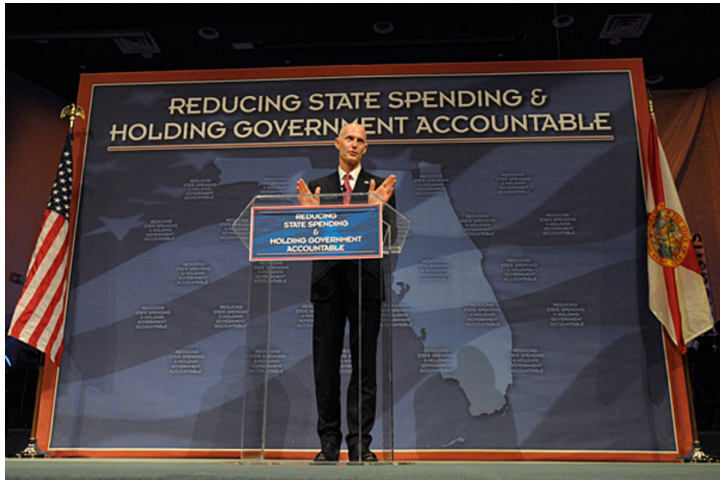
Red State Blues: How the Conservative Revolution Stalled in the States

Matt Grossmann



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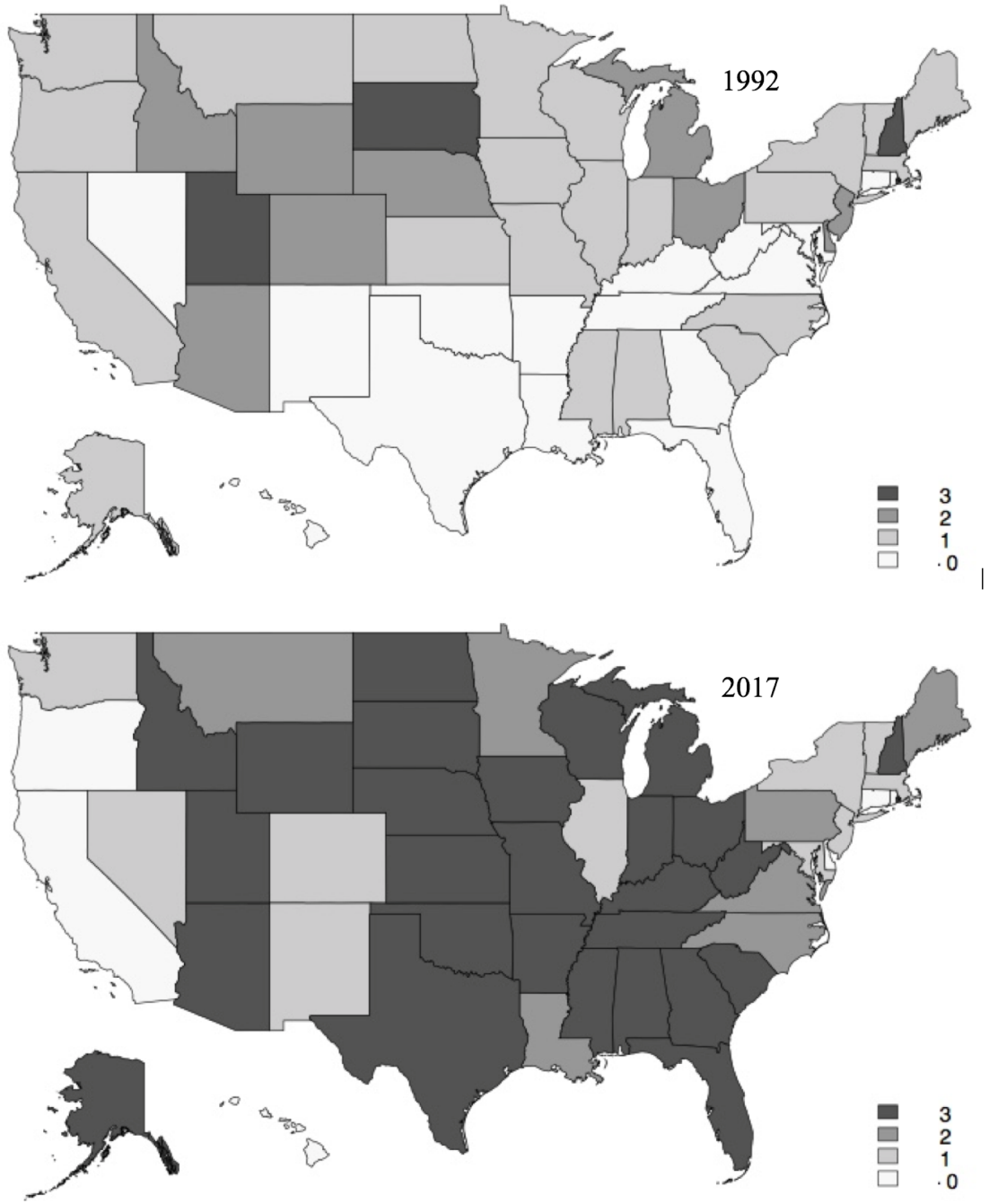
Michigan Political Leadership Program

America Turned Red, 1992-2017

Figure 1: Republican Control of State Legislative Chambers and Governorships, 1992 and 2017



Effects of Increasing Republican Control

Party Control → Policy Outputs → Socio-Economic Effects

Liberal Tendencies and Inherent Limits of Conservatism

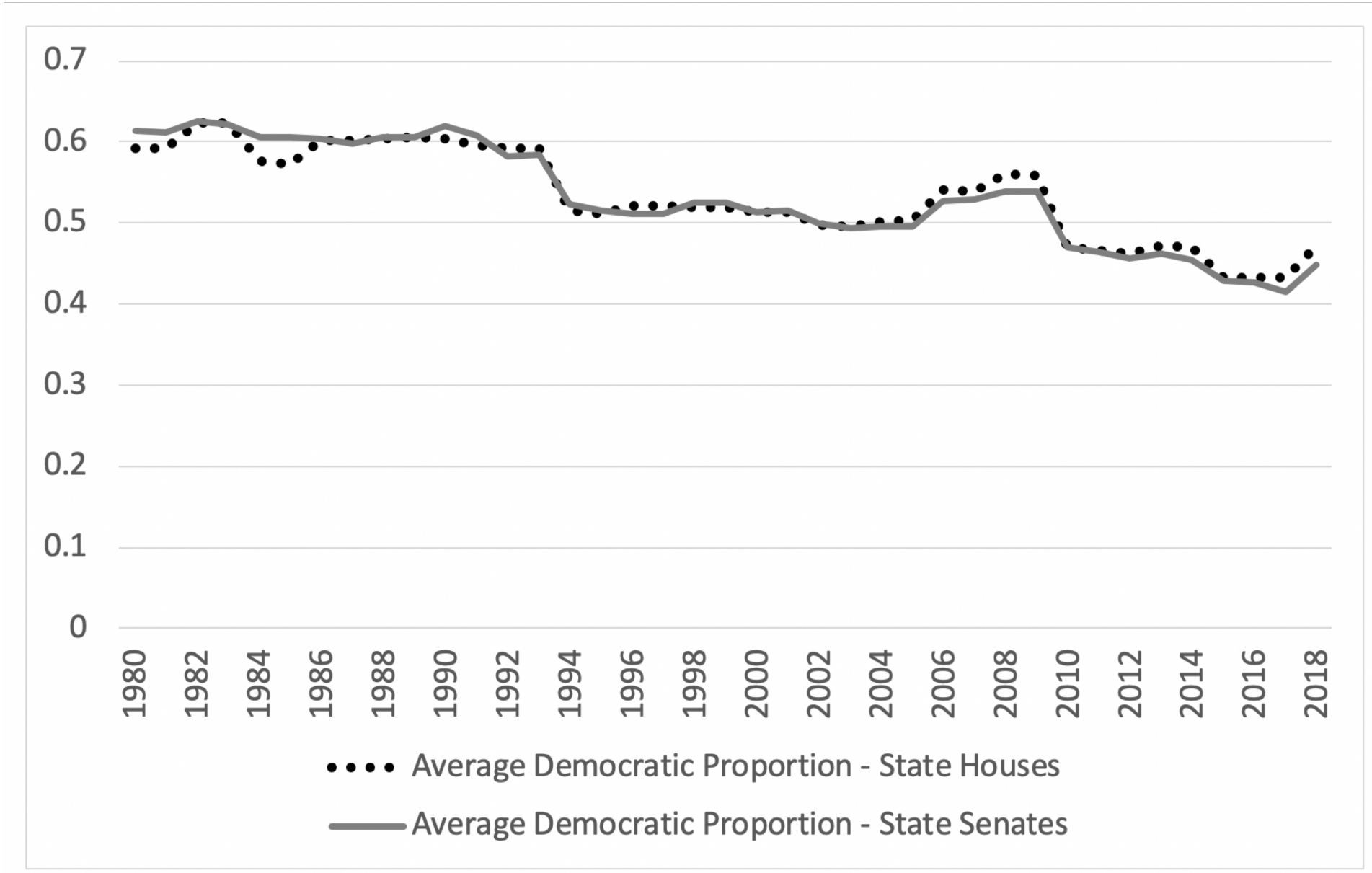
Comparative State Development and Limits of Partisanship

US State Literature: Real Partisan Control Effects, After Long Limited

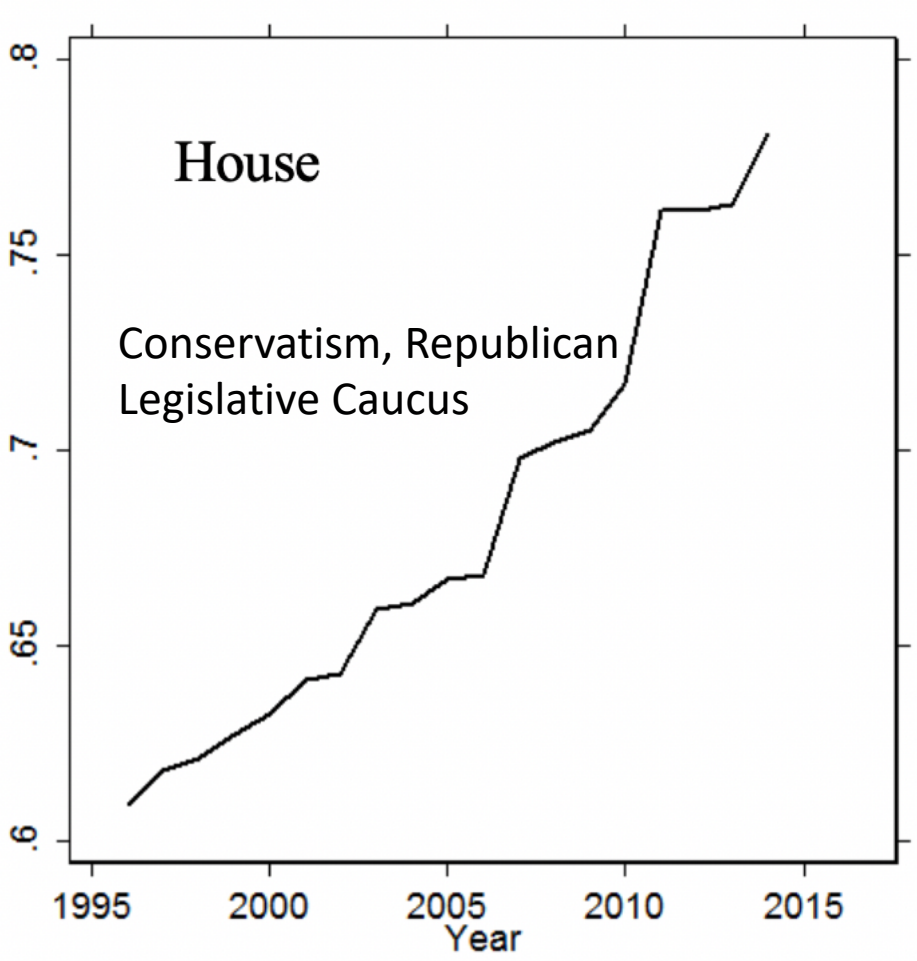
Federal Influence, State Differences, National Trends

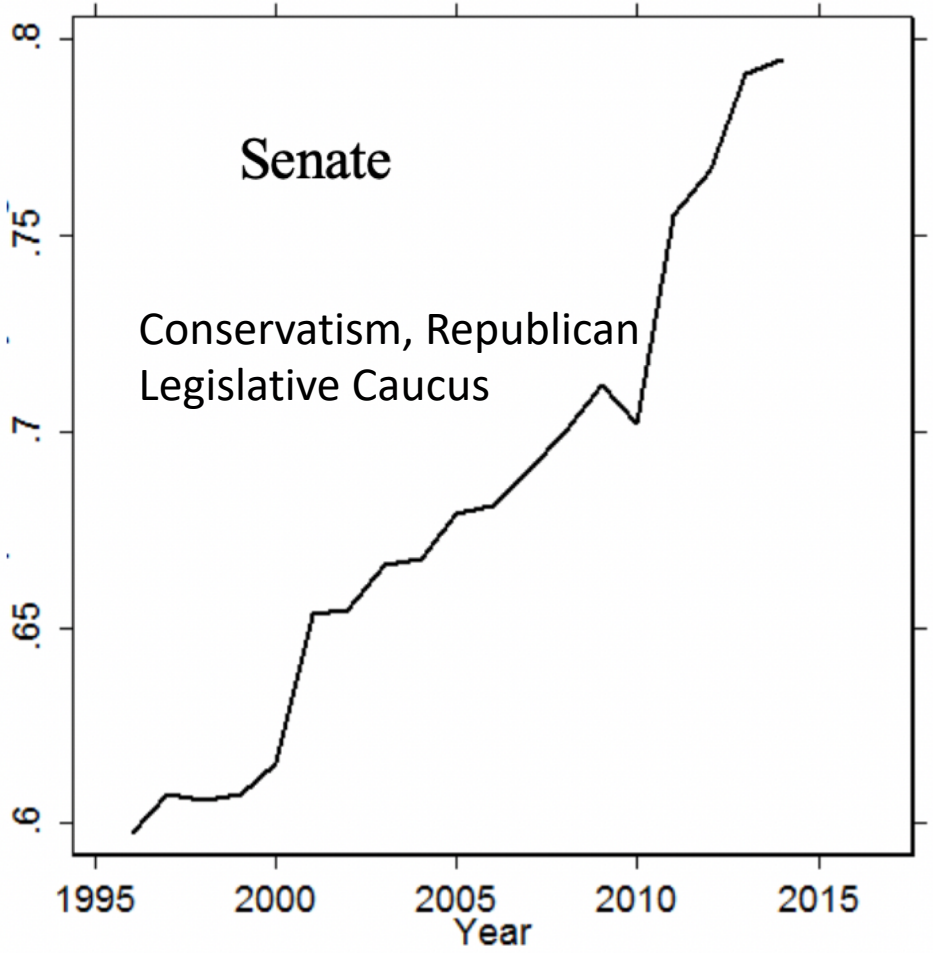
Many Factors Compete with Policy, Most Policy Limited

Declining Democratic Control of Legislatures



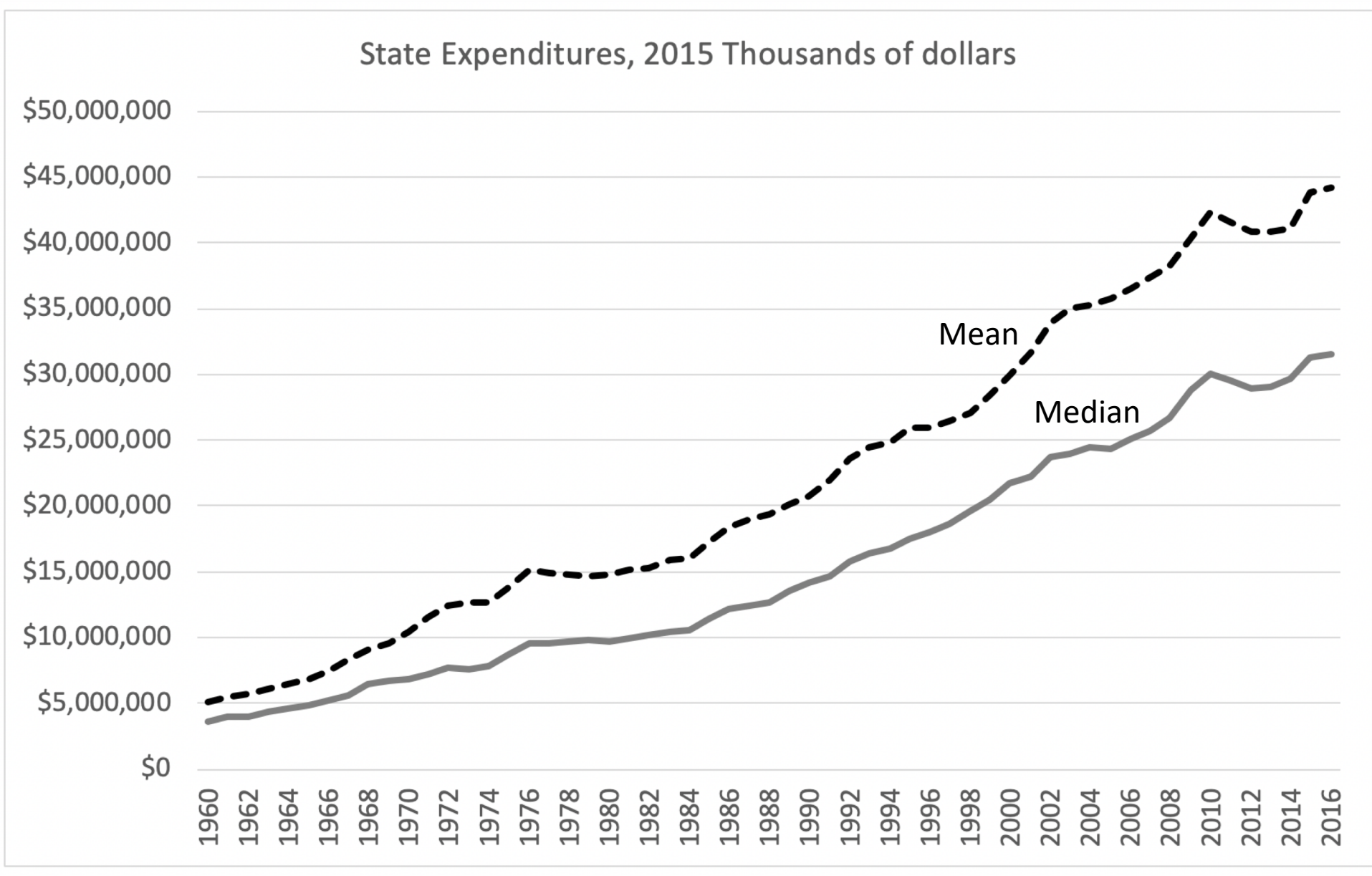
More Conservative State Republican Parties



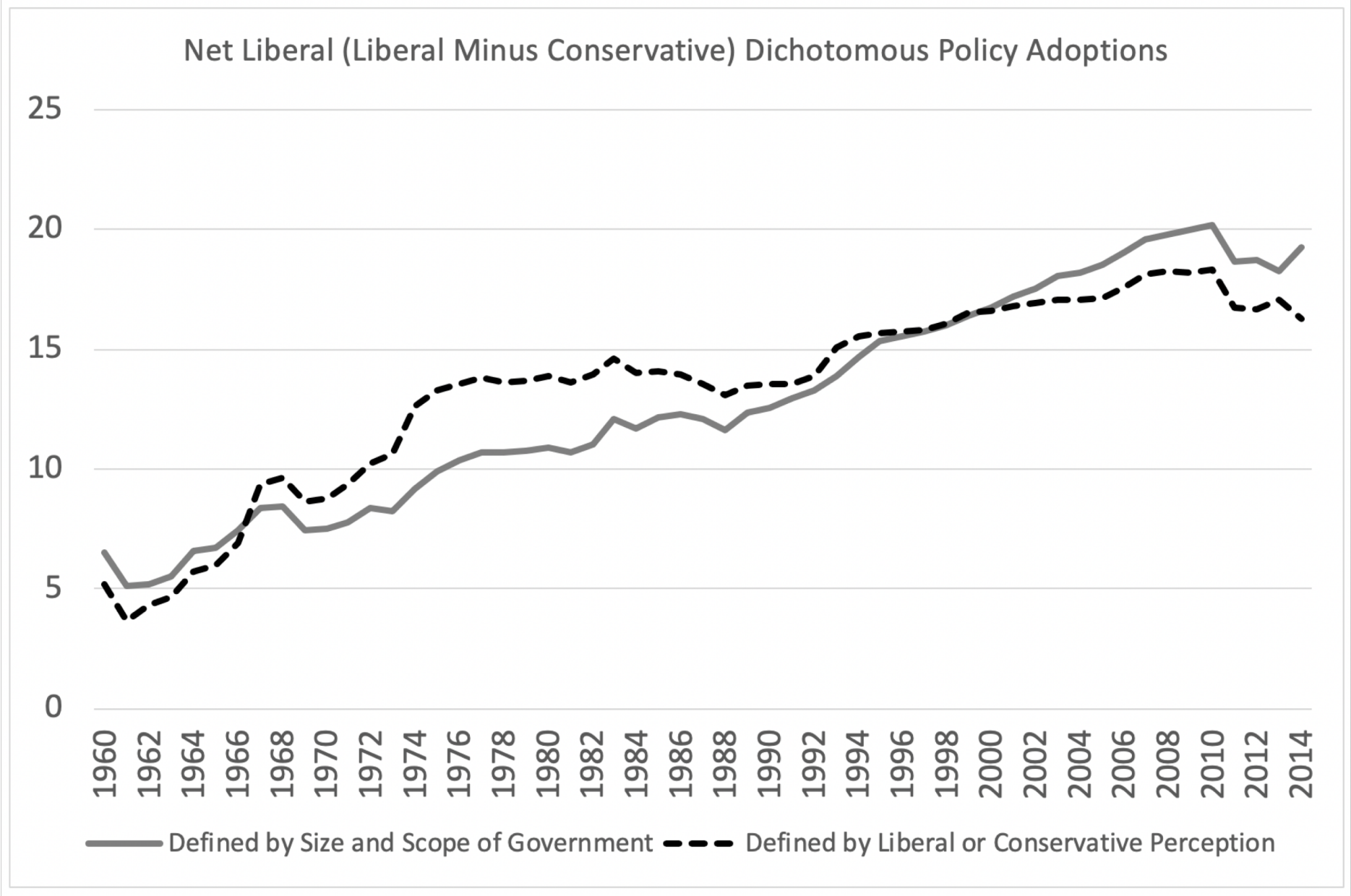


Shor and McCarty, Measuring American Legislatures, americanlegislatures.com

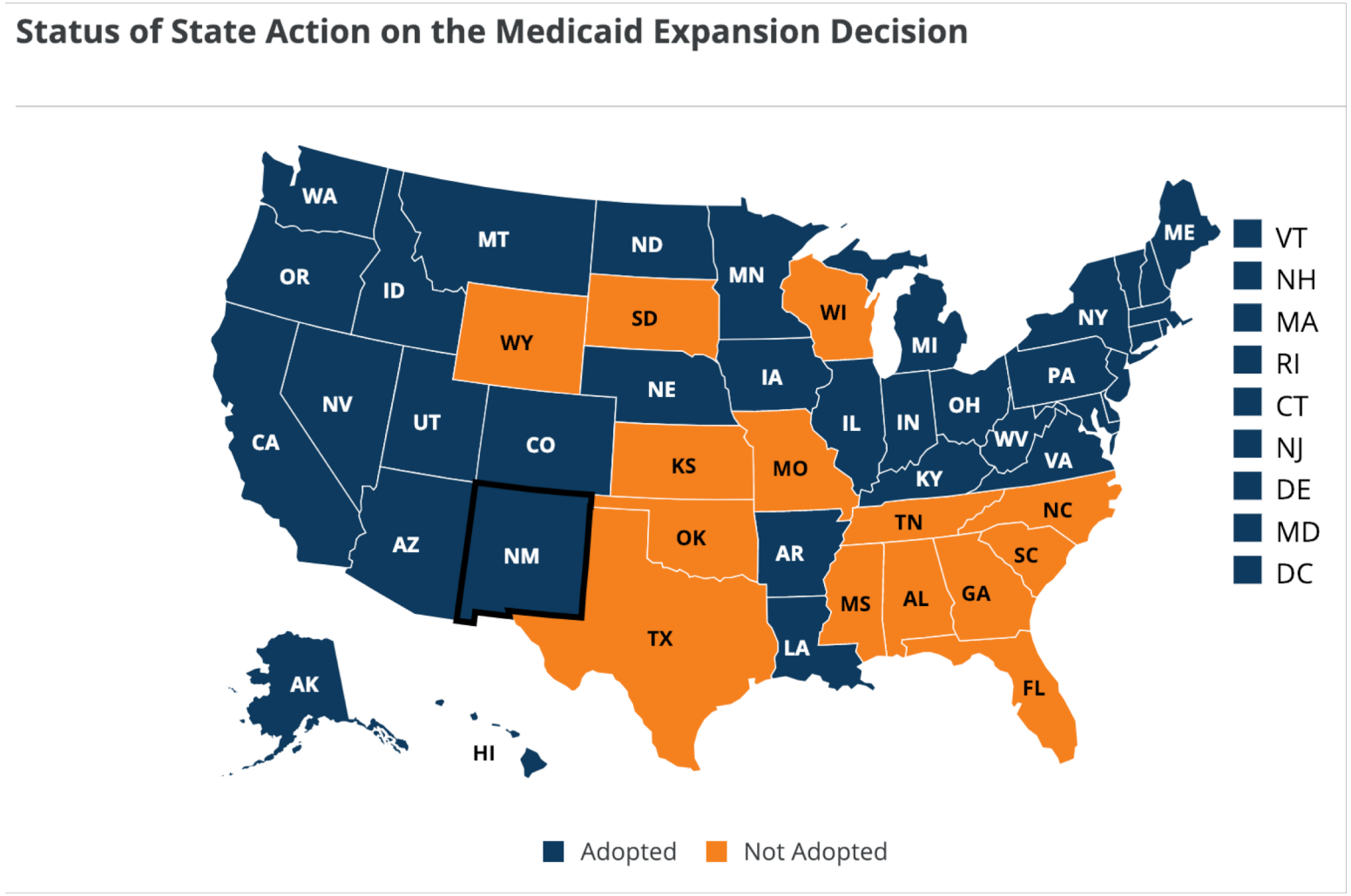
But Not-So-Conservative Policy Results



Not-So-Conservative Policy Adoptions

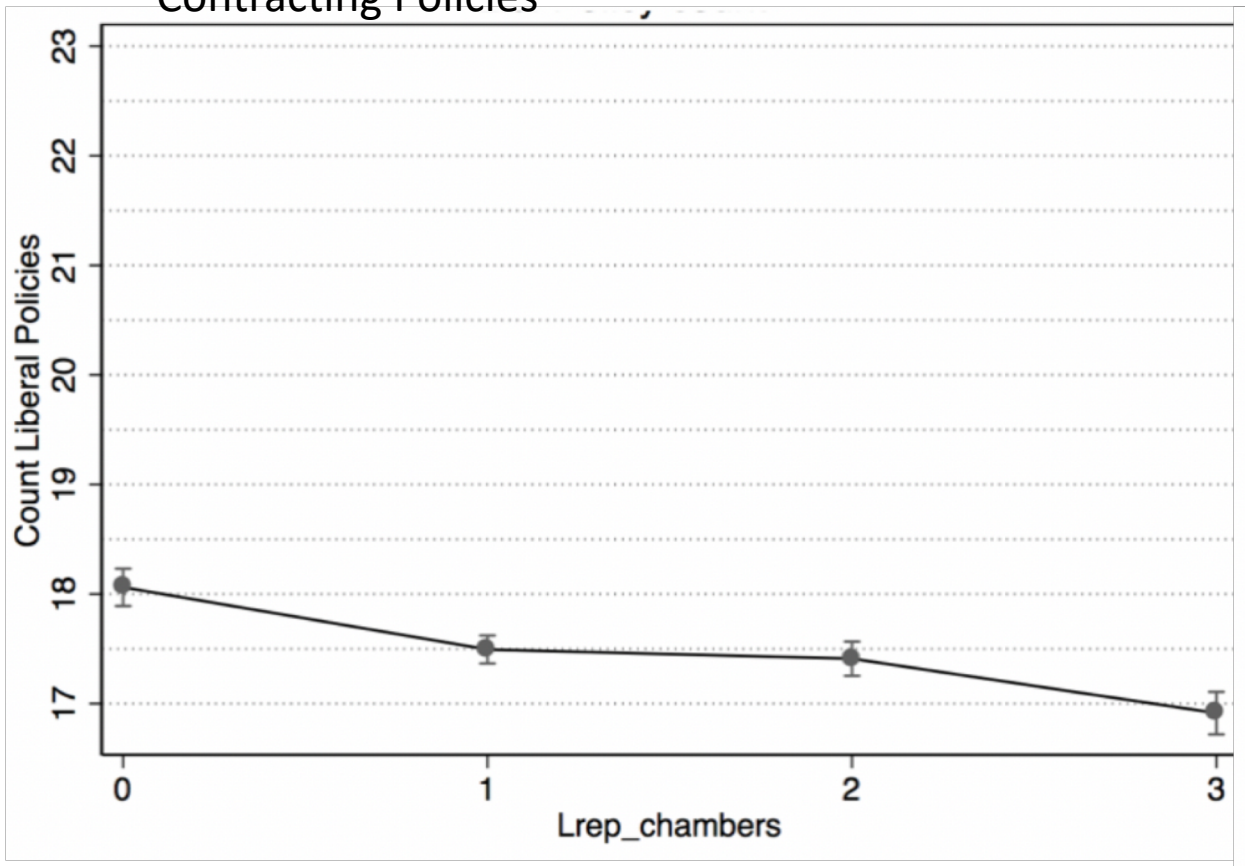


Results, But Not Conservative Trends



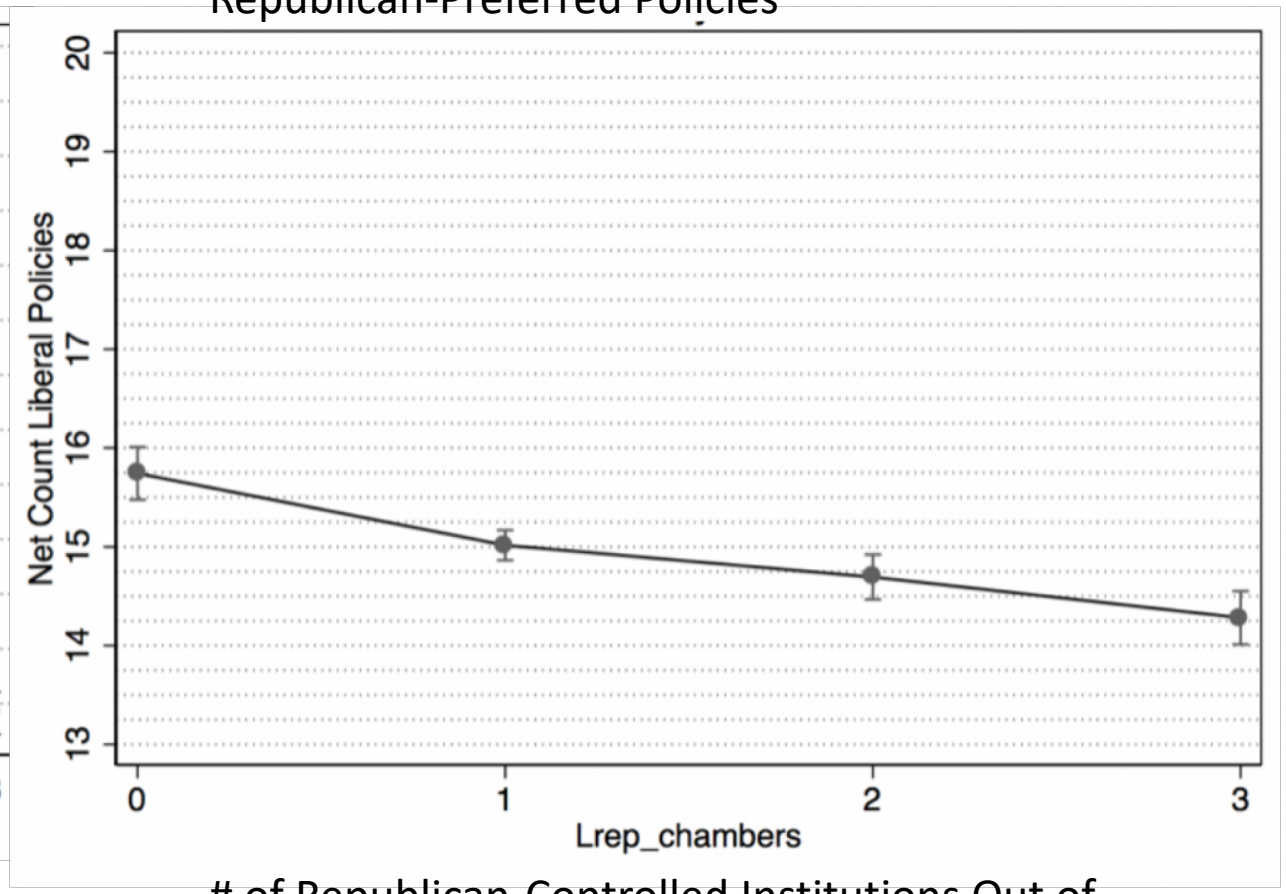
Partisan Influence on Net Conservative Policies

Net Government Expanding Minus Government Contracting Policies



# of Republican-Controlled Institutions Out of Three: House, Senate, and Governorship

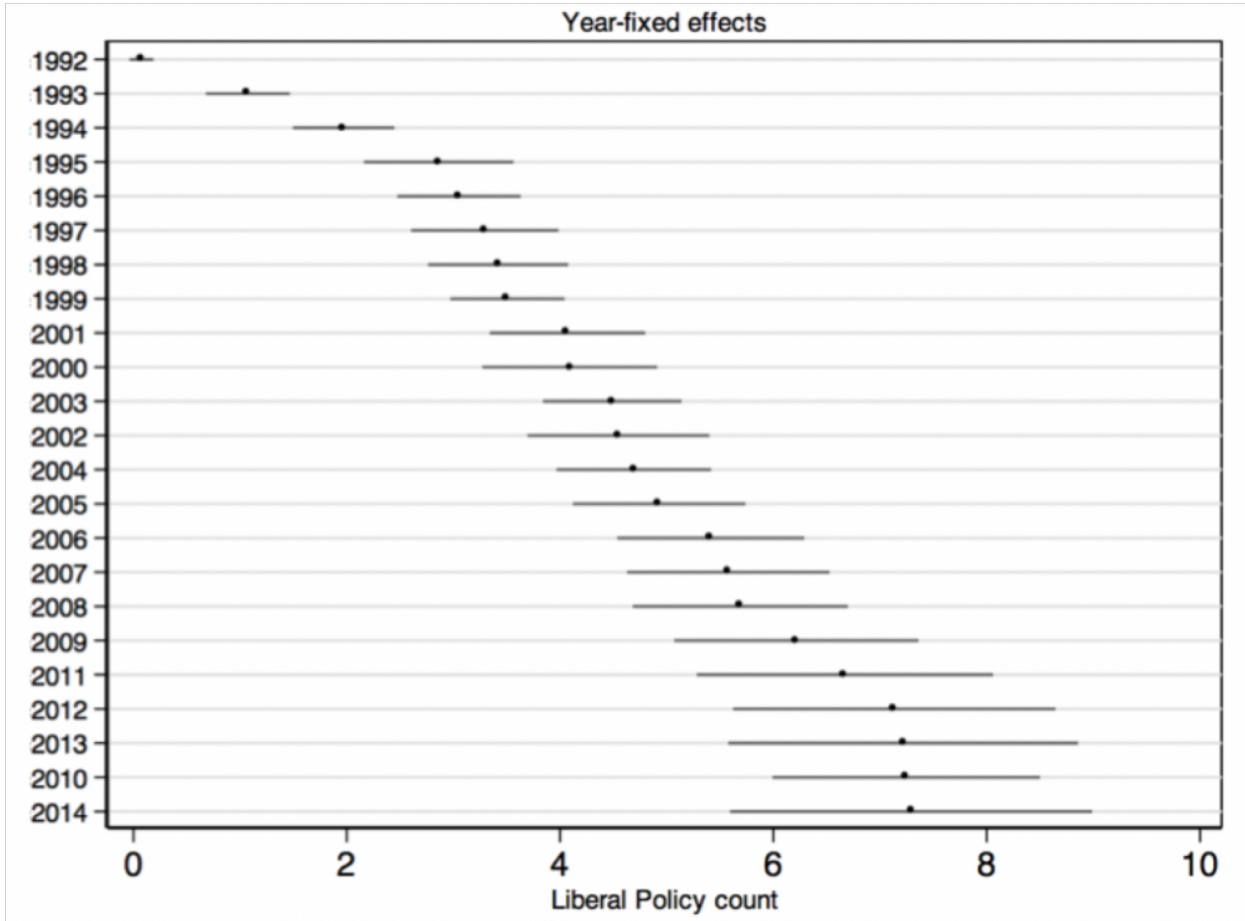
Net Democratic-Preferred Policies Minus Republican-Preferred Policies



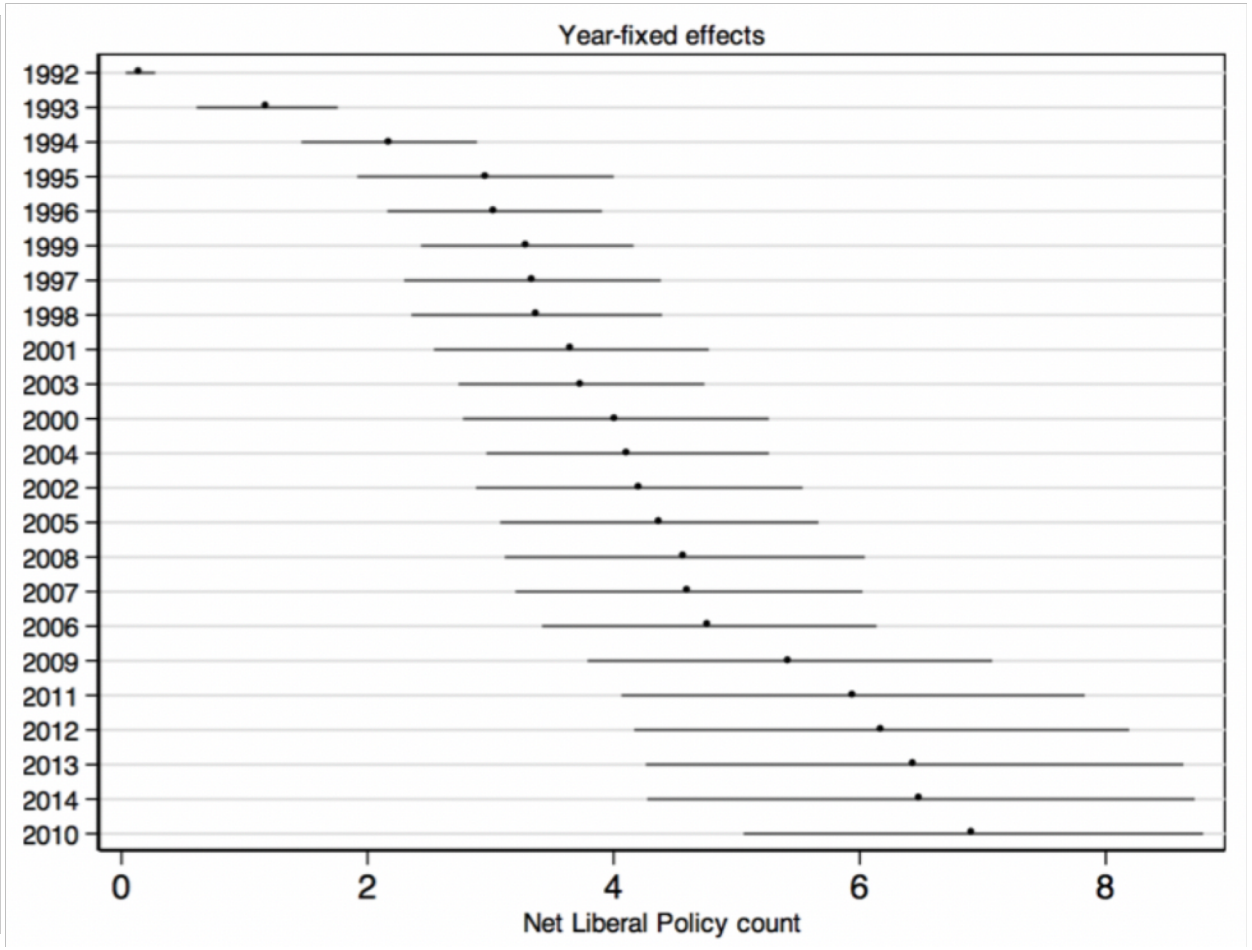
# of Republican-Controlled Institutions Out of Three: House, Senate, and Governorship

Temporal Trends Still Favor Liberalism

Net Government Expanding Minus Government Contracting Policies

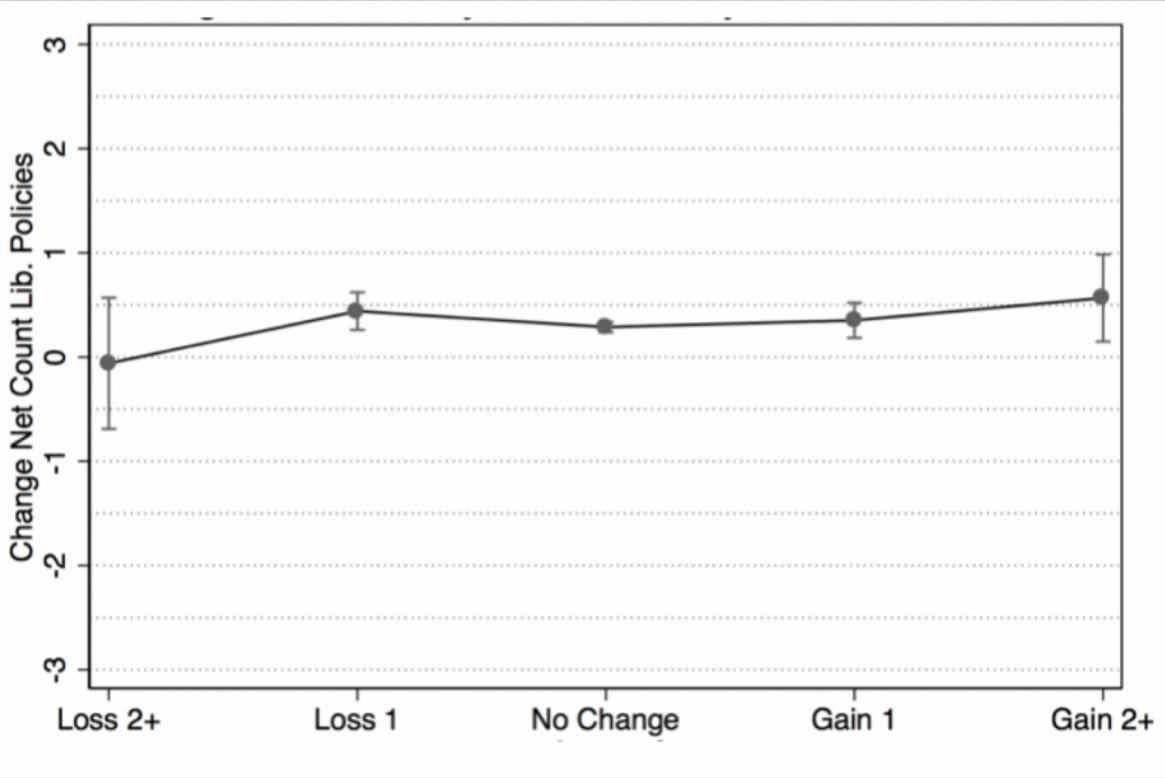


Net Democratic-Preferred Policies Minus Republican-Preferred Policies



No Immediate Change after Republican Victory

Net Government Expanding Minus Government Contracting Policies



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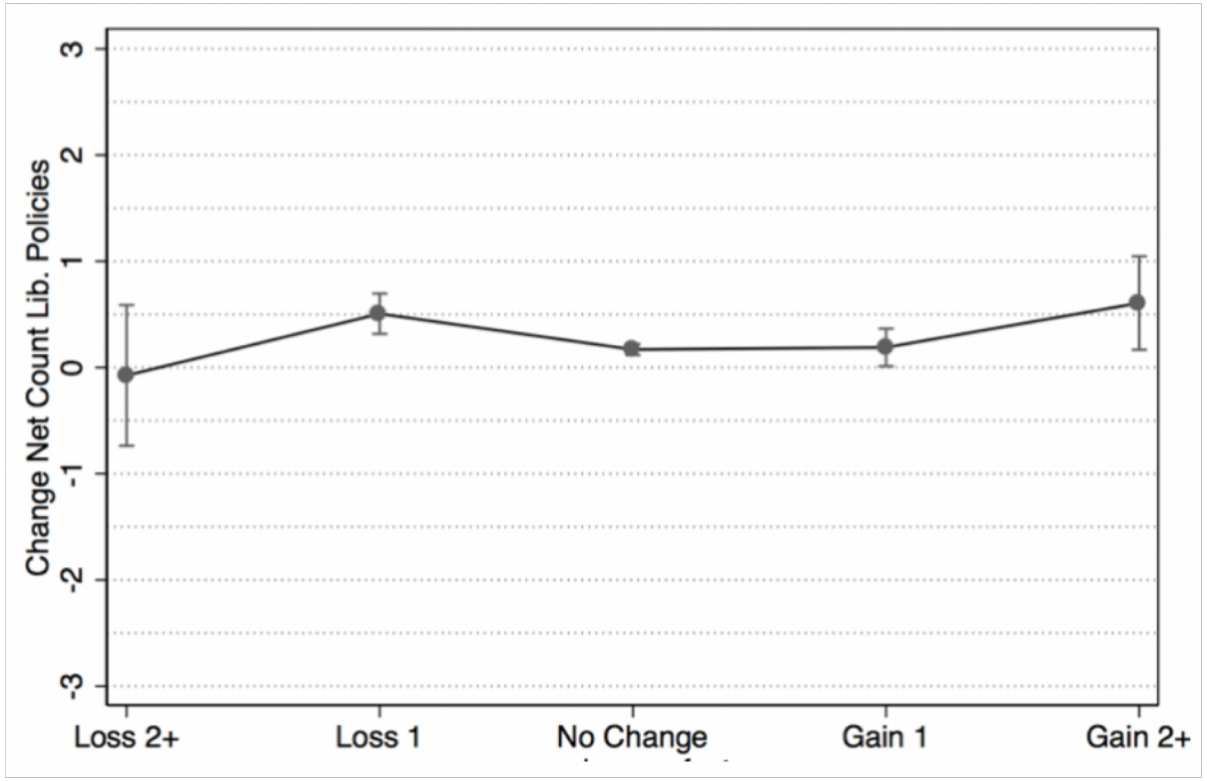
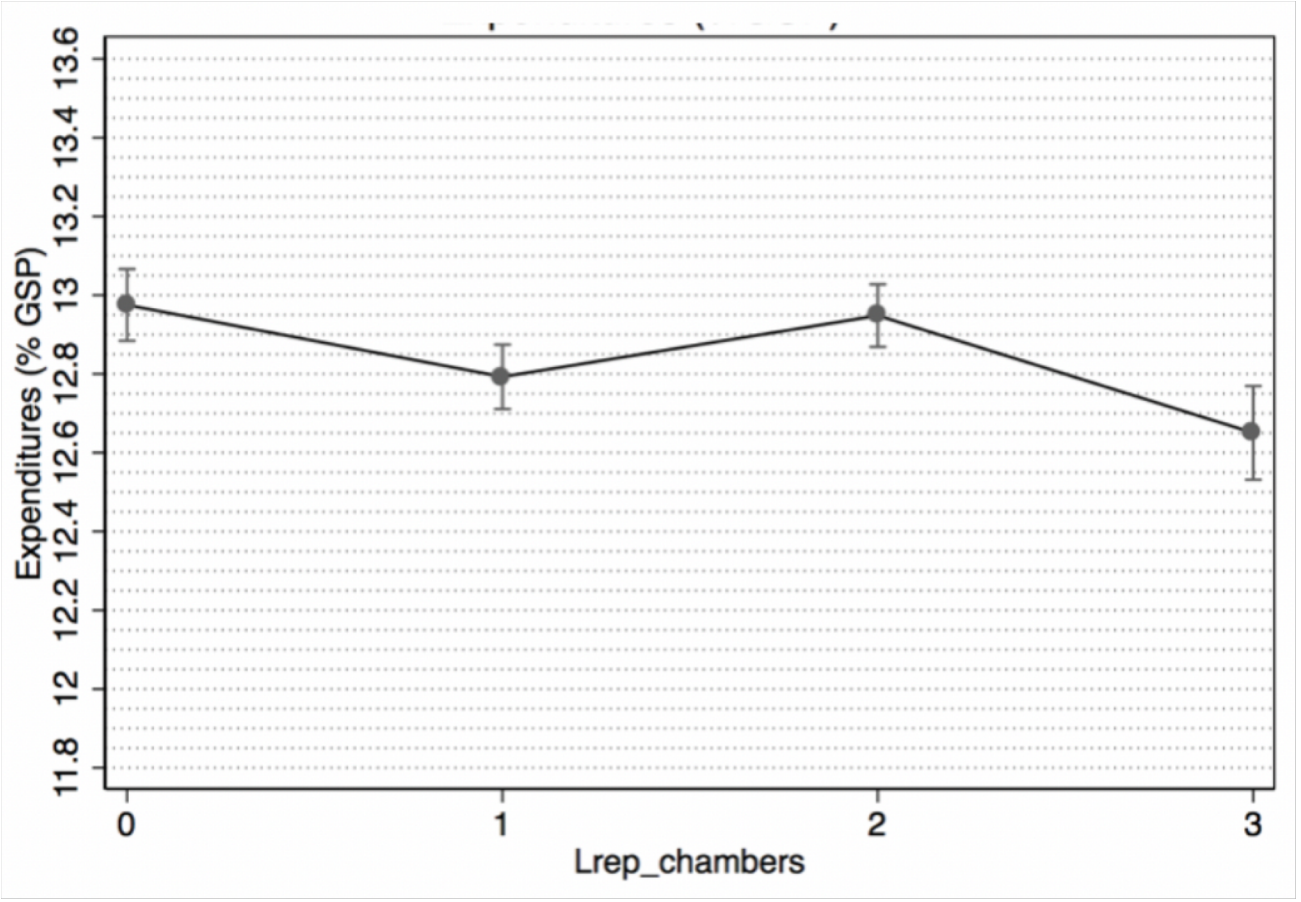
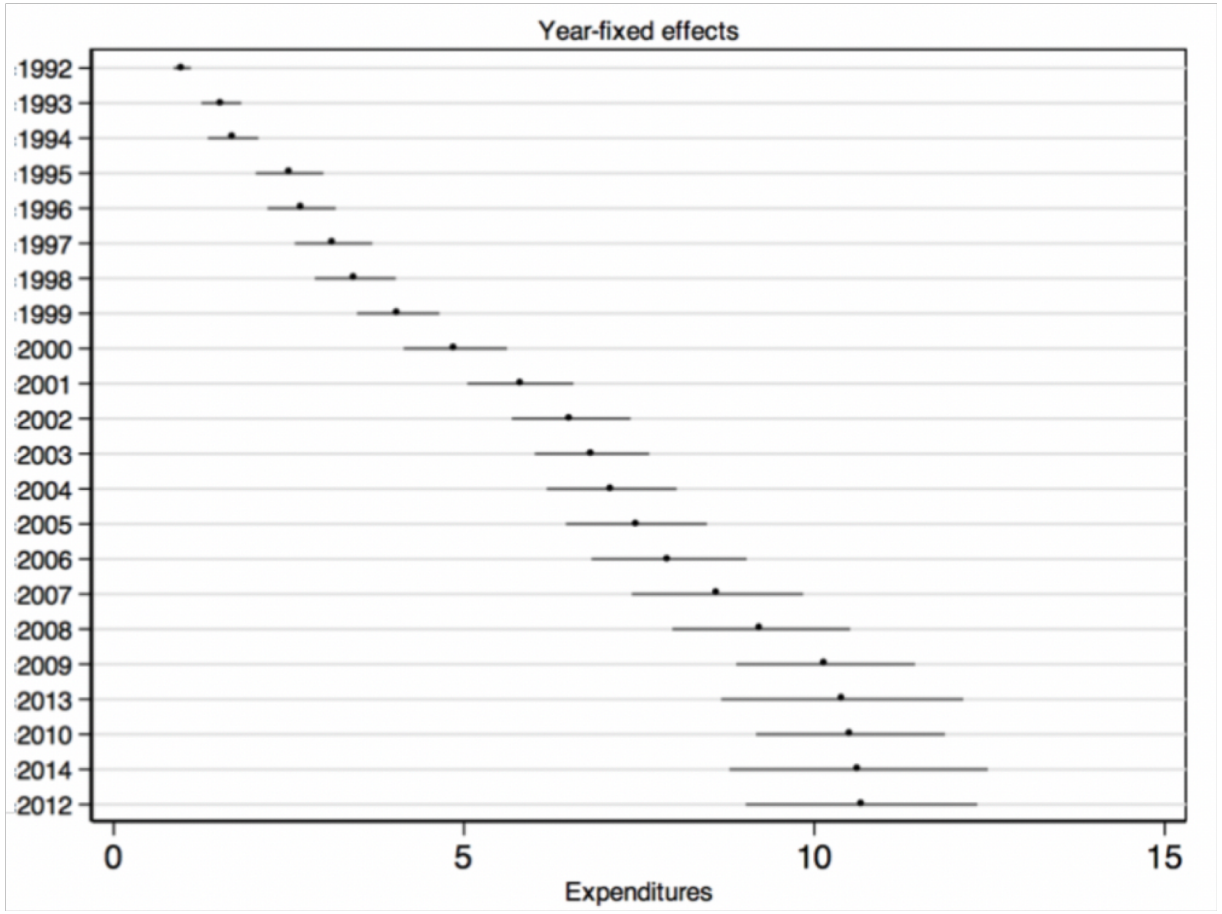
Net Democratic-Preferred Policies Minus Republican-Preferred Policies



# of Republican-Controlled Institutions Out of Three: House, Senate, and Governorship

Government as a % of State Economy

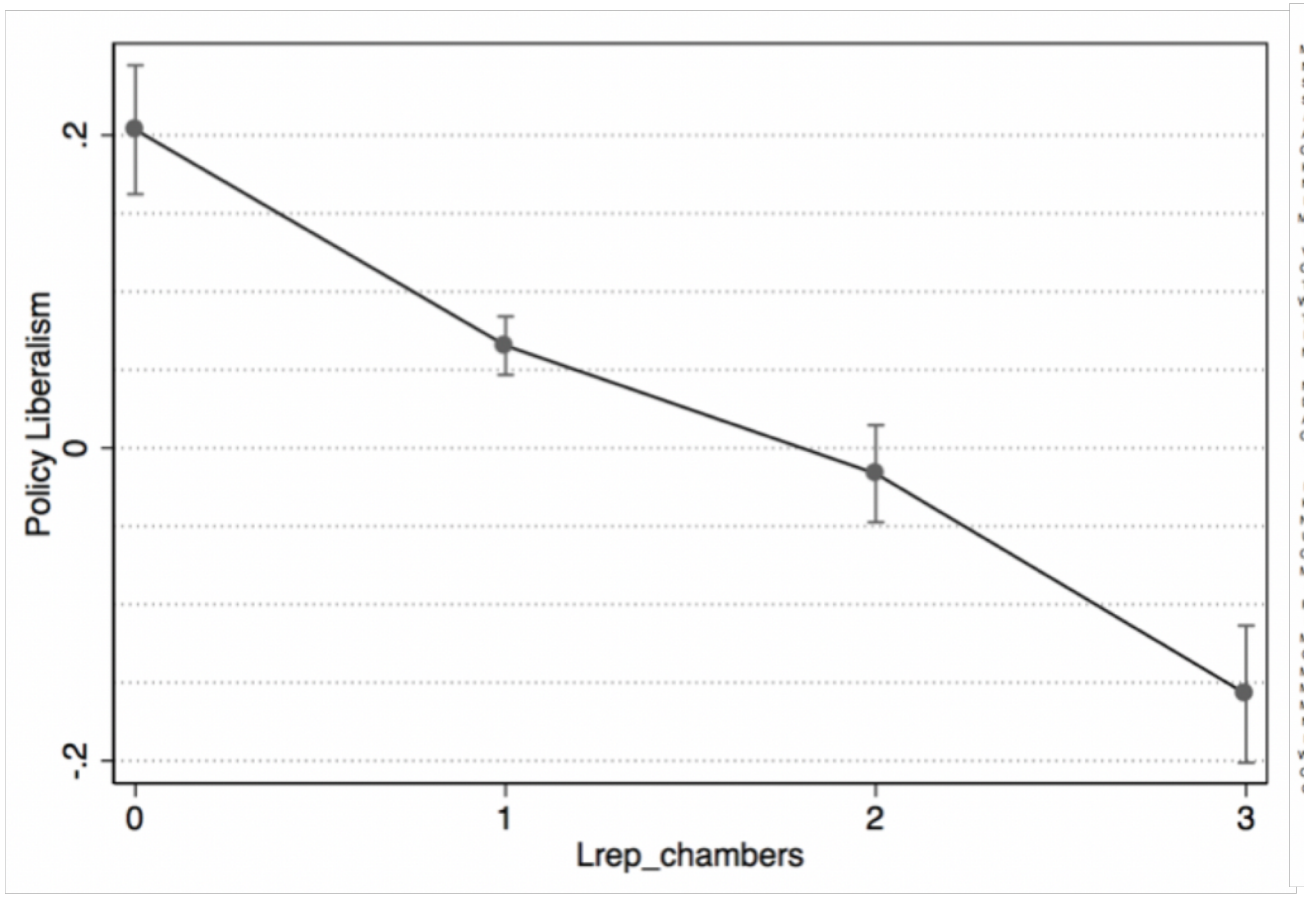




# of Republican-Controlled Institutions Out of Three: House, Senate, and Governorship

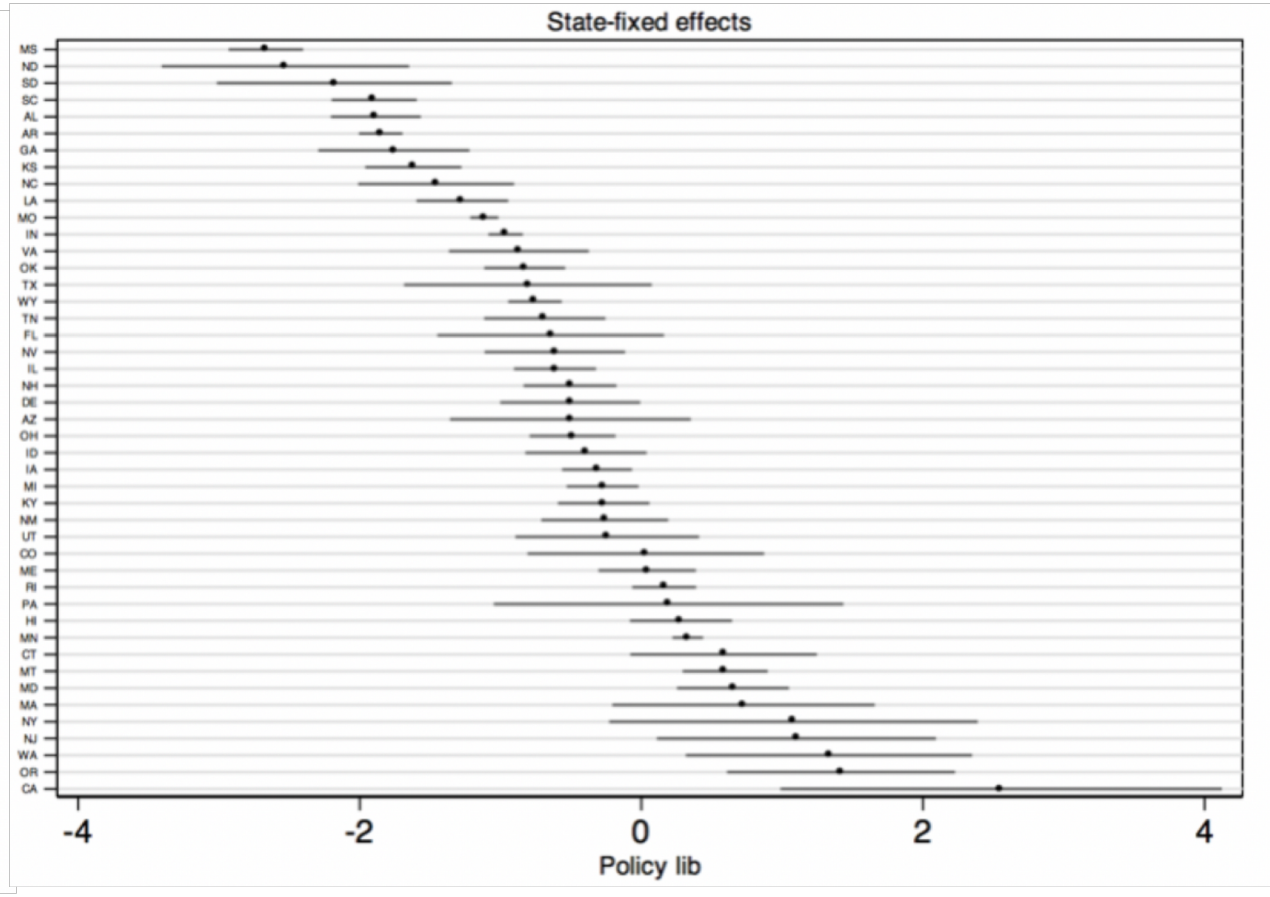
Explains Some Relative Policy Liberalism

Explains 0.4 on Caughey & Warshaw Scale



# of Republican-Controlled Institutions Out of Three: House, Senate, and Governorship

But State Fixed Effects Have a Range of 5



Grumbach Policy-Specific Absolute Measures

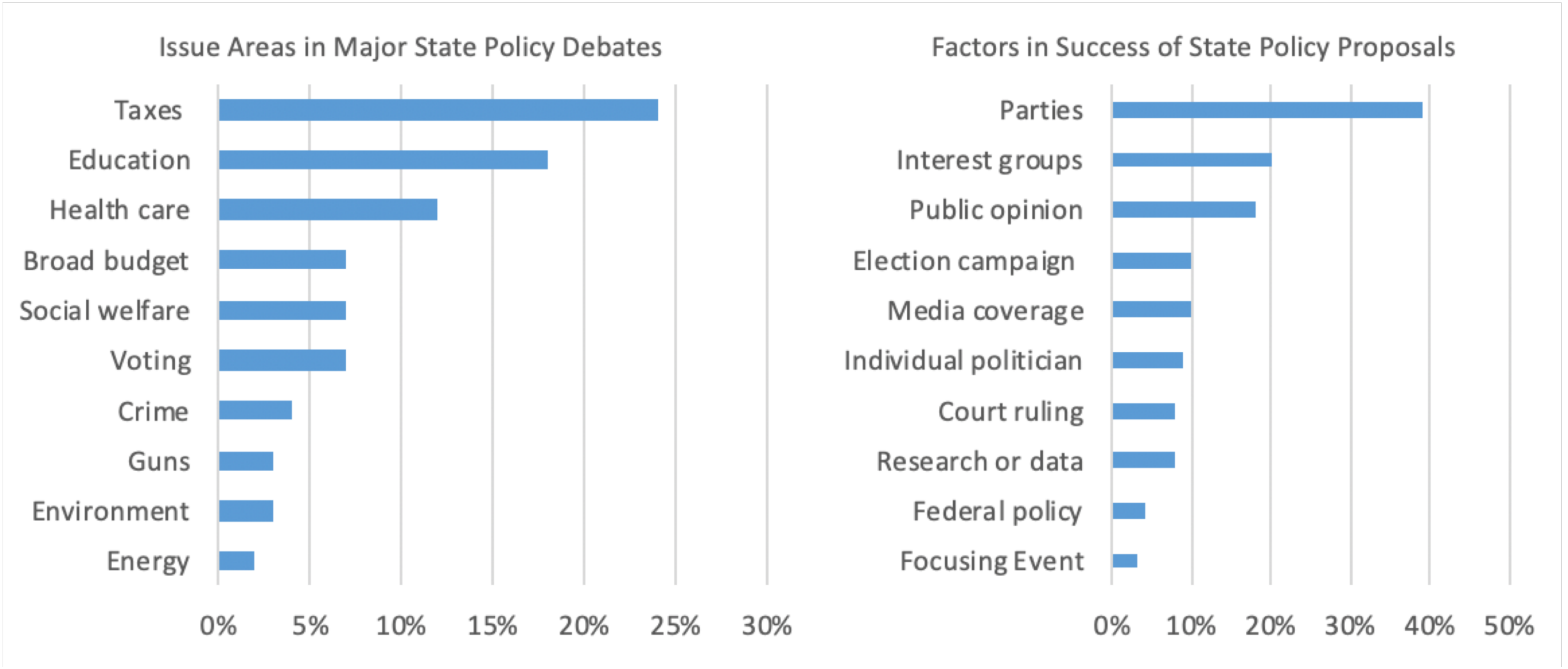
States Moving Leftward:
Campaign Finance, Civil Rights, Environment, Health, LGBT, Drugs, Taxes, Voting

States Polarizing:
Abortion, Guns, Immigration, Labor

States Moving Rightward:
Education

No Move:
Criminal Justice, Housing

Major Policy Proposals in Qualitative Histories



Local Perspectives on Republican Agendas

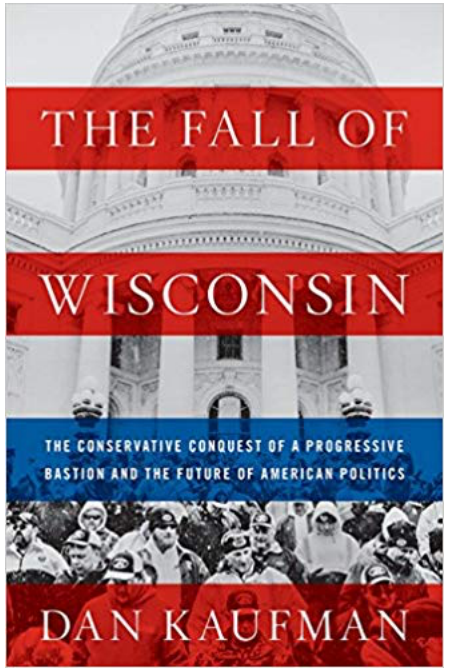
We are a state that doesn't like fast change… We prefer to wait for others to act and don't mind if we're late.

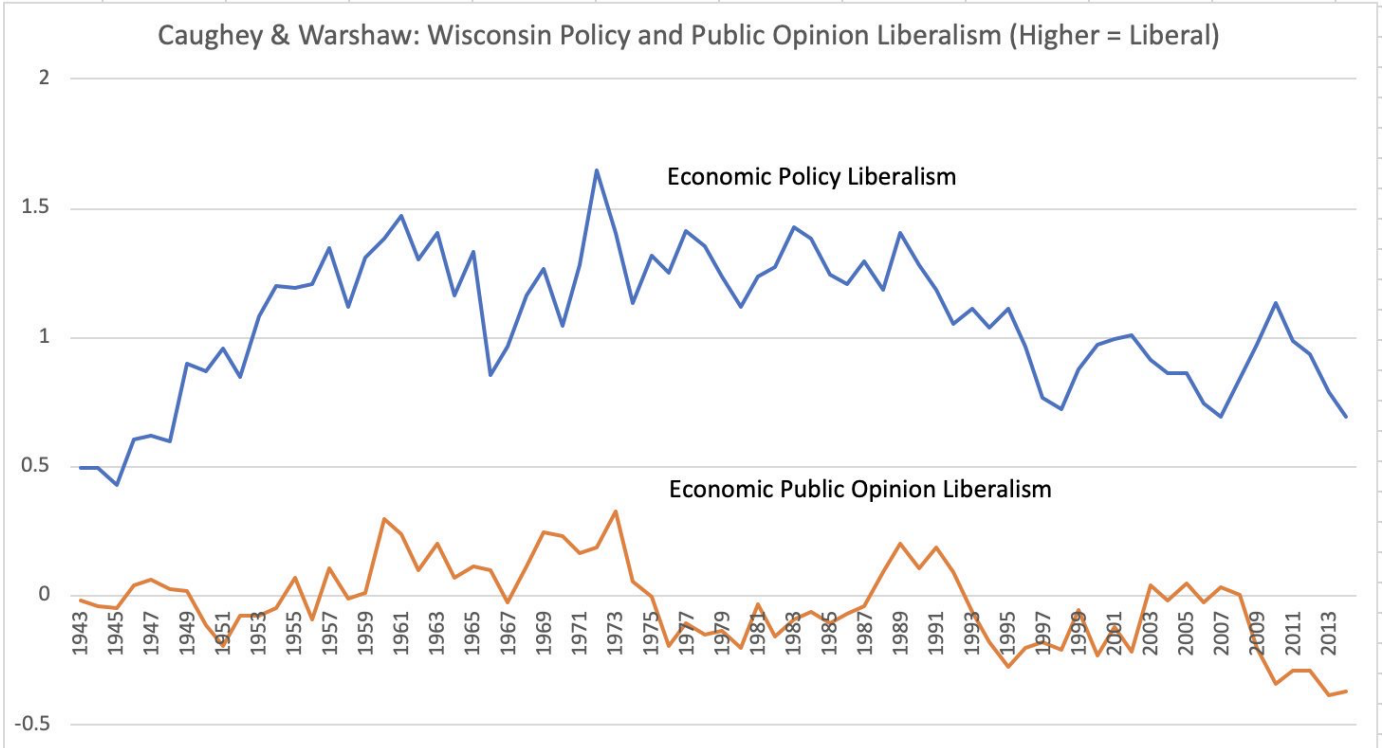
They keep government lean but are not willing to strike out for big new programs or changes….there's an attitude of 'who cares what other states are doing'

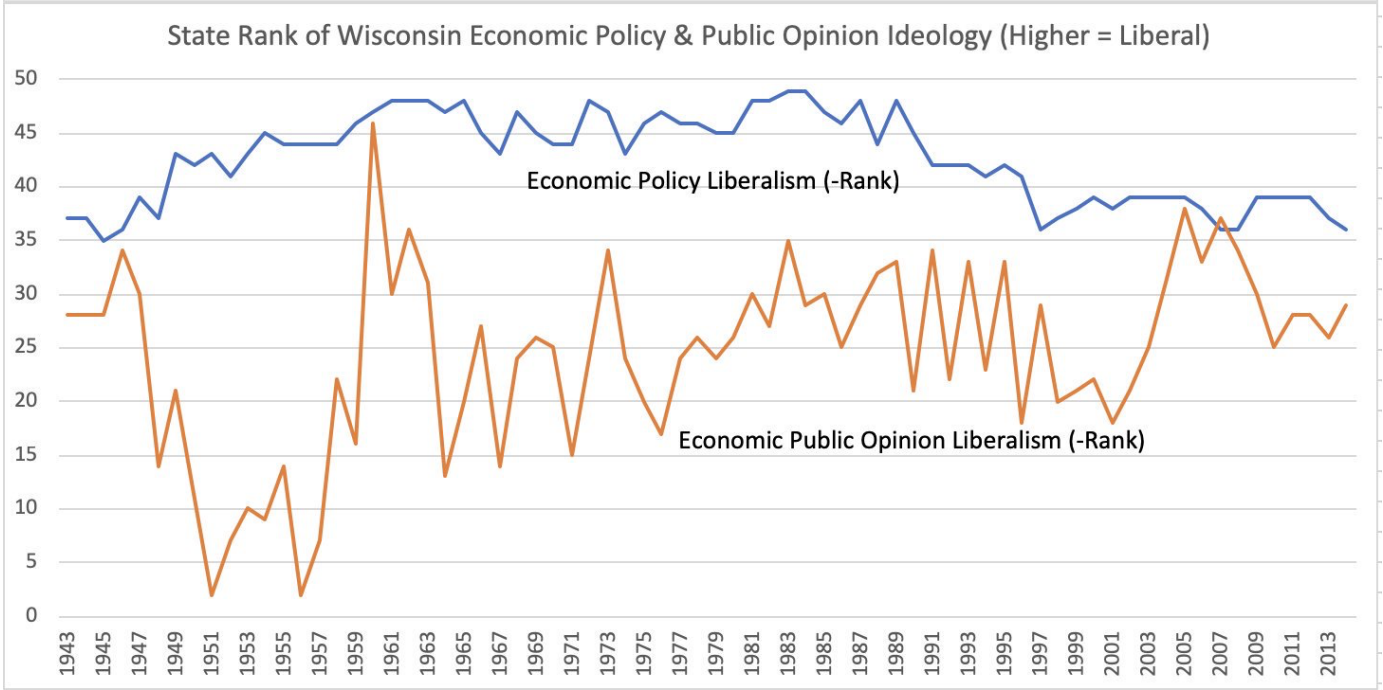
The governor hasn't rolled out any major plans… Her whole platform was 'steady the ship of state.' [The legislature seems to] work on a few things a year, work on them slowly, and see what happens.

There hasn't been a monumental change. The Democrats who had been in charge were conservative. In some cases, like criminal justice, conservative government has led to less conservative policies.

The Fall of Wisconsin?







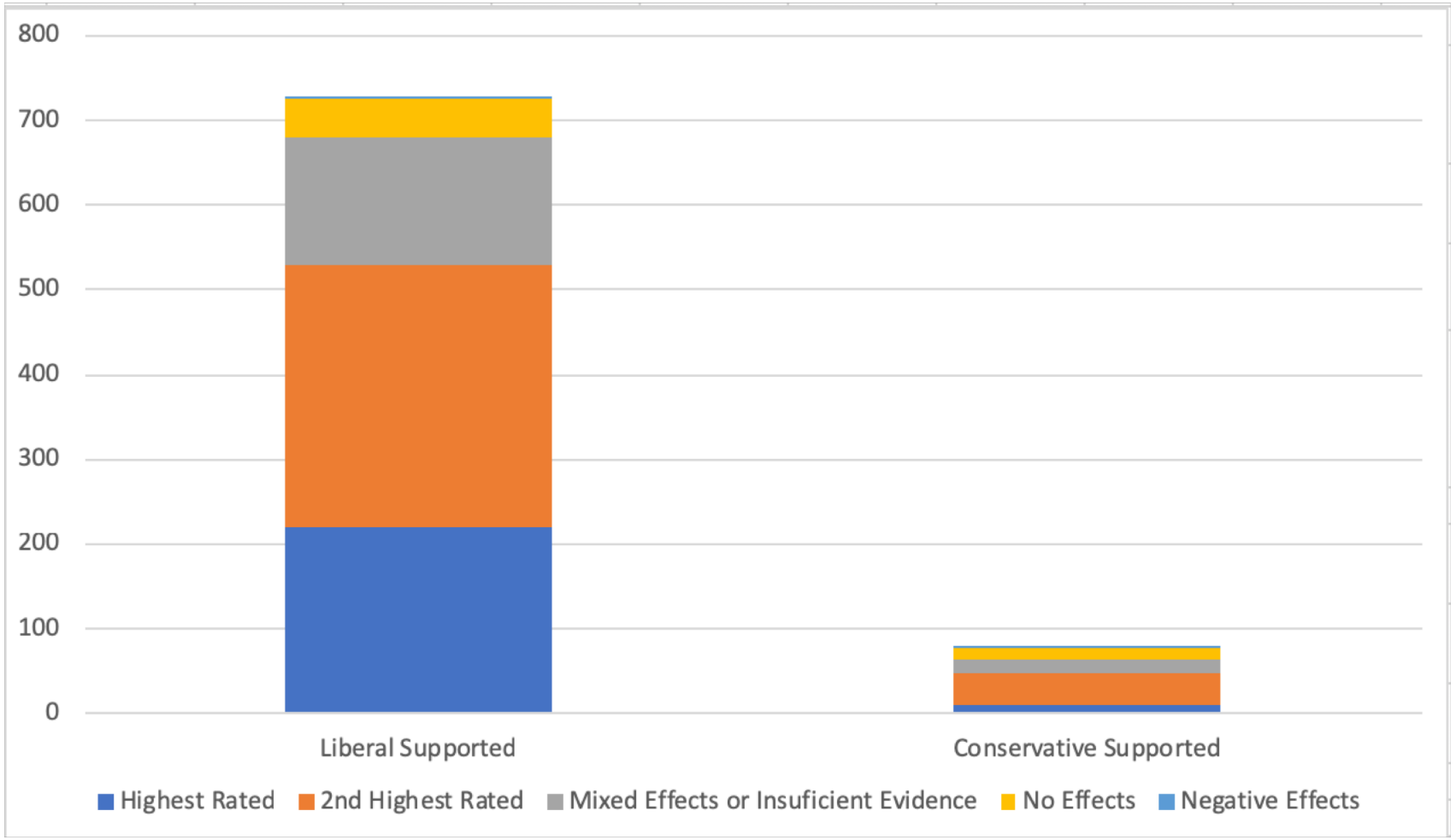
Policy Evaluations of Proximate Outcomes

	Right-to-Work	Welfare Reform	Gun Access	Abortion Restriction	Income Tax Cuts
Clear Link		welfare rolls, recipient jobs & poverty	gun suicides	clinic closure, abortion travel	income growth
Mixed, Conflicted, or Minimal	*Unionization, worker injuries*	*income*	*child gun injuries, gun homicides, gun hospitalizations*	*abortions, timing, contraception*	
No Link					employment

Policy Evaluations of Broader Outcomes

	Right-to-Work	Welfare Reform	Gun Access	Abortion Restriction	Income Tax Cuts
Clear Link	Democratic vote, self-employment				
Mixed, Conflicted, or Minimal	*wages, manufacturing, employment, firm growth, inequality, business*	*poverty rate, college, labor supply*	*robbery, assaults, crime*	*child death, injuries*	*firm growth, economic growth*
No Link	home ownership	marriage, fertility, food consumption	non-firearm homicides		

Few Evidence-Based Policies are Conservative



Outcomes of Partisan Governance

	Association with Democratic Control
Voter Turnout	-
Felons Ineligible to Vote	0
Violent Crime Rate	+
Robbery Rate	0
Rape Rate	0
Property Crime Rate	+
Murder Rate	+
Car Theft Rate	+
Value Added by Agriculture	0
Unemployment rate	+
Top 1% Share of Income	-
Top 0.1% Share of Income	-
Consumer Price Index	-
Real Per Capita Income	-
Population Growth	0
Housing Price Index	-
Gross State Product Per Capita	-
High School Graduation Rate	-
School Attendance Rate	+
Residential Sector Energy Price	0
CO2 emissions	0
Commercial Energy Consumed	+
New Green Card Holders	0
Health Spending Per Capita	0
Divorce Rate	+
Birth Rate	-
Abortion Rate	+

From Holbein and Dynes (2018). + and - indicate positive or negat
control of state government. Zeros indicate no statistically significa

Outcomes of Partisan Governance

	Association with Democratic Control	Difference-in-Differences Causal Estimate	Regression Discontinuity Causal Estimate
Voter Turnout	-	0	0
Felons Ineligible to Vote	0	0	0
Violent Crime Rate	+	0	0
Robbery Rate	0	0	0
Rape Rate	0	0	0
Property Crime Rate	+	0	0
Murder Rate	+	0	0
Car Theft Rate	+	0	0
Value Added by Agriculture	0	0	0
Unemployment rate	+	0	0
Top 1% Share of Income	-	0	0
Top 0.1% Share of Income	-	0	0
Consumer Price Index	-	0	0
Real Per Capita Income	-	0	0
Population Growth	0	0	0
Housing Price Index	-	0	0
Gross State Product Per Capita	-	0	0
High School Graduation Rate	-	0	0
School Attendance Rate	+	0	0
Residential Sector Energy Price	0	0	0
CO2 emissions	0	0	0
Commercial Energy Consumed	+	0	0
New Green Card Holders	0	0	0
Health Spending Per Capita	0	0	0
Divorce Rate	+	0	0
Birth Rate	-	0	0
Abortion Rate	+	0	0

From Holbein and Dynes (2018). + and - indicate positive or negative relationships with full Democratic control of state government. Zeros indicate no statistically significant relationship.

ALEC Takeover?

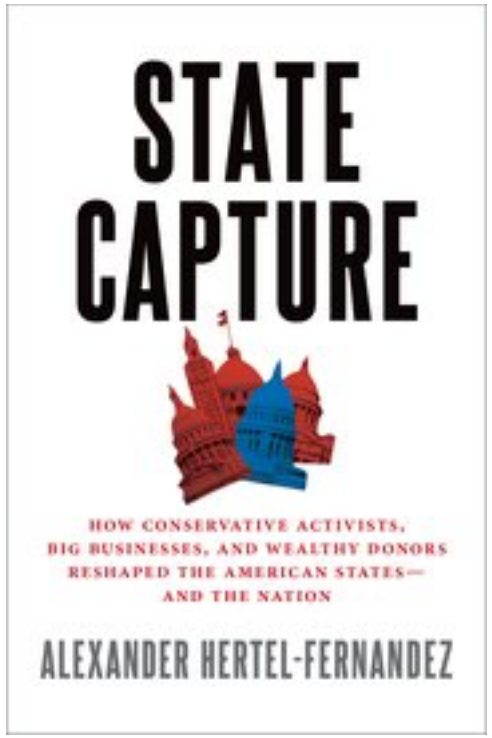
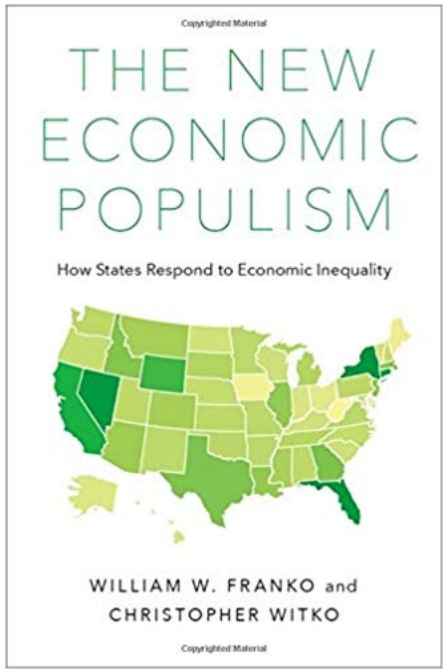


Table 2.3. **Top ALEC Bills Enacted, 1995–2013.**[a]

ALEC Bill	*Enactments*
ALEC Education Reform Package	314
Taking the Best: ALEC's Comprehensive Medical Liability Reform Proposal	178
Long-Term Care Insurance Act	56
High-Risk Health Insurance Pool Model Act	49
Resolution Urging the Obama Administration to Launch Negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement with Taiwan	42
College Savings Account Act	41
Resolution to Restate State Sovereignty	27
Resolution Calling for a Federal Balanced Budget Amendment	23
Rescission External Review Act	20
State Responses to Kyoto Climate Change Protocol	18
Vulnerable Adults Act	17
Resolution in Favor of a US Constitutional Amendment on Judicial Taxation	16
Expanded Consumer Choice in Financial Services Act	16
Resolution on Disease Management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	16
The A-Plus Literacy Act	16

Democratic Road Forward



New Wins, Bold Agendas… But Still Taking Half Measures

Lots of Lost Electoral Ground Not Easy to Win Back

Conclusions

Party Control → ? Policy Outputs → ? Socio-Economic Effects

Policy Results:

- Where most party influence, limited results: abortion, guns, immigration
- Where most results, limited party influence: education $, taxes
- Real effects with lots of help: charter schools, criminal justice reform

Implications:

- Limits of conservative governance, stronger for size of government; dilemma
- Electoral results don't depend on policy success, might depend on failure
- No real "Red State" or "Blue State" model for state governance or outcomes

Alternatives: Asking too much, The South, limiting liberalism, electoral gains