Party Coalitions, Interest Groups and the Limits of Unidimensionality in Congress

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Abstract

Scholars have long sought to understand the structure of voting among Members of Congress (MCs) and the reasons for it. They generally agree that voting in the contemporary Congress is characterized by a unidimensional left-right cleavage that can be disrupted only by "cross-cutting" or "off-dimensional" issues or "ends against the middle" voting.

Yet I show that a bill bundling issues which are NOT cross-cutting when considered separately can still disrupt normal voting patterns if it moves policy "leftward" in one issue area and "rightward" in another. This will occur when MCs with similar "spatial locations" on the left-right continuum differ in weighing the importance of particular provisions in forming their overall evaluation of a bill. Such heterogeneity in assessment of the relative importance of different aspects of a proposal may stem from variation in MCs' closeness to different party constituencies or legislators' own ideological priorities. Proposals provoking such conflict may stem either from "heresthetic" tactics or real-world factors that "bundle" factors inescapably in a way that pits party constituencies with generally orthogonal concerns against each other, disrupting longstanding coalitions.

Empirically, I focus on two cases from the 107th Congress: Bankruptcy Reform and Permanent Normal Trade with China. In both cases the unidimensional spatial model of voting performed badly because GOP MCs were cross-pressured by two factions within their coalition: business and Christian conservatives. Such cases reflect the multidimensional attitudinal structure among voters and the potential divides beneath the surface of coalitions such as the contemporary Republican Party. More broadly, they support understandings of unidimensional ideological polarization in Congress and American politics generally as a social construct rather than a result of innate human traits.

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Scholars have long debated the extent to which a single left-right dimension underlies voting in Congress. Important early work found several policy-based clusters (Clausen 1973). Yet while exceptions exist often on "distributive issues" (Hurwitz, Moiles, and Rohde 2001), in general the claims of unidimensionality (Poole and Rosenthal 1997) have won broad acceptance, with much of scholars' energies devoted to finding new ways to measure the "ideal points" of Members of Congress (MCs).

The question of the dimensionality of voting patterns and more fundamentally of the structure of policy preferences among MCs is of interest for multiple reasons. While at least in theory "spatial" models of voting predict outcomes reflecting the median legislator in a one-dimensional setting, given a multi-dimensional preference structure instability and "cycling" can result.

Beyond this there is the question of representation. We would like to know if the structure of preferences or positions among MCs reflects that prevailing among voters. We know that in the world outside Congress and political elites there are far fewer "ideologues" that take the "liberal" or "conservative" position consistently across issues (Converse 1964). In the forty years since Converse wrote, things have not changed fundamentally in this respect. In particular, Layman (2001) shows that at the mass level the correlation between "economic conservatism", i.e. opposition to wealth redistribution and regulation of business and "social conservatism", or religiosity and support for state re-enforcement of traditional norms, is minimal. To the extent that such linkage exists it is fairly recent and largely restricted to the best-informed voters who are most apt to notice patterns of polarization among political elites and gradually adapt to these cues (Carmines and Stimson 1989, Zaller 1992, Gerber and Jackson 1993).

Are there then no traces of these societal patterns in Congress? Are MCs in the grip of an ideological polarization that is removed from the beliefs of most voters? The positions of legislators are certainly far more structured "constrained" in Converse's terms than voters' attitudes. When we know a Senator's position on abortion we have a good sense of how he would vote on seemingly unrelated matters like the minimum wage or arms control. The same is not true of voters.

Yet I will argue that a unidimensional mapping of MCs preferences is descriptively incomplete because it does not account for the factors of preference
intensity among MCs that leads legislators with comparable spatial locations to make different trade-offs between particular liberal or conservative priorities when compelled to do choose between them. In such cases MCs are choosing not only between policies but between groups within their party coalitions, e.g. siding with business against Christian groups or labor against environmentalists etc.

Moreover, the unidimensional approach is misleading to the extent that it interprets ideology as an exogenous guide to MCs rather than the result of party-coordinated coalition management of groups with exogenously-determined preferences. Some recent research (Alford, Funk and Hibbing 2005) even finds a possible genetic basis for ideology among ordinary people. This view clashes with other work that sees unidimensional ideology as socially constructed by political elites (Converse 1964, Talbert and Potoski 2002, Wright and Schaffner 2002, Karol 2005), even if some basic social dispositions are inherited.

I contend that the heterogeneity among MCs as to how to make trade-offs on issues that divide their supporters are plausibly attributable to differences in their relationships to the building blocks of the party, e.g religious conservatives and business interests in the contemporary GOP. Relatedly, there is some reflection in Congress of the largely orthogonal relationship of social and economic conservatism in the public, but the way votes are structured means it is generally obscured. For coalitional reasons most Republican MCs represent both “economic conservatives” (business interests and anti-tax groups) AND “social conservatives” (the Christian Right and gun rights groups.) ¹ This particular coalition dates from the late 1970s when conservative white Protestants were mobilized politically and the NRA drew closer to the GOP. These two constituencies remain sociologically and stylistically distinct, as scholars (Freeman 1986, Layman 2001) and political commentators (Frank 2004) have long noted.

¹ Democrats' coalition of course also includes groups motivated chiefly by material interests (organized labor) as well as those motivated by non-economic rights concerns (abortion, gay rights etc.) or their ideal of a good society (environmentalists.) The line between material and rights-based concerns is often fuzzy, e.g. African-American support for Democrats. Democratic coalition components have also come into conflict resulting in a breakdown of the typical voting pattern among MCs, but they are largely beyond the scope of this paper.
While their interests are different, the agendas of social conservatives and business lobbies usually do not conflict. GOP MCs can please Christian conservatives by opposing same-sex marriage one day and woo business support by resisting a minimum wage increase the next. Thus Congress-watchers have little opportunity to distinguish between Republican MCs who are closer to their social conservative supporters and those more reliant upon business ones. Indeed MCs seldom need to choose between these groups, even if, as Fenno (1978) taught us, they may distinguish among aspects of their constituency in terms of varying levels of support and affinity.

However, several recent issues have caused the two strains of the GOP to come into conflict. Two of the most prominent examples are Bankruptcy Reform and Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China. Although the underlying concerns, abortion and pro-business policies, each are captured by all the leading unidimensional measures, e.g. ADA or NOMINATE scores, the fact that MCs were, atypically, forced to choose between business interests and Christian lobbies greatly disrupted the normal Congressional voting alignments in these cases. Similar cross-pressuring dynamics are have been evident among Democratic MCs over the years on roll calls that pit one of their traditional constituencies against another, e.g. labor vs. environmentalists on fuel-efficiency standards and earlier unions vs. African-Americans. In the face of such conflicts it is not clear what the “liberal” or “conservative” position is, even though individually each policy area has clear liberal and conservative sides.

The fact that such proposals greatly disrupt voting alignments is interesting for scholars interested in ideology and party coalitions. One might expect that a vote in which two issues are "bundled" would only disrupt the prevailing alignment if one of the issues is cross-cutting. There are famous, if disputed, cases from the time when racial issues split the country along regional rather than party lines. Riker (1965,1986) termed these proposals "killer amendments" and claimed that they were intended to undermine majorities for other legislative proposals. The best-known example is the "Powell Amendment", which would have blocked federal aid to segregated schools, the adoption of which was said to have divided Democrats and undermined the majority for the underlying proposal, delaying passage of federal aid to K-12 education. There is debate about particular instances (Krehbiel and Rivers 1990, Gilmour 2001,Mackie 2003), but
scholars agree that such amendments are rare at best. A common premise, most recently articulated by Finnochiaro and Jenkins (2005) is that for killer amendments to succeed the issue space must be multidimensional. Multidimensionality allows an MC to use a cross-cutting issue strategically to disrupt a majority poised to pass a bill he opposes.

Yet as I show, a proposal does not have to combine orthogonal or "cross-cutting" issues for it to disrupt the normal liberal/conservative polarization among MCs. A proposal can disrupt voting alignments even if both issue areas it affectss map onto the left-right divide, provided it is a move to the "left" in one policy area and a "rightward" shift in another. It may not be immediately apparent why this is so. We might imagine that even when a proposal is "liberal" in one respect and "conservative" in another need not be disruptive since MCs could still weigh these two considerations and decide whether "on balance" the bill was a progressive or reactionary one.

Indeed, consensus on how to weigh different aspects of a bill is often evident. For example, the recently signed "energy bill" included some features that -taken in isolation- appealed to environmentalists, e.g. an increase in the subsidies for development of renewable energy sources. Yet the inclusion of these provisions in the bill did not disrupt the typical voting alignment because environmental groups agreed that they were far outweighed by many other aspects of the legislation, e.g. larger subsidies to producers of non-renewable energy, increased access to old-growth forests by loggers (to produce energy) and permitting offshore oil and gas exploration in previously off-limits areas.  

For their part firms heavily invested in non-renewable forms of energy that might not have been pleased with any aid going to renewable producers evidently viewed those subsidies as a small price to pay for the passage of a long-delayed bill which included many provisions favoring them. Thus these lobbies strongly supported the measure. So in this case despite their policy disagreements, both energy companies and their environmentalist adversaries could agree about whose agenda was served overall by the energy bill and the essential irrelevance of the modest renewable provisions.

The energy bill is merely one example; much legislation in various policy areas contains such provisions, often denounced as token gestures by opponents. Whether intended merely for public consumption or to appease a handful of legislators or lobbyists

interest groups that value them more highly than most, such provisions are part of politics as usual and seldom disrupt voting alignments in Congress. In such cases most political actors generally agree that one aspect of the bill outweighs the other so there is little confusion about its overall thrust and typical voting patterns emerge.

Yet there are times when a legislative proposal has a perceived impact in two different areas, moving one "leftward" and the other "rightward" and the alignment of forces is disrupted as a result. This occurs even though neither issue is "cross-cutting" because -unlike the case of the energy bill- legislators may agree on the appropriate direction to move in both policy areas yet still weigh them very differently. These inter-legislator differences in willingness to trade off these policy dimensions can stem from multiple sources. These include variation in perceptions of the consequences of trade-offs due to incomplete information and differences regarding which issue deserves priority due to either personal beliefs or differential sensitivity to particular constituency groups. The disagreements that exist among MCs with similar spatial positions on the dominant left-right continuum can lead them to differ on such bundled proposals, favoring one faction of their party over another. These disagreements, while usually latent, can be seen as at least an echo of the multidimensional structure of public opinion in Congress.

In a two-party system both parties are necessarily diverse coalitions. Party leaders engage in "coalition management", giving each group enough in policy, patronage or symbolism to justify its continued support (Karol 2005). Coalition-partners do not have to agree on all topics in order to coexist. As long as groups get enough of what they want on the issues they are most concerned about they will be willing to share a tent with those whose agendas leave them indifferent or even somewhat displeased.

The diversity of preferences among various coalition components nevertheless presents a constant challenge to party leaders. They must seek to minimize conflict between their various constituencies. Even when promoting measures that benefit one group and leave others indifferent tension is possible because -given the limited space on the political agenda at any one time- Group A may resent the priority given to the concerns of Group B.

However, a far greater challenge for coalition managers occurs when a proposal emerges that seems to offer benefits for one group, but harms the perceived interests of
another. Of course wherever possible party leaders seek to avoid facing such divisive proposals. Legislative agenda control in some settings, e.g. the U.S. House, normally helps leaders of the majority shield their coalitions from such dangers. Yet on occasion such trade-offs are unavoidable due to legislative factors beyond leaders' control, e.g. bicameralism and rules that empower clever legislators of the minority party, or the fact that a measure strongly sought by one group inevitably antagonizes another.

Bankruptcy Reform

For several years starting in the late 1990s creditor interests had sought to reform bankruptcy laws to limit debtor rights. The credit-card companies were in the forefront of this effort. They made clear to MCs that bankruptcy reform was their number one issue. They won support from umbrella groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and they and were not shy about making campaign contributions. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, in the 2000 election cycle "Finance and Credit Companies" contributed nearly $10,000,000 to Congressional campaigns, 69% of which went to Republicans. In 2005 the efforts of the credit card industry were finally successful as President George W. Bush signed the "Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act. The ramifications and merits of the legislation are beyond the scope of this paper. What is of interest is the trouble the measure ran into on the way to enactment despite strong backing from well-heeled interests, the absence of a similarly wealthy counter-lobby and bipartisan support.

In 2000 a bankruptcy reform measure made it through the GOP-dominated Congress. Republican support for the bill was nearly unanimous and a large minority of Democrats favored it as well. Yet the measure was waylaid by complications that were insurmountable for years. In the 1990s anti-abortion activists began campaigns of picketing abortion clinics. This prompted lawsuits by clinics which in several instances resulted in substantial judgments being issued against the pro-life activists. Anti-abortion

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4 The only study I know of that references this controversy is Nunez and Rosenthal (2004.) However their focus is on "vote-buying" via campaign contributions and they give minimal attention to the complications of the abortion issue.
protestors had been sued by the clinics they were picketing. In order to avoid paying these judgments to Planned Parenthood and other groups they despised some of the leading activists, most prominently including Randall Terry of Operation Rescue, declared bankruptcy starting in November 1998. This move enraged pro-choice activists who viewed it as an abuse of bankruptcy law in order to avoid complying with court decisions. Sen. Charles Schumer (D.-N.Y), a pro-choice legislator who was critical of the bankruptcy reform on other grounds (though not seemingly a die-hard opponent), offered an amendment to the Bankruptcy reform bill aimed at blocking such groups from using that legal tactic.

Schumer's move can be seen as what Riker (1986) calls a "heresthetic" maneuver in which a politician introduces a new issue in order to disrupt the dominant majority. This is not to say that Schumer was necessarily insincere and wholly strategic in the sense that he was trying to sabotage the bankruptcy bill at all costs. His pro-choice voting record was consistent with the amendment he offered.

Yet what matters for our purposes is less Schumer's intent than his amendment's effect. The subversive potential of the Schumer Amendment was evident immediately. Sen. Joe Biden (D.-Del.), a legislator who was both close to credit card interests in his state and somewhat less pro-choice than Schumer, termed the amendment a "poison pill" and noted that "the way 'to make sure nothing happens is to say 'abortion.'" Most Senate Democrats and even some pro-choice Republicans seemed likely to vote for Schumer's Amendment. Liberals who already opposed the bankruptcy bill as a "giveaway" to the credit card companies would have no problem voting for it, but even more business-friendly Democrats who backed the underlying bill and a few Republicans looked ready to support the amendment as well. However, an amended version of the bankruptcy bill including Schumer's proposal would alienate social conservatives who would bring pressure on GOP MCs to oppose it.

Thus Schumer's proposal had the clear potential to be a "killer amendment." It is important to note that this was the case even though MCs' positions on the issues of

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5 "Terry Implores Pro-Life Crowd to Persevere" Buffalo News April 24,1999 P.1C, "Opponent of Abortion, Wife File for Bankruptcy", Buffalo News, March 22,1999 P.1C
7 ibid
bankruptcy reform and abortion were highly correlated. Both were predicted well by Poole and Rosenthal's D1 NOMINATE score. This is anomalous given the dominant view that killer amendments are necessarily cross-cutting. True, there were many MCs (chiefly moderate Democrats) who favored both Bankruptcy Reform and abortion rights. Yet even these MCs were generally less supportive of Bankruptcy reform than pro-life Democrats and especially Republicans. Many of these pro-choice/pro-bankruptcy reform Democratic MCs would vote for Democratic alternatives and motions to narrow the scope of the bill before voting for final passage of bankruptcy reform.

The Schumer Amendment's fate was uncertain and during his run for the Democratic nomination in early 2000 Vice President Al Gore rushed back to Washington to break a possible tie when it was brought to the Senate floor. In order to deny him this victory Republican leaders decided to accept the Schumer Amendment and make Gore's vote irrelevant. They could then remove the Amendment in conference, which they did. Both chambers passed the Conference Report sans the Schumer Amendment in late 2000 by veto-proof margins. Many Democrats preferred a bankruptcy bill with the Schumer Amendment but would even vote for one without it in preference to the status quo.

In December of 2000 the bill was pocket-vetoed by President Clinton. Earlier the President had written to Congress informing MCs of his objections which included not only the allegedly anti-consumer slant of the bill, but also its failure to include the Schumer provisions regarding bankruptcy declarations by abortion protestors.

Once unified Republican government emerged in early 2001 prospects for bankruptcy reform appeared to brighten. The wide margins by which the bill had passed in the previous Congress suggested that with a Presidential veto no longer a concern legislation would be imminent. Yet passage was still delayed for more than four years and the complications stemming from the Schumer Amendment were responsible in large measure. An industry lobbyist quoted in fall 2002 described the mixture of the abortion and bankruptcy issues as a "nightmare." The bundling of these issues not only was

8 "Gore Abortion Scramble" New York Times February 3,2000 P.20
blocking passage of a bankruptcy bill, but it was changing the tenor of the surrounding politics considerably; "Usually my opponents are other lawyers in their pinstripes and we can negotiate things out," he said. "Now I'm up against people who believe this is good versus evil. And I'm not used to being described as evil."  

An interesting question is why the addition of the Schumer Amendment did not initially have the disruptive consequences in the Senate in 2001 that it had in the House. Many more pro-life Republican Senators voted for the measure despite the provisions. A few possible explanations suggest themselves. The House is known to be more conservative on abortion issues and owing to their smaller and more homogenous constituencies Representatives are more apt to take "extreme" positions than Senators. It is also possible that the pro-life groups were more mobilized by the time the conference report reached the House. However the most important factor explaining the intercameral difference was probably sequence; pro-life Senators could vote for the bill despite the Schumer Amendment in the expectation that it might be removed or softened in conference. The U.S. Representatives on the other hand were eventually voted on a conference report that contained the Schumer amendment. They could not pass the buck.

In Conference Sen. Schumer had agreed upon a revised wording of his amendment with Rep. Henry Hyde (R.-Ill.), perhaps the leading pro-life advocate in Congress and a legislator who was greatly admired in Republican ranks. Schumer agreed to remove any specific mention of abortion clinic protestors. The new language referenced only persons who "'intentionally' mount an illegal protest against a 'facility that, or a person who, provides lawful goods or services.' " Nonetheless after the Conference Report was publicized this revised wording remained unacceptable to a large number of social conservatives. Republicans were in a difficult position. As Rep. Joseph Pitts (R-Pa.) put it, they "do not want to choose between their friends, their

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10 "Anti-Abortion Lobbyists Tying up Bankruptcy Bill" New York Times September 24, 2002
11 ibid
12 "Vote on Bankruptcy Bill is Stalled by Abortion Provision." New York Times, July 30, 2002 P.C2
business friends and their pro-life friends." The GOP House leadership delayed the vote on the bill for months, finally bringing it to the floor at the end of the lame-duck session following the 2002 elections, a time when they hoped more of their MCs would be able to resist pressure from social conservatives and vote for the Conference Report.

In the House the leading business lobby, the Chamber of Commerce made Bankruptcy reform a priority and used the vote on the Conference Report in their rating. (For this reason the statistical analyses I present using the Chamber of Commerce scores from 2002 below are recalculated without using that vote.) Yet Gary Bauer's Christian Right group, "Campaign for Working Families", not only lobbied against the Report, but they counted a vote for it as a black mark against MCs when calculating their ratings. Concerned Women of America also lobbied strongly against the Conference Report due to the anti-protestor provisions. Perhaps most consequentially, Dr. James Dobson of the Colorado-based Focus on the Family denounced the measure as well.

The positioning of these lobbies meant that Republican MCs were being pulled in opposite directions. The business community and the GOP House leadership favored the Conference Report, but large segments of their base were in revolt. As a result the eventual vote was not very well predicted by the traditional spatial model. In the end the Republican House leadership was "rolled" on the floor as the motion to waive points of order against the Conference Report was defeated 243-172 on November 15, 2002. Democrats opposed the measure 155 to 48. Republicans were far more divided. 124 House Republicans (including virtually all of the pro-choice moderates) backed the leadership and the Report while 84 GOP MCs opposed it. There is reason to believe that there was some position shifting among Democrats in order to force GOP MCs to choose between their "friends" as Rep. Pitts had put it. If anything, the Schumer Amendment should have made the bill more attractive to House Democrats, yet about twice as many

14 http://capwiz.com/chamber/scorecard/?chamber=H&session=1072,
http://capwiz.com/nam/scorecard/?chamber=H&session=107&x=6&y=15
15 http://www.cwfpac.com/capwiz/issues.htm,
http://www.cwfa.org/articles/2811/CWA/life/,
http://www.family.org/cforum/feature/a0023281.cfm
had voted for a version of it without that language the year before as supported it in this case. (It is important to note however than any such Democratic switches only served to make the vote look somewhat more like a tradition liberal/conservative split than it would have had any switcher Democrats favored a measure proposed by GOP leaders that so many Republican MCs were rejecting.)

After the Conference Report was defeated the House passed a version of Bankruptcy Reform that did not include the Schumer language. This measure won unanimous Republican support, but this was a wholly symbolic gesture since it was clear that the Senate would not accept the new version and the 107th Congress was in its final hours.

Figure 1 depicts the positions of U.S. Representatives in the 107th Congress in a two dimensional space based on their "coordinates" using Poole and Rosenthal's First Dimension (D1) NOMINATE score as the x-axis and their Second Dimension (D2) score as the Y axis. Each data point represents an MC. S/he is represented by a '1' if s/he voted for the Bankruptcy Reform Conference Report and a '0' if s/he opposed it. Atypically, '0's or No voters are found at almost every spatial location (this is less true of 1's or "Yes Voters.")

Table 1 puts the late 2002 vote on the Conference Report on Bankruptcy Reform in perspective. It includes a Principal Components Factor Analysis. In addition to a dummy variable capturing MCs' votes on the Conference Report, the analysis includes a Party dummy, Poole and Rosenthal's D1 and D2 Nominate Scores, interest group scores from the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) for the 107th Congress and for the Chamber of Commerce (COC) for 2002 (recalculated after removing the vote on the Conference Report) and a issue scale I created using the other votes on Bankruptcy reform for this Congress, which in another factor analysis not reported I verified load very strongly on one dimension. The Party dummy, the D1 NOMINATE score, both interest group ratings and the bankruptcy reform score all load very strongly on the first component. Thus neither business issues in general, nor bankruptcy reform nor abortion are "cross-cutting" or off dimensional issues. This is not true however of the vote on the Conference Report. It does not fit neatly onto this dominant first component or the
second one, which is dominated by the D2 NOMINATE score. Instead it seems to fall somewhere in between these dimensions, slightly closer to the first one.

Table 2 extends the analysis. It includes three models. The first two use the aforementioned NRLC and COC scores individually to predict MCs’ vote on the Bankruptcy Reform Conference Report. Both are significant predictors of votes and the sign on the coefficients is positive. (The COC score is a better predictor however.) In other words, being pro-business or pro-life meant an MC was more likely ceteris paribus to support the Bankruptcy reform measure that included the anti-protester provisions. Yet the final model shows an interesting shift when both interest group scores are included in the same regression. While the COC coefficient remains positive and significant, the NRLC now takes a negative sign. Controlling for their Chamber of Commerce rating, the more pro-life an MC was the less apt she was to favor the Bankruptcy Reform Conference Report. This is a reflection of the contrasting positions taken by pro-business and religious right lobbies above. In Model Two the positive sign on the NRLC coefficient is a spurious result of the fact that most pro-life MCs are also pro-business, an artifact of the GOP's coalition. Yet to the extent they voted for the Report it was despite, not because of their pro-life leanings.\footnote{For whatever reason the National Right to Life Committee did not include the vote on the Conference Report in calculating their scores for the 107th Congress so I was able to use their ratings as they calculate them. Substituting the similar scores created by the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) does not materially affect the results either.}

The failure of Congress to pass a bankruptcy reform bill during the 108th Congress (2003-2004), despite the return of unified Republican government suggests that more than ephemeral Democratic majority in the Senate frustrated the attempts of the creditors and the GOP leadership to move a bill. Throughout 2003 and 2004 the specter of the Schumer Amendment haunted the proceedings. Despite the Democrats' minority position, it seemed that the votes existed in the Senate to pass the amendment. Thus there was a possibility of a repeat of the scenario evident in the 2002 lame-duck session when that provision triggered opposition from anti-abortion activists that convinced many Republican MCs to resist passage of the bankruptcy bill. As a result, while a version of the bankruptcy reform bill without the offending abortion protester provisions easily
passed in the House in early 2003, there was no action in the Senate. Only in early 2005 when a newly expanded GOP majority emerged in the Senate that could and did defeat the Schumer Amendment was the logjam finally broken and bankruptcy reform enacted.

The bundling of the issue of abortion clinic protestors' prerogatives with the bankruptcy bill delayed passage of a measure with widespread support for more than 5 years. This was true despite the fact that for most of that time the White House was sympathetic to the measure as well. This delay was also risky for supporters of bankruptcy reform, since had President Bush been defeated in 2004 a President Kerry might have been able to rally enough Democrats to sustain a veto unless the bill's provisions were modified at least somewhat in favor of debtors and consumers.

**Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China**

While substantively and theoretically interesting, the ensnarement of bankruptcy legislation in the thicket of anti-abortion protests at clinics may seem to be a very unrepresentative case. Yet there were other instances in which economic and social conservatives were pitted against each other even in the 107th Congress, e.g, the case of Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China (PNTR). While this case shares some key characteristics with the abortion/bankruptcy controversy, it differs in others ways that show the multiple sources of this phenomenon.

The bankruptcy issue and abortion politics were brought together in a way that was troublesome for Republicans only because bicameralism and the rules of the Senate allowed Democrats room to maneuver. Senate Democrats led by Chuck Schumer (D.-N.Y.), were able to raise the issue, even while in the minority and could produce an amended bill that could not pass the House since some GOP MCs would no longer support a measure that restricted the rights of abortion protestors to file for bankruptcy. Once the Republican and conservative majority increased in the Senate after the 2004 elections, the GOP leadership was able to defeat the Schumer Amendment on the floor of the Senate and the majority evident for years in favor of a bankruptcy reform bill without abortion provisions could re-emerge.
The story is different for trade with China. On this topic the bundling of concerns that pulled the two main GOP constituencies in opposite directions was not the result of clever parliamentary maneuvers by political entrepreneurs. Rather it was inherent in the legislation and more fundamentally the outside world. The same China that offered a market of 1,200,000,000 consumers and a vast labor force that could undercut American workers also pursued a "one child policy" of population control that produced many abortions. The Chinese regime also imposed restrictions on independent church activity that rankled many American Christians. Thus these Christian groups found themselves on the same side as Democratic-leaning labor unions worried about competition from cheap Chinese labor. Both groups squared off against business lobbies like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Business Roundtable. The latter groups saw the undermining of unions' position as a benefit rather than a cost and did not much care about Chinese family planning or treatment of Christians. Since the Chinese leadership was not about to reverse its domestic policies in these respects conflict between the priorities of business and Christian groups simply could not be finessed by clever wording of a bill or blocking a troublesome amendment.

As a result, the typical ingredients of trade politics, conflict between capital and labor, lobbying by especially affected industries and a bit of nationalist sentiment were joined by religious concerns and lobbies. The Chamber of Commerce lobbied hard for the passage of PNTR and used the vote to score MCs, as did the second largest group the National Association of Manufacturers (which had not been as focused on Bankruptcy reform.) These groups had less influence among Democratic MCs. Meanwhile, opposition from the AFL-CIO (which had used PNTR in their 2000 rating although they did not in 2001) played a role in dissuading many more liberal Congressional Democrats from backing PNTR.  

However, Concerned Women for America, a Christian Right group opposed PNTR and included it in their scorecard rating MCs, as they had since at least the 104th Congress (1995-1996.) The "Campaign for Working Families", a group chaired by

18 http://capwiz.com/nam/scorecard/?chamber=H&session=107&x=13&y=0,

19 http://www.aflcio.org/issues/legislativealert/votes/
Christian Right activist and former presidential candidate Gary Bauer, also lobbied against PNTR and used it in their scorecard. Leaders of the Family Research Council and other Christian right groups clashed with the Bush Administration on the China trade issue and urged Congress not to support PNTR. As in the case of Bankruptcy Reform, Republican MCs received divergent signals from different elements of the GOP.

The results are visible in Figure 2. As in Figure 1, each data point represents an MC. His position in the plane represented is based on the NOMINATE coordinates of Poole and Rosenthal with the X-axis representing the first dominant (liberal/conservative) dimension and the Y-axis representing the less important second dimension. In the case of the PNTR bill depicted we see 1's (Yes voters) and 0's (No voters) at both extremes of the distribution. This is different from a typical bill in which the Yes voters and no voters are located next to each other in space.

This case has attracted comparatively little attention from scholars. Nokken (2003) is a partial exception, although his analysis of voting patterns on trade with China ends with 2000. Nokken does note what he terms an "extremes against the middle" voting pattern during the 1990s that he attributes to the fact that Most Favored Nation trade status with China could only be revoked by two-thirds vote of both Houses of Congress. Nokken correctly notes that this scenario was unlikely and theorizes that knowledge of this fact freed MCs to vote on a "position-taking" basis resulting in an alignment inconsistent with the spatial model. He holds that this changed when the vote was on Permanent Normal Trade Relations (considered in 2000 as well as 2001) because on this issue a simple majority would be decisive. Nokken does not emphasize the cross-pressuring of MCs as I do. Another problem with his analysis is that even the 2000 vote on PNTR (not shown here) as well as the 2001 that occurred after he wrote, also deviate notably from the predictions of the spatial model.

22 Hussey (2005) explores this dynamic of the "coalition of extremes" more generally. In both cases I ran a regression using the absolute value of the D1 NOMINATE Score and it did not predict votes as well as the untransformed score did, so the politics I am discussing is not simply a story of "ends against the middle."
When we look at the 2001 PNTR vote in comparison with several other indicators of MCs' positions, we also see that it is very atypical. Table 3 shows the results of a Principal Components Factor Analysis. Variables used include the D1 and D2 NOMINATE Scores, a party dummy, MC's ratings from the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) (for the 107th Congress) and from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (COC) for 2002 (minus the bankruptcy vote discussed above) along with a dummy variable measuring the MC's vote on PNTR.

What is evident from the table is that the PNTR vote does not fall along the dominant dimension of conflict. Party, the D1 score, the NRLC and COC ratings all load strongly on the first dimension, unsurprisingly. Yet the vote on PNTR fits much better onto the second dimension along with the D2 NOMINATE score. This is the case even though the issues "bundled" in the vote i.e. business concerns and abortion load strongly on the first dimension when considered separately.

We can see quantitative evidence of the cross-pressures the MCs were under when we examine Table 4. In it I present three logistic regression models predicting MCs' vote on PNTR. In models One and Two both interest group ratings, the COC and NRLC scores are significant predictors of MCs' votes. The higher an MC's score is from either group the more likely she is to favor PNTR. However in the third model when I include both interest group scores an interesting change occurs. As before the coefficient for the COC rating remains positive and significant. Yet that of the NRLC changes signs, while retaining significance. Controlling for MC's support for the Chamber of Commerce, pro-life tendencies made a legislator less likely to favor PNTR, not more. In the bivariate model the NRLC coefficient is positive, but this is a spurious finding that appears only because most pro-life politicians are also pro-business because both groups are part of the Republican coalition.

(I should note that it is dangerous to use votes to predict votes and I am using them in this case as proxies of support for the agenda of the two lobbies. I am ducking entirely the debate over whether these scores result from sincere beliefs on the part of MCs or susceptibility to political pressures from the lobbies in question.)

This connection was a more fundamental linkage than that existing between bankruptcy and abortion politics and in fact the disruption of the traditional voting
alignment was greater according to standard measures; PNTR loaded far less onto D1 than the Bankruptcy Reform Conference Report had. However this act was less important politically since there was still a majority for PNTR.

Conclusions and Notes for Future Study

In this paper I have focused on only two cases. The common element was the fact that core constituencies of the GOP (business groups and religious conservatives) disagreed on an issue, cross-pressuring Republican MCs and disrupting the normal voting alignment in Congress. This occurred even though the issues in question bankruptcy reform, trade and abortion are issues that individually are not "cross-cutting" and fit well into the liberal/conservative continuum. When MCs are forced to choose between different elements of their party and they diverge in which group they side with, a bill can disrupt the standard voting pattern, even if the issues bundled in it do not cross-cut the party cleavage when considered separately. The considerable variation in response among MCs whose "spatial locations" are almost identical suggests that something of the multidimensionality of public opinion remains in the "unidimensional Congress", even if it is only variation in preference intensity for different aspects of "liberalism" or "conservatism."

In one case the disruption of the standard alignment of MCs was due to something like the heresthetic behavior described by William Riker. By raising the issue of whether anti-abortion protestors could use bankruptcy laws to avoid paying judgments Sen. Charles Schumer (D.-N.Y.) played a major role in delaying passage of a measure that had bipartisan, majority support for five years.

In the other case, Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China, the disruption of the normal voting alignment was not the product of "heresthetics", but rather inhered in the issue, given the animating concerns of different aspects of the Republican Party. While more pronounced from a statistical standpoint, it was less significant politically as PNTR was enacted.

While this paper has been focused on two cases in one Congress this phenomenon of clashes between different partisan constituencies is more widespread. Disagreements
between religious conservatives and business do not always result in massive disruption of voting alignments, but they are visible to varying degrees in several other cases. Examples include stem-cell research (favored by biotech firms and the Chamber of Commerce, but opposed by religious right groups) and relaxation of FCC rules limiting concentration of ownership in media markets (supported by broadcasters but opposed by religious groups and the NRA as well as some liberal organizations.)

The recent controversy over the use of the filibuster to block judicial nominations also led to divisions between social and economic conservatives. Religious conservatives involved in the "culture war" such as Dr. James Dobson of "Focus on the Family" were visibly pressuring Republican Senators during this fight to resist compromise. Less attention was paid to the fact that business groups took a different view. Spokesmen for both the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers distanced themselves from the drive to limit filibusters of judicial nominations and expressed fears that the controversy could monopolize the Senate's agenda, delaying passage of bills important to their members.

Even this expanded set of examples is limited to clashes between two current constituencies of one of the major parties. Yet the phenomenon is a broader one. Democrats too have been cross-pressured when different groups within their coalition had contradictory demands that could not be finessed. While a serious examination of those cases requires another paper, some examples may be cited briefly: clashes between organized labor and environmentalists over fuel efficiency standards in autos and drilling for oil in Alaska (Obach 2004) and disagreements between unions and civil rights groups over remedies for structural racism in the former (Frymer 2003).

So what does the above evidence illustrate? Three things, it seems to me. First it shows something about contemporary politics; despite their current success, the Republicans' coalition, like others before it, contains important fault lines. Moreover, even awareness of these potential conflicts does not necessarily mean leaders can avoid

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23 "Dobson Seen as Driven, Divisive." Denver Post April 27, 2005 P.1
them on issues where religious and business lobbies find themselves diametrically opposed.

In addition, the above analysis demonstrates that the unidimensional mapping of MC's "spatial positions" by various scholars only captures part of the story. While we know that in the contemporary Congress an MC with a high D1-NOMINATE score is very likely to oppose abortion and support both bankruptcy reform and trade liberalization, we have little sense from this score alone of her priorities. The question of how she would react if forced to choose between these issues or between religious and business lobbies generally remains open.

More broadly, an examination of such cases both expands our understanding of representation and strengthens the case for viewing “ideology” as less an inherent property based in individual psychology and more a contingent product of coalition politics. Unidimensionality itself emerges as a result of the voting agenda and the activities of political leaders in building and managing coalitions rather than emerging inevitably based on the preferences of MCs.
References


Talbert, Jeffrey C. and Matthew Potoski 2002. "Setting the Legislative Agenda: The Dimensional Structure of Bill Cosponsoring and Floor Voting" Journal of Politics Vol. 64 No. 3 864-891.


Figure 1

NOMINATE Coordinates and Bankruptcy Reform

U.S. House of Representatives 2002 (1=Y) (0=N)
Table 1

Principal Components Factor Analysis
Party, NOMINATE Scores, Issue Scales and Vote No. 478
(Bankruptcy Reform Conference Report)
107th Congress, 2nd Session

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<th>2nd Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>D2 NOMINATE Score</td>
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<td>.92</td>
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Table 2  
Vote #478  
Conference Report on Bankruptcy Bill  
107th Congress Second Session (2002)  
Logistic Regression Estimates

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<th>Variables</th>
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Standard Errors in Parentheses

**= p-value <.01
Figure 2
NOMINATE Coordinates and the Vote
House Vote No. 253 (2001) PNTR With China
Table 3
Principal Components Factor Analysis
Party, NOMINATE Scores, Issue Scales and Vote No. 255
(Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China)
107th Congress, 1st Session (July 19, 2001)

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Table 4
Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China
Vote No. 253
107th Congress, 1st Session (July 19, 2001)
Logistic Regression Estimates

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Standard Errors in Parentheses
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