

American Politics Topic Overview

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Political Behavior

Micro Public Opinion

Research Questions Answered

- How is public opinion formed?
- Are political attitudes and public opinion stable? How does public opinion change at the individual level? How does political sophistication play in opinion stability?
- Do people have strong belief systems/ideology?
- Is public opinion just a mere reflection of the position of elites?
- How to best measure public opinion?

Section Outline

How is public opinion formed? What shapes public opinion?

- Ideology: Debate as to whether or not Americans hold clear and stable ideological beliefs. Ideology tends to be measured on left-right/conservative-liberal scale, but you will see that the definition varies by scholar.
 - NO
 - * Converse (1964): Americans don't think in ideological terms.
 - * Kinder (2003): Agrees with Converse but says that citizens organize their opinions on policy based on the sentiment they feel towards the social group the policy appears to benefit or harm (ethnocentrism).
 - * Recent work:
 - Jefferson (Accepted at POQ): Term "liberal" and "conservative" are unfamiliar to Black Americans.
 - Barber and Pope (2019): Partisanship primes over ideology.
 - YES/MAYBE
 - * Lane (1962, 1969, 1973): Converse uses too strict of a definition of ideology.
 - * Nie, Verba, Petrocik (1979): Americans become more ideological in time, and level ideology depends on nature of the times.
 - * Measurement issues: Achen (1975); Ansolabehere, Rodden and Snyder (2008); Stimson (2004); Berinsky (2017); Caughey, O'Grady, Warshaw (2019)
 - * Recent work:
 - Fowler et al. 2023: Real moderates exist, and they are not just undecided/confused voters.
- Values and Norms: Instead of ideology, values and norms are more stable.
 - Hochschild (1981): interviews shows that norms in redistributive justice vary by individual and issue topic.
 - Feldman (2003): Values more than ideology structure political attitudes.
 - Kinder (1983): should think more into personal needs, self-interest, group identifications, core values, inferences from history, etc. than ideology for political attitudes.
- Emotions and Affect: How do emotions/affective processes affect opinion formation?

- Marcus et al. (2000): People change opinion with the use of positive or negative affective responses.
- Lodge and Taber (2013): Reported attitudes are just rationalizations of unconscious affect
- Gadarian and Albertson (2014): People seek out more political information when anxious.
- Cognition, Heuristics and Information: Should rational voters ever take the time to be informed and vote, or do they and can they use heuristics to vote?
 - Downs (1957) Rational voters should never bother to get informed.
 - Voters use cues from elites;
 - * Zaller (1992) voters form opinions by taking cues from elites and averaging “top of the mind” considerations. See 2012 response.
 - * Lupia (1994): voters can use social or elite cues to be informed
 - * Berinsky (2007): members of the public draw on cues from trusted elites for foreign policy opinion
 - * Lenz (2012): Voters follow party leaders
 - Lau and Redlawsk (2001): Challenges the assumption that cognitive “heuristics” improve the decision-making abilities of everyday voters. Reliance on political heuristics makes decision making less accurate among those low in political sophistication.
- Self-interest: Debate as to whether or not and under what circumstances does self-interest affect public opinion.
 - Yes:
 - * Erikson and Stoker (2011): Under extreme conditions, self-interest can have a powerful and permanent effect on policy attitudes
 - * Campbell (2002): Self-interest can lead senior citizens to participate more in politics. (note this is about participation and not directly about public opinion)
 - No:
 - * Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010): economic self-interest does not explain attitudes about immigration.
 - * Sears et al. (1980): measures of self interest have little effect on policy preferences on voting behavior, whereas symbolic attitudes have major effect

Potential Related Exam Questions

- “Ideology” is a core concept in the study of mass behavior, public opinion, and elections and voting. What is “ideology,” and how much and in what ways does it matter for decision making and outcomes? Frame your answer in terms of both classic and modern conceptions of these topics.
- In his foundational work on public opinion, John Zaller expressed concerns about “elite domination” of public opinion. To what extent are elites able to dominate public opinion in the United States? Under what conditions is elite domination most – and least – likely? What are the consequences of these dynamics and processes for understanding both “institutions” (e.g., how institutions of government operate) and “behavior” (e.g., how citizens form and express opinions)?
- One of the best-known findings in the public opinion literature is that individual responses to survey questions, by and large, both exhibit little constraint and are highly unstable over time. More recently, John Zaller has argued that public opinion is often little more than a reflection of the views of political elites. Given these findings, why should we care about public opinion? What, if anything,

can the academic study of public opinion tell us about the capacity of citizens to effectively govern themselves?

- Iyengar and Kinder's seminal *News That Matters* was published over 30 years ago. Thinking about the nature of the media, the nature of public opinion, and subsequent research, do their conclusions about the nature of media influence on individuals' attitudes still stand today? Does the rise of new sources of political information – such as social media – change any of our old conclusions about the nature of media influence?
- The Republican party since 1994 has often held control of one or both chambers of Congress, after decades of being the minority party. The GOP also holds the majority of governorships and a trifecta (unified control of state government) in a large number of states, again a break from the post-war era. How did the electoral success of the Republican party increase? Please discuss the nature of public opinion and patterns of mass partisanship, the geographic distribution of voters, and any relevant party or institutional changes that contributed to the party's shifting electoral fortune.
- Over the past twenty years, the field of political behavior has been transformed by the study of political identities, and in recent elections we have seen just how powerful these identities can be for shaping political outcomes. Discuss how identity is not a mere proxy for preferences. What are the implications of this for foundational models of politics that take preferences as their starting point? For how we think about democratic representation?

Related Literature

- This section really serves as the basis for any response in political behavior, but many links with macro literature (e.g. Stimson).
- The self-interest/groups section is really linked to the REP literature.
- For heuristics look into retrospective voting and Achen and Bartels literature.

Macro Public Opinion

Research Questions Answered

- In the aggregate, is public opinion stable, rational?
- Does macro public opinion differ from micro public opinion?
- How do issues become more or less important in politics? That is, when do issues remake politics?

Section Outline

Is aggregate public opinion stable, rational? Does macro public opinion differ from micro public opinion?

- YES
 - Page and Shapiro 1992: collective public opinion is “real, stable, and sensible” – when changes do occur, they are for good reasons (changes in political world, elite leadership); while individual-level opinion might fluctuate, average of responses in the aggregate will cancel out distorting effects of random measurement error, random changes in individual opinions; overall, stable opinions can form in the aggregate despite lack of full information because citizens can use heuristics/shortcuts (see also Lupia 1994)
 - Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson 2001: macro-level analyses differ because (1) large N reduces variance, (2) when electorate changes in the aggregate, it’s the informed who shift, and (3) small micro-level changes can appear large in the aggregate → because aggregate movement driven by informed voters, movement is orderly and responsive to real political events
 - * Voters are “bankers” not “peasants” – learn information about nation’s probable economic future and respond accordingly (i.e., they are prospective, not reactive) and form evaluations using rational expectations
 - * However, “public mood”/thermostatic model does show snapbacks in opinion change, so public can be capricious
 - Stimson 2004: when thinking about public opinion as “policy mood,” when patterns of responses summed up you see random responses cancel out and opinion change reflect cumulative movement in a single direction
- NO/There’s some problems with those who answer YES
 - Bartels 1996: shows that deviations from being fully informed do not cancel out – psychological/social processes that create “errors” likely correlated, so unlikely that individuals or groups can simply use shortcuts to act as if fully informed
 - * Relatedly, Fowler and Margolis 2014 find that when uninformed citizens receive political information, systematically shift preferences to Democrats → shortcuts don’t necessarily yield correct outcomes
 - Berinsky 1999: aggregate opinion polls may provide inaccurate views of public sentiment if there is selection bias caused by respondents avoiding answering questions about sensitive topics
 - Druckman and Leeper 2012: macro-level analyses often overlook fact that attitude strength depends on attitude’s nature (extremity), accessibility, salience, connection to relevant experiences, repeated exposure to same information (continuous media coverage) → because these analyses tend to focus on issue that receive substantial media coverage and on which individuals possess strong opinions, stability likely overstates

How do issues become more or less important in politics? That is, when do issues remake politics?

- Carmines and Stimson 1990: issues gain public attention and importance when (1) strategic politicians draw attention to what seem like “winning” issues that can draw contrasts, (2) as new issues emerge, public debates about best way to solve them, and (3) older issues are applied to new contexts/new issues develop and evolve; in terms of politics issues can be *organic extensions* of existing political conflicts, *unsuccessful adaptations* where issues fails to catch public attention, or *issue evolutions* where debates changes politics by introducing tensions into party system
 - “Easy issues” most likely to become issue evolutions – becomes so ingrained that they structure voters’ “gut responses” to candidates and political parties with little need for political sophistication
 - Crucial point is that change adaptation, not generational replacement
- Page and Shapiro 1992: when changes does happen, it is *gradual* in response to social, economic, and technological trends — elites and media pay a particular role in filtering and calling attention to these trends → while most information overwhelmingly false or biased, public “resistant to being fooled”; Voting subgroups often changes together responding to perceived group (rather than self) interests – “parallel publics”
- Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson 2001: more temporary look in line with Stimson’s policy mood work, paying attention to “macropartisanship” (the relative balance of Democrats and Republicans) that changes (which are durable) in response to presidential approval, public evaluations of economy, other events
 - Thus, macropartisanship is about performance; policy mood about policy
- Stimson 2004: aggregate opinion changes in response to different events and because of dynamics of opinion leadership, this has spillover effects to other members of public → translates into voter evaluations of candidates and parties (a la thermostatic model, do they want more/less liberal/conservative government?)

Potential Related Exam Questions

- Some political scientists that public opinion is unstable and lacks coherency; others argue that public opinion is stable and rational. Evaluate both arguments with particular attention to measurement, opinion dynamics, and political outcomes.
- Is American politics issue-based? Relying on literature of both partisan identification and public opinion, evaluate possible arguments both in favor and against the idea that American politics is issue-driven.

Related Literature

- Carmines and Stimson’s “issue evolution” very closely connected to work on realignment theory/-critical elections
- Idea that aggregate public opinion is stable, rational can be connected to work centered on ignorance/inattention of citizens (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960, Converse 1964, Achen and Bartels 2016)

Political Participation and Voter Turnout

Research Questions Answered

- What motivates voters to vote?
- Is it rational to vote?
- What factors predict who votes?
- What motivates minority voters to vote?
- How does election reform/policy shape voter turnout?

Section Outline

What motivates voters to vote? Is it rational to vote?

- Riker and Ordeshook 1968: Building on Downs 1957, posits the calculus of voting ($R = PB - C + D$) – for most voters, there is a negative utility to voting ($R < 0$) as the costs of voting C far outweigh both differential benefits and intrinsic rewards of voting (B and D)
- Aldrich 1993: turnout is rational because it is a low-cost, low-decision → decision costs to abstention, people come across campaign info by accident so easier to get informed
- Blais 2000: stresses importance of civic duty D – Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008 find success in manipulating social norms surrounding D

What factors predict who votes?

- Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: higher costs of voting → lower probability of voting; costs don't fall equally across population – people with political resources (bureaucratic know-how) bears costs more easily. Despite discrepancies in who votes, attitudes on issues weakly correlated with class/race → no discernible overrepresentation for particular groups
 - Key factors: education (provides greater ability to learn about politics, master bureaucratic tasks like registration and voting, cognitive skills, citizenship values), mobility, age
- Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: people turnout based on (1) personal costs and (2) being mobilized
 - Candidate mobilization matters and campaigns only put effort toward voters they can turn out with minimal costs – those who are employed, belong to associations, community/organization leaders, educated, wealthy, partisan → key to this minimal effort strategy are existing social networks
 - * Enos, Fowler, and Vavreck 2014: Because GOTV efforts target high-propensity individuals (as opposed to underrepresented, low-propensity voters), exacerbates participation gap
 - Social networks provide information and benefits, but don't explain *why* people participate → why both direct *and* indirect mobilization efforts critical
 - Turnout decline because more limited mobilization efforts by party organizations – politics more impersonal, candidate-centered
 - Individual attributes matter: education, sense of political efficacy, evaluation of political system, options on the ballot

- Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995: Political participation is based on (1) motivation, (2) capacity, and (3) networks of recruitment. Particularly important is relationship between resources and engagement: things that promote resources (e.g., well-off family, education attainment) also lead to psychological attachment to politics and put you in a position where other will more likely ask you to get involved in politics.
 - Civic Volunteerism Model: participation rests on *resources* (e.g., time, money, civic skills; most important and causally prior), *engagement* (e.g., interest in politics, political efficacy, civic values, group consciousness, party ID, policy commitments; all psychological dispositions), *recruitment* (requests for participation from friends, relatives, acquaintances; less important because even if you have strong recruitment network, if little resources and zero engagement, unlikely to turnout)
 - Because participation split along socioeconomic lines → *participation distortion* (messages sent to policymakers skewed to reflect activists)

What motivates minority voters to vote?

- Bobo and Gilliam 1990: a sense of “empowerment” is critical in explaining participation among Black voters – increases participation because it affects political trust, efficacy, and knowledge; a “contextual cue of likely policy responsiveness” that gives participation extrinsic value
- Barreto 2007: Latinos are both more likely to turnout when a coethnic is on ballot and more likely to vote for that coethnic candidate → result of both candidate mobilization strategies and empowerment; results not as consistent for other minority groups
- Fraga 2016, 2018: finds evidence more in favor of “jurisdiction demographics-based” theory of turnout; little evidence that coethnic candidates on the ballot stimulates turnout on its own; does not rule out possibility that both individual empowerment and elite-level mobilization is a factor
 - *Electoral influence*: relative size of a group in political jurisdiction shapes incentives for citizens to vote and politicians to seek that vote → if group perceived to have greater influence, then more likely to be mobilized and feel empowered → mutually reinforcing relationship between perceived relevance, mobilization, and empowerment
- Anoll 2018: disparate histories in voting access + segregation create race-specific social norms about political participation → black voters place more social value on voting and communities play role in emphasizing *duty* of voting within community

What are reasons for declining turnout?

- Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: limited mobilization efforts by party organizations – politics more impersonal, candidate-centered
- Putnam 1990: declining social capital (networks, norms, trust necessary to get individuals to act together for shared goals)

How does election reform/policy shape voter turnout?

- Berinsky 2005: reforms designed to make it easier for registered voters to cast their ballots actually increase socioeconomic biases in the electorate – primarily because most of the costs of voting associated with cognitive tasks of being engaged/informed about politics → expansive election reforms simply make it easier for those with cognitive skills to participate
- Hajnal, Lajevardi, and Nielson 2017: voter ID laws decrease turnout among minority voters presumably through *direct* (e.g., not having required IDs) or *indirect* (e.g., voters feel targeted by laws and choose not to vote) effects (though neither directly tested)

- Grimmer et al. 2018: work find voter ID law decrease minority turnout rely on data inaccuracies (e.g., state-level turnout rates in CES has measurement error from nonresponse bias and variation in vote validation)
- Komisarchik and White 2022: *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013) had minimal effects on minority registration and turnout – could have been the effect of grassroots countermobilization efforts
 - Grimmer and Hersh 2023: it can't be countermobilization long as changes to election are actually targeted on smaller segments of electorate and relatively small effects on turnout within those segments → this explains minimal effects of *Shelby*

Potential Exam Questions

- Foundational work on political participation and voter turnout underscores the importance of resources and engagement has two critical factors. Are those two factors alone a sufficient explanation for why voters participate in election and politics more broadly?

Related Literature

- Connect to “Campaign Effects” section and role of campaigns in affecting voting behavior
- Empowerment work in “Minority Turnout” subsection can connect to “Groups and Identities”

Retrospection and Accountability

Research Questions Answered

- Do voters hold politicians accountable?
- Does the economy influence vote choice?
- Are voters able to evaluate incumbent performance based on their record?

Section Outline

- Traditional views of government accountability rest on the “**folk theory**” of Democracy where the government enacts what the majority wants, if they don’t they are voted out
 - Conception is tied to Downsian (1957) view of parties and party competition
 - * Voters have single peaked preferences on a uni-dimensional scale, parties will go to the median to win voters
 - Issues with this view: (1) difficulties of collective choice and (2) voters may not have real issue preferences (see Converse 1964)
- Theories of **retrospective voting** came next (Fiorina 1981)
 - Voters don’t need to have a lot of knowledge about party platforms or parties specifics; they just need to evaluate the incumbent
 - Tied to Fiorina’s (1981) conceptualization of Party ID as a “**running tally**”
 - * PID = positive and negative experiences with parties + initial baseline socialization
 - **Economic voting** is one type of retrospective voting focused on voter evaluations of the economy. Two foundational pieces:
 - * Kramer (1971): evaluation of incumbent performance through economic measures; finds initial correlation between economic conditions and incumbent party vote
 - * Tufte (1975): focuses on *magnitude* of midterm loss by incumbent party → midterms are referendum on president’s performance and management of the economy
- Are voters capable of retrospection? There are competing views:
 - First, it is unclear *what* economic conditions voters are evaluating. Egocentric (pocketbook) vs sociotropic (national conditions)
 - * Conover, Feldman, Knight (1987): economic evaluations are shaped by *personal* experiences
 - Second, for economic retrospection to be viable, voters need to objectively perceive economic conditions. But what about PID?
 - * Michigan School View: PID serves as “perceptual screen” so may influence perceptions of economic conditions
 - * Bartels (2002): PID influences economic evaluations.
 - Achen and Bartels (2016) strongly believe voters **are bad** at retrospection
 - * **Retrospections are blind** because of irrelevant hardships that people can blame government for when cultural constructions are relevant (**NOTE**: role of elites important)
 - Shark attacks, droughts, etc
 - Fowler and Hall (2018) disagree with shark attack finding, argue it is statistical anomaly
 - Ashworth et al 2018: argue responding to irrelevant events can be rational because it can tell you about incumbent type

- * **Voters are myopic** when it comes to economic voting; there might be some economic accountability but limited by short time horizons; poor judges of both *personal* and *national* economic conditions
- Additional evidence that voters are bad at retrospection:
 - * **Voters are bad at blame attribution:** Sances (2017): votes in MA punish incumbents for tax increases they are not responsible for
 - * Huber, Hill, Lenz (2012): **experimental evidence** showing voters are biased in their retrospection and influence by recency, irrelevance, and elite manipulation
- If not retrospective evaluations, then how are voter picking candidates?
 - Achen and Bartels (2016): voting is shaped by **group loyalties and social identities**
 - * PID is not ideology but reflection of judgements about where “people like me” belong → PID is key social identity for elections → constructs conceptual viewpoint by which voters can make sense of political world (Even among well informed)
 - * Similar idea to Green, Palmquist, Shickler’s model of PID as social identity

Potential Related Exam Questions

- Is the public capable of holding politicians accountable? Discuss theory and evidence about political accountability in presidential and congressional elections.
- Over the past twenty years, the field of political behavior has been transformed by the study of political identities, and in recent elections we have seen just how powerful these identities can be for shaping political outcomes. Discuss how identity is not a mere proxy for preferences. What are the implications of this for foundational models of politics that take preferences as their starting point? For how we think about democratic representation?
- Recent research by Achen & Bartels, Gilens & Page, and others has, in different ways, cast doubt on government responsiveness to mass preferences – and even on the very existence of democracy in the United States. What are the central empirical and theoretical claims of these authors and how have these claims been challenged by other scholars? Are the core disputes theoretical, methodological, or both? What (if anything) has been settled by this scholarly debate, and what have we learned that the early scholars of elections in the Michigan and Columbia schools did not already know? Finally, what are the most important avenues for future research on this subject?
- You have encountered two schools of thought about the influence of the economy on voting. One stresses the influence of economic considerations on vote choice and political behavior. The other emphasizes that people do not seem to be much influenced by their self-interest when they make political decisions or take political action. (1) Describe the theoretical basis and empirical support for each position. (2) How and to what extent can these schools of thought be reconciled?

Related Literature

- Closely tied to literature on PID
- Ability of voter’s to retrospect has consequences for quality of representation
- Alternative to retrospection is generally tied to literature on social groups (can be PID or race etc)

Party Identification

Research Questions Answered

- How do people form party attachments?
- Is PID based on issues or groups?
- Does PID change?

Section Outline

There are three primary models of party identification within American politics: Michigan Model, PID as a “running tally,” and the partisan hearts and minds model.

- **Michigan Model** (Campbell et al. 1960)

- Definition: PID is a stable psychological attachment to a political party, based on socialization by family and other social influences formed early in life
 - * Note: different than **Columbia Model** which focuses on sociological context, role of group membership/identity (NOT including party) in cross-pressuring; Michigan school says party is a social group itself
- Funnel Model of Causality: Socialization (esp. parents) → PID → Attitudes → voting
 - * PID as a *perceptual screen* through which individuals see what is favorable to their partisan orientations
 - Bartels (2002): Additional evidence of PID influencing economic evaluations; also a critique of “running tally” model
 - Gerber and Huber (2009): Behavioral evidence that PID shapes economic perceptions and consequently consumer behavior
 - Bisgaard (2015): UK Study but presents limits to influence of PID– perceptions of economy change based on party in power, however, perceptions converge when the economy is objectively bad
 - * Parties serve as *suppliers of cues* by which individuals may evaluate elements of politics
- When does PID fluctuate?
 - * PID is stable and strengthens over time; it rarely fluctuates
 - * **Personal Forces**: individuals shift PID selectively and in uncorrelated ways (changes in context, personal lives)
 - * **Social Forces**: Large portions of the population move simultaneously (ex. New Deal); a period effect
- What is the role of issues or policy preferences?
 - * Similar view to Converse (1964) about the ideological sophistication of the American public
 - * Issues have little impact on vote choice compared to PID

- **Running Tally** (Fiorina 1981)

- Definition: PID as a running tally of retrospective evaluations of party promises and performance and a factor representing socialization influences; Over time, PID will reflect political events (if initially outweighed by socialization)
- When does PID fluctuate?
 - * PID can continuously wax and wane as new evaluations formed (as opposed to Michigan model where change happens after a cut-point)

- What is the role of issues or policy preferences?
 - * PID is explicitly tied to evaluations of politicians and issue positions
- **Partisan Hearts and Minds** (Green Palmquist, Shickler 2002)
 - Definition: PID as a *social identification* that involves comparing a judgement about oneself with a one's perception of a social group
 - * More closely resembles ethnic or religious self-conceptions than evaluations about politics; part as part of the self-concept
 - When does PID fluctuate?
 - * PID is pretty stable, even with changes in party fortunes and platforms
 - * Party politics have little effect on PID unless changes in stereotypes about which groups belong to which party (ex. Realignment)
 - What is the role of issues and policy preferences?
 - * PID is weakly correlated with issue preferences, appears to be a separate concept
 - Critiques of Past Theories
 - * Running Tally: Predicts constant changing PID, but yet PID is largely stable. Why? Two conditions for stability: (1) parties don't change positions or (2) voters get little new information. Both are unlikely
 - * Michigan Model: Criticize the perceptual screen argument, call it *biased learning*. Find that partisans have different baselines but respond similarly to new information
 - Key results:
 - * PID is stable across multiple measure, mirrors sense of attachment similar to other identities like religious or ethnic identities
 - * PID is a key predictor of vote choice
 - * Basis of much of the affective polarization literature
- **Independents**
 - Keith et al 1992: Independents are not a homogeneous bloc pure independents are very different from partisan leaners
 - * Leaners tend to be more partisan than self-reported weak partisans
 - * Pure independents are less interested in politics; less informed
 - Klar and Krupnikov 2016: identifying as an independent is tied to voters' dislike for partisanship and desire to not be seen negatively
 - * People have stable and consistent PID, but willingness to *express* these identities fluctuate over time
 - * Identifying as an independent is not about disengagement or lack of information; instead, people high in self-monitoring are less willing to publicly identify as a partisan to avoid negative social repercussions
- **Alternative Routs to Socialization?**
 - Traditional theories of PID emphasize the role of socialization. What about immigrants? Or other groups that may not follow traditional socialization routs?
 - * Hajnal and Lee (2011): Propose new model building on Michigan and Downs
 - PID is a combination of (1) identity (2) ideology and (3) information

- Primary social identity, ideological commitments people bring with them, and informational environments
- * Carlos (2021): Children of immigrants are socialized through need to complete “mundane” tasks and “adult” responsibilities that are not explicitly political
- **Implications of Strong PID:**
 - Setting aside a discussion of polarization, there is growing evidence that PID can influence attachment to other identities
 - * Margolis (2018): Contrary to the widely held notion that religiosity influences PID, finds that PID may influence religious attachments
 - Distinct timing of religious and political socialization processes create window during which PID can influence religious decisions. At young adulthood, PID begins to crystallize but religiosity is at lowest point
 - * Egan (2019): Uses panel data to show how PID may influence attachment to a variety of identities; people will shift their social identities to align with their PID

Possible Exam Questions

- Over the past twenty years, the field of political behavior has been transformed by the study of political identities, and in recent elections we have seen just how powerful these identities can be for shaping political outcomes. Discuss how identity is not a mere proxy for preferences. What are the implications of this for foundational models of politics that take preferences as their starting point? For how we think about democratic representation?
- Canonical partisan priming experiments introduce a treatment in which an object (say a candidate, proposed bill, person, or political argument) is randomly labeled with a party. That label is often consequential. For example, people rate candidates whose partisanship aligns with their own more favorably than candidates whose partisanship is opposed to their own. One interpretation of this pattern is partisan motivated reasoning—we react more favorably to stimuli from our in-party than to stimuli from the out-party – distorting our reasoning. How persuasive is this account? Is there an alternative account? What evidence would allow one to distinguish between accounts?
- An influential strand of research in American political behavior claims that group identity is the most important factor in explaining individuals’ issue opinions and vote choices in the contemporary era. This research argues against the idea that Americans’ political evaluations and voting decisions are grounded in “rational” factors such as policy positions or evaluations of economic performance. Instead, citizens form political judgments and make voting decisions largely on the basis of long-standing social identities. What do you think of this argument? Be sure to cite evidence as well as theory

Related Literature

- Directly tied to polarization literature. Also relevant to questions of representation, accountability, parties in general

Polarization

Research Questions Answered:

- Are the masses polarized? What about elites?
- Is polarization based on issues and ideology or group affect?
- What are the social consequences of polarization?
- What are the representational or legislative consequences of polarization?

Section Outline

Are Elites Polarized?

- McCarty, Pool, Rosenthal (2006): argue strongly **yes** using NOMINATE scores
 - *Dimensionality*: almost all conflict falls on single ideological continuum
 - *Extremity*: Range of positions of members has incresed
 - *Cohesiveness*: Ideological composition of both parties more homogenous
 - *Differentiation*: Position of average Dem/GOP more separated
 - *Sorting*: less overlap in party positions
- Hetherington (2009): Agrees that elites are polarized

Why are Elites Polarized?

- External forces: *replacement* (Rohde 1991, but see McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006); *redistricting* (but see McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006, 2009, Theriault 2008); *increasingly consistency of partisan with ideological preferences* (Hetherington 2001) resulting in less ticket-splitting (Jacobson 2000, Trussler 2021); *geographic sorting* (Rodden 2019); elite positioning and rewards for extreme positioning (Carmines and Stimson 1989, Schickler 2016, Bafumi and Herron 2010, Brunnel and Buchler 2009, Lee 2016)
- Internal forces: use of Committee of the Whole (Roberts and Smith 2003), increased share of roll calls that are procedural (Theriault 2008) boost polarization measures in Congress; more votes on polarizing issues (because of Lee 2009, 2016's arguments); effects of party leadership (Rohde 1991, Smith 2007)

Are the Masses Polarized?

- **Key Debate**: Are the masses polarized or just better sorted?
 - Abramowitz and Saunders (2008): Mass *ideological* polarization has increased since the 1970s
 - * Growing correlation between PID and ideology, PID and issue positions
 - * Rise in geographic polarization
 - Fiorina (2006)(2008): Public is largely moderate but better *sorted*; polarization is largely an elite phenomenon
 - * Centrist voters can register polarized *choices* even without holding polarized *preferences*
 - * Emphasizes **partisan sorting** due tot better cues from elites
 - * Hetherington (2009): Agrees, little evidence of *mass* polarization, largely more sorting
 - Levendusky (2010): Increased partisan sorting due to increasing *elite polarization*

- * Elites polarize → party/ideology mapping clarified → voters see clarification → voters sort
- * Little evidence of *ideological* polarization
- * **Party driven:** voters shift ideology to align with PID
- * Consequences of sorting include more party loyalty, declines in affective evaluations of out-party
- If not issues, then maybe affect?
 - Iyengar, Sood, Lelkes (2012): Re-frame debate about mass polarization to be about **social identity** → growing polarization driven by growing social distance between partisans
 - * Social Identity Theory: group membership triggers positive in-group and negative out-group → reinforced by media and campaigns
 - * Decline in out-party affective evaluations (rating thermometer, social distance)
 - * Largely not related to issues
 - Mason (2015): Social polarization increasing and is driven by growing alignment between partisan and other social identities
 - * Lack of cross-cutting identities creates greater social distance between parties
 - * Again, no issue content here
 - Dias and Lelkes (2021): Account for issue signaling PID, find PID matters most
 - People are pretty bad at: (1) estimating levels of polarization in the public and (2) estimating the demographic makeup of the other party
 - * Levendusky and Malhotr (2016): Americans over-estimate the level of polarization with respect to policy issues
 - Mechanism is psychological classification – salient PID, greater perceived difference
 - * Ahler and Sood (2018) People make systematic and large errors when judging partisan composition, overestimate the number of party-stereotypical groups → facilitate more affective polarization
 - Important Measurement Question
 - * Klar, Krupnikov, Ryan (2018): A common measure of affective polarization (marriage) over-estimates the degree of polarization by conflating it with partisan disdain
 - * Druckman and Levendusky (2019): Social distance measures of affective polarization may capture distinct dimension of polarization. Additionally, when responding to polarization measures people tend to think about *elites* as opposed to *regular partisans*

What are the Social Consequences of Mass Polarization?

- Polarization appears to have both political and non-political consequences:
 - Iyengar and Westwood (2015): Affective polarization spills over into hiring decisions
 - * The lack of egalitarian norms when it comes to out-party discrimination
 - Graham and Svolik (2020): Partisanship may harm democratic norms? Strong partisans are less likely to punish co-partisans for violating democratic norms
- Are there limits to polarization?
 - Lelkes and Westwood (2017): While there is evidence that partisanship factors into the behaviors in both political and non-political situations, there are limits; specifically when it comes to intentional harm
 - * Most polarized are not willing to intentionally discriminate

- * Westwood et al (2019): revisit question following hostile 2016 campaign and find similar results
- Broockman, Kalla, Westwood (2022): Affective polarization may have downstream effects on inter-personal relations, but less clear if it influences Democratic Norms
 - * Affective polarization should not influence everything, but only judgements where there are not other more relevant considerations
 - * There are also trade-offs—costly to allow affective polarization to influence judgement
 - * Across political domains: electoral accountability, policy positions, support for bipartisanship, democratic norms, etc effects of reducing affective polarization are **null**

What are the Representational Consequences of Polarization?

- Polarization can influence incentives for running for office
 - Thomsen (2014): Ideological conformity with the party, **party fit**, influences decision to run for office and moderation is discouraged; both cause and consequence of polarization
 - Johnson (2010): Ideological extremists may have fundraising advantage among small donors
- What about ideologically extreme behavior in Congress?
 - Canes-Wrone et al (2002): Historically, there has been an electoral penalty for ideologically extreme voting in Congress → incumbents receive lower vote share when they vote with extreme of their party
 - Bafumi and Herron (2010): *Leapfrog representation*; members of congress are more extreme than median voter
 - * One extreme member of one party is replaced with extreme member of another party
 - Carson et al (2010): Maybe the punishment is not for ideological extremity but partisan loyalty (something we'd expect more of now)
- There may still be a penalty for ideological extremity in Congress, however:
 - Hall (2015): Finds electoral penalty for nominating ideologically extreme candidates in a primary; limits to influence of PID in a general
 - * Hall and Thompson (2018): Electoral penalty for ideologically extreme candidates is largely due to changes in *party turnout*
 - Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2018): Caution a bit, find little association between candidate ideology and vote choice
 - * Citizens cast vote “as if” based on proximity to parties rather than individual candidates
 - * Candidate-level ideological moderation has relatively small effect on vote share of incumbents
 - Do voters want affect or ideology?
 - * Ansolabehere and Jones (2010): Voters respond to substantive representation, hold members accountable for votes, have preferences on roll calls
 - * Costa (2021): Uses conjoint to explicitly test whether people care about affect or ideological representation from legislators, find people do care about ideology
 - Positive in-party sentiment more important than negative, out-party sentiment
 - Nationalization only strengthens relationship between PID and vote choice
 - * Trussler (2021): nationalization of elections party a function of changing media environment (broadband roll out) → changes relevant considerations

- * Moskowitz (2021): Exposure to local news is tied to greater rates of split-ticket voting

What are effects of polarization of policymaking?

- Increased difficulty in creating diverse winning coalitions: Krehbiel 1998's "gridlock interval" → alternative pathways to achieving policy outcomes:
 - Using appropriation bills to make policy (Aldrich and Rohde 2000, Ryan and Minkoff 2023) but concern over appropriations could encourage members to use nonstatutory options like committee reports (Bolton 2022)
 - There is debate over whether unified government makes a difference in gov's ability to enact important legislation – Mayhew 2005 says it doesn't since legislating is constant (given reelection goals) but Binder 1999 says Mayhew's measurement is wrong and once fixed, unified gov does help; Sinclair 2016 and Curry and Lee 2019 agree, pointing to the importance of strong party leadership in unified government
 - More broadly, polarization encourages changes to legislative process (Sinclair 2017): multiple committees, bargaining via informal process, post-committee adjustments, etc.
 - At the individual-member level, polarization had the effect of changing how members communicate (Ballard et al. 2023) and interact with one another (Dietrich 2021, Alduncin et al. 2017, McGee and Theriault 2022)

Possible Exam Questions

- What are the main means by which representation occurs in American government? Two ways of measuring the relationship between public preferences and public policy are responsiveness and congruence. What do these two terms mean, and what do they say about how well systems of representation are working in the US? What do we know about the representativeness of the federal government versus state and local governments? What is the effect of political polarization and economic inequality on the quality of representation?
- Discuss the most important institutional changes in Congress over the past quarter century. Assess the degree to which these changes have helped to achieve the policy and institutional goals of members of Congress. To what degree have these changes helped (or hurt) congressional majorities prevail over the policy goals of presidents? (Could include section on elite polarization)
- "Ideology" is a core concept in the study of mass behavior, public opinion, and elections and voting. What is "ideology," and how much and in what ways does it matter for decision making and outcomes? Frame your answer in terms of both classic and modern conceptions of these topics.
- Contemporary accounts of nationalization in American politics suggest that partisanship and party identity is the overwhelming force driving voting behavior in elections. As consequence, parties, candidates, and interest groups should focus their efforts on mobilizing party supporters, instead of persuading or contacting fence-sitters and out-partisans. What theoretical and empirical evidence is there for (or against) these claims
- Many observers credit decennial redistricting and primary election competition as major drivers of extremism and polarization among officeholders in the U.S. How persuasive is the theoretical and empirical evidence in support of these views? What are the major alternative explanations for elite polarization in the U.S., and how does the evidence fare for these alternatives?
- What are the causes and consequences of elite and mass polarization? In your response, consider the effects of at least three of the following: redistricting, primary elections, interest mobilization, campaign finance, social and news media

- There is now abundant evidence that the two parties in Washington are much more distinct and antagonistic—in a word, more polarized. What are the best explanations of this trend among federal elected officials? Based on extant theory and evidence, how important are two oft-cited culprits: primary elections and campaign finance? Finally, do we need different explanations for Republicans and Democrats? Why or why not?

Related Literature

- Closely tied to literature on PID and Parties. Both individual level theories of how people develop these attachments and how elites use parties influence polarization
- Role of media and campaigns is important here and largely left out of notes
- Clear representational implications of polarization tied to general lit on representation

Communication and Media Effects

Research Questions Answered

- What are the persuasive effects of the media?
- Do people self-select into partisan media or does the media persuade the public which results in greater polarization?
- How has the effect of the media on political behavior changed through time?
- Why do people believe and share misinformation?
- How to correct misinformation?

Section Outline

- Minimal Effects Hypothesis: Important literature on how media and campaign coverage have little effect on changing people's opinion but only reinforces existing opinions. - Columbia school (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Klapper 1960)
- Agenda-Setting and Priming:
 - Iyengar and Kinder (1987): Response to the minimal effects literature. Media can change expressed opinions without necessarily changing underlying attitudes through priming, and agenda-setting.
 - * Agenda-Setting: "Those problems that receive prominent attention on the national news become the problems the viewing public regards as the nation's most important."
 - * Priming: By calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are judged" Priming refers to changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations.
 - * See also Iyengar, Peters and Kinder (1982): which is essentially the article version of this argument.
 - Lenz (2009): Previous studies incorrectly attribute media effects (on both vote choice, presidential approval) to priming, instead of learning and opinion change. Idea that voters change their opinion to match those of their favorite "leader".
- Framing: "framing effect occurs when different, but logically equivalent, words or phrases cause individuals to alter their preferences" - Druckman (2005)
 - Elite manipulation vs. well reasoning (rational) citizens:
 - * Druckman (2001): Contrary to previous literature that claim that citizens base their preferences on arbitrary information and/or are subject to extensive elite manipulation, the authors find that citizens use frames in a competent and well-reasoned manner. Also differentiates between equivalency framing and emphasis framing.
 - Berinsky and Kinder (2006) Survey experiments showing that how stories are framed, in terms of their narrative structure, affects both what people remember and their subsequent opinions
 - Moderators to framing:
 - * Diamond (2020): Effectiveness of framing depends on priming identity salience (partisan and parent identity).
 - * Chong and Druckman (2007): Annual review piece showing:

- Individuals who have strong values are less amenable to frames that contradict those values.
 - Competing frames
 - After controlling for prior attitudes, knowledge enhances framing effects because it increases the likelihood that the considerations emphasized in a frame will be available or comprehensible to the individual.
- * Druckman and Nelson (2003): Exposure to cross-cutting views in individual discussion networks can limit the effectiveness of elite frames. Extends previous work on framing effects which take place in social vacuums— in reality people receive a frame and then discuss it afterwards. Under certain conditions, discussion networks can limit the power of elite networks if the network is cross cutting.
- Polarization and Persuasion:
 - Media reflect existing polarization:
 - * Prior (2007): Cable TV and the Internet have increased media choice, leading to a compositional change in the electorate because entertainment-seekers voluntarily opt out of political news.
 - * Prior (2013): review piece examining the effects of partisan media on political polarization, arguing that there isn't evidence that partisan media make Americans more partisan
 - Media persuade and polarize citizens:
 - * Arceneaux et al. (2012): counter-attitudinal news programming is more likely to induce hostile media effects than pro-attitudinal programming. BUT mediating effect of choice. The presence of choice attenuates the effects of partisan media on oppositional media hostility.
 - * Levendusky (2013): Partisan media polarize the electorate by taking extreme citizens and making them more extreme.
 - * Druckman et al. (2019): When partisan media comes from an in-party sources, incivility depolarizes: partisans feel less close to and trusting of their party. When individuals watch out-party sources, the opposite happens and incivility polarizes respondents.
 - * Druckman, Levendusky, McLain (2018): While partisan media may only directly impact a small proportion of the population, this influence can spread more broadly via interpersonal discussions.
 - * De Benedictis-Kessner et al. (2019): Hard to detangle self-selection and persuasion effects. Introduce Preference-Incorporating Choice and Assignment (PICA) design, that incorporates both free choice and forced exposure and find that partisan media can polarize those who are regular consumers + those who inadvertently exposed to partisan media. Opposing media can also reduce polarization.
 - * DellaVigna and Kaplan (2007): natural experiment showing that exposure to Fox News created one half of a percentage point shift toward George W. Bush in the 2000 presidential election
 - * Gerber et al. (2009): Field experiment to measure the effect of exposure to newspapers on political behavior and opinion. Find that media exposure but not media slant increases Democratic vote share.
 - * Ladd and Lenz (2009): Natural experiment showing that newspapers persuaded a considerable share of their readers to vote for Labour party in UK.
 - A bit of both:
 - * Wittenberg et al. 2023: Differing conclusions about the nature of media persuasion depending on how media preferences are measured.

- Bayesian updating vs. motivated reasoning:
 - * Coppock (2023): People update their beliefs in response to new information. Rather than rejecting counter-attitudinal information, people are persuaded by it. Consistent pattern that occurs with issue after issue, with little evidence of heterogeneity throughout the public.
- Social Media:
 - Increases Polarization:
 - * Settle (2018): Aspects of Facebook’s platform lead to an increase in affective polarization
 - * Bail et al. (2018): Exposure to opposing views on social media (following a bot that posts opposing ideological content) results in an increase in polarization.
 - * Barbera (2015): Shows that who users follow on twitter can be used to determine people’s ideology.
 - * Kim and Kim (2021): Partisans vary their political attentiveness and media consumption in response to whether news events are congenial to their party, suggesting that partisans can subject themselves to biased information flows even if their media diets are balanced.
 - * Kim and Kim (2019): It is the civility or incivility of information that influences whether exposure to dissimilar perspectives either mitigates or reinforces individuals’ attitude polarization. Exposure to uncivil opposing comments, compared to exposure to civil disagreeing comments, led to lower levels of willingness to read more comments and greater levels of negative emotions and attitude polarization.
 - Rathje et al. (2021): Negative posts about the political out-group were shared or retweeted about twice as often as posts about the in-group. Also, language about the out-group was a very strong predictor of ”angry” reactions, creating incentives for content expressing out-group animosity.
 - * Tyler et al. (2022): Evidence of unbalanced media consumption. When look at strict definition of election related politics news (un-like Guess 2021) see evidence that selective exposure to concordant news sites and increased news consumption in response to events that are favorable to one’s preferred party/candidate
 - Balanced Exposure:
 - * Guess (2021): Most People have relatively moderate media diets except for a small group of partisans who exert disproportionate influence and visibility.
 - * Guess et al. (2021): Little evidence of online partisan media influencing attitudes.
 - * Nyhan et al. (2023): Exposure to politically like-minded sources on social media is common but its prevalence does not correspond to polarization in beliefs or attitudes.
- Misinformation:
 - Why do people believe and share misinformation?
 - * Berinsky (2023): When creators plant the first seed of a rumor (tossing the pebble), its effects “ripple” outwards in the public, with belief in rumors diminishing from strong believers, uncertain and disbelievers.
 - Repeated encounters with rumors can increase belief in these rumors
 - Rumors are processed through a partisan lens. Those that are more prone to believe rumors are more partisan and conspiratorially inclined.
 - * Ecker et al. 2022: Lit review
 - Messages are more persuasive and seem more true when coming from credible, human sources that are perceived to be more attractive, power, and like-minded

- People are often biased to believe in the validity of information, use intuition rather than deliberating about info.
- Repetition increases belief in misinformation
- People often easily overlook the source of information—don’t realize when it comes from dubious sources
- * Flynn, Nyhan and Reifler (2017): Misperceptions are rooted in directionally motivated reasoning and corrections are often times not effective when touching on controversial issues and political figures.
- * Guess, Nagler and Tucker (2019): Sharing false information is rare and conservatives seem to be more likely to share misinformation, but maybe because greater supply of conservative misinformation during the 2016 presidential campaign.
- How to correct misinformation?
 - * Berinsky (2023): Need to focus on the “uncertain” to correct misinformation, because the uncertain comprise a large part of the public and the firm believers are hard to change mind.
 - Corrections from surprising sources are the most efficient in increasing the disbelievers.
 - * Nyhan and Reifler (2010): People support beliefs even more strongly after correction. Phenomenon they refer to as backfire effects.
 - * Berinsky (2017): Rumors acquire power through familiarity. More effective to correct for rumors by refuting them with statements from unlikely sources, but quashing rumors through refutation may facilitate their spread through fluency and repetition.
 - * Wood and Porter (2019): Critique Nyhan and Reifler (2010) and find that back-fire effects do not exist.
 - * Bode and Vraga (2015): Corrections on social media through the related stories function are effective in reducing belief in misinformation
 - * Pennycook et al. (2021): Accuracy nudges, whereby respondents are first asked to rate the accuracy of a post, are effective in reducing the likelihood that respondents share subsequent misinformation posts.

Possible Exam Questions

- Iyengar and Kinder’s seminal News That Matters was published over 30 years ago. Thinking about the nature of the media, the nature of public opinion, and subsequent research, do their conclusions about the nature of media influence on individuals’ attitudes still stand today? Does the rise of new sources of political information – such as social media – change any of our old conclusions about the nature of media influence?
- Canonical partisan priming experiments introduce a treatment in which an object (say a candidate, proposed bill, person, or political argument) is randomly labeled with a party. That label is often consequential. For example, people rate candidates whose partisanship aligns with their own more favorably than candidates whose partisanship is opposed to their own. One interpretation of this pattern is partisan motivated reasoning– we react more favorably to stimuli from our in-party than to stimuli from the out-party – distorting our reasoning. How persuasive is this account? Is there an alternative account? What evidence would allow one to distinguish between accounts?

Related Literature

- Micro-public opinion - Zaller + Motivated reasoning lit
- Campaign effects - See lit on minimal effects of campaigns

Campaign Effects

Research Questions Answered

- Do campaigns matter?
- How do candidates persuade voters?

Section Outline

- Advertisements, mailing, telephone-calls and canvassing
 - Televised Campaign Ads: To avoid selection bias scholars have adopted different methodological approaches.
 - * Natural Experiment:
 - Huber and Arceneaux (2007): Natural experiment showing that presidential ads are persuasive but do not mobilize voters to turnout.
 - * Field Experiment:
 - Gerber et al. (2011): Ads have strong but short-lasting effects on vote choice, consistent with priming (Iyengar and Kinder (1987)) rather online-processing (Taber and Lodge (2006)).
 - * Time-series cross-sectional models with diff-n-diff and RDD:
 - Sides, Vavreck and Warshaw (2022): Televised broadcast campaign advertising are effective in persuading but not mobilizing voters with effects being larger in down-ballot elections than in presidential elections.
 - Canvassing:
 - * Gerber and Green (2000): Field experiment. Door-to-door canvassing mobilizes voters most efficiently, direct mail slightly increases turnout, and telephone calls have no effect. Canvassing mobilizes voters more effectively than other modes of contact because more personal.
 - Mailing:
 - * Gerber, Green and Larimer (2008): Field experiment GOTV - Social pressure increases turnout. Rational choice models of turnout oversee extrinsic benefits of voting. See also Bond et al. (2012) for a similar social pressure argument.
- Political Information: Do campaigns increase political information?
 - Yes:
 - * Gelman and King (1993): How can campaign events affect vote intentions but not election results? News media have important effect on outcome of elections by conveying candidate's position on important issues. Response to pollsters during campaign are not informed nor rational. Respondents vote based on their enlightened preferences as formed from the information they learn during the campaign as well as other cues such as ideology and partisanship.
 - * Vavreck (2009): Why do incumbents in good economies sometimes lose? What matters is not just the state of the economy but how candidates campaign around it. When the economy is doing well incumbents must highlight this, and when the economy is doing poorly they must try to focus their elections on non-economic issues
 - No:

- * Gelman et al. (2016): There are no swing-voters. The apparent swings in vote intention represent mostly changes in sample composition — not changes in opinion — and these “phantom swings” arise from sample selection bias in survey participation.
- * Dunning et al. (2019): Comparative - Large scale field experiments in multiple countries. Additional information on incumbent performance does not affect vote choice nor turnout.
- Emotional Appeals: Ads can invoke emotions to increase turnout or persuade voters.
 - Brader (2005): Political ads motivate and persuade voters by appealing to emotions of enthusiasm or fear. Ads that ignite fear are better at persuading voters.
 - Kahn and Kenney (1999): Negative campaigning can motivate turnout if it touches on relevant topics and is conducted in an appropriate way.
 - Marcus and McKuen (1993): Anxiety and enthusiasm play an important role during election campaigns. Enthusiasm increases turnout and anxiety increases learning.
- Minimal Effects: Do campaigns have a minimal effect?
 - Campaigns matter:
 - * Jacobson (2015): Annual review piece cite often used to say that overall campaigns matter on vote choice, turnout and political information.
 - Campaigns have small effect:
 - * Kalla and Broockman (2018): 49 field experiments showing that campaign contacts and advertisements have minimal effects on vote choice. Only short lived effects many months before election or when candidates take unusually unpopular positions and opposing campaigns invest unusually heavily in identifying persuadable, cross-pressured voters whom they can inform about these positions.
 - * Broockman and Kalla (2022): Not only partisan loyalty but bayesian updating help explain why campaigns have minimal effects. Goes against motivated reasoning and in line with Coppock (2023).
 - * Coppock, Hill and Vavreck (2020): One commonly offered explanation for small campaign effects is heterogeneity: Persuasion may only work well in specific circumstances. Find that heterogeneity with large offsetting effects is not the source of small average effects.
- Targeting:
 - Hersh (2015): How and the success with which campaigns are able to perceive and target their voters is a function of the data/public record laws available within states. For example, if records have race of individual voters or their party affiliation, enables campaigns to better focus mobilization efforts on voters of color, partisans than in broad areas where they might be, resulting in less accidental contact.
 - Tappin et al. (2023): Under favorable conditions, microtargeting strategies produce a relatively larger persuasive impact compared to several alternative messaging strategies.
- Race and Campaigning:
 - Implicit vs. explicit racial cues:
 - * Mendelberg (2001): There are strong incentives for candidates to employ racial appeals to build support among white voters, but they must do so implicitly
 - See also Kinder work in REP about racial resentment.
 - * Valentino, Hutchings and White (2002): Implicit racial cues can prime racial considerations by increasing cognitive accessibility

- * Valentino, Neuner, and Vandebroek (2018): More recent evidence showing that even explicit racial messaging may now be politically effective for some groups
- Out-group Bias vs. In-group favoritism
 - * Tesler and Sears (2010): Racial predispositions were especially important in explaining behavior in the 2008 election, as Obama’s race made racial considerations perpetually salient
 - * Jardina (2019): White identity and consciousness is an important predictor of white opposition to Obama and support of Trump that is independent of racial resentment.
- Banks and Hicks (2019): Argue that a politician calling a political candidate’s subtle racial appeal racist should not persuade racially conservative whites to lower their support for the candidate; instead, the counter-strategy should persuade white racial liberals to view the candidate unfavorably.
- Hopkins (2021): Evidence points to the resilience of anti-Black prejudice: accounting for lagged partisanship and candidate preference, anti-Black prejudice and pro-Black esteem meaningfully associated with shifting toward or away from Trump. Mechanism is issue voting and not priming.

Possible Exam Questions

- To what extent do campaigns matter for election outcomes? In your answer, you should discuss the conditions under which political advertising, media coverage, or other campaign activity are likely to influence the way that voters behave. Why are campaign effects likely in some circumstances and for some people, but not others? What should future research on campaigns focus on?
- Canonical partisan priming experiments introduce a treatment in which an object (say a candidate, proposed bill, person, or political argument) is randomly labeled with a party. That label is often consequential. For example, people rate candidates whose partisanship aligns with their own more favorably than candidates whose partisanship is opposed to their own. One interpretation of this pattern is partisan motivated reasoning– we react more favorably to stimuli from our in-party than to stimuli from the out-party – distorting our reasoning. How persuasive is this account? Is there an alternative account? What evidence would allow one to distinguish between accounts?
- The last 25 years have seen an explosion of research on the causal effects of voter turnout efforts (GOTV) and voter persuasion efforts in the United States. First, synthesize some of the major conclusions of this line of work. What sort of regularities are present in the literature? Then, critically reflect on what has been cumulatively learned due to this line of research, with particular emphasis on its theoretical implications for the study of American politics.

Related Literature

- Money and politics
- Communication and media effects
- Micro-public opinion

Groups and Identities

Research Questions Answered

- How can we conceptualized social identities?
- How are identities politicized?
- What is group consciousness and what are some examples?
- How can we measure racial prejudice?
- What are the political consequences of inter-group contact?

Section Outline

- What is social identity?
 - Brewer (2001): Start from the assumption that social identity refers in some way to the idea that an individual's self-concept is derived to some extent from social relationships and social groups they participate in
 - * We never read Tajfel, but he is the key name when discussing Social Identity Theory
 - * Tajfel's definition of social identity: "the part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership"
 - This definition of social identity is central to a ton of literature—ranging from affective polarization and PID to ethnic conflict
 - * Brewer provides typology of social identities
 - Person-based: definitions of social identity located within the individual self-concept
 - Relational: Defining the self in relation to others
 - Group-based: Perception of the self as an integral part of a larger group unit, influences self concept
 - Abdelal et al (2006): Collective identities are social categories that vary along the dimension of content and contestation. Content is neither fixed nor predetermined, but is the outcome of a process of social contestation within the group.
 - Sen and Wasow (2016): Race is best understood as a composite variable or **bundle of sticks**. In this view, race is a combination of a lot of factors that can be disaggregated into constitutive elements
 - * Two key views of race/ethnicity: *essentialism* vs *constructivism*
 - * Past work interested in estimating effects of race struggle with post-treatment bias since race is assigned at birth
- Conceptually thinking about the connection between identity and politics
 - McClain et al (2009): There is a distinction between group membership, group identification, and group consciousness. Group membership **does not** imply group consciousness
 - * *Membership*: assignment of individual into group based on characteristics specific to the group
 - * *Identification*: Awareness of belonging to the group and having psychological attachments
 - * *Consciousness*: in-group identification politicized by a set of ideological beliefs about one's groups social standing

- Lee (2008): Expecting an identity-to-political link across different racial and ethnic groups can lead to distorted understandings of politics.
 - * **Identity to Politics Link**: idea that individuals with shared demographic labels will share common politics goals, interests, and act together to pursue them
 - * In reality, involves 5 steps: definition, identification, consciousness, venue selection, choice
 - * TLDR; cannot assume that identification implies politicization
- Theories of group consciousness – this can tie into any answer about political identities, ideology etc
 - Dawson (1994): Introduces concepts of **linked fate** and the **black utility heuristic**. This is **the** cite if you are discussing identity → politics.
 - * As African American economic interests have increased, why has the group remained largely political homogeneous?
 - * **Black Utility Heuristic**: As long as AAs continue to believe that their lives are to a large degree determined by what happens to the group as a whole, expect that perceptions of group interest will be an important component of the way that individual black voters evaluate policies, parties, candidates
 - * **Linked Fate**: survey item used to measure the degree to which AAs believe that their own self-interest are linked to the interests of the race
 - * There are some important critiques:
 - Gay, Hoschild, White (2015): find that linked fate is not unique to Black Americans and is expressed across groups. It is also found for other identities not unique to race. Might be measuring a tendency toward group connectedness as opposed to a salient political identity
 - White, Laird, Allen (2014): Push back on Dawson by exploring the navigation of *known conflicts* between maximizing racial group interest and one's simple self interest. Argue BUH fails to explain decisions where blacks are faced with perceptible trade-offs between self and group interest
 - * Argue that there incentives to defect and act toward self-interest under specific conditions tied to social pressure; norm crystallization and norm intensity also important
 - * In absence of social monitoring, defection is not uncommon but racialized social pressure limits it. Defection also tied to internalized values
 - Cramer (2012): Introduces concept of **rural consciousness**. Some people make sense of politics through a social identity infused with notions of distributive justices. Group consciousness ties in attachment to place, values, perceptions of injustice, orientation toward government and urban areas
 - Jardina (2021): Introduces idea of **white identity** as a politically meaningful identity driven by in-group feelings and distinct from out-group resentment (racism)
 - * Distinction between in-group solidarity and out-group racial resentment; white-identity as a sentiment capturing desire to protect in-group status
- What are the political consequences of inter-group contact?
 - Key (1949): Foundational piece on work about **racial threat**. The politics of the south revolved around the position of Black Southerners and the maintenance of control by a White minority. In rural Black belt counties with large population of Blacks, greater support for the Democratic party. Idea was that perceptions of racial threat drove Whites to vote at higher rates.
 - * Hersh and Nall (2016): Explore how racial context impacts the income-party relationship. In rural areas with large Black populations, relationship between income and PID is strongest (as opposed homogenous areas with less of a relationship)

- * Acharya, Blackwell, Sen (2016): Evidence of the contemporary effects of the legacy of slavery in the source. Prevalence of slavery in 1860 had lasting effect on attitudes of whites in the south making them more conservative and hostile toward African Americans. Call this *behavioral path dependence*. **Note:** Cool argument, but causal identification strategy (IV) has been criticized (ex. Devin does not like it)
- Enos (2014): Experimental evidence of the attitudinal consequences of inter-group contact. Randomly assigned Spanish speakers to Boston trains and then measured exposure among regular train riders. In the short term, exposure increased exclusionary attitudes in terms of immigration, but effect went down over time.
- Enos (2016): Natural experiment providing evidence of racial threat theory. Exploiting the demolition of public housing in Chicago, Enos finds that voter turnout among white voters living near the projects decreased while turnout among Blacks did not.

- Measuring Racism

- Kinder and Sears (1981): Introduce **symbolic racism** as an alternative to group conflict theories of racial threat. Define it as a blend of anti-black affect and traditional American moral values embodied in the Protestant ethic. (Tied to Mendelberg (2000))
- Sears and Henry (2003): Symbolic racism is move away from explicit, segregationist racism. Growing egalitarian norms prevent expression of explicit racism. View symbolic racism as a coherent belief system.
 - * Evidence that symbolic racism is made up equally of racial prejudice and general conservatism
 - * Symbolic racism is grounded in a racialized individualism
- Carmines, Sniderman, Easter (2011): Critique of racial resentment as a valid measure of racial prejudice. Argue that RR is not exchangeable with measures of racial stereotypes, this cuts into claim about convergent validity and may not be measuring racial prejudice. Additionally, it may just be a measure of racial policy support not racial resentment generally (idea here is that you are measuring support for racial policies with a measure consisting of support of racial policies)
- Agadjanian et al (2023): The racial resentment scale includes both *favoring* and *disfavoring* attitudes. Ex. hostility towards Blacks vs actively favoring blacks. Different ends of the scale can potentially measure both.
 - * Racial resentment predicts judgements about race, but reflects more *favoring* rather than *disfavoring*, which contrasts with the typical way the scale is interpreted

Social Influence and Context

Research Questions Answered

- How does context influence political behavior and attitudes?

Section Outline

Note: This section is not super cohesive in terms of the specific articles included. There is also significant overlap with some of the readings in the Groups and Identities section, specifically the inter-group contact sub-section. The outline will be split into three general themes: foundational readings, important conceptual readings, and then just a collection of miscellaneous readings.

- Foundational readings on the connection between context and attitudes/behavior
 - Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and MacPhee (1954): This is the **Columbia School** we have constantly referenced. Argue that people's opinions reflect pressures from their social networks including family, friends, coworkers, members of religious groups
 - * Vote choice takes place within a social context, so variation in that context will influence voting patterns
 - * Role of cross pressures vs homogenous networks
 - * **Minimal Effects Hypothesis**: campaigns and media do not change your views, just reinforce them
 - * **Opinion leaders**: well informed cue-givers within social networks that facilitate a *two-step* flow of information from campaigns and media
 - * Compared to Michigan school, emphasize the importance of social networks as opposed to just PID
 - Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987): The *social environment* plays a key role in affecting the flow of political information.
 - * *context* (external to the individual) vs *networks* (which are the product of choices made by the individuals who compose the network in a context)
 - * Emphasizes importance of social environments in perceptions of politics: (1) homogeneous networks can sustain political misperceptions and (2) networks can shape perceptions of your own groups and other groups
- How does context and space shape attitudes and behavior?
 - Hopkins (2010): Changes in local context (ie changes in local demographics due to immigration) alone are not sufficient to elicit racial threat.
 - * **Politicized places hypothesis**: When communities are undergoing sudden demographic changes at the same time salient national rhetoric politicizes immigration, immigrants can become target of political hostility
 - * Emphasizes the key role of the media and elites in making issues salient that allow people to connect daily experiences to political attitudes
 - Enos (2017): Geographic space between groups can structure perceptions of the groups and influence attitudes and behaviors.
 - * Quick Summary: (1) attitudes and behavior shaped by group identities (2) certain conditions can increase the salience of these identities (3) group size, proximity, segregation can increase *accessibility* and *fit* of identities (4) greater salience of identity, more likely one's attitudes will have group-based bias (5) biases have political consequences

- * The other two Enos articles on inter-group relations are also part of this book
- Nathan and Sands (2023): When thinking about the effects of *context* and *contact*, need to consider two important dimensions: (1) the **depth** and (2) the **duration** of the contact.
 - * Differences in predictions in terms of one-off brief encounters vs sustained, cooperative exposure
 - * Most studies of contact focus on the psychological effects of out-group exposure. Need to consider alternative, and likely mutually reinforcing, mechanisms including: (1) distributive politics (2) elite mobilization (3) economic conditions
- Miscellaneous readings
 - Druckman and Nelson (2003): Exposure to cross-cutting views in individual discussion networks can limit the effectiveness of elite frames. Extends previous work on framing effects which take place in social vacuums– in reality people receive a frame and then discuss it afterwards. Under certain conditions, discussion networks can limit the power of elite networks if the network is cross cutting.
 - * Related to the communication literature
 - Nickerson (2008): There may be spillover from GOTV messages within households. Using a field experiment in two-voter households, finds that exposure of one member to a GOTV message can increase turnout among the other member, likely due to interpersonal influence.
 - * This is related to the campaign effects literature
 - Wong et al (2012): Objective measures of context defined by the Census are not always politically meaningful to people. Subjective perceptions are psychologically meaningful to individuals
 - * Modifiable Areal Unit Problem: Relationship between variables at one level can change when studied at another level
 - * Ask people to draw their own neighborhoods on a map
 - Kalla and Broockman (2020): People often resist persuasion because it poses a threat to their self-image, but **non-judgmental exchange of narratives** can be an effective strategy to induce attitude change.
 - * Building on narrative persuasion and high quality listening, this strategy shown to durably reduce transphobia through large scale field experiment
 - * Emphasize importance of inter-personal conversation in reducing prejudice
 - * Can be linked to literature on political persuasion

Political Institutions

Theoretical Foundations

Research Questions Answered

- What different theoretical approaches are best to study political institutions?
- What makes for strong and stable institutions?

Section Outline

- What makes for strong institutions?
 - Huntington (1968):
 - * Scope of support for the institution + Level of institutionalization (adaptability, complexity, autonomy, coherence)
 - * Three paths to the modernization of institutions are the rationalization of authority, the differentiation of structures, and the expansion of political participation. The US saw a rapid widespread expansion of political participation compared to Europe. However, rationalization of authority and the differentiation of structures never really occurred.
- Rational Choice
 - Cameron (2000): Gives the assumptions of rational choice and when rational choice is helpful to explain American political institutions.
 - Moe (2005): Rational choice theory perceives institutions as structures of voluntary cooperation that resolve collective action problems and benefit all concerned. Institutions may be structures of cooperation but they are also structures of power
 - Shepsle (1989): Structure-induced equilibrium is based off of rational choice theory.
- Institutionalism:
 - Diermeier and Krehbiel (2003): Institutionalism and behavioralism are linked because institutionalism presupposes a behavior concept (rational choice for example). Key part to forming theories of institutions is to keep the behavioral concept fixed.
- New Institutionalism:
 - Hall and Taylor (1996): New Institutionalism does not constitute a unified body of thought but rather three distinct approaches: historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, and sociological intuitionism.
- Path Dependency:
 - Pierson (2000): Path dependence arguments are helpful because they can help political science think about how history and time interplay.
- Game Theory
 - Gailmard (2020): Formal modeling is good for looking at choice and stability but could look at change and development if they take some lessons from APD

Possible Exam Questions

- Nearly half a century ago, Nelson Polsby argued that a valuable way to understand the institutional development of the U.S. Congress was through the lens of “institutionalization.” How has this argument stood the test of time? To what degree have the patterns Polsby highlighted continued? Using Polsby’s argument, what would be his assessment of the contemporary Congress?
- There have been nearly 10,000 cites to Paul Pierson’s 2000 article on “path dependence.” Yet students of American politics use the concept in a variety of potentially incompatible ways. Drawing on existing scholarship, identify (1) a U.S. public policy or political institution that has evolved in a path-dependent way and (2) one that has not. How do we know the difference? Based on your answer, how useful do you find the concept for understanding key features of American politics?

Related Literature

- Basics to all sections in institutions.

Collective Action and Organized Interests

Research Questions Answered

- What are organizations and interest groups?
- How do organizations overcome issues of collective action?
- Are all societal groups equally represented by organizations and interest groups?
- Do interest groups influence policy?

Section Outline

- What makes an organization more prone to collective action problems and how can they overcome this?
 - Olson (1965): The main goal of organizations are to advance common interests of groups of individuals. To avoid issues of free-riding organizations must give some noncollective good or increase social pressure which can be an effective (negative) selective incentive.
 - * Large groups have problems providing common goods because each group member has a lower share of the benefits, unlike small groups it's less likely that anybody's benefits of helping provide the good exceed the costs, and organizational costs are greater.
- The maintenance of interest groups
 - Walker (1983): depends upon the success of group leaders in securing funds from outside their membership which are needed to keep their groups in operation.
 - Wilson (1995): Middle and upper-class citizens possess the financial resources, organizational skills and psychological attributes needed to maintain a rich organizational life. A predominantly lower-class society will be characteristically devoid of much organizational life.
- Unequal Representation of Interests
 - Group theory (most popular until end of 1950s): Bentley (1908), Truman (1951); viewed all politics and government as based on group actions seeking interests.
 - Pluralism (1960s): Dahl (1961) goes against Mills' (1956) and Hunter's (1953) power elite theory, and argues that there is no power in elites. He highlights the role of competitive elections in controlling social and political elites. Power is decentralized by interest groups, because some citizens use resources such as money and time to pursue political power. Political parties, politicians, government agencies, and interest groups are all seen as influencing public policy.
 - Multiple-elite theory: separate coalitions, based on interest groups, separately dominate numerous different areas of public policy.
 - * Olson (1965): in the logic of collective action goes against Dahl (1961) in the sense that if an interest group lobby succeeds in influencing policy to obtain a public good, then it will go to everyone in the area, regardless of whether they contributed to the lobby. Only lobbies with a few beneficiaries (such as a few corporations) will organize and not free-ride. According to the logic of collective action, the few defeat the many. And thus, the plurality of satisfactory representation in Dahl's pluralism cannot be expected to exist. Instead, Olson's interest group theory posits rule by the few, or rule by "special interests," each in its own particular area of public policy.
 - * Lowi (1969): organized special interests are able to control specific areas of policymaking of concern to themselves, and deflect policy implementation to reflect their own particular goals, rather than those of a much larger public.

- * Schattschneider (1975): He argues that interest groups are unrepresentative, reflecting the interests of an upper class, and that strong political parties are needed to represent the general public to countervail the power of unrepresentative interest groups.
- * Strolovitch (2006): Organizations downplay the impact of issues affecting disadvantaged groups and frame them as narrow and particularistic in their effect, while framing issues affecting advantaged subgroups as if they affect a majority of their members and have a broad and generalized impact.
- * Schlozman, Verba, and Brady (2012): the economically disadvantaged are under-represented
- * Baumgartner et al. (2009): Washington is biased towards the status quo. Lobbying community so strongly reflects elite interests that it will not fundamentally alter the balance of power unless its makeup shifts dramatically in favor of average Americans' concerns.
- Neopluralism: Existence of hundreds of policy issue areas, and to the finding that while many issue areas are characterized by a plurality of groups, some issue areas are elitist, ruled by a single coalition or perhaps having just a handful of influential groups. See J. Berry 1985; Bosso 1987; C. Jones 1975; J. Wilson 1980.

Possible Exam Questions

- Some activists and members of the public believe that campaign donations skew government policy to benefit wealthy donors and corporations. Are they right about money in politics harming representation? Discuss whether or not political science research supports their claims, and explain any discrepancies you see between research findings and public beliefs about money in politics.
- While most political observers believe that interest groups have significant influence on policy outcomes, the empirical evidence connecting interest group activity to policy outcomes has been difficult to uncover or has been met with considerable skepticism. What are the theoretical and empirical challenges with identifying the influence of interest groups on policy? Do interest groups have significant influence on policy outcomes?

Related Literature

- Money and politics
- Representation

Political Parties

Research Questions Answered

- What is the purpose of political parties?
- What functions do political parties perform?
- Which actors are most important in shaping what political parties do?
- How do political parties position themselves?

Section Outline

Theories of Political Parties

- Top-down:
 - Aldrich 2011: political parties are endogenous “institutions” created by political actors (e.g., politicians, partisan activists, and ambitious office seekers/office holders) looking to fulfill their goals and ambitions. Specifically, parties are created to solve collective action problems institutional arrangements simply cannot solve – these problems include:
 1. Ambition (Schlesinger 1966): regulating conflict/competition over scarce offices – relates closely to the “calculus of candidacy” (should I run for office? if so, with which party?)
 2. Decision-making in Government: parties-in-governments are “long coalitions” (i.e., enduring institutions) that work together over a series of bills to win more often on policy – this is in response to “Arrow’s Theorem” which says majority cycling always possible
 3. Mobilizing Supporters: parties-as-organizations work to manipulate the “calculus of voting” (Downs 1957, Riker and Ordeshook 1968) by increasing benefits of voting for party candidates (e.g., making voting a spectacle, a team sport, spoils of office) and reducing costs of voting (e.g., voter registration drives, transportation to the polls, lowering decision-making costs for voters).
 - * Crucial to lowering costs of voting (specifically, getting informed and making voting decisions) is the constructions of a party brand name (Cox and McCubbins 2005)
 - * Connect to Downs 1957 who said party ideology a useful cue to help voters make decisions – to do so, party ideology but reliable (policy statements can accurately predict later behavior), responsible (policies in one period consistent with previous), integrity (policy statements reasonably borne out by actions). While parties expected to converge toward median voter, fear of losing extremist voters keeps parties from becoming identical.
- Bottom-up:
 - Bawn et al. 2012 (UCLA School): parties are coalitions of interest groups and activists (“policy demanders”) seeking to capture/use government for their particular goals – these coalitions develop *agendas* of policies (based on their similar interests), demand *nomination* of candidates committed to these policies, and work to *elect* these candidates to office.
 - * Critiqued by Schlozman and Rosenfeld 2019: parties appear only as sum of the groups that comprise them – have no intrinsic feature describing parties ability to facilitate group agreement or capacity to mobilize participation and public sentiment
 - * Schickler 2016 as a historical application: activists pushed state and local Democratic politicians to take stand on civil rights, ultimately moving national Democratic Party left on civil rights

- * Karol 2009: similar definition of parties in that they are depicted as coalitions of groups with intense preferences that are *managed by politicians*; pay as particular attention to position changes modeled as:
 1. *Coalition maintenance*: parties respond to demands of groups already within party coalitions – as social/economic changes convince group leadership that traditional policies no longer serve their interests, party adapts accordingly to keep coalition together
 2. *Coalition group incorporation*: party leaders shift positions to attract a particular constituency – a formerly cross-cutting issues now become partisan
 3. *Coalition expansion*: party leaders adopt a new position to improve their standing with the public generally
- * Frymer 2010: depending on how entrenched a group is in a party's coalition and whether they are a majority or minority group determines whether parties will expend resources to advocate their interests and mobilize their participation – concept of *electoral capture*

Possible Exam Questions

- Discuss the role of political parties in structuring American politics, both in elections and in government.
- Schattschneider famously said “The political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties.” Is Schattschneider correct? What would American politics look like if parties did not exist.
- In recent years, a new “theory of parties” advanced by John Zaller and coauthors (see Bawn et al. 2012 and Karol et al. 2008) has gained traction in political science. Identify and explain the main features of this theory. How, if at all, does it differ from other major theoretical perspectives on parties? What are its key testable implications? How well has it met these tests? In your answer, be sure to discuss both the Republican and Democratic parties and the 2016 presidential election.
- One of the biggest debates in congressional studies concerns the influence of parties on policymaking. At one extreme, congressional scholars argue that parties are cartels that empower their leaders to dominate the legislative process so that outcomes favor majority party interests. At the other extreme, scholars have argued that parties qua parties are largely impotent and merely serve as front organizations for individuals with similar preferences. Outline the terms of this debate and discuss the evidence in favor and against the different perspectives in the literature. Be sure to discuss methodological problems that hamper efforts to answer question about party influence and suggest possible research designs that would enable us to reach more definitive conclusions.

Related Literature

- Parties-as-organizations: looks closely at literature in “Political Participation and Voter Turnout” and “Campaign Effects” sections – helpful understanding what parties do in campaigns
- Parties-in-government: rely heavily on Aldrich, but make sure to reference stuff in the “Organization of Congress: Party Leadership” section
- Parties as coalitions of policy demanders: tied closely to “Collective Action and Organized Interests,” “Money in Politics” sections in institutions; if need to talk about state/local politics, this work is particularly relevant to the “Policy & Special Interests” section of the “Federalism, State & Local Politics” notes.

Incumbency Advantage and Candidate Quality

Research Questions Answered

- Is there a candidate incumbency advantage?

Section Outline

Does the Incumbency Advantage Exist?

- Yes. What are the sources of it?
 - Mayhew (1974): Vanishing “marginals”; evidence of increasing value of incumbency
 - Candidate Familiarity:
 - * Mann and Wolfinger (1980): Incumbents gain advantages in terms of familiarity, reputation, and preference
 - * ASS (2000): Over half of the incumbency advantage can be explained by a *personal vote* (or homestyle), rather than challenger quality
 - “Direct” effect (resources)
 - * Cain, Ferejohn, Fiorina (1984): Emphasize importance of constituency services in the “personal vote”
 - * Fourniaies and Hall (2014): incumbency causes a substantial increase in campaign contributions directed toward them
 - Johnson 2010: ideologically extreme candidates may benefit from large numbers of enthusiastic individual donors
 - Candidate Quality Effect:
 - * Levitt and Wolfram (1997): rising incumbency advantage due to increased ability of incumbents to deter *high-quality challengers*
 - * Carson, Engstrom, Roberts (2007): Historical evidence of *candidate quality effect*, less so for direct resource effect
 - * Decision for challenger to enter is strategic: depends on economic conditions (Jacobson 1989) and party fit (Thomsen 2014)
 - Financial advantage:
 - * Fourniaies and Hall (2014): Financial advantage is key; largely driven by access-motivated interest groups; significant increase in financial resources
- Incumbency Advantage Does not Exist/Is Declining
 - Erikson (1971): Incumbency advantage is spurious as candidates who are most electorally appealing are more likely to be incumbents
 - Jacobson (2015): Incumbency advantage fluctuates over time and has recently declined due to nationalization of politics
 - * Increases in Mid-20th century, since trended down, paralleling changes in party line voting
 - * Ticket-splitting that previously helped incumbents before nationalization disrupted by changes in local media strength (Trussler 2021) and exposure (Moskowitz 2021)

Possible Exam Questions

- Discuss the causes and consequences of the incumbency advantage in congressional elections. In your answer, be sure to address theories and evidence about this advantage, and how and why it has changed over time.

Representation

Research Questions Asked

- Are representatives, governments responsive?
- Can descriptive representation promote substantive representation for groups?

Section Outline

Concepts & Measurement

- Forms of representation (Pitkin 1967): (1) *formalistic* (institutional arrangements that create relationship between representative and representee); (2) *symbolic* (representative “stands for” representative); (3) *descriptive* (extent to which representative resembles those being represented); (4) *substantive* (actions taken on behalf of/in the interest of represented)
- Forms of responsiveness (Eulau and Karps 1977): (1) *service* (securing particularized benefits); (2) *allocation* (deliver funding and administrative benefits), (3) *symbolic* (create bonds of trust and support), (4) *policy* (achieving desired policy outcomes)
- Analyzing representation (Weissberg 1978): *dyadic* (between representatives and their constituencies) or *collective* (extent to which institution represents people in their jurisdiction)
- Measurement concepts (Achen 1978): (1) *proximity* (ideological distance); (2) *centrism* (extent to which representatives take average position of their constituents); (3) *responsiveness* (how representatives’ views in liberal districts compare to those in conservative districts, vice versa)
- Measurement strategies:
 - Dimension reduction (Stimson): reduce individual preferences to 1/2 dimensional value (e.g., “policy mood”)
 - Issue-by-issue (Broockman 2016): ideology scores measure *consistency* rather than policy preferences – issue-by-issue analysis accounts for fact that citizens have mix of liberal and conservative views

Substantive Representation

- *Are representatives, governments responsive?*
 - Dyadic responsiveness varies by issue: Miller and Stokes 1963 as members have imperfect info about constituent preferences and citizens have minimal awareness of members’ voting records
 - * Brunell and Buchler 2009: competitive elections reduce ideological representation and voter trust in government (but historically, Gamm and Kousser 2021 show that party competition in state leg boosts spending on things improving development outcomes)
 - Representatives’ perceptions of constituent opinions can lead to incongruence: Butler and Dynes 2016 argue representatives engaged in “disagreement discounting” (discount opinion of constituents they disagree with), Broockman and Skovron 2018 blame asymmetry in who contacts representatives (Republicans more than Democrats), Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenerger, and Stokes 2019 blame skewed staff members’ skewed perceptions of public attitudes → this is in spite of fact members want to be congruent with district opinion (Down 1957, Butler and Nickerson 2011)
 - Policy responds dynamically to public opinion change (i.e., collective responsiveness): Stimson, Mackuen, and Erikson 1995 argues change is fairly quick and result of selection + adaptation (Caughey and Warshaw 2018, 2022 say responsiveness more gradual)

- * Soroka and Wlezien 2009: policy responsiveness varies across policy domains (depending on salience and level of federalism) and public response to policy more focused on outputs rather than policy decisions
- * Gilens 2005: strong status quo bias to policy change, typically favoring affluent rather than lower-/middle-class
- *Do constituents care about policy responsiveness/representative positions?*
 - More incumbent MCs vote with extreme of party, lower their vote share (Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002 and nominating extreme candidates more broadly Hall 2015; but see Tausonvitch and Warshaw 2018 for smaller effects since voting driven mostly by PID, Brady, Han, and Pope 2007 that primary voters prefer extreme candidates); similar penalty for party loyalty (Carson et al. 2010) → effects likely driven by changes in turnout (Hall and Thompson 2018)
 - * But, candidates tend espouse ideology matching national party rather than local conditions (MIT-3 2001); are rewarded for extremeism with campaign contributions from enthusiastic donors (Johnson 2010)
 - Candidate evaluations improve when representatives and constituents share issue positions and priorities (Costa 2021, Ansolabehere and Jones 2010, Ansolabehere and Kuriwaki 2022) – latter two show constituents can determine their legislator’s positions quite accurately¹

Descriptive Representation Can descriptive representation promote substantive representation for groups?

- YES:
 - Mansbridge 1999 says it is contingent on context (it can improve quality of deliberation, enhance legitimacy of institutions; but can come at costs of concentrating influence and reducing accountability)
 - Representatives likely to work on behalf of constituents with whom they share identities (Lowande, Ritchie, and Lauterbach 2019, Swers 1998, Carnes 2012)
 - * Canon 1999: while they are not monolithic Black interests, Black majority districts produce better representation of black interests while also representing white voters (better than white representatives)
 - * More broadly, descriptive representation important because it can help build bonds of trust (Gay 2002); some legislators will act as surrogates (i.e., for those outside their districts) for citizens in same identity group (Broockman 2013) regardless of electoral incentives
- NO:
 - Efforts to increase descriptive representation (through things like majority-minority districts) can work to dilute capacity for substantive representation (Swain 1993; though this may depend on region according to Cameron, Epstein, and O’Halloran 1996, but see Lublin 1999)
 - Sometimes partisan differences account for better substantive representation for groups (e.g., electing Democrats improves women’s dyadic representation more than descriptive representation according to Griffin, Newman, and Wolbrech 2012)

1. Ansolabehere and Kuriwaki 2022 also note that effect of issue agreement on approval appears smaller at district-level because districts are ideologically/politically heterogeneous than at individual-level

Possible Exam Questions

- In 1999, Jane Mansbridge wrote an article entitled, “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent ‘Yes’.” Relying on the empirical literature on congressional representation that has emerged over the past two decades, what is your response to Mansbridge’s contingent answer?
- Miller and Stokes (1963) present one major hurdle for dyadic representation: constituents do not know enough about what goes on in Washington to hold representatives accountable for a lack of policy responsiveness. This suggests that the electoral fate of representatives is simply a function of partisan identification. Yet, representatives make efforts to distinguish themselves and develop a “personal vote.” Relying on the relevant literature, explain why representatives may seek to build personal connections with constituents and whether such a strategy allow representatives to sidestep the policy views of their constituents.

Related Literature

- Thinking about policy responsiveness, include literature from “Lawmaking” suggestion that shows all hurdles in the way of achieving policy demands, work from “Money in Politics” related to donor access and interest influence
- Work on measuring preferences for presentation evokes literature in both “Micro Public Opinion” and “Macro Public Opinion”
- Descriptive representation can connect to Frymer 1999’s “electoral capture” concept and other work related to race relations

Legislators as Individuals

Research Questions Answered

- What are the goals of legislators?
- How do their goals shape the actions they take?
- What are prevailing patterns in roll-call voting and how should we measure them?
- Is it possible to cultivate a personal vote?

Section Outline

What are the goals of legislators? How do their goals shape the actions they take?

- Mayhew 1974: members of Congress are **single-minded seekers of reelection**, and thus engage in *advertising* (spreading name with little to no issue content), *credit-claiming* (make relevant political actors believe they were responsible for something desirable), and *position-taking* (stake out position on issue of interest to relevant political actors) to gain support.
 - Hall 1987, 1998: more broadly, representatives have both electoral and personal goals → engage in policy making when interests high, costs low, have resources → because interests better served doing what Mayhew describes, there is a “rational abdication” of engagement in policymaking
 - * Arnold 1990: Congress takes action on policy depending on nature of the issue (i.e., salience) and whether there are members willing to do hard work necessary to make policy → members contemplate whether voters are prospective/retrospective, attentive/inattentive; whether policy has perceptible effects, clearly identified to government actions, whether member can make visible individual contribution
 - * Sulkin 2005: when members do get into policy, might engage in “issue uptake” (take up challenger’s priority issues to help bolster electoral security in next election) through bill introductions (biggest benefit, but most work), cosponsorships (easiest), floor statements (least attention besides media quote)
 - * Barbera et al. 2019: when engaging in policy discussions (at least according to Twitter), members *follow* what supporters talk about, rather than lead
 - Fenno 1977, 1978: members have different views of what their constituency look like and craft a “home style” that helps their reelection goals (allocation of resources, presentation of self, explanation of DC activity) → goal is to build bonds of trust with constituents, cultivate a personal vote (portion of support from member’s record, qualities, and qualifications)
 - * Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1984: constituency service important to cultivating personal vote
 - * Grimmer 2013: senators use press releases as tools present themselves → engage in credit claiming in marginal districts, position taking in safe districts
 - * Grose, Malhotra, and Van Houweling 2015: senators tailor explanations of Washington activities to different audiences to compensate for incongruent policy choices
 - * Kaslovsky 2022: with rising polarization, efforts to create a “home style” might not be as effective → local visits may decrease approval rating among ideologically opposed constituents, resources more likely to go with areas with larger populations and important donors → district activities not reliable substitutes for roll-call voting
 - Jacobson 2015: electoral connection is alive and well, though member increasingly focused on majority status, fates more closely tied to party performance and national trends, have greater tools for reelection

- Fenno 1973: broader goals include *reelection, influence in the chamber, good public policy* – committees are one avenue to pursue goals beyond reelection
 - Wawro 2001: members can engage in “legislative entrepreneurship” to achieve influence and good public policy → requires informational and coalition-building skills; takes attention away from district activities (thus might be electorally costly); but provides a public good that might signal to relevant political actors (e.g., donors, activists), help secure district benefits, secure positions of power and prestige (e.g., committee chair, party leader) as it helps party create record of legislative accomplishment (Cox and McCubbins 2005, Aldrich 2011)
 - * Arnold 1990: being coalition leader might involve persuasion, procedural gamesmanship, modification to fit preferences
 - Rohde 1991: given importance of being in the majority for achieving desired policy outcomes, *majority status* added to the Fenno triumverate of goals
- Clarke 2020: while Aldrich 2011 and Cox and McCubbins 2005 talk about the importance of “party brands”, inter-party brands (e.g., Tea Party, Green New Deal coalition) provide other opportunities for members to define themselves (i.e., take positions, advertise), acquire additional electoral resources

What are prevailing patterns in roll-call voting and how should we measure them?

- Poole and Rosenthal 1991, 2007: using NOMINATE (and other related alternatives) find that roll call voting is highly structured and stable over time, predominately along one dimension (economic/-size of government) but sometimes a second too (cross-cutting issues like race and civil rights)
 - Wilcox and Clausen 1991: argue against unidimensional interpretations of roll call voting – decision making is complex with different forces structuring different issues (Kingdon 1974)
 - Roberts, Smith, and Haptonstahl 2016: degree of aggregation (i.e., individual bills, subset of bills, all roll calls) determines degree of observed dimensionality
 - Caughey and Schickler 2016: NOMINATE is useful but scores not substantively comparable across times, identifying assumption depend on both historical context and purpose (linear time trend good for cardinal comparisons, not for analyzing rapid/non-monotonic change)
- McCarthy, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006: members of Congress have become *highly polarized* along a liberal-conservative dimension (using NOMINATE scores) → increased unidimensionality, more extremeity, greater intra-party homogeneity, inter-party heterogeneity, greater sorting
- Jackson and Kingdon 1992: emphasis that ideology structures roll call decisions probably overstated due to biases in scores (e.g., ADA scores) typically used
 - Snyder 1992: interest group ratings tend to exaggerate degree of extremism and bipolarity in Congress

Possible Exam Questions

- Miller and Stokes (1963) present one major hurdle for dyadic representation: constituents do not know enough about what goes on in Washington to hold representatives accountable for a lack of policy responsiveness. This suggests that the electoral fate of representatives is simply a function of partisan identification. Yet, representatives make efforts to distinguish themselves and develop a “personal vote.” Relying on the relevant literature, explain why representatives may seek to build personal connections with constituents and whether such a strategy allow representatives to sidestep the policy views of their constituents.

- Some argue that all politicians care about is winning reelection. Is that the case? Are there other goals politicians want to pursue? Has polarization affected the relative prioritization of the goals? Relying on existing literature, describe the various goals politicians might have and the various strategies for achieving those goals.

Organization of Congress

Research Questions Answered

- What does strong party leadership look like in Congress?
- How has the organization of Congress and the way Congress goes about its business changed over time?
- When does change occur?
- What role do congressional committees play in how Congress does its business? How do they do their business?

Section Outline

What does strong party leadership look like in Congress?

- Cooper and Brady 1981: strength of party leadership depends on the political context in which leaders serve – ranges from centralized power hierarchy in the Speaker who acts as party chief (e.g., “Czar Rule” under Reed and Cannon) to a bargaining style where leaders are brokers building coalition of support for particular bills in a decentralized system (e.g., 1910-1940s Congress that settled into the Rayburn Congresses of Textbook Era 1940-1960)
- Cox and McCubbins 2005: positing *procedural cartel theory* (PCT), majorities gain their strength via ability to control legislative agenda, maintaining “party brands” by preventing votes that could roll them (i.e., party-splitting votes) on legislative floor → emphasis is on *negative agenda power*, underscores roll of procedural votes, a less costly alternative to positive agenda control
 - Contra Krehbiel who says party strength is usually defined as getting members to vote against their wishes – shows parties can have influence without persuasion
 - Unlike Rohde 1991’s *conditional party government theory* (CPG), does not require both intra-party preferences agreement and inter-party divergence
 - Do these sort of tactics work in places other than Congress? Yes, as shown in state legislatures (Cox, Kousser, and McCubbins 2010, Anzia and Jackman 2013, Jackman 2014)
 - Ballard and Curry 2021: negative agenda control not a fool-proof plan, minority parties can achieve desired outcomes based on: (1) *constraints* on majority; (2) *opportunities* (i.e., some legislation is must-pass); and (3) *motivation* to engage in legislating rather than electioneering (particularly relevant to Lee 2016)
- Rohde 1991: posits *conditional party government* (CPG) theory, argues members will delegate strong powers to party leadership when (1) greater homogeneity within and heterogeneity between parties, (2) institutional forms designed to favor majority party, and (3) leader exist willing to exercise power granted to them → reforms strengthening party leadership include reducing power of committee chairs; giving Speaker and leadership additional power over committee assignments and legislative process, enhances methods of accountability for party leaders
 - Momentous because it (1) was response to Mayhew 1974 that argued members’ reelection interests make them averse to party influence over position taking; (2) work that documented the transition from Textbook Congress era
 - Critiques: Krehbiel 1993 says what looks like party control could just be preferences (but see Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart III 2001); Carruba, Gabel, Hug 2008 argue selection of roll votes endogenous as votes could be used to discipline

- Rohde 2013: CPG not incompatible with PCT – just a difference in *positive* vs. *negative* agenda power → Cox and McCubbins 2005 would argue leaders have “minimum fiduciary standard” to be held to before they can enact party discipline
- Smith 2007: parties have *multiple collective goals*, thus pursue *multiple forms and varying degrees of influence* on legislator voting behavior and policy outcomes; parties are “long coalitions” (Aldrich 2011) in which leader pursue both *direct* (e.g., incentives, election resources, public relations) and *indirect* (e.g., setting the agenda, offering bargains/compromises) forms of influence; how much party influence there is depends on (1) incentives leaders can use to get legislator support; (2) incentives leaders can use to get support for party interests; (3) agenda-setting power; an array of external forces also shape party influence (e.g., party regimes, electoral coalitions, presidents)
 - Useful cite to blend both CPG and PCT – it’s not an either/or and *party size* is an important variable dictating optimal strategies; thus, Smith presents strong argument by including electoral interests

How has the organization of Congress and the way Congress goes about its business changed over time?

- How things used to be:
 - Matthews 1959: use to be folkways to how Senate operated – apprenticeships, focus on legislative work (“work horses, not show horses”), specialization, courtesy, reciprocity, institutional patriotism
 - Fenno 1962: in decentralized Textbook Congress era, House Appropriations was a model: members had a clear consensus of committee’s goals, were “responsible legislator” appointed to the committee to get the job done, operate through a division of labor (via subcommittees), minimal dissent, minimal partisanship, specialization, reciprocity, deference – members learned these norms through “apprenticeships”
 - * Hanson 2017: even today, some continuance of nonpartisan norms – members benefit from party’s reputation and ability to claim credit for accomplishments
 - Polsby 1968: through the 1960s, Congress “institutionalized” – relatively well-bounded, complex (i.e., there’s a division of labor), universalistic and automatic in decision-making (e.g., seniority for leadership positions)
 - * Jenkins and Stewart 2018: most of this holds up, but party leadership stronger and seniority is basically gone
- What change has looked like:
 - Rohde 1991: reforms of the 1970s happened because Democratic caucus increasingly liberal as conservative southerners replaced → transition from decentralized committee system that dominated Textbook era (think Fenno 1962) to era of strong party leadership, consistent with CPG
 - * Aldrich and Rohde 2017: CPG mostly holds up → party leadership even stronger under Newt Gingrich, somewhat less so under Hastert and Pelosi, heterogeneity thanks to Freedom Caucus under Boehner brought some restrictions on leadership back
 - Lee 2016: combination of partisan polarization and insecure majorities encourages parties to be more combative, crafting legislative alternatives and communication strategies aimed at creating maximum differences between parties (via position taking, credit claiming, advertising like Mayhew 1974 said)
 - * Lee’s *Insecure Majorities* (also published in 2016) adds some historical context to this argument, pointing to 1980s as a turning point

- * Lee 2009: coins term “partisan brinkmanship,” arguing that disagreement between parties, fight for majority encourages differences in roll call voting even when parties have no ideological difference on the issue at hand – additional evidence that parties are strong
- Park, Smith, and Vander Wielen 2017: post-passage politics has changed due to (1) competitiveness of parties; (2) distribution of preferences; and (3) inherited institutions → greater polarization and fight for the majority has encouraged parties to have stronger role in post-passage stage, replacing traditional conference committees for negotiations within caucus and leadership meetings
 - * With polarization, party leaders less willing to trust conference committees in uncertain and hostile environments – who know what’s minority party members, members from other chamber will do?
 - * Change also helped by changing budget process – after 1970s reform, can use reconciliation bills to make policy, omnibus-style bills replace what used to be done committee-by-committee, bill-by-bill into a few bills (a decentralized process), reducing conference committee opportunities
- Filibuster: Rule 22 was passed in 1917 to help Senate get business done, but now it is virtually costless (Wawro and Schickler 2007) → now serves as a new way for position taking, credit claiming
 - * Binder 2018: In Trump era, Republicans stopped short of ending filibuster because fears of setting precedents (path dependence) – “lock-in perspective” as Binder 1997 calls it
 - * Wawro and Schickler 2018: early Senate history shaped preferences and beliefs about role of minority obstruction; “remote majoritarianism” view – senators became comfortable and aren’t willing to give up rights, will only do so if sufficiently frustrated
 - * **Useful counterargument**: filibuster improves quality of deliberations, allows members to highlight neglected issues and policy proposals (Sinclair 2017)
- When does change happen?
 - * Binder 1997: minority parties historically lose parliamentary rights when majority party members believe rule changes necessary to secure favored outcomes; minority parties regain rights when cross-party coalitions emerge to demand rights from weakened majorities (e.g., Bloch Rubin 2013’s story about Cannon Revolt)
 - * Schickler 2001: changes reflect “multiple interests” that are a function of the numerous goals members have (reelections; institutional capacity, power, prestige; member access to institutional power bases; success of party; policy outcomes) – see notes for historically how they have played out

What role do congressional committees play in how Congress does its business? How do they do their business?

- Fenno 1973: committees allow members to achieve their goals of reelection, influence in the House, and good public policy (plus additional, second-order goals of careers outside House or private gain) – each committee operates differently to serve these different goals; operations of committees influenced by environmental constraints (e.g., other members, executive, leaders), strategic premises (agreed-upon ways of decision-making)
- Shepsle and Weingast 1987: committees ultimately ensure favored outcomes are adopted via conference committee stage – committee members usually put in conference and thus get an “ex post” veto
 - Park, Smith, and Vander Wielen 2017 (notes above) point out that conference committees are more rare now, diminishing benefits of ex post veto power; Stewart 2012 also shows this, finding

a decline in conference committees in favor of using party leadership, executive officials, lobbyists for hammering out negotiations on legislation

- Weingast and Marshall 1988: legislative institutions generally exist to structure and enforce bargains among legislators – committee system helps ensure durability in legislating through property rights and defined areas of jurisdiction → like Fiorina 1987, committees facilitate a “comprehensive logrolling arrangement”
- Krehbiel and Gilligan 1987, 1990: committees specialize in gather information, helping to reduce uncertainty about policy outcomes → while many traditional legislative processes have changes, this is why rank-and-file still lean committee leaders when making roll call decisions (Curry and Lee 2019)

Potential Exam Questions

- There are increasing calls from Democratic Party politicians and activists for the elimination of the filibuster. What would the consequences of eliminating the filibuster be? In answering this question, be as comprehensive as possible in framing your response (i.e., don’t just focus on the Senate) and draw as much as you can from the political science literature, and not just what an informed American can learn by reading the New York Times.
- Imagine you are advising a member of Congress who just earned the chairmanship of a congressional committee. The member wants to know what expectations will be placed on them in this position and how their role might be different today than in the heyday of the Textbook Congress.
- Consider the recent history and likely future of the Senate filibuster. How have Senate norms of minority rights and supermajority action fared in recent years? What factors are working to erode them? What works to sustain them? Is the 60-vote Senate for ordinary legislation at risk? Why or why not? How would the elimination of supermajority rules and norms alter American government and politics?

Related Literature

- Work in “Legislators as Individuals” and “Lawmaking” relevant to discuss member goals and hurdles for passing legislation
- Aldrich 2011 has useful points for a setup

Lawmaking

Research Questions Answered

- How does America's systems of separation of powers shape the ease or difficulty with which legislation is passed?
- How does America's systems of separation of powers shape how each branch attempts to achieve desired outcomes?
- How has polarization shaped way government goes about lawmaking?
- Has the lawmaking process changed as a result of polarization?

Section Outline

How does America's systems of separation of powers shape the ease or difficulty with which legislation is passed? How each branch attempts to achieve desired outcomes?

- de Figueiredo, Jacobi, and Weingast 2006: we cannot fully understand the behavior of one institution without understanding it in the context of the others – while focused on identifying behavior of POTUS in relation to Congress, reigns true in understanding what outcomes are feasible, which actors take which actions, how they act to prevent preemption
- Krehbiel 1998: ability to pass policy is contingent on the size of the gridlock interval (ideological distance between the filibuster and veto pivots)
 - Gridlock: persistent inability to enact legislation when majorities and/or president prefer new policy over status quo → gridlock is “common, not constant” – while only a simple majority in Congress and a presidential signature is needed to enact new policy, additional layers to legislative process (e.g., filibuster and presidential veto) means larger than minimum-majority sized coalitions are typical, not an exception
 - Empirically, size of gridlock interval predicts productivity of government
 - * Mayhew 2005 argues there is constancy to legislating (i.e., productivity is *not* shaped by having unified versus divided government) because members always have incentives to legislate; parties not always cohesive; shifting conditions and public moods; Binder 1998 critiques measurement – once account for issues salient on public agenda, productivity is shaped by presence of divided government (as well as level of party polarization, number of moderates, differences between chambers)
 - Binder 2017 finds number of salient issue raised dramatically in recent years and unified control still reduces frequency of gridlock
 - In explaining actions of the pivots, pay attention to actions of the proposer and opportunities for those who exploit the filibuster (work on policy entrepreneurship and congressional actions; i.e., Sinclair, Wawro, and Arnold)
- Congress ⇔ Executive:
 - Moe 1987: assume the members of Congress will use their positions to direct bureaucrats – in reality, budget control, oversight activities, appointment control are imperfect tools for doing so
 - * McCubbins and Schwartz 1984: Congress exerts oversight using “fire-alarm” oversight (acting when citizens/interest groups alter to issues with agency behavior)
 - * Bawn 1995: when writing legislation surrounding actions of agencies, tradeoff between technical competence and political control depending on willingness to trade policy consequence uncertainty for uncertainty about agency behavior

- Cameron and McCarty 2004: presidential vetoes successfully allow POTUS to get policy concessions from Congress
 - * Hassell and Kernell 2016 also find this, noting that veto threats interrupt textbook procedures, encourage leaders to punt bills to conference, encourage other unorthodox procedures – all things that encourages Congress to remove things that might cause a veto
 - * Groseclose and McCarty 2001: like Frances Lee, emphasizes congressional strategies in using actions as message → under divided government, Congress will pass bills that they know POTUS will veto to make POTUS look extreme (“blame game veto”)
- Congress ⇔ Judiciary:
 - While some work suggests Supreme Court justices defer to Congress, justices actually follow attitudinal model (Segal 1997; Segal and Spaeth 2002)

How has polarization shaped way government goes about lawmaking? Has the lawmaking process changed as a result of polarization?

- Sinclair 2016: polarization has both *direct* (ability to create winning coalitions – think Krehbiel 1998) and *indirect* (changes to organization and power distribution) effects on congressional lawmaking → *increased the significance of unified government* in passing landmark policies (in combination with strong majority party leadership)
 - Curry and Lee 2019: underscore importance of leadership-led processes to help Congress take “transformative action” even under polarization – leaders can create grand bargains by negotiating behind more flexible channels than normal legislative process → cuts rank-and-file out of the process (unless member is key resource on policy issue), but mute interest group and activist pressures; also notes increased tendency in “crisis legislating” which leaders play critical role in resolving
 - Park, Smith, and Vander Wielen 2017: polarization has encourage parties to have stronger role in post-passage stage, replacing traditional conference committees with inter-caucus negotiations and leadership meetings
 - Harbridge-Yong, Volden, and Wiseman 2023: more broadly, bipartisanship still remains in passing policy because it helps individual legislators who seek to advance their policy goals → members who get opposing party members to cosponsor their bills more successful at lawmaking (which encourages norms of reciprocity)
 - With increase in crisis legislating and stakes of failing to resolve issues requiring immediate action (e.g., debt ceiling), Congress more willing to implement stop gap solution (e.g., raising the debt ceiling just enough to hold off discussions over long-term solutions until a later date) → polarization encourages Congress to “kick the can down the road” on tough decisions (Barber and McCarty 2016)
- Sinclair 2017: polarization + changes to political environment in 60s/70s making role of “policy entrepreneur” more available to senators = legislating more difficult now
 - House: increased multiple referrals increases likelihood decisions made through informal process (often led by majority), post-committee adjustments negotiated by leadership outside of committee process, suspension of the rules, use of restrictive rules
 - Senate: majorities have less control over the calendar and members can place “holds” on legislation yields “hostage taking” (essentially, the modern version of the filibuster; much less costly); expanded resources to Senators (plus no germaneness rule) makes it simple to tack on substantive amendments, putting wrinkles into legislative process → combination of rare super-majorities

and 1970s budget reforms encourages substantive legislating through budget reconciliation, increased use of “gangs” to create legislative compromises and “legislative summits” to work out differences between executive and Congress

- Lee 2009, 2016: party polarization and insecure majorities incents parties to be more combative – actually legislating doesn’t matter as much as proposing alternatives in making clear what the differences between parties are, taking positions even on nonideological issues → difficulties in create broad winning coalitions
- Interbranch interactions: divided government, which is now more regular, encourages presidents to “go public” rather than bargaining to get their way (Kernell 2007, incentivizes Congress to set up blame game vetoes (Groseclose and McCarty 2001) and encourages increased unilateral action (Moe and Howell 1999; but as Bolton and Thrower 2016 say, legislative capacity conditions relationship)

Potential Exam Questions

- Standard theories of American policymaking focus on the constraints imposed by the separation of powers, federalism. etc. Yet occasionally major policy changes do occur. Under what conditions does large scale policy change happen in the American system of separated powers?
- We often read in the news that the majority of the nation’s voters support a particular policy, but that Congress is nonetheless unlikely to pursue it. Is this true? If so, why do we often see Congress failing to pass policies that are supported by a majority of US voters?

Related Literature

- Crucially tied to “Organization of Congress”, “Vetoes” subsection in ”Executive Branch”

The Executive Branch

- How does the president exercise power? What formal and informal powers does the president have.
- What moderates the president's power?
- How does the president respond to public opinion?

Research Questions Answered

Section Outline

- Formal Powers of the Presidency:
 - Fixed term and Zero-Sum Game: Linz (1990); Unlike parliamentary democracies the president can't be removed from office easily (only through impeachment) and the executive never consists of a coalition of parties. The president is also more powerful than the cabinet.
 - Vetoes:
 - * Cameron and McCarty (2004) under full information no vetoes should occur, but the president should still be able to influence policy through the threat of a veto. Vetoes often arise out of sequential bargaining between Congress and the president, and tend to be successful in enabling the president to get policy concessions.
 - * Groseclose and McCarty (2001): theory of blame-game vetoes: When bargaining, Congress and the president are both trying to signal to a third party – voters – about their preferences, and thus this can lead to inefficient bargaining.
 - Political Appointments:
 - * Lewis (2008): President's power on bureaucracy comes from personnel decisions (a process referred to as politicization). Politicization increases when presidents believe agency views differ from their own, when allocating new appointees has little effects on competence, and when presidents and majority in Congress share same partisan/ideological lens as Congress will be more willing to create more positions.
 - * Kinane (2021): Senate-confirmed appointees (PAS) require Senate approval, but one nomination strategy that presidents use to sidestep this process include leaving positions empty and making interim appointments.
 - Dearborn (2021): Congress increased presidential responsibilities in budgeting, trade, reorganization and employment policy, due to the fact that the president is supposed to represent the "entire" country. However, this has changed since the 1980s post Watergate.
- Informal Powers of the Presidency:
 - Persuasion and Bargaining
 - * Neustadt (1990): Presidents influence policy via persuasion and bargaining.
 - How? 1) induce them to believe that what he wants of them is what their own appraisal of their own responsibilities requires them to do in their interest. 2) other actors may rely on the president to achieve their own interests. 3) build reputation 4) public prestige
 - Going Public:
 - * Kernell (2007): presidents no longer need to rely on bargaining to get their way; instead, they can selectively "go public" – making direct appeals to voters – to scare Congress into passing their desired legislation.
 - * Tulis (1987): going public is a device used throughout the twentieth century not just a modern phenomenon.

- * Canes-Wrone (2001): tests whether going public is efficient to achieve policy goals and finds that yes this is the case.
- Unilateral Action
 - * Moe and Howell (1999): presidents can make laws through informal powers without consent of Congress, via executive orders, proclamations, and national security directives. Also, has access to pool of expertise, experience, and information from bureaucracy, and has first-mover advantage.
 - * Howell (2003): when Congress is fragmented and less capable of legislating, presidents issue more significant executive orders.
 - * Bolton and Thrower (2016): When Congress is less capable of constraining the executive, the president will issue more executive orders during periods of divided government. In periods of high legislative capacity, the president is less likely to issue executive orders when faced with an opposed Congress.
- Moderators to the president's power:
 - Issue Domains: Wildavsky (1998) presidents more successful in Congress on foreign policy vs. domestic issues. Canes-Wrone, Howell and Lewis (2008) develop Wildavsky (1998)'s argument by highlighting the fact that it is not only formal powers that explain why the president has more power over foreign policy than domestic policy, but also his first-mover advantage, information advantage, and different electoral incentives than Congress.
 - Previous Administrations: Skowronek (1997) the status quo an incoming president faces shapes the politics of their administration, depends if previous president was from their same party and whether their policies were popular.
 - The Media Baum and Kernell (1999) Presidents used to be able to command the attention of the nation and garner large audiences via television, but that seems to have waned considerably. The authors find that it is likely due to cable television as opposed to political disaffection, and that presidents and broadcast networks have begun to strategically adapt to these changes.
 - Strength of Party Organizations Milkis (2014) helps for presidents to invest in and strengthen party organizations.
 - Public Opinion Reeves and Rogowski (2016) Public has opinion on the use of the president's unilateral powers. Attitudes toward presidential power are shaped both by short-term factors, including presidential popularity, and more enduring core democratic values including the belief in the rule of law.
- Responsiveness of the president:
 - Canes-Wrone and Shotts (2004) lay out the conditions when presidents are more responsive to public opinion.
 - * 1) Presidents are more responsive to public opinion when elections are imminent and when their public standing makes these elections likely to be close. 2) Responsiveness is higher for issues that citizens are likely to consider on a routine basis (namely, more frequently salient issues)
 - Canes-Wrone, Herron and Shotts (2001): lay out the conditions under which a president follows public opinion when have information suggesting that a popular policy is contrary to voters' interests.

Possible Exam Questions

- Evaluate Donald Trump from the perspective of political science. To what extent was his nomination, campaign, and administration an aberration, and to what extent a predictable continuation of pre-existing trends? What did Trump reveal about American politics that was previously unclear? What will the lasting legacies of his presidency be?
- Standard theories of American policymaking focus on the constraints imposed by the separation of powers, federalism, etc. Yet occasionally major policy changes do occur. Under what conditions does large scale policy change happen in the American system of separated powers?
- In a speech to the Teen Student Action Summit in July 2019, President Trump stated, “Then I have an Article 2, where I have the right to do whatever I want as President.” Discuss and respond to this comment with explicit reference to the empirical and theoretical literature of political science.
- Under the Trump Presidency we have seen the President deploy social media in new ways. Discuss this strategy with reference to the literature on the unique advantages and limitations of the presidential office, and in the context of today’s polarized politics. Is there something here that is truly “new,” in that it requires updating our theories of presidential power? Or are well-known dynamics merely playing out on a new platform?
- How have changes in the relationship between president and Congress affected the constitutional system of checks and balances? Has the modern presidency affected Congress’s role in governing? If so, how? To what extent is Congress still an effective check on presidential power?
- Some argue that the country needs strong federal government intervention to address the large-scale challenges it faces, e.g. climate change and the degradation of voting rights. With Congress seemingly unable to provide bold action, would it be desirable to increase the President’s ability to enact large-scale policy change through unilateral action? Why or why not? In formulating your answer to this question lay out (i) what the President’s unilateral powers are right now; (ii) the constraints, if any, on the President’s unilateral power; (iii) why you believe that those powers ought to be expanded or strengthened (or not). Be sure to address President Trump’s alleged overreach in the exercise of unilateral power in your answer.
- Joe Biden has described the Trump presidency as an “aberration.” Assess the Trump-as aberration thesis with reference to three expectations drawn from the political science literature, (e.g., regarding presidential appointments, unilateral action, agenda setting, legislative accomplishment, party building, presidential rhetoric, etc.). Which, if any, of these three expectations did the Trump presidency confound and why? Which, if any, did it confirm and why? In what sense, if at all, has Biden’s performance thus far been a return to “normalcy”? Is there anything in the Biden-Trump comparison that would lead you to alter the criteria that political scientists use to evaluate presidents’ performance and impact?
- Bawn (1995) notes that, “By delegating policy decisions to the bureaucracy, Congress creates a control problem for itself.” Why does Congress—or other political principals such as the President—create this problem for itself, and what techniques does it have for addressing this problem (of political control)?

Courts

Research Questions Answered

- Is the court political? Are justices just “politicians in robes?”

Section Outline

- Is the Supreme Court political?
 - Dahl (1957): Foundational piece arguing that the Supreme Court is inherently a political institution because it takes on controversial questions of national policy. People tend to think the court is not political and the court’s legitimacy rests on this idea so there are incentives to maintain this image.
 - Segal and Spaeth (2002): Argue in favor of the *attitudinal model*, in which justices make decisions based on personal policy preferences and ideology, as opposed to the *legal model*, where justices are constrained by pre-existing law. Using SC case law data, find evidence in support of attitudinal model – attitudes alone predict 70% of outcomes
 - * Gillman (2001): Critique of *attitudinal model* – argue that while there may be a personal component to decision-making, it is constrained by professional norm. Argues that positivist tests of these models may be problematic, might need to rely on interpretivist models
 - * Segal (1997): Additional evidence in support of *attitudinal model*. Evaluate it against the separation of powers model, which incorporates both justice policy preferences and legal constraints
- What is the role of the Court in legislating?
 - Whittington (2005): Political support for judicial review is linked to the government’s need to use the judiciary as a mechanism to advance favorable policy and overcome barriers. Politically sustainable judicial activist can be understood as a vehicle of regime enforcement.
 - Rosenberg (2008): When is the Court able to produce political and social changes? Overview of the dynamic vs constrained view of the court.
 - * **Dynamic**: Courts can produce significant reform because they are free from electoral constraints and institutional arrangements, free to act when other branches are inactive or opposed
 - * **Constrained**: The court is generally weak and powerless; lacks budgetary powers. Other constraints include limits on the types of cases it can hear, necessary independence from other branches of government, lacks tools to implement policy
 - * Conditions for reform include: other actors induce compliance through incentives, costs to induce compliance, market implementation of decisions, providing leverage for people who are willing to implement
- Some other miscellaneous articles on the Courts/Law:
 - Teles (2008): Conservative opponents of activist liberalism in the Courts developed strategic for long-term political investment, focused on creating parallel set of institutions to rival liberal legal establishment. Role of the Federalism society.
 - Kastellec, Lax, Phillips (2010): Use MRP model to show that Senators are responsive to public opinion when voting on Supreme Court Nominees.
 - Versteeg and Zackin (2016): While much of constitutional theory argues that successful constitutions need to be *entrenched* (such as the US constitution), constitutional drafters increasingly chose specificity over entrenchment as a means to constrain political power

Possible Exam Questions

- In recent months, Chief Justice Roberts and Associate Justice Breyer have made prominent statements rejecting the idea that the Supreme Court is nothing more than partisan politics in black robes. Relying on the academic literature about the courts, respond to the claim that judges do not respond to cases based on partisan motivations

Bureaucracy

Research Questions Answered

- How the the American bureaucracy develop?
- What are the constraints on the bureaucracy?
- How can Congress oversee the bureaucracy?
- How can the bureaucracy influence public policy?

Section Outline

- Development of the American Bureaucracy
 - Skowronek (1982): Early America did not have real “state”, instead operated through a “state of courts and parties” focused on patronage, pork-barrel politics, decentralized power
 - * Pressures of industrialization created demand for a national administrative apparatus
 - * State building took place in the context of existing institution’s, and debates over how to reform the government were influenced by it
 - * Struggles between the president and congress over control of the bureaucracy led to the emergence of a powerful bureaucracy
 - Carpenter (2001): Introduces concept of **bureaucratic autonomy** or when political authorities see it in their interest to defer to agency action
 - * Autonomy tied to reputational uniqueness and political multiplicity
 - * Conditions for autonomy: (1) politically differentiated (2) unique capacities (3) political legitimacy
 - * Important note on *timing*– autonomy emerged during the Progressive era and not the New Deal
- What are the constraints on the bureaucracy/ Can Congress control the bureaucracy?
 - Niskanen (1971): Proposes a *supply side* theory of bureaucracy where the institutions are constrained by their relationship with appropriators. “Bureaus” are defined by the relationship with (1) the collective organization that provides funds (Congress); (2) suppliers of labor and factors of productions; (3) consumers of their services.
 - * Calls the bureau and sponsor relationship a *bilateral monopoly*
 - * Bureaus have informational advantage in specialized area; Bureaus strive for increased budgets but need to be reasonable in their requests
 - McCubbins and Schwartz (1984): **Fire Alarm** vs **Police Patrol** oversight of agencies. What appears to be a lack of oversight is a rational preference for one type of oversight over the other.
 - McCubbins, Noll, Weingast (1987): Emphasize the importance of **administrative procedures** as devices to enhance political control. Administrative law can be written to help elected officials retain control over policy making. Idea of *congressional dominance*
 - Moe (1987): Response to theory of *Congressional Dominance* over the bureaucracy. Through budgets, legislation, appointments. While common, these tools are not perfect or as strong as we think.
 - Bawn (1995): There is a trade-off between technical competence and political control over an agency. The degree of agency independence in a policy reflects the legislature’s willingness to trade uncertainty about policy consequences for uncertainty about agency behavior.

- Lipsky (1983): Introduces concept of **Street-level bureaucrats** (ex. teachers, cops, welfare agents) as opposed to typical view of bureaucrats as suits at agency.
 - * Key Claim: Decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and devices they invent to cope with uncertainties effectively *become* the public policies they carry out
 - * Not explicitly about Congressional oversight, but highlights some of the difficulties with controlling bureaucratic agencies with lots of street-level employees; adds additional principal agent dynamic
- Relationship between the bureaucracy and policy
 - Moe 1989: The bureaucracy is not designed to be efficient due to struggles over control by different actors (Congress, interest groups, the presidency). Role of all these different actors in establishing bureaus and administrative procedures creates structural designs meant to serve different groups and purposes
 - Potter (2017): Bureaucrats can strategically time rule-making processes to align with more favorable government. They can “fast track” or “slow roll” decision making based on the political climate
 - You (2017): Interest groups can lobby legislators directly following the passage of legislation to influence distribution of *particularized* goods in the regulatory rule-making process

Possible Exam Questions

- A prominent scholar notes, “By delegating policy decisions to the bureaucracy, Congress creates a control problem for itself.” How so? Why does Congress create this problem for itself? What techniques does it have for addressing this problem?
- Recent scholarship has inverted the old adage “all politics is local” to assert that today “all politics is national.” Assess the scope and significance of the implied change as it is observed in the operation of three institutions: e.g. federalism, parties, elections, the House, the Senate, the presidency, the bureaucracy, etc. Is the case for the nationalization of American politics overstated? What remains of the traditional view? What are the implications of the change for American politics at large.

Related Literature

- Tied to policy making and policy feedback, general inter-branch relations

Policy Making and Policy Feedback

Research Questions Answered

- How does the government make policy?
- Does policy make politics?
- What are the conditions for policy feedback? What are the consequences of policy feedback?

Section Outline

- Foundational work on the policy-making process
 - Lowi (1964): The *type* of policy in question shapes conflict over power in the policy-making sphere.

- * Political relationships are determined by their expectations → for every policy *type* there may be a distinctive relationship
- * Policy types include: distributive, regulatory, and re-distributive policy
- * Reviews different models of models of policy competition: pluralist, elitist, schattschneider
- Kingdon (1984): Policy making involves many different actors inside and outside of government and involves working in the constraints of government and the general period in time
 - * Setting policy involves: (1) setting agenda (2) specifying alternatives to choose from (3) choosing a policy (4) implementing that policy
 - **Garbage Can Model**: people have conflicting and inconsistent preferences on policy and don't understand existing processes in other sectors or boundaries of organization → problems and solutions through into "garbage can" from which we can pick
 - * **Policy Window**: short periods of time where participants can take advantage of opportunity to enact change
 - * Relevant actors and constraints include government officials, politicians, policy community, organized interests, national mood, elections
- What are the mechanisms of policy feedback?
 - Pierson (1993):
 - * Three primary actors of policy feedback: government officials, interest groups, and mass public
 - * Two Mechanisms:
 - **Resources and Incentives**: Material impacts; policies can impact the resources and incentives different political actors have
 - **Interpretive**: Public policies can impact the cognitive processes of social actors; *learning* effects and *informational* effects
 - Hacker (2004): While American social policies appear to be resilient to retrenchment, changes are more subtle leading to incomplete coverage and risk privatization
 - * No single pattern of institutional change, instead takes multiple forms and strategies abased on the character of institutions and political setting in which they are situated in
 - * Strategies to reform policies include: drift, conversion, layering, revision
 - Patashnik and Zelizer (2013): Absence of strong feedback is often the product of initial policy design features, divisive enactment, and failure of reformers to uproot institutional bases of opponents when the law was enacted
 - * Explore the ACA and Dodd Frank
 - * Two key phases of policy development:
 - Enactment: when policies are designed, feedback potential emerges, pre-existing governance structures rearranged
 - Post enactment: implementation begins, self-reinforcement takes off
 - * Ex. ACA: "submerged state" makes interpretive benefits unclear; delay in individual-level resource effects will make initial benefits diffuse
- Examples of Policy Feedback
 - Mettler (2002): GI Bill for World War II veterans promoted participatory civic duty norms and help people develop social capital
 - * GI Bill was massive program of social entitlements, expanded vocational training and education of veterans

- * Combined Pierson (1993) with VBS Civic voluntarism model
- * Bill had both *resource* and *interpretive* effects. Resources through material benefits due to education, benefits. Interpretive through fostering civic capacity and social capital
- Campbell (2003): Expansion of Social Security created an intense, entrenched voting bloc of seniors supportive of the policy and willing to react if threatened → leads to further expansion, entrenchment
 - * Growth of programs have enhanced senior participatory capacity over time coupled with threats to the program which inspire participatory surges
 - * In addition to material benefits of program, SS expansion gave seniors a political identity as program beneficiaries, targets of mobilization by parties and interest groups
- Thurston (2015): While public-private policy implementation partnerships might make it more difficult for beneficiaries to recognize the role of the state, those *excluded* from these programs can still be politicized through their exclusion
 - * Two case studies: Federal Housing Administration and GI Bill
 - * In both groups of people excluded from benefits organized and traced their exclusion to the state, pushing for reform
- Anzia and Moe (2016): Public sector unions as an example of politicians using policy to “make politics”, but this strategic behavior is constrained by collective action problems
 - * Policy can strategically be wielded to create feedback effects
 - * Democrats supporter public sector labor laws but so did many individual Republicans – collective action problems limit conditions under which parties will engage in strategic, future oriented behavior
- Clinton and Sances (2018): Short term evidence of the political effects of Medicare expansion; increased voter registration and turnout for one election.
 - * Medicaid expansion led to substantial decrease in people without insurance in counties located in expansion states compared to similar counties in non-expansion states
- Michener (2018): Need to consider the role of different layers of government in the design and implementation of local policy and how this can shape individual behavior
 - * Medicare is largest source of public health insurance but it is implemented at the *state* level
 - * **Contextualized Feedback Model of Political Participation:** Design, implementation, and constraints of policy are contingent on local contexts; these contexts are shaped by institutions; which then affect individual experiences with policies, shaping political capacity and participatory actions
 - * **Particularistic Resistance:** when policy beneficiaries take oppositional actions
- Hankinson, Magazinnik, Sands (2023): Explore policy feedback effects among the “policy adjacent”
- What about contact with the criminal justice system as a form of policy feedback?
 - Weaver and Lerman (2010): The criminal justice system as a primary site of civic education. Through both interpretive and resource mechanisms, custodial interactions with the CJS negatively affect likelihood of participating in politics and carrying out responsibilities of citizenship. Survey based study
 - * **Resource effects:** CJS policies limit availability of resources to people
 - * **Interpretive effects:** Encounters with bureaucrats can inform understandings of government, perceptions of civic identity

- White (2019a): Brief jail spells can demobilize voters through both interpretive (political socialization process in jail, discourage contact with the state) and resource (disruptions of economic life)
 - * Exploits random courtroom assignment as source of exogenous variation in jail time
 - * Racial differences in effects, significantly more demobilizing for Latino and Black voters than whites
- White (2019b): Expands previous article and looks at how “proximal contact” with the CJS affects turnout by looking at family of convicts. Little evidence of that proximal contact reduces voting in long run, but negative short term effect

Possible Exam Questions

- What role does public opinion play in the policy-making process in the United States? What are the characteristics of public opinion that enhance and, alternatively, undermine its influence? What are the mechanisms by which public attitudes enter into the process? What can studying public opinion about an issue reveal, if anything, about the prospects for policymaking in that arena?
- Any question about policy change I think can be related to this literature– entrenched interests etc

Federalism, State & Local Politics

Research Questions Answered

- Has state and local politics been nationalized? If so, what are its effects?
- How is local politics distinct from national politics?
- How responsive are state governments to public opinion?

Section Outline

Has state and local politics been nationalized? If so, what are its effects?

- Hopkins 2018: State and local politics *has* become nationalized because: (1) political parties are increasingly offering same options across the country; (2) American identities are less based on local factors; and (3) Americans are moving away from traditional media markets that promote local politics. This has impacts on *accountability* (changing incentives for state/local officials if all that matters in elections is PID); *policy outcomes* (little incentives to bargain for constituent-targeted benefits making coalition building more difficult); *voting decisions* (PID now a useful heuristic when voting locally, though only when partisanship is on the ballot/it's not a nonpartisan election)
- Grumbach 2022: nationalization of political parties has resulted in a resurgence of state governments in American policymaking (increasing policy variation across states, policy polarization between red and blue state, advantaging well-resourced groups), reduced policy learning between states controlled by opposing parties (distinct groups of legislative subsidizers, little relationship between policy success and diffusion), and democratic backsliding in states controlled by Republicans (increased use of state power to shape democratic performance)
 - Relatedly, nationalization of parties has created a renewed focus on the role of federalism – idea that each state has some capacity to implement some federal policies as they choose (e.g., Medicaid, Obamacare, etc.) → result in uneven and inconsistent access to policy benefits across the country and in turn, boost or dampen political participation among recipients of those benefits (Michener 2018)

How is local politics distinct from national politics?

- Peterson 1981: Local politics is different because it is more limited, constrained by several outside forces
 - Primary goal of local governments is to maintain enhance economic productivity
 - Thus, local governments focused on *distributive* policies that strengthen local economies and enhance tax bases. Local governments particularly well-suited for *allocation* policies (e.g., fire, police, sanitation). National governments are centered more on *redistributive* policies, given the strain they can have on local government budgets.
 - Local politics not characterized by salient issue debates (e.g., military losses, racial grievances) since local governments have little control over them → voting is dependent on evaluations of national parties (if partisan races); if nonpartisan races, voters are less interested and easily mobilized, there is more issue-less politics.
 - Organized groups have marginal impacts on policy formation: local govs usually conduct business behind closed doors, limited role of news media in local politics, less ambitious politicians, less use of polling in local politics

How responsive are state governments to public opinion?

- State governments *are* responsive (i.e., positive correlation between opinion and policy):
 - Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1989: state policy liberalism is responsive to state opinion liberalism (though partisan politics provides key context → while liberal mass opinion usually translates into Democratic control, it is state parties that put out more moderate policies that are electorally rewarded)
 - Caughey and Warshaw 2018, 2022: State policymaking is responsive, but responsiveness doesn't occur immediately as change tends to be incremental (because prevalence of veto players, scarcity of time and legislative resources)
- State governments are responsive (i.e., positive correlation between opinion and policy), *but not congruent* (i.e., policy does not actually match opinion):
 - Lax and Philips 2009, 2012: State governments are generally responsive to voter preferences, especially when salience is high, but overall, there is typically a mismatch between how liberal/-conservative citizen preferences and whether implemented policy is liberal/conservative, across a range of issues

Are state/local policy outputs biased in favor of certain groups?

- Interest groups play a major role in shaping local politics, with the ability to prevent debate and block issues from local agenda (Anzia 2022) – these groups are particularly helped by the fact that interest in local politics is low (Hopkins 2018) and structural features of local elections favor those with intense interests (Anzia 2014). At the local-level, those citizens who voice their concerns to elected officials tend to be unrepresentative of the broader public (Einstein, Palmer, and Glick 2019).
- Hertel-Fernandez 2019: Republican legislators have been aided by trio of conservative groups (aka “right-wing troika”) to pursue similar policy agenda that favor conservative, pro-business interests → do so via model bills, opportunities for legislators and businesses to network
- Existing policies can reinforce inequalities in public good (Trounstein 2016, 2020).

Possible Exam Questions

- Tip O'Neil once said “all politics is local,” meaning that what was most important to citizen is what their local governments did for them. Yet, recent work has pointed to the “nationalization” of politics. Does that mean now “all politics is *national*.” Discuss using evidence in local politics literature.

Related Literature

- Anzia's work on interest groups is in response to work in the “Collective Action and Organized Interests” section (pay particular attention to Olson) as well as the UCLA School of parties; Hertel-Fernandez 2019 also relevant here too
- “Representation” section connects well with Erikson et al. 1989 and Caughey and Warshaw 2022 as analyses of *collective representation*
- Hopkins 2018 good application of work related to strength of party ID

Money in Politics

Research Questions Answered

- What purposes does lobbying serve?
- What are the effects of lobbying?
- Who do interest groups target?
- Are elected officials receptive to those efforts?
- Who are donors?

Section Outline

What purposes does lobbying serve? What are the effects of lobbying?

- Hall and Deardorff 2006: while others posit that lobbying is about *exchange* (mutual benefit trades between agents and legislators like contributions for votes) and *persuasion* (information signaling – lobbyists gather info about opinion and policy consequences that they use to influence legislator choices), they underscore *lobbying as legislative subsidy*: subsidize/take on legislative resources for members via policy expertise (e.g., research, speech writing, model bills) and political intelligence (e.g., predict other positions)
- Gilens and Page 2014: while preferences of average citizens and economic elites correlated across issues, interest groups' stances are not – when interest groups and affluent Americans oppose a policy, it's unlikely to be adopted

Who do interest groups target? Are elected officials receptive to those efforts?

- Broockman and Kalla 2016: in a field experiment, show policy makers more likely to make themselves available for meetings when requesters identified as political donors.
- Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017: donors more likely to give to senators they have a high policy agreement with, who sit on committees with jurisdiction related to their occupation
- Interest groups seek out relevant committee members in state legislatures (direct access) but also those who have control over committee assignments process (indirect access; e.g., party leaders, committee chairs) (Fournaies and Hall 2018) and those with agenda-setting and procedural powers (Fournaies 2018)
- You 2017: when targeting legislators, usually do so *following* the passage of legislation to influence distribution of particularized goods in the regulatory rule-making process

Who are donors?

- Hill and Huber 2017: donors differ from non-donors in substantial ways (e.g., wealth, education, religiosity, older, less diverse, more likely to vote, ideologically extreme), but giving is centered on *perceived electoral stakes*, not ideological proximity
- Grumbach and Sahn 2020: campaign contributors are racially unrepresentative; but presence of ethnoracial minority candidates mobilizes coethnic donors and whites reduce donations to minority candidates

Related Literature

- Tie to “Representation” section, especially reading related to bias in how representatives perceive public preferences (e.g., Butler and Dynes 2016, Broockman 2018)
- Connect to “Collective Action and Interest Groups”