

VOX POP Newsletter

of Political Organizations and Parties

An official section of the American Political Science Association
Produced by the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron

THEME – PARTY STRENGTH

The International Comparative Political Parties Project: 1980 to 2000

Kenneth Janda
Northwestern University

Twenty years ago, at 1980 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, The Free Press announced the publication of my book: *Political Parties: A Cross-National Survey*.

Although priced at \$100 in 1980 (“the first of the hundred-dollar books,” my friends quipped). The Free Press sold out its printing of 1,000 copies and printed more copies a year or two later. By the mid-1980s, it was out of stock and out of print.

Even before the book was published, the quantitative data produced by the ICPP Project — with NSF funds — was publicly available. In 1979, the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research released the data as Study 7534 and published its accompanying codebook, *Comparative Political Parties Data 1950-1962*. Numerous scholars and students subsequently obtained and used the data files from the ICPSR, but the data codes cannot be thoroughly understood apart from the parent reference book. Unfortunately, I could not help the several persons—mainly from abroad (foreign sales exceeded domestic sales 593 to 548)—who wrote asking how to obtain a copy.

In 1997, I wrote the Simon and Schuster Company, which had absorbed The Free Press, requesting assignment of its copyright. The publisher obliged, and I began plans to republish its content on the Internet. This article announces the book’s rebirth in electronic form, outlines an outgrowth of the original ICPP Project, and lays out a plan for the future.

The main objective of the **ICPP Project 2000 Initiative** is to code all major parties in our original 53 countries entering the 21st century on all relevant variables in

the project’s conceptual framework. Having such data available would provide parties’ scholars with comparable data on party politics extending over a half a century.

Unlike the original ICPP Project, which relied on teams of students consulting library material to code parties on the variables, the 2000 Initiative will invite scholars across the world to code the parties on variables via the Internet. This part of the project is still in design stages, but it will involve filling out forms linked to a vast database. The information in the forms would be subject to data quality checks, and the database itself would be dynamic, changing as new information was submitted.

I hope the complete design by the end of 2000-2001 academic year, and to make it operational by the summer of 2001. If you have thoughts about the design that you wish to share with me, please write. My address is k-janda@northwestern.edu.

In the meantime, check in occasionally at <http://janda.org/icpp> for further developments.

THEME: PARTY STRENGTH

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Chair: Jeffrey M. Berry, Tufts University
Secretary-Treasurer: Diana Dwyre, California State University, Chico
Program Chair: Anne Costain, University of Colorado, Boulder
VOX POP Editor: John Green, The University of Akron

Executive Council: Mary DeLorse Coleman, Jackson State University; Beth Leech, Rutgers University; Marian Lief Palley, University of Delaware; Laura Woliver, University of South Carolina; Richard Hall, University of Michigan; Burdett Loomis, University of Kansas; William Mayer, Northeastern University; Thomas Poguntke, University of Mannheim; Susan Scarrow, University of Houston.

FROM HEADQUARTERS

Dear Pop Members:

The 2000 APSA conference was a great success for the Political Organizations and Parties section. Our workshop and panels celebrating the 50th anniversary of "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System" were a centerpiece of the entire conference. Our other panels on a range of topics went well too.

Since not all of you could attend our business meeting I want to report on a few decisions that were made there and at the Executive Council meeting that preceded it. Diana Dwyre was reelected as our Secretary-Treasurer and Rick Hall, Burdette Loomis, Bill Mayer, Thomas Poguntke, and Susan Scarrow were elected to our Executive Council. Earlier I appointed Anne Costain as program chair for next year's APSA. All of us in POP are indebted to Paul Allen Beck for coordinating the 2000 conference program, and to John Green and Paul Herrnson for their leadership of the Responsible Parties program. Thanks also go to our outgoing Executive Council members — John Coleman, David Farrell, Bob Harmel, and Anna Harvey, for their loyal service to us over the last two years.

Plans are now being made for the workshop at the 2001 conference in San Francisco. POP Council member Beth Leech's proposal for a workshop on elite interviewing was enthusiastically endorsed by the entire Executive Council and Leech agreed to take the lead in developing the program we'll be sponsoring. She'll offer more details in a future issue of VOXPOP. For the first time we'll award a limited number of scholarships to doctoral candidates to attend the workshop. (The grants will cover the cost of one extra night at one of the convention hotels.) Application procedures will be detailed later.

The highlight of this year's business meeting was, as always, the presentation of our annual awards. The award committees' tributes are reprinted elsewhere in this issue, but let me discuss the two awards that were not given this year. This was the first year of our Political Organizations and Parties/Party Politics award for the best paper on a POP-sponsored panel at the previous APSA conference. The committee that reviewed the papers were impressed by all of the nominees but in the end felt that none of the papers were distinguished enough to merit an award.

The Leon Epstein best book prize was not awarded either. This was the first year the award was to be given for a book published in the last two years. Previously, it had been given to a classic in the field. We had been led to understand that the APSA would notify publishers of this newly defined award but for reasons we still don't understand, that didn't happen. In the end, the Epstein committee felt that it had an inadequate number of nominations and believed it would be fairer to postpone the award. At next year's convention, two best book awards will be handed out, one for books published in 1998-1999 and once for books published in 1999-2000.

See you in San Francisco!
Jeff Berry, Chair

Political Organization and Parties Organized Section of the American Political Science Association Annual Business Meeting Washington, DC, Friday, September 1, 2000

The section meeting was called to order by POP Chairman, Jeffrey Berry. The following transpired:

Professor Berry made a number of announcements:

- Thanks to the officers of POP, John Green, editor of *Vox Pop*, and Diana Dwyre, POP Secretary-Treasurer.
- Thanks to Paul Beck for an outstanding job as the 2000 Program chair.
- Noted that there are now many more papers than there is room for at the APSA meeting, thus there are many rejections. APSA hopes to resolve this problem by 2003 by expanding the number of panels.
- Announced that Ann Costain will be the Program Chair for the 2001 meeting.

Professor Berry then called for the approval of the minutes of last year's business meeting. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Treasurer's Report (July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000)

Secretary-Treasurer, Diana Dwyre then presented the Treasurer's Report. Professor Dwyre reported that POP's financial situation is healthy (total funds = \$10,733.98) and noted the increase in membership from 527 in 1999 to 617 in 2000. She also noted that there are funds available to spend on programs or projects that the organization may want to pursue.

FUNDS ON HAND JULY 1, 1999 **\$9,640.06**

REVENUE FOR PERIOD

APSA Section dues	\$1,055.00
Interest Income	34.45
Other revenue: mailing labels	<u>224.06</u>

TOTAL REVENUE **1,313.51** **\$1,313.51**

EXPENDITURES*

1999 Awards	(219.59)
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TOTAL EXPENDITURES **(219.59)** **\$(219.59)**

NET ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD \$1,093.92

FUNDS ON HAND JUNE 30, 2000** **\$10,733.98**

* Copying, printing, postage, telephone, travel and staff provided gratis by the California State University, Chico, Tufts University and the Bliss Institute at The University of Akron.

** Bank of America funds on deposit divided between nonprofit checking (\$7,606.87) and nonprofit savings (\$3,127.11)

FROM HEADQUARTERS

(Continued from page 2)

MEMBERSHIP

<u>Year</u>	<u>POP Membership</u>
2000	617
1999	527
1998	565
1997	505
1996	519
1995	589
1994	571

Chairman Berry noted that in the future, we will find out who joins POP and send them a letter of introduction and a POP jacket.

Presentation of Awards: See awards announcement on pg.3-4

Professor Berry then noted that the POP/Party Politics Best Paper Award would not be given this year. The committee was appointed and solicited nominations (receiving only a few), but no papers merited the award.

The Leon Epstein Best Book Award was also not given this year. The committee did not receive any books, hence there were no nominations made. Next year, two Epstein awards will be given: one for 1998-1999; and one for 1999-2000.

Professor Berry noted that over 100 people attended the Wednesday Workshop on the 50th Anniversary of the "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System" APSA Report. Many thanks to Paul Herrnson and John Green for organizing such an outstanding event and other Anniversary panels throughout the meeting.

Paul Herrnson and John Green reported that the papers given at the Wednesday Workshop and at the other Anniversary panels will be on the Internet, and they will keep POP posted on the details.

Chairman Berry invited ideas for the 2001 POP Wednesday Workshop/Short Course. He announced that one proposal had been submitted by Beth Leech for a workshop on elite interviewing skills.

Professor Berry then thanked John Coleman for his excellent work on the POP Website. John Coleman presented ideas for the site: archive papers that win awards; provide links to data sets; put archived editions of *Vox Pop* on the site and/or commentaries on timely subjects such as campaign finance reform; and more POP organizational information. Another issue is to decide where the POP Website will be located, at APSA or HNET. There is no cost for either host. Coleman noted that he has appointed a committee to work on these issues.

Election of Officers:

Professor Coleman then presented the nominations for POP Secretary-Treasurer and Council:

Secretary-Treasurer	Diana Dwyre
Executive Council	
(Two-year terms):	Burdett A. Loomis William G. Mayer Susan E. Scarrow Thomas Poguntke
(One-year term):	Richard L. Hall

All nominations passed unanimously.

Professor Berry adjourned the meeting at 1:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Dwyre,
POP Secretary-Treasurer

2000 POP AWARDS

Kenneth Janda, winner of the Samuel Eldersveld Award for a lifetime of distinguished scholarly and professional contributions to the field. Presented by Marjorie Hershey.

Pradeep Chhibber and Ken W. Kollman, winners of the Jack Walker Award for an article of unusual importance and significance to the field for "Party Aggregation and the Number of Parties in India and the United States" *American Political Science Review* (vol. 92, June 1998). Presented by Anna Harvey.

Kevin Hula, winner of the Emerging Scholars Award. Presented by Marian Lief.

(Continued on page 4)

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

Ray C. Bliss

Institute of Applied Politics

CALL FOR PAPERS

The State of the Parties: 2000 & Beyond
October 2001 - Akron, Ohio

The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at The University of Akron will sponsor a conference on American political parties in October 2001, in Akron, Ohio. The purpose of the conference is to assess changes in political parties resulting from the 2000 election. The conference will bring together scholars and practitioners for this purpose, and the best papers will be included in the 4th edition of *The State of the Parties*, scheduled to be published by Rowman & Littlefield in 2002.

Scholars interested in presenting a paper on any aspect of contemporary American party politics should submit a one-page proposal by February 2, 2001, to:

John Green

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FROM HEADQUARTERS

(Continued from page 3)

POP Award Presentations

Samuel Eldersveld Award

It's a special pleasure for me to recognize Kenneth Janda because he is a distinguished alumnus of my own Department of Political Science at Indiana University. Since joining the faculty at Northwestern, Ken Janda has been responsible for significant and intellectually generous advances in the body of research on parties.

His 1980 data book *Political Parties: A Cross-National Survey*, building on a conceptual framework published in 1970, brought not just quantitative but also genuinely cross-national analysis to the study of party organizations. This remarkable project offered data on 147 political parties in 53 countries, covering 100 variables. The data production lasted more than 10 years.

Now, some decades later, Ken is putting the comparative parties book and the data files on the Web, where students and scholars all over the world will have instant access to them. The data will eventually total \$2,500 files. The distance from Hollerith cards to the World Wide Web is a measure of Ken's role as a pioneer in the development and dissemination of computer applications in research and teaching. He has developed award-winning software for use by others: The CROSSTABS program for American Government and the IDEALog instructional program.

In addition to his vital role in generating data, Ken has also made an important impact through his own theoretical and analytical research on political parties. Ken has authored or coauthored four books and two dozen articles and book chapters about the comparative study of parties, including the chapter on parties in the APSA's second State of the Discipline volume.

Most recently he has focused his research interests on political parties in central European and Russian politics. He has devoted a great deal of time to helping other scholars, including students and young colleagues in Europe. In addition to sharing his data, he has been, as Harmel states, "eager to spend vast amounts of time reading and commenting on others' work, usually developing and sharing helpful insights along the way. Ken is certainly recognized not only in the United States, but also in Europe, as one of the most influential American scholars on political parties."

In assessing his work, Ken has compared himself with the man who spent decades carving a statue of the warrior Crazy Horse into the side of a mountain near Mt. Rushmore, and 25 years of work was able to complete only the outstretched arm and pointing finger. At the risk of making a painfully obvious analogy, we would suggest that Ken Janda's research, data dissemination, and teaching about political parties have helped point the way to a more productive, systematic, comparative understanding of party politics.

Robert Harmel, Texas A&M University

Jack Walker Award

Chhibber, Pradeep, and Ken W. Kollman. 1998. "Party Aggregation and the Number of Parties in India and the United States." *American Political Science Review* 92:2, 329-342.

In this impressive paper, Chhibber and Kollman study the important but poorly understood relationship between government policy and the organization of political parties in the federal systems. They argue that candidates' incentives to associate with national versus local parties are directly linked to the extent that national governments centralize or decentralize power. When national governments centralize their power and make policies that affect local areas, candidates for national officer have greater incentives to associate with national parties. When national governments devolve power to local governments, candidates can associate with local parties. Chhibber and Kollman test these hypotheses with data from India and the United States, and find strong support for their prediction that the number of national parties will decline with the degree of fiscal centralization.

This research has important implications for the study of party systems. It implies that while traditional approaches help us understand the relationship between electoral systems and party competition at the district level, they fail to describe how parties are organized and complete at the national level. By providing the missing link - a theory of party aggregation - Chhibber and Kollman's approach goes a long way towards improving our understanding of how parties operate in a federal system, and how changes in government policies affect the nature of party organization at both the national and local levels.

Anna Harvey, New York University

Emerging Scholar Award

It is a great honor to announce the Emerging Scholar Award for POP. It is a special honor to be able to name Kevin Hula as the winner of this award. Kevin Hula's book, *Lobbying Together - Interest Group Coalitions in Legislative Politics* was published in 1999 by Georgetown University Press. Hula has made a major contribution to the literature on interest group coalitions and their effects on politics and policy in contemporary American politics. He is looking at the present and the escalating role of interest groups in American politics and policy making.

In this book, Hula uses three case studies to show the similarities and differences in coalition building behavior among business groups, civil rights groups and education groups. He looks at the formation, maintenance and strategies of interest group coalitions. He is concerned with coalition building strategies and the effects of these strategies on politics and policy. He asks two major questions. The first question is "whether groups that are active in a number of different policy domains are more likely to be active coalition members than groups that participate in only one domain." His answer, based on the data from his case studies, is "yes." The other question he asks is "whether organizations' ideological and party preferences affect their participation in political coalitions." His results differ for liberal and conservative groups. Hula considers these questions as he asks: "What do these coalitions mean for American political system?" I will not give you his answer to the question because that would be akin to give people the answer to "who done it," before the book was read, and this book is definitely worth reading.

Marian Lief Palley,
University of Delaware

**CHALLENGES TO POLITICAL
PARTIES IN EUROPE SINCE 1870:
A Multidisciplinary Retrospective**

A Graduate Student Workshop
Minda de Gunzburg Center
for European Studies,
Harvard University
April 20-22, 2001

At the end of the twentieth century, the European political arena can be characterized by political innovation and change. New actors have emerged across the political spectrum, from the greens on the left to neo-nationalists on the right. In some countries these parties have profited solely from protest votes; in others they have garnered enough electoral strength to gain seats in the legislature, and even in coalition governments. Parties face structural challenges due to a changing institutional system at the domestic level and the exigencies of European Union at the supranational. The traditional role of grassroots activism seems eclipsed by the growth of high-tech campaigning. As the fundamental link between individual constituent and representative is increasingly called into question, voting rates have dropped across Europe. Some observers even fear for the survival of party-based democracy.

Yet sudden transformations in the European political fabric are nothing new. From the last decades of the nineteenth century, the party political landscape was fundamentally changed by the arrival of mass suffrage, new kinds of parties and new forms of party organization. Socialists, clericals, and right-wing populists riding waves of resurgent nationalism established themselves across the continent after 1870. Then, after the watershed of the First World War, Communist and Fascist parties were able to challenge the very legitimacy of the European parliamentary system. In the wake of the Second World War, the party political spectrum was again reshaped, if not as violently, by the emergency of powerful Democratic Parties and varying constellations of environmentalists, regionalists and territorialist xenophobes.

This conference will bring together papers from different disciplines which examine the changes and constants in the continental party system since the late-nineteenth century and suggest original approaches for examining European parties and party politics. Graduate students will have an opportunity to discuss their work with student and faculty participants.

Paper applications addressing the following themes are particularly encouraged:

- The emergence and institutionalization of non-traditional political parties or movements, e.g. the radical-nationalist right or special interest organizations (class-based, regionally-based or environmental parties).
- The relationship of parties to civil society (including interest groups, constituencies, voting and other forms of representation).
- Internal challenges to party organization, including: mass-elite relationship, membership, resources, etc.
- International and supranational challenges to the party system.
- The relationship of parties to the state, the economy or democracy.
- Political culture and party ideologies.
- Campaigns and elections.

Participation in the workshop is competitive and by application and will be limited to advanced standing doctoral students in North America and Europe. To be considered, proposals should clearly relate research on Europe or European countries to broader theoretical debates in the fields of anthropology, history, political science or sociology and should focus on the modern period. Submitted applications will include six copies of 1) a curriculum vitae, 2) a three-page summary of dissertation research and 3) a one-page paper proposal. Complete applications must be received by December 15, 2000. Accepted papers will be due on March 15, 2001 for pre-circulation. Please send your application materials to Lisa Eschenbach, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University, 27 Kirkland Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, 617.495.4303 x231, Imeschen@fas.harvard.edu. Travel and accommodations for participants will be provided by the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University.

The workshop is organized by Eric Kurlander and Bonnie Meguid and advised by Professors David Blackburn, Torben Iversen, and Cindy Skach.

SCHOLARLY PRECINCTS:

RETHINKING PARTY STRENGTH IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

An Application of the Responsible Party Government Literature

*R. Lawrence Butler,
University of Richmond*

Fifty years have passed since the American Political Science Association's Committee on Political Parties issued its landmark report *Toward a More Responsible Party System*. Unfortunately, the literature spawned by this report has mostly gathered dust in recent decades. Many scholars of American political parties see it as irrelevant to a constitutional system of separated powers with checks and balances. Moreover, research questions have changed from normative ones to positive ones as has occurred in so many parts of the discipline. We no longer ask whether responsible parties would lead to a more representative form of government. Instead, we ask what causes parties to be relatively strong and whether we can demonstrate that parties affect the behavior of legislators.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the APSA report, this article looks to the responsible party government literature for assistance in addressing some of the current questions regarding the strength of legislative parties. It begins with a summary of the tools currently used to measure party strength in the House of Representatives and some of the problems inherent in them. Next, it draws upon the responsible party government literature for a new theoretical approach to this issue. Finally, it describes a new indicator of party strength, the Majority Party Strength Index, that resolves some of the intuitive weaknesses of current measures.

Measuring the Strength of Legislative Parties

The period from 1964-1966 was a time of great legislative success for the Democratic Party. In the wake of a martyred President and the landslide election of his chosen successor, the Congress passed Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program. This would seem to be the prototype for a strong party congress. The President ran on an ambitious platform and his party leaders passed it through the House and Senate. Yet, according to most measures, the 89th congress from 1965-1967 was part of a weak party era. In fact, indicators consistently place the 89th in the middle or in the bottom half of all post-war congresses with respect to party strength. How can this be?

The traditional measure of party strength has been the Party Voting Score (PVS). This measure calculates the percentage of roll call votes on which a majority of one party opposed a majority of the other. In short, it measures how often the two party delegations in the House disagreed with each other in a given congress. The measure suggests that party strength declined steadily from the early part of the 20th century until 1970; it then began a rather steep increase, culminating in scores

in the 1990s as high as those at the turn of the century.¹ The Rice Index of party unity parallels the trend line of the PVS.² More recent methods by Aldrich, Berger and Rohde stem from Rohde's work on conditional party government.³ Rohde concluded that the rank-and-file members in the House allowed party leaders to become stronger after 1974 because of the increasing ideological homogeneity and ideological distinctiveness of the two parties. The research of Aldrich et. al. led to the development of the Conditional Party Government index, which combines four separate measures of ideological homogeneity and distinctiveness. This measure was designed as an indicator of conditional party government, not as a general measure of party strength. It is thus tied to a specific congressional era and could easily misinterpret party strength. For example, the Cannon and Reed years. Nonetheless, the trend in this index roughly parallels that of the Party Voting Score.

All of these indices measure partisanship and party unity more than they do the strength of the parties. For a high Party Voting Score to occur the two parties must oppose each other. Consequently, a change in strategy by the minority party has the same impact as a change by the majority party. Assume, for example, that the majority party is highly unified and dominates the chamber. If the minority party adopts a "go along to get along" strategy, working with the majority to gain as many crumbs from the table as possible, the Party Voting Score would be relatively low due to the lack of partisanship. This change in strategy by the minority party makes it appear that the majority party is not in control of the chamber if we use the Party Voting Score as a measure of party strength. In part, this explains why traditional measures identify the 89th congress as one with weak parties. Now suppose that both parties are severely divided with one party being 60/40 liberal and the other being 60/40 conservative. Most votes would have the majority of one party opposing the majority of the other, yet this could hardly be a situation we would wish to grant the label of "strong parties." Thus the Party Voting Score is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for party strength.

Applying the Responsible Party Government Literature

Because they were advocates as well as scholars, advocates of responsible party government presented a detailed outline of the goals of such a system. They argued that responsible parties would develop a policy platform for the election and would vote together to enact it if granted majority status. This would improve the representativeness of government because voters would select from a clear set of alternatives, the platform selected by the voters would be enacted into law, and voters would know who to hold responsible for the positive or negative results of government policies. The thread that ties all this together is "outcome certainty." It is the one essential element that creates greater representativeness from a responsible party system.

The measures of party strength identified earlier rely on partisanship and party unity as the basis for party strength. This is understandable given that the best examples of responsible parties are found in Europe where party unity is demanded and the two parties generally oppose each other. Yet, partisanship and party unity are not necessary and sufficient conditions for outcome certainty. The two cases described above demonstrate the case against the Party Voting Score. What about the Rice and Conditional Party Government indices? Rice has a high score when the majority party is highly unified; the CPG adds the further condition that it be ideologically distinct from the minority party. In general, these would seem to be sufficient conditions for outcome certainty given that virtually all majority party members would vote together, thus ensuring victory on any given roll call vote. However, consider the case of the very narrow majority. If the majority party has only a handful more members than does the minority party, and the two are ideologically distinct, then the majority party could lose a large proportion of roll call votes while still maintaining near unanimity. Thus, in this one narrow instance, a high Rice or CPG index may not be a sufficient condition for outcome certainty.

The case against a high Rice or Conditional Party Government score being a necessary condition is a more general one. Victory on a roll call vote does not require near unanimity, it merely requires that the preferred choice of the majority party receive more votes than does the alternative. If the majority party can round up enough votes from among its members so that the combined force of defectors and all minority party members is insufficient to prevail, then outcome certainty exists. Take the example of the 89th congress in which the Democrats made up 68 percent of all Members of Congress. Suppose that 20 percent of their members, primarily from the South, usually vote with the minority. This would indicate that we have an ideologically heterogeneous majority party and a large overlap between the two parties. The first factor would drive down the Rice index while the two combined would lower the CPG index. Nonetheless, since 80 percent of the 68-percent majority party -- some 54 percent of the chamber -- votes together, the majority party can be certain that its preferred outcome will prevail. Thus, we would have high outcome certainty even with the lowered Rice and CPG indices. This means that a high Rice or CPG score is not a necessary condition for outcome certainty, making them relatively unattractive indicators of party strength.

Outcome certainty will occur when the majority party is sufficiently united on a roll call vote that it provides enough votes to guarantee its preferred outcome will prevail no matter how the minority party members decide to vote. It is not necessary for the majority party to be completely united. Nor does this formulation allow the minority party strategy to determine the extent to which party determines the outcome of the vote. This formulation allow the minority party strategy to determine the extent to which party determines the outcome of the vote. This formulation sets a threshold level of

party unity that defines whether or not outcome certainty exists on a roll call vote. When the majority party exceeds the threshold of party unity for a given vote, we will say that it is engaging in Single Party Legislating. This separates the concept of party strength from that of party unity or partisanship.

To illustrate this argument, let us compare the 89th congress with the 105th congress (1997-99) in which the majority Republicans held only 52 percent of the seats. Suppose that we had identical roll call votes in each of these two congresses. As before, 80 percent of the majority party voted Yea and 20 percent voted Nay. Conversely, 60 percent of the minority party voted Nay and 40 percent voted Yea. Each case would be treated identically by the Party Voting Score and the Rice Index. (The Conditional Party Government Index does not operate at the individual vote level and is thus excluded from this example.) The PVS would count the roll calls in both congresses as being party votes; the Rice Index would count each as having 80 percent unity. Yet, if we think in terms of outcome certainty, the votes in the 89th and 105th congresses are very different. The Democrats in the 89th are unified enough to guarantee victory and are thus acting consistent with a strategy of Single Party Legislating. In the 105th, the loss of 20 percent of all Republicans means that the majority can only be certain that 42 percent of House members will vote Yea. They must rely on minority party votes to win. Thus, the Majority party cannot guarantee victory and is not engaging in Single Party Legislating. We can see that the difference in the size of the majority caucus in the 89th and 105th congresses changes the ability of the majority party to act in a manner consistent with Single Party Legislating. To compare party strength between congresses, we simply calculate an index number that represents the percent of all roll call votes for which the tally is consistent with a strategy of Single Party Legislating. We call this the Majority Party Strength Index (MPS Index).

Preliminary Findings

Using the Majority Party Strength Index to analyze party strength in the House of Representatives has yielded some interesting preliminary results. The historical trendline of party strength using the MPS Index is generally similar to that for the Party Voting Score and the Conditional Party Government index. There are, however, two important differences in the twentieth century that are noteworthy. First of all, the MPS Index marks the rejuvenation of party strength toward the end of the century as having begun in 1959 rather than in 1975 as suggested by the conditional party government literature. This gives heightened emphasis to the formation of the Democratic Study Group and the string of events prior to 1975 that slowly loosened the Southern Democrats' grip on the institutional levers of power. It also resolves the dilemma of the Great Society congress with which we began this article -- the MPS Index spikes upward during the Kennedy-Johnson years. The second difference occurs in recent congresses. The MPS Index shows party strength declining steadily after 1992

(Continued from page 7)

falling to an extremely low level in the current congress. This analysis differs from most measures which show party strength remaining high in recent years. Time will tell if this is a temporary situation or if a more permanent change has occurred.

Although the Majority Party Strength Index generally parallels other indices over the long run, it demonstrates a great deal more variation between congresses. As a result the correlation coefficients between the MPS Index and other measures are fairly low. Fortunately, we can explain over 70 percent of the variance from the MPS Index mean using a simple six-variable model. These variables include institutional and ideological factors that would be well known to party leaders at the beginning of each congress. We therefore conclude that party strength is three parts institutional and only one part personal. Party leaders are quite constrained by institutional factors in deciding whether to engage in Single Party Legislating or whether to seek more bipartisan coalitions. Finally, we find that divided government has a moderating impact on policy outcomes but has no effect on party strength in the House.

This article has reached back fifty years to find out what the responsible party government literature can tell us about our current efforts to define and understand party strength in the House of Representatives. The arguments therein caused us to rethink what we mean by party strength. Rather than basing our measures on partisan-

ship or party unity, the responsible party government leads us to explore the existence of outcome certainty in roll call voting. When we do so, we find that the majority party is strong when it can guarantee victory without any help from the opposition party. We have formulated this concept into a new measure, the Majority Party Strength Index. Too often, we neglect old literatures as we seek the answers to contemporary research questions. Sometimes they can provide the inspiration we need to rethink our assumptions and attack the problem from a different angle.

Notes

¹ David W. Brady, Joseph Cooper and Patricia A. Hurley. "The Decline of Party in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1987-1968." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* IV (1979):381-407.

² Steward A. Rice. *Quantitative Methods in Politics*. New York: Knopf, 1928.

³ John H. Aldrich, Mark M. Berger and David W. Rohde. "The Historical Variability in Conditional Party Government, 1877-1986." Paper presented at the Conference on the History of Congress, Stanford University, January 14-15, 1999. David W. Rohde. *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

R. Lawrence Butler is a Visiting Instructor of Political Science at the University of Richmond.

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