When Reds are Redder and Blues are Bluer: Party Competition, Party Polarization, and the Changing Demand for Lobbying in the American States

Virginia Gray
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
vagray@email.unc.edu

David Lowery
Pennsylvania State University
dll36@psu.edu

Boris Shor
University of Chicago
bshor@uchicago.edu

John Cluverius
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
cluverius@unc.edu

Jeffrey J. Harden
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
jjharden@unc.edu

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Abstract

Interest system density influences the politics within interest organizations, how they play the influence game, and public policy. But how does politics in turn influence interest system density? How does politics create a demand for interest representation? Are these impacts different for for-profit interests and non-profit interests? We examine these questions by assessing how legislative party competition and the ideological distance between the two major political parties in U.S. state legislatures influence how many organized interests register to lobby. After laying out our theoretical expectations about these relationships, we examine 1997 and 2007 data on legislative party competition and ideology to assess their influence on the density of state interest systems. We find mixed results, suggesting that while politics influences the structuring of non-profit state interest communities in 1997, the effects are unclear in our 2007 data. We offer explanations for these null results with 2007 data, primarily relating to the nature of our data.

The study of communities of organized interests has developed very rapidly over the last decade and a half.[1] We now know that populations matter a great deal. They matter most immediately in terms of defining the severity of the collective action problems organizations face (Lowery and Gray 1995). Interest system density influences their mortality risks (Nownes and Lipinski 2005), the kinds and number of issues on which they lobby (Lowery 2007; Lowery, Gray, Kirkland, and Harden 2012), and how they do so (Bosso 2005, ch. 5; Lowery, Gray, Benz, Kirkland, and Sykes 2009). Perhaps of greatest interest, we now know that the diversity of interest systems is a complex result of variations in the density functions of different subsets or guilds of interest organizations rather than a simple product of wealth as power, and that for-profit and non-profit interest communities are not necessarily motivated by the same factors (Lowery, Gray, and Fellowes 2005). At the end of the influence production process, we know that the density and diversity of interest communities can sometimes, but not always, influence the shape of public policy (Gray, Lowery, and Godwin 2007a, 2007b).

In short, we know that interest system density influences the politics within interest organizations, how they play the influence game, and public policy. But how does politics in turn influence interest system density? How does politics create a demand for interest representation? We examine these questions by assessing how political party competition and the ideological distance between the two parties in U.S. state legislatures influence how many organized interests register to lobby. After laying out our theoretical expectations about these relationships, we examine 1997 and 2007 data on legislative party competition and party polarization to assess their influence on the density of state interest systems. We find indications that both measures of

[1] Indeed, prior to 1995, populations of organized interests were not considered to be especially interesting. They were assumed to be simple tallies resulting from mobilization events whereby institutions became active in lobbying or they, along with individual citizens, joined groups or associations that lobbied (Truman 1951; Olson 1965).

the character of politics within the states matter modestly in structuring interest communities in 1997, but not in the 2007 data.[2] This raises concerns about the changing nature of organized interests in 2007 compared to 1997, where several anomalous patterns have been observed.

The Political Demand for Lobbying

In many earlier studies of the politics of interest representation, government policies and politics were not viewed as influencing interest activity so much as interest activity influencing policies and politics. Mancur Olson's Rise and Decline of Nations, for example, offers an image of interest representation as a supermarket in which organized interests enter at their will, freely shopping for policies sitting passively on the store's shelves, and then purchasing them with little interaction among themselves or with the passive (if greedy) politicians at the checkout counter. More recently, attention has shifted to the role of government activity and policies in generating a demand for representation via lobbying (Leech, Baumgartner, La Pira, and Semanko 2005; Baumgartner, Larsen-Price, Leech, and Rutledge 2011; Gray, Lowery, Fellowes, and Anderson, 2005; Dusso 2010). That is, organized interests are more commonly drawn to legislatures by the attention they pay to policies under consideration, not the reverse. Policy agendas are not so much generated by interest organizations as interest organizations respond to policy agendas.

But what of politics per se, rather than the public policies produced by government? Does the level and nature of political party competition itself influence how many organized interests decide to lobby governments? Such an influence is clearly expected in the earliest versions of Gray and Lowery's (1996) Energy, Stability, Area (ESA) model of state interest community density. One of the key measures of the energy term of the model is interest uncertainty, which

[2] Initial interest in this research project was sparked by freshman Taylor Pardue in Virginia Gray's First-Year Seminar, Pressure and Power, when he asked: "If party polarization is increasing, is there room left for interest groups to be influential?" As usual she turned this into an empirical question that could be addressed at the state level and collected data on registered interests in 2007, a project only recently completed.

they measure with a folded Ranney index of state political party competition. A considerable amount of research examines the role of political competition on both parties' behavior and the subsequent influence on policy outcomes (e.g., Lowi 1963; Schlesinger 1966; Walker 1969). This work often centers on whether the implementation of the parties' sincere policy views is strengthened or weakened by competition between the major parties (see Plotnick and Winters 1990). In one perspective, parties are especially likely to "stake out" distinct positions when facing more severe competition in an effort to obtain support from distinct constituencies (Page 1977; Alt and Chrystal 1983; Plotnick and Winters 1990). In such cases, close competition provides the parties with an opportunity to win based on their sincere preferences, and thereby move policy in their preferred directions.

Alternatively, several other works adopt the view that parties are essentially a means of achieving the goal of winning elections (e.g., Aldrich 1995). In this view, parties adjust their policy positions in a competitive environment—a move that requires moderation toward the median—to gain support from enough voters to win elections (see also Downs 1957). From this logic, the opposite occurs in a less competitive state. In the absence of a need to pick up extra votes, parties do not need to moderate. Thus, parties may shift between strategic and sincere behavior in response to the level of competition (Key 1949; Chappell and Keech 1986; Barrilleaux, Holbrook, and Langer 2002).

The critical point from this work for our purposes is that competition creates tension over policy that produces interest uncertainty. In a competitive environment, both major parties have a realistic chance of winning a majority, and they must decide whether to hold true to their policy preferences and take the risk of staking out a distinct position or moderate their platform to increase the odds of winning. Both choices create uncertainty in the policy environment that we expect corresponds to an increase in organized interests' incentive to lobby. If a party stakes out

a distinct position and loses by a narrow margin, it becomes a viable minority voice for organized interests that hold different preferences from the majority. If the party moderates and wins, it is susceptible to interests representing the party's ideological base *and* interests on the side that the party moved closer toward in order to win the majority. Thus, for those either favoring policy change or opposed to it, states with high levels of party competition offer venues for lobbying by organized interests that might pay high dividends in terms of securing their interests.

Accordingly, Gray and Lowery (1996) argued that policy change is more likely to occur in competitive party systems as the out-party stands as a ready alternative to the in-party. Or as Lowi put it (1963, 571): *"in a party system, innovation is a function of the minority party."* In contrast, the payoff from lobbying in states with more limited party competition is likely to be lower: the status quo is simply more secure. However, while political party competition in the states has been shown to influence the density of some specific guilds (Lowery and Gray 1995), it does not seem to influence all of those that have been studied to date equally strongly, and its impact on the overall size of the interest system seems weak, albeit in the expected direction.

Thus, the empirical results to date, while generally supportive of this theoretical perspective, remain somewhat mixed. Moreover, one study (Berkman 2001) reported that competition's effect on density was conditioned on legislative professionalism, i.e., the competition term was significant and signed in the anticipated direction in less professional states, while, in highly professional state legislatures, party competition did not significantly increase the number of interest groups, although the sign was positive.

One plausible reason why this is so is the failure to consider how different the two parties

are in terms of their preferences.[3] That is, if the two major parties do not differ greatly in terms of their ideological preferences that bear on public policies, it may simply not matter if one party poses a risk to take over the levers of government from the other. This overlap or short distance between the two parties in ideology may translate into a more stable policy environment for some organized interests. In short, competition between the parties should matter more in terms of stimulating lobbying activity on the part of organized interests in states in which the two parties are more sharply divergent in their preferences. Thus, we might expect that party competition interacts with the ideological distance between the major parties to stimulate or depress the demand for interest representation.

Prior work on other issue domains has found some support for this interaction hypothesis. For example, Krause (2000) found that action to address the federal deficit depends not only on split or unified control of the executive and legislative branches of government, but also on how divergent the ideologies of the two major political parties are at a given time. There is also more direct work on the states supporting this expectation. For example, while the older literature on the impact of state interparty competition on public policy often yielded somewhat mixed results, the impact of party control tended to be stronger when measures of party cleavage structure (Brown 1995) or policy-relevant competition (Dye 1984) were considered. Such results suggest it may be useful to more fully explore the importance of parties by focusing on how party competition interacts with ideological divisiveness, rather than examining electoral competition on its own.[4]

But the ideological distance between the parties might also matter on its own terms.

[3] Another plausible reason has to do with the multi-year Ranney index used by Lowery and Gray (1995). Later research indicates, as will be discussed shortly, that organized interests are especially responsive to within-year threats and opportunities bearing on the likelihood of policy change.

[4] For an insightful essay on state parties see Wright (2010). He considers the role of party ideology and interparty competition and why it has been difficult to substantiate the impact of competition.

Ideological distance between parties or degree of party polarization (on polarization, see Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, and Cooperman 2010) can generate a lot of noise that might in turn generate *perceived* threats or opportunities even when the out-party stands relatively little chance to become the in-party. And in their efforts to get or to keep their hands on the levers of government, the major political parties have plenty of incentives in terms of energy, enthusiasm, and contributions to exaggerate for their respective bases the potential policy consequences that would follow from a hypothetical change in party control. Thus, while we might most strongly expect that the influence of party competition and the ideological distance between the parties might interact in their influence on incentives to lobby and, thereby, the density of state interest communities, it is also possible that they exercise quite independent influences on both.

At the same time, however, research on how party polarization might affect interest representation is scant as overall research into fundamental relationships between parties and organized interests has been moribund for decades (for an essay on this problem, see Heaney 2010). Still, some supportive hints for our expectations can be gleaned from both the parties and the interest representation literatures. In the parties literature, for example, Layman et al. (2010) both theorize and empirically suggest that one of the causes of party polarization results from increasingly extreme party activists. They also acknowledge that activist influence may be even stronger if parties are broad coalitions of organized interests, social movements, and others demanding policy who work to gain control of government to further their own goals. Recent research by Cohen, Karol, Noel, and Zaller (2008) provides support for this view, reviving the older group-centered view of political parties and demonstrating that "intense policy demanders" within political parties increasingly control the presidential nomination process. This perspective suggests that political parties in more polarized states will be dominated by party activists, organized interests, social movements, and other policy demanders.

The literature on interest representation is equally deficient in its consideration of how more polarized parties might influence organized interests. Still, Gary J. Andres (2009) observed that growing polarization in Congressional parties in the 1990s and 2000s brought about a number of changes in advocacy organizations. Some of these changes are relevant to our analysis as they may already have happened in the more polarized states. Andres (2009), for example, suggested that increased party polarization has enhanced the importance of legislative party leadership; this development means that organized interests now lobby leadership as well as committee chairs. There are also growing demands on lobbyists to help promote partisan agendas. A theoretical account for this "reverse lobbying" had been developed already by Hall and Deardorff (2006), especially the notion that lobbying is mainly a form of *legislative subsidy* in which lawmakers ask organized interests for help in passing legislation rather than the reverse. Interest organizations are asked to subsidize lawmakers with policy information, political intelligence, and to provide labor.

A related development that affects the reliance on reverse lobbying is the empowerment of lobbyists resulting from the fact that Democratic and Republican members of Congress talk less frequently to each other. Instead, lobbyists on both sides of the ideological divide are now more likely to exchange information and, thereby, serve as a conduit for indirect communication between the parties in Congress (Andres 2009). Other consequences of polarization noted by Andres (2010) include the blurring of the line between the politics of campaigns and the politics of public policy, the growth in the number of leadership PACs seeking money from organized interests and PACs, and the rise of new partisan and bipartisan lobbying firms as opposed to general advocacy firms. All of these developments at the national level might also apply at the state level, particularly in those states at the high end of party polarization. And perhaps even more importantly for social science, the states provide variation for analysis not available in

Washington.

Testing the Polarization and Competition Hypotheses

Data and Estimation

We measure interest system density, our dependent variable, with the number of lobby registrations by interest organizations in 1997 and 2007.[5] The state lobby registration data we employ have been described more fully elsewhere (Gray and Lowery 2001). Briefly, however, lobby registration lists were gathered by mail or web page from state agencies responsible for their maintenance.[6] In 1997, the density of state interest communities ranged from a low of 191 in the state of Hawaii to a high of 2,106 in California. In addition, we compiled a new data set that includes the density of interest groups in each state for 2007.[7] In 2007, the density of state interest communities ranged from a low of 297 in Hawaii to a high of 2,961 in Texas. The growth of state interest communities is displayed in Figure 1.

[5] We also replicated the analyses reported here with 1999 data for all of the variables. The results were very similar. Further, we examined whether change in the value of ideological distance and party competition influenced the change in interest organization registrations from 1997 to 1999. While these change score models did generate the expected positive coefficients, they were very weak, as was the variation accounted for by the modified change score ESA model as whole. Simply put, there is simply not enough variation in GSP, ideological distance, and party competition over this short two year period to make the analysis meaningful. Similarly to what Willie Sutton said about banks and money, we report only the cross-sectional results here because that is where the variation is present. More broadly still, it might be thought, given the current highly polarized discussions of state politics currently in the media, that the ideological distance between the two parties across the states is moving in steady progression toward greater polarization across the board. However, the analysis of Shor and McCarty (2011) indicates that this is not the case. The political parties of most states are becoming more polarized even as others are either not changing or becoming less so.

[6] Previous work indicates that the stringency of state lobbying registration requirements has little impact on the density (Lowery and Gray 1997; 1994) and diversity (Gray and Lowery 1998) of state interest communities.

[7] Interest group data for 2007 were collected from a database of state-registered lobbyist clients collected and categorized by the National Institute on Money in State Politics (hereafter the Institute), using their own codebook. The institute compiles its lobbyist client data from registered lobbyist filings from all 50 states, the same as we did for 1997. When we initiated the coding project, the year 2007 contained the most recent completed and compiled set of registered lobbyist clients. Roughly half of the 52,147 state lobbyist clients in the Institute's 2007 dataset had been coded by the Institute. Two graduate student coders were employed to code the remaining groups into the categories created by the Institute. Internet searches were used to determine the category for each unknown group. Two additional graduate students coded a handful of states. Inter-coder reliability was established using a test set of data. The coders also constructed a set of coding rules to reduce confusion and retain consistency in the course of the coding effort, which took one year. The student-coded data was then merged with the Institute's coded data; the percent remaining uncoded was 3.39 percent. Based on a translation table created by the authors, the 2007coded dataset was then sorted into guild categories equivalent to Lowery and Gray's 1990s dataset (1997).

While our substantive interest in this analysis concerns party competition and the ideological distance between the parties, we assess their impact in the context of a broader ESA model of interest system density (Gray and Lowery 1996). The independent variables are the area and energy terms of the ESA model (Lowery and Gray 1995). The area term of the model addresses the "supply" of interest organizations provided by society. As the potential or latent membership of an interest guild increases, it is expected to support a larger number of interest organizations and, thereby, lobby registrations. But this relationship is expected to be curvilinear, or density-dependent. That is, the rate of growth of organization mobilization and then lobby registrations in response to increases in the size of the potential membership of a guild is expected to slow as the size of the potential membership becomes larger.[8] Gray and Lowery have used a variety of measures in polynomial specifications to test the density-dependent impact of variations in the size of the potential membership of interest guilds across states. These include narrow indicators that are highly specific to each guild[9] (Lowery and Gray 1995), intermediate measures such as the number of firms associated with each guild (Lowery, Gray, and Fellowes 2005), and highly aggregated measures such as total GSP in a state (Lowery and Gray 1998). All produce similar findings. The choice among them largely depends on the degree to which one wishes to compare across the guilds and the availability of data at different levels of aggregation.

In this analysis, we focus on the total size of the interest system. We opt, therefore, for an aggregated measure of the potential membership of organizations found in the interest system:

[8] Lowery and Gray (2001) report that density dependence results are roughly equally due to the depression of births of new registrations and to the greater death rates of older lobbying organizations in crowded interest communities. Also see Nownes (2002) for a further explication of density dependence in interest populations over time. In contrast, Dusso (2010) argues that density dependence does not operate at the level of the national interest system, and Halpin and Jordan (2009) assert that interest organizations adapt rather than die when faced with environmental challenges.
[9] These include, for example, the number of poor in a state for the welfare guild and the number of local governments for the local government guild.

1997 and 2007 gross state product (GSP).[10] GSP is entered into the models in a polynomial form to capture the curvilinear density-dependent relationship between forces of supply or area and the density of state interest communities.

While the area or supply term of the model is a necessary control variable in this analysis, we are especially interested in the "demand" for lobbying represented by the energy or demand term of the ESA model. Lowery and Gray (1995) highlight two measures of the energy underlying the mobilization of state interest organizations, to which we will add a third. The first is *interest uncertainty*. As party competition increases, the prospect of a change in party control is enhanced, and the likelihood of sudden policy change increases. This uncertainty should encourage both those favored by current policy as well as those disadvantaged by the status quo to engage in political activity. Those in office are motivated to action by the prospects of the loss of "threatened goods," while those out of office are motivated by the opportunities to secure either "lost goods" or "new goods" (see Morrison 1979). For example, at the national level in 2012, the Democratic Party and its interest allies will be motivated to hold onto their policy achievements, such as the Affordable Care Act, while the Republican Party and followers have an incentive to gain the Presidency and the U.S. Senate and shift policy away from the status quo.

Lowery and Gray normally tap interest uncertainty with a folded Ranney index of party competition. To date, this variable has generated somewhat mixed results (Lowery and Gray 1995, 1998). In part, this may be due to calculation of the Ranney index over several years when it seems that interest organizations are especially responsive to within-legislative year sources of demand (Lowery, Gray, Fellowes, and Anderson 2004). It may also be due to a failure of the Ranney index to account for how different the two major parties are in terms of ideological

[10] In all cases, we use contemporaneous measures of both the supply and demand terms of the ESA model because prior work (Lowery, Gray, Fellowes, and Anderson 2004) has indicated that it is within year responsiveness that matters most, not interest organizations lagging or leading the forces of supply and demand.

distance, an issue we address below. The Ranney index also is heavily weighted by the party of the governor, which could also be a drawback (Ranney 1976). Therefore, we substitute a folded version of the Klarner index of party control; his index measures the probabilities of Democratic party control of a legislative chamber 9 months in advance, averaged between the two chambers. Our measure reflects the conditions of the chambers at the beginning of the 2007 legislative session and adjusts for states without elections in 2007. The party control measure is then folded to form the party competition measure.[11] Since this measure is focused solely on the legislature, and on the extent of legislative party competition in the next legislative session, we may find its explanatory power to be superior to that of the standard Ranney index.[12] Because organized interests register with the legislature as whole rather than with individual chambers, we average the scores to create a single measure of legislative party competition. The 1997 legislative competition measure ranges from a low of 0.625 for Idaho to 0.98 for Illinois. For 2007, the legislative competition measure ranges from a low of .672 for Massachusetts to a high of .989 for Mississippi.

Lowery and Gray's (1995) second energy measure concerns *constituent interest*, the specific concerns of a guild that are its focus for lobbying. Numerous measures of constituent interest have been employed in prior work on the density of interest systems.[13] Perhaps the most appropriate for our analysis is the size of the issue agenda of each guild as indicated by the

[11] We thank Professor Carl Klarner of Indiana State University for his hard work in calculating this measure for us and in graciously making the data available to us.

[12] For more information on Carl Klarner's measures of chamber switch probability, and other applications of these measures, see Klarner (2009). When incorporating gubernatorial elements, this measure predicts 96% of the variance in the Ranney Index in 2007. Separating the legislative elements allows us to leverage the conditions of the legislature alone, strengthening our variable as a measure of a latent theoretical concept.

[13] Leech and her colleagues (2005), for example, use two variables to tap the political energy underlying mobilization: federal spending and the number of Congressional hearings of interest to each guild. Dusso (2010) included eight energy variables: three measures of activity inside the legislature, two media activity measures, and three measures of interest group inaction. Lowery and Gray (1995) have employed very specific measures of policy need for specific guilds of interest organizations.

number of bills considered in state legislatures in 1997 tapping issues of concern to it. Prior work has shown that such bill counts matter a great deal in drawing specific types of interest organizations to state capitols. But total bill counts are more weakly related to the overall size of the interest community. So, although we did indeed examine models including total bill counts in state legislatures, we do not present these results. In addition to their weak coefficients, the results for all of the other measures in the specifications reported here did not change in any substantive manner when they were included and instead compromised the interpretation of models that, we will see, must already deal with a significant level of collinearity.

Our third and new dimension of the energy or demand forces associated with interest system density concerns the *stakes* at hand. That is, we have argued that the ideological distance or polarization between the two parties might also matter either directly or indirectly through its influence on the effect of party competition on interest community size. A proper measure of state-level polarization requires aggregating individual-level ideological estimates for all state legislatures in our cross-sections. Unfortunately, such data has been missing in state politics for two reasons. The first is that roll call voting data for all 50 states over time have not been collected. The second impediment is that since ideal points are latent quantities, direct comparisons across states, within states over time, or even across chambers within states are generally exceedingly difficult to make. Without a common legislative agenda, naïve comparisons of scores are misleading at best.

Recently, Shor and McCarty (2011) comprehensively addressed both problems.[14] First, they introduced a new data set of state legislative roll call votes that covers all state legislatures from at least 1996 until at least 2007. The roll call dataset currently covers all 50 states and over

[14] We thank Shor and McCarty for providing us with new data from their project not available at the time of the paper's publishing.

18,000 state legislators over time. Second, they employed a new strategy for establishing comparability of estimates across chambers, states, and time. The basis of this approach is the use of the National Political Awareness Test (NPAT), a survey of state and federal legislative candidates. The NPAT is administered by the nonpartisan Project Vote Smart and asks questions on a wide range of political issues—including fiscal policy, foreign policy, social issues, criminal justice, and environmental policy—in identical form across states over time (see (http://www.votesmart.org/). This large set of common questions provides significant leverage for making cross-state comparisons. An NPAT-based ideal point is estimated for the responders to the survey (numbering 5,683).[15]

To create the common space, each state legislature's roll calls are scaled separately. Thus, each responder has two scores—a roll call-based score that covers all legislators but is not comparable across states and an NPAT-based score that covers fewer legislators but is in a common space. The authors project the roll call-based state legislative scores to NPAT common space via a least squares regression, under the assumption of ideological consistency (on average). The scores for non-responders are imputed using the estimated parameters from that mapping. Because all predicted scores are on the same scale, they can now be directly compared.

The final step is the aggregation of the individual level scores for those legislators serving in 1997 or 2007. Party medians within the chambers are calculated. The difference between chamber party medians is our chamber-level measure of polarization (see Poole and Rosenthal 1997). The two chamber distances are averaged to derive a state-level polarization score.[16] Again, because organized interests register with legislatures and not with chambers, the average provides the most appropriate measure for an analysis with lobby registrations by interest

[15] Ideal point estimates are from Bayesian item-response theory models (Jackman 2001, 2004; Martin and Quinn 2002; Clinton et al. 2004), but Poole and Rosenthal (1997) NOMINATE scores work just as well.
[16] Our results are robust to the use of Shor and McCarty's (2011) alternative, party-free measure of polarization.

organizations as the dependent variable. We also attempted alternative models using a measure of average ideological distance between each legislator within a chamber, but they are not presented here, as their results were similar to those utilizing ideological distance. The 1997 values of the ideological distance measure ranged from a low of 0.3700 for Nebraska to a high of 2.5635 for California. The 2007 ideological measures ranged from a low of 0.5145 for Louisiana to a high of 2.844 for California.

As an additional control variable, our specification includes a dummy variable indicating whether the state government in 1997 or 2007—including the executive branch—was under the unified control of one party. Given a lack of veto points along the policy-making process, policy change is simply more likely under unified government (Krause 2000). From the logic of the party competition hypothesis, which emphasizes the likelihood of policy change, this should increase the incentives of interest organizations to engage in lobbying. This variable also incorporates the gubernatorial control elements no longer contained in the party competition measure. Finally, we include Squire's (2000) measure of state legislative professionalism as a control. As Berkman (2001) demonstrates, professionalized legislatures require less information from lobbyists, and thus groups in those states are less effective, resulting in higher rates of exit from the interest community.[17]

Our specification of the ESA model, then, includes two area or supply variables—total GSP and its squared value—and two energy or demand variables—the level of legislative competition and ideological distance between the parties. Additionally, we examine the interaction of the two energy variables on the expectation that greater ideological distance

[17] Berkman (2001) develops a more theoretically and empirically complex interaction model between the ESA model and legislative professionalism. We tested interaction specifications with the energy variables and found similar results to those reported here. Thus, given our limited degrees of freedom, we focus on a simpler model with professionalism only included as a linear term.

enhances the effect of party competition. We test this specification with OLS regression, dropping five cases for the full model in 1997 due to missing data on the dependent variable: Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska, South Carolina, and Vermont. For 2007, we drop 11 cases due to missing data on party polarization: Arkansas, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Utah. Given the limited number of overall cases in the data set and that we cannot determine whether these missing data are missing at random or non-ignorable, we chose not to utilize methods to replace these missing cases.

Results

Our theoretical expectations are assessed with the OLS results presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows the results of the models for 1997 interest group densities; Table 2 shows the results for 2007 interest group densities. The first column in the table includes only the supply or area terms of the ESA model. As is evident in this as well as all of the remaining models in the table, the positive and highly significant GSP estimate, along with the negative and highly significant estimate for its squared value, suggest that state interest communities increase in size with the size of state economies, but at a declining rate as GSP increases. These results support the central organizational ecology hypothesis that populations of organizations of all kinds increase in a density-dependent fashion or are functionally self-limiting. These conclusions remain consistent across both years. Since this result has been well-established in prior work, we will have little further to say about it in our discussion of the results for the other models. The unified government dummy was included as a control: in all cases, including the result reported for Model 1, this variable failed to generate discernible estimates. Thus, it seems that unified government does not add to the perceived capacity of state governments to engage in policy change in a manner that stimulates the growth of the interest system. It is also possible that the

party competition and control measures include much of the explanatory power of this measure.

[Insert Tables 1 and 2 here]

It is worth noting Model 1's high R-square value of 0.79 in 1997 and .77 in 2007. However, we must also note that the R-square values of the remaining models are not notably higher and never exceed 0.81. Further analyses of model fit note that model 3 has the lowest AIC across both years and total, non-profit, and for-profit groups. While one should not make too much of coefficients of determination, it might be thought that this indicates that the variables we are most interested in—the level of competition among legislative parties and the ideological distance between them—add little to accounting for the density of state interest populations. This becomes especially true as we note that most of the legislative competition explanatory variables across the models and within separate interest group sectors yield null results.

But while we believe that influence of supply does indeed dominate forces of demand in structuring the density of interest systems, the two sets of forces are not strictly additive when demand is measured by legislative party competition and ideological distance. This is because larger states' legislatures tend to be more competitive and to have more divergent and polarized parties in terms of ideology. In our data, the level of legislative competition and level of ideological distance are moderately correlated with state size as measured by GSP, 0.38 and 0.47, respectively. This result, of course, is consistent with one of the oldest findings from the very first empirical literature on state politics from the 1960s. Simply put, large states tend to be more heterogeneous and, therefore, they provide more fertile ground for party competition and ideological polarization. Recent research—conducted with more sophisticated measures of state ideological heterogeneity—also finds that larger states tend to be more heterogeneous (Levendusky and Pope 2010; Harden and Carsey 2012). At least in part, then, the coefficients of the GSP variables in Model 1 are tapping into some of the variation more properly associated

with party competition and ideological distance. Thus, the limited change in the R-square values of the remaining models does not necessarily imply that these demand forces are unimportant. Scaling these variables by population may provide a more reasonable measure of economic influence and energy alone.

The second and third models in Table 1 add separately to the baseline supply specification our indicators of legislative party competition and the ideological distance between the parties. Neither of these variables provides expected statistically significant results in 2007, with the 1997 versions of the models providing a modestly statistically significant result for legislative competition and ideological distance in their respective models at the .10 level. While the estimates are signed as expected, the mix of results suggests, as noted earlier, the strong explanatory power of GSP in the model. These dynamics become more confusing in Model 4, which includes both legislative party competition and ideological distance. Both estimates are positive as expected. But as might be expected given that they too are moderately correlated with each other (r=0.52), the size of the standardized estimates are smaller than those reported in Models 2 and 3, where each was included separately.

This collinearity may also explain why none of the non-economic explanatory variables are statistically significant in Model 4 in either 1997 or 2007. Indeed, the size of the legislative competition and ideological distance estimates fall in 1997, and are no longer significant at even the generous 0.10 criterion level. In the 2007 model, we find our legislative competition measures also not showing statistical significance, and showing a correlation coefficient inconsistent with almost all previous theoretical findings. Still, given their relationship, as well as the relationship of both to state size as measured by GSP, it could well be that collinearity is diminishing our capacity to generate discernible estimates, something that will necessitate examining in more detail the substantive effect of the of the two demand variables to assess their separate and

distinctive influences on the density of state interest communities.

The need for such further examination is especially evident in the results reported for Model 5 in Tables 1 and 2. Here we add to the model the interaction of ideological distance and legislative party competition and the control for legislative professionalism. We expect that legislative party competition is especially powerful in drawing organizations to state capitals when there are real differences in ideological preference between the two legislative parties. In this case, party polarization in 1997 manages a modestly significant relationship with interest group density in 1997, as predicted; otherwise, none of the three demand variables generates a statistically significant estimate for either 1997 or 2007, likely due to collinearity.[18]

To add a level of granularity to our dependent variable, we split interest group communities along for-profit and non-profit lines as explained by Lowery, Gray, and Fellowes (2009). Tables 3-6 show the results of these splits across both years of analysis. The numbering systems of the models are consistent with the above descriptions of our model formulations. While we find powerful results for the explanatory power of our demand variables for non-profit communities in 1997, the for-profit measures show no statistically significant results for any of those variables. The collinearity problems previously associated with Model 5 appear again in the analysis of 1997 non-profit interest communities as well, suggesting that the few statistically significant results in our 1997 examination of total interest density may be driven by the size of the non-profit interest sector. For-profit densities, in both years analyzed, seem to be only the measured effect of our economic measures.

[Insert Tables 3-6 here]

[18] In addition to the interrelationships among the two variables already noted, the addition of the interaction term generated very high levels of collinearity. The auxiliary R-square values generated from regressing each independent variable on the remaining independent variables were 0.89 for legislative party competition, 0.98 for ideological distance, and 0.97 for their interaction.

Conclusion

Previous studies have found strong evidence that the political configuration of states influences the density of interest communities. These results were not consistent in our re-analysis of 1997 data and our new analysis of 2007 data. The level of ideological distance between the two parties appear to work independently, albeit modestly, to enhance or diminish the demand for lobbying on the part of organized interests in 1997, but the results are very muddled for 2007. The sizable correlations among the supply factor of GSP and the two measures of demands from the political system—legislative party competition and ideological distance—suggest that these variables are not, on a strictly empirical level, fully independent of each other. It is also important to note that model fit does improve somewhat when adding the demand variables, even by measures that punish non-parsimonious models. Perhaps even more importantly, our attention to the demand forces promoting or impeding lobbying should not draw undue attention away from the even more dominant forces of supply.

In this analysis, as well as many others, it is clear that the single best predictor of the density of interest system is the number of potential constituents available to organized interests for mobilization. In our case, the supply was measured simply by the size of the economy (GSP). Politics as an element of demand does certainly matter. But demand cannot create its own supply. If there are no manufacturing firms in a state, they will not form a manufacturing association to engage in lobbying even if the legislative parties are competitive and they differ in terms of their ideology. States with larger economies have more heterogeneous and diversified economic interests, and similarly, larger states also have more heterogeneous political systems as well. It will be important, in future analyses, to disentangle the causal path between demand and supply.

In terms of further research, the clearest avenue is examination of how legislative

competition and ideology influence specific types of organized interests, not merely those of non-profit and for-profit interests. Different kinds of interests—and the organizations that represent them—certainly align more or less strictly along the central ideological dimension that currently separates the two major parties. And the policies of some organized interests are embedded more strongly or weakly in the status quo that may make them more sensitive to the prospect of changes in party control of the legislature. Further, focusing on more specific types of interest organizations would allow us to bring back into the specification the demand source of *constituent interest* via measures of the size of the legislative agenda bearing on different kinds of interest organizations. In this regard, we have to this point only examined how two broad groupings of interests—for profit and non-profit interests—respond to levels of legislative party competition and ideological distance or polarization. In short, the results were similar to those reported here for overall density. But a finer grained analysis of specific interest guilds would seem to be in order.

There may also be anomalies specific to the 2007 data. States with traditionally low levels of legislative party competition scored higher in 2007 (for example, Alabama and Mississippi). We also have observed a high increase in the overall number of groups for some states, with a lower increase for others, indicating that time may be a more compelling factor in future data. The way states report their lobbying clients is inconsistent in both statute and practice, and with new datasets, caution is always a helpful partner.

Table 1: OLS Estimates of Effects on Total State Interest Group Density, 1997

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01	-0.03
	(.50)	(0.40)	(0.42)	(0.44)	(0.72)
1997 GSP	1.42 ***	1.26 ***	1.43 ***	1.32 ***	1.61 ***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
1997 GSP Sq.	-0.62 ***	-0.49 **	-0.66 ***	-0.57 ***	-0.71 ***
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Legislative Competition		0.14 *		0.11	0.12
		(0.06)		(0.16)	(0.15)
Unified 1997		0.06	0.04	0.06	0.06
		(0.12)	(0.31)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Ideological Distance			0.12 *	0.09	0.12 *
			(0.06)	(0.16)	(0.10)
Legislative Professionalism					-0.25 **
					(0.02)
Ideo.Dist. X Competition					0.11
					(0.17)
N	50	45	47	44	44
R^2	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.81
adj. R^2	0.78	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.77
Resid. sd	0.47	0.49	0.48	0.50	0.48

p values in parentheses, one-tailed tests

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table 2: OLS Estimates of Effects on Total State Interest Group Density, 2007

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	-0.00
	(1.00)	(1.00)	(0.99)	(0.88)	(0.49)
GSP 2007	1.74 ***	1.74 ***	1.81 ***	1.84 ***	1.77 ***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
GSP 2007 Sq.	-1.02 ***	-1.01 ***	-1.06 ***	-1.10 * * *	-1.04 ***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Legislative Competition		-0.07		-0.19	-0.04
		(0.28)		(0.14)	(0.45)
Unified 2007		0.01	0.08	-0.07	-0.06
		(0.45)	(0.19)	(0.34)	(0.35)
Ideological Distance			-0.03	-0.01	0.73
			(0.38)	(0.46)	(0.26)
IdeoDistanceXComp					-0.79
					(0.26)
Legislative Professionalism					0.06
					(0.35)
N	50	50	39	39	39
R^2	0.77	0.78	0.80	0.80	0.81
adj. R^2	0.76	0.76	0.77	0.77	0.76
Resid. sd	0.49	0.49	0.52	0.52	0.53

p values in parentheses, one-tailed tests

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table 3: OLS Estimates of Effects on For-Profit State Interest Group Density, 1997

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03
	(.50)	(0.45)	(0.44)	(0.93)	(0.34)
GSP 1997	1.56 ***	1.47 ***	1.56 ***	1.49 ***	1.79 ***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
GSP 1997 Sq.	-0.79 ***	-0.72 ***	-0.80 ***	-0.74 ***	-0.88 ***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Legislative Competition		0.09		0.08	-0.14
		(0.16)		(0.22)	(0.29)
Unified Government		0.05	0.03	0.05	0.04
		(0.27)	(0.32)	(0.28)	(0.29)
Ideological Distance			0.06	0.03	-0.30
			(0.24)	(0.37)	(0.26)
IdeoDistanceXComp					0.50
					(0.21)
Legislative Professionalism					-0.26 **
					(0.02)
N	50	45	47	44	44
R^2	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.78	0.81
adj. R^2	0.78	0.77	0.77	0.75	0.77
Resid. sd	0.46	0.49	0.49	0.50	0.49

p values in parentheses, one-tailed tests

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table 4: OLS Estimates of Effects on For-Profit State Interest Group Density, 2007

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	-0.00	-0.00	0.00	0.01	-0.00
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.48)
2007 GSP	1.77 ***	1.77 ***	1.84 ***	1.86 ***	1.79 ***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
2007 GSP Sq.	-1.06 ***	-1.05 ***	-1.07 ***	-1.10 ***	-1.05 ***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Legislative Competition		-0.07		-0.14	-0.01
		(0.26)		(0.20)	(0.48)
Unified Government		0.04	0.10	-0.01	-0.00
		(0.38)	(0.12)	(0.48)	(0.49)
Ideological Distance			-0.09	-0.08	0.55
			(0.16)	(0.20)	(0.31)
IdeoDistanceXComp					-0.67
					(0.29)
Legislative Professionalism					0.05
					(0.36)
N	50	50	39	39	39
R^2	0.77	0.78	0.80	0.81	0.81
adj. R^2	0.76	0.76	0.78	0.78	0.77
Resid. sd	0.49	0.49	0.51	0.51	0.52

p values in parentheses, one-tailed tests

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table 5: OLS Estimates of Effects on Non-Profit State Interest Group Density, 1997

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	-0.00	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.07
	(1.00)	(0.34)	(0.43)	(0.40)	(0.24)
GSP 1997	0.91 ***	0.58 **	0.92 ***	0.74 ***	1.00 ***
	(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
GSP 1997 Sq.	-0.10	0.14	-0.22	-0.07	-0.21
	(0.65)	(0.55)	(0.15)	(0.39)	(0.21)
Legislative Competition		0.25 **		0.16 *	-0.20
		(0.01)		(0.09)	(0.24)
Unified Government		0.06	0.02	0.06	0.07
		(0.26)	(0.40)	(0.27)	(0.47)
Ideological Distance			0.29 ***	0.25 **	-0.40
			(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.23)
IdeoDistanceXComp					0.88
					(0.10)
Legislative Professionalism					-0.20 *
					(0.08)
N	50	45	47	44	44
R^2	0.67	0.70	0.73	0.74	0.75
adj. R^2	0.66	0.67	0.70	0.70	0.71
Resid. sd	0.59	0.59	0.55	0.56	0.56

p values in parentheses, one-tailed tests

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table 6: OLS Estimates of Effects on Non-Profit State Interest Group Density, 2007

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	0.01	-0.00
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.45)	(0.50)
GSP 2007	1.63 ***	1.62 ***	1.70 ***	1.72 ***	1.69 ***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
GSP 2007 Sq.	-0.89 ***	-0.88 ***	-0.99 ***	-1.02 ***	-0.98 ***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Legislative Competition		0.01		-0.16	-0.07
		(0.48)		(0.18)	(0.40)
Unified Government		0.04	0.07	-0.06	-0.06
		(0.37)	(0.23)	(0.36)	(0.37)
Ideological Distance			0.11	0.13	0.56
			(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.32)
IdeoDistance X Comp					-0.46
					(0.35)
Legislative Professionalism					0.02
					(0.45)
N	50	50	39	39	39
R^2	0.75	0.75	0.78	0.79	0.79
adj. R^2	0.74	0.73	0.76	0.76	0.74
Resid. sd	0.51	0.52	0.53	0.53	0.55

p values in parentheses, one-tailed tests

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Figure 1: Distribution of Change in Total Number of Groups,1997-2007

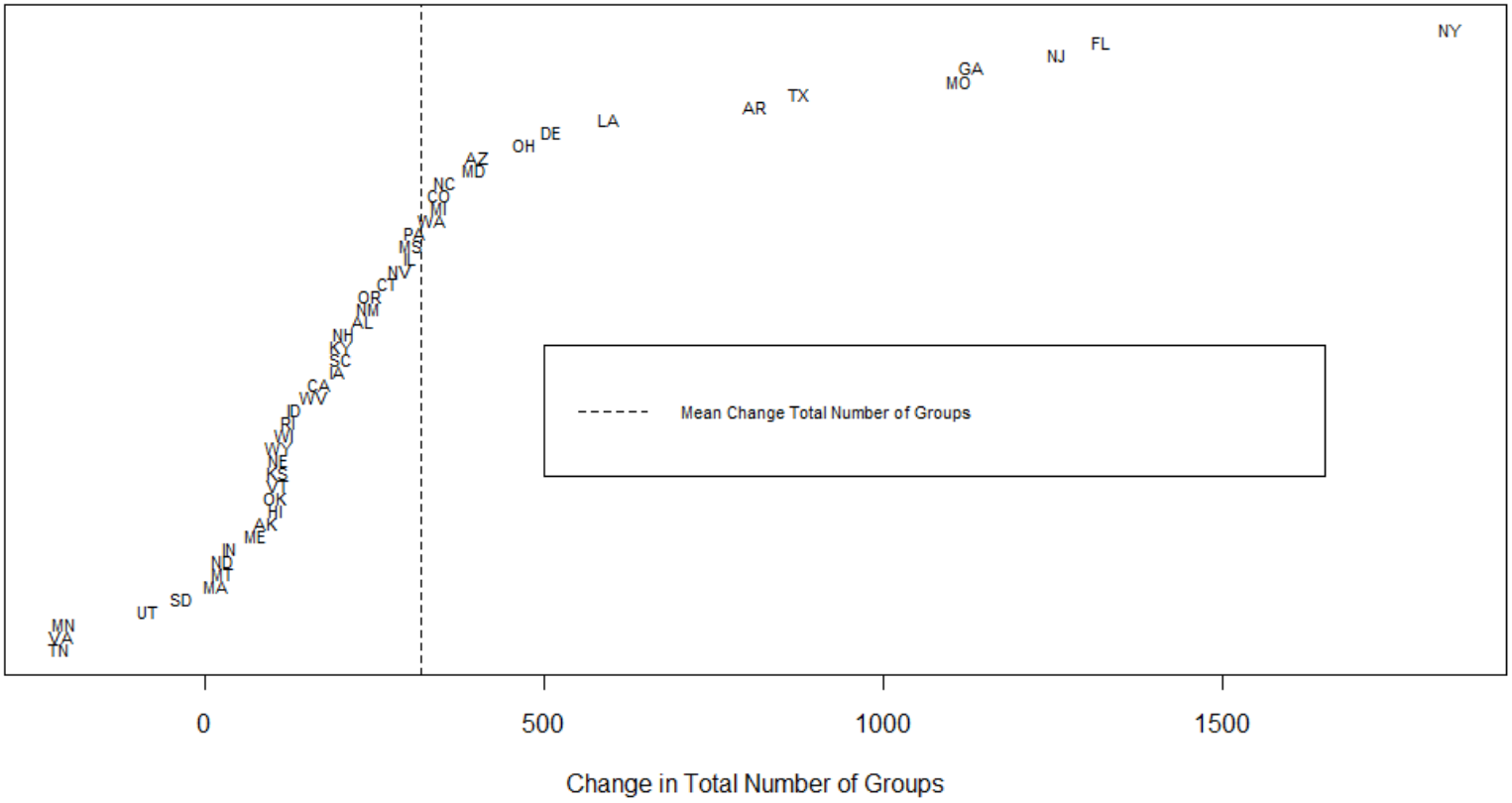
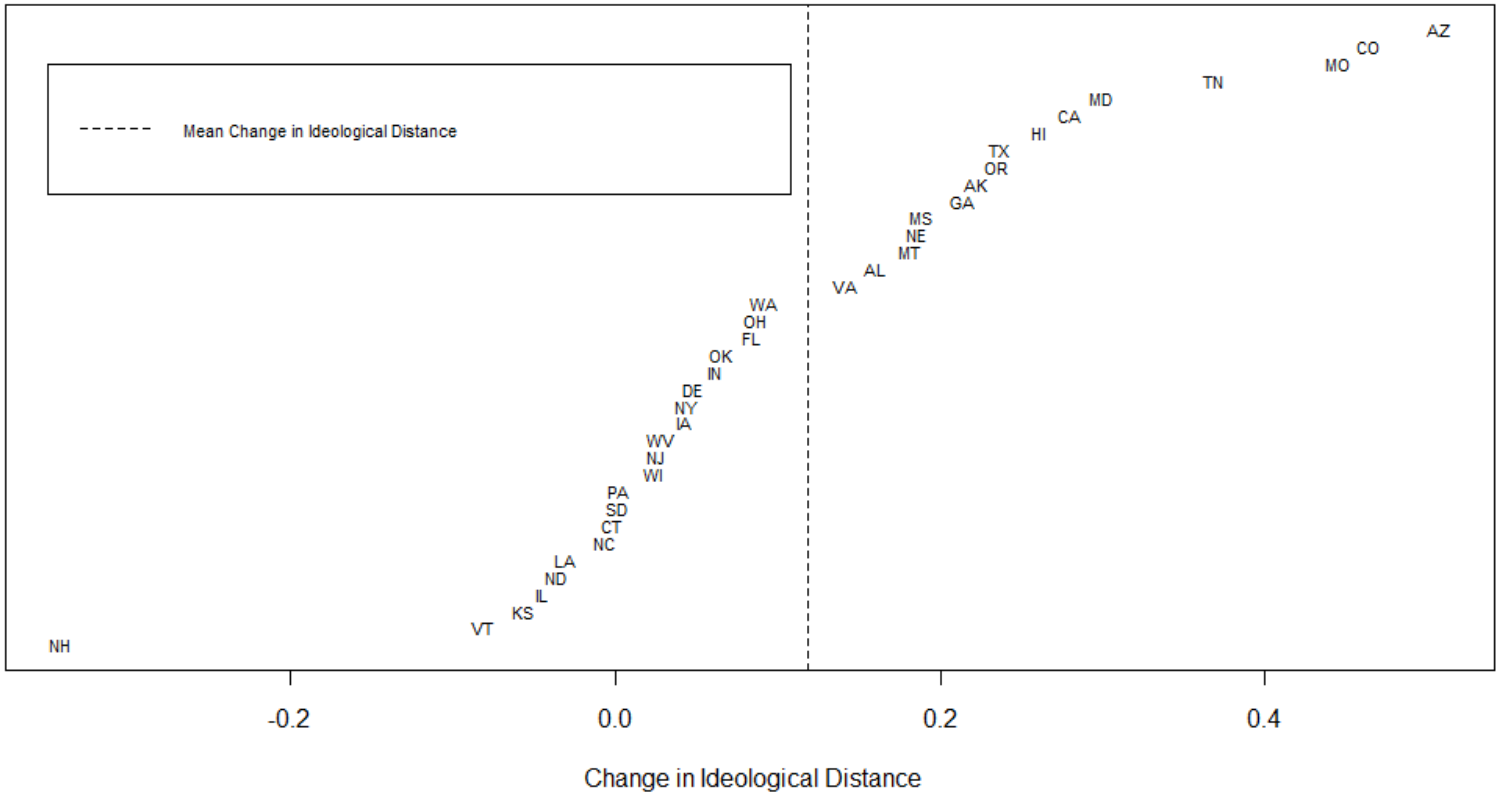


Figure 2: Ideological Distance Change by State, 1997-2007



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