

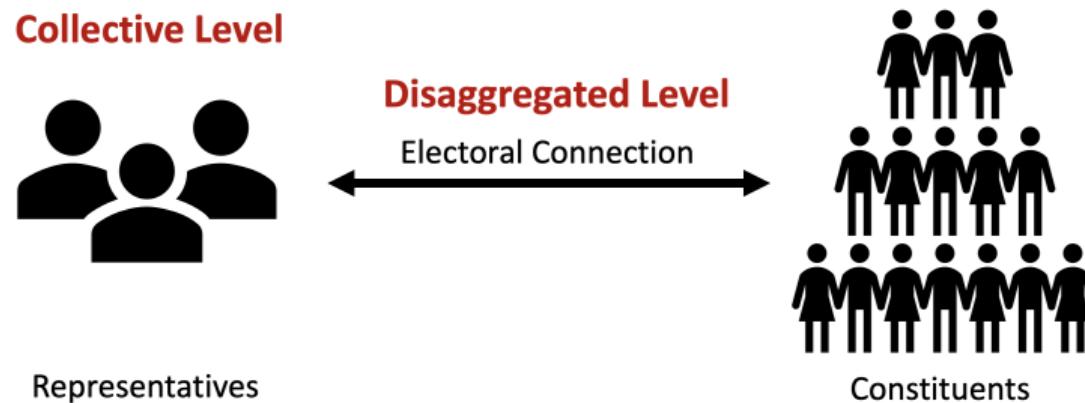
APPROPRIATORS NOT POSITION TAKERS: THE DISTORTING EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL INCENTIVES ON CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATION

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SOCI 40133 Computational Content Analysis
Presented by Linghui Wu

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BASIC CONCEPTS



RESEARCH QUESTION

How the responsiveness to constituents negatively affect collective representation via legislators **home styles** – the position they articulate during policy debates?

THE ELECTORAL CONNECTION & HOME STYLE CHOICES

Two Types of Legislators

- Marginal Representatives from districts composed of other party's partisans
- Aligned Representatives from districts composed of co-partisans

When developing home styles, legislators balance between

- Policy stances and partisan affiliation
- Personal characteristics by claiming credits for appropriations

Literature review shows **an ideological distortion**: aligned representatives articulate policy positions at a much higher rate than their marginal colleagues.

MEASURING SENATORS' HOME STYLES

Data Sources

- 64,033 press releases from each Senate office in 2005, 2006, and 2007.

Four Quantities of Interest by Bayesian statistical model

- 44 politically relevant *topics* in total
- the topic of each press release
- senator's *expressed priorities*

$$\text{Priorities}_{\text{Shelby},2005} = (\text{Priority}_{\text{Shelby},2005,1}, \dots, \text{Priority}_{\text{Shelby},2005,44}) \quad (1)$$

- home style *typology* of each senator in each year

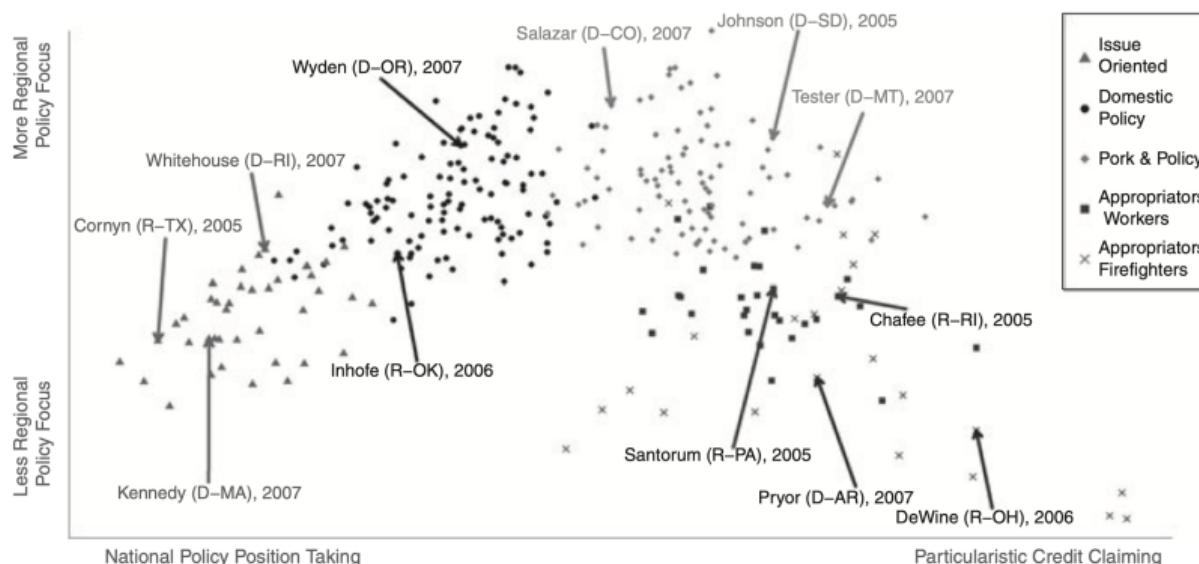
TOPICS IN PRESS RELEASES

TABLE 1 Topics in Press Releases

Description	Stems	%
Honorary	honor, prayer, remember, fund, tribute	5.0
Transp. Grants	airport, transport, announce, urban, hud	4.8
<i>Iraq</i>	iraq, iraqi, troop, war, sectarian	4.7
DHS Policy	homeland, port, terrorist, dh, fema	4.1
History/Heritage	heritage, park, historic, culture, visitor	3.8
Judicial Nom.	judge, court, supreme, nominate, nominee	3.8
Fire Dept. Grant	firefight, homeland, afgp, award, equipment	3.7
WRDA	water, river, corps, wrda, habitat	3.7
Education Fund.	student, education, school, teacher, college	3.6
<i>Budget</i>	tax, deficit, budget, cut, wage	3.5
<i>Consum. Safety</i>	consumer, fda, internet, food, broadcast	3.2
<i>Health Care Access</i>	care, patient, health, medical, hospital	3.0
Science Research	university, research, science, center, laboratory	2.9
Justice Grants	crime, justice, enforce, methamphetamine, meth	2.8
<i>Environment</i>	epa, environment, pollute, fish, clean	2.8
Biofuel	fuel, energy, ethanol, renew, oil	2.8
<i>Immigration</i>	immigration, border, illegal, reform, alien	2.6
Farm	farmer, farm, agriculture, crop, rancher	2.6
Defense Const.	defense, military, navy, army, aircraft	2.5
<i>Energy/Gas</i>	oil, price, energy, gasoline, consumer	2.4

A TYPOLOGY OF HOME STYLES IN THE U.S. SENATE

FIGURE 1 A Typology of Home Styles in the U.S. Senate

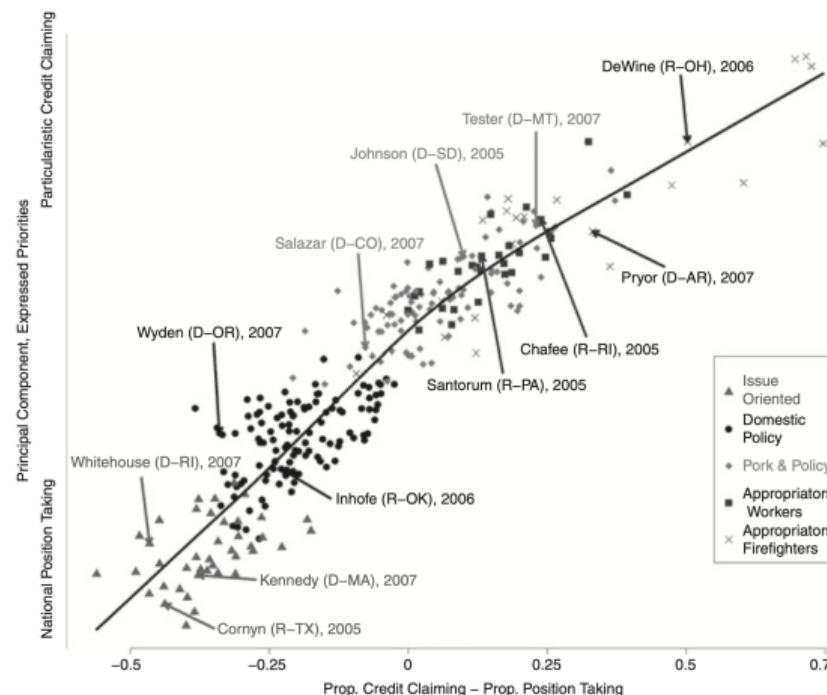


└ METHODOLOGY

└ THE TYPES OF HOME STYLES IN THE SENATE

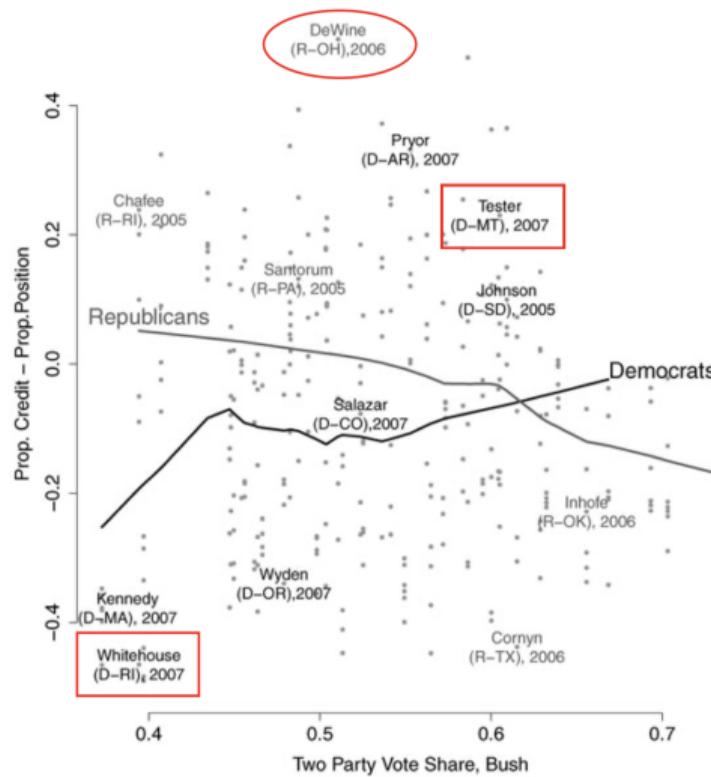
THE ISSUE-ORIENTED APPROPRIATOR SPECTRUM

FIGURE 2 Validating the Issue-Oriented Appropriator Spectrum



RESULTS

THE ELECTORAL CONNECTION'S INFLUENCE ON HOME STYLE



Marginal legislators systematically emphasize appropriations and avoid policy.

RESULTS

ROBUSTNESS CHECK

Dep. Var.	Bayesian Multilevel Linear Regression						Bayesian Multilevel Poisson Regression	
	App -Pos	App -Pos	App -Pos	App	Pos	No. App - No. Pos	No. App	No. Pos
Intercept	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.07)	-0.07 (0.06)	0.20 (0.04)	0.27 (0.03)	14.05 (18.00)	3.30 (0.26)	3.53 (0.19)
Alignment	-0.68 (0.27)	-0.56 (0.29)	-0.63 (0.26)	-0.31 (0.16)	0.35 (0.12)	-183.62 (76.79)	-1.79 (1.17)	1.16 (0.87)
(2004 Vote Share)								
Democrat	-0.11 (0.04)	-0.12 (0.08)	-0.11 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.07 (0.02)	-34.00 (12.60)	0.07 (0.19)	0.52 (0.14)
Years/100	-0.02 (0.22)	-0.03 (0.22)	-0.17 (0.21)	0.05 (0.14)	0.07 (0.10)	-84.67 (66.52)	-0.31 (0.98)	-0.16 (0.70)
Former House Mem.	0.10 (0.04)	0.11 (0.04)	0.09 (0.04)	0.06 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.02)	25.25 (11.26)	0.16 (0.17)	-0.22 (0.11)
Freshman	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	-19.57 (15.87)	-0.18 (0.23)	0.10 (0.16)
Majority	0.04 (0.02)	0.05 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)	0.04 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	8.81 (4.29)	0.28 (0.02)	0.10 (0.02)
In Cycle	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-3.18 (5.28)	0.16 (0.02)	0.19 (0.02)
State Pop. (Millions)	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	2.88 (8.82)	0.23 (0.14)	0.14 (0.11)
Ideal point est.	- (0.03)	-0.01 -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
(Idealpointest.) ²	- (0.02)	-0.02 -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Approp. Mem.	- -	- (0.04)	0.12 -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
N	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301
Sen. ran. effects (112)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State ran. effects (50)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

SUMMARIES FROM ABOVE

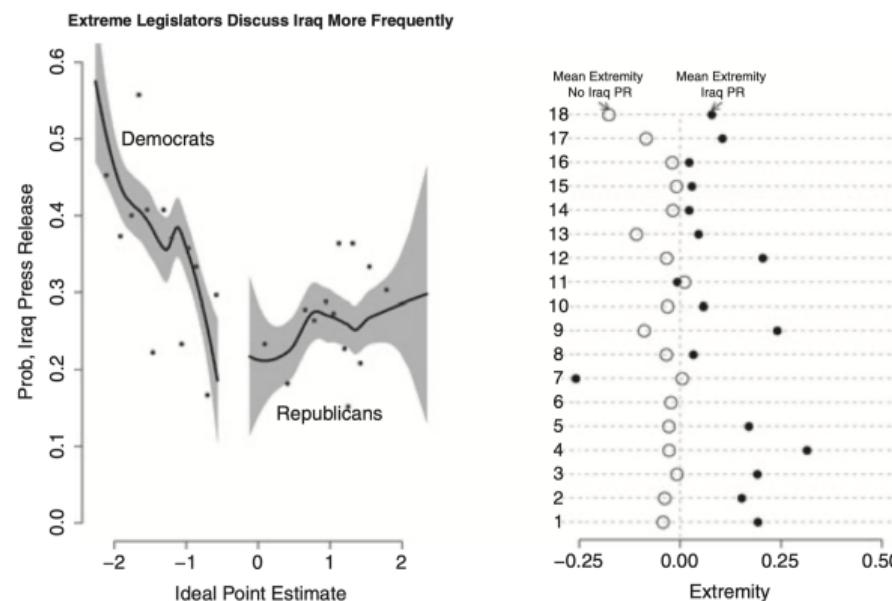
MDS algorithm & visualization suggest that the primary variation underlying senators' home style is the **trade-off** between position taking and credit claiming.

The effects of the electoral connection:

- Marginal representatives emphasize appropriations in their home style
- Aligned representatives build home style around position taking

PRESS RELEASES ON IRAQ WAR

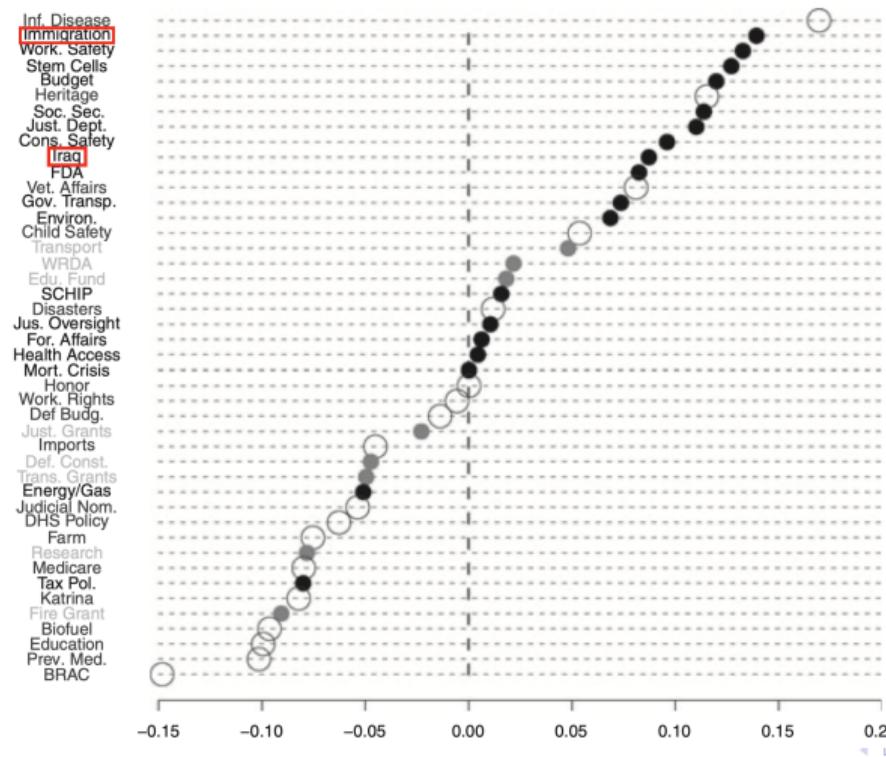
FIGURE 5 Senators Who Take Positions Are More Extreme Than
Senators Who Do Not



APPLICATIONS

A GENERAL SITUATION

A POLARIZATION IN POLICY DEBATES



- APPLICATIONS

- SUMMARY

SUMMARIES FROM ABOVE

Senators who take positions when **Iraq war** is salient are more extreme than their colleagues who stay silent.

Across **substantive topics**, senators who articulate positions are systematically more extreme than the average senator from their party, which provide an explanation for the apparent rise in vitriolic debate.

CONCLUSIONS

How legislators present their work to constituents depends on whom they present.

- Marginalized senators focus on appropriations.
- Aligned senators allocate more space to position taking.

A systematic ideological bias emerge when aggregating across states.

- Aligned senators are substantially more likely to participate in policy debates than misaligned senators.
- The extremes of both Democrats and Republicans dominate policy debates.

MY COMMENTS ON THE PAPER

Highlights

- 1 Grounded theory complement with a quantitative case study
- 2 Press releases is well-suited for supporting analysis

Potential Problems

- 1 Interchangeability among representatives, senators and legislators
- 2 Minimal and overlapped stem words for categorizing press releases