17.20 Introduction to the American Political Process

Recitation: Collective Action and Interest Groups; Electoral Geography and Voting Rights

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Announcements

Announcements and Logistics

- We will distribute the paper prompt this week
- Argument/Analytical Paper: No outside research is needed
- Response paper grading and feedbacks
- Commented copy
- Tips for response paper

Logic of Collective Action

Main Argument

- Large groups have problems coordinating collective actions
- Diverse interests?
- Members have incentive to free-ride
- Individual members are rational actors

Logic of Collective Action: Case Study

- Say we are planning a protest demanding transparency
- Let's assume:
    - Everyone's goals are exactly the same
    - Two actors are rational actors who maximize their own utility (happiness)
    - Organizing a protest can be time-consuming and risky.
    - Base utility for each actor = 2; Benefit of organizing the protest = 4; Cost if one person do eveything = 6; Cost if both actors participate = 2

Logic of Collective Action: Payoff Matrix

		B	
		Protest	Shirk
A	Protest	4,4	0,6
	Shirk	6,0	2,2

Additional thoughts

- A payoff 4 is better than 2 anyway. Why not protest?
- Each individual was responding to other's strategy
- Choosing "shirk" will always be a better option *given* other's strategy
- This is called the "dominant strategy"

Selective Benefits/Incentive

- One way to solve the collective action problem is to reward workers and/or punish shirkers:
- Can be positive or negative
- Let's create an rule such that shirkers will clean workers' room through out the rest of the year. The cost of room cleaning and the benefit of having a clean dorm are the same: 5

Logic of Collective Action: Payoff Matrix with Selective Incentives

		B	
		Protest	Shirk
A	Protest	4,4	5,1
	Shirk	1,5	2,2

Selective Benefits/Incentive

- One way to solve the collective action problem is to reward workers and/or punish shirkers:
- Can be positive or negative
- Let's create an rule such that shirkers will clean worker's room for the rest of the semester. The cost of room cleaning and the benefit of having a clean dorm are the same: 5
- In practice, designing and implementing selective benefits can be difficult for large groups.
- It might also create some serious problems in the long run...

Issue Salience

How Political Scientists Think about Issue Salience?

- Definition: the relative importance people attach to policy issues

- Media Coverage

> To measure *Salience*, we conducted a Proquest search of *New York Times* articles counting how often the policy was mentioned in some form (details available by

Lax and Philips, 2012

Selective Benefits/Incentive

- Measuring Issue Salience
- Does media converage really capture issue salience among general public?
- Do politicians really care about the voice from the other side?

- Survey Question

What do you think are the most important problems facing this country? (IF MORE THAN ONE PROBLEM:) Of all you've told me (1996-LATER: Of those you've mentioned), what would you say is the single most important problem the country faces?
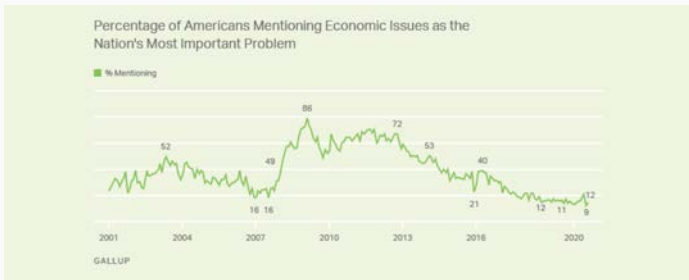
American National Election Studies

- Survey Question

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01. AGRICULTURAL
02. ECONOMICS; BUSINESS; CONSUMER ISSUES
    (includes foreign investment, tariffs/protection of U.S. industries,
    international trade deficit/balance of payments, immigration, interstate
    commerce/transportation;  does not include unemployment [09], defense
    spending [03], foreign [03] or government spending on domestic social
    welfare [09])
03. FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL DEFENSE
    (includes: foreign aid, defense spending, the space program; does not
    include: international trade deficit [02])
04. GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONING
    (not 'the economy' [02])
05. LABOR ISSUES
    (not unemployment [09])
06. NATURAL RESOURCES
07. PUBLIC ORDER
    (includes:  crime, drugs, civil liberties and non racial civil rights,
    women's rights, abortion rights, gun control, family/social/religious/moral
    'decay,' church and state, etc.)
08. RACIAL PROBLEMS
    (note: this primarily includes civil rights issues and racial equality;
    monetary assistance to minorities is primarily found in code 9, however
    there is a slight overlap: see Note 7 for specific codes; note especially
    1988 code 300 and 1966-1972 codes 61-63)
09. SOCIAL WELFARE
    (includes: population, child care, aid to education, the elderly, health
    care, housing, poverty, unemployment, 'welfare' etc.)
97. Other problems (incl. specific campaign issues)
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American National Election Studies

- Survey Question

Gallup

- Survey methods are not without limitations:
    - Question wordings and survey formats vary among different pollsters
    - Issue pool changes overtime, reflecting current events

Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran, 1996

Descriptive Representation vs. Substantive Representation

- Argument: promoting descriptive representation does not always lead to greater substantive representation
- Implication: creating more majority-minority districts may not promote minority interests
- Conditions:
  - African American voters can form a coalition with liberal white voters
  - and/or Liberal white candidates that promote African American interest

Descriptive Representation vs. Substantive Representation: Case A

- 9 legislative districts in state A. Each district elects one state legislator.
- Statewide population: 900 black voters, 990 liberal white voters, and 1,800 conservative white voters (3,690 in total)
- Each district features two candidates: a black candidate and a white conservative candidate
- The newly elected legislators will vote on an Affirmative Action bill

Case A: Voters are Evenly Distributed

100B; 110L; 200C	100B; 110L; 200C	100B; 110L; 200C
100B; 110L; 200C	100B; 110L; 200C	100B; 110L; 200C
100B; 110L; 200C	100B; 110L; 200C	100B; 110L; 200C

Case A: Voters are Evenly Distributed

Black	Black	Black
Black	Black	Black
Black	Black	Black

- Affirmative Action Bill got passed.

Case A: Creating 3 Majority-Minority Districts

45B; 110L; 255C	45B; 110L; 255C	45B; 110L; 255C
220B; 110L; 90C	220B; 110L; 90C	220B; 110L; 90C
45B; 110L; 255C	45B; 110L; 255C	45B; 110L; 255C

Case A: Creating 3 Majority-Minority Districts

White Conservative	White Conservative	White Conservative
Black	Black	Black
White Conservative	White Conservative	White Conservative

- Affirmative Action Bill failed.

Descriptive Representation vs. Substantive Representation: Case B

- 9 legislative districts in state A. Each district elects one state legislator.
- Statewide population: 900 black voters, 990 liberal white voters, and 900 conservative white voters (2,790 in total)
- Each district features three candidates: a black liberal, a white liberal candidate and a white conservative candidate
- The newly elected legislators will vote on an Affirmative Action bill

Case B: Voters are Evenly Distributed

100B; 110L; 100C	100B; 110L; 100C	100B; 110L; 100C
100B; 110L; 100C	100B; 110L; 100C	100B; 110L; 100C
100B; 110L; 100C	100B; 110L; 100C	100B; 110L; 100C

Case B: Voters are Evenly Distributed

White Liberal	White Liberal	White Liberal
White Liberal	White Liberal	White Liberal
White Liberal	White Liberal	White Liberal

- Affirmative Action Bill got passed.

Case B: Creating 3 Majority-Minority Districts

50B; 110L; 150C	50B; 110L; 150C	50B; 110L; 150C
200B; 110L	200B; 110L	200B; 110L
50B; 110L; 150C	50B; 110L; 150C	50B; 110L; 150C

Case B: Creating 3 Majority-Minority Districts

White Conservative	White Conservative	White Conservative
Black	Black	Black
White Conservative	White Conservative	White Conservative

- Affirmative Action Bill failed.

Relevance to Current Events

- Say you were a campaign consultant working for Republicans
- Your state is turning purple: new immigrants, people are getting more educated, and big tech companies are setting offices here...
- Bad news for Presidential elections
- Creating more majority-minority districts in urban areas?

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