Gov 1539: Section 1

Tyler Simko

February 12th, 2021

The plan for today

- Krehbiel reading was hard, and didn't have enough time to go over it in depth during lecture yet. We will on Tuesday.
- But it's tough! So today we'll go through Krehbiel's **Pivotal Politics** model.

The plan for today

- Krehbiel reading was hard, and didn't have enough time to go over it in depth during lecture yet. We will on Tuesday.
- But it's tough! So today we'll go through Krehbiel's **Pivotal Politics** model.
- Today's section will be a little more like a lecture than they will be in general.
- But please ask any and all questions! Interrupt me - this is a review that is supposed to help you understand this model for exams.

- Krehbiel reading was hard, and didn't have enough time to go over it in depth during lecture yet. We will on Tuesday.
- But it's tough! So today we'll go through Krehbiel's **Pivotal Politics** model.
- Today's section will be a little more like a lecture than they will be in general.
- But please ask any and all questions! Interrupt me - this is a review that is supposed to help you understand this model for exams.
- But don't worry about 100% mastering everything:
- Also don't worry about writing all of this down - I can post slides.

The goals for today

- What you should be aiming for:

- What you should be aiming for:
    1. understand the assumptions behind the model.

The goals for today

- What you should be aiming for:
  1. understand the assumptions behind the model.
  2. know the relevant players and sequence (i.e. order of movement) of the model.

The goals for today

- What you should be aiming for:
  1. understand the assumptions behind the model.
  2. know the relevant players and sequence (i.e. order of movement) of the model.
  3. start understanding how to use the model to assess a political situation (more on Tuesday).

The goals for today

- What you should be aiming for:
    1. understand the assumptions behind the model.
    2. know the relevant players and sequence (i.e. order of movement) of the model.
    3. start understanding how to use the model to assess a political situation (more on Tuesday).
    4. understand how the model might change if assumptions or players changed.

The goals for today

- What you should be aiming for:
    1. understand the assumptions behind the model.
    2. know the relevant players and sequence (i.e. order of movement) of the model.
    3. start understanding how to use the model to assess a political situation (more on Tuesday).
    4. understand how the model might change if assumptions or players changed.
- We'll revisit the model on Tuesday!

What is a (formal) model?

- Theories like Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics are normally called **formal models**. What's a formal model?

What is a (formal) model?

- Theories like Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics are normally called **formal models**. What's a formal model?
    - a workable definition: an abstract (generally mathematical) representation of some process (i.e. a choice, institutional procedure, etc.) used to explain a theory.

What is a (formal) model?

- Theories like Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics are normally called **formal models**. What's a formal model?
    - a workable definition: an abstract (generally mathematical) representation of some process (i.e. a choice, institutional procedure, etc.) used to explain a theory.
    - generally, people will use models to formalize an argument - mathematically describe each step in a process.

What is a (formal) model?

- Theories like Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics are normally called **formal models**. What's a formal model?
  - a workable definition: an abstract (generally mathematical) representation of some process (i.e. a choice, institutional procedure, etc.) used to explain a theory.
  - generally, people will use models to formalize an argument - mathematically describe each step in a process.
- These models will make predictions about the world. Authors will generally then collect data and use it to test the predictions of their model.
- You've probably heard of other formal models before!

What is a (formal) model?

- Theories like Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics are normally called **formal models**. What's a formal model?
  - a workable definition: an abstract (generally mathematical) representation of some process (i.e. a choice, institutional procedure, etc.) used to explain a theory.
  - generally, people will use models to formalize an argument - mathematically describe each step in a process.
- These models will make predictions about the world. Authors will generally then collect data and use it to test the predictions of their model.
- You've probably heard of other formal models before!
  1. Many are used in **Game Theory** (so you'll often hear models called *games*, also why the actors are called *players*).
  2. Cameron and Park 2008 reading had a model on burden sharing.
  3. The **Median Voter Theorem** is normally expressed as a model.
  4. So is the **Prisoner's Dilemma**.

- Generally, models need a bit of setup:

- Generally, models need a bit of setup:
  - **Theory**: something to be explained. What process is the author trying to demonstrate?

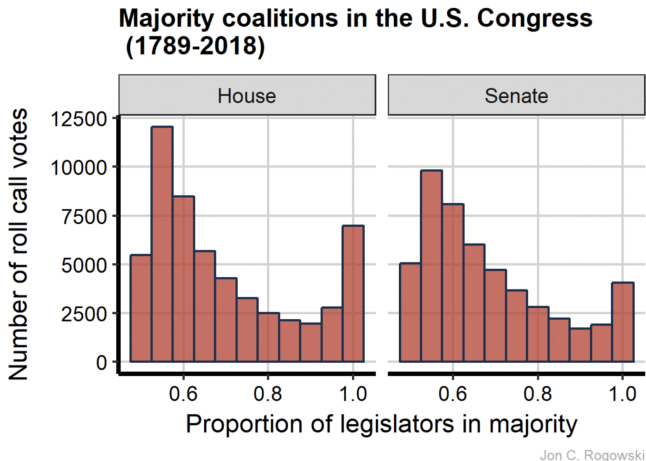## What's in a (formal) model?

- Generally, models need a bit of setup:
  - **Theory**: something to be explained. What process is the author trying to demonstrate?
  - **Players**: who are the relevant players of the game?

What's in a (formal) model?

- Generally, models need a bit of setup:
    - **Theory**: something to be explained. What process is the author trying to demonstrate?
    - **Players**: who are the relevant players of the game?
    - **Assumptions**: models are always simplified abstractions of the real world - what does the model assume to make these simplifications?

What's in a (formal) model?

- Generally, models need a bit of setup:
    - **Theory**: something to be explained. What process is the author trying to demonstrate?
    - **Players**: who are the relevant players of the game?
    - **Assumptions**: models are always simplified abstractions of the real world - what does the model assume to make these simplifications?
- Models are usually followed by a section where authors use data to test model predictions.

- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? *hint*: there are two)
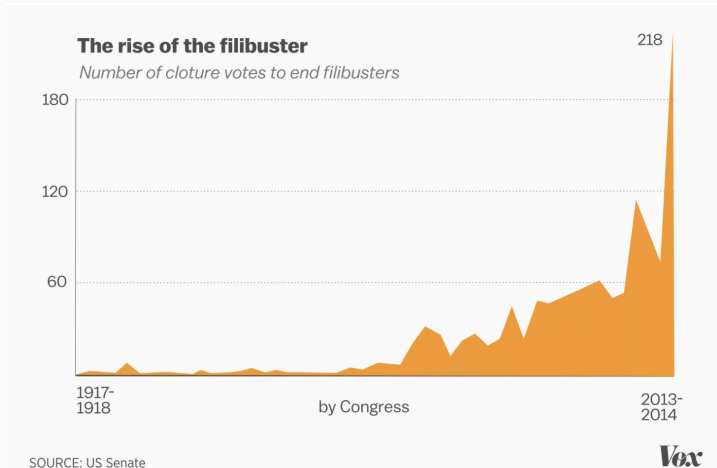
- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? *hint*: there are two)
    1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (i.e. larger than 50% + 1). Why?

- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? *hint*: there are two)
    1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (i.e. larger than 50% + 1). Why?
    2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**. When and where does gridlock happen?

Majority coalitions in the U.S. Congress (1789-2018)

Jon C. Rogowski

The rise of the filibuster
Number of cloture votes to end filibusters

218

SOURCE: US Senate

Vox

Filibusters are good proxy for gridlock - takes two-third of senate to overturn.

- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? *hint*: there are two)

Theory: Pivotal Politics

- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? **hint**: there are two)

  1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (i.e. larger than 50% + 1). Why?

Theory: Pivotal Politics

- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? **hint**: there are two)
    1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (i.e. larger than 50% + 1). Why?
    2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**. When and where does gridlock happen?

Theory: Pivotal Politics

- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? **hint**: there are two)
    1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (i.e. larger than $50\% + 1$). Why?
    2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**. When and where does gridlock happen?
- Krehbiel's model aims to answer these two questions with a theory of political decision-making. What's his answer?

Theory: Pivotal Politics

- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? **hint**: there are two)
    1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (i.e. larger than 50% + 1). Why?
    2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**. When and where does gridlock happen?

- Krehbiel's model aims to answer these two questions with a theory of political decision-making. What's his answer?
    1. **Coalitions** are usually greater than minimum-majority sized because of supermajoritarian procedures (mainly filibuster and veto).

Theory: Pivotal Politics

- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? **hint**: there are two)
    1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (i.e. larger than 50% + 1). Why?
    2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**. When and where does gridlock happen?

- Krehbiel's model aims to answer these two questions with a theory of political decision-making. What's his answer?
    1. **Coalitions** are usually greater than minimum-majority sized because of supermajoritarian procedures (mainly filibuster and veto).
    2. **Gridlock** occurs regularly because of supermajoritarian procedures under certain circumstances (moderate status quo policies and heterogeneous [i.e. varied] preferences).

Theory: Pivotal Politics

- What is the goal of Krehbiel's model? (i.e. what observable phenomena is he trying to explain? **hint**: there are two)
    1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (i.e. larger than 50% + 1). Why?
    2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**. When and where does gridlock happen?

- Krehbiel's model aims to answer these two questions with a theory of political decision-making. What's his answer?
    1. **Coalitions** are usually greater than minimum-majority sized because of supermajoritarian procedures (mainly filibuster and veto).
    2. **Gridlock** occurs regularly because of supermajoritarian procedures under certain circumstances (moderate status quo policies and heterogeneous [i.e. varied] preferences).

- His formal model is a tool to demonstrate and explain this (↑) theoretical argument.

Assumptions: Spatial Model of Legislative Voting

- Setup:
  - Unicameral (one house) legislature (so no mention of inter-house relations).

Assumptions: Spatial Model of Legislative Voting

- Setup:
  - Unicameral (one house) legislature (so no mention of inter-house relations).
  - We can measure every legislator's preferred policy as a single number "ideal point."
    - Let's say conservative = the right of the graph.
    - So, imagine someone like Ted Cruz as most right point, Bernie Sanders on left. Landrieu closer to the middle.

## Assumptions: Spatial Model of Legislative Voting

- Setup:
  - Unicameral (one house) legislature (so no mention of inter-house relations).
  - We can measure every legislator's preferred policy as a single number "ideal point."
    - Let's say conservative = the right of the graph.
    - So, imagine someone like Ted Cruz as most right point, Bernie Sanders on left. Landrieu closer to the middle.
  - Single-peaked, symmetric preferences (more on next slide).
    q = status quo (i.e. the existing policy right now)

Assumptions: Spatial Model of Legislative Voting

- Setup:
    - Unicameral (one house) legislature (so no mention of inter-house relations).
    - We can measure every legislator's preferred policy as a single number "ideal point."
        - Let's say conservative = the right of the graph.
        - So, imagine someone like Ted Cruz as most right point, Bernie Sanders on left. Landrieu closer to the middle.
    - Single-peaked, symmetric preferences (more on next slide).
      q = status quo (i.e. the existing policy right now)
- Notice all of the things the model does not include for simplification (no parties, no media, no Supreme Court, etc.).

Assumptions: Spatial Model of Legislative Voting

- Setup:
    - Unicameral (one house) legislature (so no mention of inter-house relations).
    - We can measure every legislator's preferred policy as a single number "ideal point."
        - Let's say conservative = the right of the graph.
        - So, imagine someone like Ted Cruz as most right point, Bernie Sanders on left. Landrieu closer to the middle.
    - Single-peaked, symmetric preferences (more on next slide).
        q = status quo (i.e. the existing policy right now)
- Notice all of the things the model does not include for simplification (no parties, no media, no Supreme Court, etc.).

- Procedural assumptions - all players
    - know the sequence (the move order) and each other's preferences ("complete information").
    - know who pivotal voters are and adopt "optimal" strategies.

Assumption: single-peaked symmetric preferences

- This means that how much everyone "prefers" a particular point on the line is symmetric in either direction starting from their ideal point.
- i.e. For my ideal point x, I am neutral between $x + 3$ and $x - 3$, but I prefer $x - 3$ to $x - 5$ (because $x - 3$ is closer to x).
- so "optimal" strategies means that players want to minimize the difference between policy and their ideal point.
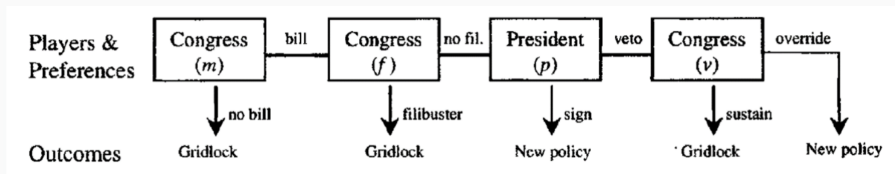

Ideal Point
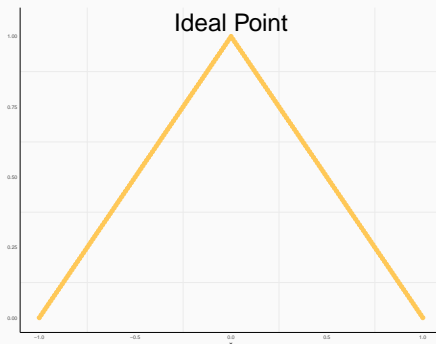
Players

- Who are the players?
    1. m: Median member of unicameral legislature (let's say the Senate).
    2. p: President.
    3. f: Filibuster pivot - Senator who has 3/5 of Senate between them and the most extreme member in the president's direction.
        - i.e. if conservative president, then filibuster pivot is the 60th most conservative Senator (10 more liberal than the median).
    4. v: Veto pivot ($\frac{2}{3}$ of Senate, typically same side of median as president)
        - Filibuster pivot ($\frac{3}{5}$ of Senate, typically opposite of median to president)
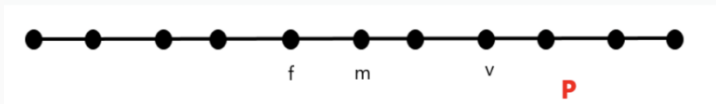
Sequence of events

(read from left to right, up to down)
(i.e. m moves first, they offer a bill or not. then f, filibuster or not, etc.)

Example

- Extreme status quo q.
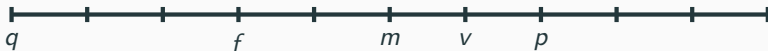
- Median m always moves first: what point should they propose for their bill?

Example

- Extreme status quo q.
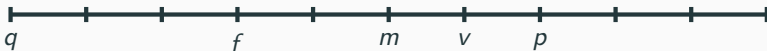
- Median m always moves first: what point should they propose for their bill?
    - Exactly their ideal point m.
    - Why? Both f and v prefer m to the status quo q (because m is closer than q to their ideal points).
    - The only members who prefer q to m are those closer to q than to m. They're not a large part of the legislature. f prefers m, so no filibuster.
    - President prefers m to q, so there will be no veto.

Example #2

- Extreme status quo q in the other direction.

$$\vdash\!\!\!-\!\!\!-\!\!\!+\!\!\!-\!\!\!+\!\!\!-\!\!\!+\!\!\!-\!\!\!+\!\!\!-\!\!\!+\!\!\!-\!\!\!+\!\!\!-\!\!\!+\!\!\!-\!\!\!+\!\!\!-\!\!\dashv$$

$$f \qquad m \quad v \quad p \qquad\qquad q$$
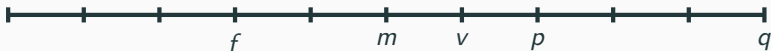
- What happens now?
    - Exactly the same! Median should propose m.
    - Why? Both f and v prefer m to the status quo q (because m is closer to their ideal point).
    - As before, the only members who prefer q to m are those for whom q is closer to their ideal point than m. f prefers m, so no filibuster.
    - President prefers m to q, so there will be no veto.

- Those were exactly what Professor Rogowski will call Zones #1 and #5.
- If q is ever there, it can easily be moved to m.
- This works because the important players - f, v, and p always prefer m to q.
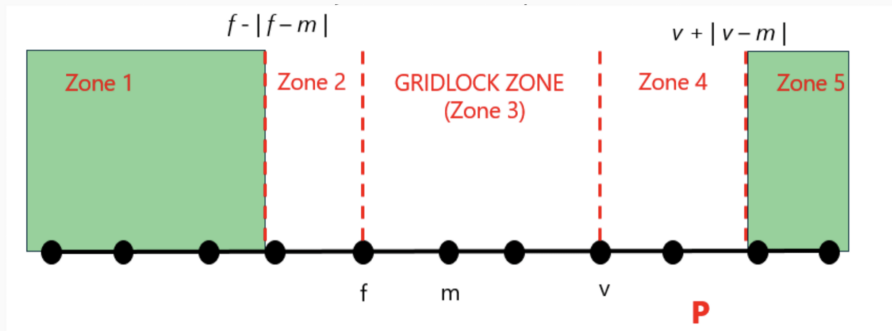
Example #3

- Once status quo isn't as extreme, f, v, or p might prefer q to certain proposals and can get concessions.
- For status quo in Zone 2, filibuster f is closer to q than m.
- When m is proposing, they know f won't support a bill further away from f than q already is. **So m proposes a bill between f and m that is equally far away as f and q but on the opposite side.**
- This is very tricky! You will need to stare at it for a while - use these slides and the ones from lecture.
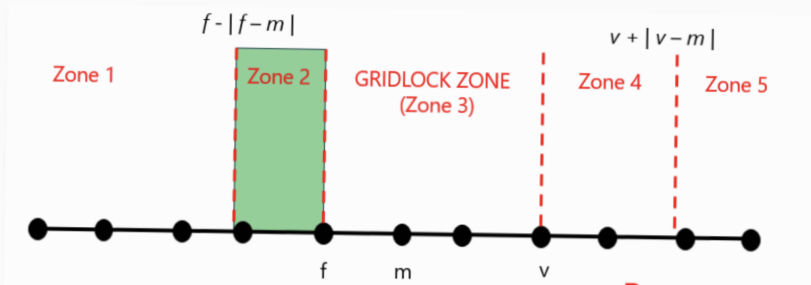
The single most important plot

Once it starts to make more sense, everything you need to know is in this plot:
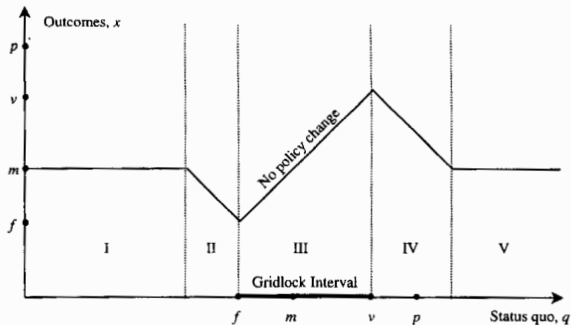
Figure 2.7
Equilibrium policies in the pivotal politics theory

- Notice Zones #1 and #5 are always m (see Examples #1 and #2).
- Zone #2: m's proposals must gradually move to satisfy f.

Example #4

- For Zone #4, similar logic to Zone #2.
- If status quo is in Zone #4, m knows they need to please v. If v is pleased, then president won't veto.
- So m can propose a bill closer to them that v prefers equally to q.
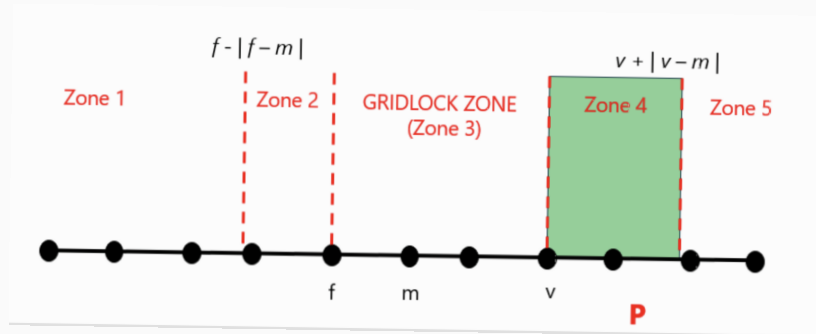
Back to this plot

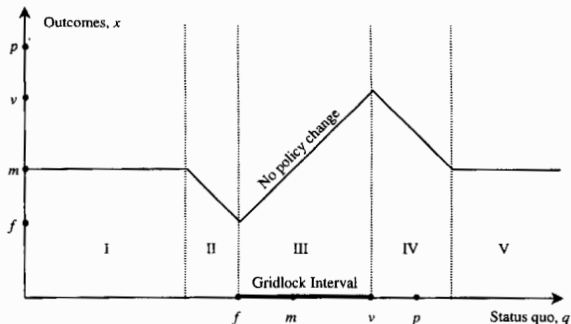Notice parallels between Zones #2 (outcome moves toward f) and #4 (outcome moves toward v).

Figure 2.7
Equilibrium policies in the pivotal politics theory

- Notice Zones #1 and #5 are always m (see Examples #1 and #2).
- In Zone #2, m's proposals must gradually move towards f to satisfy^{19/100}

Example #5: The Gridlock Zone

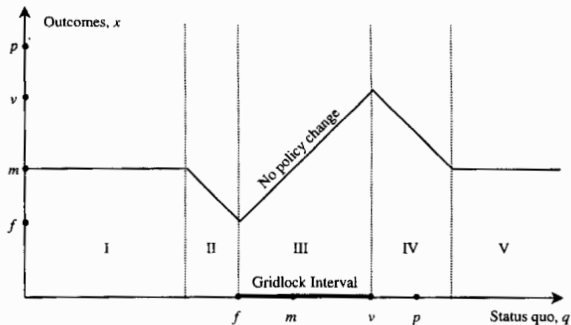Now we're in trouble. Imagine q is in Zone #3. m has two options:

Figure 2.7
Equilibrium policies in the pivotal politics theory

- If q is to the left of m, then m wants to move it right.

Example #5: The Gridlock Zone

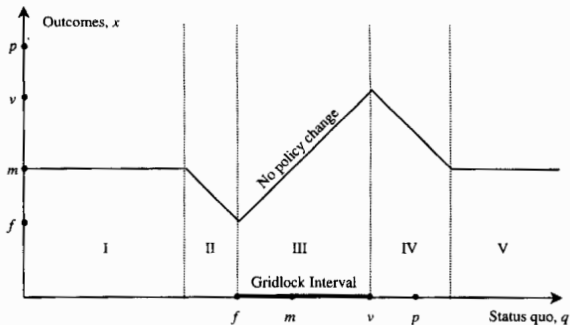Now we're in trouble. Imagine q is in Zone #3. m has two options:

Figure 2.7
Equilibrium policies in the pivotal politics theory

- If q is to the left of m, then m wants to move it right.
- Nope! f and everybody to their left prefers q to any proposal moving q to the right. f will filibuster.

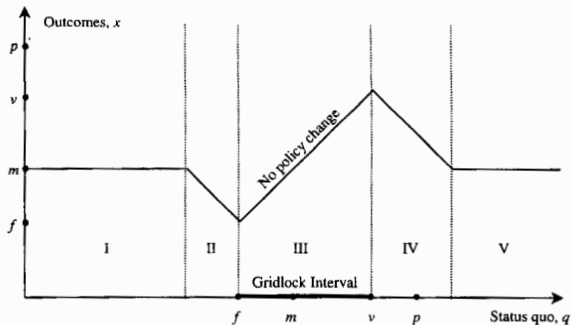Figure 2.7
Equilibrium policies in the pivotal politics theory

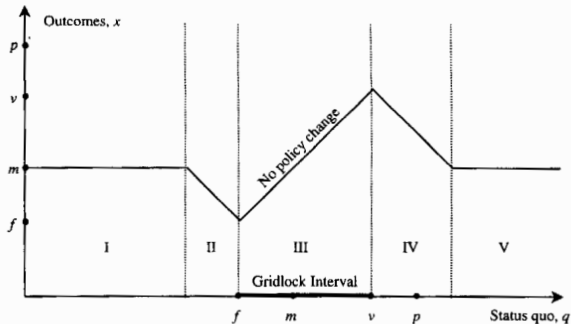- If q is to the right of m, then m wants to move it left.

Figure 2.7
Equilibrium policies in the pivotal politics theory

- If q is to the right of m, then m wants to move it left.
- Nope! v and everybody to their right (including the president) prefers q to any proposal moving q to the left. President will veto and there aren't enough votes to override it (because v agrees).
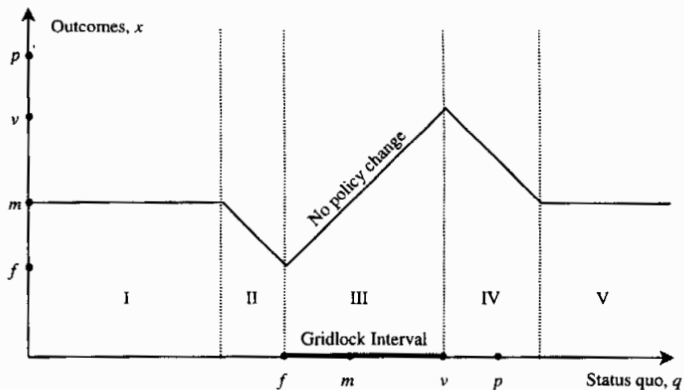
Figure 2.7
Equilibrium policies in the pivotal politics theory

Review: The Big Picture

- Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics aims to explain two patterns:

Review: The Big Picture

- Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics aims to explain two patterns:
  1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (meaning generally larger than 50% + 1).
  2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**.

- Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics aims to explain two patterns:
  1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (meaning generally larger than 50% + 1).
  2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**.
- His answer:

Review: The Big Picture

- Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics aims to explain two patterns:
    1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (meaning generally larger than 50% + 1).
    2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**.
- His answer:
    1. **Coalitions** are usually greater than minimum-majority sized because of supermajoritarian procedures (mainly filibuster and veto).
    2. **Gridlock** occurs regularly because of supermajoritarian procedures in Congress, moderate status quo policies, and heterogeneous preferences.

Review: The Big Picture

- Krehbiel's Pivotal Politics aims to explain two patterns:
  1. Legislative **coalitions** (i.e. who wins the vote) are often larger than necessary (meaning generally larger than 50% + 1).
  2. **Gridlock** (inability to pass legislation) happens *often* **but not always**.
- His answer:
  1. **Coalitions** are usually greater than minimum-majority sized because of supermajoritarian procedures (mainly filibuster and veto).
  2. **Gridlock** occurs regularly because of supermajoritarian procedures in Congress, moderate status quo policies, and heterogeneous preferences.
- He uses the model described above to do this, which is based on important assumptions, including:
  - Single-peaked preferences
  - No parties