Executive-Legislative Bargaining: Inherent Status-Quo Bias

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Recapping the Presidency

Midterm Distributions

A Spatial Model of Policy Making
Limited Judicial Influence of Checks

- Presidents appoint judges, which may limit opposition to their decisions
- Court legitimacy can be threatened in the wake of popular unilateral presidential action
- Leads to second constraint of judicial check: “While the Court is said to be an independent branch of government, then, its power and prestige are profoundly dependent on the executive.”
- Constant judicial incentive for restraint, even in event of ruling against the president, rulings can be institutionally ambiguous
Presidential Ability to *Set the Agenda*

- What is one source of “power” that the president can draw upon?
  - Only agent of the country at-large & is informally privileged to being the “first-mover” with respect to pursuing policies (State of the Union, President’s modern budget)
- How can presidents get Congress to act on their policy program according to Canes-Wrone?
  - Going “public” on specific policies can mobilize public to pressure Congress to enact presidential agenda. Can you think of an example?
- Limits to “going public?”
  - Presidents only go public on policies that are *popular* and in which they *need* support for Congress to act (presidents prefer sticky policies)
- Presidents privileged with *bully* pulpit of televised speeches
### Recapping the Presidency: Midterm Distributions

### A Spatial Model of Policy Making

#### Unilateral Presidency Recap

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<th>Presidential Policy Making</th>
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<td>Declaration of war; funding by Congress; commander in chief</td>
<td>Presidential wars</td>
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Exam Section Correlation Matrix

```
> cormat

          multiple_choice  short_answer analytical_question essay_question
multiple_choice       1.00       0.61          0.48            0.60
short_answer            0.61       1.00          0.45            0.69
analytical_question     0.48       0.45          1.00            0.50
easy_question           0.60       0.69          0.50            1.00
```
Midterm Exam Distributions

Summary Statistics (Raw Scores)

> `summary(midterm$multiple_choice)`
  Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
  4.00   13.00  16.00 15.56  18.00  20.00

> `summary(midterm$short_answer)`
  Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
  3.00   19.00  24.00 22.76  29.50  32.00

> `summary(midterm$analytical_question)`
  Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
  0.00    5.75  13.00 10.24  13.50  15.00

> `summary(midterm$essay_question)`
  Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
  17.50  26.12  31.00 28.90  32.50  35.00

> `summary(midterm$final_curved_grade)`
  Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
  37.25  68.62  82.00 77.45  91.50 101.00
## Midterm Exam Distributions

### Summary Statistics (Section Percentages)

```r
> summary(percent$multiple_choice)
   Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
 20.00   65.00   80.00 77.78   90.00 100.00

> summary(percent$short_answer)
   Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
 10.00   63.33   80.00 75.86   98.33 106.67

> summary(percent$analytical_question)
   Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
 0.00    38.33   86.67 68.27   90.00 100.00

> summary(percent$essay_question)
   Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
 50.00   74.64  88.57 82.57  92.86 100.00
```
Midterm Exam Distributions

Pol 1 Midterm Exam Histograms by Section, Summer 2017

- Multiple Choice
- Short Answer
- Analytical Question
- Essay Question
- Final Grade

Exam Section Score vs. Frequency
Krehbiel’s *Pivotal Politics* Model

Consider the following model of a simple legislature:

![Diagram of a simple legislature model]

- **L1** (Liberal Extreme - Medicare for all)
- **L2**
- **L3**
- **L4** (Conservative Extreme - no government involvement in health care)

The diagram illustrates the spatial model of policy making, where the legislature's center (M) is the pivotal point within the win set (Q). The positions of the liberal and conservative extremes are also marked, indicating the political spectrum and the potential outcomes for policy decisions.
Simple Legislature

The following conditions apply to the model:

- Single, left-right dimension of conflict (in the example, on the issue of health care reform)
- Each legislator \((L_1, L_2, L_3, L_4, L_5)\) has an “ideal-point”, vote is by majority rule (i.e. majoritarian)
- \(Q\) is the status quo policy. For legislators, the choice is always between \(Q\) and a proposal to change the status quo, \(P\).
- \(M\) is the median voter’s ideal point. Recall that the median voter is the legislator in the MIDDLE of the distribution of legislators and not necessarily in the middle of the issue or ideological space. In other words, the median legislator need not be a moderate.
- \(D\) is the distance between \(M\) & \(Q\) and the win-set is \(M + / − D\)
Working through the Simple Legislature

Consider the following questions:

▶ Why does Proposal $P_1$ fail and proposal $P_2$ win. What do the legislative coaltions look like?

▶ What is the new win set if $P_2$ passes and becomes the new $Q$?

▶ Why will any policy proposal within the win set pass as an alternative to $Q$?

▶ Why does policy converge to equilibrium at the preferences of the median voter $M$? Under what conditions does policy change after it converges to $M$?

▶ How does one change the location of $M$?
Krehbiel’s *Pivotal Politics* Model

Now, consider the following model of a bicameral legislature:
Working through Bicameralism

- Why might the median voters $M$ be located in different positions in the House & Senate?
- Consider that this is divided government in the 114th Congress with a conservative House & a relatively liberal Senate and the House wants to overturn Obamacare $Q_1$ for a replacement proposal $Q_2$, why couldn’t it change policy?
- Under what conditions could $Q_1$ change?
- What happens if the status quo policy, $Q_2$, is outside the gridlock region?
- What is the “win set” for $Q_2$? What happens if the Senate median voter moves in the direction of the House median voter, like it did following the 2014 elections?
Krehbiel’s *Pivotal Politics* Model

Now, consider the following Congress with extraordinary majorities:

\[ M = \text{median voter} \]
\[ F_{Left} = \text{Liberal filibuster pivot} \]
\[ F_{Right} = \text{Conservative filibuster pivot} \]
\[ Veto = \text{Congressional veto pivot} \]
Working Through Varying Majorities

- What is the rule for stopping a filibuster (*cloture*)? Explain what that means for the definition of the two filibuster pivots.
- What happens to the gridlock region under an extraordinary-majority rule such as the filibuster? Who is pivotal & under what conditions?
- What is a filibuster-proof majority?
- How does partisan polarization affect the placement of the Left and Right filibusters in the absence of a filibuster-proof majority?
- Why do you think the model drops bicameralism? Under what conditions would the unicameral model be inaccurate?
- What is the rule for overriding a presidential veto? Explain what that means for the definition of the veto pivot.
- Why is the veto pivot **ALWAYS** on the same side as the president?
Now, consider the following Congress with presidential turnover:

- What happens to $Q$? What’s the win set for $Q$?
- What policy $P$ should $M$ propose? Why?
- Why my “released policies”, such as $Q$ in this example, contribute to the appearance of a presidential honeymoon?