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Soft Money Reform in Multiple Dimensions

Michael J. Malbin, *The University at Albany, SUNY*

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) will have profound effects on parties and other political organizations. We can be sure of that, but we cannot be sure just what those effects will be. A law's effects may not match common public expectations, or some of the arguments of its most ardent supporters. Nevertheless, to paraphrase Yogi Berra, you can learn alot about what a law says by just reading it.

If we want to look at the bill in a sophisticated way, though, we may first have to get rid of some simplistic ideas. Much of the debate over the BCRA was phrased in terms of whether the law would make parties weaker or stronger. Opponents claimed that with 40% of the national parties' money coming from soft money in 2000, the parties would lose power to non-party advocacy groups. The bill's supporters said that ending the soft money system paradoxically could make parties stronger. They noted that the parties raised more hard money in 1996 and 2000 than they had in 1992. Moreover, most of the new soft money went straight to television consultants, to be spent in already competitive races, to pay for ads that often did not even mention a candidate's party. The system made the parties beholden to big givers, they said, while doing nothing to build up party organizations, grassroots activity or the role of party in voters' decisions.

The debate about party strength seemed a bit one-dimensional at times. The problem, as V.O. Key taught us some time ago, is that parties need to be considered along several dimensions at once. Key wrote about the party-in-the electorate, party-in-government, and party-as-organization. To understand the BCRA, we have to take this point further. Each of Key's elements itself must be seen as being multi-faceted in its own right.

Parties mirror the diversity of the institutions and people for whom they act. Congressional campaign committees do not share the same interests as national committees. State and national committees take on different characters when their parties control the White House or governorship than when they are in opposition. Within each legislative chamber, leaders of the same caucus may have more than one institutional base of support for their campaign activities. The leaders want to pursue their caucus's collective interests, which are not the same as the interests of their fellow partisans in the other legislative body or in the executive branch. But the leaders are not only thinking about collective interests: they also may want to position themselves for their next leadership contest.

In other words, to build on a well-known metaphor from Morton Grodzins' classic work on federalism, the parties are more like a national-state-local marble cake than they are like a layer cake. Indeed, the cake's batter has been so mixed up with separation-of-powers jealousies and leadership competition that Grodzin's marble swirls may be just the beginning of a full metaphorical depiction. Whatever the appropriate image, it makes no sense at all to think about the party system along a one-dimensional line, or even in the two-dimensional planes of the century old novel, *Flatland*. The new law will not act on "parties" *per se*. Different provisions will act on different party organizations in different ways.

National-State-Local

The BCRA says that all contributions to the national political party committees will be governed by contribution limits and must come from permitted sources (not corporations or labor unions.) To plug an obvious loophole, the law also says that state and local party committees must use federally regulated money to pay for "federal election activity."

But what is a "federal election activity?" Among other things, the law describes registration and get-out-the-vote as federal election

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activities even if the state party mentions no federal candidate in its efforts. This was too sweeping for many Democrats, so Congress added an amendment sponsored by Sen. Carl Levin and Rep. Sander Levin to permit state and local party committees to accept soft money contributions up to $10,000 per donor, for registration and get-out-the-vote, as long as state law allows. Some restrictions were placed on this "Levin Amendment" money, but the openings are at lease as impressive. For example, there is no limit on the number of "Levin Amendment" committees: it would be perfectly legal for hundreds of committees to spring up in a single competitive district, each with its own $10,000 limit. Moreover, even though a federal candidate may not solicit soft money contributions for these committees directly, the law explicitly permits a Member to speak or be the featured guest at a fundraising event.

From this provision alone, therefore, it is clear that the BCRA will strengthen some party activities while weakening others. For example, it looks as if the ban on soft money, combined with the Levin Amendment, could lead parties away from television advertising and toward local grassroots mobilization. However, first impressions may not tell the whole story.

Laws do not enforce themselves. They are enforced by agencies, in this case the Federal Election Commission (FEC), which has to interpret the BCRA. On June 20, the FEC voted 4-2 to exempt any registration or get-out-the-vote activity conducted by state parties from the definition of federal election activity if the activities mention only state and local candidates. This was a puzzling amendment, because the law explicitly seems to require the opposite. If the regulation stands, it could shift some potential registration and get-out-the-vote focus away from local "Levin Amendment" committees, with its $10,000 limits, back to state level party committees, which could conceivably have no contribution limits at all for these activities.

This is small potatoes compared to what the Supreme Court could do to the BCRA if it defines the Act's scope in a restrictive way, as it has in the past. The original "issue ad" loophole opened because of the Supreme Court's decision in *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976). The 1974 law defined a "contribution" or "expenditure" as being something of value given or spent "for the purpose of influencing the outcome" of an election. The *Buckley* Court said this was too vague. The 1974 law's underlying contribution limits, as well as its reporting requirements for independent expenditures, were acceptable. However, if people were going to be penalized for breaching the law, then they must—in an arena affecting free speech—be given clear notice of what would constitute a violation. To meet this need, and to avoid finding the law to be unconstitutionally vague, the Court said that it would assume the statute meant only to cover messages that use words of "express advocacy", such as "vote for" or "vote against." In other words, "express advocacy" was a statutory construction, apparently reasonable at the time, and not a constitutional requirement. As with any statutory construction, Congress was free to replace the vague definitions with clear ones.

The BCRA's new definition of "electioneering" for *non-party* activities tries to address this need with a "bright line" test that stands a good chance of passing the Court's scrutiny. The BCRA defines a *non-party* "electioneering" message as a broadcast advertisement, costing above a specified amount, using the name or likeness of a candidate, within a specified time period. With these elements, the sponsors were responding self-consciously to the "express advocacy" sections in *Buckley*. For some reason, however, Congress chose not to use the same test when it defined "federal election activity" by state parties. Instead, it included any communication that would "promote, support, attack or oppose" a federal candidate. This definition reopens the constitutional debate over vagueness.

Some FEC commissioners—thinking the phrase "promote, attack, support or oppose" to be too vague to be constitutional — tried to redefine the statute by reintroducing something akin to an "express advocacy" test. This effort failed, leaving the BCRA's statutory language unmodified. The "promote, attack, support or oppose" provision will now be challenged in Court. There, the supporters of the BCRA will argue, with some justification, that new language is clearer than the language of 1974, and that it does give adequate guidance to state parties. They may also argue that the Court gave Congress more leeway in *Buckley* to regulate parties than non-party groups.

However, one cannot be sure whether the Court will agree that the new language is clear enough. If not, one can readily imagine a court-imposed definition that could gut the ban on soft money. Thus, it is conceivable—perhaps not likely, but conceivable— that the BCRA, after all of the court tests and interpretations, could end up with some modest constraints on *non-party* issue ads, but no real change (other than a change of address from national to state parties) for political party soft money.

The Multiple Dimensions of Party in Government

Even more complex than the BCRA's effects on party organizations will be its effects on the relationships between party leaders and followers in office—the "party-in-government." When the chairs of the GOP campaign committees criticized the BCRA as weakening parties, they pointed out that the committees they run would have less money to spend. But the party's electoral arm is too fluid today to be confined to the campaign committees.

For example, there are now more than one hundred "section 527" non-party political committees associated with sitting members of Congress. These "527" committees, like the better-known Members' PACs, are often written about as vehicles that Members use to serve personal goals. This is partly true. However, some of these committees are also among the increasingly loose set of quasi-party vehicles that leaders create to pursue collective party or policy goals. Under the BCRA, these "527" committees may have to rein in their broadcast electioneering, but can still spend whatever they want on ground war campaigns in competitive districts. In addition, some factional organizations, such as the Progressive Donor Network or New Democratic Network, or issue groups, may pick up functions that the formal party committees have to give up. To repeat an important point: the new law explicitly says that Members of Congress, including party leaders, may be featured speakers at these organizations' fundraising events. By implication, that means there will be many ways for leaders to play important roles in behalf of their parties' candidates.

But the leaders will not be alone. The new law also sets some important decentralizing forces in motion. *Any* member may develop personal relationships with nonprofit issue groups. The leaders' positional power may decrease; personal power may be spread more widely.

Of course, the leadership could still control the congressional campaign committees, but this too has its ambiguities. For example, everyone knows that Republican Members of Congress were

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pressured by their leaders to contribute to the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC). Less well known is the effect of this effort. During calendar year 2000, *more than 15%* of the NRCC's hard money contributions were transfers from the principal campaign committees of GOP Members of Congress. In 2004, when the contribution limit goes from $1,000 to $2,000, one would have to expect safe members, many of whom will be committee or subcommittee leaders, to raise and transfer even more money to the campaign committees.

At the same time as individual Members may be more important to the party committee's hard money fundraising, the Members may also develop their own mutually supportive relationships with non-profit organizations, as well as with local Levin Amendment party committees based in their home districts. That is, they will have new ways to become mini-power brokers in their own right. Party leadership power, centralized in the 1980's and 1990's, could become more diffuse. (These decentralizing forces will be counterbalanced, of course, by the continued importance of party to agenda control within the chamber.)

Where the balance of these forces will come to rest cannot yet be predicted. Whether the BCRA will empower, or create problems for, state and local parties will depend upon legal and political decisions yet to be made. These same factors will affect the complex set of relationships we describe as the party-in-government. But even with all these uncertainties, we can be sure of one conclusion: the new path the BCRA will carve out for the parties will be anything but simple or linear.

Michael J. Malbin is Executive Director of The Campaign Finance Institute (CFI) in Washington D.C. and Professor of Political Science at The University of Albany, SUNY.

POP WORKSHOP

Wednesday, August 28, 9:30 a.m.

SC-5 Research on US House Elections:
Moving Away from the Candidate Centered Framework
and the Incorporation of District Composition

POP EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Friday, August 30, 11:30 a.m.

POP BUSINESS MEETING

Friday, August 30, 12:30 p.m.

APSA RECEPTION

CAMPAIGN FINANCE RESEARCH GROUP

Sponsored by The Campaign Finance Institute
Friday, August 30, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Sheraton - Boston Hotel.

THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE INSTITUTE

The Campaign Finance Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit institute, affiliated with the George Washington University, that is organized to engage in a program of objective research and education, empanel task forces and make recommendations in the field of campaign finance. It is supported by generous grants from the Joyce Foundation, Smith Richardson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

CFI's research and its analysis of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA), are available at the Institute's website,www.CFInst.org. The website also includes a portal with ready access to federal and state disclosure sites, as well as a Clearinghouse of recent political science papers and articles by others. Three of CFI's current activities may be particularly relevant for readers of VOX POP. In July, CFI announced that it had established a Blue Ribbon Task Force on Financing Presidential Nominations, with John Green as Project Manager, to consider how to address the mismatch between the frontloaded delegate selection system and the rules of campaign finance. In December, CFI will hold a post-election conference and publish a book, to be co-edited by Robin Kolodny and Michael Malbin, in which a number of political scientists use their research on recent elections to speculate about the impact of the BCRA. Finally, Michael Malbin, Clyde Wilcox, Mark Rozell, Rob Boatright and Richard Skinner have been engaged in a multi-election project on interest groups in which we look at group leaders' decisions about their political strategies and tactics before and after the BCRA.

POP WEBSITE

Greetings Members!

Our committee has been charged with the duty of maintaining and improving the POP website (located at http://www.apsanet.org/~pop). To that goal, we aspire to make this site more functional and offer more content that POP members will desire to view and use in the future. Our first priority is to get recent issues of VOX POP up onto the site, which should be accomplished sometime soon. On top of that, we also are seeking to extend the amount of content available on our site by posting relevant information on our APSA conference section and its panels and short courses, recent conference papers, an archive of syllabi, and the like. If you have recent and relevant syllabi, papers that you would like to post, or ideas regarding content you think our membership would like to see on our website (this is after all, your site . . .), please e-mail me at ksaun@niu.edu. With your help, contributions, and ideas, we can continue to build upon work that has been done in the past to make this site even better and better over time.

Cheers,

Kyle Saunders (ksaun@niu.edu)
Chair, Web Development Committee and POP Webmaster

FROM HEADQUARTERS

Dear POP Members:

Planning continues for the APSA meeting in Boston (www.apsanet.org/mtgs). John Gerring has put together an excellent set of panels and poster displays for POP. The collection is excellent, but small. It is small because we, as a section, have frankly not done a very good job attending the panels we've had in the past. APSA takes attendance into account when allocating panels for future meetings, so it is in our best interest to attend the panels. I know that everyone has a lot of other things going on at the meeting other than attending panels, but please do plan to set aside some time to attend a panel or two. Do you have family members in the area? Bring 'em along? Have you been thinking about sponsoring a school field trip? How about an anthropological visit to the land of political scientists? If the public good of increasing POP's panel allotment doesn't entice you, just think how happy Professor Gerring will be with a nice turnout at the panels. What other reason could you need?

POP is sponsoring a short course on the Wednesday prior to the meeting. Jeff Stonecash has organized this session. The session is titled "Research on U.S. House Elections: Moving Away from the Candidate Centered Framework and the Incorporation of District Composition." You can get more information by reading the article in this issue of VOX POP (on page 7).

POP's business meeting will be at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, August 30th. I urge you to bring to my attention any issues you would like discussed at the business meeting or at the executive council meeting prior to that. I am particularly interested in any thoughts you might have about new things POP might do to provide service for its members. If there are worthy projects or services in other sections that you think might be something for POP to consider, please let me know. Graduate students: what services might POP provide that would be valuable to you? You can contact me at my e-mail address: coleman@polisci.wisc.edu.

Aside from reviewing POP news, business, and finances, the business meeting will be the time we present POP's awards and the nominations for new section officers.

Award Winners:

Leon Epstein Award, honoring a book published in the last two calendar years that makes an outstanding contribution to research and scholarship on political organizations and parties: **Scott James**, *Presidents, Parties, and the Regulatory State* (Cambridge, 2000).

Jack Walker Award, honoring an article published in the last two calendar years that makes an outstanding contribution to research and scholarship on political organizations and parties: **Stephen Ansolabehere, James M. Snyder, Jr., and Charles Stewart III,** "The Effects of Party and Preferences on Congressional Roll-Call Voting." *Legislative Studies Quarterly 36* (November 2001) 533-72.

Samuel Eldersveld Award, honoring a scholar whose lifetime professional work has made an outstanding contribution to the field: **Walter Dean Burnham**, University of Texas at Austin.

Emerging Scholar Award, honoring a scholar who has received his or her Ph.D. within the last five years and whose career to date demonstrates unusual promise: **Jacob Hacker**, Harvard Society of Fellows.

Nominees for the Executive Council:

Pradheep Chhibber, University of California; Jonathan Bernstein, University of Texas at San Antonio; David Lowery, University of North Carolina; and Marie Hojnacki, Pennsylvania State University.

Outgoing members of the Council are:

Burdett A. Loomis; William G. Mayer; Susan E. Scarrow; and Thomas Poguntke. All POP members owe a debt of gratitude for the time and service these councilors devoted to POP.

I am pleased to announce that Beth Leech (Rutgers) has agreed to serve as POP's program chair for the 2003 annual meeting. The call for papers should be appearing in an issue of PS soon.

We will also be nominating a new Secretary-Treasurer to replace Diana Dwyre. Diane has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to POP for many years. She has kept the records and has the institutional memory of what we have done, haven't done, have done but have been told not to do, and haven't done but have been told to do. The job of the Chair would be impossible without her services. Please send her your thanks and appreciation for the outstanding job she has done and the incomparable dedication to POP she has displayed (ddwyre@csuchico.edu).

The last bit of POP news for you is that Kyle Saunders is POP's new webmaster and the chair of the Web Development Committee. Please visit the website (www.apsanet.org/~pop) and take a look around. As always, suggestions for improvements and additions are welcome. You can contact Kyle at ksaun@niu.edu.

I also have some news from APSA to pass along. APSA is seeking information about political science faculty who won campus-wide awards for excellence in teaching during the 2001-02 academic year. These faculty will be recognized and honored for their achievements in *PS: Political Science and Politics* and during the 2002 APSA Annual Meeting in Boston. Complete the form at www.apsanet.org/teach/2002awards.cfm to let APSA know about f aculty in your department who won awards from the department or university for teaching.

APSA has also created a Task Force on Graduate Education in Political Science. Members of the committee are: Christopher Achen, University of Michigan; Cristina Beltran, Haverford College; Cathy J. Cohen, University of Chicago; David Collier, University of California, Berkeley, chair; Edie Goldenberg, University of Michigan; Robert Keohane, Duke University; Kristen Monroe, University of California, Irvine; Rogers Smith, University of Pennsylvania; and Michael Wallerstein, Northwestern University. The Task Force will be studying graduate education and training and will prepare a formal report for the August 2003 APSA Council meeting in Philadelphia. For more information on the Council's charge to the Task Force, you can visit www.apsanet.org/new/taskforce.cfm.

As many of you know, APSA has created a new journal that will feature articles of broad interest across subfields and that synthesize and extend a body of significant research or important conceptual and

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FROM HEADQUARTERS

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theoretical developments. Jennifer Hochschild will be the inaugural editor of Perspectives on Politics. We've made it clear to APSA that there is only one POP, so they tell us they will use Perspectives as the shorthand label for the journal. Professor Hochschild has named five Associate Editors: Henry Brady, University of California; William Galston, University of Maryland; Atul Kohli, Princeton University; Paula McClain, Duke University; and Jack Snyder, Columbia University.

I look forward to seeing you in Boston!

Regards,

John
Chair, POP

POP Panels and Posters for APSA, 2002

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28TH:

9:30 a.m. — SC-5 Research on U.S. House Elections: Moving Away from the Candidate Centered Framework and the Incorporation of District Composition.

Presenters: Jeffrey M. Stonecash, Syracuse University and Burdett A. Loomis, University of Kansas

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29TH:

10:45 a.m. — 35-6 Author Meets Critics: Paul Frymer's Uneasy Alliances

Chair: Lester Kenyatta Spence, Washington University
Participants: David Plotke, New School for Social Research
Carol M. Swain, Vanderbilt University
Michael A. Jones-Correa, Cornell University
Discussant: Paul Frymer, University of California, San Diego

1:30 p.m. — 35-1 Identify Yourself: Post-Communist Ethnic Politics

Chair: Lowell W. Barrington, Marquette University
Authors: "Non-competitive Assimilation or Competitive Non-assimilation? The Political Economy of School Choice in Latvia." Stephen Bloom, University of California, Los Angeles.
"Recentralization Under Reform: The Transformation of Property Rights, Personnel, and Budgets in China's Bureaucracies, 1998-2001." Andrew Mertha, Washington University.
"Political Participation: The Effects of Context and Ethnicity." Cynthia S. Kaplan, University of California, Santa Barbara; Henry E. Brady, University of California, Berkeley.
"This Pistol Is for Killing Russians . . . But Yuri and I Are Good Friends: The Effects of Interethnic Contact on Ethnic Identity in Latvia." Daniel Kronenfeld, University of California, Berkeley.
"The Demise of Nationalism in Post-Communist Countries." Patrice McMahon, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.
Discussant: John Ishiyama, Truman State University
Co-Discussant: Lowell W. Barrington, Marquette University

3:30 p.m. — 35-7 Parties and Interest Groups in American History

Chair: David B. Robertson, University of Missouri, St. Louis
Authors: "Economic Development, Legal Desegregation, and Partisan Change in Post-War American South." Byron E. Shafer, University of Wisconsin, Richard G.C. Johnston, University of British Columbia.
"Parties in the American West, 1890-1920." Amy Bridges, University of California, San Diego.
"The Lost Years: Interest Group Formation, Attrition, and Influence Over Time." Daniel J. Tichenor, Rutgers University, Richard A. Harris, Rutgers University.
Discussants: Andrew J. Polsky, CUNY, Hunter College, David B. Robertson, University of Missouri, St. Louis

3:30 p.m. — POSTERS

"Sincere and Strategic Donations: Patterns of Interest Group Contributors." Thomas L. Brunell, Binghamton University.
"The Impact of Campaign Contributors on Legislative Behavior: A Meta-Analysis." Douglas D. Roscoe, Central Michigan University.
"The Scope of Democratic Governance in Interest Group Associations." Maryann Barakso, American University.
"Where Do 'Important Laws' Come From? Relating Mayhew's Dataset to Party Platforms." Stephen Borelli.
"A Simultaneous Equation Modeling of Party Strength in the US House of Representatives, 1887-1971." Quan Li, Pennsylvania State University.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30TH:

11:30 p.m — Executive Council
12:30 p.m. — Business Meeting
1:30 p.m. — 35-2 Parties and Party Leadership in Mexico and the U.S.

Chair: Erik Schickler, University of California Berkeley
Authors: "Gubernatorial Candidate Selection in Mexico's PRI, 1988-2000." Alejandro Poire, ITAM.
"Legislators, Policy Preferences, and the Selection of Party Leaders." Robert Van Houweling, Stanford University.
"What's In a Name? National Parties, State Parties, and the Struggle for Brand Name Autonomy in the U.S. South." Robert Mickey, Harvard University.

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Discussants: Erick Schickler, University of California, Berkeley, John H. Aldrich, Duke University

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31st:

8:45 a.m. — 35-5 Legislative Candidates and Campaign Contributors

Chair: Victoria A. Farrar-Myers, University of Texas, Arlington

Authors: "The Effect of Member-to-Member Campaign Contributions on Parties in the House." Justin Buchler, University of California, Berkeley.

"Playing Both Sides: PAC Contributions and Representation." Jennifer A. Steen, Boston College, Ian Shapiro, Yale University.

"Members of Congress as Contributors, When Every Race Counts." Michael J. Malbin, SUNY, University at Albany, Anne H. Bedlington, Campaign Finance Institute.

"Contributors and Women's PACs: Motivations and Characteristics." Christine L. Day, University of New Orleans, Charles D. Hadley, University of New Orleans.

Discussants: Victoria A. Farrar-Myers, University of Texas, Arlington, Eric S. Heberlig, University of North Carolina, Charlotte.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31st:

8:45 a.m. — 35-8 "Interest Groups and Lobbying: Comparing the U.S. Case With Other Western Democracies"

Chair: Clive S. Thomas, University of Alaska

Authors: "Comparative Lobbying Practices Washington, London, Brussels." Conor McGrath, University of Ulster.

"Similar But Not the Same: E.U. and U.S. Lobbying, a Comparison of Literature and Practice." Irina Michalowitz, European Doctoral College, Strasborg.

"Personal and Professional Relationships Between Lobbyists and Legislators: Individual and Interest-System Differences in the States." Adam J. Newmark, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

"Exit or Voice? Interest Group Tactics in Environmental Policy" Suzanne Robbins, Morehead State University.

"Environmental Groups and the New Administration" Vanessa Ruget, University of Virginia.

"Friend or Foe? A Reconsideration of Counteractive Lobbying." Lisa A. Solowiej, SUNY, Binghamton University.

"Member goals, Legislative Decisionmaking, and PAC influence." Christopher Witko, University of\ North Carolina.

1:30 p.m. — Party Institutionalization in Varied Political Settings

Chair: Nicolas van de Walle, Michigan State University

Authors: "Party System Institutionalization and Democracy in Asia and Africa." Michelle Kuenzi, Michigan State University, Gina M. Lambright, Michigan State University, Misa Nishikawa, Ball State University.

"Decentralization and Political Parties." Dawn Brancati, Columbia University.

"Explaining Party System Collapse." David J. Myers, Penn State University, Henry A. Dietz, University of Texas, Austin.

"The Implications of Party System Decline for Representation: The Case of Venezuela." Jana Morgan Kelly, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

3:30 p.m. — 35-3 Donkeys vs. Elephants: Party Competition across the American Polity

Chair: Leon D. Epstein, University of Wisconsin

Authors: "An Examination of Patterns in Party Competition Across Constituency Levels." John M. Bruce, University of Mississippi, Robert D. Brown, University of Mississippi.

"Trading Places: The Two Parties in the Electorate, 1980-2000." Jeff Smith, Washington University.

"Partisan Politics by Other Means: Explaining Bipartisanship in American Political History." Nicole Mellow, University of Texas-Austin.

"Variations in the Influences on Roll Call Voting in State Legislatures: Examining Voting in Different Issue Areas." Shannon Jenkins, Central Michigan University.

Discussant: Howard L. Reiter, University of Connecticut

PLEASE ATTEND POP PANELS!

The APSA allocates Panels to POP based on attendance.

POP Short-Course, APSA, 2002
Research on U.S. House Elections: Moving Away from the Candidate-Centered Framework and the Implications of Incorporating District Composition

Jeffrey M. Stonecash, Syracuse University
Burdette Loomis, University of Kansas

For the last 25 years House elections have been analyzed using a candidate-centered framework. The presumption is that incumbents are able to improve their vote proportions by using campaign funds and the perks of office. Outcomes are seen as largely a product of matters candidates can control, with the nature of the district r eceiving considerably less attention. This focus on candidates has coincided with the decline of partisan identification, and the rise of ticket splitting.

While this framework was consuming our attention, a significant secular realignment at the individual and district level has occurred, partisan identification has increased, and ticket splitting has declined. These changes cast considerable doubt on the continuing utility of the candidate-centered view, and suggest new lines of research.

This workshop will revolve around three topics, with most of the attention devoted to the last matter. The first two parts provide the basis for arguing for moving to new topics.

First, a brief overview of the evidence of realignment at the district level will be presented. The review will summarize: the changing demographic distribution of House districts (particularly regarding the presence of nonwhites); the growing relationship of district demographic traits (percent non-white, median family income, and percent urban) to partisan outcomes; and, the increasing relationship of presidential voting to demographic traits and to voting for House candidates.

Second, the implications of realignment for the candidate-centered view will be discussed. Most districts are safe for one party and generally do not change party hands. With most districts predisposed to elect one party, discussing politics as candidate-centered distorts reality. Further, it is difficult to explain the growing party polarization in Congress if elections and politics are candidate-centered. Finally, one of the central tenets of this view, that incumbents have increased their vote proportion over the last 50 years, is not substantiated by the record.

Third, if realignment has occurred, we need to understand how it occurred, what maintains it, and what creates deviations from the over-all pattern.

- Given that realignment has occurred over a long time period, how did such changes occur? How did conservative Republican candidates emerge in the South, and how did liberal Democratic candidates emerge in the North? When and how were cross-pressured members replaced? Who replaced them and how did the replacements behave?

- If electoral voting is creating a stronger relationship of population traits to voting for presidential and House candidates, it presumably is because there are more uniform, national images of the parties. How did these images develop and how coherent are the images of the parties currently? Does this suggest that electoral alignments within most districts are similar, such that the distribution of partisans and the composition of districts largely "determines" outcomes? If demographics plan a dominant role, when and how does campaign money play a role?

- While there is a general relationship between district demographics and partisan outcomes, two situations within this general pattern are of particular interest. First, most districts with a substantial percentage of non-whites elect Democrats, and most less urban, predominantly white districts elect Republicans. While that pattern is clear, it is also the case that Republicans win some of the former set of districts, and Democrats win some of the latter districts. How do these candidates win in an era in which there are no cross-pressured members? Do they create within district electoral alignments divergent from the general, national pattern, and, if so, how do they do this? Are they able to win election because supporters of opposition candidates are not registered or do not vote? Second, How do members in the middle-range districts (moderate median family income, diverse racial composition) win election? Are they also able to create electoral alignments divergent from the national pattern?

SPECIAL INTERESTS

International Scholars Will Focus on Sectarian, Ethnic and Cultural Conflict Fulbright School Program

Thirty top academics and professionals from around the world will be selected to work together to identify the causes and possible solutions for sectarian, ethnic and cultural conflict during the second year of the Fulbright New Century Scholars Program.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the New Century Scholars Program seeks to engage experts of different nationalities in collaborative research on important transnational issues. One-third of the scholars are from the U.S. and the rest are from other countries.

The theme for the 2002-03 scholarship effort is "Addressing Sectarian, Ethnic and Cultural Conflict Within and Across National Borders." The program is open to academics and professionals from a variety of disciplines, and the deadline for applying is October 1. Proposals may be in any area of social sciences, history, public administration, public policy, law, media and comparative religious studies. Interdisciplinary proposals are especially welcomed.

The New Century Scholars Program is administered by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES), a private organization based in Washington, D.C. For information, consult the CIES website at http://www.cies.org/cies/NCS/text_NCS.htm or contact Dr. Micaela Iovine, senior program officer. Phone: 202-686-6253, e-mail: miovine@ccies.iie.org.

New Fulbright Program Offers Short-Term Grants

The new Fulbright Senior Specialists Program, which offers short-term grants of two to six weeks for U.S. Faculty and professionals, is proving very popular. Some 120 grantees have gone to 52 countries and another 680 have been approved to be on a roster and eligible to be requested by overseas higher education institutions that need their assistance.

Applications are being accepted in the following fields:

- Anthropology and Archaeology
- Business Administration
- Communications & Journalism
- Economics
- Education
- Environmental Science
- Information Technology
- Law
- Library Science
- Political Science
- Public Administration
- Sociology and Social Work
- U.S. Studies (i.e., art, art history, dance, history, literature)

Academics and professionals apply to be on a roster of Senior Specialists Scholars who can be matched with requests coming to CIES through overseas Fulbright Commission or U.S. Embassies. There is a rolling deadline and applicants can apply on-line through the CIES Webstie (www.cies.org). Their applications are reviewed and vetted on-line by peer review committees in their disciplines.

For additional information on the Senior Specialists Program, write or call the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, 3007 Tilden Street, N.W. — Suite 5L, Washington, D.C. 20008, phone: 202-686-4026, e-mail: fulspec@cies.iie.org.

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