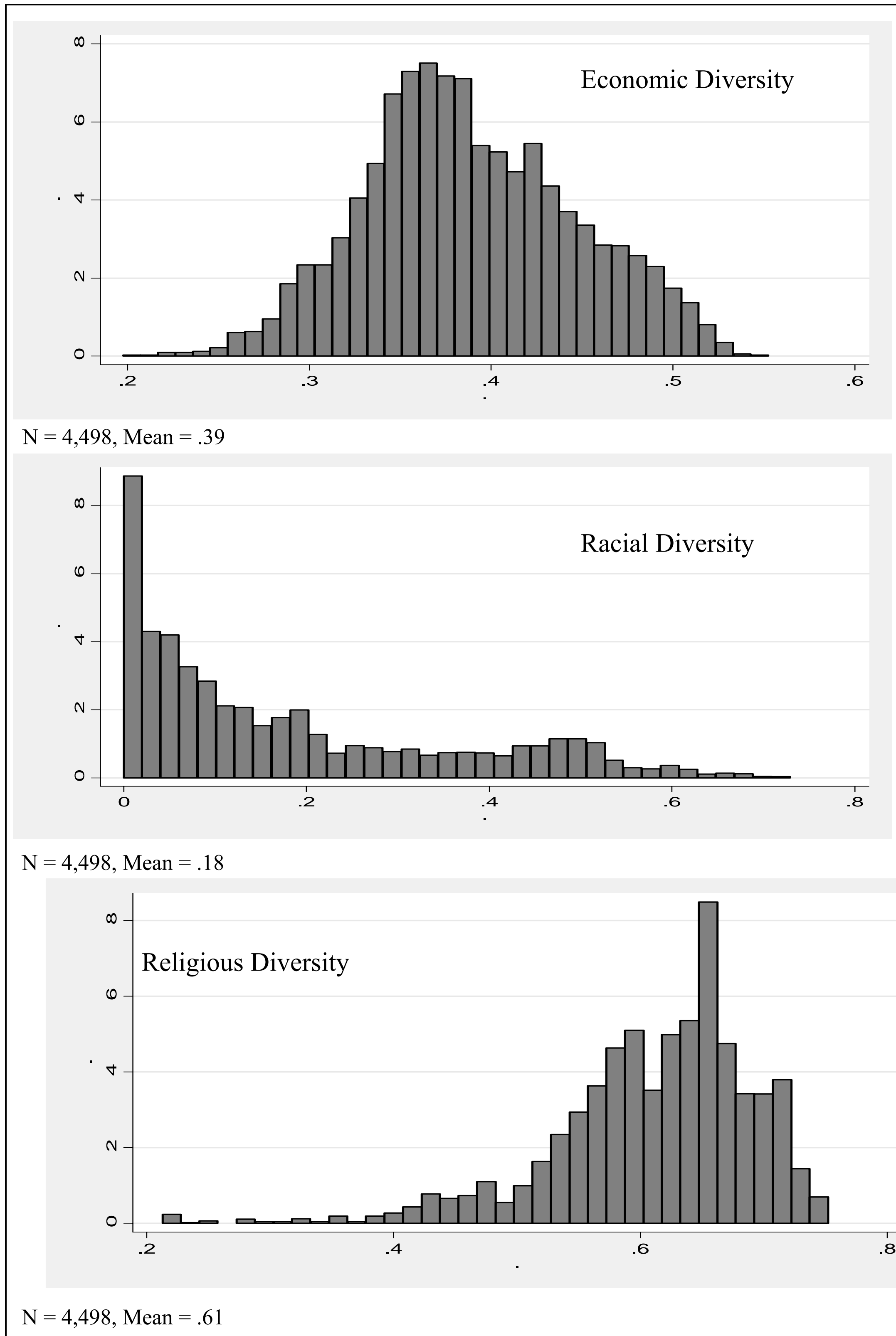


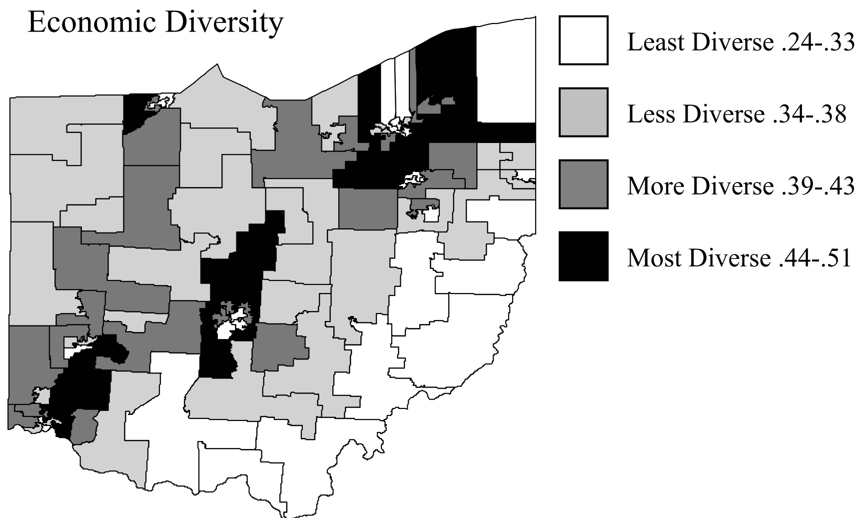
Table 3.10:
Diversity in State House Districts

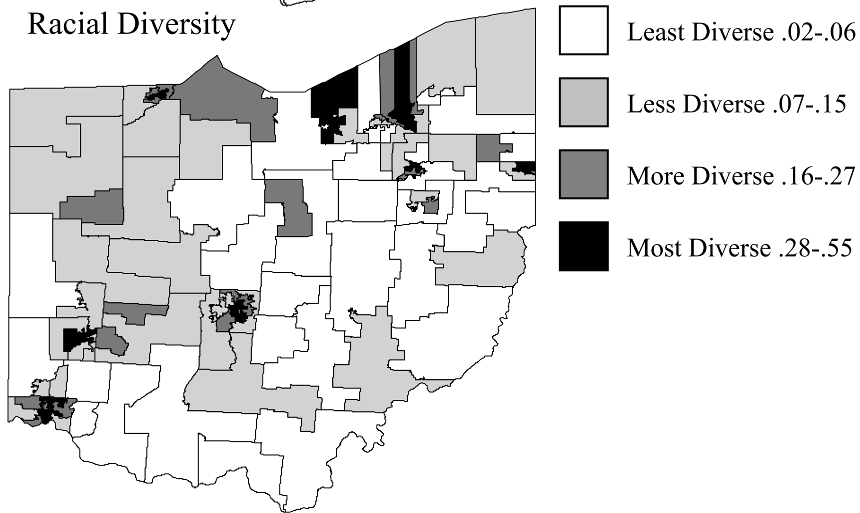
	N	Economic Diversity Average	Racial Diversity Average	Religious Diversity Average.
Arizona	60	.38	.32	.58
California	79	.44	.49	.60
Colorado	65	.41	.28	.57
Connecticut	150	.45	.22	.64
Georgia	159	.38	.32	.59
Idaho	68	.39	.12	.59
Illinois	117	.40	.26	.66
Indiana	100	.38	.13	.60
Iowa	100	.37	.7	.66
Kansas	116	.38	.17	.65
Kentucky	100	.34	.12	.61
Maine	149	.38	.2	.52
Michigan	110	.40	.17	.58
Minnesota	132	.40	.9	.70
Missouri	153	.36	.13	.65
Montana	100	.35	.4	.61
New Mexico	69	.36	.43	.63
New York	149	.40	.30	.64
North Carolina	112	.38	.32	.60
North Dakota	98	.38	.32	.60
Ohio	93	.38	.17	.62
Oregon	59	.39	.14	.49
Pennsylvania	202	.38	.14	.66
South Carolina	110	.38	.37	.60
Utah	75	.40	.13	.47
Vermont	145	.41	.2	.55
Washington	94	.42	.20	.52
West Virginia	95	.33	.7	.53
Wisconsin	99	.39	.10	.68
Wyoming	57	.38	.13	.64

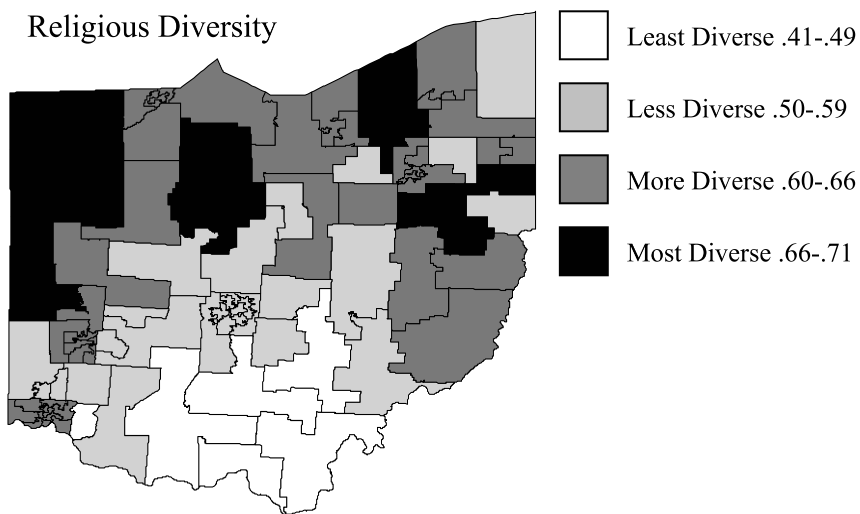
Only the lower chamber is shown because these aggregate values are almost identical between chambers, never varying more than 3 percent.

Using Ohio as a case study illustrates typical patterns of variation within states (see Map 3.3). Economic diversity is greatest in suburban districts where the various economic sectors tend to mix. Intercity districts are dominated by manufacturing jobs, while the most rural districts have a greater percentage of farm employees. Racial diversity is most noted in inner-ring suburban districts. Both the intercity districts and the rural districts exhibit the highest levels of racial homogeneity. Religious diversity exhibits a regional pattern. Southern Ohio, which shares a similar demography with Appalachia, is overwhelmingly Evangelical, while the north mixes in a greater number of Catholics and, in the west, mainline Protestants.

Map 3.3:
The Diversity of Ohio Citizens by State House District







Campaign Characteristics of Legislative Districts

Electoral Competition

An advantage of studying representation at the district, as opposed to the state, level is that measures of electoral competition are much more straightforward. Like congressional election scholars (Herrnson 2004), I measure competitiveness directly from election results. I do this by calculating the winning margin of legislators, which is simply the percent received by the winning candidate minus that of their closest opponent. Because I am interested in competitiveness as a condition for representation, that condition must exist and be known prior to the legislative sessions in which I am measuring responsiveness. As such, the competitiveness data is drawn from the election immediately preceding the year for which I collected the interest group scorecards (see Table 3.1). For most states this means 1998 elections, however for a handful of states that have four year terms, or for states with scorecards from 1998, the competitiveness analysis was done in 1996.

A good amount of variation exists in the levels of electoral competition in state legislatures circa 1998 (see Table 3.11). Some states, like Michigan, California, and Utah, had two party competition in all but a few House races. Other states, like South Carolina, Georgia and New Mexico, had more than 50 percent of statehouse races go uncontested. The average margin of victory in states was similarly varied. In every state, except North Dakota (average margin of 16 percent), the average margin of victory in the lower house was above 30 percent, with many states exceeding 60 percent average winning margins. Using a 10 percent margin (or less) as an indicator of competitiveness, some states, like Vermont, North Dakota, and West Virginia, had 40 percent or more of more races that

were competitive. Eight states in the study had fewer than 10 percent of races turn out to be competitive. Overall, these measures of competitiveness are slightly lower in the upper chambers of the state legislatures. State senators often have longer terms and greater visibility than their colleagues in the lower chambers of state government likely leading to more electoral safety.

Table 3.11:
Electoral Characteristics in State Legislatures

	Lower Chamber (House or Assembly)				Upper Chamber (Senate)			
	N	Percent of Races Uncontested	Average Winning Margin	Percent with a Margin of < 10%	N	Percent of Races Uncontested	Average Winning Margin	Percent with a Margin of < 10%
Arizona	60	36	44	37	30	57	71	13
California	79	4	36	11	40	3	31	20
Colorado	65	14	37	25	35	23	35	40
Connecticut	151	25	50	9	36	17	45	6
Georgia	180	59	70	8	56	52	66	9
Idaho	70	50	66	6	35	57	70	3
Illinois	118	49	66	10	59	47	68	8
Indiana	100	25	48	15	50	44	60	14
Iowa	100	33	49	20	50	20	36	26
Kansas	125	33	51	13	40	20	43	23
Kentucky	100	50	61	13	38	13	30	32
Maine	150	23	41	20	34	15	35	24
Michigan	110	1	37	18	38	0	36	13
Minnesota	133	5	29	17	66	2	26	20
Missouri	162	37	56	11	33	12	38	6
Montana	100	41	53	22	50	38	53	14
New Mexico	70	53	64	14	42	31	47	19
New York	150	13	58	5	61	15	62	2
North Carolina	120	37	47	32	50	30	41	38
North Dakota	98	8	16	65	49	10	27	24
Ohio	99	11	40	8	33	3	32	12
Oregon	59	17	39	17	30	20	42	36
Pennsylvania	203	38	65	4	50	32	56	14
South Carolina	124	72	78	9	--	--	--	--
Utah	75	4	38	11	29	10	36	28
Vermont	146	20	31	40	30	0	10	73
Washington	98	27	44	22	49	24	40	39
West Virginia	101	20	32	43	17	24	40	12
Wisconsin	99	35	58	7	33	24	46	21
Wyoming	60	48	58	18	30	53	63	10

Year – first election preceding 2000. In most cases, this is 1998 with a few from 1996 because of 4 year terms. Margin is the percent of votes separating the two candidates with the greatest number of votes.

These results are typical to levels of competitiveness found a decade ago. Tucker and Weber (1992) found many legislative races to be contested, but found lopsided general election victories. Typically, about three quarters of incumbent legislators are reelected (Breaux and Jewell 1992; Tucker and Weber 1992). As such, state legislative elections exhibit about the same levels of competitiveness as races for the U.S. House (Patterson 1996).

Interest Group Support

At the federal level, campaign finance information for candidates is made available by the Federal Election Commission and made more accessible to journalists and the public through the *Center for Responsive Politics*. The *Institution on Money in State Politics* is in many ways the equivalent of the CRP at the state legislative level. The Institute was founded in 1999 and has conducted campaign finance research in states where programs did not exist, upgraded and standardized research where they did, and brought the results together on its Web site in an accessible and searchable format. The existence of campaign finance records at the state legislative level makes it possible to study the responsiveness of legislators to their interest group constituencies. Having all of the information in one place and in one format makes this process much easier.

From the Institute, I collected the total amount of money legislators raised and the aggregate amounts donated to them from various economic sectors and interest groups for each legislator. The Institute collects their data from state disclosure agencies to which candidates must file their campaign finance reports. Political donors are then assigned an economic interest code, based either on the occupation and employer

information contained in the disclosure reports or on information found through a variety of resources. Currently, this data is the lowest level of aggregation available from the Institute. Like the competitiveness measures, these data come from the election preceding the session for which roll call data was collected (see Table 3.1). For most years, this means campaign finance records from 1998.

When conducting cross-state research, the total dollar amounts must be standardized in some way to account for the fact that the amount of money required to run a campaign varies from state to state. Some states have extraordinarily expensive legislative elections, while others cost next to nothing (see Table 3.12). The average total receipts of legislators running for election in California in 1998 was $677,000. The average receipts in North Dakota and Vermont, however, was about $1,000.[24]

[24] These small average amounts were not determined to be a function of restrictive campaign finance laws.

Table 3.12:
Campaign Finance in State House Districts

	N	Average Total Receipts	Average Percent from Business	Average Percent from Labor	Average Percent from Ideological Groups
Arizona	60	$30,000	47	4	1
California	79	$677,000	34	11	1
Colorado	65	$19,000	53	6	2
Connecticut	151	$20,000	31	7	1
Georgia	180	$37,000	35	2	1
Idaho	70	$9,000	63	5	2
Illinois	118	$202,000	44	15	1
Indiana	100	$52,000	48	8	<1
Iowa	100	$38,000	64	5	3
Kansas	125	$16,000	61	5	1
Kentucky	100	$23,000	59	3	3
Maine	150	$7,000	39	4	3
Michigan	110	$65,000	50	10	1
Minnesota	133	$24,000	9	5	<1
Missouri	162	$30,000	59	7	<1
Montana	100	$5,000	45	6	1
New Mexico	70	$25,000	52	3	2
New York	150	$57,000	61	5	2
North Carolina	120	$58,000	53	1	<1
North Dakota	98	$1,000	40	24	1
Ohio	99	$92,000	55	5	5
Oregon	59	$91.000	65	12	1
Pennsylvania	203	$69,000	31	11	1
South Carolina	124	$20,000	33	2	<1
Utah	75	$12,000	54	11	2
Vermont	146	$1,000	29	2	6
Washington	98	$57,000	55	6	5
West Virginia	101	$21,000	57	7	1
Wisconsin	99	$24,000	57	7	1
Wyoming	60	$3,000	51	9	<1

Year – first election preceding 2000. In most cases, this is 1998 with a few from 1996 because of 4 year terms. Because percentages are similar between chambers, only the lower house data is shown to conserve space.

Percent of candidate receipts from business groups include donations made by groups and individuals who report affiliation with business interests.[25] Labor is assigned its own category as are single issue/ideological groups. By far, the largest donating sector is the business community. The average amount of business contributions to state legislators ranges from 9 percent of total receipts in Minnesota to as much as 65 percent of total receipts in Oregon. Labor is the second most prolific interest sector, in terms of donations, while single issue/ideological groups provide a much smaller amount of money to legislators as a percent of their overall funds.

State Level Opinion Characteristics

Most variables in this study are measured at the district level. Some measures, however, are only available at the state level. For some of these measures, the state or chamber is the primary unit of analysis: divided government, chamber competition, legislative professionalism. For two measures, however, the states are simply the lowest level available. These variables include mass partisan polarization and elite party polarization.

Mass Polarization in the States

A standard question asked on public opinion surveys gauges respondents strength of partisanship. Respondents are typically asked to answer on a seven-point scale from

[25] Business interests include those classified by the Institute as: agriculture, communications & electronics, construction, defense, energy & natural resources, finance insurance & real estate, general business, health, transportation. These sectors display enough inter-correlation to justify their aggregation into a business index (Cronbach's Alpha = .876).

strong Republican to strong Democrat. By obtaining the average responses in a state for each party, the distance between is a measure of mass polarization. I use aggregated CBS/NYT polls to obtain this measure.[26]

The resulting mass polarization in each state reveals some expected results (see Table 3.13). Democrats were most liberal in Vermont and Connecticut. Republicans were most conservative in Idaho, Montana and New Mexico. Party identifiers were most different in Vermont and most similar in South Carolina and West Virginia.

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[26] I obtained this data from Gerald Wright and am very grateful for his assistance. Because this data was aggregated as percent of Democrats who were liberal, moderate and conservative and percent of Republicans who were liberal, moderate, and conservative, I transformed these percentages in each sate back to a seven point (0-6) scale. I did this in the following manner: By state (% dem. conservatives*0)+(% dem. moderates*3)+(% dem. liberals*6))/(sum of all three). I repeated the technique for Republicans. This results in a scale of opinion liberalism (from 0-6) of each party in each state.

Table 3.13:
Mass and Elite Polarization in the States

	Mass			Elite		
	Democratic Liberalism	Republican Liberalism	Mass Polarization	Democratic Liberalism	Republican Liberalism	Elite Polarization
Arizona	3.6	1.6	1.9	4.6	1.5	3.1
California	3.7	1.8	1.9	4.9	1.7	3.2
Colorado	3.9	1.9	2.0	4.5	1.4	3.1
Connecticut	4.1	1.9	2.2	4.6	2.1	2.6
Georgia	3.2	1.7	1.6	4.6	1.3	3.3
Idaho	2.8	0.9	1.9	4.1	1.8	2.2
Illinois	3.7	1.7	2.0	4.4	2.6	1.8
Indiana	3.2	1.4	1.8	4.2	1.5	2.7
Iowa	3.5	1.8	1.7	4.7	1.1	3.5
Kansas	3.4	1.6	1.8	4.8	1.8	3.0
Kentucky	3.3	1.8	1.5	4.2	1.7	2.5
Maine	3.5	1.7	1.7	5.0	2.4	2.6
Michigan	3.6	1.6	2.1	4.6	1.4	3.2
Minnesota	3.9	1.3	2.6	4.7	1.5	3.2
Missouri	3.4	1.4	2.0	4.5	1.6	2.9
Montana	3.8	1.2	2.6	5.4	1.3	4.1
New Mexico	3.5	1.2	2.3	4.6	1.3	3.3
New York	3.6	2.1	1.5	4.8	2.0	2.8
North Carolina	3.1	1.3	1.8	4.8	1.5	3.3
North Dakota	4.1	1.5	2.7	4.8	1.5	3.3
Ohio	3.3	1.7	1.7	4.7	2.1	2.6
Oregon	3.7	1.4	2.3	5.2	1.6	3.6
Pennsylvania	3.2	1.5	1.7	4.5	2.3	2.3
South Carolina	2.7	1.9	0.8	4.7	1.4	3.3
Utah	3.8	1.4	2.3	4.2	1.4	2.9
Vermont	4.3	1.3	3.0	5.1	2.0	3.1
Washington	3.8	1.4	2.4	5.1	1.4	3.7
West Virginia	3.2	2.3	0.8	4.7	2.1	2.6
Wisconsin	3.5	1.6	1.8	4.4	1.7	2.7
Wyoming	3.9	1.3	2.6	4.4	1.8	2.6

All are averages of questions with a 7-point scale from 0-6.

Elite Polarization in the States

To measure elite polarization I use surveys of national convention delegates from 1992, 1996 and 2000, aggregated (to a mean) by state. The ideology question is identical to the CBS/NYT polls (used for mass polarization) measuring the ideology of Democratic and Republican delegates on a seven point scale.[27] The distance between the delegates of the parties is my measure of elite level polarization.

As one would expect, Democratic delegates are most liberal in Oregon, Vermont, Washington and Maine, and most conservative in Idaho, Indiana, and Utah. Republicans are most conservative in Iowa, Georgia, Montana and New Mexico and most liberal in Connecticut, Illinois, Maine and Pennsylvania. The states with the greatest levels of elite polarization are Montana, Washington and Oregon, and the most similar in Illinois, Idaho, and Kentucky. As expected, I find a correlation of .4 between elite and mass levels of polarization in the states.

Four Cases of Legislative Voting Behavior

Introduced in Chapter 1, I will use four legislators throughout as case studies to help explicate the finding. Two of these legislators are ideologically extreme in their roll call voting behavior, while two are relative moderates. In many instances, these legislators fit the generalizations I make about responsiveness, on some points they do not. Regardless, however, they add real life stories to the dynamic of legislative responsiveness. Before proceeding further, I will fill in the reader a bit more on these

[27] I obtained these surveys from John Jackson who has been surveying national delegates since the 1970s and has generously shared with me his data (for the latest analysis of his findings see Jackson, Bigelow, and Green 2006).

legislators' backgrounds, the types of districts they represent, and other information that relates to their particular brand of legislative responsiveness.

Barbara Flynn Currie (D-IL)

First elected in 1979, Barbara Currie represented the 25th Illinois House district in 2000. Curry has strong liberal credentials. She is a member of the Illinois Civil Liberties Union, the ADA, the Chicago Urban League, and Emily's List. Before joining the legislature, she was an educator. In addition, she is her party's majority leader in the House.

In 2000, Planned Parenthood gave her a perfect 100 percent support score; the AFL-CIO gave her a 97 percent support score; and the NFIB gave her only a 9 percent support score. She is both socially and economically a liberal lawmaker. On a survey conducted by *Project Vote Smart*, she expressed support for almost all proposed tax increases on issues from education, to the environment, to alcohol and cigarette taxes, to inheritance taxes, just to name a few. Only on property taxes did she propose reductions. She supported the moratorium placed on the death penalty in Illinois and supported funding community centers to help at-risk youth. On education, she was overwhelmingly supportive of additional funding for public education and specifically for funding that would support sexual education programs. She indicated that she would support the inclusion of sexual orientation in anti-discrimination laws and was supportive of increasing the minimum wage and including race, ethnicity and gender as criteria for state agencies' decisions on public employment, state college and university admissions, and state contracting. Her liberal views extended to issues concerning protection of the

environment, restrictions on gun possession, as well as health and welfare issues. Ms. Currie, in short, was a model liberal.

As one would expect of a majority leader, she faced no electoral competition in 1998 but still raised nearly $100,000 in campaign donations. Half of her war chest came from business and 14 percent from labor. Less than one percent came from ideological/single-issue groups. Although herself White, Currie represented a majority minority district (85 percent Black), which Gore easily carried in 2000 by a 40 point margin. Religiously, the 25th is overwhelmingly Catholic at 70 percent of all adherents. Economically over 83 percent of residents are employed in the service sector. Her chamber is professional and controlled by her Democratic Party.

Lenore Barrett (R-ID)

Besides sharing the same gender, Lenore Barrett is politically the opposite of Currie. In 1998, Barrett represented the 26th House district of Idaho. Before serving in the Idaho House, Barrett was a Police Commissioner, on the Challis City Council, a State Committeewoman, and member of her county Republican Central Committee. Before starting on her political career, she was involved with the mining industry. Organization she belongs to include the Central Idaho Mining Association, the Daughters of the Nile (charitable association of women related by birth or marriage to Shriners/Masons), the Idaho Farm Bureau, and the Order of the Eastern Star (a fraternal order based on shared religiosity). She is a Southern Baptist, which is interesting given the fact that the majority of her district is Mormon (53 percent of adherents).

Barrett is a conservative. Planned Parenthood gave her a support score of 0 percent and the NFIB gave her a 100 percent support score. Like Currie, Barrett filled out

her *Project Vote Smart* survey allowing us to glimpse at the nature of her conservatism. She believes abortion should be outlawed except when the woman's life is in danger. She prefers either to decrease or eliminate all the types of taxes listed in the survey (22 different types) except vehicle taxes which she thinks should remain the same. She supports the death penalty, endorses voluntary prayer in public schools, and supports abstinence-only sexual education programs. She does not support any type of affirmative action related to state agency hiring decisions. On environmental issues, she supports removal of wolves from the Endangered Species List. She would prefer to ease restrictions on the purchase and possession of guns, would cap punitive damages in malpractice lawsuits, and is against state guaranteed medical care. Concerning welfare, she supports increased work requirements for able-bodied recipients.

Barrett won her reelection campaign in 1996 by a comfortable 40 percent margin. Seventy-seven percent of her campaign's financial support came from business, 0 percent from labor and 2 percent from single issue/ideological groups. Bush carried her district in 2000 by a comfortable 65 percent margin over Gore. The 26th is 95 percent white and contains a mix of service and farm workers (79 percent rural). The average household income is just under $30,000 and although 12 percent live in poverty, less than 3 percent get public assistance. The Idaho House is an amateur legislative institution in which the Republicans hold an 87 percent majority.

Ben GiaQuinta (D-IN)

In 2000, Ben GiaQuinta represented the 80th House district of Indiana. First elected in to the legislature in 1990 (he lost his election in 1994, but was returned in 1996), GiaQuinta worked most of his adult life as a Realtor after serving in 102nd Infantry

Division of the Army during World War II. The only political experience he had before his 1990 election was a stint on the Wayne Township Advisory Board in the late 1980s.

GiaQuinta is ideologically quite distinct from Currie and Barrett - he is an noted moderate. While receiving an 80 percent support score from Planned Parenthood and an 85 score from the AFL-CIO, he received a 33 percent score from the ACLU and a 40 percent from both the NFIB and Chamber of Commerce. His *Project Vote Smart* survey answers offer insights into his ideological moderation. GiaQuinta is a pro-life Democratic legislator believing abortions should only be legal when the life of the woman in endangered and thinks public funding should not go to organizations that advocate or perform abortions. Regarding gay rights, however, he feels that sexual orientation should be protected under Indiana's anti-discrimination laws. Regarding affirmative action he feels race, ethnicity, and gender should not be taken into account in state agencies' decisions on public employment, college admissions, or other state contracting. On gun issues, he thinks citizens should be allowed to carry concealed guns, but thinks proper licensing is required. On a list of tax issues his most often response is to maintain the status quo, but thinks slight increases should be made for education, health care and law enforcement. Regarding health care, he thinks patients' have the right to sue their HMOs. These issue positions, which are all over the place ideologically, reinforce the validity of his interest group scorecard ratings that label him a moderate.

The 80th House district is quite competitive. In 1998, GiaQuinta won with only 55 percent of the vote. Bush beat Gore in the 80th district by a solid 26 percent margin (62 to 36 percent). Only 15 percent of his campaign money came from business and none came from labor or ideological groups. The lion's share of his nearly $200,000 war chest

was provided by the Democratic Party ($148,000). The 80th is racially mixed with 68 percent of residents being White and 27 percent Black. It is also a religious melting pot. The biggest percentage of adherents is evangelicals at 41 percent, followed by Catholics at 35 percent, and mainline Protestants at 22 percent. The Indiana House is an amateur legislative institution in which the Democrats in 2000 held a slight majority.

Donald Moffitt (R-IL)

In 2000, Donald Moffitt represented the 94th district of the Illinois House. First elected to the statehouse in 1992, he had previously served as County Treasurer of Knox County been a schoolteacher and a farmer. Like GiaQuinta, he is a political moderate. Planned Parenthood gave him a support score of 38 percent, the AFL-CIO gave him a support score of 72 and NFIB rated him at 55 percent. Like GiaQuinta, his party label does not help describe his brand of politics.

When asked his position on Abortion, Moffitt felt that abortion should be legal in cases of incest, rape and health of the mother. He supports the death penalty, wants to see penalties strengthened for drug-related crimes, but wants to increase funding for teacher salaries, head start programs, and making college more affordable. On most economic issues, he supports slight tax increases, especially on education and health care issues. He supports the status quo or slight decreases on welfare generosity, and gas, alcohol, and cigarette taxes. On gun issues, he favors strict restrictions on issues of purchase and possession, but feels it is acceptable for citizens to carry concealed guns. Regarding welfare, he wants to see increased access to public transportation for welfare recipients, more money to be devoted to job training programs, and more TANF funds to extend to child care subsidies. On the other hand, he would like to see marriage promotion

programs for welfare recipients. While approving of limits on the punitive damages that can be awarded in medical malpractice lawsuits, he feels that patients should have the right to sue their HMOs in such cases. Moffitt is an interesting example of the conflicted lives that these moderate lawmakers live – splitting hairs and being on both sides of issues.

Moffitt won his election with a comfortable 44 percent margin of victory. Of the $75,000 he raised, 39 percent came from Business and an incredible 43 percent came from labor. He is one of the few examples, from either party, who actually received a greater percentage of their money from labor than business. In 2000, Gore squeaked out a victory in Moffitt's district winning with 50.3 percent of the vote. Like GiaQuinta, Moffitt's district is religiously quite diverse with mainline Protestants making up 47 percent of the district and Catholics making up 31 percent. Racially, the district is 90 percent White and 8 percent Black. Like the other case studies, Maffitt's district is made up primarily of service workers (65 percent) and a good number of manufacturing workers (24 percent). Moffitt served in the minority in the Illinois House with is a professional legislature.

Taken together these case studies do two things. First, they are one final piece of face validation for the roll call ideology scores. The *Project Vote Smart* surveys, which get more detailed information regarding legislator ideology are congruent with the percent support scores of the various groups. Second, and more importantly, these case studies offer clues into the causes of legislative voting. The moderates were from districts that are more competitive. The ideological extremists were from much more homogeneous districts than the moderates. Interest group money, while in terms of

amount appears to relate to levels of political competition, as a sector percent appears to predict legislative extremism.

Summary

This chapter outlines the methods used to operationalize the components of responsiveness in state legislatures and introduced the legislators that make up my case studies. The roll call behavior of legislators and the opinion characteristics of the districts proved the most difficult to operationalize. I show interest group scorecards to be useful measures of legislative roll call activity in this study for two reasons. First, they allow roll call activity to be differentiated based on issue type. This is a theoretically important distinction that is difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at using NOMINATE scores. Second, they exclude from the analysis roll calls on less salient issues. While this likely leads to an overestimation of overall polarization in the chambers, it does set the bar higher for studies of responsiveness. Finding district congruence on these most contentious issues eliminates false levels of congruence likely found through the use of NOMINATE scores that include so many procedural and non-controversial votes.

This study expands upon the most recent district level opinion estimation techniques and takes advantage of a relatively new state campaign finance resource that is the *Institute for Money in State Politics*. In addition, I utilize Graphic Information Systems (GIS) to apply many previously unavailable variables to the study of responsiveness.

Having conducted a descriptive account of the components of responsiveness, I now move on to systematically test my research questions. What accounts for the distribution of economic and social roll call liberalism discussed at the beginning of this

chapter? What accounts for legislative extremism? Under what circumstances will lawmakers be responsive to their various constituencies? What effect does polarization have on the operation of state legislatures? The rest of the study will seek answers to these questions.

Appendix to Chapter 3

Other Variables Used in the Study

Chamber Competition: Chamber competition is the absolute value of the percent of a legislator's chamber that is Democratic minus the percent Republican and comes from the session immediately preceding the one for which the interest group ratings of legislators is available.

Democratic State Legislator: This measure comes from the official election results from each state, which list the party affiliation of candidates.

Divided/Unitary Government: A state with divided government is defined as any state where different parties control one of the following institutions: the governorship, the lower house, or the upper house. Unitary government is defined as any state where one party controls all of the said institutions (this can be either Democratic or Republican unitary government). This information was collected from the session immediately preceding the one for which the interest group ratings of legislators is available.

Enactments Per Member: The number of bills enacted in the 2000 session, per member. If the legislature meets biannually, the data may be from 1999. This data comes from *The Book of the States*.

Female Legislator: This dummy measure was deduced when possible from the first name of each legislator. When an analysis of the legislator's first name did not work, Internet searches were done on the legislators name until two gender specific (his, her) results were found.

First Term Legislator: This measure indicates that a legislator was serving their first term in the session immediately preceding the one for which the interest group ratings of

legislators is available. This measure comes from the Institute for Money in State Politics.

Governor Power Index: Governor's Power rating is collected from *CQ's State Factfinder 2002*. The ranking is based on six measures of institutional power – tenure, appointment power, the number of other statewide elected officials, budget power, veto power, and party control. This measure is regularly updated based on an on-going study by Thad Beyle of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Interest Group Density: This is the number of registered interest groups in the states in 1990. This measure comes from Gray and Lowery (2000).

Bill Introductions Per Member: The number of bills introduced in the 2000 session, per member. If the legislature meets biannually this data may come from 1999. This data comes from *The Book of the States.*

Legislative Professionalism: I use the Squire (1992) index of state legislative professionalism. This index measures session length, staff size, and legislative salary.

Lower House: This control indicates a legislator works in the lower house of their state legislature.

Party Leader: Party leaders are those who occupied one of the following positions within their chamber in the session for which I collected the interest group ratings of legislators: Speaker of the House, House Majority Leader, House Minority Leader; President of the Senate, President Pro Tem of the Senate, Senate Majority Leader, Senate Minority Leader.

Percent Minority: For each chamber, the percent of legislators who are minorities. Data collected for the *U.S. Statistical Abstract*.

Percent Female: For each chamber, the percent of legislators who are women. Data collected for the *U.S. Statistical Abstract*.

Region: Each state is coded Northeast, Midwest, West, or South based on the U.S. Census coding for region. North-East states in my sample include: Connecticut, Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont; Mid-West states include: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin; Southern states include Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and West Virginia; and Western states include Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Stalemate: Stalemate is measured by dividing the number of bills introduced in each state by the number of bills enacted and subtracting that percent from 100, in 2000. This data comes from *The Book of the States*.

State Solvency: State solvency is collected from *CQ's State Factfinder 2004*. These data relate to the overall "net worth" of a state. It is the answer to the question: "If each state were to cease operations tomorrow and pay off all debts, how much money would be left over?" This measure comes from a 2000 study by State Policy Research, Inc.

Chapter 4: Roll Call Ideology in State Legislatures

This chapter analyzes the roll call ideology of state legislators. Why are some legislators extremely liberal, some moderate, and others extremely conservative in their roll call ideology? Some legislators in New York voted to increase penalties for those committing a crime determined to be a "hate crime" while others voted against this legislation. The same can be said of legislation on partial birth abortion and assisted suicide in Maine, as well as corporate responsibility for paying health insurance in Iowa, and raising the minimum wage in North Dakota, to name but a few examples. What explains this behavior?

In the first section of this chapter I present an analysis of the primary dependent variables – the economic and social roll call ideology of state legislators. Drawing on the literature and theory presented in Chapters 1 and 2, the second section sets up models that help explain legislative roll call ideology. The third section includes a presentation and discussion of the results. The fourth section presents the expectations and analysis of the effects that different levels of electoral competition and different levels of legislative professionalism have on economic and social roll call liberalism. Finally, a summary discussion ties the four components of the chapter together.

The Distribution of Economic and Social Roll Call Liberalism

As discussed, this study uses the scorecards of various watchdog groups to approximate legislative roll call ideology. In the case of economic policy, the groups include the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the Chamber of Commerce (COC), and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial

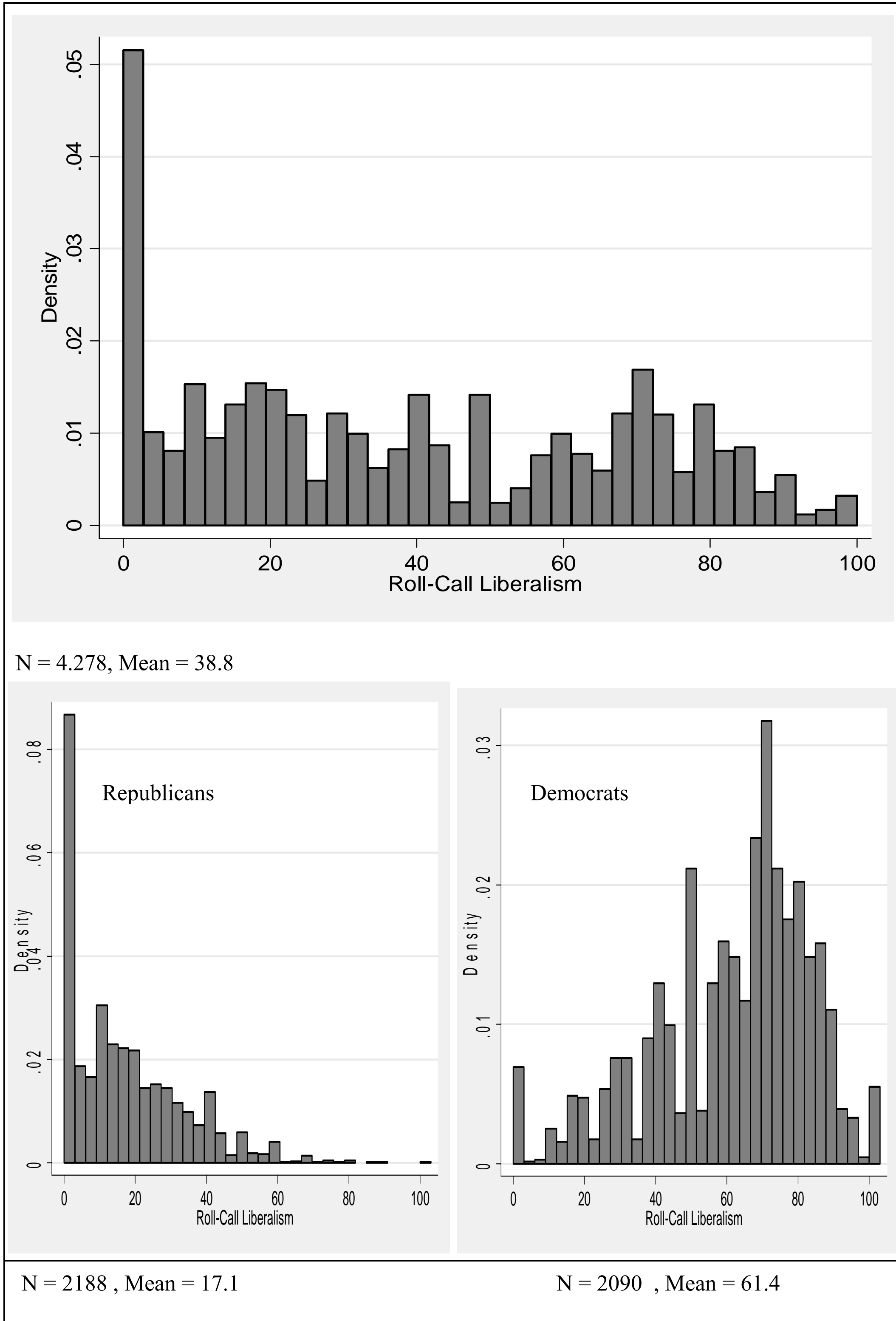
Organizations (AFL-CIO). To capture legislative ideology on social policy, the groups include state chapters of Right to Life (RTL), the National Association of Reproductive Rights and Liberties (NARAL), Planned Parenthood (PP), and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

These groups assign each legislator a support score with a range from 0 to 100 percent based on roll call votes of interest to the groups. I adjust the scorecards to point in a liberal direction, and their resulting mean reflects each legislator's economic and social roll call liberalism on a scale from 0 to 100 percent. For a full discussion of these measures, including tests of their validity, see Chapter 3.

The Distribution of Economic Roll Call Liberalism

What does the distribution of economic roll call liberalism look like? Overall, state legislatures are not hotbeds of economic liberalism. Of the 4,278 state legislators included in this study – from 30 different states – the average economic roll call liberalism of state legislators is 39 percent (see Figure 4.1). An impressive 13 percent of legislators have a 0 percent liberal (or 100 percent conservative) rating, while only 1 percent of legislators are 100 percent liberal (or 0 percent conservative). This finding is consistent with a shifting in economic regimes over the past 30 years in which the New Deal coalition, which favored state intervention on economic matters, was to a certain extent replaced by a more conservative, laissez-faire, approach to economic policy.

Figure 4.1:
The Distribution of Economic Roll Call Liberalism among State Legislators



The parties still polarize significantly on economic issues despite a general conservatism among state legislators. Republican legislators average 17 percent liberal, whereas their Democratic colleagues average 61 percent liberal ($T=-75.5$, $p<.001$). Anchoring Republicans in the conservative direction are the 24 percent of Republican legislators with a perfect conservative (0 percent liberal) rating. Indeed 96 percent of Republican legislators have an economic roll call liberalism rating of less than 50 percent.

The Democrats exhibit much more variation in their economic roll call liberalism with an average score of 61 percent. Around 2 percent of Democratic legislators identify as pure conservative and 2 percent as pure liberals. Thirty percent of Democrats fall on or below the 50 percent liberal line, making almost one-third of Democratic legislators (in this sample) economic conservatives. This ideological diversity relates to longstanding regional divisions within the Democratic Party. Although the South increasingly has gone to Republican Party candidates in federal elections, the state legislatures still house a significant number of conservative Democratic legislators (Rhodes 2000). The average economic liberalism of Southern Democratic legislators is 50 percent compared to an average of 64 percent in all other regions. Given sufficient time, the realignment of the South will likely complete itself, but one would be mistaken in the assumption that circa 2000 all conservative Democrats in the South are extinct.

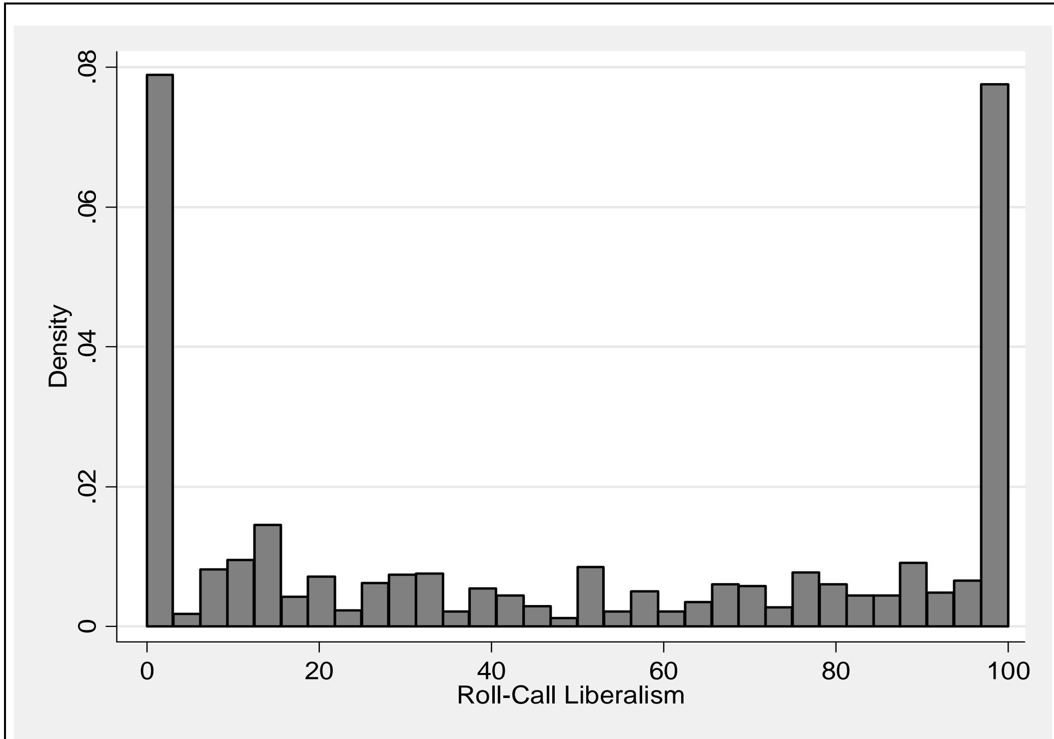
With that said, there should be no confusion over which party is more liberal and which is more conservative on economic issues. Even in Georgia, a state famous for its conservative Democrats, the Democratic legislators are a full 33 percent more liberal than their Republican colleagues. Although not perfectly polarized (due to some Democratic

moderation outside of metropolitan areas) the legislators of the two parties are clearly oriented towards opposite ideological extremes.

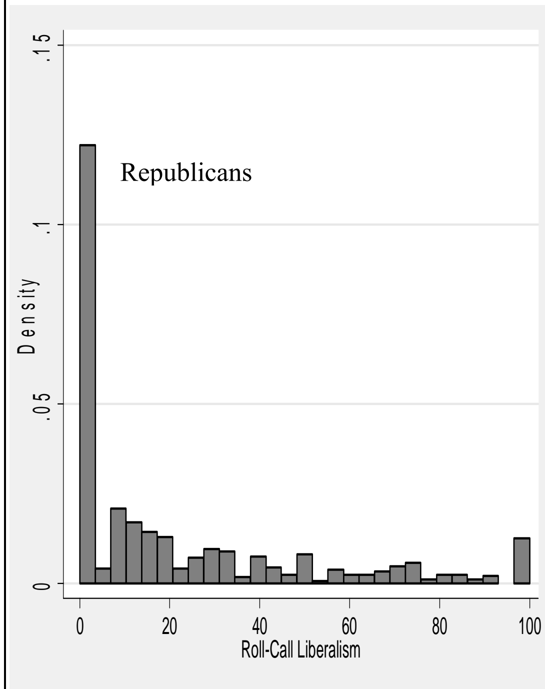
The Distribution of Social Roll Call Liberalism

While state legislators show signs of polarization on economic issues along party lines, there is no doubt of their strong polarization of social issues (see Figure 4.2). Of the 1,655 state legislators – from 13 states –for which enough data was available to measure ideology on social issues, the average social roll call liberalism for state legislators is 49 percent. However, an impressive 43 percent of legislators are at one of the two ideological extremes. Twenty-two percent are perfectly conservative (0 percent liberal) and 21 percent are perfectly liberal (100 liberal).

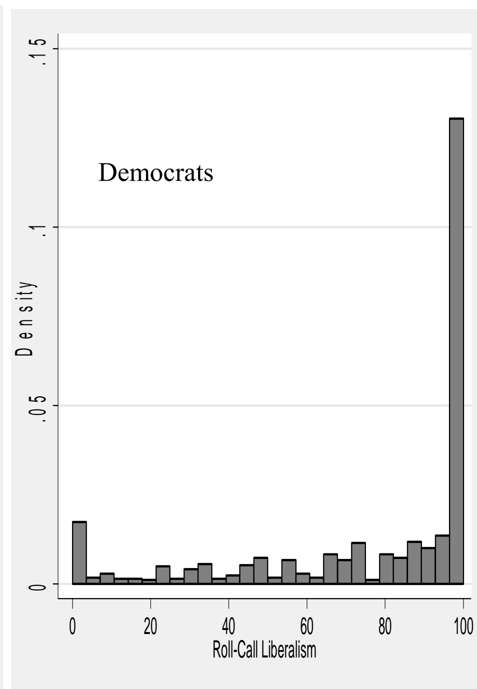
Figure 4.2:
The Distribution of Social Roll Call Liberalism among State Legislators



N= 1,655 Mean = 48.6



N = 805 , Mean = 22.0



N = 850 , Mean = 76.8

This polarization falls largely along party lines. Democratic legislators average 77 percent liberal in their social policy roll call liberalism and nearly 40 percent have a perfect 100 percent liberal rating. Their Republican colleagues average 22 percent liberal on social policy roll calls and 37 percent have a perfect 0 percent liberal (or 100 percent conservative) rating. This finding reinforces the popular view of some that, at least on social issues, the parties are engaged in a culture war (Hunter 1991; White 2003). On one side of this battle are the liberal Democrats who are supportive of abortion rights and gay rights. On the other side are conservative Republicans who view the struggle against abortion and gay rights as the front line in a larger battle against an increasingly immoral culture. How far down into the general population this chasm extends is a matter of debate (see Fiorina 2005), but at least at the level of state legislatures the culture wars are alive and well.

The Correlates of Economic and Social Roll Call Liberalism

District Opinion and Roll Call Ideology

The distributions of roll call liberalism indicate that party is a primary indicator of roll call liberalism. What else explains variation in roll call liberalism? The most prominent explanation, in both the literature and the preceding case studies, and perhaps the most critical to studies of democracy, relates to district preferences. Legislators, either through being "of their districts," or through a concerted effort to be their districts delegates, cast votes based on the wishes of those they represent.

Is the relationship between lawmaker and district the same on both economic and social policy issues? For the several reasons discussed in Chapter 2, this relationship may be stronger on social as opposed to economic issues. I specified five reasons social issues are likely to produce more responsiveness than economic issues. First, like civil rights in the 1960s (Miller and Stokes 1963), cultural issues currently are the most salient among the public. Second, these issues evoke the most controversy, leading legislators to at least seek out their district's opinion and understand the possible consequences of "jumping ship" with their district (Kingdon 1973). Third, these issues tend to cluster together more easily in the minds of constituents (Ingram, Laney, McCain. 1980) making legislators more sensitive to district opinion. Fourth, these issues do not lend themselves toward moderation or bargaining. Legislators cannot take a "middle of the road" position the way they can on economic issues. Views towards abortion, gay marriage, and flag burning, are largely black and white.[28] And as the distribution of social roll call ideology suggests, many more legislators gravitate to one side or the other. Because such a vast distance exists between legislators, it becomes unlikely that a conservative district would have anything but a conservative legislator on social issues and vice versa because not only would that legislator be liberal, he or she would likely be very liberal. Finally, social issues are, to a certain extent, "easy." No one needs a great deal of knowledge to have opinions on issues like abortion and gay rights. Because nearly everyone has an opinion on these issues, it makes sense that lawmakers pay particular attention to these potentially volatile issue positions held by their constituents. On the other hand, economic issues are

[28] Some might argue that abortion in cases of incest and rape would be a compromise, but that really is still a pro-life position.

relatively “hard.” People generally do not have a visceral response to specific issues regarding economic policy. Of course they do have an instinctive reaction to the overall state of the economy – they want it to be strong – but on particular economic issues over which legislators must decide, both the number of constituents with an opinion is likely smaller, and the strength of those opinions weaker than on social issues.

This observation is not entirely new. Thomas Frank (2004) does a case study of Kansas politics arguing that even though citizens of Kansas are natural allies of the Democratic Party based on economic issues, they tend not to support Democratic candidates based solely on an aversion to liberal positions on social issues. A similar case study could probably be done of a state like Oregon, where citizen’s economic self-interest may be with the Republican Party, but their pro-choice sentiments lead them to support Democratic Party candidates.

To test this proposition, district ideology is included in both economic and social models. To measure district ideology, I use the method developed by Ardoin and Garand (2003) (See Chapter 3 for a discussion of this method).

Interest Group Money and Roll Call Ideology

Donations from interest groups may relate to the votes that lawmakers cast. Are interest group donations equally important on both economic and social roll call votes? Because economic issues are often dealt with under the radar screen of public attention, the views of interest groups are expected to be more influential on economic as opposed to social issues. This expectation is tied to the supposition that districts are more attuned to social issues. If this is true, it is also likely that relatively small groups of the organized can effect these less salient issues. To test this hypothesis, the receipts of legislators from

business and the receipts of legislators from labor (as a percent of their overall contributions) are included in the economic model and the receipts from conservative and liberal ideological/single issue groups are included in the social roll call model.[29]

Other Explanations for Roll Call Ideology

In addition to these key expectations, several control variables are included. A rich research tradition shows that female legislators are overall more liberal on their roll call votes when compared to their male colleagues (Frankovic 1977, Gehlen 1977, Welch 1985, Thomas 1989). Furthermore, research finds women are more likely to take the lead on legislative issues related to women, children and the family (Gehlen 1977, Mezey 1978, Thomas 1991, and Thomas and Welch 1991). Given these findings, I expect to find female legislators to be more liberal than their male colleagues on economic and especially social roll call votes.

The standing of a member within their party may relate to their roll call activity. Party leaders are likely to be ideologically out in front of other members with Democratic leaders being more liberal and Republican leaders being more conservative than rank-and-file members. I test this proposition more carefully in the next chapter, but include it here as a relevant control. Electoral competitiveness and professionalism of the legislature are included in the models. These variables, when interacted with the main

[29] Because of the vast differences that exist in the amounts of money these groups donate to candidates, from state to state, some standardization method is required. These models use group contributions as a percent of overall contributions to gauge the relative dependence that various legislators place on the various groups. Another standardization method is the amount money per constituent. Both measures produce similar findings.

variables of interest will provide a test of the contextual hypotheses in the next section. A control is also included for South because of the unusually high levels of conservatism in this region. Unfortunately, not enough social scorecards were available from the South to include that region in the social policy model.

Because this study includes legislators from both the upper and the lower chambers of state legislatures, a dummy control is included for lower chamber. Finally, a control is included for the various years of the scorecards included in the study. As such, a dummy is included for scoring year 1999 and 2000, keeping 1998 as the base for comparison. No scorecards from social policy groups were available in 1999 so that variable is not included in the social policy model.

Because the distribution of the dependent variable has a defined minimum (0) and a defined maximum (100), and because cases tend to congregate at these polls (especially on social roll call liberalism), these models are run using Interval Regression. Interval Regression provides Tobit Coefficients, but unlike Tobit, Interval Regression allows for the use of robust standard errors and clustering (in this case by state) to adjust for heteroskedasticity across states and contemporaneous correlations within states.[30]

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[30] To test for multi-collinearity, I conducted a VIF test on an OLS version of the models. None of the independent variables had a VIF score greater than 1.8 - indicating no serious multi-collinearity problems. Even though relatively few cases congregated at the upper limit of the distribution on the economic roll call liberalism, both the lower and upper extremes (0 and 100) were censored in the Interval Regression model. This was done because the distribution of Social Policy Roll call Liberalism requires both sides to be censored, and to provide reliable comparisons between the chapters, the same method needed to be used on each. Running the model with only a lower limit censor, however, produces nearly identical results. In addition, the same variables turn out to be significant using an OLS version of the model.

The Causes of Economic and Social Roll Call Liberalism

As expected, the party identification of state legislators is fundamental to understanding legislator's economic and social roll call liberalism (see Table 4.1). Even when controlling for the other variables, the political parties clearly act to aggregate ideological orientations – with conservative legislators being largely members of the Republican Party and liberal legislators being mostly members of the Democratic Party. As the distributions suggest, party membership, although significant in both the economic and social models, appears to be particularly important to explaining roll call liberalism on social issues.

Table 4.1:
Economic and Social Roll Call Liberalism among State Legislators

	Economic Roll Call Liberalism		Social Roll Call Liberalism	
	β (se)	P >|z|	β (se)	P >|z|
Democratic State Legislator	.412 (.004)	.001	.665 (.180)	.001
District Liberalism	.174 (.110)	.058	.744 (.232)	.001
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.125 (.040)	.001	--	--
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.282 (.098)	.002	--	--
Percent of Receipts from Conservative Social Groups	--	--	-.115 (.130)	.187
Percent of Receipts from Liberal Social Groups	--	--	.426 (.121)	.001
Control Variables:				
Democratic Leader	.068 (.019)	.001	.208 (.084)	.007
Republican Leader	-.028 (.023)	.111	.047 (.086)	.291
Female Legislator	.029 (.014)	.018	.143 (.058)	.007
Lower Chamber of State Legislature	-.024 (.018)	.089	.003 (.050)	.474
Electoral Margin of District	.001 (.001)	.096	.001 (.001)	.001
Professionalism of Chamber	-.045 (.096)	.321	-.113 (.211)	.297
South	-.052 (.062)	.202	--	--
Scoring Year 2000	.093 (.108)	.194	-.003 (.006)	.334
Scoring Year 1999	.001 (.116)	.500	--	--
Constant	.024 (.137)	.432	-.430 (.136)	.001
Wald Chi-Square	331.43	Prob. > .001	102.99	Prob. > .001
N	4140		1602	

Note: Interval Regression Coefficients with robust standard errors adjusted for clustering by state. No observations fitting criteria = "--". One tailed significance tests.

The influence of district ideology on legislative roll call liberalism is perhaps the most interesting finding in this chapter. As expected, legislators are extremely sensitive to their district's ideology on social issues, but much less so on economic issues. In the economic roll call model, the district ideology coefficient just misses the $p > .05$ level necessary to achieve statistical significance, whereas on social roll calls the coefficient easily reaches the $p > .001$ level of significance. On social issues, legislators do their best to match up with their districts. This happens in one of two ways. Either they are so much like their districts they unconsciously represent their district's social predispositions or they know that their districts understand these issues, and may hold them accountable for their stances, and thus go out of their way to appease their constituents. Either way, legislators are significantly more responsive to their districts on social issues as opposed to economic issues.[31]

Campaign receipts from both business and labor significantly relate to economic roll call liberalism in the expected directions. On social issues, only liberal social group money reaches significance. Democratic leaders appear to be more liberal than other

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[31] To make sure that the differences between the economic and social models were not just a function of separate samples, a separate analysis was conducted that only included the 1,588 for which both an economic and a social roll call liberalism measure was available for each legislator. The findings between this limited sample and the larger (yet uneven) sample presented in the tables are nearly identical with none of the primary independent variable either falling out of or gaining significance based on choice of sample.

members are, holding all else constant. Consistent with previous research, female legislators are significantly more liberal than are their male colleagues.[32]

Interpreting coefficients is not straightforward with Interval Regression. To interpret the effects of the various independent variables on the predicted change of the dependent variable, the predicted estimates are calculated for all the statistically significant variables in Table 4.1. By holding all other variables constant and manipulating the statistically significant independent variables, their effect on roll call liberalism is observed. For both the economic roll call model and the social roll-call model, all continuous variables are set at their means, and for binary variables, legislators are from the lower house, male, not from the South, and the scorecard year is 2000.

The effect of party clearly maintains its importance in the economic roll call model, even when controlling for other variables (see Table 4.2). Democrats have an estimated economic roll call liberalism of 59.3 percent while Republicans have an estimated roll call liberalism of 17.6 percent. Since it is obvious that party is fundamental to understanding economic roll call voting, the other significant variables are analyzed twice, once while holding the model constant for Democrats and once holding it constant for Republicans.

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[32] This analysis was also run separately for each party to make sure the relationships were not fundamentally different based on party. Concerning the most important variables (district, Party, Money), this turned out not to be the case. Notable differences included: party leaders had more of an effect on Democrats, business and labor money affected Democrats, only labor money affected Republicans (business just missed significance). In the social policy models the only notable difference was that for Democrats party leaders were more influential than they were for Republicans.

Table 4.2:
Predicted Probabilities for Economic Roll Call Liberalism

	Predicted Roll Call Liberalism
Party	
Democratic Legislators	59.3
Republican Legislators	17.6

	Democrats	Republicans
Receipts from Business		
Max (100)	50.7	9.1
+1 sd (D=.64, R=.77)	55.2	11.9
Mean (D=39.3, R=.52)	58.3	15.0
-1 sd (D=.14, R=.27)	61.4	18.2
Min (0)	63.2	21.5
Receipts from Labor		
Max (D=100, R=.81)	85.5	38.5
+1 sd (D=.25, R=.10)	64.3	18.5
Mean (D=.09.3, R=.03)	60.5	16.5
-1 sd (D=0.4, R=0)	57.4	15.7
Min (0)	57.4	15.7
Party Leader		
Leader	66.1	14.9
Rank and File	59.3	17.6
Gender		
Female	62.2	20.5
Male	59.3	17.6

Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 4.1. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, legislators are not leaders, from the lower house, male, not from the South, and the scoring year is 2000.

Labor and business money has a substantively significant effect on economic roll call liberalism for Democratic and Republican legislators. A one standard deviation increase in donations from business groups decreases the roll call liberalism of legislators by 3 percent. Labor contributions have more of an effect on Democrats. A one standard deviation increase in labor contributions nets a 4 percent increase in economic roll call liberalism for Democrats and a 2 percent increase for Republicans. Over the entire range of labor contributions, from lowest to highest, the increase for democrats is nearly 30 percent and the increase for Republicans is just over 20 percent. The labor money effect is likely greater on Democrats, while the business money effect is about equal between the parties, because business money gets more evenly distributed than labor contributions. Although statistically significant, the substantive difference between female and male legislators and party leaders versus rank-and-file members on economic roll call votes is quite modest.

Party is even more influential in the social roll call model. The change of party from Republican to Democrat produces almost a 67 percent increase in social roll call liberalism. Thus, even when controlling for the other variables, the partisan polarization of state legislators on social issues could not be much larger. This is perfectly reasonable given the greater level of polarization on social as opposed to economic issues.

Table 4.3:
Predicted Probabilities for Social Roll Call Liberalism

	Predicted Roll Call Liberalism
Party	
Democratic Legislators	79.1
Republican Legislators	12.5

	Democrats	Republicans
District Liberalism		
Max (D=100, R=.94)	100	30.5
+1 sd (D=.74, R=.67)	85.9	14.9
Mean (D=.59, R=.53)	77.7	7.4
-1 sd (D=.44, R=.39)	69.5	0
Min (D=.07, R=0)	47.9	0
Percent of Receipts from Liberal Social Groups		
Max (87.6)	100	--
+1 sd (6.3)	100	--
Mean (1.5)	82.8	--
-1 sd (0)	76.4	--
Min (0)	76.4	--
Party Leader		
Leader	99.9	17.3
Rank and File	79.1	12.5
Gender		
Female	93.4	26.8
Male	79.1	12.5

Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 4.1 (Column 2). Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, legislators are from the lower house, not party leaders, male, and the scoring year is 2000. No predicted estimates can be predicted for the effect of liberal social group money on Republican roll call liberalism because of the method used to estimate amounts of social group money donated to candidates (see Chapter 3).

District ideology has impressive effects on legislator's social roll call liberalism. A Democratic legislator representing a 100 percent liberal district has a social roll call liberalism of 100 percent, whereas a Democratic legislator from the most conservative democratic district yields a social roll call liberalism of only 48 percent. A Democratic legislator moving from one standard deviation below to one standard deviation above the mean yields a 16 percent increase in social roll call liberalism. For Republicans, district ideology has a slightly different effect. Republican legislators from the most liberal republican district (95 percent liberal) has a predicted social roll call liberalism of 31 percent while those with districts one standard deviation or less below the mean have a predicted social roll call liberalism of 0 percent.

The effect of liberal social group money is felt at the margins. A Democratic legislator at the mean level of receipts from liberal social groups has a predicted roll call liberalism of 83 percent. A one standard deviation increase above the mean results in a perfectly liberal at 100 percent; one standard deviation below the mean decreases a legislative liberalism to 76 percent.

Democratic men are nearly 79 percent liberal in their social roll call voting, while Democratic women are nearly 93 percent liberal. Likewise, Republican men are nearly 12 percent more conservative than Republican women (13 percent to 27 percent liberal respectively). As opposed to the modest effect that gender has on economic roll calls, it is both statistical and substantively meaningful on social roll calls. This finding has important implications for research on the gender gap. At the start of the 21st century few legislative differences exist between female and male legislators on economic issues. On

social issues, however, the gender gap is still a relevant concept in state legislative studies. Finally, Democratic Party leaders are 14 percent more liberal than other Democrats, holding all else constant, the effect of party leaders for Republicans is not significant.

These models do a good job of predicting the roll call liberalism for my various case studies. Currie's (D-IL) actual economic roll call liberalism was 81 percent and the economic roll call liberalism model predicted her to be a 75 percent liberal legislator. Her actual social roll call liberalism was a perfect 100 percent and she was actually predcted to 110 percent liberal. Being a Democrat took Currie onto the expected side of the distribution, and the her mix of business and labor contributions landed her slightly below her actual economic liberalism level. She received more business support (probably because she was a party leader) than the model would have predicted. The other case studies also predicted to within 15 points the actual social and economic roll call liberalism of the other three members. A close look shows that party and district liberalism land a legislator on the right side of the continuum and donations, electoral margin and gender account for the incremental adjustments.

Conditional Responsiveness

Under what conditions are legislators most likely to represent their district constituents, their parties, and/or their campaign supporters? As discussed in Chapter 2, certain environmental factors are likely to affect the relationship between legislators and their various constituencies. The environmental factors analyzed here are electoral competitiveness and legislative professionalism. As discussed, the relationship between

these contextual variables and legislators' parties, districts and campaign supporters is often times not clear.

As discussed at length in Chapter 2, electoral competitiveness likely conditions the relationship between all the actors and roll call responsiveness. The literature is inconclusive regarding the relationship between district ideology and legislative roll call ideology in competitive versus uncompetitive elections. It could be that legislators in competitive districts go out of their way to appease their constituents out of fear for their reelection – the "marginality thesis" (Stimson, Mackuen, and Erikson 1995). Conversely, it could be that legislators in safe, likely homogeneous, districts have an easier time being "of their districts" and unconsciously being very responsive – the "homogeneity thesis" (Miller 1964; Jones 1973). Whichever side of this argument proves correct has important implications for reformers who wish to adjust redistricting plans to facilitate greater competition.

Party influence may change based on the level of electoral uncertainty facing a member. Parties are ideologically charged units led by policy-motivated activists who seek to push a partisan agenda in Congress and state legislatures. As such, legislator deference to the party position is likely less common when they have to worry about their chances for reelection. On the other hand, legislators running in competitive elections do need the financial support of parties. It is possible that legislators must toe the party line in an effort to get these resources and hope that their constituency does not notice. More likely, however, parties likely give them leeway to pursue whatever agenda will get them reelected and help the party maintain it's seat count.

Similarly, interest groups may be better able to influence legislators in safe seats when a member has nothing to fear from district opinion. As explained in Chapter 2, Danzau and Munger (1986) show that policy outcomes depend on comparative advantages to legislators of constituents and groups. The amounts of money interest groups are able to offer members, versus the number of votes a legislators needs to win reelection, are carefully maximized. Legislators are more likely to support interest groups when they face minimal competition for the same reasons they align with their party – if left unchecked they will align themselves with more ideologically extreme actors. On the other hand, members running in competitive races have a greater need to raise campaign money. So, it is possible that, in an effort to increase their war chest, in order to persuade voters to support them, they may need to alienate their voters and grow more ideologically extreme.

Professionalism also conditions responsiveness. Legislators in professional legislatures may have the resources at their disposal to be particularly responsive to their districts, or perhaps as term limits supporters suggest, a chasm exists between professional careerist legislators and their constituents that does not exist between amateur legislators and their constituents.

Regarding the effect of party in professional versus amateur legislatures, the direction of the relationship is not entirely clear. The traditional thinking holds that legislators in amateur legislatures do not have the individual capacity they need and turn to the parties for help (Hershey and Beck 2003). It is also possible, however, that because members of professional legislatures are more career (legislative career) focused, they will more readily toe the party line. Furthermore, states with professional legislatures

have stronger party organizations which are known to engage in more rigorous candidate recruitment (Hershey and Beck 2003), likely finding future legislators who are more attracted to the ideological battles that define professional legislatures.

The relationship between group contributions and roll calls is also likely conditioned by levels of legislative professionalism. Because professional legislatures have more access points for interest groups to make contact with legislators and because legislators may be more likely to develop long-standing relationships with these groups, legislators in professional state legislatures may be more receptive to pressure from labor and business groups. On the other hand, legislators in amateur legislatures have less staff to help with legislating and perhaps these groups' efforts, in concert with their campaign contributions, fill this expertise void and create a codependence between group and legislator. [33]

The Contextual Effect of Electoral Competition

The only primary independent variable (of party, district ideology, business money, labor money) that significantly influences economic roll call liberalism in competitive districts is party affiliation.[34] All four of the primary independent variables, however, help explain economic roll call liberalism in uncompetitive districts. So the

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[33] Closely tied to my discussion of professionalism is the issue of term limits. I considered included controls in my models for states with term limits but decided against it. Since my study includes data from 1998-2000, many states that enacted term limits had not yet implemented them; these include AZ, CO, MI, ID, MO, MT, OR, UT and WY. The only states to have implemented their term limits before 1998 were CA and ME.

[34] Competitive districts are those in which the preceding election was decided by 10 percentage points or less (between the first place and second place finisher).

question becomes, are there significant differences between the effect of these variables in uncompetitive versus competitive races? A close look at the party and district liberalism coefficients reveals that both, respectively, work in nearly the same way in both competitive and uncompetitive districts. Support is not found for either the marginality thesis nor the homogeneity thesis, as responsiveness to district constituents on economic issues is the safe for under both contextual settings. Receipts from business and receipts from labor, however, have significantly greater effects in uncompetitive as opposed to competitive districts. These groups give money in support of their inside lobbying game and it appears to pay off. I will discuss this finding more while presenting the predicted probabilities which reveal the meaningful significance of these findings.

Table 4.4:
The Contextual Effect of Competitiveness on Roll Call Liberalism

	β (se)	P >|z|	P >|z| difference from slope for uncompetitive
Economic Roll Call Liberalism			
Competitive District			
Democratic State Legislator	.403 (.042)	.001	.308
District Liberalism	.110 (.170)	.170	.287
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.059 (.058)	.154	.045
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.072 (.101)	.238	.001
Uncompetitive District			
Democratic State Legislator	.420 (.038)	.001	--
District Liberalism	.188 (.109)	.043	--
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.137 (.037)	.001	--
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.378 (.080)	.001	--
Social Roll Call Liberalism			
Competitive District			
Democratic State Legislator	.711 (.068)	.001	.254
District Liberalism	.692 (.406)	.044	.452
Percent of Receipts from Conservative Social Groups	-.753 (.309)	.008	.020
Percent of Receipts from Liberal Social Groups	.763 (.258)	.002	.025
Uncompetitive District			
Democratic State Legislator	.663 (.031)	.001	--
District Liberalism	.743 (.164)	.001	--
Percent of Receipts from Conservative Social Groups	-.103 (.078)	.094	--
Percent of Receipts from Liberal Social Groups	.382 (.118)	.001	--

Note: Interval Regression Coefficients with robust standard errors adjusted for clustering by state. P-values for differences were computed based on models with interaction terms between the independent variables and a dummy representing the degree of electoral competitiveness The full model is included in the Appendix (Tables A4.1 and A4.2). One-tailed significance tests.

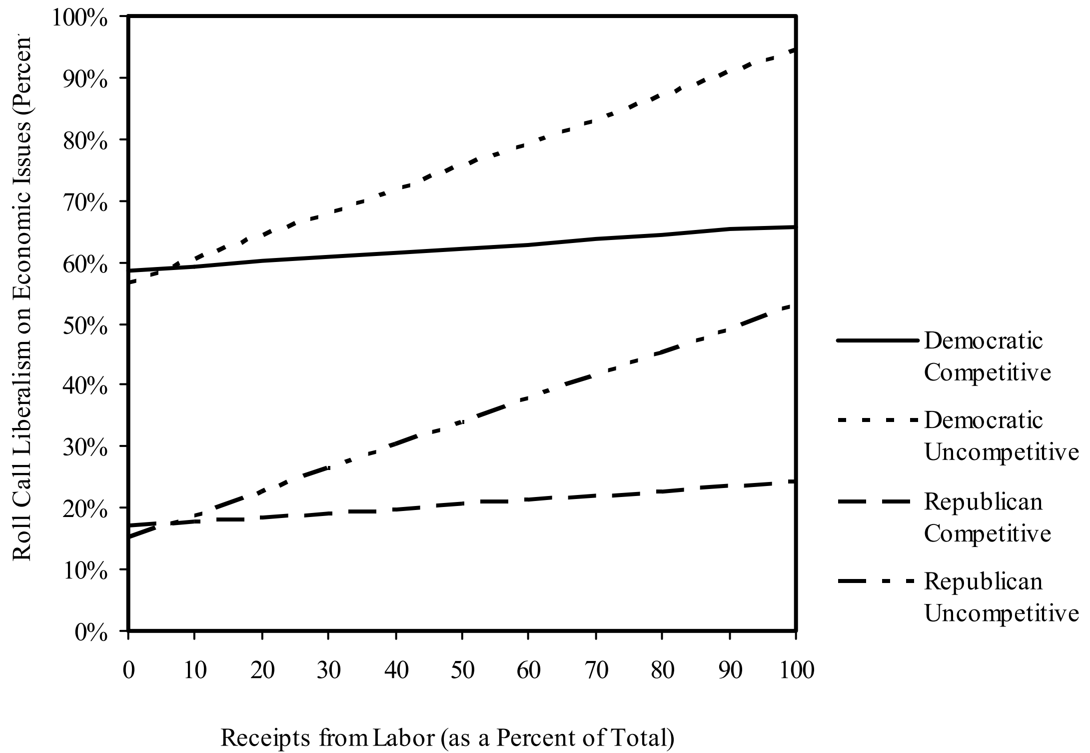
All of the primary independent variables significantly relate to social liberalism, regardless of level of electoral competition. As was the case with the economic policy model, only interest group donations produced significantly different results between competitive and uncompetitive districts. Before discussing the interesting interest group findings, I will spend some time discussing why party and district influence are not statistically different between competitive and uncompetitive districts.

The effect of district ideology is always stronger in uncompetitive districts, indicating that perhaps the homogeneity thesis is correct; however, the differences never reach levels of statistical significance. Thus, my results offer no strong evidence as to whether the marginality or homogeneity thesis is correct. When I run a version of this model with party and district liberalism interacted, within the interaction of competitiveness, the resulting party/district measure is positively, and significantly greater in uncompetitive districts. The model, however, is far from parsimonious and difficult to present. It works because district and party correlate to a greater extent in uncompetitive districts (competitive r=-.013, uncompetitive r=.251). Thus, district and party forces align in safe districts and influence legislative voting. In competitive districts, they do not align and produce insignificant results. This result supports the "homogeneity thesis" but to get the result, the effect of party and district must be interacted.

A more clearcut, and quite interesting, story concerns the contextual effect of competitiveness on the impact that contributions have on legislators' roll call votes. On economic issues, business and labor groups give money to uncompetitive legislators,

pursuing an inside strategy. On social issues, ideological groups give to competitive candidates, likely hoping to change the makeup of the legislatures. Predicted estimates, in the form of line graphs, display the substantive significance of the differences of labor and business contributions on economic roll call liberalism based on the presence of electoral competitiveness (see Figure 4.3). Legislators in competitive districts are not influenced by business and labor money. Regardless of how much money they receive from labor, Democrats running in competitive races hover around 60 percent liberal, while similarly competitive Republicans hover around 20 percent liberal.

Figure 4.3:
Labor Money and Economic Roll Call Liberalism by Competitiveness

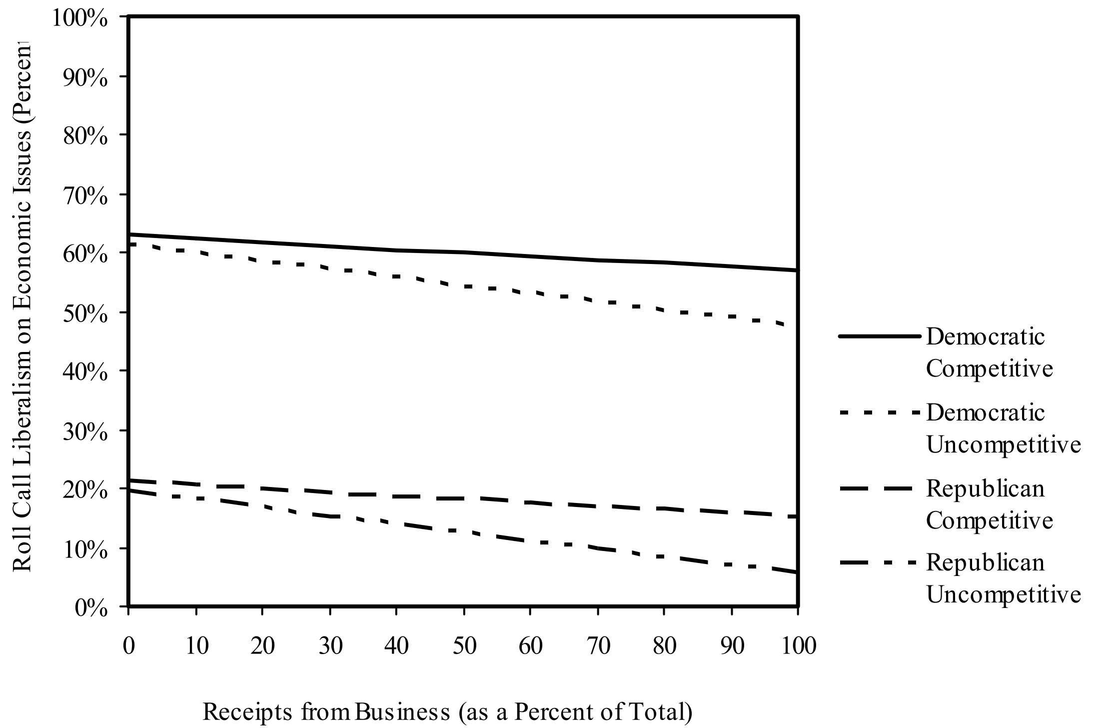


Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 4.4. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, the legislator is from the lower house, not a party leader, male, not from the South, and the scoring year is 2000.

When races are uncompetitive, however, the influence of labor money becomes much more pronounced. Democrats with 0 percent of their receipts from labor are about 60 percent liberal, but Democrats with 100 percent of their receipts from labor are around 95 percent liberal. Republicans experience a similar 35 percent increase. Apparently labor gets the biggest "bang for their buck" when their donation strategy supplements their inside activities. Francia et al. (2003) find that donors fall into three broad categories based on their reason for contributing – investors, ideologues and intimates. The findings suggest that labor and business interests largely follow an "investment" strategy where the donors care most about material incentives like whether or not the legislator is friendly to their interests. Thus, their donations are targeted in a way that maximizes their access to key members.

The impact of business money in competitive versus uncompetitive races, although statistically different, is somewhat less meaningfully in its change. For business groups to increase a legislator's economic roll call liberalism by 10 percent, they must completely fund a candidate in uncompetitive races. This is an expensive proposition given the average receipts for candidates in uncompetitive races (in this sample) amounted to approximately $65,000 in 1998.

Figure 4.4:
Business Money and Economic Roll Call Liberalism by Competitiveness



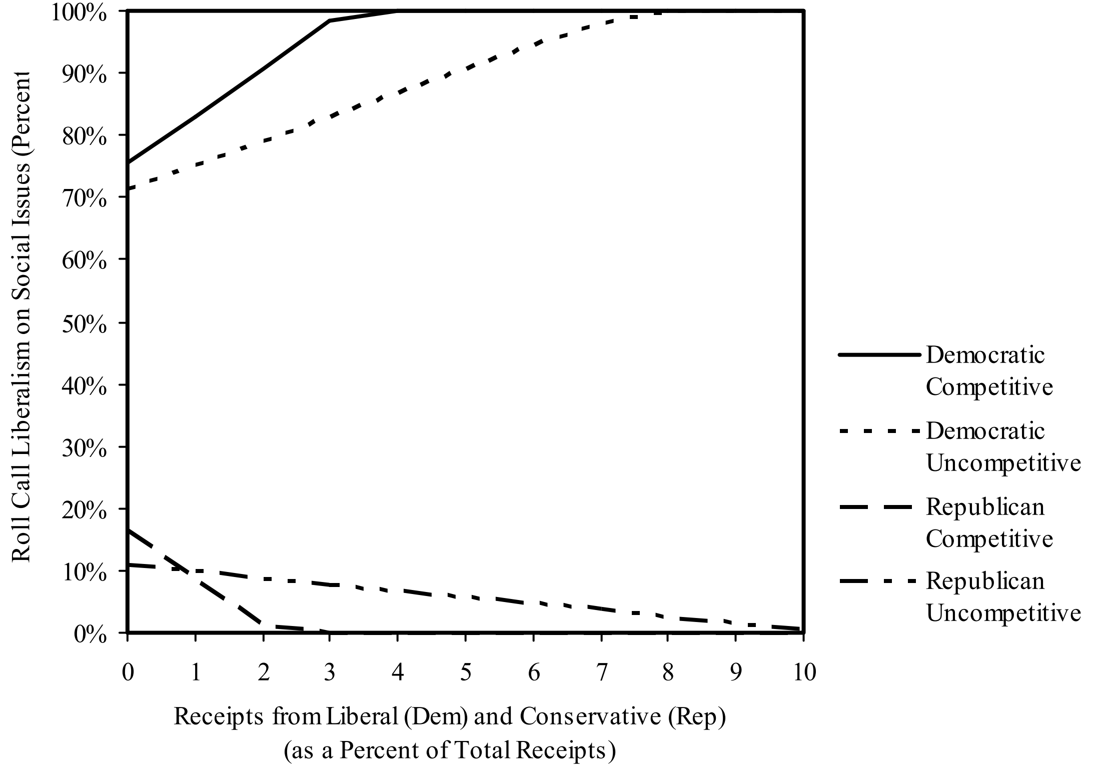
Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 4.4. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, the legislator is from the lower house, not party leaders, male, not from the South, and the scoring year is 2000.

On social issues, groups have the opposite effect. The greater amount of money goes to competitive races, and the effect of money on votes appears greatest in competitive races. Unlike labor and business group money, however, the amount of a candidate's war chest coming from social groups is much smaller. As such, the substantive impact of these contributions is less compelling. If a representative receives more than 10 percent of their total contributions from social issue groups (a feat that only 1.7 percent of legislators achieve) they are predicted to have a 100 percent liberal or 0 percent conservative score depending upon party.

These findings are extremely relevant for groups donating money to candidates. Economic interest groups should take some solace in the fact that their donations seem to be driving up support for their agenda among electorally safe legislators. Their "investment" strategy seems to be working. It would frustrate them to learn, however, that their donations to competitive members, the ones who are probably most anxious to receive their contributions, are not having an impact on their roll call votes.

Just the opposite is true for the social issue groups. They can take comfort in knowing that where their contributions are most needed, in competitive districts, legislators are responding to their electoral support with more friendly roll call votes. However, the social groups seem quite ineffectual in increasing support among safe incumbents. This finding supports the congressional literature that finds social groups to be most influential in the electoral arena, and quite amateur in their ability to support an inside lobby (Bruce 1988; Hertzke 1988; Hofrenning 1995; Rozell and Wilxox 1999; Green and Bigelow 2005).

Figure 4.5:
Liberal an Conservative Ideological Group Money and Social Roll Call Liberalism by Competitiveness



Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 4.4. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, the legislator is from the lower house, not party leaders, male, not from the South, and the scoring year is 2000.

The Contextual Effect of Legislative Professionalism

In states with professional legislatures, all four of the primary independent variables (district constituency, party, labor donations, business donations) significantly relate to economic roll call liberalism. In amateur legislatures, only party significantly relates to economic liberalism. Party and labor money are not significantly different between professional and amateur legislators on economic policy; however, the differences are significant for district ideology and business receipts.

Legislators in professional legislatures are significantly more responsive to their district ideology than legislators in amateur legislatures. Thus, responsiveness is more a function of legislative capacity, not a perceived closeness that term limits supporters cite as a virtue of amateur legislative institutions. Likewise, legislators are more responsive to their business supporters in professional as opposed to amateur legislatures. The argument that amateur legislators might look to interests to help fill the capacity gap does not hold up. Instead, professional legislatures that nurture long-term relationships between legislators and interest group supporters and which have many access points for groups to enter the legislative process are those most influenced by interest group donations.

Table 4.5:
The Contextual Effect of Professionalism on Roll Call Liberalism

	B (se)	P >|z|	P >|z| difference from slope for amateur
Economic Roll Call Liberalism			
Professional			
Democratic State Legislator	.420 (.048)	.001	.427
District Liberalism	.364 (.181)	.023	.038
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.185 (.047)	.001	.014
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.350 (.101)	.001	.253
Amateur			
Democratic State Legislator	.408 (.045)	.001	--
District Liberalism	-.080 (.188)	.336	--
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.024 (.023)	.149	--
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.227 (.155)	.072	--
Social Roll Call Liberalism			
Professional			
Democratic State Legislator	.737 (.031)	.001	.001
District Liberalism	.759 (.174)	.001	.133
Percent of Receipts from Conservative Social Groups	-.338 (.492)	.246	.001
Percent of Receipts from Liberal Social Groups	.398 (.156)	.006	.404
Amateur			
Democratic State Legislator	.405 (.052)	.001	--
District Liberalism	.367 (.321)	.133	--
Percent of Receipts from Conservative Social Groups	-.125 (.031)	.001	--
Percent of Receipts from Liberal Social Groups	.443 (.116)	.001	--

Note: Interval Regression Coefficients with robust standard errors adjusted for clustering by state. P-values for differences were computed based on models with interaction terms between the independent variables and a dummy representing professional/amateur The full model is included in the Appendix (Tables A4.3 and A4.4). One-tailed significance tests.

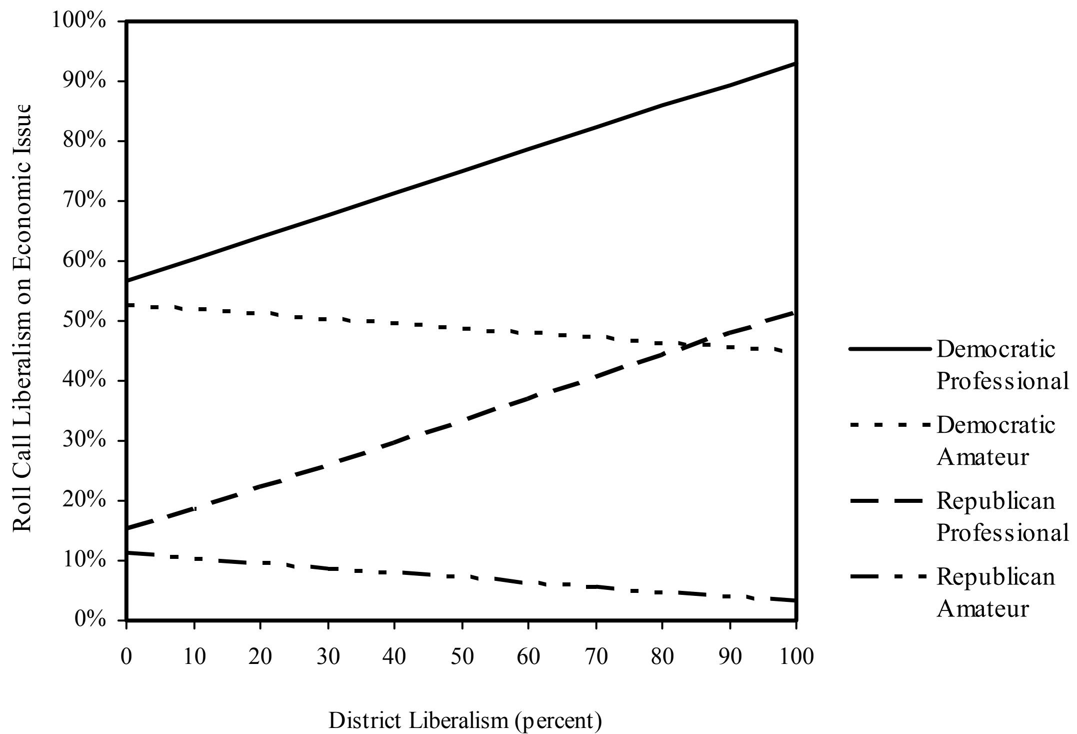
In both professional and amateur legislatures, Democratic lawmakers are significantly more liberal than their Republican colleagues. However, the influence of party is significantly greater in professional legislatures. This relates back to the greater partisan polarization on social issues as opposed to economic issues. Increasing district liberalism results in significantly greater social roll call liberalism for professional legislators, but not for amateur legislators. The difference between levels of professionalism, however, is not significant.

To elucidate the impact of these various groups on economic and social policy roll call liberalism, I again calculate predicted estimates for those variables that turned out to be significantly different legislators in professional and amateur legislatures. The impact of district ideology on economic roll call votes in professional legislatures is significantly different from its impact in amateur districts. A Democrat representing a perfectly conservative district has a 55 percent liberal score on their economic roll call vote regardless of the level of professionalism in their chamber. If the legislator represents a fully liberal district, however, a Democratic from a professional chamber is likely to be over 90 percent liberal whereas the same Democratic legislator in an unprofessional district is still only about 50 percent liberal. This 30 percent increase in economic roll call liberalism, based on change in party, is also evident amongst Republicans in professional legislatures.

This finding is interesting, given the fact that overall, district opinion matters so much more on social as opposed to economic issues. The lack of constituency responsiveness on economic issues, however, appears in part to be a function of a lack of

legislative professionalism. Within professional states, legislators are able to gain a grasp of their districts' wants/needs, even on economic issues, and deliver. This should not take away, however, from the larger point that constituency responsiveness is greater on social issues. Going back to Table 4.5, the coefficient for district liberalism on social roll call liberalism is greater for legislators in both professional and amateur districts, than it is in either of the economic roll call models. The difference between the effect of district opinion on legislators in professional and amateur states, however, is only significantly different in the economic roll call models. Essentially, legislators in professional states are about as responsive to their districts on economic roll calls as are legislators to their districts on social policy roll calls in amateur states.

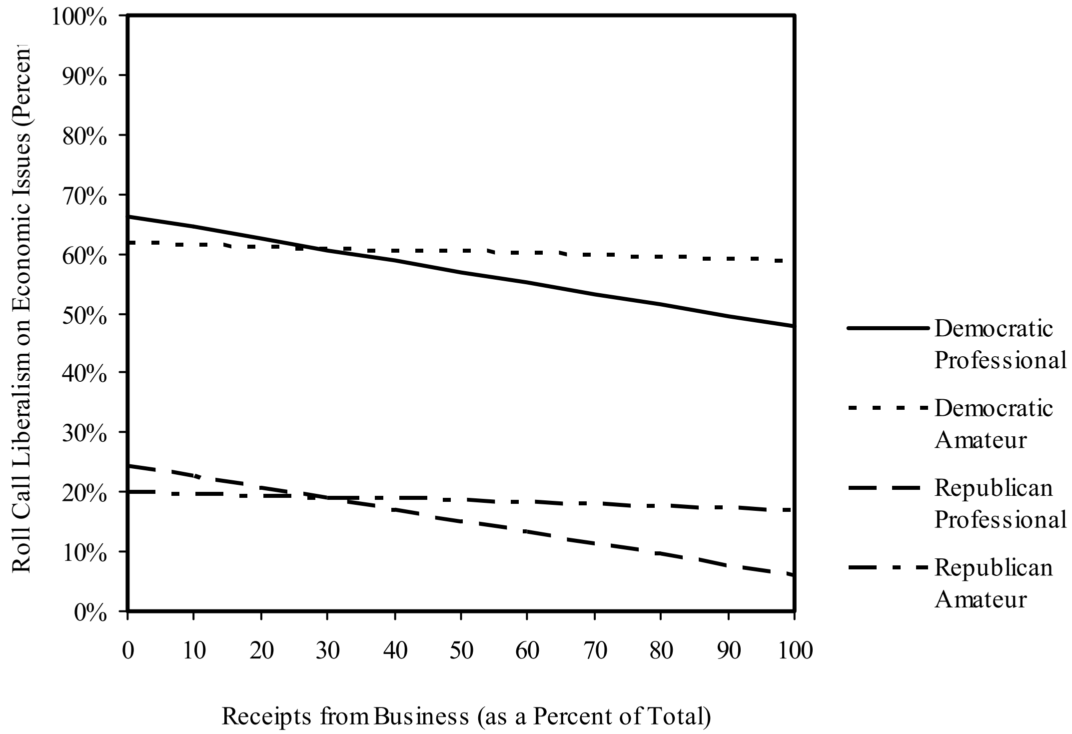
Figure 4.6:
District Ideology and Economic Roll Call Liberalism by Legislative Professionalism



Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 4.5. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, the legislator is from the lower house, not party leaders, male, not from the South, and the scoring year is 2000.

The impact of business money on economic roll call liberalism is significantly different between professional and amateur legislatures but the substantive differences are small. When a legislator receives all of their money from business, they grow about 10 percent more conservative in professional legislatures. In amateur legislatures, they become about 2 percent more conservative. For practical purposes, this 10 percent figure is inflated because only 2 legislators in the study were actually completely funded by business. A more realistic range is to look between 25 percent and 75 percent business funding. The decrease in economic roll call liberalism between these two points is about 5 percent.

Figure 4.7:
Business Money and Economic Roll Call Liberalism by Legislative Professionalism

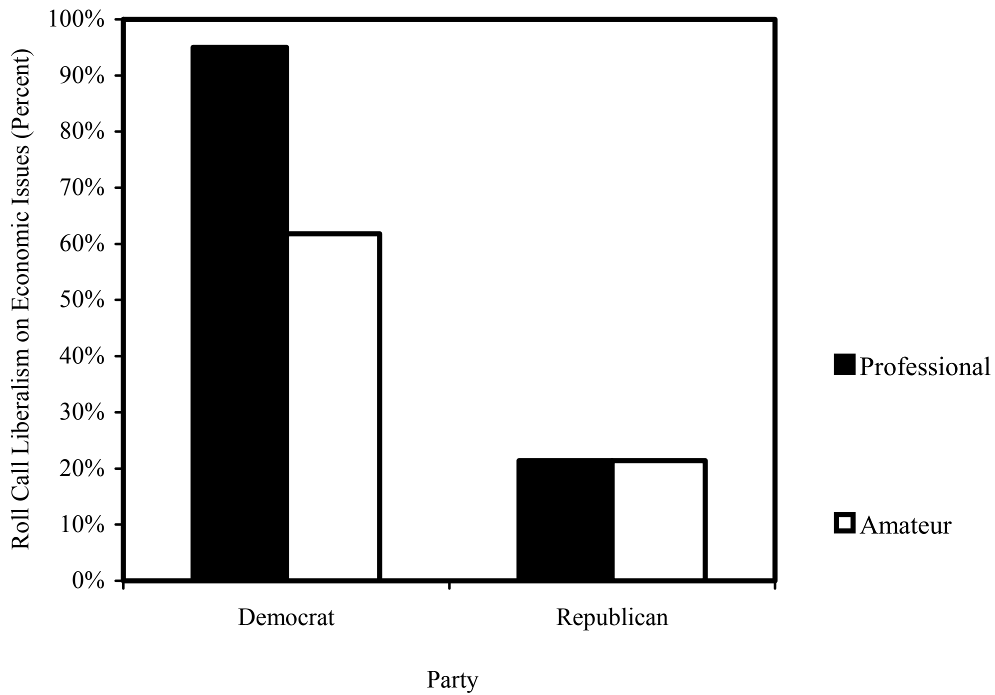


Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 4.5. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, the legislator is from the lower house, not party leaders, male, not from the South, and the scoring year is 2000.

Legislative professionalism conditions the relationship between party and social roll call liberalism. The main differences exist for Democrats. Holding all other variables constant, Democratic legislators who work in professional legislatures are almost uniformly rated 100 percent liberal. Democratic lawmakers from amateur legislatures, however, are only rated about 65 percent liberal. This difference of 35 percent does not exist for Republicans who hover around 20 percent liberal regardless of the level of legislative professionalism in the chambers in which they serve. Professionalism, thus, drives Democratic, but not Republican, lawmakers to ideological extremes. This likely relates to the motivation of members to serve in states with professional legislatures. In amateur legislatures, with their short, perhaps biennial sessions, are more attractive to those who can combine part-time legislative service with another primary occupation. These tend to be professionals, who are more likely to be Republicans. Professional legislatures may not be attractive enough for business professionals to leave their career for, but they are to policy motivated Democrats (Fiorina 1994). I find that these career oriented Democrats are quite liberal vis-à-vis those serving in more amateur states.[35]

[35] This finding is not a function of region. When I run the model in different regions, similar difference exist for Democrats, and Republicans are similarly alike in professional and amateur legislatures.

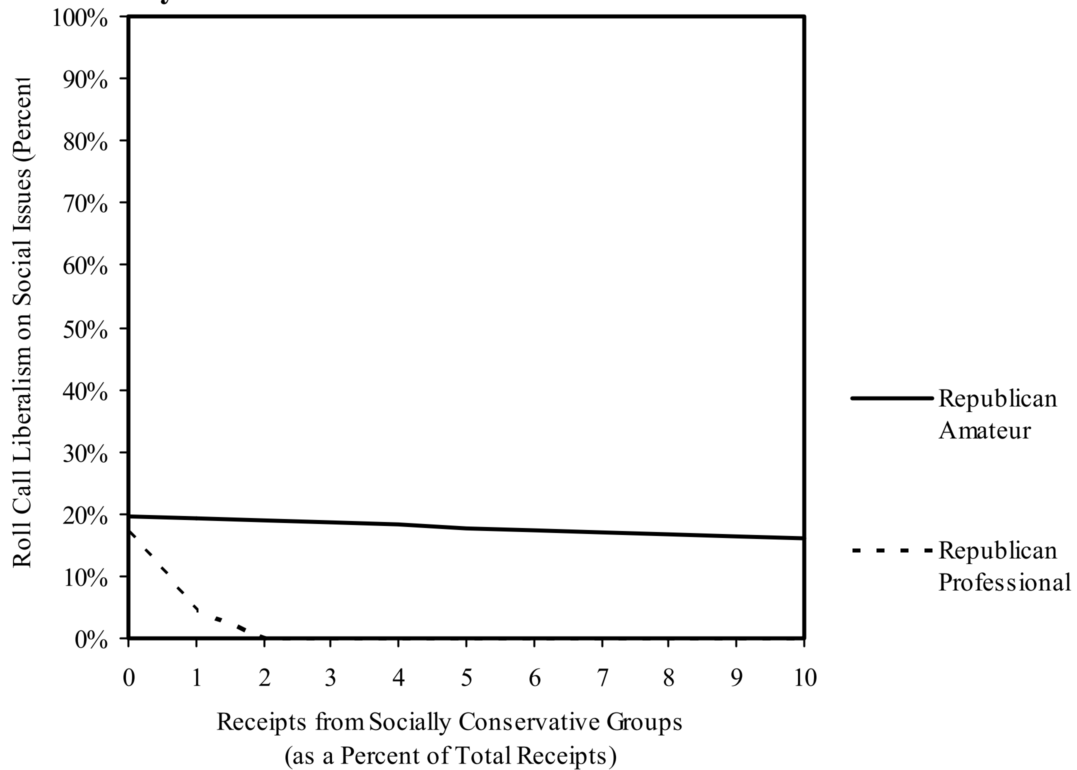
Figure 4.8:
Political Party and Social Roll Call Liberalism by Legislative Professionalism



Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 4.5. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, the legislator is from the lower house, not party leaders, male, and the scoring year is 2000.

Finally, the relationship between conservative ideological group money on the social roll call liberalism of Republicans differs based on level of legislative professionalism. Social group money has almost no effect on Republican legislators in amateur legislatures. However, it does significantly relate to Republican member conservatism in professional legislatures. This is likely because of the type of Republican legislators drawn to serve in professional legislatures. Career minded Republicans who give up their private sector job to serve in a professional legislature are not likely to be moderates. They have what scholars call progressive ambition. They want to win higher office and are seeking in their state legislative career to shore up those constituencies they feel they need in future races for higher office (Hibbing 1986; Maestas 2000). With this said, the reader should note that two percent of campaign funds coming from socially conservative groups is an abnormally high amount. Slightly less than one percent of all legislators in this study have two percent or more of their funds coming from these groups. So this result, while statistically significant, lacks a meaningful impact as long as conservative social groups continue to donate such small amounts of money to the vast majority of state legislators.

Figure 4.9:
Conservative Ideological Group Money and Social Roll Call Liberalism by Professionalism



Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 4.5. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, the legislator is from the lower house, not party leaders, male, and the scoring year is 2000.

Summary

In this chapter, I examined the relationship between legislators and their various constituencies and confirm a great deal of what was suggested in the theory and literature chapters. On economic issues, there is an overall tilt of legislators in the conservative direction. This is consistent with scholarship that shows a shifting in economic regimes over the past 30 years in which the New Deal coalition, which favored state intervention on economic matters, was to a certain extent replaced by a more conservative, lassie faire, approach to economic policy. On social issues, legislators are overwhelmingly polarized. With a line drawn in the sand, state legislators are battling over the cultural issues that divide the two parties.

Perhaps the most interesting finding in this study is that increased district liberalism results in increased legislator roll call liberalism on social but not economic issues. On social issues, legislators need to care about the opinion of their constituency because it is most likely that voters are paying attention to these higher salient legislative controversies. A Democratic legislator from a liberal leaning district may be able to vote against a labor bargaining rule and emerge unscathed, but they are much less likely to get away with a vote for a law restricting abortion.

This dynamic has implications that go to the heart of what it means for legislators to represent their constituency. Social policy congruence, from the standpoint of responsiveness, if fine, but an inability of constituents to hold their members accountable on economic issues presents a discouraging problem for the worst off among us, especially given the fact that the Democratic state legislators (unlike Republican

legislators) are the ones lacking unity. The trend over the past twenty years has been for less government action aimed at alleviating the worst forms of economic depression among low-income families. If only the most active groups (usually business who do not want to pay taxes that social programs require or because they want to keep a perpetual underclass dependent on the lowest paying jobs) are having a noted influence on economic policy. The trade off between the organized and the unorganized constituencies, on economic issues is very near zero-sum. The relatively strong conservative gains of business take precedence over the weak influence of constituents in the minds of legislators. Until or unless the Democratic Party can make economic issues more salient (as they did in the New Deal and Great Society eras) little incentive exists for legislative responsiveness.

The contextual effect of electoral competition is also important to understanding responsive notions of representation. Constituency opinion, when interacted with a legislator's party affiliation, is more influential in uncompetitive districts. This is because members who win election in safe districts are so similar to their districts (because of district homogeneity) that responsiveness can happen almost unconsciously. The next chapter will elaborate on this finding. Electoral competition also influences the relationship between legislators and their organized constituencies. Business and labor donations influence legislative roll call voting on economic issues when legislators are from uncompetitive districts. The relationship between ideological group money and social issue roll call voting, however, is strongest when legislators are from competitive districts. Labor and business groups have the resources to target their donations using an investment strategy, strengthening their relationship with legislators who need not worry

about their reelection. More amateur ideological groups, however, target their relatively limited contributions with an eye toward reshuffling the membership of state legislatures. The influence of this money on legislators in competitive races is significant.

The contextual effect of legislative professionalism is also important to understanding the roll call activity of state legislators. District ideology, although not usually effective in influencing economic roll call activity, does have a greater influence on legislators who work in professional legislatures. Capacity enables responsiveness. The view that legislators are more responsive when they are part-time, “ordinary,” legislators is simply not born out in this analysis. Since 2000, term limits have gone into effect on many state legislators and the amaturizing of state legislatures is in full bloom. This reform is especially troubling for responsiveness because in addition to low capacity amateur legislators problems in responding to district opinion, they are now low capacity and unaccountable legislators. Without even reelection to worry about, amateur legislators have even fewer incentives to worry about their reelection prospects.

Appendix to Chapter 4

Appendix Table 4.1:
Models of Economic Roll Call Liberalism by Competitiveness

	β (se)	β (se)	β (se)	β (se)
District Liberalism X Competitive	-7.736 (13.751)	--	--	--
Democratic X Competitive	--	-1.799 (3.580)	--	--
Percent from Business X Competitive	--	--	-30.643 (7.815)	--
Percent from Labor X Competitive	--	--	--	7.813 (4.629)
District Liberalism	18.775 (10.913)	17.178 (10.927)	16.053 (10.902)	16.916 (10.906)
Democratic	41.722 (3.573)	42.079 (3.782)	41.593 (3.506)	41.740 (3.561)
Percent of Receipts from Business	-12.085 (3.930)	-12.099 (3.937)	-12.116 (3.907)	-13.674 (3.706)
Percent of Receipts from Labor	27.877 (9.715)	28.243 (9.648)	37.844 (8.021)	28.408 (9.586)
Competitive	3.084 (9.636)	-1.203 (2.504)	.221 (2.266)	-5.176 (2.314)
Democratic Leader	6.856 (1.821)	6.808 (1.816)	6.928 (1.833)	6.735 (1.802)
Republican Leader	-2.692 (2.290)	-2.616 (2.290)	-2.482 (2.293)	-2.585 (2.295)
Lower Chamber	-2.361 (1.819)	-2.334 (1.827)	-2.279 (1.794)	-2.314 (1.821)
Professionalism	-4.902 (9.445)	-4.689 (9.421)	-4.586 (9.256)	-4.380 (9.390)
Female Legislator	2.816 (1.361)	2.845 (1.337)	2.865 (1.351)	2.806 (1.349)
South	-4.910 (6.207)	-4.870 (6.206)	-4.818 (6.172)	-4.954 (6.198)
Scoring Year 2000	9.085 (10.720)	9.071 (10.725)	9.054 (10.635)	8.989 (10.756)
Scoring Year 1999	-.319 (11.585)	-.169 (11.523)	.550 (11.574)	-.240 (11.563)
Constant	3.389 (13.390)	4.184 (13.534)	4.446 (13.405)	5.266 (13.463)
Wald Chi-Square (Significance)	335.20 (.001)	333.32 (.001)	346.58 (.001)	341.40 (.001)
N	4140	4140	4140	4140

Corresponds to economic roll call models in Table 4.4.

Appendix Table 4.2:
Models of Social Roll Call Liberalism by Competitiveness

	β (se)	β (se)	β (se)	β (se)
District Liberalism X Competitive	-5.116 (42.023)	--	--	--
Democratic X Competitive	--	4.792 (7.245)	--	--
Percent from Conservative Social Groups X Competitive	--	--	-6.495 (3.161)	--
Percent from Liberal Social Groups X Competitive	--	--	--	3.805 (3.152)
District Liberalism	74.349 (16.436)	74.945 (15.840)	75.003 (15.754)	73.647 (15.746)
Democratic	67.062 (2.904)	66.321 (3.068)	64.581 (2.881)	66.876 (2.881)
Percent of Receipts Conservative Social Groups	-1.184 (.848)	-1.193 (.850)	-1.034 (.784)	-1.188 (.848)
Percent of Receipts from Liberal Social Groups	4.250 (.940)	4.240 (.936)	4.238 (.935)	3.822 (.915)
Competitive	-.911 (29.461)	-6.722 (4.864)	-2.570 (3.778)	-6.390 (3.845)
Democratic Leader	20.921 (7.353)	20.892 (7.350)	20.832 (7.336)	20.766 (7.340)
Republican Leader	6.161 (6.551)	5.963 (6.555)	5.714 (6.552)	5.958 (6.550)
Lower Chamber	.429 (2.863)	.423 (2.861)	.671 (2.857)	.371 (2.857)
Professionalism	-11.424 (7.328)	-11.466 (7.330)	-11.565 (7.339)	-11.120 (7.313)
Female Legislator	13.568 (3.050)	13.533 (3.048)	13.494 (3.044)	13.407 (3.050)
Scoring Year 2000	-3.477 (3.722)	-3.535 (3.713)	-3.407 (3.707)	-3.627 (3.709)
Constant	-34.960 (10.064)	-34.933 (9.600)	-35.419 (9.565)	34.057 (9.562)
Wald Chi-Square (Significance)	1073.22 (.001)	1074.09 (.001)	1079.46 (.001)	1076.50 (.001)
N	1602	1602	1602	1602

Corresponds to social roll call models in Table 4.4.

Appendix Table 4.3:
Models of Economic Roll Call Liberalism by Legislative Professionalism

	β (se)	β (se)	β (se)	β (se)
District Liberalism X Professional	44.350 (24.981)	--	--	--
Democratic X Professional	--	1.207 (6.510)	--	--
Percent from Business X Professional	--	--	-15.557 (7.080)	--
Percent from Labor X Professional	--	--	--	12.253 (18.415)
District Liberalism	-7.965 (18.836)	18.447 (12.788)	18.763 (12.436)	17.966 (12.556)
Democratic	41.607 (3.655)	40.794 (4.538)	41.777 (3.615)	41.541 (3.566)
Percent of Receipts from Business	-12.363 (4.057)	-12.251 (4.239)	-2.970 (4.975)	-12.088 (4.282)
Percent of Receipts from Labor	26.790 (9.956)	28.904 (9.775)	28.736 (9.526)	22.686 (15.487)
Competitive	.030 (.024)	.033 (.024)	.033 (.024)	.031 (.024)
Democratic Leader	6.994 (2.021)	6.887 (2.007)	6.605 (1.797)	6.915 (2.046)
Republican Leader	-2.275 (2.233)	-2.448 (2.300)	-2.392 (2.293)	-2.424 (2.258)
Lower Chamber	-1.890 (1.662)	-2.243 (11.265)	-2.088 (1.636)	-2.172 (1.709)
Professionalism	-33.710 (18.060)	-4.876 (5.893)	2.655 (4.896)	-4.991 (4.641)
Female Legislator	3.032 (1.387)	2.906 (1.325)	2.859 (1.311)	2.904 (1.357)
South	-4.848 (5.501)	-5.332 (5.871)	-4.981 (1.311)	-5.230 (5.757)
Scoring Year 2000	8.630 (8.671)	9.233 (9.477)	9.438 (9.404)	9.086 (9.513)
Scoring Year 1999	-4.156 (10.280)	-2.295 (11.265)	-2.012 (1.636)	-1.861 (11.512)
Constant	20.771 (16.315)	3.630 (12.934)	-1.444 (13.075)	3.952 (12.989)
Wald Chi-Square (Significance)	344.64 (.001)	399.43 (.001)	337.06 (.001)	331.10 (.001)
N	4140	4140	4140	4140

Corresponds to economic roll call models in Table 4.5.

Appendix Table 4.4:
Models of Social Roll Call Liberalism by Legislative Professionalism

	β (se)	β (se)	β (se)	β (se)
District Liberalism X Professional	29.171 (35.917)	--	--	--
Democratic X Professional	--	33.221 (5.696)	--	--
Percent from Conservative Social Groups X Professional	--	--	12.169 (3.133)	--
Percent from Liberal Social Groups X Professional	--	--	--	.455 (1.872)
District Liberalism	46.681 (32.151)	68.455 (15.562)	73.864 (15.511)	69.423 (15.562)
Democratic	66.408 (2.862)	40.452 (5.216)	64.858 (2.823)	66.404 (2.863)
Percent of Receipts Conservative Social Groups	-1.106 (.861)	-1.124 (.899)	-12.507 (3.109)	-1.117 (.867)
Percent of Receipts from Liberal Social Groups	4.285 (.957)	4.555 (.996)	4.130 (.946)	3.980 (1.559)
Competitive	.144 (.035)	.134 (.035)	.146 (.035)	.146 (.035)
Democratic Leader	21.335 (7.218)	20.899 (6.976)	21.319 (7.245)	21.331 (7.234)
Republican Leader	5.284 (6.517)	6.687 (6.306)	3.504 (6.428)	5.085 (6.468)
Lower Chamber	.331 (2.853)	.645 (2.799)	.538 (2.833)	.145 (.035)
Professionalism	-21.722 (25.974)	-16.238 (5.064)	-7.928 (4.920)	-1.384 (4.851)
Female Legislator	14.876 (3.054)	15.470 (3.022)	14.612 (3.038)	14.773 (3.056)
Scoring Year 2000	-.929 (6.444)	-4.114 (4.985)	1.883 (5.659)	-3.398 (5.591)
Constant	-28.205 (19.155)	-28.766 (9.769)	-42.981 (9.653)	-41.478 (9.735)
Wald Chi-Square (Significance)	1100.06 (.001)	1141.13 (.001)	1105.51 (.001)	1096.98 (.001)
N	1602	1602	1602	1602

Corresponds to social roll call models in Table 4.5.

Chapter 5: Roll Call Extremism in State Legislatures

The preceding chapter investigated the dynamics that explain legislative roll call liberalism and conservatism. Under certain conditions; on social issues, in electorally safe districts, and in professional legislatures; lawmakers were found to be more responsive to the opinions of their district constituencies. Ideological direction however, is only the most obvious characteristic of roll call voting. A second dimension of roll call activity concerns the extremism/moderation of a member's roll call votes.

Each state legislative chamber has its ideological stalwarts – legislators who are consistently at the polar ends in their roll call ideology. These legislators, which include Barbara Currie (D-IL) and Lenore Barrett (R-ID), have a clearcut view of the world and express that ideological certainty through their legislative roll call votes. At the same time, each legislature has a number of more moderate members, which include Ben GiaQuinta (D-IN) and Donald Moffitt (R-IL). For these lawmakers, legislative battles are not black and white ideological struggles, but rather a venue for compromise and coalition building. It is not likely that legislators randomly fall into one camp or the other. In an era of increased partisan polarization in legislatures, this facet of roll call behavior becomes even more interesting because it takes ideological direction (and the built in partisan explanation) out of the equation. Moreover, examining roll call extremism allows for the investigation of an additional district characteristic, district diversity, to help explain what motivates legislators in their roll call decision-making.

District diversity should relate directly to the ability of lawmakers to be responsive to their district constituencies. When members come from demographically

homogeneous districts, and especially when they descriptively represent that dominant characteristic, it is likely that members respond to the prevailing character of their district. However, when members represent a heterogeneous district, they likely have a difficult time growing too ideologically extreme because they need to create electoral coalitions that span at least a number of the demographic divides.

In this chapter, I investigate this second characteristic of legislative roll call activity – legislative extremism. The primary research question is, what drives certain legislators to take extreme positions on economic or social issues? I control for all of the characteristics that were found to influence roll call liberalism in the past chapter because economic and social roll call extremism is in essence a reformulation of the roll call liberalism measures. I pay particular attention, however, to the role that economic, racial, and religious district diversity has on the nature of their representatives roll call votes. Understanding how these diversity measures drive legislators to either roll call extremes or roll call moderation will expand what we know about the influence of district constituencies on the roll call voting behavior of their state representative.

The Structure of Legislative Extremism in State Legislatures

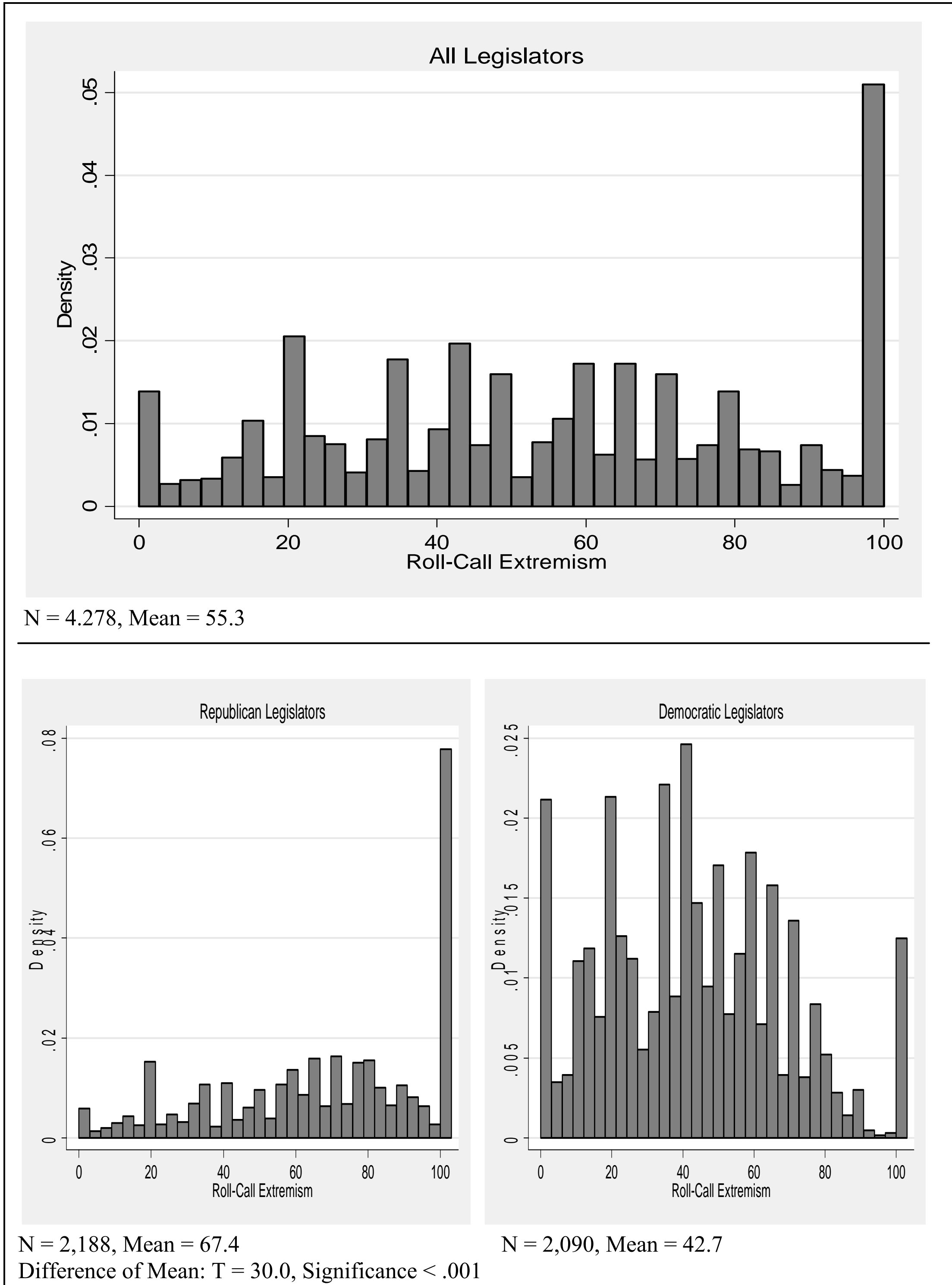
The primary dependent variables in this study are economic and social roll call extremism – each measured on a continuous scale from 0-100. Again, these scores are based on the same interest group report cards reported in Table 3.1. Because these scores, when indexed into an average, give a legislator's roll call liberalism, they were then folded in half to produce a measure of roll call extremism. For example, if a legislator received a score of 100 from the AFL-CIO and a 0 from the NFIB, the legislator would have a 100 percent liberal economic roll call ideology (NFIB is recoded into a liberal

direction). That legislator would also have a 100 percent extremism score. On the other hand, a legislator with a 50 percent economic roll call liberalism score (average of group scores) would have a roll call extremism of 0. The same procedure applies to the creation of social roll call extremism.

The Structure of Economic Roll Call Extremism

Regarding economic extremism, the distribution appears mostly normal with the exception of the 100 percent category, which contains a disproportionate number of cases (13 percent of all case). The average level of economic extremism is 55 percent. The distribution looks much different when examining the two parties separately. As expected, the Republican Party is much more uniform in its propensity towards economic polarization. Of all Republican state legislators, 24 percent receive perfectly extreme marks and the average for all Republican legislators is 67 percent extreme.

Figure 5.1:
The Distribution of Economic Roll Call Extremism among State Legislators



The Democrats, on the other hand, are much more varied in their level of economic extremism. Only a small group of legislators are in the 100 percent category (4 percent), while a more sizable number (5 percent) are actually at the moderate end of the scale. The Democratic Party forms a near normal distribution with a mean of 43 percent. As the distributions suggest, the Republicans and Democrats are significantly different from one another in their levels of economic extremism.

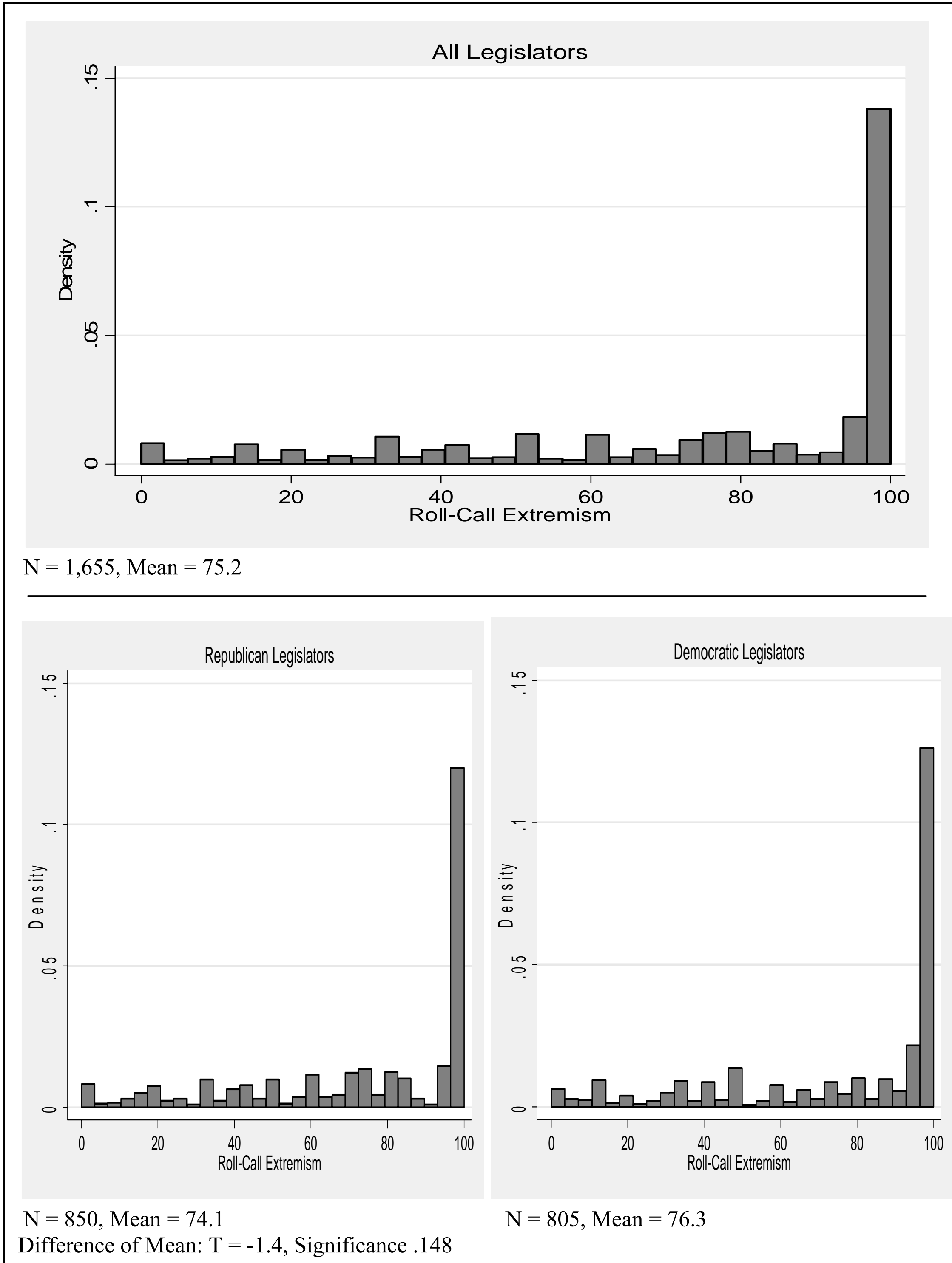
It is clear that party will be a major explanatory force when modeling economic roll call liberalism. As expected, the Republicans are defenders of government uninvolvement on economic matters while the Democrats are much more divided on these issues. As previously suggested, this likely relates to the overwhelming support in the United States for the principles underlying the free market system. The Democratic Party is not anything like the socialist parties of Europe. Being "anti-business" is not a label that many politicians, even self-avowed liberals, desire. When policies are enacted that hamper the economy, officeholders are held accountable. Regardless of party, a quick route to electoral defeat, is when voters perceive the government as being responsible for a poor economy (Kinder and Kiewet 1981).

The Structure of Social Roll Call Extremism

Virtually all legislators take extreme positions on social issues. On a broad spectrum of social issues ranging from abortion, to gay rights, to teaching about God in public schools, to symbolic issues like desecration of the flag, the parties are fundamentally polarized. These issues do not lend themselves to compromise and it is as

if gravity pulls legislators to extremes on social issues in a way that it does not on economic issues.

Figure 5.1:
The Distribution of Social Roll Call Extremism among State Legislators



An impressive 43 percent of all legislators fall into the 100 percent extreme category while the average level of extremism is 75 percent. Thus, on social issues, state legislators are a full 20 percent more extreme than they are on economic issues. Furthermore, this dynamic crosses party lines. For both Democrats and Republicans, just less than half of all members fall into the 100 percent extreme category (45 and 41 percent respectively). As a result, the two party distributions are not significantly different on social issues.

The Correlates of Legislative Extremism

District Diversity and Legislative Extremism

Besides the likely effect of party on economic extremism, what helps explain these distributions? District diversity is likely to relate to the nature of their representative's legislative activity. Representatives from homogeneous districts, who themselves likely reflect that homogeneity, likely move to ideological extremes.

More internally homogeneous districts – be them economically, racially, or religiously alike – are prone to electing legislators who reflect that sameness and act with more legislative certainty. On the other hand, districts rich in diversity likely elect representatives who must walk a difficult line between the interests of their economically/socially diverse districts. This likely results in legislative moderation. Consider a district that is 95 percent black, versus a district that is equal parts White, Black, Latino, versus a district that is 95 percent White. In the 95 percent Black district, the representative will probably be an extremely liberal legislator; while in the mixed

district, the legislators will likely be more moderate; and in the 95 percent white district, the representative will likely be an extreme conservative legislator.

What makes districts more or less diverse? Those responsible for state legislative redistricting plans have as their primary motive the desire to increase the number of seats their parties hold in the legislative chambers (Bullock 1975; Niemi and Winsky 1992; Ostdiek 1995). These redistricting decisions are likely to have real and observable effects on the nature of district diversity and thus will affect the nature of legislative voting. When legislative districts are "packed" – creating internally homogeneous units – extremism likely follows. When districts are "cracked," moderation is the likely result. Researchers studying the effect of majority-minority redistricting plans have found this to be true. Majority-minority districts (by design racially "packed") elect sharply liberal members, while the surrounding, overwhelmingly White, districts tend to elect very conservative members (Cameron, Epstein and O'Halloran 1996; Petrocik and Desposato 1998).[36] As such, homogeneity works to the benefit of legislative extremism.

Redistricting, as an explanation of homogeneous populations, however is incomplete. Not only do those responsible for redistricting often group like people together. Evidence exists that people emigrate in such ways as to bolster homogeneity. When people increase their economic standing, they tend to leave poorer neighborhoods, leaving the places they left less diverse and bolstering the homogeneity of their new location (Gimpel 1999).

[36] It is important to note that an average majority-minority district possesses more racial diversity than non-majority-minority districts. However, though their effect on neighboring districts, majority minority districts do cause increasing levels of homogeneity overall.

To measure district diversity, a Sullivan Index (Sullivan 1969) of diversity is generated for economic, racial, and religious diversity in each district. I expect that economic diversity decreases economic roll call extremism and that racial and religious diversity decreases social roll call liberalism. For a detailed explanation of this measure, see Chapter 3.

Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Legislative Extremism

Even though partisanship is not expected to have the overwhelming effect on extremism that it does on legislative liberalism, lawmakers' party affiliations still relate to their roll call extremism. As shown, Republican legislators are more predisposed to ideologically extreme position taking vis-à-vis their Democratic colleagues on economic issues. It is of course true that Democratic legislators are more willing to use the government to regulate certain business practices, but they are not, overall, seeking to undo the free-market system. Republicans, on the other hand, find it much easier to unite in a pure defense of limited government involvement on economic matters.

This ideological moderation by Democrats on economic issues, however, is less evident on social issues. On social issues, which are not amiable to compromise in the first place, legislators of both parties are similar in their propensity towards extremism. For Democrats, this means a limited view of government regulation on social issues; for Republicans, a more hands on approach to regulation of what they view as questionable social behavior – be it gay marriage, the desecration of the flag, or the use of abortion, to name a few key issues. The effect of party has already been outlined, but it is nonetheless important to test its effect while controlling for the other factors which follow.

Interest groups exist because they are seeking to change or defend policies. They also tend to represent ideologically narrow groups of individuals who feel the government is not responding to their concerns. Interest group constituencies are highly partisan, have high levels of political knowledge, and are willing to participate in a variety of activities aimed at affecting the policy process (Verba and Nie 1972; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1995). Interest groups are also careful to maximize the impact of the dollars they contribute. They pay more for greater legislator effort, and less when voters are less hostile to a given policy (Denzau and Munger 1986). As such, interest groups do not generally pressure legislators towards the ideological middle. Business and labor attempt to pull legislators to extremes on economic policy. Ideological groups attempt to pull legislators to extremes on social policy.

Interest group support is measured as the percent of campaign receipts a legislator receives from interest groups. The Institute for Money in State Politics provided this data on legislative campaign finance and a complete discussion of the measure can be found in Chapter 3.

Controlling for Chamber Characteristics

Party competition in the chambers may also relate to differing levels of legislative extremism. Legislating in a closely divided chamber can result in either greater levels of stalemate or greater levels of cross-aisle cooperation. If legislators opt for stalemate, legislative extremism likely follows, if they decide to be bipartisan for the sake of getting something done, moderation should result. The same exact logic applies to legislating in divided versus unified party government. Members serving under divided government may choose to moderate their views and work together, or they may decide to engage

each other in an ideological battle and wait until the next election in hopes of unified party government (Jones 2001). Chamber competition and the presence of divided government is included in the models to test these possibilities.

Legislative professionalism may relate to roll call extremism. Perhaps legislators have an easier time breaking with their party when they have greater individual capacity. This individual capacity (more staff, full-time legislative job, longer sessions) may allow them to develop greater ties with their district, resulting in a greater focus toward home and less of a focus on partisan politics at the statehouse. On the other hand, professional legislators, who choose politics as their primary career, may be more likely to engage in struggles over issues on which they have strong opinions. Following this line of reasoning, legislators in amateur legislatures would be less ideologically decisive and more willing to moderate their views. For a discussion of the measurement of chamber competition, divided government, and legislative professionalism, see Chapter 3.

Controlling for Legislator and District Characteristics

Certain characteristics related to each individual legislator and the districts they represent may relate to legislative extremism. Ideally, one would survey all legislators and ask a battery of questions to measure their propensity toward taking ideologically extreme versus ideologically moderate positions. This type of data, however, is not available so I instead focus on those characteristics that are directly measurable, including the legislator's tenure, whether they are a party leader, the competition they

face in elections, and their gender. District controls not included in the diversity measures include percent of the district with a college degree and percent living in poverty.[37]

No scholarship, that I know of, has tested the relationship between legislative tenure and ideological extremism. My measurement of tenure, from the Institute on Money in State Politics, only includes whether or not the member was serving in their first term in 1998. What should we expect from a new class of legislators? It could be that they are electorally uncertain and as such would gravitate toward moderate positions out of fear of the ideological unknown. It could also be, however, that they are young, idealistic, and have high hopes for what may be their very ideological (rather than pragmatic) agenda. Furthermore, at this early point in their career they may be seeking recognition by their parties that would follow from extreme ideological position taking.

I expect party leaders to be more ideologically extreme than the rank-and-file members. Scholarship from nearly fifty years ago suggested the opposite; that leaders in Congress would position themselves in the ideological middle of their parties (Matthews 1960) – as much servants of their fellow partisans as leaders. As the power of parties in Congress rose (at the expense of committees), the role of party leaders became less that of an intermediary peacemaker, and more of a ideological guiding light (Cox and McCubbins 1994; Sinclair 2000). Leaders increasingly use carrots (like prime committee assignments) to keep their fellow partisans in line. Furthermore, with more unified

[37] Several measures including household income, public assistance, social security receipts, and others, were tested and eventually dropped from the analysis because of the multi-collinearity they produced with each other and the diversity indexes.

parties, members are typically amenable to following their leaders to extremes (Hershey and Beck 2003).

Regarding electoral competition, I expect that close elections lead to less legislative extremism. We know that districts are relatively moderate, ideologically, and when members face the prospect of losing their seat or are in position to win a closely contested election, I expect them to moderate their positions, in Downsian fashion. When members run in uncompetitive elections, they are free to test the waters of legislative extremism with a good deal of certainty that it will not come back to haunt them in future elections. The evidence supporting such a claim was discussed at length in Chapters 2 and 4 and does not need reiteration, especially considering that this is a control variable in this chapter. Regarding the measurement of tenure, leadership, college percent, poverty percent, and electoral competition, see Chapter 3.

No scholarship exists that test the effect of state level elite and mass polarization on individual legislator extremism.[38] The two, however, are theoretically linked and as such, I test their influence on state legislator extremism. Party elites, which I measure using a compilation of delegates to the national party conventions, are those activist components within each party that legislators rely on for primary support as well as for

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[38] I also attempted to include them in models in the previous chapter but the models would not support their inclusion. To use state level mass and elite measures to test for ideological direction requires the inclusion of Republican and Democratic elite measures for both the elite and mass level partisans. These four variables, in combination with legislator's party created such multi-collinearity problems that often the party of the legislators would fall out of significance or point in the wrong direction. In this chapter, however, the mean difference between the parties is appropriate and with fewer measure multi-collinearity did not pose a problem.

financial backing. As such, it is possible that as the party elite diverge, legislators follow their activist supporters and become more extreme in their roll call behavior. The same reaction is possible to mass partisans in each state. As the citizens who identify with each party grow further apart, legislators may respond with increasing extremism. Based on a continuation of my theory regarding responsiveness and issue type; I expect mass polarization to have a greater effect on social issue extremism and elite polarization to have a greater effect on economic issue extremism.

The Causes of Economic Roll Call Extremism

To model the effect of the various explanatory variables on economic and social extremism, I again use Interval Regression to deal with the fact that so many cases congregate at the extreme.[39] In explaining the meaningful significance of statistically significant variables, and flush out the theoretical relevance of each, I compute predicted

[39] To test for multi-collinearity, I conducted VIF tests on OLS versions of the models. On the economic extremism model, one VIF score was 4.1 but the rest were 2.1 or lower. On the social extremism model, none exceeded 2.4. Because the 4.1 VIF score was a bit disconcerting, I ran the model without the most correlated variable to make sure my findings did not change. Although the coefficients did change slightly, overall significance levels (and directions) of the primary independent variables did not change. Because of the propensity of cases to congregate at the upper extreme in both models, the Interval Regression model was instructed to censor the upper limits. When run without controlling for the upper limit category the results are nearly identical and when run in OLS the same variables appear significant (some others become significant in the OLS models) and none become significant simply by the use of the Interval Regression model. Besides the fact that Interval Regression is required based on the distribution of the dependent variable, this offers assurance that it is not artificially producing significant variables but is in fact biased toward accepting the null. Furthermore, when OLS models are run without the 100 percent categories, no VIF scores exceeded 2.0, further indicating no serious levels of multi-collinearity in the model.

estimates. Two out of the three primary hypotheses relating to economic roll call extremism hold. As expected economic diversity is related to a decrease in economic roll call extremism and Democratic legislators are less extreme on economic roll calls than their Republican counterparts. Interest group money from economic interests comes close to increasing economic roll call extremism, however it does not reach necessary levels of statistical significance.

Table 5.1:
Economic Roll Call Extremism

	β (se)	P >|z|
Economic Diversity in the District	-81.741 (30.571)	.004
Democratic State Legislator	-30.508 (4.291)	..001
Percent of Receipts from Economic Interest Groups	4.876 (4.659)	.148
Legislator and District Characteristics		
First Term Legislator	-.388 (2.356)	.435
Party Leader	5.499 (2.590)	.012
Electoral Competition	-3.247 (2.814)	.125
Percent of District with a College Education	11.671 (10.329)	.129
Percent of District Living in Poverty	-20.106 (16.714)	.115
Female Legislator	2.031 (1.219)	.048
State Opinion Polarization		
State Elite Polarization	12.301 (4.679)	.005
State Mass Partisan Polarization	-1.072 (5.206)	.419
Chamber Characteristics		
Chamber Competition	-18.188 (33.315)	.293
Divided Government	3.282 (4.937)	.253
Legislative Professionalism	9.080 (18.040)	.307
Lower House	-1.581 (3.950)	.345
Control Variables		
Scoring Year 2000	-13.204 (7.167)	.033
Scoring Year 1999	-22.903 (9.964)	.011
Constant	85.134 (19.669)	.001
Wald Chi-Square	117.80	Prob. > .001
N	4060	

Note: Interval Regression Coefficients with robust standard errors adjusted for clustering by chamber. One tailed significance tests.

Party leaders are found to be significantly more extreme than the party rank-and-file. Female legislators are also significantly more extreme on economic matters than their male colleagues. Electoral competition appears to diminish economic extremism, but just misses the .05 level of statistical significance. No chamber characteristics appear to significantly influence the level of legislator's economic extremism.

As I expected, from my theory that mass attitudes matter more on economic issues; elite polarization significantly increases legislator roll call extremism on economic issues. Mass polarization, however, has no significant effect. I will talk more about this and the other significant variables as I describe their predictive values.

What is the substantive significance of these findings? Holding all other variables constant Democratic legislators have a roll call extremism of 38.4 percent while their Republican colleagues have a roll call extremism of 69.1 percent. Thus, the partisan divide (31 percent gap) is robust even when controlling for the other variables. Republicans, as explained in the previous chapter, are ideologically united in a conservative direction while Democrats, although more liberal overall are much more moderate. Southern representatives, especially, contribute to economic moderation on economic issues.

Table 5.2:
Predicted Economic Roll Call Extremism

	Predicted Roll Call Extremism
Party	
Democratic Legislators	38.4
Republican Legislators	69.1

	Democrats	Republicans
Economic Diversity in District		
.198 (min)	54.0	84.5
.348 (-1 sd)	41.8	72.3
.388 (mean)	38.4	69.0
.428 (+1 sd)	35.2	65.7
.543 (max)	25.8	56.3
Party Leadership		
Party Leader	43.9	74.4
Rank and File	38.4	69.0
State Elite Polarization		
1.81 (min)	24.6	55.1
2.47 (-1 sd)	32.7	63.2
2.95 (mean)	38.4	69.0
3.43 (+1 sd)	44.5	74.9
4.06 (max)	52.2	82.7
Gender		
Female	40.5	71.0
Male	38.4	69.0

Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 5.1. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, government is not divided and the legislator is from the lower house, not a party leader, not a first term member, male, and the scoring year is 2000.

Economic diversity has a substantive effect on economic roll call extremism. While holding the other variables constant Democratic and Republican legislators experience a 6 percent increase in economic extremism moving from an economic diversity of -1 standard deviation to +1 standard deviation. The full range of economic diversity, from the lowest to the highest point, represents an increase of 26 percent. Thus, when legislators represent a district with greater levels of economic diversity they are clearly less likely to be economically extreme in their roll call voting. The entire scale is shifted toward the extreme end with Republican lawmakers, but the effect is the same. I do not directly investigate the causes of economic diversity, but either through redistricting efforts that geographically tie together similar economic units or through residential self-selection, economically similar geographic units elect legislators that are more economically extreme.

This is a theoretically important link between district constituents and legislative roll call behavior. Responsiveness is not just delegate style responsiveness based on expressed constituent desires, it is also a response to unexpressed constituent needs (Jewell 1983). This finding confirms that representatives know the economic demographics existing in their districts and respond to those needs. When districts are economically diverse, representatives do not respond with economically extreme roll call votes but instead take on each issue on a case-by-case basis. When districts are economically homogeneous, representatives tend to vote in a much more extreme fashion.

This was the case with my four case studies. My two extremist legislators Currie (D) and Barrett (R) both had districts dominated by service workers (83 and 55 percent

respectively). My two moderate cases GiaQuinta (D) and Moffitt (R), while having a majority (50 percent each) of service workers had twice the manufacturing sector workers in their districts, compared with the other two extremists (at 40 and 42 percent respectively). Both government and farm sector jobs did not make up a significant portion of any of the case study legislator's districts (all less than 7 percent). The economic diversity of their districts helped define the legislative moderation of my less extreme case studies. The economic homogeneity of the Currie and Barrett districts helped lead these legislators to ideological extremes.

As I expected, party leaders are more likely to be extreme in their roll call activity vis-à-vis the rank-and-file members. Party leaders are on average 6.4 percent more liberal when controlling for the other variables in the model. This indicates that on economic issues the party leaders, as expected, are leading the ideological charge of their respective parties. Like scholarship that shows congressional leaders to be out in front of their fellow partisan lawmakers (Cox and McCubbins 1994; Sinclair 2000) as opposed to being a median representation of their caucus (Matthews 1960), party leaders in state legislatures are also ideologically more extreme.

The impact of party elite polarization is quite striking. An increase from -1 standard deviation to +1 standard deviation in elite party polarization increases economic roll call extremism by 12 percent. Over the entire range of the elite polarization the increase is 38 percent more extreme. This lends even more evidence to my theory that on economic issue it is the elite level actors that have the greatest impact on legislative voting. The public is not as interested, overall, in the complex dynamics of economic

issues, however the activists do have positions and are effective in getting legislators to respond to their position.

The gender of legislators was also found to correspond with increased levels of economic extremism. The substantive effect, however, is not too great. Female legislators are only 2.4 percent more extreme on their economic roll call votes than their male colleagues.

In sum, the most interesting findings here relate to the relationship between party and economic roll call extremism; economic diversity in the district and economic roll call extremism; and elite party polarization and roll call extremism. As expected, Democrats are not overtly anti-business in the way Republicans are overtly pro-business. Legislators who represent economically diverse districts are less likely to be extreme in their economic roll call votes. In short, they do not have the luxury of ideological certainty on economic issues that comes with representing economically homogeneous districts. This is especially important because it represents one of the few instances in this study where mass characteristics influence economic roll calls. Diversity, however, is most likely to manifest itself as an unarticulated demand of the constituency. Finally, elite party polarization, represents the latest in a long line of elite characteristics that is found to influence legislative roll call voting on economic, less salient, roll call votes.

The Causes of Social Roll Call Extremism

Like economic extremism, the diversity of the district is also related to social roll call liberalism. As racial diversity increases, social extremism decreases. As expected, both parties are relatively equal in their social roll call extremism. In addition,

contributions from ideological interest groups do not affect legislative extremism on social issues.

Table 5.3:
Social Roll Call Extremism

	β (se)	P >|z|
Racial Diversity in the District	-40.427 (20.563)	.025
Religious Diversity in the District	5.115 (26.251)	.420
Democratic State Legislator	.852 (6.996)	.452
Percent of Receipts from Ideological Groups	-11.603 (40.755)	.388
Legislator and District Characteristics		
First Term Legislator	9.626 (3.871)	.007
Party Leader	2.448 (5.733)	.335
Electoral Competition	.846 (4.837)	.431
Percent of District with a College Education	39.261 (11.199)	.001
Percent of District Living in Poverty	124.274 (31.336)	.001
Female Legislator	3.999 (3.791)	.146
State Opinion Polarization		
State Party Elite Polarization	-4.395 (6.084)	.235
State Mass Partisan Polarization	14.973 (7.246)	.019
Chamber Characteristics		
Chamber Competition	-93.310 (48.086)	.026
Divided Government	13.327 (13.597)	.199
Legislative Professionalism	73.107 (18.864)	.001
Lower House	-.144 (5.584)	.490
Control Variables		
Scoring Year 2000	26.444 (6.242)	.001
Constant	30.121 (24.020)	.105
Wald Chi-Square	267.42	Prob.<.001
N	1587	

Note: Interval Regression Coefficients with robust standard errors adjusted for clustering by chamber. One tailed significance tests.

Regarding the control variables, first term legislators are more extreme than more experienced legislators and other district controls including percent with a college degree and percent living in poverty are positively related to legislative extremism. Chamber competition appears to diminish legislative extremism, but falls just short of statistical significance. Increased legislative professionalism, however, significantly increases in legislative extremism. As I expected, on social issues it is mass party polarization, and not elite party polarization, that influences roll call behavior.

These significant variables have a meaningful impact on social roll call extremism. Holding all variables constant, a district that falls one standard deviation above the mean for racial diversity is 77.7 percent extreme while a district one standard deviation below the mean is 90.2 percent extreme. For districts with a minimum amount of racial diversity, social extremism is 90.4 percent while social extremism at the maximum level of racial diversity in the sample is 64.2 percent extreme; this represents a greater than 26 percent increase in social extremism. Thus, racially homogeneous districts are more likely to produce legislative extremism on social issues, while racially heterogeneous districts are more likely to produce legislative moderation. Just as economic diversity moderates legislator's economic roll call votes; racial diversity moderates legislator's social roll call votes. In fact, the effect is even greater for racial diversity than it is for economic diversity. Again, legislator responsiveness is found to be a function of district characteristics.

Take, for instance, the racial and economic diversity of my four case studies. Currie (D) and Barrett (R), my two extremist examples come from racially homogeneous

districts. Currie's is 85 percent Black and Barrett's is 95 percent White. My two examples of moderates have slightly more racially diverse districts. GiaQuinta's (D) is 68 percent White and Moffitt's (R) is 90 percent white. While the difference for the two Republicans are not dramatic, the difference is telling between the two Democrats. Being from a more racially diverse district seems to moderate GiaQuinta's social issue positions. His electoral coalition likely spans different racial groups and he must remain sensitive to the views of a broader range of groups.

Table 5.4:
Predicted Social Roll Call Extremism

	Predicted Roll Call Extremism
Racial Diversity in District	
0 (min)	85.9
.007 (-1 sd)	85.6
.181 (mean)	78.6
.355 (+1 sd)	71.6
.730 (max)	56.4
First Term Legislator	
First Term	88.4
Not First term	78.7
State Mass Partisan Polarization	
.840 (min)	62.1
1.496 (-1 sd)	71.9
1.970 (mean)	78.6
2.441 (+1 sd)	86.0
3.000 (max)	94.4
Legislative Professionalism	
.056 (min)	62.9
.081 (-1 sd)	63.9
.241 (mean)	78.6
.401 (+1 sd)	93.5
.659 (max)	100
Percent of District with a College Degree	
(min)	70.9
(-1 sd)	74.4
(mean)	78.6
(+1 sd)	83.2
(max)	96.0
Percent of District Living in Poverty	
(min)	67.2
(-1 sd)	70.2
(mean)	78.7
(+1 sd)	87.3
(max)	100

Note: These predicted estimates are based on the Interval Regression coefficients presented in Table 5.3. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, government is not divided and the legislator is from the lower house, not a party leader, not a first term member, male, a Democrat and the scoring year is 2000.

First term legislators are 9.4 percent more extreme than members who have been in the legislature for more than one term. It does not appear that rookie legislators moderate their roll call votes because of electoral uncertainty, but instead they bring with them a sort of idealism or clear idea of how they want to act on social issues. This could represent a sort of generational replacement where new socially extremist legislators are replacing a more moderate cohort that existed previously. Without data that extends over time, this can only be speculation.

As the legislative professionalism of a chamber increases, so does legislative extremism. A 22.3 percent increase occurs between a legislator one standard deviation below the mean and a legislator one standard deviation above the mean. Moving from the lowest levels of legislative professionalism to the highest levels of legislative professionalism a 27.9 percent increase occurs. Clearly, when legislatures meet full-time, pay generous salaries, and have greater numbers of staff, legislators are more oriented more toward the ideological extremes; while amateurs seem much more interested in legislative moderation.

As mass party polarization in a state increases, legislators become much more extreme in their voting behavior on social roll call votes. An increase from -1 standard deviation to +1 standard deviation in mass partisan polarization, nets 15 percent more social issue extremism among legislators. Across the entire distribution, the increase in extremism is 32 percent. The evidence, as it adds up, is growing overwhelming. Legislators are responsive to the masses, but not their elite level supporters, on social issues. Just the opposite is true on economic issues. On contentious, salient, and perhaps more visceral issues, legislators pay close attention to the opinions of average citizens.

The district controls for both percent with a college degree and percent living in poverty have substantive effects on social policy extremism. A one standard deviation increase in percent with a college degree accompanies a 4.6 percent extremism increase. A one standard deviation increase in percent living below the poverty line accompanies a 7.3 percent extremism increase. These are essentially pseudo measures of diversity not captured in the racial and religious indices. These results reinforce the finding that district homogony leads to legislative extremism.

Summary

Most treatments of the relationship between populations and government activity analyze the direction of ideology (district liberalism leading to legislative liberalism or state opinion liberalism leading to policy liberalism). This analysis focused on explaining the strength of ideology, allowing me to study the effect of district diversity measures on legislative roll call activity. As expected, district diversity relates directly to both economic and social roll call output. The more homogeneous the district, the more extreme the legislator's roll call votes. Studying the direction of ideology alone could not capture this dynamic.

What does it mean for representation that district diversity contributes to the character of legislative roll call behavior? Responsiveness is easier for lawmakers that come from homogeneous districts, as the unarticulated demands of their district constituencies are easier to understand. For lawmakers from diverse districts, the job of representing is much more difficult. Their districts are dynamic political units that require a more nuanced representational approach. These legislators must put together an

coalition within their community that will secure them reelection. This results in less extreme roll call voting.

This finding has practical political implications for those in charge of generating redistricting plans. If plans are chosen that enhance the levels of homogeneity, greater levels of legislative extremism follow. Many would view this as an unwelcome occurrence. However, this does not mean that representation would suffer. In fact, a demographically unified district is likely to elect a representative that has an extremely easy time reflecting the district in their legislative behavior. This presents an interesting scenario where the way we may want to see our government (thoughtful and moderate) does not line up with what we want from our individual lawmaker (someone who always agrees with "me"). Especially on social issues where citizens likely have a strict sense of what they view as right and wrong, it may be difficult for them to have both a moderate and thoughtful legislature and a legislator who espouses their views.

The evidence in this chapter produced null findings concerning the expected relationship between interest group money and roll call extremism. Increases in money from economic and social issue groups did not result in increased levels of economic or social extremism.

Interestingly, the culture wars appear to by fought with more tenacity in professional legislatures. For these lawmakers, legislating is not a part-time hobby but is rather their chosen vocation. People who choose politics as a career are likely to have strong opinions on political issues of the day and this appears to be especially true concerning culture war issues. The polarized parties in these chambers only serve to reinforce that division.

Finally, the dynamics behind legislative responsiveness to mass and elite partisan polarization lens even more support to the overarching story of this dissertation. On economic issues, noted for their lack of public salience, legislators respond to their elite level supporters. Concerning social issues, however, legislators do not respond to their activist supporters and instead concern themselves with the opinions of the mass public. Social issues elicit constituent responsiveness. Economic issues induce elite level responsiveness.

In Chapter 4, I investigated the distribution of roll call ideology and sought to explain why some legislators were liberal while others were conservative in their roll call voting. Noting the large number of legislators that possessed nearly pure ideological dimensions in their voting, especially on social issues, in this chapter I examined the dynamics that lead certain legislators to taking extreme ideological positions. The next logical step in this analysis is to examine how this extremism effects aggregate policy outcomes. Through an aggregated chamber level analysis, the following chapter analyzes the effect of all this extremism (at the chamber level it is called polarization) on policy output in state legislatures.

Chapter 6: Polarization in State Legislatures

Throughout the study, I have argued the importance of characteristics that influence the roll call voting behavior of individual legislators. It is at this level, I argue, that responsiveness is most crucial to normative notions of representation and democracy. It is also important, however, to remember that legislative roll call behavior has aggregate level implications. As the number of extremist legislators increases, the institutions in which they serve necessarily become more polarized. At the federal level, the ideological divisiveness of elected leaders is implicated in the generally sour public attitude towards government (Uslaner 1993; Jamieson and Falk 2000; Hibbings and Theiss-Morse 2003) and also in the reduced productivity of government (Binder 1999; Jones 2001).

This chapter investigates the causes and consequences of legislative polarization at the state level. Why are some chambers more prone to polarization? What are the consequences of polarization in state legislatures? To answer these questions, I use data aggregated to the chamber level from the 30 states worth of individual legislator data in this study.[40] Regarding the causes of polarization, I expect to find many of the phenomena that drive individual legislative extremism also to explain aggregate level polarization. What is especially interesting to see is the way different variables work at the aggregate level as opposed to the individual level. This presents a test of the ecological fallacy, that they way forces operate at the aggregate level may not be the same as they way they operate at the district level. I pay particular attention to the role of

[40] Because only lower chamber scorecards were available in KS, NC, SC, and WY, the resulting number of cases is 56 rather than 60.

mass and elite polarization, along with various electoral and institutional characteristics that likely encourage or enable legislative polarization.

Concerning the consequences of legislative polarization, I use the ideological gap between the parties to help explain legislative productivity (or what is, in the negative, termed gridlock or stalemate) while examining and controlling for other explanations of legislative productivity such as the presence of divided government, interest group density, and legislative professionalism. I have found throughout this study that extreme ideolgocial roll call voting does not usually impinge on responsiveness. In fact, it helps representatives be responsive because their districts are easier to understand and the legislators they elect likely reflect their homogeneity. The aggregation of extremism to the chamber level, however, results in legislative polarization. Does this produce negative consequences? Are polarized chambers less productive?

Some Popular Accounts of Polarization

Noting the polarization in state legislatures, the news media around the country have been quick to diagnose the negative causes and effects of polarization.[41] I do not intend to present a laundry list of all news articles dealing with the polarization phenomena, but a few examples will give the reader a taste for the type of reporting commonly found in newspapers around the country.

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[41] As a matter of fact, a search for all stories (39) containing the words "polarization"/"polarized" and "legislature"/"statehouse" (all 4 combinations) produced no articles that treated polarization in a positive light (105 negative articles).

Concerning the cause of polarization, two explanations stand out in these popular accounts of the problem: redistricting and money. Take for example the following three quotes concerning the California and Oregon Legislatures.

> *California is about to get more polarized…Newly drawn political boundaries helped consolidate districts for liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans, leaving fewer competitive seats.*[42]
>
> *The political atmosphere for all this problem-solving could be particularly troubling. The legislature is…even more polarized. Redistricting created safe districts for both parties, which produced many ideologically pure candidates on both sides.*[43]
>
> *For anyone counting on a less polarized legislature to resolve Oregon's budget problems next year, a look at the money fueling this years campaigns offers little encouragement. Most of the money going to candidates and political parties is coming from powerful interest groups that lean dramatically toward one party or the other… Republicans, who control the Legislature, dominated in nearly every business sector…But Democrats have narrowed the money gap by leaning on the one constituency that lopsidedly and reliably favors them: organized labor…This reliance, in turn makes legislators more hesitant to do things that they believe will be unpopular with their supporters.*[44]

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[42] Salladay, Robert, *San Francisco Chronicle*. October 27, 2002.

[43] Smith, Dan, *Sacramento Bee*, November 10, 2002.

[44] Suo, Steve and Dave Hogan, *The Oregonian*, October 28, 2002. Internal references to Bill Lunch at the University of Oregon.

A uniquely insightful story appeared in the *Omaha World Herald* concerning the relationship between mass polarization and legislative divisiveness:

> *Mirroring the attitude of the polarized public, the Nebraska Legislature on Wednesday rejected a ban on fetal-tissue research for the second year in a row. The outcome did not surprise one legislative observer, who said issues that sharply divide constituents have the same effect on their elected representatives.*[45]

The consequences of polarization on policy outcomes are less frequently mentioned in newspapers, but they do sometimes raise interesting points, like the possible shutdown of government in Minnesota.

> *Welfare time limits, children's health insurance and family planning programs are emerging as major hurdles in the Legislature's effort to avert a partial state government shutdown on Sunday.*[46]

> *Republicans are back. "No more gridlock," said a jubilant state Republican Party Chairman Bruce Benson after the GOP regained control of the Colorado State Senate. No one was happier than Gov. Bill Owens who campaigned hard and donated money to help with several key races. "You've got to have a Senate you can work with," Owens said after learning of the GOP victory. "The last two years have been very difficult. "This will allow us to move our agenda forward. Republicans worked hard for this."*[47]

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[45] Tysver, Robynn , *Omaha World Herald*. April 12, 2001.

[46] Staff Writers, *Star Tribune*. June 27, 2001.

[47] Sanko, John J. *Rocky Mountain News*. November 6, 2002.

This state cannot abide the gridlock of another 49-49 tie in the House. Heading into leaner times and the same old trans-portation woes, someone has to be in charge and held accountable. Deadlock is a gift to incumbents in both parties. They shrug their shoulders, decry the stalemate and whisper sweet nothings to voters about what they wanted to do.[48]

These stories from individuals who report on the front lines of legislative politics offer some insights into the causes and effects of legislative polarization: redistricting, campaign money, mirroring a polarized public. What follows is a discussion and presentation of findings regarding the possible causes of polarization. The second section of this chapter deals with the consequences of polarization.

Why Can't We All Just Get Along?

I measure chamber polarization as the mean ideological difference between the parties in each legislative chamber. The ideology of each party, within each chamber, is the aggregate (mean) roll call liberalism obtained from the interest group scorecards previously discussed. In the primary statistical analyses (those presented in tables throughout this chapter), only economic roll call polarization is included. This is because the aggregate social roll call polarization leaves too few cases (23 chambers) for the statistical models to produce reliable estimates. To assess the effects of social roll call polarization, I will use simple correlations and present those findings in the text.[49]

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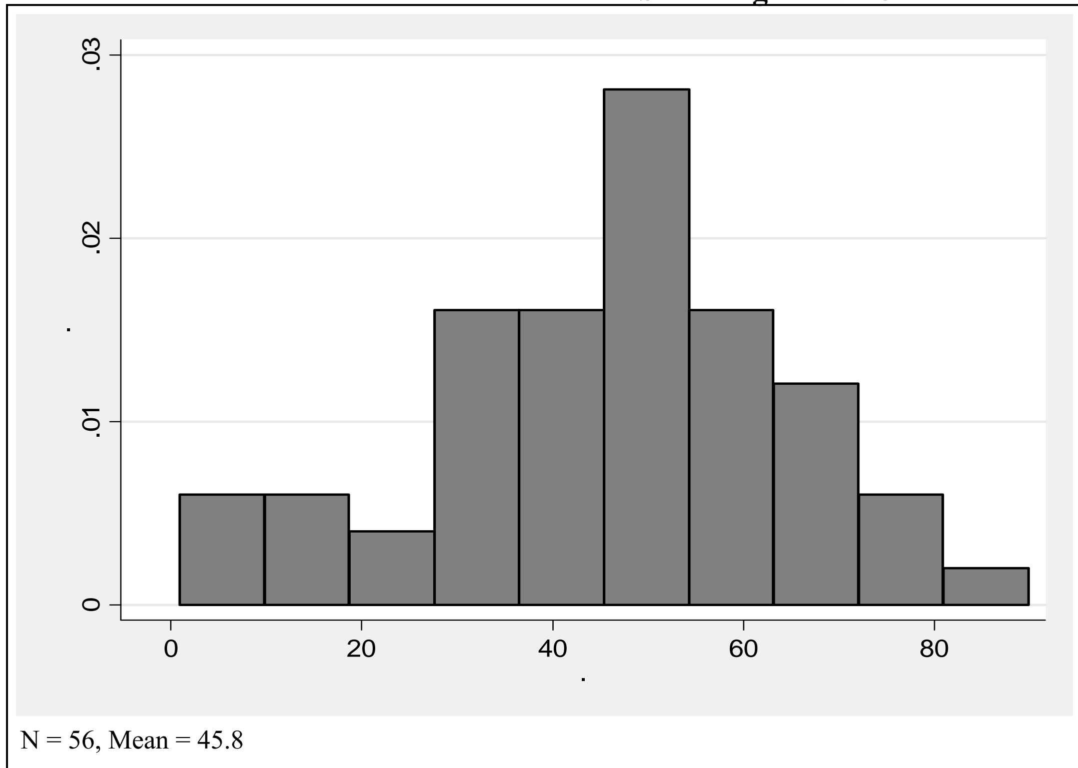
[48] Dickie, Lance. *The Seattle Times*. October 26, 2001

[49] Note that unless otherwise specified, when I discuss chamber polarization I am referring to economic policy polarization.

As presented in Chapter 3, some states, like California and Michigan, are wildly polarized; while others, like Kansas, Kentucky and Wyoming, exhibit no significant ideological differences between the parties. Economic polarization in the 55 chambers under analysis is distributed normally with an average ideological chasm of a robust 45.8 percentage points. Thus, parties in state legislatures, like the contemporary Congress (Aldrich 1995; Coleman 1997; Rohde 1991; Sinclair 2000, and Stonecash et al. 2003) are engaged in a good deal of partisan struggle.

Figure 6.1:
The Distribution of Economic Polarization in State Legislative Chambers



N = 56, Mean = 45.8

What explains the gulf, or in some cases the hairline fracture, that separates the parties in state legislatures? I expect that a combination of opinion forces, electoral characteristics, and institutional variation will help explain the varying levels of observed polarization.

Opinion Forces and Legislative Polarization

Legislative polarization may simply be a reflection of *mass opinion polarization*. States with a polarized populace, where Democrats are very liberal and Republicans very conservative, may produce legislatures that reflect those divisions. When mass ideological differences between state partisans are relatively small, legislative parties will likely be programmatic and contest the middle ground; however, states with substantial mass ideological differences are more likely to have issue-oriented, polarized, parties (Paddock 1998, 774). The most straightforward conceptualization of mass polarization is simply the degree to which Democratic and Republican identifiers are ideologically distinct. I measure this using an updated formulation of the mass polarization index devised by Erikson, Wright and McIver (1993) described in detail in Chapter 3.

Elite opinion polarization may also help predict legislative divisiveness. One of the most consistent findings in the political party literature over the past 30 years is the sustained ideological polarization between national Democratic and Republican party activists (for example see Kirkpatrick 1976; Poole and Rosenthal 1984; Stone, Rapoport, and Abromowitz 1994; Jackson, Bigelow, and Green 2004). Although the national parties

have polarized, at the state level, a good deal of variation still exists (see Chapter 3).[50] As such, the states are a useful venue for testing the degree to which elite level polarization spills over into legislative divisiveness.

Electoral Characteristics and Legislative Polarization

Another elite level measure related to polarization is the amount of *campaign money from interest groups* circulating around the statehouse. In Chapter 4, I hypothesized that money from liberal groups would lead to more liberal roll call votes and conservative group money would lead to more conservative legislative voting behavior; and in Chapter 5, I hypothesized that campaign money would lead to greater levels of roll call extremism. As such, my expectation is that when interest group money increases so does legislative polarization. As discussed previously, interest groups do not typically represent the ideological middle (Danzau and Munger 1986) and in states where groups give significant amounts of money, the result may be increased levels of polarization. However, the relatively modest effects of interest group money in the previous two chapters raises some concerns about this expectation. Perhaps groups do not give because they want to increase the ideological nature of roll call votes, but rather they are seeking access to important members regardless of their past support or prospects for future support. Especially among business and labor groups this appears to be the case.

[50] Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993) also find the elite fundamentally divided (as measured by the opinions of legislators, party activists, and party identifiers), however they choose not to test the effects of elite opinion along side mass opinion. Instead, they argue that elite opinion is a reflection of mass opinion, which is itself a reflection of underlying state political culture.

Campaign receipts, in this chapter, are measured in dollar amounts per state resident (see Chapter 3 for more information on the source of this data).

Party competition in legislative elections, or average *electoral margin* of victory, is likely related to chamber polarization. Since the 1940's, scholars have suggested a link between party competition and state policy and organizational differences (Key 1949; Fenton 1966; Sharkansky and Hofferbert 1969; Dye 1984; Barrilleaux 1986). The direction of the link between electoral competitiveness and chamber polarization, however, is not entirely clear. As mentioned, popular accounts of legislative unrest are often traced back to redistricting plans that emphasize electoral safety over two-party competition. The argument goes that redistricting plans eliminate competitive seats and thus remove the most centrist members of both parties. Evidence to support this argument, however, has been hard to find at the Congressional level (but see Carson, Carson, Crespin, Finocchiaro, and Rohde 2003).[51] An obvious problem with the redistricting explanation is that it cannot explain increases of polarization in the Senate and in House districts that do not significantly change their borders (Theriault 2005).

Furthermore, it may be naive to reason that more divisive elections will lead to less partisan rancor in the chambers. Candidates running in close elections raise and spend more money (Herrnson 2004) and are more likely to engage in negative campaigning (Kahn and Kenney 2004; Damore 2002). These are not the ingredients of future conciliation and moderation. In other words, it seems perfectly plausible that electoral ugliness will spill over into governing divisiveness in the form of partisan polarization. Because the direction of the relationship is unclear, I test the hypotheses that

[51] These authors find that more ideological members in Congress often follow redistricting.

average margin of victory relates to chamber polarization. Like Holbrook and VanDunk (1993), I measure electoral margin using the average percent of victory for all races in a given chamber (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed explanation).[52]

Institutional Characteristics and Legislative Polarization

The vast majority of scholarship analyzing the effects of institutional characteristics deals with their effects on legislative output. I will discuss this work in the second part of this chapter while analyzing the effects of chamber polarization on legislative productivity. In addition to legislative output, however, institutional characteristics may also help explain levels of chamber polarization.

Interest group density in the states may result in greater levels of polarization between the parties. Parties tend to form around broad views of public policy, which encapsulate or provide an umbrella for a variety of interest group organizations. Strong parties, like those in at the national level, have some control over which groups join their coalition. At the state level, however, weaker parties are often captured by their interest group elements, which then come to define the party (Thomas and Hrebenar 1990). Given the ability to define partisanship, it is likely that these groups will do so in a polarizing way as their policy goals are usually ideologically extreme. Given the ability of groups to influence the policy agenda, and with legislators as their agents, I expect that increasing interest group density will lead to more polarized legislatures.

[52] Some measures of party competition (Ranney 1976; Bibby and Holbrook 1996) take into account the proportion and duration of party success in gubernatorial and state legislative elections. These measures are appropriate when studying policy output, but because chamber polarization is only a legislative characteristic, I chose to use a competitiveness measure that doesn't extend beyond legislative elections.

Another institutional characteristic thought to relate to the level of party polarization is *legislative professionalism*. Party leadership is stronger in professional, as opposed to amateur, legislatures (Patterson 1997). Leaders in professional chambers have the power to distribute campaign funds and provide members with desirable committee positions. Additionally, the party leadership in professional legislatures can control the legislative agenda – making it difficult for individual members to shirk their issue priorities. As such, professional legislatures tend to grow polarized. Some have referred to this phenomenon as "the sick legislature syndrome" (Mahtesian 1997) where the professionalization of legislatures, which was expected to usher in positive changes to the chambers, actually had unintended consequences including general bad behavior on the part of legislators and a significant level of polarization. Based on this, I expect to find professional chambers more polarized vis-à-vis more amateur legislative institutions.

The presence of *divided government* likely affects the level of polarization in legislative chambers, but the direction of this relationship is not always clear. When different parties control one of the chambers or the governorship, the degree of divisiveness between the parties may decrease as legislators attempt to work together to gain legislative accomplishments. This is simply because in order to get anything done legislators and the executive must be willing to deviate from their ideological polls and find common ground with the other party; however, the parties may decide to remain ideological, perhaps blocking out the governor of a different party, thereby setting up a future electoral battle. This seems to be true in Maryland where a Democratic dominated state legislature is intent on stalling or squashing most attempts by the Republican Governor to gain passage of his agenda. As such, the divided government hypothesis is

tested with the expectation that it affects levels of polarization, but without a clear direction specified.

Similarly mixed logic applies to the relationship between chamber competition and legislative divisiveness. When one party dominates a chamber, it could be the minority party seeks to distinguish itself and act as a "responsible" minority party constantly biting at the heels of the majority. On the other hand, in an effort to achieve some policy goals met, the minority party may decide to moderate. More likely, close partisan division likely leads to greater levels of polarization. Charles Mahtesian (1997) describes this logic in a case study of the Minnesota House. "With party control up for grabs, [partisanship] hardened into a conviction on both sides that they were entitled to pursue their goals by any means necessary." Both possibilities are tested here. Chamber competition is measured as the absolute value of the difference between percent of seats held by each party (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed presentation of chamber competition).

A number of control variables are included that also represent institutional characteristics. Although I pay less attention to the effect of these variables, I can posit some brief expectations. I expect polarization is greater in the *lower chambers* of state government, since, like the U.S. Senate, the upper houses of state government are typically smaller in number and more informal in their operation. In addition, they often elect members every four or six years, perhaps leading to less polarization. Percent of the legislature made up of *minorities*, which are overwhelmingly liberal and Democratic (Nelson 1991; Conyers and Wallace 1976), may result in more polarized legislatures. Like minority legislators, *female* members tend to be more Democratic and liberal than

their male colleagues (Leader 1977), but they also may bring a more civilized approach to legislating – perhaps making chambers less polarized.

The Causes of Polarization

Increased elite polarization in states causes a significant increase in legislative divisiveness. As expected, legislators exhibit similar tendencies to the elite level communities from which they are drawn. Legislators are not average citizens. Republican legislators tend to be male, White, and drawn from the business community; while Democratic legislators are typically more diverse both in terms of race and gender and often come from backgrounds in law. All legislators are relatively wealthy and well educated (Patterson 1997). An analysis of the demographics of party elites reveals an almost identical snapshot (Jackson, Green and Bigelow 2004). Party elites are similar to their parties' legislators both demographically and ideologically and as such, this finding should be no surprise.

This elite polarization finding is both statistically and substantively significant. A chamber with elite polarization one standard deviation below the mean has a predicted legislative polarization of 35.5 percent, whereas a chamber with elite polarization one standard deviation above the mean has a predicted legislative polarization of 49.1, for a difference of nearly 15 percent. Over the entire range of elite polarization, the difference in expected legislative polarization is 40 percent. These are large increases in chamber divisiveness produced by elite level polarization.

Table 6.1:
The Causes of Legislative Polarization

	β (se)	P >|t|
Opinion Forces		
Elite Polarization	13.891 (4.718)	.003
Mass Polarization	-7.839 (6.583)	.122
Electoral Characteristics		
Average Percent of Contributions from Economic. Group	2.832 (7.725)	.359
Average Margin of Victory	-.314 (.127)	.010
Chamber/State Characteristics		
Interest Group Density	.013 (.008)	.063
Legislative Professionalism	22.294 (19.696)	.134
Divided Government	10.423 (4.915)	.021
Chamber Competition	-.017 (.212)	.468
Controls		
Lower House	-1..366 (3.550)	.352
Percent Minority	.654 (.473)	.089
Percent Female	-.101 (.515)	.423
South	-22.604 (8.819)	.008
Northeast	-.609 (6.556)	.464
West	2.540 (8.555)	.385
Constant	17.402 (15.970)	142.5
Adjusted R Squared	.632	
N	56	

Note: OLS Regression Coefficients with robust standard errors adjusted for clustering by chamber. One tailed significance tests.

Table 6.2:
Predicted Legislative Polarization

Elite Polarization in the State	
1.18 (min)	17.5
2.47 (-1 sd)	35.5
2.96 (mean)	42.3
3.45 (+1 sd)	49.1
4.06 (max)	57.5
Interest Group Density	
221 (min)	37.0
304 (-1 sd)	38.1
616 (mean)	42.3
928 (+1 sd)	46.4
1348 (max)	51.9
Average Winning Margin in the Legislature	
9.8 (min)	53.7
31.6 (-1 sd)	46.9
46.4 (mean)	42.3
61.2 (+1 sd)	37.6
78.4 (max)	32.2
Status of Government	
Unitary	42.3
Divided	52.7

Note: These predicted estimates are based on the OLS Regression coefficients presented in Table 6.1. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, government is not divided, the chamber is House, and the region is Mid-West.

Interestingly, states with more polarized mass partisans have less overall legislative divisiveness. This finding falls just short of the p<.1 level of significance, but its direction and closeness to statistical significance is at odds with expectations.[53] As discussed previously, the measure of legislative polarization used in this study captures economic issues polarization. In Chapter 4, I found overwhelming evidence that legislators respond to their constituents on social issues, but only weak statistical indications they are responsive on economic issues. While this does not explain the negative relationship found here, it does offer a clue. Running a simple correlation between mass opinion polarization and both social and economic legislative polarization reveals this to be true. The correlation of mass opinion polarization with social legislative divisiveness is a strong .404, while the correlation with economic polarization is -.100. Complimenting the evidence in Chapter 4, this result suggests that not only legislators, but actually legislatures are more responsive to mass opinion on social, as opposed to economic, issues.

Theoretically, the direction of two-party competition to legislative polarization was unclear. The results suggest that instead of decreasing legislative divisiveness, electoral competition actually increases polarization. As the margin of victory increases, legislative polarization decreases. This suggests that divisive campaigns may spill over into divisive legislating. When the average winning margin in a chamber is one standard deviation above the mean (less competitive), the predicted level of polarization in the

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[53] This finding is not necessarily a function of multi-colliniarity between elite and mass opinion (the correlation between the two is .300)

chamber is 37.6; however, one standard deviation below the mean (more competitive) results in a predicted polarization of 46.9.

As expected, interest group density in state capitols leads to greater levels of legislative polarization. This is the second elite level measure to reach statistical significance. Moving from a state one standard deviation below the mean to a state one standard deviation above the mean (in interest group density), results in a legislative polarization increase of 8 percent. Over the entire range, interest group density adds 15 percent more polarization to a legislative chamber.

Finally, divided government produces more polarization than unitary state government. Theoretically, it was unclear whether legislators would come together under divided government in the hopes of accomplishing legislative goals – what we might call the Clinton model – or instead act as opposition parties. The evidence supports the latter. I find divided government significantly more polarized than unitary government, regardless of other controls being included in or excluded from the model. A unitary state government has a predicted legislative polarization of 42 percent, whereas a divided state government has a predicted legislative polarization of 53 percent.

"It's not that we can't do things…"[54]

Polarization has potential consequences for the operation of government and legislative outcomes. Polarized chambers produce unruly behavior such as name-calling and ad homonym attacks on the part of legislators (Jamieson and Falk 2000; Uslaner

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[54] "It's not that we can't do things…it's that there are pressures stopping us." Senator John Marty, the 1994 Democratic gubernatorial nominee in Minnesota speaking about an unproductive legislative session – (quoted in Mahtesian 1997).

1993) and fuels the negative attitudes citizens have toward government (King 1997; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2003). But what about the effect polarization has on legislative productivity?

To measure legislative productivity, I use two related measures. The average number of bills introduced (per member) in each state and the ratio of bills introduced to those enacted (minus 100 – to give a measure of stalemate as opposed to productivity). These are essentially the same measures used by Gray and Lowery (2000) in their study of interest group density on legislative productivity and come from *The Book of the States 2001,* which provides an account of all bills and resolutions passed each session. I do not include resolutions in this measure, as they are often honorific as opposed to substantive. Nor do I consider bills passed during special sessions, and for states with biannual legislatures not meeting in 2000, I use figures from 1999. This measure is much cruder than those commonly used at the congressional level, which analyze "significant," "landmark," or "salient" legislation (Mayhew 1991; Cameron, Howell, Adler, and Riemann 1997; Binder 1999), but they represent the best measure readily available at the state legislative level.

Congressional scholarship shows that polarization produces greater levels of gridlock (Binder 1999; Jones 2001). The drawback of congressional studies is that to observe changes in polarization one must look back over several decades and control for a host of temporal circumstances in order to observe changes in polarization. Studies at the state level can compare differing levels of polarization in a cross-sectional analysis;

yet, no state level study (that I can find) has included legislative polarization in an empirical analysis of legislative gridlock.[55]

For the same reasons as in Congress, I tie *state legislative polarization*, theoretically, to gridlock. I hypothesize that when parties polarize, the likelihood of passing their legislation likely decreases. Through the separation of powers and bicameralism, extraordinary levels of consensus are needed to pass legislation (Krehbiel 1998). Most states do not have a filibuster provision in either legislative chamber. Nonetheless, veto threats from governors (which in most states require super-majority overrides) and relatively weak party control (which instills a degree of roll call uncertainty) makes polarization a detriment to the passage of legislation. Furthermore, greater polarization increases the incentive for legislators to engage in strategic disagreement (or the "blame game"), which leads to bargaining failure and gridlock (Gilmour 1995, Groseclose and McCarty 2000).[56]

No other cause of legislative gridlock in Congress has received more attention than *divided government* (Sundquist 1988; Cutler 1988; Mayhew 1991; Fiorina 1996; Kelly 1993; Cameron, Howell, Adler, and Riemann 1997; Edwards, Barrett, and Peake 1997; Binder 1999). The divided government hypothesis typically holds that legislation is less likely to pass when the President's (or in my case Governor's) party does not control both houses of the legislature. The logic simple: the separation of powers requires a great deal of agreement between the executive, and both chambers of the legislature. Unified

[55] An exception to this is Uslaner (2006), but he is looking at polarization effects on quality of government not legislative productivity.

[56] Unfortunately, this can only be inferred as going hand and hand with polarization as no direct measures of such activity exist at the state legislative level.

party control is thought to provide the necessary condition for significant policy accomplishments, and its absence to preclude any chance of productivity.

While intuitively pleasing, empirical support for the divided government hypothesis is mixed. Mayhew's (1991) analysis of "significant laws" found no evidence that divided government hindered their enactment. Cameron, Howell, Adler, and Riemann (1997) found that divided government hinders enactment of "landmark legislation" and increases enactment of less significant policy. Binder (1999) finds that divided government decreases the amount of "salient legislation" passed into law, even though the effect is not dramatic.

A problem with the standard operationalization of divided government is the concept is usually treated dichotomously (divided, or not divided) (but see Binder 1999). This assumes that unified Democratic and unified Republican government operates the same way. Republicans, however, may not be as opposed to stalemate as Democrats since it prevents government action – a conservative ideal. As such, I treat divided government as a three part dummy variable with unified Democratic and unified Republican government in the models and divided government left out as the base. I expect that divided government will produce more productivity, but leave open the possibility that unified Republican government may be purposefully less productive.

I expect *chamber competition* to drive up the likelihood of stalemate. When parties are closely divided (numerically, not necessarily ideologically), the number of votes required to block legislation decreases, which likely increases the occurrence of stalemate.

In a similar analysis to this one, Gray and Lowery (2000) find that number of *interest groups* registered in a state increases the occurrence of stalemate. Their finding supports the view that groups block-up the system (sometimes called hyperpluralism), producing an inability on the part of government to act. This finding is supportive of the neopluralist school of thought (Walker 1983; Heclo 1978), which emphasizes the extensive conflict that exists among interest organizations. Conflict raises the costs associated with logrolling and coalition building (Heinz et al. 1993) leading eventually to legislative gridlock. In short, increases in interest group activity "cancel out" groups influence (Truman 1951) and causes gridlock.

Legislative professionalism should increase legislative productivity. Professional legislatures meet all year round, offer incentives encouraging legislating is the primary vocation of the members, and provide for professional staff assistants, all designed to make government work. In addition to being a theoretically relevant concept, professionalism is an important control variable; it captures the length of session, which is a logical control in any model that deals with the number of bills introduced and passed.[57]

Controls are included for the *chamber* of the legislature, the *power of the governor*, the *solvency* of the state budget, and *region*. Since governors are players in the policy-process (in some state more than others), it is expected that increased gubernatorial powers will decrease the likelihood of stalemate (controlling for divided government). States with budgetary problems may make it impossible for members to

[57] I included a measure for the length of session, but it was so correlated with professionalism (actually a sample of it) that I removed it from the final analysis.

introduce and/or pass legislation. These variables fall outside of the main focus of this project and are included as control variables but not discussed at length.

The Consequences of Polarization

Legislative polarization increases the level of stalemate in state legislatures (see Table 6.3). Controlling for everything else in the model, a one-unit increase in legislative polarization nets a .144 percentage increase in the proportion of bills not enacted. A chamber with one standard deviation less polarization (than the mean) produces a 79 percent bill failure rate (holding everything else constant – see footnote in the table); whereas a legislature with one standard deviation more polarization has an 85 percent failure rate (see Table 6.3). Across the entire range of chamber polarization, the increase is 12 percent. This increase, while modest, represents the most substantively significant increase of any of the main explanatory variables (see Table 6.5). Legislative polarization, however, does not significantly decrease the number of bills introduced per member. The effect of social policy polarization on stalemate would likely be less impressive.

Table 6.3:
Legislative Productivity and the Consequences of Legislative Polarization

	Introductions Per Member		100-Percentage of Introductions Enacted (Stalemate)	
	β (se)	P >|t|	β (se)	P >|t|
Legislative Polarization	-.220 (294)	.227	.144 (.098)	.069
Republican Unified Government	-28.529 (9.137)	.001	6.359 (3.031)	.018
Democratic Unified Government	-17.758 (14.607)	.112	-1.001 (4.845)	.418
Chamber Competition	-.961 (.476)	.022	.065 (.158)	.341
Interest Group Density	.028 (.020)	.088	.003 (.007)	.320
Legislative Professionalism	82.906 (37.455)	.014	-15.095 (12.424)	.112
Controls				
Lower House	-29.833 (6.560)	.001	-.166 (2.176)	.470
Governor Power Index	14.950 (10.652)	.080	6.305 (3.533)	.037
Budgetary Solvency	-.001 (.002)	.475	-.001 (.001)	.173
South	19.650 (16.653)	.119	16.703 (5.524)	.001
Northeast	38.259 (10.074)	.001	5.198 (3.341)	.060
West	19.559 (9.009)	.015	12.812 (2.988)	.001
Constant	5.046 (49.063)	.459	52.214 (16.274)	.001
R Squared	.617		.392	
N	55		55	

Note: Note: Seemingly Unrelated Regression Coefficients. One tailed significance tests.

Table 6.4:
Predicted Bill Introduction

Status of Government	
Republican Unitary	1.5
Democratic Unitary	12.2
Divided	30.0
Chamber Competition	
8.6 (min)	47.3
30.7 (-1 sd)	26.1
39.8 (mean)	16.8
48.9 (+1 sd)	8.6
50 (max)	7.5
Interest Group Density	
221 (min)	5.9
304 (-1 sd)	8.3
616 (mean)	16.9
928 (+1 sd)	25.6
1348 (max)	37.3
Legislative Professionalism	
.056 (min)	1.7
.076 (-1 sd)	3.4
.238 (mean)	16.9
.400 (+1 sd)	30.2
.659 (max)	51.7

Note: These predicted estimates are based on the OLS Regression coefficients presented in Table 6.3. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, government is divided, the chamber is House, and the region is Mid-West.

Table 6.5:
Predicted Stalemate

Legislative Polarization	
1.0 (min)	75.3
28.2 (-1 sd)	79.2
46.8 (mean)	81.9
65.4 (+1 sd)	84.6
81.9 (max)	87.0
Status of Government	
Republican Unitary	88.2
Democratic Unitary	80.1
Divided	81.9
Legislative Professionalism	
.056 (min)	84.7
.076 (-1 sd)	84.4
.238 (mean)	81.9
.400 (+1 sd)	79.5
.659 (max)	75.6

Note: These predicted estimates are based on the OLS Regression coefficients presented in Table 6.3. Except for the experimental variables - all continuous variables are set at their means. For binary (non-experimental) variables, government is divided, the chamber is House, and the region is Mid-West.

What about the effect of social policy polarization? While economic polarization correlates with stalemate at .25, social policy polarization only correlates at a .03 level. Again, this test does not control for any of the other variables but it is highly unlikely that a correlation of .03, when specified correctly, would suddenly jump to levels even approaching statistical significance.

The status of government (divided, Democratic unified, Republican unified) relates to both the number of introductions and the legislative success rate. Unified governments introduce a uniformly smaller proportion of legislation. Especially under Republican government, less legislation is considered, which is expected due to the conservative tendency of Republicans. Democratic government, however, is also less likely than divided government to see a great number of bills introduced.

Holding everything else constant, the predicted number of bills introduced under Republican unified government is 28 percent less than under divided government; it is 18 percent less for unified Democratic government (see Table 6.2). A degree of certainty exists when one party controls the levers of power in state government as the fate of legislation is predetermined based on party politics. Divided government raises the level of uncertainty, thus increasing bill introductions. Furthermore, under divided government the parties have more of an incentive to distinguish themselves from one another. One way they distinguish themselves, in the hopes of garnering electoral support, is to introduce legislation that is either popular or will distinguish them among some subset of the population.

The status of governments' relation to stalemate is even more interesting. Stalemate is most common under unified Republican government, significantly less common under divided government, and least common under unified Democratic government. This effect reveals the importance of not thinking about divided government as a dichotomous variable, but rather a three part dummy variable. Republicans do not want government to do much, as revealed in the substantial level of stalemate that exists under unified Republican government. Divided government is the next most unproductive form of government, likely for all the reasons stated in the classic hypothesis regarding its effect on gridlock. Finally, some evidence exists that unified Democratic government prevents stalemate, although this particular component is not significant.[58]

States with denser interest group communities introduce a greater number of bills. These results are extremely significant (see Table 6.4). Moving from least dense to densest state, there is a corresponding increase of 32 bills introduced per member. Unlike Gray and Lowery (2000), I find no evidence of interest groups decreasing the proportion of bills passed.[59]

Finally, legislative professionalism is found to both increase the number of bills introduced in a chamber and increase the likelihood of passage. The increase in the number of bills introduced per member is quite dramatic (see Table 6.4), but it is important to remember that professionalism is controlling for the length of the session, so

[58] When specified differently (without chamber competition) the model also produces significant findings for unified Democratic government.

[59] Their finding does hold up when I exclude the South from my analysis.

an increase is expected. However, the fact that professionalism decreases the level of stalemate is a substantively interesting finding. As professionalism increases, the level of stalemate drops (by more than 10 percent over the entire range, and 5 percent between standard deviations). Thus professionalism, while implicated in increasing polarization (the results just missed significance) also acts to combat the negative effect of polarization on legislative productivity.

Summary

As citizens love their representatives but hate Congress (Parker and Davidson 1979), citizens seem to love their extremist legislator but not polarized politics in their state capitol. In sum, the indicators found to exacerbate legislative polarization are elite opinion polarization, electoral competition, interest group density and divided government. Two of these indicators (elite polarization and interest group density) are elite level phenomenon; chamber marginality is an electoral characteristic, and divided government is an organizational characteristic of state government related to electoral divisions within the state.

Regarding economic polarization, elite (and not mass) polarization drives legislative divisiveness. Although social policy polarization could not be tested in as rigorous a fashion, the correlation between it and mass opinion divisiveness was much stronger than for economic polarization. This result complements the findings in Chapters 4 and 5, which show economic policy a consistent function of elite level factors, and social policy related closely to mass opinion.

Regarding the effect of electoral competition on the level of polarization – reformers beware. I find that redistricting plans that heighten competition will have the

unintended consequence of increasing partisan polarization. The idea that chambers with members worried about their reelection will produce an ideological coming together of the parties is simply not born out in this analysis. Competition does not necessarily produce moderation.

Polarization in legislative chambers increases the likelihood of stalemate. This finding lends real world importance to this project. Understanding what leads legislators to extremes is not only interesting, but has implications for the policy process. The result is not just legislative ugliness or a dissatisfied public; it actually hinders the productivity of government. In addition, this finding represents an important contribution to the literature for which the divided government hypothesis has received the lion's share of attention.

Regarding divided government, it proved useful to conceive of the status of government not in a bivariate way, but instead as a three part construct. Republicans and Democratic controlled governments do not view policy productivity the same way. I find that Republican government produces the most stalemate, divided government comes in second, and Democratic government produces the lowest level of stalemate. Democrats want to use government of accomplish things, Republicans largely do not, and when government is divided the two sides struggle over the ability of government to produce.

Finally, legislative professionalism, shown in previous chapters to both facilitate district congruence and produce greater levels of extremism, is likewise found to increase polarization, but decrease levels of stalemate. This finding offers encouragement to those on both sides of the professionalism movement. Professional legislatures are contentious, nasty (Mahtesian 1997) and polarized, but they are also more productive.

Chapter 7: The Prospects for State Legislative Responsiveness at the Dawn of a New Century

"Unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all this talk about democracy is nonsense" (Key 1961).

From town councils to the U.S. Senate, and since colonial times, what we now call the United States has always included a compilation of representative democracies. Through free and fair elections, citizens choose their leaders whom they entrust with the formal task of deciding public policy. This design frees citizens from participation in the day-to-day activities of government by providing representatives to act in their stead. Our representative system is democracy on a manageable scale. The question we should never stop asking, however, is: How well are our representatives responding to the needs and desires of those they represent? If the lawmakers we send to town and city councils, the various state capitals, and Washington D.C., fail to act on our behalf the moment the chamber door closes, all this talk about democracy, as Key suggests, is nonsense.

The purpose of this dissertation was to assess the degrees to which state legislators are responsive to their various constituencies. The guiding research questions are: 1) Under what circumstances are state legislators most responsive to their districts, parties, and interest group supporters? 2) What drives certain legislators to take extreme issue positions? and 3) What explains and what are the consequences of state legislative polarization? The results of my analysis show that responsiveness often occurs, but is conditional upon different circumstances.

Motivating Responsiveness

Responsiveness requires legislators who are motivated to reflect constituency preferences. Three conditions that tap into legislative motivations are issue type, electoral competition, and institutional capacity or professionalism. I find each of these conditions influence legislative responsiveness.

Issue Type and Representation

Perhaps my most interesting finding is that legislators are responsive to their constituents on social but not economic issues. Districts elect legislators who cast roll call votes on social issues that reflect their constituencies' ideological orientations. Under typical circumstances, the ideological orientation of the district does not matter nearly as much on economic issues.

More than at any point in recent times, social or cultural issues define our political consciousness. People have opinions on culture war issues like abortion and gay marriage, and these salient issues receive the lion's share of media attention, tend to cluster together in ideologically coherent ways, and elicit strong emotional responses. Having coherent opinions across these issues provides constituents' political strength. State legislators, either through a shared personal belief or in fear of electoral retribution, give the people what they want on social issues. Either way, legislators are responsive.

Disturbing, however, is the lack of responsiveness to districts on economic issues. As districts become more liberal, the economic roll call votes of legislators do not. When districts are diverse economically (significant portions of a district working in various economic sectors), legislators do moderate their economic roll call votes to a certain extent. However, these issues, which float under the radar screen of public attention, are

not dealt with in nearly as responsive a fashion as social issues. Therefore, our government is not fully living up to its representational ideals – as understood through policy responsiveness.

I find representative democracy to be at its best when people have opinions on issues. Representatives tend to respond, legislatively, to expressed issue positions; however, an equally important part of responsiveness is the capacity among legislators to represent the unarticulated needs of their constituencies (Jewell 1983). If citizens are not particularly cognizant of a certain issue, group of issues, or in the case of economic issues an entire type of legislation, it is still the responsibility of their elected officials to respond to their needs. This task appears to be the point where state legislative responsiveness is failing and that breakdown carries with it important consequences. Economic issues include such things as the right to sue a Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), utility deregulation, education tax credits, health coverage, and public retirement programs. These issues directly relate to the lives of almost every citizen. Gay marriage, abortion, and flag burning are of direct importance to much smaller subset of the population.

Who then are legislators responding to on economic issues? This research indicates that organized interests, especially business interests, who donate more money to incumbent legislators than other groups and have the largest lobbying presence in the states, are much more powerful at influencing economic roll call votes as opposed to district constituents. These groups often represent a narrow cross-section of America, and my findings show that the trade off between organized and unorganized constituencies,

on economic issues, is very near zero-sum. The gains of the organized are the losses of the unorganized.

In March of 2006, I witnessed this dynamic play out in the Maryland State Senate. The senators were debating final passage of a bill to impose strict regulations on coal-fired power plants that do not decrease emissions. Before the final vote, several lawmakers rose to oppose its passage. One-by-one they defended the economic interests of the power companies and it became evident that lobbyists were calling in directly to the desks of senators while they sat in session. On multiple occasions, the President of the Senate stopped the proceedings because the phone calls were clear violations of Senate rules. In the end, the proposal stalled and final passage is still pending.

Electoral Competitiveness and Representation

Constituency opinion, when interacted with a legislator's party affiliation, is more influential on legislative voting behavior when members come from uncompetitive districts. This is because members who win election to safe seats, which usually have a one party orientation, are so ideologically similar to their districts (due to district homogeneity) that responsiveness can happen almost unconsciously. This stands in stark contrast to the prevailing wisdom that representatives respond to their constituents when fearing for their reelection. I find just the opposite: when legislators have a diverse, incoherent, constituency they will tend to continue being ideological, hoping their behavior will appeal to at least a majority of their district, but knowing they are not being responsive to the other half even though they may still fear for their reelection.

Electoral competition also influences the relationship between legislators and their organized constituencies. Business and labor donations influence legislative roll call

voting on economic issues when legislators are from uncompetitive districts. This is because labor and business groups pursue an access-oriented strategy. They have the resources to target their donations using an investment strategy, strengthening their relationship with legislators who need not worry about their reelection. The relationship between ideological group money and social issue roll call voting, however, is just the opposite. The influence is strongest when legislators are from competitive districts. Social issue groups target their relatively limited contributions with an eye toward reshuffling the membership of state legislatures. They are not seeking access to the entrenched legislative membership; they want to change the makeup of the chambers to suit their issue priorities. The goals of groups drive their donation strategies, which are intimately related to the electoral competition member's face, which in turn drives group influence.

Professionalism and Representation

The contextual effect of legislative professionalism is important to understanding responsiveness. I find legislative professionalism to enhance representation. District ideology, although not effective by itself in influencing economic roll call activity, does have a greater influence on legislators who work in professional legislatures. Capacity enables responsiveness, even on these low salience economic issues. This finding supports the view of many scholars who viewed the professionalization of state legislatures in the latter half of the 20th century as a healthy development for representative democracy. As such, this result challenges the critics of legislative professionalism who argue professionalism serves to insulate representative s from their constituents, leaving legislators less responsive to district interests. This is simply not

born out in my analysis. If legislative institutions are the engines of democracy, I find professional capacity to be the fuel.

Responsiveness to interest groups, however, is also found to be greater in professional legislatures. In this instance, the relationship between district constituents and interest group supporters is not zero-sum in nature. It is important to note, however, that the increased responsiveness of legislators to interest group supporters in professional states, although statistically significant, is quite modest.

Reformers and Responsiveness

Reforming political processes and institutions often results in the creation of unintended consequences. Sometimes these effects are relatively minor, but in other instances, the cure turns out to be worse than the disease. Several reforms directed at state legislatures (including redistricting proposals, campaign finance reforms, and term limits) have the potential to interfere with responsiveness. As such, my findings offer some clues to the potential effects that these reform proposals may have on state legislative responsiveness. Since policy responsiveness is central to representation, and representation is central to democratic design, the unintended consequences of these reforms could potentially strike a blow to democracy in the American states.

Foundational work in political science warned of the dangers associated with a lack of political competition (see Key 1949, 1956). The focus of much of this work related to the negative effects of one-party hegemony throughout most of the history of the American South. The concern is that democracy is not functioning properly when reelection rates are as low in the U.S. as they are in Cuba, China, and the old Soviet Union. Furthermore, persistently uncompetitive elections drive down participation rates

in politics because citizens do not view their vote as important. In the states, various laws and regulations govern the drawing of district lines – both for the state legislatures and the U.S. House. In most states, partisans in either the legislative or the executive branches of government make redistricting decisions. Some states are experimenting with non-partisan or bi-partisan redistricting commissions that have a primary motive to increase political competition.[60] My findings, however, suggest they should carefully consider the effects that their designs will have on legislative responsiveness.

When districts are more heterogeneous, political competition likely increases, but responsiveness to constituents can suffer. I do not find district opinion to significantly influence legislative roll call voting in competitive districts the way it does in uncompetitive districts. A demographically unified district is likely to elect a representative that has an extremely easy time reflecting the vast majority of their district in a way that does not happen in diverse districts. Perhaps the inherent benefits of competition, especially increased political participation, are worth the cost of less responsiveness, but it is important that reformers are aware of this unintended consequence. Reformers who want to see more electoral competition are, without a doubt, attempting to improve democracy by giving voters meaningful choices; but they should note that increasing participation through redistricting may harm democracy by creating less responsive legislators.

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[60] These states include, AK, AZ, CO, HI, ID, IA, MO, MT, NJ, PA, and WA. For a detailed examination of these systems and reports on their goals see the Campaign Legal Center's website: www.campaignlegalcenter.org

Several states have experimented with clean money initiatives intended to purge the influence (or perceived influence) of money from legislatures, and increase competition among candidates.[61] While most states are still not willing to publicly subsidize campaigns, all states place restrictions of some sort on campaign contributions from interest groups. How would removing money from politics effect responsiveness? My evidence suggests the greatest effect would be on economic issues, where interest groups currently have the most influence over legislative voting decisions. Perhaps legislators would then turn to their constituents in determining their decisions on these issues, but, alas, we cannot be sure. Unless citizens develop firm opinions on economic issues, legislators may just turn to other elite actors (such as their parties) for cues on how to vote on these issues.

The campaign finance reform literature shows, as does my research, the vast majority of interest group money is given to safe incumbents, committee chairs, and party leaders (Jewell and Cassie 1998). Significant donations at the state legislative level are used to augment groups' inside lobbying game, not to influence elections. As such, strict campaign finance laws hold the potential to decrease the power of state lobbies. It is just hard to predict who would benefit most if groups were to lose their power.

My findings relate directly to efforts aimed at amateurizing state legislatures. The years analyzed in this study make direct tests of term limits impossible, but it is accepted as fact that term limits are intended to amateurize state legislatures. The hope of these reformers is that legislative turnover will give voters fresh choices and enable the legislature to look and act more like the citizenry. The implication is that an "average

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[61] In 2000, these states included HI, ME, MA, MN, and WI

citizen" would be particularly capable of representing the wishes of citizens, as opposed to insulated professionals; I find exactly the opposite. The more professional the legislature, the more responsive legislators are to constituency opinion. Representation is an involved process requiring great legislative capacity including skilled lawmakers who work full time and assisted by a capable staff with many office resources.

More than any other reform, term limits seem completely misdirected. Concerning redistricting, there would likely be tradeoffs; one problem solved but another created. With regard to term limits, my data indicates that their enactment will actually produce the opposite of their intended consequence. District responsiveness will suffer; the unintended consequence may be that it will suffer even more than I expect. If the institutional memories of legislatures are turned over to interest groups, the power of the organized, or perhaps the executive, may overwhelm the chambers. Greater professionalism, however, does have one significant drawback. Professional legislatures are more polarized, which leads to a more contentious and nasty brand of politics (Mahtesian 1997).

Living and Legislating in an Age of Polarization

On the most important issues of the day, state politics circa 2000 are quite polarized. On social issues particularly, but also on economic issues, legislators tend to be ideologically extreme. When legislators assemble with their party caucuses and take to the floor of their chambers the result is a significant amount of cross-aisle partisan polarization in many statehouse chambers. At the individual district level, legislators are often congruent to their district opinion, which citizens no doubt appreciate, however polarization produces its own set of unpopular affects. I show that polarization results in

increased levels of stalemate and also suspect that polarization leads to lower levels of goodwill or comity in state legislatures. We may love our extremist legislators, but not the effects of polarized state politics – the natural aggregation of extremism.

Looking beyond the nastiness of polarization, however, the picture is not too grim. State legislatures are, at least conditionally, responsive. Given that the vast majority of citizens could not pick their state representative out of a police lineup, it is in a sense reassuring to know that on issues that people care about representatives do respond. To improve responsiveness the candle should be burned at both ends. State lawmaking institutions need to give lawmakers a capacity to represent their districts. On the other end, citizens need to develop more coherent opinions on issues. Despite the several pitfalls discussed, state legislatures can and are responsive political institutions. The impacts of their policy decisions affect our most basic needs. As I mentioned at the outset, these are the laws that we are born, live and die under. It is vitally important that we not consider democracy achieved upon leaving the voting booth. We must be vigilant in assuring that our government, at all levels, is responding to our expressed wishes and our unexpressed needs.

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