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POLITICAL FRACTIONS AND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS: INTRAPARTY CONFLICT AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

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NICHOLAS C. JUDD

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Abstract

This dissertation is about patterns of alliance and opposition evident in records of financial contributions to federal political campaigns. Over periods of many years, repeat donors develop affiliations with specific candidates and organizations. Similarly, candidates, organizations, and incumbent lawmakers cultivate overlapping sets of contributors. Scholars have used these intersecting financial ties to infer estimates of donor and candidate ideology on a liberal-to-conservative continuum. While this has helped to break new ground in the study of partisan polarization, these methods have offered little purchase on questions of within-party structure. As the need to understand polarization becomes more acute, and ongoing research more strongly signals that it is an intrapartisan as well as interpartisan phenomenon, this has become an increasingly important problem to solve.

This dissertation introduces a way forward through an extension of existing methodological work. This project makes three key contributions. First, it presents a new procedure for inference about communities of donors and candidates in federal campaign finance. This section of the dissertation demonstrates the gains to be made by relaxing the assumptions of existing rational choice approaches and instead adopting a more general network-based interpretation of the ties implied by campaign finance transactions. Next, the work turns to an analysis of the dynamics of conflict between fractions within parties. Here, analysis leads to the conclusion that cohesive action by economic radicals in the Republican Party produces the election of lawmakers deeply embedded in a unique financial community with no real analog on the left. Finally, the dissertation shows that these financial ties also predict substantial and significant differences in the legislative effectiveness of economically radical legislators once in office. Taken together, these findings challenge existing conceptions of the role of campaign donors in federal politics, and promote new directions for political research.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The American Revolution was not financed with matching funds from George III.

Sen. Eugene McCarthy (Ret.), Sept. 10, 1999

The involvement of affluent, older, majority-white political donors in federal elections played a starring role in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary. Seeking to stave off rising opposition to the role of affluent, and, thus, likely influential, political donors in the 2020 nominating process (e.g., McElwee, Schaffer, and Rhodes 2016), party chairman Tom Perez began the contest by announcing that candidates must meet minimum thresholds for small contributions in order to appear in televised presidential debates (Barrow 2018). While candidates like Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Bernard Sanders (I-Vt.) announced that they would forego spending time on the fund-raising circuit themselves, others — like Mayor Pete Buttigieg, of South Bend, Ind. — continued to collect checks in person from significant donors.

Notably, Buttigieg's schedule of events included a fund-raiser hosted at the luxurious Hall Rutherford winery in California's Napa Valley (Smith and Associated Press 2019). To say that this highlighted a tension within the party would be an understatement. The next presidential debate, hosted shortly after the story broke, featured a sharp exchange between Warren and Buttigieg that added a new phrase to the political lexicon (PBS NewsHour 2019).

"Billionaires in wine caves," Warren said, standing just steps away from Buttigieg on the debate stage, "should not pick the next president of the United States."

That exchange, and the brief discourse on wine-cave politics that ensued, highlights how little knowledge exists about the relationships between donors and candidates, despite a large quantity of research exploring donors and candidates separately. There is an extensive literature on campaign finance in general, stretching back nearly 100 years, and touching on federal, state, and local elections (Pollock 1926; Heerwig and McCabe 2019). Scholars have devoted extensive attention to the reasons why donors give (Magleby, Goodliffe, and Olsen 2018; Overacker 1932; Heard 1960), the policy views of political contributors (Francia et al. 2005; Broockman, Ferenstein, and Malhotra 2019), the particular financial interests involved in specific presidential campaigns (Corrado 1991; Lewis, Benes, and O'Brien 1996), and the influence of business elites on politics generally (Ferguson 1995; Domhoff 2013). This literature has much to say about changes in campaign strategy, efforts to alter campaign finance law, and the impact those shifting laws and strategies have on the fortunes of public policy (La Raja 2008).

The professional commentariat, in close communion with mainstream political science, quickly sought to offer nuance and context to wine-cave discourse. Yglesias (2019), gamely attempting a review of recent literature, observed that donors are more polarized than the population at large, such that Democratic donors are often more liberal than rank-and-file Democrats on many issues. An op-ed from Bill Wehrle, a health-care executive who said he attended the event, offered supporting evidence. He said that donors in the "wine cave" wanted to know how Buttigieg would accomplish progressive social policy goals (Wehrle 2019).

But what about economic issues? Here there may be a rift within the Democratic Party. Technology entrepreneurs are an illustrative example. A recent survey of this group found that relative to all Democratic donors, technology entrepreneurs are about as socially liberal, slightly less supportive of redistribution, and far less supportive of market regulation (Broockman, Ferenstein, and Malhotra 2019). The rise of online contributions has not significantly altered this story. People who make contributions online, while thought to be less likely to have a professional interest in politics than donors who attend events in person, are more likely to have higher incomes, more education, and higher levels of political interest than the average American (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2010). If economic moderates or economic conservatives like these entrepreneurs practice "wine-cave" politics but more economically liberal nonelites do not, this may advantage the moderate wing of the party over the liberal wing. One group would act cohesively in support of candidates its members prefer, and the other group would not.

Unfortunately, the literature offers few clues about whether things could really be that simple. What patterns of interaction characterize the relations between donors and candidates? What are their consequences? Beyond their importance to a pressing matter of public interest, these questions are of immediate relevance for political sociologists for two reasons. First, asymmetric polarization and partisan sorting are a longstanding subject of interest (DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996). This dissertation's contribution to that literature builds on work in political science that seeks to develop a keener understanding of how asymmetric polarization can influence policy outcomes in Congress (Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer 2019). These recent findings provide critical clues about the importance of intraparty processes for the explanation of party- and system-level outcomes, like polarization.

Second, efforts to address these questions extend a long and productive line of work on political parties. Current work describes party formation as a process of elite conflict that settles into some equilibrium state, like a party system or a one-party regime (Slez and Martin 2007; Walder and Lu 2017). In the contemporary American case, political parties have been careering away from equilibrium since the mid-1970s (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2008). Certainly there have been shocks, but none equivalent to the kind of unsettling episode — extended upheaval in a fragile state, failures of institutional design that would leave a new nation bankrupt and unable to defend itself — anticipated in the present literature.

What aspects of stability and change in parties might explain this apparent disequilibrium, with the policy positions of the parties moving further and further apart? Here sociologists have less to draw on. Work in the discipline has considered stability and change in mass attitudes (Knoke 1976; Manza and Brooks 1999) more carefully than patterns of elite behavior or linkages between mass and elite. Only recently have scholars working in the Gramscian tradition argued for renewed focus on mobilization by party leaders, using the apparatus of the political party, to "articulate" broad social groups into the party's own project (de Leon, Desai, and Tugal 2015). In political science, however, scholars developing theories of parties as extended party networks

(Koger, Masket, and Noel 2009; Bawn et al. 2012) trace these linkages, and find that donors sit at an important point of articulation between political elites and laypeople in a different sense. Far from being "interpellated" into mass movements in struggles against other parties, these scholars see some donors as strategic actors in their own right, maneuvering against others to steer the party in their direction. This dissertation describes varieties of mass-elite linkage that are relevant to scholars at work across this broad literature on the structure of parties more generally. In the context of contemporary sociological work on political parties, the empirical results presented here bring new depth and more focused attention to the American case. These findings challenge some aspects of a nascent theory of parties through the lens of "political articulation," while, elsewhere, they suggest extensions and new directions (de Leon 2013).

1.1 Overview of the argument

This dissertation argues that policy gridlock and, to a lesser extent, partisan polarization, are in part explained by the actions of political *fractions* — coalitions of actors not only within, but spanning, the two major political parties in the United States. I begin by showing that the alignments of political donors — both with candidates and with one another — express broader patterns of alliance and opposition within and also between parties. Legislators who receive contributions from similar donors appear to belong to the same fraction. Members of fractions share not only donors but also similarities in the ideology implied by their roll-call votes or their positions on specific policy issues. By attending to patterns of repeated donations by the most active and involved donors in federal politics since regular disclosure of contributions became the norm in 1979, I estimate the membership of five such fractions.

Fractional politics expresses itself in the nation's two major political parties in different ways. In the Democratic Party, the ambitions of fractional donors and candidates manifest in primary elections in safe seats, where the Democrat is almost certain to win. Among Republicans, however, fractions are likely to mobilize even in places where their chosen party stands at best a fighting chance of victory. Members of an economically radical fraction within the GOP succeed when fractional donors unify behind one of their own but the rest of the party is divided. Similarly, fractional legislators have systematically different careers as lawmakers. A wave of progressive Democrats elected to Congress beginning in the mid-2000s have had remarkable success pursuing their policy programs. I show that their legislative effectiveness cannot be explained by the brief moment of united government at the beginning of Barack Obama's first term as president. Economic radicals within the GOP, on the other hand, are systematically less likely to have their own significant bills implemented into law.

To arrive at these results, I build on data introduced by political scientists for the purpose of estimating the ideology of legislators and candidates for office, the Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME) (Bonica 2014a). This dataset includes records of campaign contributions to federal candidates, by donors giving more than $200 to each candidate, to all federal political committees, from 1979–2012. The author of that dataset used probabilistic record linkage algorithms to connect each contribution, which is normally recorded alongside the name, employer, and occupation of the contributor, to unique donors, making the effort, for instance, to connect contributions by the same person who lists two different addresses over time, and to disambiguate contributions by two people with the same name but different jobs and places of residence.

This dissertation presents new methods, contributes theoretical development, and offers new supporting empirical findings to the study of political parties, polarization, and American politics. In what follows, I show the gains to be made by adapting a relational approach to politics that accounts not only for ties between legislators, but between candidates and their elite supporters, in the larger context of electoral politics. Through this approach, I demonstrate that changes at the level of political parties and the American policymaking system, such as legislative gridlock, can be better understood by studying not only action *between* parties, as in the metaphor of politics as a team sport (Magleby 2011), but also alliance and opposition *within* parties, or, in some cases, even fractions that facilitate bipartisan cooperation.

This presents a strong challenge to a key assumption of the "articulation" approach, which is that parties, at the direction of party leaders, deploy a unified party apparatus to carry out mass mobilization efforts that subsequently succeed or fail. Instead, I show that fractions within the parties advance their own positions and maneuver for greater representation in party leadership, all with one eye on members of the other party. Because this evidence is consistent with a large and growing body of work in political science on party factions and sub-party brands (Kujala 2020; Clarke 2020), it strongly suggests that this axiom must be discarded by scholars taking the articulation approach. However, I will argue that this presents an opportunity for political sociologists interested in political parties. The core of the argument advanced in the theory of political articulation is that political elites succeed or fail in guiding a party into control of government based on their ability to manipulate the salience of social cleavages, unifying an electoral coalition while dividing coalitions of opponents. My findings invalidate the claim that a unified political elite is engaged in mobilization on behalf of the party, but, as later chapters will make clear, this dissertation offers no reason to discount the claim that constituting political identities, as well as mobilizing supporters around those identities, is crucially important.

1.2 Plan of the work

Chapter 2 places this dissertation in the context of the shifting legal rules and political alliances that shape patterns of political contributions in federal politics during the period 1979–2012. In this chapter, I give an abbreviated history of campaign finance regulations and practices during that time. I also explain why it is reasonable, first, to expect that financial disclosures would reveal meaningful information about relationships between donors and candidates, despite changing regulations and many opportunities for contributors to give anonymously, and, second, to expect that information from this period can produce meaningful insights for later periods, given the rising importance of small-dollar contributions, "dark money," and other concerns. Finally, I relate this history to the theoretical argument presented in this introduction.

Chapter 3 introduces the data and methods used in greater detail. Here, I introduce the theory and empirical evidence undergirding the fractional politics approach described in this dissertation. I estimate the membership of various fractions, and present evidence that members of fractions share common policy outlooks. I relate these findings to current debates in the study of political parties, and describe how this evidence helps to advance those debates.

In Chapter 4, I analyze fractional politics and their consequences. I assess the extent to which conflict between fractions effects the composition of political parties in the legislature, and connect this work to the larger literature on asymmetric polarization. Next, Chapter 5 introduces the study of fractional politics for policymaking. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the findings and describes the implications of this study of fractions for scholars of American politics, political parties, and polarization.

1.3 Fractions and the financial side of politics

This inquiry begins with a discussion of the changing rules surrounding the interactions between donors and candidates in federal politics. As there are many comprehensive treatments of the subject of campaign finance, my goal in the next chapter is not to contribute to historiography, but to make the narrow case that administrative records of campaign finance reports can and do offer a robust look at broad patterns of alliance and opposition that express larger cleavages between and within parties.[1] In the subsequent chapter and throughout this dissertation, I seek to use the contribution habits of political donors to understand larger patterns in elite and mass politics.

To some readers, it may seem as if I breeze by important questions, such as: The extent to which politics is dominated by conflict — or cooperation — between elites; whether this domination is increasing or decreasing; whether the American system can rightly be called a democracy; whether, given a close examination of the role of money in American politics, democracy under current circumstances, or in general, is possible. Scholars, journalists, and politicians themselves have debated these weighty questions for more than 100 years. Calls for campaign finance reform have been mobilized, not only for reform, but also to advance specific policy or partisan goals, for just as long. Sensitive to the accusation that he was in the pocket of corporate trusts, Theodore Roosevelt proposed public financing of elections shortly after his accession to the presidency in 1904; similarly, changes in law and regulation over the ensuing decades were designed to curb the influence of labor unions in one year, and corporations the next, as different fractions found

1. For comprehensive histories, see Mutch (2016), Heard (1960), and Overacker (1932).

fellowship in the cause of systemic change (La Raja 2008).

Looking at American politics through the lens of campaign finance certainly does narrow the focus of inquiry on a particular set of elite actors. I take their participation, if not their influence, for granted. History offers every reason to do this. As Sen. Eugene McCarthy — a plaintiff in the landmark *Buckley v. Valeo* Supreme Court case that changed the course of campaign finance in the late 20th century — explains in the epigraph to this introduction, businesspeople and the corporations they control have been at work within, and on, the political structure of the United States since before its founding. McCarthy invokes John Hancock, a signatory to the Constitution whose legend — and fortune — looms large over the nation's founding myths. But a more appropriate reference may have been another signatory to the Constitution, Robert Morris, who used various financial innovations to pay the Continental Army, personally underwrote the debt of the Continental Congress, used his control of the nascent nation's financial affairs to benefit himself personally — and, towards the end of his life, lost his fortune in speculative land deals gone wrong, leaving debtor's prison only a few years before his death (Rappleye 2010). As Continental sedition increased, Morris was reluctant to join the revolutionary side. Drawing on Morris' personal letters and other materials, Rappleye (2010) argues that the financier certainly saw opportunities for profit in patriotism, but the weight of economic incentives fell in favor of the status quo. Morris came to understand a way in which joining the cause of the new republic reconciled cross-cutting pressure from his business concerns, his personal attachments, and his nascent political awareness.

"Big contributors have always been giving money to the Republicans," McCarthy said, before his allusion to the Revolution, "but occasionally they give ... to a liberal cause" (McCarthy 1999).

His comment was more than a little tongue-in-cheek, but it wears well. First, an academic tendency to focus on the ways in which issues like tax policy might unify economic elites leads scholars to overlook the extent to which partisan attachment, along with other policy positions, is becoming more diverse among the affluent (Manza and Brooks 1999). Cross-cutting pressures lead people to seek reconciliations not unlike the one that Robert Morris appears to have had. In the contemporary case, these pressures seem to be resolved in favor of conservative tendencies more often than liberal ones (Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014), but little is known about the patterns of political affiliation that emerge as people act and react in light of their many attachments, experiences, and beliefs. This is particularly true of affluent people. Because economic elites so rarely participate in surveys, scholars look elsewhere for clues as to the patterns of their political activity. Page, Seawright, and Lacombe (2018) make the case that because the truly advantaged have avenues to conceal their political activity, campaign finance records are an unreliable source to develop a complete accounting of the activity of one individual or a specific set of people. However, as I will show in Chapter 2, recorded activity accounts for the crucial core of funds raised and spent in federal politics. Public documents provide information sufficient to identify political fractions that act cohesively in meaningful ways.

Second, it happens to be true, in a literal sense across the longer historical arc of American politics, that financial elites provide crucial resources to both parties, and a diversity of economic interests and idiosyncratic positions regularly induces the truly advantaged to ally with members of the lay public in political struggle (Shefter 2001), or, at a minimum, to recruit members of the lay public as part of struggles between elites. Just as revolutionary politics was in a non-trivial sense the reconciliation of financial capital with political interest (see also Tilly 1992), presidential politics in the United States has long involved extensive support from the heads of wealthy families and multinational corporations. For instance, two-thirds of the funding for Woodrow Wilson's pursuit of the Democratic presidential nomination in 1912 came from just seven people (Overacker 1932). Wilson's nomination effort also featured a mass campaign to raise small-dollar contributions.

In Wilson's bid for the Democratic nomination fight, he self-consciously positioned himself as a progressive champion and an ally of the populists against Wall Street and Eastern financial interests more generally (Link 1968). Yet Wilson's financiers did not represent Eastern financial interests only in the sense that they either were not Eastern, or were in industry and not finance, and never both. It is true that Cleveland H. Dodge, his top supporter, knew him from his college years at Princeton. But it should also be noted that the Dodge family held substantial mining interests in the United States and abroad. Wilson's third most generous supporter, Cyrus McCormick, had family interests in agricultural equipment. Henry Morgenthau, who, in contemporary parlance, did a fair amount of bundling of contributions for Wilson, was a New York real estate mogul. And, while Richard M. Nixon was deposed before a grand jury for the allegation that he offered ambassadorships as rewards to top financiers, Morgenthau, famously, was U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire under Wilson (Department of Justice. Watergate Special Prosecution Force. Office of the Deputy Special Prosecutor 1973–1975).[2]

Disagreements between competing economic interests, large and small, and alliances between the very affluent and the broader public — including explicitly economic alliances, in the form of sharing the cost of presidential campaigns — have long shaped pivotal struggles within and between the major political parties in the United States. This dissertation seeks to address the extent to which these patterns of alliance and opposition express the more general arrangement of political actors into coalitions organized around electoral or policy goals, and the consequences of these struggles for lawmaking. I begin by describing how this has remained constant in the recent past, despite changes in campaign finance law and regulation, during the period 1979–2012.

2. People who make substantial contributions to successful presidential campaigns still have a habit of becoming ambassadors (Levinthal and Zubak-Skees 2017).

Chapter 2

Continuity and change in campaign finance, 1972–2018

It was the morning of January 7, 2007, and David Plouffe needed money — fast.

This fund-raising effort was not for him personally. But, looking back, he would acknowledge it as a pivotal moment in his career. In just a few years Plouffe would go from being an anonymous, if successful, political consultant, to an internationally known guide to the world of public policy for a select group of wealthy and influential people. By 2014 he would be senior vice president at Uber, then valued at $40 billion. In 2017 he would leave Uber to manage policy for the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the personal foundation of the pediatrician Priscilla Chan and her husband, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

Plouffe, a top Democratic political strategist, was about to begin the process of financing a presidential campaign. For most of 2006, he worked with his colleague David Axelrod to cultivate a candidate for the 2008 presidential election. For months, their candidate-to-be had been reluctant to commit to running. In December 2006, the candidate left for a family vacation to Hawaii. When he came back, he promised, he would give Plouffe an answer. The vacation came and went and still Plouffe did not hear a word. Then, on the evening of January 6, 2007, Barack Obama picked up the phone, called David Plouffe, and agreed to run for President of the United States.

As Obama's campaign manager, Plouffe had a short list of immediate priorities. Raising money was the most pressing one. Without money, he could not start hiring staff and building up an organization to address the campaign's other needs. Obama was already late in entering the race, so time was of the essence. In a campaign memoir, Plouffe (2009, 28) writes that he immediately set fund-raising goals for the campaign: At least $12 million in the first three months of the campaign, and $50 million by the end of 2007.

What happened next offers an instructive window into the relationship between political donors and candidates in American politics. Obama vastly outraised his competitors by forming a coalition that relied on wealthy donors, especially from the financial services industry, to begin his campaign, and then turned to an unprecedented number of smaller donors from throughout the country to run up his campaign receipts. While cultivating this coalition, Obama established an intimate proximity with donors. Based on accounts in Plouffe's campaign memoir, contemporaneous news reports, and other public sources, it is clear that campaign donors had unique access to the candidate. He answered their questions directly in face-to-face discussions. He gave them his views on current events that were far more candid than what he said in public. And he listened as they expressed their concerns and priorities.

Like most successful candidates, Obama had a diverse network of patrons arranged around an elite core of his wealthiest and most generous supporters. To be sure, this network reflects only part of the coalition that propelled him to office. But it is a crucial part of that coalition, and, in the earliest stages of his campaign, when the shape of the 2008 presidential race was defined by possibilities rather than prior events, Obama's donor coalition was the first priority for his campaign staff.

Obama and Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York, who was the presumptive front-runner among Democrats in early 2007, stood on opposite sides of a divide within the Democratic party. As prominent donors choose which candidates to support, they may do so in ways that reflect these divisions. However, existing academic literature on campaign finance has done little to connect patterns of contributions with maneuvering within parties. Because scholars have only begun to explain struggles within contemporary parties in a systematic way, especially in the American case, this represents a substantial gap in knowledge.

The testimony of political insiders like Plouffe, who describe the importance of fund-raising coalitions as part of the actual practice of politics, suggests that solving this smaller puzzle has the potential to open new doors for scholars at work on larger questions. As Plouffe's memoir shows, donors are among the first people with the ability to render judgment on candidates who stand for election in the United States, and political insiders say that donors' decisions to offer or withhold support can make or break a nascent campaign. For these reasons, developing more knowledge about the structures formed by alliance and opposition between donors and candidates additionally clarifies the larger structures surrounding political action in formal politics more generally.

This dissertation seeks to address unanswered questions regarding campaign donors in political coalitions. First, do patterns of contributions suggest that donors are merely investors seeking a pecuniary return or spectators giving for the thrill of proximity to power, as implied by investor and consumer models of campaign finance? Or, as scholars of "extended party networks" have begun to argue, are some donors members of larger coalitions? Next, is the alignment of donors and candidates consequential for partisan politics? And, finally, do these patterns of alliance and opposition meaningfully alter the practices of democratic governance?

The goal of this project is to contribute new knowledge about the role of donors in partisan politics, the extent to which donors can be said to act collectively with candidates and others in struggles within political parties, and the consequences of such action, both in electoral politics and in government. In this chapter, I draw on the 2008 election, a broader history of campaign finance from 1979–2012, and existing literature on American campaign finance to provide a more complete motivation for this project.

2.1 Theoretical implications

Political sociologists and some other scholars of politics have overstated the extent to which party leaders comprise unitary political elites. The history of Obama's 2008 campaign, and the broader history of American campaign finance, builds the intuition that a party elite can be heterogeneous in interests, orientations, outlooks, and behaviors. This cuts against the assumption, made by scholars taking a political articulation approach to political parties, that whether a party accedes to control of government can be attributed to the success or failure of a series of actions that comprise a national effort to construct a partisan coalition.

De Leon, Desai, and Tugal (2009) argue, for instance, that the Republican Party's fortunes since 1980 can be explained by a failure by party elites to bind middle-class, moderate whites to the party's project. Obama's victory in 2008 demonstrates that moving the unit of analysis from between- to within-elite struggles provides a significant increase in explanatory power. Crucially, Obama kept progressive activists in his electoral coalition even while siphoning financial support from moderate Democrats who might otherwise have backed incumbent party elites. More generally, I will show in Chapter 3 that Republican Party elites are themselves also divided. This chapter builds the intuition that this is the case by focusing on the strategic decisions of key figures in the Republican Party, like Sen. John McCain of Arizona, who became his party's nominee in 2008 after losing the nomination to George W. Bush in 2000. There is no unitary party elite to whom the success or failure of a single mobilization effort can be attributed. In fact, as I will show in this chapter, the task of mobilizing voters on behalf of a party is shared by a diffuse group of professionals and activists, some of whom are barred by law from coordinating with one another.

Within parties, competing sets of candidates and professionals recruit financial supporters, as well as voters, in pursuit of elected office. With control of office comes influence within the party, more direct involvement in the process of policymaking, and the ability to affect the election campaigns of other candidates. The 2008 presidential campaign serves to highlight the pivotal role played by donors in these struggles for control of elected office.

2.2 Campaign donors and intrapartisan struggles

Barack Obama's historic campaign of 2008 is a compelling empirical case because it raises three issues that help to set the stage for this dissertation. First, the 2008 Democratic primary is popularly understood as an example of an election where the selection of the nominee would impose a clear hierarchy between competing sets of politicians, activists, and their supporters within the same party. As a case of intrapartisan competition, it highlights how much there is yet to learn about the structure of conflict within parties. In light of more recent events, such as the election of Donald J. Trump and the concomitant transformation of the Republican Party, the need to understand intrapartisan conflict — or, at a minimum, the sense that scholars of parties cannot currently explain the dynamics of conflict within parties — becomes more acute.

Second, Obama's election in 2008 represented a moment of rupture in the history of American campaign finance. Obama became the first major party nominee since 1976 to break with a tradition of accepting public financing of a campaign. Explaining the context of this decision, the reasons Obama gave for doing so, and the truly qualified ways in which his fund-raising changed as a consequence offer an opportunity to more fully describe how and why the data used in this project can address not only the precise questions raised, concerning donors and candidates, but also broader issues about the structure of intrapartisan struggles in contemporary American politics.

Third and finally, the 2008 election arrives towards the end of the period under study in this project, which begins with the implementation of new campaign finance disclosure requirements in 1979 and ends after the 2012 presidential elections. Taking up the Obama campaign as an illustrative case, I will describe what has changed in the few years since the 44th president's 2012 re-election campaign. In so doing, I will speak to the extent to which propositions raised and defended in the context of 1979–2012 can be expected to retain their validity in the future.

One way to do this is by highlighting the extent to which the broad outlines of intraparty divisions observed in 2008 appear to have analogs much earlier in American political development. Because the kinds of relationships between donors and candidates have emerged as consequential alignments during earlier periods in America's past, I begin the project with some confidence that these alignments continue to be important in the contemporary period, and that they will remain of interest in the future. In this discussion, I will also clarify the choice of data and the period under study. Before making this diversion into an earlier era, I begin by returning to the Democratic primaries of 2007–2008.

In the waning days of the 2007–2008 primary season, the competition between Obama and Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York was cast as a clash between progressives and moderates in the Democratic Party. This was not only about policy differences, but also about personalities, and a general orientation to politics (Packer 2008). Clinton took a hawkish foreign policy stance; Obama pledged to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama campaigned on the promise of an open, inclusive, participatory Democratic Party, and, famously, mobilized a generation of first-time activists. Clinton was a central figure in the party's New Democrat wing, which, by 2007, was firmly the party establishment; by the time Obama began his campaign, Clinton had already engaged a significant number of the party's leading professional operatives.

Was this an example of a party changing character, from "establishment" to "progressive?" How would one be able to tell? While the contest between Obama and Clinton for the Democratic Party may have been as monumental as journalists and insiders made it out to be, existing scholarship offers few guidelines to measure and analyze such a structural shift inside the parties. Scholars working in the historical tradition signal these movements by describing the rise to power and subsequent fall of organizations and institutions, like organized labor (Schlozman 2015), or individual leaders, like Rep. Joseph Gurney Cannon (R-Ill.), the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives at the turn of the 20th century and perhaps the most powerful constitutional officer that institution has ever known (Bloch Rubin 2017).

This focus on individual personalities or specific, short-term coalitions obscures longer-term trends. It also relies on extensive access to archives, correspondence and other primary source material that cannot be brought to bear in the study of contemporary politics. The Progressive Era tumult of 1910–1912 extends this example, highlighting the kinds of information that may yet emerge when the historical record from 2008 becomes available. In two examples from this period, the revolt against Cannon and Woodrow Wilson's successful quest for the presidency in 1912, individuals and groups take center stage, but more durable coalitions oriented toward specific policy goals consistently linger at the edge of the picture.

Cannon fell from power, and the Republican Party splintered, over accusations that the GOP pursued tariff policy and refused to enact reform to the benefit of various industrial interests and at the expense of the nation as a whole. A narrow view of Cannon in the legislature, or Woodrow Wilson preparing for the presidency in 1912 (Link 1968), excludes the larger coalitions engaged in the demise of Cannon in the Republican Party and the rise of Wilson among the Democrats. Cannon and "standpat" Republicans more generally, for instance, had enemies not only among farmers, but some members of the shipping and manufacturing industries, who came to believe they could expand into new markets if tariffs were lowered (Bloch Rubin 2017, 33–35, 74–75).

Confronted with a fractured Republican Party, Wilson navigated to power by carefully aligning himself with some economic interests against others. This allowed him to finance his campaign and court powerful allies without alienating the populist Democrats who formed his party's dominant tendency. Wilson's campaign turn as a progressive reformer came with the help of financial supporters like the New York real estate magnate Henry Morgenthau and Cyrus McCormick, a manufacturer of industrial equipment and fellow Princeton alumni. At the same time, by provoking the ire of Wall Street interests in spectacular fashion — and even goading the publisher William Randolph Hearst into participating in an exceptionally nasty smear campaign — Wilson positioned himself against Eastern finance (Link 1968). This made it easier for William Jennings Bryan to eventually give Wilson his support, ending the nomination contest.

The historical record, like popular accounts of the 2008 presidential campaign, frames changes in the priorities and platforms of political parties as the result of a process of struggle between competing interests. During the Progressive Era, clashes between agrarian and railroad interests, or between manufacturing and labor, built up over a period of decades, not between individuals, but between coalitions organized in pursuit of both short- and long-term goals.

This interest in alignments between coalitions stands in contrast to the theoretical framework most commonly used to understand formal politics today. Work on the contemporary case is oriented towards the aggregate behavior of voters or legislators, with each individual understood in part through an estimate of their ideology on a liberal-to-conservative continuum. Not only does this framework seem to occlude subjects that appear to be important based on historical study, development of new tools within the framework of ideal point estimation has not kept pace with the metastization of the phenomenon it was developed to analyze. As some scholars wonder aloud if the United States is about to fall to a global wave of democratic backsliding (c.f. Mickey, Levitisky, and Way 2017), and others seek to explain growing support for authoritarianism in America as a function of a full-blown crisis of legitimacy (Hahl, Kim, and Zuckerman Sivan 2018), those asking questions about the structure of partisan coalitions have a more urgent tone. In particular, in the United States, scholars have struggled to understand how the Republican Party could so quickly change character, taking as its standard bearer the moderate Willard "Mitt" Romney in 2012, then, in 2016, installing the nativist and authoritarian Donald J. Trump in the White House (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2019). The historical record is not yet available, and methodologists constructing new ideal point estimates for use in the study of politics concede that they have yielded minimal results when applied to questions of intrapartisan conflict (Bonica 2018).

Studies of party structure need new data and methods. The relational nature of available data on donors and candidates make them a good fit for use in the development of new ideas of this kind. Campaign finance is just one aspect of American politics. The alignment of donors and candidates does not determine what lawmakers will do once in office, or which politicians win or lose.[1] But fund-raising is an integral part of elections in the United States. The particular history of federal campaign finance law has produced a system that offers remarkable insight into relationships between candidates, parties, and their patrons. American campaign finance regulations express a trade-off: relatively few limits on how much money can be spent, or where, in exchange for relatively strict requirements for public disclosure of who spends on what and when, at least concerning money spent to directly influence federal elections. As a result, administrative campaign finance records offer a substantial enumeration of the patrons to whom parties and candidates turn for support during election campaigns, an enumeration of the candidates standing for election to federal office, and comprehensive records of how those candidates performed relative to one another in the construction of campaign organizations. To understand more about the meaning of those relationships, we return to Obama's election in 2008.

2.3 The political meaning of money: Donors and candidates in federal elections

After announcing his candidacy for president of the United States, Barack Obama immediately had to build a campaign. To build an organization that could challenge Hillary Clinton for the

1. This is the prevailing opinion in the literature, but it was more colorfully put by Jesse Unruh, a longtime California power broker. Unruh first assumed elected office in 1954 and served as California's state treasurer from 1975 until he died from cancer in 1987. His full remarks are coarse by any standard but telling with respect to gender as well as economic imbalances in the politics of his era, and so I will repeat them unabridged. Describing the relationship between politicians and lobbyists in the California's state capitol in Sacramento, Unruh was famous for telling new lawmakers: "If you can't eat their food, drink their booze, screw their women and then vote against them, you have no business being up here" (Cannon 1987).

Democratic nomination, he would first need to build connections with affluent donors and the people who could persuade them to write him a check.

"Obama spent much of those early days calling potential contributors and fund-raisers," Plouffe (2009, 33), his campaign manager, writes in his memoir. Donors would continue to occupy the future president's time long after he announced his candidacy. "Almost all of March was a succession of fund-raisers," Plouffe (2009, 52) admits. "sometimes four or five events a day."

When politicians and donors get together, what do they talk about? Despite the habitual secrecy of campaign strategists, who minimize their candidate's public profile as a way of avoiding risk, and the famous privacy of the very wealthy, the answer is often more prosaic than one might think. In private conversations with donors, in hotel ballrooms, the dining rooms of private homes, or in wine caves, politicians give speeches much like the ones they give in public. They stake out policy positions, cloak themselves in American values, and make promises. The difference is that donors who make the largest contributions have opportunities to evaluate candidates in more intimate and less guarded surroundings.

"I am in this race to tell the corporate lobbyists that their days of setting the agenda in Washington are over," Obama told a packed house at the Veterans Auditorium in Des Moines, Iowa, during a televised speech at the 2007 Jefferson-Jackson Dinner, an annual fund-raiser (Obama, Barack 2007). "They have not funded my campaign, they will not work in my White House, and they will not drown out the voices of the American people when I am president." This sort of positioning gave donors few clues about where Obama might stand relative to them, not only in terms of policy positions, but also in terms of allies and enemies.

A year later, he was more candid at a fund-raiser in a private home in San Francisco's Pacific Heights neighborhood, on April 6, 2008. The fund-raiser, with a reported entry price of $1,000 a head, was "closed press," meaning journalists would not be admitted to the event (Garofoli 2008). Mayhill Fowler was a blogger, with no formal training in journalism, paid by The Huffington Post, not a newspaper. Audio recorder in hand, she attended the event, and recorded an Obama who was more conversational and less abstract than he had been in Iowa the previous year. The sweeping rhetoric of his public speeches was replaced with specific remarks about his personal background, his take on current events, his qualifications for the presidency, and his reasons why he was a viable candidate (Fowler 2008). And, famously, he said:

> You go into some of these small towns in Pennsylvania, and like a lot of small towns in the Midwest, the jobs have been gone now for 25 years and nothing's replaced them. And they fell through the Clinton Administration, and the Bush Administration, and each successive administration has said that somehow these communities are gonna regenerate and they have not. And it's not surprising then they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.

Obama's "guns and religion" comment was remarkably blunt for its time. It created negative press for his campaign, but he went on to win the Democratic nomination and took Pennsylvania in the general election with more than 54 percent of the vote. His remarks clearly did little to sway the election, but they do highlight the frequent, intimate, and private interactions that donors have with candidates, which is why they are recapitulated here.[2]

Donors have unmediated access to candidates, so much so that some may have greater surveillance of the political field than many elected officials or campaign professionals (Hertel-Fernandez, Skocpol, and Sclar 2018). And yet, most donors are lay participants in politics, in contrast to their professional counterparties. Setting aside political professionals who are also donors, a donor's position in formal politics is a function of the resources they have accumulated outside of the political field — their business contacts and personal connections as well as their money. In this sense, donors occupy an interstitial position between those who live their lives inside the world of formal politics and those who do not.

Most donors are more like voters, in other words, than they are like professional politicians, even if their view of politics is very different from the view at the ballot box. However, they are in general well-informed voters. What is more, a subset of donors are persistent participants in politics, giving to different candidates over many elections. They endure constant solicitations to

2. This moment is likely to have caused at least one structural change in the donor-candidate relationship. When Obama ran for re-election in 2012, attendees checked their cellphones at the door before entering his fund-raisers — a practice other candidates are likely to have adopted as well (Judd 2012).

give money. For this reason, there exist patterns of contributions from donors who give to the same candidates over repeated elections. Whether as a result of mass marketing (Koger, Masket, and Noel 2009) or on their own initiative, these patterns trace the structures of financial support that sustain partisan politics.

2.3.1 The constant contact between donors and candidates

While Obama sought to build his own financial network for his presidential campaign, he was also connected to his party's larger financial network through his experience in the U.S. Senate. In recent years, as the cost of campaigns has risen, fund-raising activity has come to account for a greater proportion of a lawmaker's time. The practice of "call time" would have been familiar to Obama from his two years in the Senate and, earlier, as a state legislator in Illinois.

Political donations are a critical resource for politicians and political parties, and, as a result, political donors are central players in stories about how the parties grow, shrink, and change. A politician's fund-raising ability has become a determining factor in their position in their party (Heberlig and Larson 2012). Just as David Plouffe did for Obama, candidates and incumbent lawmakers throughout government measure their electoral prospects in terms of their ability to recruit and maintain relationships with donors.

Former Rep. David Jolly (R-Fla.), who served from 2014 to 2017, described the experience of contacting political donors in an interview with the journalist Norah O'Donnell for *60 Minutes* (O'Donnell, Shevlin, and Doran 2016). After winning his seat in a special election, he told O'Donnell, he had to immediately prepare to keep it in another election just months away:

> Rep. David Jolly: We sat behind closed doors at one of the party headquarter back rooms in front of a white board where the equation was drawn out. You have six months until the election. Break that down to having to raise $2 million in the next six months. And your job, new member of Congress, is to raise $18,000 a day. Your first responsibility is to make sure you hit $18,000 a day.
>
> Norah O'Donnell: Your first responsibility–
>
> Rep. David Jolly: My first responsibility–
>
> Norah O'Donnell: –as a congressman?
>
> Rep. David Jolly: –as a sitting member of Congress.

> Norah O'Donnell: How were you supposed to raise $18,000 a day?
>
> Rep. David Jolly: Simply by calling people, cold-calling a list that fund-raisers put in front of you, you're presented with their biography. So please call John. He's married to Sally. His daughter, Emma, just graduated from high school. They gave $18,000 last year to different candidates. They can give you $1,000 too if you ask them to. And they put you on the phone. And it's a script.

Through their frequent interactions with candidates and incumbents, donors develop knowledge of the politicians who steer the direction of their party. They learn whose policies they support, whose policies they oppose, and even which candidates they simply do not like. This sort of careful assessment is mutual, and this pattern of interaction has been a stable, consequential feature of American politics for more than 100 years — including Woodrow Wilson's repeated refusal to accept money from William Randolph Hearst (Shannon 1959).

To the extent that all policies are an expression of compromise among members of one coalition engaged in struggles against an opposing coalition — and, in the federal legislature, this is a very productive way to think about political action (c.f. Cox and McCubbins 1993) — the decisions of donors to align with some candidates and snub others may influence how political parties change composition over time. To some extent, this may reproduce the "upper-class bias" that scholars of political participation have long observed (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2013). Donors and candidates tend to come to politics from the same affluent, professional backgrounds (Carnes 2013; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2013), and donors are more likely to support candidates who share their policy views (Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017).

However, there is substantial variation in the preferences of political donors, for instance by industry or occupation (Broockman, Ferenstein, and Malhotra 2019) and by partisan attachment (Francia 2003; Francia et al. 2005). If donors give merely out of pecuniary interest, as in the case of investors giving to maintain ties with lawmakers who oversee regulation of their business, one would expect little in the way of coherent patterns of giving that reflect consistent policy views. If, on the other hand, donors express a wider array of views, the picture is more complicated. Given historical evidence like the 1912 presidential election and popular accounts like the clash of Obama and Clinton, a reasonable observer would expect donors to be organized in ways that cannot be explained by party alone. In this case, donors would span parties, as in the case of the Progressives of 1912. Split between Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt's third-party challenge of that year, they abandoned William H. Taft and the Republican Party to an electoral loss. While the alignment of progressive donors with Wilson was not determinative, it was indicative of the cross-cutting cleavages that united both donors and voters in Wilson's coalition.

Given the regular contact between donors and candidates, and the regular surveillance each group has of the other, one has every reason to suspect that a similar sort of meaningful articulation persists today. However, scholars and lay observers may doubt the possibility of identifying these sorts of connections in campaign finance records. At the turn of the 20th century, as at the beginning of the 21st, concern over the corrupting influence of money in politics was widespread. In the contemporary case, activists, citizens, journalists and some academics are concerned that corporations and wealthy individuals can use a variety of legal means to invest millions of dollars in politics without disclosing their activity.

This concern over so-called "dark money" has been a motivating factor for roughly 20 years of ongoing reforms in the legislature and the courts. It is true that corporations and the very wealthy are able to assert themselves in federal politics, and to a greater extent in local politics, outside of the system of publicity that the United States has developed since the early 1900s. This poses a problem for some attempts at power mapping or process tracing. Individual actors may hide their movements, and groups of individuals can obscure some associational activity. However, it does not detract from the potential of campaign finance reports to offer leverage over the broad question of the patterns of alliance and opposition that characterize alignments of coalitions within and between parties.

In fact, in 2008, Obama framed a monumental decision to buck tradition in his presidential campaign as a response to the activity of Republican dark-money groups. Reaching for an earlier tradition of free participation but total publicity, Obama raised millions of dollars from a mix of industry insiders, political power players, and first-time donors. Tracing the history of changes in campaign finance leading up to that decision, and what happened afterward, builds confidence in the idea that disclosure reports from electoral campaigns can convey information about the broad structure of alliance and opposition in federal politics.

In 2008, as in years before and since, interest groups used a variety of legal vehicles to spend millions of dollars on voter registration, mobilization, and advertising — even messages that invoked candidates by name — without disclosing their funders until well after the election, or, in some cases, without disclosing them at all (Magleby 2011, 71–81). However, those expenditures were made in support of or opposition to campaigns funded under a regime of full publicity. This places "dark money" groups — even groups that make substantial expenditures — at the periphery of struggles that substantially take place in public view. A full enumeration of exactly which actors gave how much in support or opposition to whom is not possible thanks to vehicles like the 501(c)(4) organization, which can make limited expenditures on issues and can even invoke candidates by name, but need not disclose its donors. But the form of the coalitions including those actors is well defined at their leading edges, where they come into contact in electoral politics, even if their full content is obscured. Explaining the full context of Obama's decision to forego public financing of his 2008 campaign will justify this claim.

2.4 Campaign finance law, 1976–2016

Between 1976 and 2008, presidential candidates opted in to a system of public financing for presidential campaigns. During primary elections, most major party candidates accepted limits on their fund-raising in exchange for matching funds allocated according to a formula. In general elections, private fund-raising was not permitted under this system. Instead, the candidates relied on funds collected through opt-in contributions made as Americans filed their federal tax returns, and disbursed according to a formula based on their performance in previous elections in each state. Obama was the first candidate of a major party to forego participation in both the primary and general-election phase of this system.

The presidential campaign funding mechanism was the capstone of a sprawling system of federal campaign finance reform instituted in three waves, first through the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) of 1971, then, after the Watergate scandal, through amendments in 1974, and, finally, after a Supreme Court decision invalidated key components, a second wave of amendments in 1976. Like the presidential public financing system, the larger regulatory structure was complex, did little to prevent the involvement of major economic interests in federal politics, and began to slowly crumble almost as soon as it was enacted into law.

FECA followed decades of occasional attempts at campaign finance reform. These efforts began in earnest with the Tillman Act of 1907, which limited the contributions of corporations to the national parties for the purposes of congressional elections, and the Federal Corrupt Practices Act of 1910, which introduced early requirements for publicity. Each bill had been significantly weakened before being enacted into law and did more to re-route funding flows through different organizational vehicles than it did to actually stem the influence of major economic interests (Shannon 1959).

Notably, these attempts at reform left aside one significant policy prescription. Sensitive to accusations that he was in league with corporate trusts, Theodore Roosevelt called for campaign reform shortly after his election in 1904. Roosevelt's initial proffer was for public financing of elections, not caps on fund-raising or expenditure totals. This, along with the notion of full publicity, formed the germ of the presidential funding system instituted in 1971.

By 1971 existing campaign finance regimes had begun to chafe both parties, thanks in no small part to the rising cost of television ads in presidential campaigns. There was some willingness to change the rules of the game, although the Republican Party under Richard Nixon was more interested in elimination of caps on spending and fund-raising than on new sources of funds. Throughout the 1960s Democrats developed and then pushed for a system of public financing for presidential campaigns, which would become the core of the 1971 reforms. Bargaining over a tax bill Nixon was pushing for, Democrats instituted the tax check-off system that funded presidential general elections — although only after agreeing to institute the system in 1976, after Nixon's final re-election effort (La Raja 2008, 72–75). Separately, Democrats pushed for the FECA of 1971, which introduced the contemporary system of reporting requirements, but left the House and Senate in charge of receiving reports (La Raja 2008; Garrett 2018).

The Watergate scandal provoked additional change. Responding to news that Nixon's campaign had secretly solicited six-figure donations from executives, and accusations that Nixon had traded ambassadorships and other favors of office in exchange for campaign cash, Congress passed amendments to FECA in 1974. These amendments extended public financing to presidential primary elections, imposed strict spending and contribution limits on individual donations to candidates, raised disclosure requirements, and established the Federal Election Commission to receive reports and to provide oversight over the whole system (Garrett 2018). A landmark Supreme Court decision, *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976), ruled spending limits unconstitutional and found fault with the legal construction of the FEC. Congress passed the 1976 amendments to FECA in response to *Buckley*, and, in 1979, amended the law again, this time to exempt certain "party-building" activities from federal fund-raising limits.

Buckley and the 1979 FECA amendments are notable for several reasons. The amendments of 1979 created another route for political parties to raise money not subject to limits on how much a given individual can donate to a single committee, and allowed limited use of donations that come directly from corporate treasuries — something that had been subject to restrictions since the Tillman Act of 1907 (Cantor 1997). *Buckley* additionally imposed narrow definitions of participation in campaign activity, such that messages that did not meet a high standard of "express advocacy" were largely exempt from FECA requirements. These created the legal vehicles and loopholes for unrestricted spending on activities that are nominally not directly related to elections, called "soft money," and the ability to raise and spend on campaign-adjacent activities outside of public view, called "dark money."

Without undermining the significant concerns raised over both kinds of spending, which have manifested in various forms since 1979, the history of soft money and dark money show that they exist at the periphery of more closely regulated campaign activity. Soft money was a vehicle for parties and candidates to recruit additional supporters or deploy additional resources, and from 1992 through 2002, when new law eliminated soft money, it changed hands in public view. Dark money occludes the participation of some political actors, especially affluent individuals and major corporations, from public view. In practice, however, dark-money spending in elections and campaigns is more common during general elections, that is, spending by a partisan on one side in opposition to the other, than in primary elections. Dark money has also seen more extensive use in state and local politics and in issue advocacy.

2.4.1 Soft money

Using the party-building exemptions built into the 1979 amendments, parties could raise and spend large sums on activities like voter file maintenance, training, paying the staff of state party organizations, and managing get-out-the-vote operations. Throughout the 1980s the financing of these "party-building" activities went on outside of public view at the federal level. In 1992, however, the FEC instituted new regulations requiring parties to disclose the allocation of funds between "hard money" accounts, for spending on federal elections, and soft money.

By 1996, reform activists had raised a new round of outcry. In 1995, President William J. Clinton accepted public funds for his upcoming re-election campaign, agreeing to a cap of $37 million in spending during the primary election season. That same year, party lawyers at the Democratic National Committee decided that thanks to recent court cases, party organizations could pay for "issue advertising" using soft money. By avoiding phrases like "vote for" or "don't elect," these advertisements fell below the express advocacy threshold established in *Buckley*. Clinton approved a plan that allowed the DNC to raise and spend an additional $44 million on what were, for all intents and purposes, campaign advertisements, but paid for with money above and beyond the cap imposed under the public financing system (Marcus and Babcock 1997).

Soft-money fund-raising at the DNC increased from $36 million in the 1992 cycle to $122 million in 1996 (Washington Post 1996). The Republican National Committee increased its own soft-money efforts from $50 million in 1992 to $141 million in 1996. This tore at the edges of the Watergate-era system of public financing, but not the system of full publicity: Thanks to the FEC's rules changes in 1992, these contributions are recorded and reported to the FEC. Trends in the hard and soft money raised by the national parties over time is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

The public financing system received its next direct assault during the 1996 Republican pri-

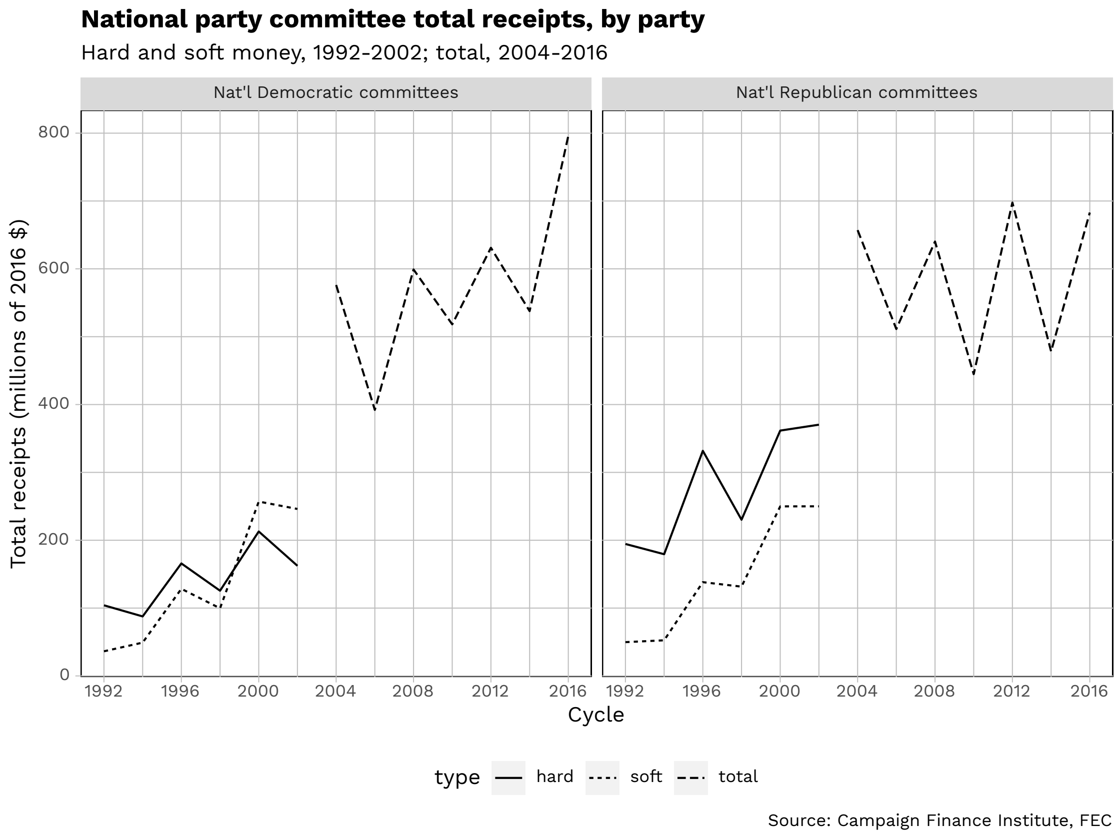

Figure 2.1: Hard and soft money raised by national party committees, by party and election cycle, 1992–2016. Total figure includes hard money exclusively from 2004-2016. Data: Campaign Finance Institute (2020b).

mary. Steve Forbes, a wealthy media executive running an underdog campaign, declined federal funding in order to finance his own campaign for that year's primary elections. He was the first credible major-party candidate to do so.[3] In 2000, when Forbes repeated the tactic, George W. Bush followed suit, reportedly for fear of being outspent (Weber 2011). Bush accepted public financing in the general election, which he narrowly won over Al Gore. But candidates followed his precedent in subsequent years, and in 2004 Democrats began to forego public funds during primary elections as well.

There is one other innovation from 2000 that foreshadows future developments. After winning the New Hampshire primary, Arizona Sen. John McCain raised $1 million online in just 48 hours,

3. Ross Perot also stood outside the system of federal funding during his 1992 and 1996 campaigns, but did so first as an independent, and then at the head of a third party.

with an average contribution of $110 (*The Economist* 2000). Small-dollar contributions were still an insignificant part of the 2000 presidential campaign, but journalists and political operatives took note of the potential for Internet fund-raising to replace direct mail, which was, and is, notoriously expensive.

During the 1990s, concern also mounted over spending routed through "527 groups," so named because they are incorporated under Section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code. Through this form of organization, operatives could raise and spend unlimited amounts of money on political activities so long as it remains adjacent to, but not directly involved in, advocacy on behalf of or in opposition to specific candidates — the *Buckley v. Valeo* standard.[4] Spending routed through these groups was subject to very limited oversight until it attracted attention in the 1998 midterm elections, and Congress mandated more robust disclosures from 527 groups, filed with the Internal Revenue Service, in 2000 (Daniel 2010). While direct donations to candidates were prohibited, the candidates themselves, including candidates for president, were actively involved in soliciting both soft money and dark money donations to outside groups (Cantor 1997). Since disclosure requirements began in 2000, most 527 groups have disclosed their receipts and expenditures to the IRS on a periodic basis.

For McCain, the senator from Arizona who lost the Republican nomination for the presidency to Bush in 2000, the rise of soft money placed corporations and wealthy individuals too close to the center of the political action. After his loss in the 2000 presidential primary, he returned to the Senate, continued a longtime collaboration with Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) in the pursuit of new campaign finance legislation, and, after the excesses of the 1998 midterm and 2000 presidential campaigns, the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) became law in 2002. The BCRA, still in effect as of this writing, restricts the ability of national political parties to use soft money, and thus closes one avenue for corporate spending in federal elections.

However, since 1998, 527 groups had been gaining popularity, and the flow of funds through those arrangements began to outstrip previous levels of soft money spending. While left-leaning

4. As I will explain, later changes to the law allowed 527 groups to spend directly to influence elections, although that spending is subject to FEC oversight.

groups like the Sierra Club also incorporated as 527s, conservative groups are known for their innovations in the use of this organizational form. In 2004, a 527 called Swift Boat Veterans for Truth spent $23 million, notably challenging the war record of Vietnam veteran, Democratic presidential nominee, and sitting U.S. Senator John Kerry in several television advertisements (Center for Responsive Politics 2016). Despite the organization's name, which implies that its supporters were primarily war veterans, its top contributors were Texas business magnates in finance and real estate: Bob Perry, Harold Simmons, and T. Boone Pickens (ibid).[5] The "Swift Boat" group also raised $715,000 directly from corporations and $12.5 million from individuals giving more than the $5,000 per year limit for political action committees (Federal Election Commission 2007). Since it did not operate as a PAC, it did not observe the contribution limit. The group's argument was that its advertisements were not independent expenditures in direct support or opposition to a presidential candidate. Its activities are an example of the weakness of the enforcement options made available under campaign finance law. After the 2004 election, the Federal Election Commission ruled that Swift Boat Veterans for Truth should have registered as a political action committee. That group, and several others, agreed in 2007 to pay civil penalties (ibid). By this time, however, Bush was nearing the end of his second term as president.

2.4.2 Barack Obama's mass and elite support

In 2008, with Kerry's loss fresh in the minds of many Democratic operatives, Sen. Barack Obama became the first presidential candidate since 1976 to refuse public funding for a general election campaign. By the time he announced this decision in June 2008, he had already won the Democratic nomination thanks in part to 1.5 million individual donations and a campaign infrastructure oriented towards maximizing the impact of volunteers and supporters among the party rank-and-file (Obama 2008).

"The public financing of presidential elections as it exists today is broken, and we face opponents who have become masters at gaming this broken system," Obama said in his announcement, a video message to supporters that was uploaded to YouTube.

5. Again, 527 groups have been obliged to disclose their donors since 2000.

The future president called out McCain, that year's Republican nominee and an author of the most recent effort at campaign finance reform, as a beneficiary of unsavory outside spending.

“We've already seen that he's not going to stop the smears and attacks from his allies running so-called 527 groups, who will spend millions and millions of dollars in unlimited donations,” Obama said of his general-election adversary.

“Instead of forcing us to rely on millions from Washington lobbyists and special-interest PACs, you've fueled this campaign with donations of $5, $10, $20, whatever you can afford," Obama went on to say, later adding, ”You've already changed the way campaigns are funded because you know that's the only way we can change how Washington works.”

The Obama campaign's success makes McCain's 2000 fund-raising look anemic. In the Obama campaign's monthly filing for June 2008, the month the candidate rejected public funding, his staff reported having raised $337 million through the end of that month and having $71 million in cash on hand by month's end, according to campaign finance disclosures. Campaign staff told reporters that 91 percent of Obama's contributions come in amounts of less than $200 (Mooney 2008).

Obama's landmark decision was a watershed moment for mass fund-raising. However, it was not quite, as he put it, a declaration of independence from a broken system. To start Obama's primary election campaign against Hillary Clinton, his finance operation relied on large-dollar fund-raising from financial-industry executives and industrial magnates as well as mass appeals to grassroots supporters. In 2007, Obama raised more than one-third of his campaign funds from the financial sector, and nearly two-thirds of his earliest donations come in amounts of $1,000 or more (Sifry 2009). Faced with limits on how much the campaign could raise from its most affluent supporters in the general election, Obama's staff used new media technologies to recruit a much larger base of financial sponsors — but only after executives and senior employees of firms in financial services, legal services, and other regulated industries had already reached their maximum allowable contributions.

The institutional changes that make this strategy possible come slowly. Even McCain's fund-raising success in 2000 was the result of earlier moves. The FEC issued an opinion allowing campaign contributions through the Internet in 1995.[6] In 1999, the campaign for Democratic Sen. Bill Bradley, running for his party's nomination for the presidency, received an FEC advisory opinion stating that donations given over the Internet with a credit card qualified for matching funds under the public financing program. In 2004, inspired by former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean's campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, Matt DeBergalis and Benjamin Rahn founded ActBlue, which processes credit card contributions on behalf of any Democrat, in any race, anywhere in the country (Wayne 2007). During the 2008 campaign, Obama supporters independent of the campaign began using ActBlue to solicit contributions from their own friends and acquaintances. Online fund-raising became even more widespread after the Obama campaign made it a prominent aspect of its campaign practices (Kreiss 2012). By 2012 party organizations like the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee were sending fund-raising solicitations by email that directed would-be donors straight to ActBlue.com. As of early 2019, ActBlue had raised more than $3 billion in behalf of Democratic candidates (ActBlue 2019).

2.4.3 Super PACs, unlimited contributions, and dark money

After 2008, the pendulum swung even further in the direction of increased influence of affluent individuals and corporations. In 2010, the Supreme Court decision *Citizens United v. FEC* struck down the BCRA's provision against electioneering funded by unions or corporate treasuries, so long as that spending is reported, eventually, to the Federal Election Commission. The same year, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled in *SpeechNow.org v. FEC* that limits on contributions to 527 groups organized to make independent expenditures — that is, seeking to issue communications that explicitly meet the express advocacy standard — were unconstitutional. This allows 527 groups to raise unlimited amounts of money that can be spent directly in support or opposition to candidates. The FEC requires groups to report these expenditures.[7]

6. This was Advisory Opinion 1995-09, issued at the request of an organization connected to Rep. Newt Gingrich. Gingrich appears to be the first politician for federal office to develop online fund-raising infrastructure, although Lamar Alexander, who had been George H.W. Bush's Secretary of Education, filed to raise money online the same year.

7. It is still possible to mention candidates in "issue advocacy" advertisements, which need not be reported to the FEC. In practice, some organizations pursue the issue advertisement strategy and less direct messaging, while others report ad buys with express advocacy as independent expenditures or electioneering communications.

Despite the availability of pathways to support or oppose candidates indirectly, many donors prefer to remain involved directly with candidates and parties. However, the original FECA language included an upper limit on the aggregate amount that an individual could give to political campaigns and committees, not only a limit on the total an individual entity could give to a single campaign. As of 2012 that aggregate limit still stood. Aided by Dan Backer, an industrious campaign finance lawyer noted for his work on behalf of Republicans, an Alabama electrical engineer, Shawn McCutcheon, sued the FEC in that year, arguing that this aggregate limit was a violation of his right to free speech (Frizell 2014). In October 2013 the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *McCutcheon v. FEC*. On April 2, 2014, the court ruled 5-4 for McCutcheon, and donors became free to give as much money to candidates, campaigns and other political organizations as they desire, so long as they do not exceed the maximum they can give to each individual organization.

Unlimited spending on election-adjacent activities funded by anonymous donors also becomes a growing business. This dark money flows through so-called "social welfare organizations," organized under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code, and to a lesser extent through other 501(c) organizations as well. While the law gives broad leeway for organizations to engage in candidate-centered activity without technically qualifying as campaign activity, in practice dark money spending, and even the unlimited PAC activity unleashed by *McCutcheon*, have not become a substantial factor in congressional primary elections (Boatright, Malbin, and Glavin 2016; Malbin and Glavin 2018). Instead, fund-raising circulates through networks of organizations connected to parties or candidates but that have higher contribution limits, such as so-called "leadership PACs" and joint fund-raising committees, in which receipts are split between candidate and party committees (Heberlig and Larson 2012). Dark money has been more extensively used at the state level, such as in the case of ballot initiatives (e.g., Judd 2015). It is also used in general elections, where groups run ads to support (or attack) vulnerable incumbents without meeting the "express advocacy" standard.

These changes allow for an increasing intensity of involvement among wealthy donors, who, like McCutcheon, were already involved in networks of campaign contributors, and already possessed a strong partisan affiliation. At the same time, however, a parallel set of organizational innovations, like ActBlue, increase the capacity of political campaigns to recruit a new set of supporters from the ranks of non-elites. Both types of innovations come from both parties. The Democratic Party under Clinton elected to support the 1996 presidential campaign with a wave of advertising paid for with soft money, but the Democrats under Dean made room in the party's organizational infrastructure for ActBlue. Republicans and their supporters pushed for *McCutcheon* and *Citizens United*, but the Republican presidential candidates John McCain and, later, Donald J. Trump, propelled themselves in part by soliciting small-dollar donations.

Despite the increasing ability of affluent individuals and corporations to spend large sums on politics with limited disclosure, the core of the system instituted in 1971, especially the system of public disclosure of campaign contributors, remains in place. In fact, as small-dollar contributions through ActBlue — and, beginning in the 2020 cycle, a Republican analog, WinRed — come to account for a greater proportion of candidate receipts, disclosure is actually increasing.[8] For reporting purposes, ActBlue and WinRed are conduits for the contributions they handle. The FEC's regulations require that an organization acting as a conduit disclose each contribution it facilitates, regardless of amount. Normally, campaigns need only disclose contributions from donors who give more than $200 to the same campaign committee in a cycle.

Independent expenditures have increased in volume and significance (Fig. 2.2). However, they are more important in general elections, where they fulfill the same role of supporting party activity that soft money performed prior to 2002; in state politics; and in bona fide issue advocacy. While "issue advertising" is used to intervene in elections, donors like McCutcheon have preferred to become directly involved in campaigns and elections. The *McCutcheon* court decision allows them to support a larger number of candidates and organizations, increasing the density of donor networks. While there are corporations, unions and individuals who use legal vehicles to conceal

8. There have been attempts to establish ActBlue-like institutions on the right, such as RightRoots.com in 2006 and Slatecard in 2007 (Levy 2007). However, these efforts did not enjoy the same kind of adoption as ActBlue. I am not aware of any attempt to conclusively argue why the Republican Party did not develop a single institution to handle grassroots online fund-raising until 16 years after ActBlue's launch, although there are extensive treatments of the field of political technology that offer clues (Kreiss 2012, 2016).

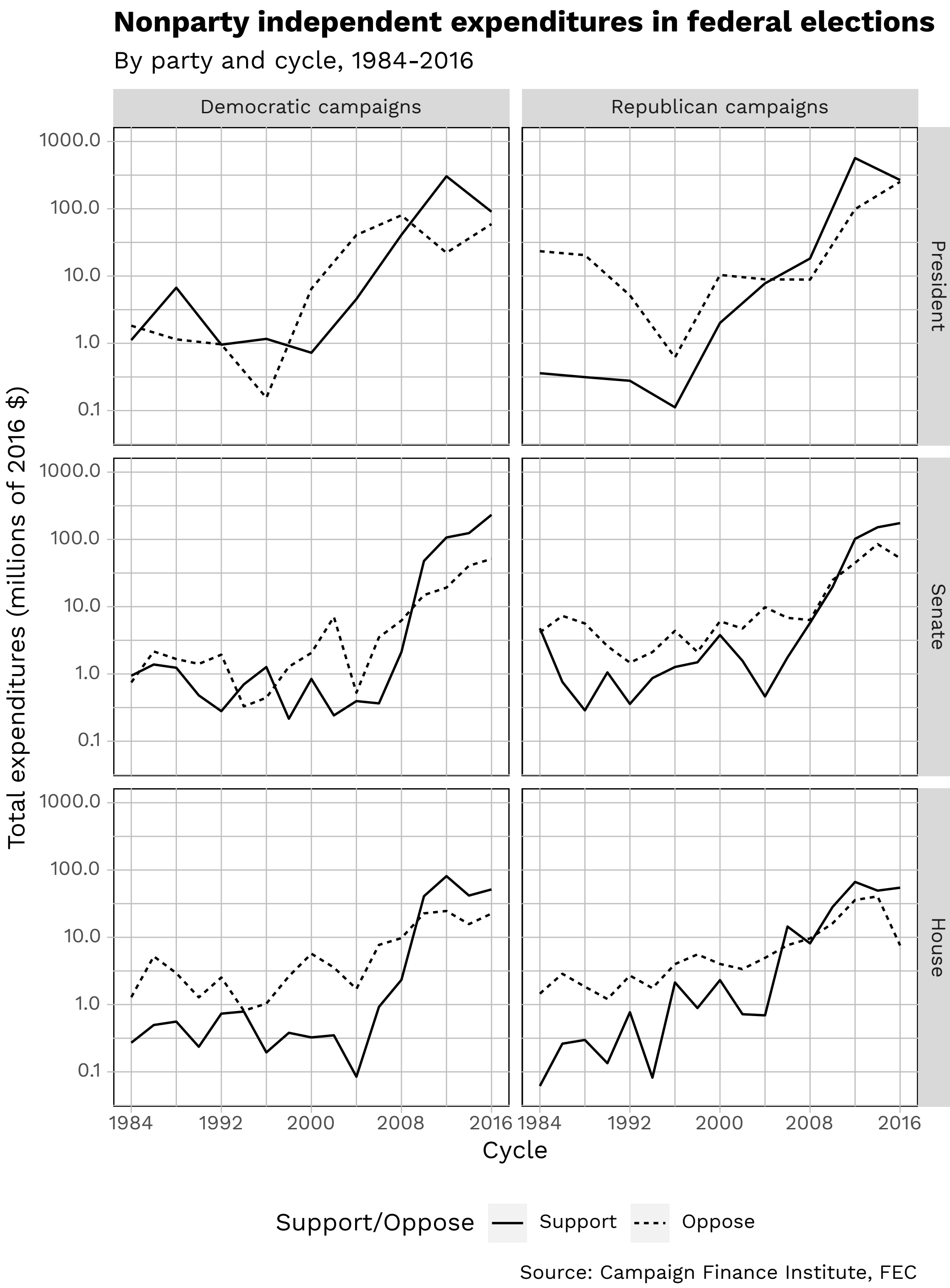

Figure 2.2: Independent expenditures in federal elections, 1984–2016. Y-axis on logarithmic (base 10) scale. Data: Campaign Finance Institute (2020c, 2020d).

their political activity, these expenditures are made in support or opposition to candidates and political groups with no shortage of contributors whose donations are public record. While campaign finance has a vast industry of dark money at its periphery, at its core, political committees disclose more than enough information to build a clear picture of who stands with whom and when.

2.4.4 Campaign finance practices: Mass and elite

The 1996 presidential election marks a crucial turning point in the institutional history of campaign finance. The events of that year's presidential election signaled that the influence of the wealthy in politics was on the ascent, and that campaign finance regulations designed to check their power were crumbling. To explain the importance of these changes, The Washington Post turned to reform advocate Fred Wertheimer, who left the "citizen's lobby" Common Cause in 1995 to found a good-government and campaign finance reform advocacy group, Democracy 21.

"If nothing happens to change this system, 1996 will simply look like the first year of the Internet compared to what comes next," the newspaper quotes Wertheimer as saying (Marcus and Babcock 1997). "'In future elections we'll greatly increase the $2 billion we spent this year, and have greater violations of the law, lower turnouts and an American people who sit on the sidelines and watch their government for sale."

The sums spent on politics in 1996 pale in comparison to what will be spent four, eight, and sixteen years later. More flagrant violations of campaign finance law really do come to pass. But turnout does not go down. In fact, voter turnout modestly increases. And rather than sit on the sidelines as the cost of American elections goes up, many people — including those of modest means — become more likely to donate their own money to the cause of a candidate for federal office.

Barack Obama's mix of mass and elite fund-raising is a case in point. In terms of individual contributions, Obama outraised McCain by a ratio of more than two-to-one. The campaign has said the former president recruited more than three million donors for his first national campaign. Subtracting the number of donors who gave itemized contributions from that three million figure to derive the size of Obama's small-dollar donor base, Malbin (2008) wrote, "[Obama's] 2.5 million small donors would be in the same general range as [the Campaign Finance Institute's] published estimate for the number of small donors who gave to all candidates combined in 2004 (anywhere from 2.0 to 2.8 million)."

The sheer number of people recruited into campaign finance by the Obama campaign, relative to the size of the donorate in previous campaigns, is staggering. And the Obama campaign established a pattern that later campaigns, especially campaigns by Democratic Party candidates, would follow. In contemporary national politics, political giving is an increasingly popular form of participation. Based on a 2017 analysis of American National Election Studies survey data, Hughes (2017) estimates that the percentage of Americans who give directly to a candidate or campaign doubled between 1992 and 2016, from six to 12 percent.

While an illustration of changes in presidential fund-raising over time would be hard to interpret because figures from before and after 2008 are not comparable, there is no such issue with House and Senate campaigns. The total funds raised by campaigns of each type by party are illustrated in Figs. 2.3–2.4.

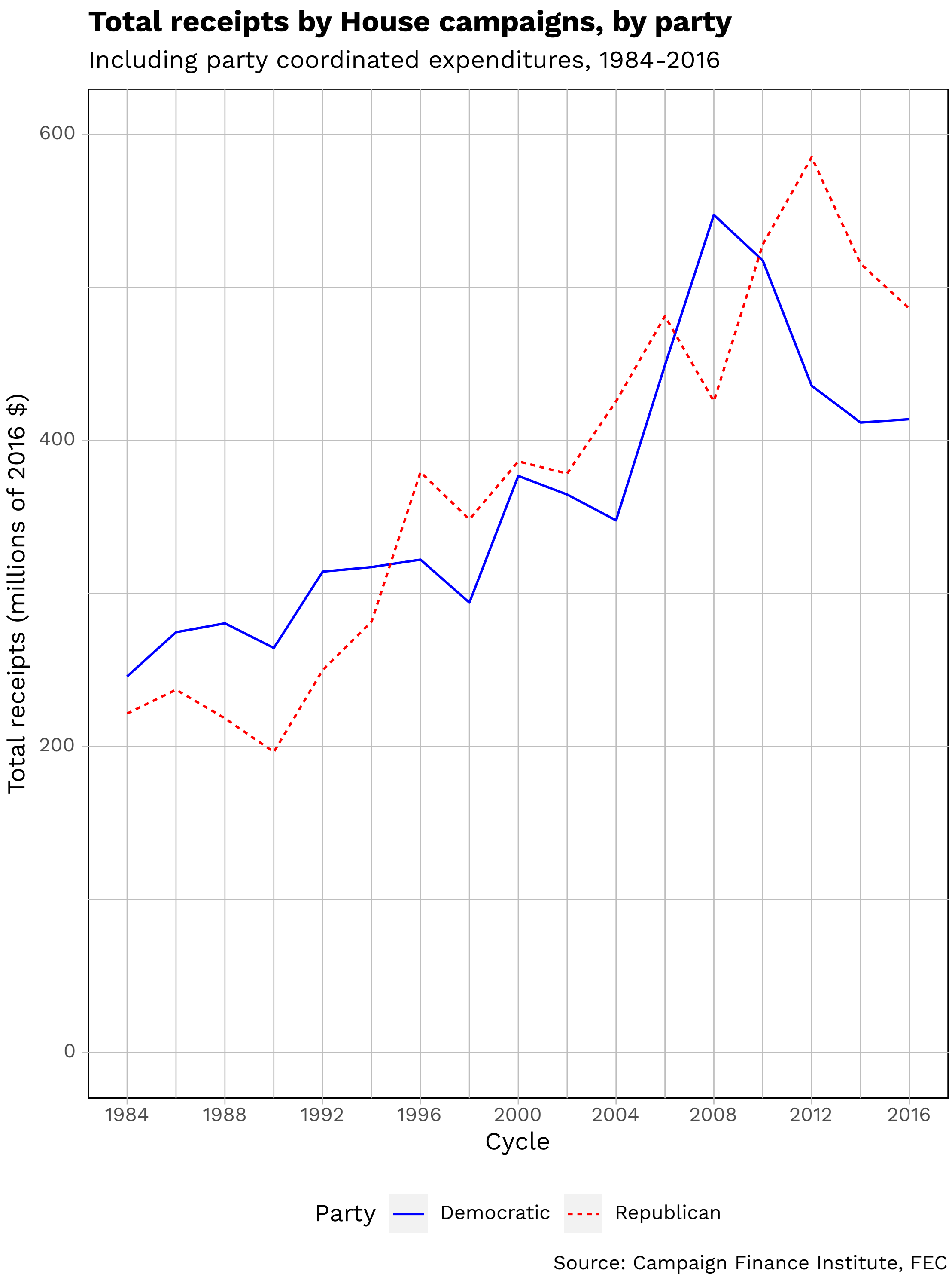

Figure 2.3: Total funds raised in House elections by party, 1984–2016. Data: Campaign Finance Institute (2020a).

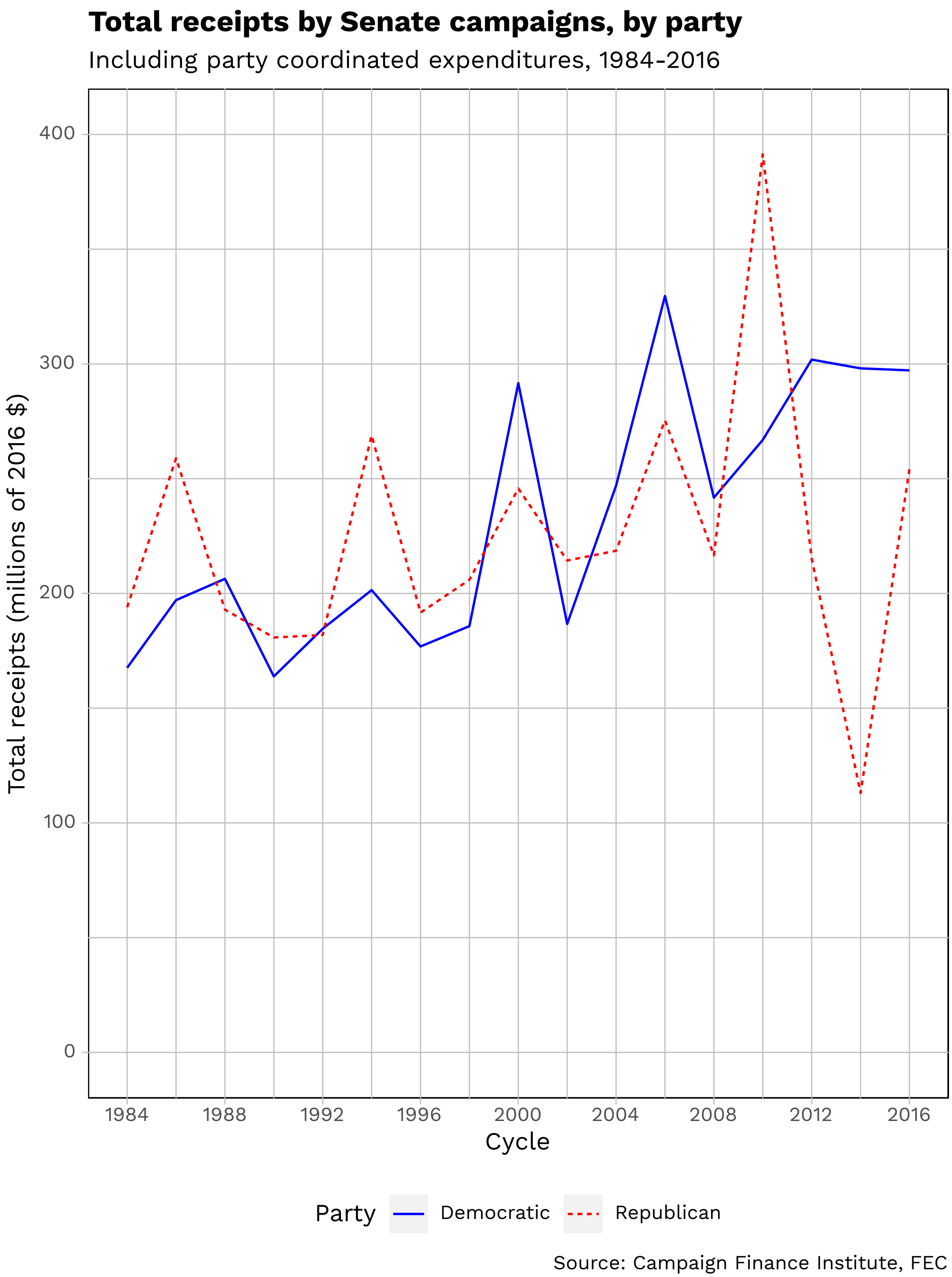

Figure 2.4: Total funds raised in Senate elections by party, 1984–2016. Data: Campaign Finance Institute (2020a).

This chapter has argued that campaign finance reports offer highly granular reports of which people supported which candidates or organizations, and when. While changing laws and loopholes allow for omissions that would be crucial for research into a complete accounting of the political activity of individual people, it is possible to clearly discern patterns of alliance and opposition thanks to the volume of activity that takes place in full view. And because changing campaign practices have so far tended towards the increasing disclosure associated with mass participation alongside the less visible intervention of elite donors who would prefer to remain anonymous, it is reasonable to believe that this will remain possible in the near future.

Through a detailed look at the history of campaign finance in federal U.S. politics, I have highlighted the role that donors play in the selection of candidates for office. Candidates in the same party, with diverse policy views, turn to donors for the financial support necessary to mount mass campaigns. Similarly, the organizations involved in those campaigns are heterogeneous in their capacities, their ability to coordinate with the committees of elected officials or party organizations, their sources of financial support, their legal forms of organization, and their own policy priorities.

American campaign finance is organized such that financial support for a given party's causes and candidates flows through a diffuse network of organizations, sometimes with competing interests. This calls into question the explanatory power of theories that attribute a party's success or failure to the actions of a unitary party elite. In Chapter 3, I propose an alternative approach focused on fractions or tendencies that operate within and across political parties. Next, I describe campaign finance data in more detail, and, finally, I put it to use in developing new information about the structure of fractional politics.

Chapter 3

Party fractions and financial networks: Theory and evidence

The usual way of thinking about polarization among political elites can make it seem as if extremism by lawmakers is entirely a consequence of individual preferences or institutional rules. A closer reading of recent literature clarifies that the political action of donors and party activists might play a significant role. Recent work moves towards the realization that the behavior of candidates, donors and voters must be studied not only in the context of *between-party competition* for votes and legislative seats, but also with an eye on *within-party conflict* that determines who controls the party agenda. Here and in Chapter 4, I further investigate the relationship between intraparty conflict, interparty competition, and partisan polarization in the context of congressional elections in the United States.

The most promising explanations for polarization focus on the replacement of moderate legislators with ideological ones, but offer few explanations for how this replacement comes to pass (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2008; but see Bonica 2014b). The most compelling explanation in the present literature is that moderates do not run (Thomsen 2014), which implies that if moderates *were* to compete against extremists, they would win back seats. And yet, when it comes to primary elections and other forms of internal conflict, incumbents and party officials in the United States are famously conflict-averse. An incumbent concerned about a primary challenge may raise a sizable early war chest to discourage enterprising newcomers (Jacobson 2009, 45). Such a politician may even adopt more extreme policy positions in order to deny a challenger the opportunity to mount an attack from a partisan flank (Brady, Han, and Pope 2007). Some party officials also believe it is in their interest to suppress internal party conflict. They believe that contested primary elections divert resources and create internecine acrimony, draining bank accounts and disenchanting supporters who, out of spite, might stay home rather than vote the party line on Election Day

(Boatright 2014).

Does within-party conflict lead to greater between-party division? Recent work claims that ideologically extreme legislators who win primary elections are more likely to lose in general elections (Hall 2015; Hall and Thompson 2018). If extremist challengers lose seats to the other party, creating incumbents who enjoy a significant advantage in the future, then conservatives cowing moderate Republicans into submission or progressive Democrats chasing off their establishment co-partisans would seem, paradoxically, to produce more moderation in the long term. This is the kind of counter-intuitive finding that social scientists deeply enjoy. However, it is hard to reconcile the story it implies with the successful march of the extreme right through the GOP since 1994, or with current levels of between-party distance on matters of economic policy, the likes of which have not been seen since the Gilded Age (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2008).

Other work builds towards a clearer picture of events by distinguishing between mere *professional competition*, or the number of candidates in a race, and *divisiveness*, or the degree to which candidates represent opposing fractions engaged in a struggle for party control. For instance, Jewitt and Treul (2014) find that intrapartisan division increased general-election turnout in the 2010 primary elections. This is an important forward step, but it does not assess the effect of within-party conflict on partisan polarization.

In this chapter, I introduce a novel method to use campaign finance records to estimate the structure of fractions within parties. With a straightforward generalization of some recent methodological advances, a method for the estimation of ideology in one dimension instead produces low-rank approximations of the similarities and differences between donors and candidates in a shared, multidimensional space. Applying this method, I uncover durable, cohesive fractions that stand apart from a majority of Republicans and Democrats. Mainstream politicians in one party may not share many donors with candidates of the other party, but they share enough of them to produce a coherent political core, with members of each party connected, however indirectly, with their colleagues across the aisle.

To further preview the findings, I show in Chapter 4 that, since 1980, a fraction of economic radicals has been working to advance its position within the GOP. In recent decades, elections sending these radicals to Congress are characterized by close alignment between the fraction's candidate and its donors in primary elections where other elements of the Republican Party are not united. This lends support to some theoretical propositions advanced in the UCLA school's "extended party network" theory of parties, in particular, that parties are best characterized by divisions between "pragmatists" willing to broker compromise across party lines and "ideologues" who are not. It also demonstrates the utility of approaching conflict within parties as a matter not only of professional competition, with multiple candidates vying for a new position, but also of relative degrees of unity or division within party fractions.

Having developed a more coherent picture of conflict and competition in the parties, I turn to the question of conflict and polarization. Applying another methodological innovation to allow for the comparison of different congressional districts encompassing the same areas over time, I use fixed-effects models to study the effect of primary-election competition on the ideology of elected legislators. Modeling ideology as the outcome using ideal-point estimates derived from roll-call votes, I show that increased professional competition, as defined above, is associated with the election of more extreme legislators. However, when party adherents organize themselves more neatly along fractional divides, the party nominates — and installs into Congress — systematically less extreme legislators. These results are consistent with the theory that a chaotic primary with many candidates creates opportunities for cohesive fractions to advance their agendas, but when a party electorate is able to perceive and respond to clear fractional differences, moderates are more likely to prevail.

The rest of this work proceeds as follows. In the next section, I describe the underlying theory beneath the hypothesis that fractional coherence reduces polarization. Next, drawing on 32 years of data on congressional elections, I explain the measurements and plan of analysis used to test that hypothesis. This chapter concludes by describing the structure of intrapartisan struggle between 1979 and 2012. The following chapter delivers on the promises made here by assessing the effect of intrapartisan conflict on interpartisan polarization. After presenting the results, I conclude by discussing the implications these findings have for studies of partisan politics, stability and change in political parties, and partisan polarization.

3.1 Intrapartisan conflict and elite polarization

Elite polarization is both a relational and cognitive phenomenon, in the same sense that electrons have the properties of both particles and waves (Greiner 2000). Cognitively, then, polarization relates to systematic opposition in opinions on some issue, and the process through which those oppositions increase over time (DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996). Relationally, however, polarization refers to a state of social or interactional separation, and the process through which this separation increases over time (for e.g., Neal 2018).

The canonical example of polarization is the growing separation between Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. Congress beginning circa 1980. Members of opposing parties decreasingly vote in agreement on the same bills (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2008), co-sponsor legislation across party lines (Rippere 2016), or collaborate on bipartisan press events (Desmarais et al. 2015). This separation is more pronounced in the first case than in the second or third.

While social scientists *measure* relational polarization in this case, we often seek to *study* the cognitive variety. This may be a distinction without a difference. For instance, how legislators act and with whom they associate produce a strikingly similar picture of polarization as the one created by measuring how they speak (Gentzkow, Shapiro, and Taddy 2016). The literature shows that maps of alliance and opposition in co-sponsorship place legislators in more or less the same positions relative to one another as maps that assess similarities and differences in what they say, or, alternatively, how they describe the political world. Patterns of elite speech imply that legislators have comprehensive maps of the political world of ideas — theories of politics we might call "ideology" (Martin and Desmond 2010; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014; Martin and Judd 2020) — and, in other forms of action, their maneuvers show that these maps are quite accurate. Among elites, what one might call ideology in the classical sense — boiling down to a general orientation to politics that places each person somewhere on a liberal-to-conservative continuum, with more liberal people to the left and more conservative people to the right — is intimately connected to the forces that organize alliances and structure political action.

However tight the link between cognition and action may be, there is an even closer connection between action and *interaction*. In the pursuit of specific policy goals, politicians form clear webs of alliance and opposition. These webs reveal *fractions* or *tendencies* within each party (Sartori 1976) — the groups, each organized around discrete combinations of identities and aims, that constitute the "long coalition" of the party as a whole (Aldrich 1995).[1] It is common to think of these fractions in ideological terms, separating, for instance, extremists and moderates. But it is just as reasonable to think in relational terms. In this case parties comprise groups organized by orientation to action rather than ideology. Noel (2016) suggests one such distinction, between party *regulars*, who countenance deal-making across party lines in the short term in the service of the party's long-term goals, and *ideologues*, who do not. This helps to explain cases like the Southern "Blue Dog" Democrats of the 2000s, whose socially conservative positions placed them outside of the party mainstream and whose membership in the party was very likely the outcome of cross-cutting pressures.

This alternative, relational, view of party structure stands in contrast to the classical, ideological approach. It is not necessary to adjudicate between these competing conceptions in order to study partisan polarization. However, empirical results that concern polarization between parties have very different implications depending on which of these two models appears to more precisely describe within-party conflict.

3.1.1 Theories of party fraction: Competing hypotheses

Because official action in the legislature introduces institutional rules that confound the forces around patterns of interaction, it is better to think of within-party differences in terms of electoral coalitions. In the American system, primary elections afford the opportunity for competing groups within parties to resolve their disagreements, whether through negotiation and compromise or

1. I adopt the terminology of Sartori (1976) because a "fraction" may exist without necessarily threatening the stability of the party system as a whole, while a "faction," as understood by authors like James Madison, poses an existential threat to democratic politics. It may be the case that some fractions have destabilizing properties while others do not. Occasionally, to avoid terminological fatigue, I use "tendency" interchangeably.

through the dominance hierarchy imposed by the emergence of a winner over a loser. Further, the campaign finance system in the United States compels candidates to reveal their financial bases of support. The same relationships between interaction, action, and cognition observed in the legislature also appear in analyses of the networks formed by donors and candidates (Bonica 2013).

Partisanship and ideology work together to separate Democratic and Republican candidates and their supporters alike, with a dwindling number of the political or financial elite straddling this line (Bonica 2014b; Heerwig 2018). Like politicians, donors have a clear sense of where they stand and the positions of others relative to their own "location" in policy space (Francia 2003; Bramlett, Gimpel, and Lee 2011; La Raja and Wiltse 2012; Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017; Broockman, Ferenstein, and Malhotra 2019). Tracing connections between donors and candidates brings the structure of political coalitions into sharper focus (Bonica 2014a). The maneuvers of donors and candidates are crucial to the larger organization and reorganization of coalitions within an "extended party network" that includes party officials, activists, and operatives in political organizations (Koger, Masket, and Noel 2009). Campaign finance activity reveals the structure of alignments within parties that bridge both formal and informal party organizations (Grossmann and Dominguez 2009; Masket 2011).

If the classical ideological view does a better job of explaining the structure of these electoral coalitions, then one would expect each of the two parties to be divided into at most three groups: extremists, moderates, and some subset of outsiders. Further, in their electoral coalitions, regulars of one party would be quite separate and apart from the other party's moderate wing. One might expect members from different parties to share allies only on specific matters of policy or as a function of long engagement in Congress, which famously unites incumbent legislators and incumbents in industry (e.g. Powell and Grimmer 2016). In this view, lawmakers and their supporters are sorted by ideology, and their ideology shapes their behaviors. Because of the close association between ideology and partisanship, this would lead to a clear line of division between Republicans and Democrats. Because ideology is in this view a substantial cause of behavior, there are few other factors with comparable explanatory power, and, as a result, one would not expect other perceptible cleavages to divide members of the same party.

Taking the relational view, in contrast, one would expect clear distinctions between extremists of both parties, but more cross-pollination between "regulars" of the two parties. Put another way, members of one party with a bipartisan disposition will likely have the support of donors, and others in their electoral coalitions, with a similar outlook. Such donors can be expected to give not only to Democrats but also to Republicans, perhaps even alternating between one party and the other or changing allegiance from one to the other over time according to their preferences and changing party platforms. In terms of coalitions defined by patterns of interaction, then, some regulars of one party may seem more like regulars of the other than like the ideologues in their own caucus. What is more, the difference is a difference in orientation to action, not a cognitive distinction. One might find, in this case, a politician who very much espouses ideologically extreme views, but who appears nonetheless, by dint sharing financial supporters with members of the opposing party, a party regular, not an ideologue in this sense. The consequences of this shared support for a lawmaker's action in the legislature will be explored in Chapter 5.

3.1.2 Conflict, competition, and polarization

The strongest force causing polarization in the U.S. since 1980 is the emergence of an increasingly dominant conservative tendency in the Republican party that agitates against compromise, bipartisan or otherwise (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2008; Thomsen 2014; Skocpol and Hertel-Fernandez 2016). The question becomes when and how this tendency gains control of the Republican Party. The answer must make sense given the absence of a rising progressive tendency in the Democratic Party, or, at least, the absence of a tendency with the same size, organization, and efficacy. The interpretation of findings changes depending on whether an ideological or relational model of party coalitions appears to be more accurate.

The subject of interest, then, is the interplay between tendencies within parties. Already this solidifies a key insight: Polarization *between* parties is necessarily the function of processes at work *within* each party, even as leaders in one party act always with one eye on their rivals in the other. But what aspect of this process leads to the rightward march of the Republican Party?

In studies of elite polarization, the current state of the field is to assume that conservative power grows when conservatives replace moderates through elections. Exactly how this happens is unclear. Moderate state legislators who might launch a federal campaign systematically report that they believe their party's primary electorate is too extreme to support their candidacy, and do not run (Thomsen 2014). However, most evidence suggests that ideologues (extremists) generally lose to regulars (moderates) in head-to-head competition (with the possible exception of the South; see Fouirnaies and Hall 2020). One way to reconcile these conflicting findings is to re-evaluate, and to clarify, how and when conflict between members of the same party will change the character of their party as a whole.

The biggest obstacle to research on the role of within-party processes in polarization has been the conflation of *professional competition*, or the extent to which party politicians all vie for the same seat, and *conflict*, or the degree to which different tendencies within the party contest a given seat. (The latter concept is closer to the notion of divisiveness offered by Jewitt and Treul (2014).) In both cases, to the victor go significant spoils. However, only in the case of conflict does the outcome meaningfully alter the balance of power within a party.

I will illustrate by example. Consider two hypothetical constituencies, each of which have two co-partisan politicians prepared to make a credible bid for their party's nomination. In the first constituency, both candidates are from the same tendency and share the same general policy outlook. In the second, the candidates draw support from different tendencies. Regardless of who wins election in the first constituency, that legislator is likely to support the same candidate for leader of their caucus, to vote in similar ways on legislation, and to support similar co-partisans in their own efforts to win seats across the country. The balance of power between tendencies remains unaltered.

The second case is very different. If an extremist (ideologue) were to defeat a moderate (regular) in the second constituency, then the balance of power within the party would shift. That legislator may act in concert to thwart efforts at collaborating across party lines, to support more radical over more moderate legislation, to direct official resources to develop radical policies, and to lend help to other candidates nationwide who seek to mount similar challenges for control of their party. With enough confederates, members of a more ideological tendency could even disrupt leadership structures by, say, withholding support for constitutional officers until some of their number are appointed as party leaders or chairs of important committees.

In sum, the difference between conflict and competition within parties is subtle but crucial. In the case of competition, elections determine the personalities and predilections of legislators. In the case of conflict, they may alter the trajectory of a party's policy platform.

Confronted with the opportunity to make intrapartisan gains, what are members of a party fraction to do? The answer depends on their orientation to *between-party* competition, and the extent to which the district is "in play" for both parties, that is, whether the outcome of the general election is in any real doubt. In districts where both parties have a credible chance of winning the seat, an enterprising candidate might play a game of brinksmanship.

Consider the case of a district with a vulnerable incumbent from the other party. By mounting a nomination bid where the outcome has real stakes for the party as a whole, a political entrepreneur might compel local or national party leaders to support an insurgent campaign rather than risk intraparty strife by floating a candidate from the ranks of party insiders. Party leaders — and other insiders — seek to conserve resources for the general election, want to avoid intraparty conflict, and may mistake such a candidacy as a sign of an ideologically extreme base in the district. For these reasons, party leaders may accept an extreme candidate rather than spend the time and energy necessary to simultaneously fight that candidate in the primary and prepare to defeat the other party in general elections, not only in that district, but in other competitive districts as well.

Alternatively, enterprising members of ideological (extreme) fractions may seek to play an exclusively inside game. In this case, ideological candidates would be more likely to contest seats that any co-partisan would be sure to win. In one sense, this lowers the stakes, because there is little risk of losing the seat if the "wrong" candidate were to win in a primary election. In districts with an incumbent, this also all but guarantees that the insurgent candidate will lose, although demonstrating the ability to organize a campaign may persuade the incumbent to shift policy positions — or persuade party leaders to bring the insurgent out from the cold, and put those organizing skills to use.

Two recent exceptions prove the rule. In 2014, the economics professor David Brat defeated Rep. Eric Cantor (R-Va.) in a primary election, unseating the Republican House leadership's second-in-command. In 2018, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez defeated Rep. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.) in a primary, ousting the Democratic Party's House Caucus chair. Both took their rivals' seats in the House. In 2014, Cantor's Virginia seat was safe for Republicans; similarly, Crowley's district, comprising sections of Queens and the Bronx in New York City, was safe for Democrats. Only in the hot-house environments of Virginia conservatism in President Barack Obama's second mid-term election, and the nexus of labor and community organizing in New York City in President Donald Trump's first mid-term, would ideological candidates have the capacity to unseat well-positioned party regulars. In a district with a more competitive opposing party, in a year without countercyclical opposition to an incumbent president, ideological candidates are more likely to lose than win in overt conflict with party regulars. This is because of a gap between perception and reality. Voters in a district — even party-line voters — hold less extreme views than activists (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2010, p. 17). However, party leaders and other insiders interact more often with activists than they do with the party rank-and-file. As a result, these "regulars" may mistakenly assume that extreme views are more common within their party than they really are (Broockman and Skovron 2018). This has a documented effect on the behavior of party insiders. Notably, this kind of perception discourages moderate candidates from seeking federal office (Thomsen 2014).

This theory of intrapartisan conflict leads to a crucial testable proposition. Ideological candidates will tend to lose to regulars in cases where intrapartisan conflict is high and fractions within the parties have an opportunity to settle their disputes at the ballot box. However, more ideological candidates will in general benefit when intrapartisan conflict is low and insiders select a "consensus" candidate, rather than supporting their fraction all the way through a primary election. In this case, a candidate who survives a primary with greater within-party conflict and goes on to win the general election should be *less extreme* than a candidate nominated without significant intrapartisan strife.

An alternative hypothesis is that intrapartisan conflict leads to *greater* polarization. Of the possible reasons, two stand out as especially likely. The first possibility is that the proposition given above is wrong in a single important detail. Rather than insiders settling on an insurgent as a consensus candidate unbidden, as above, it is possible that this follows a period of behind-the-scenes maneuver by donors and candidates. A prime example is Rep. Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.), who raised a significant amount of money early in his first congressional campaign against two established figures in Arizona's Republican Party. The national party signaled interest in Gosar months before the primary election, but nonetheless allowed party insiders to continue to make their case for alternatives. After allowing conflict to play out, the party intervened again, announcing Gosar's admission to a group of candidates chosen for the strength of their organization and their fundraising ability (Politico 2010). Rather than a case in which national leaders intervened to *prevent* a conflict between regional affiliates, this is an example of national leaders intervening to announce the winner after a conflict has occurred but before voters become involved.

The second possibility looks for answers in the actions of fractional rather than organizational leaders. In this case, insurgent fractions choose to challenge the incumbent fraction where their odds of success are greatest. This leads to a systematic association between conflict and the election of more ideologically extreme legislators driven not by the ability of insurgents to win in direct combat, but by their facility for choosing targets of opportunity. This alternative is supported by evidence that insurgent groups prefer to contest open seats, where an incumbent legislator's existing alliances will not be a factor (Boatright 2014).

In what follows, I first build a descriptive picture of the structure of party coalitions. This lends evidence to help adjudicate which axis best describes intrapartisan division, ideologue/regular or moderate/extremist. Next, I illustrate patterns of intrapartisan competition over time and across the United States. Finally, I test the proposition that intrapartisan conflict produces less ideologically extreme legislators.

3.2 Data

The data used in this chapter and subsequent chapters come from the Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (Bonica 2014a). This dataset includes 130 million contributions made by roughly 16 million organizations and individuals from 1979 to 2014, of which I draw on a subset of contributions to candidates in federal elections from 1979 to 2012.[2] This database includes unique identifiers for each donor, assigned using probabilistic record linkage algorithms, allowing for analyses that follow donors over time.

3.2.1 Contribution records

The FECA requires federal political campaigns and other committees to file periodic financial reports with the FEC. From 1979 through 2000, committees filed paper reports with the Commission. Each report comprises a series of forms and schedules. The periodic reports of interest here include a summary of amounts raised, spent, and borrowed; statements of cash on hand; itemized schedules of contributions from all contributors who have given more than $200 during a given election cycle; and itemized schedules of expenditures. Each record of a contribution includes the contributor's name, employer, occupation, and address, all of which is self-reported by the contributor, along with the amount and date of the contribution. Campaigns are obliged to keep records of all contributions valued above $50 on the chance that a repeat contributor crosses over the $200 threshold, and in practice the quality of data on small contributions has increased significantly since online contributions became more common, around 2006, because the required information is collected along with credit card information as a contribution is being made and passed to a campaign's compliance software.[3] FEC staff and contractors digitize paper reports of contributions and expenditures for use by researchers and for public inspection.

Beginning January 1, 2001, all campaigns and committees under FEC purview and expecting to make more than $50,000 in annual expenditures have been required to file their reports elec-

2. The data for 2014 included in this dataset are incomplete.

3. It is also a misconception that only small contributions are collected online. From 2006 forward, it is common to see records of contributions in the hundreds or even thousands of dollars handled by intermediaries like ActBlue, which process online contributions.

tronically. However, the Senate elected to maintain control of its own records, and for this reason campaigns for that chamber of Congress filed paper records with the Secretary of the Senate.[4] The electronic reports were, and remain, faithful to their original construction as paper reports, down to fields that note the line number of the total to which a given amount is to be added. For instance, contributions from individuals are tallied in a different place than loans or contributions from a candidate. In 2018, new language included in an appropriations act changed the rules, and since September 21, 2018, Senate campaigns have been required to file electronically as well.

The FEC makes efforts to maintain data quality, for instance by following up with committees that appear to have omitted information about contributors or submitted reports that contain errors. The FEC also attempts to enforce law and regulation prohibiting activity like straw contributions, where one person gives money to another for the purpose of making a contribution, or donations from people who are not United States citizens. There have been some high-profile examples of successful enforcement of these provisions (see, e.g., *U.S. v. Parnas*). In practice, the volume of contributions is so high that errors, and blatant evasion of the law requiring the disclosure of donor information, are both common. However, the volume of data is also so high that errors are swamped by valid reports.

3.3 Using contribution records to identify fractions

Because the DIME dataset includes unique identifiers for each contributor, the data offer detailed records of the giving of donors over a period of up to 33 years. The data chronicle how contributors enter and leave the donor pool, shift their preferences from giving to parties to giving to candidates, and change their allegiances when incumbents retire or new candidates emerge. The intuition behind the methods developed here is that donors who give to the same candidates are in some sense similar or "near" to one another in a space defined by candidates, and the same is true for candidates who share donors. In what follows, I use methods that arrange donors and candidates in terms of this sort of nearness.

Because the usual candidate will receive contributions from more donors than the usual donor

4. The FEC continued to digitize these records by hand for public inspection.

will make contributions to candidates, it makes sense to think of candidates as the points about which donors might concentrate. One could even place donors on a single line according to which candidates they have given to. In the process one would also arrange candidates. One would expect, naturally, for such a one-dimensional summary to express partisanship in a very clear sense. After all, donors who give exclusively to Democrats ought to be near to other Democrats, but far away from Republicans, and vice versa for Republicans with respect to Democrats. Similarly, Republicans who are able to recruit some donors who also give to Democrats ought to be placed between the Democrats and the more partisan Republicans.

3.3.1 Low-dimensional representation of distances between donors and candidates

A proven way to act on this intuition is using correspondence analysis (Bonica 2014a). Scholars developing spatial models of politics in the rational choice tradition use correspondence analysis to produce ideology scores for donors and candidates in one dimension (Bonica 2014a; Hall 2015; Bonica and Cox 2018).[5] In existing work, scholars seek to place donors and candidates all on a single number line. In practice this arranges liberal candidates to the left, with the most liberal taking values less than -1, and conservative candidates to the right, with the most conservative taking values greater than 1. In what follows, I introduce an extension of this approach.

Correspondence analysis uses the singular value decomposition, a linear algebra tool that can be thought of as a means to compress information, or, if one prefers, as a means to arrive at optimal low-dimensional representations of a much higher-dimensional space. Beginning with a donor-by-candidate matrix with a representation of total contribution amounts in the cells, the first step is to standardize the cells relative to the total dollar amount, or, in the terminology of correspondence analysis, the mass, in the matrix.[6]

The remainder of the procedure follows Greenacre (2016). The next step is to standardize again

5. The correspondence analysis approach is an evolution in this line of work. Earlier, Bonica (2013) addressed the same ideal-point estimation task using an item-response theory (IRT) model. That paper is an advance on still earlier work by McCarty and Poole (1998), which approached contributions as a discrete choice problem.

6. Following Bonica, I tally each contribution in the hundreds of dollars, and right-censor each contribution to avoid skew introduced by changes in maximum contributions over time. In practice these sorts of preprocessing adjustments do not substantially alter the results.

such that each cell expresses a deviation from the average mass associated with its contributor (row) and candidate (column). Formally, if the donor-by-candidate matrix is the IxJ matrix N, and $n = \sum_i \sum_j n_{ij}$, then

$$P = \frac{1}{n} N. \tag{3.1}$$

The row masses can be expressed as $r_i = \sum_{j=1}^{J} p_{ij}$, and the column masses, $c_j = \sum_{i=1}^{I} p_{ij}$.

If D_r is a matrix with the row masses across the main diagonal, and D_c is a matrix with the column masses across the main diagonal, then the matrix of standardized residuals created through this process is

$$S = D_r^{-\frac{1}{2}} (P - rc^T) D_c^{-\frac{1}{2}} \tag{3.2}$$

and the singular value decomposition would yield

$$S = U D_\alpha V^T \text{ where } U^T U = V^T V = I, \tag{3.3}$$

and D_α is a matrix with the singular values, α, across the main diagonal. These results are used to construct coordinates that place candidates (columns) relative to one another in a space spanned by donors, and donors (rows) relative to one another in a space spanned by candidates. These are called principal coordinates, and for candidates they would be

$$G = D_c^{-\frac{1}{2}} V D_\alpha. \tag{3.4}$$

These principal coordinates are positioned with respect to vertex points in the space of donors, called the standard coordinates of the donors, which are

$$\Phi = D_r^{-\frac{1}{2}} U. \tag{3.5}$$

A barycentric relationship connects these sets of coordinates:

$$G = D_c^{-1} P^T \Phi. \tag{3.6}$$

In this candidate analysis, candidates are closer to some donors while further away from others. A similar analysis is possible for donors in a space of candidates. Principal coordinates and standard coordinates are related by the singular values α, which can be thought of as scaling factors.

The results above are given as if one calculates a full singular value decomposition, which, in this case, would have $J - 1$ singular values. This is not what is done in practice. Adopting strong assumptions from rational choice models of behavior, Bonica (2014a) chooses to interpret the coordinates along the first dimension alone as single-number summaries of economic conservatism or liberalism. For legislators who have ideal point estimates calculated using roll-call votes, the coordinates projected based on relationships with donors and the estimates from roll-call votes are very highly correlated, which suggests that both numbers capture the same property of persons, and that property is latent ideology.

Mathematically, however, these are nothing more than least-squares approximations of positions in the larger space of candidates and donors. By the Eckart-Young theorem, an IxJ matrix $S_{(m)}$ constructed using the first m columns of U and V, $U_{(m)}$ and $V_{(m)}$, is the least-squares rank m approximation of S.[7] This result gives the intuition that the first-dimension scores are optimal in the sense that they preserve as much information about the arrangement of candidates, arranged with respect to one another thanks to their receipts from donors, as is possible to do with just a single-number summary.

Because Bonica's interest is only in the first dimension and because the donor-by-candidate matrix is very large — more than 15 million donors and thousands of candidates as well — he uses a method of reciprocal averaging to estimate only the first singular value and the first left and right singular vectors. This implementation iterates between estimates of the first singular value and the first singular vectors until convergence, starting with all Democrats at a first-dimension coordinate

7. Again, see Greenacre (2016). The results are fundamental in linear algebra with applications in a variety of fields; see, e.g., Bretscher (2012).

of -1 and all Republicans at 1. As a result, taking this approach one cannot consider donors and candidates in a higher-dimensional space. These single-dimension scores have not offered much purchase for the study of within-party structures or processes (Bonica 2018).

3.3.2 Correspondence analysis: The network interpretation

The present approach abandons the rational choice basis for spatial models in favor of a network-based interpretation. Ideal point estimates derived using correspondence analysis are exactly equivalent to weighted least-squares approximations of the distances between actors in a single dimension. That is, they are simply the representation of where actors are situated relative to one another on a single line that preserves the greatest possible amount of information about the distances between them. Additional dimensions preserve more information about those positions. The weighted Euclidean distances between two actors retain their meaning as approximations of distances in a higher-dimensional social space (Greenacre 2016), and this is precisely their interpretation in network analysis (Wasserman, Faust, and Galaskiewicz 1990).

In practice, the first-dimension coordinates produced through correspondence analysis correlate with DW-NOMINATE ideal point estimates of elected lawmakers at $r = 0.84$. However, it is unlikely that this first dimension has much explanatory power over the choices made by donors, who lack the constraints that confront legislators navigating the formal rules of Congress and the institutions of their party apparatus (Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2018; Francia 2003). Put another way, there is no reason to discount the finding that ideal point estimates reflect where donors and candidates stand on a liberal-to-conservative spectrum. However, empirically, ideology conceived of in that way explains a marginal amount of political action — at least, action by non-elites. This, too, supports relaxing the assumptions of rational choice models and interpreting distances in a more general and network-theoretic way, as is already ascendant in political science (e.g. Koger, Masket, and Noel 2009).

The task at hand is to understand political *fractions* — associations of donors and candidates that, I will show, are characterized by patterns in their shared policy preferences and orientation to politics. Whether or not members of one party might be said to belong to the same fraction as their partisan opposition is an open question, but coordinates in one dimension are of limited use for identifying differences within and not only between parties. This being the case, there are two ways to proceed. One is to revert to more traditional network-based methods of community detection. For instance, since network cohesion will turn out to be a subject of interest, one might iteratively cut edges from the network of donors and candidates to maximize cohesion. While this may be possible on the "backbone" of the network (Neal 2014), that is, considering only the most prolific donors and the most popular candidates, it is not possible in this approach to then assign fractions to donors and candidates who are outside of that backbone, and it becomes infeasible to apply an algorithm of this kind as the number of donors or candidates increases.

For this reason, I turn to the other possible approach, which is to continue with the spatial paradigm, but to adopt a different interpretation. First, I use additional dimensions from the correspondence analysis solution. Viewing these coordinates not as ideal points but as low-rank approximations of position in a higher-dimensional space, clustering methods based on observations of continuous variables are a logical choice. Using a higher-dimensional space preserves more information about where donors and candidates stand relative to one another, which allows for greater purchase on the question of how these actors are arranged in fractions within parties. Methods for the estimation of group membership also allow the prediction of memberships for "out-of-sample" observations. This allows me to calculate coordinates for donors and candidates as supplementary rows and columns, and then predict fraction membership based on those coordinates.

The extension described here develops correspondence analysis into a means to analyze the associations between donors and candidates beyond the paradigm of ideological extremity. Earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 2, I described a literature giving many reasons to believe that donors give to candidates not only for ideological reasons but out of personal affinity, on the request of a friend, to maintain access to policymakers who may influence their industry, or for any of countless other causes. Correspondence analysis is unlikely to neatly divide these many different causes of difference and similarity. However, by the Eckart-Young theorem, a simple extension of Bonica's method from one to many dimensions should incorporate additional information about these various factors. As the number of dimensions increases, so too does the variability among candidates and donors who appear in one dimension to be concentrated at party means.

Following this line of reasoning, the proportion of variance (or inertia in the language of correspondence analysis) explained by additional dimensions is still not necessary to derive. Others have demonstrated that however much is explained by the first dimension suffices to capture meaningful information about how donors and candidates are arranged with respect to one another. But if one is to analyze donors and candidates in multiple dimensions, then how many dimensions should be considered? A simple criterion is to add additional dimensions to the analysis (in the exposition of the Eckart-Young theorem, above, to increment m) until doing so achieves diminishing returns in terms of principal inertia.

To make this problem computationally tractable, I consider only the "backbone" of the complete federal campaign finance network (Neal 2014), defined here as all candidates for the House, Senate, or presidency to have received at least 150 contributions from donors who made donations to at least 6 different candidates from 1979–2012, and all donors who made donations to at least 6 candidates who meet that criterion. Under this decision rule, the matrix P used in analysis includes $332,427$ donors in rows and $4,680$ candidates in columns.

I then calculate a full correspondence analysis solution for the first 30 coordinates, that is, using the first 30 singular values from SVD. In practice the principal inertia associated with each singular value becomes stable and very small after the 10^{th} value (Figure 3.1).[8] For this reason the results presented here use $m = 10$.

8. Principal inertia is the language of correspondence analysis, but the principal inertia of the principal axes are the squared singular values from SVD, and the squared singular values from SVD on the matrix S are also the eigenvalues of both the square matrix SS^T and S^TS.

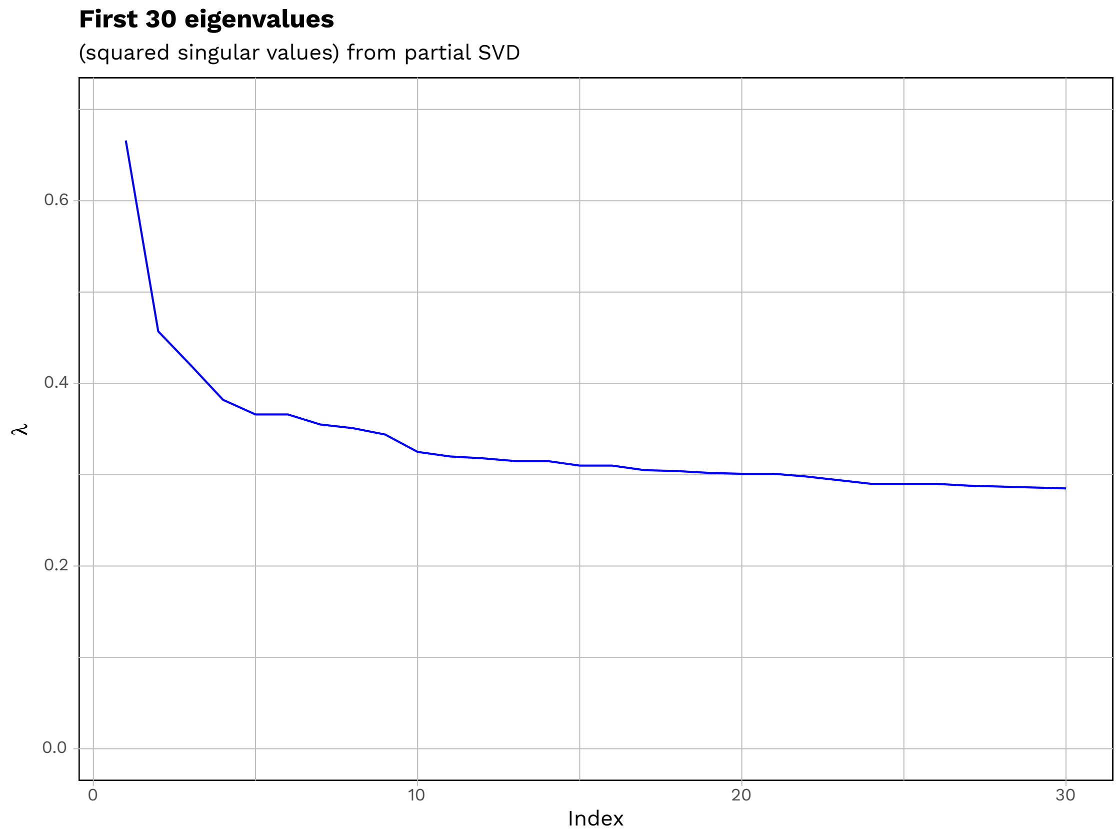

Figure 3.1: Scree plot of the first 30 eigenvalues calculated through partial SVD of the matrix P.

3.3.3 Identifying political fractions: an overview

The approach described so far constructs a low-dimensional approximation of the distances between donors and candidates in a space of campaign finance. The goal in constructing this approximation is to preserve as much information about patterns of affiliation in the original donor-by-candidate matrix as possible, the better to identify fractions that may or may not be coterminous with the boundaries of political parties. By extending previous work in a novel way rather than seeking a completely new approach, the analysis can proceed while making reference to established results describing the structure of relations in campaign finance, for instance, the knowledge that the first dimension of this approximation is strongly correlated with economic liberalism or conservatism. Here, I describe how I infer membership in these fractions.

The usual way of analyzing clusters in correspondence analysis is equivalent to Ward clustering. This presents some of the same problems as more direct community detection algorithms. In particular, while computationally tractable for the network backbone, it would not be possible to then predict membership for out-of-sample donors and candidates. This is too great a cost to bear because it would give up advantages conferred by working within the correspondence analysis framework. In correspondence analysis, it is possible to compute coordinates for out-of-sample observations using the method of supplementary points. This will turn out to be very much of interest for analysis at the level of individual elections, including elections that do not involve very many donors included in the backbone of the full campaign finance network. A final concern is specifying the number of clusters. Using Ward's method, the analyst has little additional information to draw on when seeking to understand the relative merits or drawbacks to a number of clusters.

Both of these problems are addressed by Bayesian Gaussian mixture models. Using this family of models it is possible to make out-of-sample predictions regarding cluster assignment, and to take a Bayesian approach to model selection to address the risk of overfitting (Rossi 2014). I use this class of model to estimate membership in party fractions, where membership is a latent variable and the first 10 coordinates of donors and candidates calculated using Equations 3.4–3.5 are observed.

For each donor or candidate i, I have an observed vector-valued variable: Their principal coordinates (candidates) and standard coordinates (donors) in the correspondence analysis solution, $\mathbf{y_i} = (y_{i1}, \ldots, y_{i10})$. To reiterate, these coordinates are a low-dimensional representation of each donor's or candidate's position with respect to one another in a space spanned by all donors. In the language of correspondence analysis, this is an "asymmetric map," a projection in which it is reasonable to consider distances between donors and candidates (Greenacre 2016). It is also possible to compute one set of fraction assignments for both donors and candidates rather than to consider them separately.

To infer membership of donors and candidates in clusters, called fractions, I must also specify the number of fractions. The theoretical exposition given previously suggests that there are likely to be five fractions of note, two comprising mostly Democrats, two comprising mostly Republicans, and, possibly, a fifth, which may comprise true moderates. However, it is an open question whether moderate Democrats and Republicans may seem more similar to one another than to their (more extreme) co-partisans.

It is common clustering algorithms to partition objects (in this case, donors and candidates) into a larger number of clusters than are theoretically relevant, but that satisfy some objective function. This can be thought of as identifying not only broad coalitions within parties but also sub-divisions inside those party fractions. In the present case, there is reason to believe that it would be more convenient for the hypotheses at issue — for instance, that there exists a relationship between intrapartisan conflict and polarization — to adopt a more complex model with a larger number of clusters. Suppose, for example, that there was some non-zero probability of conflict between any two fractions in a given partisan primary. As the number of fractions increases, the number of primary elections featuring multiple fractions is also likely to increase, creating more opportunities for fractional conflict.

For these reasons, I adopt an estimation strategy that allows the number of fractions to vary up to an upper limit. Using a Dirichlet process prior and variational Bayesian approximation to the posterior distributions of the parameters (described below), I infer the distribution of donors and candidates over up to five fractions, fitting with theoretical expectations. However, if it is unlikely that there are that many fractions, the number of donors and candidates assigned to "extra" fractions will be close to zero. By restricting the number of fractions, I ensure that later hypothesis tests related to fractional conflict are conservative ones.

To define the model, I will present the reasoning that informed model construction, context necessary to understand the model, and, finally, the formal specification.

3.3.4 Model specification and estimation: Some considerations

Prior to recent theoretical (Sethuraman 1994) and technical (Blei and Jordan 2006) advances, Bayesian inference for this sort of latent variable made use of Dirichlet priors (Gelman et al. 2013). This required stronger assumptions about the number of clusters. Inference was also deeply impacted by an identification problem inherent in the task. Without additional information or stronger assumptions, the algorithm has no basis on which to determine that order of cluster assignments.

In some cases, using Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) estimation, this could even result in the problem of "label switching," in which a sampler may arbitrarily switch assignment from one label to another while exploring the posterior distributions of parameters (Rossi 2014, 29–33).[9]

The Dirichlet process prior allows the analyst to make weaker assumptions about the number and precise distribution of clusters, at considerable cost of model complexity, as I will show. In fact, the additional complexity indicates that MCMC methods would be very slow to converge, with potential pathologies that would be difficult to diagnose (Blei and Jordan 2006). These issues make variational Bayesian approximations to the posterior parameter distributions an attractive alternative. Variational Bayesian estimation obliges the analyst to adopt some additional independence assumptions, but makes the estimation of cluster assignments a tractable statistical problem (Grimmer 2011).

The alternative is Ward clustering, an approach that offers few opportunities for statistical interpretation, generates less analytical leverage over the question of an appropriate number of clusters, and produces no quantification of uncertainty whatsoever. It should also be noted that there exist methods for the analysis of graphs that use variational approximation to cluster nodes directly (Airoldi et al. 2008), such that the dimension reduction step of correspondence analysis would not be necessary. There are two reasons why such methods were not adapted here. First, extensions to the bipartite case are very new, such that taking them up would have made the present project a more specifically methodological than theoretical one. Second, adopting such a fully Bayesian approach would limit the ability to place the present work in conversation with its precedents. Including correspondence analysis as a dimension reduction step clarifies how the present project extends prior research in a cumulative manner.

3.3.5 The mixture model: Preliminaries

In general, each observation $\mathbf{y}_i$ is generated by a mixture of k multivariate Gaussian distributions, with a mixing proportion $\boldsymbol{\pi} = (\pi_1, \ldots, \pi_k)$ that can be interpreted as the proportion of each fraction in the population of donors and candidates. Each Gaussian has parameters $\theta_k = (\boldsymbol{\mu}_k, \Sigma_k)$,

9. Specifically, in cases in which two clusters k and (k) have very similar distributions of observed variables.

substituting $\mathrm{N}(\theta)$ for the usual notation $\mathrm{N}(\mu, \Sigma)$.

The mixing distribution will be assigned as a prior a Dirichlet process, G, which can be interpreted as a distribution over distributions. The definition of a Dirichlet process, again as presented by Teh (2010), is given as follows. Let H be some distribution over a probability space Θ, and let α be a positive real number. G is Dirichlet process distributed with base distribution H and concentration parameter α if, for any finite measurable partition $A_1, \ldots, A_r$ of Θ,

$$(G(A_1), \ldots, G(A_r)) \sim \mathrm{Dir}(\alpha \mathrm{H}(A_1), \ldots, \alpha \mathrm{H}(A_r)). \tag{3.7}$$

Note that draws from G are discrete even when H is smooth.

The implementation used to make inference here follows the "stick-breaking" representation of the Dirichlet process due to Sethuraman (1994). Using $\theta_1^*, \ldots, \theta_m^*$ to enumerate the unique values of θ, and denoting by δ the Dirac delta function, a distribution with point mass at its argument, a Dirichlet process can be constructed as follows (Grimmer 2011; Teh 2010):

$$\beta_k \sim \mathrm{Beta}(1, \alpha) \tag{3.8}$$

$$\theta_k^* \sim \mathrm{H} \tag{3.9}$$

$$\pi_k = \beta_k \prod_{l=1}^{k-1} (1 - \beta_k) \tag{3.10}$$

$$G = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \pi_k \delta(\theta_k^*) \tag{3.11}$$

This representation is so named because it can be thought of as repeatedly breaking a "stick" of unit length. Starting with this unit stick, the algorithm is to make a first break at β_1, and assign the resulting length to π_1. The remainder of the stick is recursively fractured in similar fashion. As a result each observation i is drawn from one of a countably infinite number of Gaussians. While the number of clusters represented in the data is in practical terms bounded only by the number of data points, following this construction the π_k decrease exponentially such that there is quickly very little "stick" left to break. For this reason the final number of clusters k with nonzero π_k in the posterior distribution can be small. By truncating the approximation to the posterior distribution over cluster parameters used in the estimation step, I impose a stricter limit of at most 5 clusters.

3.3.6 The mixture model: Two representations

The model assumed to generate observations can be written (Teh 2010):

$$\mathbf{y}_i|\theta_i \sim \mathrm{N}(\theta_i) \tag{3.12}$$

$$\theta_i|G \sim G \tag{3.13}$$

$$G|\alpha, \mathrm{H} \sim \mathrm{DP}(\alpha, \mathrm{H}) \tag{3.14}$$

G is Dirichlet process distributed as in Eqs. 3.8–3.11. This is the model that is estimated, but it has an equivalent latent-variable representation. This representation begins with Eqs. 3.8–3.11, but differs from the representation above through the introduction of a cluster assignment variable, z_i (Teh 2010):

$$z_i|\boldsymbol{\pi} \sim \mathrm{Mult}(\boldsymbol{\pi}) \tag{3.15}$$

$$\theta_k^*|\mathrm{H} \sim \mathrm{H} \tag{3.16}$$

$$\mathbf{y}_i|z_i, (theta_k^*) \sim \mathrm{N}(\theta_{z_i}^*) \tag{3.17}$$

where $\theta_i = \theta_{zi}^*$. Here H refers to the priors of the distributions for the Σ_k and $\boldsymbol{\mu}_k$. The priors for $\boldsymbol{\mu}_k$ and Σ_k are based on the sample means and covariances:

$$\Sigma_k \sim \mathrm{IW}(10, \frac{1}{n}YY^T) \tag{3.18}$$

$$\boldsymbol{\mu}_k|\Sigma_k \sim \mathrm{N}(\bar{\mathbf{Y}}, 1) \tag{3.19}$$

Finally, I set $\alpha = 5$, the number of fractions, or clusters, assumed to be in the data.

Estimation proceeds using variational Bayesian approximation. This is a deterministic algorithm that maximizes a lower bound on the logarithm of the probability of the data conditional on estimates of the posterior parameters, similar to the expectation maximization (EM) algorithm used in the maximum likelihood framework. It is a widely studied and applied estimation strategy in computer science and machine learning (Bishop 2006; Blei and Jordan 2006; Grimmer 2011; Blei, Kucukelbir, and McAuliffe 2017). Variational inference introduces an approximation to the posterior distribution of the parameters $\boldsymbol{\theta}, \boldsymbol{\beta}$ in which the former and latter are independent. This distribution is then factorized into products of separate approximations to the posteriors of each of the two components. In the first estimation step, the initial (or, in subsequent iterations, previously computed) values of all parameters are used to describe these approximations. In the second step, new parameter values are successively calculated, first for the $\boldsymbol{\beta}$, then for the $\boldsymbol{\theta}$. Each iteration is guaranteed to increase the log probability of the data. The algorithm continues until the increase in the log probability, or changes in the parameter values, falls below a specific tolerance. For the model and the estimation, as well as prediction of cluster assignments (discussed below), I use the implementation of Pedregosa et al. (2011).

3.3.7 Inferring fractional affiliation

After computing parameter estimates using variational Bayesian approximation, Equation 3.15 and the posterior parameter estimates are used to additionally infer the membership of each donor and candidate in fractions. I previously explained that donors and candidates outside the "backbone" of prolific donors and popular candidates are projected into the coordinate system of correspondence analysis using the method of supplementary points. In this Bayesian approach, I additionally make inference with respect to the fractional affiliation of each donor and candidate with ties to any actor in the network backbone. This produces inferences with respect to fractional affiliation for a total of $2,235,831$ donors and $5,998$ candidates.

3.3.8 Quantifying intrapartisan conflict

The procedure above sets the stage for the study of conflict within political parties. It is used to estimate the arrangement of party fractions in the political space spanned by donors to federal campaigns. These donors are arranged in patterns of alliance through their contributions to the same candidates in different elections. They are arranged in patterns of opposition through their contributions to different candidates in the same election.

I measure variation in within-party conflict across space and time by combining the estimates of fractional membership derived above with a more direct network analysis of the graphs formed by candidates competing in each party's primary in each House election in the United States, 1980–2012. Each party primary in each district has a separate bipartite graph and a square adjacency matrix representation A, where all donors are listed first, and then the candidates. For each election, the question of interest here is the extent to which the election features conflict between groups within the same party.

In network analysis, conflict between groups is understood to be intimately related to cohesion within groups. Cohesion can be measured as "modularity," or the extent to which there are more within-group ties than would be expected if group membership and affiliation had no relationship. This second null case is represented by another matrix P, which can be thought of as the adjacency matrix one would expect to find in the null case. Each graph's modularity is:

$$Q = \frac{1}{2m} \sum_{i,j} (A_{ij} - P_{ij}) \delta(g_i, g_j) \tag{3.20}$$

where g_i is the fraction to which actor i belongs and the indicator δ is 1 when $g_i = g_j$. I calculate modularity using an extension of this approach introduced in Barber (2007). Following this extension, I compute modularity scores that are more appropriate for a bipartite network by adjusting the null model to account for the fact that donors do not give to other donors. By calculating supplementary points for donors not included in the original correspondence analysis solution, I am able to calculate modularity for a far larger number of elections, resulting in a larger analytic sample.

When fractions within each party are in conflict, they support opposing candidates in the same partisan primary. Donors from different fractions will ally behind the same candidate less often than would be the case if the party was unified, and these modularity scores will be higher than average. Conversely, when fractions within each party are not divided, modularity will be low. Crucially, this accounts for two separate cases of reduced intrapartisan ideological conflict. Modularity is low when donors of different fractions support the same single candidate. It is also low when there are multiple candidates, but fractions themselves are divided more or less evenly across candidates. (Fractions emerge over long periods, many elections, and many donors and candidates, such that donors of one fraction need not give only to members of the same fraction in order to appear as a member of that group.) Modularity ranges from zero to one, where one indicates greater within-group cohesion, and, by implication, greater conflict (Wasserman and Faust 2018).

Modularity is an operationalization of conflict and cohesion that focuses on the alignment of donors and candidates within the same fraction. In the remainder of this work, I use the term *intrapartisan conflict* to refer specifically to this measure of fractional cohesion. However, it is also of interest to note whether, in each election, donors of the same fraction tend to support the same candidate, or if donors of a given fraction divide their support across many candidates.

3.3.9 Donor concentration

Donors of a given fraction do not always support candidates from the same fraction. In a given election, donors of a given fraction may not even support the same candidate. Intuitively, this might occur in a party with three fractions when only two fractions are represented by candidates in an election. Donors from the third fraction may then be *concentrated* in support of the same candidate from one of the other two fractions, or *dispersed* among several candidates. Unlike modularity, here the fractional allegiance of the candidate does not matter.

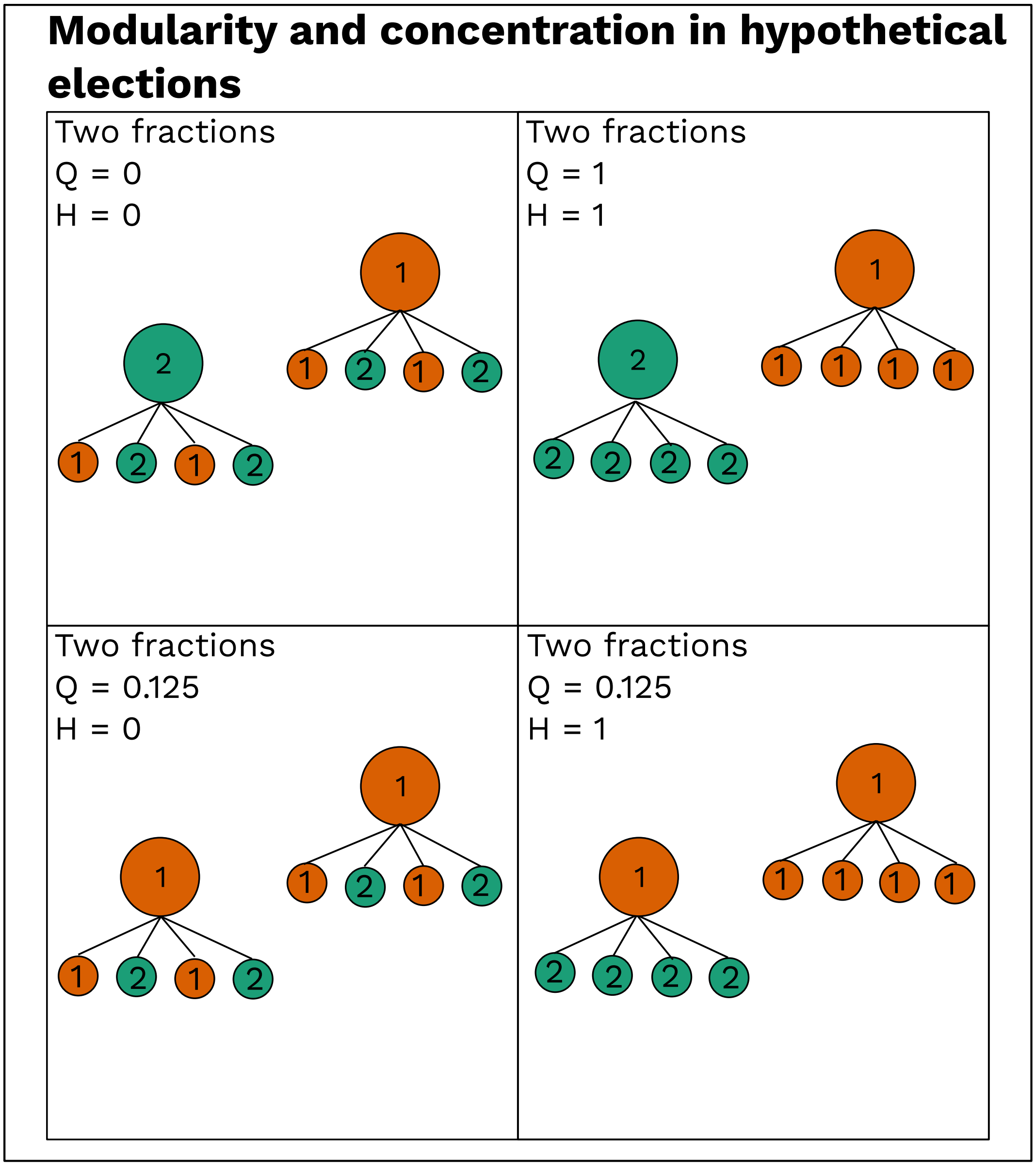

Figure 3.2: Four hypothetical primary elections, each with two candidates (large circles), eight donors (small circles), and two fractions (1 and 2). In two elections (top left, bottom left), contributions from donors in Fraction 1 and Fraction 2 are completely unrelated to their affiliation. In one of the other two (top right), donors and candidates are perfectly aligned along fractional divisions. In the other (bottom right), donors are divided along fractional lines, but members of one fraction have no member of their own tendency to support. The figure shows that modularity (Q) and concentration index (H) capture different aspects of conflict, depending on whether alignment with candidates is or is not of interest.

I quantify this alternative conceptualization of conflict using an information-theoretic index (the H-index), well-known in sociology as an index of multigroup segregation with desirable mathematical properties (e.g., Reardon and Firebaugh 2002; Iceland 2004). This index depends on a second measure called the entropy score:

$$E = \sum_{r=1}^{r} (\Pi_r) \ln(\frac{1}{\Pi_r}). \tag{3.21}$$

here, Π_r refers to the proportion of donors in a district partisan primary who belong to a given fraction. Each candidate in a primary election also has a diversity score that reflects the extent to which that candidate's donors all belong to one fraction or belong to different fractions.

The H-index is a weighted average of each candidate's deviation from the election entropy score. Where t_i is the number of donors supporting a candidate, T is the number of donors participating in the election, and E_i is candidate i's entropy score,

$$H = \sum_{i=1}^{n} [\frac{t_i(E - E_i)}{ET}]. \tag{3.22}$$

The entropy scores have an upper bound at the natural log of the number fractions participating in the election. The H-index, hereafter a "concentration index," is bounded between 0 and 1, where 0 is perfect dispersion and 1 is total segregation of fractional donors among candidates. An election in which donor fractions are perfectly segregated, with each fraction behind a different candidate, would have a concentration index of one. To illustrate the differences between these two ways of measuring alignment within parties, four hypothetical party primary elections are presented in Figure 3.2.

3.3.10 Hypothesis testing

As outlined above, the object of interest is the role of intrapartisan conflict as it plays out over time, as observed at the level of individual congressional elections. The unit of analysis is the district in a two-year session of Congress, and the primary dependent variable is the ideology — as measured by DW-NOMINATE ideal-point estimates — of the legislator elected after each general election. The independent variable of interest is intrapartisan conflict, as operationalized by modularity. In multivariate analysis, I test the hypothesis that intrapartisan conflict reduces interpartisan polarization using session and area fixed effects.

I use area fixed effects to account for time-invariant properties of local politics such as each party's relative chances, the presence of long-tenured incumbents, the relative conservatism or liberalism of party electorates, or the institutions and folkways of an entrenched local elite (c.f. Masket 2011). State-level fixed effects would paint with too broad a brush, averaging in suburban with urban districts, failing to account for sharp within-state differences across usually stable borders like city limits or county lines. Similarly, it would not suffice to assign a fixed effect to each set of district borders. This would fail to account for correlation between districts that share politics because neighborhoods now in one district were once in the other.

I resolve this problem by building on recent work on the identification of common geographies. Slez, O'Connell, and Curtis (2017) suggest an approach in which areal units are nodes in a graph, and share edges if they occupy the same area at different times. Each connected component of this graph defines an area that is stable over time.

In the case of congressional districts, frequent and often substantial changes to district boundaries make the naive version of this approach intractable. As districts change shape over time, nearly every district in a state trades a sizable amount of jurisdiction with more than one other district. The practical consequence is that the naive approach produces exactly as many areas as there are states under study.

As in Slez, O'Connell, and Curtis (2017), I begin by creating a list of edges between the sets of district boundaries for congressional districts under study. Each edge is weighted by the proportion of area that the child district inherits from its parent. I keep only edges in which a child district covers 50% or more of its parent's area. This simple decision rule produces areas of districts in every session of Congress that are bound together by a common political inheritance.

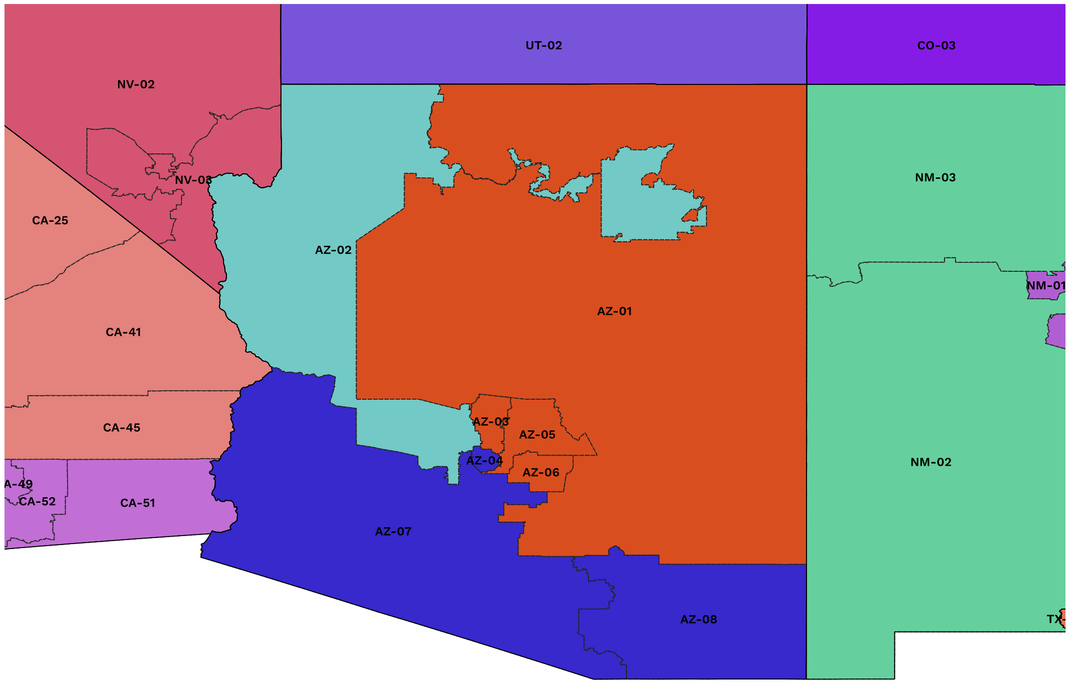

Figure 3.3: Arizona's apportionment map for the 112th Congress (Jan. 2011 – Jan. 2013). Boundaries come from Lewis et al. (2013).

The results of this procedure are illustrated using the case of Arizona's apportionment in the 112th Congress (Fig. 3.3). Districts are labeled with their designation and colored according to area. Arizona's Second Congressional District is stable from 1980 through this time period (2011–2013), although after the 112th Congress Arizona gains a new district that upsets this balance. However, AZ-01, AZ-03, AZ-05 and AZ-06 are all children of districts that included portions of the Phoenix suburbs in the past. They are connected by this political history, and for this reason they belong to the same area. Similarly, AZ-04, AZ-07 and AZ-08 are carved from common territory, and so they belong to a third area. It is no coincidence that these shared regional histories are associated with shared outcomes: AZ-02, AZ-01, and all of the districts in the same cluster as AZ-01 all have Republican representatives in the 112th Congress (although AZ-01 flipped from blue to red that year), while AZ-04, AZ-07, and AZ-08 are all represented by Democrats at this point in time.

In addition to these fixed effects, and the measures of conflict and competition described above, I include the following independent variables:

Legislator's party. I use a dummy variable here to distinguish between Republicans and Democrats. The Democrat-Farmer-Labor party (Minnesota Democrats) are recoded as Democrats. Independents and candidates representing third parties are excluded.

Incumbency. Here, dummy variables distinguish between open seats and elections in which an incumbent is running.

Time. I model variability in national trends over time using cycle fixed effects.

Two-party vote share for legislator's party. Interpartisan competition has no substantial effect on polarization after accounting for area and cycle fixed effects. This variable is included for continuity with previous literature.

These elements are incorporated into a series of fixed-effects models predicting the DW-NOMINATE score of the legislator elected in district i, in election year j, where district i is a member of area k, and the particular specification includes P covariates:

$$Y_{ijk} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_j + \alpha_k + \sum_{p=1}^{P} \beta_p X_p + \epsilon_{ijk}, \epsilon_{ijk} \sim N(0, \Sigma_k), \tag{3.23}$$

and

$$E[\epsilon_{ijk}\epsilon_{i'j'k'}] = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } k \neq k' \\ \sigma_{(ii')k} & \text{if } k = k' \end{cases} \tag{3.24}$$

In these specifications, α_* indicates a fixed effect. In one specification, the areas k are replaced with states.

3.4 Regulars and ideologues or moderates and extremists? Describing party structure

Drawing on the theoretical expectations described above, the results presented here are based on a model with 5 clusters. Figure 3.4 plots each candidate based on their first-dimension coordinates from the correspondence analysis solution, on the X-axis, eigenvector centrality, on the Y-axis, and cluster membership. Eigenvector centrality's most common plain-English definition is tautological: "actors are central if they have ties to other actors that are themselves central." (Faust 1997, p. 160) In the present case, this means that donors are central if they in general give to candidates who receive a larger-than-average amount of money from a greater-than-average number of other donors — especially donors who are also central. A similar explanation applies to the centrality of candidates in relation to the donors from which they receive funds. Thus, the Y-axis arranges candidates from bottom to top in increasing order of their contributors' relative importance among donors.[10]

The figure shows a clear division separating the candidates to the left of the origin from those to the right. Party affiliation is not pictured, but this dividing line is at best a rough approximation of the gulf that separates Republicans and Democrats. The reasons why are instructive. Approximately 90% of Democrats are to the left of the mean value along the first dimension, which is close to zero, but 98% of Republicans are to the right. Put another way, in this least-squares representation of the larger space of federal politics, 10% of Democrats are like most Republicans in a sense quite like ideology, but the converse is true for just two percent of Republicans with respect to Democrats.[11]

The clusters in Figure 3.4 are consistent with a political environment in which candidates of opposing parties regularly share supporters thanks to shared regional attachments, issue interests, industries, and personal acquaintances. This is clear given the single large cluster that spans both parties, but includes more Democrats than Republicans. A second cluster includes a large number of Republican candidates at the party's rightmost ideological edge, and a third appears to include a number of less-central Republican and Democratic candidates. A fourth includes only Democrats at the party's leftmost ideological edge, while a fifth is so dispersed along the left-right continuum that it is clear before further interpretation that it must include people typically associated with

10. In more technical terms, interpreting the donor-by-candidate matrix specifically as an adjacency matrix, each candidate i's *centrality* in the network is proportional to $\lambda_1 V_{i1}$, where λ_1 is the first eigenvalue from the singular value decomposition and V is the matrix of right (candidate) singular values.

11. These coordinates correlate with DW-NOMINATE scores, accepted as a measure of ideology, at $r = 0.84$. They correlate with the CFScores introduced in Bonica (2014a) at $r = 0.95$. The mean value along the first dimension in the figure is 0.0812.

third parties.[12] The cluster labels are arbitrary.

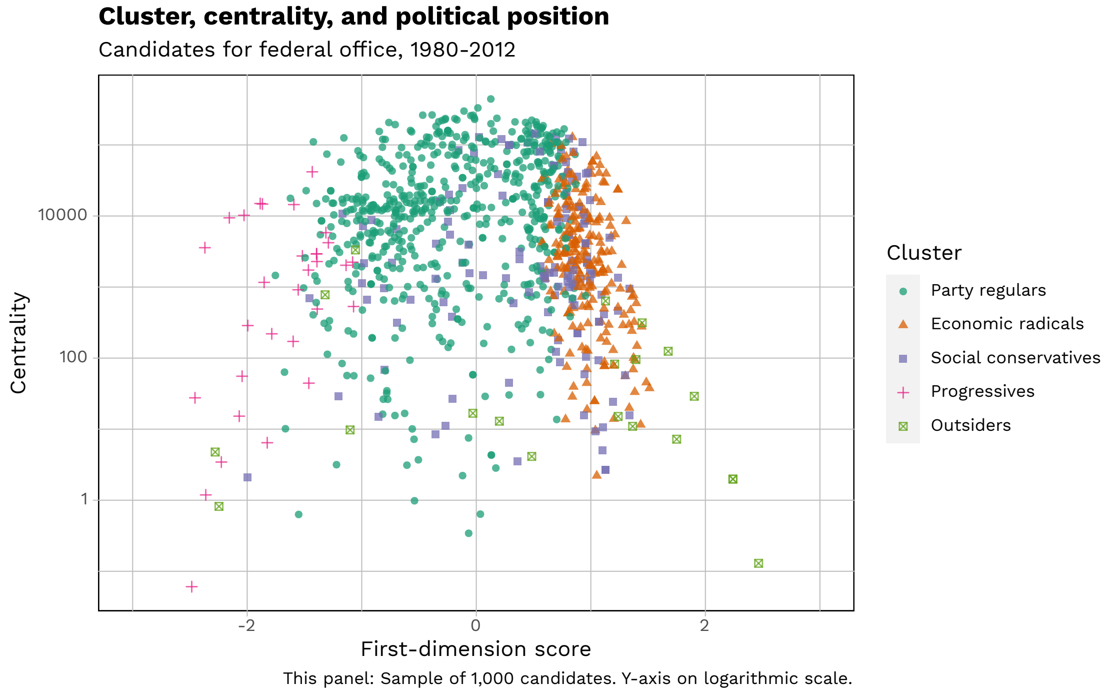

Figure 3.4: Donors by ideology, cluster, and centrality.

The first cluster, labeled "party regulars" for reasons that will be explained shortly, comprises 58% of all candidates, 82% of Democrats, 36% of Republicans. Sixty-six percent of candidates in this cluster are to the left of the first-dimension mean. A second cluster, "economic radicals," comprises 42% of Republicans, and no Democrats. No candidates in this cluster are to the left of the origin. A cluster of social conservatives comprises 13% of all candidates, 10% of Democrats, and 16% of Republicans. Twenty-seven percent of candidates in this cluster are to the left of the origin. A fourth cluster, of progressives, comprises six percent of all Democrats and less than one percent of all Republicans, or three percent of all candidates in total. Finally, a cluster of outsiders accounts for two percent of all candidates, including one percent of all Democrats, two percent of all Republicans, and 35% of all third-party candidates.[13] Figure 3.5 illustrates the distribution of

12. And inspection reveals that it does, but only a specific sort of independent candidate, as I will explain later on.

13. Some candidates did not receive enough contributions from repeat donors to be classified, and are labeled "Unknown." This group increases in size in more recent elections because a larger proportion of donors in these elections have not made many contributions. Additionally, it was not possible to match a small number of incumbent legislators with DIME candidate IDs, missingness that does not appear to be associated with fraction or party affiliation. The

fractional alignment among members of the U.S. House by their party affiliation over the period 1980–2012.

3.4.1 Validating cluster interpretation

The clustering solution presented here identifies divisions between groups of candidates and donors along an axis that does not neatly correspond to the liberal-conservative economic divide. Figure 3.5 clarifies immediately the presence of a cluster of economic radicals. To validate the claim that a second cluster groups social conservatives, I use congressional scorecard ratings of incumbent legislators from the Family Research Council. The FRC sponsors the annual "Values Voter" summit as part of the circuit for conservative federal candidates. FRC materials describe it as an organization focused on traditional American family values. The Southern Poverty Law Center classifies the FRC as an anti-gay hate group. Neither the organization nor its critics disagree on its manifest desire to exert rightward pressure on American politicians generally, but especially on social issues. As a result, the zero-to-100 continuum established in FRC scorecard ratings — which are based on selected roll-call votes — places most Democrats near zero, but offers higher scores to socially conservative Democrats.

To assist in validating the assignment of cluster labels, I use FRC ratings from the 112th Congress (2011–2013). It is clear that the cluster identified as "social conservatives" indeed captures donors and candidates who share more conservative positions. Table 3.1 reports results from a regression of FRC scorecard ratings on cluster assignments and party affiliation for incumbents in that Congress. Befitting expectations, Republicans earn high scores on average, and Democrats earn low scores. Relative to Republicans in the economically radical fraction, Republican party regulars — which captures politicians who circulate in a world of politics-as-usual, sharing supporters who are, if not the same people, then certainly not so different — do not score as high. After accounting for partisanship, there is a substantively small and statistically insignificant difference

outsiders include third-party candidates, marginal candidates at the lower bound of the number of donors required for inclusion in the correspondence analysis solution, and Pat Buchanan. Because correspondence analysis solutions are sensitive to outliers, and because candidates with few donors are by nature outliers, there is little to say about this group other than to note that if its members carried cards, Buchanan would have had one in his back pocket.

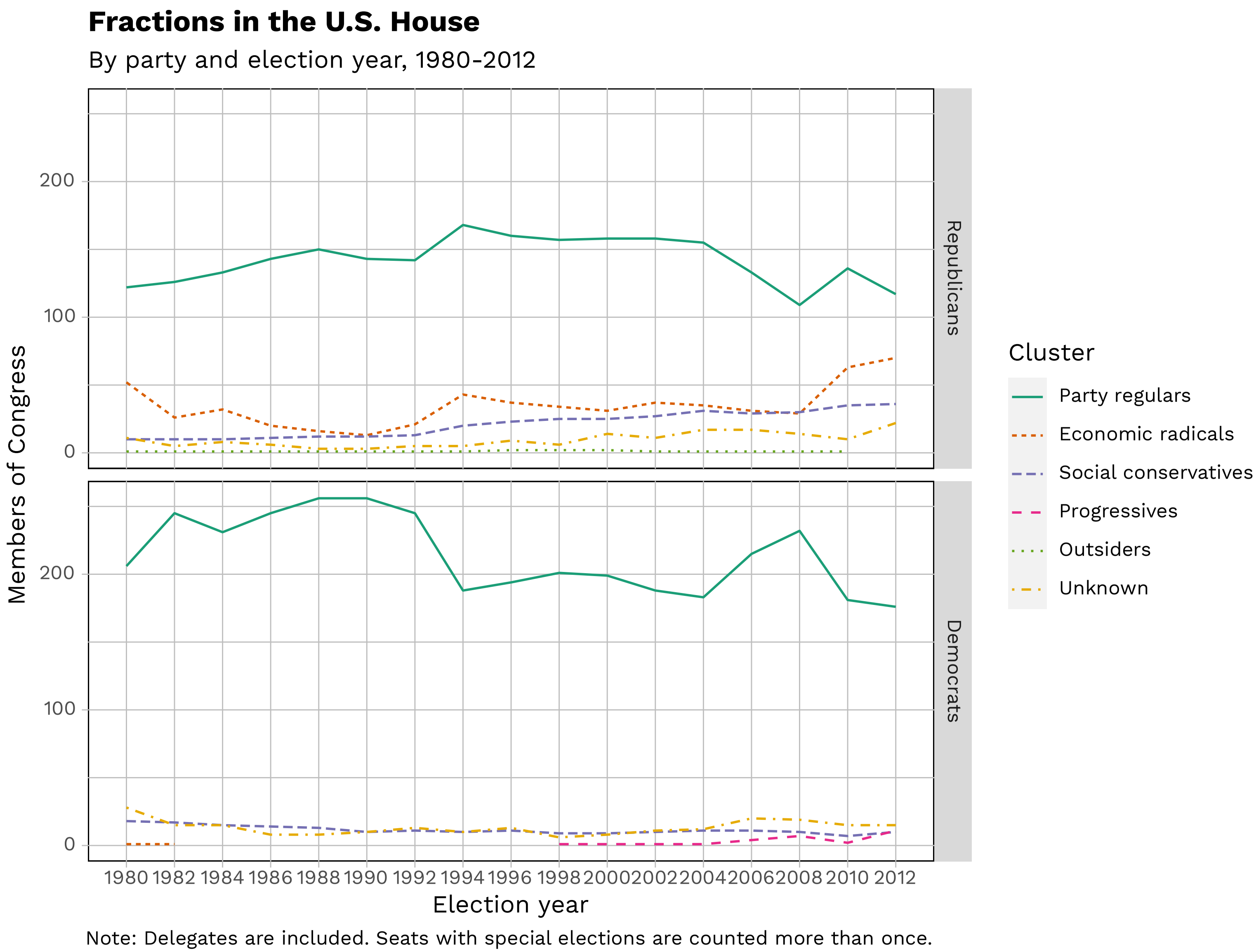

Figure 3.5: Distribution of fraction over members of the U.S. House of Representatives by party, 1980–2012.

between the FRC scorecard ratings of members of economic radicals and social conservatives — but Democrats belonging to this group score, on average, 4.7 points higher than their co-partisans among the party regulars. The direction and magnitude of these results make sense given the theoretical expectations outlined above and the party discipline imposed on roll-call voting by party leadership during the period under study.

Table 3.1: Regression of FRC scorecard rating on cluster assignment among incumbents in the 112th Congress.

Reference: Social conservative, Democrat	14.72^{***} (2.66)
Party regular	-4.67^{**} (2.28)
Economic radical	0.95 (2.05)
Progressive	−9.72 (7.55)
Unknown	−3.13 (2.69)
Republican	76.62^{***} (1.55)
Observations	433
R^2	0.90
Adjusted R^2	0.90
Residual Std. Error	12.94 (df = 427)
F Statistic	791.61^{***} (df = 5; 427)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
	Standard errors are robust (Huber-White).

The cluster solution produced here describes an American political field defined by an ongoing assault against a bipartisan establishment, first and most remarkably from the radical right, and then, as the radicals gained sway in the Capitol, from the progressive left. It is broadly consistent with arguments that the most important consideration in models of party fraction is not ideology in the sense of issue position, but in the sense of orientation to politics. In particular, this evidence underscores the importance of the extent to which that orientation includes a tolerance for alliances with members of other groups (Noel 2016).

These interpretations are supported by the political history of the United States during the period 1980–2012. With the Reagan Revolution in full swing, the Republican Party as of 1980 is split between an establishment pro-business wing, a socially conservative wing, and an insurgent economically radical tendency, united in uneasy alliance. The conservative and radical fractions are active members of the Republican coalition, but in the party under George H.W. Bush, the establishment is firmly in control of the levers of power. In the Democratic Party, labor and business have reached détente in mainstream politics, while a pro-business and socially conservative fraction pursues election in districts that might otherwise swing Republican. These facts are reflected by Cluster A's plurality among sitting legislators in both parties in Congress.

The Republican Party under Bush loses the White House decisively in 1992 as the nation's political establishment converges behind Clinton and the New Democrats. This failure creates an opening for Newt Gingrich and the GOP's more economically radical wing to consolidate their position, recruiting large numbers of like-minded candidates to extend their reach in the House during the 1994 midterm elections. A robust institutional infrastructure on the far right surrounds Republican lawmakers and their professional staff with conservative activists and policy proposals, even as economic radicals sever ties between policymakers and independent experts (Medvetz 2007; Bimber 1996). Meanwhile, the New Democrats embrace neoliberal economic policy and socially conservative allies in Congress, sparking a progressive backlash. Their organizing is more successful outside of formal politics than it is within the party ranks. Extrapartisan institutions like Moveon.org begin to form, fueling a well-documented wave of social movement activity (Karpf 2012; Bimber, Flanagin, and Stohl 2012; Howard 2005). Only when the Democrats are completely out of power are these insurgents welcomed into the formal party, most notably by way of Howard Dean's short-lived candidacy for president of the United States (Kreiss 2012; Heaney and Rojas 2015). Correspondingly, economic radicals gain ground in the GOP after 1994, and progressives emerge among Democrats after 1996.

Barack Obama brokers a coalition between progressives and fractions of the broader American political establishment to secure the Democratic nomination, notably relying on robust support from Wall Street early in his candidacy (Sifry 2009). With the nomination in hand, he consolidates his position in his party by turning the New Democrats into enthusiastic supporters and secures eight years in the White House. Across the aisle, economic radicals, in concert with social conservatives, have by this time all but finished seizing control of the Republican Party from the forces of politics as usual. By the conclusion of the period under study, the fraction of regulars seeks to maintain its influence among Democrats but has completely lost sway within the GOP.

3.4.2 Understanding fractions in American politics, 1980–2012

In this section, I described a methodology for identifying fractions within the two major parties in American politics, reported the results for the period 1980–2012, and interpreted them in the context of the events of that period. Analyzing fractions identified using this methodology, I demonstrated that the Republican Party is divided between an establishment fraction that spans both parties, a fraction of economic radicals, and a fraction of social conservatives. I showed that economic conservatives have been a sizable force within the GOP since at least 1980, but they gained representation in the mid-term elections after William J. Clinton's victory in 1992 and Barack Obama's victory in 2008.

Figure 3.5 suggests that the Tea Party successes of 2010 and the conservative-led Republican takeover of the House in 1994 are, while significant events that signal remarkable consolidations of power on the part of economic radicals, far from sudden ruptures in the distribution of fractional allegiances. It is also worth noting that party regulars account for a disproportionate number of sitting lawmakers for both parties relative to their proportions in the population of all Democratic and Republican candidates for Congress.

The first time economic conservatives consolidated their gains within the Republican Party, a progressive fraction emerged in the Democratic Party shortly afterward, in 1998. After Republican economic radicals advanced again in the 2010 midterms, the progressives — including Tammy Baldwin, Bernard Sanders, and Tammy Duckworth during their terms in the House, among a small number of others — enlarged their numbers as well.[14] However, progressive gains were at most a faint echo of conservative increases in power.

These changes in the fractional composition of Congress proceeded at pace with the well-understood trajectory of asymmetric polarization among the political elite. Economic radicals are

14. While strictly speaking not a Democrat, Sanders was a member of the Democratic Caucus during his time in the House.

consistently to the extreme right on matters concerning states and markets. Social conservatives are their ready allies, marrying a compatible economic outlook with a focus on maintaining established social and racial hierarchies. As both of these groups gained sway in the Republican Party, the GOP's rightward turn accelerated. The progressive fraction at work inside the Democratic Party is far smaller and grew its ranks more slowly.

These changes occured seat by seat, election by election, the product of cumulative gains by one fraction against others in a struggle for seats in Congress and control of party resources. Because change appears to be cumulative over many years and across an entire nation's worth of federal elections within each year, in the following chapter I turn from description of change within parties over time to analyses at the level of the individual election. At issue in the next chapter are the processes that lead to the election of ideologically extreme, or ideologically moderate, lawmakers. In particular, I attend to the role of intrapartisan conflict and electoral competition in the process of polarization. Testing narrow propositions about the relationship between within-party conflict and between-party competition addresses matters of public interest, but also offers the opportunity to gain more leverage on broader questions about stability and change in political parties. Following the presentation of results in the next chapter, I assess the implications of these findings for competing theories of party structure.

Chapter 4

Intrapartisan conflict and interpartisan polarization

In Chapter 3, I described the presence of political fractions in federal politics in the United States. This chapter assesses the consequences of fractional politics on congressional elections. Taking up the case of elections for the U.S. House of Representatives, I first describe the role of within-party conflict in contests for office. In particular, I contribute to ongoing research on intrapartisan maneuvering by examining the prevalence of three different forms of within-party struggle. Next, I assess the relationship between these varieties of action and changes in the level of representation each fraction obtains in Congress. Finally, I explore the effect of fractional politics on partisan polarization.

Previous work on within-party conflict differentiates between *professional competition*, or the number of candidates in a contest for office, and *divisiveness*, or the extent to which an election is characterized by a conflict between organized groups within a party. In Chapter 3, I reasoned that in campaign finance, it is possible to additionally distinguish between two different forms of divisiveness. *Intrapartisan conflict*, measured as the modularity of a party's campaign finance network in an election, captures the extent to which an election involves an organized effort around a candidate from a given fraction. Modularity is high when donors organize themselves around a candidate from their fraction. In network analysis, the density of within-group ties is called *cohesion*. For this reason, I infer that when modularity is high, at least one fraction is acting cohesively. This has a double meaning. It is true in the narrow sense that modularity, Q (Eq. 3.20), is close to 1. But Q being high also implies that at least one fraction is acting in coordinated fashion with the goal of electing their candidate.

Concentration, measured as the extent to which donors are dispersed among candidates without regard to fraction, expresses whether donors are united by fraction or are divided, no matter which fractions are represented by the candidates in the race. This measure (the H-index, see Eq. 3.22) becomes important in part because there are three fractions at work within each party. For example, consider a case when social conservatives have the option to participate in a congressional election by supporting either an economic radical or a party regular, but no candidate from their own fraction. In situations like this, social conservatives cannot act cohesively to advance their fraction because they have no candidate in the race. However, they may still concentrate behind a single candidate, or, instead, disperse, and support different candidates. Concentration generalizes this concept to quantify the extent to which donors from the same fraction are concentrated behind the same candidate or dispersed. Intrapartisan conflict and concentration capture two different forms of within-party alignment, as described in Figure 3.2.

The rest of this chapter proceeds as follows. In the next section, I describe patterns in the distribution of these forms of conflict over congressional primary elections. I illustrate that among Republicans, intrapartisan conflict is common in districts where the general election outcome is truly in doubt, but the same is not true for Democrats. After establishing these facts, I explore this asymmetry in greater detail. I show that economic radicals benefit by acting cohesively when donors of other Republican fractions are dispersed. Finally, I assess the extent to which fractional politics directly impacts elite polarization. Using the most common measure of polarization in the literature, I find that professional competition increases polarization. I also find some evidence that when fractions are concentrated in primary elections, and their party's candidate goes on to win the general election, that candidate will go on to be a more moderate legislator. These results help to explain the processes at work in American politics over an important span of recent history.

4.1 The prevalence of conflict and competition

Professional competition is a necessary condition for either of the two forms of conflict, and Figure 4.1 illustrates that professional competition is an exception rather than the rule in primary elections. The figure depicts the distribution of candidates over primary elections, broken out by party and that party's relative chances of success. Those chances are measured by each party's share of the two-party vote share in the district. Visual inspection makes it clear that there is only one difference of note between the Republican and Democratic Parties in the distribution of competition based on party vote share. During the period under study, Democrats fielded one candidate alone in 77 percent of elections where their party received less than 50 percent of the two-party vote share. Republicans, on the other hand, fielded one candidate in 70 percent of similar contests.[1] The parties are similar, although the Republican Party appears to have marginally less professional competition. As I will show, this masks larger differences between the parties concerning other forms of within-party struggle.

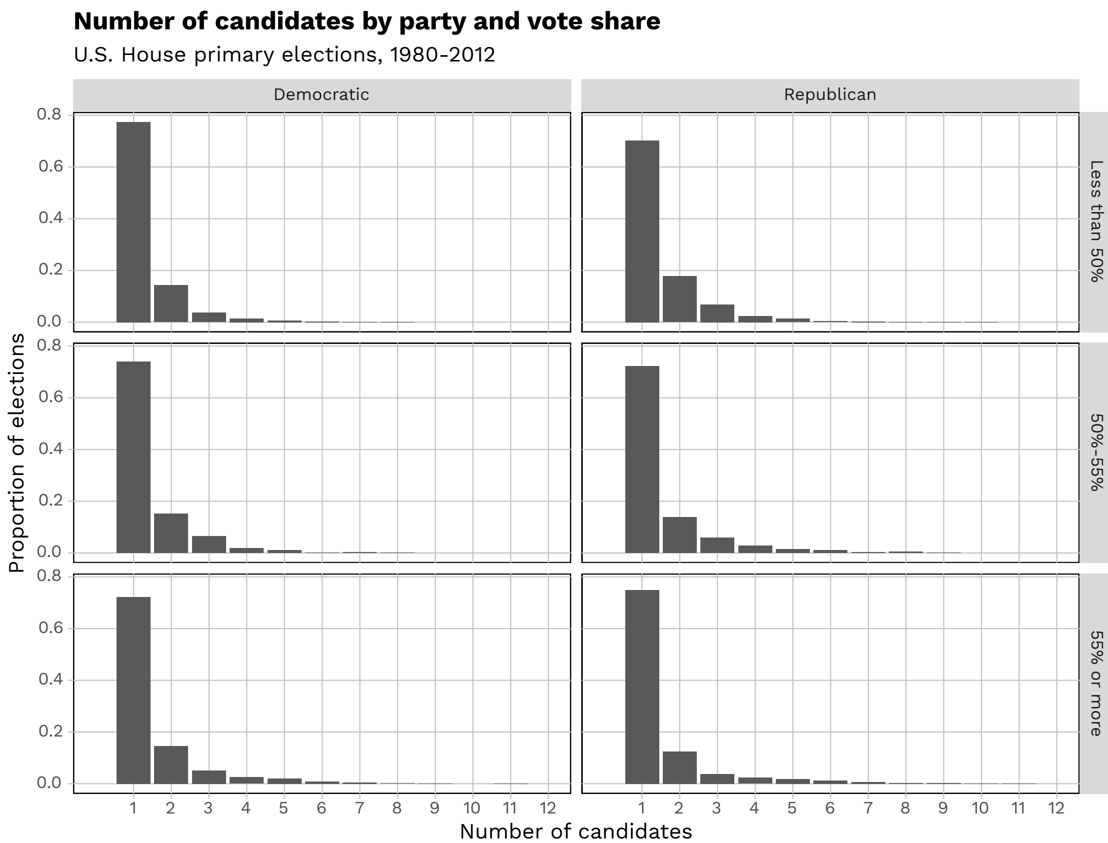

Figure 4.1: The proportion of elections with a given number of candidates, by party and the party's relative competitiveness in the district.

4.2 Intrapartisan conflict

Figure 4.2 shows that there are more substantial differences between parties in the relationship between intrapartisan conflict and interpartisan struggle. In the figure, each point is a primary

1. This difference in proportion is statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ (95% CI: $[0.047, 0.096]$); table not shown.

election. Points are translucent, so that darker regions indicate a dense concentration of similar elections. The left panel includes Democratic primary elections and the right panel describes Republicans. Smoothed lines, fit using generalized additive models, indicate trends. The Y-axis plots intrapartisan conflict, which, as explained above, is a measure of the degree to which donors and candidates are aligned along fractional lines. In this figure and hereafter, this measure is presented after being scaled to zero mean and unit variance for ease of interpretation.

Among Democrats, donors are more likely to support candidates of their fraction in primary elections where the Democrat is sure to win than in elections where Democrats do not have a clear advantage. With the general election outcome all but certain, there is no pressure on party insiders to intervene in the primary. While conflict is uniformly lower among Republicans, it is at its highest not where Republicans are sure to win, but where the general-election outcome is at its most uncertain — in districts where Democrats hold a slight advantage.

In both cases, the trend line indicates a nonlinear relationship. There is a clear rank-order correlation for Democrats (Spearman's $\hat{\rho} = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$) but not for Republicans ($\hat{\rho} = -0.03$, $p = 0.19$). Additional investigation suggests that this is because of the nature of the nonlinear relationship among Republicans, and because of the presence of unobserved, time-invariant, place-specific confounders.

Table 4.1 reports parameter estimates from a series of regressions of intrapartisan conflict in Republican primary elections on two-party presidential vote share. Models 1–4 specify GOP vote share as a piecewise function. In those models, coefficients are contrasts with the average level of conflict in districts where an incumbent is running and the Republican presidential candidate took between 50 and 55% of the vote in the most recent presidential election. Model 5 includes two-party vote share as a continuous variable.

These estimates provide strong evidence that intrapartisan conflict is opportunistic, local, and driven by professional competition. It is opportunistic in the sense that insurgent fractions gather for challenges against the party establishment where there is no incumbent candidate to defend a seat. It is also opportunistic in the sense that conflict is more likely in places where elections

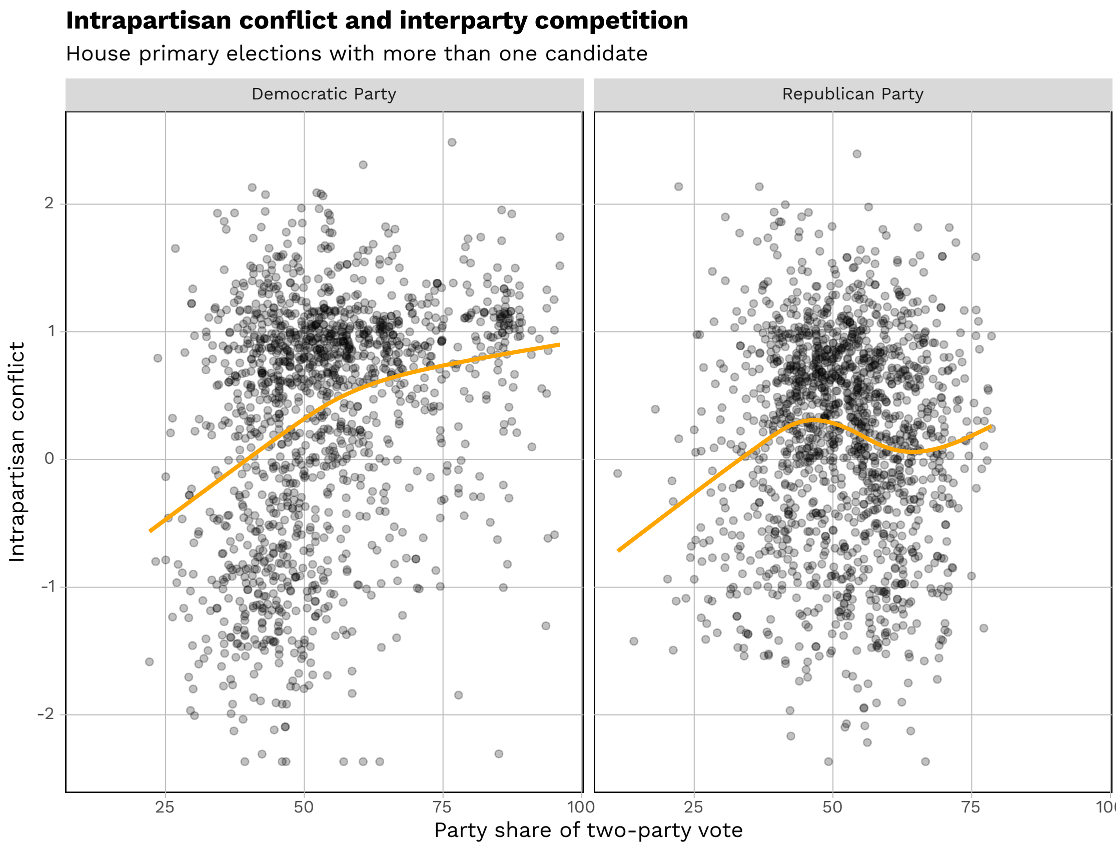

Figure 4.2: The relationship between two-party vote share and intrapartisan conflict, by party, in House primary elections with more than one candidate, 1980–2012.

have real stakes. In those situations, the GOP establishment might be compelled to concede the nomination to a strong challenger from an insurgent fraction rather than risk the opportunity to win a seat. It is local in the sense that vote share is generally stable in the same place over time, such that time-invariant properties of a state or area explain a substantial amount of the variation in intrapartisan conflict. And it is driven by professional competition in the sense that fractional divisions emerge as the number of candidates increase.

Model 1 in Table 4.1 supports the interpretation of Figure 4.2 given above. The GOP experiences higher rates of intrapartisan conflict where the general-election outcome is not certain. In contrast, the level of conflict is low where Democrats are sure to win or sure to lose. What is more, conflict is more pronounced in contests over open seats; however, this appears to be because open-seat races draw more contenders, and with them, more fractional maneuvering (model 2).

Table 4.1: GOP intrapartisan conflict by party vote share

	Dependent variable:				
	Intrapartisan conflict				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
40% < VS <= 45%	0.089	0.106*	0.054	0.134	
	(0.078)	(0.077)	(0.086)	(0.105)	
45% < VS <= 50%	0.061	0.073	−0.011	0.052	
	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.087)	(0.098)	
55% < VS <= 60%	−0.197***	−0.211***	−0.103*	−0.069	
	(0.078)	(0.076)	(0.066)	(0.094)	
VS 40% or less	−0.238***	−0.194**	−0.282***	−0.173*	
	(0.087)	(0.085)	(0.086)	(0.132)	
VS greater than 60%	−0.177***	−0.189***	0.119**	0.115	
	(0.070)	(0.068)	(0.064)	(0.103)	
Two-party vote share					0.011***
					(0.005)
Open seat	0.129***	−0.015	0.045	−0.019	−0.021
	(0.045)	(0.048)	(0.046)	(0.057)	(0.056)
Number of candidates		0.115***	0.089***	0.102***	0.100***
		(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Fixed effects:	None	None	State, Cycle	Area, Cycle	Area, Cycle
Standard errors:	Huber-White	Huber-White	State	Region	Region
Observations	1,391	1,391	1,391	1,391	1,391
R^2	0.029	0.064	0.269	0.447	0.444
Adjusted R^2	0.024	0.059	0.232	0.270	0.268
Residual Std. Error	0.802 (df = 1384)	0.788 (df = 1383)	0.712 (df = 1324)	0.694 (df = 1053)	0.695 (df = 1057)
F Statistic	6.785*** (df = 6; 1384)	13.500*** (df = 7; 1383)	7.369*** (df = 66; 1324)	2.525*** (df = 337; 1053)	2.531*** (df = 333; 1057)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Reference group: Incumbent, 50% < VS <= 55%. Models 2–5: cluster-robust SE.

Model 3 introduces state- and cycle-level fixed effects, with cluster-robust standard errors grouped by state. After accounting for these factors, the level of conflict in districts where Republicans and Democrats are competitive are indistinguishable from one another. However, the level of conflict in districts where Republicans are sure to lose is lower by one-third of one standard deviation, on average.

Model 4 replaces state-level fixed effects and clustered standard errors with their area equivalents. This comes with an increase in explanatory power, but no substantive change in the results. Model 5 replaces the piecewise function of models 1–4 with the original continuous variable. This shows that assuming a linear relationship between vote share and intrapartisan conflict produces an artificially low estimate of the strength of their association.

These results are consistent with the hypothesis that insurgent fractions in the Republican Party pressure their co-partisans for a greater share of seats in Congress by preying on the GOP establishment's desire to defeat Democrats at all costs. Donors and candidates display greater fractional cohesion where the GOP success is the most in doubt, creating intrapartisan conflict in those situations. Party elites would sooner concede a nomination to a fractional candidate and enter the general election with a well-resourced and unified party than risk weakening the party's position against Democrats in a divisive primary. Social conservatives and economic radicals in the GOP have no such inhibitions.

However, differences in the Republican Party's electoral fortunes are so stable within areas over time as to become indistinguishable from other time-invariant properties of each place, at least at standard levels of statistical significance. What is more, this analysis concerns a very specific operationalization of intrapartisan conflict in which donors and candidates act in alignment. I also consider an alternative operationalization, *concentration*, a measure of the degree to which different fractions are represented in each candidate's donor pool relative to the diversity of the donors participating in the primary election as a whole (Eqs. 3.21–3.22).

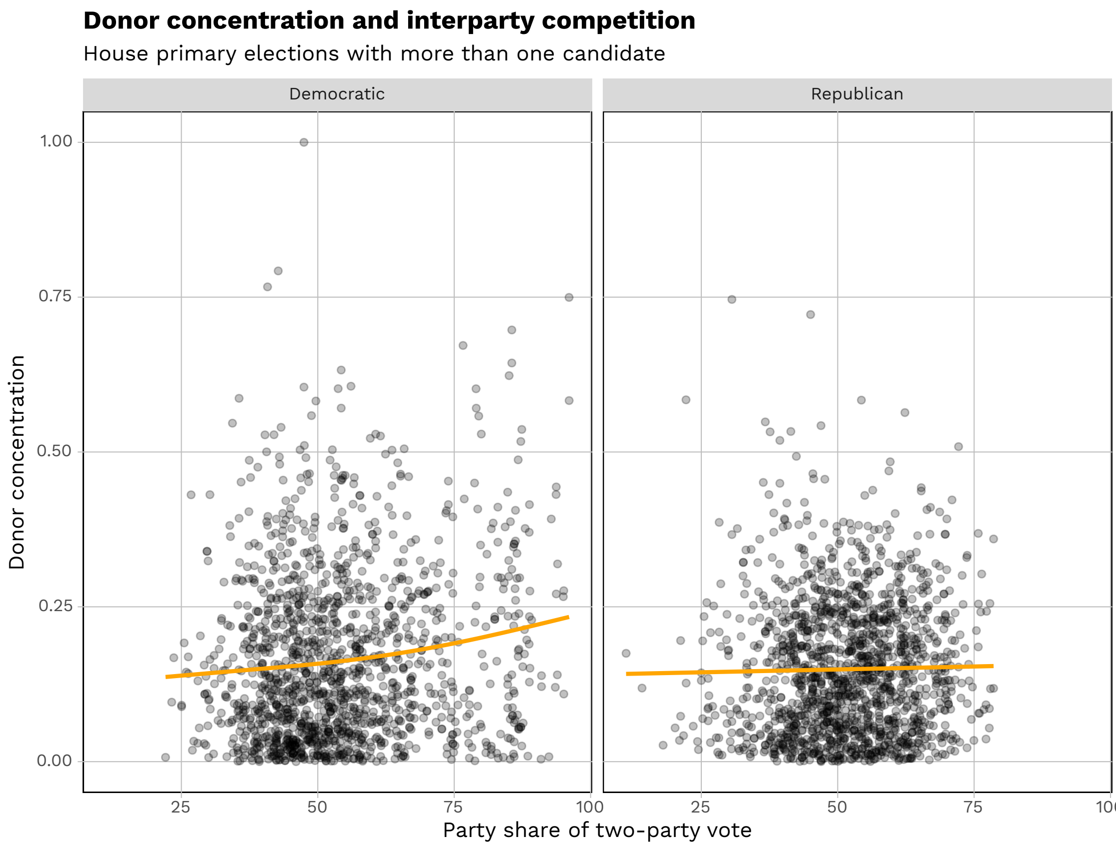

Figure 4.3: The relationship between two-party vote share and donor concentration, by party, in House primary elections with more than one candidate, 1980–2012.

Figure 4.3 reproduces the scatter plots and trend lines of Figure 4.2 for the concentration index. Among Democrats there is a modest positive correlation between two-party vote share and concentration (Spearman's $\hat{\rho} = 0.11, p < 0.01$), but there is no statistically significant correlation (product-moment or rank-order) among Republicans. No statistically significant relationships are concealed by a failure to account for state, area, or temporal variation (using the same plan as applied to intraparty conflict; results not shown.).

These analyses suggest that fractions within the Republican Party act cohesively to advance their position by capitalizing on party elites' fear of losing seats to members of the other party. When a fractional candidate emerges in a district where the party has a chance to win, donors align with that candidate, forming a coalition along fractional lines. Without considering whether donors are supporting a candidate from their own fraction, however, how Republican donors divide themselves between candidates in an election has no apparent relationship with their party's chances of winning the campaign.

The difference between the pattern that emerges with and without adding candidates into the equation is instructive. It suggests that fractional allegiances within parties guide how donors act only in the context of struggles for position inside the party itself. The difference indicates that fractions inside parties are best understood as coalitions of donors *and candidates*, organized around the short-term goal of electing specific candidates to office. Without a candidate from their fraction to organize around, donors from a fraction have no reason to act as a cohesive subgroup within the party.

As a result, donors with the opportunity to support a candidate from their fraction will do so, while donors who do not have that opportunity may support candidates from other fractions. This explains cases in which intrapartisan conflict is high, but concentration is low. In those cases, members of one fraction are acting cohesively, while others are not.

It follows that a fraction seeking to elect one of its own will benefit from this cohesion while the rest of the party is in disarray. The hypothesis to test here is that, conditional on the election of a Republican in a primary with more than one candidate, an economic radical will be elected with higher probability when concentration is low but intrapartisan conflict is high. The variable of interest here is categorical, the fraction of the elected Republican legislator. Where the rest of the analyses in the present work hew to the fixed-effects paradigm of econometrics, that toolkit has two failures that make it unacceptable for this task. First, there are so many districts that have never elected an economic radical and so many years in which few of them are elected that too many observations would be thrown out. Second, multinomial (or categorical) problems push the limits of capability for many numerical methods for calculating maximum likelihood parameter estimates. With the additional complexity involved in attempting to account for variance across time and space, only the simplest multilevel models estimated in this fashion are known to produce reliable results (Raudenbush and Bryk 2001).

4.3 When do Republicans send radicals to Congress?

To address this task, I introduce a Bayesian multilevel model of the probability of electing an economic radical legislator, conditional on election of a Republican after a primary with more than one candidate. Then, for an election in district i, in cycle j, in area k,

$$\text{Fraction}_{ijk} \sim \text{Categorical}(p_1, p_2, p_3, p_4, p_5) \tag{4.1}$$

where 1 indexes party regulars, 2 economic radicals, 3 indexes social conservatives, 4 indexes outsiders, 5 indexes an undefined fraction, and progressives are excluded as no Republicans are members. Adding m to correspond to this index, and using party regulars as a reference group,

$$Pr(\text{Fraction}_{ijk} = m|\alpha, \beta, \sigma, X) = \frac{\exp(\beta_{0jkm} + \sum_{p=1}^{P} \beta_{p\cdot\cdot m} X_{pijk})}{1 + \sum_{m=2}^{5} \exp(\beta_{0jkm} + \sum_{p=1}^{P} \beta_{p\cdot\cdot m} X_{pijk})}, \tag{4.2}$$

$$\beta_{0jkm} = \alpha_{0\cdot\cdot m} + \alpha_{0j\cdot m} + \alpha_{0\cdot km}, \tag{4.3}$$

$$\boldsymbol{\beta}_m \sim \text{N}(\begin{bmatrix} \mu_{\beta_{0m}} \\ \vdots \\ \mu_{\beta_{pm}} \end{bmatrix}, \Sigma_{\beta m}), \tag{4.4}$$

$$\alpha_{0\cdot\cdot m} \sim \text{N}(0, \sigma^2_{\alpha 0m}), \tag{4.5}$$

$$\alpha_{0j\cdot m} \sim \text{N}(0, \sigma^2_{\alpha 1m}), \tag{4.6}$$

$$\alpha_{0\cdot km} \sim \text{N}(0, \sigma^2_{\alpha 2m}), \tag{4.7}$$

where Eqs. 4.2 – 4.7 specify a model with uncorrelated area and cycle random intercepts, and the β_{p*} include coefficients for intraparty conflict, concentration, and the Republican party's share of two-party vote share.[2] Posterior distributions for the parameters are estimated using the No-U-Turn Sampler of Hoffman and Gelman (2014), an extension of the Hamiltonian Monte Carlo algorithm.

4.3.1 When Republicans choose radicals: Results

The primary parameters of interest in this model pertain to concentration and intraparty conflict. I present fitted values in Figures 4.4–4.5. Coefficient estimates from the posterior distributions over parameters are presented in Table 4.2.[3] Each figure shows how the predicted probability of electing an economic radical changes as the independent variable of interest varies over its domain of observed values in two conditions, one in which the second variable of interest is held at its 25$^{\text{th}}$ percentile value (the "low" condition), and one in which it is held at its 75$^{\text{th}}$ percentile value (the "high" condition). The shaded regions around the expected values define 95% credible intervals where the upper bound corresponds to the 97.5$^{\text{th}}$ percentile of the posterior distribution and the lower bound corresponds to the 2.5$^{\text{th}}$ percentile. The results offer strong evidence in support of the hypothesis that economic radicals benefit by acting in concert while their copartisans are in disarray.

Figure 4.4 shows that when donor concentration is high, the probability of Republicans sending an economically radical legislator to Congress is lower regardless of the level of intrapartisan conflict. However, when concentration is low, high conflict predicts a high probability of electing an economic radical. Because the high- and low-concentration conditions are pegged to the upper and lower bound of concentration's interquartile range, they understate how dramatic the difference in the marginal effect of conflict on the probability of electing a radical legislator can actually be. If concentration is held at 0.74, for instance — which is the highest observed value in the data — the 95% credible interval does not include 50% probability of electing an economic radical (not shown). Put another way, at higher-than-usual levels of concentration among GOP donors, the probability of electing a radical Republican is remarkably low.

2. I additionally specify generic weakly informative priors on the β and σ. These are omitted from the formal specification in the interests of space, but I assign all μ_β a prior $N(0, 1)$ and all σ a prior $\text{Student}(3, 0, 10)$.

3. Diagnostic plots (not shown) suggest that the chains mix well early in the sampling process, and additional diagnostics indicate that estimation has reached convergence. Only coefficient estimates for outsiders are suspect due to low effective sample size.

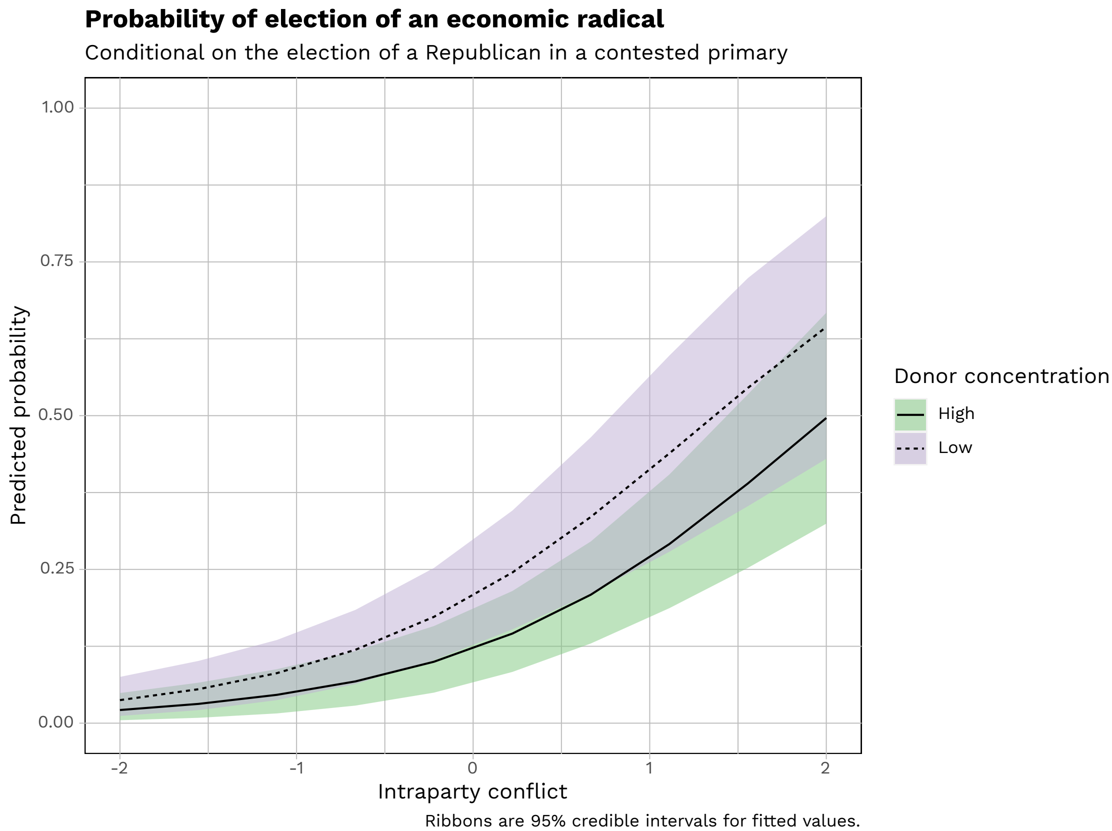

Figure 4.4: Predicted probability of electing an economic radical after a contested House primary, by intraparty conflict.

Figure 4.5 illustrates fitted values as concentration varies but intraparty conflict is held constant in “low” or ”high” conditions. As in the previous figure, the probability of Republicans sending an economic radical to Congress is greatest when intraparty conflict is high and concentration is low. This is consistent with economic radicals acting cohesively to support their candidate while members of other fractions spread their support across candidates, including a radical candidate. As concentration increases, however, the chances for economic radicals quickly decline.

Using administrative records of campaign contributions, I have introduced and applied new measures of intrapartisan conflict and concentration in federal elections. I have identified fractions within the political parties with distinctive policy goals and ideological leanings. I have shown that economically radical and socially conservative fractions in the Republican Party have made gains since the rise of the New Democrats in the early 1990s. By modeling election results as a

Table 4.2: Multinomial logit coefficient estimates: Fraction of elected Republican legislator

	Dependent variable:			
	Pr(Fraction = fraction)			
	Estimate	Est. Error	2.5%	97.5%
Intercept (Radicals)	−0.037	1.12	−2.23	2.19
Intercept (Conservatives)	−21.64	5.86	−34.65	−12.00
Intercept (Outsiders)	−413.25	369.30	−1539.99	−72.48
Intercept (Undefined)	−9.97	3.24	−16.90	−4.27
Intraparty conflict (Radicals)	1.01	0.24	0.58	1.51
Fractionalism (Radicals)	−3.65	1.58	−6.81	−0.69
Republican vote share (Radicals)	−0.02	0.02	−0.06	0.02
Intraparty conflict (Conservatives)	0.81	0.63	−0.43	2.08
Fractionalism (Conservatives)	−10.20	4.92	−20.67	−1.42
Vote share (Conservatives)	0.18	0.08	0.02	0.35
Intraparty conflict (Outsiders)	1.06	17.27	−33.66	40.78
Fractionalism (Outsiders)	57.63	178.75	−268.17	577.90
Vote share (Outsiders)	2.10	2.75	−1.13	10.43
Intraparty conflict (Undefined)	−0.30	0.37	−1.06	0.38
Fractionalism (Undefined)	−3.97	3.06	−10.10	2.00
Vote share (Undefined)	0.05	0.05	−0.04	0.15

Note: Coefficients are logarithms of odds ratios.
Estimates and expected errors are means and standard deviations, respectively.
The columns 2.5% and 97.5% refer to upper and lower bounds of 95% credible intervals.
Estimates of variance parameters and other summary statistics are omitted for space.

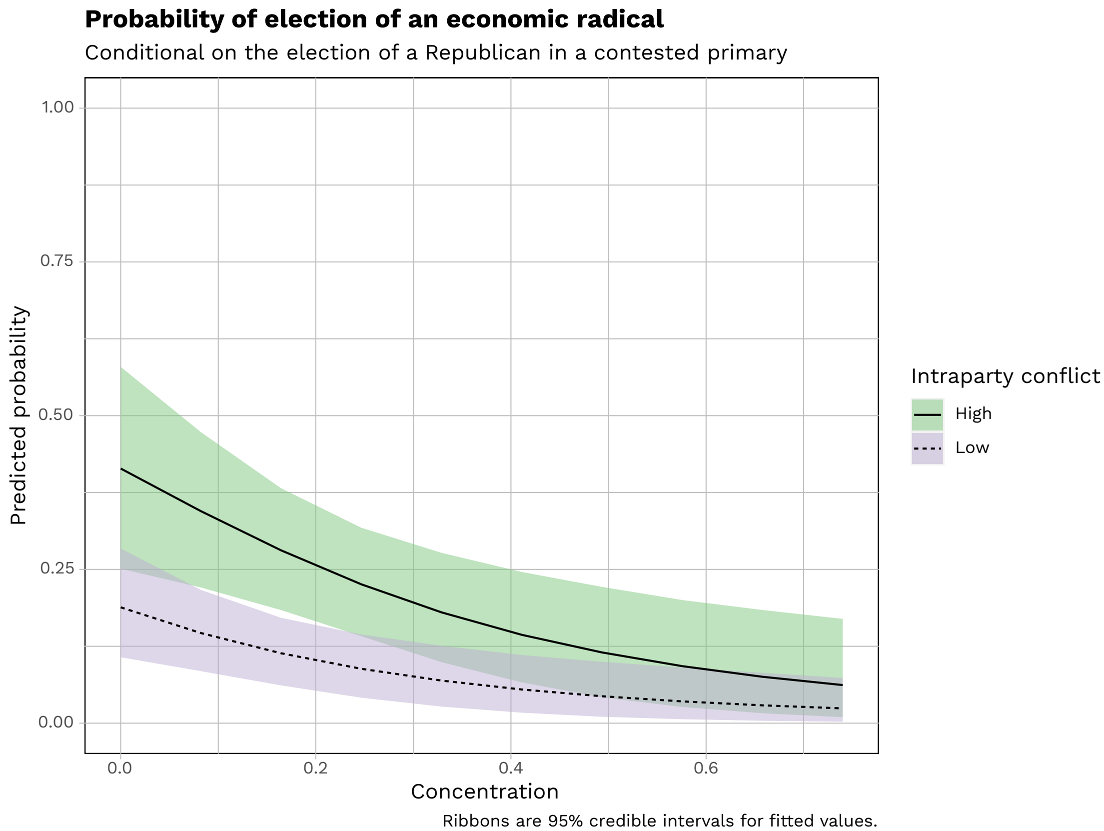

Figure 4.5: Predicted probability of electing an economic radical after a contested House primary, by donor concentration.

function of fractional activity, I inferred that elections producing these legislators have distinctive properties. Economic radicals and social conservatives are most likely to emerge from elections where the winning fraction acts cohesively while other fractions do not.

In aggregate, these findings develop an explanation for asymmetric polarization rooted in the fractional nature of partisan politics. To date, scholars of politics have struggled to reconcile explanations rooted in the aggregation of individual preference with the accelerating rightward turn of the GOP relative to a Democratic Party engaged in, at best, a slow slide towards more liberal social policy. Here, I have offered evidence that the Republican Party is becoming more conservative because there are active, organized, cohesive groups of conservatives working to elect their fellow travelers.

But what are the consequences of this fractional activity for polarization writ large? In what follows, I turn to this final question.

4.4 Elite polarization

To measure polarization among federal legislators, scholars of American politics most often use measures derived using DW-NOMINATE, which scales members of Congress using their roll-call votes (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2008). I have shown that by this measure, members of economically radical and socially conservative fractions are plainly further to the right on this scale, while the Democratic Party's progressive wing is further to the left (Fig. 3.4).

Figure 4.6 extends this analysis to explore changes over time, presenting LOESS lines fit to the DW-NOMINATE scores of legislators from each fraction.[4] Between 1980 and 2012, economic radicals and social conservatives in the Republican Party have also moved further to the right on economic issues than the Republicans among the bipartisan group of insiders who account for the majority of donors and candidates in politics. Among Democrats, the social conservatives who remain are more conservative than their co-partisans along the first dimension of DW-NOMINATE, which is best understood as a measure of economic liberalism, as well.

Because the fractions at the edge of the Republican Party are more conservative than the party as a whole, their victories help to explain the rightward march of the GOP. Fractional boundaries are estimated using a low-dimensional approximation of similarities and differences between candidates based on their shared connections to political donors, which lends a straightforward relational interpretation to the figure. As candidates from extreme fractions edge out establishment Republicans for congressional seats, the Republican party-in-the-legislature literally loses its ties to mainstream politics. Lawmakers with connections to the opposing party, however indirect, are replaced with members of a cohesive fraction isolated from opposition legislators and the interests that might persuade them to come to the bargaining table.

The remaining question is what roles conflict and competition within the party play in causing polarization. Analyzing the results of elections between 1980–2012 with more than one candidate participating in the winning party's primary, it appears that concentration and professional com-

4. Confidence intervals around the local fit are omitted for clarity of presentation.

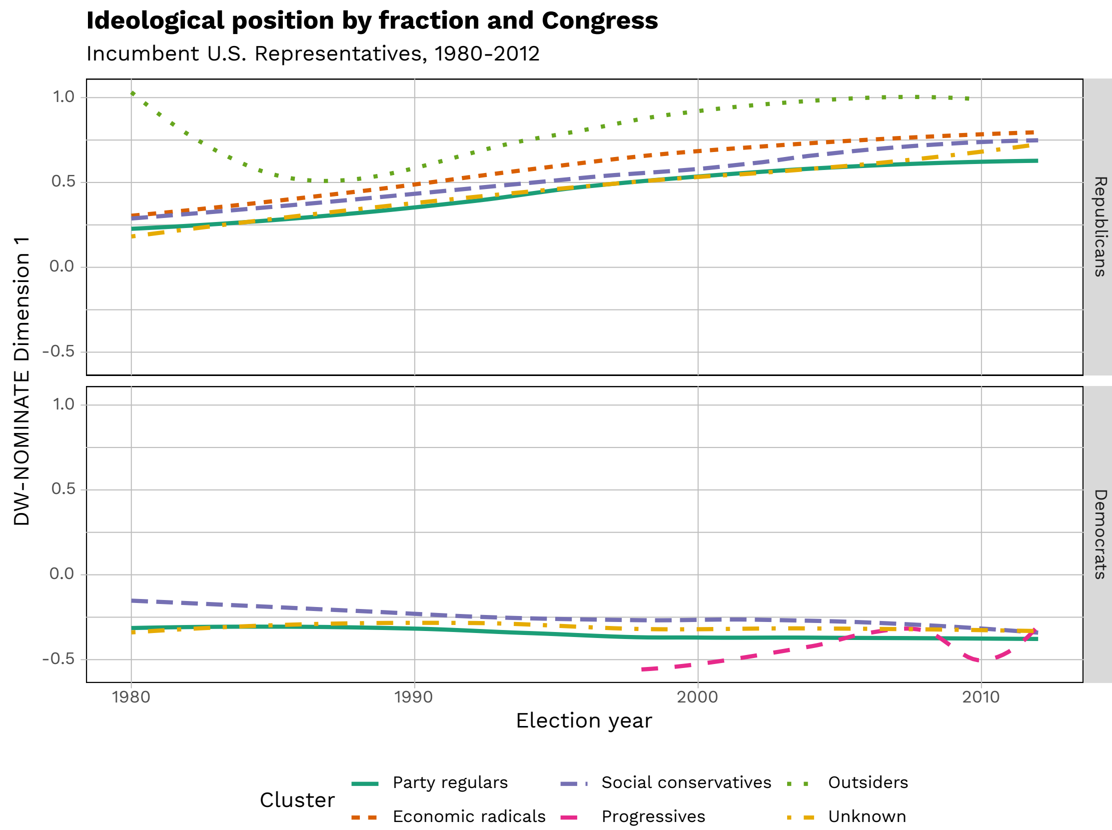

Figure 4.6: Average DW-NOMINATE scores by party and fraction, incumbent U.S. representatives, 1980–2012.

petition play separate parts. Table 4.3 presents coefficient estimates from a series of multivariate models to address this question. In each model, the dependent variable is the DW-NOMINATE first-dimension score of the legislator elected to Congress after a specific election cycle. An interaction term with party for each of the primary independent variables of interest allows for effects to vary between Republicans and Democrats. The estimated effect for Republicans corresponds to the main coefficient. The effect for Democrats is the main coefficent estimate plus the estimate of the interaction term.

Model 1 from Table 4.3 shows that after accounting for time-invariant properties of states, legislators that survive more competitive elections are also more ideologically extreme and this effect is symmetric across party lines. Subsequent models show that this finding is robust to alternative specifications. Model 2 moves from state to area fixed effects. The remaining models remove

Table 4.3: Regression of polarization on conflict, competition, and donor concentration

	Dependent variable:					
	DW-NOMINATE Dimension 1					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Democrat	-0.202^{***}	-0.385^{***}	-0.378^{***}	-0.397^{***}	-0.404^{***}	-0.398^{***}
	(0.075)	(0.158)	(0.159)	(0.160)	(0.159)	(0.160)
Donor concentration	-0.012	-0.028^{*}	-0.017		-0.018	
	(0.014)	(0.018)	(0.016)		(0.017)	
Number of candidates	0.016^{***}	0.013^{*}	0.013^{*}	0.009		
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)		
Intraparty conflict	-0.001	0.022		0.008	0.022	
	(0.014)	(0.017)		(0.015)	(0.018)	
Party vote share	0.003^{***}	0.00002	-0.00002	-0.0002	-0.00003	-0.0001
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Open seat	-0.004	0.001	-0.001	0.002	0.027	0.023
	(0.017)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.023)
Democrat × concentration	0.018	0.028^{*}	0.019		0.015	
	(0.014)	(0.020)	(0.017)		(0.019)	
Democrat × candidates	-0.027^{***}	-0.025^{***}	-0.026^{***}	-0.021^{**}		
	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)		
Democrat × conflict	0.010	-0.016		-0.002	-0.014	
	(0.018)	(0.022)		(0.018)	(0.022)	
Democrat × vote share	-0.011^{***}	-0.008^{***}	-0.008^{***}	-0.008^{***}	-0.007^{***}	-0.008^{***}
	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Democrat × open seat	-0.004	0.018	0.022	0.017	-0.027	-0.022
	(0.021)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.030)	(0.030)
Fixed effects:	State, Cycle	Area, Cycle	Area, Cycle	Area, Cycle	Area, Cycle	
Standard errors:	State	Area	Area	Area	Area	
Observations	1,022	1,059	1,059	1,059	1,059	1,059
R^2	0.925	0.959	0.958	0.958	0.958	0.958
Adjusted R^2	0.919	0.935	0.935	0.935	0.934	0.934
Residual Std. Error	0.145 (df = 951)	0.130 (df = 676)	0.130 (df = 678)	0.130 (df = 678)	0.130 (df = 678)	0.131 (df = 682)
F Statistic	166.581^{***} (df = 70; 951)	40.912^{***} (df = 382; 676)	41.010^{***} (df = 380; 678)	40.896^{***} (df = 380; 678)	40.665^{***} (df = 380; 678)	41.055^{***} (df = 376; 682)

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$
Standard errors are cluster-robust.

each of the three main independent variables of interest individually, and then all three together, as robustness checks. In this table, concentration and intrapartisan conflict have been rescaled to have zero mean and unit variance so they can be compared side-by-side. Number of candidates means the number in excess of two, the minimum level of competition necessary for inclusion in this subset of the data.

After better accounting for within-state differences between districts, concentration — the degree to which donors are divided along fractional lines, without regard to whether they are aligned with candidates — emerges as another explanation. A one standard-deviation increase in the degree to which donors are divided along fractional lines leads to a decline in the DW-NOMINATE score of a Republican by more than 0.028, or 2.8% of the range of the dependent variable. Among Democrats, it has no effect.

However, subsequent models show that this finding obtains only when all three independent variables of interest are included. Because the three forms of competition are interrelated, omitting any one of them confounds the coefficient estimates. Further, after accounting for area effects, the coefficients of interest are significant only at the $p < 0.1$ level. One possible explanation is that the fixed-effects approach or the idiosyncrasies of the data used make substantive relationships appear tenuous. Another is that, in fact, competitiveness is the real driver here. A third is that DW-NOMINATE simply is not an appropriate variable for estimating differences within parties, and the low statistical significance of the effect is the consequence of low variability on the dependent variable. Regardless of the reason, I cannot rule out the null hypothesis of no association.[5]

Increased professional competition, and reduced interpartisan competition, each drive polarization. Ideologically extreme candidates and economically radical fractions in the Republican Party do best where the opposing party's chances are low, and where a crowded primary field creates pressure to stand out before local and national elites. In contrast, when donors from different

5. The theoretical explanation is the most likely one. As an additional robustness check, I estimated model 2 as a cross-classified random effects model, with area and election-year (cycle) random effects (not shown). This produces a modest increase in statistical power because areas with just a single observation of a competitive election are included. In that model, the coefficient for the number of candidates is equivalent to the estimate in model 2 and significant at $p < .01$ while the coefficients on the other two variables approach zero.

fractions each support different candidates, ideologically extreme candidates are less likely to be elected.

4.5 Discussion

Contemporary American parties are indeed "long coalitions," in the famous phrase coined by Aldrich (1995). These coalitions include fractions of candidates and their financial supporters. Each fraction can be characterized not only by its policy positions, but by its orientation to politics, and, especially, whether its members appear to be similar to members of the opposing party thanks to shared networks of supporters or candidates. Similarly, the fractional politics of the Democratic and Republican Parties are different.

Fractions in the Republican Party play hardball with their copartisans, advancing their candidates for open seats and in districts where Republican victories are not certain. In the Democratic Party, in contrast, internecine struggles do not surface in districts that are "in play" for the other side. Analyzing changes in fractional politics over time, it is clear that economic radicals within the Republican Party have also benefited from good timing. Twice in 30 years — in 1994, after William J. Clinton made George W. Bush a one-term president, and again in 2010, after Barack Obama became the first African-American president — a cohesive far-right fraction acted in concert to secure seats in Congress through the vehicle of a Republican Party reeling from a decisive loss. After the rise of pro-business, pro-free-trade New Democrats, and after the first post-Reagan bloom for economic radicals, a progressive fraction began to build representation in the Democratic Party as well.

As Noel (2016) suggests, fractions within the parties are best understood not only in terms of whether their policy positions are characterized as "moderate" or "extreme," but also whether their position in political networks places them within reach of members of the opposing party who might be recruited for collaboration on short-term goals. I have demonstrated that the fractional politics of the United States is characterized by a bipartisan political mainstream, where politicians share common connections, however indirect, through the networks of donors who finance politics, and collections of outsiders, with supporters who stand apart. There is no single coherent group of purists in either party, but instead competing fractions with different views about the direction their party should take.

Seeking to explain the consequences of fractional politics for interpartisan polarization, I turned to the relationship between fractional conflict and the ideological extremity of elected legislators. I demonstrated that conflict and competition each play a role in political polarization. As professional competition increases and more candidates enter a primary campaign, the ideological extremity of the party nominee — and, eventually, legislator — goes up. However, when donors participating in the party's "invisible primary" are sharply divided along fractional lines, each supporting a candidate from their side, the legislator selected through that process is less extreme. The chaos of a multi-candidate primary, then, is kind to adherents of the far left and the far right. In a room with many voices, it seems, the loudest mouth alone is often the only one that people hear. And yet, this is not the case in one very specific instance: When donors keep to their set, the supporters of radical fractions are unable to recruit from the far larger establishment, and the establishment does not compromise with its party's activist tendencies. When a party's mainstream finds its own candidate, and radicals are isolated, the forces of moderation have their day.

The clarity of these findings is tempered by methodological and theoretical limitations. In particular, estimates of the role of donor concentration are not robust to alternative specifications, leaving the question still unsettled. Nevertheless, the results presented here still have several policy and theoretical implications.

4.5.1 Stability and change in political parties

These results illustrate that changes in the structures within political parties have direct consequences for outcomes at the level of the party system as a whole. While moments of rapid change can restructure the balance of power within a party, these are accelerations that take place in the context of decades-long struggle. Other scholars who seek an exhaustive typology of fractions, enumerating discrete groups in their historical context, are right to build out a fuller descriptive account of how the specific interests and personalities that comprise the parties change over time. Similarly, scholars who seek to reduce partisan politics to models that include only the "ins" and the “outs” follow in a tradition that has long proved its utility (Lipset 1959). But the former approach, I have shown, may overlook a remarkable degree of continuity in the alignment of broad fractions within the parties, while the latter elides both the folkways that connect elites across party lines, and the divisions that separate networks of activists who share a party affiliation, but wish to steer the party in very different directions.

The present work makes contributions to two ongoing areas of research, one narrow and empirical, the other larger and more theoretical. Empirically, the present work introduces new evidence in support of the claim that primary elections influence political polarization. Extending work by scholars like Jewitt and Treul (2014), I introduced new methods for distinguishing between professional competition and more divisive forms of intrapartisan struggle. I showed that these different patterns of interaction may have very different consequences for political polarization. By demonstrating how accounting for state and area alters the results, the present work also makes clear that future research must account for the substantial role of place in the structure of political process.

Theoretically, the present work is cumulative with a growing literature on extended party networks. I contribute to this literature by further developing the concept of party fractions, moving beyond the notion of “ins” and “outs” and towards a concept that strikes a better balance between that simple model and a particularistic approach that would miss too much continuity by addressing only specific, short-term coalitions. Further, I draw a new connection between scholarship on extended party networks and research into political polarization. I show that the decisions made in local party politics — whether one or many candidates are able to mount a campaign, and, crucially, whether local networks of donors are united or divided along fractional lines — have second-order implications for the structure of politics in the federal legislature as a whole.

Together, these contributions point up the need for an integrative theoretical framework to the study of formal politics. By “integrative,” I mean an approach that considers each subject of interest not only in the context of, but, specifically, *in relation to* other actors, structures, and forces at work in the political field. Here, this integrative approach has produced an improved explanation of the actions of representatives in the legislature by examining them in relation to their financial supporters, their intrapartisan opponents, and the geographical areas they seek to control. I have shown how attending to those relations between donors, candidates, and places offer leverage on the basic problem of identifying fractions themselves, and understanding how conflict between fractions causes — or mitigates — polarization.

In the present work, fractional affiliation, regional attachment and ties between supporters and political leaders help to explain outcomes at the level of the party system. Variation in relational meaning, between, for instance, donors and candidates of different fractions, or between the ties that bind large- versus small-dollar donors to candidates, may help to explain differences in the relative cohesion of different groups. There is also room for further methodological innovation. Ideal point estimates derived from roll-call voting records remain a less than an ideal measure for the estimation of within-party differences, and further exploration may find other ways in which local cohesion causes changes in global structure. Nevertheless, the approach developed here opens many pathways for future research into the structure of party coalitions.

Chapter 5

A House divided: The effect of fractional politics on policymaking

Currently, many scholars of American politics connect a decline in federal policymaking capacity with political polarization. The assumption in the literature on polarization is a direct causal link between polarization and gridlock. When legislators are polarized, compromise across party lines is less possible, and lawmakers are unable to pass significant legislation (Jones 2001; Bonica et al. 2013).

Recent work on Congressional institutions makes it unclear how to support the claim that polarization causes gridlock. Most significant legislation emerges and travels through Congress under the watchful eye of party leadership, at the head of party "cartels" (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). Members of the majority party delegate to the leadership on important matters. They also delegate the ability to impose discipline, including sanctions for legislators who defect, and compensation for legislators who comply at the cost of their own policy agenda (Jenkins and Monroe 2012). Given that voters punish legislators who do not do important things they are supposed to do, such as pass a budget (Andersen, Lassen, and Nielsen 2020), and that party leaders have the power to impose discipline on legislators who might not otherwise do what they should, one would expect the leaders of party cartels to smoothly enforce party order. Polarization alone, then, is unlikely to cause gridlock. Spatial models of the legislature anticipate that party leaders should be able to find side payments or other compensation sufficient to bring any individual polarized legislator in line over the long run.

Scholars of intraparty organization have opened a line of inquiry that promises an answer. Their analysis begins from the observation that legislators are not bound together by ideology alone. When legislators share constituencies, for instance by representing neighboring districts, districts where the same industries or firms have significant interests, or districts where social movements are active, they may seek to coordinate their actions. Similarly, legislators may share ideology but vary in the extent of their cross-cutting attachments. For institutional scholars, legislators form voting blocs in order to act collectively without the support of (or in direct opposition to) party leaders. To do this, they develop formal and informal institutions, such as whip systems to keep the bloc together, mechanisms for sharing staff to research and produce policy, and, importantly, networks of financial support to fund their efforts even if party leaders shut them out from the party's infrastructure (DiSalvo 2012; Bloch Rubin 2017).

In this scholarship on American political institutions, there is active debate over the relationship between party fractions and the party as a whole. DiSalvo (2012) argues that fractions seek to alter a party's "brand," shifting the entire party in their direction along the liberal-to-conservative ideological spectrum. Bloch Rubin (2017) argues instead that fractions seek to develop their own brand complementary to public understandings of the party.

At issue in these competing understandings of fraction is the way in which legislators who belong to a fraction relate to party leaders and members of the party's base of mass and elite supporters — as well as the consequences of those relations for the ability of democratic institutions to serve their policymaking function. DiSalvo argues that legislators seeking to shift the party "brand" are often motivated by ideas, not interests. In his view, parties change character when groups mobilize to install their ideology and outlook, not just their policy positions and preferred leaders, at the core of the party. Party fractions take power and change institutional rules to suit their moment and their policy agenda. From this perspective, one would expect fractional lawmakers to be no less successful in policymaking than any other member of their party.

The alternative view is of fractions as networks seeking autonomy from the party. In this view fractions are influenced by the conflicting interests of actors outside formal politics, upon whom lawmakers depend for re-election. If fractions seek to build their own "brand," then one would expect their policymaking efforts to rise and fall independently of the party as a whole, depending on their ability to broker alliance not only with presidents and the public but also their own co-partisans in the legislature.

Despite a robust literature offering not only historiography but also social and political analysis over American political development through the postwar era, the question of how fractions mediate between incumbent and insurgent elites remains unresolved. In the search for answers, recent work has begun to examine the contemporary era, from 1980 through the Obama presidency. Because archives covering this period are not yet available, current literature draws primarily on elite interviews, news accounts, and secondary source material, along with what little correspondence and other documentary evidence astute scholars have been able to obtain.

In this chapter, I apply the analytical approach developed in Chapter 3 to contribute new evidence and theoretical development that advances this debate. In that chapter, I introduced and applied novel methods to identify fractions in networks of donors and candidates in a substantial span of the contemporary era, 1979–2012. I demonstrated that these bases of financial support are associated with distinctive policy outlooks in two different ways. First, fractions have significant differences on specific policy issues. Second, fractions vary in their partisan content. Progressive Democrats do not occupy the same financial networks as Republicans, and economically radical Republicans do not occupy the same financial networks as Democrats. Party regulars and social conservatives, on the other hand, belong to financial networks that span the parties.

I then demonstrated that economic radicals win when their financial supporters act cohesively to back one of their own in a primary election that otherwise divides donors from each fraction across different candidates. Finally, I demonstrated that in the Republican Party, fractions engage in a politics of brinksmanship, pressing for primary-election victories even in cases where party leaders might fear that intrapartisan conflict could cost the GOP a general-election victory. Democrats, in contrast, are uniformly more likely to contest seats that are safely in Democratic hands than to contest a seat where the general election outcome is in any real doubt.

Building on that work, this chapter shows that those victories have consequences for legislative effectiveness. To preview the findings, I present evidence that as members of the minority party, fractional legislators are systematically more visible dissidents than party regulars. However, some fractional legislators produce and implement fewer policies than party regulars when their party is in power. This relationship is independent from ideology, and, importantly, it also varies by party and by fraction.

Republican social conservatives, with a financial network that bridges the divide between the parties, are not substantially different from party regulars in their effectiveness while in power. During the period under study, Democrats are in general as effective in power as they are in the minority. However, progressive Democrats are substantially more effective than party regulars regardless of whether they are in or out of power. And economic radicals, engaged during the period under study in an attempted hostile takeover of the GOP, experience roughly half the increase in effectiveness that their co-partisans enjoy when their party enters the majority in the House.

On policy issues, from tax cuts and the removal of consumer protections to national right-to-work legislation, economic radicals have long pursued a robust policy agenda. Rather than suggest that free-market supporters would simply prefer to preserve policy gains of the Reagan era, these findings demonstrate that during the period under study, members of the GOP's right flank struggled to attach their names to legislation that would advance their goals. Further, I show that this was not due to ideology alone. Independent of ideological extremity, lawmakers embedded in far-right networks of financial supporters were systematically less productive than party regulars who shared financial networks with members of their party's leadership "cartel" (Cox and McCubbins 1993). By demonstrating how fractional allegiance with confederates outside of the party elite predicts differences in the policy effectiveness of individual legislators, I contribute to the broader literature on parties and party fractions with new evidence of the linkages between institutional action and backroom politics.[1]

This work also highlights the price of fractional politics for the effectiveness of legislative institutions. In literature on Congress, effectiveness refers specifically to the ability to develop, introduce, and pass significant legislation (Volden and Wiseman 2014). In this chapter, I take up

1. The phrase "backroom politics" is an accurate descriptor. Networks of financial support are built in the offices of attorneys and lobbyists, on the patios of tony country clubs, and, literally, in the backrooms of restaurants. Masket (2011) offers an ethnographic account, which I corroborate in my own interviews with political donors. How to understand backroom politics in normative terms is up to the reader.

the question of whether fractions differ in their legislative effectiveness.

During the period under study, economic radicals generally held their ground in the House (and in the Senate) but did not achieve the ultimate goal of electing a president accountable first and foremost to them. Instead, they had two generations of party regulars in George H.W. and George W. Bush, "compassionate conservatives" unwilling to be responsible for the decimation of social support programs. Meanwhile, progressive Democrats delivered votes for President Barack Obama in the 2008 primary election, and progressive goals — especially an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also expansive health care reform — were a centerpiece of his policy platform.

The findings presented here are consistent with a politics in which fractions within parties pursue distinct policy programs, but vary in the effectiveness of their efforts. A fraction in a position to bargain in intrapartisan politics — like progressive Democrats, whose energy from 2006–2008 played a critical role in delivering their party the White House — is able to implement its policy goals. A fraction engaged in antagonistic struggle within its own party while also refusing to engage across party lines faces a war on two fronts and is less successful.

Previous chapters connected networks of financial supporters to the policy outlook of individual candidates and legislators. This chapter demonstrates that fractions defined by campaign finance networks, taking different strategies to pursue their policy goals, and with different orientations to within- and between-party politics, achieve different ends. In so doing, it completes the task of linking conflict between a party's elite supporters outside of professional politics and policy outcomes in the world of legislature and government. The rest of this chapter delivers on the promises made so far in the service of the larger project of demonstrating how economic elites and other interested parties in campaign finance articulate a connection between mass and elite, and, in so doing, give the dynamics of formal politics a clear and interpretable social basis.

5.1 Fractions and formal politics

The usual explanation for the absence of institutional politics from much of political sociology is that it is such a central preoccupation for political scientists (Burstein 1981). However, clashes between reformers and incumbents within institutions — especially in American political development — are nearly always also clashes between two sets of political actors, one supported by people who understand themselves to be economically and socially well-suited by the status quo, the other allied with people who do not. I aim to show in this chapter that existing work has not yet realized important gains to be made by cutting against rather than with the grain implied by the disciplinary division of labor, with elite movements and elite politics so often studied in isolation rather than in relation to one another.

Much current work on institutional politics in political science engages with two different theoretical frameworks, the party "cartel" of Cox and McCubbins (1993) and the extended party network of Bawn et al. (2012) (see also Aldrich 1995). In the cartel view, legislative leaders solve the collective action problems faced by members of a political party by managing the party's shared resources and administering a system of side payments and penalties. These are compensation in both a figurative and literal sense. In the figurative sense, party cartels establish exclusive control over the supply of policies. In the literal sense, cartels control budget allocations in their institutions, and also in their parties.

Recent work demonstrates that in the long term, the cartel in the literal sense of financial flows is just as consequential for policy production as the cartel in the figurative sense of the word. In the House and Senate, a party's leaders — the constitutional officers like the House Speaker, but also the whip and head of the party caucus — have the greatest fund-raising ability, but also the acquiescence of their members to operate dues systems (Heberlig 2003). Party leadership also plays a key role in managing the allocation of committee positions, which lawmakers need in order to advance policies relevant to their constituents, and also in order to stand out as worthy recipients of campaign funds from people involved in particular industries (Powell and Grimmer 2016). In this view, the challenge for party leadership is to use this system in order to compensate legislators who support policies even at possible electoral risk, to mete out punishment for legislators who do not play along, to negotiate between the competing interests within the cartel, and to advance the collective interests of the cartel as a whole.

One gap in this literature is that it does not adequately explain sustained deviation from the party line by groups of legislators, even in the presence of strong party leadership. Studies of intraparty organization have emerged to address this problem. Scholars working in this subfield agree that party fractions develop organizational infrastructure and other institutions, like whip systems, in order to develop voting blocs. When a voting bloc has the right opportunity, it can extract concessions on its key policies from party leaders, or even form temporary majorities with the other party in order to steer the entire legislature. Organization and institutions allow the fraction to maintain cohesion until the right moment, and to weather any retaliation their party leaders might seek to administer.

Two recent efforts in the field of institutional politics highlight the work left to be done in this field. For DiSalvo (2012), party fractions seek to exert influence on the party "brand" as a whole. Their goal is to move the party in their ideological direction. Their ability to accomplish this goal varies systematically according to whether their party is in the minority or majority, depends on their relationship with the president, who can make or break new policy initiatives, and a number of other less significant variables. For Bloch Rubin (2017), fractions seek to develop a brand all their own. The distinction allows members of a fraction to operate independently of their party apparatus in critical ways. Having a distinctive brand separate from the party, Bloch Rubin shows, allows legislators to campaign on their variation of the party's platform and identity. Not only does this create room to maneuver for votes among groups who might support them but not their co-partisans, it also affords fractions the ability to market themselves separately to financial supporters. Independent sources of money to run campaigns and voters to win them are critical to weathering reprisals from party leadership. Fractions may be united by regional interests or other shared bases of support, rather than by a coherent set of policy beliefs or unifying ideology. Indeed, ideological or policy concerns may take a backseat to the need to retain power for power's sake, as Bloch Rubin demonstrates in her account of the Southern Democrats' coordinated efforts to defend Jim Crow.

Financial support not only helps to sustain fractions in the legislature against resistant leadership, it can also be manipulated to maintain power. Newt Gingrich, for instance, sought to pre-empt other Republicans from using the Republican Study Committee to challenge his dominance of the party by gutting funding for House organizations. Years later, the financial support of the Club for Growth played an important role in facilitating the RSC's regrowth (Bloch Rubin 2017, ibid, 278–282). But the people and organizations providing financial support to fractional legislators receive only passing mention in works that are chiefly concerned with how members of Congress maneuver with respect to one another. Given the importance of resource flows for party organization, the relationship between the structure of financial flows and the performance of policymaking is a substantial subject to overlook.

5.1.1 Campaign finance and political outcomes

Recent work on the role of donors in campaign finance has minimized their active participation in electoral politics and their pursuit of — or benefit from — specific policy outcomes (Ansolabehere, Figueiredo, and Snyder 2003; Fowler, Garro, and Spenkuch 2020; but see Kalla and Broockman 2016). A central pillar of this argument is that, due in part to a cap on the total amount each individual or organization can contribute to a single campaign, no one donor is significant enough to exert undue influence or pursue a quid pro quo. Because the potential benefits would never outweigh the cost, it would not be rational for an individual donor to use contributions to pursue a specific policy outcome. Two considerations supersede this argument by redirecting academic interest to other, related questions. First, small numbers of extremely wealthy donors face lower coordination costs, and as a result face a far more tractable collective action problem when their goal is to pursue policies of interest to all members of their set (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008). This helps to illustrate the importance of recent work that seeks to better describe how politics works for people in that position (Page, Seawright, and Lacombe 2018; Hertel-Fernandez, Skocpol, and Sclar 2018). It also productively reframes that which is to be explained. While outright corruption and undue influence occur at the margins of politics, many scholars are interested not in these extreme cases, but instead in the regularities observed as individuals and groups pursue policies in their collective interest. Second, nearly 100 years of scholarship demonstrates that interactions between donors and candidates are consequential for the structure of intrapartisan coalitions, the set of policies it is possible to enact through the American policymaking apparatus, and the behavior of individual legislators. Just as possibility of benefit from a quid pro quo is not a necessary condition for an individual to participate in politics, there are more hypotheses to test than whether contributions are a cause of resource accumulation.[2]

Chapter 3 of this work made the case that between 1980–2012, durable and cohesive fractions of political donors within the parties, and especially the Republican Party, helped like-minded candidates accede to the federal legislature by offering united support when the rest of their party was divided. In this chapter, I argue that this fractional maneuvering influences the policymaking behavior of individual legislators.

The contemporary Congressional party committee is oriented towards raising a constant stream of money for its incumbents. As the scale and scope of fund-raising has increased, the influence of money in politics is a subject of renewed public scrutiny. Some aspects of organization in the last 20 years are novel. The institutionalization of formal dues systems is one recent innovation. In prior years, party committees raised money for incumbents. However, a number of recent changes have reversed that flow. Congress began oversight of soft money in 1991, and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act ended the parties' ability to raise soft money in 2002.[3] In the 1990s, control of the House became less certain, but individual House incumbents became more certain of the ability to retain their seat. The cartel response was to reverse the flows of funds such that the many lawmakers in safe seats subsidize the campaigns of a few lawmakers in swing seats, or, if they do not participate in the cartel, lose out on desirable committee posts and other spoils (Heberlig 2003).

As a function of these instruments of party discipline, those who do not participate in the party's dues system — or who do not reach some other accommodation with party leaders — may

2. Although it may be the case that lobbying and campaign contributions cause firms to receive government contracts. Allison and Harkins (2014) demonstrate a correlation.

3. "Soft money" refers to funds raised for "party building" activities not directly related to federal campaigning in theory, but which assist in key aspects of party organization, especially for presidential campaigns, in practice; see Chapter 2.

be less effective policymakers. If this hypothesis is not correct, then we have some reason to revisit the claim that networks of financial sponsorship are an effective means for party leaders to control their conferences. If members of radical fractions are able to pursue their policy agenda even while antagonizing party leaders, then access to alternative networks may completely dismantle the "cartel" system investigated by Cox and McCubbins (1993). However, this outcome would support the view that fractional politics is a struggle over the control of the party's agenda, and not the attempt of fractions to advance their own agenda, sometimes bargaining with co-partisans, sometimes bargaining across the aisle (DiSalvo 2012).

If, on the other hand, we can rule out the claim that financial support is unrelated to policy, this represents substantial progress in the project to understand linkages between political and economic elites. Support for the hypothesis presented here would trace a connection between action in the legislature and the maneuvering of people and organizations outside the halls of government. This would show that relations of financial support between lawmakers and donors — and between lawmakers on their own, who circulate funds through leadership PACs, joint fundraising committees, and other vehicles — define fractional divisions with consequences for lawmaking and policy gridlock. Finally, it lends support to the view that fractions seek to advance their own policy plans, and develop a policy "brand" that succeeds or fails independently of the party as a whole (Bloch Rubin 2017).

5.2 Data and methods

Volden and Wiseman (2014) make available a data set that includes a measure of the effectiveness of legislators in the U.S. House. Their Legislative Effectiveness Scores are based on legislators' performance as authors and managers of legislation. They are concerned in particular with five kinds of bill status: The total number of bills introduced by each legislator, whether those bills are the subject of action in committee, whether bills return to the floor for a vote, whether they are enacted, and if they become law.

They divide bills into three categories. Substantive and significant bills received coverage in Congressional Quarterly Weekly or CQ Magazine, widely read publications on Capitol Hill, at least twice in the Congress it was introduced.[4] Commemorative bills are the ceremonial stuff and constituent service for which lawmakers are often mocked but which are helpful to their constituents and to their re-election chances, such as the naming of a post office or a "private bill" that will affect a single individual or organization in practice. Other bills, and ceremonial bills covered in CQ/Congressional Quarterly, are deemed substantive. These are three distinct bill types.

Calculating the number of bills each legislator has advanced to each status for each type creates fifteen indicators. For each legislator in each Congress, Volden and Wiseman (2014) use these indicators to calculate a Legislative Effectiveness Score using a weighted average of these indicators for each legislator relative to all other legislators in that Congress. Their formula assigns higher scores to lawmakers that advance substantive and significant bills relative to lawmakers that produce only substantive or commemorative ones, and reweights the scores so that the average is one for each Congress. They show, among other things, that legislative effectiveness predicts whether a lawmaker is going to retire, and can be used to illustrate the dynamics of House committee work.

In what follows, I use the legislative effectiveness scores of Volden and Wiseman (2014) as the key dependent variable in a series of ordinary least squares regressions using fixed effects and cluster-robust standard errors. However, because Volden and Wiseman's original variable has a lower bound at zero, some otherwise reasonable model-based comparisons between legislators may give nonsensical results. I address this by transforming the variable to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one, so that coefficient estimates and fitted values reflect differences relative to an average legislator.

To capture fractional allegiance, I use the estimates of membership introduced, derived and validated in Chapter 3. There I labeled five fractions, and validated their associations with five labels, which are, in order: Regulars, economic radicals, social conservatives, progressives, and outsiders, who are too few and too dispersed to say much about other than that this group includes not only people noted for their dedication to racial hierarchy, including David Duke, but also libertarians who emphasize their small-government positions, including former Rep. Ron Paul (R-

4. This undersells CQ's relevance, as the parent company provides a suite of government relations software and information services that have long been in wide use.

Tex.). Of particular interest in analysis will be the economic radicals, the social conservatives, and the progressive Democrats. As a function of coding errors or insufficient information about specific candidates in the underlying data used to construct fractional membership, some incumbent legislators cannot be identified with a fraction and are instead assigned to an "undefined" category.

To address the confounding relationship of legislator ideology and fraction, I include DW-NOMINATE first-dimension ideal points and an additional quadratic term. From data provided by Volden and Wiseman, I also incorporate a series of indicators related to each lawmaker's institutional position, including their tenure, whether they serve on the budget committee or another "power" committee, if they are the Speaker, Majority Leader, or Minority Leader, and if they are a committee chair. Finally, I account for time-invariant local variation using an area fixed effects specification similar to Eqs. 3.23–3.24. These specifications additionally account for time-varying national trends with a year effect.

5.3 Results

The effect of fractional allegiance on legislative effectiveness varies significantly by party. Table 5.1 presents these differences using the results from a series of progressively more complex fixed-effects regression models. The primary variables of interest are the coefficient estimates for the contrast between a party regular (the reference category in these models) and an economic radical, and for the difference in differences between a regular and a radical when moving from the minority to the majority. The primary models of interest are the full model (5) and an additional model that allows members of different parties belonging to the same fraction to have different levels of effectiveness (6).

Models 4–6 include additional controls for institutional position, but the coefficients are omitted from the table due to space constraints. The results from those coefficients are as expected. In brief, the Speaker and party leadership appear less effective, but this is because leaders exercise power through their control of the agenda, not through introducing legislation. Conversely, chairs of committees are more effective, in part because they occasionally sponsor bills on behalf of their committees. The table does include the coefficient for tenure, which, as expected, has a significant positive relationship to legislative effectiveness.

The key finding is that economic radicals are less effective at pursuing their own individual policy agendas than members of other fractions in Congress. Relative to party regulars, economic radicals are one-tenth of one standard deviation more effective when in the minority, a small but statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference. There is a more substantial difference in differences between the effect of majority on regulars and radicals. For radicals, the increase in effectiveness associated with majority is roughly half of what it is for regulars ($p < 0.01$). Further, after accounting for region and time, neither party nor ideology explains these differences in effectiveness. Variation in policymaking productivity is driven, first, by institutional position, notably tenure — but fractional allegiance, and not ideology, brings up a close second.

Fitting expectations, these differences are also asymmetric. Progressive Democrats are consistently more productive than their "regular" peers (model 5), and social conservatives — who span both parties — are not different from regulars to a statistically significant degree. After allowing for members of the same party-spanning fraction from different parties to vary in legislative effectiveness (model 6), the underperformance of economic radicals is the most consistent and robust result. The effect of majority status becomes slightly smaller and its standard error nearly doubles so that the effect is no longer significant. Socially conservative Democrats appear less effective than their co-partisans in this model, but the difference does not meet conventional standards of statistical significance ($p < 0.1$). The coefficient on the contrast between party regulars and progressive Democrats is no longer significant in this specification, but this is itself noteworthy because the meaning of the contrast changes as well. In model 6 this means one cannot reject the null hypothesis that progressive Democrats are at least as effective as regular Republicans, even if regular Democrats are not active policymakers.

The estimates from model 6 in Table 5.1 support the finding that economic radicals are disembedded from their party's normal practice of policymaking to an unusual degree. They additionally show that this result is robust to alternative specifications. Model 6 does not reproduce the finding that progressives are more effective than regular Democrats, but this is not decisive evidence

Table 5.1: Regression of Legislative Effectiveness on Fractional Affiliation

	Dependent variable:					
	Legislative Effectiveness Score					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Democrat	−0.270	−0.563**	−0.233	−0.067	0.071	0.158
	(0.262)	(0.266)	(0.246)	(0.116)	(0.154)	(0.167)
Tenure (terms)			0.090***	0.043***	0.045***	0.045***
			(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)
DW-NOMINATE dim. 1		−0.452***	−0.155**	−0.047	0.025	0.022
		(0.072)	(0.067)	(0.109)	(0.134)	(0.134)
DW-NOMINATE squared		0.140*	0.019	−0.168*	−0.065	−0.061
		(0.083)	(0.077)	(0.102)	(0.138)	(0.139)
Majority	0.571**	0.675**	0.834***	0.458***	0.533***	0.325
	(0.263)	(0.264)	(0.243)	(0.140)	(0.161)	(0.280)
Economic radicals	−0.022	0.011	0.139**	0.101***	0.098**	0.091**
	(0.072)	(0.073)	(0.067)	(0.036)	(0.046)	(0.046)
Social conservatives	−0.008	0.045	0.068	0.181***	0.053	0.079
	(0.076)	(0.077)	(0.071)	(0.062)	(0.094)	(0.116)
Progressives	0.086	0.092	0.540*	0.294***	0.286***	−0.013
	(0.301)	(0.301)	(0.278)	(0.101)	(0.109)	(0.287)
Undefined fraction	0.030	0.056	0.174**	−0.134	−0.121	−0.261
	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.087)	(0.147)	(0.156)	(0.266)
Majority × radical	−0.408***	−0.393***	−0.338***	−0.196***	−0.257***	−0.252***
	(0.096)	(0.097)	(0.089)	(0.077)	(0.088)	(0.091)
Majority × conservative	−0.240**	−0.243**	−0.201**	−0.086	0.004	−0.051
	(0.097)	(0.098)	(0.090)	(0.078)	(0.118)	(0.150)
Majority × progressive	−0.261	−0.271	−0.253	−0.028	0.187	0.562
	(0.436)	(0.435)	(0.402)	(0.194)	(0.287)	(0.560)
Majority × Undefined	−0.076	−0.075	−0.156	0.113	0.101	0.281
	(0.122)	(0.123)	(0.113)	(0.249)	(0.263)	(0.493)
Majority × Democrat	0.367	0.238	−0.115	−0.129	−0.280	−0.242
	(0.524)	(0.524)	(0.483)	(0.234)	(0.298)	(0.347)
Regular × Democrat						−0.303
						(0.275)
Conservative × Democrat						−0.379*
						(0.293)
Regular × Dem × Maj.						0.377
						(0.497)
Conservative × Dem × Maj.						0.532
						(0.533)
Fixed effects:	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	State, Cycle	Area, Cycle	Area, Cycle
Standard errors:	OLS	OLS	OLS	State	Area	Area
Observations	5,984	5,951	5,951	5,951	5,951	5,951
R^2	0.125	0.132	0.261	0.476	0.570	0.571
Adjusted R^2	0.121	0.128	0.257	0.468	0.536	0.536
Residual Std. Error	0.939 (df = 5956)	0.937 (df = 5921)	0.865 (df = 5920)	0.731 (df = 5865)	0.683 (df = 5512)	0.683 (df = 5508)
F Statistic	31.579*** (df = 27; 5956)	31.133*** (df = 29; 5921)	69.667*** (df = 30; 5920)	62.674*** (df = 85; 5865)	16.713*** (df = 438; 5512)	16.582*** (df = 442; 5508)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Reference group: Freshman Republican, party regular
Final three models include additional controls for institutional position

against the claim. That model includes four additional interaction terms, two of them being three-way interaction terms, and this causes the standard errors of the regression coefficients to become large. This is expected due to the increased level of covariance between regressors. Finally, model 6 gives reason to believe that progressives and party regulars are effective in the Democratic Party while social conservatives are not. However, the variability of effectiveness within the set of socially conservative Democrats is so great that one cannot rule out the possibility that this difference is due to sampling variability and not different mean levels of legislative effectiveness.

The effectiveness of progressive Democrats cannot be explained by historical contingency. While the House Progressive Caucus was founded in 1991, progressive Democrats emerge as a coherent and distinct financial network five years later, in 1996. Candidates belonging to that network do not enter the House in numbers for another decade. Progressives entered Congress en masse during the 2006 midterm elections, as the Democratic Party retook the House majority for the first time since 1994, mobilized not only by George W. Bush's presidency but also by anti-war and anti-corporate organizing.

The first two years of Barack Obama's term were also historic for progressive policies, including the Affordable Care Act and the Dodd-Frank Act. To guard against the possibility that the findings related to progressives were in fact a function of united government, I ran model 5 again on a subset of the data excluding the 110th U.S. Congress (results not shown). The coefficient for progressives actually increases, to 0.301 from the 0.286 reported in Table 5.1. For this reason, one can rule out the possibility that progressives would appear less effective than regular Democrats if one held out a recent period of united government favorable to their policy agenda.

A more likely explanation is that the progressive fraction is embedded in a financial network that rewards the pursuit of new policy. Examining the list of progressive legislators after the fact reveals some surprises. The methods employed in Chapter 3 show that some legislators known as moderates, like Rep. Joe Sestak (D-Penn.), are members of the dense and distinct network of progressive financial supporters. Sestak's legislative activity includes many bills congruent with progressive priorities. For instance, he was a co-sponsor of a bill to repeal Don't Ask, Don't

Tell, and another bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act. Sestak was willing to work across party lines while in the House, which registers him as a moderate when estimating ideology in one dimension based on roll-call votes. But he belongs to a financial network that exclusively supported Democrats who appear further to the left than their peers.

Sestak's example suggests that this group of legislators faced no penalty from their supporters for working across party lines on specific issues, and no penalty from their party leadership for their activities outside of the party hierarchy. It is likely that progressive Democrats succeeded while conservative Republicans failed in pursuit of a policy agenda because progressives were a key part of the Democratic coalition during this time, while conservatives during the period under study actively pursued a hostile takeover of the GOP. In this case, the supporters of economic radicals are underwriting the pursuit of a specific set of policies regardless of whether legislators of their fraction are effective at enacting them or not.

These results show that lawmakers who draw their financial resources from outside of regular party networks also stand apart from the parties' normal policymaking apparatus. The consequences of this separation vary depending on whether the fraction is part of the majority or minority, and on the alignment of the fraction with its larger party. They also indicate that fractions able to reach out to like-minded alters across the aisle, like party regulars and, possibly, social conservatives, have an easier time advancing legislation when out of power.

5.4 Discussion

This chapter tests the hypothesis that fractional legislators are less effective policymakers than party regulars. I find that economic radicals, agitating for control of the Republican Party and frequently at odds with their party leadership, pay a price for their insurrection when their party is in the majority. Progressive Democrats, on the other hand, enjoy consistently high levels of effectiveness during the period under study.

It does not suffice to explain these differences by observing that each fraction has different objectives. A naive observer might argue that progressives are interested in effecting change, while conservatives, in the words of William F. Buckley (1955), seek to stand athwart history, yelling, "Stop!" Yet, for economic radicals, there is from the beginning of their movement much to undo, and every progressive success adds one more task to the list. Given the robust policy agenda offered by conservatives during the period under study, including and especially Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America," the difference in policy effectiveness cannot be boiled down to matters of legislative style.

Buckley was also self-aware enough to note, in his mission statement for *The National Review*, that most of the country would have little patience for the conservative enterprise. The results presented here show that during the period under study, a distaste for incendiary radical economic policy extended even into the Republican Party. Other scholars have noted the ways in which conservative organizing in the GOP fractured their coalition and slowed the pace of policy (Bloch Rubin 2017). In this work, I have presented a systematic assessment of the source and extent of this effect.

Conservative lawmakers do not suffer policy losses because of their failure to occupy "pivot points" or because of their distance from the median policy position in the legislature. Instead, their effectiveness suffers because they stand apart from the network of party regulars. Their embeddedness in alternative networks allows them to function without party resources — in fact, they function more effectively than party regulars when in the minority. But their independence also places them outside of the patterns of reciprocal exchange and flows of influence that party leaders use to assign opportunities to advance policies.

This is not news to the economic radicals themselves. Realizing that the party dues system does not benefit them so long as they are not in control of the party's formal apparatus in the House, some radicals have phrased their objections in the language of reform. Rep. Ken Buck (2017), for instance, has decried the dues system and its association with the assignment of committee appointments as "the swamp" of Washington corruption, in a deliberate association with language President Donald Trump used during his 2016 presidential campaign.

However, these findings do lend more to the resolution of a recent debate over the orientation of fractions to their party's "brands." In contemporary politics, fractional legislators are distinct from their co-partisans in their ability to advance their policy agendas. If fractional politics was a winner-take-all struggle for the party brand, with all losers complying and all winners magnanimous in victory, one would expect no significant differences between co-partisans of different fractions, only differences in effectiveness between legislators in the majority and minority.

Importantly, however, the policymaking effectiveness of fractional legislators is not uniformly low. Social conservatives, a group that also includes Democrats, perform roughly as effectively as party regulars. And progressives — a set that, during the period under study, meets its moment in the response to Bush and the election of Barack Obama — prove remarkably efficient in advancing substantive and significant bills through the House. Given the existing scholarship on this period, the most likely explanation for these differences is found in the alignment between fractions within parties. Economic radicals press for advantage within the GOP, and are even willing to risk costing their party a seat in Congress if it means increasing the likelihood of one of their own acceding to the legislature (Ch. 4). Democrats appear to play a strictly inside game, and are much more likely to contest seats when an intraparty conflict does not drain resources away from a general election where the outcome is in any real doubt. This chapter highlights a similar pattern of conflict versus cooperation in policymaking, too.

This research demonstrates substantial and consequential connections between policymaking in the House of Representatives, the alliances and oppositions of fractional politics within political parties, and the mobilization of elite supporters in civil society. Existing research in institutional politics has looked past the relationships between legislators and their supporters outside the legislature. Instead, recent scholarship has focused on the ways in which organization in the House resolves collective action problems for lawmakers, conditional on some reason for them to act in concert. The present study gives ample reason to extend the analysis, and to understand organization in the legislature in relation to action in the broader field of politics.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Faced with the growing realization that American democracy was unable to address rising economic inequality, social scientists turned to the study of polarization and policy gridlock with renewed intensity (Jacobs et al. 2004). This dissertation has proposed a new suite of theoretical and methodological approaches to offer alternative perspectives and new findings in efforts to address these intertwined and acute problems. In this concluding chapter, I will elaborate on the implications of this work for active research on both subjects, and in related, more general areas of study.

6.1 Polarization

The dominant paradigm in studies of polarization is to focus on its cognitive or emotive rather than relational aspect. Even when taking up questions like whether a Republican would allow her child to marry a Democrat, the fundamental subject of study is not the structure of social ties that conditions the question's premise, but the valence and intensity of affect at work in the mind of the individual providing an answer (Iyengar et al. 2019). This inattention to social structure has left questions unanswered in the study of politics. In this dissertation I have attempted some solutions to these problems in the hope that it will highlight the way for others.

That social scientists use relational data to make inference about attributes of individual persons, like ideology, is a choice, not an obligation. I have demonstrated this for campaign finance data, which has been a productive subject of study in ideal point estimation (Bonica 2014a). Chapter 3 provides the more general principles of correspondence analysis of which methods used in prior work are a special case. In the general rather than special case, this class of method produces low-dimensional approximations of positions of actors relative to one another in a higher-dimensional space. Taking this approach, I presented a picture of alliance and opposition within parties enriched by additional information sufficient to capture within- as well as between-party alignments, a goal that has so far eluded scholars working on similar problems with behavioral data.

The results demonstrated that relational polarization, like its cognitive complement, is consequential for election- and party-level outcomes. Chapter 4 shows that cohesive action by economically radical donors in support of their candidate increases the likelihood that one of their own will accede to Congress. While the findings related to cognitive polarization are mixed, the study of relational polarization in that chapter is clear. In the Republican Party one fraction militates in pursuit of its own goals even when it places the party's success in doubt, while among Democrats the dynamics are different. This suggests that polarization has fractional origins which later work, and subsequent improvements in measurement, may yet capture more conclusively.

6.2 Money in politics

Applying new methods to existing data, I made inferences about fractions of donors and candidates for whom federal campaign finance is a field of maneuver. The results complicate existing descriptions of the political donor. If donors were motivated by partisan concerns, one would expect patterns of affiliation to express sharp divisions between the parties. Similarly, if donors merely followed their pecuniary interests, one would expect few contributors to give succor to the party out of power, whichever party that may be, and as a result there may be no clear pattern to contributions at all. And in either case, one would have little reason to believe that contributors had any impact on the larger sweep of an election season, except to the extent that candidates who cannot recruit donors have less hope of election.

In contrast, I demonstrate that donors are aligned in conflicting but coherent groups that do not neatly map to either perspective exclusively. What is more, those alignments are consequential for election outcomes and for government. These findings challenge consumer models that propose campaign finance is best understood as a hobby, like golf, or building wooden ships inside old wine bottles. The alignment of donors with lawmakers in office too neatly corresponds to policy preference to suggest that donors are innocent of specific policy interests and remain engaged in politics for kicks. But so, too, do the findings presented here challenge investor models that propose policy gains are bought and paid for. The consistent and focused attention of economic radicals in support of their cause is in general rewarded with the election of legislators who produce less substantive and significant legislation than their peers (Ch. 5).

To reconcile this puzzle, new directions in campaign finance can build on the present study by continuing to study donors in relation to one another, to candidates, and to other political professionals. This will complement existing work that explores, for instance, the fundraising strategy of campaigns (Magleby, Goodliffe, and Olsen 2018). In particular, this dissertation highlights that while campaigns have strategies, donors do, too (Rhodes, Schaffner, and La Raja 2018) — and the results are sometimes unexpected, as in the case of determined economic radical donors who support legislators with limited success in policy implementation.

6.3 Parties

I have highlighted the ways in which the structure of financial flows and the structure of influence on policy are mutually co-constitutive. Those flows predict not only the chances of candidate success but also the manner of victory, either through intrapartisan combat or through the pursuit of consensus against members of an opposing party. The structure of fractions within parties presented here are consonant with some new results emerging from the study of extended party networks.

Extended party network theory involves the premise that policy demanders outside the formal party apparatus seek to resolve their collective action problems through party institutions (Bawn et al. 2012; Koger, Masket, and Noel 2010). The case of the Tea Party has proved fruitful for developing more precise notions of how within-party conflict plays out through party networks. Openly antagonistic to party leaders and seeking to defeat Republican incumbents in electoral combat, Tea Party supporters seemed to view controlling the GOP as a way to assert dominance over conservative politics, not as a way to resolve differences with other "policy demanders" (taking great liberty with the argument of Blum 2016). Due to their cohesion and the coherence of their policy goals, the Tea Party appears to be a "party within a party" (ibid). In this dissertation, I connect the

Tea Party wave of 2010 with a far older network of economic radicals. Given the view of parties themselves as "long coalitions" (Aldrich 1995), perhaps this argument is even more correct than it may first have seemed.

While these findings support some directions now taken by scholarship on extended party networks, they present a challenge to other theories of party. The evidence presented in this dissertation shows that struggles over federal office are contested locally. Local conditions influence the outcome, and the outcomes of each election have independent effects on the balance of power within the party as a whole. While national elites may intervene in these local races — often to great effect — their action is constrained by these local conditions. What is more, it appears that these constraints are different for Republicans than they are for Democrats. Among Democrats, a high degree of competition among fractions is less likely in a district where both parties have a good chance of winning the seat in the general election. Among Republicans, however, fractional competition is high in primary elections for toss-up seats. This kind of intrapartisan hardball benefits economic radicals, who appear not to share the oft-cited concern of party elites that a contested primary may negatively impact the party's chances in a general election. Scholars of politics have called on party elites to guard the gates of their party against authoritarians who promise electoral victory at the cost of democratic norms (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2019). The findings presented here clarify the audience for this plea. Rather than a unitary national elite, such gatekeeping would be required of a diverse group of party notables.

These conclusions suggest that the political articulation approach of De Leon, Desai, and Tugal (2009) requires revision. This approach proposes a framework for political analysis in which unified party elites construct and enact a single, nationwide mobilization strategy. Yet the level of within-party competition apparent within the Republican Party, and, beginning in 2006, the Democratic Party, calls into question the validity of the assumption that mobilization efforts are the project of a unified elite. The evidence presented here suggests instead that sub-party groups — political fractions — mobilize their supporters in order to gain representation and to influence the policymaking process.

What is more, the articulation approach suggests that parties change character in critical moments, when party leaders develop the correct strategy to mobilize potential supporters, similar to the well-understood process of frame resonance (e.g. Ferree 2003). In contrast, I show that parties change character as the result of cumulative gains over periods of decades, after many election cycles in which a cohesive fraction builds representation, solidifies control over turf, and continues to press its advantages. These findings are more compatible with work in sociology that shows how geographic variation in institutional structure and party strength help to explain policy change (Amenta and Halfmann 2000).

6.4 New directions

The program of research inaugurated in this dissertation includes ample room for extensions and new directions. One immediately relevant area for future work is outside spending. The propositions developed here with respect to the structure of fractions, the dynamics of competition, and their implications for policymaking emerge from a context that seems innocent of outside influence when compared to the intensity of interpartisan conflict waged through independent expenditure and outside groups in the wake of decisions like *Citizens United* and *Speechnow*. Differences between how financial flows influenced politics "then" as opposed to "now" may be instructive, providing insights into deeper regularities.

Chapter 3 illustrated the cumulative nature of changing fractional fortunes in House elections, just as polarization appears punctuated in other contexts (Bonica 2014b). In particular, interparty dynamics appear to have profound consequences for intraparty hierarchy. It is very suggestive that economic radicals enjoyed their greatest gains in 1994, after the election of William J. Clinton and just two short years out of power, and again in 2010, after the election of Barack Obama and, again, coming off of eight years with substantial control of the American policy apparatus. Time in the desert, so to speak, was also associated with the rise of progressives in the Democratic Party. Howard Dean's 2004 presidential run created an organizational structure for progressives and focused attention on their contributions to party infrastructure that propelled them to a pivotal position in 2006 and 2008 (Kreiss 2012).

These observations suggest that intrapartisan conflict may increase in the Democratic Party in the near future, as a nascent movement of new progressive politics grows just as the conservative movement took on a new form at the start of the Cold War. Innovators like Richard Viguerie mobilized small-dollar donors to support conservative campaigns and patrons like the Coors family underwrote the development of new conservative institutions by adopting novel organizational forms — direct mail in the former case, and the "think tank," a quintessentially postwar structure, in the latter (Medvetz 2007; Gross, Medvetz, and Russell 2011). These acts structured financial flows at a critical moment of realignment and institutionalized new patterns that shaped politics for a generation. The contemporary moment, too, seems to some a moment of realignment. It is possible that flows of contributions from newly mobilized small-dollar donors, coupled with the novel intervention of idiosyncratic billionaires like the former presidential candidates Tom Steyer and Michael Bloomberg, will combine to restructure politics in the United States.

I offer this not as a prognostication, but as a testable proposition. The goal of this dissertation has been to generate new approaches and new findings for a systematic study of fractional politics. By fractional politics, I mean an approach to partisan and electoral politics that can account for outcomes at the level of the policymaking apparatus or the party system by making recourse to the engagement not only of individuals, but also of groups. A final hypothesis is, for this project, a fitting coda.

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