

Adam J. Ramey, Jonathan D. Klingler,
Gary E. Hollibaugh Jr.



*Personality, Polarization,
and the Transformation
of the US Congress*

More Than a Feeling

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FOR THE MANY PERSONALITIES OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

Acknowledgments

It is often the case in science that the best and most novel avenues of inquiry arise by accident. This project counts itself among the works (of all qualities) that have emerged in this venerable tradition. While completing another project, two of us (Ramey and Klingler) were sipping Turkish coffee in Toulouse, France, on a fine autumn day. Klingler was conveying with great excitement his recent forays into the voluminous and fascinating literature on personality and decision-making. Ramey was equally excited about his own recent explorations in the area of quantitative text analysis. In the midst of this exchange, an idea was born from a simple question: could we measure theoretically relevant personality traits of individuals using text? We gambled that the answer was yes. Ramey and Klingler then set up a Skype call with Hollibaugh to see if (a) he thought they were crazy, and (b) if he was willing to forgo another joint project and instead pursue this idea. While he was not (and still is not) fully willing to give Ramey and Klingler a pass on the insanity question, Hollibaugh nevertheless rolled the dice on the project.

In the years since, we have worked tirelessly toward a monumental goal—bridging the diverse literatures on personality, political institutions, and quantitative text analysis. Though much of that time was spent penning this manuscript, a nontrivial time was spent evangelizing our new set of ideas. Both tasks have been challenging, and without the support of those closest to us and this enterprise the final product would not have been possible. It is thus fitting that we begin by acknowledging those who have played significant roles in the development, growth, and maturation of this project.

Much of this book was written in unlikely locations. When together, we rarely sat in an office, typing away. Rather, much of our time fleshing out and executing the ideas expressed in this project was done in cafés, restaurants, cigar rooms, and the like. While it is impossible to give a full account of all such places, we give special thanks to the staff and management at those establishments where we took up significant table space over the course of our endeavor. In Toulouse, we thank the staff of La Rose de Sables, Ras La Tasse, and Al Diwan for a nearly endless supply of caffeine, sandwiches, *raisin et menthe*, and impeccable service. We offer particular recognition to Ras La Tasse for providing great air-conditioning during the *canicule* of summer 2015, and Al Diwan for providing us with a comfortable and productive spot to work during the night hours of the same visit. The final push on this book (as well as two articles written almost entirely at those locations) would have been stymied without them. In Abu Dhabi, the location of the largest number of joint visits, we thank the staffs of Tarbouche, the Marina al Bateen Lebanese restaurant (where many of our original ideas were formed), and Almaz by Momo. The constant supply of Turkish coffee and delicious food cannot be overlooked. In Chicago, we thank the staff at Iwan Ries & Co. for providing us with fine cigars and a comfortable spot to work mere steps away from the Palmer House Hilton. Last, we thank the entire staff at Nat Sherman's in New York. The last push of this project was facilitated by their excellent Wi-Fi, impeccable ambiance, and unrivaled cigars.

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We also acknowledge that portions of Chapter 3 are drawn from our forthcoming (and more technically oriented) article in *Political Science Research and Methods*, “Measuring Elite Personality Using Speech.”

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PART I

Foundations