

Eric M. Uslaner*

Congressional Polarization and Political Trust

DOI 10.1515/for-2015-0034

Abstract: Americans have become less trusting of their federal government since the late 1950s. Most accounts of trust in government are based upon the performance of the economy. I argue that two additional factors are essential for understanding the sharp fall in trust in government in recent years: the level of partisan polarization in the Congress (as reflected in the ideological distance between the parties on roll calls) and the inability of Congress to enact legislation (gridlock).

Introduction

“Laws are like sausages. It is better not to see them made,” said the 19th century Prussian leader Otto von Bismarck.¹ The law-making process has become increasingly acrimonious in the past several decades as partisan conflicts have become more acrimonious. The most famous rant came in 2009 when Rep. Joe Wilson (R, SC) shouted “You lie” to President Barack Obama who was urging Congress to enact his health care proposal in an address to a joint session of Congress.²

Wilson’s charge was perhaps the most publicized of the acrimony between the parties – on Capitol Hill and in the electorate. Civility – otherwise called “courtesy” – had long been a staple of relations between members of each house and a way to resolve policy disagreements to arrive at compromises on legislation (Matthews 1960; Uslaner 1993, pp. 32–34). Since the early 1980s increasing ideological differences between the parties have led to harsh words between members and less willingness to search for common ground. Leaders used to be personal friends. Sam Rayburn (D, TX) and Joe Martin (R, MA) served as Speaker and Minority Leader in the 1940s and 1950s and were personally very close. Martin and

1 <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/27759.html>.

2 http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0112/71889_Page2.html.

***Corresponding author: Eric M. Uslaner**, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland – College Park, College Park, MD 20742, USA; Senior Research Fellow, Center for American Law and Political Science Southwest University of Political Science and Law Chongqing, China; and Honorary Professor of Political Science, Aarhus University, Denmark, e-mail: euslaner@umd.edu

his wife regularly hosted the bachelor Rayburn for dinner. Democratic Speaker Thomas P. (“Tip”) O’Neill and Republican Minority Leader Bob Michel (R, IL) were golfing buddies (Uslaner 1993, p. 4).

Relations between current leaders John Boehner (R, OH) and Nancy Pelosi (D, CA) have been so tense that a meeting to seek a budget compromise was treated as a major event of unusual importance – much as a summit meeting of the leaders of the US and the old Soviet Union was prior to the fall of Communism (Strong 2013). Senate leaders Mitch McConnell (R, KY) and Harry Reid (D, NV) have each challenged the other’s integrity (Raju and Bresnahan 2013).

The decline of civility in the Congress reflects the increasing polarization in both the Congress and the public. As our language has become more coarse, the ideological distance between Democrats and Republicans has increased, and our leaders have found it difficult to reach agreement on even routine legislation, the public has lost confidence in their political system. During the heyday of civility, 77 percent of Americans believed that “the government in Washington...[could be] trust[ed] to do the right thing.” As late as 1972, after confidence had dropped in the wake of the Vietnam War and riots in major cities, trust in government still stood above 50 percent. In the 1970s just a third of Americans expressed confidence in Washington and by the 1990s barely more than a quarter trusted the federal government. There was a short spike after the September 11, 2001 attacks but this did not last long. Our politics had become much more confrontational and it was difficult to get legislation enacted. By the 2000s the battles in Washington were intensely partisan.

Partisan conflict in Congress stems from growing ideological differentiation between the parties (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006) and the close division of seats (Lee 2009). The ideological gap makes it more difficult to find common ground on issues of policy. The tight partisan divide means that any policy victory could lead to a change in control of the House or the Senate. The widening gulf between the parties makes reconciliation on policy difficult. Even as the parties hold almost equal numbers of seats in each chamber, individual districts are increasingly safe for one party, with just 35 competitive House districts in 2012 compared to 103 a decade earlier (Silver 2012).

These deep divisions are reflected in a polarized electorate: Ideology is more strongly related to party voting for both President and Congress. The linkage between ideology and party voting for Congress increased dramatically from 1968 to 2012: In the former year, 60 percent of Democrats and 40 percent of Republicans cast Democratic ballots for House candidates. By 2012, 90 percent of Democrats and 20 percent of Republicans voted for Democrats in House contests (Jacobson 2013, p. 695). The parties are sorted not only by ideology, but by race, religion and religiosity, region, age, and income. The coalitions of each party have become

more distinctive. Identifiers with each party now see the other party as threats to their own cultures (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Mason 2013; Hetherington and Rudolph 2014). They see the policies of the opposition as illegitimate. While there has always been a partisan division on trust in government (Anderson et al. 2005), the increasing polarization divides people even more on confidence in the state.

Lippincott (2012) presents the linkage between polarization and the decline of trust in government:

We face persistently low growth and high joblessness, historically high debt and deficits, and a deteriorating transportation infrastructure. Tax reform cries out for attention. Immigration and energy policy need action. Yet our elected representatives retreat behind partisan lines, as if only one side has all the answers. Most people know that is not the case anywhere in life and certainly not in Congress. The result is cynicism and lack of trust.

When a member of one party accuses a President of the other party of being a liar – and faces no sanctions from his own conference – it is not surprising that trust has become so polarized. Both members of Congress and voters see each other as not just wrong on the issues, but motivated by less than praiseworthy intentions. Hetherington and Rudolph (2014, pp. 25–27) show that identifiers with each party see supporters of the opposition about as favorably – or even less so – than they did for extremist groups or lawbreakers two to three decades ago.

I focus here at both the aggregate and individual levels on:

- the linkage between ideological polarization in Congress and political trust. In the aggregate analysis, I show that the increase in legislative polarization tracks the decline in political trust. At the individual level, I show that aggregate measures of polarization lower people’s trust in government from 1958 (the first year the trust question was asked) to 2012 (the most recent survey). Polarized politics makes people less trusting (cf. King 1997).
- the effect of gridlock on political trust. Lippincott argues that polarization makes it more difficult to get legislation enacted. When both parties prefer stalemate to enacting a compromise that might let one party claim any credit, the result is “gridlock” – a Congress that cannot get anything done. Binder (2015) argues: “...the degree of partisan polarization matters, as ideologically distant parties make harder the crafting of large bipartisan majorities necessary for durable policy change...Partisan polarization appears to be on the verge of passing historical levels in the Senate and has surpassed House records stemming from the turn of the century.” Polarization makes it very difficult – often seemingly impossible – for Congress to get anything done. Congressional productivity has fallen to the lowest level in the past two decades (Desilver 2014) No wonder people have such a low opinion of Congress, with just 15 percent approving of the job their legislature is doing (Riffkin 2014).

- When people have such a negative opinion of their elected officials, trust in government will be sure to drop. The effect of gridlock on political trust is about the same as that of polarization in the aggregate analysis.
- the roots of polarization. I show that there is a powerful relationship between polarization and economic inequality – as McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2006) show. This is also consistent with my argument (Uslaner 2000) that partisan divisions stem from declining social trust – which in turn rest upon growing economic inequality (Uslaner 2002, ch. 6). I also show elsewhere (Uslaner 2012) a direct linkage between both political and social trust and economic inequality. Inequality has a moderate impact by itself on trust in government – but its indirect link through polarization is much stronger.
 - the impact of polarization and gridlock on political trust in individual-level analysis of American National Election Study data from 1980 to 2008 (the last year for which I have gridlock data). Gridlock appears to have a more pronounced effect on political trust than does polarization – and the estimation even suggests that greater polarization leads to *more* political trust. However, the high correlations among polarization, the Gini index, and the time trend make these estimates less precise. They do suggest that both gridlock and growing inequality lead people to be less trusting in government.

What is Trust in Government and Why Does it Matter?

Trust in government, Hetherington (2005, p. 9) argues, is “the degree to which people perceive that government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectations. . . a running tally of how people think that the government is doing at a given point in time.” It is not, he states (2005, p. 11) “trust in a specific political figure. Political trust is a general evaluation of the entire government. . . .” Citrin (1974) sees trust in government as reflecting approval of the people in power – especially the President. Citrin’s argument seems more compelling, especially when partisan polarization plays such a strong role in shaping trust in government. Jacobson (2014) shows that Presidential approval has become strongly polarized over time: The difference in approval ratings between identifiers with the President’s party and the opposition has increased from 40 percent in 1952 – falling to 30 percent in 1976 – to 80 percent in 2012.

While there is much support for Citrin’s argument that attitudes toward the people in power shape trust in government, longer-term predispositions matter as well. Partisan polarization and legislative gridlock have effects that last beyond

specific administrations. So I see trust in government as reflecting both attitudes toward the current regime (Citrin 1974) and more general political predispositions.

Political trust matters, Hetherington argues, because it provides support for governmental programs. If you do not believe that the government is managing policy – or the economy more generally – well, then you will not support governmental policies that involve major expenditures (such as health care reform, welfare benefits, foreign aid, and liberal policies more generally).

People who do not trust government will see it as too powerful and wasteful of public resources.

People do not believe that public officials have their interests at heart. Most people believe that government does not pay attention to what people like them think. In 1964 a third said that government listens, but the share of positive responses fell sharply in the 1970s to about 15 percent (where it remained for the next three decades). Americans also soured on their own members of Congress. In 1964, 44 percent believed that their Representatives paid attention to constituents, but this figure fell to 18 percent by the 1970s. They regularly report that the government in Washington is too strong – with responses ranging from a low of 46 percent to a high of 76 percent in 1980 in data from the American National Election Study.

This skepticism works against the development of political trust. However, when things seem to be going well, these doubts fade. Americans' confidence rises when the economy is doing well – or when they see a strong state as critical to protecting them (as was the case after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001). People have less faith in government when things are not going so well. The state of the national economy plays a large role in shaping trust in government (Listhaug and Wiberg 1995).

The aggregate models I estimate below include measures of trust in government from a variety of surveys from 1973 to 2011, mostly from the American National Election Studies with additional polls from the Ipoll data base of media and other surveys at the Roper Center. The data on polarization come from Keith Poole. Poole and his colleagues (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006) scale roll-call votes for each Congress. The scale scores (for the first and dominant dimension) they obtain are presumed to be measures of political ideology. The average of these DW-NOMINATE scores (as they are called) by party is the overall ideological measure for a party's legislative contingent in each Congress for the House or the Senate. The absolute difference between Democratic and Republican DW-NOMINATE averages is their measure of polarization. The greater the absolute difference, the more polarized the parties are. The Poole database includes polarization scores for the House and the Senate. Since they are highly correlated ($r=0.93$ from 1947 to 2013), I use the scores for one chamber – and here I employ the scores for the House. Finally, Binder (2015) compiles a list of salient issues

from legislation that is cited on the front page of the *New York Times* in a Congress. The number of failed salient issues compared to the total number is her measure of gridlock, which I employ here.³ While it would be desirable to measure the level of incivility in the public sphere – or even just in the legislative branch – we do not have good measures of coarse rhetoric. Impressionistic evidence suggests that incivility is part of the larger syndrome of polarization (Uslaner 1993).

I focus here on simple graphs of the connections among political trust, polarization, and gridlock. In Figure 1 I present time trends of these three measures. Of the three time series, only polarization shows a monotonic increase over time ($r=0.932$ with time). Partisan divisions have increased consistently over time. Gridlock increases over time and trust in government declines, and their trends are dramatic ($r=0.589$ and -0.647 , respectively). Gridlock rises from 1947 to 1955, falls through 1965, rise again through 1981, falling from 1987 to 1993, and then rising sharply after 2005 to levels seen only once before in this time series (1999). Trust in government fell from 1964 until 1980 – reflecting conflicts over Vietnam and riots in American cities and later the Iran hostage crisis and “stagflation,” high unemployment and inflation at the same time. The economic recovery, albeit uneven under Ronald Reagan, led to greater political trust. Trust fell with the weakened economy (1987–1994) and rose with boom times (1995–2002) – before its longer-term fall in 2005. There are thus time trends suggesting more polarization, more gridlock, and less trust. But the trends are far from uniform.

I show scatterplots of trust in government with polarization and gridlock in Figures 2 and 3. For both measures the story is largely the same: As polarization (gridlock) increases, political trust falls. The relationships are moderate and about the same magnitude ($R^2=0.29$ and 0.25 , respectively). In Table 1, I present a multivariate regression of political trust including both polarization and gridlock together with the growth rate in the gross domestic product, a good measure of whether the economy is getting better or worse (Masket 2009). In this estimation, polarization matters more than gridlock. But we should not overinterpret this result since polarization and gridlock are highly correlated ($r=0.594$).

If polarization is a key factor in reducing trust in government, what leads to greater divisions between the parties? As McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal argue (2006), rising inequality is the key factor underlying polarization in Congress. This provides support for the arguments of Abramowitz (2010) and Jacobson

³ www.ropercenter.uconn.edu. When more than one survey is available for a year, I use the average. See Uslaner (2012). The polarization data are from www.voteview.com. The gridlock data are described in Binder (2015) and were graciously provided by Sarah Binder. The Gini coefficients come from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/inequality/>.

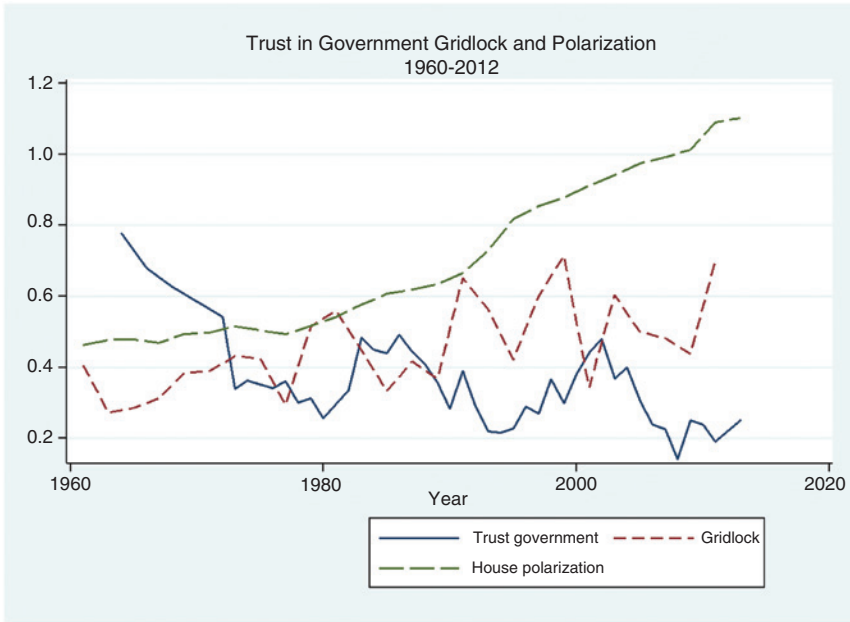


Figure 1: Trust in Government Gridlock and Polarization 1960–2012.

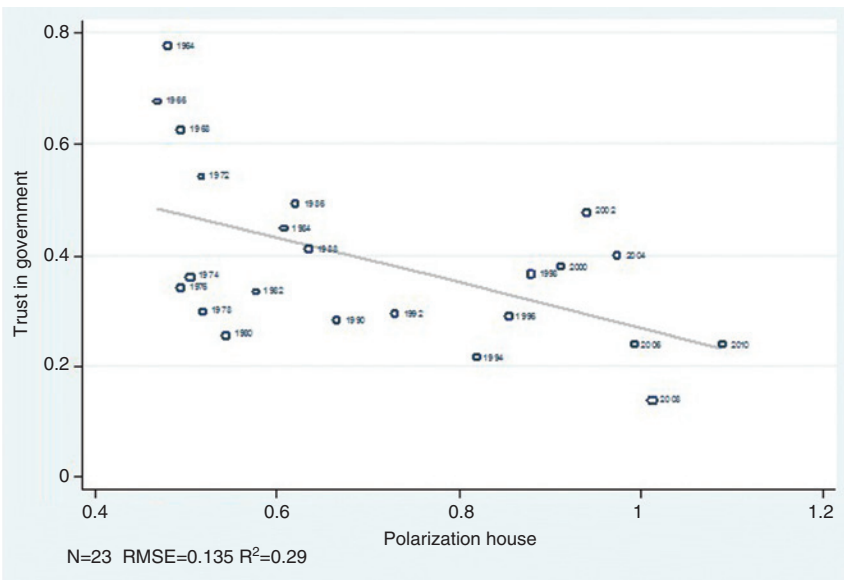


Figure 2: Trust in Government and House Polarization 1964–2010.

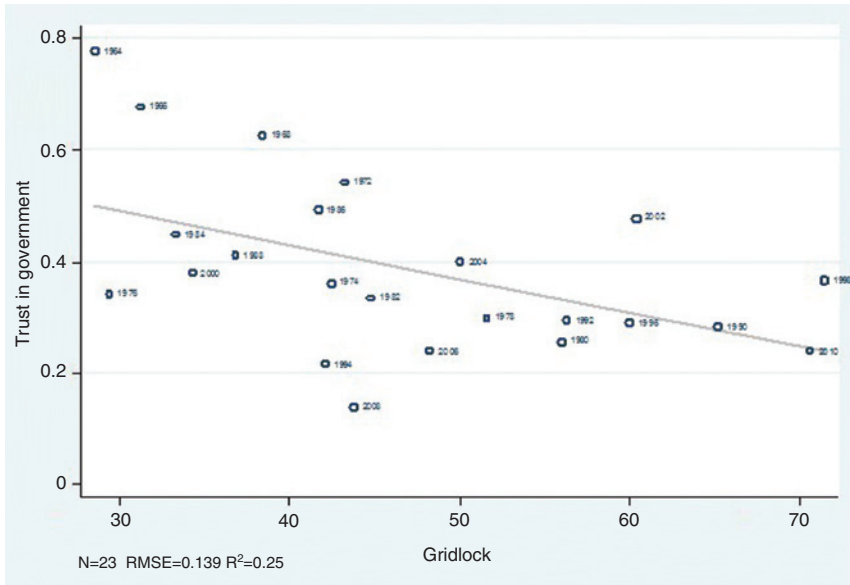


Figure 3: Trust in Government and Gridlock 1964–2010.

Table 1: Trust, Polarization, Gridlock, and Economic Performance.

Variable	Coefficient	S.E.	t ratio
Polarization	-0.269*	0.148	-1.82
Gridlock	-0.002	0.002	-0.87
GDP growth rate	2.474*	1.168	2.12
Constant	0.595**	0.135	4.41

**p<0.01, *p<0.05 all tests one-tailed except constant.

R²=0.478, S.E.=0.121 N=23.

(2014) that polarization reflects societal tensions. I also have argued that polarization in Congress reflects declining social trust – which in turn rests upon increasing inequality (Uslaner 2000, 2002, ch. 6).

Polarization tracks inequality over time almost perfectly from 1947 to 2013 (R²=0.913, see Figure 4). The linkage with gridlock is much weaker (R²=0.348). So is the direct link with political trust (R²=0.320). The powerful relationship between inequality and trust suggests that there is at least a strong *indirect* tie between the Gini index and political trust. The linkage between polarization and inequality does not depend upon the class basis of electoral coalitions – which

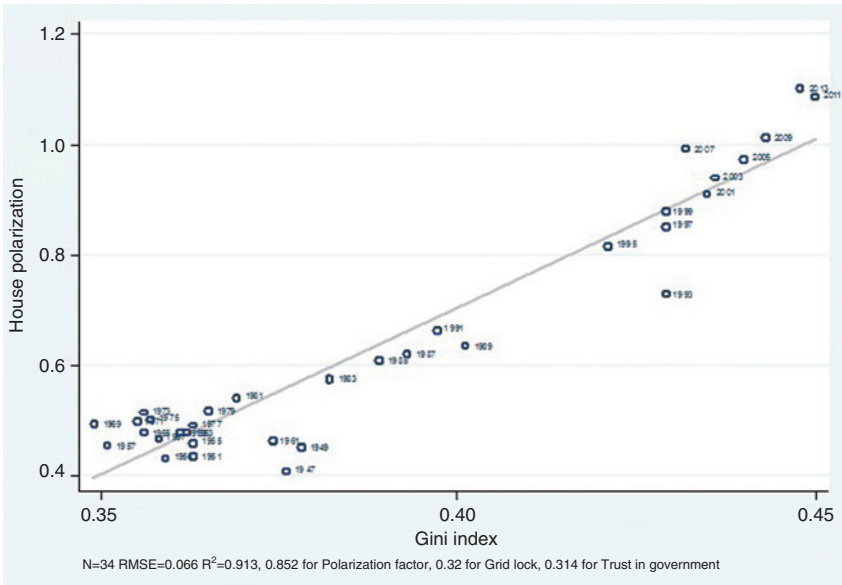


Figure 4: House Polarization and Gini Index 1947–2013.

does not seem to have increased dramatically over time. Partisan disputes over programs to reduce inequality *have* become sharper over time. In 1982, the first year in which people were asked if they prefer more government spending or fewer services in the ANES cumulative file, 42 percent of Democrats and 13 percent of Republicans favored more spending ($r=-0.32$). In 2012, 53 percent of Democrats and 10.5 percent of Republicans backed a greater role for government ($r=-0.53$). A *New York Times* survey in June, 2015 found sharp differences in attitudes about inequality between Democratic and Republican identifiers: 47 percent of Republicans held that the gap between the rich and the poor is a problem that should be addressed now compared to 83 percent of Democrats. The gap is much stronger on proposed solutions: 81 percent of Democrats but just 31 percent of Republicans said that the government should do more to reduce the income gap.⁴

Ideology among the public is also more strongly related to partisanship in 2012 than when it was first asked in 1984: Liberal identification rose from 38 percent among Democrats to 47 percent and fell among Republicans from 13 to 6 percent. Conservative identification rose from 59 percent to 75 percent and fell among Democrats for 31 to 18 percent. For elites, the trends were much sharper:

⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/03/business/income-inequality-workers-rights-international-trade-poll.html>.

Table 2: Ordered Probit of Trust in Government: American National Election Study 1988–2008.

Variable	Coefficient	S.E.	t Ratio
House polarization	0.837	0.429	1.95
Gridlock	-0.005*	0.001	-6.62
Gini index	-18.543*	1.852	-10.01
Approve president	0.244*	0.009	26.65
Economy better	0.097*	0.009	10.94
Party ID aligned	0.029*	0.005	5.98
Year	0.048*	0.007	7.23

* $p < 0.001$, all tests one-tailed except for year.

$N = 19,930$, $-2 * \text{Log Likelihood} = -2778.98$.

Polarization in the House remained low from 1948 through the 1960s but more than doubled by 2008 (and remained steady to 2012). Starting from a much lower base, polarization tripled in the Senate from 1948 to 2012 – and is now about the same level as in the House. For both the public and members of Congress, much of the conflict centered on the role of government and, indeed, whether inequality was really a problem.

I also estimated an ordered probit model of political trust at the individual level using the ANES cumulative data set. The model includes data from 1980 to 2008. Two key measures – Presidential approval and perceptions of the economy – begin in 1980 and the gridlock data end at 2008. I present the results in Table 2.⁵

Consistent with Citrin (1974), the strongest impact on political trust at the individual level is Presidential approval. Attitudes toward the President, more than other institutions, shape trust in government. So do perceptions of the economic situation: People who think that the economy will get better in the next year are substantially more likely to trust government. This is consistent with Listhaug and Wiberg (1995) – and also with Hetherington, who argues that people’s expectations of government performance are the key determinants of trust. There is also support for the claim that partisanship shapes political trust. I created a measure of “aligned party identification” from the traditional 7 – point party ID scale. The aligned partisanship measure gives the highest scores to identifiers with the party of the incumbent President. And this measure also strongly affects trust in government.

I include aggregate measures of polarization, gridlock, the Gini index, and a counter for Year (to control for the decreasing trust in government over time). Gridlock has a powerful negative effect on trust as does the Gini index: As

⁵ I do not estimate changes in probabilities (“effects”) since this is an ordered probit model and there is no easy way to interpret these changes for a dependent variable with four categories.

gridlock and inequality have increased, political trust has fallen. There are inexplicable positive coefficients for polarization and the time counter. However, the substantial collinearity for these variables calls these coefficients into question.⁶ The negative effect of gridlock remains even if I drop polarization and the time counter. If I drop the Gini index (which is very strongly correlated with both polarization and the time counter), there are strong negative effects for *both* gridlock and polarization. I exclude GDP growth from the individual-level model since it is highly correlated with people's views of the economy.

Party identification, perceptions of the economy, and Presidential approval are more than just additional determinants of trust in government. They are part of the polarization story – as people's perceptions of the economy are heavily influenced by their partisanship (Enns, Kellstedt, and McAvoy 2012) and as Presidential approval has become increasingly polarized by party (Jacobson 2014). Presidential approval, aligned partisanship, and gridlock all have greater effects *after* 1990. Economic inequality is insignificant (in estimations without polarization but with gridlock) prior to 1990, but it has very large effects after 1990. As our politics has become more polarized, the impact of partisanship on trust in government has increased.

Reprise

Americans see their government, especially the Congress, as too remote. Bismarck told us that law-making is messy. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995, p. 19) report that Americans see members of Congress as engaging in “bickeing, haggling, and all talk.” In the aggregate analysis, polarization seems to have a stronger effect on political trust – but the individual level analysis indicates that both polarization and especially gridlock lead people to be less trusting of their government.

These effects may be understated. The gridlock data end at 2010 – the high point for both deadlock and polarization. But the ANES data end at 2008 – there was no election study in 2010. In recent years, polarization and gridlock both seem to have increased as acrimony between the parties has grown (Jacobson 2014). Our national discourse has also become more harsh, as politics has become more of a combat sport with people cheering on their party as it were a wrestling match (Mutz 2015).

Most critically, gridlock and especially polarization are not driven only by elite behavior. It is not just a story of our leaders behaving badly and this leads the public to lose confidence in them. Polarization is largely driven by growing

⁶ The variance inflation factors for polarization, the Gini index, and the time counter are 55.36, 24.9, and 35.7, respectively. A VIF of 10 is generally considered to indicate high collinearity.

economic inequality – and the conflicts between the parties reflect the divisions between those at the top and bottom of the economic ladder. As inequality has increased and as inequality has become an area of contention between the parties, it has become increasingly difficult to restore the political trust that may be necessary to enact policies that might lead to a restoration of trust.

There also seems to be little prospect for either polarization or gridlock to be reduced any time soon. The ideological gulf between the two parties has been growing and shows little evidence of abating. The Congressional parties remain evenly balanced so there is little incentive for them to work together and perhaps restore public trust. Rising inequality, polarization, and a tight competition to power are all sources of both gridlock and lack of trust in government.

References

- Abramowitz, Alan I. 2010. *The Disappearing Center*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Anderson, Christopher., Andre Blais, Sean Bowler, Todd Donovan, and Ola Listhaug. 2005. *Losers Consent: Elections and Democratic Legitimacy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Binder, Sarah. 2015. "The Dysfunctional Congress." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 18: 85–101.
- Citrin, Jack. 1974. "Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government." *American Political Science Review* 68: 973–988.
- Desilver, Drew. 2014. "Congress continues its Streak of Passing Few Significant Laws." (July 31). <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/31/congress-continues-its-streak-of-passing-few-significant-laws/>.
- Enns, Peter K., Paul M. Kellstedt, and Gregory E. McAvoy. 2012. "The Consequences of Partisanship in Economic Perceptions." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76: 287–310.
- Hetherington, Marc J. 2005. *Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hetherington, Marc J., and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2014. "The Emergence of Polarized Trust." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August, Washington, DC. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2484755.
- Hibbing, John, and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 1995. *Congress as Public Enemy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76: 405–431.
- Jacobson, Gary C. 2013. "Partisan Polarization in American Politics: A Background Paper." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43: 688–708.
- Jacobson, Gary C. 2014. "Barack Obama and the nationalization of electoral politics in 2012." *Electoral Studies*. Accessed October 8, 2015. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379414001061>.
- King, David C. 1997. "The Polarization of American Political Parties and Mistrust of Government." In *Why People Don't Trust Government*, edited by Joseph S. Nye, Philip Zelikow, and David C. King. Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press.

- Lee, Frances. 2009. *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Listhaug, Ola, and Matti Wiberg. 1995. "Confidence in Political and Private Institutions." In *Citizens and the State*, edited by H.-D. Klingemann and D. Fuchs, 298–322. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lippincott, Jonathan R. 2012. "Partisan Polarization Destroys Trust in Government." Accessed May 21, 2012. Available at <http://www.nolabels.org/blog/partisan-polarization-destroys-trust-in-government/>.
- Masket, Seth. 2009. "Does Unemployment Affect Midterm Elections?" Accessed November 3, 2015. <http://enikrising.blogspot.com/2009/11/does-unemployment-affect-midterm.html>.
- Mason, Lilliana. 2013. "The Rise of Uncivil Agreement: Issue Versus Behavioral Polarization in the American Electorate." *American Behavioral Scientist* 57: 140–159.
- Matthews, Donald R. 1960. *U.S. Senators and Their World*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- McCarty, Nolan, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Mutz, Diana C. 2015. *In-Your-Face Politics: The Consequences of Uncivil Media*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Raju, Manu, and John Bresnahan. 2013. "Harry Reid-Mitch McConnell Relationship Hits New Low." Accessed November 3, 2015. <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/07/harry-reid-mitch-mcconnell-relationship-94134.html>.
- Riffkin, Rebecca. 2014. "2014 US Approval of Congress Remains Near All-Time Low." (December 14). Accessed November 3, 2015. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/180113/2014-approval-congress-remains-near-time-low.aspx>.
- Silver, Nate. 2012. "As Swing Districts Dwindle, Can a Divided House Stand?" Accessed November 3, 2015. <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/27/as-swing-districts-dwindle-can-a-divided-house-stand/>.
- Strong, Jonathan. 2013. "On Boehner-Pelosi Meeting, a Question of Why?" (October 9). Accessed November 3, 2015. <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/360813/boehner-pelosi-meeting-question-why-jonathan-strong>.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 1993. *The Decline of Comity in Congress*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 2000. "Is the Senate More Civil Than the House?" In *Esteemed Colleagues: Civility and Deliberation in the Senate*, edited by Burdett Loomis. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 2002. *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 2012. "Income Inequality in the United States Fuels Pessimism and Threatens Social Cohesion." Working Paper for the Center for American Progress (December 5, 2012). <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/report/2012/12/05/46871/income-inequality-in-the-united-states-fuels-pessimism-and-threatens-social-cohesion>.

Eric M. Uslaner is Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland—College Park. He is Senior Research Fellow, Center for American Law and Political Science, Southwest University of Political Science and Law, Chongqing, China and Honorary Professor of Political Science, University of Aarhus, Denmark.