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R44

Identical geography, different party: a natural experiment on the magnitude of party differences in the US Senate, 1960-84

Bernard Grofman, Robert Griffin and Amihai Glazer

Inspired by Downs (1957), dozens of articles have been written in which party competition is modelled as a battle by office-seeking politicians for the allegiance of the median voter (see reviews in Riker and Ordeshook, 1973; Enelow and Hinich, 1984). Yet the critical implications which derive from this median voter mode, namely Tweedledum and Tweedledee politics and politically competitive elections, are falsified by the data.

The empirical evidence for the United States contradicts Downs's implications in several ways. (1) Platforms of opposing political parties are far from identical (Page, 1981; Pomper, 1969), and despite candidate penchants for generality and ambiguity, recent US presidential candidates have often shown striking contrasts in candidate positions. (2) When congressional districts change hands the new House members vote differently from the old if there has been a change in party, but not otherwise (Brady and Lynn, 1973; Clausen, 1973; Fiorina, 1974; Glazer and Robbins, 1983). (3) Voting differences between senators of opposite parties persist even after constituency characteristics have been controlled for (Bullock and Brady, 1983; Poole and Rosenthal, 1985). (4) Most incumbents are re-elected (Mayhew, 1977). (5) Several areas of the country have remained for long periods of time under one-party control.

We make use of a 'natural experiment', comparisons of the voting records of senators from the same state but of opposite parties. This allows us to investigate the magnitude of the differences in ideology caused by party differences when the potentially confounding effects of constituency differences have been completely controlled for. This use of a natural experiment distinguishes our analysis from that of earlier work (e.g. Bullock and Brady, 1983) on the Senate. Our key findings about the US Senate fly in the face of a simple Downsian model:

1. US senators from the same state but of opposite parties vote quite distinctly from one another, while differences between senators from the same party and the same state are minimal. Moreover, in states where

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one senator is a Democrat and the other a Republican, the Democrat is almost always to the left of the Republican from that state.

2. For most of the past 25 years the mean ideological difference between senators of the same state who are of opposite parties exceeds that between two randomly chosen senators of opposite parties in the nation as a whole.

Competition for the US Senate, 1960-84

A number of measures of Congressional liberalism are based on roll calls, of which the best known are those issued by the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) and by the Americans for Constitutional Action (ACA). In addition, political scientists (Manley, 1981; Ornstein *et al.*, 1984) make use of the Conservative Coalition (CC support score) which indicates the proportion of issues on which members vote with conservative southern Democrats. Kritzer (1978: 492) shows that these measures of liberalism are almost perfectly correlated with each other (as well as with the roll-call scores produced by other organizations) and essentially tap a single dimension (see also Kau and Rubin, 1982; Poole and Rosenthal, 1985). In 1981, for example, the correlation between ADA score and CC score was -0.94 in the Senate and -0.93 in the House. To simplify our exposition, we deal exclusively with ADA scores.

We use ADA score differences between Republican and Democratic senators for the years 1960-84 to determine the degree to which Democrats differ from Republicans when geographic constituency is held constant. The standard interpretation of Downs (e.g. Davis *et al.*, 1970) would predict that senators from both parties are to be found at (or very near) the overall median voter in the state. However, senators from the same state differ if and only if they are of opposite parties, and Democrats are virtually always ideologically to the left of the Republicans (see Table 13.1).

As shown in Table 13.1 for the period 1960-84, the average absolute difference between the ideologies of Democratic and Republican senators from the same state is a huge 43.4 points. Furthermore, the general pattern holds up every year, even in the 1980s when a much higher percentage of divided party states are in the south. Moreover, other evidence shows that in states with senators of opposite parties 93 per cent of the time the Republican senator was to the right of the Democrat from that state. The differences can be quite extreme. For example, in New York in 1982 Daniel Moynihan, a Democrat, had an ADA score of 95 while Alfonso D'Amato, a Republican, had an ADA score of only 15.

Table 13.1. Mean absolute difference in ADA score: party composition, Senate, 1960-84. (N in brackets)

Year	Divided states	DIR states	R/R states
1960	12.8 (24)	52.1 (15)	18.6 (9)
1961	14.2 (24)	64.0 (15)	20.0 (7)
1963-4	14.8 (25)	59.1 (16)	13.9 (8)
1965	15.5 (26)	53.1 (16)	12.5 (8)
1966	16.0 (24)	51.8 (17)	16.9 (8)
1967	18.8 (22)	44.4 (18)	12.7 (9)
1968	20.2 (22)	32.5 (17)	24.8 (9)
1969	17.4 (17)	49.3 (21)	17.1 (11)
1970	19.5 (17)	49.8 (22)	14.6 (10)
1971	13.8 (17)	52.9 (18)	19.6 (13)
1972	13.2 (17)	41.9 (18)	20.0 (13)
1973	11.1 (18)	43.7 (20)	23.2 (11)
1974	8.1 (17)	37.8 (22)	24.3 (10)
1975	10.0 (21)	31.7 (19)	24.6 (9)
1976	19.5 (21)	32.1 (19)	27.8 (9)
1977	14.7 (19)	33.9 (23)	19.3 (7)
1978	15.7 (19)	33.3 (23)	11.4 (7)
1979	13.4 (16)	31.0 (26)	15.9 (7)
1980	18.4 (16)	30.5 (26)	11.7 (7)
1981	13.5 (11)	44.4 (24)	9.6 (14)
1982	18.0 (10)	42.7 (25)	10.0 (14)
1983	12.7 (11)	40.4 (23)	12.0 (15)
1984	17.3 (11)	45.4 (23)	10.6 (16)
Average 1960-84	15.2	43.4	17.0

The party differences shown in Table 13.1 are not affected by the 'south is different' phenomenon to any significant extent. In the south the average ADA difference between senators of opposite party from the same state is 36.2. Of course, there have been only a handful of southern senators from divided states. Table 13.2 compares senators from the same state who held office at the same time. To see whether the party-effect phenomenon holds over time, we track the ADA scores of each state's senators over time, as incumbents change and as the party of the incumbent shifts.

As Table 13.2 shows, the effect is present with both longitudinal and cross-sectional data, and with the same dramatic differences between succeeding senators of different parties as we observed in our cross-sectional, within-state, comparisons. We see that, on average, the ADA score of a Democratic senator is 32.7 points higher than that of the Republican senator he replaced; partisan shifts in the reverse direction

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are associated with an average decrease of 52.6 points in ADA scores. In contrast, individual senators change very little over time, and shifts in Senate seats not associated with a change in parties have only a minimal effect on ADA ratings. For example, in Iowa, when the Republican, Hickentlooper, was replaced by the Democrat, Hughes, in 1969, the shift in ADA score was a whopping 89 points, from 0 to 89; when Hughes was replaced by Culver, another Democrat, in 1975, the shift was only 14 points, from 86 to 100; but when the Democrat, Culver, was replaced by a Republican, Grassley, the shift was again dramatic, from 78 to 5. Similarly, in 1961 when the Republican, Martin, was replaced by Miller, another Republican, the shift, although larger, from 30 to 0, was far smaller than the shift when Miller was replaced by a Democrat, Clark, in 1973. Then the shift in ADA score was 60 points, from 20 to 80; and when the Democrat, Clark, was replaced in 1979 by the Republican, Jepsen, the ADA score dropped massively from 90 to 0. We might also note that the mean value of shifts that did not involve a change in parties was even smaller than the mean absolute value of such shifts reported in Table 13.1: -1.4 points for seats that stayed Democrat and -0.4 for seats that stayed Republican.

Table 13.2: Mean longitudinal shift in Senatorial ADA scores across all states in 1960-1984 by region and by categories of party and incumbent change. (N in brackets)

Region	Same person		Different person		Same person		Different person	
	D/D	R/R	D/D	R/R	R/R	R/D	D/R	
South	3.7 (56)	1.1 (12)	6.1 (11)	0.2 (4)	19.2 (5)	-27.8 (13)		
Mid West	1.8 (37)	-0.6 (25)	7.3 (6)	5.7 (6)	60.6 (10)	-40.5 (12)		
North-east	3.4 (33)	-7.4 (31)	5.7 (3)	-2.7 (7)	49.2 (13)	-11.2 (9)		
West	2.5 (40)	-2.3 (26)	2.3 (6)	3.4 (7)	68.9 (8)	-42.8 (16)		
All states	2.9 (166)	-3.1 (94)	5.5 (26)	1.7 (24)	52.6 (36)	-32.7 (50)		

There are some minor regional differences. In the Mid West, for example, a shift from a Democratic to Republican Senator led to a 40 point drop in ADA score, while in the north-east the drop was only 11 points. In the Mid West, a switch from a Republican to a Democrat

generated a 60 point increase in ADA score; in the north-east the shift was a slightly less sizeable 48 points. On balance, party differences were least in the south. In all regions, maintenance of the same party, but with a different incumbent, on average, involved less than a 10 point shift in ADA score; while if we tracked the same senator over time his or her score shifted on balance by a minuscule amount, usually well under 5 points, with a very slight tendency for Democrats to become more liberal and Republicans to become more conservative. This latter effect, however, may well be a simple regression to the mean phenomenon. In short, party really matters even when geographic constituency is held constant.

Our analysis reveals another important and rather unexpected finding: during the period 1960-84 the mean ADA difference between senators from the same state exceeded that between randomly chosen senators from the country as a whole. Table 13.3 shows mean Republican and Democratic ADA scores for the senate as a whole. For the period 1960-84 the mean ADA difference between Republican and Democratic senators was only 34.0, compared to a mean absolute difference of 43.4 for senators from the same state of opposite parties (and a mean difference of 42.5). Comparing the rows in Tables 13.1 and 13.3 we find that this pattern holds strongly from 1960 to 1974, while within-state and between-state differences are virtually identical through 1980; since 1980 the pattern has reversed, with the between-state differences between parties greater than the within-state ones.

Why are between-state ADA differences between senators of opposite parties now greater than within-state differences, although in previous decades the difference was in the other direction? We believe the best explanation is a compositional one. The simple answer is the steady growth of Republican senatorial strength in the south, and the diminishing ideological heterogeneity of the Democratic Party in the Senate, as shown by the long-run decrease in the standard deviation of Democratic Party ADA scores.

The standard deviation of Democratic ADA scores has fallen by roughly one-third from the 1960s to the 1980s (see Table 13.3). This fall is almost perfectly paralleled by an almost perfectly monotonic decline in Democratic senators from the thirteen states of the old south: from 24 in 1960 to 14 in 1984. The loss of these conservative senators on the Democratic side of the aisle and their replacement by even more conservative Republicans on the Republican side of the aisle has led to an increase in the liberalism of Senate Democrats relative to Senate Republicans.

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Table 13.3: Mean and standard deviation of ADA scores for Republican and Democrat Senators 1960-84

Year	Republicans			Democrats			Partisan difference
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
1960	34	30.0	25.7	64	61.8	37.9	31.8
1961	32	26.2	28.0	64	70.7	33.7	44.5
1963-4	33	28.9	24.9	66	60.4	32.8	31.5
1965	32	20.8	26.6	68	63.1	33.2	42.3
1966	33	20.4	26.9	66	59.1	34.1	38.7
1967	36	24.6	24.7	63	52.4	29.5	27.8
1968	36	30.5	28.6	62	43.1	30.6	12.6
1969	43	33.2	31.3	56	61.8	33.4	28.6
1970	42	29.0	29.4	57	56.5	32.0	27.5
1971	44	25.1	24.3	54	64.8	29.2	39.7
1972	44	24.8	24.4	54	50.6	29.8	25.8
1973	43	26.4	26.5	56	62.8	27.4	36.4
1974	43	31.0	29.2	56	61.6	29.8	30.6
1975	38	31.4	30.2	61	61.5	30.1	30.1
1976	38	25.7	29.2	61	55.1	25.9	29.4
1977	38	25.1	27.4	61	58.9	25.9	33.8
1978	38	25.9	22.1	61	52.9	22.8	27.0
1979	41	22.8	19.7	58	49.1	23.0	26.3
1980	41	29.3	19.5	58	58.7	19.8	29.4
1981	53	16.8	16.0	45	66.2	25.6	49.4
1982	54	25.1	23.6	45	68.7	23.9	43.6
1983	54	22.4	19.4	45	68.3	21.7	45.9
1984	55	24.7	23.7	45	73.9	23.4	49.2
Average		26.1			60.1		34.0

Discussion

In looking for explanations for the importance of party in generating differences in ideological voting behaviour among senators and congressmen elected from the same state but of opposite parties, one basic intuition is that political competition in the US has both a centralizing and a decentralizing component. The centralizing component is the widely shared view of a difference between Republicans and Democrats, with the latter seen as being to the left of the former. The decentralizing component is the fact that national party competition must take place in 50 states (or 435 Congressional districts) which are distinct constituencies, each with very different attitudinal and demographic characteristics. Because of the interaction of national

and local effects, diversity at the constituency level is reconciled with similarities at the national level, even though some Democrats may look a lot like Republicans (and vice versa) if judged relative to the national mean of each party (see especially Weinbaum and Judd, 1970: 300-1 on the national party effect, and theoretical work on the behaviour of national parties faced with multiple constituencies, Austen-Smith, 1983, 1984, 1986).

Another key intuition is the recognition that a candidate's election constituency may be very different in character from his/her geographic constituency. Fenno (1978) calls attention to the 'concentric circles' of contact between representatives and their constituencies, with a few individuals playing a critical role in campaigns and others having direct access to the candidate when they seek it. Fenno (1978) also emphasizes a candidate's 'election constituency', the set of individuals who actually voted for him/her. Markus (1974) and Bullock and Brady (1983) show that the characteristics of the election constituency are far more important in predicting a representative's vote than the characteristics of the overall geographic constituency which the representative ostensibly serves. Similarly, other critics of Downs (such as Hirschman, 1970) point out that the Downsian model is inappropriate if the more extreme wings of each party gain control over party policy and eschew the middle ground. Moreover, as many sociologists and political scientists (including some who are sympathetic to a rational choice approach) continue to stress, there are group bases of political competition (see, e.g., Fiorina, 1974; Axelrod, 1972, and updates in 1976, 1980 and 1984; cf. Froman, 1963). The same point is often made by practitioners of what has been called the 'new political history' (Benson, 1961; Jensen, 1971; Kleppner, 1970, 1979; Silbey, 1985; cf. Burnham, 1970; McCormick, 1974).

In viewing the 19th century, most contemporary historians have decisively rejected the Downsian view of parties in favour of a group-rooted basis of partisan conflict (Silbey, 1985: 59). Customarily, 20th century party politics are viewed as more nearly fitting a Downsian model. However, Silbey's (1985: 59-61) language about antebellum party politics may apply, perhaps even with undiminished force, to contemporary party politics as well.

The stress on parties as primarily political machines, while appropriate on one level, does not confront the other dimensions present nearly enough... Elite maneuvering for partisan advantage always went on. But it did not occur within an anything goes for electoral victory mentality. It could not... Different social groups were attracted to each party by each's stance and where their own friends and enemies were located themselves. Parties had

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different centers of gravity based on their component groups. There were clearly distinctive political mind sets in America. There was a Democratic mentality and a Whig, later Republican, mentality. Neither party could digest every demand, interest and pressure within society at a given moment. They could never be all things to all men.

At least in the US Senate it is apparent that party does matter, and party and election constituency effects are stronger than geographic constituency ones. The effect of party constituencies is reinforced by the importance of policy-motivated activists as campaign workers and contributors and by the role of internal selection mechanisms such as party primaries in constraining the policy positions of party nominees (see especially Aldrich, 1980; Coleman, 1972; Aranson and Ordeshook, 1972).

We believe it useful to rethink the implication of much of the previous empirical work on the link between representative and constituency. For example if the constituency link is to a representative's election constituency and not the geographic constituency, then classic findings such as those of Miller and Stokes (1963) or Cnudde and McCrone (1966) may understate (or mistake) the extent to which a representative's votes are the product of potential electoral sanctions. While some authors (e.g. Markus, 1974; Fenno, 1978; Bullock and Brady, 1983; and McCubbins and Sullivan, 1984) have understood this point, the Downsian perspective continues to lead most political scientists to search for relationships between a representative's views and those of the geographic constituency.

At least as judged by our experience in relating our findings to other scholars, even political scientists who understand the difference between electoral and geographic constituency underestimate the remarkable magnitude of the direct party effect, and attribute most of the difference between senators of different parties to compositional differences in geographic constituency, i.e. to the fact that Democrats (except in the south) tend to be elected from more liberal states and thus are more liberal. Yet the multivariate correlation between a host of economic and demographic variables (including race, income, and employment) and Senate ADA scores in 1982 was just 0.54 and rises to only 0.58 even with a dummy variable for the south. However, when we include party share of the 1980 presidential vote in the state the correlation rises to 0.83. Indeed the simple bivariate correlation in 1982 between party vote share and ADA score is 0.68 for the Senate as a whole; and it is even higher if we control for section. In particular, the simple correlation between party vote share and ADA score is 0.74 for non-Southern senators and 0.83 for southern senators - an effect

stronger than for all demographic variables combined. Moreover, even if we try to predict the mean ADA score of the senators from each state, demographic variables together with region account for only 47 per cent of the variance in 1982. However, if we introduce a further dummy for party control (1 if 2D, -1 if 2R), the r^2 increases to 0.67.

While there is a compositional effect, which affects which states will elect Democrats, geographic constituency cannot explain why senators of opposite parties of the same state are so very different in their ideology. We cannot understand politics in the United States in terms of the simple Downsian model which posits convergence to a unidimensional median. We must introduce complicating institutional factors such as competition across multiple constituencies (Austin-Smith, 1984, 1986) and internal party selection mechanisms (Aranson and Ordeshook, 1972; Coleman, 1972); as well as mechanisms which tend to create distinct electoral constituencies for each of the parties (Aldrich, 1983; Glazer, 1988). Remarkably, however, multidimensionality in the space of political competition may not be a major confounding factor. Also, one other possible explanation of within-state party differences (adapted from Baron, 1984; cf. Fiorina, 1987), the notion that in picking senators voters try to balance them off so as to achieve a desirable aggregate ideological outcome, was not supported, although our empirical test was crude.

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Developments in Electoral Geography

edited by
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and
P.J. TAYLOR

A Study Group on the World Political Map was established by the International Geographical Union at Paris International Geographical Conference in August 1984. Its terms of reference are given in the Preface to the document presented to the Congress as a case for the Group's establishment.

In view of the need to increase co-operation between nations and peoples in the face of underlying stresses and conflicts, and to promote peace and well-being when confronted by national and internal inequalities and uneven prospects, there is justification for a search, on the widest possible front, for a fuller understanding of the political problems of territory, the oceans and human resources. Such a search must focus on upon priority problems and comparative studies should bring together geographers of many persuasions, interested in applied and policy-making aspects of the discipline.

At the Sydney International Geographical Congress in August 1988 the Study Group was replaced by a Commission on the World Political Map. The Commission is chaired by Professor David B. Knight of the Department of Geography, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, K1S 5B6.

Since its establishment, the Group/Commission has held a series of conferences and has produced several books containing some of the papers presented. To date, the following have been produced in a series published by Routledge.

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