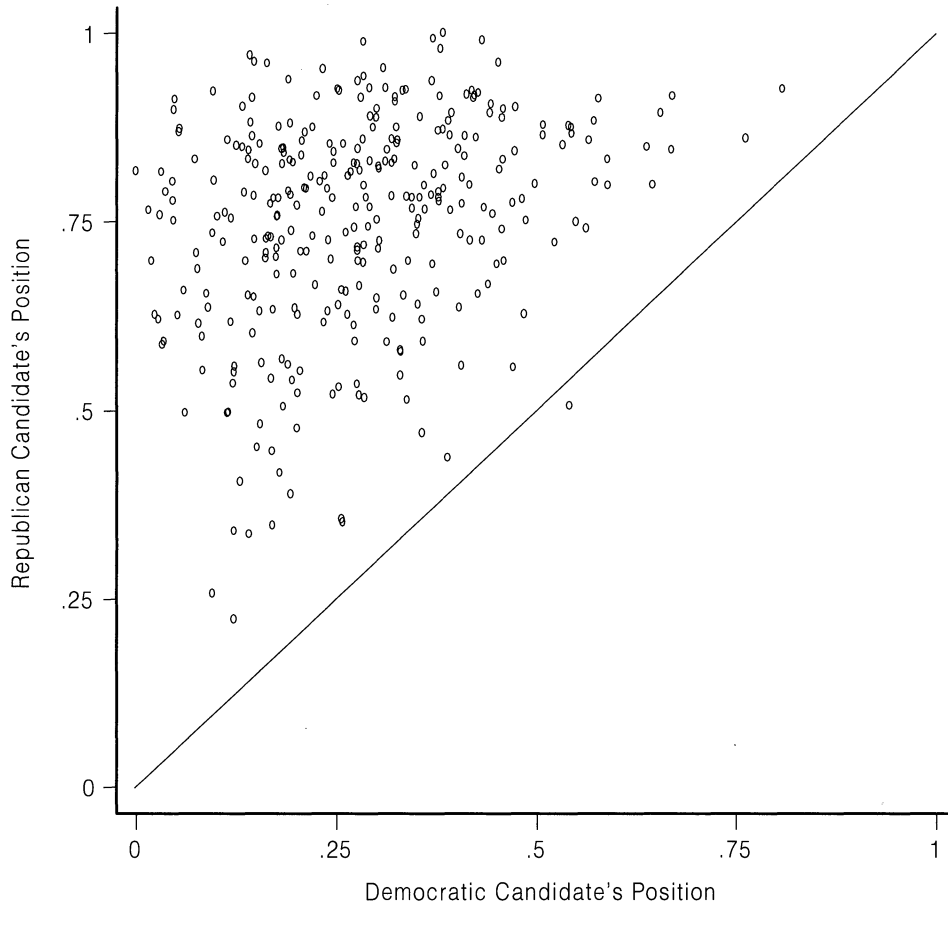


FIGURE 2 Candidate Positioning in 1996: Republicans vs. Democrats

We explore such politically induced moderation in Table 1, where we test for the effects of incumbency status and candidate quality on candidate ideological position, controlling for district conservatism. We see here that after controlling for district conservatism, incumbents are more moderate than open-seat candidates and that open-seat candidates are more moderate than challengers.¹¹ For Republicans running in a 50-50 district the predicted average ideological locations are .686 (incumbents) vs. .766 (open seats) vs. .804 (challengers), while for Democrats in a 50-50 district the predicted locations are .369 vs. .326, vs. .253, respectively.

Table 1 also suggests that more competitive districts tend to produce more moderate candidates. First, as noted above, open-seat candidates are more moderate than challengers, even after controlling for district parti-

¹¹This finding is clearly at odds with Achen's (1978) reanalysis of Miller and Stokes's data, in which he estimates that losers were more representative than winners in 1958, at least in the North, by two of his three measures of representativeness.

anship. This effect is especially strong and robust for Democrats and is also significant for Republicans when the candidate quality variable is not included in the regressions. Second, "high-quality" nonincumbents are more moderate than other nonincumbents. This effect is similar in both parties, and the estimates imply that the positions of high-quality nonincumbents are more moderate than those of other nonincumbents by .08 to .10 points, or about one-half to two-thirds of the within-party standard deviations.

Table 2 shows more directly how the competitiveness of the district reduced the ideological gap between the candidates in 1996. Here, the dependent variable is the ideological gap between the two candidates. The independent variables are district conservatism and measures of candidate quality and primary competition. First, marginal districts induce a significantly smaller gap than safe districts. The effect of partisan competition is measured by including, along with our measure of district conservatism, the square of that measure, as well.