Slippage among the Experts

Agency Costs in Partisan Election Regulation

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How do IFE and parties relate?

Our work on IFE, now and then

Before: static ideal point estimation 1996–2007
(Estévez, Magar, and Rosas 2008)

- Party watchdog model: expect party segmentation of Council General (same-sponsor councilors align).

Now: dynamic estimation 1996–2011

- Same general hypothesis, finer tests.
- Longitudinal estimates: track realignment, effect of new entrants, compare electoral semesters/rest...
- Link dynamics to analytical narratives.

The Federal Electoral Institute

- Nine-member, non-partisan regulatory board
- Decisions affect all aspects of party life
  1. party finance
  2. candidate selection
  3. campaign contents
  4. leaders v. rank-and-file
  5. vote count
  6. ...
- Congress appoints members (super-majority) for 7-year terms. Party quota/veto system (informal)
- Public roll call votes

Our argument

Parties designed election referee that they can influence

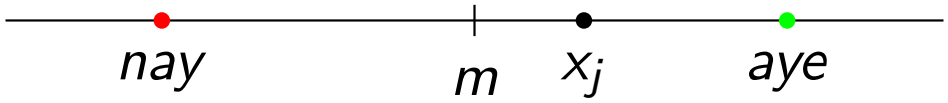
Delegation dilemmas:
IFE (the agent) affects parties' (the principal) welfare

Careful delegation $\rightarrow$ party trust $\rightarrow$ citizen trust

Contract design (Kiewiet & McCubbins 1991)

- screening
- monitoring
- rewards and sanctions
- checks and balances

Stochastic spatial voting



Vote propensity: $v_j^* = \texttt{signal}(x_j - m) + \texttt{error}$.

Voting is sincere: $v_j = \begin{cases} 1 \text{ ('aye')} \iff v_j^* \geq 0 \\ 0 \text{ ('nay') otherwise.} \end{cases}$

Small assembly: Bayesian estimation via MCMC simulation.

Dynamics

Approach 1—Martin&Quinn (2002):

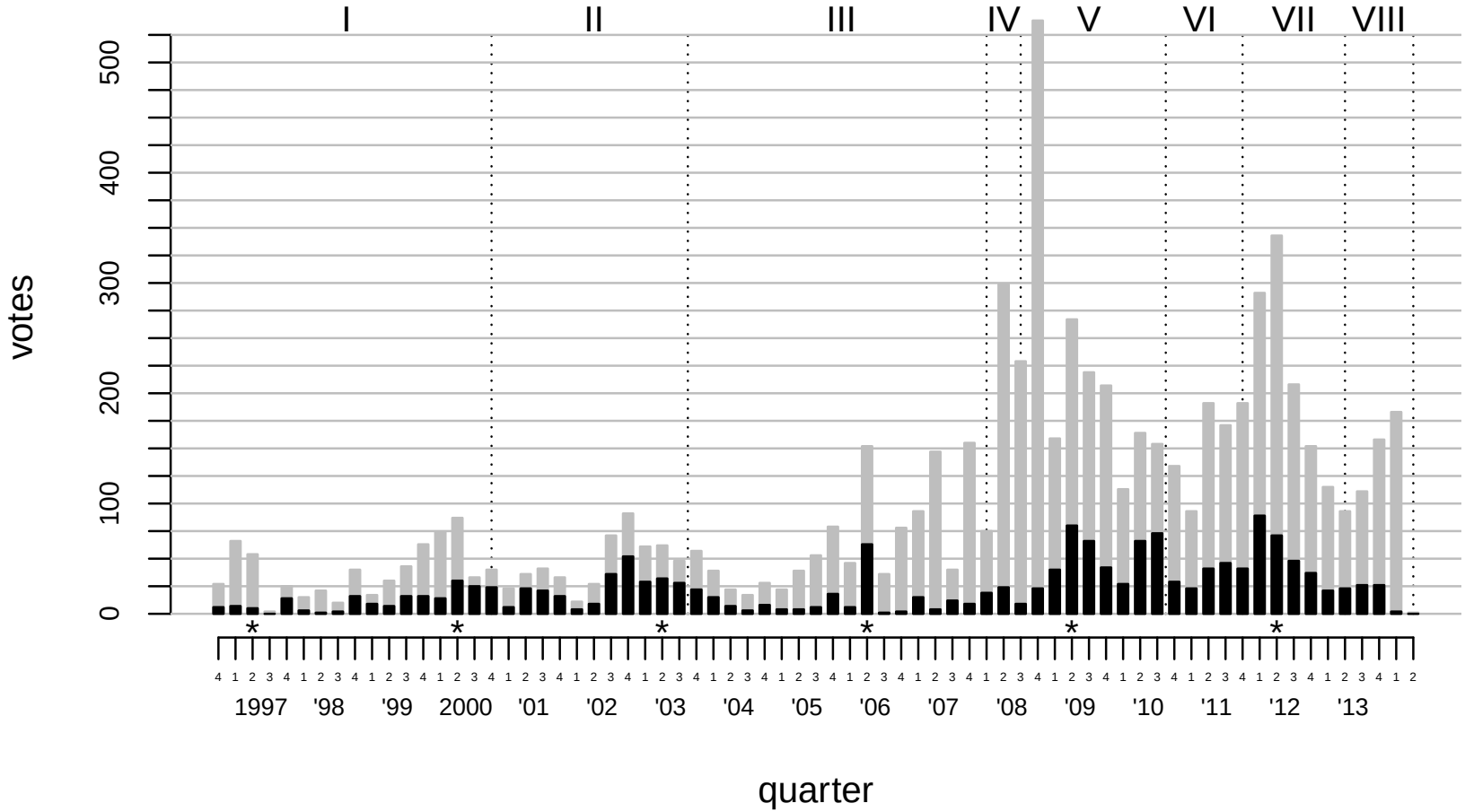
- For quarter t: $x_{j,t} \sim \mathrm{N}(x_{j,t-1}, \text{slack})$
- *Drawback*: votes vary considerably across quarters—ideal points sensitive to sheer volume of information (Desposato), so drift may be spurious

Approach 2—Bonica (2010):

- Allow estimates to vary over periods of very short duration: item $i \pm k$, $k = 15$
- Vote-by-vote estimation
- Periods mostly overlap, constraining short-term shifts
- IRT instead of OC

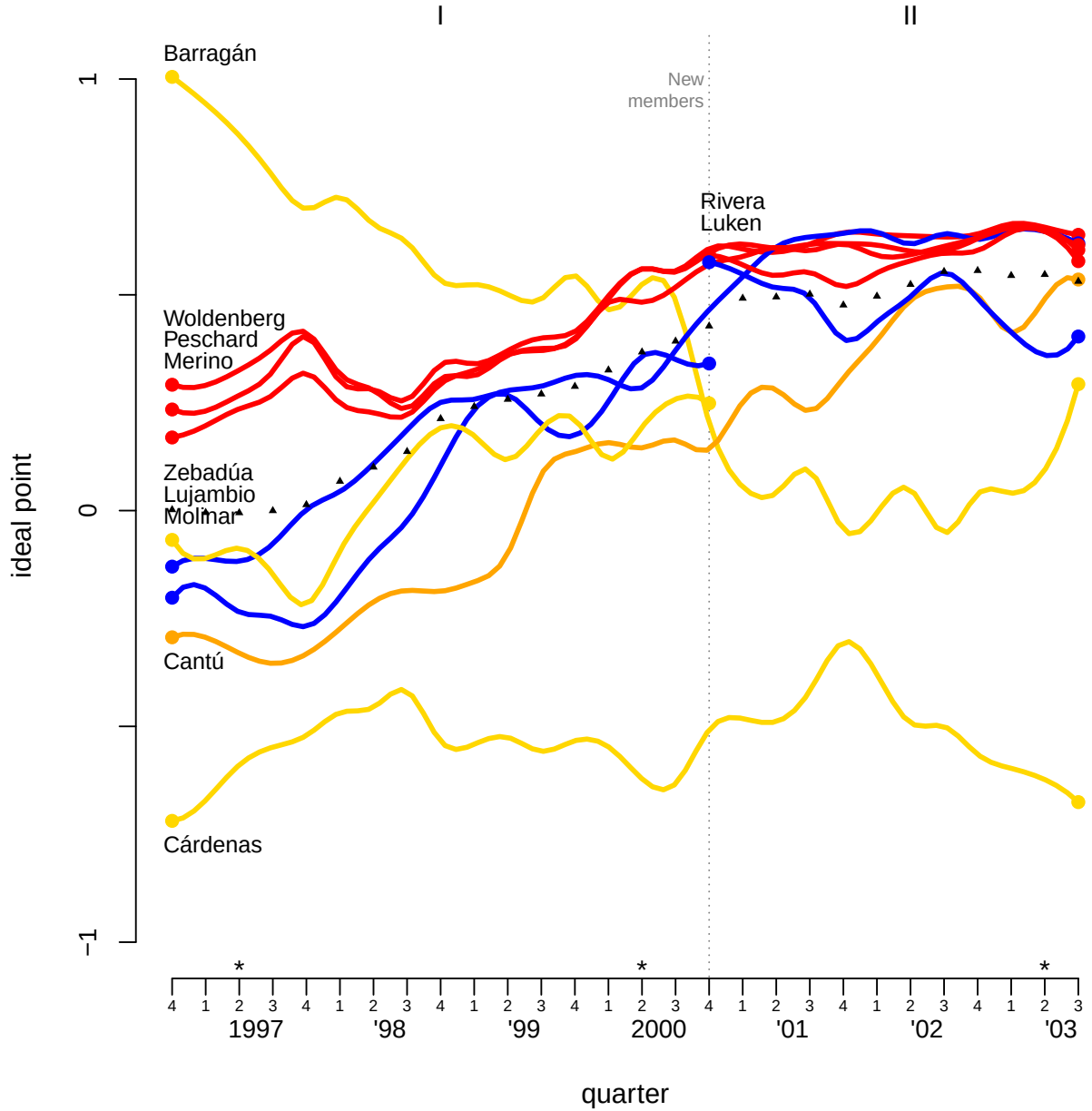
Contested votes

Votes: 3,907 unanimous, 1,446 contested (27 %)



Same members within each period (I, II, ...)

Results: 1996–2003 **quarterly**



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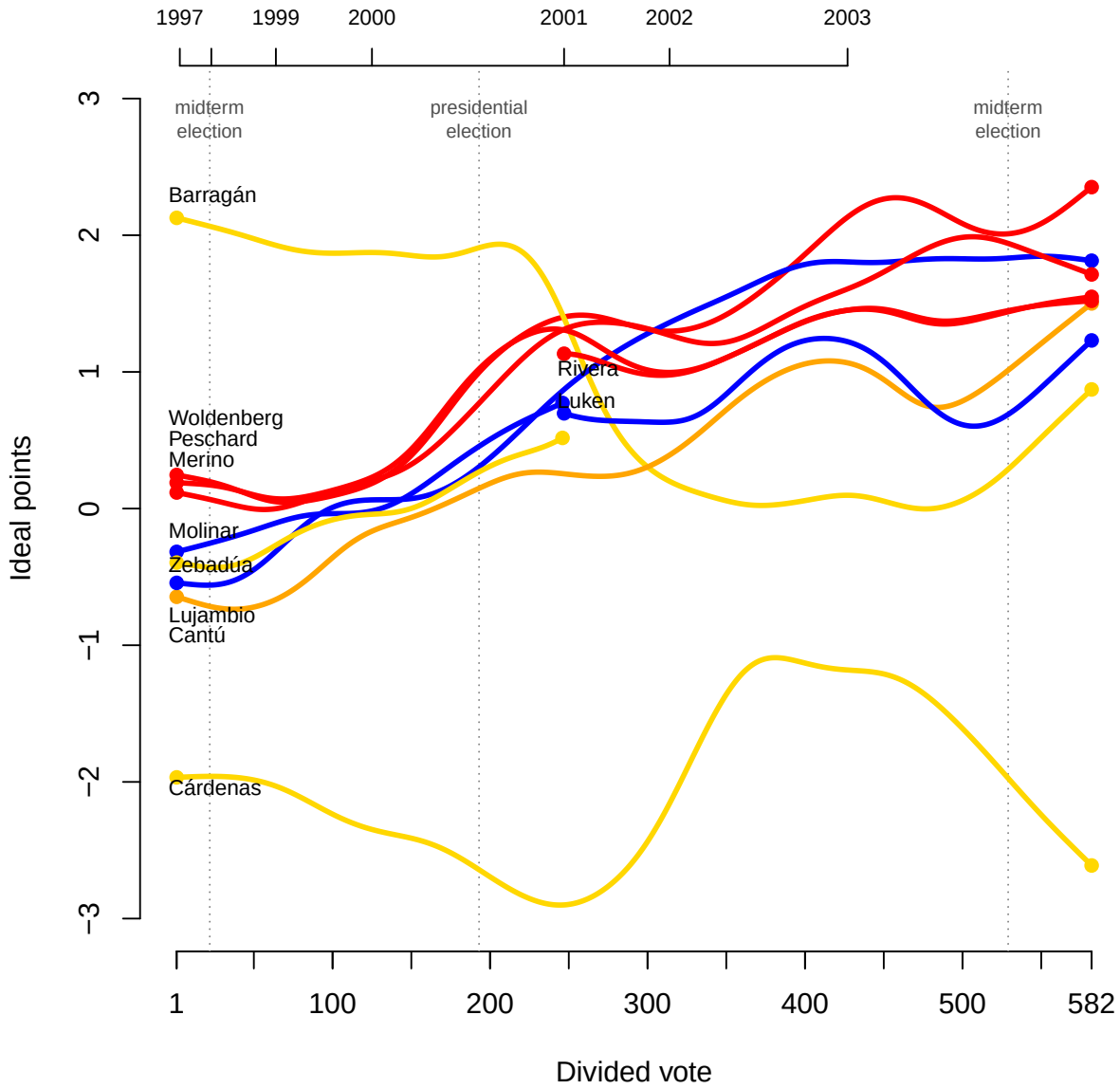
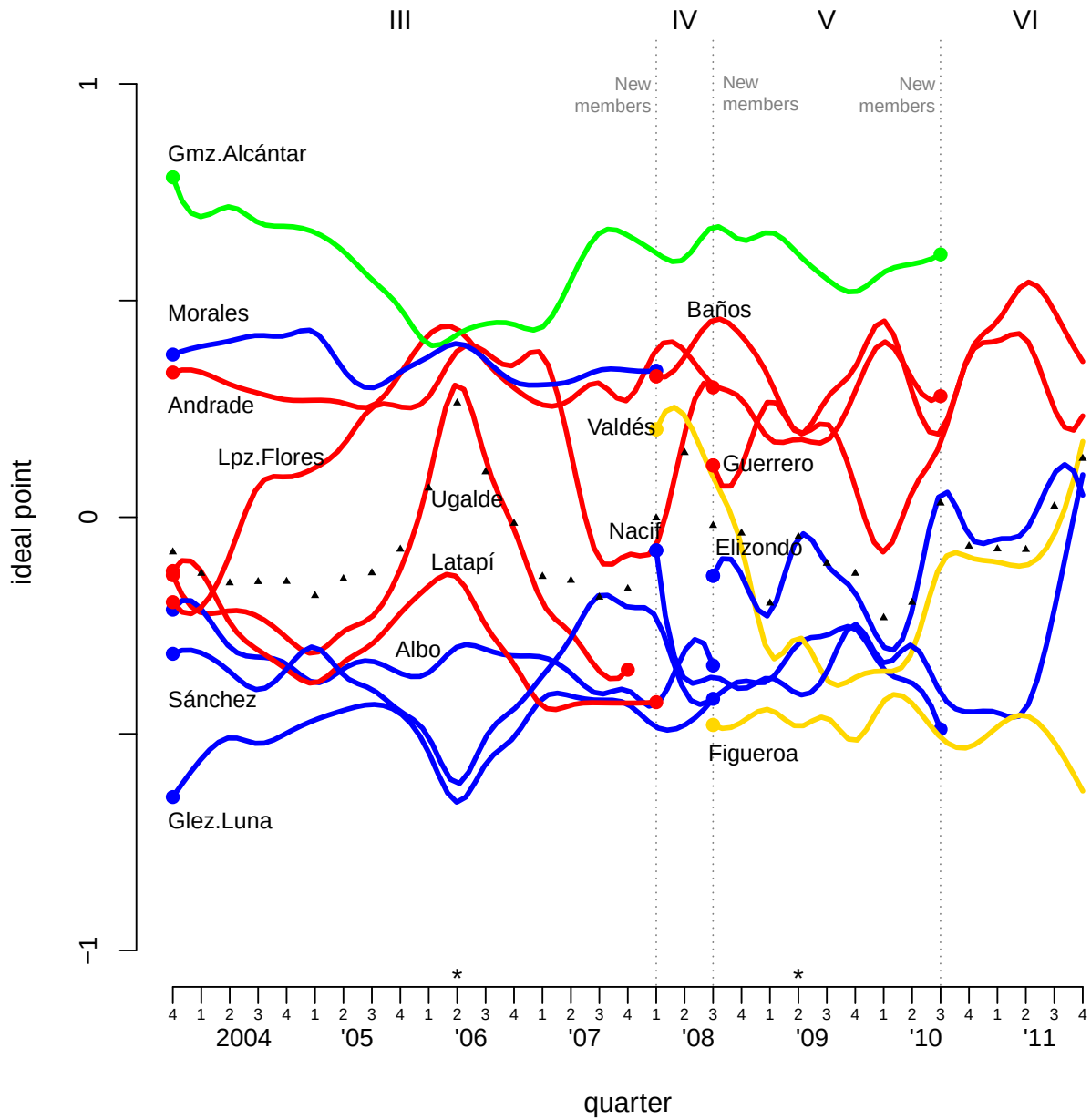


Results: 2003–2011 **quarterly**



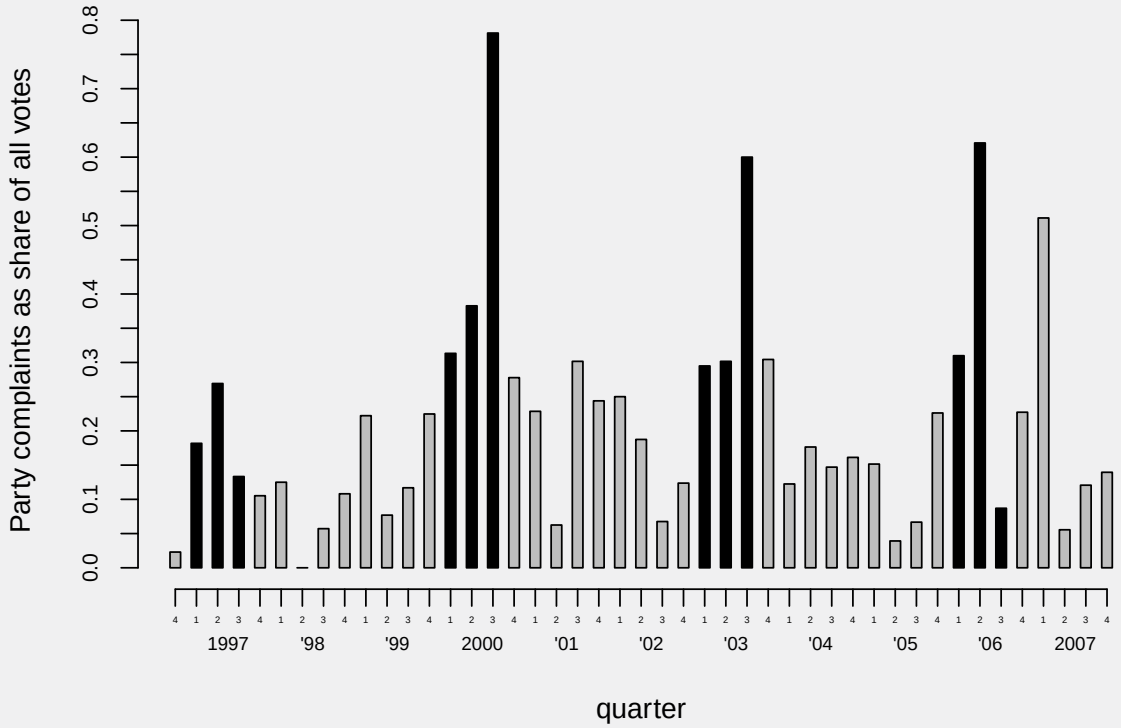
What lies behind drift?

	Type	*Effect on ideal points*
1.	Screening	Concomitant shifts among same-sponsor councilors
2.	Constituent pressure	Shifts should *follow* change in principal's situation (eg. new Congress)
3.	Gatekeeping	Removal of divisive issues pulls most together

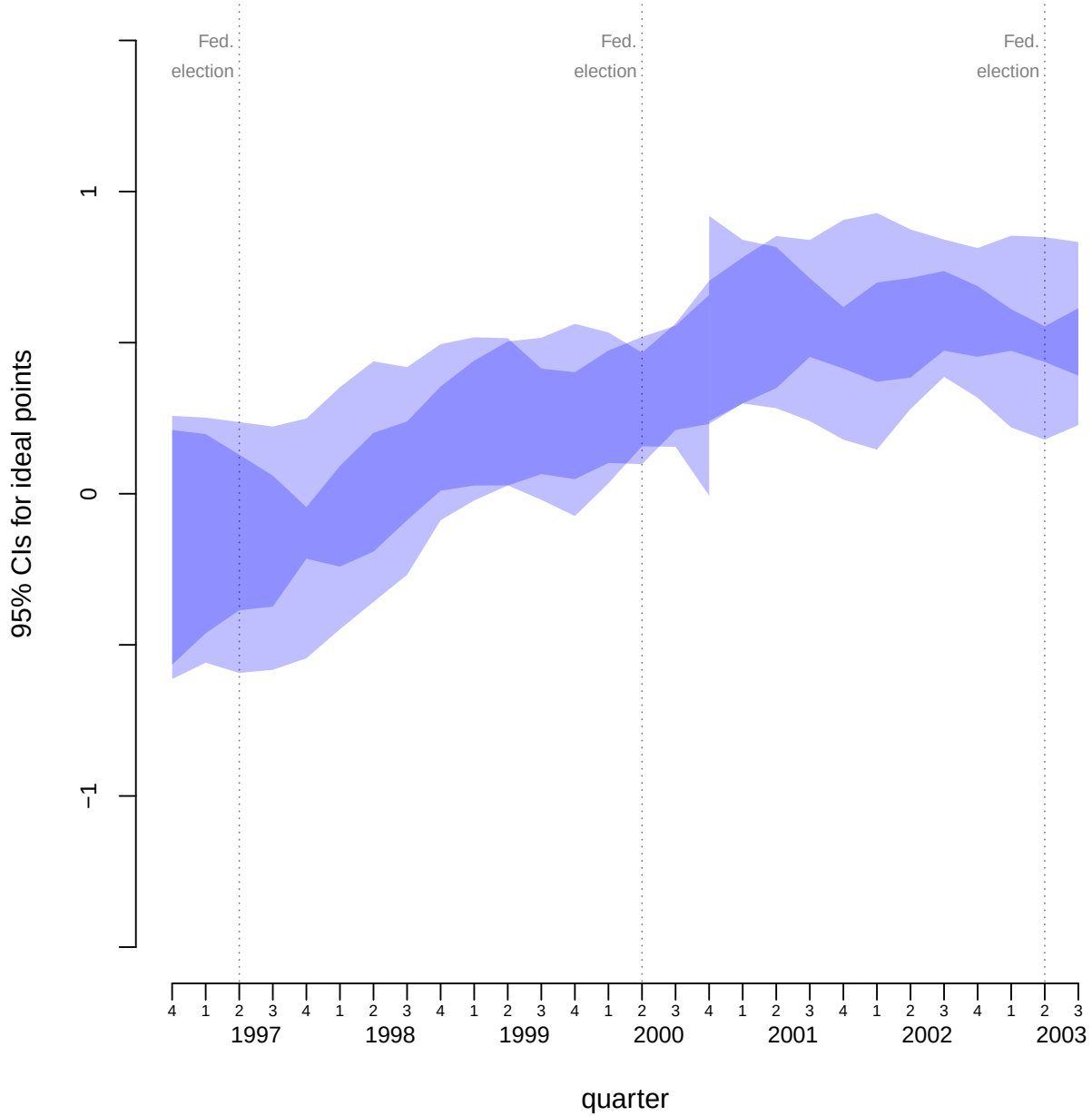
Some empirical indicators

1. New Congress = new principal
2. Congressional party split = two new principals
3. Election quarters = less agenda control by IFE (party complaints)

Party complaints filed as % of all votes



Results: overlapping



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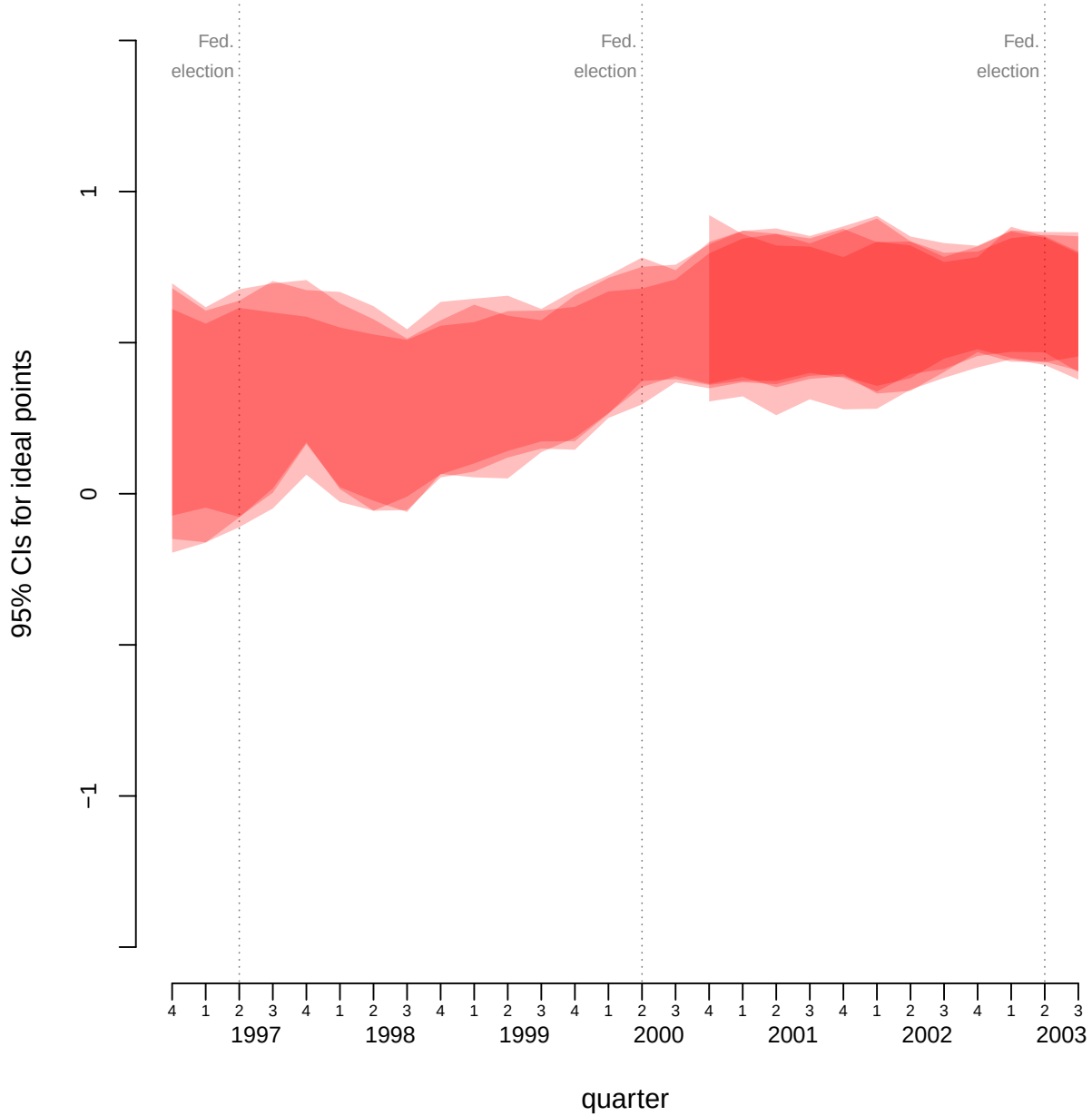

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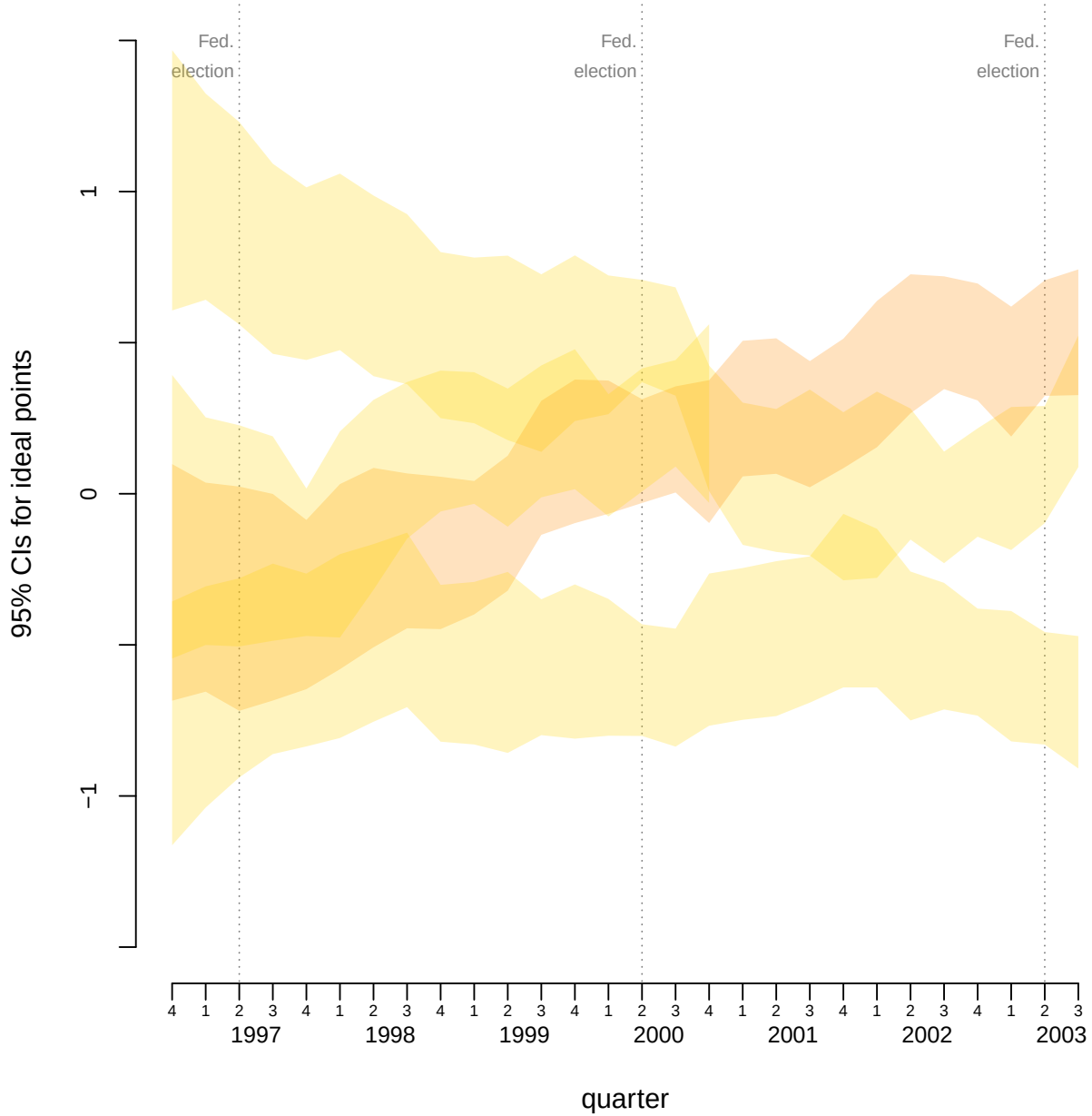
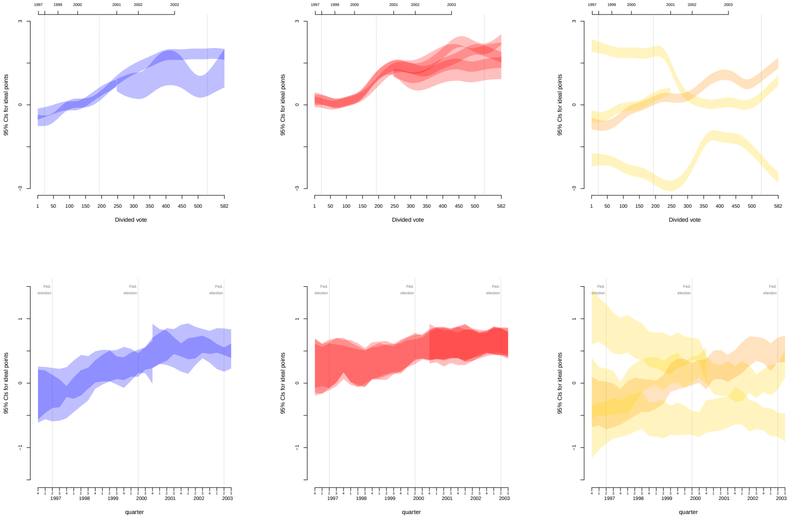
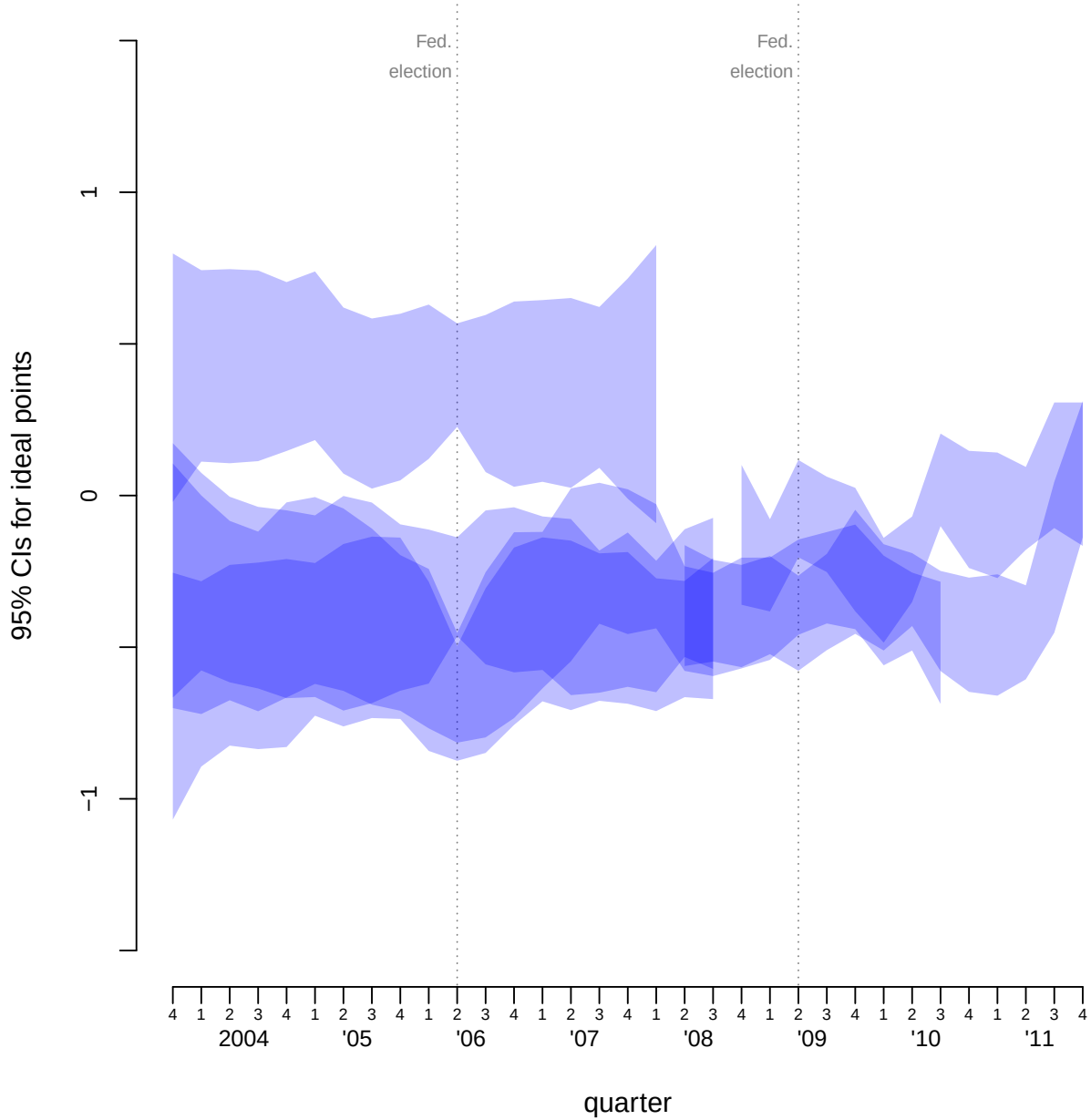


Results: overlap in two models



Results: overlapping



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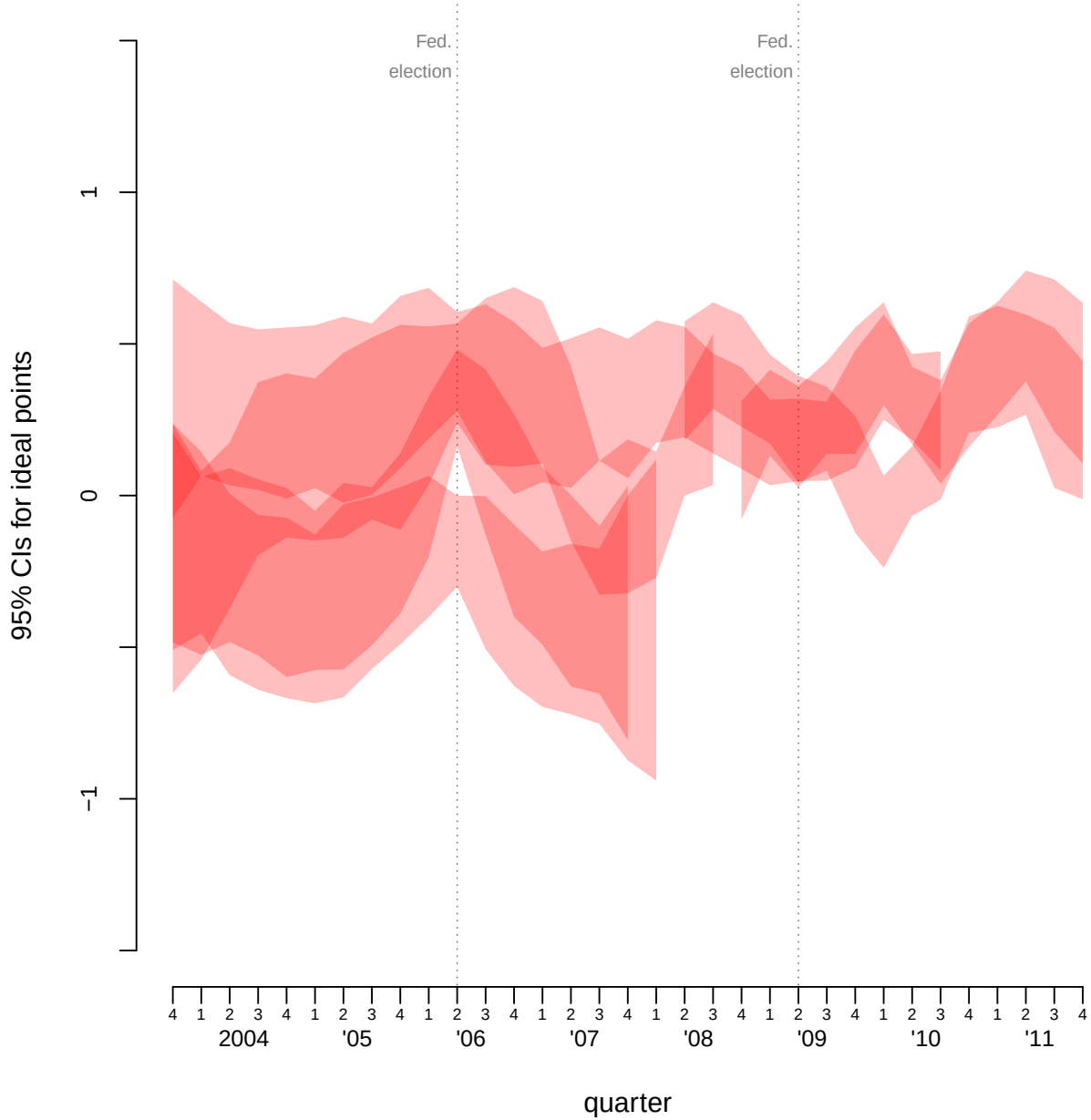

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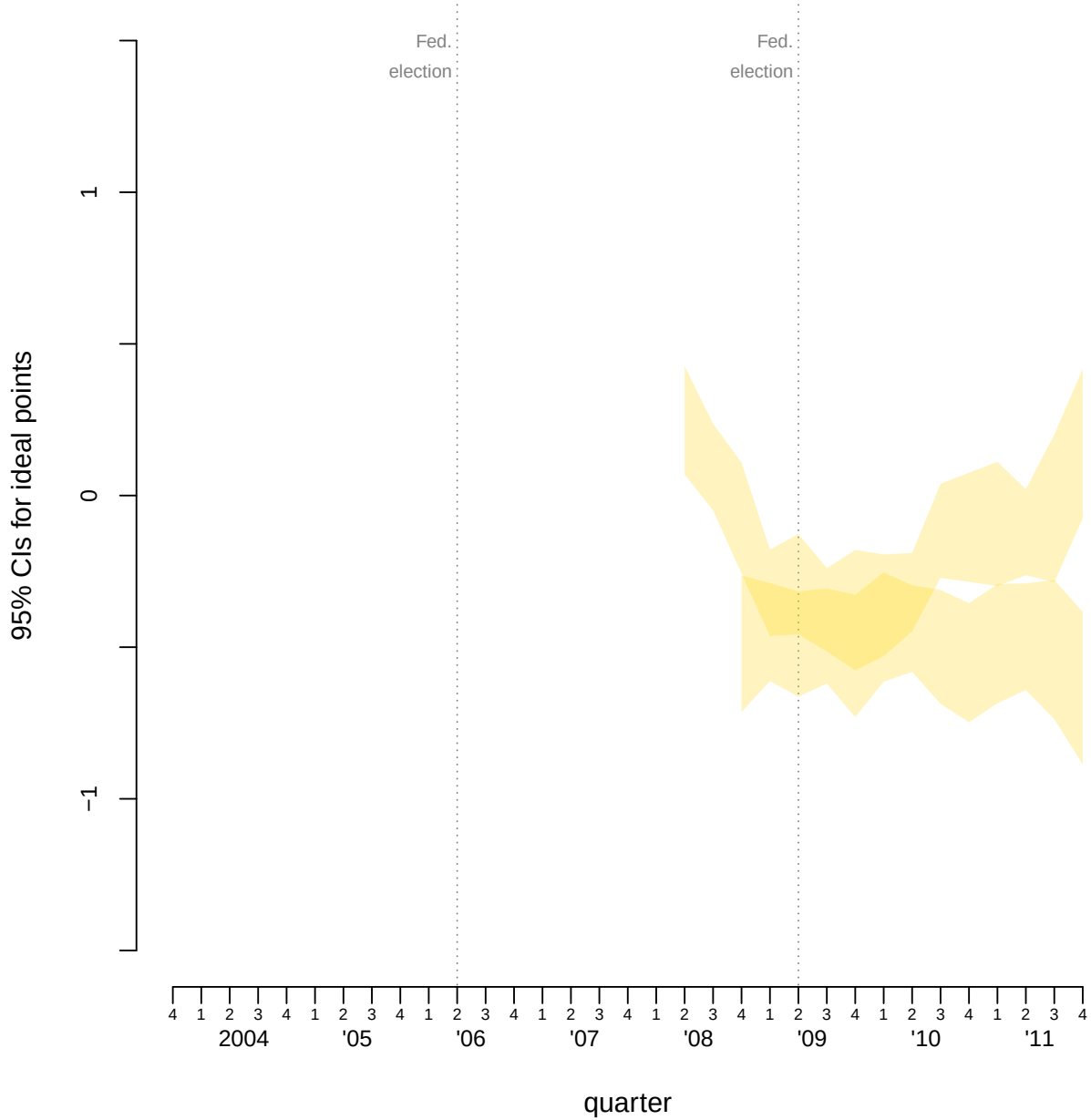

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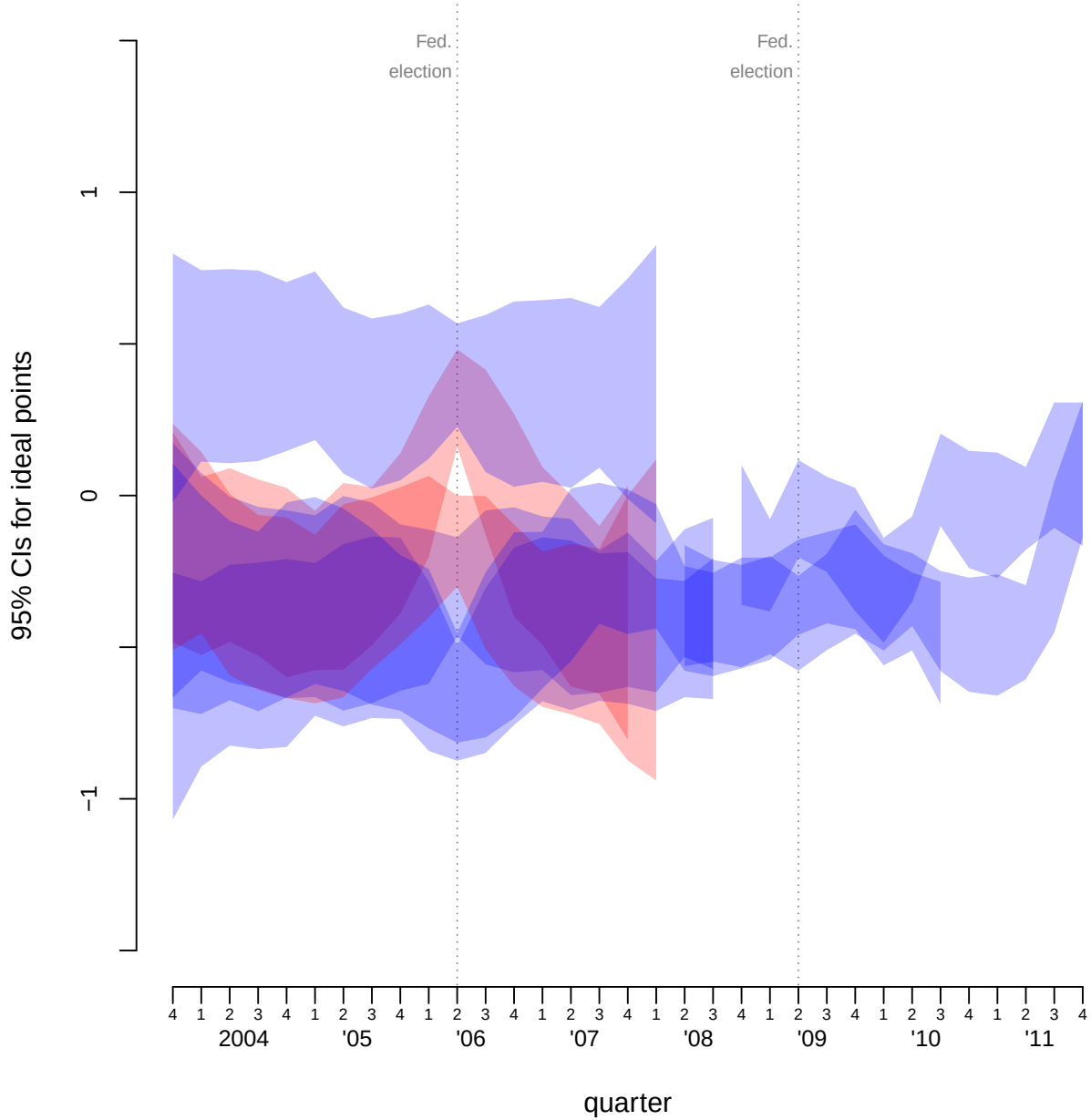

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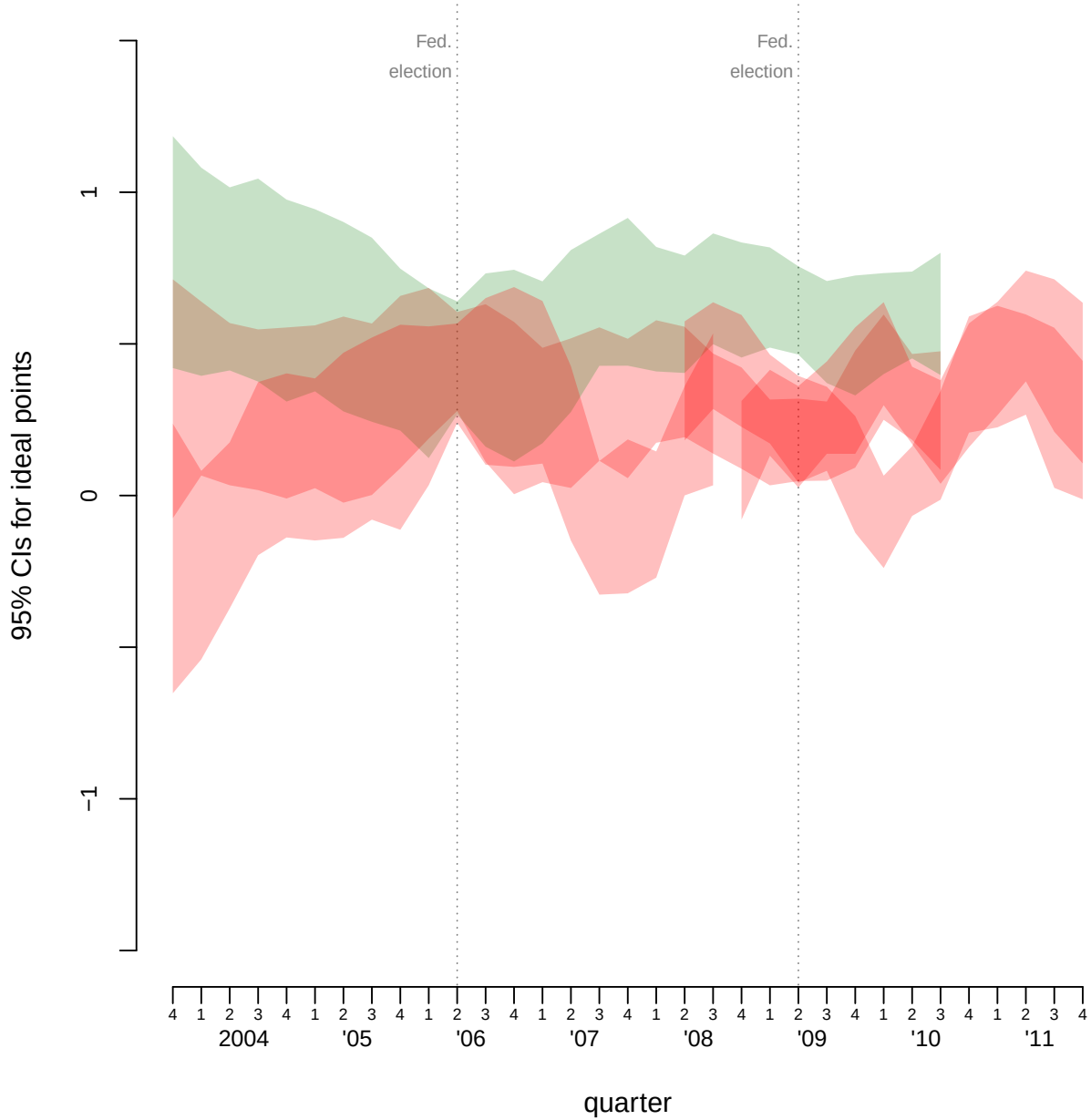

New principal and inter-quarter change

	Posterior $\lvert x_{j,t+1} - x_{j,t} \rvert$	Mean	Std. dev.
a	New Congress quarters	.140	.115
b	Rest	.108	.084
c	Prob. a>b	.560	

Gatekeeping and signal-to-noise ratio

	Posterior $\lvert\texttt{signal}_i\rvert$	Mean	Std. dev.
d	Electoral quarters	2.677	1.682
e	Rest	2.601	1.684
f	Prob. d>e	.565	

Posterior $\texttt{signal}_i$s with .95 ci off zero		
g	Percentage electoral quarters	53 %
h	Percentage rest	45 %

Party system influence

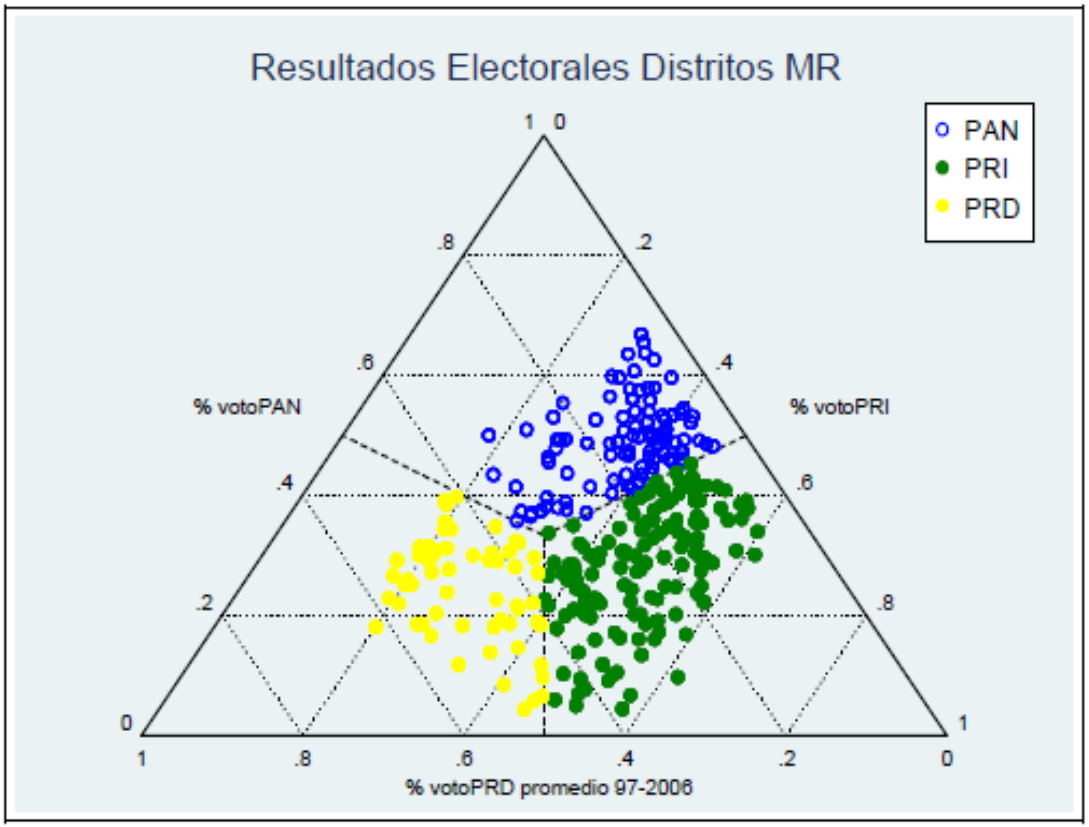

FIGURA 7. Porcentaje de votos promedio del PRI, PAN y PRD en distritos de mayoría relativa, 1997 – 2006.

Source: Aparicio&Márques (2010).

Wrap up

1. Preliminary inspection shows some promising routes
2. Ideal points in IFE move considerably. Short-term shocks and long-term drift
3. Movement seems tied to representation considerations (change in principal; less agenda power)
4. Next: kernel smoother; committee-plenary interactions

Thank you!

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