Origins and Development of Congress

17.251
Spring 2016
Congressional Historical Eras and Electoral Discontinuities

**Critical periods**
- 1812-20
- 1860-65
- 1896-1912
- 1964-1968

**Congressional systems**
- Experimental
- Democritizing
- Civil War
- Textbook
- Post-Reform

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>Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Feds vs. Reps.</td>
<td>- Floor supreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ”previous q” developed in the House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ad hoc select comms. dominate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Loose formal organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Timeline](image)

- 1812-20
- 1860-65
- 1896-1912
- 1964-1968
- 2016

- Experimental
- Democritizing
- Civil War
- Textbook
- Post-Reform
1812-20
(Transition from Experimental to Antebellum systems)

- Electorate expands
- Federalists discredited
- Slavery now an issue
- Napoleonic Wars end


## 1820-60

(Ante bellum system)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral dynamics</th>
<th>Rules</th>
<th>Comms.</th>
<th>Party leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mass electorate</td>
<td>Committees take agenda control</td>
<td>-Standingdominate 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>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Senate leadership remains weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Regional divisions complicate Speakership selection (next slide)

---

**Timeline:**

- 1800-1812: Experimental
- 1812-1820: Democritizing
- 1820-1850: Antebellum
- 1850-1865: Civil War
- 1865-1896: Textbook
- 1896-1912: Post-Reform
- 1912-1964: Textbook
- 1964-1968: Post-Reform
- 1968-2016: Textbook
Balloting for Speaker

Candidates receiving votes
Candidates receiving 10 or more votes
Balloting for Clerk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cong.</th>
<th>Ballots</th>
<th>Name, State</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>John W. Taylor, NY</td>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>Adams</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>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>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>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>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>James K. Polk, Tenn.</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Jackson</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>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>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>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>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>John W. Davis, IN</td>
<td>Dem.</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Robert C. Winthrop, MA</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Howell Cobb, GA</td>
<td>Dem.</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Linn Boyd, KY</td>
<td>Dem.</td>
<td>Democrat</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>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Nathaniel Banks, MA</td>
<td>Amer.</td>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Effect of the Balance Rule

Stylized House

W_H(\phi)

Gov't Activism

Stylized Senate

W_S(\phi)

Gov't Activism
The Effect of the Balance Rule

Gov't Activism

Slavery

$W_S(\phi)$

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

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

<table>
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<th>Organizational dynamics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electoral dynamics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dems. v. Reps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dem. Strength in the South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rep. strength in the North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Knife-edged partisan margins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timeline:**
- 1800: Experimental
- 1812-20: Democritizing
- 1860-65: Civil War
- 1896-1912
- 1964-1968
- 2016

**Textbook Period:** 1850-1900
Ideological divisions

52\textsuperscript{nd} Cong.
(1891-1893)

80\textsuperscript{th} 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

Winner

Yes

No

Yes

No
% joint ballot elections for Senate

Joint ballots --- all

Year term begins

Pct.

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

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

### Historical Events

- **1800**
  - Experimental

- **1812-20**
  - Democritizing

- **1850**
  - Civil War

- **1860-65**
  - Post-Reform

- **1896-1912**
  - Textbook

- **1964-1968**
  - Post-Reform
Regional parties

Courtesy of Kenneth C. Martis. Used with permission.
Regional parties

Courtesy of Kenneth C. Martis. Used with permission.
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
Rise of careerism

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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational dynamics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electoral dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Reps conservative, Dems. Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Regionalism <em>per se</em> deemphasized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Loss of regionalism in parties

80th Congress
(1947-1948)

114th Congress
(2015-2016)

(Note the color reverse)

Source: Historical Atlas of Congressional Parties in the United States Congress by Kenneth Martis

Composition of the House by district (2014 election results). Light red are pick-ups by Republicans, light blue are pick-ups by Democrats.

Density

0 1 2 3 4

Liberal-Conservative

Density

-1 -.5 0 .5 1

Liberal-conservative

40th Congress (1867-1869)

50th Congress (1887-1889)

60th Congress (1907-1909)

70th Congress (1927-1929)

80th Congress (1947-1949)

90th Congress (1967-1969)

100th Congress (1987-1989)

110th Congress (2007-2009)
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
- 2016

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

A dawning new era?
17.251 Congress and the American Political System I
Fall 2016

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