

# Examining the Robustness of Ideological Voting: Evidence from the Confederate House of Representatives

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A majority of work on Congressional voting behavior finds that members of Congress establish ideological positions and maintain them throughout the entirety of their careers, regardless of how their career aspirations, political positions, or underlying constituencies change. Based on this evidence, Poole (1998) concludes that members of Congress “die in their ideological boots.” I examine the robustness of the “ideological-boots thesis” more closely, using vote-scaling techniques and roll-call voting data from a different American legislative system: the Congress of the Confederate States of America. Initial results run contrary to the ideological-boots thesis, as I uncover low levels of cross-system stability among members who moved from the U.S. House to the Confederate House. Examining further, I argue that high levels of ideological stability follow from a strong party system being in place to structure voting, which has traditionally been the case in the two-party U.S. House but was not the case in the partyless Confederate House. This result aside, I do find a moderate but increasing level of ideological stability among members of the Confederate House in a session-by-session analysis, which is robust to a serious “shock” (Federal invasion) to the constituency-representative linkage underlying the electoral connection. This latter finding suggests that as long as there are electoral incentives associated with ideological labels, then ideologies will develop, regardless of party structure.

Recent work in the field of Congressional voting behavior suggests that members of Congress (MCs) “die in their ideological boots.” That is, according to Poole (1998, 3), “based upon the roll-call voting record, once elected to Congress, members adopt an ideological position and maintain that position throughout their careers—once a liberal or a conservative or a moderate, always a liberal or a conservative or a moderate.” This finding applies not only to members of the contemporary Congress, but MCs from bygone eras as well, as Poole and Rosenthal (1997) find high levels of individual-level ideological stability across nearly *all* of United States Congressional history. Moreover, additional evidence suggests that members of Congress remain ideologically consistent even in the face of changing personal or electoral conditions: members’ voting records remain essentially the same, regardless of whether they plan to retire (Lott 1987; Van Beek 1991; Lott and Bronars 1993; Poole and Rosenthal 1997), plan to run for a higher office (Hibbing 1986; Poole and Romer 1993), serve in a higher office (Grofman, Griffin, and Berry 1995; Poole and Rosenthal 1997), or have their districts redrawn (Poole and Romer 1993; Poole 1998).

This article examines the “ideological-boots thesis” further to assess whether it is truly a general finding. Rather than examine voting behavior in the U.S. Congress, however, I focus on voting behavior in a heretofore forgotten institution in American history: the Congress of the Confederate States of America. I contend that the Confederate Congress is a suitable forum to explore the robustness of the ideological-boots thesis, because it provides two unique extensions to the study of individual-level ideological stability that cannot be pursued in a study of the U.S. Congress. First, a significant number of individuals who served in the Confederate House had

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served previously in the U.S. House. By studying the voting behavior of this subset of members in the U.S. before secession and in the Confederacy after secession, I can examine how stable ideological positions are *across* different legislative systems. Second, during the course of the Civil War, many Confederate House members were cut off from their constituents when Federal troops invaded their districts. By examining how these members voted before and after Federal occupation, I can explore whether a serious “shock” to the electoral connection significantly affects members’ ideological positions.

The article proceeds as follows. I first review the literature on individual-level ideological stability and explain in more detail how an analysis of roll-call voting in the Confederate House can add to our understanding of the robustness of ideological behavior. I then examine the stability of individual-level voting behavior across the U.S. and Confederate systems and make the case that political parties induce ideological stability through agenda control. Next, I examine how a subset of Confederate MCs behaved before and after Federal troops invaded and occupied their districts. Finally, I conclude.

### Individual-level Ideological Stability: A Review of the Literature

A sizeable literature has developed in recent years that investigates the ideological stability of individual members of Congress. Poole and Rosenthal (1991, 1997) have conducted the most thorough general investigation, examining members’ voting behavior across all of Congressional history.<sup>1</sup> Using their W-NOMINATE coordinates, Poole and Rosenthal compute Pearson correlations for individual House and Senate members who served in more than one House or Senate, respectively, and average those correlations across the first ninety-six Congresses, comparing a given Congress with each of the succeeding four Congresses. They find a great deal of ideological stability with only gradual drop-offs over time: a 0.92 and 0.87 correlation between times  $t$  and  $t+1$  for House and Senate members, respectively, which declines to 0.84 and 0.74 between times  $t$  and  $t+4$ . Poole (1998) extends this analysis through the 104th Congress and uncovers similar results: most of the correlations between pairs of Houses and Senates are above 0.9, even with lags up to five Houses or Senates.

<sup>1</sup>For other general studies of individual-level voting stability in the post-World War II Congress, see Clausen (1973), Asher and Weisberg (1978), Lott and Bronars (1993), and McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (1997).

In addition to these general studies, there has also been a focus on *particular* aspects of ideological stability. This research has taken two forms. *Member-specific studies* examine whether members of Congress change their behavior as their *personal* demands change. Studies of this nature typically investigate whether MCs who either aspire to and perhaps achieve higher office or plan to retire alter their voting behavior. *District-specific studies* examine whether members of Congress change their behavior as their *external* or *electoral* demands change. Studies of this nature typically investigate whether MCs whose district boundaries have been redrawn alter their voting behavior.

The first major strand of the member-specific studies focuses on the voting behavior of MCs who run for higher office. Both Hibbing (1986), using conservative coalition scores to analyze the period from the Eighty-sixth through the Ninety-seventh Congresses, and Poole and Romer (1993), using D-NOMINATE scores to analyze the period from the Eightieth through the Ninety-eighth Congresses, find no evidence that House members who aspire to higher office change their voting behavior in their last term. However, Carey (1994), using *sessional* D-NOMINATE scores in an analysis of the Eighty-ninth through the Ninety-eighth Congresses, does find some evidence that MCs change their voting behavior when they decide to run for statewide office—shifting their vote choices in the direction of the state party delegation.<sup>2</sup>

Carey’s findings appear to be fleeting, however, after considering studies of MCs’ behavior *after* they attain higher office. Grofman, Griffin, and Berry (1995), using ADA scores to analyze the voting records of fifty-four House members who served in the Senate between the 97th and 102nd Congresses, find no significant differences in their voting behavior between the two chambers. Moreover, Poole and Rosenthal (1997), using W-NOMINATE scores to analyze all 134 members in the post-Seventeenth Amendment era who first served in the House and then were elected to the Senate, find a 0.90 correlation between their House and Senate positions. From this, Poole and Rosenthal claim that MCs “not only . . . die in their ideological boots, but they do not change them when they run for the Senate” (1997, 76).<sup>3</sup>

Another strand of the member-specific studies focuses on the voting behavior of MCs who plan to retire.

<sup>2</sup>Alternatively, Rothenberg and Sanders (2000), using “transformed” NOMINATE scores in an analysis of the 102nd through 104th Congresses, uncover mixed results as to whether or not MCs who pursue statewide office alter their voting behavior.

<sup>3</sup>In fact, both Carey and Grofman-Poole-Rosenthal may be correct. MCs could alter their behavior while running for higher office, but then revert to their previous behavior after they are elected and serving in the Senate.

Cross-sectional work by Lott (1987) and Van Beek (1991) reveals no significant differences in the voting behavior of retiring versus nonretiring MCs during the Ninety-fourth and Ninety-fifth Congresses.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, longitudinal work by Poole and Romer (1993) and Lott and Bronars (1993) in the post-World War II era uncovers no significant differences when comparing retiring MCs' voting behavior in their last term to their voting behavior in prior terms.<sup>5</sup> Alternatively, evidence uncovered by Lott (1987, 1990), Poole and Romer (1993), Herrick, Moore, and Hibbing (1994), and Poole and Rosenthal (1997) suggests that retiring MCs alter their level of *participation* instead, cutting back significantly on the number of roll-call votes they cast.

Finally, several district-specific studies have focused on House members' voting behavior before and after their districts have been redrawn. Glazer and Robbins (1983), using ADA scores, find significant voting differences for members before and after redistricting. Using D-NOMINATE scores, however, Poole and Romer (1993) find that MCs maintain well-defined ideologies even after their districts' boundaries change. Moreover, Poole replicates Glazer and Robbins' analysis using W-NOMINATE scores and finds no significant redistricting effects, leading him to suggest that "the difference between the two findings is probably due to the coarseness of ADA scores which are typically based on 20 or fewer roll calls" (1998, 20, footnote 9).

In summary, the roll-call voting literature suggests that members of Congress are quite ideologically stable. Once elected, an MC adopts an ideological position and maintains it over time, regardless of how his career aspirations, political status or underlying constituency changes.

### The Ideological-Boots Thesis and the Confederate Congress

While the ideological-boots thesis seems quite robust, I propose to test its boundaries further, not by reexamining individual vote choice in the U.S. Congress, but by fo-

<sup>4</sup>See Zupan (1990) for an alternate view.

<sup>5</sup>More recently, Rothenberg and Sanders (2000) find some evidence that MCs who plan to retire vote differently in the last six months of election years, relative to MCs who do not plan to retire. However, they report that the magnitude of change is small and the relatively small  $R^2$  values for their models "suggest that there is substantial randomness associated with behavioral change" (2000, 321). Moreover, these findings of ideological change are small compared to levels of *abstention change*, in which retiring members defect at a much higher rate relative to returning members.

ocusing on the vote choices of members of a *different* American legislative institution: the Congress of the Confederate States of America. In short, by incorporating the Confederate Congressional experience, I am afforded two unique opportunities to examine the limits of ideological stability that cannot be undertaken in a study of U.S. Congressional behavior alone. First, I am able to extend the literature on member-specific ideological change by moving beyond studies of cross-institution change (i.e., U.S. House to U.S. Senate) to an analysis of *cross-system change*. That is, because a significant number of Confederate MCs had served previously in the U.S. Congress, I can examine how ideologically stable these individuals remained *across* the two legislative systems.<sup>6</sup> Second, I am able to extend the literature on district-specific ideological change by moving beyond studies of simple redistricting to an analysis of full-scale electoral reconstruction. During the course of the Civil War, Federal troops invaded the former U.S. South, separating many Confederate House members from their districts. For these MCs, the constituency-representative linkage changed dramatically: after the "shock" of the invasion, they were *directly* representing refugees and soldiers only, rather than their entire district populations. By examining how these members voted both before and after their districts were invaded, I can explore whether this dramatic shock to the "electoral connection" had any effect on members' ideological positions.<sup>7</sup>

### Examining Ideological Stability Across Legislative Systems

A large percentage of Confederate MCs—42 percent of the Confederate House and 50 percent of the Confederate Senate—had served previously in the U.S. Congress (Martis 1994). Aside from its functional importance in providing a smooth legislative transition, Confederate House members' experience provides the basis for a cross-system analysis of ideological stability. By comparing groups of House members who served in both the U.S. and Confederate Congresses to groups of House members who served only in the U.S. Congress *during the same period*, I can examine how stable members' ideological positions were *across* the two systems relative

<sup>6</sup>A parallel inquiry not as yet pursued, to the best of my knowledge, is how much consistency is exhibited as state legislators move to the U.S. Congress.

<sup>7</sup>For evidence of an electoral connection in the nineteenth-century U.S. House, see Swift (1987), Stewart (1989), and Bianco, Spence, and Wilkerson (1996).

to *within* the same system. Results from these comparisons will shed some light on the more general question of how robust ideological stability is to changes in institutional structure.

While the Confederate States and United States were separate national systems, the institutional features of their legislative systems were nearly identical. Constitutionally, just as in the U.S., Confederate House members were directly elected by district-level contingents for two-year terms, with state-level representation based on population, while Confederate Senators were elected every six years by state-level legislatures, with each state receiving the same level of representation (two members).<sup>8</sup> Structurally, standing committees conducted legislative business in the Confederate Congress, with fourteen of fifteen House committees, twelve of thirteen Senate committees, and three Joint committees copied directly from the U.S. Congress.<sup>9</sup> Procedurally, the legislative rules for the Confederate Congress were “mainly culled from the United States House and Senate rules,” with only slight deviations (Yearns 1960, 34–35).<sup>10</sup> Thus, while the Confederate House can be used to undertake a cross-system test of individual-level ideological stability (and the general robustness of the ideological-boots thesis), its close similarity to the U.S. House should, all else equal, increase the likelihood of uncovering high levels of stability.

Following Poole (1998), I utilize two measures to generate ideological comparisons: W-NOMINATE first-dimension scores and a set of rank orderings, based on a simple optimal classification algorithm (see Poole 2000). Because secession and the creation of the Confederate government occurred between the Thirty-sixth and Thirty-seventh U.S. Houses, I compare two types of members: those who served in the U.S. House before secession and continued to serve afterward in the Thirty-seventh U.S. House, and those who served in the U.S. House before secession and went on to serve in the First Confederate House (which ran concurrently with the Thirty-seventh U.S. House). W-NOMINATE scores and rank orderings are computed for four separate Houses: the Thirty-fifth, Thirty-sixth, and Thirty-seventh U.S. Houses and the First Confederate House. Thus, I make four sets of

comparisons in total, based upon lags of one and two Congresses: (1) members who served in both the Thirty-fifth and Thirty-seventh U.S. Houses (twenty-five in total); (2) members who served in both the Thirty-sixth and Thirty-seventh U.S. Houses (seventy-three in total); (3) members who served in both the Thirty-fifth U.S. House and First Confederate House (nineteen in total); and (4) members who served in both the Thirty-sixth U.S. House and First Confederate House (nineteen in total).<sup>11</sup> For each set of Houses, Pearson correlations are computed between NOMINATE scores and Spearman correlations are computed between rank orderings.

Results are presented in Table 1. The evidence is striking: members who served only in the U.S. House remained quite ideologically stable, whereas members who moved from the U.S. House to the Confederate House exhibited little or no ideological stability. The exceptionally high Pearson correlations (0.916 and 0.911) for the two sets of U.S. House members are representative of similar sets of correlations from the pre-Civil War era: 0.87 for members of concurrent Houses and 0.81 for members of two-lagged Houses (Poole and Rosenthal 1997, 72). Pearson correlations for the two sets of members who “switched” from the U.S. House to the Confederate House, on the other hand, approached zero (0.076 and 0.052). Spearman correlations tell a similar story. Members from the two sets of U.S. Houses remained quite stable relative to one another (0.781 and 0.760), while members from the cross-system Houses exhibited no ordinal stability (–0.078 and –0.052).

The lack of ideological consistency for individuals who served in both the U.S. and Confederate Houses is difficult to understand, given that the formal institutional structures underlying each legislature were nearly identical. Substantive explanations also prove fruitless. W-NOMINATE scalings confirm that roll-call voting was essentially one-dimensional in both the U.S. and Confederate Houses, with little additional leverage obtained by adding higher dimensions.<sup>12</sup> Further, Bense (1987, 1990) contends that “states’ rights versus central state authority” defined the principle issue dimension in both legislatures, which is confirmed by Jenkins (1999) through an analysis of vote-based issue codes. This similarity-of-issue-space finding suggests that members’ W-NOMINATE scores were indeed comparable across the two sys-

<sup>8</sup>See Article I, Sections 2 and 3 of the Constitution of the Confederate States of America, printed in the *Confederate Journal*, volume I, 909–924.

<sup>9</sup>Standing committees for the First Confederate House and Senate appear in the *Confederate Journal*, volume II, 17 and volume V, 41, respectively.

<sup>10</sup>A complete listing of Confederate House and Senate rules can be found in the *Confederate Journal*, volume II, 15–18 and volume V, 37–43, respectively.

<sup>11</sup>My decision to stop at two lags is a function of data constraints. Too few members served in both the Thirty-fourth U.S. House and the First Confederate House to make additional comparisons worthwhile.

<sup>12</sup>See Jenkins (1999) for a more detailed analysis of the structure of roll-call voting in the two legislatures.

**TABLE 1** Pairwise Correlations Within and Across Legislatures

Pearson Correlations	
35th & 37th U.S. Houses	36th & 37th U.S. Houses
0.911	0.916
(N = 25)	(N = 73)
35th U.S. House & 1st Conf House	36th U.S. House & 1st Conf House
0.076	0.052
(N = 19)	(N = 19)

Note: Figures represent correlations between members' W-NOMINATE scores, with sample size in parentheses.

### Spearman Correlations

35th & 37th U.S. Houses	36th & 37th U.S. Houses
0.781	0.760
(N = 25)	(N = 73)
35th U. S. House & 1st Conf House	36th U.S. House & 1st Conf House
-0.078	-0.052
(N = 19)	(N = 19)

Note: Figures represent correlations between members' rank orders, using a simple optimal classification algorithm (see Poole 2000), with sample size in parentheses.

tems.<sup>13</sup> The distribution of vote types, i.e., final-passage, amendment, and procedural votes, was also *not* significantly different across the U.S. and Confederate Houses. Finally, there is no evidence that there was a *sectional* component to ideological stability, as Southern MCs were as ideologically stable as Northern MCs prior to the Civil War (Jenkins 1999).

### Party and Ideological Stability

Moving beyond formal institutions and substantive explanations, I contend that an *informal* institution, the political party system, was responsible for members' cross-system instability. The state of political parties was the only significant difference between the two legislative systems, that is, a strong two-party system existed in the U.S. House both before and during the war, while a party system did not exist in the Confederate House.<sup>14</sup>

Why might party offer a solution to cross-system instability? Partisan theories of legislative organization argue that parties act as "bonding mechanisms" to hold members together (Rohde 1991; Cox and McCubbins 1993, 1994, 1999; Aldrich 1995). Simply put, the party in

the majority (through the actions of its leaders) controls the legislative agenda, selecting those issues that will benefit the party collectivity by separating its members from the opposing party's members. In spatial terms, this manipulation of the agenda lends structure to Congressional voting, which in turn induces stability in individual-level vote choice. This party-based view of ideological stability is supported by the recent work of McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, who, in a scaling analysis of the U.S. House in the post-World War II era, find that "parties . . . influence roll call voting through their powers of agenda control" and conclude that "party discipline . . . is manifest in the location of the legislator's ideal point in the standard spatial model" (2000, 49).<sup>15</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that individuals who served in both the U.S. and Confederate Houses expressed low levels of ideological stability, while individuals who served only in the U.S. House expressed high levels of ideological stability: strong parties controlled the agenda

<sup>13</sup>Both legislatures struggled with how much governing authority to take away from states and transfer to the central government and, in doing so, dealt with many of the same issues, such as conscription, habeas corpus, impressment, slavery, and war financing.

<sup>14</sup>See Potter (1960), McKittrick (1967), Alexander and Beringer (1972), and Beringer (1972) for a discussion of the lack of political party development in the Confederacy.

<sup>15</sup>Another strand of the strong-party thesis suggests that party leaders influence members' vote choices by "pressuring" them. That is, party leaders use their resources (scheduling legislation, making committee assignments) to entice members to support the party agenda. This perspective, advanced most strongly by Snyder and Groseclose (2000), has been critiqued recently by McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2000). The search for party effects on Congressional roll-call voting generally was first touched off by Krehbiel (1993) and is currently a much studied topic in the discipline. Other recent papers include Jenkins (1999), Lawrence, Maltzman, and Smith (1999), Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (1999), Cooper and Young (1999), Wilson (1999), Hager and Talbert (2000), and Nokken (2000).

**TABLE 2** Pearson Correlations During Unstable Partisan Periods in the U.S. House

	time $t$	$t + 1$	$t + 2$
Era of Good Feelings	14th House (1815)	0.18	0.02
	15th House (1817)	0.88	0.46
	16th House (1819)	0.60	0.73
	17th House (1821)	0.59	0.62
	18th House (1823)	0.62	0.72
Post-Whig Era {	32nd Congress (1851)	0.76	0.69
	<b>U.S. Average (1789–1980)</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>0.89</b>

Note: Figures are in terms of W-NOMINATE scores.

in the U.S. House, while MCs were not affected by partisan controls in the partyless Confederate House. In spatial terms, individuals who served only in the U.S. House possessed ideal points that were constrained by party *throughout their tenure*, while individuals who moved from the U.S. House to the Confederate House possessed ideal points that were constrained by party only *initially*. Once in the Confederate House, these former U.S. House members operated in an environment free of party manipulation, which is reflected in their very different Confederate ideal points.

To further support this party-based view of ideological stability, I present additional evidence as a validity check. If there is a direct relationship between individual-level ideological stability and the existence of a strong party system, then we should expect to observe *less* stability during *unstable* partisan periods. Over the course of U.S. history, there have been two periods in which the traditional two-party system has collapsed: 1816–1824, dubbed the “Era of Good Feelings,” and the early 1850s. In each period, one of the two national parties vanished—first the Federalists, then the Whigs—creating a state of one-party politics. If parties indeed act as bonding mechanisms to structure members’ choices and induce ideological stability, then pairwise correlations during these unstable periods should be significantly lower than similar comparisons from strong party periods.

Pearson correlations for the Era of Good Feelings and the early 1850s are presented in Table 2. The evidence is consistent with a party-based view of ideological stability: pairwise correlations for members who served in two Houses between time  $t$  and time  $t+1$  or  $t+2$  were significantly lower than the U.S. House average across time. Admittedly, these correlations are higher than the cross-system correlations presented in Table 1, but they are consistent with the particulars of the partisan con-

text. While the Era of Good Feelings and the post-1850s were unstable periods, they were *still* party periods, albeit one-party rather than two-party periods. The surviving party still possessed the ability to structure the agenda, but could not impose discipline as effectively without the existence of a viable electoral foil.

From this evidence, it appears that the ideological-boots thesis is contingent rather than general in nature. Members of Congress “die in their ideological boots,” as Poole contends, as long as they operate within a two-party system. Parties control the legislative agenda and, in doing so, structure Congressional voting and help induce individual-level ideological stability. When the two-party framework is taken away, that portion of ideological behavior that party induces is removed as well, resulting in more instability in individual-level vote choice.

### Examining Ideological Stability Within the Confederate House: A Corollary

Given that I have argued that a sizeable portion of individual-level ideological stability is party induced, this begs the question: how do MCs behave in an environment devoid of party? In answer, I examine members’ voting records session by session to investigate whether ideology is mainly an artifact of party or whether it can develop independently.

Amid the war with the United States, two separate Confederate Congresses assembled. The First Confederate Congress met in four sessions between February 18, 1862 and February 17, 1864, while the Second Confederate Congress met in two sessions between February 18, 1864 and March 18, 1865. By scaling votes from each of these six sessions separately, using W-NOMINATE, I can generate sessional ideal points for individual members and compute pairwise sessional correlations to investi-

gate how ideologically stable they remained throughout their Confederate careers.<sup>16</sup>

Sessional Pearson correlations suggest that Confederate MCs in fact exhibited a substantial degree of ideological stability across their Congressional tenure. During the First Confederate House, there was a moderate degree of individual-level stability ( $r = 0.514, 0.503, 0.442$  between the first and second, second and third, and third and fourth sessions, respectively). Those members who survived reelection, however, displayed an increasing level of stability ( $r = 0.736$  between the fourth session of the First Confederate House and the first session of the Second Confederate House), while members of the Second Confederate House displayed a great deal of stability ( $r = 0.808$  between the first and second sessions).

This evidence of increasing consistency in individual vote choice across the Confederate House suggests that a strong party structure is not the sole determinant of ideological stability. That is, while parties help induce stability, a considerable degree of stability emerges in the absence of parties. To understand why MCs behave in an ideological fashion despite a lack of party structure requires an understanding of member goals and incentives, to which I now turn.

The seminal work on the development of political ideologies was elaborated by Downs, (1957), who couched his analysis in terms of parties or “teams.”<sup>17</sup> Because voters are uncertain about issues, candidate positions, and policy outcomes and are unwilling to pay the costs of becoming informed, parties develop ideologies—“a verbal image of the good society and the chief means for constructing such a society” (1957, 96)—for voters to use as informational shortcuts. With these party ideologies, voters can quickly and inexpensively identify each party’s stance on a range of issues, from which they can then act (vote) accordingly. Since Downs’ initial

analysis, scholars have applied his notion of ideology as an electoral “brandname” or reputation to individual reelection-minded politicians, rather than simply to parties (Lott 1986, 1987; Dougan and Munger 1989; Kalt and Zupan 1990).

Ideology is only effective, however, if it is reliable. Returning to the Downsian world, if parties drift too far from their espoused ideologies, then the informational shortcuts (and accompanying electoral benefits) associated with ideology deteriorate. Moreover, as Downs contends, “[Rational citizens] would rather vote for a party that can be relied upon to carry out its imperfect proposals than one whose behavior cannot be predicted at all” (1957, 107). Downs’ theoretical assertions have been verified empirically, as contemporary research has found that Congressional incumbents who have strayed too far from their established ideological positions have been “sorted” out of office by their constituents (Lott and Davis 1992; Kau and Rubin 1993; Wright 1993; Lott and Bronars 1993).

Returning to the Confederate case, legislators, even in the absence of party structure, had an incentive to remain ideologically consistent: reelection success. Anecdotal evidence suggests that reelection was a valuable asset to Confederate MCs. Most were planters, who owned large estates and many slaves, and thus had a *financial* incentive to see the Confederacy succeed (Alexander and Beringer 1972, 354–389). Holding political office, in turn, gave them the best opportunity to affect the course of the war and the nation. If MCs wanted to return to office, they had to construct and maintain individual-level ideological reputations, lest they ignore a valuable electoral advantage. In total, 84 of the 106 members (79.2 percent) of the First Confederate House ran for reelection.

Is there evidence that Confederate House incumbents were punished for ideological drift? We can investigate this question by analyzing the pre-election voting behavior of all members from the First Confederate House who ran for reelection to the Second Confederate House. By comparing individual-level correlations between the second and third sessions of the First Confederate House for members who were reelected versus members who lost, we can examine whether ideological consistency had any bearing on electoral outcomes.<sup>18</sup> In fact, reelection outcomes were directly related to ideological consistency: members who won reelection displayed a moderate, but significant, degree of ideological

<sup>16</sup>In an initial session-by-session analysis, I found that members’ ideal point estimates from the third session of the First Confederate House were essentially uncorrelated with their estimates from all other sessions. Examining the *types* of roll-call votes by session sheds some light on this irregularity, as a significantly greater proportion of procedural votes occurred in the third session, relative to all other sessions: procedural roll calls made up 44.9, 41.7, 57.3, 48.8, 43.9, and 46.7 percent of all roll-call votes in the first through sixth sessions of the Confederate House, respectively. Thus, the third session provided fewer opportunities for members to showcase their ideological *policy* positions, which significantly influenced the composition of their third session W-NOMINATE scores. To remedy this problem, I incorporate only *nonprocedural roll-call votes* (i.e., final-policy and amendment votes) in the standard W-NOMINATE estimations.

<sup>17</sup>For more recent work on the development of political ideologies, see Hinich and Munger (1994) and Bawn (1999).

<sup>18</sup>The elections to the Second Confederate House for all states occurred between the third and fourth sessions of the First Confederate House (Martis 1994).

stability ( $r = 0.606$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $N = 47$ ), while members who were defeated showed no continuity in vote choice ( $r = 0.388$ ,  $p < .09$ ,  $N = 21$ ).<sup>19</sup>

### Ideological Stability and Electoral Shock

In the previous section, I uncovered a sizeable degree of individual-level ideological stability within the Confederate House and argued that it resulted from MCs recognizing that there were electoral benefits associated with adopting ideological labels. In this section, I examine whether those ideological labels were robust to an exogenous shock: invasion. That is, after their districts were occupied by Federal troops, disrupting the representative-constituency linkage underlying the electoral connection, did Confederate MCs maintain their prior ideological positions or did they adjust their voting behavior to the new electoral environment?

From the outset of the Civil War, the Confederacy found itself in a defensive military position. By the opening of the First Confederate Congress in March 1862, Federal troops had occupied Missouri, Kentucky, and the northwestern portion of Virginia (Martis 1994, 17, 27). By the end of the Civil War, 70 of the 106 Confederate Congressional districts (66 percent) had been invaded (Martis 1994, 28). Thus, at any given point in the war, a large percentage of Confederate House members were serving and voting in Congress while their districts were under enemy control.

Examining the consequences of Federal invasion more closely, the literature on Confederate roll-call voting contends that members from occupied (Federally invaded) districts voted differently than members from unoccupied (free) districts (Yearns 1960; Alexander and Beringer 1972; Bensel 1987, 1990; Martis 1994). Specifically, members from Missouri, Kentucky, and western Virginia, whose districts were *always* occupied, were considered to be quite radical, “consistently voting for drastic measures to win the war, such as conscription, impressment, suspension of habeas corpus, and stringent economic policies,” while members from unoccupied districts maintained greater states’ rights convictions (Martis

1994, 92–93).<sup>20</sup> Vote data confirm this occupied-unoccupied dichotomy, as the mean sessional W-NOMINATE scores for members whose districts were *always* occupied (0.326) are significantly different ( $p < .0001$ ) from members whose district were *never* occupied (-0.033).

Three complementary reasons have been offered to explain why members from always-occupied districts were willing to support greater central state authority. First, these members would benefit only if the Confederacy won the war *and* Federal troops were driven from their districts, so that they would have constituencies to represent after the armistice. Thus, they had an incentive to do whatever was necessary—more conscription, more impressment, higher taxes, and so on—to win the war. Second, they did not have to pay any of the costs to obtain victory. Since their districts were occupied, most of their constituents were under Federal control and thus could not be taxed, impressed, or drafted. Hence, members from always-occupied districts could “free ride” off members from unoccupied districts (Alexander and Beringer 1972, 336; Martis 1994, 92). Third, members from always-occupied districts faced a different electoral constituency, as they were held electorally accountable only by those who had escaped Federal control. This group included some refugees, but was composed mostly of soldiers who formerly resided in the occupied districts. Regarding soldiers’ preferences, Bensel contends that “[a]lthough the electoral record is incomplete, what is known suggests that the soldier vote strongly favored more extreme war measures and, consequently, a stronger central state” (1987, 79). Thus, the incentives facing MCs from always-occupied districts were mutually enforcing: voting for stronger central-state measures met the short-term needs of their electoral constituencies (soldiers), as well as furthered their own long-run political needs (obtaining a decisive victory to maintain their political viability).

The incentive structure underlying the behavior of members from always-occupied districts raises the following question: how did members whose districts were initially unoccupied, but later occupied, behave after occupation? More explicitly, did these members maintain their initial ideological positions after their districts were occupied, or did they accede to the new electoral incentives that accompanied occupation? To this point, I have made the claim that individual-level ideological stability among Confederate MCs increased session by session, in large part because of the electoral benefits that accrue

<sup>19</sup>Sixteen additional members ran for reelection to the Second Confederate House; however, these members did not possess a W-NOMINATE score for either the second session or third session of the First Confederate House and therefore could not be included in the analysis. Thirteen members who chose not to run for reelection also displayed no significant continuity in vote choice ( $r = 0.323$ ,  $p < .28$ ).

<sup>20</sup>All of Texas and Florida remained unoccupied throughout the war, as well as large parts of Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia (Martis 1994).



from establishing credible ideological labels. District occupation, however, was a *major* shock to the constituency-representative linkage underlying the electoral connection. Examining members' behavior before and after occupation, therefore, will shed some light on the robustness of ideological stability: does a member take an ideological label and maintain it despite exogenous changes to his electoral environment? Such an examination has general implications as well. For example, do members of the contemporary U.S. House who face a significant electoral shock (redistricting, for example) maintain their previous voting patterns because of ideology per se, or could this consistency merely be an artifact of party constraints, which remain constant across the two states of nature? An analysis of voting patterns before and after occupation in the partyless Confederacy will help address this question.

To examine the effects of occupation on ideology, I incorporate members' *complete* session-by-session voting history, as well as additional variables to control for contextual and temporal effects, in two multivariate regressions. First, I construct a one-way fixed-effects model based on work by Lott and Bronars (1993) and Carey (1994):

$$\begin{aligned} W-NOM_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 W-NOM_{it-1} + \beta_2 LAMEDUCK_{it} \\ & + \beta_3 NEVER_i + \beta_4 ALWAYS_i \\ & + \beta_5 SHOCK_{it} + \delta' TIME + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned}$$

The dependent variable is a given member's sessional W-NOMINATE score at time  $t$ , modeled as a function of his sessional W-NOMINATE score at time  $t-1$  plus additional explanatory and control variables. A given Confederate MC can thus have as many as *five* observations in the overall model, if he both served and possessed a W-NOMINATE score in all six House sessions. A dummy variable (*LAMEDUCK*) is included to control for last-session effects and is coded 1 for the fourth session of the First Confederate Congress if a given member lost or did not run for reelection and zero otherwise. Two dummies (*NEVER* and *ALWAYS*) are included to separate three groups of members: those whose districts were never occupied, those whose districts were always occupied, and those whose districts "switched." A vector of  $t-1$  dummies are included to control for session-to-session (time) effects, where  $t$  is equal to the total number of concurrent sessions (five). Finally, an additional dummy (*SHOCK*) is included to investigate whether members from districts that switched from unoccupied to occupied status altered their voting behavior.<sup>21</sup> The *SHOCK* variable is coded 1

for those sessions in which the district was occupied and zero otherwise.

Based on the results from the simple always/never-occupied analysis earlier in this section, I expect a significant, rightward shift in members' voting behavior after their districts became occupied (a positive, significant coefficient for the *SHOCK* variable), if they began to vote systematically for measures to strengthen central state authority. This would occur if members began responding to their new electoral constituencies, soldiers in the field who formerly resided in the newly occupied districts. If I find that members' voting behavior did not change significantly after their districts became occupied (no significant effect for the *SHOCK* variable), then I infer that members maintained their prior ideological positions, despite the apparent electoral temptation to "drift."

Results are presented in the first column of Table 3. As expected, a member's sessional W-NOMINATE score at time  $t-1$  is a significant ( $p < .001$ ) predictor of his behavior at time  $t$ . The *LAMEDUCK* variable proves not to be significant ( $p < .456$ ), suggesting that members who were not reelected to the Second Confederate House did not change their voting patterns in their last session. This evidence coincides with contemporary findings regarding last-term ideological stability. More importantly, however, the *SHOCK* variable is *not* significant ( $p < .841$ ), suggesting that members from districts that switched from unoccupied to occupied status did *not* change their voting behavior toward supporting greater central state authority across the two states of nature.

As an alternative to the preceding model, I also construct a two-way fixed-effects model to investigate the relationship between occupation and ideology:

$$\begin{aligned} W-NOM_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 LAMEDUCK_{it} + \beta_2 NEVER_i \\ & + \beta_3 ALWAYS_i + \beta_4 SHOCK_{it} + \delta' TIME \\ & + \gamma' MEMBER + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned}$$

The dependent variable is once again a member's sessional W-NOMINATE score at time  $t$ , but because I do not incorporate a lagged-NOMINATE score, a given Confederate MC can have as many as *six* observations, if he both served and possessed a W-NOMINATE score in all six House sessions. The same dummy variables are used from the prior model—*LAMEDUCK*, *ALWAYS*, *NEVER*, *SHOCK*, plus sessional (time) controls—with

Congress stayed in session only a few months at a time, most invasions took place during intersessions. When invasions coincided with Congressional proceedings, I code a member's district as "newly occupied" for a session if two-thirds of that member's votes during the session came after the invasion occurred.

<sup>21</sup>Martis (1994) provides a detailed account of when particular districts were invaded by Federal troops. Because the Confederate

**TABLE 3** Examining the Determinants of Members' Voting Behavior

	One-Way Fixed Effects	Two-Way Fixed Effects
WNOM <sub>t-1</sub>	0.501*** (0.044)	—
LAMEDUCK	0.071 (0.095)	0.112 (0.098)
NEVER	-0.095 (0.082)	0.850*** (0.257)
ALWAYS	0.093 (0.085)	1.027*** (0.080)
SHOCK	-0.019 (0.097)	-0.026 (0.080)
CONSTANT	0.144 (0.079)	-0.661*** (0.082)
<i>F</i>	31.89***	181.28***
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.385	0.678
<i>N</i>	376	551

Note: Dependent variable is member's sessional W-NOMINATE score at time *t*. Figures represent OLS unstandardized coefficients, with White-corrected standard errors in parentheses. Results for time (session) dummies in the one-way and two-way models and member dummies in the two-way model are not reported. \**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001.

the addition of a vector of dummies to control for individual member effects (151 in total).

Results appear in the second column of Table 3. As in the previous model, the *LAMEDUCK* variable is not significant (*p* < .256), suggesting that exiting members did not alter their voting patterns in their last session in office. Also, once again, the *SHOCK* variable is not significant (*p* < .744), suggesting that members were *not* more inclined to support greater central state authority after their districts were occupied.

In all, findings from two multivariate regressions suggest that individual-level ideological stability in the Confederate House remained robust in the face of a significant electoral shock (Federal invasion). Confederate MCs whose districts were occupied continued to vote as they had prior to occupation, retaining their ideological labels rather than swaying in the electoral wind. These findings support my prior contention that ideological labels not only develop, but remain stable, even when a party structure is not present.

## Conclusion

Individual-level voting has been remarkably stable across most of U.S. Congressional history. With rare exceptions, MCs establish ideological positions and maintain them

throughout the entirety of their careers, regardless of how institutional or electoral conditions change around them. This finding has led Poole (1998, 3) to remark that "members of Congress die in their ideological boots."

I examine the robustness of the "ideological-boots thesis" by studying voting behavior in a different American legislative system: the Congress of the Confederate States of America. By analyzing Confederate voting patterns, I am able to examine theoretical aspects of ideological stability that are unavailable in a study of the U.S. Congress alone. First, I can investigate *cross-system stability*, by analyzing how members who served in both the U.S. and Confederate Houses voted in the different legislative settings. Second, I can investigate *electoral stability*, by analyzing how Confederate House members responded to a major electoral shock, Federal occupation of their districts.

Examining the voting behavior of members who served in both the U.S. and Confederate Houses, I find little evidence of individual-level cross-system stability. Rather than claim that ideological stability is not robust across legislative systems, however, I argue that party was the cause of the instability. By controlling the legislative agenda, parties structure Congressional voting and induce individual-level ideological stability. While the U.S. House maintained a strong two-party system throughout the war, the Confederate House lacked a party system and, therefore, a source of ideological bonding. An examination of U.S. history supports this party-based conclusion, as there were only two periods of low ideological stability in the U.S. House, which coincided with the only two periods of partisan instability in the nation: the Era of Good Feelings and the early 1850s. From this, I conclude that the exceedingly high levels of ideological stability found in U.S. Congressional voting are, to a large extent, party induced. Thus, Poole's assertion that members die in their ideological boots, rather than being a general finding, is contingent upon a stable party system being in place.

These prior results notwithstanding, I do find an independent basis for ideology. That is, ideology is not simply an artifact of party; rather, it develops even in a partyless system like the Confederacy for very rational reasons. Examining Confederate roll-call voting on a session-by-session basis, I find that House members displayed increasing levels of individual stability. These results confirm some theoretical notions first espoused by Downs (1957), that is, members have an electoral incentive to construct and maintain ideological "labels," general economic and social positions that will allow their constituents to discern their positions on a range of individual issues. Members who fail to develop such labels risk alienating their constituents, who do not have the

time or inclination to obtain information about candidates' particular positions, and being voted out of office. There is some evidence that this "logic" occurred in the Confederacy, as members who were reelected to the Second Confederate House had behaved in a more ideologically stable fashion prior to the elections than members who were defeated.

Moreover, I find that Confederate House members' ideological positions were robust in the face of a general electoral shock: Federal invasion of their districts. Even though the constituency-representative linkage changed dramatically after occupation, with MCs from occupied districts only representing soldiers and refugees rather than their entire district populations, it did not affect the way in which members voted. While there was some evidence to suggest that soldiers preferred measures associated with stronger central state authority, members from newly-occupied districts did not significantly shift their voting behavior in that direction. Rather, they maintained their preoccupation ideologies. This suggests perhaps that members realized that greater electoral rewards accrued from maintaining consistent ideologies rather than shifting in the political winds, based on the Downsian notion that, all else equal, voters prefer the known to the unknown.

In conclusion, while I find the ideological-boots thesis to be somewhat overstated, I do find that ideology is an important determinant of vote choice, regardless of party structure. Individual-level ideological stability appears to develop regardless of the particular institutional conditions in place, as long as ideological labels remain electorally valuable. Ideological stability, however, appears to be at its strongest during stable two-party periods, when members can receive additional partisan benefits for behaving consistently.

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