

# American Comprehensive Exam Notes

*Hao Wang*  
*Arizona State University*  
*June 29, 2017*

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>POS 530 American Politics</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Week 1 Introduction . . . . .	2
1.2	Week 2 Congress . . . . .	3
1.3	Week 3 . . . . .	6
1.4	Week 4 Congress . . . . .	9

# 1 POS 530 American Politics

## 1.1 Week 1 Introduction

### 1.1.1 [Gilens \(2012\)](#) : Affluence and Influence (Book)

**Cite Key** Gilens2012

**Author** Martin Gilens

**Year** 2012

#### **Summary**

the association between government policy and public preferences could tell us something important about the responsiveness of our government to the public and the extent to which political influence is reserved for the affluent. Two questions: 1. under which conditions government is responsible 2. Who is among the governed that government respond to.

The author starts with the discussion of democracy and the citizen-government linkages. While Converse argue that American voters do not have coherent ideology and lacks political understandings, there are several ways that citizens can approach politics without sophisticated knowledge: 1. through cue-taking of the more-knowledgeable citizens. 2. Although democratic participation requires some minimal knowledge, citizens only need to be knowledgeable on some issues, not all of them.

#### **Main Findings**

Policy preference is measured by the actual policy outcomes. The main interest is the association between the policy outcomes and the degree of support expressed by the public/ or a subgroup.

Comparing education and income classes, policy congruence is more salient with the increasing levels of incomes; Interest group is interrelated with income classes. But income is still dominant factor: on economic and tax domain, interest group is closely related with rich people, on social welfare, interest group is evenly distributed across income classes. On gun control and environment, interest group is running against public wishes.

### 1.1.2 [Bartels \(2008\)](#) Unequal Democracy

**Cite Key:** Bartels2008

**Author:** Larry Bartels

**Year:** 2008

#### **Summary**

The major question of this book is to discuss political equality of a democracy. Economic growth, inequality and political accountability. How to explain the success of the Republican parties if Democrat party helps middle classes so dramatically over the past years? Increasing economic inequality has become a political issue.

## **Findings**

1. Partisan divisions, under R's control, the real income growth for lower and middle income classes has consistently lagged well behind D's administration, also lagged well behind the income growth rates of the rich. Lower unemployment rates under D, but almost identical inflation rates, according to Hibbs 1987
2. Class divisions: Democrats lose support from the middle class and high-income class. However, the general public is not becoming more conservative. Working classes do not value cultural issues more either. (probably race? a US-them division?); Nor did the religious practice a deciding factor.
3. How Rep. can win elections: voters are myopic and only focus on election year performance; 2. Election year income growth for affluent voters is much more consequential, even for low and middle income voters 3. voters are swayed by the balance of campaign spending between incumbents and challengers.

## **1.2 Week 2 Congress**

### **1.2.1 Sin (2014) Separation of Powers and Legislative Organization**

**Cite Key** Sin2014

**Author** Gisela Sin

**Year** 2014

#### **Summary**

The goal is to explain the house rule changes in the Congress. The House majority has to anticipate the actions of Senate and the president, as predetermined by the constitution. Also, the House includes fractions of different goals and interests. Intraparty groups are important for the changes of the House rules as well.

Gephardt rule abolishment (Rep)

Constitutional Constraints: any bills requires approval of both House and Senate as well as the president, or a supermajority of both House and Senate.

Intraparty conflicts: conservative Rep. and progressive Rep.

Constitutional Theory of Legislative Organization. Environment: by the Constitution, there are three players in determining the policy outcomes: House, Senate and the president.

Two stages of game: the power-sharing game and the legislative game. In the power-sharing game, house fractions choose rules and procedures that distribute power among themselves. In the legislative game, there are two steps, the bicameral agreement stage and the constitutional stage (require all agreements from House, Senate and the President).

## Findings

1. House rules changes as the set of constitutional actors changes. Even holding every House member's ideal point constant, a shift in the ideal point of the Senate or the president can change the constitutional set and the available policy choices of the House.
2. Constitutional set changes predict. Not the change of House median, the party homogeneity, the party polarization, party capacity nor the majority party size.
3. Centralization happens when the nonspeaker group now get closer to the speaker group, or has ally in Senate/president. Decentralization happens when the Senate and president closer to the speaker fraction/ or when House minority controls both Senate and the president.

### 1.2.2 **Schickler (2001): Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the US Congress**

**Cite Key** Schickler2001

**Author** Eric Schickler

**Year** 2011

#### Summary

What explains the institutional changes in Congress? Members have different interests, and different interests are effective at different time periods.

Pluralism: different coalitions promoting a wide range of collective interests drive processes of change. reelection interest, bolster the capacity, power and prestige of the chamber of Congress as a whole, interest of accessing to the institutional power bases, party-based interest, and policy-based interest.

Disjointed: the dynamics of institutional development derive from the interactions and tensions among competing coalitions promoting several different interests.

Predictions: 1. Electoral interests will matter more as member careerism increases (Mayhew 1974). 2. Congressional capacity and power will be more salient following episodes in which the president has gained influence at Congress's expense (Dodd 1977; Sundquist 1981). 3. Members' interest in institutional power bases will generate pressure for decentralization following an influx of junior members that substantially alters the seniority distribution (Dodd 1986; Diermeier 1995). 4. Majority party interests will be particularly important when the majority party is internally unified and has policy preferences that are

sharply different from those of the minority (Rohde 1991). 5. Policy-based interests will generate pressure for institutional changes when electoral shocks and other exogenous factors substantially shift the location of the median voter on the floor (Krehbiel 1998; Schickler 2000).

DV: Institutional changes, include leadership instruments, the committee system, and rules and procedures.

### **Findings**

1890 - 1910: the longest successful era of party government in congressional history, multiple collective interests shaped institutional development. Majority party interest, minority party interest, and concerns about congressional capacity also shaped House rules in 1891-95. 1909-1910 reforms even brought a cross-party coalitions for minority Democrats and insurgent Republicans that was united by a confluence of ideological, partisan, and power base concerns.

1919 - 1932: the House majority party was once again more successful than the Senate majority in promoting interests. GOP majority, the institutional changes initiated by Republicans were at least partly intended to improve the GOP's effectiveness. Cross-party coalitions rooted in ideological and sectoral interests also shaped institutional changes during this period, particularly in the Senate. Even in the House, cross-party coalitions enjoyed notable victories in 1924 and in 1931. In both cases, ideological concerns interacted with members' personal power interests to promote reforms that loosened majority leaders' agenda control.

1937 - 1952: majority party interest receded further in importance. The main collective interests were defending Congress from presidential aggrandizement and promoting the cross-party conservative coalition. e.g.: the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, which is due to the congressional-presidential rivalry.

In the 1970s-1980s, party interests returned to prominence, but they interacted with junior members' power base interests and with a renewed concern that Congress had lost too much ground to the executive branch. The result was an array of institutional changes that augmented majority party influence and helped coordinate spending decisions, but also facilitated entrepreneurship by junior members.

### **1.2.3 Palsby (1968) The Institutionalization of the U.S. House**

**Citekey** Palsby1968

**Author** Nelson Palsby

**Year** 1968

#### **Summary**

Institution: 1. it is relatively well-bounded, different from its environment. 2. The organization is relatively complex, its functions are internally separate on some regular and explicit

basis. 3. The organization tends to use universalistic rather than particularistic criteria, and automatic rather than discretionary methods for conducting its internal business. Precedents and rules are followed; merit systems replace favoritism and nepotism; and impersonal codes supplant personal preferences as prescriptions for behavior.

**Findings** 1. Harder to enter: increased years of members and speakers. 2. Increased complexity: in the growth in the autonomy and importance of committees, in the growth of specialized agencies of party leadership, and in the general increase in the provision of various emoluments and auxiliary aids to members in the form of office space, salaries, allowances, staff aid and committee staffs. 3. A seniority system is always used.

#### **1.2.4 Hibbing (1991) Contours of the Modern Congressional Career**

**Citekey** Hibbing1991

**Author** John Hibbing

**Year** 1991

**Summary** Study changes in four areas: the electoral career, the formal position career, the legislative activity career, and the constituency activity career. Changes are standardized. Senior members are more active in raising issues, but pay less attention to constituencies.

**Conclusion:** Post-war congressional career electoral support improves; positions within the institution expand to improve; legislative activity, specialization, and efficiency increase; and attention to district affairs diminishes. Specially, representatives used to do much better electorally as senior members than they were junior members, but now electoral performance is quite similar. Senior members used to acquire quality formal positions only after several terms of service, but now these positions are frequently obtained early in a career. Senior members used to do substantially less constituency service works, but now these differences are slight. Overall, the distinctiveness of particular career stages is much less than it used to be.

### **1.3 Week 3**

#### **1.3.1 Brooks (2013) He Runs She Runs**

**Citekey** Brooks2013

**Author** Deborah Jordan Brooks

**Year** 2013

**Summary**

Feminism, women and politics, performance of female politicians etc., are becoming increasingly important in modern democracies. Being systematically discriminated until

20th century, women's political voices are still weaker than males. Unlike Scandinavian countries where female MPs constitute a fairly large percentage (around 30 to 40%) in the parliaments, there are only about 20 percent females in the Congress. Outside the political arena, females' salaries are significantly lower than males, and there are few female business leaders. Media commentators and journalists keep reminding us that these facts reflect the longstanding gender stereotypes in the United States: females are regarded inferior to males, with respect to politics, female politicians are harder to achieve political success.

This conventional wisdom becomes the core question of Brooks' book. Gender stereotypes are so prevalently perceived in the public that it is not systematically examined in academia. Confirmation bias states that people tend to find evidence to support their intuition, which helps explain why few scholars asking the question: does gender stereotypes harm female politicians in the same as common females? This book however addresses this issue directly using experimental designs, which are considered more rigorous than non-experimental designs and easier to ensure internal validity.

Two confronting theories are examined in chapter 2. Double Standards Theory holds that female candidates will suffer from the descriptive stereotypes as being women; and they have to balance the potential conflicting identities as being women while acting as leaders; voters have higher standards for female politicians due to the prevailing gender discrimination. In other words, Double Standards Theory reflects the conventional wisdom. The author's argument leans towards the second theory: Leaders-Not-Ladies. This theory holds that being a political leader, female politicians do not suffer from the common gender stereotypes that common females will have. 'Female politicians will be evaluated by voters as 'politician' rather than female' (p. 29). Characteristics on 'good leadership' will outperform 'good femininity'. On the other hand, Brooks argues that female politicians have more information available to voters; and when voter receive more relevant information, stereotypical judgment goes down (p.41).

Brooks tests the two hypotheses with experimental methods. Fictional candidates are used rather than the actual political figures. Brooks argues that using fictional roles helps to isolate other confounding characteristics of that candidate which may interact with gender (p.47). On the other hand, experiments provide stronger control over the amount of information that voters will receive. Samples are drawn from YoGov subsample, as the author demonstrates that YoGov is more representative than commonly used student samples. Dependent variables are three questions: overall likeness; competence as a Senator; competence as the President ten years from now.

The core idea of the experimental design is to examine if voters form different opinions on the two fictional politicians with the same amount of information except for the gender difference. In the six experiments, respondents are required to read the articles with the same content of the candidates other than the gender. These articles are manipulated across 6 different dimensions: political experience (chapter 4), crying, anger, empathy, and knowledge gaffes (chapters 5 - 7). Analysis is done with ANOVA, which is common in experimental designs (although not widely used in political science). ANOVA outperforms regression in the way that less assumptions are employed and beta coefficients need not to

be constant.

The results support her argument of the Leaders-Not-Ladies. Overall, there is no statistically significant differences between male and female candidates. Instead, female candidates receive positive stereotypes in some aspects like being affirmative; and female politicians are in general regarded more intelligent when both candidates are inexperienced. Female candidates are not penalized particularly for being inexperienced; crying and showing anger; lack of empathy; and for knowledge gaffes. Overall, the results are consistent across different dimensions: female candidates do not suffer from gender stereotypes.

The experimental designs in this study dramatically enhance the interval validity. Not only in terms of causal inference, but the linkage between theory and experimentation as well. Brooks discusses the key concept of stereotypes in the beginning: 'stereotypes allow people to quickly and efficiently - if not always accurately make assumptions about the likely characteristics and behaviors of people' (p.~17). Although she does not emphasize a lot about its theoretical implications, all the later experimentations are based on this very concept. Stereotypes are not necessarily undesirable, people use stereotypes everyday and in most conditions they are useful. For instance, hardcore partisans can vote efficiently on partisan lines even without looking at candidates' proposals. Without enough information and the intention to absorb the information, stereotypes reduce decision-making costs.

Then the experimental design in the book becomes extremely useful in controlling the amount of information voters receive. Regarding stereotype as a mechanism of efficient opinion formation without sufficient information, there is enough reason to believe that, female politicians who have more exposed information to the public than a common unknown female, may suffer less from gender stereotype.

Also related to this question, since the information shared by voters will increase with the running campaign, it will be interesting to see if the gender stereotype will diminish when voters know more about the female candidates (or maybe it will be strengthened as perception bias exist before the information processing mechanism, so opinions will skew further with more information). These hypotheses cannot be tested in a one-time design which is performed in this book, but will be available with a panel-tracing survey or multiple experiments with increasing information.

Other than the strength of the book, there are a few points which makes the arguments weaker. The non-significant findings of gender stereotypes are very robust in different settings (with respect to emotion, experience, empathy, knowledge gaffe), but I am not sure about the effect of gender stimuli. Brooks did mention that about 85% respondents recognize the different names settings correctly, but does this mean the names trigger potential gender stereotypes effectively?

The other potential flaw comes from the leaders-not-ladies argument. Brooks argues that voters may have different subtypes for female politician as they are playing the leadership position instead of common females. However, on the other hand we see female politicians emphasizing their gender identity in the United States as well as in other countries. According to Hanna Pitkin's representation argument, female politicians



have the descriptive representation value of being females, and thus should be expected to interact and communicate with females a lot more. These suggest that albeit voters may regard female politicians differently from the typical gender stereotype, female politicians are still connected with women. Future may focus on the interaction between female politicians as a subtype and the general gender stereotypes.

Putting electoral contexts into her study, with the absence of partisanship, the experimental designs suffer somewhat from external validity. Partisanship is playing important roles in politics. Some comparative studies show that with stricter partisan disciplines, female MPs are marginalized and cannot form cross-party alliance on women's issues (e.g. Ayata and Tutuncu 2008, Lovenduski 2001). On the other hand, female candidates from Democrats and Republicans seem to have different winning probabilities. Empirical statistics shows more Democratic females in the Congress. Party ID and winning odds for female politicians are worth analyzing in the future.

Overall, this study uses simulated experimental design to examine the conventional wisdom that female politicians suffer from gender stereotypes. The non-significant results are robust in different experimental settings. The solid evidence from the book strongly challenges conventional wisdom. Also, this study shows how experimental design can help figure out the causal mechanism of opinion formation.

## **1.4 Week 4 Congress**

### **1.4.1 Burden, Jones and Kang (2014) Sore Loser Laws and Congressional Polarization**

**Author** Barry C. Burden and Bradley M. Jones and Michael S. Kang

**Year** 2014

**Summary** Sore loser law can explain the broadening ideology gaps. It is a constant effect that contribute an additional amount of polarization on top of more general trends.

Sore loser law: a candidate who fails to win a party primary cannot appear on the general election ballots as either an independent candidate or nominee of another party.

How: 1. by removing any subsequent reentry options for candidates, they place greater pressure on primary candidates to cater to the polarized preferences of party bases. 2. by preventing moderate candidates rejected by the party base from getting elected as sore losers.

Case: 2010 McCain Arizona Senate election: moving to right; 2006 Connecticut reelection, without sore loser law, Lieberman won based on his moderate positions.

#### **Findings**

Number of states with sore loser laws increased. Polarizing effects of sore loser laws using three sources: congressional candidate surveys, congressional roll-call records, and state

legislative measures based on both survey and roll calls. Coding sore loser law as the dummy variable, it is significant.

#### **1.4.2 Druckman, Kifer and Parkin (2009) Campaign Communications in U.S. Congressional Elections**

**Author** James N. Druckman and Martin J. Kifer and Michael Parkin

**Year** 2009

**Summary** Data is from candidate websites in the three election circles. Key idea is to identify the different campaign strategy adopted by incumbents and challengers. Their predictions: 1. challengers will employ significantly more negative rhetoric and provide more opportunities for voters to engage with campaign 2. challengers will put more emphasis on issues, personal features and party affiliations to distract voters from the incumbency to alternative criteria. 3. Incumbents will emphasize more on experience in public office, familiarity, and providing district or state benefits.

**Findings** Predictions confirmed. Also challengers are more opt to take risky actions.

#### **1.4.3 Branton, Cassese and Jones (2012) Race, Ethnicity, and U.S. House Incumbent Evaluations**

**Author** Regina P. Branton and Erin C. Cassese and Bradford S. Jones

**Year** 2012

**Summary** Consider evaluations of U.S. house incumbents under conditions of racial/ethnic congruence and incongruence. whether different racial groups have ordered preferences among nondescriptive alternatives.

Descriptive representation: representative possesses an essential attribute linking her to a group whose members also possess that attribute.

**Findings** No evidence of race-based judgment among African Americans, while Latinos and Whites demonstrates preferences based on race and ethnicity.

There is a “black-brown divide”: competition for political economic resources among minority groups has contributed to intergroup animosities. Black and latinos do not support each other in this study. African American MCs are not the “next best choice” for Latinos.

#### **1.4.4 Krehbiel (2000) Party Discipline and Partisanship**

**Author** Keith Krehbriel

**Year** 2000

## **Journal AJPS**

**Summary** This article discuss different measurements of partisanship. Current measurement is roll-call vote-based measurement. The author propose a new measurement considering both the preferences of each individual MCs and partisanship. Parties and individual level preferences are considered as exogenous variables, will be considered both in the behavioral stage.

A spatial cutpoint model: including parties, leadership positions, and minority/majority median voter positions.

Party-voting score is defined as the percenage of all roll calls in a Congress in which at least a majority of one party votes against at least a majority of the other party.

### **1.4.5 Krehbiel (1993) Where's the Party**

**Author** Keith Krehbiel

**Year** 1993

**Journal** BJPS

#### **Summary**

This article tries to find significant partisan behaviors in the U.S. congress. Question: how to define a significant partisan behavior: legialators of that party vote according to partisan lines in spite of personal disagreement. Test with data from the 99th Congress. Testing significant partisan behaviors independent of personal preferences with the formation of standing committee and the appointment of conferees. Partisan effects are rare. To sum, partisan influences in Congress diminishes.

### **1.4.6 Krehbiel (1999) Paradoxes of Parties in Congress**

**Author** Keith Krehbiel

**Year** 1999

**Journal** Legislative Studies Quarterly

#### **Summary**

This article introduces several paradoxes of parties in the congress. 1. Partisan strength: with introparty heterogeneity, partisan strength is not strong. Parties are said to be strong exactly when, viewed through a simple spatial model, they are superfluous. 2. Theories of lawmaking that differ greatly in their party assumptions are often observationally equivalent at the level of predicted outcomes. 3. Party voting occurs even when all legislators ignore completely their partisan identities. Futhermore, party-voting measures

are fundamentally incapable of distinguishing between utterly partisan roll-call voting behavior and utterly non-partisan roll-call voting.

#### **1.4.7 Hager and Talbert (2000) Party Influence on Voting in the House**

**Author** Gregory L. Hager and Jeffery C. Talbert

**Year** 2000

**Journal** LSQ

##### **Summary**

Using roll-call data from the House from the 1950s to 1990s, isolating the effects of parties, including members who switch parties. Regression analysis shows that party influence on voting has varied, but there is an effect, even controlling for ideology. DVs are different levels of party-important votes in Congress. Party shows an effect. On switchers, results show that voting behavior did change after members switched parties.

#### **1.4.8 Cooper and Brady (1981) Leadership Style**

**Author** Joseph Cooper and David W. Brady

**Year** 1981

**Journal** APSR

##### **Summary**

A change of leadership style in House. A switch from a hierarchial style to a bargaining parttern. They argue that it is the institutional context of the House that determine the leadership power and style. Style and effectiveness are contingent or situational, the impact of leadership style is conditioned on party strength. When strength is high, more hierarchial style, when strength is low, more bargaining style.

**Findings** A strong correlation between the percentage vote sharing of parties and the centralized leadership style. Leadership style is more determined by institutional context rather than personal traits.

#### **1.4.9 Binder, Lawrence and Maltzman (1999) Uncovering the Hidden Effect of Party**

**Author** Sarah A. Binder and Eric D. Lawrence and Forrest Maltzman

**Year** 1999

**Journal** JOP

**Summary** Reexamining the 1994 'A to Z' discharge petition campaign in the U.S. House of Representatives. a case in which preferences rather than partisanship are said to provide the superior account of legislative behavior. Using the same spatial model which Krehbiel 1995 used, they found significant partisan effect.

### **Findings**

Separating individuals' policy preferences from the partisan labels, they found clear divergence of partisan effects. E.G. NTU (National Taxpayer Union) score, Concord Coalition score, NOMINATE score...

#### **1.4.10 Snyder and Groseclose (2000) Estimating Party Influence of Roll-Call Voting**

**Author** James Snyder and Tim Groseclose

**Year** 2000

**Journal** AJPS

**Summary** Differentiate partisan votings into substantive voting and procedural votings, over the post-war period, party influence in the House occurs especially often on key procedural votes: the rule on a bill, motions to cut off debate, and motions to recommit. In terms of substantive issues, party influence appears most frequently on budget resolutions, tax policy, social security, social welfare policy, and national debt limit, while it is relatively rare on moral and religious issues and civil rights, and entirely absent on issues such as gun controls. On some issues, such as agriculture, public works, and nuclear energy, party influence has varied dramatically over the period (1871 - 1998).

Definition of a partisan influence: direct pressure applied by the party leader or caucus, including rewards and punishments.

**Findings** Evidence from two stage regressions based on monte carlo simulations. Party pressure is very high in close and very close roll-calls. No major difference between the House and Senate votings.

## **References**

- Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Binder, Sarah A., Eric D. Lawrence and Forrest Maltzman. 1999. "Uncovering the Hidden Effect of Party." *The Journal of Politics* 61(3):815 – 831.
- Branton, Regina P., Erin C. Cassese and Bradford S. Jones. 2012. "Race, Ethnicity and U.S. House Incumbent Evaluations." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 37(4):465 – 489.

- Brooks, Deborah Jordan. 2013. *He Runs, She Runs: Why Gender Stereotypes Do Not Harm Women Candidates*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Burden, Barry C., Bradley M. Jones and Michael S. Kang. 2014. "Sore Loser Laws and Congressional Polarization." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 39(3):299 – 325.
- Cooper, Joseph and David W. Brady. 1981. "Institutional Context and Leadership Style: The House from Cannon to Rayburn." *American Political Science Review* 75(2):411 – 425.
- Druckman, James N., Martin J. Kifer and Michael Parkin. 2009. "Campaign Communication in U.S. Congressional Elections." *American Political Science Review* 103(3):343 – 366.
- Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hager, Gregory L. and Jeffery C. Talbert. 2000. "Look for the Party Label: Party Influence on Voting in the House." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 25(1):75 – 99.
- Hibbing, John R. 1991. "Contours of the Modern Congressional Career." *The American Political Science Review* 85(2):405–428.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1993. "Where's the Party." *British Journal of Political Science* 23(2):235 – 266.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1999. "Paradoxes of Parties in Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 24(1):31 – 64.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 2000. "Party Discipline and Measures of Partisanship." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2):212 – 227.
- Polsby, Nelson. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 62(1):144 – 168.
- Schickler, Eric. 2001. *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sin, Gisela. 2014. *Separation of Powers and Legislative Organization*. Cambridge University Press.
- Snyder, James M. and Tim Groseclose. 2000. "Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2):193 – 211.