

Reaction Paper Week 11

The Grossmann and Dominguez paper looks at affiliation networks of interest groups and their conclusion defies much of the emerging literature in this area surrounding the assumption of polarization in legislative coalitions. They find that these interest group coalitions in support of legislation are bipartisan grand coalitions of groups who do not agree in endorsements of candidates.

The Apkarian et al. paper looks at six different types of donors to political campaigns in the 2004 California state legislature as a network to tie candidates together. They found the existence of this network linking extra-legislative actors and also found a complexity in donor motivations that vary based on donor type. I enjoyed this reading as I felt it expanded on the existing literature and the breakdown amongst the different types of donors were fruitful; however, I had a specific issue with one of the breakdowns of individuals. They proposed that individual citizens who donated were more likely to make small donations to a single candidate driven by ideological factors. However, I think this leaves out the outliers of very wealthy individuals donating large sums of money to candidates, such as Peter Thiel. I think breaking down the individuals section into both small and large (wealth wise), as they did for companies, would lead to a more fruitful analysis of political networks.