

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

American Gridlock

American Gridlock brings together the country's preeminent experts on the causes, characteristics, and consequences of partisan polarization in U.S. politics and government, with each chapter presenting original scholarship and novel data. This book is the first to combine research on all facets of polarization, among the public (both voters and activists), in our federal institutions (Congress, the presidency, and the Supreme Court), at the state level, and in the media. Each chapter includes a bullet-point summary of its main argument and conclusions, and is written in clear prose that highlights the substantive implications of polarization for representation and policymaking. The authors examine polarization with an array of current and historical data, including public opinion surveys; electoral, legislative, and congressional data; experimental data; and content analyses of media outlets. *American Gridlock's* theoretical and empirical depth distinguishes it from any other volume on polarization.

James A. Thurber is University Distinguished Professor of Government and Founder and Director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University. In 2010, he won the Walter Beach Pi Sigma American Political Science Association Award for his work combining applied and academic research. He is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration and a member of the American Bar Association's Task Force on Lobbying Law Reform. He is the author of multiple books and more than eighty articles and chapters on Congress, congressional-presidential relations, congressional budgeting, congressional reform, interest groups and lobbying, congressional ethics, and campaigns and elections. He co-produced three BBC TV documentaries on the U.S. Congress and elections.

Antoine Yoshinaka is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He has published numerous articles on elections, parties, and representation in outlets such as *Political Research Quarterly*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *British Journal of Political Science*, and *Electoral Studies*. He has a forthcoming book to be published by Cambridge University Press, titled *Crossing the Aisle: Party Switching by U.S. Legislators in the Postwar Era*.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political
Polarization
Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

American Gridlock

The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by

JAMES A. THURBER

American University

ANTOINE YOSHINAKA

State University of New York at Buffalo



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107534698

© Cambridge University Press 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-11416-6 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-53469-8 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For my wife, Claudia

*And my family, Mark, Lissette, Kathryn, Greg, Tristan, Bryan, and
Kelsey*

– James A. Thurber

To Daniela and Clara

– Antoine Yoshinaka

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of contributors</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Foreword</i>	xxi
<i>Thomas E. Mann</i>	
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxix
 Introduction	 I
<i>James A. Thurber and Antoine Yoshinaka</i>	
PART I POLARIZATION AMONG VOTERS AND ACTIVISTS	
1 The New American Electorate: Partisan, Sorted, and Polarized	19
<i>Alan I. Abramowitz</i>	
2 Redistricting and Polarization	45
<i>Micah Altman and Michael McDonald</i>	
3 Party Activists, Interest Groups, and Polarization in American Politics	68
<i>David Karol</i>	
4 Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics, Still?	86
<i>Marc J. Hetherington and Jonathan D. Weiler</i>	
5 Party Sorting: The Foundations of Polarized Politics	113
<i>Samuel J. Abrams and Morris P. Fiorina</i>	
PART II POLARIZATION IN NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	
6 Presidential-Congressional Relations in an Era of Polarized Parties and a 60-Vote Senate	133
<i>Jon R. Bond, Richard Fleisher, and Jeffrey E. Cohen</i>	
7 Party Warriors: The Ugly Side of Party Polarization in Congress	152
<i>Sean M. Theriault</i>	
	vii

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization
Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	Contents
8 The Sources and Consequences of Polarization in the U.S. Supreme Court <i>Brandon L. Bartels</i>	171
PART III POLARIZATION IN THE STATES	
9 Polarization in American State Legislatures <i>Boris Shor</i>	203
10 The Costs of Party Reform: Two States' Experiences <i>Seth E. Maskett</i>	222
11 The Policy Consequences of Party Polarization: Evidence from the American States <i>Elizabeth Rigby and Gerald C. Wright</i>	236
PART IV POLARIZATION IN THE MEDIA	
12 Partisan Media and Electoral Polarization in 2012: Evidence from the American National Election Study <i>Gary C. Jacobson</i>	259
13 News as a Casualty: District Polarization and Media Coverage of U.S. House Campaigns <i>Danny Hayes and Jennifer L. Lawless</i>	287
14 More a Symptom Than a Cause: Polarization and Partisan News Media in America <i>Kevin Arceneaux and Martin Johnson</i>	309
15 The Polarizing Effects of Partisan and Mainstream News <i>Natalie Jomini Stroud and Alexander Curry</i>	337
PART V IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	
16 Congressional Polarization and Its Connection to Income Inequality: An Update <i>Adam Bonica, Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal</i>	357
17 The Sources and Impact of Political Polarization <i>James A. Thurber and Antoine Yoshinaka</i>	378
<i>Index</i>	389

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contributors

Alan I. Abramowitz is the Alben W. Barkley Professor of Political Science at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. He received his BA from the University of Rochester in 1969 and his PhD from Stanford University in 1976. Dr. Abramowitz has authored or coauthored six books, dozens of contributions to edited volumes, and more than fifty articles in political science journals dealing with political parties, elections, and voting behavior in the United States. He is also one of the nation's leading election forecasters – his Time for Change Model has correctly predicted the popular-vote winner in every presidential election since 1988, including the 2012 election. Dr. Abramowitz's most recent book, *The Polarized Public: Why American Government Is So Dysfunctional*, examines the causes and consequences of growing partisan polarization among political leaders and ordinary Americans.

Samuel J. Abrams is a political scientist with interests in political behavior and culture and methods. He is Professor of Politics and Social Science at Sarah Lawrence College and is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. His current research interests involve understanding the current “red/blue divide” in the United States and mapping Jewish community's political and electoral behavior. He is also working on a number of projects exploring ideology and partisanship.

Micah Altman is Director of Research and Head Scientist in the Program on Information Science for the MIT Libraries at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Altman is also a nonresident senior fellow at The Brookings Institution. Prior to arriving at MIT, Dr. Altman served at Harvard University for fifteen years as Associate Director of the Harvard-MIT Data Center, Archival Director of the Henry A. Murray Archive, and Senior Research Scientist in the Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences. Dr. Altman conducts work primarily in the fields of social science, information privacy, information science and research methods, and statistical computation, focusing on the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

List of contributors

intersections of information, technology, privacy, and politics as well as on the dissemination, preservation, reliability, and governance of scientific knowledge. Dr. Altman earned a PhD in social science from the California Institute of Technology and conducted his postdoctoral research at Harvard University. Prior to studying social science, Dr. Altman worked as a software engineer in the Silicon Valley developing software and courses, teaching, and consulting on the subject of high-performance computing.

Kevin Arceneaux is Professor of Political Science, Faculty Affiliate with the Institute for Public Affairs, and Director of the Behavioral Foundations Lab at Temple University. He studies political communication, political psychology, and political behavior, focusing on the interaction between political messages and people's political predispositions. His recent book, *Changing Minds or Changing Channels: Partisan News in an Age of Choice* (2013, coauthored with Martin Johnson), employs novel experimental methods to investigate how human agency shapes the influence of political media. The book was co-winner of the 2014 Goldsmith Book Prize awarded by the Harvard Kennedy School Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy. He has published articles on the influence of partisan campaigns on voting behavior, the effects of predispositions on attitude formation, the role of human biology in explaining individual variation in predispositions, and experimental methodology. In 2012, Professor Arceneaux received the Emerging Scholar Award from the Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior Section of the American Political Science Association (APSA). He is an active member of the APSA Experiments in Political Science section, a member of the Experiments in Governance and Politics (EGAP) group, and a Laboratories of Democracies research affiliate. He also serves as an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Experimental Political Science* and, along with Cindy Kam, as a co-editor for the Routledge Series on Experimental Political Science. He has served on the editorial boards of the *American Journal of Political Science* and *Political Communication*. Professor Arceneaux has received research funding from the National Science Foundation, the JEHT Foundation, CIRCLE, and Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences. His work appears in numerous scholarly journals, including the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, *Political Behavior*, *Political Communication*, *Political Psychology*, and *Political Analysis*. He received a PhD in political science from Rice University in 2003. Before joining the faculty at Temple University, he completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Yale University.

Brandon L. Bartels is Associate Professor of Political Science at George Washington University. His research and teaching interests center on American politics, judicial decision making, the U.S. Supreme Court, and public perceptions of law and courts. His work has appeared in the *American*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of contributors*

xi

Political Science Review, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and other outlets. His work has also been supported by the National Science Foundation. His current work focuses on legal change and the constraining capacity of law on the Supreme Court and the consequences of Supreme Court policymaking for public perceptions of judicial legitimacy and democracy.

Jon R. Bond is Professor of Political Science at Texas A&M University. He has published articles on presidential-congressional relations, congressional elections, and party polarization in the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, and *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, among others, as well as numerous book chapters. He is coauthor of *The President in the Legislative Arena* (1990) and *Analyzing American Democracy: Politics and Political Science* (2013), and he is co-editor of *Polarized Politics: Congress and the President in a Partisan Era* (2000) and *Institutional Games and the U.S. Supreme Court* (2006). Dr. Bond, who received his PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, was an American Political Science Association Congressional Fellow. He has served as co-editor of the *Journal of Politics* and as president of the Southern Political Science Association, and Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society.

Adam Bonica is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Stanford University. His research examines American political ideology, campaign finance, interest group politics, and judicial politics. The focus of his research has been the development of a methodology for measuring the ideology of political actors using campaign finance records. By leveraging a large-scale database of contributions made to campaigns at every level of American politics, the method is able to recover a unified set of ideological measures for a wide range of political candidates as well as thousands of political organizations and millions of individual donors. His work has appeared in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, and *JAMA Internal Medicine*. Before joining the Stanford faculty, he was a fellow at the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics at Princeton University.

Jeffrey E. Cohen is Professor of Political Science at Fordham University. He is the author of thirteen books; *Going Local: Presidential Leadership in the Post-Broadcast Age* (2010) won both the 2011 Richard E. Neustadt Award from the Presidency Research Group of the American Political Science Association and the 2012 Goldsmith Award from the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Cohen, who received his PhD from the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

University of Michigan, is the author of articles in academic journals such as the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, and *Journal of Politics*.

Alexander Curry, who has an MA from Brigham Young University, is a doctoral student in Communication Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also a research associate at the Engaging News Project. His research focuses on political communication and online news, and he is particularly interested in sports and the role sports play in America's political landscape. His work has appeared in the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* and the *Journal of Public Relations Research*. From 2005 to 2010, he served as a writer for California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Morris P. Fiorina is the Wendt Family Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and a senior fellow of the Hoover Institution. He received an undergraduate degree from Allegheny College (1968) and a PhD from the University of Rochester (1972), and taught at Caltech and Harvard before coming to Stanford in 1998. He has written widely on American politics, with special emphasis on the study of representation and elections. He has published numerous articles and written or edited twelve books: *Representatives, Roll Calls, and Constituencies*; *Congress – Keystone of the Washington Establishment*; *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*; *The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence* (coauthored with Bruce Cain and John Ferejohn); *Home Style and Washington Work* (co-edited with David Rohde); *The New American Democracy* (with Paul Peterson and Bert Johnson); *Divided Government*; *Civic Engagement in American Democracy* (co-edited with Theda Skocpol), *Change and Continuity in House Elections* (co-edited with David Brady and John Cogan), *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* (with Samuel Abrams and Jeremy Pope), *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics* (with Samuel Abrams); and most recently, *Can We Talk?: The Rise of Rude, Nasty, Stubborn Politics* (co-edited with Dan Shea). He has served on the editorial boards of a dozen journals in political science, political economy, law, and public policy, and from 1986 to 1990 served as chair of the Board of Overseers of the American National Election Studies. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, and the National Academy of Sciences. In 2006 the Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior section of the American Political Science Association awarded him the Warren E. Miller Prize for career contributions to the field.

Richard Fleisher is Professor of Political Science at Fordham University. His interests focus on American political institutions and processes. He has written or edited several books and has published articles in the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, and *Journal of Politics*,

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of contributors

xiii

as well as other leading political science journals. He earned his PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Danny Hayes is Associate Professor of Political Science at George Washington University. His research focuses on political communication and political behavior in American politics. He is the coauthor of *Influence from Abroad: Foreign Voices, the Media, and U.S. Public Opinion* (2013). His work has been supported by the National Science Foundation and has appeared in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *Political Communication*, *Politics & Gender*, and *Political Behavior*, among others. Since 2011, he has written for the *Washington Post* blogs Behind the Numbers, Wonkblog, and The Monkey Cage.

Marc J. Hetherington is Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. He is the author of three scholarly books: *Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism* (2005), *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics* (with Jonathan Weiler, 2009), and *Why Washington Won't Work: Polarization, Political Trust, and the Governing Crisis* (with Thomas Rudolph, 2015). In addition, he has published numerous articles in scholarly journals such as the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and *British Journal of Political Science*. He was also the recipient of the Emerging Scholar Award from the American Political Science Association's section on Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior.

Gary C. Jacobson is Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of California, San Diego, where he has taught since 1979. He received his AB from Stanford in 1966 and his PhD from Yale in 1972. He specializes in the study of U.S. elections, parties, interest groups, public opinion, and Congress. He is the author of *Money in Congressional Elections*, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, and *The Electoral Origins of Divided Government*, and he is the coauthor of *Strategy and Choice in Congressional Elections* and *The Logic of American Politics*, as well as more than 100 research articles. His most recent book is *A Divider, Not a Uniter: George W. Bush and the American People*. He has served on the Board of Overseers of National Election Studies (1985–93), the Council of the American Political Science Association (1993–94), the APSA's Committee on Research Support, as Treasurer of the APSA (1996–97), and as chair of the APSA's Elections Review Committee (2001–02).

Martin Johnson is the Kevin P. Reilly, Sr. Chair in Political Communication and Professor of Mass Communication and Political Science at Louisiana State University. He studies media, politics, public opinion, political psychology, and public policy. His book, *Changing Minds or Changing Channels: Partisan News in an Age of Choice* (coauthored with Kevin Arceneaux, 2013) investigates how the choices viewers make shape the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

influence of political media. It was the co-winner of the 2014 Goldsmith Book Prize awarded by the Harvard Kennedy School Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy. He has published papers in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Human Communication Research*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Political Communication*, *Political Psychology*, and *Political Analysis*, among other scholarly venues. He is the former president of the Southwestern Political Science Association. He currently serves on the editorial board of *Social Science Quarterly* and previously served on the editorial board of the *American Journal of Political Science*. Before joining the faculty at LSU, he served as department chair and professor at the University of California, Riverside, and directed the Media and Communication Research Lab there. He earned his MA and PhD in political science from Rice University.

David Karol is Associate Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland, College Park. His research focuses on parties, interest groups, political institutions, and American political development. He is the author of *Party Position Change in American Politics: Coalition Management* (2009), coauthor of *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations before and after Reform* (2008), and coeditor of *Nominating the President: Evolution and Revolution in 2008 and Beyond* (2009). He has published articles in several journals and contributed chapters to edited volumes. He is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Politics* and the Council of the APSA Section on Political Organizations and Parties (POP).

Jennifer L. Lawless is Professor of Government at American University, where she is also the Director of the Women & Politics Institute. She received her PhD in political science from Stanford University in 2003 and her BA from Union College in 1997. Professor Lawless's research, which has been supported by the National Science Foundation, focuses on representation, political ambition, and gender in the electoral process. She is the author of *Becoming a Candidate: Political Ambition and the Decision to Run for Office* (2012) and coauthor of *Running from Office: Why Young Americans Are Turned Off to Politics* (2015) and *It Still Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office* (2010). Her work has appeared in academic journals including the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *Journal of Politics*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, and *Politics & Gender* (of which she served as editor, 2010–13).

Thomas E. Mann is Senior Fellow in Governance Studies at The Brookings Institution and Resident Scholar, Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley. He held the W. Averell Harriman Chair at Brookings between 1991 and 2014 and was Director of Governmental Studies between 1987 and 1999. Before that, Mann was executive director of the American

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of contributors*

xv

Political Science Association. Mann earned his BA in political science at the University of Florida and his MA and PhD at the University of Michigan. He first came to Washington in 1969 as a Congressional Fellow in the offices of Senator Philip A. Hart and Representative James G. O'Hara. Mann has taught at Princeton University, Johns Hopkins University, Georgetown University, the University of Virginia, and American University; conducted polls for congressional candidates; worked as a consultant to IBM and the Public Broadcasting Service; chaired the Board of Overseers of the National Election Studies; and served as an expert witness in the constitutional defense of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law. He is a recipient of the American Political Science Association's Frank J. Goodnow and Charles E. Merriam Awards. He and Norman Ornstein in 2008 published an updated edition of *The Broken Branch: How Congress Is Failing America and How to Get It Back on Track*. Their latest book, a New York Times best seller entitled *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism*, was published in the spring of 2012. Mann and Ornstein were recently named by Foreign Policy Magazine among "100 Top Global Thinkers of 2012" for "diagnosing America's political dysfunction."

Seth E. Masket is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Denver. He researches and teaches on party organizations, state legislatures, campaigns and elections, and social networks. He is the author of *No Middle Ground: How Informal Party Organizations Control Nominations and Polarize Legislatures* (2009), and is writing a book on state party reform movements. His work has appeared in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, and *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, among other journals. He is a founder of and frequent contributor to the political science weblog, *Mischiefs of Faction*, and he writes a weekly online column for the *Pacific Standard*. He is also an occasional contributor to the *Washington Post's* political science weblog, *The Monkey Cage*. He received his PhD in political science from UCLA in 2004. He also holds a master's degree in campaign management from the George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management and a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

Nolan McCarty is the Susan Dod Brown Professor of Politics and Public Affairs and Chair of the Department of Politics at Princeton University. He was formerly the associate dean at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. His research interests include U.S. politics, democratic political institutions, and political game theory. He is the recipient of the Robert Eckles Swain National Fellowship from the Hoover Institution and the John M. Olin Fellowship in Political Economy. He has coauthored three books: *Political Game Theory* (with Adam Meirowitz, 2006), *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (with Keith Poole and

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Howard Rosenthal, 2006), and *Political Bubbles: Financial Crises and the Failure of American Democracy* (with Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal, 2013). In 2010, he was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He earned his AB from the University of Chicago and his PhD from Carnegie Mellon University.

Michael McDonald is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Florida and a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. He produces widely used voter turnout rates for the country. He has been a redistricting consultant or expert witness in fourteen states. Along with his collaborator, Micah Altman, he created the award-winning open-source redistricting software, DistrictBuilder, which was used by advocates and redistricting authorities across the United States and Mexico. This software builds on the first open-source multi-criteria redistricting optimization tool, BARD, also developed with Dr. Altman. He is the author of numerous peer-reviewed articles, law review articles, book chapters, and opinion editorials in the popular press. He is the coauthor of *Numerical Issues in Statistical Computing for the Social Scientist* (with Michah Altman and Jeff Gill, 2003) and coeditor of *The Marketplace of Democracy: Electoral Competition and American Politics* (with John Sides, 2006).

Keith T. Poole is the Philip H. Alston Jr. Distinguished Professor in Department of Political Science at the University of Georgia. He received his PhD in political science from the University of Rochester in 1978. His research interests include methodology, political-economic history of American institutions, economic growth and entrepreneurship, and the political-economic history of railroads. He is the author or coauthor of more than sixty articles, as well as the author of *Spatial Models of Parliamentary Voting* (2005), a coauthor of *Analyzing Spatial Models of Choice and Judgment Using R* (with David A. Armstrong II, Ryan Baker, Royce Carroll, Christopher Hare, and Howard Rosenthal, 2014), *Political Bubbles: Financial Crises and the Failure of American Democracy* (with Nolan M. McCarty and Howard Rosenthal, 2013), *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (with Nolan M. McCarty and Howard Rosenthal, 2006), *Ideology In Congress* (with Howard Rosenthal, 2007), and *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting* (with Howard Rosenthal, 1997). Professor Poole has served on the editorial boards of *Social Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Politics*, *American Journal of Political Science*, and *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.

Elizabeth Rigby is Associate Professor of Public Policy and of Political Science at George Washington University, where she teaches courses in the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy on the role of politics in the policymaking process. Her research examines the interplay of politics, policy, and social inequality in the contemporary United States and has been published in a range of journals including the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Political Research*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of contributors*

xvii

Quarterly, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Policy Studies Journal, and Health Affairs. Professor Rigby holds a PhD (with distinction) from Columbia University. In addition, she received postdoctoral training in population health at the University of Wisconsin–Madison as a Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society Scholar and has served as an APSA Congressional Fellow on the minority staff of the Senate Finance Committee.

Howard Rosenthal is Professor of Politics at New York University; a Roger Williams Straus Professor of Social Sciences, Emeritus, at Princeton University; and a political economist and methodologist. His most innovative scientific contributions took place during the twenty-seven years he was a faculty member at Carnegie Mellon University. In the earliest years, motivated by CMU colleagues, he applied game theory and spatial theory to the study of coalitions, voting, turnout, and electoral strategy. The next project was methodological, expressed in the coauthored volume, *Prediction Analysis of Cross-Classification* (with David K. Hildebrand and James D. Laing, 1977). Subsequently, he collaborated on the well-known Romer-Rosenthal model of agenda control, on *Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy* (with Alberto Alesina, 1995) and on the theory of participation in elections and the provision of public goods. His most widely noted contribution was the development of the Poole-Rosenthal dichotomous choice scaling model, NOMINATE, which led to coauthored books such as *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches and Political Bubbles* (with Nolan McCarthy and Keith T. Poole, 2006) and the contribution in this volume. In recent years, Rosenthal's research interests have included the intersection of politics and finance, resulting in papers on bankruptcy and on political intervention in credit markets, as well as the coedited volume *Credit Markets for the Poor* (with Patrick Bolton, 2005). His current empirical project in that area is the study of the impact of deregulation on the ownership structure of American electric utilities. For part of 2015, Rosenthal is a research scholar at Columbia University. He was previously a Sherman Fairchild Distinguished Scholar at the California Institute of Technology, a National Fellow at the Hoover Institution, a fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, a fellow at the Russell Sage Foundation, and a fellow at the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation.

Boris Shor is a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Government at Georgetown University. His research interests include state legislatures, political polarization, representation, and health policy. Using roll-call voting data and candidate survey responses, he co-created the data project on state legislative ideology and polarization located at <http://www.americanlegislatures.com>, containing estimates of ideological positions of more than 20,000 individual legislators in all 50 states across the past two decades, plus more than 1,800 chamber-years of aggregate data. He is the coauthor of *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State* (Andrew Gelman, David Park, Joseph Bafumi, and Jeronimo Cortina, 2009) and has published work in the *American Political*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii

List of contributors

Science Review, *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Politics Research*, *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, *Political Analysis*, and *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*. He has been a Robert Wood Johnson Scholar in Health Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, and a fellow at the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics at Princeton University. His research website is <http://research.bshor.com>.

Natalie (Talia) Jomini Stroud is Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Assistant Director of Research at the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life at the University of Texas at Austin. She directs the grant-funded Engaging News Project, which examines commercially viable and democratically beneficial ways of improving online news coverage. In 2014–15, she was a fellow at the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics at Princeton University. She is interested in how the media affect our political behaviors and attitudes, and how our political behaviors and attitudes affect our media use. Her book, *Niche News: The Politics of News Choice* (2011), explores the causes, consequences, and prevalence of partisan selective exposure and the preference for like-minded political information. *Niche News* received the International Communication Association's 2012 Outstanding Book Award. Her work has appeared in *Political Communication*, *Journal of Communication*, *Political Behavior*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, and the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. She received her PhD from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

Sean M. Theriault is University Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin. Professor Theriault is currently researching the distinction between ideological and war-making behavior in the U.S. Congress, has published three books: *The Power of the People: Congressional Competition*, *Public Attention*, and *Voter Retribution* (2005), *Party Polarization in Congress* (2008), and *The Gingrich Senators: The Roots of Partisan Warfare in Congress* (2013). He has also published numerous articles in a variety of journals on subjects ranging from presidential rhetoric to congressional careers and the Louisiana Purchase to the Pendleton Act of 1883. Before obtaining his PhD from Stanford University in 2001 (and his MA in political science in 2000), he attended the University of Richmond (BA, 1993) and the University of Rochester (MS in public policy analysis, 1996).

James A. Thurber earned his BA in political science at the University of Oregon and his MA and PhD at Indiana University. He is Distinguished University Professor and Director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University. He is editor of the journal *Congress and the Presidency*. His latest publications are *Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional Relations* (2013, 5th ed.) and *Campaigns and Elections, American Style* (with Candice Nelson, 2013, 4th ed.). He is the author and

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of contributors

xix

editor of numerous books and articles on American politics, including *Obama in Office* (2011), *Congress and the Internet* (with Colton Campbell, 2002), *The Battle for Congress: Consultants, Candidates, and Voters* (2001), *Crowded Airwaves: Campaign Advertising in Elections* (with Candice J. Nelson and David A. Dulio, 2001), *Campaign Warriors: Political Consultants in Elections* (2000), and *Divided Democracy* (1991).

Jonathan D. Weiler received his PhD in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he is a senior lecturer and director of undergraduate studies in the Curriculum in Global Studies. He is the author of two books: *Human Rights in Russia: A Darker Side of Reform* (2004) and *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics* (with Marc Hetherington, 2009).

Gerald C. Wright received his PhD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Before joining the faculty at Indiana University, he served as program director for political science at the National Science Foundation and taught at Florida Atlantic University and Florida State University. His research concentrates on public opinion, legislative behavior, and particularly the nexus of the two in representation. He has authored dozens of articles on these topics and is the coauthor of *Statehouse Democracy* (with Robert S. Erikson and John P. McIver, 1993), which has won enduring impact awards from both the Elections and Public Opinion and the State Politics and Policy sections of the American Political Science Association.

Antoine Yoshinaka is Associate Professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo. His research examines how institutions and the preferences of political actors influence political outcomes. Some of his recent work on congressional redistricting examines the various ways in which partisan mapmakers strategically allocate uncertainty across districts. His upcoming Cambridge University Press book, *Crossing the Aisle: Party Switching by U.S. Legislators in the Postwar Era*, is the first book-length treatment on the causes and consequences of legislative party switching in the United States. He received his PhD from the University of Rochester.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political
Polarization
Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Foreword

A few months ago, the weblog The Monkey Cage commissioned and published a series of short essays on polarization, kicked off by an overview written by Nolan McCarty, which summarized the findings of an APSA study group (on which I and several others present at the May 2014 conference at American University that formed the basis for this book served).¹ I think Nolan fairly reflected majority views of polarization within the scholarly community. What followed in the ensuing days and weeks was a rich offering of the research perspectives of colleagues, many by participants in this conference. Lots of interesting work on polarization is being done, and our knowledge is increasing. Much of that work is discussed in this volume.

PROFESSIONAL DISCOMFORT WITH POLARIZATION

What I would like to address, however, is what I see as our professional discomfort with and reluctance to take seriously the widespread public views that our political system is dangerously broken. I understand and sympathize with that defensive posture, one I've embraced most of my professional life. I've spent decades in Washington explaining and defending the American constitutional system in the face of what I considered to be uninformed and ill-considered attacks on Congress and our way of governing.

After all, the problems our country confronts are immensely difficult, other democracies struggle as we do trying to deal with them, we've overcome similar periods of subpar performance and political dysfunction throughout our history, and our political system has adapted to new circumstances and self-corrected.

¹ McCarty, Nolan. 2014. "What We Know and Don't Know about Our Polarized Politics." Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/01/08/what-we-know-and-dont-know-about-our-polarized-politics>.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxii

Foreword

But there's something else going on here: How would we justify ourselves if we didn't contest the conventional wisdom of mere pundits and journalists? We have a positive political science to conduct and are properly critical of half-baked diagnoses and ungrounded normative speculations on how to cure our governing maladies.

But I believe these times are strikingly different from what we have seen in the past, and the health and well-being of our democracy is properly a matter of great concern. We owe it to ourselves and our country to reconsider our priors and at least entertain the possibility that these concerns are justified, even if for us uncomfortably so.

MOSTLY CONSENSUS VIEWS OF IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

Let's start with some basics.

- The parties in Congress are as polarized – internally unified and distinctive from one another – as at any time in history. This holds for both the House and the Senate, and for most state legislatures. It also holds for an electorate that Gary Jacobson (Chapter 12 in this volume) reports was in the 2012 elections the most polarized ever (or at least since the start of ANES in 1952).
- The fit between ideology and party is unusually strong. As Hans Noel argues in his new book, *Political Ideologies and Political Parties in American History*, for perhaps the first time in American history, the two dominant ideologies have captured the two dominant political parties.² The path to polarization, he argues, originated neither among elected officials nor within the mass public, but instead developed over a long period of time, with key roles played by ideological thinkers and political activists with policy demands.
- Under divided government and split chamber control, the current Congress has ceased to operate as an effective legislative body. Deliberation and compromise are scarce commodities, not the coin of the realm. The contemporary Congress bears little resemblance to the “textbook Congress” or “the reform Congress” that followed. Individual members are no longer the most useful unit of analysis for understanding congressional behavior and policy-making. Parties are the key actors, and they respond more to their activist bases than to the median voter.
- Public approval of the performance of Congress and public trust in government to respond to their needs have plunged to record depths.
- Whereas a causal connection between inequality and polarization is uncertain, growing concerns about economic and political inequality are rooted in real increases in the concentration of income, wealth, and opportunities for political influence (see Bonica et al., Chapter 16, this volume).

² Noel, Hans. 2013. *Political Ideologies and Political Parties in America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Foreword*

xxiii

MORE CONTROVERSIAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT POLARIZATION

These are not controversial assertions. Now on to the often more disputed aspects of the polarization story.

- The most important and problematic feature of today's polarization is its partisan character. To treat polarization as "mere sorting" is to trivialize, if not miss entirely, the biggest and most significant development in American politics in recent decades.
- That polarization reflects first of all the striking ideological differences between the parties, evident most sharply in the behavior of elected officials at national and state levels and among party activists, but also clearly evident among voters (see Part I of this volume). The level of constraint (consistency of policy preferences) in the ideological views of voters has increased markedly since Philip Converse described "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics" more than a half century ago.³
- Partisan polarization reflects more than sincere ideological differences, however. The rough parity between the parties fuels an intense competition for control of the White House and Congress. The stakes for control are particularly high because the ideological differences and policy demands between the vast party networks are large, and the chances of gaining or maintaining control are realistic because of the competitiveness of the parties. This leads to strategic agenda setting and voting – what Frances Lee calls partisan team play⁴ – even on issues with little or no ideological content, an expansion of the permanent campaign into an institutionalized partisan messaging war in Congress, and a tribalism (what scholars often call affective partisan polarization) that is now such a prominent feature of American politics (see Theriault, Chapter 7, this volume).
- The linkage of party and ideology has given us "more responsible parties" and with it the promise of more clarity and accountability for voters. But when embedded in our constitutional system, it can be a formula for willful obstruction and policy irresolution. That is precisely the outcome Austin Ranney forecast in his prophetic dissent to the famous 1950 American Political Science Association Report entitled "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System."⁵ Ranney powerfully argued that more ideologically coherent, internally unified, and adversarial parties in the fashion of Westminster-style parliamentary democracy would be a disaster within the American constitutional system, given our separation of powers, separately

³ Converse, Philip. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In D. Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press.

⁴ Lee, Frances. 2010. *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁵ Ranney, Austin. 1950. "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties." *American Political Science Review* 44 (3): Part 2, Supplement.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

elected institutions, and constraints on majority rule that favor cross-party coalitions and compromise.⁶

- This mismatch between our parties and governing institutions is made even more problematic by another feature of our contemporary politics: **the polarization is asymmetric**. Republicans have become a radical insurgency: “ideological extreme, contemptuous of the inherited policy regime, scornful of compromise, unpersuaded by conventional understanding of facts, evidence, and science; and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition.”⁷

The evidence of this asymmetry is overwhelming. Nolan McCarty, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal provide the strongest evidence for this asymmetry among members of Congress with their use of overlapping cohorts in the first dimension of DW-NOMINATE scores.⁸ They find that the ideological distance between the parties grew dramatically since the 1970s, but that it would be a mistake to equate the two parties’ roles in contemporary political polarization. “(T)he data are clear that this is a Republican-led phenomenon where very conservative Republicans have replaced moderate Republicans and Southern Democrats.”⁹ The rise of the Tea Party moved the Republican Party even further from the political center.

This striking party asymmetry measured by congressional roll-call behavior is also present in state legislatures, as Part III of this volume demonstrates.

But the evidence for asymmetry goes well beyond roll-call voting. Changing Republican Party positions on taxes, Keynesian economics, immigration, climate change and the environment, health care, science policy, and a host of cultural policies are consistent with the same pattern. So too are the embrace of hard-ball strategies and tactics involving parliamentary-like opposition, the rise of the 60-vote Senate, government shutdowns, debt ceiling hostage-taking, and nullification efforts not seen since the antebellum South. Historian Gregory Kabaservice in *Rule and Ruin* traces the key intellectual and political developments in the transformation of the GOP from Eisenhower to the Tea Party.¹⁰ In *The Party Is Over*, former Republican congressional staffer Mike Lofgren provides a rich and colorful insider’s perspective on the radicalization of the Republican Party in Congress.¹¹ And Norm Ornstein and I in *It’s Even*

⁶ Ranney, Austin. 1951. “Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Commentary.” *American Political Science Review* 45 (Sept.): 488–499.

⁷ Mann, Thomas E., and Norman J. Ornstein. 2012. *It’s Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism*. New York: Basic Books. xiv.

⁸ McCarty, Nolan, Keith Poole, Howard Rosenthal, and Chris Hare. 2012. “Polarization Is Real (and Asymmetric).” Retrieved from <http://themonkeycage.org/2012/05/15/polarization-is-real-and-asymmetric>

⁹ Ibid. p. 3.

¹⁰ Kabaservice, Gregory. 2012. *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹¹ Lofgren, Mike. 2013. *The Party Is Over*. New York: Viking.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Foreword*

xxv

Worse Than It Looks document how the asymmetry developed from Newt Gingrich in the 1980s to the Young Guns in the present.

Finally, given the salience of the racial and cultural divides in the new party coalitions, it should not be surprising that asymmetric polarization has found its way to the public. Republican Party voters are more skewed to their ideological pole than Democratic Party voters are to theirs.

Polarization is indeed asymmetric, yet many political scientists, like most mainstream journalists and political reformers, refuse to even acknowledge or take seriously the case for this assertion. It makes us uncomfortable framing an argument that some will characterize as partisan, even if it more accurately captures the reality of the contemporary party system. We (as well as mainstream media) do the public a disservice to say less than we believe to be true and avoid research directions that might produce “unbalanced” results. Insisting on false equivalence in the media or the academy is no virtue.

One final point about polarization: Apart from the substantial minority of citizens who never vote and whose lives are fully detached from politics and public affairs, we are indeed a Red and Blue nation. Alan Abramowitz’s characterization of the current era of electoral competition (Chapter 1 in this volume) is in my view dead on: intense two-party competition for control, increasing one-party domination of states and congressional districts, and consistency of election results across levels and over time.

AN OUTDATED LITERATURE?

Much of what we have written about parties and Congress does not fit contemporary conditions. As John Zaller, Seth Masket, and their colleagues from UCLA have theorized and demonstrated, parties are less collectives of election-minded politicians responding to the median voter than networks including interest groups, activists, and donors with clear policy demands.¹² The imprint of these networks on the public has weakened the argument that voters are mostly moderate, pragmatic, and independent (see also Karol, Chapter 3, this volume).

Districts voting for presidential and House candidates of different parties are vanishing (see Abramowitz, Chapter 1, this volume). So too are states with U.S. senators representing both parties. Divided party government is today a formula for inaction, not an opportunity for bipartisan legislating.

So there is no reason to be smug about our past research findings or certain that we have seen it all before. Plenty of evidence suggests we have a serious mismatch between our “more responsible parties” and our constitutional system, especially when one of those parties is hell-bent on replacing, not amending to fit current conditions, a century’s worth of policy development.

¹² Bawn, Kathleen, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2012. “A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands, and Nominations in American Politics,” *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (3): 571–597.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxvi

Foreword

WHAT TO DO?

What we know from our research is that there is no easy way out of the mess we are in.

Change our institutions to fit our new-style parties? Beyond reining in the Senate filibuster, this would entail far-reaching constitutional reform that is likely to remain in the realm of intellectual debate.

Alter the electoral system to produce somewhat less polarized parties? Lots of ideas worth pursuing in the states, but short of major changes such as compulsory voting or some form of PR, the evidence suggests that they would produce at best modest results.

Encourage independent or third-party candidates appealing to a vast moderate center in American politics? Been there. Done that. A definite nonstarter.

More wishful thinking about delegation to nonpartisan or bipartisan groups? Enough already!

Perhaps more promising are approaches that focus directly on the parties as they exist within our constitutional system. These parties are deeply and asymmetrically polarized, each anchored in a worldview and coalitions of interests and activists, and likely to stay that way for some time to come. Under these conditions, unified party government seems an essential first step, one that can sustain itself in office long enough to put in place and begin to implement a credible governing program. The second is nudging the Republican Party back into a genuinely conservative, not radical party, one a little more pragmatic and a little less ideological, one that aspires to win presidential as well as congressional elections over the long haul. The third is dampening the intense and unrelenting competition for control of Congress and the White House, which is itself an historical anomaly.

With demographic changes continuing to unfold to the benefit of the Democrats, it is not hard to see them retaining and increasing their advantage in presidential elections. Controlling the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue is more challenging. Democrats might have an opportunity to regain unified control in 2016. But holding those majorities in 2018 would be an even more difficult task.

How about another run of unified Republican Party government, one that is not discredited like George W. Bush's by unpopular wars and a financial collapse, and finds its way to a politically and substantively sustainable program for governing? Some argue the best way to bring the Republican Party back to reality is to put it in charge and make it fully accountable for its actions. Others fear the policy consequences of unconstrained extremism.

Perhaps a more reliable way of bringing the Republican Party back into the mainstream is a few more decisive presidential elections defeats. That might create the conditions for the emergence of new Republican ideas less detached

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Foreword

xxvii

from reality and new efforts among some coalition partners to challenge extremist forces in primary elections.

I don't know what the answer is, or even if there is one. But I do know that in spite of a lot of terrific research, we still have work to do fully diagnosing our strikingly dysfunctional government and speaking forthrightly in the public what we believe to be true. This collection of research, with its broad scope and focus on partisan change, is a good start toward that goal.

Thomas E. Mann

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political
Polarization
Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-11416-6 - American Gridlock: The Sources, Character, and Impact of Political Polarization

Edited by James A. Thurber And Antoine Yoshinaka

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Robert Dreesen, Senior Editor at Cambridge University Press (CUP), for his early and strong support, which assured the timely publication of *American Gridlock*. We thank the two production editors who worked on this publication, Josh Penney at the United States Cambridge office and Adam Hooper at the Cambridge office in the United Kingdom. We also thank our very efficient project manager, Sathish Kumar at Integra Software Services and Kevin Broccoli, our indexer.

We thank Rebecca Prosky at American University's Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies for her outstanding organization of the conference that led to this book and for her careful assistance in the production of *American Gridlock*. Barbara Romzek, Dean of American University's School of Public Affairs, gave us her support of this project from conception to completion. I also thank my friend, Neil Kerwin, colleague and president of American University who has been a strong supporter of the Center and its projects since its founding in 1979.

The authors in *American Gridlock* contributed original and thought-provoking scholarship on polarization for this book, and they all submitted in a timely manner, despite their many other worthy endeavors. The book is a collective effort, but as editors and authors we take full responsibility for any omissions or errors of fact and interpretation.

We dedicate this book to our families. Jim thanks Claudia, Mark, Lissette, Kathryn, Greg, Tristan, Bryan, and Kelsey for your gifts of love, joy, inspiration and support. Antoine thanks his family, in particular his wife Daniela and their daughter Clara, for their love, patience, and understanding during the time it took to write and edit this book. He also thanks his parents, Louise and Tsukasa, and in-laws, Paulo and Ester, for their support and affection.