Origins and Development of Congress

17.251

Spring 2016
Congressional Historical Eras and Electoral Discontinuities

A dawning new era?
# 1789-1812 (Experimental system)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral dynamics</th>
<th>Organizational dynamics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During critical period</td>
<td>During cong’l system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite electorate (Table 3.2)</td>
<td>-Floor supreme -“previous q” developed in the House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feds vs. Reps.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timeline:**
- 1800-1812: Experimental
- 1812-1820: Democritizing
- 1820-1860: Civil War
- 1860-1865: Textbook
- 1865-1912: Post-Reform
- 1912-1964: Post-1965
1812-20
(Transition from Experimental to Antebellum systems)

- Electorate expands
- Federalists discredited
- Slavery now an issue
- Napoleonic Wars end
1820-60
(Antebellum system)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral dynamics</th>
<th>Rules</th>
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<th>Party leadership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Mass electorate</td>
<td>Committees take agenda control</td>
<td>-Standings dominate selects</td>
<td>-Van Buren tries to make Congress a partisan organ, but…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Whigs vs. Dems.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-comm chairs compete w/ Speaker</td>
<td>-Regional divisions complicate Speakership selection (next slide)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Regional divisions complicate Speakership selection (next slide)
- Senate leadership remains weak
Balloting for Speaker

Number of candidates

Year

- Candidates receiving votes
- Candidates receiving 10 or more votes

FIGHTING FOR THE SPEAKERSHIP
THE HOUSE AND THE RISE OF PARTY GOVERNMENT

JEFFERY A. JENKINS
CHARLES STEWART III
Balloting for Clerk

Number of ballots

Year

1780 1800 1820 1840 1860 1880 1900
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cong.</th>
<th>Ballots</th>
<th>Name, State</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Name, State</th>
<th>Largest party</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>John W. Taylor, N.Y.</td>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>Adams</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andrew Stevenson, Va.</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td></td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andrew Stevenson, Va.</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td></td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andrew Stevenson, Va.</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td></td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andrew Stevenson, Va.</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td></td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>John Bell, Tenn.</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>“</td>
<td></td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>James K. Polk. Tenn.</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td></td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>James K. Polk. Tenn.</td>
<td>Dem.</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Robert M.T. Hunter, Va.</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>John White, Ky.</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>John W. Jones, Va.</td>
<td>Dem.</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>John W. Davis, Ind.</td>
<td>Dem.</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Robert C. Winthrop, Mass.</td>
<td>Whig.</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Linn Boyd, Ky.</td>
<td>Dem.</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Linn Boyd, Ky.</td>
<td>Dem.</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Nathaniel Banks, Mass.</td>
<td>Amer.</td>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Effect of the Balance Rule

Stylized House

Slavery

Gov’t Activism

W_H(φ)

Stylized Senate

Slavery

Gov’t Activism

W_S(φ)
The Effect of the Balance Rule

Slavery

Gov't Activism

$W_S(\phi)$

$W_H(\phi)$
1860-1865
(Transition from Antebellum to Civil War System)

- South excluded from national elections
- Party support highly regionalized
1865-1896
(Civil War System)

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<tr>
<td>- Dems. v. Reps.</td>
<td>- “Reed Rules” in the House</td>
<td>- Parties take control of committee rosters</td>
<td>- Party polarization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dem. Strength in the South</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Appr. devolution</td>
<td>- Party “strong”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rep. strength in the North</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Caucus organization in House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Knife-edged partisan margins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Steering committee in the Senate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Diagram showing timelines:
- 1800: Experimental
- 1812-20: Democratizing
- 1850: Civil War
- 1860-65: Civil War
- 1896-1912: TV
- 1900: TV
- 1964-1968: Post-Reform
- 1950: Textbook

Timeline key:
- 1812-20: Democratizing
- 1860-65: Civil War
- 1896-1912: Textbook
- 1964-1968: Post-Reform
- 1950: Textbook
- 1900: Parliament
Ideological divisions

52nd Cong. (1891-1893)

80th Cong. (1947-48)
1896-1912
(Transition from Civil War to Textbook systems)

- Economic dislocations create Progressive/Populist movements
A Word about Senate Elections

• State legislative elections often brought about chaotic balloting
• Stories of corruption in Senate elections led to Progressive calls for reform
• Rise of third parties gave major parties an incentive to create a duopoly of power
• 17th amendment: popular election of senators (1914)
• Still parties become more prominent
The Process

State election (~ Nov.)

Nomination? (~mid-Jan.)

Bicameral balloting (2nd Tuesday of session)

Canvass

Bicameral majority?

Joint ballot

No

Yes

Winner
Counterfactual: What If No Popular Elections?
Counterfactual:
What If Popular Election before 1917?
## 1912-1968
(Textbook system)

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Regional support for parties</td>
<td>Battles over filibuster prominent in the Senate</td>
<td>-Comms. dominate legislating &amp; careers</td>
<td>-Party cohesion diminishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Dems pick up progressives and cities</td>
<td></td>
<td>-consol. in 1946</td>
<td>-party leaders brokers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regional parties

Source: Kenneth Martis, *Historical Atlas of Congressional Parties in the United States Congress*
Regional parties
Rise of careerism: The House

Update of Figure 3.5
Rise of careerism

Update of Figure 3.5
Rise of careerism

Update of Figure 3.5
Update of Figure 3.5
Rise of careerism: The Senate
Senate & House Careerism Compared
1968-1974
(Transition from Textbook to Post-Reform system)

• Anti-war sentiment divorces supporters of strong defense from Dems.
• Civil Rights movement divorces southern Whites from Dems, but reinforces Black affiliation with Dems.
1974-now
(Post-Reform System)

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>-Reps conservative, Dems. Liberal</td>
<td>Floor proceedings open up</td>
<td>-Comms important, but…..</td>
<td>-Parties resurgent -Leaders more assertive (Republicans esp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Regionalism <em>per se</em> deemphasized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Timeline Image]

- Experimental
- Democratizing
- Civil War
- Textbook
- 2016
- Post-Reform
Loss of regionalism in parties

80th Congress
(1947-1948)

114th Congress
(2015-2016)

(Note the color reverse)

Source: Martis atlas

Rise of Party Unity Voting
(Update of Figure 3.4)
Decline of Conservative Coalition
(Update of Figure 3.7)
New Electoral Environment?  
New Organizational Environment?  

• Election  
  – Voters more partisan  
  – Districts more partisan  
  – Party committees play greater role  

• Organization  
  – Party leaders more prominent & partisan  
  – Committee membership more partisan  
    • Chairs  
    • Seats  
    • Link to finance
Congressional Historical Eras and Electoral Discontinuities

Critical periods
- 1800-1812-20
- 1850-1860-65
- 1900-1896-1912

Congressional systems
- Experimental
- Democritizing
- Civil War
- Textbook
- New Partisan

A dawning new era?