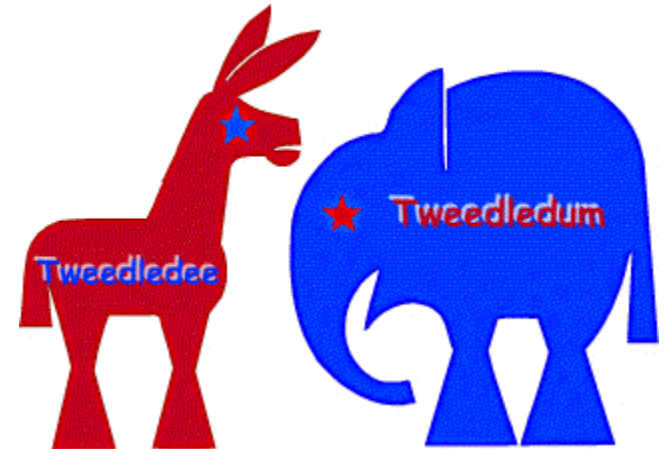


Political Parties and Congressional Leadership

17.251/252

Fall 2008



Lecture Organization

- Natural history of political parties in the U.S.
- Why do parties exist?
 - What explains varying levels of party cohesion
 - When are leaders “strong” and when are they “weak”?

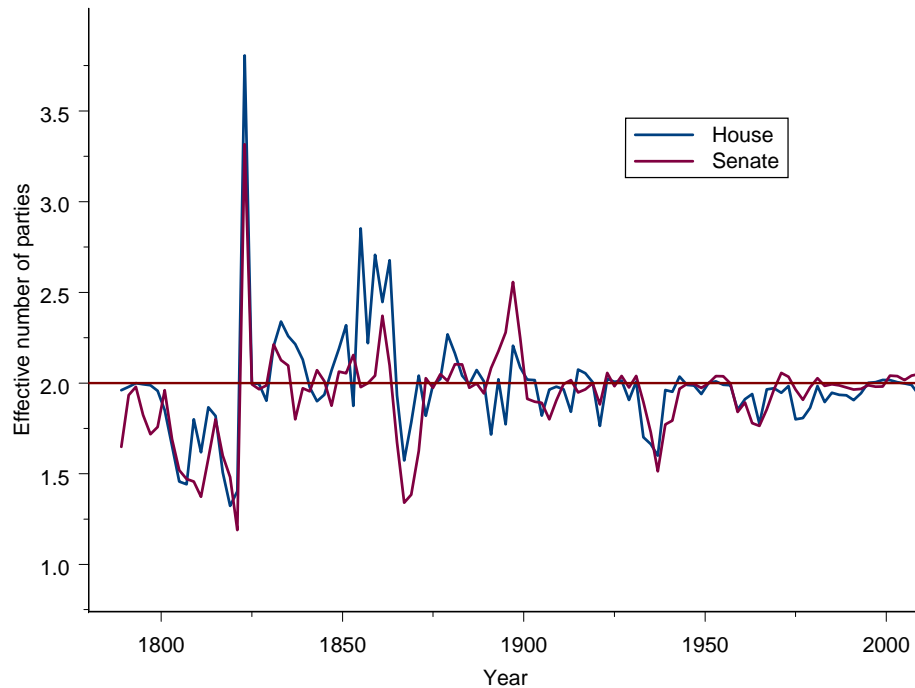
Interesting (and Important) Historical Aside

- Party membership originally arose in the chamber and spread to the electoral arena
- Now, party membership arises in the electoral arena and spreads to the institution

Natural History of Political Parties

| Period | Party of the “right” | Party of the “left” |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| 1789—1823 (1 st —17 th Cong.) | Federalists | Republicans |
| 1823—1837 (18 th —24 th Cong.) | Multifactionalism based on old party labels & new individual alliances | |
| 1837—1857 (25 th —34 th Cong.) | Whigs | Democrats |
| 1857—present (35 th —108 th Cong.) | Republicans | Democrats |

Effective number of parties



110th/111th Cong:

Senate

48/56D

49/42R

2/2I

House

233/255D

205/175R

/5 Und.

Parties Change in Their Cohesiveness

Congress

The Movie



[Pool and Rosenthal movie](#)

Current Organization of Congress

- Party responsibilities
 - Scheduling business
 - Distributing leadership among and within committees
 - Promoting attendance and spreading information
 - Facilitate bargaining
- Resources that parties possess
 - Knowledge of rules
 - Access to tangible benefits

Some notes about historical development

- Party control
 - Until roughly the Civil War, parties don't "organize" the chambers
 - After the Civil War, they do (first the House, then the Senate)
 - Even so, party control of committees is a 20th century phenomenon
- Over time formal party positions have proliferated and institutionalized
 - Institutionalization mostly a 20th century phenomenon

Current Org Chart

| Position | House | Senate |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Constitutional head | Speaker | V.P./ President <i>pro tempore</i> |
| Floor leader | Majority/ minority leader | Majority/ minority leader |
| Whip | Majority/ minority whip | Majority/ minority whip |
| Caucus | Chair, v.chair, secy. | Chair, secy. |
| Policy committees | | |
| Committees on committees | | |
| Campaign committees | | |

110th House

| Position | Rep | Dem |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Constitutional head | | Speaker Nancy Pelosi (CA) |
| Floor leader | Maj. Leader John Boehner (OH) | Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (MD) |
| Whip | Maj. Whip Roy Blunt (MO) [Eric Cantor (VA) in 111th] Chief Deputy Whip Roy Blunt (MO) | Min. Whip James Clyburn (SC) Chief Deputy Whips G. K. Butterfield (NC), Joe Crowley (NY), Diana DeGette (CO), Ed Pastor (AZ), Jan Schakowsky (IL), John Tanner (TN), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL), Maxine Waters (CA) |
| Caucus/Conference | Chairman: Adam Putnam (FL) [Mike Pence (IN)] Vice ch: Kay Granger (TX) [Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA) in 111th] Sec'y: John Carter (TX) [? For 111th] | Chairman: Rahm Emanuel (IL) [Larson in 111th] Vice ch: John Larson (CT) [Xavier Becerra (CA) in 111th] |
| Committees on committees | Steering Committee Chair: Speaker | Steering Committee Co-Chairs: Rosa DeLauro (CT), George Miller (CA) |
| Campaign committees | Nat. Rep. Campaign Comm. Chair: Tom Cole (OK) [Pete Sessions (TX) in 111th] | Dem. Cong'l Campaign Comm. Chair: Chris Van Hollen (MD) |

Senate

| Position | Rep | Dem |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Constitutional head | Vice President: Dick Cheney | [V.P.: Joe Biden in 111th] President <i>pro tempore</i>: Robert Byrd (WV) [Ted Kennedy (MA) in 111th] |
| Floor leader | Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (KY) | Majority leader Harry Reid (NV) |
| Whip | Republican Whip Jon Kyl (AZ) | Asst maj. leader: Richard Durbin (IL) |
| Caucus | Conf. chair: Lamar Alexander (TN) | Chair: Dem. Leader V. Chair: Charles Schumer (NY) Secretary: Patty Murray (WA) |
| Policy committees | Chair: Kay Bailey Hutchinson (TX) | Chair: Bryon Dorgan (ND) |
| Committees on committees | Policy Committee ch: | Steering & Outreach Comm. Ch: Debbie Stabenow (MI) |
| Campaign committees | NRSC Ch: John Ensign (NV) [John Cornyn (TX) in 111th] | DSCC Ch: Charles Schumer (NY) [? For 111th Cong.] |

Note some things about historical development

- Regional/ideological balancing
- Emergence of career ladder

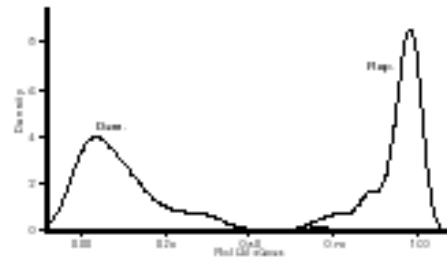
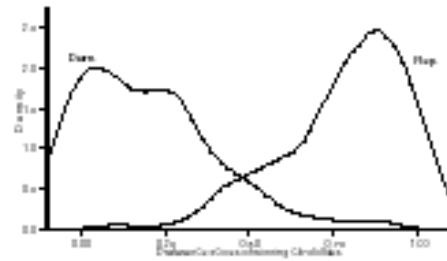
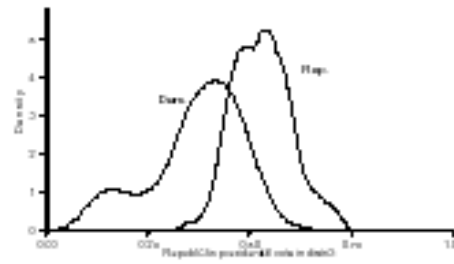
Why Do Parties Exist?

- Anomalous position of parties in spatial models of legislatures
 - The chamber median should rule. Party is just a label
 - Who governs? Do leaders “boss” followers (common view) or do followers terrorize leaders?

Some perspectives on this question

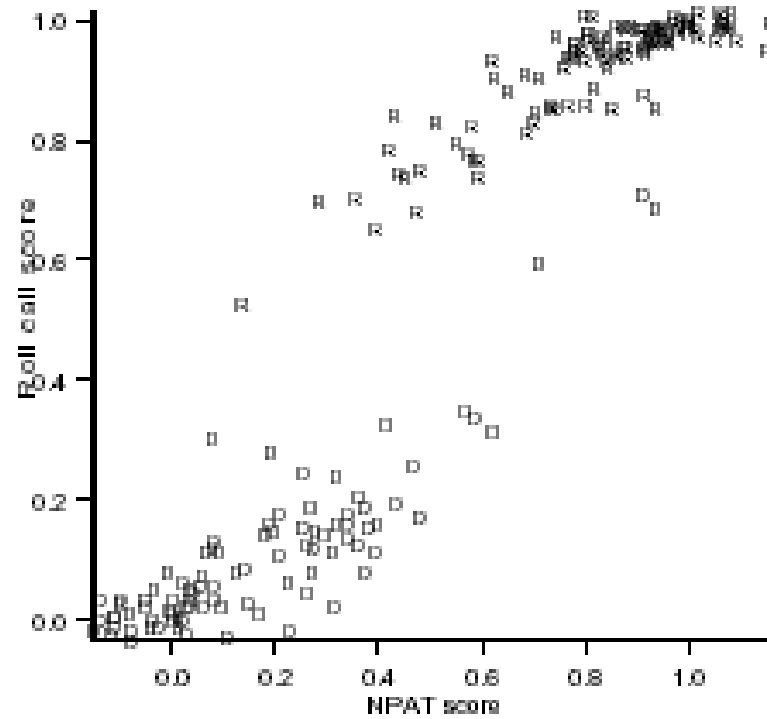
- Rohde: Conditional party government
- Krehbiel: Where's the party?
 - MIT3: Rules and distinguishing policy
- Calvert: Parties coordinate
- Aldrich, Cox, and McCubbins: Parties help members get elected

Evidence that Parties Push Members Apart



Source: Ansolabehere,
Snyder, and Stewart
(2001)

Further Evidence



Rohde & “Conditional Party Government”

- Observation: parties more prevalent
- Claim: “strong” parties don’t “boss”
- Democratic party
 - Greater heterogeneity over time
 - Greater “power” given party organs
 - This reform was “conditional party government” (pp. 31—34): greater power if agreement
- Republican party
 - Defensive to Democratic resurgence
 - Events since 1991 only confirm the point