

The Declining Value of Moderation in US House Elections

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/H1/ Introduction

A long-running debate over accountability and representation in American politics is centered around whether incumbents are individually held accountable for their own records (Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002; Carson, Koger, Lebo, and Young 2010), collectively held accountable for their party's record (Schattschneider 1960; Raney 1962; Jones 2010), or held accountable at all, given the electorate's general ignorance about Congressional politics (Stokes and Miller 1962).

Recent work shows that incumbents do, in fact, lose vote-share if their individual voting record is ideologically extreme (Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002) or too often in agreement with the rest of the incumbent's party (Carson, Koger, Lebo, and Young 2010). The seemingly obvious implication of these findings is that reelection-seeking incumbents should refrain from establishing voting records that are very extreme or very partisan. It is therefore puzzling that, in recent decades, the two major parties in Congress have become more ideologically extreme and more ideologically unified.

Here, we help address this puzzle by showing – formally and empirically – that two processes associated with polarization have diminished the electoral benefit of moderation. In our model, the term “moderation” refers to movement by an incumbent away from his² party's mean ideology, and towards ideal point of a more centrist median voter. Broadly consistent with both of the finding of Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) and Carson, Koger, Lebo, and Young (2010), our model constructs a scenario in which this type of moderation always gains the

² In this article, we use “he” when referring to candidates and “she” when referring to voters.

incumbent some number of votes. However, our model also shows that this gain is diminished by the following two processes:

First, polarization in Congress has made each of the parties' brands more distinct, and this has led voters to increasingly favor one party over the other (Grynavinsky 2006, Jones 2010). In most cases, voters in a district favor the incumbent's party over the challenger's party, and increasingly do so by 2 or more points (Jacobson 2009). We show that this increase in district partisanship mechanically diminishes the votes incumbents can gain by moderating their voting record.

Second, we draw on a long-standing literature, which shows that voters do not assess candidates on their voting record alone, but also on the collective record of their party (Campbell et al 1960; Popkin 1991; Cox and McCubbins 1993; Aldrich 1995; Snyder and Ting 2002; Woon and Pope 2008; Kim and LeVeck 2013). Polarization has also been characterized by parties that are increasingly ideologically homogenous. This has lead voter's to place more weight on the record of an incumbent's party and less weight on the incumbent's individual record, meaning that moderation in an incumbent's individual legislative record is less likely to convince voters to vote for the incumbent.

Before continuing on to describe our model, hypotheses, and results, it is important to note that we are hardly the first to describe how parties might polarize when voters prefer moderate candidates. A number of models, such as Calvert and Wittman (1985) and Berger, Munger, and Potthoff (2000), show that parties may diverge towards the extremes of a unidimensional ideological space, even when voters are ideologically moderate and select candidates based on their spatial proximity to the voter. Similarly, there is plenty of existing

research, such as McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2006) and Levendusky (2009), that attempts to explain the ongoing increase in party polarization.

However, to the best of our knowledge, we are the first to present a model and empirical evidence showing that party polarization *itself* diminishes the electoral benefit of moderation by individual incumbents. This finding is important because it raises the possibility that polarization can become self-reinforcing. As incumbent's incentive to moderate their voting record declines, intra-party cohesiveness in voting behavior may increase. This, in turn, could further diminish the gains from individual moderation.

In the next section we present our model and use it to derive a set of testable hypotheses. We then present a series of empirical tests, which confirm these hypotheses. Finally, we conclude by discussing the implications of our findings and directions for future research.

/H1/ Model

In this section, we present a modified version of the model developed by Kim and LeVeck (2013), which describes electoral competition within a single congressional district. Following that article, we assume that voters in a district have an ideal point along a left-right spectrum. It is further assumed that voters' ideal points lie between the mean ideal points of each congressional party. Without loss of generality, we also assume that mean ideal point of the challenger's party is located at 0 and the mean ideal point of the incumbent's party is located at 1 (meaning that all voters, including the median voter V , are located in the interval $[0,1]$).

Voters vote for the candidate they perceive as being closest to them, but do not necessarily know the true position of either candidate. Instead, each voter starts with a prior

belief that a candidate is randomly drawn from the distribution of ideological positions inside his party. The ideologies of the incumbent and challenger parties are assumed to be distributed normally with means $\mu_i = 1$, $\mu_c = 0$ and variances s_i^2 , s_c^2 .

Voters can update their prior belief about the incumbent after observing a finite number of noisy signals about an incumbent's true record. These signals are assumed to be drawn from the incumbent's true record, which is also distributed normally with mean $(1-x)$ and variance σ^2 .

³ This definition of the incumbent's position allows x to parameterize an incumbent's level of moderation. As x grows larger, the incumbent moves further away from his party and towards a more centrist median voter V . We assume that incumbents will never take a position such that $1-x < V$, as this would start to lose the incumbent vote-share. The model, as described so far, is presented in Figure 1.

< Insert Figure 1 about here. >

While this model of congressional elections is highly stylized, its core assumptions are consistent with a number of existing findings. The assumption that voters are located between the two parties is broadly consistent with the finding that most voters and most districts are more moderate than the mean ideology of the two major parties in the US House (Bafumi and Herron 2010). When paired with the assumption that voters choose candidates based on perceived spatial proximity, the assumption that voters are more centrist than the major parties is also consistent with the finding that voters punish politicians for being ideologically extreme (Canes-Wrone,

³ As in Kim and LeVeck (2013), we assume that challengers have no record to run on. Voters' beliefs about the challenger are therefore equal to voters' beliefs about the challenger's party. Please see Kim and LeVeck (2013), for a further discussion and justification of this assumption.

Brady, and Cogan 2002) or for being too close their own party (Carson, Koger, Lebo, and Young). The assumption that voters use parties to form their prior belief about candidates is both consistent with a number of existing models (Snyder and Ting 2002; Woon and Pope 2008), and with the finding that voters use party labels as shortcut for inferring the positions of candidates (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Popkin 1995). The assumption that voters observe noisy signals about the incumbent's true record is consistent with the finding that campaigns and campaign spending lead voters to become more informed about an incumbent's record (Coleman and Manna 2000).

//H2/ The Effect of District Partisanship on Moderation

Also following Kim and LeVeck (2013), we define a parameter K , above which voters prefer to vote a candidate drawn from the incumbent's party, and below which voters prefer to vote for the challenger. For simplicity of exposition, $K=1/2$ throughout this paper.⁴

New to this paper, we define a parameter $P \in [1, 0]$, which represents the proportion of voters who are closer to the incumbent's party (i.e. the proportion of voters with an ideal point greater than $K=1/2$). This is conceptually similar to the measure of district ideology used in Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) — the vote-share of the presidential candidate from the incumbent's party in the most recent election. Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan argue that this measure serves as a proxy for district ideology because presidential candidates act as

⁴ In the original model of Kim and LeVeck (2013), K only equals $1/2$ if voters are risk neutral. Because voter risk-aversion does not substantially affect any of our claims, we omit the possibility of risk-aversion from the current model.

representative agents for their party's ideological platform. We largely agree with this line of argument, but simply note that presidential vote-share is not a direct measure of spatial ideology. Instead, presidential vote-share, to the extent it indicates ideology within a district, more closely corresponds to the proportion of voters in a district that are ideologically closer to the incumbent's party. We therefore refer to P as a district's partisanship.⁵

Lastly, we assume that voters are uniformly distributed on either side of $K=1/2$, such that the density of voters favoring the incumbent's party is $P/2$, and $(1-P)/2$ otherwise. This rather unrealistic assumption is made only to simplify our exposition. Our theoretical results wouldn't change under a number of more realistic and complex assumptions. For example, nothing changes substantially if we assume that the distribution of voter ideal points is single peaked with full support from 0 to 1.⁶

⁵ This differs slightly from Kim and LeVeck (2013), who define district partisanship in terms of the median voter V . Here, we simply note that under a number of plausible assumptions there will be a positive, monotonic relationship between P , the proportion of voters closer to the incumbent's party, and V , the location of the median voter. However, our definition of district partisanship is more directly related to the actual measures used in empirical tests.

⁶ As an early reader of the paper helpfully points out, the assumption of uniformity could also be justified as corresponding to the belief held by a candidate who knows P , but is completely uncertain about how voters' ideal points are actually distributed. Even if this belief is incorrect, it will still determine what candidate *expects* to gain from moderation, and therefore determine their decision to establish a moderate voting record.

Given these definitions and assumptions, it is now possible to derive the following hypothesis:

H1: As P (a district's partisanship) increases, candidates gain fewer votes by moderating their own voting record toward the districts median voter and away from the party.

The intuition behind this claim is illustrated in Figure 2. A candidate who moderates their voting record away from their party and towards the median voter in their district gains all the voters between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $(x-1)/2$. Given our assumption about how voters are distributed within a district, this means that moderation increases the incumbent's vote-share by $[(1 - P)(x - 1)]/4$. Because $\frac{\partial}{\partial x} = (1 - P)/4$, and because this expression is always decreasing for any increase in P , moderation always gains an incumbent less when P increases. We therefore expect that as district partisanship has increased in recent decades, the gain from establishing a more moderate record in Congress has diminished.

< Insert Figure 2 about here. >

Before continuing, we further note that this theoretical results does not depend on whether the incumbent actually needs to moderate his record to win the district. It is certainly true that incumbents in heavily partisan districts do not need to gain as many additional voters.⁷ This, in turn, can lead incumbents in highly partisan districts to moderate their voting record less

⁷ In our model, incumbents have no actual need to moderate in order to win the election if V , the position of the median voter, is above $K=1/2$. However, Kim and LeVeck (2013) show that this can change if the median voter is sufficiently risk averse. We set such considerations aside in the existing model as risk aversion on the part of voters does not alter our main results.

(Erikson and Wright 2008). However, to the extent that incumbents do moderate, the *marginal* gains will still diminish as a district's partisanship increases.

//H2/ How Party Reputation Warps Voters' Perception of Incumbent Positions

In the current model, the effect of moderation is not only mediated by a district's partisanship. It is also mediated by the ideological variance of the incumbent's party, s_i^2 . We show this by describing how a median voter V updates her beliefs about the incumbent's true position given her prior belief about the incumbent and the informational signals she receives about the incumbent's actual record.

The median voter, V , updates her beliefs about the incumbent via Bayes' Rule, using the party reputation as her prior. The voter also observes a random draw from the incumbent's individual reputation, and updates her initial belief accordingly. In other words, we assume that the voter starts with the assumption that the incumbent is like the typical member of his party, but that, upon observing some aspect of the incumbent's record, the voter may change her mind. How the voter changes her mind in light of new information about the incumbent (or... the voter's posterior belief about x) will be characterized by the expected mean $E(\mu)$ and variance s^2 as follows.

$$E(\mu) = \frac{x}{\sigma^2(\frac{1}{s_i^2} + \frac{1}{\sigma^2})}$$

$$s^2 = \frac{1}{\frac{1}{s_i^2} + \frac{1}{\sigma^2}}$$

$E(\mu)$ is how much closer the incumbent's record *appears* to the voter than his party on average, given his party's reputation and his own record. Differentiating $E(\mu)$ with respect to s_i^2 yields $\frac{x}{\sigma^2 s_i^4 (\frac{1}{s_i^2} + \frac{1}{\sigma^2})^2}$, which is always positive. In other words, the larger the the variance of the party

reputation, the larger the magnitude of an incumbent's perceived moderation is. It is easier to highlight the individual reputation when the party reputation is uninformative, i.e. characterized by a very large variance, or a large value of s_i^2 . Conversely, the smaller the variance, the smaller the value of $E(\mu)$, meaning that the more informative the party label, the more it refracts an incumbent's individual record, drawing the latter closer to that of the party as whole. Even if the incumbent does have an actual record of moderation as an individual, voters perceive his record as much less moderate than it really is, due to the fact that he belongs to a party with a very clearly defined reputation. Two extreme possibilities are worthy of consideration: the incumbent's true position cannot be conveyed to the voter unless the party reputation is totally uninformative, as only when $s_i^2 \rightarrow \infty$, $E(\mu) \rightarrow x$. If, on the other hand, the party label is perfectly informative, if the party reputation has zero variance, it is theoretically impossible for the incumbent to demonstrate that he is different from his party at all, as $s_i^2 \rightarrow 0$, $E(\mu) \rightarrow 0$.

Observe also that the effect of the party reputation is not a direct effect. There is no reason to expect that being a member of a party with a strong or weak collective reputation should, by itself, raise or lower the vote totals for an incumbent. Clearer party reputation operates by affecting the perception by the voters, by making the incumbent's record less moderate than it really is. As such, its effect on elections can be seen only in conjunction with an incumbent's legislative record, as smaller variance in party reputation effectively cuts down the perceived moderation of an incumbent compared to his actual record:

H2: As a party's collective reputation increases, incumbent's gain a larger vote share by moderating their legislative record.

There is also a secondary implication:

H3: As the variance in a party's collective reputation increases, a district's partisanship, P , has a smaller effect on the incumbent's vote share.

H3 simply follows from the fact that as $s_i^2 \rightarrow 0$, voters think that the incumbent is exactly at 1, the mean ideology of his party. The vote-share he obtains in this scenario is P , the proportion of voters who are closest to the incumbent's party. As $s_i^2 \rightarrow \infty$, the vote share obtained by an incumbent is fully determined by his true level of moderation, x .

/H1/ Empirical Evaluation of the Model

The approach we take to empirically evaluate our hypotheses is similar to that used by Canes-Wrone et al (2002). As per their model, we regress the vote share of each incumbent on a measures for his district's partisanship and his record of moderation. As our hypotheses concern the interactive relationships between an incumbent's individual record and the district partisanship and party reputation, we introduce these via interaction effects. Our baseline empirical model, then, becomes:

Incumbent's Vote share =

$b_0 + b_1$ (District Partisanship)

+ b_2 (Moderation)

+ b_3 (Uncertainty in Incumbent's Party Reputation)

+ b_4 (District Partisanship \times Moderation)

+ b_5 (Uncertainty in Incumbent's Party Reputation \times Moderation)

+ b_6 (Uncertainty in Incumbent's Party Reputation \times District Partisanship)

We use the two-party vote share for the presidential candidate from the incumbent's party in the most recent election to capture the *district partisanship*. We make this choice because this

measure has been used by several prominent existing studies as the stand-in for voter's ideological proximity to the incumbent's party (including Canes-Wrone et al 2002 and Kim and LeVeck 2013). However, we do note that our results hold if we use other measures of district partisanship, such as the measure-theoretic variable constructed by Levundusky, Pope and Jackman (2008).

Our measure of incumbents' *moderation* is based on their DW-Nominate score from the last Congress prior to the election. Since we are interested in incumbents' legislative records relative to their party, we subtract the mean scores of each party in each Congress from each incumbent's individual scores. To capture the relative extremity of the records rather than the directionality, we multiply the Republicans' differences by -1. This procedure matches the definition of moderation in our model as closely as possible by assigning the highest moderation scores to those whose records are closest to the mean ideology of the opposite party, while assigning negative scores to those who are at the ideological extremes of their own party's side of the ideological spectrum.

The *uncertainty in the incumbent's party reputation* is captured through the standard deviation of the DW-Nominate scores among the members of a party in a given Congress, following Kim and LeVeck (2013). A large component of a party's reputation is built around the collective voting records by its members. This measure captures the extent of dispersion in voting records among the party members in the given Congress and thus measures the degree of predictability in voting behavior conditional on membership in the party. As the notion of reputation we employ is directly linked to the uncertainty, this measure provides a direct measure of this concept.

Given H1, that increases in district partisanship diminish the gains in vote-share caused by moderation, we expect that the coefficient on b_4 will be negative.

Given H2, that higher variance in the party's reputation increases the electoral gains made by moderation, we expect that the coefficient on b_5 will be positive.

Given H3, that higher variance in the party's reputation decrease the effect of district partisanship on vote-share, we expect that the coefficient on b_6 will be negative.

In addition, we include the following control variables, which may be plausibly correlated with both our dependent and independent variables..

- 1) *Challenger Quality*: Previous research indicates that a challenger who has previously held an elective office presents a far more formidable opponent to an incumbent (Jacobson and Kernell 1983). The presence of these high quality challengers could depend substantially on variables, such as district partisanship. We account for this by including a dummy variable taking the value of 1 when the challenger has held an elected office previously and 0 otherwise.
- 2) *Freshman*: Incumbents defending their seats for the first time tend to enjoy comparatively less favorable electoral prospects due to, among others, having had less opportunity to perform electorally useful activities (Mayhew 1974) or less influential committee assignments (Munger 1988). We include a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if it is the first time that the incumbent faces a reelection and 0 otherwise to account for this.
- 3) $\ln(\text{Challenger Spending}) - \ln(\text{Incumbent Spending})$: Campaign spending is widely believed to have substantial impact in shaping the electoral outcome even if the specifics of the consequences are heavily debated, and is also related to the variables which determine the likely outcome of a race (e.g. Erikson and Wright 1998; Jacobson 2009). We account for this by

incorporating a the difference between the natural log of the amounts spent by the challenger and the incumbent. The spending figures are adjusted for inflation using the 1983 dollar as the baseline. For the few cases where candidates did not incur any campaign expenditure on record, we added \$1 to the expenditures before taking the natural log.

In addition to these variables, however, there are numerous other factors that affect the electoral outcomes that depend on the particulars of the given year or the district. In order to help account for these variations, we employ a two-way fixed effects model with district and year fixed effects. In order to account for the changes in districts caused by redistricting, we code the districts after each round of redistricting as separate districts from the old districts with the same number. The district fixed effects help account for any persistent variations specific to a district that accounts for the electoral outcomes therein while the year fixed effects help account for nationwide shocks particular to a given election, such as various national political forces, presidential popularity, and economic performance.

The data we examine includes U.S. House general elections that featured a contested election between an incumbent and a challenger⁸ during the period between 1972 and 2008. All the election and campaign finance data we use in this paper has been collected and generously provided by Gary Jacobson. DW-Nominate and associated data have been obtained from the well-known www.voteview.com website maintained by Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal.

/H1/ Findings

⁸ We have systematically excluded open seats as well as the odd cases that pitted an incumbent against another incumbent.

We have argued that there are two forces, both related to the reputation of the national party, that shape the electoral effects of the moderate legislative record on the part of the incumbent: the partisanship of the district that the incumbent represents and the collective reputation of the incumbent's party based on its aggregative legislative record. In order to show their effects apart from each other, we run four separate models. First, we run the model without any interaction that simply recapitulates the findings by Canes-Wrone et al that moderation in legislative record has a positive electoral impact using our specifications. The next two models incorporate just one interaction term apiece. Only then do we run the full model that includes all the variables of interest.

Table 1 below shows the results of our analysis using Liang and Zeger (1986) standard errors clustered by districts. The first column shows the baseline model based on Canes-Wrone et al. The second column adds the interaction effect between the district partisanship and the incumbent's legislative record. The third column includes the effect from the uncertainty in the incumbent's party's collective reputation and its interaction with the incumbent's legislative record. The fourth column shows the full model incorporating both interaction terms.

(Insert Table 1 Here)

The first column shows that the original substantive findings by Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002), holds up even though our operationalization of moderation differs from theirs. After accounting for the district partisanship, various vagaries particular to each district

and election, there is a systematic electoral gain that accrues to an incumbent from the moderation in his legislative record.⁹

The second column shows support *H1*. As expected, the interaction term between the moderation in incumbent's voting record and district partisanship carries a negative coefficient, consistent with our argument that, the more partisan the district becomes, the smaller the gains from moderation in legislative record becomes. This is not insignificant given the present trends in partisan makeup of Congressional districts (Levendusky 2009; Oppenheimer 2010). In 1972, the average two-party share of the presidential votes that went to the incumbent's party in districts that produced a contested election involving an incumbent was only 51.4%. By 2008, the figure has risen to 60.5%. While moderation may well remain electorally fruitful on average, it is not nearly as helpful in the race that the typical incumbent faces today. To give a sense of how moderation's value has changed along this dimension, consider the vote share gained by an incumbent who moves from the center of their party (with a moderation score of 0) to the highest level recorded in our dataset (a moderation score of .45). On average, this move is associated with 3 additional points of vote-share in a district where the district partisanship is 51%, but only 1 point in a district where the district partisanship is 61. Our best estimate therefore suggests that changes the average level of *district partisanship* have diminished the electoral value of moderation by a factor of 3.

The third column, presents evidence for *H2* by including *uncertainty in the incumbent's party reputation* and interacting it with the incumbent's level of moderation. As expected, there

⁹ The finding is also broadly consistent with the findings of Carson, Kroger, Lebo, and Young 2010, as moderation in our study is measured relative to the party's mean ideology.

is no statistically significant association between uncertainty itself and incumbents' vote-share. Meanwhile, the interactive effect between the uncertainty and the incumbent's level of moderation is very large and positive. This is consistent with *H2*, that larger the uncertainty in the incumbent's party reputation, the larger the electoral benefits of moderation are.¹⁰ To get a sense of how variance in party's reputations has influenced the value of moderation, consider again what would happen to a candidate who moderated from the mean of their party at 0 to .45. In 1972 the average standard deviation in parties' Nominate scores was .20, and on average, moderating by .45 would gain an incumbent about 5 points. In 2008, where the average standard deviation in parties' Nominate scores was .15, the same level of moderation would have gained an incumbent only 1 point of vote share. This represents a 5 fold decrease in the value of moderation.

Consistent with *H3*, the model in Column 4 shows that there is a negative interaction between uncertainty in a party's reputation and the effect of district partisanship. In 1972, there was a high variance in parties ideology scores, a 1 point change in district partisanship was, on average, associated with only a .05 point increase in incumbent vote-share. By 2008, the same change in district partisanship was associated with a .28 point increase in incumbent vote-share.

¹⁰ In this model, the coefficient on *moderation* actually switches signs so that the main effect of a moderate legislative record appears to be a net negative on the incumbent. In reality, this is misleading since it presupposes the condition of zero uncertainty in party reputation. It's also the case that this coefficient returns to being positive in Column 5, where all of the interactive relationships implied by our formal model are accounted for.

The full model, presented in Column 5, replicates each of the findings above, with minimum changes in both the magnitudes of the coefficients and standard errors. The one notable exception to this is that the interaction effect between *moderation* and *uncertainty in incumbent's party reputation* goes away. This is primarily because this relationship is highly collinear with the interaction between *moderation* and *uncertainty in incumbent's party reputation*.

/H1/ Conclusion

In this article, we have illustrated two ways in which the benefits of individual moderation have decreased over the last four decades. Specifically, we have shown that the gains are undercut by both increases in district partisanship and the increasing informativeness of the party label.

Given these trends, the electoral benefits from a more moderate legislative record have been steadily shrinking, providing ever less of an incentive for members of Congress to not toe the party line. This trend is especially interesting because it could create a positive feedback loop where, at least for some incumbents, polarization diminishes the benefit to moderation enough that it is outweighed by the costs they face in terms of reduced party support (Rohde 1991, Cox and McCubbins 1993). If these incumbents move even further towards their party's end of the ideological spectrum (or are replaced by more ideological candidates) it would further the existing trend towards greater polarization... further reducing the benefits of moderation. While the existence of such a loop is hardly guaranteed, our findings are consistent with the possibility that two types of equilibria ultimately exist in congressional politics:

- Depolarized equilibria, where party brands and attachments are relatively weak, giving candidates a continual incentive to moderate their own record towards the median voter in their district.
- Polarized equilibria, where party brands and attachments are relatively strong, diminishing candidates incentive to moderate their record towards the median voter in their district.

The existence of such equilibria are also consistent with the existing congressional record, where polarization (as measured by DW Nominate Scores) has tended to steadily increase or decrease and then remain stably low or high for a number of decades. Unfortunately, while the model used in this paper is well suited to illustrating comparative statics, it is not designed to derive the equilibrium outcomes that would emerge from politicians, parties, and voters continually interacting. We are therefore unable to use the current model to rigorously examine whether polarization is actually self-reinforcing under certain conditions, but hope to examine this important possibility further in future work using other models.

The trends described and explained in our paper also expose an important paradox in the notion of what constitutes “strong” parties, at least in terms of how the phrase is commonly used. A party’s strength is commonly associated with its internal ideological homogeneity that generates a highly informative electorally beneficial “brand” (Rohde 1991; Cox and McCubbins 2007). Yet, this is precisely the process that undercuts the electoral prospects of party members in districts where their party is not naturally popular. Mayhew (1974b) famously noted, the impact of “incumbency advantage” is that it blunts the effects of partisan tides in elections. To the degree that the individually distinctive legislative records furnish the incumbents to build

surplus votes and thus add to their electoral advantage, Mayhew's observation is fully consistent with our findings.

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Figure 1: The Baseline Model

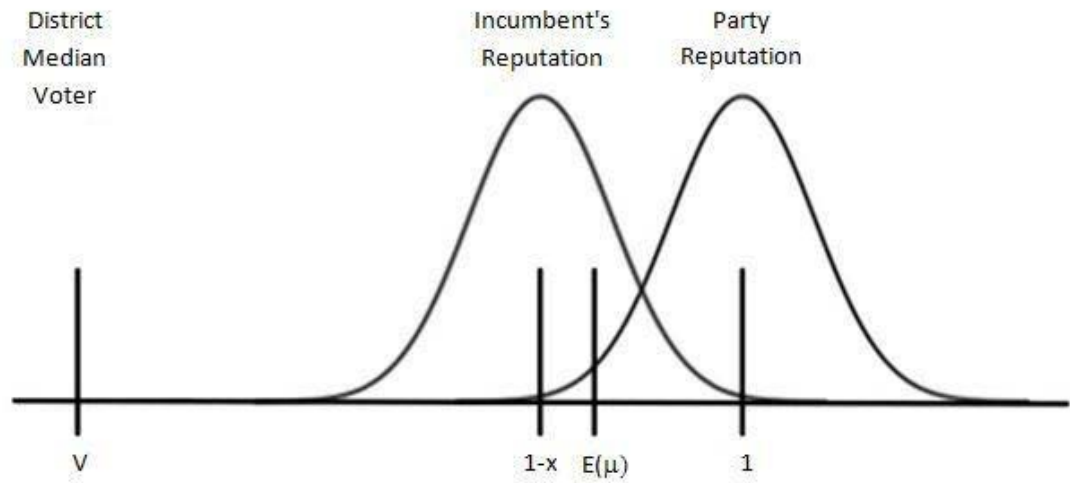


Figure 2: How Moderation Changes the Incumbent's Vote-Share

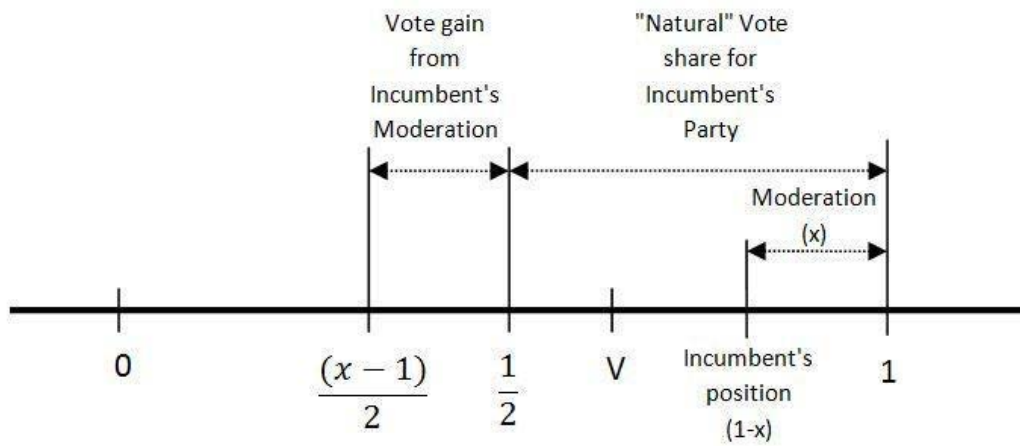


Table 1: Effect of Moderation on Incumbent Vote Share, Moderated by District Partisanship and Uncertainty in the Reputation of the Incumbent's Party.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Moderation	4.94*** (1.224)	26.56*** (5.097)	-26.35*** (9.254)	5.26*** (1.235)	31.81*** (11.163)
Dist. Partisanship	0.18*** (0.016)	0.18*** (0.015)	0.17*** (0.017)	0.98*** (0.119)	1.01*** (0.118)
Uncertainty in Party Reputation			-2.90 (16.766)	235.07*** (38.455)	247.07*** (38.142)
Moderation x Dist. Partisanship		-0.40*** (0.096)			-0.41*** (0.094)
Moderation x Uncertainty in Party Reputation			186.06*** (55.890)		-26.20 (55.465)
Dist. Partisanship x Uncertainty in Party Reputation				-4.65*** (0.687)	-4.84*** (0.678)
Quality	-3.15*** (0.285)	-3.16*** (0.286)	-3.14*** (0.285)	-3.11*** (0.284)	-3.12*** (0.284)
ln(Challenger Spending)-ln(Incumbent Spending)	-2.31*** (0.101)	-2.30*** (0.100)	-2.31*** (0.101)	-2.28*** (0.099)	-2.27*** (0.098)
Observations	5,446	5,446	5,446	5,446	5,446
R2	.62	.63	.63	.63	.64

Year and state fixed effects are omitted from the table.
 Robust standard errors in parentheses clustered by congressional district
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1