Restrictive Rules and Representative Outcomes

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Abstract

Two distinct phenomena have accompanied the new era of mass and elite polarization. First, in accordance with Conditional Party Government, lawmaking has become fundamentally more polarizing. In particular, the rules used to pass major legislation have become more restrictive, and their usage has grown dramatically. Second, traditionally aggregate analysis has shifted to the party identification sub-level. Theory originally thought to apply uniformly to all individuals is now recast as operating differently for Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. This analysis applies both of these arguments to the study of aggregate representation. In particular, it analyzes how restrictive rules affect the quality of representation of partisan sub-groups, especially as restrictive lawmaking increases. I find that the general quality of dynamic representation is the same for each partisan group. Partisan sub-groups do, however, seem to respond differently in their policy preferences to changes in polarization and lawmaking strategies over time.

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Introduction

The study of representation is a core interest in democratic government. Specifically, individuals want to believe that democratic representatives act, at least broadly, to enact their preferences into law. Political science provides quite a bit of evidence on this question, most of it positive. At the dyadic level (Member of Congress to constituency, such as Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002), across different issues (Miller and Stokes 1963; Hurley and Hill 2003), and in the aggregate (Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995), representation exists in some form or another. Representation may be better on some issues than others (Hill and Hurley 1999), to some constituencies than others (Griffin and Newman 2005), or may take a lagged functional form (Wlezien 1995), but it is largely found to exist.

What we do not know, however, is how representation has changed as polarization has changed. Virtually all work in political science agrees that elite polarization has surged in the last twenty years (Poole and Rosenthal 2007), and other work suggests that mass ideologies have also diverged (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008). It certainly seems likely that these changes in ideology should have demonstrable effects on the quality of representation.

One such path for these effects is through lawmaking. The resurgence of polarization has led to a broad growth in the use of restrictive rules in passing major legislation (Duff and Rohde 2012). The use of these rules could have the clear effect of increasing representation for some partisan subgroups over others.

This study aims to answer this question. In particular, I use novel data on rules and polarization to investigate how patterns of representation change with polarization. On the upside, polarization does not seem to preclude the representation of any particular partisan group, including Independents. Though the quality of that representation may decline, the

general pattern of representation still seems to exist. However, it is apparent that the use of rules is not unbiased. For Republicans in particular, restrictive rules help to shift policy outcomes toward Republican policy demands, often at the expense of others.

Literature Review and Theory

Representation can arise in a variety of ways, and the quality of that emergent representation can vary significantly. Political science, working at least since the seminal cross-sectional work of Miller and Stokes (1963), has provided a wide variety of evidence for policy representation by the United States House of Representatives. Most important for the analysis at hand is that this representation is often unequal. Most notably, representation often skews towards co-partisans (Hurley and Hill 2003). Adams, Bishin, and Dow (2004, 348) find that voters prefer and electorally reward when candidates present non-centrist positions on issues, though there is some concern that too much ideological extremity (in the view of the district) can hurt Members (Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002).

While we have evidence that representation exists at the dynamic, global level, between broadly aggregated public preferences and broadly considered government policy outputs (for instance Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002), we have little research on how this process has changed as the political environment has changed. Most notably, it is easiest to represent public opinion when most members of the public aggregate to a single, well defined policy preference, and most Members can compromise to create policy that reflects that interest. Recall: only a single policy is created for all individuals. Both of those realities, however, have shifted dramatically. Individuals in the mass public are possibly becoming more ideologically extreme on the basis of party identification (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008). At the very least, they are becoming more consistent in their policy

preferences on the basis of their party identification (Levendusky 2009). Accordingly, it is more disingenuous to aggregate over all of their preferences and establish a single, representative policy average to be represented in the traditional dynamic, demand-input model. Instead, we have multiple, separate subgroups demanding increasingly different types of policy, often mutually exclusive. Our tests of the quality of representation should reflect these differences, especially if we know that dyadic representation often skews towards co-partisans.

Politicians are also becoming more ideologically extreme. Across any given measure, Members of Congress are growing more divided on the basis of party identification (Fleisher and Bond 2004). This exacerbates the problem of representation. Not only is it harder to establish the aggregate public position to be represented, but politicians themselves are less likely to compromise to represent such an aggregate position, even if it existed. Instead, they are more likely to demand extreme positions and extreme policy alternatives, possibly hurting the quality of representation.

Additionally, we are certainly aware the increasing elite polarization also fundamentally affects the process by which laws are actually made. Moreover, these effects explicitly make it more difficult to derive the general representational benefit usually uncovered in dynamic representation models. Specifically, elite polarization (the majority party becoming more homogenous, especially relative to the minority party, and the two parties becoming increasingly separated in an ideological space) leads to fundamentally more polarized lawmaking, in accordance with Conditional Party Government (CPG). CPG traces back to the works of Rohde (1991) and Aldrich (1995). Rohde (1991) summarizes the intertwined nature of both party and leadership (162-163). Electoral victories produce different types of party caucuses, akin to the "external" factors of Brady, Cooper, and Hurley (1979). When majority-party caucuses are particularly homogeneous, especially relative to a heterogeneous minority party, party members are expected to delegate considerable

powers to the party leadership. These powers are consensually expected to be used to achieve partisan legislative ends. The importance of party leadership in achieving partisan ends has been noted before in past research (Cooper and Brady 1981).

Generally, the willingness of members of Congress (MCs) to delegate authority and power to the leadership varies predictably over time. Specifically, it varies according to the "condition" of conditional party government: the degree of homogeneity within the majority party, relative to the minority party, and the amount of policy separation between the two (Aldrich, Rohde, and Tofias 2004, 3; Aldrich and Rohde 1998, 5; Aldrich and Rohde 2001, 5; Rohde and Aldrich 2010, 236).[1] Satisfaction of this condition should offer three consequences: increased leadership powers, an expectation of the party to use those powers, and subsequent partisan legislation as a result of using those powers (Aldrich and Rohde 1998, 5; Aldrich, Rohde, and Tofias 2004, 3; Aldrich, Rohde, and Tofias 2007, 103).[2] Each of these consequences explicitly affects the potential relationship between aggregate preferences and policy outcomes. Party control of the institution during polarized time periods might fundamentally shift policy outcomes away from the floor median, as parties use rules and other leadership powers to pursue firmly partisan legislation.

A variety of evidence has been marshalled in support of the theory. Rohde (1991) demonstrates how resurgent partisanship in the House was a cause of increased homogeneity, increased leadership, and leader orientations. Aldrich (2011) shows how, as more extreme MCs arrive in the House,[3] party voting and partisan legislation increase, especially through the use of special rules in legislation. Rohde and Aldrich (2010) describe broadly the various institutional changes within the House since the mid-twentieth cen-

[1] Fortunately, this consistency offers two fairly well defined concepts that can be measured easily (with a review of potential measures as early as Brady, Cooper, and Hurley 1979).

[2] It is possible to imagine other theoretically implied outcomes, such as partisan organization of committees (Aldrich and Battista 2002). But I focus on the three major outcomes, as consistently defined by the original authors of the theory.

[3] The "electoral connection" of CPG is elaborated in Aldrich and Rohde (2001).

tury and relate them to changes in the level of CPG. Yet even despite the preponderance of evidence demonstrating changing methods of lawmaking, we hae little evidence on how these changing patterns of lawmaking affect the changing relationship of representation over time. Even though we are fairly certain of changing elite and mass polarization, we haven't yet tested the changing channels of representation.

Only a single study attempts to disentangle these potential effects. Ura and Ellis (2012) attempt to measure policy preferences by partisan subgroup explicitly, jettisoning the idea of a single aggregate preference to be represented globally. They find that each of the partisan moods—Republican, Democratic, and Independent—is responsive to macro conditions (like the economy). The main difference between the parties is their responses to policy choices despite parallel responses to conditions. Partisan subgroups perceive policy alternatives differently, and they adjust their preferences in non-identical ways when evaluating those policies.

The patterns described above have logical implications for the quality of representation that could emerge as polarization increases. Two ideas are immediately apparent. First, policy could potentially shift from being representative to aggregate policy preferences (of the whole public in the average) to being more representative of specific partisan preferences. As polarization increases, more issues might become party defining, leading to an electoral benefit of representation of co-partisans over partisans *or* better representation on the basis of broader belief-sharing. No matter the mechanism, representatives might become more responsive to their co-partisans as polarization increases.

Second, a main driver of that process should be the increasing partisan use of rules, especially restrictive ones on major legislation, as a normal pattern of lawmaking. On this point, Conditional Party Government is clear. The as the "condition" of CPG becomes more satisfied, meaning, broadly, that as the parties become more polarized, the majority party is increasingly empowered to use restrictive rules to accomplish party goals. In light

of the first theoretical expectation, these rules could be used to increasingly represent the policy preferences of co-partisans over partisans. The above discussion implies that these effects might be conditional on one another. That is, the use of rules might be exclusively devoted to representing co-partisan mood. As preferences shift to become more extreme, rules might be used to represent those changes in preferences. Generally, then, we are left with three theoretical expectations.

First: as polarization increases, policy representation should shift from representing aggregate preferences of all individuals to representing aggregate preferences of the co-partisans of the majority party.

Second: as polarization increases, restrictive rules should increasingly be used to shift policy outputs towards the preferences of the majority party.

Third: as polarization increases, restrictive rules should especially be used to shift policy outputs towards the preferences of the majority party as its co-partisan, mass preferences grow to be more extreme in the direction of the majority party (Democrats becoming more liberal and Republicans more conservative). That is, the representational benefit of restrictive rules is conditional on mass policy preferences moving to become more extreme.

The analyses presented here are simply a first cut at examining these potential relationships. What follows makes use of the data and time periods available, which, unfortunately, are quite limited. In addition, the specifications of the models that follow are limited by the availability of the data. I encourage discussion and ideas on all of these points. I turn to a description of that data in the next section.

Data and Methods

The theory above suggests three key data series are required to test these expectations. The first is a measure of the use of rules over time. The database of special rules comes from the rules identified by the Political Institutions and Public Choice dataset (Rohde 2010), extended from 1947 to 2012. These data code all recorded votes on rules issued by the Rules Committee, as identified by *Congressional Quarterly*. I supplemented this initial coding by evaluating all recorded votes in *Congressional Quarterly* to determine if the recorded vote was taken on a rule. For each of the rules identified, I obtained the full text of the corresponding House Resolution from either the *Congressional Record* (through Proquest Congressional, 1947-1989) or THOMAS (from 1990-2012). The total number of rules collected is 2,413, accounting for rules that were defeated and reintroduced once amended. The series is shown in Figure 1.

The measure of polarization comes from Wood and Jordan (2011). In particular, the data use inflation-adjusted ADA scores to simulate distributions of Republicans and Democrats in the House over time. The measure of polarization is the amount of overlap between the two distributions. It ranges from zero (complete overlap) to one (no distributional overlap). This measure has been found to be robust to alternative measures of ideology and broadly consistent with other measures of polarization. The series is presented in Figure 2.

The measure of policy is borrowed from Ramirez (2013). In general, we desire a way to measure how ideological the major outputs of the House are in any given year. To capture ideological votes, I first record all votes designated as ideological by the ADA and the American Conservative Union (ACU). I then record all *Congressional Quarterly* "key votes," a set of the most important votes taken by the House each year as determined by the non-partisan contributors to that volume. Lastly, I match recorded ideological votes to the

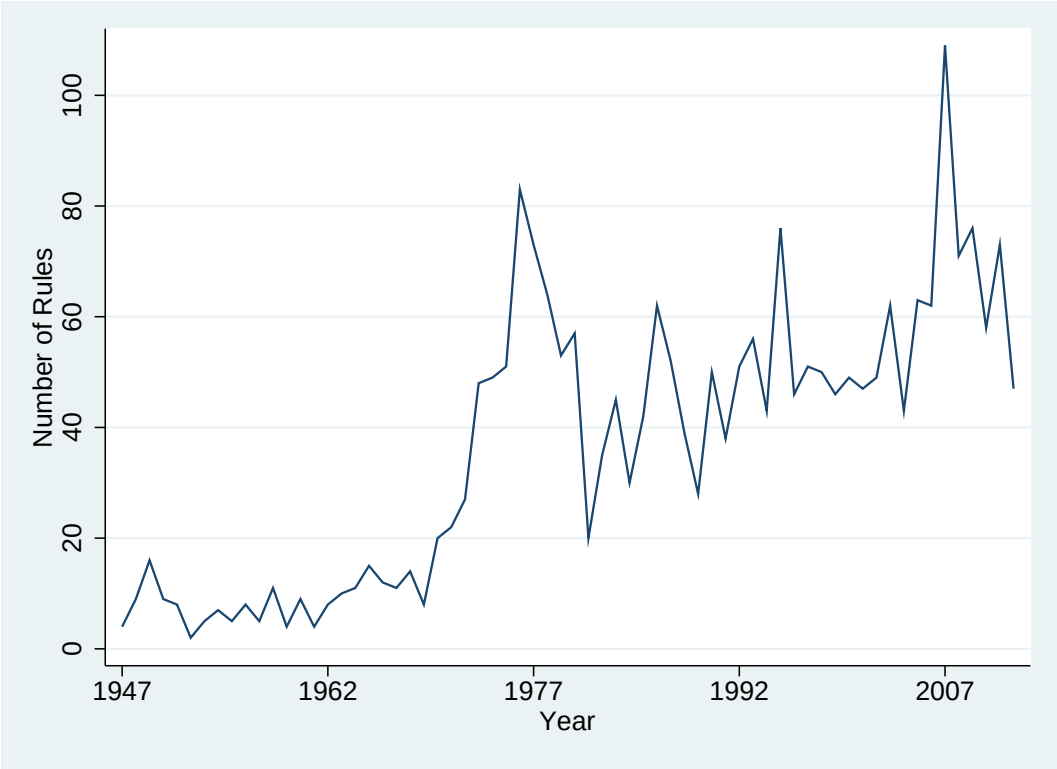

Figure 1: Number of Rules over Time.

non-partisan key votes. A key vote is counted as having an ideological direction if either of the interest group scores recorded it as such. The final measure of policy outputs, then, is the percent of key votes that were ideological in any given direction.[4] This represents the continuous nature of the direction of policy. The series is shown in Figure 3.

We also need a measure of preferences. The preferences of partisan subgroups are borrowed from Ura and Ellis (2012). In particular, they collect policy preferences on *Mood*-like indicators from the General Social Survey and then disaggregate them by party identification. For information on the validation of those measures, as well as their general movements, see Ura and Ellis (2012). As they use GSS data, those series begin in 1972. The measure of "full" policy preferences is the classic *Mood* from Stimson (1999), updated

[4]Ramirez (2013) found this measure to have strong construct validity with regards to policy movement and public demand for policy.

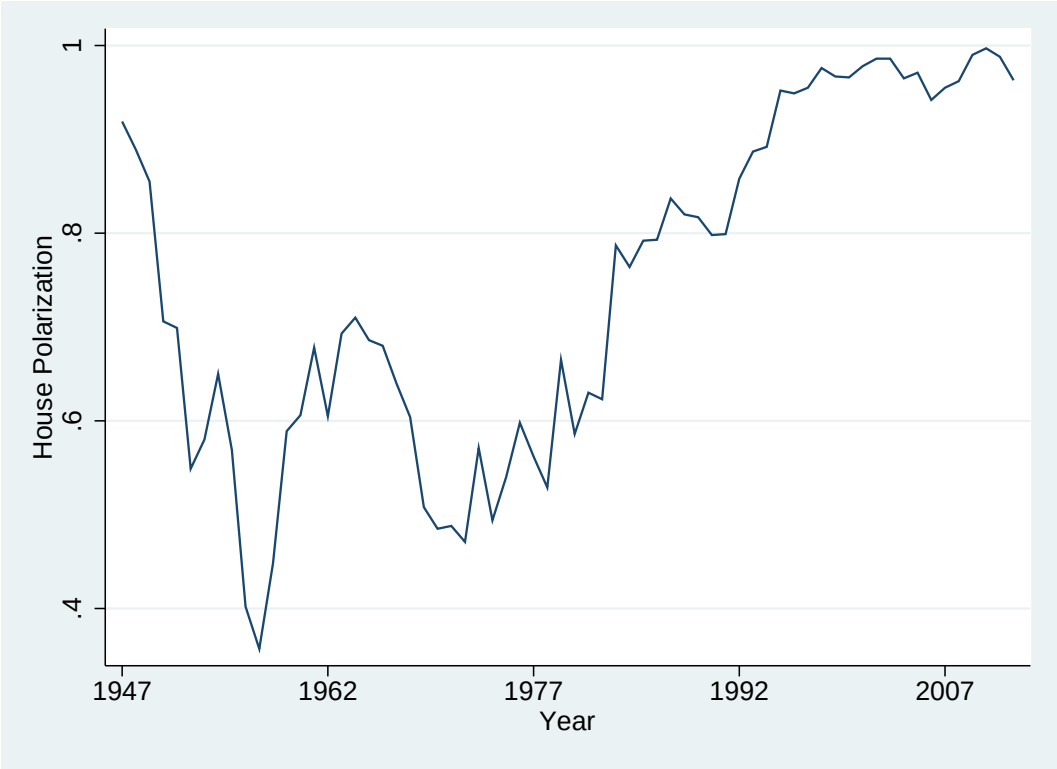

Figure 2: House Polarization over Time.

through 2014. It takes survey marginals from a variety of different policy questions and aggregates them via a dyadic ratios algorithm. On all of the series, higher values indicate more liberal preferences. Each of these series is shown together in Figure 4.

Lastly, this analysis controls for economic expectations over time. Generally, as the economy improves, individuals hold more liberal policy preferences. Accordingly, I control for economic perceptions with the Index of Consumer Sentiment.

Each of the moods is integrated. Policy is stationary over time. Consumer sentiment is also integrated over time. Accordingly, this analysis makes use of two types of modeling strategies. Partial Adjustment Models are used to model policy in levels, with moods in differences. That is, lagged changes in mood are thought to move policy up or down to absolute levels. To ensure that changes in differences are not obscuring important effects found in levels, each of these analyses is also recast as a six-variable Vector Autoregression

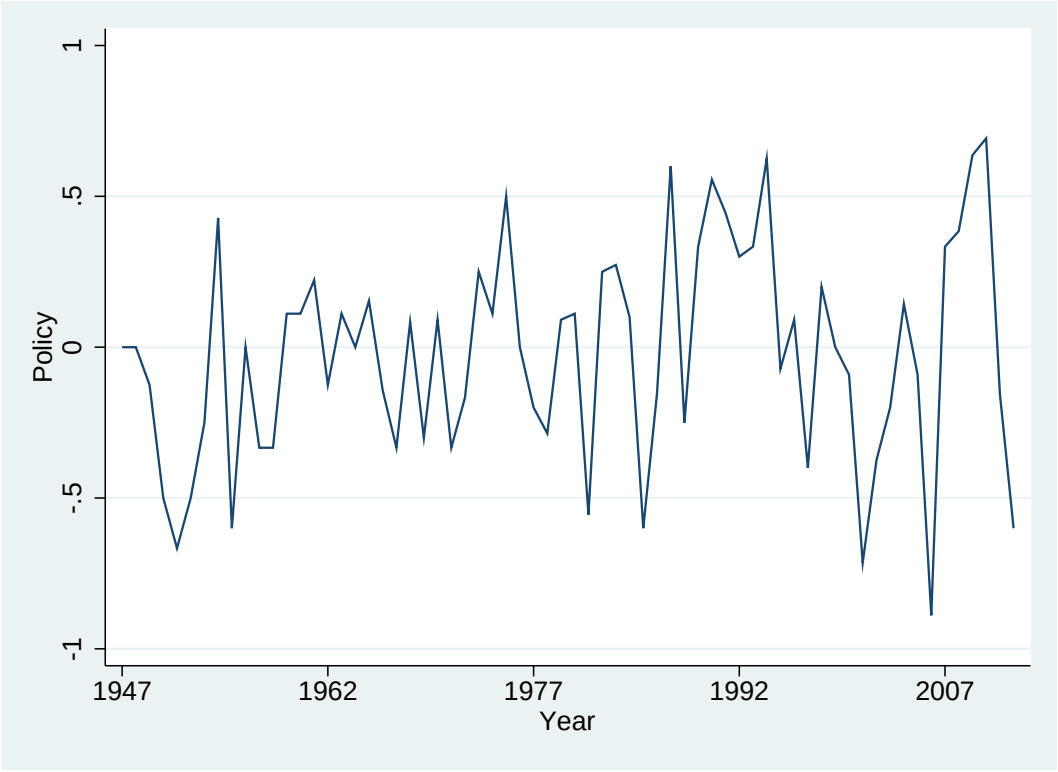

Figure 3: Policy Series from Ramirez (2013).

(VAR) system. Each system contains one lag of the variables in the system, as suggested by virtually all fit criteria (AIC, BIC, and LR). Johansen tests for cointegration suggest that none of the variables in the system are cointegrated.

Results

I start by reporting the results of the Partial Adjustment Models. Recall here that the dependent variable—policy—is preserved in levels, while the key integrated independent variables—rules and moods—are measured in differences. For each group, we test two models. The first model is constituted of the same six variables in the VAR. The second model interacts mood and rules for each partisan group. According to the theory, the effect of rules on policy should be conditional on movements in partisan mood. Only

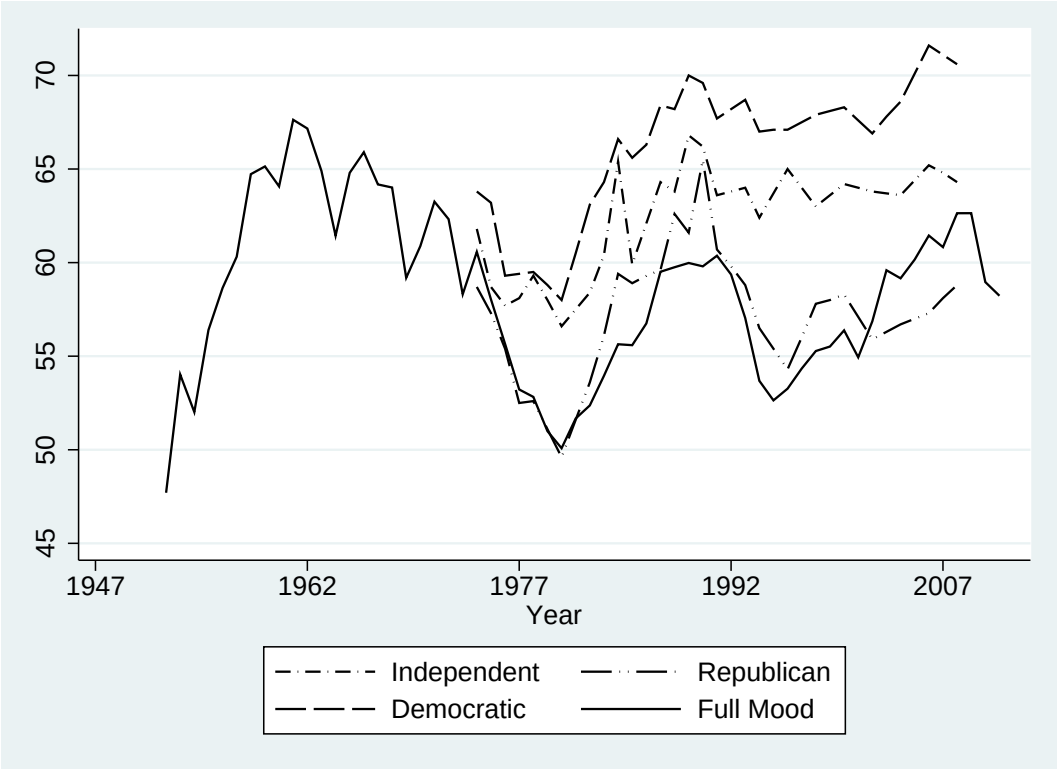

Figure 4: Moods, from Ura and Ellis (2012) and Stimson (1999, 2014).

when moods change do rules affect policy movements.

Table 1 presents the first set of results, this time for the full mood series. The pattern of effects in Table 1, Model 1 can be quickly summarized, as they are mostly insignificant. Changes in rules, changes in sentiment, changes in House polarization, and, most importantly, changes in mood are all insignificant on the liberalness or conservativeness of policy outputs. Only Republican control of the House is significant (which lends the model some validity). When Republicans are in control of the House, it leads to an immediate 0.376-unit decrease in the liberalness of policy outputs. Considering the scale of the policy variable—it ranges from -1 (perfectly negative policy) to 1 (perfectly liberal policy)—this effect is quite large.

The interactive model is substantively uninteresting. Most importantly, the interaction is insignificant (and the estimated effect itself is close to zero). The effects of changes in

Table 1: Full Mood and Policy

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Y_{t-1}	0.180	0.196
	(-0.168)	(-0.201)
ΔRules	0.001	0.001
	(-0.003)	(-0.004)
ΔConsumer Sentiment	0.001	0.001
	(-0.008)	(-0.008)
Republican Control	-0.376**	-0.367**
	(0.129)	(0.142)
ΔHouse Polarization	0.675	0.688
	(-1.469)	(-1.495)
ΔFull Mood$_{t-1}$	0.029	0.028
	(-0.039)	(-0.040)
ΔFull Mood$_{t-1}$*	-	0.000
ΔRules		(-0.003)
Constant	0.156	0.153
	(-0.082)	(-0.087)
R^2	0.29	0.29
N	38	38
AIC	1.026	1.078

$^{**}p < 0.05$. $^{*}p < 0.10$.

Portmanteau Q tests insignificant.

rules are not conditional on changes in mood. Recall, though, that the theory is specifically about partisan subgroups. So such a null finding is not necessarily unexpected.

Unfortunately, this null finding persists across some partisan subgroups. Tables 2 and 3 can be summarized together. In neither case are shifts in rules conditional on shifts in mood (Model 2 in both Tables has an insignificant interaction). Moreover, in neither case are shifts in mood independently significant, as evidenced by the null findings in Model 1 of both Tables. Just as in the models for the full mood series in Table 1, the only significant force on levels of policy is Republican control of the House. The size of the effects are consistent with the findings for full mood, too.

Table 2: Democrat Mood and Policy

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Y_{t-1}	0.093	0.088
	(-0.183)	(-0.203)
ΔRules	0.001	0.001
	(-0.004)	(-0.004)
ΔConsumer Sentiment	0.001	0.001
	(-0.008)	(-0.008)
Republican Control	-0.328**	-0.332**
	(0.141)	(0.156)
ΔHouse Polarization	0.586	0.581
	(-1.528)	(-1.559)
ΔDemocrat Mood$_{t-1}$	0.008	0.009
	(-0.050)	(-0.053)
ΔDemocrat Mood$_{t-1}$*	-	0.000
ΔRules		(-0.004)
Constant	0.131	0.133
	(-0.087)	(-0.094)
R^2	0.21	0.21
N	34	34
AIC	1.093	1.211

$^{**}p < 0.05$. $^{*}p < 0.10$.

Portmanteau Q tests insignificant.

We lastly turn to the effects of Republican mood on policy. The findings are presented in Table 4. The findings in Model 1 largely echo those for Democrats and Independents: the only significant influence on policy is Republican control of the House. The interactive model, however, is much more interesting for Republicans. Namely, the interaction between changes in rules and changes in mood are significant for changes in policy. This provides empirical support for the theory.

To talk in any meaningful way about the magnitude of those effects, is important to consider marginal effects plots, as the coefficients in the model are conditional and not interpretable in any theoretically meaningful way (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006).

Table 3: Independent Mood and Policy

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Y_{t-1}	0.092	0.097
	(-0.182)	(-0.187)
ΔRules	0.001	0.001
	(-0.004)	(-0.004)
ΔConsumer Sentiment	0.001	0.001
	(-0.008)	(-0.009)
Republican Control	-0.330**	-0.327**
	(0.141)	(0.144)
ΔHouse Polarization	0.620	0.647
	(-1.522)	(-1.555)
ΔIndependent Mood$_{t-1}$	-0.010	-0.016
	(-0.037)	(-0.046)
ΔIndependent Mood$_{t-1}$*	-	0.001
ΔRules		(-0.002)
Constant	0.134	0.135
	(-0.087)	(-0.088)
R^2	0.21	0.21
N	34	34
AIC	1.091	1.148

** $p < 0.05$. * $p < 0.10$.

Portmanteau Q tests insignificant.

The marginal effects of changes in rules at different levels of changes in Republican mood are demonstrated in Figure 5.

The pattern observed is interesting. When Republican mood shifts to become more conservative, the effect of increasing the number of rules used is to make policy more *liberal*, not conservative. Rules, then, seem to be accomplishing the opposite of a representational benefit. Instead, rules make it more likely to observe the opposite of the policy preferences that the party holds.

There are a number of caveats to the above analyses. First, and foremost, we are dealing with a severe problem in the number of degrees of freedom. These effects may be

Table 4: Republican Mood and Policy

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Y_{t-1}	0.104	-0.078
	(-0.182)	(-0.200)
ΔRules	0.001	-0.001
	(-0.004)	(-0.004)
ΔConsumer Sentiment	0.001	0.004
	(-0.008)	(-0.008)
Republican Control	-0.323**	-0.356**
	(0.140)	(0.135)
ΔHouse Polarization	0.542	0.589
	(-1.512)	(-1.450)
ΔRepublican Mood$_{t-1}$	0.026	0.027
	(-0.036)	(-0.035)
ΔRepublican Mood$_{t-1}$*	-	-0.005*
ΔRules		(-0.003)
Constant	0.131	0.125
	(-0.086)	(-0.082)
R^2	0.22	0.31
N	34	34
AIC	1.076	1.071

** $p < 0.05$. * $p < 0.10$.

Portmanteau Q tests insignificant.

hard to identify simply because there is not enough information in the model to estimate them consistently. Second, it could simply be that there isn't enough variation in the theoretical variables to test the theory adequately. We have only observed twenty years of increased polarization, and many of those years were exclusively under one party's control. In order to fully test the theory, we should need more variation in both party control of the House and partisan moods. The information available is severely limited.

Third, the pattern of effects could be conditional on more than just partisan mood and the number of rules. Namely, control of the House might play a large role in the representational benefit of partisan moods. I do not insert such an interaction here, however. The

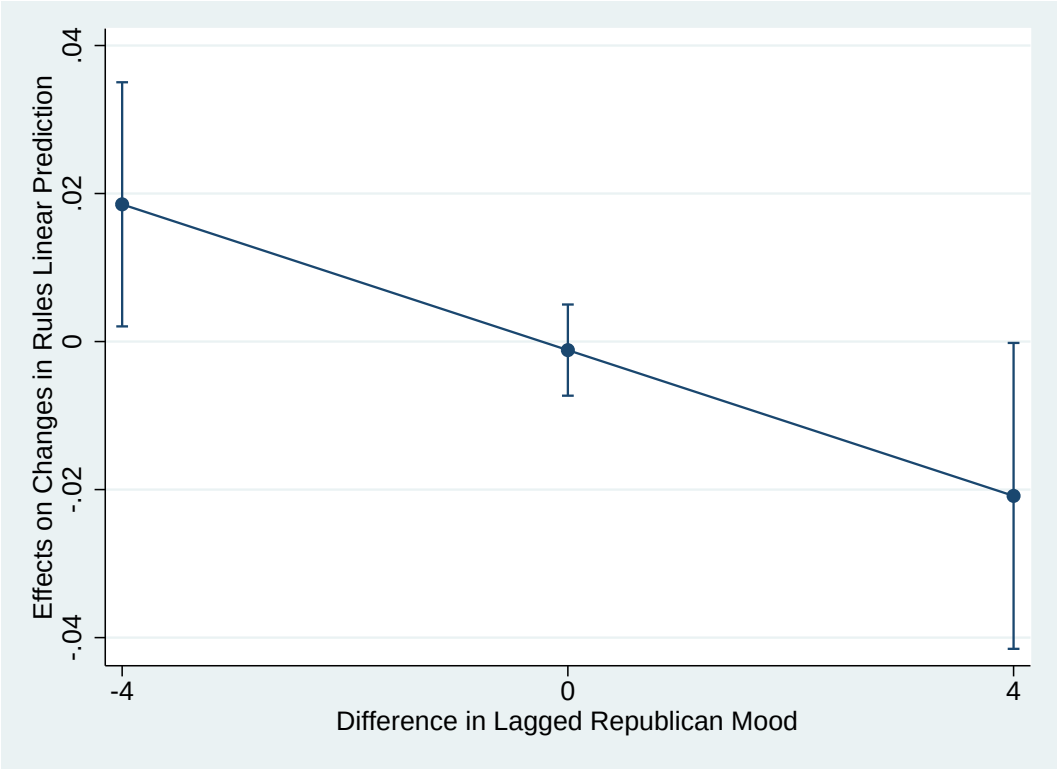

Figure 5: Marginal Effects of Changes in Rules at Levels of Changes in Republican Mood.

model is already difficult to identify, given the small number of observations. Theoretical model specification is a clear opportunity for future work.

The lack of representational linkages above might be disconcerting. In particular, though, we could be seeing such a pattern because the models are estimated in differences. Accordingly, I now turn to presenting the VAR results in levels. By its nature, VAR produces a large amount of output when estimating a system. An especially useful way to summarize this output is through impulse response functions.[5] Impulse response functions

[5]Each endogenous variable in the system can be shocked mathematically to produce a response in the other variables in the system. The responses to these simulated shocks take into account feedback across variables that can either suppress or accentuate the relationships. Plots of the resulting innovations—called impulse response functions (IRFs)—allow one to observe the behavior of the system through time. If two variables are related, a shock in one variable will cause an observable change in the other. A feature that distinguishes VAR from other time series methods that warrants special attention concerns the issue of whether the variables in a VAR need to be stationary. The goal of a VAR analysis is to determine the interrelationships among the variables, not determine specific parameter estimates (Enders 2004). Differencing produces no gain in asymptotic efficiency in an autoregression, and throws away important information. Enders (2010)

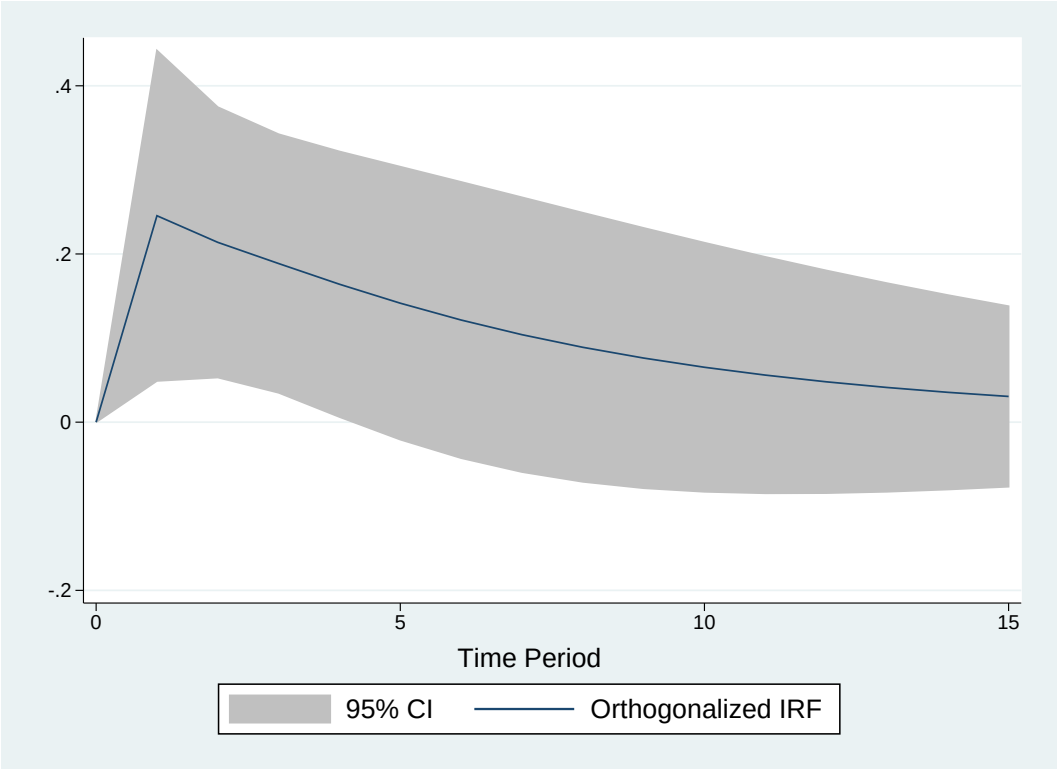

Figure 6: Impulse Response Function: Republican Mood on Policy.

trace the responses to all variables in the system to a shock in a single variable. Most of the variables here are theoretically uninteresting, so I isolate the relevant impulse responses. The most important relationship here is between mood and policy outcomes. In particular, the following models account for the endogeneity between rules, polarization, mood, and policy. This robust specification allows for a powerful identification of the relationship between policy and mood.[6] In each case, the relevant mood series is in a VAR system with consumer sentiment, policy outputs, rules, House polarization, and Republican control, each with the contemporaneous levels and the lagged values.[7]

notes that the "majority view" is that the form of the variables in the VAR should mimic the true data generating process.

[6]I don't present full IRFs for the entire system, as many of the relationships are insignificant and theoretically uninteresting. Granger causality tests are available from the author.

[7]The reader is advised that a low number of degrees of freedom are available. The limiting variable is policy: interest group ratings from multiple groups are only available since the 1970s.

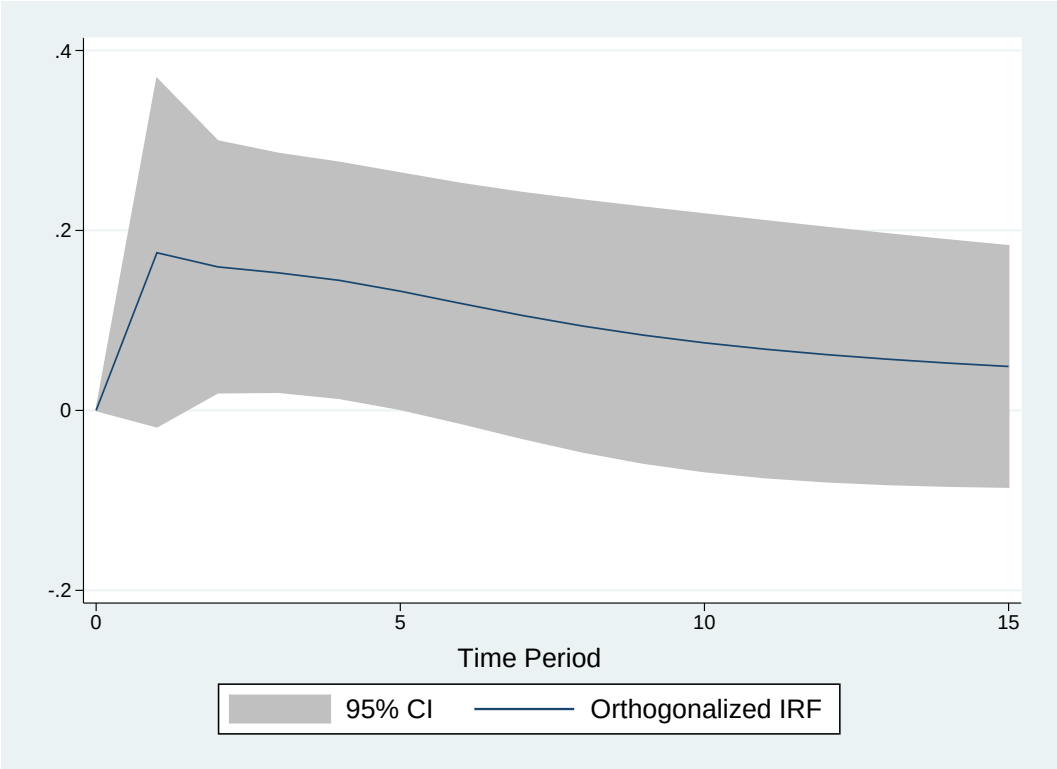

Figure 7: Impulse Response Function: Democratic Mood on Policy.

Turn first to the IRF in Figure 6. A standard-deviation increase in Republican mood leads a 0.22-unit increase in standardized policy outputs. This increase persists for four years, as well. Compare this effect to the effect of a standard-deviation shock to Democratic mood, illustrated in Figure 7. The estimated effect of an increase is smaller—only around 0.18 units. This suggests that the relationship between Republican mood and policy is stronger (in an absolute sense) than Democratic mood and policy. The effect in Figure 7, however, persists for more time periods than the effect in Figure 6. The relationship between Democratic mood and policy, however, persists for a longer time period.

The relationship between Independent mood and policy is much weaker. Note the IRF in Figure 8. The effect of a standard-deviation shock to Independent mood on policy only barely reaches statistical significance. Even then, it is only significant for a single time period and dies out quickly. In a system that accounts for polarization, restrictive

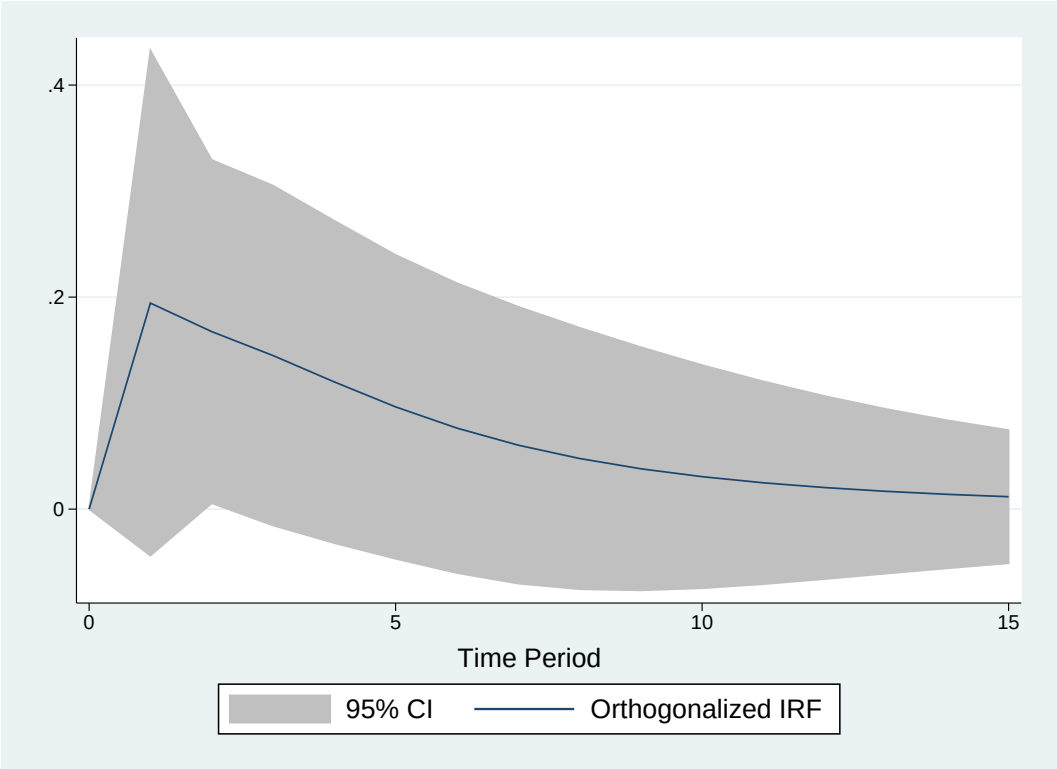

Figure 8: Impulse Response Function: Independent Mood on Policy.

lawmaking, and partisan mood, it seems as if Independents lose out in that process.

The relationship between full mood (the classic Stimson measure) and policy is presented in Figure 9. A standard-deviation shock to full mood leads to an immediate increase in policy, again reflecting the general pattern of representation observed at the partisan level. Note, however, that the magnitude of this increase is considerably smaller, especially than the Republican effect in Figure 6. However, this effect lasts much longer than either of the other partisan effects: a shock to full mood has lingering effects on the system for up to seven years. In general, then, while all partisan groups seem to receive some representation, that representation varies both in immediate magnitude as well as lingering effects across partisan groups.

Three other patterns of effects from the respective VARs are worth investigating. First it is reasonable to wonder what the effect of lawmaking (that is, rules) is on partisan mood?

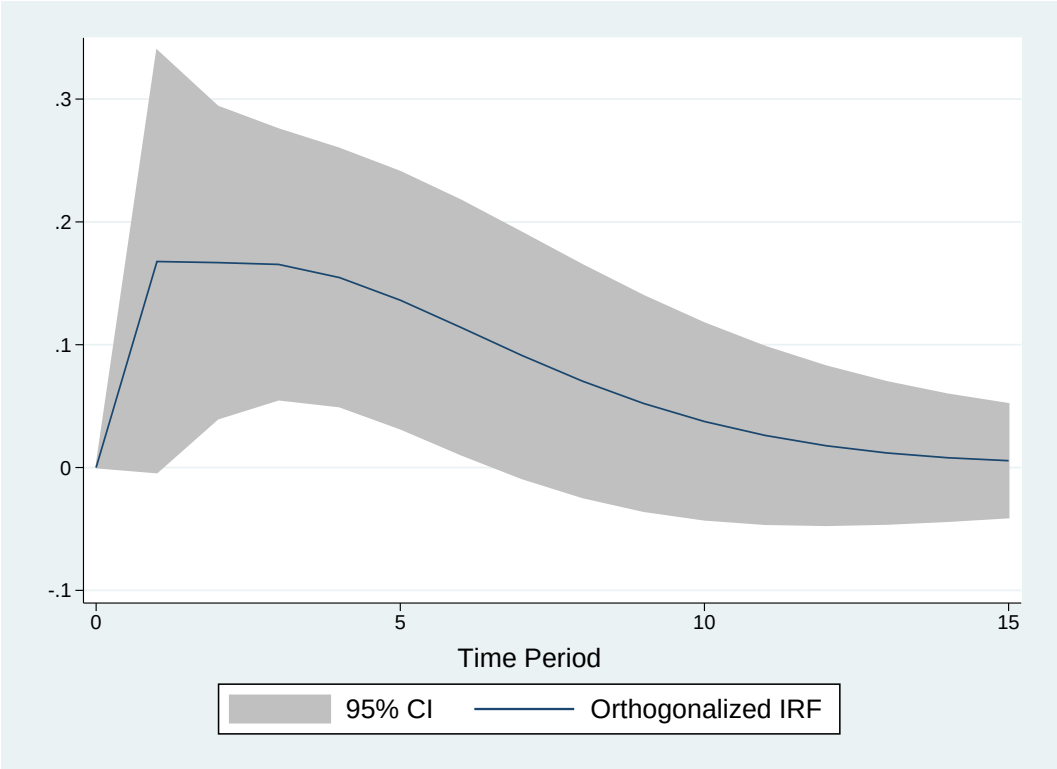

Figure 9: Impulse Response Function: Full Mood on Policy.

After observing partisan or contentious lawmaking strategies, do partisan groups become more or less conservative or liberal? Figure 10 presents the results of the IRF of rules on Republican mood. The pattern is intriguing. The effect of a standard-deviation shock to the usage of rules is to immediately make Republicans more conservative. That is, simply observing a contentious lawmaking process makes Republicans want more conservative policy outputs. This pattern of effects is not present for any other partisan subgroup.

Figures 11 and 12 display two last interesting results from the VAR. Namely, how do partisan subgroups respond in their preferences to observing elite polarization? For Democrats and Independents, at least, it makes them demand more liberal policies. For Independents, the effect of a standard-deviation shock to polarization is actually quite considerable: a 0.20 unit increase in standardized Independent mood. This effect persists for roughly eight time periods, too. For Democrats, the effect is less pronounced. A standard-

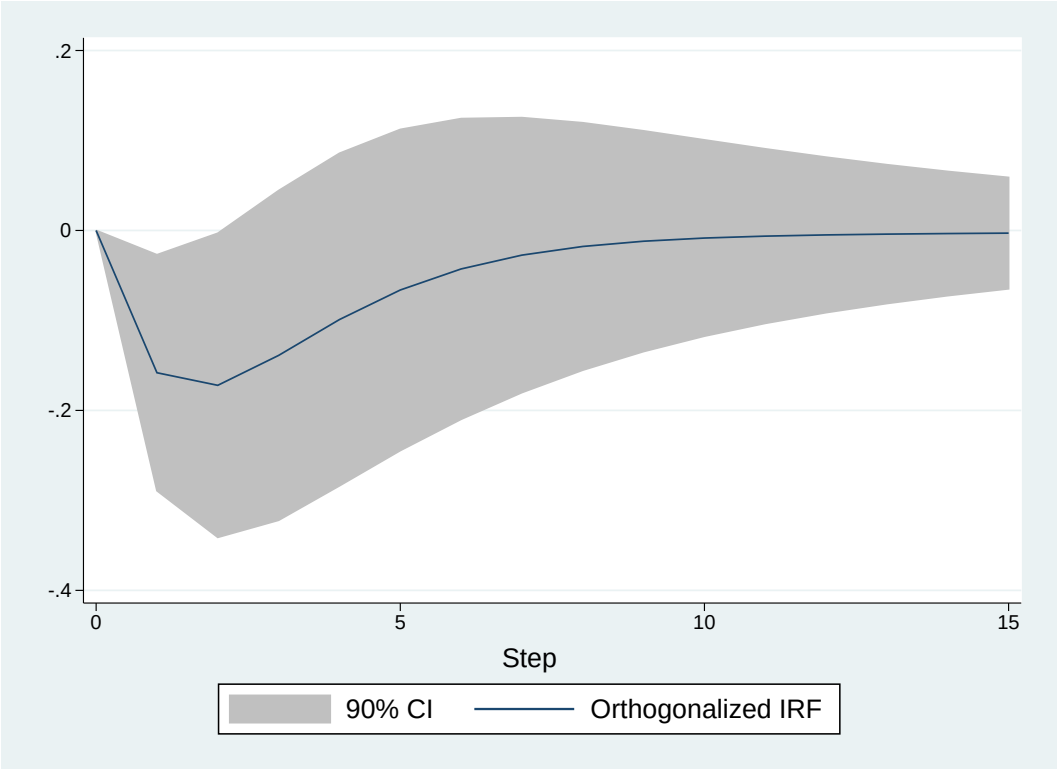

Figure 10: Impulse Response Function: Rules on Republican Mood.

deviation shock to House polarization increases standardized Democratic mood to become more liberal by about 0.15 units. This effect, however, persists for a longer time period. Such a shock only decays after almost ten years. Increases in polarization, then, have real and lasting influences on partisan moods.[8] Recall also that, since this is a VAR, those shocks to partisan mood are reentered into the system as effects on policy. This is true also for the effects of lawmaking on Republican mood. Since we observe a general pattern of representation—partisan moods broadly are reflected into policy—increases in polarization have the effect of increasing liberal policy (through making Democratic demands more liberal), and increases in the usage of rules have the effect of increasing conservative policy (through making Republican demands more conservative). This system has real effects.

[8]These effects are not significant for Republicans.

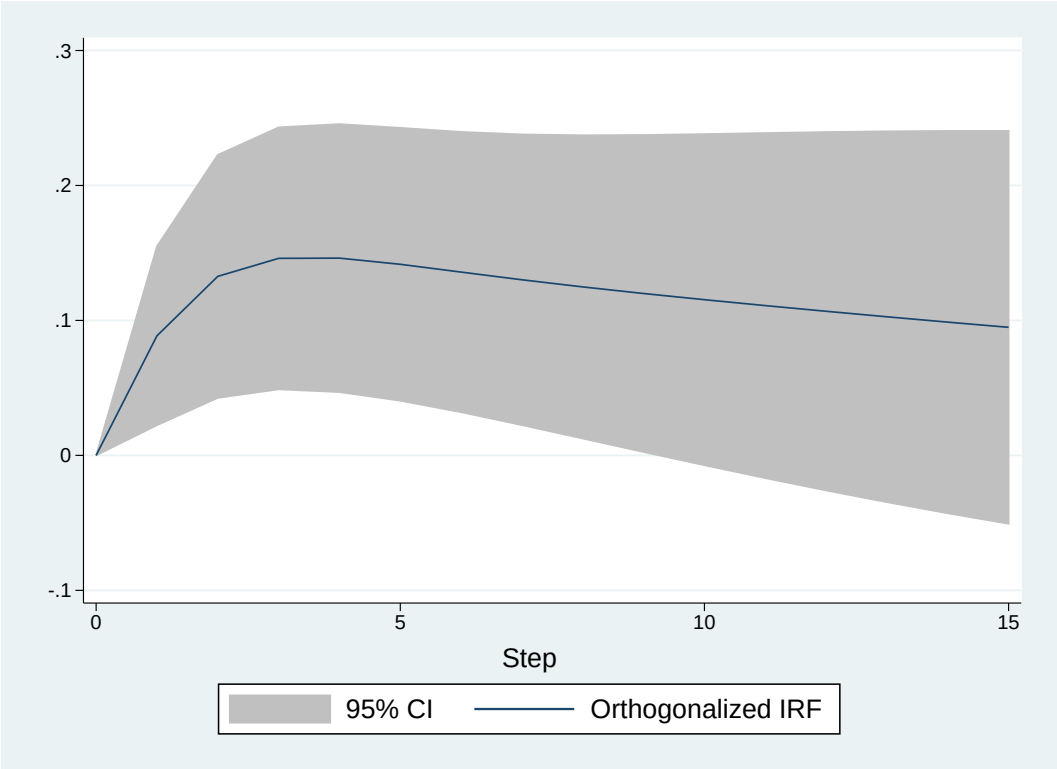

Figure 11: Impulse Response Function: House Polarization on Democratic Mood.

Conclusion

The quality of representation certainly varies. One particularly interesting way that elite (and possibly mass) polarization might cause the quality of representation to vary systematically is the responsiveness of policy to particular constituencies, especially as lawmaking changes. As elite polarization increases, Democrats should become especially more responsive to Democrats, Republicans to Republicans, and Independents might lose out in the process. Moreover, conflictual lawmaking strategies, like the use of special rules, might exacerbate these representational benefits.

There is, at best, mixed support for these expectations. In all cases, partisan control of the House has real effects on policy outputs. Republicans are consistent creators of more conservative policy than their liberal counterparts. In differences, however, the theory

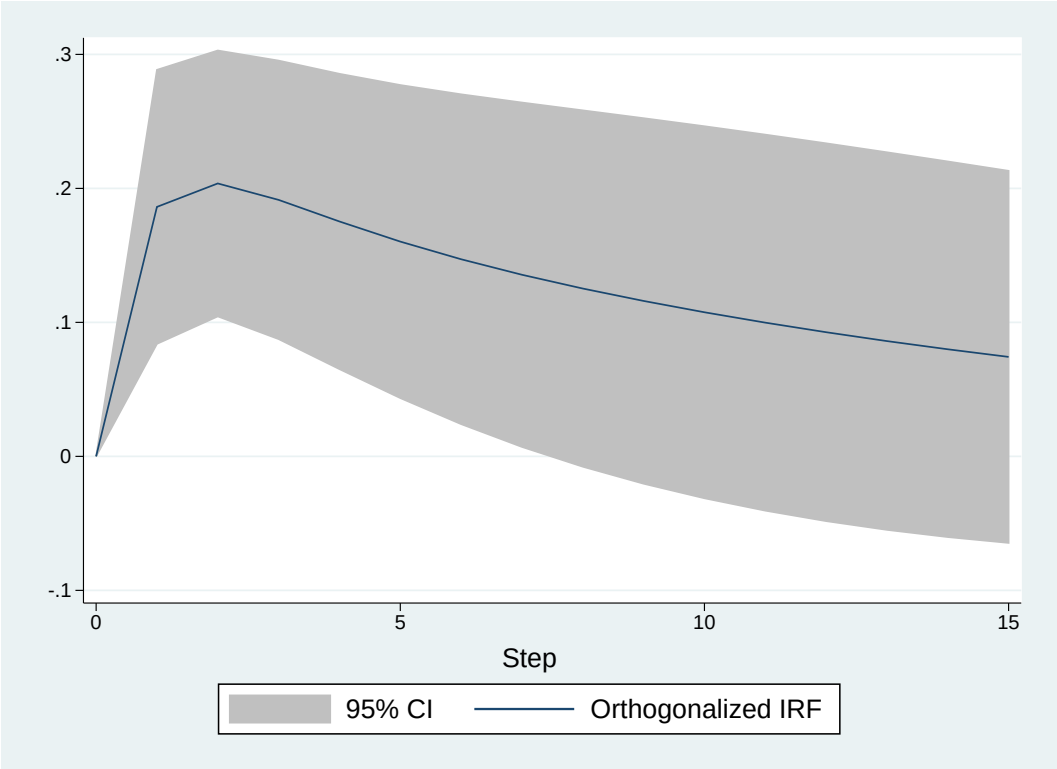

Figure 12: Impulse Response Function: House Polarization on Independent Mood.

receives little support. The evidence for basic representational linkages—changes in mood causing changes in policy—is lacking. The conditional theoretical support—those changes in mood being conditional on lawmaking strategies—is only observed for Republicans, and even then not in the expected direction. As Republican mood decreases (becomes more conservative), increases in rules make policy more liberal, not conservative. There is considerable question whether these effects are well identified, however.

The theory is better supported in levels. From the VARs, the basic representational linkage is always present. Shifts in partisan moods (as well as overall mood) lead to changes in policy. More interesting are Figures 10 to 12. The usage of rules also causes Republicans to grow more conservative. Observing a lawmaking process full of conflict is enough to make Republicans demand more conservative policy outputs. Another opportunity for future research is whether this effect is also conditional on party control.

Interestingly, there is considerable reason to think it is not. As Republicans observe conflictual lawmaking in a Republican-led House, they might reward it by demanding more conservative (and, in an elite-polarized world, more "acceptable") policy. At the same time, if Republicans observe conflictual lawmaking by Democrats, they might withdraw into the party fold and grow more conservative out of annoyance with the majority party. Both patterns of effects are plausible. These effects do not exist for any other partisan group.

For Independents and Democrats, polarization has more interesting effects on mood. As elite polarization increases, both Democrats and Independents become more liberal. For Democrats, this pattern makes more immediate sense. Observing a world of elite-level conflict that extends to multiple issues (Carsey and Layman 2006), Democrats might respond by developing more liberal preferences. Independents are harder to characterize. They might be behaving closer to Democrats than to "true" Independents, or it could be that recent policy times characterized by high levels of polarization might also simply be more liberal than others. Again, more data is necessary.

These analysis present multiple opportunities for future research, and they raise many questions. Representational patterns certainly exist, but they also almost certainly vary as polarization changes over time. The theoretical nature of that relationship should continue to be a research focus for political science.

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