
The Regional Realignment of Congress, 1919-1984

*Keith T. Poole
and Howard Rosenbhal*

The period since World War I has been marked by a dramatic shift, as evidenced by congressional roll call voting, in the liberal/conservative preferences of the regions of the United States. The most conservative region in the twenties, the Northeast, is now the most liberal. The most liberal region in the twenties, the South, is now conservative. Currently, the most conservative region is the Mountain West.

The Great Depression undoubtedly played a critical role in initiating this realignment. It has now been more than 50 years since the almost complete collapse of the American economy. From 1929 to 1932, industrial production fell by one-half and unemployment soared to 24 percent of the workforce. This catastrophe produced a political earthquake. The Republican party generally, and Herbert Hoover in particular, were held responsible for the disaster. In the wake of the 1936 elections, the Republican party was left with only 16 Senators and 89 Representatives in Congress--the most lopsided party balance since the development of the mass-based two-party system in the late 1820s.¹

This dramatic shift in the party balance, and the massive member replacement that accompanied it, produced a marked change in the type of policies enacted by Congress (Sinclair, 1977, 1981; Brady 1979, 1982; Ginsberg, 1972, 1976). Ginsberg (1976), on the basis of a content analysis of party platforms and public laws, concludes that the changes in policy after 1933 were "in keeping with voter choices favoring alterations in the economic system and redistributions of opportunities in favor of urban working class elements" (p. 49). More specifically, Sinclair (1977), using the five policy dimensions (government

management, social welfare, civil liberties, international involvement, agriculture) developed by Clausen (1973), found that only the government management dimension was present in congressional voting prior to the Great Depression. The most significant change in congressional voting was the emergence of a social welfare dimension in the 71st Congress (1929-30). The debate then was over direct relief. After the 73rd Congress (1933-34), the debate was not over whether, but how much, to spend (Sinclair, 1981, p. 225).

Most studies assume that what drives a realignment is the existence of a set of issues that cut across the normal lines of a party cleavage. In terms of a spatial theory of realignment, the clear implication is that the cross-cutting issues organize voting along new spatial axes both in Congress and in the mass public. We find little evidence that this occurred in Congressional voting during the period of the New Deal realignment. What we find is that a simple unidimensional spatial model accounts for most of congressional voting over the period 1919-1984. The New Deal realignment was, in effect, a sharp shift of the existing political spectrum to the left.² Later, however, during World War II, a second dimension does appear which is related to civil rights for Blacks. It separates the Northern and Southern Democrats--a separation that peaked in the mid to late 1960s.

In keeping with the theme of this volume, we will focus our analysis on regional differences in congressional voting. We will first outline our scaling methodology for analyzing congressional voting and contrast it with previous methods. We will then discuss the results of our scalings, results that indicate the most significant changes occur in the Northeastern, the Southern, and the Mountain state delegations.

A SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF CONGRESSIONAL VOTING

A Unidimensional Model

In keeping with classic spatial theory, we assume that each legislator has an ideal point in a multidimensional policy space and that each roll call can be represented as a choice between two points in the space--one point representing the policy consequences of a "yea" vote and one point representing the policy consequences of a "nay" vote.³ We denote the position of the i th legislator on the k th dimension as x_{ik}

($i=1, \dots, p$ where p is the number of legislators; $k=1, \dots, s$ where s is the number of dimensions). The positions of the yea and nay outcomes of the l th roll call are denoted as z_{yl} and z_{nl} respectively ($l=1, \dots, t$ where t is the number of roll calls). The distance of the i th legislator to one of the policy outcomes of the l th roll call is:

$$d_{ijl} = \left[\sum_{k=1}^s (x_{ik} - z_{jk})^2 \right]^{1/2}, \quad j = \text{yea, nay} \quad [1]$$

We assume that each legislator has an interval-level quasi-concave utility function which consists of a fixed component and a stochastic component. That is, the utility of legislator i for alternative j on roll call l is given by:

$$U_{ijl} = \beta \exp \left[\frac{-w^2 d_{ijl}^2}{2} \right] + e_{ijl} \quad [2]$$

where β and w are parameters which we estimate, d_{ijl} is as stated in [1], and e_{ijl} are the error terms. For tractability, we assume that the e_{ijl} have a logit (i.e. the log of the inverse exponential; Drhymes, 1978, p. 342) distribution. In Poole and Rosenthal (1983, 1985a), we discuss in detail the NOMINATE program, an iterative, nonlinear, maximum likelihood procedure we developed to estimate the parameters in [1] and [2].⁴ Consequently, we will only sketch how the program works here.

What NOMINATE does is to locate one point representing each legislator and two points for each roll call. These locations are chosen to maximize the likelihood of the observed pattern of voting. Loosely speaking, if a legislator voted yea on a particular roll call, then NOMINATE tries to place this individual closer to the yea outcome point and further away from the nay outcome point.

NOMINATE is an iterative procedure. Given estimates of the spatial location of the legislators, NOMINATE finds, for each roll call, outcome points that maximize the likelihood of the observed pattern of yeas and nays. Similarly, given estimates for all the roll call outcome points, NOMINATE finds, for each legislator, the location vis-a-vis the roll call outcome points, which maximizes the likelihood of the observed pattern of voting by the legislator. An iteration of the procedure consists of estimating new coordinates for the roll calls, using these new coordinates to estimate new coordinates for the legislators, then using all the new coordinates to estimate new values for the utility function parameters (β and w in [2]) common to all the legislators.

When the policy space is unidimensional and voting is always between two policy outcomes with no abstention, then NOMINATE is, in effect, performing Guttman scaling. However, there are crucial differences. NOMINATE locates two policy points per roll call--one corresponding to the policy consequences of a yeas vote and the other corresponding to the policy consequences of a nays vote. In classic Guttman scaling, only one point per roll call is estimated which is, in effect, the midpoint of the yeas and nays policy outcome points. More importantly, the behavioral assumptions underlying the two models are completely different. Guttman scaling was developed for and applied to dominance dimensions. That is, depending upon how the endpoints of the dimension are defined, an item at the end dominates everything to its left (right). For example, if a student can work a difficult physics problem, then the student should be able to work one of moderate difficulty, as well as a simple problem. In terms of a utility model, individuals have monotonically increasing utility functions over the dimension. In contrast, we assume that the policy space consists of *proximity* dimensions over which individuals have single-peaked utility functions. The two models are functionally equivalent when there are only two choices, which is why Guttman scaling has been so widely used in roll call voting studies.

Currently, only a unidimensional version of NOMINATE has been fully implemented. However, we have preliminary results from a procedure that generates starting coordinates for the legislators in two and three dimensions which allows us to address the question of multidimensionality.

In order to study the question of dimensional change during the New Deal realignment period, we performed a unidimensional scaling for every Congress from 1919 to 1984 (the 66th through the 98th). Separate scalings were done

for the House and Senate. When there were enough roll calls (200 or more), we scaled individual years rather than Congresses. This resulted in 47 separate scalings for the Senate and 43 separate scalings for the House.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 display the overall fit of the model stated in [2] to the roll calls for the various congresses/years for the House and Senate. All roll calls with at least 2.5 percent in the minority or better were included in the analysis. To indicate the "fit" of the model we use the percentage of correctly classified votes.⁵ This is computed in the usual way. The legislator is "predicted" to vote for the closest alternative and if that alternative is the same as the actual vote it is a correct classification. Also shown in the tables are the percentages of votes correctly classified by the two-party (Democrat, Republican) and three-party (Northern Democrat, Southern Democrat, Republican) models suggested as benchmarks by Weisberg (1978). These figures are arrived at by determining how the majority of each party voted and simply "predicting" that all members of that party vote for the alternative favored by the party majority.

The unidimensional spatial model fits the roll call data very well. The lowest classification percentages were 77.6 (1933-34) for the Senate and 79.0 (1957-58) for the House. Approximately 1.4 million votes were cast in the Senate between 1919 and 1984. The unidimensional spatial model correctly classifies about 82 percent of these votes. In the House, roughly 4.8 million votes were cast of which about 84 percent were classified correctly.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show that the spatial model is always better than the two-party model. However, in three of the Senate scalings and ten of the House scalings the three-party model correctly classifies a higher percentage of the votes than does the spatial model. This comparison, however, is somewhat misleading. The party models maximize *classifications* while the NOMINATE procedure maximizes *probabilities*. If the roll call coordinates are located so as to maximize classifications--holding the legislator coordinates from NOMINATE fixed--then the classification percentage of the spatial model increases an average of 2.2 percent (Poole and Rosenthal, 1985b).

The classification percentages of the spatial and three-party models are similar because the Southern Democrats after World War II have tended to be more conservative than their northern colleagues and closer to the Republicans (Poole and Rosenthal, 1985b). The much discussed "conservative coalition" of Southern Democrats and

Table 6.1
Overall fit of unidimensional model, 1919-1984, Senate

Year	Total roll calls	Nominate	2-party model	3-party model
1919-20	399	85.1	83.2	83.8
1921-22	731	87.7	85.5	85.7
1923-24	192	81.6	79.0	79.9
1925-26	229	81.3	77.1	77.8
1927-28	185	79.3	76.0	76.8
1929-30	433	83.1	75.7	76.3
1931-32	255	77.9	73.0	73.9
1933-34	224	77.6	75.3	76.0
1935-36	189	77.7	74.0	74.7
1937-38	170	79.4	73.5	76.0
1939-40	259	77.7	75.0	76.3
1941-42	173	78.4	76.2	77.5
1943-44	210	78.4	75.7	78.7
1945-46	237	82.8	76.2	79.2
1947-48	237	84.2	81.4	83.1
1949	230	82.9	79.1	80.6
1950	217	79.4	77.1	79.2
1951-52	304	82.3	78.3	79.8
1953-54	242	82.5	78.9	81.1
1955-56	217	80.4	78.1	79.2
1957-58	255	80.4	76.7	79.5
1959	185	82.3	77.8	80.2
1960	175	80.2	75.5	80.6
1961	191	82.9	76.9	81.0
1962	209	84.9	79.1	81.1
1963	214	82.6	78.5	81.1
1964	291	82.0	73.7	82.5
1965	235	82.0	76.1	79.5
1966	206	83.0	75.8	79.6
1967	268	81.0	77.3	79.8
1968	250	80.0	73.5	77.6
1969	211	80.3	74.5	78.0
1970	345	83.3	74.5	78.7
1971	353	81.7	74.7	78.2
1972	430	82.6	74.8	79.0
1973	499	84.5	78.7	80.5
1974	484	81.0	73.3	76.4
1975	548	83.3	76.6	78.7
1976	596	84.4	76.3	78.7
1977	568	82.3	74.9	77.5
1978	469	83.0	75.9	77.6
1979	448	80.4	76.3	78.0
1980	480	80.5	77.1	78.6
1981	397	83.1	80.9	82.5
1982	421	81.8	79.8	80.5
1983	348	81.1	78.4	79.1
1984	230	82.2	80.0	81.2
Mean		81.632	76.934	79.177
Standard deviation		2.155	2.567	2.286

Table 6.2
Overall fit of unidimensional model, 1919-1984, House

Year	Total roll calls	Nominate	2-party model	3-party model
1919-20	271	83.0	82.3	83.4
1921-22	325	87.5	86.2	86.8
1923-24	164	85.0	82.8	83.7
1925-26	106	83.3	81.1	82.2
1927-28	68	85.1	81.1	82.7
1929-30	98	86.1	84.1	84.8
1931-32	115	80.5	78.2	79.7
1933-34	137	85.3	84.3	84.9
1935-36	206	83.1	82.8	83.3
1937-38	153	80.4	79.6	81.1
1939-40	216	85.1	84.3	85.8
1941-42	126	81.2	80.4	83.5
1943-44	135	84.1	80.9	84.0
1945-46	206	85.9	81.3	85.1
1947-48	146	87.1	84.1	86.2
1949-50	243	82.6	80.1	84.8
1951-52	159	84.8	79.3	82.7
1953-54	120	82.0	79.8	83.2
1955-56	121	80.1	78.7	81.0
1957-58	172	79.0	76.6	80.0
1959-60	162	81.3	79.1	82.7
1961-62	202	85.4	81.7	83.5
1963-64	200	86.4	83.0	84.6
1965	161	86.3	80.0	83.5
1966	143	87.2	81.1	83.8
1967	195	86.5	81.0	84.1
1968	194	84.6	79.0	82.3
1969	140	85.5	78.0	81.6
1970	213	84.1	78.2	81.4
1971	267	83.5	76.9	80.3
1972	260	83.4	76.5	79.8
1973	473	82.5	77.9	80.0
1974	444	83.2	77.9	79.6
1975	536	83.4	78.1	80.5
1976	528	83.7	77.7	80.1
1977	555	83.5	78.5	80.5
1978	662	83.2	79.0	80.2
1979	572	84.2	80.7	81.9
1980	495	84.5	80.7	81.9
1981	281	84.1	79.8	82.1
1982	398	84.1	80.8	83.4
1983	432	85.7	82.0	83.4
1984	351	85.5	82.0	83.2
Mean		84.033	80.356	82.572
Standard deviation		1.971	2.285	1.899

Republicans is quite consistent with a simple unidimensional model of voting. In addition, in those years when civil rights for Blacks formed a significant portion of the congressional agenda (e.g. 1964), the Southern Democrats were opposed by a coalition of Northern Democrats and Republicans (a "Civil War" coalition). This situation is consistent with a unidimensional model in which the Republicans are located between the two wings of the Democratic party. This is in fact what our estimates show.

In sum, as the civil rights example shows, it is quite possible that a unidimensional model would fit the separate congresses/years well but the recovered dimension could be different between scalings. We now turn to an examination of the stability of the unidimensional model over time.

Unidimensional Stability: 1919-1984

In Poole and Rosenthal (1985b) and Poole and Daniels (1985), a method developed by Poole (1983) is used to link the separate scalings. We will only briefly sketch the method and the results here because the issues associated with its use are discussed in detail in the cited papers. In our regional analysis in the next section we use the linked coordinates from Poole and Rosenthal (1985b).

In our model that links the separate scalings we assume that, over time, the expected change in any legislator's position is zero. We assume that the legislators are located in a common low dimensional space and that what we observe yearly is a linear mapping from that unobserved space plus some random error. That is,

$$x_{it} = c_i + w_i'x_i + v_{it} \quad [3]$$

where x_{it} is the scaled coordinate from the t -th scaling, c_i and w_i are the linear mapping, x_i is legislator i 's vector location in the common space, and v_{it} is an error term with mean zero. In order to obtain stable estimates of the parameters, only those legislators appearing in six or more scalings were used in the estimation of [3]. Therefore, in order to track distributions using all the legislators over time, we must first map the individual scalings onto the

common space. We accomplish this by transforming each x_{it} by the inverse of the linear map for its scaling. For example, in one dimension this produces:

$$x_{it}^* = [1/w_i][x_{it} - c_i] \quad [4]$$

The x^* values are the linked coordinates.

The overall fit of the model stated in [3] to the Senate and House scalings was very good. For the Senate, a one dimensional common space accounted for 86.5 percent of the variance while a two dimensional space accounted for 93.6 percent. The corresponding figures for the House were 92.1 and 95.5 percent respectively. The addition of a third dimension had almost no effect.

The fits for the one dimensional model are striking given the 66 year time span of the data. What this result basically implies is that there is a persistent character to the left-right or liberal-conservative conflict in American politics. In Poole and Rosenthal (1985b) we analyze the deviations from this highly stable unidimensional pattern and find that they are almost entirely due to civil rights controversies which emerged during the Second World War. The dimension was stable throughout the New Deal realignment period. The great changes in the type of policies enacted by Congress beginning in the early 1930s were due to the massive member replacement during those years which shifted the center of gravity on the liberal-conservative dimension sharply to the left.

Although we find a basic, and persistent, stability in the alignment of legislators vis-a-vis one another, this does not imply that the liberal/conservative content of specific issues as embodied in roll call votes has the same persistent, stable character. In fact, issues evolve and change greatly in their liberal/conservative character--even to the point of flip-flopping on the dimension. For example, protective tariffs were championed by conservatives and free trade by liberals in the 1920s. In 1985, it is just the opposite. As another example, consider the Equal Rights Amendment. When it was sent to the states in 1972 there was a broad consensus backing it. It passed in many states by voice vote. However, by 1973, due to the efforts of Phyllis Schlafly, it was beginning to be interpreted as a liberal versus conservative issue. By 1980, the Republican

party dropped its traditional support for the amendment from its platform. In sum, the basic liberal/conservative lineup of legislators stays the same. What can change is the liberal/conservative interpretation of an issue.

A Multidimensional Model: Some Preliminary Results

Although the evidence for unidimensionality is quite strong, it is based upon an analysis of separate unidimensional scalings. Unfortunately, two and three dimensional versions of NOMINATE are not yet available. However, methods exist which produce spatial maps of legislators (or roll calls--but not both at once) by scaling agreement scores or interest group ratings.⁶ These maps can then be used to study the underlying dimensional structure of voting. For example, Poole and Daniels (1985) apply metric unfolding methods (Poole, 1982; 1984) to interest group ratings of the members of the House and Senate over the 1959-1980 period. They find that a one-dimensional spatial model accounts for over 80 percent of the variance in the 190,000 ratings in their analysis.⁷ A weak, but nonetheless persistent, second dimension associated with party unity exists in the ratings. It accounts for less than 7 percent of the variance and primarily serves to separate the Southern and Northern Democrats.

The party unity dimension is not an artifact of the interest group ratings. The two-dimensional spatial maps estimated from the interest groups ratings by Poole and Daniels for the 1971-1978 Senates are almost identical to those produced by Hoadley (1980) from a nonmetric multidimensional scaling (Kruskal, 1964a; 1964b) of agreement scores computed between Senators.

In addition, we have found the same second dimension through the use of a new metric scaling procedure that will be utilized in future time-series and multidimensional versions of NOMINATE. In this procedure, implemented on a Control Data Cyber 205, we simultaneously estimated the common space coordinates (the x_i vectors of [3]) in one, two, and three dimensions for all Senators who served in the 33 Congresses (66th through 98th) between 1919 and 1984. In effect, we computed 33 agreement score matrices and performed metric multidimensional scaling (Poole, 1984) on them simultaneously to obtain coordinates for the 662 unique Senators who served during the time period. One dimension accounted for about 59 percent of the variance in

the approximately 165,000 unique agreement scores, two dimensions 69 percent, and three dimensions 71 percent. The average r-square with the NOMINATE separate unidimensional scalings was .83 (std. dev. .11). The pattern of the r-squares was very similar to those produced by fitting [3] to the Senate scalings--the congresses/years (e.g. 1960, 1964) with low r-squares tended to have a large number of roll calls on civil rights.

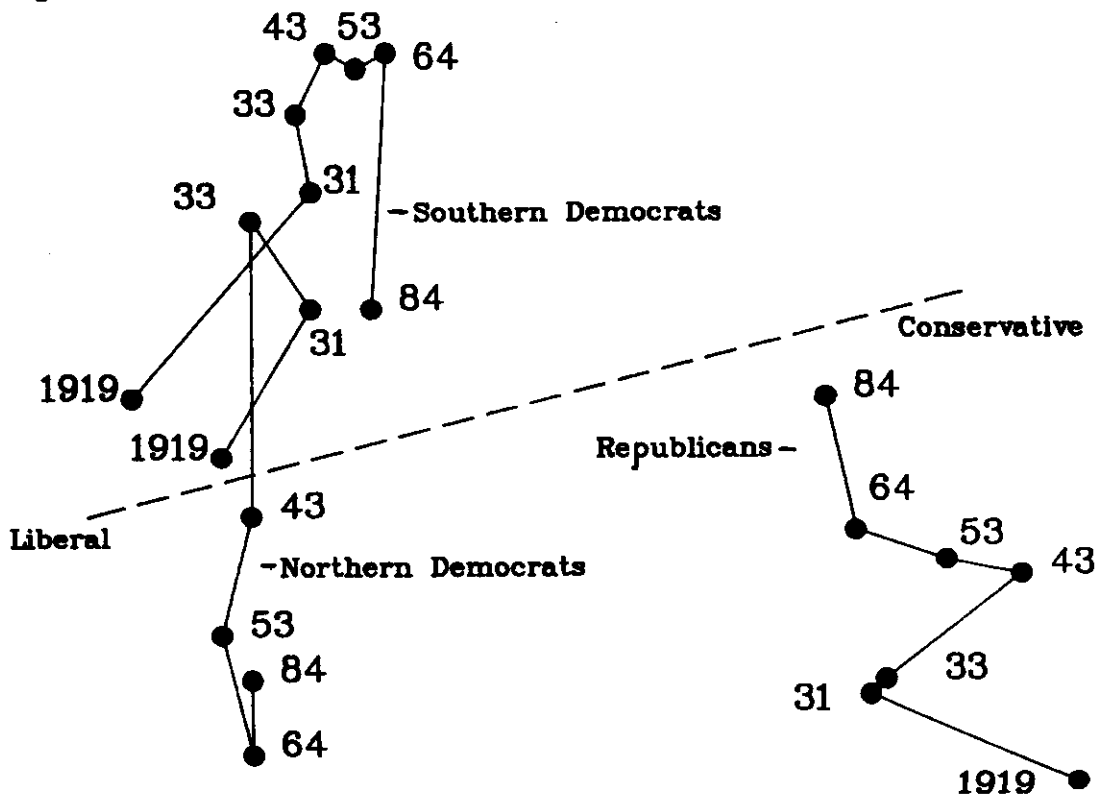
Figure 6.1 shows the two-dimensional locations of Northern Democrats, Southern Democrats, and Republicans for selected years. Immediately after World War I, the two wings of the Democratic party were not significantly different. In fact, the Southern Democrats were more liberal than their Northern colleagues (Poole and Rosenthal, 1985b; and Figures 6.2 and 6.3 below). The two wings stayed fairly close together through the mid 1930s but by 1943 the separation was considerable. The drift continued through the 1950s reaching a peak separation in the middle 1960s before closing somewhat through the 1970s and 1980s.

Although all the evidence is not yet in, a few tentative conclusions are possible. First, the underlying spatial structure of Congressional voting is, at most, two-dimensional. Second, the two-dimensional structure appeared after, not during, the New Deal. Third, the second dimension, which is considerably weaker than the first, serves mainly to separate Northern from Southern Democrats. We now turn to an analysis of the unidimensional linked coordinates.

REGIONAL CHANGES IN CONGRESSIONAL VOTING: 1919-1984

Figures 6.2 and 6.3 show the mean positions of Democrats, Republicans, and all legislators in the Senate and House on the liberal-conservative dimension over time. The same pattern of movement in the overall means is evident for both Houses. The most conservative period was immediately after World War I. The massive influx of Democrats due to the Great Depression shifted the overall mean to the left, followed by a movement back to the right during the 1940s and 1950s. Beginning with the 1958 elections, the mean moves back to the left and stays relatively stable until Reagan's election in 1980. These movements of the grand mean are due primarily to shifts in the partisan balance but, as suggested by the patterns

Figure 6.1 Two-Dimensional Change in the U.S. Senate, 1919 - 1984



revealed by Figure 6.1, they are in part due to internal changes within the parties as well.⁸

Figures 6.4 and 6.5 show changes in the mean liberal-conservative positions of legislators from selected regions over time. We focus our attention on the three regions of the country where the most change occurred--the Southern states, the Mountain West, and the Northeast.⁹

The Northeast has undergone a dramatic change in the character of its congressional delegation since World War I. The delegation has become much smaller and more liberal. The region lost nearly a quarter of its seats in the House of Representatives due to reapportionment. In addition, it changed from being the most conservative region of the country to the most liberal. This, in large part, reflected the partisan change of the region. In 1919 the party ratio was about 7 to 3 in favor of the Republicans but by 1984 the party ratio was about 6 to 4 in favor of the Democrats. The shift to the left occurred in two phases. First, a sharp shift in the early years of the New Deal followed by a long period of relative stability which lasted until the elections of 1958; and second, another sharp shift over the 1959-1965 period followed again by a period of relative stability which still persists.

Figures 6.6 and 6.7 show that the leftward movement of the Northeast was due both to the replacement of Republicans by Democrats as well as to the replacement of conservative Republicans by more moderate Republicans. Both parties moved left from the Depression until the late 1960s. In recent years, the Republicans in both the House and Senate have begun to move back to the right. The pattern of movement in the Senate is considerably choppy due to the effects of civil rights in the 1960s, but the overall trends are about the same.

The changes that have occurred in the South are nearly a mirror image of those of the Northeast. In 1919 all the Southern senators were Democrats, and there were only ten Republicans among the 131 Southern representatives. By 1983, the Senate delegation was almost evenly split between Republicans and Democrats (12 and 14 respectively) and 30 percent of the representatives were Republicans (39 out of a total of 130). At the beginning of the period, the South was the most liberal region of the country. This persisted into the early years of World War II. In 1943-44 a large number of roll calls occurred on the issue of voting rights for Blacks serving in the armed forces. Other than scattered votes on anti-lynching legislation, this marked

Figure 6.2
Means of liberal-conservative positions in U.S. Senate, 1919-1984

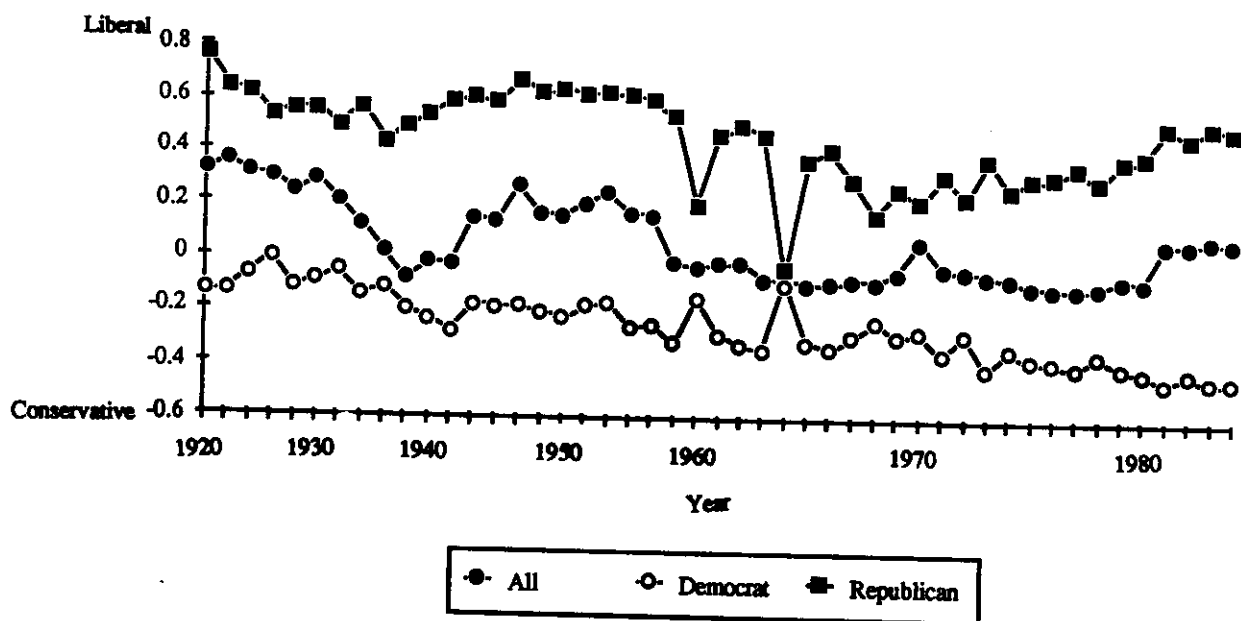


Figure 6.3
Means of liberal-conservative position in U.S. Senate, 1919-1984

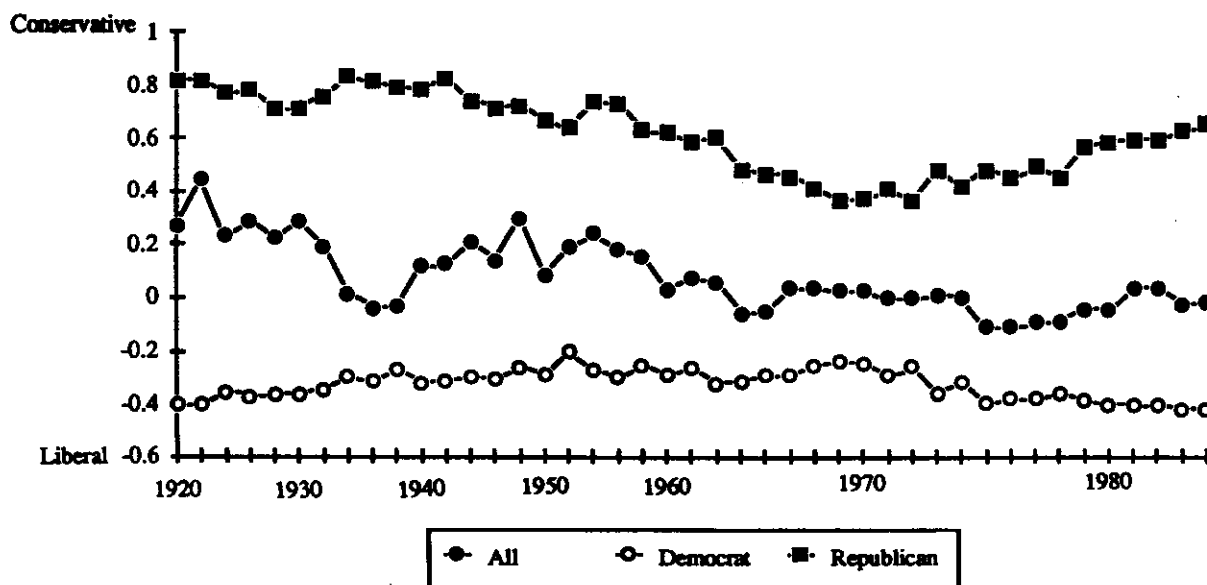


Figure 6.4
Means of liberal-conservative positions in U.S. Senate, 1919-1984

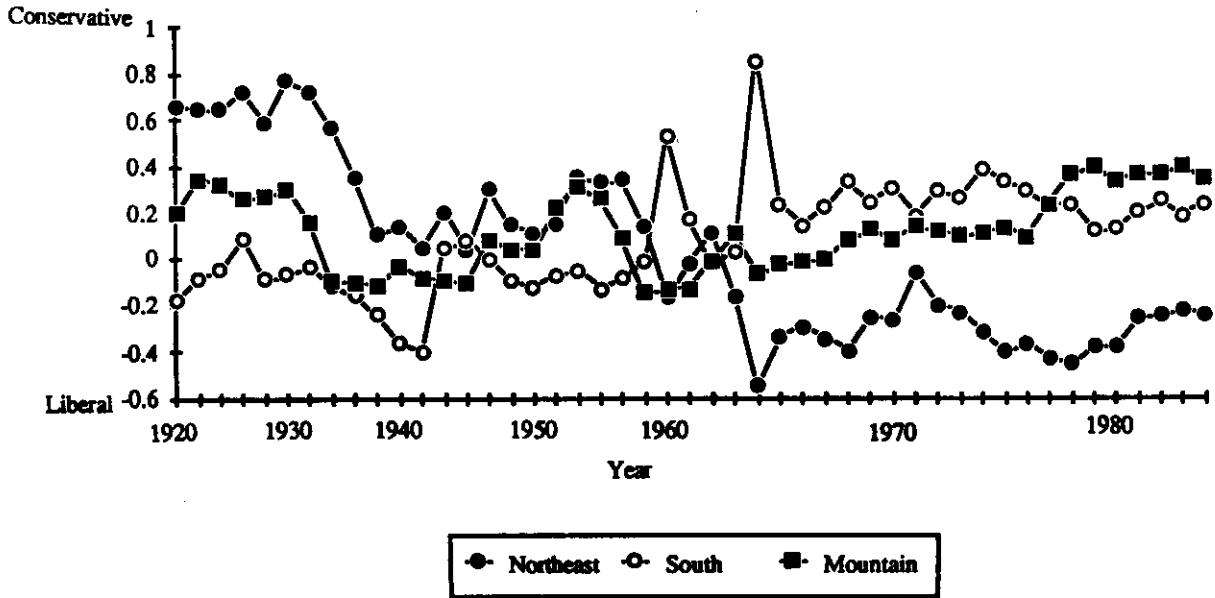


Figure 6.5
Means of liberal-conservative positions in U.S. House, 1919-1984

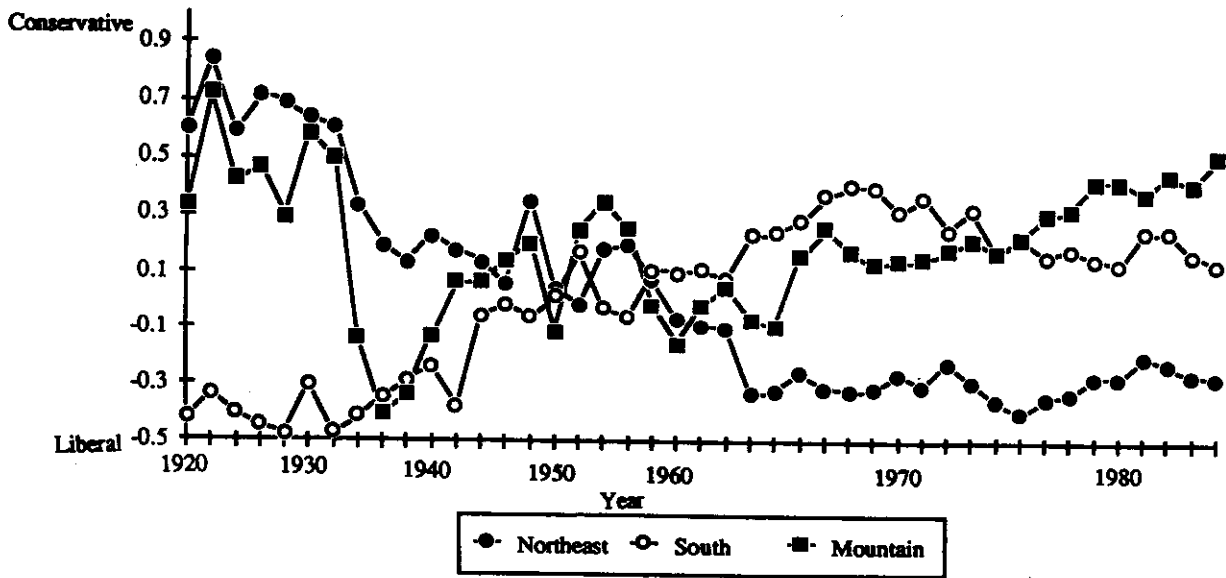


Figure 6.6
Means of liberal-conservative positions in U.S. Senate-Northeast, 1919-1984

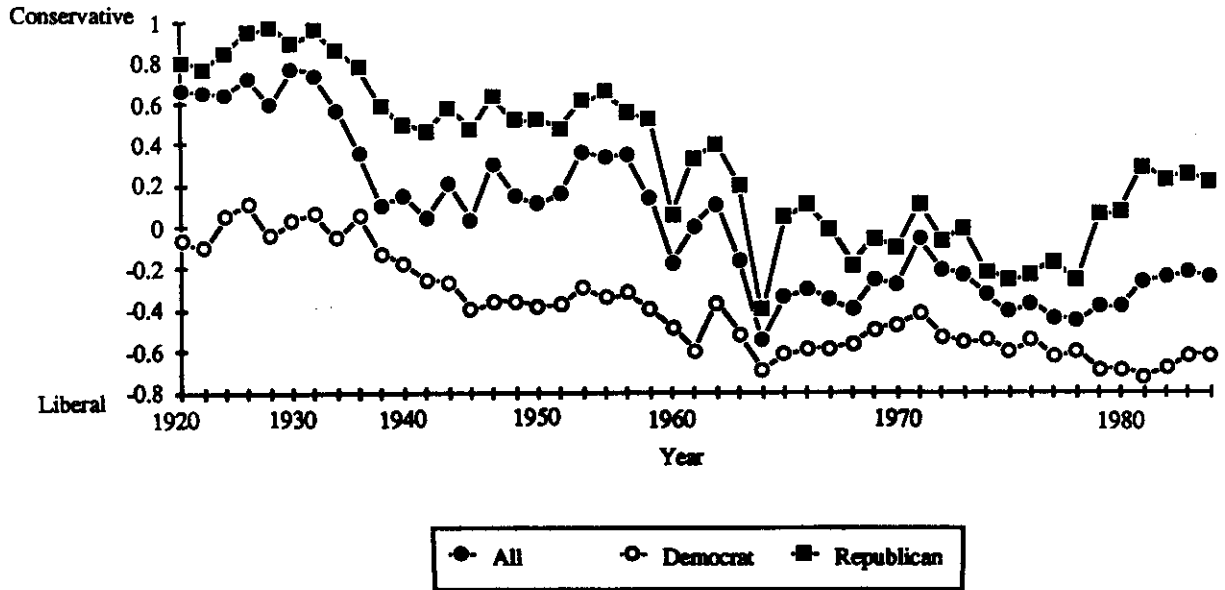
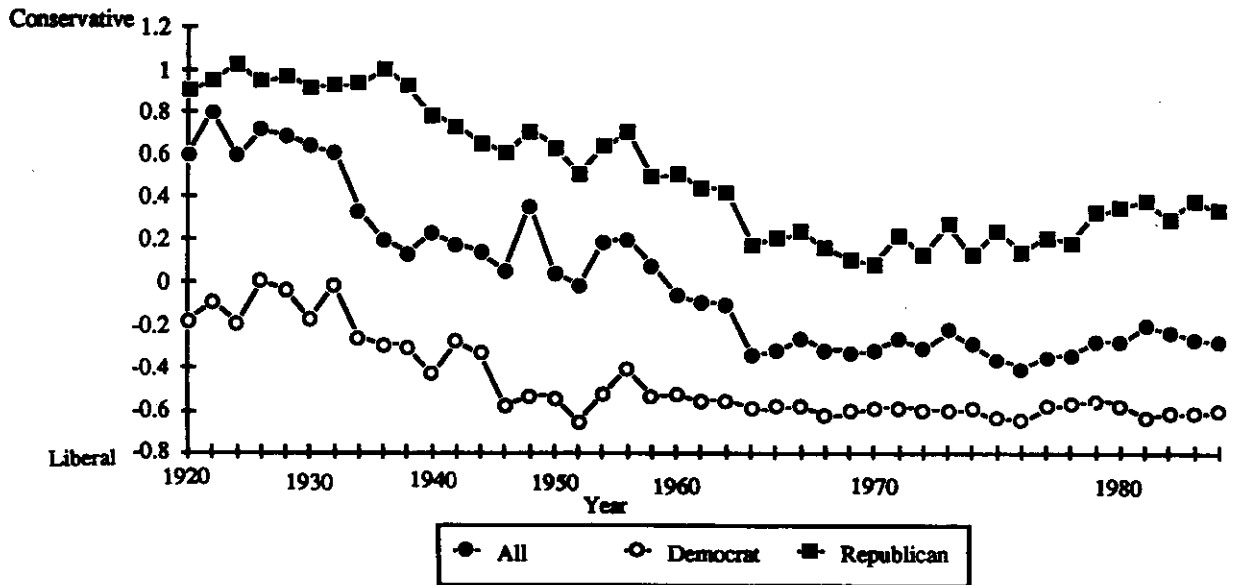


Figure 6.7
Means of liberal-conservative positions in U.S. House-Northeast, 1919-1984



the first appearance in a substantial way of civil rights on the congressional agenda after World War I. As Figures 6.4 and 6.5 show, it induced a sharp shift to the right by the congressional delegation from the South. A period of stability followed and persisted until the mid-1960s when the civil rights ferment of those years produced another sharp shift to the right. The substantial "spikes" in the Senate (Figure 6.4) are due to the large number of roll calls taken on amendments to civil rights bills in 1960 and 1964.

However, unlike the steady liberal trend of the Northeast, particularly in the House, the conservative trend of Southern members of Congress came to a halt in the 1960s. A less intensive civil rights agenda in the seventies and the eighties and the enfranchisement of Southern blacks has resulted in a liberal shift of Southern Democrats (Bullock, 1981). This shift shows up clearly in Figures 6.8 and 6.9. As a result, even with the increase in the number of Republicans who remain staunchly conservative, the Southern delegation has become slightly more liberal (see also Figure 6.1).

In contrast to the Northeast and the South, the Mountain West has not exhibited a consistent change over the 1919-84 period either in the relative strength of the two parties or in the ideological makeup of the delegation. The West in 1919 was moderately conservative but by 1984 it was the most conservative delegation in Congress. In between, substantial shifts occurred. The delegation shifted sharply to the left during the New Deal, then back to the right during the late 1940s and early 1950s, then back to the left again in the late 1950s. Since then, however, there has been a persistent movement to the right.

Figures 6.10 and 6.11 show that this movement to the right since the late 1950s is due, in both Houses, to the increase in the number of Republicans. In the Senate, the conservative shift is due to Republicans replacing Democrats. In the House, both replacement and reapportionment--the new seats were usually won by Republicans--were responsible. Moreover, the new Republicans in the House were much more Republican than their predecessors, so much so that Mountain House Republicans are now much more conservative than their Southern counterparts.

In recent years--since the late 1970s--this continuing shift to the right in the Mountain West has been accompanied by an increasing polarization of the two political parties. By 1984, the ideological gap between Democrats and

Figure 6.8
Means of liberal-conservative positions in U.S. Senate-South, 1919-1984

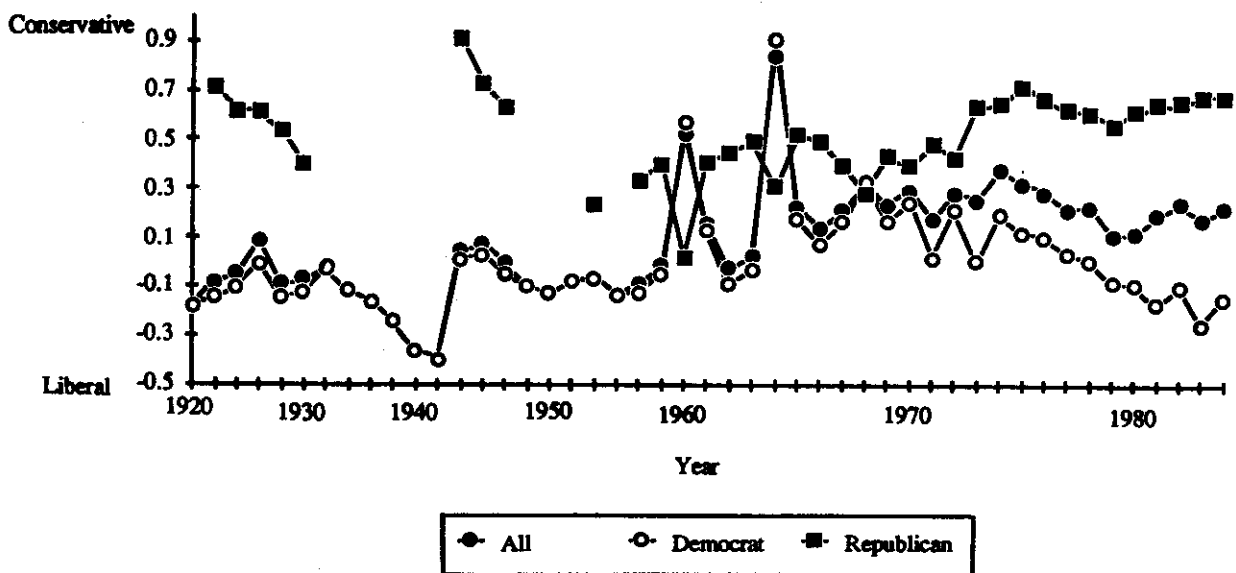


Figure 6.9
Means of liberal-conservative positions in U.S. House-South, 1919-1984

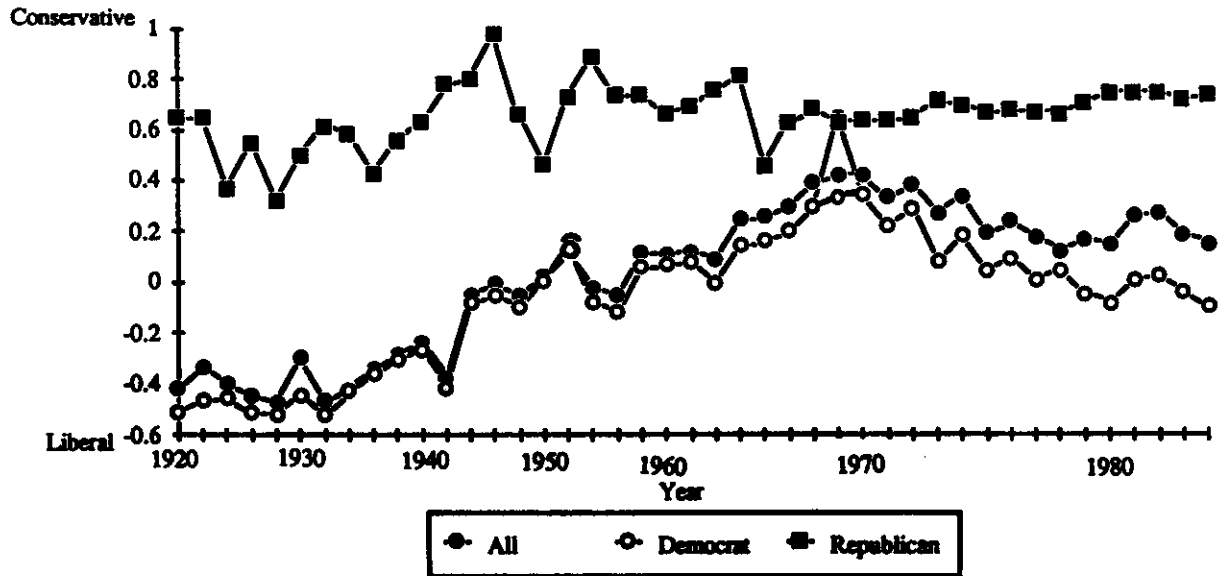


Figure 6.10
Means of liberal-conservative positions in U.S. Senate-Mountain, 1919-1984

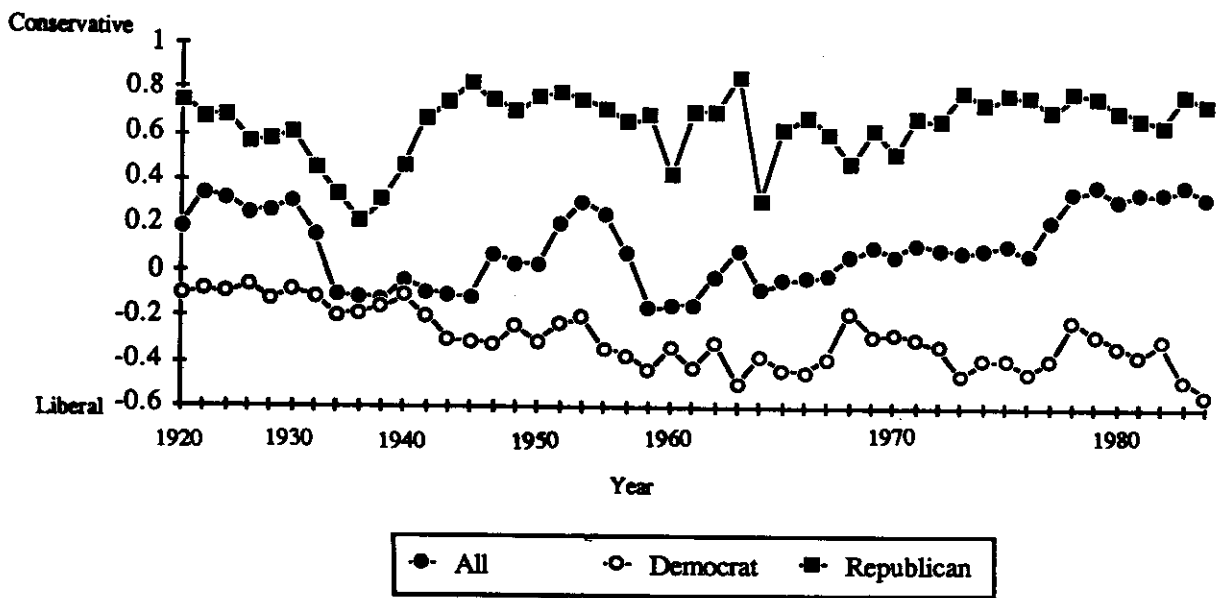
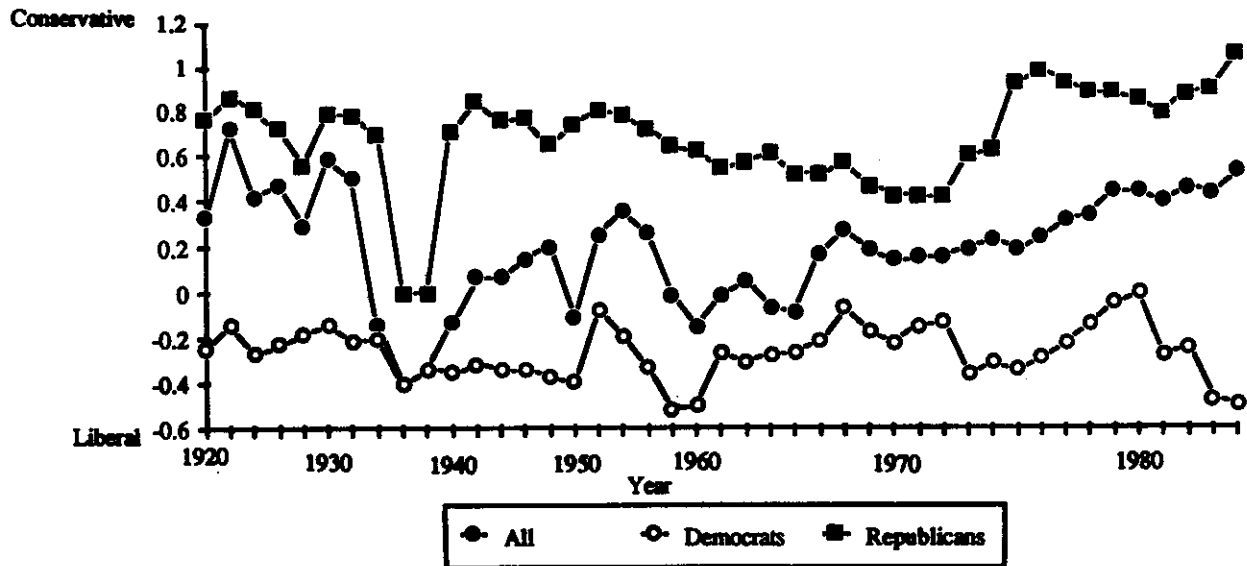


Figure 6.11
Means of liberal-conservative positions in U.S. House-Mountain, 1919-1984



Republicans from the Mountain West was matched only by the highly polarized delegation from the Pacific Coast region (California, Oregon, Washington). Figure 6.12 shows the polarization (Republican mean minus Democratic mean) of the Senate delegations from the Northeast and Mountain West (the South is not shown because of the small number of Republican Senators throughout the early period of our analysis). Figure 6.13 shows the polarization of the House delegations. The sharp increase in an already high level of polarization of the Mountain West delegations in recent years is striking. We speculate that this high level of polarization is probably due in part to the contentiousness of natural resource and development issues which are particularly important in the West. It will take a much more detailed analysis than is possible here to clearly identify the reasons for the polarization.

CONCLUSION

What are we to make of these regional changes? A simple—but facile—explanation for the patterns shown in Figures 6.4 and 6.5 is the frostbelt/sunbelt dichotomy that has been the subject of so much media attention in the last few years. The Northeast is declining economically while the South and West are dynamic and growing. By this argument, areas in economic decline will elect more legislators who favor government intervention in the economy (Democrats) while areas that are dynamic economically will elect more legislators who favor less government regulation (Republicans). While we think there is much truth to this argument, we will not press it here. The failure of the South to follow the conservative shift of the Mountain West since 1970 indicates that economic growth by itself will not explain regional changes on the dimension. To unravel the puzzle of regional change requires more sophisticated research modeling the linkage between Congressional voting, economic change, and electoral outcomes.

ENDNOTES

¹For an excellent discussion of the emergence of the modern, mass-based political party in American politics, see Hofstadter (1969).

²In the words of Sundquist (1983, p. 204): "The Hoover of 1928 may have been a moderate centrist, in the political spectrum of that time, but in four years of

calamity the whole spectrum moved sharply to the left. By 1932 the center had slipped from under the President and had stranded him, his heels still dug in, at the extreme. And his party, save for its insurgent minority, was stranded with him."

³Following standard practice in roll call studies, we treated pairs and announced positions as votes.

⁴Pooler and Rosenthal (1983) is available on request.

⁵See Pooler and Rosenthal (1985b) for an alternative evaluation of fit that leads to similar substantive conclusions.

⁶For an excellent survey of these techniques see Wasberg (1968).

⁷Kritzer (1978) applied factor analysis to sets of interest group ratings of the 91st and 98th House of Representatives and found "a clear unidimensional structure" (p. 496).

⁸For a further discussion of these issues, see Pooler and Rosenthal, 1984; 1985.

⁹We defined the regions as follows. The South consists of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Oklahoma. The Mountain West consists of Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana. The Northeast consists of Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Maryland, and West Virginia. We have also analyzed the Pacific Coast (California, Oregon, Washington) and Midwest (the remaining continental states). The Pacific Coast most clearly resembles the Mountain West but is less conservative. The Midwest has throughout our time series been representative of national averages.

Figure 6.12
Polarization in the Senate, 1919-1984

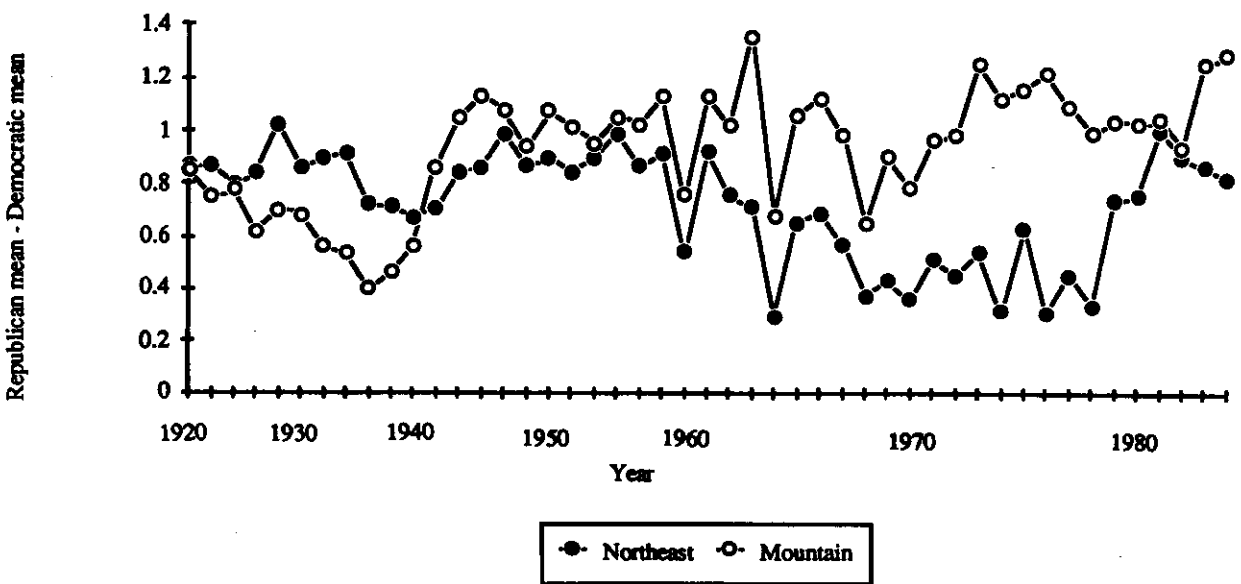


Figure 6.13
Polarization in the House, 1919-1984

