

Parties as Organizations: Implications of the American Party System

Carlos Algara
calgara@ucdavis.edu

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Senate GOP Efforts to Repeal & Replace the ACA

New Defections Signal End for Health Bill

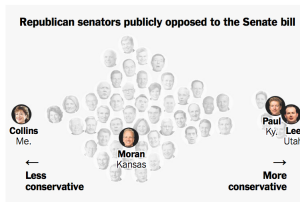
Trump Calls On Congress to Pass Repeal-Only Plan

By THOMAS KAPLAN

- Senators Jerry Moran of Kansas and Mike Lee of Utah said they would oppose the bill to replace the Affordable Care Act, leaving it short.
- President Trump said Congress should "start from a clean slate." Senator Mitch McConnell said he would push a measure to repeal the law now and replace it later.

2087 Comments

- 'We Will Return,' Trump Tweets About Health Care



A Battle Begins as Republicans Look to Pass a Budget

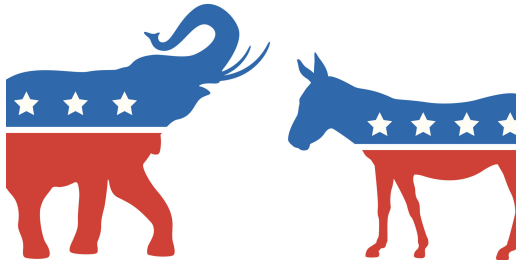
By ALAN RAFFEPORT

Having failed so far to agree on a health care overhaul, a fractured Republican Party must now tackle a spending plan.

- ▶ Using the course concepts, what explains Senate Republican's failure to follow the House GOP Majority and repeal the ACA?
- ▶ Does their failure surprise you? What does this say to party strength in the U.S. Congress?

Agenda

- 1 What is a Political Party?
- 2 Overcoming Collective Action



- ▶ Opening Question: What do you think this quote by E.E. Schattschneider means with regards to the American party system: “*Modern democracy is **unthinkable** save in terms of political parties?*”

Parties Solving Collective Action Problems

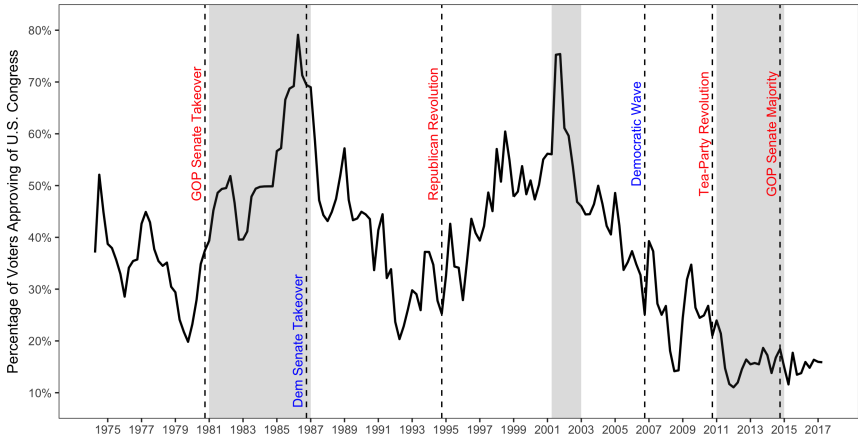
Political Parties and Problems of Collective Action

Arena:	Collective Action Problems	Parties Help Solve by:
Electorate	Free riding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rational abstention • Rational ignorance 	Branding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus of collective responsibility • Heuristic; party id. Mobilization
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of politicians' ambition • Getting elected to office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomination (agenda setting) • Mobilization • Fundraising
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transaction costs for making policy. • Coalition maintenance 	"Long" coalition; ready-made support for party policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda control and the problem of cycling. • Imagine a President Perot or Blumberg...or Trump?

What is a Political Party?

- ▶ What's the traditional notion of party described by Bawn et al. in their *Theory of Political Parties*?
- ▶ Traditionally, parties as teams that facilitate *collective accountability*
- ▶ Why do Bawn et al. reject this notion & what is their assumption about voters?
- ▶ Voters unable to tease out various party policy positions or even agree on *who* to blame & who to reward (collective accountability)
- ▶ What theory do they bring forth of parties in light of the electorate's "blind spot"
- ▶ Parties mainly collection of group interests that agree on set of agenda items & that work to give nominations (with resources) to candidates with a *credible agreement* towards that agenda

Voter assessments of the Collective Congress



N = 1,395 national polls & shaded areas indicate divided control of Congress. Quarterly estimates derived from dyad ratios model (Stimson 1998).

Voter assessments of the Congressional Parties



N = 264 national Democratic polls & 321 Republican polls. Quarterly estimates derived from dyad ratios model (Stimson 1998).

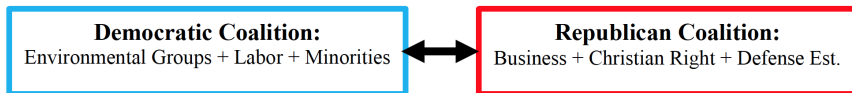
Parties as a Function of *Group Interests*

- ▶ What in the Madisonian framework & electoral system undermines collective accountability?
- ▶ Bawn et al. assume this & propose that parties are merely collection of organized interests, what does this mean?
- ▶ How do these interests use nominations? Is this a principal-agent relationship?
- ▶ Group Interests (teachers, lawyers, interest groups, etc.) are *main* unit of interest
- ▶ What are the incentives of office holders in this theory?
- ▶ Parties are collection of fragile “long” coalitions. . . parallels with *Federalist 10*?

Parties as *Long Coalitions*

Parties and Coalition Maintenance

Parties form a “long” coalition:



What kinds of issues might divide each party’s coalition?

- Are there issues that might tempt groups to defect from one coalition to another?
- What are the advantages of remaining in the coalition by smoothing over differences?

Source: Stone (2016) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar

Overcoming Collective Action in Government

- ▶ What's the fundamental problem of collective action in the legislature?
- ▶ *Parties in-government consist of office-holders who have preferences*
- ▶ Remember, collective action fundamentally about securing *public goods*
- ▶ What does this mean?
- ▶ Parties in government are plagued by competing incentives among their members
- ▶ Consider the following simple Prisoner's Dilemma

Game Theory: The Prisoner's Dilemma

<i>Player 1 Choice</i>	<i>Player 2's Choice</i>	
	Cooperation	Defection
Cooperation	(3,3)	(1,4)
Defection	(4,1)	(2,2)

Payouts in parenthesis. Assume one-shot game.

Collective Action in Bicameral Legislating

Legislator	Legislation						
	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
House							
A	7	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
B	-1	7	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
C	-1	-1	7	-1	-1	-1	-1
D	-1	-1	-1	7	-1	-1	-1
E	-1	-1	-1	-1	7	-1	-1
F	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	7	-1
G	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	7
Senate							
Q (A+B+C)	5	5	5	-3	-3	-3	-3
R (D+E)	-2	-2	-2	6	6	-2	-2
S (F+G)	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	6	6

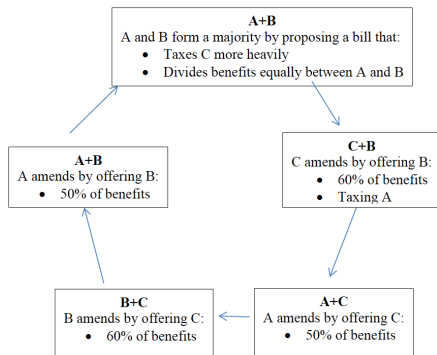
* *Senate payoffs = sum of payoffs to state House districts*

Collective Action in Government

- ▶ How does this game parallel to the struggle parties have in delivering public goods?
- ▶ Parties can either form long or narrow coalitions, longest coalitions could be a coalition of *all* legislators
- ▶ This is the *norm of universalism*, each legislator receives something as member of a “long coalition”, what’s the downside to this?
- ▶ The fear here is that this can lead to *legislative cycling*, where no single faction constitutes a majority and thus infinite bargaining can occur between members
- ▶ Consider if players (legislators) are worse off under cycling

The problem of cycling in legislatures

Imagine there are three factions or voting blocks: A, B, and C. No single faction constitutes a majority; any two factions can form a majority:



Parties solve this problem by controlling the agenda. If A and B are in the same party, the party prevents amendments offered by C that would split the coalition.

Source: Stone (2016) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar

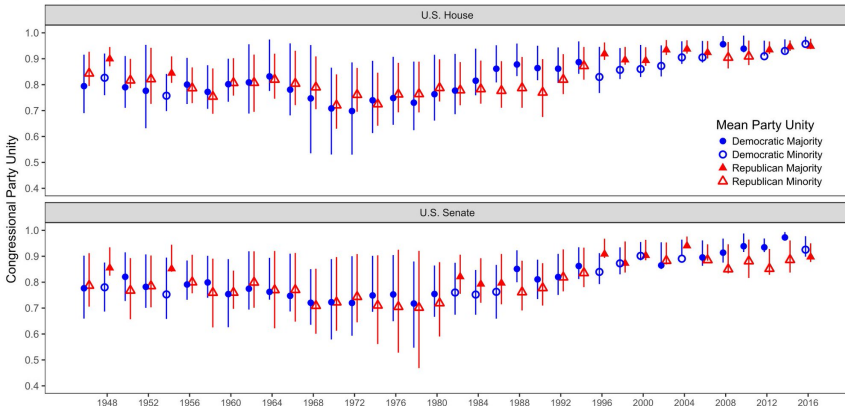
Parties Solving Collective Action *in Government*

- ▶ Premium on *setting the agenda* for House & Senate party leaders
- ▶ What do party members get out of delegation of agenda setting powers to party leaders?
- ▶ **Stable coalitions** & distinct public goods that *distinguish* party brands
- ▶ What happens “in-government” contributes to how parties solve collective action problems in electoral arena, how?
- ▶ Heuristic & raw mobilization efforts by parties benefit all candidates running under the party brand (ex: coattail effect in presidential years)
- ▶ Politicians are *office-seeking* and what parties do in government reduces cost of election

Limits to Party's Efforts

- ▶ Why would parties in government be limited in ability to solve collective action problems?
- ▶ American political parties generally thought of as being *weak* parties, why?
- ▶ Parties limited in coercing their members to vote against self-interest, why?
- ▶ American parties gaining strength in party unity, why? What explanation would Bawn et al. give?
- ▶ Comparative parties known for *formal* means of party discipline (withholding campaign funds, denying nominations primarily)

Congressional Party Unity during the Post-War Period, 1946-2016



Point ranges indicate distance between 25% percentile to 75% quantile with respect to party unity.

Carlos Algara: @algaraca / Data: Rvoterview Scrape

Key Points:

- ▶ Traditional view is that parties are “teams” of likeminded players
- ▶ Bawn et al. contend parties are aggregation of group interests
- ▶ Group interests work towards giving nominations to like-minded candidates
- ▶ Parties are comprised of “long coalitions”, akin to a collection of factions
- ▶ Legislatures comprised of members with varying self-interest
- ▶ Parties in government help solve collective action by setting the agenda & providing members with stable coalitions
- ▶ Parties in government strengthen brand & heuristic, necessary mechanism of overcoming collective action in electoral arena