


separately, and representatives from rural Southern districts supported the NIRA, while their counterparts in Northern industrial districts supported the AAA and the REA.

In part these coalitions formed because of the severity of the economic shock they were called on to address and the fact that Roosevelt wanted the policies enacted. As we have seen, members frequently said they were voting for this or that piece of legislation not because they wanted or liked it, but because the President wanted it. It must be remembered that from 1932 to 1938, Roosevelt led the party to overwhelming victories. The 1932 landslide was followed by a *gain* in Democratic House seats in 1934, and then the overwhelming victory of 1936. No other President has ever had such striking electoral fortunes over a six-year, three-election period. As late as 1938, Lyndon Johnson overcame highly unfavorable odds and won a House seat by running on the slogan, "I will support the President in Washington."<sup>47</sup> This is in such stark contrast to contemporary results and campaigns as to be almost unbelievable. However, these impressive electoral results, and the unlikely nature of the coalition, could not last forever.

The emergence of a conservative coalition in 1938 effectively ended the President's ability to push further domestic policy changes through the Congress. The coalition became active on a bill that, like civil rights legislation, split the Northern and Southern wings of the party. The Fair Labor Standards Act was opposed by Southerners because it would have destroyed their sole advantage in attracting industry—cheap labor. In their efforts to defeat the bill, Southern representatives joined forces with Republicans. Their success in defeating the Fair Labor Standards Act and the increased Republican membership after the 1938 election put the conservative coalition in a position to block any further major policy proposals.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Committees and Policy Making in Critical Eras

 COMMITTEES ARE more than just a part of the policy process in the U.S. House of Representatives. Since World War II they have effectively *made* policy, according to such seminal works as those of Charles O. Jones (on the Agriculture Committee), Richard Fenno (Appropriations), John Manley (Ways and Means), and Nelson Polsby and Joseph Cooper (the seniority system). In general the historical picture these authors paint shows why committees' structure, norms, and rules encouraged policy incrementalism.<sup>1</sup> House committees were hierarchical; Ways and Means, Rules, and Appropriations were exclusive and powerful. Membership on these committees was earned: members first had to serve on less important committees, where their performance could be evaluated by the leadership, before being appointed to one of the major ones.<sup>2</sup> Turnover on the major committees was relatively slow, which served to inculcate new members with existing norms and rules.<sup>3</sup> Add to this portrait the selection of committee assignments by members seeking influence in areas relevant to their policy interests, and one recognizes that preferences and institutional structure combined to yield committees that were, in William Riker's term, sets of preferences.<sup>4</sup>

Although the 1974 congressional reforms changed some aspects of the committee system, the basic point still holds today—committee structure, norms, and rules promote policy incrementalism. To be sure, we may now speak more commonly of a "subcommittee government" that has brought more participants into the process; and there have been alterations in the referral process and other parts of the system. But despite these changes, Steven Smith and Christopher Deering conclude that the fragmentation of the pre-reform committee system is compatible with members' goals of reelection and personal power. "Jurisdictional fragmentation certainly helps. Members representing similar constituencies can join together to determine

policy affecting those constituencies with minimal interference from disinterested members; . . . members with particular policy interests are given an opportunity to focus on and have a major influence over policy decisions in those areas."<sup>5</sup> Thus it is fair to say the post-reform House maintains the essence of the pre-reform arrangements, and though in the discussion that follows, I focus on committee studies in the pre-1974 period, I shall stick to the present tense.

This is not to say that different committees all use similar decision strategies except insofar as the strategy in every case favors incremental policy choices. Fenno's comparative study of congressional committees shows how the system works.<sup>6</sup> He classifies committees by the goals of their members and by their major constituencies—factors that together yield problems unique to each committee. The goal of the members of the Appropriations Committee, for example, is influence, and their primary constituency is the House itself, whose members desire funding for the various programs of interest to them. Since the Appropriations Committee's way to attain influence is to cut the President's budget requests, thus diminishing funding the House members desire, a strategic dilemma ensues. This dilemma has been resolved by the development of a committee bill strategy. The Appropriations Committee is made up of liberals and conservatives, Southerners and Northerners, Democrats and Republicans. Fiscal differences are expected to be compromised and ironed out first in subcommittee and then by the full committee. The final bill or bills are then supported by the entire committee on the floor. Fenno refers to this as an integrative strategy, and the mode is clearly consensual.<sup>7</sup> Reporting out a bill supported by all of the committee's disparate factions leaves the whole House with little alternative but to support it, especially since bills are normally reported with a special rule prohibiting amendments. On specific items the President's budget request is reduced, thus ensuring the committee's influence. As Fenno has shown, however, if one takes an over-time series of appropriation bills, the amount appropriated tends to rise, thus satisfying the House members' desire to fund programs. Moreover, the rate of increase is relatively stable. In sum, the over-time decisions are incremental, with funding roughly following the pattern

$$t_1 = \$x_{t_1}; t_2 = \$x_{t_1} + .05; t_3 = \$x_{t_2} + .05; \text{ etc.}$$

The Interior Committee, by contrast, is characterized by members whose principal goal is reelection and a constituency composed of Western mining, timber, and ranching interests.<sup>8</sup> The committee's dilemma is how to support the differing, sometimes conflicting, inter-

ests of its members' constituencies. It has resolved the problem by adopting a logrolling strategy and a policy of multiple use. That is, the committee reports out a bill that satisfies the members' goal of reelection by allowing the different constituent interests to use federal lands for different purposes. A representative from east Texas gets timber-cutting rights for his constituents, a member from Colorado gets grazing rights at reduced prices for his constituents, and a representative from Montana gets mining rights. Each supports the others' policy proposals, and the result is universal pork-barrel legislation.

Ways and Means Committee members also have influence as their goal, but their constituency differs from the Appropriations Committee's; the constituency of Ways and Means is led by the President and by business interests seeking tax breaks.<sup>9</sup> In addition, unlike Appropriations, Ways and Means is not required to report out a timely yearly bill. The strategic result is that the committee is more partisan than Appropriations; the usual policy result is the granting of special tax breaks.<sup>10</sup> Neither the President nor the committee members want to campaign for office on a record of increasing taxes, and business and industrial interests usually present to the committee tightly reasoned packages showing how tax breaks will help them without diminishing overall revenues. Manley shows how, during a 1960's session, the committee heard testimony favoring a tax-cutting package proposed by Lyndon Johnson and opposing a limited floor for deductions that would have raised taxes.<sup>11</sup> Once again, the preferences of members and the structure, norms, and rules of the committee combined to provide stable policy results.

These are of course but a few examples of committee decision making, and a more exhaustive portrait would in any case be somewhat dated. The rise of environmental interests, for example, must change the policy equation for the Interior Committee to a certain extent. And one could of course draw other, similar examples from other House committees. Yet I would still argue that the overall policy outputs of committees are incremental, owing in large part to the combination of members' preferences and committee structure. In the following pages we shall see how critical elections result in non-incremental policy changes by the Appropriations and Agriculture committees.

In the modern House of Representatives the committee system has reigned in no small part because of the continuity of membership. Continuity ensures gradual changes in leadership and the transmission of committee norms and rules, which facilitate incrementalism, to new members. In addition, committee jurisdictions amount to lim-

ited monopoly-right grants over certain policy areas.<sup>12</sup> Thus, for example, the Agriculture Committee has a monopoly on agriculture policy. Its membership is, within limits, self-selected and hence dominated by people representing agricultural interests. The more important a committee, the more restricted its membership. In part, restricting membership strengthens committees because their proprietary rights are distributed over fewer members, enabling individual members to wield more power within the committee. To be sure, a committee's monopoly rights can be contested or limited by claims of other committees, or by the actions of the House itself on a bill's final passage. The jurisdictional disputes over the 1977 Carter Energy Act are a case in point. And the House's attempts to amend tax bills on the floor testify to the desire, on occasion, to limit a committee's proprietary rights.<sup>13</sup> These limitations notwithstanding, it is still fair to assert that committees are, in general, awarded proprietary rights over policy areas, and that members seek committee assignments that help them attain their ends.

As we have seen, during critical election periods the turnover on House committees is very high. Fenno, noting how this affects committee decision making, observes: "The two occasions on which the greatest amount of open dissatisfaction, threatened rebellion, and actual rebellion occurred coincided with the two greatest personnel turnovers. . . . The tendency to rebellion increases as personnel turnover increases; the very stability of committee membership appears, once again, as a critical condition of [the style of decision making]." <sup>14</sup> Fenno is describing the Appropriations Committee in the 80th House (1947-49), when the newly elected Republican members, in the majority for the first time in fourteen years, were seeking to repeal much of the New Deal legislation. The fact that President Harry Truman was a Democrat who threatened and used the veto to thwart the proposed policy shifts, along with the Democrats' surprising electoral victory in 1948, ultimately prohibited any major shift. During critical election periods, however, the same party controls House, Senate, and Presidency for at least a decade.

Committee turnover during critical election periods should be interpreted as preference shifts brought about by electoral results. The shift in preferences and leadership results in changed norms, rules, and structure, which in combination yield nonincremental policy results. In this chapter the focus is on the House Appropriations Committee from 1895 to 1950, and the House Agriculture Committee during the New Deal era.<sup>15</sup> In regard to the Appropriations Committee the argument is that the exogenously driven electoral turnover,

along with shifts in norms, leadership, and so forth, led to unified partisan activity on the committee and thus to nonincremental policy shifts, or a new equilibrium.

### ★ The Appropriations Committee

The Appropriations Committee is at the heart of the congressional policy process and is thus a natural choice. The committee has operated consensually since the end of World War II, compromising differences among its members. But the pressures to operate by consensus go back much further. Indeed, ever since the committee's formation in 1865, any major changes in the House's appropriations process have resulted from disputes over the committee's funding of programs and departments. When, in the 1880's, the House gave seven additional committees the right to appropriate funds, it was because the Appropriations Committee was not funding certain agencies (e.g. the one responsible for agriculture) at a high enough level. And when the House voted in 1919 and 1920 to change the budget process and recentralize power in the Appropriations Committee, it was essentially because the constituency-oriented committees were funding their agencies and programs at too high a level given the state of the economy. The committee's strategy to report consensual bills that balance the need to guard the Treasury and to fund programs incrementally can thus be seen as a long-standing strategy.<sup>16</sup>

During critical periods old policy patterns or equilibria are broken, and clusters of policy changes are enacted. If this is the case for policy in general, such results should be observable on the Appropriations Committee. The argument is that if preferences have shifted toward a new congressional majority party, then the committee's decision process will be partisan rather than consensual, and the chances for nonincremental appropriations are increased. High turnover and unified partisan behavior on the committee will yield nonincremental appropriations. In order to demonstrate this it is necessary to show that:

1. during the period from 1895 to 1950 the Appropriations Committee's behavior was usually consensual but at times partisan;
2. the absolute change in appropriations from year to year is associated with levels of partisan voting—specifically, partisan voting on the committee will be positively related to nonincremental appropriations;
3. during the critical periods 1897-99 and 1933-39, the levels of partisanship and nonincrementalism will be highest; and

4. committee turnover is high during the critical periods and thus associated with both partisanship and nonincrementalism.

In sum, the argument is that during a critical period electoral results cause high turnover, and the new majority on Appropriations behaves in a partisan fashion, which results in nonincremental appropriations.

In congressional history, 1890–1910 was the heyday of the Speaker's powers.<sup>17</sup> The committee and party systems were molded together by the practice of having party leaders chair the important committees. The result was a more hierarchical, centralized leadership structure in the House of Representatives than had previously obtained.<sup>18</sup> During this era party voting in the House peaked; thus one expects to find the Appropriations Committee voting in a more partisan fashion. To test this hypothesis, the committee's votes on the following kinds of roll calls were analyzed: amendments to appropriations bills, recommittal motions on appropriations bills, and final passage.<sup>19</sup> An average Index of Party Likeness score was computed for the entire committee, and the percentage of 90 percent-90 percent party-line votes was calculated. These scores were calculated for all Houses from the 54th through the 81st House (1895–1950). Since there were up to eight appropriating committees between 1895 and 1920, the scores were calculated for each committee during this period. The results are shown in Figure 5.1.

It is clear that within this span of years there were periods of partisan committee behavior. One is the period from the critical election of 1894 to 1915, a few years after the stripping of the Speaker's power in the 61st House (1909–11). The lowest percentage of almost straight party-line voting is 22 percent in the 54th House (1895–97); in the next two Houses the average rises to 50 percent. In the following period, 1916–33, the average is much lower; only two Houses attain levels falling in the range of the earlier period. The New Deal realignment results in an increased percentage of party votes from 1935 to 1939 (74th–75th Houses), when Roosevelt made a strong turn to the left. After these Houses the figures fall back toward the less-than-10-percent levels reported by Fenno for the post-World War II period. In addition, an analysis of average Index of Party Likeness scores for each House reveals an average of 27.2 for the 1895–1915 period, and of 51.6 for the post-1915 era. Since the lower the Index of Party Likeness score, the higher the levels of party voting, the earlier period was plainly characterized by party structuring of voting. Thus, by both measures it is clear that the members of appropriations committees have at times behaved in a partisan fashion, notably during the 1895–1915 period, when multiple committees appropriated, and during the

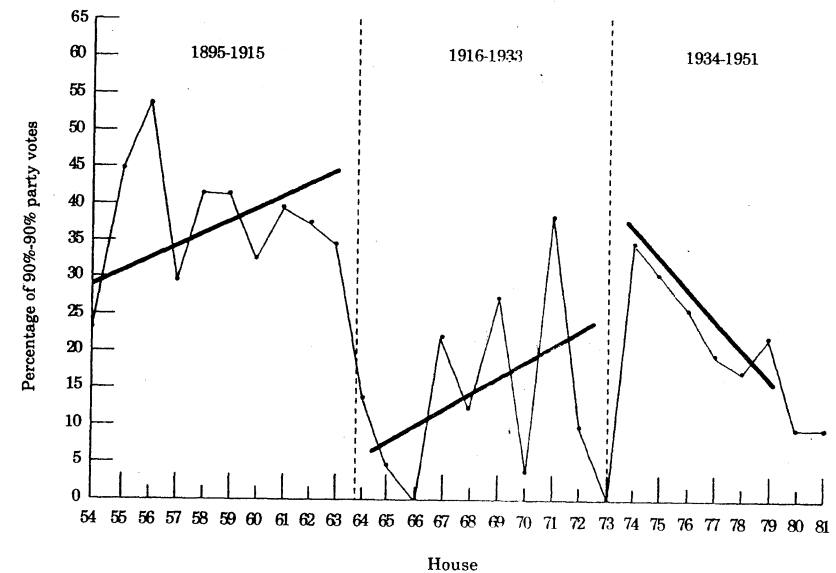


Fig. 5.1. Party voting on the House Appropriations Committee and other appropriating committees, 1895–1951. Source: compiled by author from the *Congressional Record* and *Public Acts*.

New Deal period, when Appropriations acted alone. The years 1895–1915 contain both a critical and a postcritical period when partisanship was high, which suggests two important points about partisanship and nonincremental appropriations decisions. I expect that during the critical period 1897–1901, changes in appropriations would be greater than they were in the post-1901 period, even though partisanship remained high. Essentially this means that partisan behavior was a norm in this era, and that it is the turnover in membership—change in preferences—that generates the shifts in appropriations. In addition, if partisanship is the norm during this era and in non-critical periods the committees pass incremental fiscal bills, then partisanship can yield both incremental and nonincremental results.\* The nonincremental decisions will occur in critical periods when committee turnover is greatest. If I can show that the 1897–1901 and 1933–39 periods yielded the most partisan and least incremental appropriations, and that committee turnover in these periods was at a

\*I am indebted to Joseph Cooper for this point. The argument is that a representative process ensures that all viewpoints will be heard internally; thus any policy output will be a compromise. A partisan process can vote in nonincremental changes as well as incremental outputs. In part this is true because in a partisan process you do not have to convince as many members—one over half of the majority party—if party voting is enforced after the decision is made.

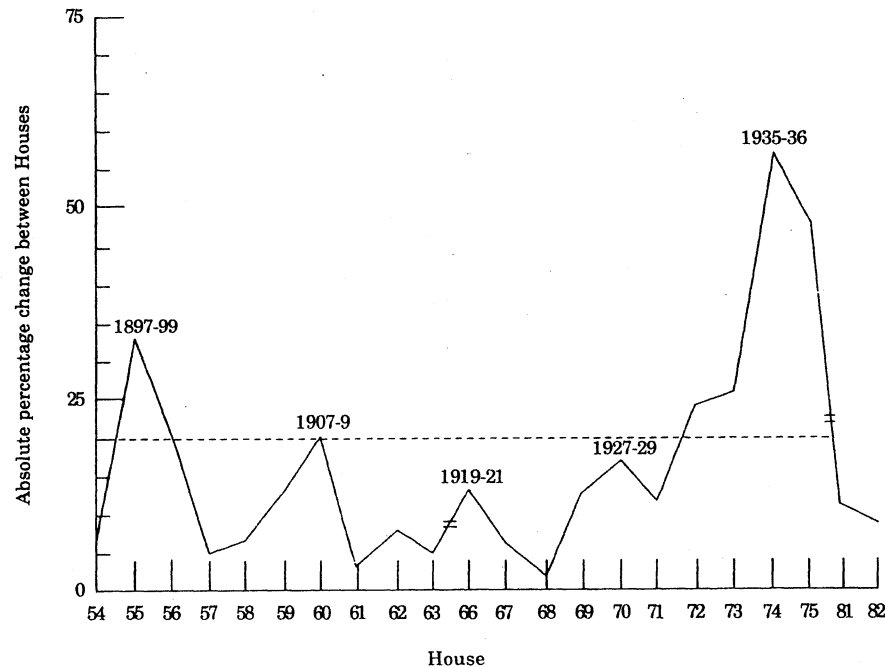


Fig. 5.2. Percentage changes in House appropriations, 1895-1953. The figure for each House is the average of the two annual bills.

high, the results for the committee study would be similar to those for the entire House.

Estimating the amounts of money appropriated during World Wars I and II, and to a lesser extent the Spanish-American War, is problematic. To reduce as much as possible the effects of war on appropriations decisions, I do not include defense appropriations in any of the 58 appropriations bills in the time series. In addition, I calculated changes in appropriations for agriculture, rivers and harbors, commerce, and labor as a check against changes in total appropriations. Because these checks did not show significant differences from the overall appropriations, only the overall figures, minus defense, are given. Figure 5.2 shows the absolute percentage changes from appropriations by previous Houses for the entire time series, excluding the two world wars. I include data from the 81st and 82nd Houses to show how increases dropped after realignment was over.

Two technical points are in order. First, I use absolute figures for appropriations because significant change can be either positive or negative. The Jacksonian era was characterized by the reductions in

the scope of federal government. Ronald Reagan's "policy revolution" will ultimately be judged on the basis of how much he cut government. Second, the figures used are those for final House passage; they differ by less than 1 percent from those passed by the committees.<sup>20</sup> Essentially there is no difference between the two figures.

The results show that the highest absolute changes in appropriations occurred during the critical periods of the 1890's and 1930's. The only positive changes in excess of 20 percent obtain in the critical eras. The only other change of over 20 percent, in the 72nd House (1931-33), was a decrease, the result of President Hoover's attempt to balance the budget.

Thus far, I have shown that the Appropriations Committee behaved in a partisan fashion during both realignments and during the period from 1900 to 1915, and that absolute changes in appropriations are greatest during realignments. What remains is to tie together committee turnover, partisanship, and major changes in appropriations. Table 5.1 shows the average turnover on the Appropriations Committee, the average Index of Party Likeness for committee members on relevant votes, and the average positive increases in appropriations for 1897-1949. The hypothesis is that during the 1890's and New Deal realignment periods, committee turnover, party voting, and appropriations will be high, and that high partisanship during the 1901-15 period will not result in abnormally high change in appropriations. In addition it is expected that the 1916-32 and 1940-49 periods (excluding war expenditures) will follow the Fenno model of lower partisanship and incremental changes in appropriations.

The results support the argument. In the years 1897-1901 partisanship was high, with an average Index of Likeness of 20.5 (i.e. the average vote was about 80 percent-80 percent party line). The average increase in expenditures during these years was 27.0 percent, and the

TABLE 5.1  
*Appropriations Committee Turnover, Party Voting, and Increases in Appropriations, 1897-1949*

Period	Number new committee members		Index of Likeness		Increase in appropriations	
	Mean (pct.)	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean (pct.)	Std. dev.
1897-1901	46.6%	11.5	20.5	0.7	27.0%	8.5
1902-1915	35.9	18.1	34.3	4.2	7.6	7.1
1916-1932	26.0	13.6	57.6	12.4	4.5	18.9
1933-1939	34.3	10.9	29.7	1.2	34.1	19.4
1940-1949	24.4	8.0	54.0	9.3	9.6	14.3

turnover on the Appropriations Committee averaged 46.6 percent. The New Deal realignment was also characterized by high turnover—34.3 percent with an average Index of Likeness of 29.7 (about 70 percent–70 percent), and an average increase in expenditures of 34.1 percent. Thus the highest partisanship and highest change in appropriations occurred during realignment periods. The turnover on the Appropriations Committee was slightly higher during the 1902–15 period than during the New Deal realignment. However, since during more than two-thirds of this period the Speaker had the power to appoint committees, this difference in turnover can be readily accounted for by internal structural factors. Turnover on the committee brought about by electoral results appears to bring about the most dramatic changes in partisanship and in expenditures.

The 1902–15 period is characterized by relatively high partisan voting, but the average increase in appropriations is only 7.6 percent. The 1916–32 and 1940–49 periods have the lowest turnover, the lowest levels of partisan voting, and average increases in appropriations below 10 percent, a figure commonly used to define incrementalism.

These results show that nonincremental money decisions are related to electoral turnover and partisan voting. In terms of the theory offered here, the results are compatible with social-choice theory regarding policy equilibrium. Kenneth Shepsle argues that members seeking committee assignments are revealing preferences in the committees they select.<sup>21</sup> Thus he claims that “an election that ‘shocks’ the structure” of the previous House’s committee has important consequences. The consequences result in part because “one of the benefits of committee membership is the monopoly control, shared with other committee members, over the agenda and deliberations in a particular policy jurisdiction. Monopoly ‘rents’ are earned by committee members; members capitalize these rents; that is, convert them into general institutional influence, by engaging in quid pro quo behavior that is common in congressional life.”<sup>22</sup> Under normal conditions members of committees, especially the more important committees, guard the permeability of their “rents” by getting the new members’ consent in regard to how things are done: “consent must be obtained before anything gets done.” During critical periods the election results in a high turnover of members, shifts in preferences, and a drastic increase in committee permeability. When there is such a “large committee turnover . . . then the consent must be obtained before anything is done premise no longer applies.”<sup>23</sup> In sum the combined effect of the “electoral shock” is to restructure the committee system in such a way that a new policy equilibrium can be obtained.

### ★ The Agriculture Committee

The results for appropriating committees corroborate the results for the House as a whole. However, these results do not portray in detail what one means by structural change, and the details of such change are important. In order to demonstrate the effect of structural change I turn to an analysis of the House Agriculture Committee during the 1890’s and New Deal realignments. In the first period, I shall argue, the structure of the committee was changed in 1880, when the House granted Agriculture the right to appropriate independent of the Appropriations Committee. With this structural shift in place, the downturn in the farm economy and the turnover on the committee generated by the critical elections caused a rise in agricultural appropriations in the 1897–1901 period. In short, the argument is that the specific changes associated with the critical period were in part exogenously driven by the shift in farmers’ economic fortunes.

In the New Deal era, I shall argue, the Agriculture Committee was presented with a serious structural problem with the passage of the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Specifically, the committee could not apportion the monies appropriated in the AAA until it had institutionalized a system of commodity subcommittees that could logroll price supports and other programs. This is, of course, in contrast to the 1890’s example, where the structural shift preceded the appropriations increase.

First a word on the developments in the appropriating process from the inception of the Appropriations Committee after the Civil War. In 1867, with the government saddled with a high national debt and running huge deficits, the House created a committee with jurisdiction over all fiscal matters and an admonition to guard the Treasury. The new committee took its role seriously. From 1867 to 1879 the mean change in the budget was –0.21 percent. Meanwhile, in 1876 the House vested even more power in the committee by passing the Holman Rule, which allowed the committee to reduce departmental expenditures by cutting positions and salaries. Decreased expenditures over the 1867–79 period and the industrialization of the economy generated government surpluses and, by 1880, a greatly reduced national debt.

The committee’s reward was a loss of power. In 1881 the 46th House, in a major revision of its rules, accorded the Agriculture Committee the right to appropriate monies on its own. The debate centered on two factors. First, members favoring the change felt that agriculture was underfunded. Second, they contended that the under-

funding was due to the excessive power vested in the Appropriations Committee. As Representative William H. Calkins (R-Ind.) noted: "The fact is, this is simply a fight for power. . . . The ground of complaint is the immense power that the [Appropriations] committee now wields in this House. . . . Two hundred and seventy men are now under the guardianship of fifteen."<sup>24</sup>

The 46th House also granted the Commerce Committee the right to appropriate funds for rivers and harbors legislation; proposals from five other standing committees seeking the appropriations privilege were denied. But in 1885 the 49th House extended the privilege to five other committees, with the result that by 1887 Appropriations controlled only about half the budget. These decentralizing reforms generated increased expenditures by the seven committees directly appropriating funds for the departments and agencies under their jurisdiction. In sum, the exogenous demand for increased expenditures was accommodated by a structural change in the House's committee system.

After an initial jump, the year-to-year shifts in agricultural appropriations decreased. None of the 1892-96 budgets ever increased more than 3 percent; two actually decreased. The 1898-1900 budgets are the ones most likely to have been affected by the critical elections of 1894 and 1896. The story is as follows. The Panic of 1893 had caused a drastic drop in agricultural prices. In 1888 the December 1 price for a bushel of wheat was slightly over 90 cents; by 1894 the price had fallen to 30 cents. Oat prices fell from 42 cents a bushel in 1890 to 18 cents by 1896. The decline in agricultural prices led to increased political activity on the part of farmers, as the rise of the Populist and Anti-Monopoly political parties attests. The elections of 1894 and 1896 caused a complete turnover on the Agriculture Committee (Table 3.7), and the new members responded by increasing the agricultural appropriation. The response was delayed, however, until the full effects of the electoral change were evident—that is, until the Republican Party controlled the House, Senate, and Presidency. The full complement met on the budget for the first time in December 1897; thus the effect can only be seen in the 1898 budget figures. The budgets under the control of the 55th and 56th Houses (1897-1901) were the 1898, 1899, 1900, and 1901 budgets, and each provided for a minimum increase of over 7 percent in agricultural appropriations; two gave increases of 10 percent or more. Figure 5.3 shows the appropriations for agriculture over the 1891-1900 period.

The argument is that the upward shift in agricultural appropriations from 1898 to 1901 was the result of the committee turnover gen-

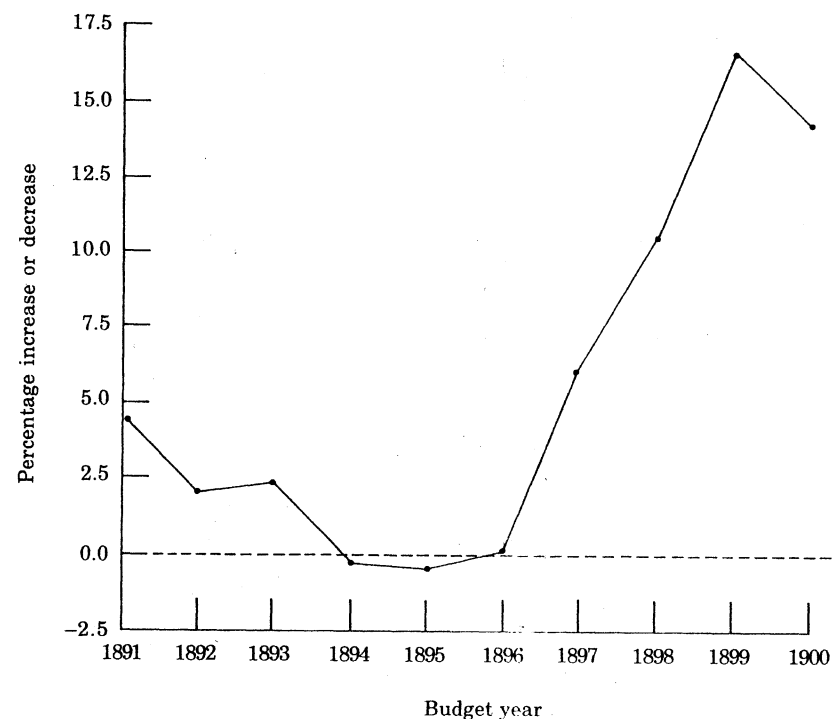


Fig. 5.3. Percentage changes in agricultural appropriations by budget year, 1891-1900

erated by the election results. The structure to increase appropriations had been in place since 1881; what was necessary was for the preference shifts to be translated into electoral results. The increases in that period are all the more impressive considering that the Republicans had won the elections. It was, after all, the Democrats who adopted the pro-farmer Populist Party propositions in their 1896 platforms. Moreover, the Republicans overrepresented Northern industrial interests, the Democrats rural Southern and Western interests. In one sense the Republican coalition was capable of ignoring farm interests. It did not do so at least in part because the new Republican members of the policy-making committee represented farm interests and favored increased appropriations. Interestingly, in two of these four budgets the increase in agricultural funding was greater than the overall budget increase. In short, if a committee has a jurisdictional monopoly and there is an influx of new members preferring higher expenditures, they have the ability to increase expenditures even under conditions where the dominant party could afford (electorally) to ignore or downplay the request for additional expenditures.

Some economic models assume that institutional structure is irrelevant; thus they would argue that the structural change that decentralized appropriations power was irrelevant or inconsequential. That is, a majority must have favored increased agricultural expenditures and, given this, expenditures would have risen regardless of the specific structural change actually made. The change could have come, for example, through new appointments to the Appropriations Committee or on the final floor vote. The specifics are irrelevant; what matters is that if a majority wishes to shift policy, it can do so regardless of structural arrangements.

It is, of course, difficult to counter such an argument without the capacity to replay history under different arrangements. Nevertheless, the structure-is-unimportant argument seems flawed in several ways. If the majority of the Appropriations Committee clearly favored funding at a lower rate, then finding a coalition to shift the decisions toward greater expenditures would have been extremely difficult, and replacing them *en bloc* impossible, since the committee members all had power bases that got them appointed to the committee in the first place. Given the Appropriations Committee's ability to delay and derail individual bills by parliamentary maneuvers, circumventing its decisions on the floor was not an option. The committee could and did keep bills off the floor, thus barring any appropriation at all in certain years. Given these difficulties, creating "new" appropriations committees was an extremely rational way to proceed. The Agriculture Committee had already revealed a preference for greater expenditures; empowering it to appropriate assured the desired policy result. If my claim is incorrect, then one might ask why, in the 46th House, the seven committees seeking the power to appropriate did not band together and seek an up-or-down vote for all their requests at the same time. Rather, the procedure was that each interest came separately to the floor for approval, and only Agriculture and Commerce won the right to appropriate. Obviously, in 1881 there was no majority for a complete stripping of Appropriations' power; rather, solutions were policy-specific.

Another reason to discount the structure-is-unimportant argument is that the flow of events was reversed in the New Deal period. As we have seen, in 1933–37 the House passed a large increase in the agricultural appropriation, and the committee had to create an after-the-fact structure that would allow it to divide the increased monies among the relevant commodity interests. Thus we turn to an explication of agricultural appropriations during the New Deal period.

Immediately after World War I the U.S. farm economy was plunged into recession. During the war the Allies' need for foodstuffs and American requirements for mobilization were such that production and services had expanded concomitantly, and the value of farmland and agricultural prices had risen sharply. The drop in farm prices after the war left farmers overextended in debt, taxation, and acreage. The weak export market, postwar deflation, and declining crop prices resulted in a depression. In 1919 annual farm income averaged \$1,395.00; by 1921 it had fallen to \$517.00. Aggregate farm debt was about \$3.8 billion in 1918; by 1922 it exceeded \$7 billion (in constant dollars).

All this generated pressure on Congress to shore up the farm economy. The main thrust of this pressure was toward three new policy preferences: to develop cooperative marketing programs, to raise the prices of agricultural products through government action, and to expand farm credit facilities. One important organizational development during this era was the formation, in 1920, of the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), headquartered in Washington. Under its leadership, congressmen from rural districts established a caucus headed by the Republican L. J. Dickinson of Iowa. This caucus worked to organize a bipartisan pro-farm movement in both House and Senate, while the other half of the so-called Farm Bloc, the AFBF, conducted and tabulated local farm bureau referenda by congressional district and used the results to pressure congressmen into supporting pro-farm legislation. This organizational arrangement enjoyed the support of other farm groups as well as the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Bloc was given credit for passing the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921, the Emergency Tariff of 1921, and the Capper-Volstead Act of 1922, among other bills. By 1924, however, prices in some commodities (e.g. cotton) had risen so much that bipartisan, cross-commodity action had become impossible.

Interest groups and congressmen representing commodities that were still depressed began to push programs that would increase prices, arguing that farmers were not fully sharing in America's prosperity. The core of these suggested policy shifts can be found by looking at a history of the McNary-Haugen agricultural subsidy bills considered by the House between 1924 and 1928.<sup>25</sup> For our purposes the dilemma was that the policy was driven by commodity differences, witness the fact that McNary-Haugen could not be passed until representatives of disparate agriculture interests came together to support it. The first bill died when cotton and dairy interests opposed it be-

cause it favored the wheat producers of the North Central states. Subsequent reintroductions of the bill featured the active participation of groups such as the American Council of Agriculture, the Corn Belt Committee, and the Committee of Twenty-Two. A form of the bill was passed twice in the 69th House (1925–27), when cotton and tobacco interests were added to the coalition. President Coolidge vetoed the bill both times. Hoover, too, adamantly opposed McNary-Haugen, preferring instead tariffs and cooperative marketing solutions.

The shift from subsistence and small cash-crop agriculture to agriculture as a commodity-based business generated shifts in preferences. The major indicators of shifting preferences were increases in commodity-based farm interest groups and Agriculture Committee hearings focusing on commodity problems. Nancy Kursman shows at least a fourfold increase in commodity-based farm groups between 1915 and 1930 and a similar fourfold rise in committee hearings on commodity-based problems from 1920 to 1930.

The Great Depression exacerbated the farm problem. Prices for farm products fell dramatically, and farm foreclosures rose from 17 per 1,000 in 1927–30 to 30 per 1,000 in 1932–33. The immediate response of the Roosevelt administration was to pass the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. This legislation was an emergency relief program. The thrust of the original AAA was based on the McNary-Haugen principle of price supports and parity that would give farmers purchasing power equivalent to their purchasing power in the 1909–14 base period. The act featured production controls for basic commodities in exchange for cash benefit payments. Unlike the 1920's legislation, the 1933 AAA was originated not by farm pressure groups working through the House, but by the executive branch. The same was true of other early New Deal agricultural legislation, such as the Emergency Farm Mortgage Act and the Farm Credit Act. In fact, the AAA appropriation appeared in the executive budget, not the congressional budget.

But whatever the initial intentions of the executive branch in passing the 1933 AAA, events soon changed them. In 1936 the Supreme Court declared the processing-tax section of the bill unconstitutional. Congress, meanwhile, in an attempt to maintain continuity of aid, had passed stopgap legislation such as the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment acts. In the course of this effort, policy shifted from farm prices to the maintenance of farm income. Rather than accept a tax on processors, the Congress was to fund commodity subsidies. In short, from 1933 to 1938, policy shifted from emergency legislation to

long-term policies featuring price subsidies, crop insurance, farm loans, and marketing quotas.

The President had given agricultural appropriations a large early boost with the AAA. The depression had resulted in a shift of preferences, and the massive turnover in the House yielded an agricultural policy designed to ameliorate the effects of the depression. However, this shift had been achieved without any restructuring of the Agriculture Committee. Turnover on the committee was great—85.7 percent from 1930 to 1933—but the legislation was executive and emergency-oriented, not congressional and maintaining. Given the commodity-based nature of the funding, the Agriculture Committee's problem was how to divide the increased appropriations in a way that would generate continuing support for agricultural income supports. The greatest challenge was to structure the committee to present a united front. The committee responded by establishing commodity-based subcommittees, thus institutionalizing the pork-barrel nature of agricultural politics that Charles O. Jones has detailed.<sup>26</sup> Kursman tells us how great were the exogenous pressures put on the committee, documenting a full 60 percent increase in commodity-based lobbies from 1932 to 1940.<sup>27</sup>

Before 1933 only the full committee held hearings; there were no permanent subcommittees. In the 73rd and subsequent Houses the committee was divided into formal subcommittees. From 1902 to the mid-1920's the Agriculture Committee's chairman had run commodity hearings; the new arrangement featured relatively permanent subcommittee chairs. In 1937 subcommittees were numbered and made permanent (some 20 years later, the 84th House established standing, named subcommittees). Some of the commodity-based subcommittees with their committee numbering scheme in the 74th House were (2) Potatoes under AAA, (3) Oleomargarine, (4) Wheat, (6) Cotton, (7) Tobacco, and (8) Rice. Standing subcommittees of the 75th House included (1) Commodities under AAA, (2) Sugar, (3) Dairy and Insurance, and (5) Surplus Commodities.

The subcommittees early recognized that in order to perpetuate and maintain the farm program, they would have to hold regular meetings on price supports. By 1936 such meetings were routine, with members of each subcommittee prepared to protect their interests. The debate over the 1938 AAA shows how the process worked. Representative Gerald J. Boileau (R–Wis.) stated: "The gentleman knows that the Committee on Agriculture was broken up into subcommittees to consider various phases of this bill. I happen to be on the subcom-

mittee considering milk and dairying, and that is what I am protecting."<sup>28</sup> Thus, the House Agriculture Committee restructured itself over the 1933–38 period in response to the emergency passage of the 1933 AAA. The passage of the 1938 AAA meant that the committee, through its subcommittees, controlled commodity subsidies; and the budget line was transferred from the executive to the congressional budget.

In order to test whether or not the shift to this new structural arrangement resulted in a new policy equilibrium, a piecewise dummy regression with known joint points was run on agricultural appropriations.<sup>29</sup> This technique was used because it tells us whether or not a new policy system resulted from the structural changes set in motion by the 1938 AAA. Richard Quandt devised this technique to determine systemic changes in the economy when the only data one had were known points measured as 0 or 1.<sup>30</sup> Thus the model identifies period-specific slopes and intercepts. To correct for years of inflation and deflation, the total amount appropriated for agriculture was adjusted for the price deflator for each year from 1916 to 1950. Using these figures the absolute levels of change in agricultural appropriations from one budget year to the next were calculated and run as the dependent variable. The equation is:

$$y_t = b_1x_1t + b_2x_2t + b_3x_3t + b_4x_4t + e$$

where

$y_t$  = absolute change in yearly appropriations

$x_1$  = a dichotomous variable with 1 for every year from 1916 to 1937 and 0 for every year from 1938 to 1950

$x_2$  = a counter for the years 1916 to 1950

$x_3$  = a dichotomous variable with 1 for every year from 1938 to 1950 and 0 for every year from 1916 to 1937

$x_4$  = a counter for the years 1938 to 1950

$e$  = error term

The model was estimated by a first-order autoregressive model in which  $y = xb + e$  and  $e = \rho e(t-1) + u$ , where  $\rho$  is the autoregressive parameter and  $u$  is an independent disturbance.  $\rho$  was estimated with a least-squares procedure, and to correct for autocorrelation a Cochrane-Orcutt iterative procedure was used.<sup>31</sup> The expectation is that the intercept for the 1938–50 period will be significant. In addition the slope for the 1916–37 period may be significant, given the success of the Farm Bloc. Table 5.2 shows the results.

The results confirm the hypothesis. The intercept for the subcom-

TABLE 5.2  
*Piecewise Regression for the Structural Shift in the  
Agriculture Committee*

Variable	Coefficient	Significance
$x_1$ : intercept 1916	.041	insignificant
$x_2$ : slope 1916–37	.406	significant
$x_3$ : intercept 1937	.472	significant .05
$x_4$ : slope 1938–50	-.023	insignificant

NOTE: F square = .45. Durbin Watson 1.97

mittee system inaugurated in the 1933–37 period and the passage of the 1938 AAA shows a significant upward and permanent shift in the appropriations for agriculture. The slope for the 1916–37 period is also significant. This result is not surprising given the early success of the Farm Bloc. In fact, changing the starting date to 1921 and rerunning the analysis yields an increase in the value of the slope coefficient. Figure 5.4 shows the agricultural appropriations by year for 1921–50. (Observe that the scale for 1921–34 rises to only \$250 million, which is close to the bottom of the scale for 1935–50.) The figure clearly shows a steady increase in appropriations from 1922 to 1933, and further increases from 1935 to 1939. The jump from slightly less than \$200 million in 1936 to over \$1 billion by 1939 shows the systemic difference.

The period from 1942 to 1950 shows a steady state at around \$600 million. Thus the results from the piecewise regression make sense: a significant slope change in the 1916–37 period and a significant intercept change for the 1938 AAA. The passage of the 1933 AAA failed to resolve the farm issue for the House in the following ways: (1) the decision was essentially made not there, but in the executive branch; (2) the bill was viewed as an emergency act; (3) the policy was based on processing taxes, not on permanent subsidies; and (4) the commodity subsidies were not finalized. Between 1933 and 1937 the House resolved these difficulties by forming commodity-based subcommittees to divide the benefits. Through these subcommittees the Agriculture Committee built itself a unified coalition, and it used the coalition to convert the policy from a temporary solution to a permanent one, transferring the line from the executive to the congressional budget. The result was, of course, higher expenditures for agriculture and a new policy equilibrium. Surely the committee's choice to restructure itself into commodity subcommittees influenced both the policy process and the policy outputs.

In general these results show that both the endogenous structure

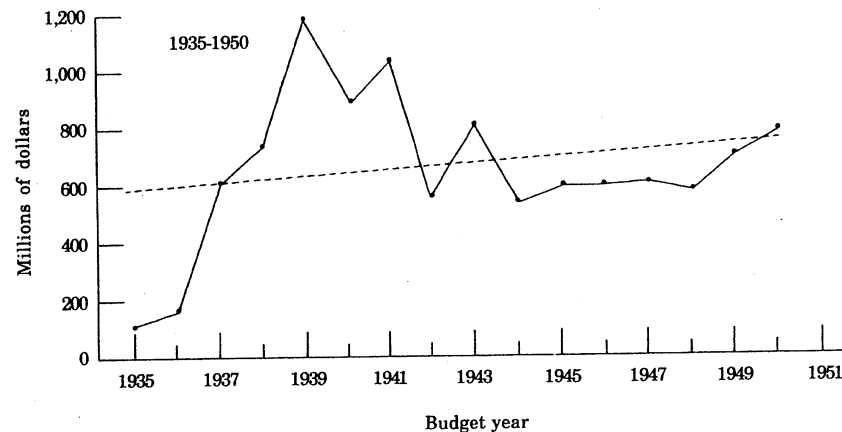
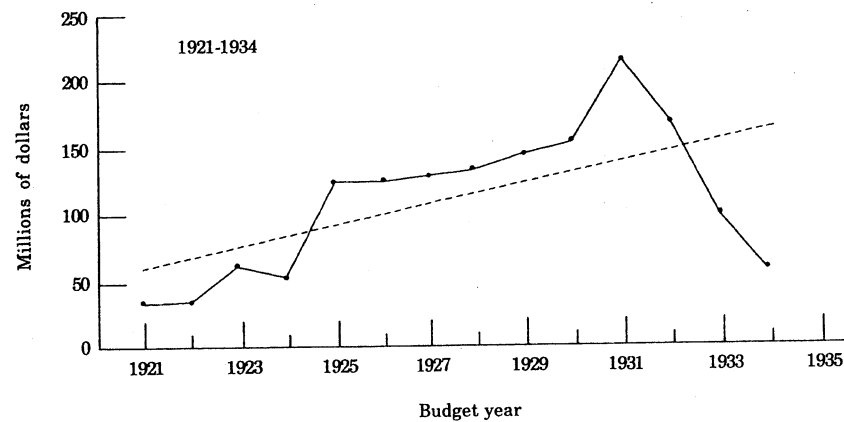


Fig. 5-4. Agricultural appropriations by budget year, 1921-1950

of the House and exogenous economic and electoral forces affected the shape of the agricultural budget. The upward shift in agricultural appropriations in 1897-1901 was largely the result of the electoral consequences of the Panic of 1893 and the decentralized structure of the Appropriations Committee. The upward shift in agricultural appropriations in 1938 was largely the result of the Agriculture Committee's restructuring into subcommittees, which balanced commodity interests and facilitated coalition building, and, of course, the electoral results associated with the Great Depression.

The party voting scores for the passage of the AAA of 1938 were heavily partisan. Although I cannot report the votes in the Agriculture Committee, since they were not recorded, congressional voting on agricultural assistance legislation was clearly structured by party throughout the New Deal era. The correlations between party identification and favorable votes in this domain are as follows: 1933-35 (73rd House), 0.90; 1935-37 (74th House), 0.91, and 1937-39 (75th House), 0.77. The lower correlation between party and voting in the 75th House came about when some Republicans from rural areas began supporting some agricultural assistance programs. Members of the House Agriculture Committee were separated out, and the same correlations were run; this analysis showed no significant differences save the slightly higher pro-support scores for Republicans on the committee. Nevertheless, agricultural assistance programs, including the AAA, were voted in by Democrats over solid Republican opposition. Thus, as was the case for the earlier appropriating committees, partisanship rose during periods of policy shifts.

Studies of other committees' activities during critical periods would surely reveal different structural arrangements, depending on members' motivations and committee constituencies. Such analyses will have to be done by other researchers. For my part, I will simply conclude that at least for appropriations and agricultural policy, both electoral and structural factors contributed to changes in policy equilibrium.

## Competitive Party Systems and the Votes-to-Seats Ratio

WITH THE PUBLICATION of the important 1980 Clubb-Flanigan-Zingale work, *Partisan Realignment: Voters, Parties, and Government in American History*, students of American realignments began to focus on endogenous variables to account for policy shifts. This was in part because neither the Civil War nor the 1890's realignment represented an impressive shift of voters. As the authors said, with respect to the Civil War: "Electoral change during these years seems to be largely interpretable in terms of Southern secession, occupation and Reconstruction." And with respect to the 1890's: "Here again . . . while indications of lasting electoral change are clear, the realignment of 1896 appears substantially less impressive than might have been expected."<sup>1</sup> Thus far we have seen how electoral results in each of these eras produced turnover in the House and consequently disrupted the continuity and structure of House committees, thus enabling the dominant congressional party to shift the policy equilibrium. Yet it is important to recognize that this model of policy change is electorally driven.

In each of the three critical periods under study, the election resulted in a new and dominant House majority party, which also controlled the Senate and the Presidency for at least a decade. This extended electoral control has been shown in the Civil War and 1890's periods to be tied to the votes-to-seats relationship. Neither of these critical periods generated an electoral shift as impressive as that of the New Deal era. Both the Civil War and 1890's critical eras were compensating in nature, with electoral gains for the Republicans in the North offset by gains for Democrats in the Southern and Border states. In both periods relatively minor shifts in votes resulted in extensive and lasting gains in House seats for the Republicans. A partial explanation for these gains in seats is that the votes-to-seats ratio fa-

vored Republicans, particularly in the North. It has been shown that the Republicans benefited more than the Cube Law predicts.

In this chapter the nature of the votes-to-seats ratio during critical periods is examined. We begin with a discussion of seats, votes, and the spatial organization of elections. After discussing the effect of single-seat, plurality-winner electoral arrangements on votes-to-seats ratios, we will examine the constituency party distribution (CPD) for each critical period. In addition, the analysis isolates those congressional districts that accounted for the Republican majorities in the Civil War and 1890's eras. We conclude with an explanation of how relatively minor vote swings can result in significant and lasting seat swings.

The Cube Law relationship between votes and seats is based on the assumption that the CPD is normally distributed, with a mean of 50 percent and a narrow range of observed values. G. Gudgin and R. J. Taylor describe the phenomenon as follows: "It is the existence of the normal CPD, and in particular the narrow range of observed values for the standard deviation which are important [for understanding the Cube Law]."<sup>2</sup> When the two-party vote is normally distributed, in the familiar bell curve, and the standard deviation is limited, the relationship between votes and seats is expressed by the power curve shown in Figure 6.1. When the CPD is normal and the Cube Law applies, then for every increase of 1 percent in the vote over 50 percent, there is a 3 percent rise in the number of seats won; thus the name Cube Law. It is obvious that to the extent that the conditions of a normal distribution and limited variance are violated, the power curve will vary from the Cube Law curve.

The two dominant statistical properties of a CPD that affect the votes-to-seats ratio are skewness and kurtosis. The asymmetry of a frequency distribution is measured by its *skewness*. The skewness measure ( $B_1$ ) is based on the third moment about the mean on the formula

$$B_1 = \sum \frac{(V_i - \bar{V})^3}{\sigma}$$

$B_1 = 0$  when the distribution is symmetric (including the normal curve). If  $B_1 > 0$  (positive), then the mode is to the left of the mean; if  $B_1 < 0$  and negative, the mode is to the right of the mean. If the mean vote is around 50 percent, a slight positive skewness means a large number of votes are wasted in marginal constituencies, and a negative skewness indicates efficient voting—or few votes wasted. Figure 6.2 shows the effects of positive and negative skewness. In the case of positive skewness, large numbers of wasted votes are found in the high tail.

*Kurtosis* is a general measure of the shape of a distribution in terms

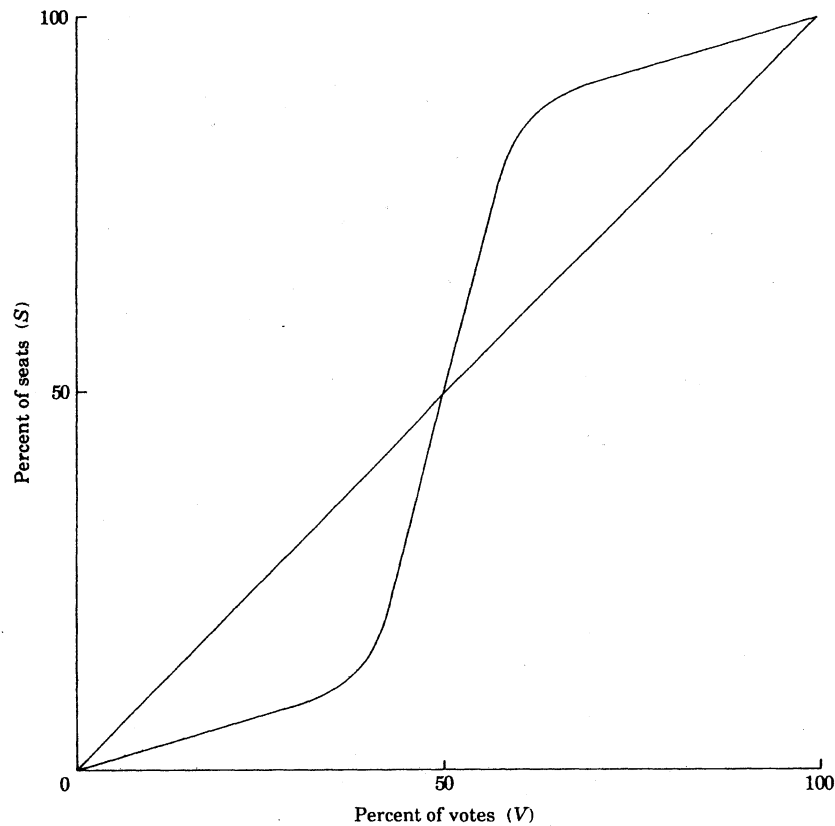


Fig. 6.1. Cube Law power curve. The Cube Law is expressed as  $S = V^3/V^3 + (1 - V)^3$ .

of peakedness through flatness to a U-shaped distribution. Kurtosis ( $B_2$ ) is defined as:

$$B_2 = \left[ \sum \frac{(V_i - \bar{V})^4}{\sigma^2} \right] - 3.$$

A normal distribution has a value of 0,  $B_2 = 0$ . When the distribution is more peaked than normal and has compensating thick tails,  $B_2 > 0$ , and the distribution is *leptokurtic*. When the distribution is flatter than normal and has deficiencies in the tails, it is *platykurtic* and  $0 > B_2$ . Thus, kurtosis is a measure of the pattern of a distribution about its mean that is independent of variance.\*

\*Technically, kurtosis measures the thickness of the tails of a distribution. In the case of a well-behaved curve, kurtosis gives a good estimate of the peakedness of a distribution. The results shown in this chapter measure the shape of the curves around 50 percent. The number of competitive seats is included to demonstrate this point.

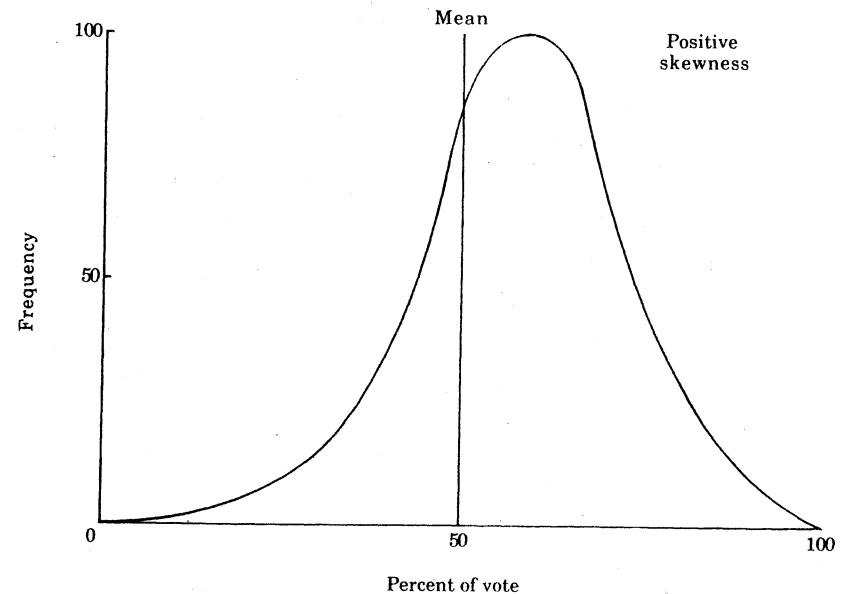
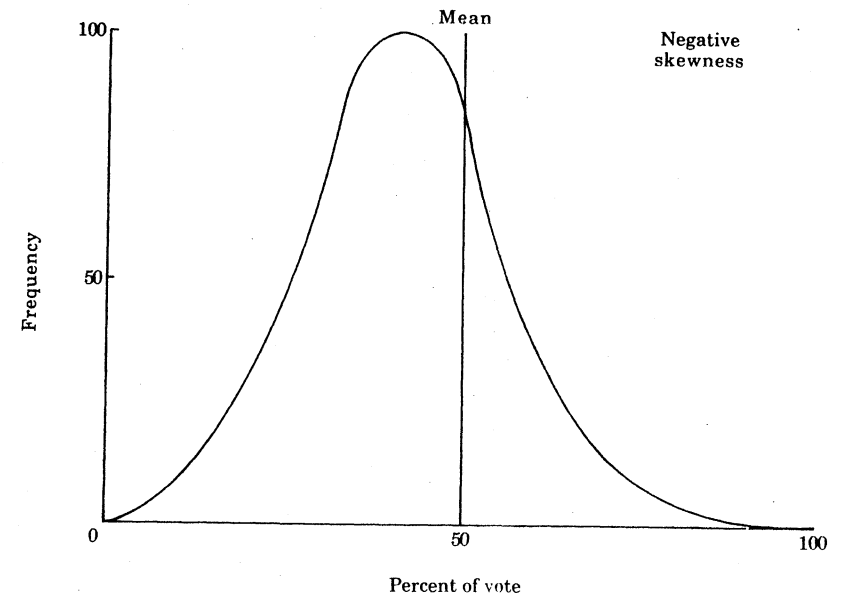


Fig. 6.2. Negative and positive vote skewness

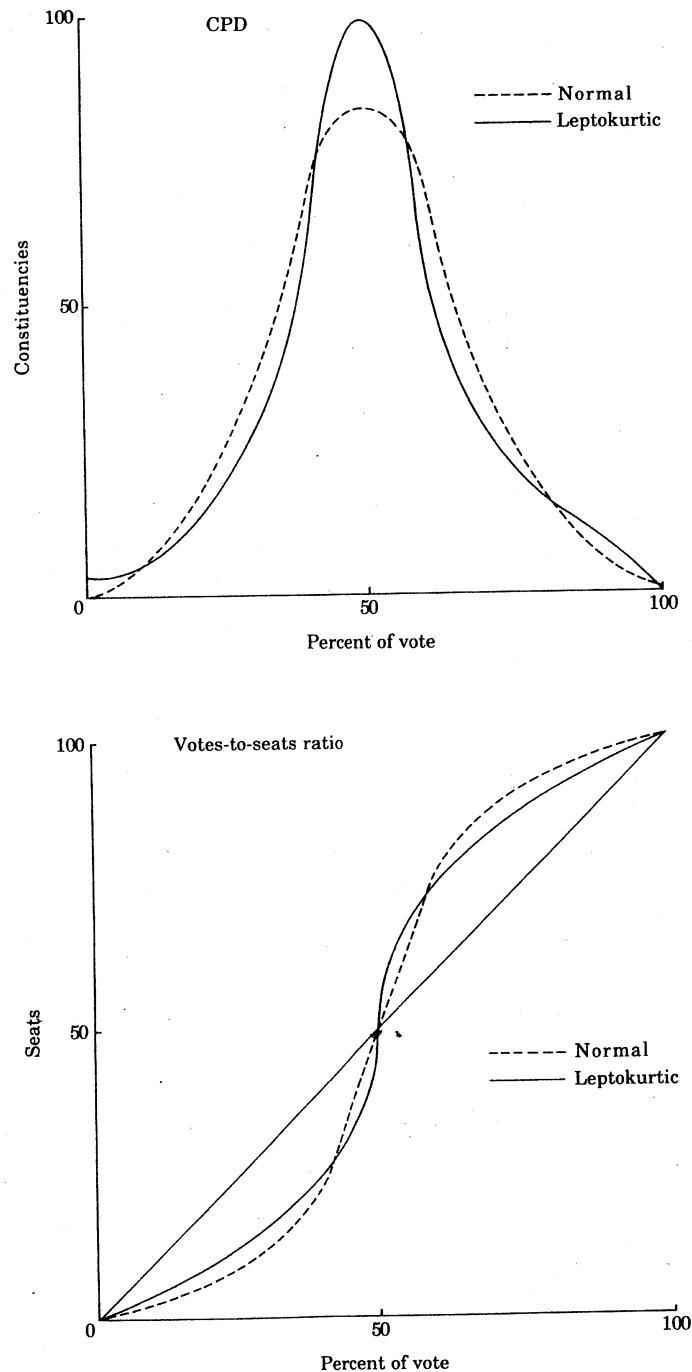


Fig. 6.3. Effect of leptokurtic CPD on votes-to-seats ratio

The level of kurtosis in a CPD measures the level of party competition because it concerns the central portion of the CPD where seats change hands. The higher the value of kurtosis (positive  $B_2 > 0$ ), the greater the number of competitive seats. Since the number of competitive seats directly affects the votes-to-seats ratio, the kurtosis of a CPD is related to the votes-seats curve. Gudgin and Taylor show that kurtosis is much like variance in its effects on electoral stability.<sup>3</sup> Consider, for example, two CPDs with the same variance, where one curve is leptokurtic and the other normal. In this case the leptokurtic distribution will have more competitive seats and will produce a votes-to-seats relationship equivalent to a normal distribution with compact variance. Platykurtosis will have the opposite effect. As indicated in Figure 6.3, the leptokurtic curve translates into a steeper votes-to-seats power curve at the 50 percent point.

In the platykurtic case, the most obvious application for our purposes occurs when each party has a large number of safe seats; thus the distribution has two modes toward each end of the distribution and a relatively flat center where seats might change hands. Gudgin and Taylor correctly point out that for such platykurtic curves, "All such distributions (including that of the U.S.A.) cannot be modeled adequately by power laws."<sup>4</sup> In this case the votes-to-seats relationship must be taken directly from the CPDs themselves. Since the purpose here is to show how the CPD changes over time, and what the specific relationship is between CPDs and seats, it is not necessary to pursue the specifics of modeling a power curve for platykurtic distributions. In sum, the skewness and kurtosis of CPDs in first-past-the-post systems can be used to describe how during the Civil War and 1890's critical periods, minor vote shifts produced relatively permanent seat shifts to the Republican Party.

The argument is that before the Civil War and 1890's critical elections, the party system should be characterized by a large number of competitive seats. The CPDs should have positive kurtoses ( $B_2 > 0 =$  leptokurtic) before the elections, and during the critical period the kurtosis figures should decrease, since many of the competitive seats will have been shifted into safer seats. The Republican Party CPDs should be skewed negatively ( $B_1 < 0$ ), giving the party an advantage over the Democrats in seats won: a negative skewness, as noted, implies more efficient voting. The period following the critical election should be characterized by relatively lower Republican kurtosis figures and continued efficiency in Republican voting (negative skews). Once we have demonstrated the above, we turn to an analysis of where the Republicans attained their fourteen-year majorities in the House.

★ **Constituency Party Distributions in the Three Periods**

The first characteristic of the distribution of seats worth exploring is the actual percentage of House seats where a switch of 5 percent of the vote would have changed the party representing the district. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show the percentage of competitive House seats and the corresponding kurtosis figures; Figures 6.4 and 6.5 show the same results graphically.

The results for the Civil War era (Table 6.1) show a drop in the number of competitive seats, beginning in 1854. The figure falls below 40 percent and stays there until the very competitive election of 1862. The 1864 and 1866 elections have fewer competitive districts, but then, in 1868, as Southern states begin to be readmitted to the Union, the figure rises once more, to remain above 40 percent through the 1874 elections. The kurtosis figure drops to 0.6 in 1854 and then is 2.0 or more for the next two elections. In the controlling election for the Republicans, 1860, the kurtosis drops to 1.6. As expected, the competitive election of 1862 drives the kurtosis figure up, but in the next three elections the figure remains below 2.0. The readmission of the Southern states restores a competitive two-party system, as indicated by the high kurtosis figures. Figure 6.4 graphically tells much the same story. Clearly, the election of 1854 shows a shift away from the Democrats, as evidenced by the leftward shift in the curve. Elections from 1856 to 1862 show a slightly more competitive system, but the left tails of these curves remain higher than the Democratic gains on the far right. After a considerable increase in Republican safe seats (a leftward shift) in 1864 and 1866, the Democrats made

TABLE 6.1  
*Competitive Districts and Kurtosis for Democratic CPDs, 1850–1874*

Election year	Competitive districts (percent of total)	Kurtosis ( $B_2$ )	Election year	Competitive districts (percent of total)	Kurtosis ( $B_2$ )
1850	59.4%	2.5	1864	32.0%	1.2
1852	48.1	1.4	1866	35.3	1.4
1854	30.4	0.6	1868	41.0	1.6
1856	37.4	2.6	1870	42.1	2.8
1858	37.8	2.0	1872	40.6	2.5
1860	39.2	1.6	1874	40.1	2.9
1862	40.7	2.8			

NOTE: In this and the following tables, a competitive district is one where a switch of 5% of the vote would have swung the district from one party to the other. The higher the  $B_2$  figure, the greater the number of competitive seats.

TABLE 6.2  
*Competitive Districts and Kurtosis for Democratic CPDs, 1884–1910*

Election year	Competitive districts (percent of total)	Kurtosis ( $B_2$ )	Election year	Competitive districts (percent of total)	Kurtosis ( $B_2$ )
1884	40.5%	2.2	1898	33.0%	1.0
1886	37.8	0.6	1900	29.7	1.0
1888	43.1	2.7	1902	24.3	0.1
1890	41.9	1.0	1904	18.0	0.1
1892	34.0	3.2	1906	23.6	0.0
1894	23.2	1.6	1908	27.0	0.5
1896	34.5	1.6	1910	36.3	0.3

good some of their losses in subsequent years, and by 1874, as indicated by the rightward shift, they have more safe seats than the Republicans. And, of course, it is in 1874 that the Democrats had their first House majority since 1858. While the end points of the graph show seats won or lost by 25 percent or more (aggregated), the kurtosis figures in the tables are for actual values (not aggregated). Thus the graphs help illuminate how the thicker tails of a leptokurtic curve indicate increases in safe seats.

Table 6.2 shows that, in the 1890's era, the number of competitive seats falls sharply in 1892 and again in 1894. The number of competitive seats declines from 1896 until 1902 and then begins to rise in 1906 until it reaches 36.3 in 1910. The kurtosis figures are, in general, higher in the precritical period (1884–92) than they are in the critical period. The period following the 1896 election is clearly less leptokurtic than the two preceding periods. Figure 6.4 shows these results in graphic form. The 1894 election dramatically shifts the curve leftward, and this Republican bias continues until 1910, when the Democrats regained the House for the first time since 1892.

Thus, in both the Civil War and the 1890's, a pattern of decreases in the number of competitive seats and corresponding decreases in kurtosis is observed. Still, it has not been shown how this favored the Republicans. To do so, it is necessary to show that the Republican CPDs are more negatively skewed—more efficient voting—than the Democratic CPDs in the Civil War and 1890's periods, and that this voting efficiency manifested itself in seats won in marginal districts. Tables 6.3 and 6.4 show the percentage of marginal seats won by Republicans in the respective periods and the skewness of both parties' CPDs.

As can be seen, in the Civil War era, the Republicans began to win more than 50 percent of the marginal seats in 1856 and continued to win heavily until 1874. The Republicans enjoyed more efficient voting

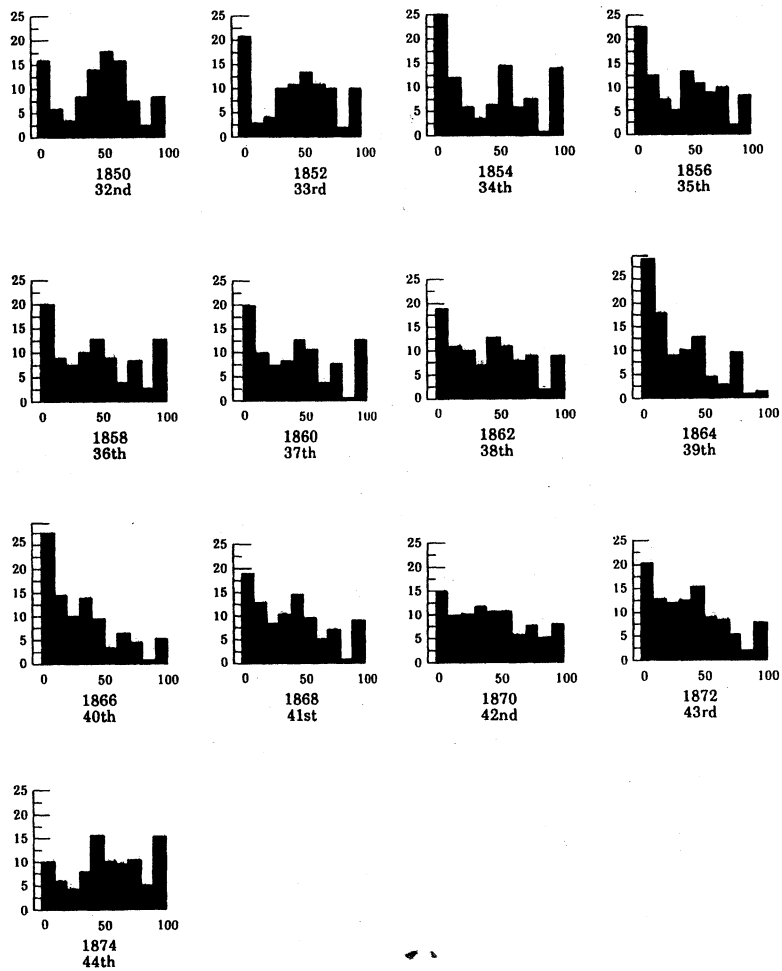


Fig. 6.4. Democratic CPDs, 1850-1876. In this and the analogous figures that follow, the years shown are election years. The y axis is percent of seats.

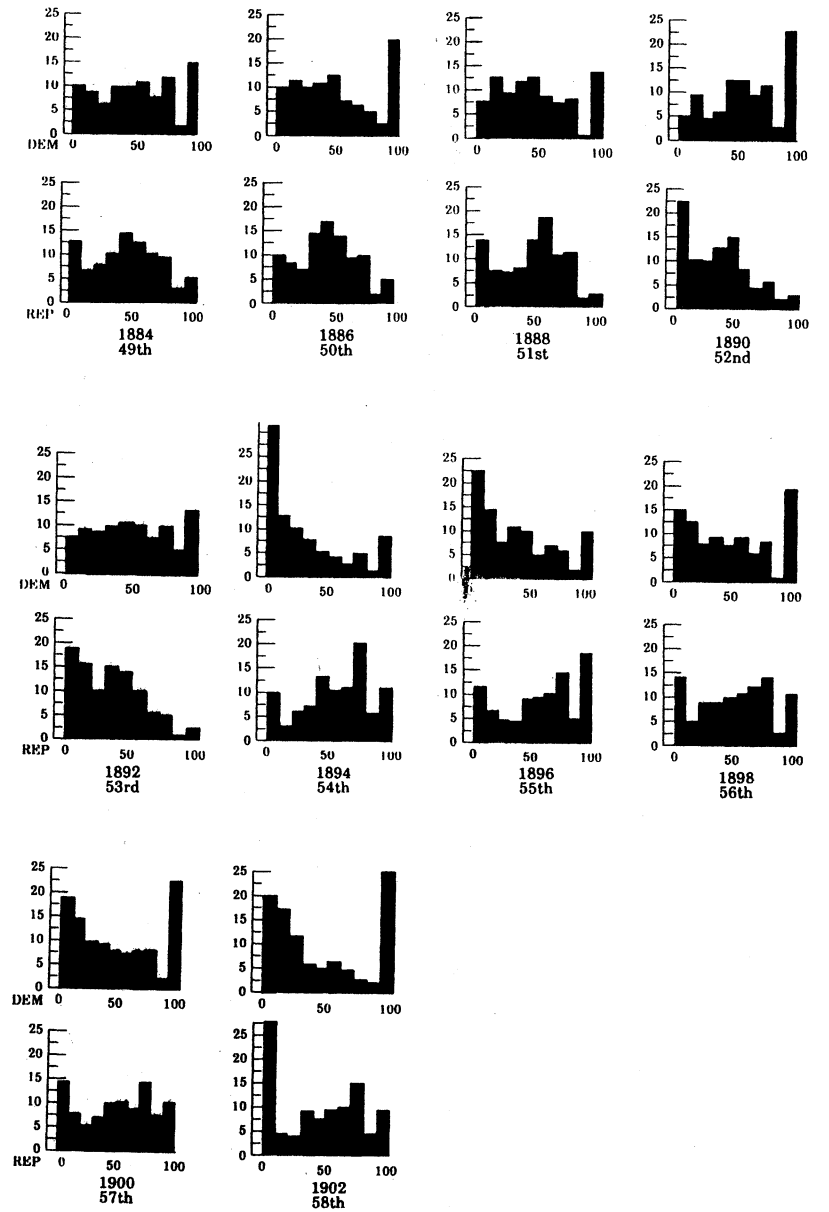


Fig. 6.5. Republican and Democratic CPDs, 1884-1902

TABLE 6.3

*Percentage of Republican Wins and Skewness in Competitive Districts, 1850-1874*

Election year	Competitive districts		Skewness	
	Percent of total	Percent Republican wins	Republican	Democrat
1850	59.4%	40.1% <sup>a</sup>	-0.49 <sup>a</sup>	0.13
1852	48.1	46.4 <sup>a</sup>	-0.68 <sup>a</sup>	0.04
1854	30.4	34.3 <sup>a</sup>	-0.90 <sup>a</sup>	0.37
1856	37.4	51.1	-0.99	0.73
1858	37.8	52.2	-1.31	1.26
1860	39.2	59.4	-1.02	0.56
1862	40.7	53.1	0.43	-0.81
1864	32.0	75.0	0.46	-1.01
1866	35.3	72.7	-0.46	0.27
1868	41.0	63.9	-0.34	0.07
1870	42.1	57.8	-0.79	0.69
1872	40.6	58.1	-0.85	0.13
1874	40.1	47.4	-1.19	0.44

<sup>a</sup>Figures are for non-Democrats.

during all but three congressional elections, and in two of those (in 1862 and 1864) the electorate was composed of only Northern voters. It is interesting to note that during the precritical and critical periods Republicans always had CPDs characterized by negative skewness, and the Democrats always had positive skewness. That is, in the 1850 to 1860 elections, during which the Republican Party was formed and replaced the Whigs as the Democrats' opposition, the Republican vote was efficiently distributed while the Democrats wasted votes in the right-hand tail of the distribution. Figure 6.2 shows how the mid-1850's elections shifted the curve to the left (i.e., created a number of safe seats for the Republicans). In sum, Table 6.3 shows that the Republicans won a majority of competitive seats in 1856 and continued to do so until the 1874 elections, and the skewness figures show a more efficient distribution of the vote for the Republicans.

Table 6.4 shows that in every House controlled by the Republicans (and they controlled all but those elected in 1884, 1886, 1890, 1892, and 1910), they won over 52 percent of the competitive seats, and in three of the five Houses they lost they were under 50 percent. Throughout the entire period the Republican vote was more efficiently distributed than the Democratic vote. Every skewness figure for the Republicans is negative, every skewness figure for the Democrats positive. Thus, as in the Civil War era, during the competitive precritical period when the Republicans won control of the House in 1888, they also won a majority of the competitive seats. Then, during

TABLE 6.4

*Percentage of Republican Wins and Skewness in Competitive Districts, 1884-1910*

Election year	Competitive districts		Skewness	
	Percent of total	Percent Republican wins	Republican	Democrat
1884	40.5%	50.7%	-0.53	1.28
1886	37.8	36.2	-0.64	1.24
1888	43.1	61.9	-1.00	1.43
1890	41.9	47.5	-0.40	1.20
1892	34.0	43.9	-1.07	1.28
1894	23.2	64.9	-0.80	0.70
1896	34.5	64.1	-0.40	0.97
1898	33.0	54.5	-0.55	1.03
1900	29.7	52.8	-0.87	1.05
1902	24.3	52.9	-0.59	0.42
1904	18.0	56.7	-0.77	0.63
1906	23.6	53.8	-0.59	0.54
1908	27.0	61.1	-1.01	0.89
1910	36.3	51.8	-0.59	0.56

the critical period, the number of competitive seats dropped, and in both 1894 and 1896 the Republicans won over 64 percent of the remaining marginal seats. The period of dominance was characterized by consistent Republican majorities in competitive seats.

In sum, in both the Civil War period and the 1890's, Republican majorities were created in part by their efficient voting distributions and their ability to win a majority of the competitive seats.

Although these data are suggestive, they are not definitive. To be totally persuasive, I need to show that the drop in the number of competitive seats during the critical election periods resulted from a long-lived shift to the Republican Party. Demonstrating that the shift of a relatively few voters could account for a major shift in seats entails an analysis of both competitive districts and the spatial configuration of voters.

The major factor accounting for particular distributions of CPDs is of course the spatial organization of voters. If voters are distributed equally across all districts, then the party with a mean above 50 percent will win all districts. Consider, for example, a three-district two-party system in which votes are distributed equally and one party has a mean of 52 percent (thus 52-48; 52-48; 52-48). In this case, clearly, one party wins all three seats. This, however, assumes zero variance, and as we know, that is not true of the distribution of the vote in American elections. Consider, then, these two variants of a three-district system: (1) 5-95; 75-25; 76-24; and (2) 48-52; 45-

TABLE 6.5

*Mean Vote, Kurtosis, Skewness, and Competitive District Wins for Republican Party in Northern States, 1850-1874*

Election year	Mean vote (percent)	Kurtosis ( $B_2$ )	Skewness ( $B_1$ )	Competitive districts	
				Percent of total	Percent Republican wins <sup>a</sup>
1850	46.9%	3.8	-0.41	58.2%	37.9%
1852	45.4	5.8	-0.13	51.1	35.2
1854	54.5	3.8	-0.83	32.9	58.9
1856	51.4	0.6	-0.20	37.3	55.0
1858	51.3	5.5	-1.86	48.4	64.3
1860	51.9	4.1	-1.58	45.6	58.8
1862	52.6	3.4	0.43	41.5	50.9
1864	58.8	1.8	0.46	34.5	71.0
1866	56.1	2.3	-0.47	37.7	69.5
1868	53.8	1.9	-0.34	40.3	64.0
1870	50.3	2.1	-0.57	47.1	62.8
1872	53.4	4.1	-1.14	40.8	60.8
1874	45.2	2.2	-1.38	45.1	47.3

<sup>a</sup>Non-Democratic parties.

55; 63-37. In both cases the first party's mean vote is 52 percent, but in example (1) it wins two seats, in (2) only one. The American electoral system, since at least the Civil War era, has been characterized by a regional-spatial configuration of party voters. That is, Democrats have been more concentrated in Southern and Border states, Republicans in Northern states. The analysis of the votes-to-seats ratio in both periods showed Republicans with a large advantage in Northern states. Thus it follows that the advantages to Republicans shown above, a negative skewness and leptokurtic distributions, should be even more pronounced if we control for region. If in fact the CPDs show the appropriate shapes, it will be clear that slight voter shifts can result in major seat shifts. In short, if it can be shown that Northern districts were extremely competitive prior to the critical elections, then it is clear that a slight shift toward the Republicans in the North could result in a pro-Republican (rightward) shift in the CPDs. This rightward shift to the Republicans can be the result of three factors: (1) the mean shift in the vote toward the Republicans reduces the number of competitive districts by increasing the number of safe Republican seats; (2) the mean shift does not significantly reduce the number of competitive seats but ensures that Republicans will win a majority of competitive seats; and (3) a combination of (1) and (2) such that Republicans increase their number of safe seats and win a majority of the competitive seats. Since Tables 6.1 and 6.2 showed that

TABLE 6.6

*Mean Vote, Kurtosis, Skewness, and Competitive District Wins for Republican Party in Northern States, 1884-1910*

Election year	Mean vote (percent)	Kurtosis ( $B_2$ )	Skewness ( $B_1$ )	Competitive districts	
				Percent of total	Percent Republican wins
1884	50.8%	6.8	0.19	58.7%	51.5%
1886	49.2	6.4	-0.17	60.9	43.5
1888	50.5	6.0	0.31	58.9	60.9
1890	46.4	3.7	0.18	47.1	32.9
1892	46.8	2.5	0.38	51.2	32.6
1894	53.7	3.6	-0.26	45.2	52.4
1896	55.9	2.5	0.32	38.6	63.7
1898	52.2	3.5	0.48	46.2	59.1
1900	53.9	2.1	0.45	43.8	53.3
1902	51.6	4.4	-0.31	43.0	55.6
1904	57.1	2.0	0.51	33.2	55.6
1906	53.4	2.8	0.19	41.9	56.6
1908	52.9	4.0	-0.48	42.8	52.8
1910	47.9	5.2	-0.11	47.7	41.5

the decrease in competitive seats and the drop in the leptokurtosis of Republican CPDs was less pronounced in the Civil War era than in the 1890's, the expectation is that the Civil War period will be like (3) above, and the 1890's like (1).

To determine whether or not this is the case requires an analysis of the following data: (1) the levels of kurtosis found in the pre- and postcritical election period; (2) the shift in the mean vote toward the Republicans in the periods under consideration; (3) the percentage of Republican victories in competitive districts over the relevant time periods; and (4) the confluence of these trends (i.e., whether all of these relationships are more pronounced in the Northern states since this is where the Republicans' seat advantages were won). Tables 6.5 and 6.6 show the results. The figures for 1850-58 in Table 6.5 are for all non-Democratic candidates, and those for 1860-74 are for Republicans.

The 1854 election is the turning point in the anti-Democratic vote. In this election the mean non-Democratic vote goes over 50 percent and stays there until 1874. Until the 1862 election, with the exception of 1856, the kurtosis of the CPDs is quite high, almost twice as high as the figures for the whole country (Table 6.1). From 1864 until 1872 the peakness of the CPDs is reduced, largely as a result of the Republicans' electoral success during the Civil War. The number of competitive districts falls somewhat from 1860 through 1868, but less dramatically than in the 1890's. Thus there is reason to believe that the

Republicans' seat advantage resulted from the combination of an increase in safe seats and victories in competitive seats.

Throughout this period, but especially in the critical 1858 and 1860 elections, the Republican vote was more efficiently distributed—that is, negatively skewed. In regard to competitive seats, non-Democratic candidates won less than 40 percent until the 1854 election, at which point and continuing until 1874, the non-Democrats and then the Republicans won a majority of competitive seats. Interestingly, in the critical 1858 and 1860 elections, respectively, the Republicans won 64.3 and 58.8 percent of competitive seats. From 1864 until 1874 they never fell below the 60 percent level in competitive seats. It seems clear that the Republican control of the House from 1858 to 1874 rested on their control of competitive seats plus a shift of some seats from competitive to safe. In fact, from 1862 until 1874, Republicans controlled an average of 74.9 percent of the seats won by 25 percent of the vote or more. In the critical elections of 1858 and 1860 the Republicans won 58.8 and 58.6 percent of safe seats.

Figure 6.6 shows the Republican CPDs in a precritical, critical, and postcritical election, controlling for North-South differences. The 1850 graphs show a competitive system in both the North and the South, but especially the North. Those for 1860 show the rightward shift to the Republicans in the North, and the Democrats' position as *the* party in the South. And the 1870 graphs show that with the readmission of some Southern states, the Republicans, under Reconstruction, won some Southern seats, and maintained an advantage in the North.

Table 6.6 shows that from 1884 until 1894 there was a two-party competitive system in the North. The vote hovers around 50 percent, with the Republicans winning slim majorities twice and the Democrats winning three times. The 1894 election shifts the Republican mean vote to 53.7 percent, and until 1902 the Republicans retain their advantage. The kurtosis figures show a very peaked curve until the Democratic landslide of 1890; from 1892 until 1910, with the exception of 1902, the peakness of the curve is reduced. The 1890 Democratic landslide also marks a decline in the number of competitive seats, and from 1894 on, the number of competitive seats remains below 50 percent. The party wins in competitive seats flip-flop until 1894, with Democrats winning a majority of competitive seats three times in the five elections. Thereafter, the Republicans win the majority of competitive districts until the 1910 election. The skewness figures do not indicate any Republican advantage arising from efficient voting, although the figures are low enough to have little effect (i.e.,

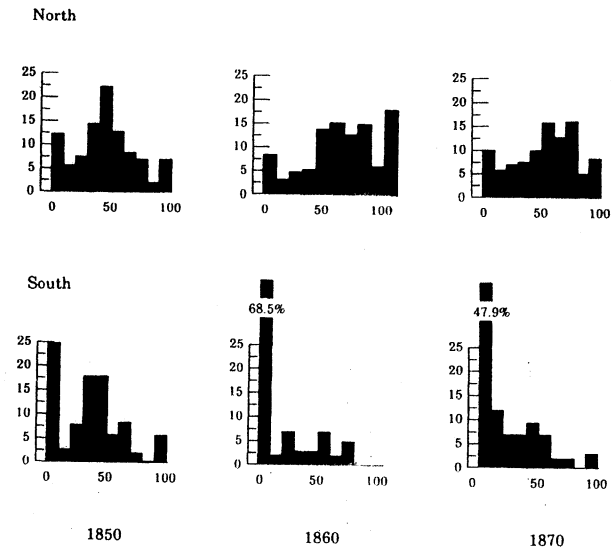


Fig. 6.6. Republican CPDs in three Civil War-era elections by region, 1850–1870. The 1850 distributions are for the Whig Party.

very little skew). Thus, as in the Civil War period, the Republicans' control of House seats was based on their ability to win majorities of competitive seats and increase the number of their safe seats. In fact, from 1894 to 1910 the Republicans controlled over 75 percent of safe Northern seats.

Figure 6.7 shows the Democratic and Republican CPDs in a precritical, critical, and postcritical election, controlling for North-South differences. The 1888 graphs show a two-party, competitive system in the North and Democratic dominance in the South. The 1896 graphs show the rightward shift to the Republicans in the North and the leftward shift to the Democrats in the South. And the 1900 graphs show the Republicans maintaining their advantage in the North, while the Democrats dominate a noncompetitive South.

The precritical periods in both the Civil War era and the 1890's were periods of intense two-party competition in the North, where control of the House shifted from party to party depending mostly on which party captured a majority of the competitive seats. The critical election or elections shifted the mean percentage of the vote to the Republicans, or against the Democrats. This shift gave the Republicans an increase in safe seats and a majority of the competitive seats until the 1874 and 1910 elections. In both cases the critical election results were obtainable given the competitive nature of the CPDs. In

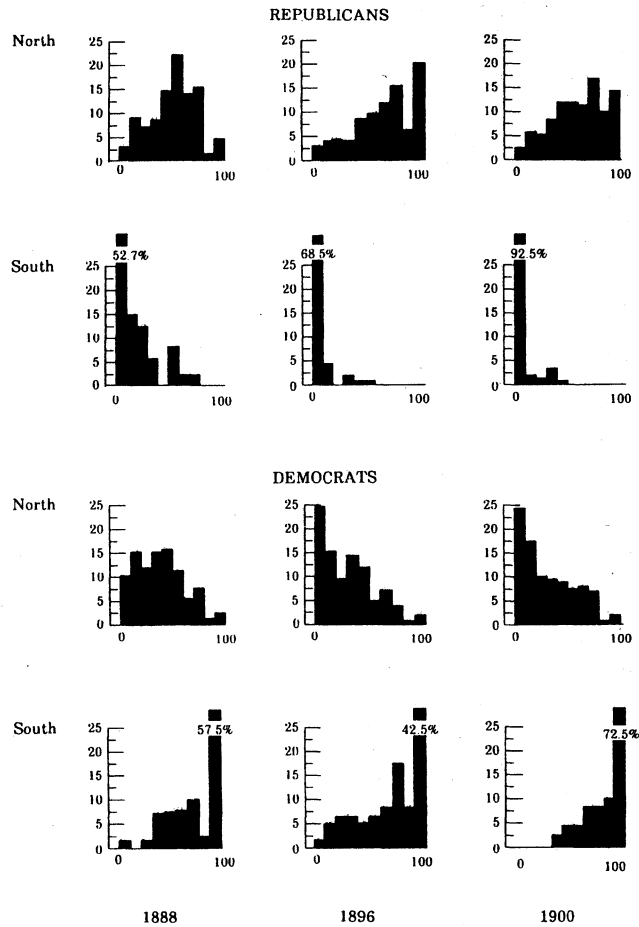


Fig. 6.7. Republican and Democratic CPDs in three 1890's-era elections by region, 1888-1900

short, the relatively minor vote shifts resulted in permanent seat shifts owing to the nature of the spatial distribution of the party vote. This is in contradistinction to the New Deal era, when the critical election was an across-the-board phenomenon. It is worthwhile to examine the difference, and I turn next to an analysis of the New Deal realignment.

From 1874, when the Democrats regained the House for the first time since 1858, until 1892 there was a substantial number of competitive districts. The ten House elections from 1874 to 1892 had an average of 39.4 percent competitive districts, and the average kurtosis was +2.3, which indicates the peakness of the distributions. In con-

trast, the elections from 1910 to 1930 had an average of only 21.6 percent competitive seats, and an average kurtosis of  $-.03$ . In fact, only the 1910, 1916, and 1920 elections had a positive kurtosis, the highest of which was 0.5. Thus the 1932 election took place in an electoral context characterized by relatively few competitive seats and many safe seats. The 1874-94 period had an average of just 27.8 percent safe seats per election, compared with 52.9 percent in 1910-30. Put another way, the shape of the CPDs had shifted from peaked to U-shaped. Figure 6.8 shows the distribution of the Democratic vote for 1924-40 and 1946, and clearly shows the U shape of the curve prior to the critical election of 1932.

The 1932 election was clearly an across-the-board realignment to the Democrats. That is, the Democrats gained in almost all districts. Since they had already dominated elections in the Southern states, we ought to see the greatest shift occurring in the North. Table 6.7 shows the mean Democratic vote, the skewness and kurtosis of the Demo-

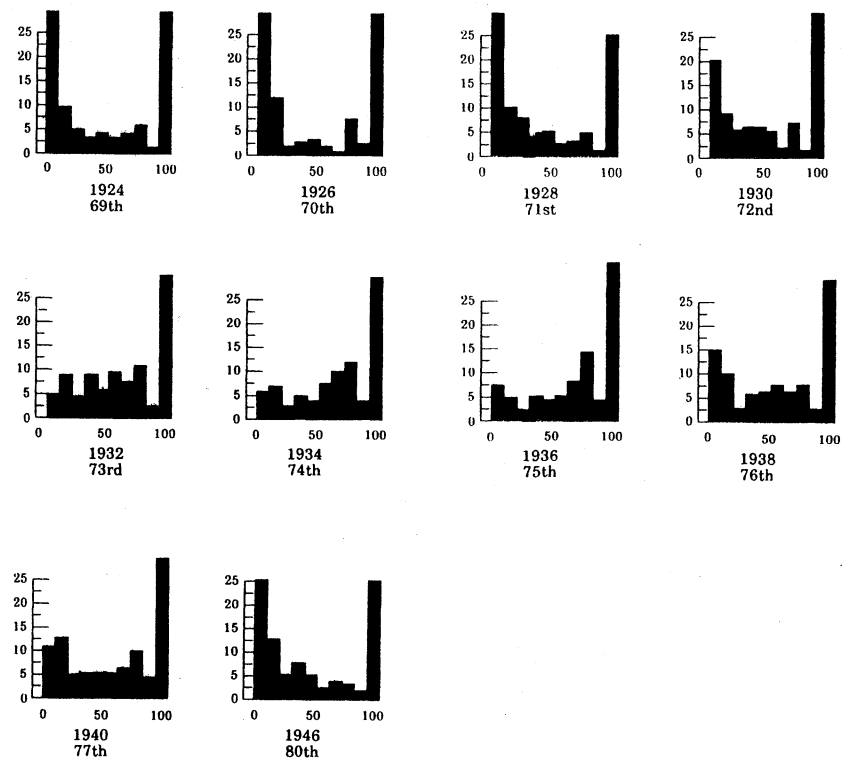


Fig. 6.8. Democratic CPDs, 1924-1946

TABLE 6.7  
*Mean Vote, Kurtosis, Skewness, and Competitive and Safe District Wins for Democratic Party in Northern States, 1924-1946*

Election year	Mean vote (percent)	Kurtosis ( $B_2$ )	Skewness ( $B_1$ )	Competitive seats		Safe seats <sup>a</sup>	
				Percent of total	Percent Democrat wins	Percent of total	Percent Democrat wins
1924	41.6%	1.7	0.99	19.4%	48.4%	52.3%	18.7%
1926	44.8	1.2	0.92	14.7	38.1	53.8	25.1
1928	42.7	1.3	0.89	22.2	33.7	45.3	37.8
1930	48.4	0.7	0.63	25.8	37.6	44.9	43.0
1932	53.7	1.3	0.93	38.0	51.1	27.8	73.7
1934	54.3	1.3	0.68	36.0	64.7	28.6	73.4
1936	54.6	1.0	0.09	30.9	60.8	33.9	72.0
1938	49.7	1.1	0.34	30.9	54.7	37.7	47.8
1940	50.3	1.6	0.37	29.6	52.6	28.8	52.8
1942	46.7	1.5	0.40	24.0	45.0	42.1	37.6
1944	49.5	2.2	0.36	27.6	47.8	39.4	39.6
1946	44.3	2.9	0.97	24.0	32.5	45.6	24.3

<sup>a</sup>Won by a margin of 25 percent or more.

cratic CPD, and the percentages of competitive and safe seats in each election from 1924 to 1946 in the Northern states.

The results clearly show how the Democrats became the majority party during the New Deal era. Over 1924-30 their proportion of the House vote in Northern states rose from 41.6 percent to 48.4 percent, and from 1932 to 1938 they averaged 54 percent. The number of competitive seats rose by a factor of 2 between 1924 and 1932, from 19.4 percent to 38.0 percent. Before 1932 the Democrats never won a majority of competitive seats; in fact, with one exception they did not win even 40 percent of these seats. Thereafter they won the majority of competitive seats until the 1942 election. The number of safe seats was quite high over the 1924-30 elections, averaging 49.1 percent, and the Democrats won an average of only 31.2 percent of these seats. The number of safe seats dropped dramatically in the 1932 election, and in the 1932, 1934, and 1936 elections the Democrats won over 70 percent of them. Over the 1938 to 1946 period the number of safe seats increased, and until 1946 the Democrats held slightly less than 50 percent of these seats. In short, the 1932 election shifted the entire CPD curve to the right, increasing the number of competitive seats and the number of Democratic wins in these seats. The number of safe seats decreased, but it was Republican safe seats that were lost, while in contrast the Democrats held their existing safe seats and gained a few new ones.

Figure 6.9 shows the Democratic CPDs in a precritical, a critical, and a postcritical election, controlling for North-South differences. The picture clearly makes the point. In 1926 there are few competitive seats in the North, and the Republicans have a big advantage in safe seats. The 1932 election shifts the curve rightward in the Northern states and increases the number of safe Democratic seats. The 1938 election readjusts the curve leftward, increasing the number of safe Republican seats while leaving the Democrats with a sizable number of safe seats and a slight advantage in competitive seats. The House seats in the South curve shows no significant change during the period. In 1926 91.5 percent of all Southern seats were safely Democratic. This figure increases to over 95 percent in both 1932 and 1938, but does not affect the net number of Democratic seats in the House. The CPDs in Table 6.7 reflect first the decline of competitive seats prior to 1932, then from 1932 through 1938 the increase in the size of the tails (i.e., the increase in safe Democratic seats) and from 1940 through 1946 the increase in the number of competitive seats.

The New Deal critical elections were unlike those of the Civil War and 1890's because the election results were a noncompensating, across-the-board shift to the new majority party in the North. The South was heavily Democratic before 1932, and remained so during

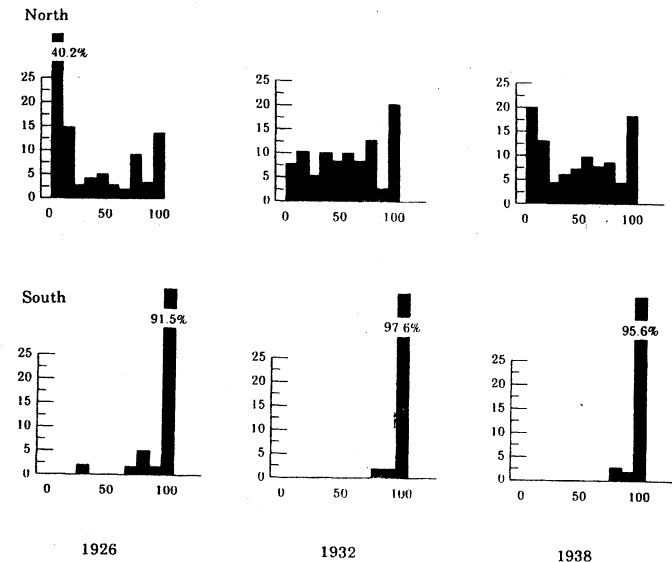


Fig. 6.9. Democratic CPDs in three New Deal-era elections by region, 1926-1938

and after the critical election. In contrast, the Civil War and 1890's periods did not shift the curve as dramatically rightward to the Republicans, and gains in Northern states were accompanied by losses in Southern states. Thus, there was nothing marginal about the Democratic win in the New Deal period. The across-the-board shift to the Democrats can easily be translated into their huge seat advantage in the House.

### ★ Spatial Changes in the Civil War and 1890's Eras

The analysis thus far has dealt only with election-by-election results. Let us now turn to an analysis of which regions and districts switched in the direction of the Republicans in the two non-across-the-board realignments, those of the Civil War and 1890's eras. The strategy is to present the results in three stages: the precritical period, the critical period, and the period of party control.

Chapter Two showed that during the Civil War period, the first major shift away from the Democrats occurred in the 1854 election in the Midwestern and Eastern states. The Republican Party was not the only beneficiary of the anti-Democratic vote in this election. The American, Free Soil, and Whig parties, in various degrees, benefited. The most dramatic shift to the Republican Party occurred in Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. These states had a total of 54 House seats in the 33rd House (1853-55); 37, or about 69 percent, were held by Democrats. In the 34th House (1855-57) Republicans held 46, or 85 percent, of these seats, a dramatic turnover. In Ohio the turnover was complete: all 21 seats went Republican, and all by margins greater than 55 percent.

New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania had 74 House seats in the 33rd House, and 44, or about 59 percent, were held by Democrats. When the 34th House opened, only fourteen of the 74 representatives from these states were Democrats. In New Jersey and Pennsylvania the Whig Party was the major beneficiary of the anti-Democratic vote; in New York the Whig and American parties and a combined Whig-American ticket benefited. The 1854 election in Massachusetts brought an entire slate of American Party candidates to office.

These two blocks of states were where the Republicans built their new majority. The first block remained Republican through 1860. The second moved toward the Republicans over the next three elections at a differential rate. In 1856 Massachusetts moved into the Republican column, electing Republicans for ten of its eleven seats. New

TABLE 6.8  
*Spatial Configurations of Republican Wins in the Civil War Realignment*  
(Percent)

Category	1846-52 elections	1854-58 elections	1860-74 elections	Difference over period
Midwest				
Competitive seats	80.0%	47.5%	53.6%	-26.4%
Republican share of all seats	35.2 <sup>a</sup>	73.3	74.7	39.5
Republican safe seats <sup>b</sup>	3.8	44.7	34.9	31.1
Northeast				
Competitive seats	77.0%	50.9%	42.5%	34.5%
Republican share of all seats	45.3 <sup>a</sup>	47.7	72.2	26.9
Republican safe seats <sup>b</sup>	10.8	22.5	42.5	31.7
All other non-Southern				
Competitive seats	54.7%	52.2%	31.5%	-23.2%
Republican share of all seats	50.5 <sup>a</sup>	10.9	45.6	-4.9
Republican safe seats <sup>b</sup>	22.1	6.5	32.9	10.8

<sup>a</sup>Non-Democratic parties.

<sup>b</sup>"Safe seats" here and in Table 6.9 means wins by more than 55 percent of the vote.

York, with 33 seats, moved Republican in 1856, electing 21 Republicans, and then 29 in 1858. Pennsylvania did not move toward the Republicans until 1858, when it elected 21 Union (later Republican) Party members out of a 25-member delegation; and in 1860 Republicans captured 20 seats. Table 6.8 shows election patterns from 1846 to 1874 for these two blocks of states and all other non-Southern states. The percentages are based on the total number of contests within the block over the period. Safe seats here are defined as those won by more than 55 percent of the vote.

The results show a drop in the number of competitive seats from the precritical to the critical period and increases in both Republican victories and Republican safe seats. The Republicans control over 70 percent of Midwestern seats in the 1854-58 period and maintain that margin in the era of Republican control. In the Northeast the pattern develops more slowly. Republicans win only 47.7 percent of all seats in the 1854-58 period and then increase their share to over 70 percent in the era of Republican control. Although the other Northern states also show a decrease in competitive seats, the Democrats maintained majorities there through the 1858 election. In fact, the Republican vote decreases about 5 percent over the years 1846-74, and the increase in Republican safe seats is about one-third of that found for the Midwest and Northeast.

In regard to seats won by 10 percent or more during the all-important 1860–66 period, there were 66 seats that were Republican in all four elections; 20 were Midwestern, 42 Northeastern. Massachusetts and Maine were the most strongly Republican; all their House seats were filled by Republicans through the period, and over 90 percent of these victories were by 55 percent or more. Upstate New York had twelve relatively safe Republican seats; in these 48 elections (12 seats  $\times$  4 elections) only six were decided by a margin of less than 55 percent. Thus it is fair to conclude that the regions that brought the Republicans their majority sustained them during the Civil War elections.

This holds true throughout the period of Republican dominance. For example, of the 55 House seats that were filled by Republicans in every election from 1860 to 1874, sixteen were Midwestern, 37 Northeastern. Massachusetts, Maine, and upstate New York were the strongest Republican areas, contributing 26 of the 55 seats. In fact, from 1860 to 1874 the Massachusetts and Maine state delegations were entirely Republican.

If we shift the focus from districts to states, we find sixteen states electing Republicans at a two-to-one ratio over Democrats in 1860–74: California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Ohio, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. It is worth noting that states entering the Union after 1854 overwhelmingly favored Republican candidates. In addition, those states gaining the most seats in the 1862 and 1872 census-driven reapportionments were also strongly Republican. From 1862 to 1874 the Northern states had a net gain of 50 seats, with Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota accounting for one-half of them, and these states were very Republican states. In contrast, the Deep South lost nine seats during the period, with Virginia alone losing six from 1850 to 1874. In short, Republican dominance was not only built on existing House districts, but was also aided by the addition of new states and new districts.

The 1890's period is easier to deal with since House elections were contested essentially between Democrats and Republicans, and the switch to the Republicans occurred in the 1894 and 1896 elections. The Midwestern states were the major block moving toward the Republicans: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Illinois moved from eleven Democrats and eleven Republicans in 1892 to two Democrats and 20 Republicans in 1894 and held a seventeen-to-six Republican advantage in 1896. In a similar pattern, from 1892 to 1894 Republicans gained eleven seats in In-

diana, four seats in Michigan (nine if 1890 is the base), eight in Ohio, seven in Wisconsin, and three in Kansas. The Republicans gained seats in other Midwestern states, but the major gains that were sustained over the period of Republican control, 1896–1908, came from these states.

In the Northeast the states that moved most strongly Republican between 1890 and 1894 were Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Massachusetts went from five Republicans in 1890 to twelve in 1894. And between 1892 and 1894 Connecticut went from one Republican to four; New York and Pennsylvania from fourteen and 20 to 29 and 28, respectively; and New Jersey from two to eight. Again, as in the Midwest, other Northeastern states voted in more Republicans in 1894, but the states listed above provided the most sustained support over the 1896–1908 period. Table 6.9 shows the percent of competitive seats, Republican victories, and safe Republican seats for both the pre-1894 period and the 1894–1908 period. The expectation is that the percentage of competitive seats should decrease, and that the percentage of Republican and safe Republican seats should increase. Moreover, the percentage shifts should be greater in the Midwest than in the East, which had a higher Republican base.

The results corroborate the hypothesis. In the Midwest 55 percent of the seats were competitive in the pre-1894 period, compared with only about 53 percent in the 1894–1908 period. The Republicans'

TABLE 6.9  
*Spatial Configurations of Republican Wins in the 1890's Realignment*  
(Percent)

Category	1890–1892 elections	1894–1910 elections	Difference over period
Midwest			
Competitive seats	85.0%	52.7%	-32.3%
Republican share of all seats	40.0	84.2	44.2
Republican safe seats	4.0	43.2	39.2
Northeast			
Competitive seats	56.9%	45.8%	-11.1%
Republican share of all seats	48.2	71.0	22.8
Republican safe seats	17.8	42.5	24.7
All other non-Southern			
Competitive seats	60.3%	58.1%	-2.2%
Republican share of all seats	31.2	49.8	18.6
Republican safe seats	8.5	19.7	-11.2

share rose from 40 percent of all Midwestern seats to more than 84 percent. And their safe seats jumped dramatically, from 4 percent to over 40 percent. The Northeastern states show the same pattern, but as expected, the percentage changes are smaller: an 11 percent decrease in competitive seats, a 23 percent increase in safe seats. The "other non-Southern states" (see Table 6.8) were run as a control, and the results show how the Midwestern and Northeastern states stand apart. In the rest of the North, competitive seats decrease only 2.2 percent, and Republican wins and safe seats increase only some 19 percent and 8 percent, respectively. And it should be noted that in these states the Republicans do not capture a majority of the contested seats in either period. Thus, it can be concluded that a swing of a relatively few voters in these two blocks of Northern states transformed a competitive two-party system into a one-party-dominant system for a period of sixteen years.

Only one small question remains. Did the Republican Party's seat margin come from competitive districts or from noncompetitive districts? That is, how many of the seats won by the Republicans in both periods came from districts where a swing of 5 percent or less would have changed the district's representation? The thesis in this chapter is that in both the Civil War and the 1890's critical period, the Republican votes-to-seats advantage occurred because there were so many competitive (45 to 55 percent) districts. That is, the Republicans could attain a House majority with a relatively minor swing in votes because they were winning competitive districts.

The 1854 election is the most important during the Civil War era because, as has been shown, that election saw a massive movement away from the Democrats. The anti-Democratic Party vote in 1854 benefited different parties in different regions; thus I shall use the term non-Democratic and in the next chapter deal with the question of how the Republicans put together a majority between 1854 and 1860. There were 105 districts represented by Democrats in 1852 that switched to other parties in 1854. There were, of course, many Southern districts that went Democratic in 1854; thus the 105 seats do not represent the net loss to the Democrats. It is, however, in those seats that we find the origins of the Republican majority. Eighty-one of the 105, or 77.1 percent, had been competitive in the 1852 election. It is clear that over three-quarters of the original anti-Democratic surge came from districts where minor vote swings resulted in a major seat change. Moreover, 72 (68.6 percent) of the 105 anti-Democratic seats in 1854 were Republican in 1860, and over one-half (54.2) were safe seats (won by margins greater than 55 percent). In sum about three-

quarters of the seats that gave the Republicans their realignment margin came from the competitive sector of the constituency party distribution.

The 1890's critical period follows much the same pattern. The 1894 election, as shown above, was the most important in the era. There were 110 seats that shifted from Democratic in 1892 to Republican in 1894. Of the 110 new Republican seats, 91 or 82.7 percent had been competitive in 1892. Thus slightly over four-fifths of the Republican swing seats came from districts where a vote change of 5 percent or less could result in a seat change. Sixty-eight (61.8 percent) of these seats remained Republican in both the 1896 and 1898 elections. In contrast to the Civil War period, however, only a third (35.3 percent) of these were safe seats. In sum, as in the Civil War period, the vast majority of the seats that gave the Republicans majority status came from the competitive sector of the constituency party distribution. This result is not surprising given the competitive nature of the electoral system prior to both realignments.


#### ★ Summary

Neither the Civil War critical period nor the 1890's critical period was characterized by significant shifts in voting, yet both produced stable Republican majorities in the House and Senate. Earlier in this chapter this anomaly was seen to be the result of a votes-to-seats ratio in excess of the Cube Law. The Cube Law was shown to be dependent on a normally distributed cumulative party distribution with limited variance. Since the American party system is not typically "normal," the votes-to-seats distortion found in the Civil War and 1890's eras is seen as a result of the shape of the CPDs. In both critical periods the party distribution prior to the shift was leptokurtic—that is, highly peaked with many competitive seats. Given such a peaked distribution, a permanent shift of a small percentage of voters would result in a new stable majority party. The results showed that the precritical periods in both eras were characterized by peaked distributions, efficient Republican voting, and a slight shift toward the Republicans in the mean vote.

Our attention then turned to ascertaining the spatial configuration of party voting. The initial assumption was that in both the Civil War and 1890's eras, the shift to the Republicans would be concentrated in the Northeastern and Midwestern states. The data revealed that in the Civil War era the 1854 election shifted support away from the Democrats. In the Midwest the shift was to Republican candidates; in the

Northeast the Whigs and the American Party were the primary beneficiaries of anti-Democratic voting. By 1858, however, the Republicans had replaced both these parties as the second major party, and in both regions Republicans dominated elections until the mid-1870's. In the 1890's era the Midwestern and Northeastern states shifted to the Republicans in 1894 and remained predominantly Republican until 1910. Thus in both periods a small Republican shift in the Midwest and the Northeast converted a highly competitive two-party system into regional one-partyism.

## Conclusion

 THIS BOOK began with an argument that linked changes in mass electoral behavior and the House of Representatives with dramatic changes in public policy. In the process of examining these linkages, I found that many of my preconceptions changed and new questions arose. No question has been more important than the role of political parties in linking elections, institutions, and policy shifts. Political parties in the electorate, as organizations, and as government, were central to explaining how policy shifts occurred in each of our three eras, and in this final chapter I deal with three questions related to this theme. (1) Would the two nineteenth-century realignments have occurred without the particular constituent party distributions that generated favorable Republican votes-to-seats ratios? (2) Are the electoral results reported in this book compatible with the theory of retrospective voting? And (3) What are some of the implications of my findings for contemporary American politics?

### ★ A Revised View of Realignments

The finding that both nineteenth-century realignments were dependent on a highly competitive party system leads one to ask the first question. To restate it in more concrete terms, did the Kansas-Nebraska, slavery, and money issues produce these realignments, or should they be ascribed instead to advantages in the votes-to-seats ratios? In order to answer this question, it is necessary, first, to outline the standard view of what drives realignments and then to offer my own.

The standard view of realignments holds that as we move (in time) away from a realignment party identification weakness (dealignment), at some point a new, cross-cutting issue arises to generate a new criti-