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POLARIZED BY DESIGN:
DOES THE STRUCTURE OF CONGRESS ELIMINATE MODERATES?

by

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of a Degree with Honors
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ABSTRACT

Over the last few decades scholars have noted the new structure of Congress has become much more leader centric, with them holding more power than they had in the past. This has helped to foster polarization within Congress as a body, by making bipartisanship a more difficult process and poses the question: why would a moderate member of Congress choose to pursue a career where their goal and insights are largely discounted by the rest of the body they serve in? In order to determine whether these new limitations on moderates impact their presence this thesis will analyze a number of changes that occurred in the US Congress over a twenty year period, dating back to 1993 until 2011, which scholarship suggests diminish the agency of moderate members of Congress and analyze how the moderate share of Congress reacts to the change. While data suggest that the changes to the rules and norms of Congress may have amplified polarization, they did not impact the number of moderates in the House.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

May 1st 2023

In *Party Polarization in Congress*, Sean Theriault discusses how institutional changes to rules and norms have created a more polarized Congress. In order to illustrate the impact of these changes he introduces the story of Margret Roukema. Roukema *was* a moderate Republican representing the state of New Jersey in the House of Representatives from 1983 to 2003. However, the timing of her retirement was somewhat abnormal. She was next in line to chair the Banking committee, one of the most powerful in Congress. It was not as if she was an incompetent legislator; her 20 years of experience in the House made her a candidate for the position of US Treasurer in the Bush administration, however she turned down that offer. So why would someone at the peak of their career choose to retire?

While Roukema was arguably at the peak of her career it was about to go downhill. She had been passed up for the position of Banking Committee Chair due to poor fundraising and assumptions that she was not loyal enough to the Republican Party. In the end the position was given to the third most senior member of the committee Richard Baker because, unlike Roukema, he was a reliable Republican with more substantial campaign distributions. In addition to being passed up for a position that she would have otherwise earned she was about to be termed out of her subcommittee chair positions. After being passed up for the position and being termed out of her subcommittee, what was left for Roukema to do? Was she supposed to wait another 6 years to be passed over for a committee chair appointment again? Instead she left in

discouragement to be replaced by Scott Garrett, someone who was far less moderate than Roukema (Theriault 2008).

Theriault argues that these norm changes forced Roukema out of the House of Representatives are also responsible for the manifestation of polarization in Congress. Moderates, like Roukema, were not always forced to leave in defeat because the rules and norms were not in their favor. In fact the rules and norms at one point would have favored Roukema because seniority used to be king and campaign funds were not a deciding factor in the matter. Over time the rules and norms of Congress have transformed giving more power to leadership, meaning that they have more influence over the legislative body as a whole. Many scholars have suggested these changes have contributed to the growth of polarization over the last few decades citing Roukema as an example of this phenomenon. The decreasing presence of moderates is a contributing factor to the growth of political polarization, the divergence of both political parties from the center towards more their own corners of the political spectrum. This thesis will discuss the factors that current scholarship suggests contribute to polarization and consider the validity of each in order to determine whether or not the changes in rules and norms in Congress have a significant impact on moderate representation within Congress.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The United States is no stranger to political polarization. Ever since the establishment of the Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties, political parties have been at odds with one another. Throughout American history the divide between parties was like a line in the sand depicting where each party's core values lied. These values were not set in stone; during times without high levels of polarization, moderates amongst the parties were often able to cross the aisle to work on legislation on a bipartisan basis, something especially prominent in the mid-20th century. In the current iteration of Congress crossing the aisle has become a rare occurrence. Such efforts are treacherous endeavors because of the ideological homogeneity that has developed in a manner that pits the parties against each other on nearly every big ticket issue (Theriault 2008, Courser, Helland, & Miller 2018).

Polarization is often seen as a threat to democracy and a cause of inefficiency within Congress. While polarization may seem like a simple divide between the parties it is a much more complicated issue. The point of contention that divides the parties are ideological bases, those of conservatism and liberalism. While there are some areas where they could cooperate, such as fiscal policy regarding policies such as taxation, there are others where they cannot, such as social policy regarding issues such as the rights of marginalized groups. This gap makes it more difficult to make headway in coordinating in either area. The inability to cooperate in these areas has led to a lack of cooperation in general with neither party wanting the other party to gain a legislative victory (Chua 2018, Lee 2016). When two sides of a nation's government are so opposed to one another it creates an unresponsive body focused more on winning politically rather

than helping the nation, making it important to understand why it has evolved to be such a combative setting and how this tension might be alleviated.

Political polarization impacts the nation in a number of ways. On one hand there are some relatively positive effects such as the clarity of the parties' goals. With the parties' drastic difference in political stances voters have two clear choices of who to vote for and what they will attempt to accomplish. While this may seem like something that parties have always had or should have, it has not always been the case. During the mid-20th century, for example, the parties were muddled with little distinction between the two. Polarization has also increased voter turnout because each of the party's bases are so invested in beating each other. Distinct choices and higher turnout may sound great for democracy on their own but the costs associated with polarization make these gains feel less impactful (Campbel 2016, Nice 1984).

Without cooperation between the parties, legislation can be easily obstructed using tools such as a presidential veto or the filibuster (Mann & Ornstein 2016, Drutman 2022). This lack of inter-party cooperation is not well received by the public. While Congress has never been particularly popular amongst the public, the recent trend in popularity polls of the institution have been especially negative with Congress's approval rating failing to reach over 40% since 2005. One Gallup poll in 2013 found that 28% of those who disapproved of Congress did so because they disliked the tendency for party gridlock. However, it is difficult to ascertain the public's current thoughts on the matter because this question has not been asked since (Gallup 2013). Supplemental polling from the Bipartisan Policy Center during 2021 polled 1,996 registered voters asking them whether they would prefer that Congress work on a more cooperative basis, to which

67% claimed that they would (BPC 2021). However, it is difficult to quantify this finding's validity because it did not question how these voters would like to see this cooperation manifest. Perhaps conservative voters would like to see liberals concede more to their party rather than have their own representatives concede to liberals, or vice versa for liberals, skewing the perspective that the polling actually measures. allowing their perspective to be potentially skewed towards the opposing party working with them instead of working with them instead.

There is some level of cooperation between the parties but it is often not characterized as such and it is not obvious to the public. This cooperation is not a product of deliberation on the floor of Congress, instead it is primarily spearheaded by party leadership behind the scenes. Leadership in Congress has largely abandoned the process of legislative order, the process where traditionally the legislature debated the finer details of legislation on the House floor, in favor of omnibus bills, large legislative packages that cast a wide net of policies in order to force members of the opposition, generally the Congressional minority, to support them or refrain from obstructing them (Straus & Matthew 2017). Some literature claims that this is just as efficient as regular order, since the volume of legislation that Congress passes is roughly the same as it was in years prior (Davidson et al., 2022). However, the lack of deliberation between parties is harmful to public perception because it allows them to characterize the other party as adversaries.

This lack of cooperation between the parties also damages each party's political legitimacy. Members of the minority party see their lack of impact on legislation and conclude that the opposing party is completely discounting their voice in the legislative

process, making them feel like these new policies are illegitimate, such as the case of the Affordable Care Act. These policies are often painted as oversteps in power which the opposing party had no right to take, further fueling ideas of illegitimacy. More recently this lack of political legitimacy has shifted away from purely criticizing policy and has transformed into challenges to election legitimacy with many claiming that entire election results are wrong (Longwell 2020).

If changes to the reward system of Congress have truly contributed to the exacerbated state of polarization as Theriault claims, then these changes should align with a shift in the composition of the legislature that reflects a less diverse Congress. If the rules of Congress have a polarizing effect on the legislature and make it more difficult for bipartisan cooperation and moderate solutions to prevail, will these reforms have some impact on the presence of moderates or lack thereof in the legislature? This thesis attempts to answer this question by compiling a list of Congressional changes, breaking down arguments regarding why these changes may create a polarized environment, and analyzing the resulting data to determine whether or not they impact polarization. The following is a collection of known data on polarization and a consideration of how polarization may or may not connect to this theory that consolidation of power within leadership leads to polarization which leads to decreased moderate presence.

Where Polarization Began

Over the last 50 years partisan polarization has grown to a relatively high point in the nation's history, only rivaling polarization that occurred in the wake of the Civil War. This current trend towards a more polarized government is often traced back to the death

of the unofficial four party system, which was composed of hard right Republicans, moderate Republicans, moderate Democrats, many of whom were Southern Democrats, and left-wing Democrats. This diverse representation made it difficult for polarization to develop because moderates of both parties were hard to distinguish from one another as some Republicans were more liberal than Democrats and vice versa (Drutman 2019). When this was the status quo each party was limited in how they could proceed; moderates could not become more radical because their voter base would just vote for the other party's moderate and those on the fringes were kept in check because they could be replaced by moderates in their own parties (Nice 1984, Campbell 2016).¹

However, as the line between the parties became less muddled and parties sorted into liberal and conservative camps, overlap in between the parties disappeared and was replaced with ideological hegemony. Hegemony amongst the parties does not necessarily mean that the parties will become polarized; if two sections of the public disagreed on taxation policies then they could come to a compromise where both parties could be satisfied by gaining some ground on an issue (Drutman 2020, Campbell 2016, Chu 2018). However, the cause of division amongst the parties lies in ideological cleavages, such as ideas about gay rights and or whether abortion should be legal or not. These are not issues on which parties can easily compromise; it is a case where one side will lose and the other side will win because there is no way LGBTQ+ members can only be afforded some rights and not others; it is an all or nothing issue which ensures that there will be some polarization amongst the parties (Chua 2018). While these issues ensure that there

¹ It is of note that this era of weakened parties is somewhat of an outlier in America's history and acting like the parties are traditionally weak in American democracy is somewhat a misrepresentation of the system as a whole (Brady & Han 2014).

will be disagreements between the parties they do not explain why the parties have diverged away from each other over time.

Polarization Theories

Emerging Polarization

The prevailing view amongst the American public is that the electorate at large has become more divided overtime. Because the electorate is polarized, politicians who represent the public are also more polarized. Polarization in the public, which the theory is predicated on, is statistically evident (Poole & Rosenthal 1984). Neither of the parties think particularly highly of each other. For instance, according to a 2019 poll by the PRC that surveyed 9,895 people, 64% of Republicans and 75% of Democrats believe the opposing party to be rather extreme, unreasonable, and close minded (Pew Research 2019). This extends more than just finding the other party unreasonable. A 2022 poll that questioned 792 registered voters found that members of each party believe the other party to be a threat to democracy, 26% of Democrats believe the threat to be with the GOP and 24% of Republicans find the threat to be Democrats (Bump 2022). If each party sees the other as uncompromising, extreme, and a threat to democracy the politicians representing them are not working together. This is also not a matter of finding fault in the opposing sides' politicians, it extends to how the parties' members feel about one another. For instance, a 2020 poll of 1,500 people shows that 38% of Democrats and Republicans would be at least somewhat upset if their children married members of the opposing party (Ballard 2020). This is a dramatic shift from the 1960's when Americans did not seem to

consider this to be important at all. How can each party's representatives be anything but polarized when the electorate thinks so lowly of the other side?

These polls may seem like undeniable evidence of polarization amongst the entire public. However, there are a number of problems surrounding the polarization amongst the wider public. For one, polarization seems to only have profound effects on members of both parties and not independents, though the status of independents actually being independents is dubious since a number of them always vote for one party despite their status. Polls indicate that these independents who make up nearly 40% of the population do not hold the strong partisan beliefs of the current parties which indicates that there is a substantial number of moderates in the electorate (Campbell 2016, Fiorina 2008).

No polarization

While polarization amongst the wider public is evident, the *degree* to which polarization occurred is up for debate. One idea about polarization is that polarization is greatly exaggerated and that people just want to see more cooperation amongst their legislators. Instead of two sides of America splitting apart and each party's members despising one another the parties have sorted to two sides with a balance in the center (Fiorina 2008, Mason 2015). However, in recent years with the rise of Trump and the growing prominence of members of the Tea Party, the gap continues to widen with no sign of an active middle ground. If there is a substantial section of the population that is somewhat centrist why are these fringe groups coming into power? It seems like the idea that polarization is largely manufactured has been proven wrong from the passage of time.

While this idea may seem counterintuitive to the political climate that is observable today there are data that support Fiorina's ideas. For one, polling suggests that members of the public are on the same page. One 2020 poll of 1,996 registered voters shows that 67% of the public wants the parties to cooperate more (BPC 2021). This measure is almost certainly inflated and people are likely not factoring in their own party's failure to work with the other party and are thinking more in terms of the other party yielding ground. Despite this, there are a number of areas where Americans agree with each other on public policy, such as abortion (Mason 2015). The average American cares less about the nitty gritty details of policy and cares more about who proposes the ideas. So if Americans are only divided on the basis of what team they root for can Americans be that deeply polarized?

Fiorina claims that the outrage members of each electorate feel for the opposing side is exacerbated by party elites like activists, scholars, and strong ideologues. For instance, the media rarely takes the public's thoughts on politics into account by talking to moderate members of the public. Instead, they will talk to members of the public with a more polarized view. One might say that America should completely close its borders while the other might say that the borders should be completely open. These ideas are not the traditional beliefs of the average person, but they have come into popularity in recent years. Because these are the primary representations of each side received by the public, people feel like the opposing party is more ideologically extreme than they actually are. This makes the parties feel more averse to the opposing party because their ideas are so much more extreme than their own and they need to be challenged at the polls (Fiorina 2008). Party elites use a similar strategy to influence their voter base, using this

misconception to fuel discontent with their opposing party. This idea fits well with Lee's (2016) study of Congress' current way of running which explores how Congress has changed from a body focused on policy to a body focused on politics. This creates an environment where one party can block prominent legislation despite bipartisan support for it for the sake of making the other party look incompetent and shrouding their own goals as more partisan than they really are.

This, in Fiorina's view, indicates that polarization is a surface level phenomena because each party's electorate is acting on fear sourced from misconceptions and if these misconceptions were spread less then polarization would be minimized. He also reasons that moderates are scared off by the focus on the two extremes of the parties. If neither party will trend towards the center of the policy debate moderates will feel like they are not being represented and henceforth they do not vote. This would explain why the moderate representation in Congress has decreased over the years, although this idea is based more on speculation than anything else. If polarization in the electorate is in fact overblown then there must be alternative reasons for its prevalence today, one of which may be these structural reforms.

Asymmetric polarization

Some scholars propose that polarization is imbalanced towards one party, the Republicans. This is defined as asymmetrical polarization. According to DW-NOMINATE scores Republicans have shifted further towards the right relative to the amount that Democrats have shifted to the left since polarization in the electorate has become apparent. Using this data Mann and Ornstein (2016) conclude that polarization is

asymmetrical. They do not come to this conclusion by looking at these numbers but analyzing the changes in conduct on the side of Republicans. In addition to the ideological shift Republicans are more prone to hold up legislation using procedure.

Using procedure to gain advantages in the legislative process is a powerful tool as politicians have come to learn in recent years. The rules and norms that govern the legislative process in some ways determine how legislation takes shape, much like the checks and balance system that America was founded on. The Speaker of the House has control over all legislation that hits the floor and committee chairs have the power to stop legislation from reaching the Speaker. These powers are important primarily to save time. If a committee chair or the Speaker sees a bill that cannot or will not pass through the process they can avoid wasting time by ignoring the bill outright. This has been used to stifle legislation that would not pass in the case of civil rights legislation during the mid 1900s (Courser, Helland, Miller 2018). Despite these rules' previous implementation, the new way that things like the filibuster have come to be used to stop all legislation that is brought forth from the opposing party is evident of polarization in Congress. Instead of acting like the Federalism government that it was designed to be, Republican leaders have treated the rules of Congress in a way more akin to a parliamentary system creating gridlock and slowing down the legislative process (Drutnam 2022 , Grumet 2014, Mann & Ornstein 2016).

This is attributed to a change in strategy introduced by Newt Gingrich – not to play nice and get things done but instead to try and position the Republicans to win a majority. He did this by discrediting his political opponents, promoting stronger partisan ideologies, recruiting stronger ideologues to Congress, and obstructing legislation (Green

& Crouch 2022, 15). Republican leadership continued to implement these strategies in the following years and over time influenced the whole of Congress to take shape around it, as Lee (2016) describes. Gingrich did not just shake up the norms of Congress he also had profound effects on the rules of Congress. He slashed the powers and budgets of committees and consolidated power in leadership, a trend some of his successors would follow.

There is some reason to be skeptical about the theory around asymmetrical polarization, mainly a criticism of the time frame Mann and Ornstein have chosen to observe. James Campbell (2016) proposes that if observers widen their search range to ten years earlier they will recognize a substantial shift leftward by the Democrats while Republicans maintained their score. Campbell claims that the polarization that observers witness today was initiated by the Democrats because they shifted the discourse leftward and as a result they turned off the more moderate members of the electorate who in response fled to the Republicans. Factoring in recent events and the newfound prominence of Tea Party Republicans it seems that Mann & Ornstein are correct in their assertion that polarization is asymmetrical. The matter of Gingrich's overarching influence on the rules of Congress is especially impactful since it led to Roukema leaving Congress and begs the question, did these changes fundamentally change the composition of Congress?

Culture change

One of the more prominent explanations for the growth of polarization is the numerous cultural changes that have occurred over the last half century. One idea that is

prominent is the lack of opportunities for inter party socialization. Socialization is a key component to how people cooperate with one another in a traditional work setting. Feeling stronger bonds with coworkers creates empathy between coworkers, and the same can be said in Congress. These relationships not only allowed members of Congress to curry favor with one another, they created unofficial rules of engagement. If a member acted in bad faith they may feel social repercussions for their actions, henceforth dissuading them from doing so. Many of the settings where members came together to socialize like bars or party dinners have slowly been phased out over time, being replaced by partisan events where members only get to know their own parties and better reinforce the views of their colleagues (Grumet 2014).

Additionally, Congress spends far less time in Washington so they have less opportunity or need to socialize. Instead of moving their families to the capitol and setting up roots there, members scarcely spend time in Washington when Congress is not in session, flying home when Congress gets out Thursday night and flying back in at the beginning of the next week on Sunday (Grumet 2014, Davidson Et al 2022). This is not because these individuals do not work. Members are spending time in their districts making efforts to be seen as members of their community instead of politicians, due to the stigma around professional politicians. Due to their limited time in Washington, members see less need to find nicer apartments or move their families with them because they spend less time in their living space and they see their family regularly. Instead of inviting members over to their homes for dinner to strengthen their working relationship and entertain themselves, members do not have the time or an appropriate space to do so (Grumet 2014). The lack of formal social events and the inability for members to host

their own makes Washington a far less sociable environment and in turn the benefits derived from socialization between the parties are defunct

While more interparty socialization would not be a bad thing it is unlikely that the lack of it is a cause of polarization; it is more likely to be a symptom of it. For one, Grumet's analysis fails to look at the change in formal structure that has occurred in Congress over the development of polarization. Members are often dissuaded from working with the other party because it may turn off their highly polarized base and leadership party thus limiting their ability to advance politically (Hirano & Snyder 2019, Thomsen 2014, Courser, Helland, & Miller 2018). Giving members of Congress the tools to collaborate will not make them do so if there is little incentive to do so.

Much of this cultural change is explained by the shift from "policy to politics" in Congress. The nature of the modern campaign strategy is to convince voters to vote against the opposing party rather than to convince voters that you are the better option. This is often accomplished by painting the other party as incredibly extreme, ineffective, and uncompromising (Lee 2016). Even when policy options have a bipartisan appeal they may not pass through Congress because of a refusal to allow the opposing party to garner credit, as was the case when the Republicans struck down the 2012 debt plan. Despite being written by both Democrats and Republicans, the legislation did not go through because Republicans realized that it would hurt their chances of winning the next election since the party in power usually gets credit for programs like this even if they are agreed upon by both parties (Mann & Ornstein 2016, Grumet 2014, Straus & Classman 2017).

Even legislators who do not favor this strategy are seemingly incentivised by benefits they receive from their party being in power; they are more likely to chair a

committee or subcommittee, they are more likely to be capable of getting legislation that their party is in favor of through Congress, and they protect themselves from primary election challengers. While it may seem like legislators could take action against this culture they would prefer to enact policy there is little they can do. For one, going against the party's core campaign strategy invites primary rivals who will make appeals to die hard members of their party's electorate, opening themselves up to be replaced. Additionally members may incur the wrath of party leaders who are in a position to reward members for loyalty and weaken members who work against the party (Lee 2016).

Causes of Polarization

Changes in Congress

Each of these theories make an attempt to understand polarization in terms of a large-scale phenomena, not taking the time to dig into the smaller agitators that cause polarization amongst Americans. One of these narrower areas of study focuses on the changes to the composition of Congress. The primary way that polarization makes its way into Congress is through the turnover of seats. When a member of Congress is defeated in a race or decides to retire they are usually replaced by a more polarized individual (Theubult 2006). Over the last 30 years the 140 moderates in Congress have dwindled to a mere 40 or so. This phenomena matches up poorly with polling on bipartisanship since Americans allegedly want to see more bipartisanship in Congress and are less divided on issues than one may be led to believe (BPC 2021).

One possible explanation for this is that the rules that govern Congress have greatly changed to become less favorable for moderates. In polarized eras of governance

it is more important for leaders of Congress to have power over their party. One or two individuals that fail to fall in line can spell disaster for policy initiative since it could give members of the opposition an opportunity to stop the initiative in its tracks like Joe Manchin did when he held up a number of Biden's policy goals during his first term (Walsh 2021). Scholars have argued that this period of centralized power has come from necessity. However, this highly structured system is also conducive to the growth of polarization. The centralization of power in Congress essentially creates a more polarized Congress because it creates more ideological homogeneity within the body. Leaders accomplish this by weakening the positions of Congress members and using their power to create a more homogeneity (Theriault 2008).

One area where this has been done would be committee chairs. Committee chairs have immense influence on any and all legislation that goes into their committee, similar to the majority leader of the House. They have the power to craft a schedule, decide whether bills go to subcommittees or not, and decide how procedure on particular bills is structured. Essentially they have complete power over the legislation that is in the committee's jurisdiction. This makes the position highly coveted (Davidson et al., 2022). The traditional way of appointing committee chairs in Congress is seniority, where the senior most member on a committee, depending on party affiliation, becomes the chair of that committee. This ensures that those with enough experience in the committee are in charge (Theriault 2008, Courser, Helland, & Miller 2018). Since these members have stuck with the committee for a number of years they would both have knowledge of the subject and procedure to run the committee. This is also in a sense a reward for serving one's district faithfully for a number of years. Since the individual has had a longer career

in Congress than others they are granted the opportunity to better serve their state or district by holding a more influential position.

While this system worked well in the past it has been changed a great deal within the House. While seniority was a traditional rule, committee chairs can also be appointed by party leadership through votes by the steering committee, which is composed primarily of high profile members of the party. While oftentimes the chair is given to the senior member they can be denied the opportunity if the committee decides to go another direction. There are a number of reasons for this divergence from tradition. Some members wanted the committee process to be more Democratic, feeling disgruntled with long sitting members dominating leadership positions for a number of years. However, leadership saw moving away from tradition as an opportunity to strengthen their influence on the legislative process by removing key actors who did not share the same priorities as the rest of the party, ensuring that party leadership can push through legislation that they deem important without the significant roadblock of a committee chair standing in their way (Courser, Helland, & Miller 2018). Since the ability to appoint committee chairs allows the party leadership to run a tighter ship, members are implicitly told that to climb the ladder and to gain more prominence they need to conform to the views of the party and focus more on nationalized politics as opposed to representing their own districts, thus rewarding more polarized individuals (Theriault 2008).

As Congress shifts in a way that benefits more polarized individuals, moderates are going to run less frequently (Thomsen 2014). Not only would running require many to run in electoral districts that favor polarized individuals because of primary elections and districts with large partisan populations but even after winning they face an

establishment that does not value their bipartisan values and will attempt to strong arm them into toeing the party line (Theriault 2008). While there is a general consensus that rule change fosters polarization in Congress the results of these studies heavily rely on the testimonials of former legislators who feel put out by the current process and less statistical evidence. This leaves potential flaws pertaining to the study as it focuses on bipartisan legislators and not the less bipartisan public. If the public does not want bipartisanship it is of little consequence that the system dissuades it because it does not represent the public in the first place. There are also other possible explanations for the decline in the moderate makeup of Congress.

Districts

The process of gerrymandering is often seen as a major source of polarization because it creates safer districts for one party. The idea is if a district is safer for one party than the other that district will attract more extreme members of the electorate creating a Congress composed of more polarized individuals. This is an appealing idea because, if true, it would be easy to address. If we simply banned the practice, political order in the country would be put on track. It also seems feasible since safer districts would benefit polarized individuals. However, the correlation with polarization's growth is questionable (McCarthy, Poole, & Rosenthal 2009).

One problem with this idea is that the Senate, a body whose elections have nothing to do with redistricting, has also become more polarized over time. If a polarized government was a result of gerrymandering why would this be the case? Data suggests that the House has become more polarized than the Senate over time so this alone cannot

discount the theory (McCarthy, Poole, & Rosenthal 2009). If gerrymandering had an effect on the makeup of Congress statistically these changes should be most evident immediately following a census, the time when redistricting occurs. However, this is not the case. Rather than increasing in conjunction with census periods, polarization in Congress maintained a steady rate of increase suggesting no serious correlation (McCarthy, Poole, & Rosenthal 2009, Hirano & Snyder 2019).

This lack of correlation is largely due to the fact that these districts are already sorted amongst partisan ideology. Urban areas are centers for liberals and rural districts are centers for conservatives. Even when these districts are reorganized they have little impact on who their elected representative is because they have naturally changed to benefit more polarized officials. This makes primary elections a larger contributor to polarization because it puts moderates at a disadvantage during primaries, not only because these districts are uncompetitive, but because primary elections attract extremist activists and those more polarized than the average member of the public, to vote at higher rates. Since primaries attract more extreme voters, moderate candidates are likely to lose and never see the final election, wasting their time and money, incentivising them from doing so in the first place (Hirano & Snyder 2019).

While it would be easy to blame the primary system as a whole, there are other factors like the economic circumstances of individuals that make polarization a persistent problem and create a wider divide between sectors of the public.

Income Inequality

One major factor that has increased at the same time as polarization has been income inequality. This is not a coincidence. When income inequality is on the rise it psychologically impacts members of the public. It makes them feel frustrated, anxious, and more susceptible to polarized candidates (Algan, Yann, et al. 2017). When the two sides of the political aisle are primarily blaming each other for the nation's problems at large, voters project their own experiences onto these rhetorics. If they are facing financial hardship they will adopt one of the two parties' messages, regardless of whether or not their policies would solve issues affecting them. They will be quick to blame one of the two parties for the misfortune of the nation at large and adopt the extremist views as their own. This problem is further exacerbated by the distribution of the American population.

If one were to look at a map color-coded to reflect the political beliefs of the region's population they would see clear dividing lines separating the liberal population from the conservative population. This is a feature of human nature, people like to be surrounded by like minded individuals, it makes them feel more comfortable to express their beliefs because they do not need to fear being ridiculed. As a result of this geographic sorting people are less likely to encounter someone who holds political beliefs which differ from their own, making it easier to other them. This is especially problematic when this sorting is on the basis of class, which is the case, because it creates misconceptions about who each party's voter base is amongst the public at large. Republicans will resort to labeling their opponent's base to be entitled and lazy, seeking to take the wealth of others, and Democrats will resort to labeling their opponents as

racists standing in the way of equality. This hatred and misunderstanding of the parties' core values explains why there are fewer moderates in Congress because despite the substance of their arguments many members of the public only see the labels which they detest.

There are some issues with this line of thought. For one, there is not a clear line between the growth of polarization and inequality. While the psychological effects of income inequality lend themselves to creating more polarized individuals it is far from the only explanation. Polarization amongst the public could simply be a result of sorting in the electorate and proximity would actually have little impact on the public's existing beliefs. Geographic polarization also cannot explain the origins of poor perceptions of the opposing party as there needs to be some sort of rhetoric that fuels the political divide.

Media

Polarization in the media has been a subject of study by a number of scholars. Some studies claim that the media has and always will be a somewhat polarizing force. Media and the individuals behind it often have their own political goals such as the Federalist Papers which made efforts to convince the public that the constitution needed to be passed while the Anti-Federalist Papers attempted to argue the opposite (Lieberman & Mettler 2020). These two parties pitted the public against each other. However, the current iteration of the media does not focus on questioning the validity of ideas, instead questioning the validity of groups.

In recent years the media has become more antagonistic towards individuals and groups, painting each party as extreme and uncompromising. This has a polarizing effect

on the public such that they see the opposing party as an enemy, not because they are forced to wrestle with their policies but because they dislike the character of the other party (Fiorina 2008, Mason 2015). Furthermore, partisan media reinforces partisan beliefs because they only examine the arguments of their own parties' ideas, so viewers see their arguments justified again and again and the viewer base becomes much more homogenous (Campbell 2016).

Some argue that the media has little effect on the public because they are already polarized. This idea concludes that media serves more of a sorting effect because people become attracted to the arguments and policies that their own beliefs better align with; after all, why would an unpolarized public view polarized media (Campbell 2016, Drutman 2020)? While the media's role in polarization is more a contributing factor than a root cause of the phenomena, its effect on the public cannot be understated because it isolates them and creates ideological homogeneity. When a large section of the public has homogenous beliefs it is bound to affect the political candidates that they elect, making them more polarized (Mann & Ornstein 2016, Fiorina 2008).

Summary

Polarization as a whole is a complicated and multifaceted issue. While there are a handful of reasons as to why polarization has developed and where fault lies, there is no one answer to the issue. Each analysis of the polarization is in some way flawed. Emerging Polarization Theory does not have clear statistical support amongst the entire public and fails to establish a cause; the idea behind the No Polarization Theory is counterintuitive to the feelings of the public and is highly speculative, and an

Asymmetrical Polarization frame of reference is questionable. While each theory has its flaws it also has significant merits that ensure that they cannot easily be discounted (Campbell 2016, Mann & Ornstein 2016, Mason 2015). At the core of this problem is the causal relationship between polarization and its agitators because of the cyclical relationship between the two. Are these agitators actually core causes of polarization or is polarization a cause of these agitators?

There are some things that scholars have identified as causes of polarization. The change in culture in Congress from a policy first approach to a politics first approach is a prominent example of this. Since politicians are going into the legislative process with the intent to amplify the differences between the parties they have helped to sort the parties as well as create a gap between them promoting the current hegemony with the two parties and led to less cooperation in Congress as well as less tolerance for it amongst partisan hardliners. While members of Congress have a tendency to move more towards their political base, which creates more polarization in Congress, the largest cause is when a member is replaced. This can partially be explained because of the change in tactics. As the parties formulate strategies to differentiate themselves from the opposing party moderates will give up their positions because of a lack of party fit, or be primaried out of their seats (Lee 2016, Thomsen 2014).

There are a number of reasons for the expansion of polarization that are well documented in literature such as geography, media, and the role of money in politics; each of these create animosity for the other party by reinforcing the views of party members, sowing distrust of the opposing party, and bolstering misconceptions about the other party (Fiorina 2008, Mann & Ornstein 2016). Literature has also attempted to

account for how changes in rules and norms in Congress have fostered the growth of polarization (Therbult 2008, Philides 2011, Grumet 2014). However, these studies' scope is often limited to particular instances such as the change in committee chair selection or the use of the filibuster as opposed to looking at rule changes and norm changes overtime and how they foster more polarization within Congress. This study will attempt to fill in this gap taking a deeper look into the role of rule changes in the study of polarization and how these changes may have built on each other and influence polarization.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In order to determine whether the rules of Congress influence the presence of moderates I compiled a list of Congressional rule reforms and normative changes that occurred in the House of Representatives, the body where leadership has more influence on the rules, and analyzed changes to the party unity and the number of moderates, members with DW-Nominate scores in the $-.25$ and $.25$ ranges, in Congress that occurred following their implementation, within a six year span. What follows in this chapter is a brief introduction to the terminology I will be using—Party unity scores and DW-Nominate scores—as well as their importance to my project, the importance of these terms in understanding polarization within Congress, and a justification of the scope of my project and the time period in American politics that it covers.

Measuring Current Polarization

There are two tools that are commonly used when assessing the level of polarization within Congress, party unity scores and DW-NOMINATE scores. Party unity scores use a compilation of votes to determine how unified the party is the votes of each party and calculate the difference between the two, or lack thereof. There are two dimensions to party unity scores: the number of party unity votes, which is compiled by taking count of the number of pieces of legislation in which a majority of one party and a majority of the other party are on opposite sides, and party unity scores, the rate party members vote on party lines. When party unity scores are high it indicates high levels of homogeneity within the caucuses. By measuring each party's preference relative to one another the differences between the parties become apparent. These scores have been

compiled by Roll Call using various issues of the Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report.

DW-NOMINATE scores are also determined by looking at the voting records of Congress to determine their homogeneity; however, these records are analyzed in order to determine where these members' wider political beliefs are. They have become one of the primary methods of measuring polarization because they are able to better contextualize their voting patterns and define why these members voted the way they did. There are a number of dimensions that DW-Nominate scores cover, however the most looked at are the conservative liberal scale, because that largely encapsulates where the parties have separated from one another. DW-Nominate scores scale in range from 1, being incredibly liberal, and -1, being incredibly conservative. These scores are compiled and reported by the UCLA Department of Political Science.²

Timeline

This project will discuss changes that occurred in the US Congress over a twenty year period, dating back to 1993 until 2011. While this time frame does not track changes in Congressional rules and norms changes that occurred since the origin of polarization, the 1970s, it does correlate with the growth of increased party unity in the wake of the parties becoming competitive. The changes I will explore will be the role of money in committee appointment, the numerous changes that Newt Gingrich imposed on Congress, the change in time spent in Washington by legislators, the pronounced importance of the Hastert Rule, the tactics of control used by Nancy Pelosi, and the banning of earmarks.

² <https://voteview.com/congress/house>

Previous scholars such as Theriault and Mann & Ornstein have theorized that these changes created long-standing norms within Congress that bolstered polarization in some way or form. This thesis aims to build on their research by examining the same time period and changes to rules and norms in more detail, looking at the statistics from year to year and taking into consideration the proportion of moderates rather than the average scores of each party.

While there are other changes that occurred before this time frame the upswing of polarization, the early 1970's, 1993-1995 saw some of the most dramatic and impactful changes seen in the House and have become the norm since. Additionally many of the changes that occurred during this point occurred when polarization was growing in prominence behind the scenes during the Democratic Party's domination of American politics. Examining the change in the moderate population during an era of low competition would likely fail to yield any significant results, so an analysis of this time period will offer clearer insight into the causes of polarization. While there have been structural changes since the banning of earmarks the majority have not occurred in the House. Most have occurred in the Senate, mainly regarding the filibuster, so they cannot qualify as components for this project. While there are recent developments in the House such as the composition of the January 6th committee, recent instances of committee chairs refusing to allow members of the Democratic caucus to cross-examine experts, and the more recent debt hostage scenario, these have yet to become norms and there has not been adequate time for these instances to yield data.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

1993 Role of Money in Appointment

Leaders of Congress with positions of power, like Speaker of the House or committee chairs, have different responsibilities and goals than the other members of Congress. They have a number of goals: to achieve their policy objectives, to maintain their position, and to help their party win elections. Since they have been given authority in Congress it is expected of them to use this authority to help accomplish these goals, or risk replacement. For example, the Speaker of the House can use their agenda setting power to avoid discussing legislation that might be detrimental to their party's image while promoting those that will go over well with their base. Avoiding bills that might rile up the opposing party or dissuade their own base is a powerful tool for influencing voters, as well as controlling legislation.

The ability to manage legislation and position the party for elections requires a deep understanding of procedure, the ability to negotiate with members of their own party, and their opposition. Between the 97th (1981-1983) Congress and 102nd Congress (1991-1993), out of the 34 elected leadership positions, 20, or 59%, were filled by party middlemen, members of the party that had median DW-NOMINATE scores, while the remaining 14 were filled by moderates who held 2, or 6%, of these positions, and extremists won 12, or 35%, of these positions (Heberlig, Hetherington, & Larson 2006). Presumably the higher presence of party centrists is due to the requirement that leaders need to be attuned to their party's goals; moderates would cater too much to the opposition and extremist policies would be too far from the center to foster cooperation.

However, priorities have shifted; it is no longer enough to effectively manage the legislature to be deemed as an effective party leader.

Instead, raising campaign funds has become paramount to political success. The rate of spending for campaigns over the last thirty years makes this need to raise funds evident. In recent years political spending on campaigns has been on an upward trend, even when factoring in inflation. During the election cycle for the 102nd Congress, House elections received a little more than \$280,000,000 dollars compared to the 104th Congressional election cycle, which received a little over \$415,000,000, which is over \$100,000,000 difference between what the natural rate of inflation would be (FEC). Since each party had both been increasing the amount they receive and spend on campaigns each party feels a need to keep pace or out spend their opponents. This newfound prominence of campaign funds has led to a change in priorities regarding who gets considered for leadership positions. Not only do they need to use their power to make the party more appealing, they also need to prove that they can serve as effective fundraisers.

A member's redistribution of campaign funds has become a determining factor in whether a member of Congress obtains a leadership position. Doing so shows one's dedication to the party and directly helps the party get reelected, an important aspect of leadership. However, the prominence of redistributing campaign funds has shifted who gains leadership from centerline members to extremists because extremists are better fundraisers. There are a number of reasons for this; for one, those with extreme partisan views cater more towards political advocates and elites, since they are the members of the public who are evidently more polarized than the rest of the public. These groups are so heavily invested in the political process they have tendencies to contribute more

financially. Second, the nature of politically extreme campaigns is akin to fear mongering the opposing parties views, claiming the Democrats are all socialists or that Republicans are all racists and keeping the other party out of power is the only way to save the country (Campbell 2016). Not only has this been a major factor in driving up voter turnout but also helps to generate funds.

This shift towards the prominence of fundraising ability as a qualification is made evident post the 103rd Congress. Between the 103rd Congress (1993-1995) and the 108th Congress (2003-2005) out of the 27 leadership positions available, extremists won 15, or 56%, of the available positions. This is a relatively dramatic shift from the previous status quo; parties in the House previously run by party centrists instead became primarily dominated by the extremes of the parties. One might argue that this is due to a change in the composition of Congress itself moving toward a body comprised of more extreme members than previous sessions of Congress; however, these leaders are much more polarizing than the rest of Congress as party floor leaders' DW-NOMINATE scores place 0.30 points higher than rank and file members (Heberlig, Hetherington, & Larson 2006).

The prevalence of extremists in leadership positions means one thing for Congress as an institution: more extremists. Leaders are not only central figure heads in the eyes of the public but they also have influence over how the party is structured and who is recruited. Leaders portray the party and its values and look for members that will do well in elections and be good fits. So if leaders of the party are already extreme they will seek out members with similar beliefs because it will be easier to work with them and they will have the same fundraising appeal as other extreme candidates.

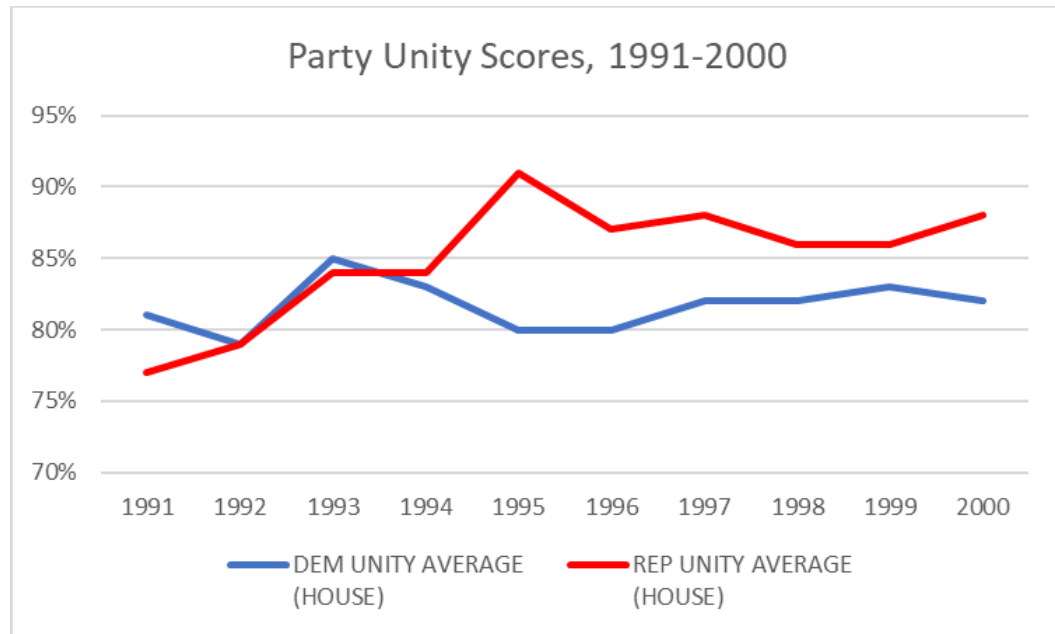
When granted leadership positions, leaders have influence over a number of smaller positions: the Speaker of the House gets to choose who chairs of committees are, those committee chairs choose subcommittee chairs. While campaign fund redistribution may not be considered for smaller positions, like chairs on subcommittees, ideology certainly does. Leadership has limited spheres of influence; they cannot sit in on every committee meeting to direct it so they rely on committee chairs to do so for them. This means that they will select members they believe will hold similar beliefs, which would be more extreme.

Since leadership will continue to recruit more ideologically extreme members and appoint them to higher positions of power it creates a cycle where extremist members are better positioned to acquire leadership positions. This in turn creates a problem of party fit which might explain why moderates seldomly run for Congress. When moderates see the parties dominated by extremist talking points on both sides of the political spectrum they are less invested in the political process. They often vote not out of love, but rather out of fear of what the other party will do if they are to gain power. Only seeing extremists advance politically also dissuades moderates from running for office (Tomsen 2014). Not only would doing so often be an uphill battle, because of the primary system, acquiring an elected position would not promise them a serious chance to advance politically to a leadership position and would force them to work under someone with uncompromising views, which is counter intuitive to the goal of moderates (Hirano & Snyder 2019).

While the growing importance of campaign fundraising does promote more extremist members of Congress to higher positions the effect it has on the average

legislator is not immediately apparent. In the year this change was implemented, 1993, party unity rose dramatically, from 79% within each party to 85% within the Democratic Party and 84% within the Republican Party, a large leap from the typical 2 to 3% fluctuation seen year to year, where it would remain until 1994 (See Figure 1). The installment of more extreme members of Congress to positions of leadership seems to have created an environment where members of the parties were more loyal to leadership than other sessions of Congress and hints at what future unity scores in Congress would look like under leaders, such as Hastert and Pelosi (Lesniewski 2022).

Figure 1. Party Unity Scores 1991 to 2000

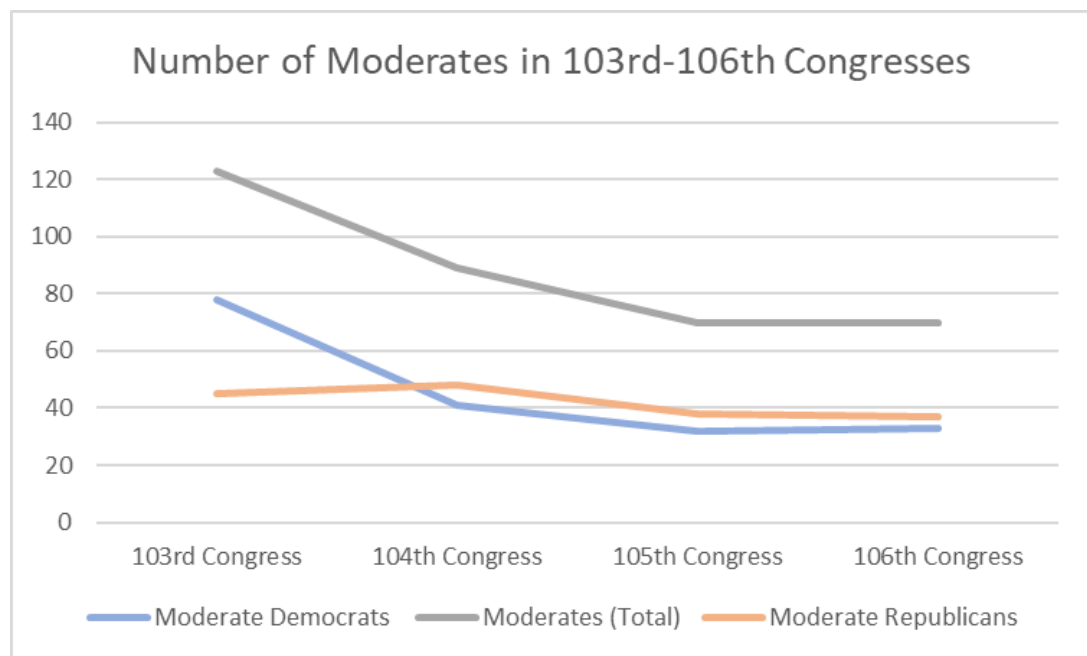


Party Unity Scores in the United States House of Representatives, 1991 to 2000

The following election, the election for the 104th Congress, the moderate population of Congress dropped by 34 members, the largest recorded drop in moderates

(UCLA 2023). However, it would be disingenuous to claim that the role of money in appointing members to leadership was the cause of the issue because the results of the election can be chalked up to sorting with many Southern Democrats, liberal moderates, being replaced with middle ground Republicans who more aptly represented their districts (Campbell 2016). Because there are alternative explanations for the change in the moderate population following this change, claiming that the change in leadership appointment had a direct impact on the presence of moderates is a flimsy claim at best.

Figure 2. Number of Moderates in the 102nd-105th Congresses



Number of Moderates (Members with DW-NOMINATE SCORES ranging between -0.25 and 0.25) in the United States Congress, 102nd to 105th Congress

The change in leadership qualifications moving to favor more extreme ideologues has opened the floodgates to leadership that is composed of extremists. These leaders

then use their power to position other extremists and create a Congress that is much more loyal to *them*. While some scholarship suggests that this would impact the structure of Congress there is little evidence of it doing so. Not only are there alternative reasons that the moderate population is changing, such as sorting and the changing political climate, there is also the matter of the numerous changes that occurred during the 104th Congress, spearheaded by Newt Gingrich. These changes would make bipartisan deliberation more difficult to execute and make analyzing the long term effects this change had on Congress.

Gingrich Reforms

Those familiar with scholarship on polarization are likely well aware of the role that Newt Gingrich had on the development of polarization and the modern Republican Party. He came onto the scene with one goal: to make the Republican Party *the* majority party and he largely accomplished this (Mann & Ornstein 2016). During his time as a legislator Gingrich broke a number of norms that moderated Congress, such as the methods he used to attack the opposing party and the establishment itself. After accomplishing his goal of crafting a Republican majority Gingrich was rewarded with the position of Speaker of the House, and its aforementioned powers. Over the course of Gingrich's time as Speaker he would institute a number of systematic changes that to this day influence Congress, making it a less hospitable place for moderation and cooperation.

Harsher Use of Appointment Power

Prior to 1995 committee chairs were selected by secret ballot of the Steering Committee, a small committee consisting of representatives across the nation (Pearson 2018). Allowing their voices to factor into the committee chair selection process would ordinarily ensure that those selected would be representative of the party as a whole as opposed to just the Speaker; however, the Speaker still dominated the share of the committee's votes for the most part. Newt Gingrich had other plans.

Instead of following the recent precedent, selecting committee chairs on the basis of seniority, Gingrich hand picked members of Congress to be committee chairs, bypassing the authority of the Steering Committee altogether. The most egregious of these selections was Robert Livingston to the chair of the appropriations committee who was ranked fifth in term of seniority. This was a huge change to the status quo giving leadership greater power to make appointments based on party loyalty in the future (Pearson 2018).

This also extended to subcommittees. Instead of using seniority as the basis for who would chair a subcommittee they began to be appointed by committee chairs; however, this decision had to be made with approval of the Speaker of the House. The Speaker could use these subcommittee chairs to draw attention to loyal up and comers by giving them subcommittee chairs, and punish older more moderate members in Congress by denying them the position altogether (Pearson 2018). This move greatly enhanced the power of leadership in Congress to force homogeneity amongst the party in Congress.

Term Limits

In the Republican's Contract With America, Newt Gingrich and 300 hundred of his fellow Republicans promised a number of things: reform to tax laws, welfare reform, stronger national defense, among others. One thing that the Contract promised that the Republicans delivered was term limits for Congress. These term limits were targeted towards committee and subcommittee chairs limiting them to 3 terms in the position, four if approved by the Speaker. Another institutional change that Gingrich instituted was the implementation of term limits for committee chairs (Pearson 2018).

To some this might not seem like it would have profound impacts on polarization; after all these seats will become open eventually what does it matter that they open up more often? Changing the conditions for appointment of committee chairs does two things. First, it establishes an informal term limit for Congress. After achieving a chairmanship there are few areas where members of Congress can ascend. They could make a bid for Speaker of the House or their party's Whip but these positions are rarely vacant so instead these members will be mitigated to a smaller role with less resources (Reynolds 2017). It is a similar reason why presidents do not run for office after their term is up; they have more opportunities to achieve their goals, whether that be financially or politically, by using their former prominence to get jobs in the private sector or making moves for a seat in the Senate. This in turn creates a more polarized Congress because of the nature that polarization gets through the establishment, member replacement.

The second thing that term limits to chairmanship achieves is pronouncing the need for members to conform to the will of leaders in Congress. With the term limits of

committee chairs being so short it almost ensures that members with safe districts will eventually be in contention for these seats. In order to be considered for these positions they are forced to make themselves appealing to party leadership, by conforming to their beliefs (Pearson 2018). This coupled with the extremist makeup of Congress ensures that members with longer careers will conform to the opinions of leadership and in turn will create a more homogenous environment.

Miscellaneous Changes

There are other areas of change that Gingrich enacted during his time as Speaker of the House although these changes have less evidence of institutional polarization. One major change that Gingrich was responsible for was the redistribution of funds throughout Congress. Gingrich made drastic budget cuts to members' individual staff budgets and cut a third of committee staff, and all of these committee staff members needed to be approved by the Speaker of the House, while bolstering funding that leadership had. He also did away with a number of partisan research groups such as the Democratic Research Group and the Republican Research Group, whose main task was to distribute information about upcoming legislation.

Robbing members of these key resources created an environment where legislators are forced to rely on leadership to find information on legislation. They would lack resources to find data on policies while the Whip and Speaker would have the resources necessary to find data and make appeals to their members as opposed to members having their own staff who knows their districts and the values of their voter base (Greene & Crouch 2022).

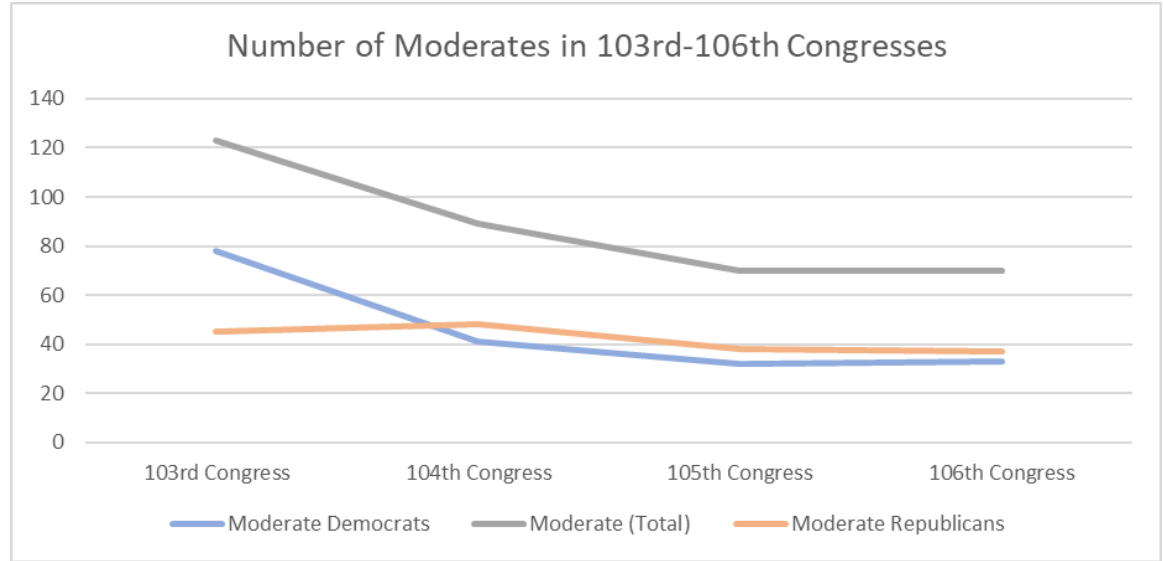
Another major point of the precedent established by Gingrich was the makeup of task forces. While not a method to control legislators it is a roadblock for bipartisanship in the legislative process. Prior to Gingrich's time as Speaker, task forces were pseudo committees formed to take a specialized look at a specific and important issue so that Congress could design their legislative agenda around their findings. They consisted of members of both parties in order to get a broader view on the issues and so deliberation could occur. However, Gingrich made task forces on a partisan basis taking any and all members of the opposing party out of the picture. Not only does this grant leadership the more power to craft the legislative agenda they gained the power to remove the voice of the minority altogether (Pearson 2018). This has become the status quo with the parties creating these task forces to dictate the policy of Congress all together. Further, dividing the parties' ability to interact with one another makes the opposition feel alienated from the process and question the validity of the other party and has further undermined cross party coordination.

In the aftermath of these changes party unity within the Republican caucus skyrocketed from 84% to 91%, another significant change. This set a trend within the Republican Party of high unity over the next five years, the party's unity score did not drop below 86% (See Figure 1). Using these tools to control the legislature seemingly made the party adhere to the greater desires of leadership overall. There are other factors one might consider when looking at the results of these reforms that could explain the increased unity. For one, this was the first time the Republican Party was the majority party and much of this was because of the efforts of Gingrich, so perhaps the party would feel like they owed Gingrich or that they would decide it was in their best interest to

continue following him, after all, it garnered them majority control; however, Gingrich did have a number of critics who disapproved with his methods (Green & Couch 2022, Pearson 2018).

In the election following these changes the moderate population in Congress immediately decreased; in the 105th Congress the population of moderates in the House went down by 19 members, 10 conservative and 9 liberal (See Figure 3). While this was not as significant as the decrease in between the 103rd Congress and the 104th Congress, of 34 members, it was still a 21% decrease in the level of moderate representation within the House (UCLA 2023). Seeing as this decrease in representation immediately follows the numerous reforms to Congress instituted by Gingrich, it is possible that the reforms influenced the change in the moderate population in some way. If this were the case, we could expect to see similar dips in representation occur following the further use of these reforms.

Figure 3. Number of Moderates in the 103rd-106th Congresses



Number of Moderates (Members with DW-NOMINATE SCORES ranging between -0.25 and 0.25) in the United States Congress, 103rd to 106th Congress

The leap in party unity scores that followed the reforms put into place by Gingrich strongly suggests that these rules have some serious implications for the development of homogeneity in Congress. This homogeneity could result from members being strong-armed into following leadership closely as a result of the institution of these rules or it could result from these restrictive rules dissuading moderates from remaining in Congress, or a combination of the two. Scholars such as Drutman, Mann, and Ornstein support the former while Grumet and Thomsen suggest the latter. The high party unity scores suggests that members were brought in line by Gingrich's leadership style and the methods he chose to control the legislature were effective at creating a strong conservative front. The change in share that moderates composed of the House so far does not suggest that Gingrich's changes had much of an impact on their presence. For

one, the number of moderates did not substantially decrease following the reforms to the rules, the most significant decrease in moderate presence occurred before Gingrich was in power let alone before he changed the rules of Congress. The lack of immediate results from these changes, in both parties, suggests that if these changes had any impact it would not be evident until much later.

Legislators Time in Congress

In the lead up to the Republican takeover of the House the Heritage Foundation released a report titled “Cutting Congress Down to Size: How a Part-Time Congress Would Work” in which the Heritage Foundation voiced support for a number of the policies that Gingrich implemented such as cutting a third of committee staff and cutting individual Congressional staff by 25%. One of their more extreme suggestions was creating a part time legislature where members of Congress would only be in session 6 months of the year forcing members to substantial pay cuts and get part time jobs (Plunk 1994). The idea was to make Congress more connected with their constituents and would help cut *wasteful spending* within the institution.

While this particular change never came to fruition the average time members have spent in Congress has drastically decreased over time. From an average of 278 days in session, during the 1980 and 1990, to an average of 125 days in session during 2000-2006 to 118 days in session 2013 (Mann & Ornstein 2008, Grumet 2014). Not only has Congress decreased the number of days they spend in session there are questions as to how many of the days they show up to work, oftentimes members will roll in later on Mondays or leave early Thursday if there are no votes scheduled to occur.

This is theorized to have had profound effects on the legislature itself, making it difficult for members to foster relationships with one another and put themselves in positions to curry favor with one another and damaging any hope of mutual toleration. When coworkers have no common ground to speak of and no relationships to build trust they become less efficient and less cooperative with one another (Lua & Cobb 2010). Because of the adversarial nature of legislating it is even more important for these relationships to be fostered between party members so seeing their decline is problematic for efficient democracy.

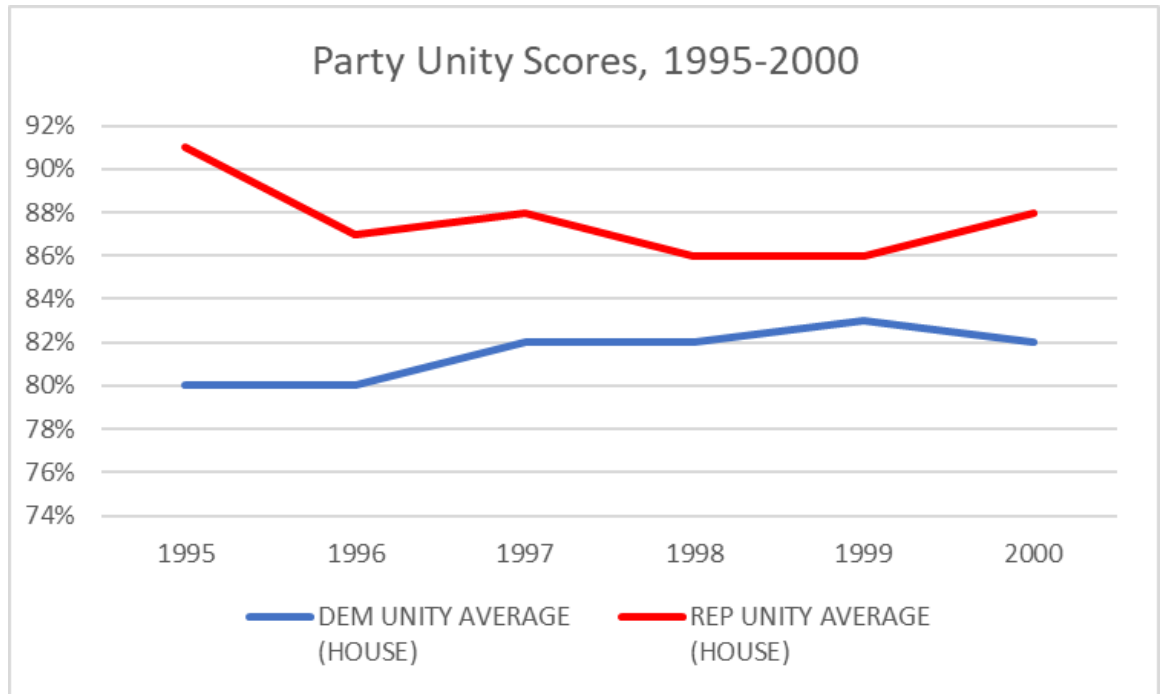
This shift in the number of days in session seems to have started in the mid 1990s, although the exact year is unknown because of spotty record keeping. What is known is that after this point the number of days in session has steadily decreased.

While this is a nice sentiment in theory, the data either fails to support it or the effects of less socialization are obstructed by the sheer number of changes that occurred inside and outside the legislature. For one, testing the validity of these changes is profoundly difficult because of the poor records on crossparty events and the number of days actually spent in Congress, which was not properly recorded until 2001. So tracking these changes in relation to the growth of polarization remains difficult.

Looking at the probable beginning of this change in 1997, there is very little evidence to support that it had any major impacts on polarization. While the party unity scores following this change are relatively high within the Republican caucus, which ranged from 86% to 88%, they remained lower than the first year that Gingrich was Speaker of the House (See Figure 4). The Democratic caucus' party unity score remained largely unchanged following the changes in Congress's schedule, continuing to range

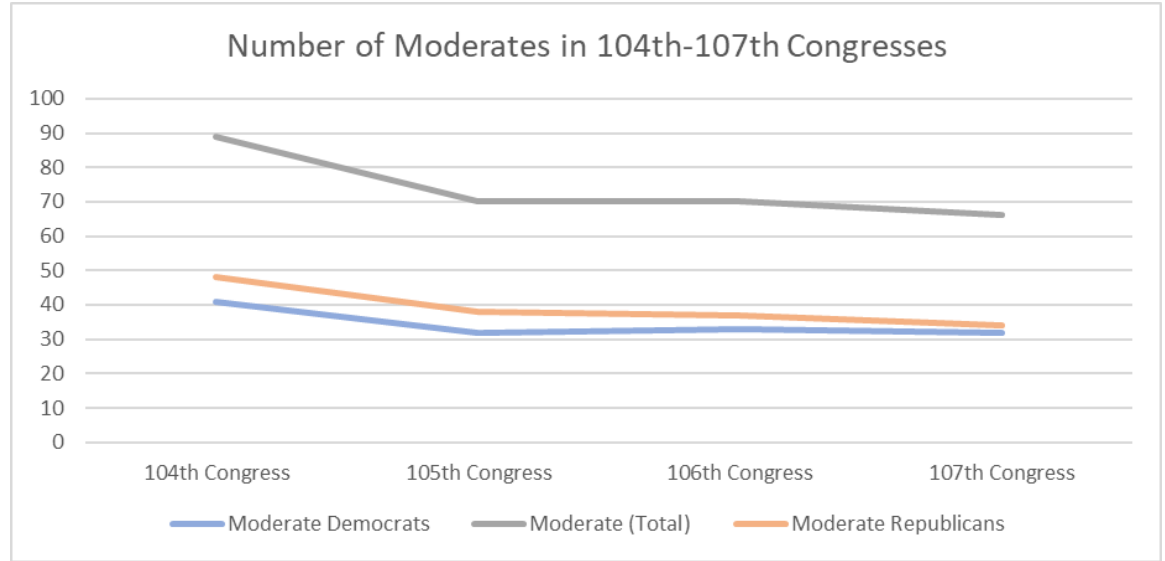
from 82% to 83%, a relatively insignificant increase from prior years (Lesniewski 2022). Furthermore, the number of moderates in Congress following this change did not shift significantly, remaining at 70 in 105th Congress through the 106th Congress only decreasing to 66 in the 107th Congress (See Figure 5).

Figure 4. Party Unity Scores 1995-2000



Party Unity Scores in the United States House of Representatives, 1995 to 2000

Figure 5. Number of Moderates in the 104th-107th Congresses



Number of Moderates (Members with DW-NOMINATE SCORES ranging between -0.25 and 0.25) in the United States Congress, 104th to 107th Congress

With such small shifts in both Caucus' unity scores and the population of moderates within Congress following the change in the schedule there is little evidence of any immediate impact on homogeneity of the parties, or on polarization between the two. If the change in Congress's schedule did impact the body each party would experience increased party loyalty and the share of moderates would decrease. While this lack of connection between legislators may have contributed to the demise of mutual toleration there is no statistically clear evidence that is convincing enough to prove that diminishing inter-party relationships to be a final nail in the coffin.

Establishment of the Hastert Rule

Initially when Newt Gingrich gave up his position as Speaker of the House, in 1995, a number of legislators were hopeful that his replacement, Dennis Hastert, would be less willing to use the powers granted to him as Speaker of the House and Congress would return to a bit of normalcy. However, this was not the case. For a majority of the mid to late 20th century Democrats had maintained control of the House of Representatives and with that control they had the power to dictate what legislation went up for votes in the House. Theoretically if the Speaker wanted to silence the minority party's efforts to impact legislation outright they could; however, some Speakers chose not to use this power, like Tip O'Neil. Despite his opposition to many of the minority's policy initiatives he allowed their voice to be heard and for them to take part in the political process, costing him some legislative battles (Edwards 2015). When Jim Wright replaced O'Neil as Speaker in 1987, this changed. Wright used his position as Speaker to stifle the law making power of the opposing party, by putting restrictions on their ability to impact legislation. Many of these tactics, like limiting the number of amendments on a piece of legislation, have become commonplace in the modern iterations of Congress. One particular rule that Speaker Wright implemented was a normative rule where he would not introduce legislation that the majority of the majority did not support. When Hastert went on the air and formally invoked the intent to not introduce legislation that a majority of his party did not approve of, he created the Hastert Rule, although he had been abiding by the rule since 2001. Hastert continued to use the reforms to the position that his predecessor established and kept a relatively tight grip on the caucus. In 2003, during a press conference, after receiving Medicare revisions from the Senate, Speaker

Hastert refused to bring the issue to the floor citing that he would not bring any legislation to the floor without the support of the majority of the majority, a use of procedure that former Speaker Jim Wright implemented during his time as Speaker (Edwards 2015, Babington 2004).

While this practice may seem like a tool for one's own party to keep the Speaker accountable to their own party it has instead evolved into an excuse for leadership to avoid bringing forth legislation that would otherwise pass with bipartisan support, such as in the case where the Senate would send the House unpopular legislation. This signified a major shift in the legislative process that occurred within the Republican Party. If enough of the Republicans on the far right of the Republican Party did not support an initiative then it would not see the light of day.

While the Hastert Rule is normative, and henceforth not set in stone, it has largely stuck within the Republican Party, vowing to follow the rule has become a defining reason for a member to obtain the position of Speaker of the House, such as Boehner and Ryan. The rule has been broken a number of times by Hastert's successors like Pelosi and Boehner, however these have not come out of a desire to work with moderates but to skirt blame such as the cases where Boehner broke the rule. While Boehner broke the Hastert Rule on numerous occasions it was actually sanctioned by his party. While a majority of the Republicans did not support the initiative it was more so a case of indifference, deciding not to vote for major spending initiatives (Lee 2015).

There are a number of reasons to believe that the implementation of the Hastert Rule is harmful to democracy. Mickey Edwards, a scholar and former House member representing the 5th district of Oklahoma, claims that the Hastert Rule is un-Democratic,

completely silencing the voices of millions of Americans. Citing the former use of regular order and deliberation on the House floor on unpopular legislative initiatives would last days and often fail but the process would be upheld and the American people would see their voices heard, something lacking in Congress today (Edwards 2015).

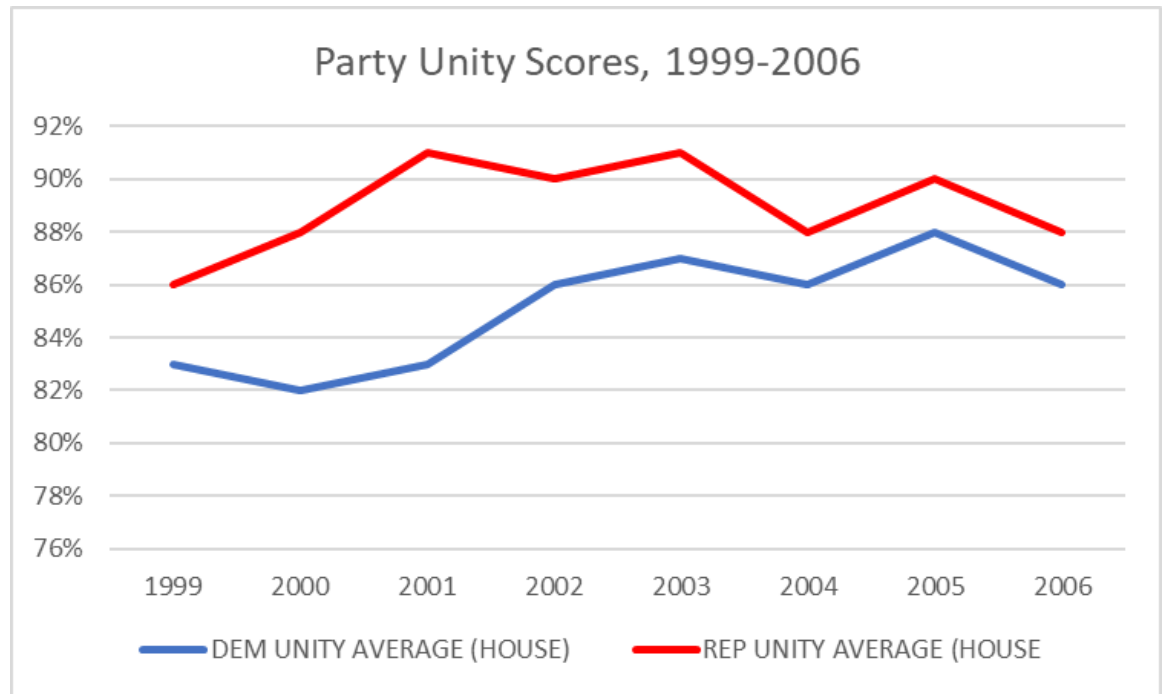
While the claim that the process is outright undemocratic is dubious there is something to say about the lack of process and how it may be discouraging for moderates who believe the process will leave them unheard.

The Hastert Rule's use has a polarizing effect. Using it to focus on legislative goals that extremists can sign on to makes moderates that exist in the electorate feel jaded, like their voices and opinions hardly matter. Overuse of the Hastert Rule, and procedures like this can be damaging to the party in power because it moves moderates who feel this way, to the other party in hopes that they will make their voices heard (Richman 2015). So when both parties use procedure to shut the other party out of the process they are alienating moderates, once again presenting the problem of party fit. If moderates do not feel like they belong on either side of the political aisle they have little choice but to suffer in silence and vote for the party that does the best job representing *some* of their beliefs.

Hastert's commitment to the Hastert Rule coincided with the highest party unity score within the Republican caucus since 1995, that of 91% overall and a 4% leap from his first term as Speaker. Over the following years the further use of the Hastert Rule coincided with similarly high party unity scores: that of 91% in 2001, 90% in 2002, 91% in 2003, 88% in 2004, 90% in 2005, and 88% in 2006, after which he lost his position as

Speaker (See Figure 6). Seemingly this rule helped Hastert promote the values of his own party creating a more loyal caucus (Lesniewski 2022).

Figure 6. Party Unity Scores 1999 to 2006

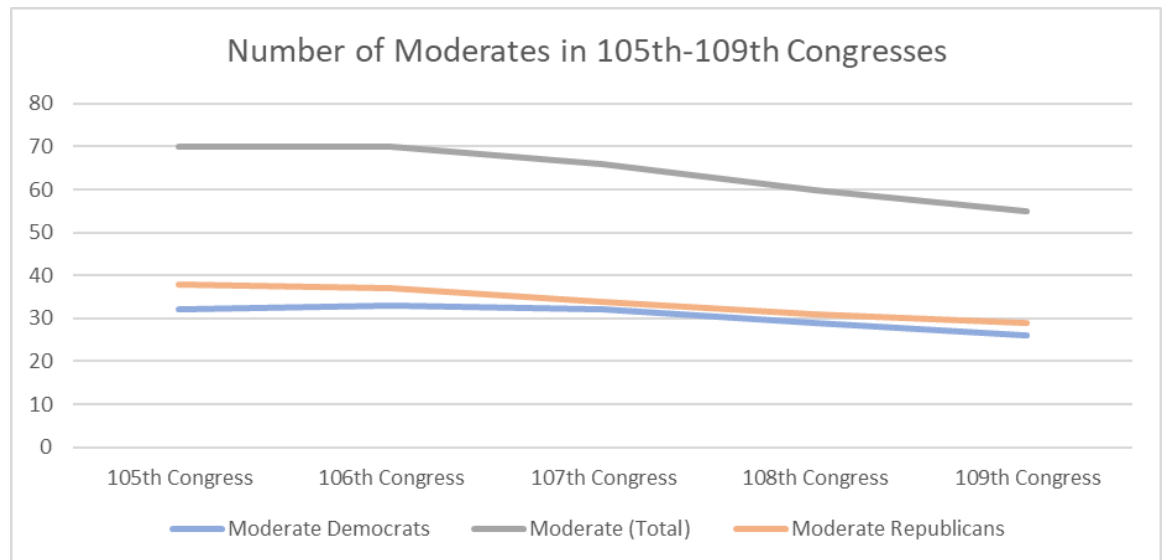


Party Unity Scores in the United States House of Representatives, 1999 to 2006

This decision to insulate the decision making power of Congress seems to have had a galvanizing effect on the opposing party. Despite the party unity score of the Democratic Party remaining between 80% to 83% since 1994, 2002 set a new trend, a more heavily united Democratic caucus, with a score of 86% in 2002. Over the following years Democratic unity would remain strong, never dipping below 86%. This is evidence of a lack of incentive, or opportunity, for Democrats to break ranks with their party because the inability to work towards moderate solutions or legislation the Democratic party became more homogeneous and henceforth more polarized (Lesniewski 2022).

While the homogeneity within Congress increased, the population of moderates did not fluctuate significantly. Over the next two Congresses, the 108th and 109th, the population of moderates only dropped by 11 members, 6 of which were Republicans and 5 of which were Democrats (See Figure 7). If prolonged use of the Hastert Rule was responsible for a decrease in moderates it would stand to reason that following its institution the share of moderates in Congress would significantly decrease instead of following a trend. Because the level of moderate representation does not shift significantly, as it was already on a downward trajectory, it is unlikely that the way that Hastert ran Congress had any meaningful effect on moderates' presence.

Figure 7. Number of Moderates in the 105th-109th Congresses



Number of Moderates (Members with DW-NOMINATE SCORES ranging between -0.25 and 0.25) in the United States Congress, 105th to 109th Congress

The high levels of party unity following the stricter use of the Hastert Rule suggests that it did in fact assist in increasing homogeneity within the parties. As party unity scores following the Hastert Rule's implementation increased, party unity within each party remained relatively high while the rule was still enforced. With the already low moderate count within Congress, getting moderate legislation to the floor of the House became far more difficult and one-party solutions became more prevalent. Increased prominence of one-party solutions should have some impact on the number of moderates in Congress (Richman 2015). However, there was little difference following the implementation of this rule outside of the downward trend that was already occurring.

Nancy Pelosi

2007 was a big year for Democrats. It was the first time in 12 years that they held a majority of the House and Senate and they made history electing the first female Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi. Democrats had an opportunity to look at the use of power that largely shut them out of the legislative process and turn a new page toward cooperation, deliberation, and regular order. A nice sentiment that was far from what occurred. While Pelosi did not make significant changes to the rules of Congress she had a thorough understanding regarding how to use those rules to her party's advantage.

Pelosi was elected at what would be a difficult time for Democrats to cross the aisle. The primary methodology behind their campaign was to attack Bush and the Republicans regarding the Iraq War and his plan to overhaul social security. Democrats were also doing well in the polls reaching approval rates higher than the president (Pew 2006). Another possible reason for Pelosi's lack of cooperation with the Republicans

could be attributed to her own political leaning. She was also far from the party centrist that leaders were in the past. She was relatively progressive for her time and she shared little common ground with conservatives. Seeing an opportunity to craft legislation unimpeded by conservatives, she took the opportunity to use the rules to advantage herself like her predecessors..

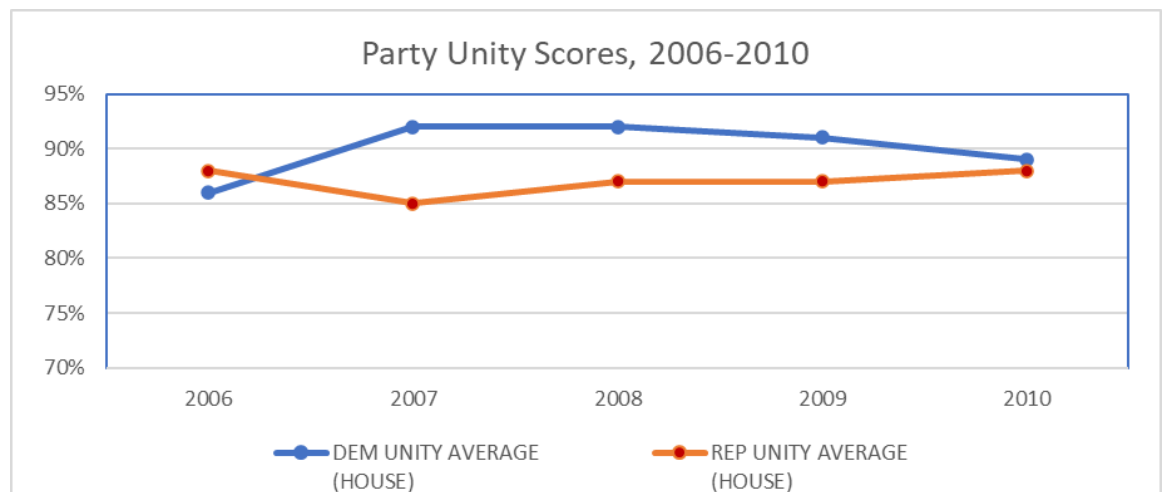
During Pelosi's time she was a prime example of the top down approach seen in previous administrations using her power as Speaker to dominate the legislative agenda (Davidson et al 2022). She accomplished this by constantly rewriting bills proposed to the House in order to side step criticism or opposing views, using special rules to limit Republicans ability to actually amend legislation, and a consistent trend of getting bills last minute so Congress had limited time to consider or deliberate regarding the proposed legislation. In response Republicans called for a return to regular order where deliberation would occur regularly between the parties, something they failed to follow through on when they had control of the House (CFRS).

While this is mainly speculative Pelosi's commitment to this top down leadership style seemingly cemented this type of procedure in Congress, primarily because it was the first time a Democrat in control used them to such extremes (Davidson et al 2022). Having the opposing party use procedure to control the legislative agenda to such a high degree presents the same problem of the Hastert Rule, that moderates will feel unheard. Seeing as it was the other party imposing these rules it might affect the breakdown of moderates even further, or adversely affect Republicans.

Pelosi's tactics managing the House were remarkably efficient, increasing her party's unity score from 86% to 92%, the highest party unity score recorded for the

Democratic Party; a similar jump in party loyalty that Gingrich was able to acquire with his consolidation of power (See Figure 8) . During her time as Speaker the Democratic Party’s unity score remained high, only dropping to 89% in 2010. In the wake of the change of leadership in the House Republican party unity dipped to 85% (Lesniewski 2022). While this was the lowest party unity score since before Gingrich’s reforms it was only a three point dip which quickly recovered in the following three years. Since Pelosi was a relatively liberal member of the Democratic Party and her use of leadership powers benefited her party's base it might lead some to believe that these tactics would lead to a similar decrease in the presence of moderates in Congress, however, this does not seem to be the case, at least for Democrats.

Figure 8. Party Unity Scores 2006 to 2010

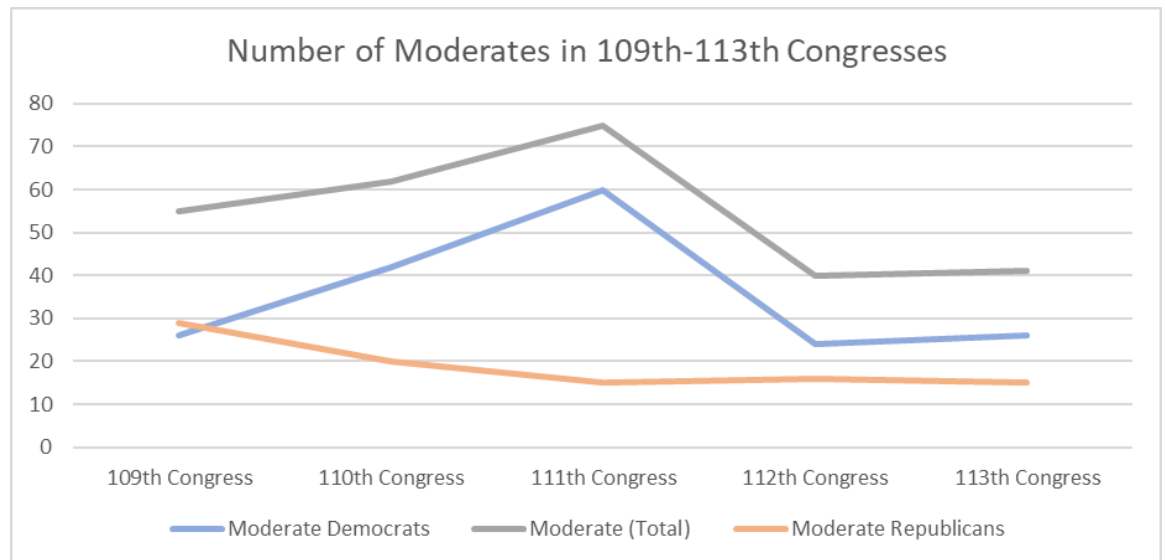


Party Unity Scores in the United States House of Representatives, 2006 to 2010

The DW-NOMINATE scores of the 110th Congress through the 111th do not show any indication of serious decline in moderate presence in the House, in fact during

Peolosi’s time as Speaker the presence of moderates within the House increased from 55 to 62 during the 110th Congress and increased to 75 during the 111th Congress, reaching a high point for the 21st century (See Figure 9). These moderates consisted of roughly 33% Republicans and 66% of Democrats in the 110th Congress and 20% Republicans and 80% Democrats in 111th. To claim that this legislative style dissuaded Democratic moderates from running in elections would be disingenuous; however, after Democrats lost the election for the House in 2010 the total number of moderates in the House dropped to 40. This was a 47% decrease from the 111th Congress and the 60 moderate Democrats dwindled down to a mere 24 (UCLA 2023).

Figure 9. Number of Moderates in the 109th-113th Congresses



Number of Moderates (Members with DW-NOMINATE SCORES ranging between -0.25 and 0.25) in the United States Congress, 109th to 113th Congress

In the face of the sharp upturn of moderate representation within the Democratic caucus the moderate presence within the Republican party took a steep downturn, dropping from 29 members during the 109th Congress to 20 during the 110th Congress when it continued to decline to 15 during the 111th Congress (UCLA 2023). These seats were seemingly won by Democratic moderates, evident from their larger share of representation. Curiously when the Republican party regained control of the House the number of moderates amongst their ranks remained stagnant. Despite winning 64 new seats the moderate population only rose to 16, a net gain of one seat of one from the prior session. There is little evidence to suggest that Democratic control and the use of Congressional powers would have any influence on the population of moderates in Congress, as the moderate population continued to remain low despite four terms of uninterrupted control.

Like when other leaders implemented more restrictive agenda setting powers, such as Hastert, the Democratic Caucus became more united with little to no effect on the presence of moderates in the institution. Given the sudden upswing in moderate presence did not last, it is more likely a result of the 2008 Financial Crisis and the high Democrat voting turnout that came from for the 2010 election. If the norms of procedure do not influence Congress as a body, as they seem to have with Gingrich perhaps changes in rules will show greater impacts on the makeup of Congress.

Earmarks

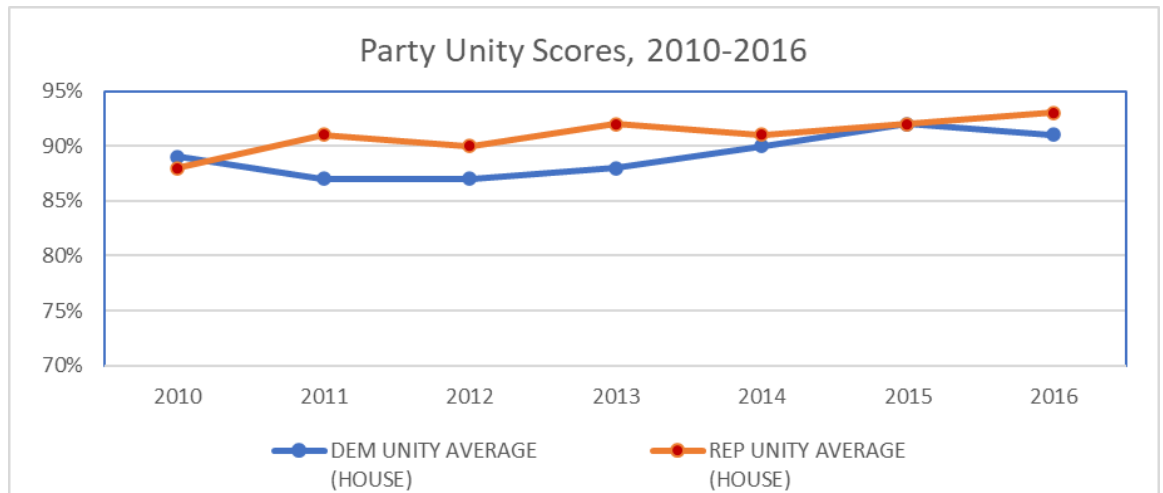
Earmarks are a tool used by leadership to foster cooperation within the legislature. If a member of Congress feels like they cannot support a bill because it would not go over well with their constituents back home an earmark could be attached to the bill that would help the member smooth things over with their base by funding repairs to roads, fixing critical infrastructure, among other things. In polarized times where obstruction is a common practice, using earmarks to negotiate with members of the opposition or one's own party is an invaluable tool. In 2005 the number of earmarks were particularly high, reaching over 13,000 in number and over \$19 billion in cost (Hedlund 2019). At the time scholars believed this increased use of earmarks was a response to polarization being used as a tool to bridge the gap between parties in order to pass legislation like the national budget. In more recent evaluations of earmarks scholars have come to the conclusion that the establishment of earmarks decreases polarization by giving legislators incentives other than 'stopping the opposition's policy at all cost.

Despite the usefulness of earmarks the public has key misconceptions about their purpose citing them as a way to bribe legislators. Part of this misconception comes from legislators themselves. In a recent press conference members of the GOP went on extensively about how earmarks were just that. In 2011 after some controversy the GOP banned the use of earmarks outright taking this tool away from the parties (Shutt 2021). If the existence of earmarks creates a less polarized Congress would the elimination of them outright create a more polarized and homogenized Congress?

The year that earmarks were banned coincided with high party unity scores within both parties. After five years of remaining in the high 80s the Republican Party's unity

score once again reached 91%, a three point increase from the previous year (See Figure 10). This high level of unity would persist until 2019 where party unity only went as low as 90% once in that span of time, peaking at 93% in 2016; However, the election of Donald Trump likely had much more to do with this increase than earmarks did. Additionally the banning of earmarks had little impact on the House Republicans because they were in the majority. Because the party is largely united behind conservative leadership, and only 16 of their 245 members were moderates they would not need to rely on earmarks in the House in order to pass legislation. In the wake of the banning of earmarks the Democratic caucus' party unity score dropped 2 points to 87%, which is common when a change in party control occurs. This was short lived, rising to 90% in 2014 where it would only increase from there (Lesniewski 2022).

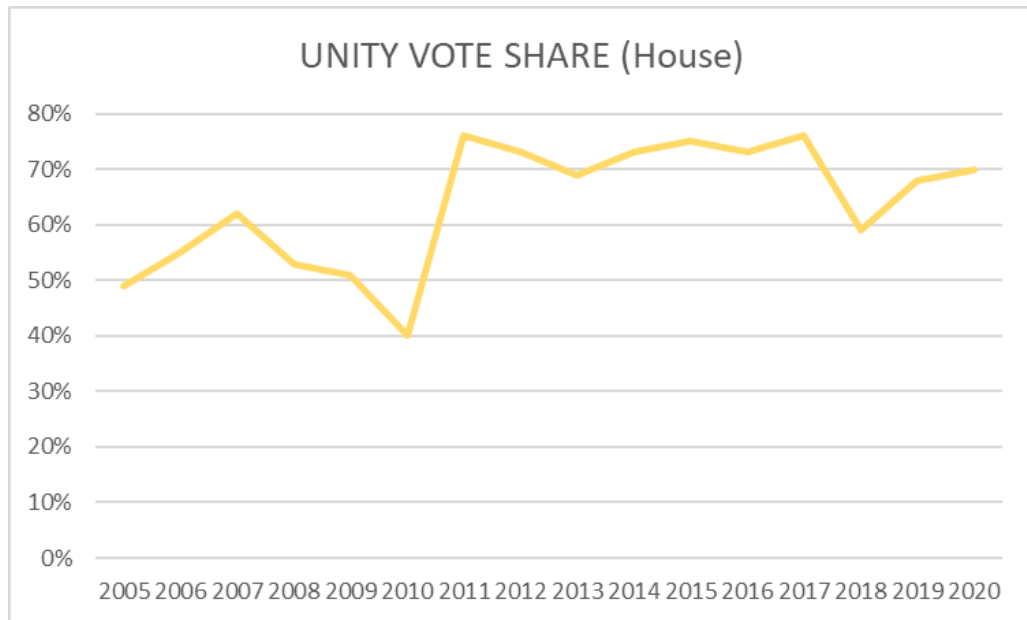
Figure 10. Party Unity Scores 2010 to 2016.



Party Unity Scores in the United States House of Representatives, 2010 to 2016

While each of the parties unity scores appear normal post the earmark ban the number of party unity votes changes drastically. Before the change to earmarks the percentage of party unity votes averaged to remain around 50%, with highs of 62%, 2007 and lows of 40%, 2010 (See Figure 11). Following the banning of earmarks the line between parties thickened with party unity votes rising to 76%, a 36% jump from the prior year. This became a trend with unity votes making up at least 68% of year to year votes between 2011 and 2020 nine of the ten years. Without the ability to create incentives for the minority party to vote in line with the majority there is little to no reason for moderates to break ranks with their own party on bills that majority engineers to only cater to their own party, so one might expect this to push moderates out of Congress (Lesniewski 2022).

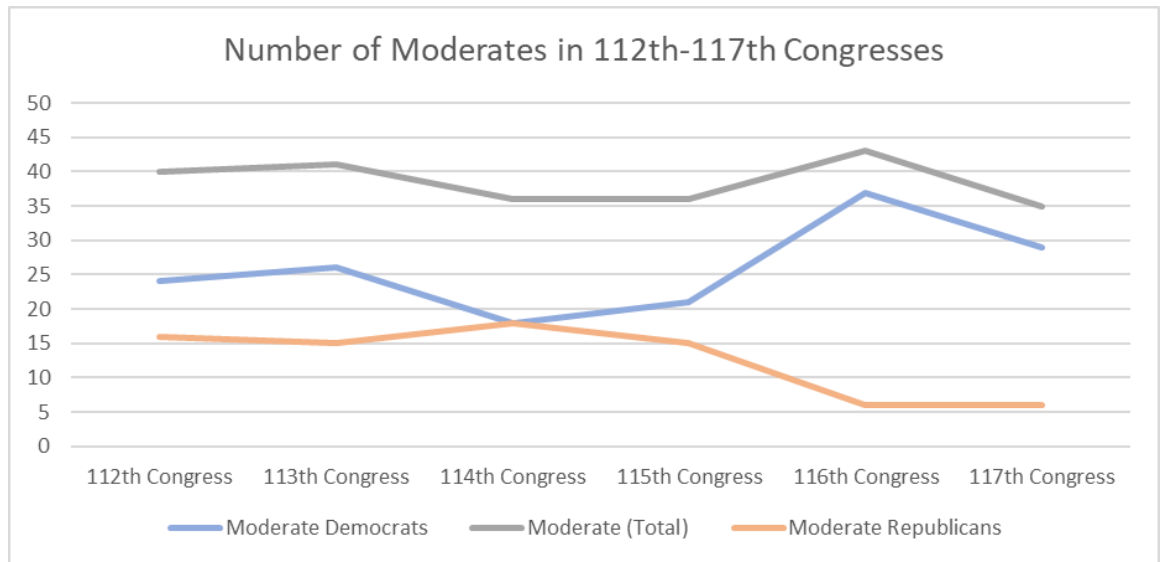
Figure 11. Share of Unity Votes in the House of Representatives 2005-2020



Percentage of Unity Votes in Congress in the United States Congress, 2005-2020

Despite the high number of party unity votes and another tool being taken away from moderates the moderate population of Congress did not adjust significantly, in fact it seems to have reached a floor. The Congresses following the banning of earmarks have a specific range of moderates lying between 41 and 35 (See Figure 12). Before this point it was common to see the number of moderate drop year to year somewhere between 4-6 members each session (UCLA 2023). If their members are not being dissuaded despite losing the one of their most prominent tools that allowed party lines to be broken there is little reason to believe that moderates are dissuaded to run or remain in Congress because of the rules that govern the body. These last 35-40 seats are determined by the region's constituents and a desire to see a moderate represent them, something that has seemingly fallen out of favor throughout the nation.

Figure 12. Number of Moderates in the 112th-117th Congresses



Number of Moderates (Members with DW-NOMINATE SCORES ranging between -0.25 and 0.25) in the United States Congress, 112th to 117th Congress

Summary

Over the last thirty years many of the changes to norms and rules within Congress have had a polarizing effect on the body. These changes, like the role of money in the appointment of leadership and the various changes Gingrich made to the Speaker's influence on committee appointments, have made it easier for extremists to find themselves in higher positions of power, increasing their sphere of influence. Having more extreme members of Congress in positions of power creates an environment that is resistant to bipartisan efforts because these more extreme members are less compromising than more centerline members. These changes coincided with, and are somewhat responsible for, a large divide between the parties, indicated by their increasing party unity scores (See Figure 1).

Theoretically these changes should push moderates out of Congress because they have less influence on legislation due to leadership appealing to the more extreme wings of their party. At first glance this seems to be the case. With highly partisan leadership during the early- to mid-1990s the moderate population of Congress decreased by 50% between 1991, before the reforms were put into place, and 1997, immediately after the reforms; however, due to the other occurrences, like party sorting, it is unlikely that the reforms to the rules were a root cause of the decrease in moderate presence.

The changes to rules and norms in the following ten year span also had a polarizing effect on the legislature, although these changes had less impact than their predecessors. The strong adherence to the Hastert Rule in 2001 saw an increase in party unity amongst both parties and made it impossible for bipartisan solutions to get through the House, although the low head count of moderates already made doing so more

difficult. The use of procedure enacted by Pelosi created record high party unity within the Democratic Caucus and greatly diminished the influence of the Republican Party in the legislative process, and the banning of Earmarks fostered more partisan divide on legislation than the previous 15 years because it took away a valuable tool for creating united fronts against the opposing party that may oppose legislative initiatives.

With additional restrictions to the influence that moderates had on the legislative agenda in Congress, a similar decrease in the population of moderates should have occurred; however, the share of moderates in Congress did not decrease significantly following the aforementioned changes to the rules and norms of the body. In fact, the moderate share of Congress *increased* during Pelosi's time as speaker. This in turn raises doubts pertaining to the relationship between the downturn in moderate presence during the early mid 1990's and the changes that occurred during the time, making it more probable that other factors, like sorting, had much more to do with this downturn in moderate presence than those changes. In conclusion, the data suggests that while changes to the rules and norms over the past 30 years have contributed to the increase in polarization, they did not have much impact on the number of moderates.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Although trends in data resulting from changes during the early to mid 1990s -- namely the changes to the role of money in the appointment of leadership in 1993 and Gingrich's many changes to the rules of Congress in 1995 -- suggested that there was a relationship between changes to rules and norms and the number of moderates in Congress, there is little to suggest that this was a causal relationship rather than a correlation. While the numerous reforms that occurred within Congress did increase party homogeneity substantially there is little evidence that increased homogeneity alone within Congress forces members out of the institution.

Aside from the decrease in moderate population that occurred in the wake of the new found role of campaign funds in appointments to leadership positions and Gingrich's reforms, which saw the number of moderates drop by 50%, from 140 to 70 between 1991 and 1997 no such change occurred following any new norms or procedural changes despite their impact on moderation. While the stricter implementation of the Hastert Rule, the leadership style of Pelosi, and the banning of earmarks did create an environment of higher partisanship within Congress and diminished the capabilities of bipartisan efforts the presence of moderates was not negatively impacted significantly, and in the case of Pelosi's leadership increased substantially. Since the reforms and changes to Congress after 1995 did not correlate with sharp decreases in the presence of moderates, there is little reason to believe the trend seen in the early- to mid-1990s following changes to the role of money in the appointment of leadership and Gingrich's reforms represented a causal link. Overall, this thesis has reviewed the already well documented pattern of party homogeneity that exists when a party is in control and the

lack thereof without control. While these changes do seem to impact party homogeneity and polarization, they do not impact the presence of moderates.

This study largely disproves any link between increased restrictions within the House and the presence of moderates within it. There seem to be much more impactful factors that determine whether a moderate is elected, such as political sorting and political movements. Congress is an elected body and while these restrictions may cause some to retire or dissuade some moderates from running, the sentiment of the district is what will determine the candidate.

This is not to say that there is no relationship between the restrictions imposed on moderates and their presence, or lack thereof, just that the methods of tracking this change used in this thesis may be ineffective and have potential flaws. One possible explanation for the lack of moderate decline in the house in the 21st century is that the rules of the House that Gingrich introduced already created a barrier for moderates to run in the first place. Once a leadership showed that it would favor its more extreme members, moderates could have taken it as a sign to stop making attempts at running for office and the following changes only further reinforced this mode of thinking rather than enhance it. The other possibility is that the public is simply too polarized to elect moderates in the first place, geographical polarization already diminishes the possibility for moderates to run in the first place so it stands to reason that it would/does weed out moderates making the feelings of moderate representative, or potential moderate representatives, irrelevant. Further research could be done to examine these possibilities.

The research design of this thesis has assumed that the lack of moderates is because moderates see the changes in the structure of Congress and then choose not to

run without adequate testing if this is the case. While there is literature that suggests that moderates are running for office in scarcer numbers (Tomsen 2014) there is not much to suggest that this is one of the elements that dissuade members from running, one of the things this thesis was meant to test. Seeing the number of moderates in office does not mean that these moderates did not attempt to run for office, it could also mean that they lost. In order to understand whether the rules are causing moderates to leave Congress or avoid running requires a more intimate study of the group, compiling data on the elections instead of the results of said elections. Analyzing the race with moderates throughout the years and breaking down how many moderates are running, where moderates fall off during the campaign process, and whether they are on the final ballot or lose before that point final or fringe candidates, may indicate that these rules alienate moderates from running or the public is against moderate representation.

Another area where the assumption that these rule changes influence the perception of moderates is assuming that they in some part lead members of Congress to leave the institution. While the hyperpartisanship that results from these changes has led to moderates like Margret Roukema and Olympia Snowe there is not much in the way of documentation describing how widespread this occurrence is. Understanding why moderates chose to give up their positions may expose the potential influence, or lack thereof, these rules had on their decision to leave the legislature. However, this in of itself is difficult to test. One avenue could come in the form of interviews with moderates that do decide to leave, in an attempt to find the role that these rules had on their decision. However, this is not liable to be very effective, probably because they don't want to ruin

their career by badtalking leaders, they may not want to make Congress look bad, and many are dead.

Another area that may unveil the influence that rules have on moderates would be tracking the party homogeneity back further. There are a number of rule changes that occurred that set precedent for the changes that Gingrich implemented by former Speakers, like Carl Albert and Jim Wright, seeing the influence that these changes had on moderates in Congress may help to understand whether or not these changes did influence Congress's make up, like it did with Gingrich's changes, or that was a matter of coincidence.

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