

2018 Research Week Proposal

Poster Proposal

Title- Examining the Negative Impacts of Political Polarization and Party Dominance in American Democracy: A Theoretical Approach to Elitism and Preemption

Program of Study- Government & Paralegal Studies

Presentation Type- Print Poster

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Category- Textual or Investigative

Abstract:

Contemporary American political scientists advocate that both the American populous and their elected government officials are the most politically polarized in history since the Civil War. In fact, a significant cohort of the population believes that the opposing political party is an enemy to acceptable cultural formalities and therefore, distrust and hatred for the political party opposite to theirs often ensues. Utilizing contemporary measurements of determining polarization among parties within the government, comparing the measurable size of state governments, and through evaluating legislative acts of congress, this paper seeks to provide a theoretical analysis to explain why the American people are more politically divided than any point in recent history and how this polarization has contributed towards the increasing state preemption and state government influence. This paper will advocate that geographic homogeneity of political parties, the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the American democratic process, and increasing levels of education among citizens have significantly contributed towards modern political polarization. Additionally, this work furthers previous research through examining the impact of this polarization on topics including state preemption and draws a connection between the desecration of democratic values as a negative consequence of political polarization and party dominance. As this paper suggests, the lack of compromise plaguing modern American politics

through polarization and party dominance has created a system of bureaucratic elitism which has stripped average citizens of their basic rights of choice. Such examples discussed within this paper include state preemption laws among historically one-party dominated states which purposefully oppress minority opinions within their jurisdiction as a result of party animosity. Ultimately, the implications of this research assert the importance of moderates and compromise in legislation as a way of upholding the principle of “the will of the people” and as a democracy.