From Vanguard to Old Guard:

The Changing Role of Interest Groups in American Politics

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Abstract

Today, interest groups, Political Action Committees, and outside activists are a more visible and powerful force in party politics than ever before. With the weakening of traditional party organizations – which, since the 19th Century, have lost control of the nomination process, the ability to meet the financial demands of candidates for office, or to repay partisan volunteers with government jobs – interest groups gradually increased their own electioneering activities filling the void.

According to many political scientists, as interest groups and outside activists stepped into roles once filled by party bosses, civic satraps, and committee kingmakers, they steered the two major national parties to the ideological extremes. While the "party regulars" of the past were interested in winning elections, this new cadre of political elites is interested in winning policy victories even if that means pulling politicians away from the pivotal median voter.

This dissertation suggests that interest groups not only influence party politics, they are also influenced by it. In fact, only when parties are institutionally powerful can interest groups eschew the hard-minded, strategic, sometimes unprincipled, calculations party elites make.

The data presented in this dissertation demonstrate interest groups have adapted to their new roles and do behave much as traditional party organizations. They tend to endorse the same candidates for political office, pour money into the same general election races, and attend to partisan coalition-building at least as assiduously as party elites. This demonstrates that it is the functions a group fills rather than the form an organization takes – be it a trade association, a labor union, or a party committee – that determines its political activities.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my professors, Dr. James Ceaser and Dr. Sidney Milkis, for their wisdom and generosity; my parents, David and Barbara, for their love and encouragement; and Jessica for her patience, devotion, and comfort. Without all of these gifts – too often undeserved and unreturned – this project would have died long ago.

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Introduction

One of the most common tropes in literature and theatre is the personal transition that occurs when a character moves from outsider to insider, powerless to empowered, vanguard to old guard. In simple works of fiction, this transition is portrayed as simply corruptive; a heroic idealist is stripped of her clarity of purpose and righteous vigor. In more serious works, the effect of the crown upon the head it rests is more nuanced. Youthful exuberance is replaced by sober maturity, pious moralism is replaced by moral ambiguity, and sharp-tongued candor is replaced by cagey reserve. To transition from outsider to insider is to assume for oneself a greater responsibility over a broader set of people, structures, and institutions. Often the view from the throne leads the new King to act very much like the old for better or for worse or – more accurately – for better *and* for worse. So it is with many (but not all) interest groups in American politics. As groups fill the void left by party bosses, civic satraps, and committee kingmakers, they begin to respond to the very same incentives, limitations, and opportunities that governed the actions of this older vintage of political elite.

Many have argued the eroding control and shrinking war chests of the national party committees resulting from waves of reform beginning during the Progressive Era, has underwritten the expanding influence of interest groups. By stripping party bosses of their ability to control who bears the party imprimatur in elections and severely curtailing the national party committees' ability to raise and spend money, candidates for office have turned, out of necessity, to interest groups and corporate PACs to support their ever more expensive political campaigns.[1] So thoroughly have interest groups supplanted the traditional roles of parties, many argue the term itself should be reconceived; no longer

should parties be understood as a collection of national and state committees, local "traditional party organizations," and elected officials, but as loosely connected networks of interest groups, PACs and wealthy donors.[2] Empirical research indicates interest groups not only have a decisive impact on who the major political parties select to run for office, but often guide the evolving issue positions of legislators once they are seated.[3] Some claim outsized interest group influence is largely to blame for ideological polarization and partisan gridlock that defines the contemporary period.[4]

Orthodox accounts of the impact of interest group influence on party politics assume that as interest groups gain new tools of influence, their incentives, issue positions, and ideological dispositions remain the same. Though they have stepped into the role of traditional party organizations, they do not read from the same script. At the heart of this account is an assumption that what defines political institutions is not the functions they fulfill at a moment but the organizing principle that guided their creation.

Function-based theory suggests something radically different about the motivations of both parties and interest groups. It suggests that what governs the behavior of interest groups, traditional party organizations, labor unions, trade associations, public interest organizations like the Sierra Club or National Right to Life, or the now-ubiquitous "Super PAC," is not the institutional *form* they take, but the *function* they fill. A group's organizing principle can become, in many instances, subverted as a group takes on new roles. Assuming they are set and stable, the rules that govern political contest and the policymaking process tend to incentivize the creation of certain institutions who are, in turn, rewarded for comporting themselves in certain ways. Winner-take-all elections, for instance, incentivize the creation of big tent parties capable

of holding together a diverse coalition. The fact that there are no rewards for coming in second also leads voters to regard voting for third parties as a waste of a vote and, hence, in political regimes like ours, there is typically room for only two parties.[5] Because winning control of government necessitates winning over a majority of the American electorate, these parties should both converge on the median voter, upon whom victory hinges.[6]

Which political actors play these roles is often a matter of public policy. The law determines how candidates get on election ballot; how, from whom, and in what amounts organizations can raise money; when and on what organizations can spend money; what means organizations can use to get voters to show up at the polls; what sort of benefits interest groups and parties can offer volunteers and donors; and much more. In the 19th Century, our legal system privileged traditional party organizations. The spoils system allowed them to reward party loyalty and coerce volunteerism; closed primaries allowed them to select candidates for office without any outside input; and federal campaign finance reform was, as yet, unheard of. Wave after wave of reform washed away these institutional capacities and created new openings for interest group involvement in elections and the policymaking process. However, interest groups, saddled with legal strictures of their own, were unable to fully usurp the role of traditional party organizations. Campaign finance laws put hard caps on the political spending of corporations and labor unions while the tax code prevented public charities from extensive lobbying campaigns. Within the last fifteen years, however, the balance of power between interest groups and parties has reached a tipping point. The combination of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 and the Supreme Court's 2010 ruling in

Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission made it much more difficult for party committees to raise money and eased restrictions on independent expenditures by interest groups. As a result, party committees now find it difficult to play the roles they did in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century. As a consequence of the receding power of traditional party organizations, interest groups have come increasingly to the fore. Flush with money and manpower, outside groups now play many of the roles parties once did.

Once interest groups take on the roles once played by parties, function-based theory suggests that their strategies and tactics will change as well. Their behavior will be governed by the logic of these tasks. Whether interest groups or traditional party organizations are directing the party, selecting candidates, or running a campaign, the measure of success is the same: winning control of government via electoral victory. A coalition that stitches together small minority of like-minded compatriots, a candidate who is ideologically pure but loses times and again, a party platform that is stirring to true believers but repellant to everyone else – parties cannot afford these indulgences.

Only when parties were strong could interest groups eschew the hard-minded, strategic, sometimes unprincipled, calculations party elites make. Groups that rely on *one* party to advance their legislative agenda can no longer rely on traditional party organizations to soberly steer the ship. *They* must take the helm – and sober up as well. Selecting candidates, raising and disbursing the bulk of campaign contributions, brokering the terms of enduring party coalition now falls to interest groups; to succeed in these roles means focusing, as never before, on electoral success. As such, they must pick winners over staunch allies to hold a majority in Congress. They must also fight alongside partisan allies even when the battle has little or nothing to do with them. Most

importantly, interest groups must take account of public opinion and the general welfare – not just the interests of their members – as they craft policy. In other words, interest groups must do exactly the things Schattschneider and others assumed *only* parties could.

The data presented in this dissertation will demonstrate interest groups have adapted to their new roles and do behave much as traditional party organizations. They tend to endorse the same candidates for political office, pour money into the same general election races, and attend to partisan coalition-building at least as assiduously as party elites. This demonstrates that it is the functions a group fills rather than the form an organization takes – be it a trade association, a labor union, or a party committee – that determines its political activities. After all, as John Aldrich shows, parties were created from whole cloth to fill the demands of politicians and candidates for office. Those demands still need to be met even if legal barriers block party committees from meeting them. In a sense, the modern interest group has been transformed not by choice, but by necessity. Interest groups no longer fit the description of Schattschneider and others. They may appear similar on the surface, but they fill such a radically different set of functions as a result of the faltering institutional strength of traditional party organizations that old accounts of their motivations, tendencies, aspirations, and – most especially – relations to political parties, may no longer apply.

Relevance to the Current Party Literature

Function-Based Theory confronts head on the Schattschneiderian notion that parties and interest groups are necessarily rivalrous institutions with fundamentally distinct agendas. According to most modern party scholarship – most notably John

Aldrich – parties are, first and foremost, membership service organizations established by and for elected officials.[7] Their core function is to assist their members in winning office. All their functions, from building state and local party committees, to drafting platforms, to enforcing voting discipline, serve this overriding objective. Interest groups, on the other hand, are only incidentally concerned with electoral outcomes. They are membership service organizations as well, but their members are not interested in holding office, but in enacting a policy agenda.[8] While many interest groups campaign doggedly on behalf of candidates for office, if victories in November do not translate into favorable legislation, regulation, and executive action thereafter, they have not done their job. According to Schattschneider and later scholars like Theodore Lowi and Morris Fiorina, interest groups tend to focus on the core concerns of their members, not the general welfare; the policies they advocate are designed to appeal to members and potential donors rather than to voters or the public at large.[9]

The natural rivalry between parties and interest groups played out over the last century as outsiders and insiders have grappled for control of our regime. Since E.E. Schattschneider and other mid-century political scientists called for a the recasting and reinvigoration of *responsible parties*, most political scientists have asserted the superiority of a political system dominated by parties as opposed to "special" interests.[10] Their concern with winning elections, the reasoning goes, leads party leaders to pay due attention to the median voter, the undecided centrists, the "vital center."[11] When party insiders were at the helm throughout the first half of the 20th Century, Me-Too Republicans and Scoop Jackson Democrats brokered compromises, fostered bipartisan consensus among the body politic on issues from taxation for foreign affairs, and kept

divisive social issues off the agenda. While many political scientists at the time complained the two major parties did not offer the public clear and distinct alternatives,[12] as ideological polarization and crippling gridlock have seized Washington, the smoke-filled rooms of the past have taken on the soft, hazy quality of a classic Hollywood film in their collective memory.[13] Today, according to this orthodox narrative, we see what a polity governed by interest groups, instead of parties, looks like. Their focus on particularistic group advantage rather than public interest, and purity rather than electability, are natural to interest groups; these tendencies are related to the very qualities that distinguish them from parties.

A growing body of research questions many of these longstanding orthodoxies.[14] Some recent scholarship suggests an inverse relationship between the robustness of a group's connection to a political party and its own ability to maintain momentum, exert pressure on political actors, and speak truth to power. For instance, in his highly influential work on the civil rights movement, Paul Frymer develops the concept of *electoral capture*.[15] Groups fall into this hopeless status once the party leaders they ordinarily work on behalf of realize their interest group ally has nowhere else to turn. Knowing they have nothing to fear from ignoring a loyal group's demands, the once-simpatico party ceases to make meaningful concessions. Thus, for groups who have elected to work with one party to the exclusion of the other, the lack of a clear exit strategy means they can exert very little leverage over their party "allies."

The so-called UCLA School – a group that includes John Zaller, Kathleen Bawn and many of their students – depart from Schattschneiderian theory still further. They argue that, at least in the 21st Century, the distinction between interests and parties has

broken down rendering strict divisions between parties and interest groups obsolete.[16] Their research shows that the dividing lines between interest groups and parties is muddled by overlapping members and shared resources. In fact, the UCLA School's research demonstrates that interest groups behave somewhat like the traditional party organizations and party bosses of the past. They forge compromises behind closed doors, share resources, take into consideration the median voter and electability when selecting candidates for office, and develop common ideological platforms in an effort to knit indivisible alliances. While many of the UCLA School's empirical findings call into question the idea that interest groups and parties are fundamentally at odds, few of the scholars associated with this school draw the conclusion that interest groups carry out the functions once performed by traditional party organizations and party bosses. Following in line with the orthodox view, the UCLA School portrays interest groups as a polarizing force. "Inevitably," Kathleen Bawn et al. write, "party programs [heavily influenced by partisan interest groups] are less than perfect matches for the concerns of most voters, who respond with varying degrees of trust, adaptation, and confusion."[17] Implicit in this claim is the assumption that interest groups do not calibrate their policy preferences to the exigencies of popular opinion and electoral dynamics as closely as traditional party organizations do. In fact, undergirding most UCLA School studies is the idea that politicians, parties, political climate, or even other partisan interest groups do not alter interest group policy preferences.[18]

Function-based theory suggests these portrayals of party-group interactions, like the work of earlier critics of Pluralist Theory, is partially inaccurate. Interest groups adapt themselves to the functions they take on just as an older cadre party elites and traditional

party organizations. Like parties, electoral victory seems to be a major consideration that shapes not only a group's lobbying decisions and campaign expenditures, but how it defines its interests. To supporters, to other groups, and perhaps to themselves, interest organizations may describe their compromises as temporary expedients. But, in practice, interest groups rarely abandon partisan allies nor regain their status as singularly focused vanguards once they go down this path. If an interest group determines that its policy goals can *only* be achieved through one party, the electoral success of that party will likely become the *primary* goal of the group. Without achieving this goal, which is, strictly speaking, instrumental, nothing else can be achieved.

This is not to suggest interest group partisanship is the result of cooptation as Frymer and others do. Those who claim interest groups are captives of the parties and those who claim interest groups have captured them, have the following in common: they assume, owing to their different goals, these two distinct entities are necessarily opposing forces. In fact, interest groups get a great deal from political parties in return for their loyalty. While empirical research finds that interest groups have a lower success rate than an increasingly hyperbolic punditry public discourse, parties and politicians do shift positions on issues as a result of powerful interest groups in their coalition.[19] As Brian Schlozman writes, "more than just a logroll, [powerful partisan interest] groups shape parties' long-term trajectories by enacting favored policies and shaping parties' ideological development."[20] This dissertation does not deny the reality of interest group influence over political parties by claiming that interest groups are electorally captured. It simply seeks to demonstrate that partisan interest groups do not comport themselves as the Schattschneiderian view suggests or as pundits often assert. As I will show, interest

groups – including many with reputations for fierce and uncompromising ideologically-motivated advocacy – do not tend to promote strictly doctrinaire outsiders to office, reward those who consistently vote their way with outsized campaign contributions, blithely ignore the broad public interest, or foster polarization by working only with groups and activists on their side of the aisle. In fact, interest groups tend to behave much as traditional party organizations do. They back the same candidates, focus their efforts on the same races, and attempt to build wide, bipartisan coalitions (on K Street, if not on Pennsylvania Avenue).

None of this is meant to suggest that interest groups become fully analogous to the party proper as the UCLA School claims. Partisan interest group coalitions – the *shadow party* to borrow from the UCLA School's lexicon – parallel the functions of traditional party organizations in their functions but are not wholly indistinguishable. We should understand parties and interest groups as they so often understand themselves: distinct institutions with different roles but shared goals. Focusing on lobbying and reverse lobbying, outsider insurrections and electoral capture, the supposed shift in power between party bosses and interest group activists, misses the ways parties and interest groups cooperate to both win both elections *and* policy victories.

Plan for the Dissertation

In the chapters that follow, I will provide new evidence that interest groups engage in a wide range party-building activities – that is, activities undertaken with the objective of strengthening a political party – as a matter of course. From the candidates they support, to the rhetoric they use, to the positions they take on policy issues, interest

groups prove themselves to be at least as concerned with the electoral victory as they are with policy accomplishments on behalf of their constituency. In fact, I will show that sometimes, when presented with a choice between a meaningful policy achievement on behalf of their members and the political advantage for their favored party, interest group leaders choose the party. This calls into question the most basic assumptions about interests groups and the incentives they respond to.

Aside from providing new evidence of interest group party-building, I also develop a theory to explain which groups will adopt this strategy and when. After all, the vast majority of interest groups either contribute some money to politicians of both parties or demure from party politics altogether.[21] Key to understanding the stance an interest group adopts toward the two major parties, is to understand that stance is not always freely chosen. While all groups might prefer to keep both Republican and Democrats forever vying for their affection, only some are able to keep both suitors interested and, yet, unrequited, over the long-term. When one party decides the courtship is hopeless (or, at least, more trouble than it is worth), the incentives confronting a group change dramatically. At the former stage, power hinges on a perception that a group is uncommitted to either major party; that is what keeps both parties striving for their favor. Once that stage has passed, the incentives are just the opposite. Suddenly, influence depends on a group's perceived value to the one party they are now paired with. Groups in such a position are incentivized to prove their worth as a coalition partner by turning out the vote, raising campaign contributions, and using their bully pulpit to trumpet the virtues of their friends while expose the vices of their enemies. As party-connected

groups do all this, they hold onto the promise once the game is won, good team players will be well rewarded.

Interest group cooperation can, admittedly, look very similar to interest group cooption, but the similarity is superficial and context specific. The fact that, for the last twenty-five years, we have been experiencing an unprecedented period of partisan parity, means that interest groups have been accruing promissory notes from the parties for a long time but have yet to redeem very many. That does not mean those debts will be ignored. In fact, I will present compelling evidence that when the current stalemate breaks in favor of one party or the other, the interest groups associated with the winning side will benefit greatly from the close relationships they are establishing today.

In the chapter that immediately follows, I lay out in greater detail the state of the literature on parties and interest groups and propose my own account of the conditions and consequences of interest group and party alliances. The key intuition, as eluded to above, is this: groups that are better served by one of the two major parties will begin to act according to the same incentives as the party bosses, patronage-seekers, and caucus kingmakers of the past. The party-building imperative, once brought to bear, often trumps interest group's assumed role as the conduits and connective tissue linking their members to the halls of power.

In the next two chapters, I shift from explaining why groups adopt party-building strategies to demonstrating the degree to which considerations of party strength govern their behavior. In Chapter 2, I look for party-building behavior in the context of elections. I find interest groups with polarizing agendas use their contributions to assure their party's majority status rather than as a reward for good behavior. For groups with

partisan ties, the perceived closeness of an election, more than any other factor, including a legislator's votes on key group priorities, dictates how much money that candidate can expect to receive. This intuitive finding has some rather counterintuitive implications. Because centrists are ordinarily selected to run in toss-up districts, while ideological purists generally hail from safe districts, extreme groups with divisive agendas – the most likely to adopt party-building strategies – actually tend to support moderate politicians.

Chapter 3 asks whether party-connected interest groups fulfill another key function of political parties: aggregating the demands of various constituencies into a more or less coherent platform. By looking at issue positions taken by over 200 groups on several thousand pieces of legislation, I find co-partisan groups on both sides of the aisle do work to harmonize their agendas. Interest groups within the orbit of the same party go to great pains to avoid conflict and uncover common threads uniting their superficially disjoint agendas.

In Chapter 4, I turn from empirical analyses to a case study of one interest group – the Sierra Club – that transitioned from political outsider to an indispensable component of the Democratic interest group coalition. Empirical analyses often have great difficulty uncovering the complex, often hidden, dynamics between interest groups and parties. Analyzing bills and lobbying disclosure forms, coding interest group scorecards and floor votes, cannot give a full accounting of such a phenomenon. Reducing the myriad and multiform interactions between party elites and interest group activists to a few easily quantifiable measures has the advantage of allowing an analysis of a wide swath of the interest group population (extremely valuable given the variety of groups and diversity of strategies vis-à-vis the two major parties) but it also distorts and flattens the subjects of

analysis. Each interest group, each bill, each policy campaign is idiosyncratic and, arguably, incomparable. Case studies are imperfect too. By focusing on a single case, one might mistakenly glean a generalizable trend from a unique episode. In combining qualitative and quantitative methods, I hope to compensate for the deficiencies of each.

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[5] According to Sociologist Maurice Duverger, the combination of plurality voting systems and single member districts will result in only two viable political parties. In such systems, voters will generally judge a vote for a third party as wasted unless they are truly indifferent as to which of the two top parties holds power. This is generally referred to as Duverger's Law.

[6] The tendency of both major parties to vie for the pivotal median voter is derived from Economist Kenneth Arrow's impossibility theorem and most famously elaborated by Anthony Downs in his seminal work, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. The applicability of this theorem to the American case has been questioned as partisan polarization has grown however. See, for instance: Davis, Otto A., Melvin J. Hinich, and Peter C. Ordeshook. "An expository development of a mathematical model of the electoral process." *American Political Science Review* 64.2 (1970): 426-448.; Grofman, Bernard. "Downs and Two-Party Convergence." *Annual Review of Political Science.* (2004): 25-46.

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Chapter 1: A Theory of Parties and Interest Groups

In February of 2004, 65 South Dakota state legislators co-sponsored a bill to establish that, for the purposes of state law, "the life of a human being begins when the ovum is fertilized by male sperm." Except in cases where the procedure was necessary to save the mother's life or spare her from "serious risk of substantial and irreversible impairment of a major bodily function," abortions performed in the state would be prosecuted as Class 5 felonies resulting in five years in prison, a $5,000 fine, or both.[1] The bill, arguably the most direct challenge of *Roe v. Wade* in the 31 years since its passage, seemed almost certain to pass. At the time, Republicans enjoyed outsized majorities in both houses and control of the governor's mansion even though the state's delegation to the United States Senate was split. The bill easily sailed through the state house of representatives and, by a margin of one vote, squeaked through the senate as well. However, Governor Mike Rounds, who had initially vowed his support for the bill, vetoed it. Rounds asked that the legislature provide some assurance that if the statute were to be struck by the judicial branch, the state's already codified limitations on abortion would still stand. However, the amended version of the abortion ban never made it to Rounds' desk. One pivotal state senator switched his vote, thereby killing the bill on the floor. Pro-abortion groups were quick to blame a special interest group well-known for its dogged advocacy and political influence. But the culprit was not Planned Parenthood, NARAL, or any of the other usual suspects. Instead, the strongest state anti-abortion statute to date was killed by none other than the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC).

The leading pro-life group's decision to sink the bill infuriated other pro-life groups and activists. Notre Dame Law Professor Emeritus Charles E. Rice lashed out at the NRLC calling it a "barnacle on the pro-life ship of state," a "frequent embarrassment to the pro-life cause," and an unprincipled organization that "rarely met a compromise it didn't like."[2] According to the Thomas More Law Center, given that the anti-abortion group helped its sponsor draft the legislation, the NRLC's public objections to the bill did not square with their past behaviors, much less their stated principles. While the NRLC argued that the bill's health exception would leave the decision as to the necessity of an abortion to the "subjective judgment of the abortionist, thus creating a gigantic loophole," it was the NRLC that fought for the inclusion of this and other exceptions to the general ban.[3] The bill's primary sponsor, State Rep. Matt McCaulley, claims efforts to accommodate the Right to Life were doomed from the start. "In the end," McCaulley said, "they didn't want to compromise, they wanted the bill dead."[4]

The NRLC's opposition to the strongest anti-abortion measure since *Roe v. Wade* had very little to do with the policy itself and much more to do with the political context. The complete criminalization of abortion—with no exception for rape or incest—has historically been broadly unpopular. Bringing this proposal to the fore in an election year seemed impolitic, especially since South Dakota's senatorial race, featuring a vulnerable Democratic Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle and promising a well-known challenger John Thune, was a major focus of the Republican Party that cycle. "It's much more productive to work on getting pro-life politicians elected…The timing was terribly wrong," said State Representative Jay Duenwald, who also served as the state chair of South Dakota Right to Life, "we're not going to get a pro-life person appointed to the

court and approved within a year. If we could get rid of U.S. Sen. Tom Daschle and reelect Bush, then we would have a fighting chance."[5]

The NRLC is not alone in calibrating their demands to the median voter, or in sacrificing immediate policy gains for electoral success. Groups on the other side of the abortion issue have moderated somewhat as well. NARAL, for instance, has clarified that they do not advocate abortion-on-demand during the third trimester. As Alison Hewitt, the group's Director of Government Relations, stated in a 2003 interview, "the anti-choice claim that pro-choice groups and individuals are in favor of unrestricted abortions in the 7th, 8th or 9th month of pregnancy is flatly wrong."[6] True to their policy, NARAL did not publically criticize President Obama when he made clear on the campaign trail that mental distress should not count as one of the few health concerns used to justify this increasingly rare procedure.[7] EMILY's List, another group that focuses extensively on abortion policy, no longer makes support of late-term abortion a criterion for endorsement of candidates for office.[8]

In other policy spaces, too, groups with reputations for uncompromising issue advocacy frequently slacken the reins to allow for politicians and parties to run for election unencumbered by unpopular issue positions. In the wake of a mass shooting at a movie theater in Lafayette, Louisiana by a man with a history of mental illness, the National Rifle Association supported legislation sponsored by Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) that would increase access to mental health records during the background check process.[9] The National Council of La Raza has agreed, in principle, to support comprehensive immigration reform that increases law enforcement presence on the border and requires illegal immigrants to pay back taxes before being placed on a path

the citizenship.[10] The AFL-CIO also gave ground when a legislative proposal known as "card check", which leaders believed was critical to expanding organized labor's share of the workforce, slipped significantly in popular esteem. While the group had lobbied extensively on behalf of the bill, the group did not include the Employee Free Choice Act in its annual list of key votes.[11]

Despite many prominent examples like those listed above, most political scientists draw a clear distinction between the goals and incentives of parties and those of interest groups. The primary objective of parties is winning and holding office while the chief goal of interest groups is enacting favored policies. Given their different goals, government should operate very differently in the hands of one or the other. To the extent interest groups dominate, fierce ideological divisions will come to the fore, the median voter will be abandoned for the sake of warding off primary challengers financed by interest group PACs, and poorly organized constituencies will be forsaken. Parties, on the other hand, have an incentive to build broad coalitions, avoid ideological hot button issues, and find pragmatic compromises that please the median voter.

In this chapter, I argue that partisan interest groups and traditional party organizations respond to very similar incentives and have parallel objectives. Groups—or at least the small subset of groups that adopt partisan strategies of influence—do not light upon their goals without reference to the broader political context and do not pursue those goals without consideration of the electoral consequences. The way politically involved organizations—be they traditional party organizations or interest groups—carry out functions like selecting candidates, funding campaigns, or picking policy planks is not likely to differ very much because these actions have a certain logic embedded within

them. In essence, they are skills that groups learn rather than strategies they deploy. There is, after all, a right way and a wrong way to perform all of these functions because, no matter who performs them, the goals are the same: picking a winner, controlling a majority, attracting the median voter. Once interest groups take on the roles once played by parties, their behavior will be governed by the logic of these tasks. This is what I call a *function-based*, as opposed to a *form-based*, theory of interest group behavior. This portrayal of group-party interactions harkens back to the work of V.O. Key, many of the insights of which no longer inform contemporary scholarship.

Interest Group & Party Power: Opposing Views

Much of E.E. Schattschneider's best-known work is written as a refutation of near-contemporaries like Arthur Bentley, Robert Dahl, and David Truman—collectively referred to as Pluralists—who assert that interest groups, not individuals or parties, are the atomic unit in politics. Public policy, these authors note, rarely singles individuals out for special treatment, but instead affects groups of people with certain characteristics. As Truman notes, "In all societies of any degree of complexity the individual is less affected directly by society as a whole than differentially through various of its subdivisions, or groups."[12] Because the law tends to impact groups, individuals tend to interact with government through organizations that represent the interests of groups. On the Pluralist view, political institutions should facilitate a fair and open competition between interest groups and, in so doing, allow a prevailing majority interest to coalesce among and between the nation's various interest groups and organized factions.

The crux of Schattschneider's critique of the Pluralists hinges on their assumption that "when groups are adequately stated, everything is stated." [13] Schattschneider's most famous line is aimed directly at this premise: "the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent." According to Truman, Bentley, and others, groups form naturally in response to laws, societal or scientific innovations, the creation of other groups, or other exogenous shocks that make people aware of a *politically relevant* shared characteristic. Schattschneider argues interest group formation is not nearly so straightforward. Creating a group takes time, money, and expertise. These are qualities the upper class has in superabundance, but for which the poor are lacking dearly. Not only does interest group pluralism over-represent some groups while leaving out others, but there is an ineffable, yet very real, quality lost as well: the *great public interest*. As Schattschneider writes, "the sum of special interests is not equal to the sum of interests in society." Even if every group had its appointed interest group, all with teams of equally matched lobbyists on K Street, the public *qua* public would still be without representation. Perhaps this imagined version of Gucci Gulch would better approximate the public will; like a Seurat painting, the tightly clustered dots might give the illusion of wholeness, but only at a distance. The public interest, on Schattschneider's view, is a thing unto itself, not the sum of its parts.

E.E. Schattschneider agreed that interest groups had outsized influence in the mid-20th Century America, but was far less sanguine than Truman and others about the consequences. For him, parties should be at the very center of the political process. As Schattschneider writes, "modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties."[14] Parties are the institution that makes a semi-sovereign people capable of turning

government to their chosen purposes. Schattschneider observes: “The public is very much like a rich man who is unable to supervise closely all of his enterprise." Parties solve this principle-agent problem by structuring and simplifying the choices available to voters. In a regime with plurality elections and single member districts, the public have but two choices – one major party or its opposition – and parties have but one choice: put forward a platform that addresses the major issues of the day and appeals to the median voter.

Parties and politicians may not want to respond to the general public – “a thousand men want power for a thousand reasons” – and sometimes, either accidentally or intentionally, a party will drift from the popular consensus. But, in these cases, the opposing party offers a corrective. “The sovereignty of the voter consists in his freedom of choice,” Shattschneider writes. “Democracy is not found in the parties but between the parties."[15] Parties’ concern for the public will is not the result of any altruistic intent nor does it need to be mandated by any official writ; their behavior follows logically from their role: assisting a slate of politicians to power. Parties do not need formal incentives “to make them sensitive to the wishes of the voters any more than we need laws compelling merchants to please their customers.”[16]

Interest groups, according to Schattschneider, do not and cannot serve a similar function. As Schattschneider puts it:

> The mobilization of majorities in recognition of the great public interests, the integration of special interests with public policy, and the over-all management and planning involved in discriminating among special interests cannot be done by organized special interests on their own initiative. These are the functions of an entirely different kind of organization, the political party. The majorities formed by parties are never mere aggregates of special interest, i.e., the parties and pressure groups consist of two different syntheses of interests.”[17]

While both are aggregators of individual opinions at their core, the similarities between parties and interest groups end there. On his view, interest groups' narrow pursuit of particularistic advantage of their members put them at odds with "big tent" political parties committed to attracting majority support. While interests and parties are both means by which opinions are aggregated and commuted to politicians and administrators, the incentives they respond to are fundamentally distinct. Parties' first consideration is electoral success by "mobilizing majorities." Parties rise and fall on their ability to appeal to the median voter, interest groups *are only formed* when a faction finds it cannot win through majoritarian politics; parties formulate broad platforms that address the public's chief concerns while interest groups focus on the discrete issues of importance to their members; parties broadcast their agendas in order to attract supporters while interest groups attempt to set policy behind closed doors and safely away from public scrutiny.

Unfortunately, given Schattschneider's appraisal of the relative value of parties as opposed to interest groups, he believed his epoch represented the low ebb of the political party. According to Schattschneider, by the 1950's both major parties had become the handmaids of a new vintage of moneyed national interests that they were ill-equipped to wrangle. APSA's 1950 report of the Committee of Political Parties, of which E.E. Schattschneider was chair, reported, "to a very considerable extent the regular party organizations are now so yoked into a partnership with the newcomers that they have lost much of their old freedom of action."[18] As a result, the committee concluded, the parties of the era had become focused on distributing particularistic benefits to organized interests instead of crafting broad programmatic agendas in the public interest. Even if they wanted to, party leaders did not have sufficient power to unite the various factions of

their party around a common platform, far less to ensure sufficient party discipline to actually execute the provisions of that platform. The most pernicious consequence of the party's weakness, according to APSA 1950, was that the American voter was not presented two discernable and distinct courses for the nation**.** "Alternatives between the parties are defined so badly", APSA 1950 states, "that it is often difficult to determine what the election has decided even in broadest terms."[19]

Adding to the tragedy of the erosion of parties' "freedom of action" is the fact that, according to Schattschneider, it was easily avoidable. Unlike some contemporaries, like Sam Lubell, Schattschneider believed parties, not interest groups, have the natural advantage in the American system:

> Once a two-party system is firmly established the major parties automatically have a monopoly of elections; they monopolize the greatest single channel to power in the whole regime. Control of elections gives the parties a very great position in the political system. If there are twenty thousand pressure groups and two parties, who has the favorable bargaining position?[20]

When it is demanded of them, parties can and do impose their will on the interest groups loosely aligned with them. Thus, Schattschneider warns against exaggerating the power of groups. Both Republican and Democratic Parties actually have significant latitude despite the reputation of being slaves to business and labor respectively. "It is as likely that pressure groups are prisoners of the parties as it is the other way around, because pressure groups cannot easily negotiate with both sides in the party conflict."[21]

The parties gave up their positions of power not out of necessity, but largely out of convenience. Meeting the demands of coalitional politics had become too unwieldy for political parties to handle alone. "The volume of consultation, hearing, exchange of opinion, adjudication, and adjustment going on between the people and the government,"

Schattschneider observes, "overflows all traditional channels of communication."[22] In the context of this intense contest to be heard, interest groups became more valuable both to the highly politically active segment of the population for which these groups help cut through the beltway gridlock, and to politicians who cannot possibly process every individual voice. Simply divvying up policy between organized groups had, by the mid-20th Century, become far easier than doing the hard work of engaging the broader public.

V.O Key gives a very different account of the relationship between parties and interest groups. He argued parties and interest groups both benefitted from a symbiotic relationship with neither clearly dominating. On this view, political parties and interest groups tended to divide the labor of collecting and directing electoral resources and crafting policy. "The broad tendency" Key wrote, "is that lobbying on many issues re-enforces the leadership of the party with which the group is allied."[23] According to Key, this mutually beneficial arrangement is made possible by the fact that parties and interest groups have complementary and distinct institutional advantages, and both have essentially the same objective: mobilizing public opinion. Both institutions, in their unique way, lend the blustering and uncertain winds of public sentiment a sail to harness their energy during gale and gentle breeze alike, and a rudder to direct their movement. Policymaking and coalition-building in the American regime is difficult by design. Because the Constitution charts an intentionally circuitous route from policy proposal to enactment, public sentiment alone is often not enough to move the status quo. For Key, both interests and parties are useful institutional correctives to Constitutional paralysis. Key claims both interest groups and parties, working in parallel, "are the propulsion for the formal constitutional system."[24]

While Key argues interest groups and parties often had consonant objectives and complementary powers, he also believes parties are, in the main, responsible for setting the nation's policy agenda. As Key writes, "the policy orientations of the parties plow a furrow through the group system, and most of the major groups – and some of the lesser groups – find one party more congenial to their tastes than the other."[25] Notice, in this metaphor the role of the interest group is reactive. The furrow is plowed by parties and, after the work is done, they pick a side. While Key admits there is "an occasional large-scale movement develops that cuts across party lines more often a group—at least a major economically based group—finds most of its friends in one party and only a few in the other."[26] Beneficial policy planks are what draw interest groups to one party or the other, "the party's platform is not the product of the interest groups that cluster around it." As Key explains, "the contention is not that either party commits itself unreservedly to its camp of followers among pressure groups. Yet, given the drift of policy of either party, it attracts some groups and repels others."[27]

While Schattschneider is concerned with the ways interest groups pervert the incentives of political parties, V.O. Key points to the ways in which party-group alliances change interest groups. On Key's view, both an interest group's espoused *interests* and *group membership* shift in response to a burgeoning partisan alliance. When interest groups associate closely with a political party, they often accept a wider array of issues into their lobbying portfolio. Key points to the Republican-leaning American Farm Bureau Association's promotion of Eisenhower's plan to build a dam in Idaho's Hell's Canyon. As Key points out:

> Farmers as farmers have no clear defined concern about the matter, and the directors simply followed the ideological line of an organization generally as one

> with the Republican party and not indisposed to adopt a resolution at a strategic moment to aid their allies."[28]

As a group's leadership begins to spread its scope of concern over an expanded range of issues, its partisan identity becomes ever-clearer and an ever more certain predictor of its future advocacy:

> The partisan orientation of large groups with a varied membership becomes more noticeable as these groups move from advocacy of the narrow interests of their membership toward an attempt to represent the views of the members on almost the whole range of public questions."… When groups expand their range of concern over the affairs of mankind they are bereft of cues to action in their immediate self-interest and grasp hold of whatever ideological rudder seems to suit their taste."[29]

As an organization's partisan allegiance becomes a prominent feature of its overall identity, the group will likely begin to change from the inside out. "Partisan and ideological differences may strain the unity of organizations based on common vocation or economic pursuit" Key states, leading to a group membership that is more homogeneous as partisan outliers peel off either to form groups or simply to relieve the strain of competing partisan/group attachments.[30] This process culminates in interest groups and political parties with largely overlapping memberships.

For these reasons, while many interest groups make an effort at "nurturing their friends whatever party label they bear" Key says, " most of the major group's friends are likely to have the same party label."[31] Still, Key makes clear that there is a great deal of variation regarding how close knit these friendships become. "On one extreme, along the scale of differentiation, the organized group pursues its objective in dealing with governmental functionaries – legislative and administrative – more or less independently of political parties" allowing it to function "more or less autonomously as a mechanism

of communication between its members and government."[32] On the other end of the spectrum are "groups that tend to operate in the closest communication with one or the other of the political parties." For these groups, their relationship with the party is "not only of parallelism of objective but of active collaboration."[33] As Key states later:

> [L]obbying is often said to be destructive of party discipline and subversive of party leadership. At intervals, the legislative allies of an interest group do form a coalition cutting across party lines and wrest leadership from the parties. With the major economically based pressure groups clustered around the Republican and the Democratic Parties, the broad tendency is that lobbying on many issues re-enforces the leadership of the party with which the group is allied, the effects of the pressure and party leadership operate in the same direction."[34]

In fact, Key argues, the more groups and parties cooperate to draft winning candidates for office, draft sound party platforms, and win elections, the closer their interests become. "Alliances of opinion and attitude" Key writes, "are supplemented by relations of mutual defense and offense in the legislative and electoral field."[35] This balance is as it should be, according to Key. Working in tandem, parties and interest groups assure that government stays responsive to unorganized constituencies but takes into consideration smaller discrete interests, and caters to the median voter while remaining fettered by principle.

Schattschneider's Influence on Contemporary Scholarship

Bentley, Truman, Dahl, Schattschneider, Lowi, and Key still limn the basic contours of the debate regarding the role and impact of interest groups and parties, though their relative impact on contemporary scholarship is very different. Few, for instance, give such a strong defense of interest group pluralism as Bentley, Truman, and Dahl. While history has not been kind to Schattschneider (nor to Mancur Olson whose

powerful account of why interest groups rarely formed to pursue *broad public interests* greatly bolstered the attack on the Pluralists) insofar as it is broadly focused public interest groups that drove the associational explosion of the 1960's, recent empirical evidence suggests that Schattschneider's account of the *upper-class bias* of organized representation was also essentially correct. In their aptly named book *The Unheavenly Chorus*, Schlozman, Verba, and Brady find only about one in eight of the organized interests with lobbyists in Washington, D.C. are membership organizations open to the general public. The rest are occupational associations. While ordinary citizens often belong to these groups, most such organizations represent high-income workers in lucrative professions. Labor unions, the membership of which has been steadily dropping since the middle of the Twentieth Century, are the exception. More troubling, there are zero organized interests with a presence in Washington representing recipients of means-tested social programs.[36] While a few groups represent certain other disempowered minorities, often these organizations represent the concerns particular to the most well-to-do members of that community.[37] For instance, as Risa Goluboff points out, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People worked far harder to open the gates to university and law school campuses than it did to unbar the doors of union halls.[38] The skew of the interest group community arise naturally in a nation marked by startling inequality.[39]

Most contemporary political scientists also agree with Schattschneider's appraisal of the relative power of interest groups, though it is often difficult to empirically demonstrate a causal link between an organization's lobbying efforts or campaign contributions and subsequent voting behavior. Meta-analyses of research on

the link between campaign contributions and congressional roll call votes revealed about half of such studies find no evidence of influence.[40] This is striking for a couple of reasons. First, editors of academic journals are typically less eager to publish null findings. Second, as a result of this bias, political scientists are less likely to seek out null findings. The fact that researchers on the hunt for examples of interest group influence had a coin-flip's chance of finding it suggests that, at the very least, interest groups wield their power with more finesse than a simple tally of dollars spent and votes taken could reveal.[41]

There are many plausible reasons to think that simply counting dollars and roll call votes both misstates and understates the influence of interest groups. As Milyo, Primo, and Groseclose write:

> Simply put, PAC contributions are not the only route by which interested money might influence policy makers and, given existing limits on the size of PAC contributions, neither are they the most likely route. The very idea of building a majority coalition by buying off individual members of Congress (a group not renowned for their fidelity or trustworthiness) with small campaign contributions and without an explicit contracting mechanism, as all the while competing interests work at counter purposes, sounds something akin to herding cats.[42]

Many argue campaign contributions are not meant to change votes at all but to ensure access to already simpatico politicians while also assuring they remain in office.[43] Others suggest focusing on floor votes provides a snapshot of the phase of the policymaking process wherein interest group influence is weakest. This is when the general public is most likely to be tuned in and watching. Before a bill has been announced and after it has passed, elected officials and bureaucrats are willing to give more ground knowing the eyes of the nation are elsewhere.[44] Others argue focusing on salient policy areas – as most case studies of interest group influence do – leads to findings that are not

generalizable to the vast majority of bills that do not rise to the level of mass consciousness. In fact, as Schattschneider predicted, a significant body of empirical evidence confirms that interest groups win when the public is relatively disengaged.[45]

Given the complex and myriad ways interest groups might assert their will over politicians, some political scientists have decided to seal the mechanisms of influence in a black box, zoom out, and look for evidence of group power at the macro-level. Using a dataset of 1,779 policies upon which major nationally representative polls had been taken over a period of 22 years, Martin Gilens and Anthony Page concluded that policy outcomes over that period more often reflected interest group preferences than the preferences of the mass public or even economic elites.[46] David Karol has found interest group demands account for subsequent shifts, or, pejoratively, "flip-flops," of even long-serving members of Congress who do not wish to incur the scorn, nor the primary challenges, associated with being out of step with an important element of their constituency.[47]

Some have found that interest groups have not only caused the parties to shift positions on standing policy questions, they have radically changed the issues on the political agenda.[48] Around mid-century, a new crop of *public interest groups*– that is, groups formed to pursue non-excludable public goods rather than their membership's self-interest – like the Sierra Club and National Right to Life refocused politics from the bread-and-butter economic cleavages that had defined politics and the parties for years, to post-material issues like the environment and abortion. These wedge issues, once kept off the agenda by party bosses that had no desire to disrupt the partisan equilibrium, were

brought to the fore by these political outsider groups reshaping platforms, redrawing the political map, and transforming the tone and tenor of politics.[49]

Unlike membership associations, trade associations, and labor unions of the past this new brand of public interest groups tended to focus on a single highly salient issue. According to Morris Fiorina, such groups tend to be more ideologically homogeneous and more extreme in their preferences because of the people these policy-focused groups tend to attract to them. While people might join the Knights of Columbus or the Order of the Elks for camaraderie, a trade association for networking opportunities, and a labor union for the job protection, there is little reason to join the National Right to Life or contribute to the National Resource Defense Council aside from a deep commitment to their political cause. Unfortunately, those who are devoted enough to such a political cause to commit their time and money to an interest group also tend to have more radical and rigid policy preferences than the average person. As Morris Fiorina observes, "common discourse recognizes that close relationship by the absence of pairings like 'raging moderate' or 'wishy- washy extremist.'[50] Like voting in primary elections, volunteering, and making campaign contributions, interest group participation is not an activity that appeals to the more-or-less moderate and the mostly inattentive. So we can assume by their very existence that a politically involved organized interest represents a segment of the population that both cares more adamantly about a policy outcome than the general public and holds more extreme opinions than the median voter. They are, in other words, *high demanders* as well as outliers.[51] Interest groups further increase polarization by distorting the preferences of their members by advancing more radical proposals than their already ideologically extreme members most prefer. As Claassen and Nicholson

show, even measured against their relevant constituencies (i.e. environmentalists or gun owners), the policy preferences of the organization's leadership are extreme.[52]

According to scholars like Morris Fiorina, Ray La Raja, and Byron Shafer, interest groups' influence is all the greater given the weakness of today's traditional party organizations. Like Schattschneider, these and other political scientists, see parties as a natural counterpoint to interest groups. Unfortunately, since Schattschneider's era, the political parties have become far less capable of holding their own against the collected might of the ever-expanding interest group population. Parties no longer control who runs on the party ticket, far less what platform they run on. Parties can no longer provide the money and matériel candidates need to win elections.[53] A growing body of empirical evidence confirms an inverse relationship between the power of traditional party organizations and the power of interest groups. Green, Guth, and Wilcox found that in states where legal strictures constrained political party's autonomy in internal affairs, electoral activities, and candidate selection increased the perceived influence of the Christian Coalition among political elites. La Raja and Shafer go a step further, showing the connection between legal strictures on political party expenditures and increased polarization. They find that state laws that limit party expenditures on electioneering promote the election of more ideologically extreme candidates because while parties tend to distribute money to candidates locked in tight races regardless of partisanship, interest groups tend to direct their money only to ideological purists.[54]

Were parties as strong as they were prior to the reforms of the late 20th century – if party bosses were able to select nominees without the influence of outside groups, if party campaign committees had sufficient money and staffing to meet all the demands of

candidates for office, if politicians did not have to fear the reprisals of organized interests when taking hard votes – perhaps the American system would function as winner-take-all systems are meant to.[55] Perhaps politicians would spend more time courting the median voter than pandering to the partisan groups. Perhaps highly contentious issues would not come to the fore and dominate political life.[56] Perhaps the bipartisan consensus that has broken down issue by issue, election by election, might take root again.[57] Morris Fiorina echoes E.E. Schattschneider when he states, "the only way collective responsibility has ever existed, and can exist given our institutions, is through the agency of the political party; in American politics, responsibility requires cohesive parties."[58]

Some authors seem to agree with Schattschneiderian account of party-group antagonism, but see evidence that parties have finally realized the institutional advantages Schattschneider alludes to in *A Semi-Sovereign People*. Paul Frymer's in-depth case study of the Civil Rights movement reveals groups with allies on only one side of the aisle risk falling victim to what he terms "electoral capture". Because it is frequently the case the opposing party will stand to lose more of its base than it could reasonably expect to gain from a firmly ensconced contra-constituency, neither party has an incentive to cater to the group's demands. One party has nothing to gain, the other has nothing to lose.

Some research suggests parties push their advantage over interest groups a step further by not giving any quarter *to* them, but also extorting money and support *from* them. According to Fred McChesney, groups write checks to their local politician for the same reason Chicago shop owners handed wads of cash to their local mob boss.[59] Politicians, he writes, "extract rents" from the well-heeled by the "mounting of a credible

threat of loss, then selling back to those otherwise victimized, reprieve from that loss."[60] Both Barbara Sinclair and Ronald Shaiko observes that parties often "reverse lobby" interest groups to stay silent when they otherwise might speak, support bills they otherwise might have no interest in, or even take positions directly opposite their perceived self-interest.[61] From Lyndon Johnson's attempt to keep civil rights leaders silent on the Vietnam War, to Bill Clinton's war room, to Tom DeLay's efforts to stitch together a coalition in support of the Contract with America, journalists and political historians have furnished plenty high profile examples of the phenomenon.[62] Moreover, when such demands are made electorally, captured constituencies have little recourse but to comply.

V.O. Key's Influence on Modern Scholarship

While most of the research on the relationship between parties and interest groups came of age in the house that Schattschneider built, some of V.O. Key's revelations are beginning to challenge the consensus that, a) interest groups are more powerful than traditional political parties and, b) their power is bound to pervert democratic institutions. Not all those who call these postulates into question do so with V.O Key explicitly in mind. In fact, shockingly few hearken back to him. This may be because Key's deeply nuanced account of the political world leads many to view him as, at heart, a keen observer of the political world rather than a theorist in the purist sense. This is unfortunate, particularly considering that, in a sub-discipline desperately wanting for overarching theory and unifying frames, Key's theory of Party-Group Parallelism furnishes a useful one *especially* insofar as it points to several shortcomings of prevailing notions within this literature.

Like Schattschneider, the most influential and oft cited works in the interest group literature build into their research design an assumption that the direction of causality between party and interest group is more or less uni-directional. Few political scientists would deny that interest groups make compromises, bide their time, and pick their punches carefully; but most political scientists still seem to believe that, compared to parties, organized interests are more concerned with ideological purity, less willing to compromise, and tend to pull policy further away from the median voter when and if they can. The consensus view of group-party interactions seems to be Schattschneiderian at heart: while interest groups may use parties as temporary expedients and may even be coopted by them if they are unlucky, the two organizations are built for a wholly different purposes and there is forever a tension between them.

These simplifying assumptions may obscure more than they clarify, however. The real world simply does not conform to the Schattschneiderian account of party-group antagonism. Myriad historical examples demonstrate that interest groups and parties do not always militate against one another. In certain cases, parties have actually attempted to build up interest group power and vice versa. Howard Taft, seeking a counterbalance to the political might of organized labor, called for "central organization in touch with associations and chambers of commerce throughout the country"; his work to that end culminated in the creation of the Chamber of Commerce four months later.[63] Democratic politicians have made similar efforts. For instance, the National Council for Senior Citizens – the first interest group to represent senior citizens – was started with aid of trade unions. Similarly, modern feminist organizations received millions of dollars of support and visibility following a series of White House conferences during JFK's

administration.[64] More recently, Barack Obama, after his 2012 re-election, was intimately involved in the creation of a 501(c)(4) dedicated to advancing his progressive agenda by working alongside other left-leaning interest groups.[65] For politicians and traditional party organizations who recognize their unique capacities, interest groups can be a boon rather than a bother. Organized interests on both the right and left can use their deep connection to a community or reputation for neutral expertise in an issue area to build grassroots support for policy. Explicitly partisan organizations on the other hand, are often perceived as organizations designed to win elections and control government. Into their statements and issue advocacy, the audience will always read a motivation befitting their mission.

Interest groups, too, recognize the unique capacities of political parties. Far from advocating for the withering of the formal party apparatus, interest groups – especially those definitively tied to one party or another – often advocate for robust party organizations and stronger party leadership. The AFL-CIO clearly saw the advantage of a strong Democratic Party when it supported procedures that magnified party leaders' control over rank-and-file members of Congress. In their judgment, a more disciplined Democratic Party would be a more reliable advocate of organized labor's agenda.[66] Similarly, when the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act was passed, the National Rifle Association leapt to the defense of the "soft money" loophole, which essentially allowed parties to raise unlimited funds as long as dollars earmarked as such were not spent directly on electoral campaigns.[67] Interest groups also regularly take into consideration their favored party's electoral strength when they choose how and what to advocate, as the short vignette regarding the failed South Dakota abortion bill was

intended to show. This is far from an isolated incident. In his expertly rendered case study of the relationship between the AFL-CIO and the Michigan Democratic Party, Dan Galvin shows that interest groups particularly deeply embedded within the shadow party often soften their issue demands voluntarily to allow their party's elected officials to appeal to the widest possible swath of the electorate.[68]

One reason interest groups and parties seem to reinforce, rather than militate against, each other is because, to a surprising extent, they are composed of the same people. Baumgartner and Walker find that most active citizens are both active volunteers for candidates of their favored political party and also belong to multiple interest groups.[69] Masket, Heaney, Miller, and Strolovich's survey of the delegates to the 2008 Republican and Democratic nominating conventions found that 56 percent of these most active partisans belonged to at least one voluntary organized interest and 23.82 percent belonged to more than one.[70] At the grassroots level as well, interest groups and parties have largely overlapping memberships. In his seminal study of Common Cause, an ostensibly non-partisan group, Rothenberg found that over 80 percent of members were Democrats. Clyde Wilcox found the membership of the Moral Majority was also nearly homogeneously Republican.[71] In both cases, members were agreed with their party's position across a wide range of issues, not just the issues pertaining to their group's agenda.

Heaney and Rojas' study of the anti-war movement galvanized by the second Iraq war, finds groups primarily composed of Democrats, as opposed to self-identifying Independents or Green Party supporters, saw their cause's success as fundamentally enmeshed with the Democratic Party's electoral success. As a result:

> [W]hen the Democrats were out of office and the Republicans were in power, these intersecting identities [partisanship and group membership] promoted synergy between the party and the movement…Anti-Republican partisanship helped to fuel the growth of the antiwar movement and explains why its mobilization appears to have depended more on changes in partisan control than on substantive adjustments in foreign policies."[72]

By the same token, when Democrats took control of the White House and both chambers of Congress and, yet, did not immediately change course in either Iraq or Afghanistan, Democrats in the Anti-War Movement commenced, "demobilization not in response to a policy victory, but in response to a party victory."[73] The same phenomenon might explain the abrupt demobilization of the Tea Party after Republicans regained control of Congress after the 2010 midterm elections. When group members and party members are one and the same, they come to view the two as distinct tools to the same end; social movements and interest groups may be appropriate at one time – for instance, when one's favored party is wholly disempowered in Washington – but once a trustworthy political party has control of the levers of power, protest or "outside lobbying" may feel less necessary.

The party-boosterism of partisan interest groups may not be the result only of trust and good faith in elected allies. Politically homogeneous groups take a terrible risk when they criticize erstwhile allies too harshly. As both V.O. Key and David Truman note, any time two groups share a significant number of members, their very existence is threatened any time the pair's interests conflict.[74] The existential danger for interest groups with high numbers of committed partisans is exacerbated by the strength and durability of one's identification with their party. The unshakeable nature of party identification once solidified is one of the most consistent findings of behavioral political

science.[75] In fact, research suggests partisan conviction usually supersedes policy preferences; even on very personally salient issues, when partisans hold an opinion that is out of line with their party's platform, they are more likely to change their mind regarding that issue than they are to change their party identification.[76] Party identity often trumps loyalties to interest groups and their leaders as well. Interest group organization affiliation is not typically adopted as early in life, reified as often, nor held onto as long; as a result it is easier to let go of than partisan identification.[77] Thus, when an interest group leader harshly challenges a politician of a group member's party creating dissonance between two sources of identity – group membership and party identification – that leader runs a serious risk of voice, vote, *and* exit for precious little (if any) reward.[78]

An interest group with a highly partisan membership may be reluctant to take politicians of their own party to task but, as Lawrence Rothenberg's Common Cause case study shows, such groups aggressively sniff out bones of contention with the opposing party. During the Reagan administration, Common Cause, a group primarily dedicated to campaign finance reform and government transparency, set its lobbyists to work stopping the president's planned launch of the MX Missile program.[79] According to the group's leadership, the idea to enter a policy area so detached from their principle agenda originated with the grassroots. According to one governing board member quoted in Rothenberg's book on the subject:

> I felt…that the organization would weaken its focus on its core mission if it got involved in a variety of other issues outside the explicitly structure and process issues the organization was formed to address…I believe that to some extent here is an example of where the citizen activists and constituents "led" the leadership in the organization." [80]

While technically a non-partisan 501(c)(3) group, Common Cause's membership is almost exclusively Liberal Democrats who, according to the group's founder, were deeply affected by "the Reagan rhetoric and the…real fear that this nuclear stuff was out of control."[81]

If the partisan homogeneity of an interest group places limits on how much pressure the group can apply to party elites, those limits are only likely to tighten as time passes. As groups endorse candidates for office, a percentage of members may feel increasingly at odds with, and out of place in, the group. Though loyalty or strong commitment to the group's overall mission may prevent such ideological odd-men-out from leaving the group immediately, some percent, in time, will.[82] When they do exit, a group's ideological outliers will leave the group still more ideologically homogeneous. As this process repeats itself, the groups that adopt partisan strategies of influence see their memberships become increasingly homogeneous as minority factions are successively whittled away. Paul Johnson terms this process, evocatively, "unraveling."[83]

Further, new generations of group members will likely not be as ideologically diverse or open to bipartisan strategies of influence. As Michael Heaney shows, ideology and advocacy techniques are central parts of an organization's identity.[84] A Democrat is unlikely to join a group filled with Republicans or Socialists, and people who prefer direct action are not likely to join a group that specializes in crafting well-researched model bills. As a group takes on a partisan reputation and electioneering becomes a part of an interest group's identity, the group will likely attract a more partisan and more political potential members than it once did. The Sierra Club, once a relatively non-

partisan 501(c)(3), experienced just this when they became more overtly political in the late 70's and early 80's. As Philip Berry, a long-serving president of the group, recalled:

> In 1982, we had a pleasant surprise. We found that in many instances the people acting for the club politically had not been in leadership roles before. They were grass-roots activists who seemed to say, 'I wished somebody had done this, and now the Sierra Club has. I'm going to go join to help out.' And so, we got new blood. People wanted to be politically active. Their motivation was environmental *politics*, and we were the vehicle.[85]

That injection of new blood changes the character of the group and the incentives future leaders will respond to as they interact with parties and politicians. Interest groups do not just *act* in a more overtly partisan manner, they actually *become* more partisan from the inside out.

Key argues that parties, in the final analysis, get the better of this arrangement. They ultimately are the ones that direct the caravan of fellow travelers. Daniel Schlozman, who has produced one of the most nuanced and theoretically rich accounts of interest groups and party interactions, demonstrates via carefully constructed case studies that parties, ultimately, draw the boundaries across the political topography and interest groups immigrate or expatriate, that is, *if* the border is opened to meet them. Immigration policy, too, is under the purview of party leaders. Thus, "partisan response, rather than movement choice, determines the ultimate outcome."[86] Often admittance into the party means "defanging movement radical[ism]" and "more doctrinaire brethren" since "parties seek supporters who will not unduly upset their coalitions."[87]

Together, these findings clearly lend significant support to V.O. Key's parallelism thesis. On the other hand, it is hard to square them with Schattschneider's conclusions. The fact that party leaders seed new groups, even though these groups will act

autonomously and may even challenge their decisions or threaten the dominance of traditional party organizations, suggests that these insiders understand that the existence of a strong generally simpatico interest group is a net advantage. Even if allied groups cause trouble from time to time, party leaders seem to recognize that – at least in the modern era – traditional party organizations need auxiliary organizations. Such groups may be better positioned to mobilize varied constituencies, develop issue expertise, and speak to the public without the taint of overt partisanship. Also, party leaders may understand what Heaney demonstrates: that the risk of serious antagonism is actually quite low. If interest groups and parties are at all responsive to their mass memberships, and if those mass memberships overlap as much as recent research seems to indicate, a shared sense of purpose between party and interest group will naturally grow from a group's grassroots. For many interest group members, the party is not an outside force to be used instrumentally but an important source of identity.

Pluralism, Parallelism, and Antagonism in the UCLA School's Synthesis

Some have gone so far as to suggest the very distinction between party organization and non-party organized interest is no longer relevant. Scholars associated with what has become known as the UCLA School argue that over-formal, tightly circumscribed definitions focusing on national committees, officeholders, and paid employees, mischaracterize the modern political party. "The formal party apparatus," Koger, Masket, and Noel write, "is only one part of an extended network of interest groups, media, 527s, and candidates."[88] These networks of political elites can sometimes work at cross-purposes, be riven by internecine squabbles, or even break apart, but they

typically unite behind consensus nominees during election season, working effectively to control government (which is, after all, the *ur* objective of a party).[89] The "shadow party" is the term that is sometimes given for the collection of interest groups, activists, social movements, and pundits that work in concert with the national committees and politicians.

The evidence UCLA School scholars have presented in support of their group-centered account of party behavior is impressive. Over the last ten years, they have shown that presidential nominees, party platforms, and even the shifting tenets of Conservatism and Liberalism reflect the wishes of the shadow party.[90] Bolstering the notion that groups that tend to support the same candidates are more than just the sum of their parts, shadow party interest groups seem to work as a team sharing donor information and coordinating their campaign expenditures.[91]

The UCLA School represents a unique blend of Key, the Pluralists, and also Schattschneider. Like Key, they believe interest groups and traditional party organizations are not as distinct in their goals or fundamentally antagonistic in their ends as Schattschneider claims. But, in claiming loosely connected interest group alliances *are* the party properly understood, they go significantly further than Key who claims only that groups and parties function in *parallel* toward the same objectives. In their belief that interest groups, rather than party committees and politicians, are primarily responsible for setting party platforms and settling on a slate of candidates for office, the UCLA School scholars reflect Truman and Bentley. But, like Schattschneider, UCLA School authors believe interest group pluralism has serious ill effects, namely political polarization. As Marty Cohen and his coauthors emphasize, only groups with polarizing policies need to

enter the fray of partisan contestation because "for policies that would make most voters better off, simple persuasion would be effective." Meanwhile, groups with policy preferences out of step with the average citizen, "simple persuasion" or majoritarian politics is not enough. They must enlist friends – politicians, pundits, and other ideologically simpatico interest groups – to move their agenda forward. "Inevitably," Bawn et al. claim, "party programs [heavily influenced by partisan interest groups] are less than perfect matches for the concerns of most voters, who respond with varying degrees of trust, adaptation, and confusion."[92]

Time and Convergence: Changing Party-Group Relationships

One clear shortfall of the UCLA School is the fact that they do not address the importance of the laws and regulations that shape the incentives and behavior of interest groups and traditional party organizations. Their shadow parties seem to exist outside of time and context. Their definition of parties – as coalitions of party committees and interest groups, political elites and outside activists – is not time-bound nor contingent on any particularity of the contemporary institutional context. The fact that interest groups should agglomerate into two rival shadow parties is understood to be a logical reaction to the two party, winner-take-all electoral context that has existed since America's founding. And, yet, interest groups have not always behaved like this. As Daniel Schlozman and others point out, in the 19th Century, interest groups were more likely to form third parties than to ally with a major party.[93] Then, at the turn of the 20th Century, interest groups emphasized technical policy expertise as opposed to electoral might.[94]

The tendency of interest groups to ally with one major political party to the exclusion of the other is a mid-Twentieth Century development.

Many scholars of parties and interest groups – including many associated with the UCLA School – also overlook the ways the interest group population has changed over the course of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Century. At mid-century, most interest groups were focused on narrow interests or parochial interests associated with one industry or segment of the workforce. A few *peak associations* like the American Federation of Labor and the National Association of Manufacturers represented larger swaths of the American public but these groups were few in number and, as with smaller organizations, were largely focused on the material interests of their members. It was not until the *associational explosion* of the 1960's that significant numbers of *public interest groups,* sometimes referred to as *citizen groups*, were formed to advance their sense of the general welfare rather than their members material interest. At the same time groups like the Sierra Club, the Christian Coalition, and Human Rights Campaign changed the interest group ecology, many older material interest groups started casting their objectives in more ideological terms. While Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, tended to focus on collective bargaining agreements on behalf of labor union members, today the AFL-CIO works to "to ensure *all* working people are treated fairly, with decent paychecks and benefits, safe jobs, dignity, and equal opportunities."[95] The American Association of Retired People (AARP), once assiduously focused on safeguarding programs that aid the elderly, now takes positions on everything from gun control to LGBT workplace discrimination to energy regulations.[96] So expansive is the group's agenda that it changed its name from the American Association

for Retired Persons to simply "AARP, Inc."; its four letter moniker, once an acronym, now stands for nothing, signifying that the group now stands for everything.

Traditional party organizations have also changed significantly since the middle of the Twentieth Century not only in the degree to which they lean on and listen to interest groups, but also in terms of their goals and who they hire. When E.E. Schattschneider, David Truman, and V.O. Key penned the seminal texts of the interest group canon, traditional party organizations were still largely dominated by party bosses like Chicago's Michael Daley, senior members of Congress like Wilbur Mills, and powerful state party committee leaders like Connecticut's John Moran Bailey, who served as party chairman for nearly four decades. This cadre of professionalized party elites had retained the helm of the major parties despite Progressive Era reforms. The distinctions Schattschneider, LaRaja, and Fiorina often draw between the incentives driving party insiders and outside activists may well have been true during this era. Party leaders effectively marginalized voices they thought were too extreme, serving, instead, parochial, narrowly hewn, and mainstream interests that would not hurt their chances of appealing to the average voter. So diligently did both parties seek out the pivotal median voter and avoid controversial stances and alliances, that George Wallace famously observed there was not "a dime's worth of difference" between Republicans and Democrats.[97]

Within the next twenty years, however, traditional party organizations underwent a fundamental change from the inside out. Aided by waves of reform begun by the Progressives, inspired by the writing of Schattschneider and the other authors of APSA 1950, and continuing even today, James Q. Wilson wrote that, in the 1960's, "a new kind

of politician" came to the fore: what he called the "amateur democrat." In contrast to professional party elites who were "preoccupied with the outcome of politics in terms of winning and losing," amateur democrats do not see victory in terms of seats held and elections won but "in terms of ideals and principles." For the amateur democrat, winning in November means nothing if those victories are not translated into significant policy change. These "amateurs" look much more like the interest group activists that lead groups like the Sierra Club and the Christian Coalition than the party bosses that once led the major parties. By the 1960's, greater transparency and openings for public participation made it difficult to pay back political volunteers and favors in non-competitive contracts, municipal jobs, and nominations to run for office. As waves of reform finally began to wash away layers of graft and cronyism, those dissuaded from participating in politics or running for office by the dirtier aspects of party politics entered public life. As those once drawn to politics by the "extrinsic satisfaction of participation – power, income, status, or the fun of the game" started to recede from public life, amateur democrats who find "politics intrinsically interesting because it expresses a concept of the public interest" came to lead the major parties.

Now that amateur democrats took the helm of the two major parties, both public and large material interest groups started to pursue non-excludable, public interest agendas, and new statutes began to force parties to rely more on interest group resources, the Schattschneiderian account of the distinctions between groups and parties seems less tenable. Groups and parties are now staffed by the same people (in many cases, literally), attract volunteers by the same purposive (as opposed to material) incentives, and work together during election season to support the same candidates. Partly owing to changes

within each institution and partly owing to laws that govern the fundraising, lobbying, and electioneering efforts of groups and parties both, antagonism and competition appear to have given way to parallelism.

Whence parallelism?

Parties, interest groups, and officeholders– the primary players in the American political drama – would all prefer to operate with autonomy, all things being equal. Politicians would prefer to act according to their conscience or, failing that, respond directly (and only) to their constituency; interest groups would prefer to make their demands and have them met without having to invest any great sum in electioneering; and party leaders would prefer to pick winning candidates and craft appealing platforms without either interest groups or politicians pushing back or offering their two cents. At the same time, interest groups, parties, and politicians would all like to direct the other two sets of actors and are liable to look jealously upon the resources of one another. Logic would dictate that conflict would be the ordinary relationship between these actors. Any time their policy objectives, candidate preferences, or electioneering strategies differed, each should mobilize its resources – money, clout, network of supporters – against the others. Intra-party politics should be a scene of perpetual and bloody combat. And, yet, this is not what unfolds before us. Instead, what appears on stage is a rather placid scene with politicians, interest groups, and parties singing one another's praises in unison as a well-practiced choir. Union bosses, environmental activists, party committee chairs, and politicians all appear before their audience, arms locked in solidarity and looking on toward some distant object. Perhaps all the fighting goes on backstage; such

harmony seems implausible in the extreme. But, certain institutional arrangements make it considerably more likely that parties, politicians, and interest groups will not only *act* as though they are a harmonious whole, but will actually *become* a harmonious whole.

It is easy to see how and why parties and politician's interests might align. After all, parties are – for the most part – brought into being by politicians and office-seekers who recognized their value.[98] When parties were either non-existent or very weak, as they were during the first decades of the new American republic, politicians had great autonomy to determine their positions on any given issue and to run for whatever office they pleased whenever they though it advisable, and to make short-term or long-term alliances with the Members of Congress they chose. The advantages of this system – what Steven Skowronek refers to as the period of *patrician politics* – is that elected officials were free to respond to their constituencies or act according to their own ideological commitments free from the pressures of *team politics* that strong parties create.[99] The weaknesses of this system, though, were at least as weighty. Without any gatekeeper, candidates with largely similar policy preferences split each other's votes in general elections. Regional factions and local economic interests dominated roll-call voting and stymied the creation of the sort of stable, multi-issue, majority log-roll that would redound to the benefit all its members.[100] Discipline was needed to assure largely simpatico candidates for office did not steal votes from one another and to ensure the terms of multi-issue coalitions were followed even when they required tough votes. The advantages of national political parties were clear enough that within thirty years, elected officials were willing to sacrifice some of their patrician autonomy for their creation.[101]

The common ground between interest groups, parties, and politicians is less obvious. Unlike parties, interest groups did not start out as service organizations for politicians. Their value to politicians, much less to parties, was not immediately so clear. The value of politicians and to parties was not immediately obvious to organized interests either. The first large, national associations were distinctly apolitical. Early regional and national associations mostly consisted of religious denominations, fraternal orders like the Freemasons, and ethnic group organizations predominantly for Irish and German immigrants.[102] After the Civil War, a period Arthur Schlesinger termed the "Golden Age of Fraternity," many benevolent and charitable organizations like the Knights of Columbus, the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, the Knights of Pythias, and many others were founded in the decade that followed the war's end.[103] While most associations did not engage in any political activities, not all groups were similarly sanguine regarding government policy. Some groups formed during this period lobbied government almost incidentally to meet very specific policy goals. For example, the New York Municipal Society lobbied New York City's government for cleaner streets. Other groups, like the Cigarmakers' Association of the Pacific Coast (a proto craft union), were formed explicitly to advance a policy agenda.[104]

When interest groups outside the party fold did attempt to advance a policy agenda, they followed three different avenues – what Robert Dahl called a trilemma of mutually exclusive options.[105] Interest groups can: 1) choose to organize its own political party, 2) remain neutral between the two major parties, or 3) enter into an alliance with an existing party. From the 1830's until around 1900, groups tended to follow the first two of these three paths. Parties like the Anti-Mason Party, Know-Nothing Party, the Free

Soil Party, and the Greenback Party, were what we might call *single-issue parties*, formed as factions that might today start an interest group or political action committee. Other third parties like the Populist, Bull-Moose, and Progressive Parties advanced broader platforms that united several political factions.

During the middle and later Nineteenth Century, the sort of nonpartisan inside-the-beltway lobbying that is common today also took shape.[106] Business and manufacturing interests lobbied state legislatures and the federal government for subsidies, tariffs, land grants, suppression of upstart unions and picket lines, and many other favors. During the Grant administration, lobbying hit an early apex in Washington as economic interest groups and large corporations advanced their agenda through paid surrogates with connections to state and federal politicians.[107]

At the turn of the 20th Century, this tactic spread and the modern policy-focused organized interest group took shape. Elizabeth Clemens's research shows that during the Progressive Era, political entrepreneurs in women's suffrage groups, labor unions, and agricultural associations, adopted lobbying techniques once only employed by corporations.[108] Contemporaneous political scientists also described the first two decades of the Twentieth Century as a period during which interest groups became considerably more professional and nationalized.[109] Looking back at this period, Dan Tichenor and Richard Harris confirm there is a significant uptick in the number of interest groups appearing in the archives of the U.S. Congressional Committee Hearings Index from these years.[110] Groups like the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the American Federation of Labor, however, did not seek to ally with one party. Instead, they worked hard to maintain reputations for

nonpartisan expertise.[111] The goal of these groups, as Elizabeth Clemens observes, was to win over individual policymakers on both sides of the aisle by providing unimpeachable, unbiased, social scientific evidence about the impact of the policy options before them. Over the course of the late Twentieth Century, policy-focused, Washington-based interest groups started to displace the largely apolitical, locally-rooted fraternal associations of the past.[112]

Nonpartisan, expertise-based strategies did not work for every group and the first organized interests to definitively align with a party were among the largest and most influential. Labor unions and certain peak business organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers were among the first to adopt partisan strategies of influence. David Truman suggests that these very largest of organized interests came to represent – at least in their own conception – more than their members but the business community and the American worker writ large.[113] Given the class cleavages that divided the major parties at this time, it is easy to see why peak labor and industry groups would abandon hope of maintaining allies on both sides of the political aisle. Still, throughout the 1950's and 1960's it was more common for interest groups to bypass parties altogether dealing directly with Members of Congress, their aides-de-camp, and career bureaucrats.[114]

A new cohort of public interest groups forged in the furnace of 1960's activism reinforced, at least initially, norms of interest group nonpartisanship. While groups like the Sierra Club, National Organization for Women, and the National Council of La Raza eschewed inside lobbying strategies that relied on carefully cultivated relationships with policymakers and technical expertise, none the less, these organizations kept the parties at

a distance upon formation, though for different reasons. While the organized interests of the early 20th Century sought bipartisan influence via rigorous policy research – an imminently reasonable expectation in an era wherein Progressives held tremendous influence in both the Democratic and Republican Parties – public interest groups feared that getting too cozy with party bosses and politicians would to lead to unprincipled compromises and pulled punches. The same is true for many of the groups formed on the right in reaction to policy gains made by New Left inspired organizations. The National Right to Life Council, the Moral Majority, and think-tanks like the Heritage Foundation formed as non-partisan entities determined to maintain their autonomy.

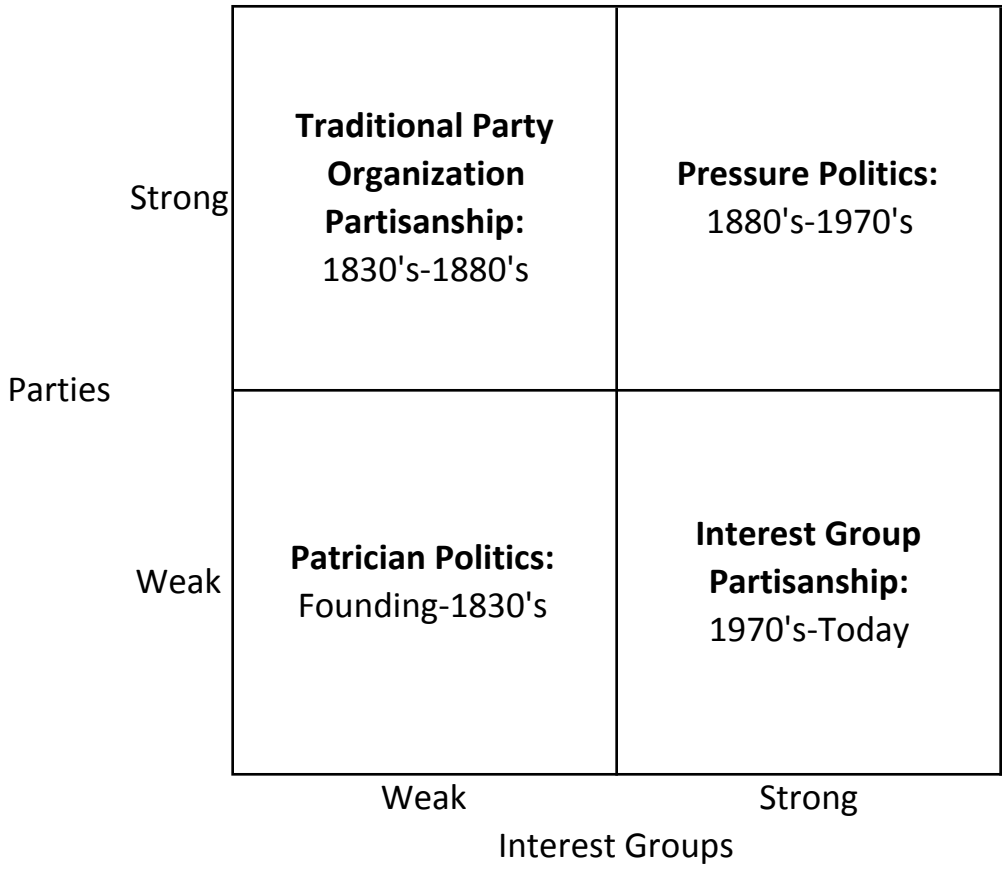
Partisan strategies of influence became considerably more common throughout the late Twentieth Century as groups large and small, corporate and union, material and post-material, broke decisively for one political party. Groups that initially intended to maintain ties with both parties, abandoned that hope. New groups like Moveon.org, Progressive Majority, and Citizen's United formed with the expressed aim of advancing the electoral fortunes of one political party. Today, a large proportion of prominent interest groups are decisively on one side of the political aisle. Of the organizations that appeared on Fortune Magazine's last Washington Power 25 ranking, nearly all contributed six or seven figure amounts in the previous election cycle, but invested nearly all of their money in candidates from one political party.[115]

While there is a tremendous amount of research regarding interest groups and parties – their changing tactics, scope of influence, and size – there is little work on the changing dynamics between interest groups and parties.[116] Only recently have scholars taken note of the way changes and adaptations in parties cause changes in the strategies

and influence of interest groups and vice versa. As Michael Heaney notes, "parties and groups evolved over time, they adapted to one another…Parties sprung up to routinize electoral competition, groups developed to compensate for the deficits of parties, and then parties demanded new services from groups," Heaney writes. "The biological metaphor of co-evolution is apt to describe the process."[117] Interest group and party strategies cannot be understood in isolation. Each major shift in the institutional capacities of interest groups or parties, often brought on by changes to campaign finance law or the tax code, has resulted in a shift in the relationship between these two entities.

Figure 1 below gives a broad overview of how the macro-level political trends above are partially explained by the institutional strength – by which I mean the ability to select and direct elected officials – of interest groups and parties. During the Era of Good Feeling, so called because of the lack of partisan contestation, the extraordinary weakness of national parties and negligible number of politically engaged organized interests left elected representatives relatively unconstrained. Other than individual concerned citizens back home, there were no watchful eyes looking over their shoulder or powerful disciplinarians forcing their hands.

Table 1: Legal Regimes & Institutional Power



Politicians lost significant autonomy as national political parties grew to maturity during the Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren administrations. For nearly a century, political parties held a near monopoly over the resources required to win and hold office. Access to patronage jobs allowed parties to solicit volunteers with the promise of employment. The fact that throughout the early and mid 1800's ballots were printed and distributed by the party, only contained the names of one party's candidates for all offices, and were often on colored paper, allowed party canvassers to monitor the polls and prevented individuals from voting a split ticket. Also, most newspapers were financed or otherwise tightly linked to one party.

The uncommon number of influential third parties that formed across this period is likely related to the institutional strength of political parties during this period.[118] It is, after all, surprising that in a winner-take-all electoral system, this would be a common tactic. As Duverger's Law demonstrates, nations with electoral systems like ours, where there is no reward for coming in a close second, should be dominated by two major parties. Why did minority factions of the past, like anti-masonic and anti-immigrant groups not understand what today's environmentalists and evangelical groups understand? The clearest means to influence in a winner-take-all system is not through a party of their own creation but through one or both of the already established, electorally viable parties. However, when traditional party organizations were electorally self-sufficient – when they had the means to coerce political volunteerism via the spoils system, to control the narrative via the party press, and pick their nominees via closed party caucuses – interest groups had little to add. The two major parties simply did not need to rely on outside groups and, as a result, offering assistance to a major party in order to get leverage was an abortive strategy.

Creating a third party, on the other hand, gave interest groups a way to at once hit the major parties where it hurt – the ballot box – and to demonstrate the size of their constituency and the importance of their issues to voters.[119] The idea, Rapaport and Stone hypothesize, was not to truly rival the two major parties, but to establish proof of concept to potential investors as an entrepreneur might. For third parties that perform well enough, a major party may orchestrate an acquisition. As Mazmanian observes, "Usually after a strong showing by a minor party, at least one of the major parties shifts its position, adopting the third party's rhetoric if not the core of its programs.

Consequently, by the following election the third-party constituency…has a major party more sympathetic to its demands."[120] For this reason, according to Hofstadter, "third parties are like bees; once they have stung they die."[121] While less common today, third parties still occasionally stung in the Twentieth Century. While essentially vehicles for presidential candidates, the George Wallace's American Independence Party, Ross Perot's Reform Party, and Ralph Nader's Green Party played determinative roles in presidential elections. However, today many more interest groups choose to work through an established party. Again, the institutional strength of contemporary political parties informed this shift in strategy. Unlike Nineteenth Century parties, modern political parties do not have a stranglehold on electoral resources. Even if it means opening the doors of the proverbial smoke-filled room to interest groups leaders, parties have no choice but to lean on outside groups for money, manpower, and messaging.

One by one, starting in the Progressive Era, the institutional capacities political parties enjoy were stripped away. The Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act of 1883 created the merit system for federal employees; thereafter, career civil servants would be hired without regard to partisan affiliation and removable only upon poor performance. This marked the beginning of the professional bureaucracy and the end of the spoils system. In the 1880's and 1890's, states began printing and distributing ballots allowing for secret voting and ticket-splitting. Nonpartisan, "penny press" papers, which were often keenly focused on exposing corruption and graft, attained wide circulation during the late 1800's, replacing partisan papers. When Florida held the first presidential primary in 1901, the course was set for party leaders losing control over who ran for office bearing the party's aegis.

For all the change the Progressives were able to manage, traditional party organizations still had considerable power as the nation returned to "normalcy" at the end of the Wilson administration. Party primaries remained an oddity by the 1920's. Party leaders still picked their candidates for most down-ticket races and presidential aspirants would still be chosen in smoke-filled rooms rather than popular primaries until the 1970's. The Progressives had not made any serious push to enact campaign finance laws, either, so parties were able to raise and spend unlimited quantities – though the price of political campaigns was still relatively modest until the popularity of televisions (and televised advertisements) transformed the way candidates reached out to their electorate. In short, by the end of the Progressive Era, traditional party organizations were definitely weakened but still capable of selecting who would represent the party in elections and subsequently meeting their electioneering demands.

Mitigating the loss of traditional party organization power, new limitations imposed on the political activity of interest groups kept parties and groups in rough parity. Owing in part to the explosive Teapot Dome scandal and other well-publicized incidents of corruption, Congress passed a series of campaign finance reforms starting with the Tillman Act of 1907, subsequently replaced by the Federal Corrupt Practices Act of 1910, and culminating with the Campaign Finance and Disclosure Law of 1925. As a result of these bills, spending by House and Senate candidates was capped at $5,000 and $25,000 respectively, all contributions above $50 were to be disclosed, and – most importantly from the perspective of interest group power – corporations and interstate banks were banned from contributing any money to politicians or candidates for federal office. With the Smith Connaly Act of 1943 and the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, passed as

Republicans regained a position of near parity with the long-dominant Democrats, Congress prohibited political contributions from labor union general funds as well. Anticipating these changes, the Congress of Industrial Organizations formed the first political action committee to channel voluntary contributions from its members to political campaigns. Still, the fact that unions could only spend these separate, segregated, and voluntarily contributed funds significantly limited potential impact on campaigns.

In addition to campaign finance reform, Congress also used the tax code to weaken the political clout of organized interests. In 1919, the Treasury Department ruled that organizations "formed to disseminate controversial or partisan propaganda" would no longer be covered under section 501(c)(3) of the tax code which grants public charities and private trusts tax-exempt status and their donors a tax write-off. [122] In 1934, Congress imposed strict lobbying limits on 501(c)(3) groups. In 1954, 501(c)(3)'s were forbidden from campaigning on behalf of candidates for office by a restriction appended to the Internal Revenue Code by then Senator Lyndon B. Johnson.[123] Some suggest Johnson pushed for the inclusion of this provision because an interest group endorsed a political adversary in his most recent political race.[124] After 1954, organizations interested in directly influencing elections or lobbying politicians would have to file under section 501(c)(4) of the tax code, which does not allow donations to be written off for a tax deduction.

During this period of group-party parity, which stretched from roughly the turn of the Twentieth Century until the 1970's, large interest groups like the Congress of Industrial Unions (CIO) and the National Association of Manufacturing formed political

action committees and were granted significant input into candidate selection and party platforms.[125] Such groups became what Daniel Schlozman terms "anchoring groups." As V.O. Key notes, mostly larger interest groups with wider constituencies and more thoroughgoing agendas tended to chose parallelism to outside pressure. For most groups, standing athwart the partisan divide was still the strategy of choice.

Perhaps more interest groups would have adopted this tactic but for the tight control of party bosses, apparatchiks, and senior Members of Congress that still held the reins of power in both parties. The still considerable institutional capacity of parties meant that partisan elites could afford to hold at a distance interest groups whose demands were perceived as too radical for the average white middle-class voter, or that could cause a rift between political elites. Even as the Democratic Party worked closely with the CIO, with the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, political elites pushed the CIO to expel unions that were seen as too far left like the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Farm Equipment Union.[126]

The continuing institutional capacity of the party meant that until the late 1960's and 1970's, the inner sanctum of the party caucuses were still dominated by the same party bosses and professional operatives Progressives decried. The "amateur democrats" James Q. Wilson describes – "true believers" motivated by ideological commitments and strong policy preferences – had not yet changed the composition of the parties. These old hands had very different motivations than do party leaders today, or the interest group activists of their time. While the balance of power within the Democratic leadership had long been shifting toward Northern Liberals, making a serious effort to consolidate the support of civil rights groups representing African-Americans was not seen as worth the

risk to white and Southern support – after all, the Democratic Party did not need these groups' institutional capacity, it only needed the votes of the demographic they represented – which they already had by the 1950's.

By the 1970's, a powerful wave of reforms weakened the parties to the point that they could no longer meet the ends to which they were originally formed. Reformers also worked to expand the primary system thereby ending party elite's ability to run the candidates of their choice. After the explosive 1968 Democratic convention, in which Hubert Humphrey, a relative moderate and the preferred candidate of the establishment, was handed the party's nomination over Senator Eugene McCarthy, whose anti-war stance had won him the support of the New Left and a majority of primary voters, the Democratic National Convention convened the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection – popularly referred to McGovern-Fraser Commission. The commission recommended, among other things, that the Democratic Party greatly expand the number of convention delegates selected by popular election. The party implemented the core elements of the McGovern-Fraser commission's recommendations and the Republican Party soon followed suit.[127] Since 1968, neither party has nominated a candidate for president who did not win the majority of delegates selected via popular primary.

Increasingly stringent campaign finance laws pushed individual donations away from campaigns and parties and toward interest groups and Political Action Committees. The Federal Elections Campaign Act (FECA) of 1971, amended in 1974, capped the amount individuals and groups contribute to a campaign or spend on advertisements. It also capped the amount candidates could spend overall on their campaigns. Many of the

new bill's provisions were struck down by the Supreme Court's 1976 decision in *Buckley vs. Valeo*. After the Court's ruling, organizations and individuals could donate unlimited amounts to party committees as long as the funds were not earmarked for electioneering purposes (this is often referred to as the "soft money" loophole), candidates were no longer subject to expenditure limitations, nor were independent expenditures (expenditures not directed toward or coordinated with or by a candidate's campaign or party) capped. Despite the *Valeo* decision, FECA's remaining provisions had a significant impact on the balance of power between interest groups and parties. Limitations on what individuals and groups could donate to parties combined with the possibility of unlimited outside expenditures expanded the power of outside spending groups relative to campaigns and parties.[128] Groups and individuals that had once contributed directly to campaigns now channeled money into political action committees once they reached the fairly low ceiling on direct contributions. Political Action Committees, many of which were, as today, tightly connected with corporations, trade associations, labor unions, and public interest groups, became the gatekeepers and custodians of this stream of money.[129]

Later campaign finance laws, like the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA), further diminished the spending power of parties and had a dramatic impact on the national party committees. Prior to its passage, parties were allowed to raise unlimited amounts of money for "party building". These contributions became an important source of funds that gave the DNC and RNC, through fundraising, candidate recruitment and training, and "messaging," and greater control over state and local organizations, resulting in the incipient formation of the first *national* machines in

American politics. BCRA short-circuited this development. It forbade "soft money" contributions to parties in national elections and required that the national committees rely on "hard money," subject to federal contribution limits. As a result, it is now considerably harder for national party committees to muster human resources to meet the demands of candidates as well. Prior to the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA), national party committees were able to use unlimited soft money contributions to fund training programs along with many other critical services.[130] But with their war chests limited to campaign activity, both the DNC and RNC now focus almost exclusively on strategic advertising buys to candidates locked in competitive elections. Meanwhile, non-profits are unconstrained by the FEC and IRS in regards to the amount they can spend on training.[131]

Although BCRA appeared to privilege spending by "independent organizations," the law did proscribe advertisements by outside groups that mentioned a candidate by name within thirty days of a primary and sixty days of a general election. However, these limitations were stripped away by the *Citizens United vs. the Federal Elections Commission*, which significantly tilted the law more favorably in the direction of independent groups. By leaving in place the new regulations on party fundraising, but declaring the limitation on outside spending groups unconstitutional, the Supreme Court pushed more money outside the party system and further weakened the parties in the face of interest groups and Super PACs. The Court reasoned that BCRA's limits on contributions to candidates and parties were permissible restrictions on citizen's ability to spend as they wish (and, in so doing, facilitate political speech) since such donations carry a significant risk of quid pro quo political arrangements. In the judgment of the

Court, Super PACs serve as an intermediary between potential briber and bribe recipient – according to their statute, Super PACs are prohibited from coordinating their activities with candidates or party officials – making contributions to such organizations less dangerous. While the Court's opinion did not express any animus against parties as such, their decision was premised on the idea that traditional party organizations were not as effective a barrier to political corruption as interest groups and Super PACs. Unsurprisingly, the combination of contribution limits imposed on donations to parties and interest groups by BCRA and the *Citizen's United* decision, Super PACs have multiplied and grown in financial might.[132] In 2012, the first presidential election cycle following the *Citizen's United* decision, independent, uncoordinated expenditures by Super PACs and interest groups hit $1 Billion, a 300 percent increase compared to 2008. Combined, the six Republican and Democratic national committees spent $1.3 Billion, a negligible increase over 2008. In 2016, outside expenditures rose to $1.4 Billion outpacing stagnating national committee spending for the first time in modern political history.[133]

Not all outside expenditures are made by interest groups or interest group connected PACs. Some PACs, like the Senate Majority PAC and the House Majority PAC, are party connected. Others are creatures of an hour established to help one political candidate. Still others are a hybrid; PACs like Majority Forward and Priorities USA are not connected to a party or an interest group and do not have a specific issue or slate of issues for which they lobby. Instead, they focus on serving the party, its candidates, and the shadow party as well. The distinction between these organizations and policy-focused interest groups manifests in the way they describe themselves.

Priorities USA, the largest PAC on the left, states it is a "service center for the grassroots progressive movement." Majority Forward, a 501(c)(4) group that spent over $10 Million in 2016, says it was "created to support voter registration and voter turnout efforts." All these groups, however, are expressly forbidden by law from coordinating their activities with a candidate for office or party. Thus, as outside expenditures overtake spending by party committees, party leaders lose control over electioneering activities and campaign messaging even if interest groups do not account for every dollar of that spending.

Weakening political parties have not just created new opportunities for interest groups to influence the policymaking process, they have also changed the incentives that inform their advocacy. As descried above, throughout American political history, interest groups have shaped their behavior in response to changes in the institutional strength of political parties. When parties and interest groups were both weak, this function was fulfilled by the personal networks built by individual politicians. When parties were strong and interest groups weak, many interest groups had to form parties to be taken account of. When interest groups and parties had comparable institutional capacity, the pressure politics bemoaned by Schattschneider and Lowi and praised by pluralists like Key and Truman developed. Now that campaign finance law empowers interest groups, they no longer are at liberty to simply press their policy agenda; they must also fulfill the roles parties once did. They must also take into consideration the same factors – public opinion, electability, the stability of a broad, enduring coalition – to which traditional party organizations respond.

Why Parallelism?

E.E. Schattschneider would not recognize nor understand the most powerful interest groups of today – groups like Majority Forward or Priorities USA, nor even groups like Sierra Club or the National Right to Life. He could not account for their relationship to the parties, nor their fierce advocacy for rather moderate candidates. He could not account for their restraint nor their self-censorship. He could not understand the breadth of their agendas, nor their focus on the perceptions of the broad public. In many ways, today's interest group community fits Schattschneider's description of parties better, which is undoubtedly why the term "shadow party" has so much currency today. As they have ascended to the mantle of party power, interest groups have assumed also the responsibilities political scientists once believed only parties could fulfill. In fact, it is not the *form* an institution takes or the *name* we append to it that governs its behavior, but the *functions* it fulfills. Once an interest group determines that its fate relies on the electoral success of one political party and, as a consequence of this realization, commits to advancing the odds of that party's electoral success, the pressures that bear on traditional party organizations come to bear on it, because, in essence, it has adopted the function of a traditional party organization.

In politics, there are also certain established functions that must be filled. Candidates for office must be selected, someone must formulate the plan for government that candidate will pitch to the voters, and, if that candidate wins, someone else must try to either keep the candidate accountable to that sales pitch or else explain to the voters why he defied their expectations. In a prior era, parties fulfilled these functions and today interest groups do. But the job description is the same no matter who is turning the

wrenches on the factory floor. Just like jobs outside of politics, creativity, agency, and autonomy are all constrained by the need to get results. The functions party bosses once filled have objective measures of success indelibly attached to them and, for these reasons, whatever organization takes them on can be expected to perform them in roughly the same way. Interest group leaders may prefer – all else equal – a candidate that is more ideologically pure, but the risk of fielding a losing candidate is a powerful incentive to stay on the right side of Duverger's Law and hew close to the median voter. Similarly, groups might prefer to reward their most faithful allies with large campaign contributions but, if they are not in a tight race, doing so does not help to assure the reins of congressional leadership stay in the right hands. Whatever the form of the institution – be it a party boss, or urban machine, a strong national committee, or an interest group – success is defined the same way so, in the last analysis, the function will be carried according to the same rules.

There are other explanations as to why interest groups adopt partisan strategies. Some, like Paul Frymer, argue that the reason interest groups seem to function in parallel with the political party owes to coercion.[134] Groups whose support for one party is more-or-less assured lose their leverage over both the more and the less simpatico party. Friendly partisans know they have little to fear by ignoring an "electorally captured" group and contra partisans know they have little to gain by appealing to them. As Barbara Sinclair and Ronald Shaiko show, politicians and party operatives understand and take advantage of a captured group's lack of options. Not only do electorally captured groups risk being ignored, party elites often call upon groups to publically sing the praises of policies and politicians they grumble about in private; they have little

choice but to accede in the hopes of keeping a seat at the table.[135] Yet, top-down pressure does not explain the popularity of partisan strategies of influence and the rise of the shadow parties. Politicians have always had an interest in getting fractious organized interests to support their policies. Early Twentieth Century presidents famously attempted to coerce interest groups to toe the party line or, at the very least, tone down their criticism.[136] More importantly, as political parties have lost power, it would seem that party elites would lose leverage over them. Instead, more interest groups than ever divert significant resources to bolster the fortunes and sing the praises of one political party.

Another explanation as to why more interest groups might tend to toe the party line is increasing party polarization. As the parties drift further and further apart, perhaps more interest groups are forced to choose a side, unable to straddle the widening gulf dividing elected Republicans and Democrats. But this explanation of the rise of the shadow parties seems implausible when the full scope of American political development is brought into view. As Poole and Rosenthal have shown, party polarization is the norm in Washington, not the exception. The period of time between roughly 1920 and 1980 – the period during which Schattschneider, Key, Dahl, Truman, Key, Wilson, and Lowi wrote the canonical works of the party and interest group literature were written during a period of extraordinarily low partisanship. This was a historic accident caused largely – if not completely – by the aversion of the "Solid South" to the party of Lincoln, despite the fact that they had more policy preferences in common with the GOP than with the rest of the Democratic Party. Despite the fact that from the 1830's through the early 1900's, the major parties voted as a block roughly as often as they do today, interest groups did

not regularly adopt partisan strategies of influence as they do today. Only within the last twenty to thirty years have interest groups formed anything resembling the shadow party alliances the UCLA School identifies. If polarization on Pennsylvania Avenue explained polarization on K Street, we would have seen a phenomenon similar to the modern shadow party earlier in American history.

Stepping Back: Interest Group Partisanship and The Regime

Of course, not all interest groups have been transformed by receding party power. In fact, the vast majority of interest groups continue to hold both parties at a healthy distance. Most 501(c)(3)'s – groups like the Humane Society, the March of Dimes, and the American Cancer Society – have agendas that simply do not breed partisan contention. Other groups like Greenpeace, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, and the John Birch Society are too extreme to attract serious attention from even the most radical public official. Another huge segment of the interest group population donate nearly commensurate amounts to candidates from both political parties; almost all trade associations and corporate PACs give money to powerful members of Congress, members of relevant committees and subcommittees, and long-serving incumbents regardless of party.[137] These groups do not use their money to propel one party to office, but to assure access to those on both sides of the aisle who can push their agenda forward. While it is becoming harder and harder for such groups to maintain friendships on either side, even in these highly polarized times, there are still many policy domains that do not cleanly cleave the two parties.[138] In these "off-cleavage" policy spaces, interest groups can and do attempt to buy the affections of Democrats and Republicans. Groups with

relatively narrow or highly technical policy demands are also unlikely to face partisan contention requiring them to choose sides.[139]

Still, the number of interest groups that contribute to political campaigns has gone up significantly in recent years. Furthermore, partisan interest groups have rushed to take advantage of new institutional opportunities that have been opened up or expanded over the last decade; as Boatright observes, we have yet to see a single bipartisan PAC or Super PAC.[140] Partisan interest groups also tend to be larger, peak organizations, like the Chamber of Commerce or the AFL-CIO, that represent such a wide swath of the population, have such broad agendas, and involve themselves in such a wide array of issues that they are almost certain to make powerful enemies and draw the ire of a political party.[141] Groups that work on what Carmines and Stimson term "easy" issues – that is, issues that are symbolic rather than technical, about policy ends rather than means, persistent rather than new to the political agenda, and likely to elicit a gut response from even the relatively ill-informed American citizenry – are also more likely to face partisan contention.[142] In short, the sort of groups that comprise the shadow party are likely to be more visible by dint of the size of their constituencies or the provocative nature of their policy agenda. To the extent partisan groups enjoy greater influence over the policymaking process, their influence may be even more out of proportion to their numbers.

Function-based theory proposes that the influence of partisan interest groups over politicians, parties, and the public may be less dramatic than one might conclude from the work of Schattschneider, Lowi, or Fiorina. Still, the changing role of interest groups in American politics may not be altogether healthy for the regime. One of the unique

characteristics of the American regime, noted by scholars from Alexis de Tocqueville to Louis Hartz, is the seemingly trivial differences between political parties. Unlike in Europe, where party often intersects with class and basic ideas about how wealth, power, and property should be disposed of, in the United States both parties have espoused devotion to the core precepts of John Locke's political theory, individual rights more generally, and capitalism. Tocqueville made a similar observation regarding Nineteenth Century politics. While parties still fought over control of congress and state houses and politicians launched frothing rhetoric against each other, he observed:

> As they do not feel themselves elevated and sustained by great objects, their character is stamped with a selfishness that shows openly in each of their acts. They always become heated in a cool way; their language is violent but their course is timid and uncertain.[143]

Recent scholarship suggests the rising tenor of partisan hostility obscures the deep underlying agreement between the parties. Lilliana Mason writes in her aptly titled article "I Disrespectfully Agree," Americans are not as divided on the issues as is often claimed. However, since the mid-Twentieth Century, *social* polarization, "characterized by increased levels of partisan bias, activism, and anger, is increasing, driven by partisan identity and political identity alignment."[144] In short, her findings indicate Americans feel stronger attachment to their own party and deeper animosity toward opposing partisans even though, substantively, there is much common ground. Interest groups may contribute to the *appearance* of deep and principled division between the parties without actually causing such a cleavage. The seemingly inexorable link between political party and the groups they "stand for" is a prerequisite for today's vitriolic, reflexive, partisanship, which can apparently exist independently of actual policy disagreement.[145]

Few party or interest group scholars have considered the possibility that perhaps the tension between interest groups and parties was an advantage of the old regime. Insofar as campaign finance laws coerce interest groups to take a more active role in party politics, they also attenuate what may have been a productive tension between two sorts of organizations with legitimate and competing rights to rule. In the years between approximately 1920 and 1970, when interest groups and parties had roughly comparable institutional strength, both types of organizations played unique roles. During this era, Schattschneider's descriptions of the roles and tendencies of parties and interest groups were nearly accurate. Few interest groups seemed to form close alliances with either major party. Even groups that clearly sided with one political party did not take on the major roles of the party; they remained only ancillary contributors to election efforts and did not seem to reach out to support other co-partisan groups in the way that organized interests of today do. Mid-Century parties were also closer to Schattschneider's description. Led and staffed by party bosses and apparatchiks drawn to politics by the promise of patronage jobs, kickbacks, or simply for the thrill of the fight, traditional party organizations seemed to focus more intently on winning over decisive undecided voters than today's parties controlled by *amateur democrats*.

If Schattschneider's description of the natural tendency of Mid-Century interest groups and parties was accurate, the healthiest regime may have been the one Schattschneider was describing. Parties and interest groups represent two very different but equally valid modes of organizing political claims. Parties focus on widening the scope of conflict, as Schattschneider notes. Their core functions – winning elections and harmonizing the demands of a majority coalition –requires them to focus on doing the

most good for the largest number of people. It requires them to keep a finger on the pulse of the public. It requires party elites to formulate some semblance of a program regarding every policy area of consequence. It requires that they sacrifice the perfect for the sake of the popular. The natural tendency of interest groups, on the other hand, is to defend assiduously the interests of one minority faction. This requires them to draw lines in the sand and stand in stalwart resistance. It requires group leaders to know a lot about one policy area rather than a little about all policy areas. It requires them to seek allies and try to win over the public, but it also requires they stand against the majority opinion if they fail. Taken to their extremis, both modes of politics are deficient. Principle and pragmatism, general will and parochial interests, big picture and issue expertise, each have an important place in a properly functioning democracy.

As interest groups fill the vacuum left by traditional party organizations, the productive tension between these two types of organizations slackens. The repercussions are concrete and disturbing. Instead of rewarding politicians of both parties for advancing their group's interests, partisan interest groups have a clear incentive to downplay the good deeds of politicians on the other side of the aisle, lest it aid him or her come November. Similarly, when erstwhile allies in high office disregard a partisan interest group's policy demands, they are unlikely to draw attention to the misdeed fearing it could hurt his or her electoral fortunes. In essence, as interest groups start to prioritize electoral victory, minority factions lose their only advocates. Counter-intuitively, the problem with interest group domination is not parochialism and uncompromising ideology, but that politics becomes too focused on the general will and electoral victory. As interest groups take on the roles and incentives of parties, they turn

away, by half steps, from the valuable function they are most well adapted to serve: representing specific interests and minority communities. Perhaps the healthiest regime would be one that incentivizes each to play its separate role and empowers each to compete with and balance the other.

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Truman, David Bicknell. *The Governmental Process*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971.

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[79] Rothenberg, Lawrence S., *Linking Citizens to Government: Interest Group Politics at Common Cause*. Cambridge University Press. 1992.

[80] Ibid., p.183

[81] Ibid, p.181

[82]Hirschman 1970

[83] Johnson, Paul Edward. "Unraveling in democratically governed groups." *Rationality and Society* 2, no. 1 (1990): 4-34.; Ainsworth, Scott H. *Analyzing interest groups: group influence on people and policies*. Norton, 2002.

[84] Heaney, Michael T. "Outside the issue niche: The multidimensionality of interest group identity." *American Politics Research* 32, no. 6 (2004): 611-651.

[85] Berry, Phillip S. *Sierra Club Leader, 1960s-1980s: A Broadened Agenda, A Bold Approach*. 1988, Vol. 31: 149 pp.

[86] Schlozman, 2015. p.43

[87] Ibid. p.45. Brian Schlozman admits that: "even many of the winners [of intra-group quarrels] seem radical in the context of the median voter and the political system as a whole." But, he points out that partisan interest group leadership tend to defer to party leadership. Schlozman writes: "Sidney Hillman, the 'labor statesman' from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, always deferred to Franklin

Roosevelt, unlike the fiery coal miner, John L. Lewis, or conservatives, for their part, have turned away from the jeremiads of Jerry Falwell. The cleavages in the black community after 1965 reveal similar patterns."

[88] Koger, Gregory, Seth Masket, and Hans Noel. "Partisan webs: Information exchange and party networks." *British Journal of Political Science* 39.3 (2009): 633-653.

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[90] Karol, David. *Party position change in American politics: Coalition management*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

[91] Koger et al., 2009.

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[93] Schlozman, 2015.

[94] Clemens, Elisabeth S. *The people's lobby: Organizational innovation and the rise of interest group politics in the United States, 1890-1925*. University of Chicago Press, 1997.

[95] ALF-CIO website. Online: https://aflcio.org/about. Accessed: July 8, 2017. Emphasis added.

[96] Robb, Bob. "Does the AARP Still Want Your Guns?" NRA: American Rifleman blog. April 10, 2013.https://www.americanrifleman.org/articles/2013/4/10/does-the-aarp-still-want-your-guns/; AARP website. Online: http://www.aarp.org/relationships/family/info-04-2011/where-aarp-stands-lgbt.html. Accessed: July 8, 2017.; "AARP. Specific Issues: ENG." Center for Responsive Politics. Opensecrets.org. Online: https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientissues_spec.. Accessed: July 8, 2017.

[97] This was a slogan of George Wallace's 1968 third party bid for the White House. He first uttered the phrase in 1966 when his wife Lurleen Wallace ran for Governor of Alabama after he was termed out of office.

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[101]Formisano, Ronald P. *The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861*. Princeton University Press, 2015.

[102]Olson, Alison Gilbert. *Making the Empire Work: London and American Interest Groups, 1690-1790*. Harvard University Press, 1992.

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[104] Kaufman, 1999; Cooper, Patricia Ann. *Once a cigar maker: men, women, and work culture in American cigar factories, 1900-1919*. Vol. 265. University of Illinois Press, 1987.

[105] Dahl, Robert A., 1967. Pluralist Democracy in the United States: Conflict and Consent. Chicago: Rand McNally.. Also see Schlozman 2015.

[106]Clemens, Elisabeth S. *The people's lobby: Organizational innovation and the rise of interest group politics in the United States, 1890-1925*. University of Chicago Press, 1997.

[107] Thompson, Margaret Susan. "The Spider Web." *Congress and Lobbying in the Age of Grant.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 1985.

[108] Clemens, 1997.

[109] Herring 1929; Crawford 1939.

[110] Tichenor, Daniel J. and Richard A. Harris, "Organized Interests and American Political Development." *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol. 117, No. 4 (Winter, 2002-2003), pp. 587-612.

[111] Clemens, 1997.

[112] Skocpol, Theda. "Advocates without members: The recent transformation of American civic life." in *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*. Theda Skocpol and Morris Fiorina editors. (1999): 498-504.

[113] Truman, 1951.
[114] Lowi, Theodore J. *The end of liberalism: Ideology, policy, and the crisis of public authority*. WW Norton & Company, 1969.
[115] Fortune Magazine's periodic ranking of interest group influence was based on the results of a survey of 2,200 Washington DC insiders, including members of Congress, their staffs, and senior White House officials, The last Fortune Magazine ranking was in 2001. While some of the groups on this list may not enjoy the same level of prominence they did 15 years ago, most are still noteworthy Washington players.
[116] Heaney, Michael T. "Linking Parties and Interest Groups." Maisel, L. Sandy, and Jeffrey M. Berry, eds. *The Oxford handbook of American political parties and interest groups*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2010.
[117]Ibid. p.570
[118] Third parties were common after this period as well of course. Some of the most electorally viable third parties- for instance, the American Independence Party and the Green Party – were essentially the vehicles of a presidential candidate (George Wallace and Ralph Nader respectively). Neither had viable down-ticket candidates. The Libertarian Party, consistently the leading third party in terms of general election vote count, is more akin to the third parties of the 19th Century. It does run candidate in congressional races as well as the presidential race, for instance. But, the Libertarian Party is far broader in its focus than single-issue parties like the Anti-Mason Party or the Know-Nothings. The Libertarian Party is not best understood as an embodiment of a single faction as these other groups were. There are many single-issue third parties exist today – such as the Legal Marijuana Now Party and the Taxpayers Party, are not nearly as electorally viable as their antecedents. Few have extracted any sort of concessions from either of the major parties so they continue to languor at the bottom of the ballot in perpetuity.
[119] Rapoport, Ronald B., and Walter J. Stone. *Three's a Crowd. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press*, 2005.
[120] Mazmanian, Daniel A. *Third parties in presidential elections*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1974. P.143
[121] Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1955. p.97.
[122] *Tax-Exempt Organizations: Political Activity Restrictions and Disclosure Requirements*. Congressional Research Service Report RL33377. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. Sept 24, 2010.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Judith E. Kindell and John Francis Reilly, *Election Year Issue*s, IRS 2002 EO CPE TEXT. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. 2002. p.448-51
[125] Schlozman, 2015; Charnock, Emily. *From Ghosts to Shadows: Parties, Interest Groups and the Rise of Political Action.* Dissertation. Charlottesville, VA.: University of Virginia. 2013.
[126]For a brief history of the Taft-Hartley Act, see: Reilly, Gerard D. "Legislative History of the Taft-Hartley Act." *George Washington Law Review* 1960. p.285. For a broader history of the CIO's response to pressure to exclude unions that were perceived to be communist dominated, see: Kimeldorf, Howard. "World War II and the Deradicalization of American labor: The ILWU as a Deviant Case." *Labor History* 33.2 (1992): 248-278. ; Zieger, Robert H. *The CIO, 1935-1955*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 1997.; Prickett, James R. "Some Aspects of the Communist Controversy in the CIO." *Science & Society* (1969): 299-321.; Chaison, Gary. "Federation Expulsions and Union Mergers in the United States." *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 28.2 (1973): 343-361.
[127]Atkeson, Lonna Rae, and Cherie D. Maestas. "Meaningful participation and the evolution of the reformed presidential nominating system." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42.1 (2009): 59-64.; Cohen et al. 2008; Shafer, Byron E. *Quiet Revolution: Struggle for the Democratic Party & Shaping of Post-Reform Politi*. Russell Sage Foundation, 1983.
[128] La Raja, Raymond J., *Small Change: Money, Political Parties, and Campaign Finance Reform*. Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008.; La Raja, Raymond J. "Why Super PACs: How the American party system outgrew the campaign finance system." *The Forum*. Vol. 10. No. 4. 2013.; Boatright, Robert G. *Interest groups and campaign finance reform in the United States and Canada*. University of Michigan Press, 2011.; Boatright, Robert G., ed. *The Deregulatory Moment?: A Comparative Perspective on Changing Campaign Finance Laws*. University of Michigan Press, 2015.
[129] La Raja, 2008, 2013.
[130] La Raja, 2008.

[131] While 501(c)(4) groups are subject to strict limits on how much of their overall budget can be directed toward what is loosely termed "political activity," giving union activists time off to engage in "community service" on election day, registering voters, or training community organizers, do not fall into this category and, thus, are not regulated.
[132] Boatright, Robert G. "Situating the new 527 organizations in interest group theory." *The Forum*. Vol. 5. No. 2. De Gruyter, 2007.
[133] Total Outside Spending by Election Cycle, Excluding Party Committees, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Online: https://www.opensecrets.org/outsidespending/cycle_tots.php.
[134] Frymer 1999; Mizruchi, Mark S., *The Fracturing of the American Corporate Elite*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013; Shaiko, Ronald G. "Reverse lobbying: Interest group mobilization from the White House and the Hill." Interest Group Politics 5th ed. Cigler and Loomis eds. (1998): 255-282.; Sinclair, Barbara. *Party wars: Polarization and the politics of national policy making*. Vol. 10. University of Oklahoma Press, 2014.. Ch.9
[135] Ibid.
[136] For much of his administration, Roosevelt – fearing the reprisals of recalcitrant Southern Democrats – attempted to tamp down rising civil rights activism. When, for instance, A. Philip Randolph, Walter White and Bayard Rustin began to organize a mass march on Washington, Roosevelt sent discouraging letters warning of racial hostility. He also invited Randolph and White to the White House to attempt to assuage and cajole them. Only after he issued an Executive Order prohibiting racial discrimination in federal vocational training programs and defense industry contracting did these early civil rights leaders agree to cancel their planned march. See: Kersten, Andrew E. *A. Philip Randolph: A life in the vanguard*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006.
pp.59-63. Lyndon Johnson's efforts to silence environmentalist critics was far more heavy-handed. When the Sierra Club took out a one-page advertisement in the New York Times decrying plans to dam the Colorado River, Johnson's Internal Revenue Service (IRS) decided to revoke the Club's 501(c)(3) non-profit status. While the group reorganized as a 501(c)(4) group, their donors would no longer receive tax deductions for their contributions as a result of the IRS's decision. See: Pearson, Byron E. *Still the Wild River Runs: Congress, the Sierra Club, and the Fight to Save Grand Canyon*. University of Arizona Press, 2002.
[137] Welch, William P. "The allocation of political monies: Economic interest groups." *Public Choice* 35.1 (1980): 97-120; Milyo, Jeffrey, David Primo, and Timothy Groseclose. "Corporate PAC campaign contributions in perspective." *Business and Politics* 2.1 (2000): 75-88.
[138] Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. *The Macro Polity*. Cambridge University Press, 2002. p.329-31 determined that 124 of the 200 issue areas they studied moved policy right or left while the rest had no clear ideological valence. See also Mayhew, 2006; Baumgartner et al. 2009.
[139] Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson. "The Two Faces of Issue Voting," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 74, No. 1. (Mar., 1980), pp. 78-91. Hunter, James Davison. *Culture wars: The struggle to control the family, art, education, law, and politics in America*. Basic Books, 1992. But see also: Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy Pope. *Culture war?: The myth of a polarized America*. Longman Publishing Group, 2006. Smith, Mark A. *American business and political power: public opinion, elections, and democracy*. University of Chicago Press, 2000. and Baumgartner et al 2009
[140] As Boatright points out: "[T]here are no bipartisan groups. Bipartisan groups tend to value access. For 527 groups sponsored by established interest groups, there clearly was no expectation that the 527 spending would increase the group's access. 527s were likely viewed by these groups as a supplement to more traditional activities, and this supplement was primarily directed towards the group's preferred party even if PAC contributions or other activities were not directed exclusively in this fashion. For the free-standing 527s, access was not pursued or expected at all." See: Boatright, Robert G. "Situating the new 527 organizations in interest group theory." *The Forum*. Vol. 5. No. 2. De Gruyter, 2007.
[141] In his study of the Chamber of Commerce, Mark Smith found the group's diverse membership and broad mission of representing "business-wide" policy priorities, means the group only stakes out positions that unite businesses of all sizes across all sectors of the economy. Such impactful policy proposals are likely to draw the attention of the public even if they are not "easy" issues, according to Carmines and Stimson's definition. Smith suggests the group's brassy chords often resonate with ideological refrains already in the air. Fairly or not, the Chamber has become an avatar for "big business" and one need only

say those two words to sense why Liberals and Conservatives, Democrats and Republicans from Pennsylvania Avenue, to K Street, to Main Street, typically square off regarding their agenda. See: Mark Smith . Baumgartner et al 2009

[142] Carmines, Edward G., and James A. Stimson. *Issue evolution: Race and the transformation of American politics*. Princeton University Press, 1989.

[143] De Tocqueville, Alexis. Democracy in America, Vol. 1, Part 2, Chapter 2. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. p 167

[144] Mason, Lilliana. "“I disrespectfully agree”: The differential effects of partisan sorting on social and issue polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59.1 (2015): 128-145. See also: Mason, Lilliana. "“I disrespectfully agree”: The differential effects of partisan sorting on social and issue polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59.1 (2015): 128-145; See also: Iyengar, Shanto and Sean J. Westwood. “Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization.” *American Journal of Political Science*. Dec. 16, 2014; Greene, Steven. “Understanding Party Identification.” *Political Psychology*. 20.2 (1999): 393-403.

[145] Lewis-Beck, Michael S. *The American Voter Revisited*. University of Michigan Press, 2009.; Wlezien, Christopher, and Arthur H. Miller. "Social groups and political judgments." *Social Science Quarterly* (1997): 625-640.; Miller, Arthur H., Christopher Wlezien, and Anne Hildreth. "A reference group theory of partisan coalitions." *The Journal of Politics* 53.4 (1991): 1134-1149.; Campbell, Angus, Phillip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley Press.; Zinni Jr, Frank P., Franco Mattei, and Laurie A. Rhodebeck. "The structure of attitudes toward groups: A comparison of experts and novices." *Political Research Quarterly* 50.3 (1997): 595-626.

Chapter 2: Interest Groups and Candidate Selection

When President Bill Clinton and the New Democrats took the helm of the Democratic Party in the 1990's, labor unions found that their agenda was a diminishing priority to their partisan allies. New trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) passed with support from Democrats as well as Republicans. Pivotal Democrats joined Republicans in killing union priorities like "card check"[1], and left-leaning politicians let proposals to prevent the permanent replacement of strikers languor and die.[2] Meanwhile, miners and pipefitters saw their jobs come under attack as the Democratic Party turned decisively in favor of preserving the environment even at the cost of employment in certain sectors of the economy.

All this changed in 2016. A populist wave lifted two candidates willing to question their party's under-emphasis on issues facing the working class generally and industrial unionists particularly. In so doing, both Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders became their respective party's most union friendly presidential primary contenders in more than 20 years. On the campaign trail, Bernie Sanders called for an overhaul of the nation's labor laws, which, he argued, contributed to sagging union participation rates. He also supported boosting the minimum wage to $15 an hour, long a priority of powerful service sector unions. While Donald Trump stood opposed to these union policy priorities, he, like Sanders, argued that the hastily conceived trade deal known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership should be dropped and that NAFTA should be thoroughly renegotiated. Trump also condemned, in much starker terms than Bernie Sanders, Chinese economic policies that he claimed helped them undercut America's manufacturing base. And, while Bernie Sanders stayed mostly mute on immigration,

Trump gave voice to a fear, shared by many blue-collar whites, that new immigrants were suppressing wages.

Despite Bernie Sanders' and Donald Trump's entreaties to union workers, neither earned significant support from organized labor leaders. Instead, the great majority of labor unions endorsed Hillary Clinton. Unlike Bernie Sanders, Clinton did not pledge to reform labor laws, raise the minimum wage to $15, or rework NAFTA. Late in the campaign, Clinton did vow opposition to the TPP but this promise was rendered considerably less credible by her own memoirs in which she stated the agreement represented the "gold standard" of multilateral trade deals," and a leaked speech transcript wherein she told business leaders that, despite her campaign rhetoric, she remains supportive of the TPP.[3] Despite her comparative weakness on key labor priorities, major unions like the Service Employees International Union, the United Food and Commercial Workers, American Federation of Teachers, and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees were among Clinton's first organizational advocates.[4] In all, Clinton racked up two dozen national labor union endorsements over the course of the primary campaign, while Bernie Sanders garnered the support of the National Nurses United, the American Postal Workers Union, and the Communications Workers of America.[5] Other major unions stayed on the sidelines, including traditional ground game powerhouses like the United Auto Workers and the Teamsters. The AFL-CIO also stayed neutral, even as a majority of its member organizations lined up behind Clinton.[6]

Once Hillary Clinton sealed up the Democratic Party's nomination, organized labor – or at least the national leadership thereof – formed a wholly united front around

the Democratic candidate. Despite the fact that Trump made protectionism, manufacturing jobs, and revitalizing the rust belt cornerstones of his campaign, union leaders had no praise for Republican Party's nominee. Speaking from the stage of the Democratic National Convention, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka claimed, "Donald Trump isn't the solution to America's problems, he *is* the problem."[7] Terry O'Sullivan, head of the powerful Laborers' International Union of North America, pointedly called the Republican nominee a "racist, sexist, prejudiced billionaire bully."[8] Organized labor leaders' fiery rhetoric was matched by a similarly ferocious electioneering effort. Labor unions donated more than $132 million to Super PACs and $35 million directly to candidates.[9] Unions did not just pepper the airwaves with campaign advertisements; they also flooded the streets with volunteers. In all, AFL-CIO members logged 100,000 volunteer hours, knocking on one million doors in the last three weeks of the campaign.[10] Their furious efforts came despite, or, perhaps, because of, their perception that many of their members were gravitating toward the Republican candidate. "He starts with a different profile than George Bush or Mitt Romney," said Andy Stern, former president of Service Employees International Union, recognizing the clear departure from Republican candidates of the past. "He is the first Republican in a while that has real appeal. I don't think people looked at Mitt Romney and said, 'He's going to fight for me.'"[11]

Unprecedented as labor's efforts were, they were not enough. And, on the morning of November 10th, the AFL-CIO found itself at the absolute nadir of its political influence. The organization had let Bernie Sanders, its fiercest advocate, languor and die during the primary. It then spent a record amount for a candidate that did not actively

court union voters. Finally, Election Day saw millions of union households flout leadership guidance, proving that the AFL-CIO's endorsement carried little weight even with its own members.[12] For one of the wealthiest and most powerful interest group sectors in the country, operating during a political epoch we are told is dominated by wealthy and powerful outside groups, this election cycle represented a stunning show of powerlessness.

Many claim that rising interest group campaign expenditures and influence over candidate selection has allowed outside organizations to set the policy direction of the two major parties. According to political scientists and pundits alike, the increased polarization, inattention to centrist swing voters, and the lack of compromise on Capitol Hill, is partly due to the rising influence of outside activists and interest groups.[13] According to the orthodox view, interest groups tend to favor more ideologically extreme candidates in primary elections, fund primary challenges when officeholders step out of line, and insure compliance with their agenda via major campaign contributions. Traditional party organizations – ordinarily focused on holding a maximum of political offices rather than promoting ideological rigidity – were once a powerful countervailing force. But, as waves of reform have stripped parties of their ability to control the nomination process or adequately fund a slate of candidates, interest groups have stepped to the fore and reshaped the incentives facing candidates for office. To win and hold power, officeholders must placate partisan interest groups that make up the shadow party rather than convince party bosses they can win the day in November. What the orthodox narrative assumes is that interest groups have not changed their electioneering strategies in response to the institutional decline of parties. Interest groups, this theory suggests,

have continued to behave the same way in the context of elections though their role in elections is more determinative.

Even scholars associated with the UCLA School – as John Zaller, Kathleen Bawn and their many students have come to be known – focus on the ways the shadow party and the party proper are similar but also careful to point out that interest groups are significantly less focused on romancing the pivotal median voter. On their account, growing interest group influence has not only diffused and decentralized political power, it has also led to greater polarization. As Kathleen Bawn et al. write: "Inevitably, party programs [heavily influenced by partisan interest groups] are less than perfect matches for the concerns of most voters, who respond with varying degrees of trust, adaptation, and confusion."[14] According to Bawn and others, interest groups have taken on the functions of the party but do not wield their newfound power the same way traditional party organizations did. Entering the fray of electoral competition does not change interest groups' policy preferences, nor does the fate of a political party ever displace policy victory as the primary goal of the interest group. Thus, in the electoral context, the UCLA School's model of shadow party behavior suggests that interest groups will get behind candidates that are further from the vital center of the body politic than party elites would prefer.

The vignette above, and the data that follow, indicate that partisan interest groups often work to serve the interests of parties and politicians, rather than coercing parties and politicians to serve them. The orthodox narrative ignores the way capacities, power, responsibility, and vantage point change behavior. It suggests that as interest groups have displaced traditional party organizations and a bygone cadre of political insiders,

they have maintained their outsider perspective. While gaining old guard status, they have maintained their vanguard spirit. The assumptions of function-based theory point in a different direction. As discussed at length in the last chapter, function-based theory suggests that all tasks have standards of success associated with them. In the case of candidate selection and campaign management, the standard of success is picking winning candidates and propelling them to office. These standards of success are not up for debate and do not change regardless of who is picking party nominees, making campaign contributions, or running campaigns. Thus, power may pass from one group or type of organization to another, but the erstwhile vanguard will likely carry out its new functions very much as the displaced old guard once did. Strategy and tactics are a byproduct of the function a group decides to fill, not the form the group takes – be it a labor union, trade association, public interest group, national party committee, or party machine.

In the context of elections, function-based theory holds that interest groups should support the same candidates in both primary and general elections that traditional party organizations do. Like party officials, interest group leaders must consider electability above ideological purity during primaries. During general elections, they must balance their desire to fund faithful allies against their desire to influence the most closely contested races. Winning close races might mean funding candidates that are not only weak allies, but may actually oppose key interest group priorities. But to assure control of government, interest groups, like traditional party organizations, must concentrate their efforts on pivotal battlegrounds rather than directing resources toward redoubts of support.

In this chapter, I will provide evidence that many of the specific expectations derived from the orthodox account of interest group influence are contradicted by empirical evidence. Interest groups are not as determinative of who holds office nor as extreme in their candidate preferences as they are often portrayed. Further, analyses of the candidates interest groups endorse in primary elections will reveal that partisan groups seem to act according to the same motives as traditional party organizations do. Like party organizations, interest groups tend to keep primary contests at arm's length for fear of angering their oft-divided membership or foredooming a positive working relationship with the party's eventual nominee. When interest groups do weigh in during primary contests, they tend to prefer tested politicians to insurgent outsiders just as national and state party committees do.

In general elections, interest group tactics and strategies are also similar to traditional party organizations. Both types of organizations tend to direct their money and manpower toward toss-up races. Resulting from this calculus, interest groups actually do not tend to reward ideological outliers or fanatic devotees of their cause. Because centrists are typically picked to run in hotly contested districts while hardliners usually hail from safe districts, moderates – not extremists – get the most interest group money. Thus, the interest groups that are most often blamed for partisan polarization – that is, strongly partisan interest groups – should actually use the bulk of their influence and resources to pick candidates with mass popular appeal in swing districts. This is a stark contrast from the orthodox view that partisan interest groups are pulling the two major parties to the poles of the political spectrum by rewarding loyalists with big donations and punishing those that step out of line with negative attack ads and primary challenges.

Primary Elections and Interest Group Power: Literature in Review

Throughout most of the 20th Century, political scientists did not devote much serious scholarship to interest group influence over primary elections. Political scientists seemed to have sensibly concluded that, given the minimal number of contested primaries and the very high success rate of incumbents, primary threats were "little more than a nuisance."[15] But rising polarization in the 1990's caused scholars to reassess and many political scientists have attempted to identify whether introduction of primary elections in the 1970's contributed to this phenomenon.[16]

Despite the fact that incumbents are still very rarely subject to a serious primary competition, some suggest the mere possibility is enough to scare candidates to the ideological polls long after they have established themselves as safe bets for general election victory. As Fiorina and Levendusky point out, "in all likelihood, incumbents act strategically to preclude primary challenges. Even if they are unlikely to face a challenge, candidates take special pains to maintain the support of their party's hard-core voters."[17] With more and more precisely gerrymandered safe districts, an increasing number of politicians are more likely to be caught in a tight primary election than a competitive general election and respond in kind. As McCarty *et al.* write:

> Presumably in an era of declining competition politicians no longer feel the need to reach out to moderate and independent voters to win elections. Instead politicians are free to pander to their ideological and partisan base. Politicians who do not pander may face primary challenges by ideologically purer candidates.[18]

Whether or not interest groups exacerbate these ill effects of popular primaries is an open question. The consensus view was, until very recently, that the introduction of primary elections contributed to increasing party polarization because primary *electorates*

prefer more extreme candidates than general electorates.[19] But, recent research has uncovered evidence that interest groups do amplify the polarizing impact of popular primaries.[20] Researchers have found that primary voters take note of, and take cues from, interest groups and prominent activists.[21] These cues are especially important during primary elections during which voters do not have partisan labels to use as heuristics. And interest groups provide more than cues for voters, they also provide seed money for political aspirants.[22] Interest group money at this stage of an election can be particularly impactful for several reasons. For one, advertising is a critical way of building a reputation and distinguishing one's self from a potentially crowded field of primary challengers; this is especially valuable to non-incumbents with low name recognition.[23] Further, party committees almost never spend money in contested primaries, nor do leadership PACs or corporations.[24] The lack of funding sources magnifies the impact of the few organized interests that *do* give.[25] For these reasons, scholars associated with the UCLA School count group involvement in candidate selection as their most efficacious tool of influence over politicians and parties.[26] Especially for groups that are essentially relegated to one major party, attempting to exert leverage over politicians can be a losing endeavor. [27] After all, groups that have nowhere else to turn cannot plausibly threaten to abandon their allies. This makes it all the more important to pick candidates whose commitment to a group's agenda can be trusted. As Cohen et al. write:

> Political scientists typically treat politicians as separate from the groups that back them for office, but the separation becomes somewhat artificial if as groups might like to do, they choose politicians from their own groups. A politician committed to group values will still value reelection, but she will be more likely to take initiatives and risks for the group than would one with a different background.[28]

During what they term the *hidden primary,* interest groups and outside activists pledge their support, their knowledge, and their resources behind a candidate who they believe is both electable and committed to their aggregated policy agenda. Via their central role in the candidate selection process, interest groups essentially shape the party in their own image. As Cohen et al write:

> In making nominations, the groups that constitute parties go beyond merely pressuring candidates to adopt positions closer to their own than most voters might prefer. They define basic party positions, decide how much electoral risk to take in pursuit of these positions, and choose which candidates to put forward under the party banner. Their purpose is to place reliable agents in government offices. Thus, intense policy demanders expect that their nominees will, if elected, provide loyal service on matters large and small.[29]

The approval of the Shadow Party is the first litmus test for any aspiring officeholder. They determine who bears the party's imprimatur and, in so doing, they set the agenda for the party-in-office. Given the UCLA School's assumption that partisan interest groups are high demanders with more extreme preferences than the median voter or the party bosses of the past, the impact of the hidden primary is easy to predict. "Inevitably," Bawn et al claim, "the party programs are less than perfect matches for the concerns of most voters, who respond with varying degrees of trust, adaptation, and confusion."[30]

Some scholars question the popular account of the impact of the popular primary and the power it confers on interest groups.[31] Recent empirical research has cast doubt on the popular assumption that primary elections contribute to polarization.[32] Stephen Ansolabehere and several coauthors attempted to isolate the impact of the introduction of the popular primary from other events that occurred at roughly the same time such as the Great Migration, the partisan realignment of the South, and the birth of ideological Conservatism, by leveraging the fact that states did not all adopt the popular primary

simultaneously. They find little evidence that the introduction of the direct primary resulted in polarized roll call voting records among the congressmen and senators of newly reformed states.[33]

Ansolabehere et al. also found that the spread of the popular primary in the 1970's did not bring on a rash of primary challenges. In the 1920's, before the mandatory direct primary was instituted in most states, the rate of incumbent challenge was over 20 percent in the in both the North and the South, reaching 30 percent by the 1930's. But, as direct primaries became more common, the rate of primary challenges actually fell. From 1968 to 1992, the number of state Democratic committees that held primary elections rose from 15 to 40. The number of states holding Republican primaries rose from 15 to 39 over the same period. Since 1968, there has never been a year in which even a quarter of House Members or Senators faced primary challenges.[34] In fact, from 1970 to 2010, the average number of incumbents to face primary challenges has been 9.4 percent.[35] Even in 2010, an election cycle dominated by insurgent Tea Party outsiders, only 14 percent of incumbents faced a primary challenge (or challenges) that deprived them of at least 25 percent of the vote. Only six were defeated.[36] Of the few primary challenges that do occur, Robert Boatright has found that ideology is a relatively rare impetus for a primary challenge.[37] Boatright also found that in those states where political party committees still play some role in the primary process, the number of contested primaries was nearly identical to states where party organizations play no role.[38] More surprising, when Boatright analyzed contemporaneous media accounts of each primary race from 1970 to 2010, he found that only about 12 percent were

ideologically motivated; this calls into question the popular view that primary elections are driving partisan polarization.[39]

Not only are primary challenges rare, the role interest groups play in these contests is relatively negligible. Robert Boatright finds the amount primary challengers receive from individual donors dwarfs spending by Political Action Committees of all kinds including leadership PACs established by individual politicians and PACs related to a single corporation. In fact, in every election year since 1982, primary challengers have spent more of their own money on their primary campaigns than they have received from Political Action Committees.[40] As Boatright explains:

> "[T]raditional, issue-oriented groups such as the National Rifle Association or the League of Conservative Voters have never dabbled much in primaries. Newer organizations—like the Club for Growth, MoveOn.org, FreedomWorks and various Tea Party outfits…concentrate their attention on a small number of races. Every year there are two or three primary challengers (like Edwards or Harris) who receive substantial interest group support, but there are rarely more than that."[41]

While there are clear cases of interest groups forcing out entrenched and out-of-step incumbents, these are still exceptions.[42] However, interest groups do seem to be more assertive in open primaries. In the 2010 midterm elections for instance, most of the Tea Party's anti-establishment energy was directed at defeating moderate candidates in open seats rather than unseating incumbent "RINO's."[43] Of course, interest groups can still increase polarization by focusing on open races rather than unseating incumbents. In fact, Poole and Rosenthal suggest that candidates retiring and being replaced by more radical legislators is the primary means by which the parties become more polarized.[44]

Some recent research calls into question not only whether interest groups use primary elections to increase ideological purity, but the degree to which they desire firm

ideologues in the first place. Walter Stone and Alan Abramowitz demonstrate that political activists, many of whom are connected to interest groups, weigh electability more heavily than ideology when they consider who to support during elections.[45] To the extent interest groups put ideological purity before electability, they are punished at the ballot box. Andrew Hall's study of U.S. House elections from 1980-2010 revealed that when ideologically extreme candidates – i.e. candidates who attract campaign contributions primarily from their party's most ideologically extreme donors – cost their party 9-13 percentage points in the general election vote share.[46]

For many groups, choosing ideologically pure candidates is not only impolitic, but contrary to their interests. Trade associations and corporate PACs who advocate for the concrete, material interests of their members are better served by experienced and powerful moderates who can influence legislation and are willing to cut deals across the aisle. For such groups, ideologically-driven candidates not only jeopardize electoral victory but are also more likely to oppose the financial aid and favorable regulatory environment such groups seek as a matter of principle. Particularistic, excludable material benefits – which are, according to Mancur Olsen, the main objective of trade associations and labor unions – are often hard to defend on ideological grounds. Conservatives often oppose special benefits awarded to handpicked industries and corporations on the grounds that these arrangements violate free market principles. Liberals, on the other hand, often label subsidies and tax breaks as *corporate welfare*, which siphons money away from programs that improve *social* welfare.

The few interest groups that do endeavor to control parties by unseating incumbents or selecting ideologues for open seats, may face opposition from material

interest groups on their own side of the political aisle who, for the reasons described above, prefer moderate candidates. For instance, as they endeavored to push the Republican Party further to the right, the Tea Party ran into stiff resistance from right-leaning corporate interests. In the 2012 and 2014 congressional primaries, the Chamber of Commerce spent $50 million in 2014 and set aside twice that for 2016 in order to bolster moderate business-friendly Republicans like Senators Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and Pat Roberts of Kansas against Tea Party challengers.[47] The Chamber's counter-mobilization was highly effective. In 2014, the Chamber won 14 of the 15 primaries in which it backed a candidate. The group's inability to mount effective primary challenges against moderate incumbents stripped the group of one of its largest cudgels and curtailed its influence.[48] By demonstrating that standing up to Tea Party leaders was not a death sentence, corporate interests not only emboldened their allies in Congress, but may have stanched the Tea Party's strain of doctrinaire Conservatism.

In addition to the pressure from other interest groups to throw their weight behind presumptive nominees and tried-and-true moderates, interest groups may also face backlash from within their ranks if they endorse a candidate that enjoys less-than-unanimous support from members. Even interest groups whose membership is very homogenous in terms of partisanship and ideology – which is the case for many public interest groups – primary elections can reveal intra-party factions and intra-group fissures. National, state, and local party committee chairs are likely subject to similar bottom-up pressure. Party committees are, after all, highly structured bureaucracies with clearly delineated chains of command and circumspect discretion.[49] And, unlike many interest groups, party members often elect their chairmen – yet another constraint on

discretion.[50] If, in fact, partisan interest groups and political parties behave similarly in primary elections, it may be, in part, because both sets of organizations are subject to bottom-up pressure from rank-and-file partisans.

When ideologically-driven interest groups do face off against traditional party organizations over a primary election contest, they may find the party proper can still hold its own. Despite their inability to pick candidates behind closed doors, national party committees still have significant tools at their disposal. After interviewing dozens of party elites, donors, and national and state party officials, Hans Hassel concludes that while national and state party committees may have less money to fund their preferred candidate and no capacity to shield their favorite pick from competition, they have more subtle – but no less powerful – means of winnowing the field of aspirants. In fact, Hassel finds that almost 80 percent of party-favored candidates win contested primaries.[51] As one party official told Hassel:

> There are two reasons the party's preference is upheld. One, people [not favored by the party] don't run. And two, if they do run, they run inept campaigns. The smart campaign people get behind the party's candidate and there's no one left for the candidate that wants to challenge the party's candidate.[52]

Party official's pockets may not be as deep as in the past, but their rolodexes are every bit as full and their resumes' are every bit as long. They know the donors, the good campaign managers, the reliable pollsters, and the booker at the local radio station. They also stand at the nexus of disparate interest group communities that make up the so-called shadow party. After all, interest group coordination is not as self-executing as the UCLA School portrays. Where there is a web, there is likely a spider and, according to some political scientists, party committees are still it.[53]

Parties, according to Hassel's research, base their candidate selection decisions on the same factors that party bosses looked to at mid-century: namely, electability. As one Democratic Party official stated:

> The reality is that we need to elect Democrats . . . and at the end of the day if I or others tried to find a candidate who fit the party [and just focused on satisfying primary voters] as opposed to the district, we'd lose. So first and foremost when you're recruiting candidates you've got to find a candidate who…can win the general election.[54]

Even when interest groups are able to shift the election in favor of a candidate who appears to be an ideological purist, once the nomination is sealed up and the general election comes into focus, candidates often move to the center on order to appeal to the general electorate.[55] As Mitt Romney's senior campaign advisor Eric Fehrnstrom said, "I think you hit a reset button for the fall campaign. Everything changes…It's almost like an Etch A Sketch. You can kind of shake it up, and we start all over again."[56] Thus, in their attempt to steer the parties, primary elections are only half the equation.

General Elections and Interest Group Influence

Just as the introduction of the popular primary reduces the capacity of the party organization to handpick their party's candidates, new fundraising strictures limit the degree to which parties can meet the needs of their slate of aspiring officeholders and empower outside groups and their PACs.[57] Successive waves of reform have significantly curtailed the means by which parties induce political voluntarism and finance their operations. While local party committees once had armies of canvassers ready to work for the chance at a patronage job, the Wagner Act ended the spoils system and left parties increasingly reliant on interest groups to get out the vote.[58] For much of

the 20th Century, labor unions' immense influence within the Democratic Party was assured by their impressive street level mobilization machine. Some have argued the evangelical church fulfilled a similar function in the GOP.[59] In addition to their reliance on interest group muscle, party organizations and the party-in-government have become increasingly reliant on interest group money over the last six years.[60] The combination of the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform bill which ended the so-called "soft money" loophole that once allowed parties to raise unlimited funds earmarked for non-campaign "party building" functions, and the *Citizen's United* decision which allowed unlimited contributions to Super PACs, outside groups have a significant edge regarding fundraising.[61]

As with candidate selection, most political scientists argue that the overall impact of interest groups displacing traditional party organizations in general elections is greater political polarization.[62] Statistical analyses of interest group campaign contributions demonstrate that many groups, especially ideological interests and unions, use their campaign contributions to reward national politicians who consistently support their policy priorities or punish those who regularly oppose their agenda.[63] For groups that engage in this sort of *friends-and-enemies* campaign contribution strategy – groups like the Club for Growth, Heritage Action, and the League of Conservation Voters – political donations are a way of coercing allegiance to group objectives.[64] Well before election season, such groups use the threat (or promise) of contributions or issue advertisements to win votes for important legislation. To this end, many such organizations use scorecards and "key votes" to broadcast to lawmakers when a piece of legislation will weigh on their campaign contribution decisions. These findings concord with Bawn et al's hypothesis

that the interest groups that enter the fray of electoral competition are typically high-demanding outliers whose primary motivation is to elect politicians who are as far to the extreme of the ideological spectrum as the public will accept. The cumulative impact of interest group advocacy and partisan weakness is – according to this research – a deeply divided political system where elected officers are locked in a state of paralysis, easily scared away from sensible bipartisan compromises by the partisan interests upon whom they rely for money and manpower.[65]

Other research demonstrates that many prominent interest groups eschew the sort of friends-and-enemies electioneering strategy described above. For many interest groups, campaign contributions are not a reward for service rendered but a key to the smoke-filled rooms where deals are cut.[66] For groups that follow *access-seeking strategies* – primarily corporations, trade associations, and many labor unions – spending is primarily driven by a desire to assure access to powerful committee chairs, members on relevant sub-committees, and pivotal senior members.[67] This strategy is a more efficient means of securing the narrow and particularistic policy goals such groups typically vie for. Since such organizations' policy agendas and lobbying activity are usually not known to the public at large, which means that congressman or senators are not likely to pay a price in terms of public opinion for coming to the aid of such groups.[68] However, the general electorate is also unlikely to notice if a member of congress or president completely ignores a trade association's agenda either. As a result, the obstacle that confronts these groups is often antipathy rather than apathy. To overcome this obstacle, it is generally enough to contribute to the gatekeepers who determine what makes it onto the Congress's agenda, what earmarks make it into an omnibus bill, what

barriers to entry get erected against which smaller corporations, and what legal exemptions are permitted to which industries.

While friends-and-enemies strategies lead groups to allocate the bulk of their contributions to ideologically simpatico candidates, access-based strategies lead groups to give to candidates on the basis of their years in office, the committee a politician sits on, whether or not they hold a chairmanship or a leadership position in congress, and likelihood of remaining in office.[69] Rarely do such groups take a risky bet on non-incumbents or candidates locked in tight races.[70] It is also rare that such groups give all their money to one party election cycle after election cycle.[71] In fact, it is not uncommon for such groups to donate money to both presidential campaigns in a general election contest. Members of Congress who are well positioned to further a group's agenda can expect significant contributions no matter their party or prior voting record. Their preference for political insiders, fostering bipartisan cooperation, and avoiding steely ideological obstinacy, trade associations and corporate PACs - groups that tend to follow access-seeking strategies tend to support ideological moderates, not extremists.[72]

An access-seeking strategy is not always sufficient to achieving policy victory, especially when a trade association or corporate interest's policy agenda runs afoul of another interest group. And, it is rarely the case that an interest group has the luxury of advocating for a significant policy goal unopposed. In their landmark study of ninety-eight policy issues, Baumgartner and his coauthors found that approximately 83 percent of time, at least two rival interest group factions favored irreconcilably opposed objectives.[73] However, a seat at the table is apparently all money can assure interest groups. Baumgartner et al found that when interest groups square off against one

another, the wealthier side does not have greater odds of victory. This finding suggests that pouring more money on senior committee members and long-serving legislative leaders is, apparently, not enough to tilt the deliberative scales. In short, even though access-seeking strategies do not guarantee anything more than a hearing, they remain the most efficient strategy for groups with narrow and low salience agendas whose chief obstacles are apathy and other interest groups rather than public furor or ideologically-driven enmity.

For groups that rely wholly on one party for influence, neither of the strategies described above is sufficient. Groups that depend on one party's control of government to advance their agenda must think beyond single races and key votes; they must consider how their donations advance the electoral fortunes of an entire political party rather than individual legislators. For groups with highly visible and ideologically contentious agendas, *partisan-electoral* strategies are common.

If an interest group's slate of policy goals is polarizing and relatively high salience – as is the case for groups that pursue broad policy goals meant to advance the public interest, rather than the material interests of members alone – money spent on behalf of influential committee chairs of the opposing party will be of little help. Buying access can help a group to overcome apathy or ignorance, but these are not the chief obstacles to groups like National Right to Life, the National Rifle Association, or the Sierra Club. The ideologically contentious nature of these group's policy agenda means that no amount of money can buy a fair hearing from the opposing side of the aisle; on the other hand, public focus on their relatively high salience agenda means their policy priorities will not sit unattended in the absence of large campaign contributions to

friendly legislators. Thus, for most public interest groups, pursuing access-seeking strategies would be hopelessly naïve and rewarding the friendship of stalwart allies is kind gesture but not an absolute necessity. Bipartisanship is also a nicety to be indulged only sparingly. Friends across the aisle may get a token contribution, but only so long as their election is a foregone conclusion – which is to say a group's contribution will be of little use and no consequence.[74] Even stalwart allies of the more simpatico of the two major parties are unlikely to get a large contribution if their election is all-but-assured.[75] For groups whose influence is constrained to one party, assuring that party's control of government is a necessary precondition for influence and, as a result, must drive a group's electioneering strategy. Instead of rewarding friends and punishing enemies or attempting to buy access with powerful and well-established legislators, partisan interest groups must focus their donations on toss-up races. These are the pivotal contests on which a party's majority status is lost or won.

Directing their efforts toward assuring a party's control of government leads partisan – and often ideologically polarizing – interest groups to allocate their resources in a counter-intuitive manner. Groups that would, if they pursued a more naïve electioneering strategy, give their money to ideologically extreme candidates, should allocate the majority of their contributions to the sort of relatively moderate candidates who are typically selected to run in closely divided swing districts. This is a paradox of interest group extremism; the very groups that political scientists from Schattschneider to Fiorina assume would be most at odds with pragmatic party leaders have the strongest incentives to distribute their resources just as party committees do.[76] Accepting the party's health as a core objective should fundamentally reorient a group. Groups guided

by this strategy do not necessarily give to candidates they believe will be their most stalwart allies after election. Instead, their contributions are part of "an organized attempt to get control of the government," the very definition of a political party's motivation on Schattschneider's view.[77]

While the orthodox view of interest group influence draws clear distinctions between the goals and strategies of traditional party organizations and interest groups, function-based theory defines certain conditions under which interest groups would act similarly to the party proper. This theory holds that once a group takes on the role of a political party, its decisions will start to reflect the same logic that guided traditional party organizations of the past and party committees of the present. Regarding primary elections, this means selecting candidates who are most likely to win on election day, rather than candidates that are most likely to march in lockstep after election day. In general elections, partisan interest groups are likely to allocate money and manpower to the candidates locked in tight races, rather than stalwart allies of their agenda. In short, such groups should work in parallel with traditional party organizations just as V.O. Key hypothesized.

Testable Hypotheses

As mentioned above, function-based theory has clear and testable implications for primary election and general election electioneering strategies. Regarding primary elections, groups that perceive their fate to be integrally tied to one party are likely to support candidates on the same basis that traditional party organizations chose to support candidates; electability is likely to trump ideological purity. In line with Boatright's

findings – and in contrast to orthodox understandings of interest group influence – partisan interest groups should rarely challenge incumbents. In short, when it comes to primary elections and candidate selection, interest groups and parties should generally throw their weight behind the same candidates. Both types of organizations should prefer candidates whose background and experience suggests they will fare best in the general election.

The efforts of traditional party organizations and partisan interest groups should also tend to be complimentary, rather than conflicting, during general election campaigns. Like traditional party organizations, partisan interest groups should donate most of their electioneering resources to toss-up races in an effort to assure their party's control of government. Unlike some other interest groups, interest groups who rely on one party for influence will not make more contributions or larger contributions to committee chairs, senior leaders in the House and Senate, party leaders, or even stalwart advocates of their legislative agenda. As a result, the most polarizing groups should deliver up the bulk of their funding to relative moderates of the sort ordinarily selected to run in toss-up states and districts. These hypotheses stand in stark contrast to the expectations of most scholars in the field who portray partisan interest groups as a powerful centrifugal force pulling the parties apart by rewarding extremism and punishing moderation.

Testing predictions: primary elections

To test the theoretical implications described above, I will need to identify which candidates interest groups would be expected to contribute to if they follow a friends-and-enemies, access-based, or a partisan-electoral strategy. Unfortunately, such

measures are not ready to hand for primary election candidates. While there is information regarding the voting history of incumbents in national races, as well as what committee they have chaired and whether or not they hold a leadership position in their party caucus, it is not clear how a challenger will vote or what his or her status might be in the upcoming session. While it is probably safe to assume a freshman member of the House or Senate will probably not step straight into a leadership position or onto a prestigious committee. Still, some challengers have backgrounds or connections that may put them in the good graces of party leaders who largely decide on committee assignments. Similarly, not every long-serving member of Congress is well respected by party leaders. In 2016, for instance, the Chamber of Commerce supported several challengers to Tea Party connected incumbents anticipating that, if elected, they would play nicer with a centrist party establishment. It is also difficult to know where a challenger falls on the ideological spectrum. While every seated member of Congress has a voting record to judge, challengers who have not served in Congress before have no such record.

Without reliable measures of the factors that contribute to primary support, the best available evidence of whether partisan interest groups behave according to the same incentives as party committees is to see how often they endorse the same candidates. If groups and parties work in parallel, as Key supposes and function-based group hypothesizes, interest groups and parties should very rarely support different candidates for office. Casey B.K. Dominguez's study of the 2002 primaries is the best and most comprehensive study of party and interest group campaign endorsements in congressional primaries is database . While such endorsements are common and sometimes publicized,

it is often difficult to systematically search for and catalogue them. Instead of rifling through local newspapers, television commercial archives, and interest group newsletters, Dominguez asked candidates to recall which candidates interest groups and traditional party organizations endorsed in their race. 175 candidates responded providing information on almost every primary contest that year.

Figure 1 illustrates the correlation between the proportion of interest groups and traditional party organizations endorsements. These data reveal that when a candidate garners support from a greater proportion of traditional party organizations, he or she will also garner a greater proportion of partisan interest group endorsements. The same relationship does not obtain regarding non-partisan interest groups whose endorsement decisions appear to be unrelated to the support of the party proper.

While somewhat weaker than expected, a relationship between party support and

Figure 1: Correlation between group and party endorsements

Congressional Primaries

Note: 2000-2002 CBK Dominguez

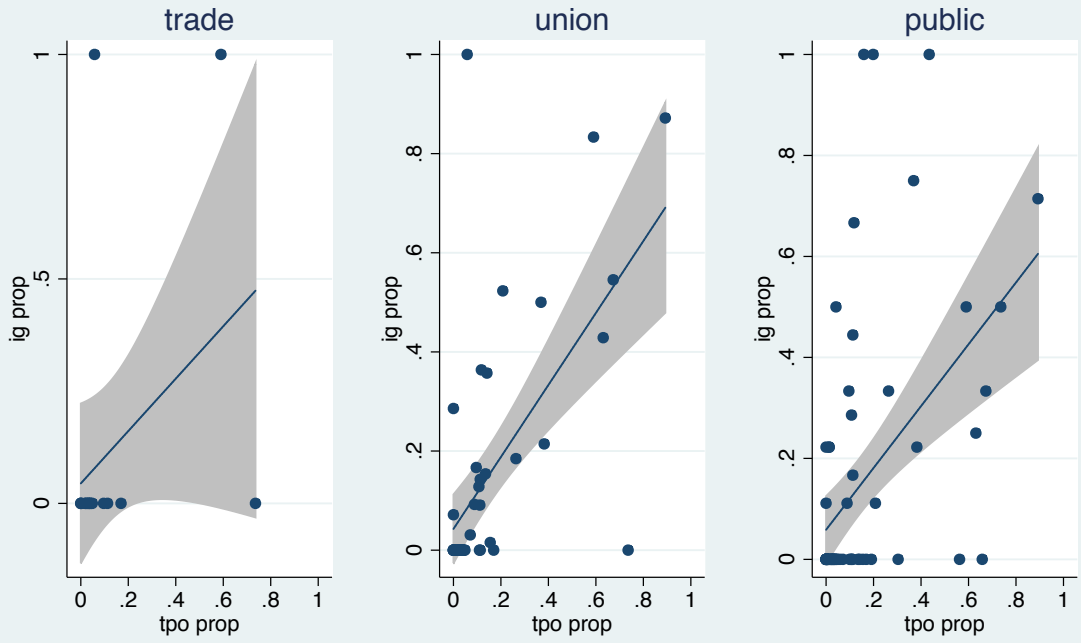
partisan interest group support was identifiable. The Spearman's r correlation statistics (a measure employed due to the non-normality of the data) for trade associations, labor unions, and public interest groups are .147, .306, and .148 respectively. The chance that partisan interest group endorsements are independent of party endorsements is quite low in the case of all group types, though the null hypothesis can be rejected with 95 percent certainty only in the case of labor unions. The t-statistics for partisan public interest and trade associations are .187 and .147 respectively. The relationship between non-partisan groups and party support is significantly weaker. Non-partisan union endorsements are the most closely correlated of all non-partisan group types with a Spearman's r of .139 and a t statistic of .216.

The statistics presented above are driven down slightly by the fact that in many of the races covered by Dominguez's data, there are only interest group or party organization endorsements observed. Including these races, as I have done, greatly decreases the correlation between group and party endorsements; discounting such cases, however, seems theoretically unjustifiable as the decision of interest groups and parties to endorse or withhold endorsement in a race is surely a considered decision on the part of these actors. Another important indicator of interest group and party agreement in primary contests is the number of cases in which a majority of party endorsements go to one candidate while the majority of group endorsements go to another. In the 175 primary campaigns included in this study, there are only nine examples of this. There are only seven cases in which a clear majority (over sixty percent) of interest groups coalesced behind one candidate, while a similar majority of party organizations supported other candidates in the race. The very low number of primary contests that pit the

majority of party endorsers against the majority of interest group endorsers gives some additional assurance, given the somewhat unimpressive correlations presented above, that partisan interest groups are working in parallel – not in competition with – the party proper.

While most of the literature regarding interest group electioneering has focused on congressional campaigns – a bias evident in this chapter as well – thanks, in large part, to the scholars collectively known a the UCLA School, there is now a data regarding interest group and party endorsements in presidential elections. These scholars have recorded the public endorsements of party leadership, politicians, interest group leaders, outsider activists, and many others, in each presidential primary candidate from 1980 to 2004.[78] As Figure 2 illustrates, the relationship between partisan interest groups and traditional party organization endorsements is stronger in presidential primaries than in congressional primaries. The Spearman's r correlations between the proportion of traditional party organization endorsements earned by a candidate and the proportion of group endorsements is quite strong in the case of labor unions (.63 Spearman r) and public interest groups (.50 Spearman r) and both relationships are statistically significant at the .001 level.

Figure 2: Correlation between group and party endorsements
Presidential Primaries



Note: 1978-2004 Cohen et al 2008

The relationship between trade association and party organization endorsements is less impressive, but still discernable. Though moderately correlated (Spearman's r of .375), I can reject the null hypothesis that trade association endorsements are wholly independent of party endorsements with only 88.5 percent certainty. This mirrors the differences between trade associations and other interest group types revealed by the congressional primary data.

While these findings seem to confirm my expectations that partisan interest groups make their political decisions on the basis of the same factors that party committees and elites do, the fact that interest groups and party organizations eventually coalesce behind the same candidates is not, in and of itself, evidence of group-party parallelism. The same statistical results would obtain if either groups or parties regularly

coopt or coerce the other actors in the regime. Perhaps, as Hassel's research suggests, party committees still dominate the selection process by signaling support for a candidate early on in the process. The reverse phenomenon is equally consistent with the data. Interest group aid may be so critical to electoral success today that candidates who do not have the support of the shadow party network are simply not viable. Taking this into account, party elites may withhold their support for political insiders who leave outside groups cold.

To more clearly establish that interest groups make endorsements based on electability, just as party committees do, we must go beyond endorsement patterns and look at the actual candidates being endorsed. Do the candidates that parties and interest groups endorse have certain traits in common that make them likely winners? If the orthodox account of interest group influence is accurate, the candidates preferred by interest groups and party committees should have very different levels of experience and career trajectories. Party elites – supposedly more focused on electoral victory –should tend to prefer known quantities that are thoroughly vetted, familiar to the electorate, proven winners, and team players. They should tend to endorse incumbents rather than challengers, those with more years of political experience, or those who have rendered service to the party in some way. Interest groups, on the other hand, should put much more stock in ideological purity; incumbency, years in elected office, and service to party should, if anything, be marks against a candidates; political insiders are often viewed as part of the problem – coopted by the very system these groups are determined to change.

In contrast to the orthodox view, function-based theory suggests that interest group and party committees should both select candidates whose backgrounds and

experience give them the highest chance of winning the general election. They should both prefer primary candidates who are battle- tested, thoroughly vetted, and familiar to voters. This is not to say ideological purity is of no importance to interest groups, but it should be a secondary consideration. For groups that seek to control government – be they interest groups or party committees – winning should come first.

To test these hypotheses, I once again used Casey Dominguez's congressional primary dataset, which contains information on the incumbency status, years of electoral experience, a dummy variable indicating prior employment with a traditional party organization, and each primary winner's general election vote share; I include this last variable as a *post hoc* measure of the ineffable quality of electability.[79] To determine the impact of these variables on the number of endorsements a candidate receives, I used a negative binomial count model. This model best fits the shape of Dominguez's data. As is commonly the case with count data, values are not normally distributed, instead exhibiting a steeply declining curvilinear form. There is an over-dispersion of zeros in the data with most candidates receiving no observed endorsements. By far the most common non-zero sum of endorsements is one, then, significantly less common, two, then three, and so on. This distribution strongly suggests a count model rather than linear regression. Of the two most commonly used count models – the Poisson and negative binomial – the negative binomial model is much better fit theoretically as the Poisson model assumes that all observed events – in this case group endorsements – are wholly independent from one another.[80] This is almost certainly not the case with this data since early endorsements signal the viability and electoral support of a candidate to late endorsing interest groups and party committees. Primary endorsements are often

contagious. The negative binomial model, which I employ, does not assume events are independent. For this reason, it is often used for other contagious phenomenon like the outbreak of infectious disease.

Table 1 reports the effects of a candidate's years of experience, general election vote share, status as a party operative (a dummy variable taking on a value of 1 for candidates who worked for a traditional party organization in any capacity), and incumbency status. As with all the analyses in this chapter, I separate partisan groups into the three most commonly identified groupings: public interest, labor unions, and trade associations, running separate regressions on each subset of the data. While function-based theory does not predict that group type will have a strong effect on a partisan group's political behavior, distinctions between public interest groups, labor unions, and trade associations are often made within the interest group literature. Distinguishing between them allows me to demonstrate that my theory of interest group behavior is applicable to all sorts of groups and, also, that my results are not being driven primarily by one sort of interest group.

As expected, the regression results reported in Table 1 suggest traditional party organizations and partisan interest groups of all types lean toward candidates that have traits associated with electability. The strongest demonstration of this hypothesis is the strong correlation between the number of endorsements and general election vote share.

Table 1: Determinants of group and party endorsements

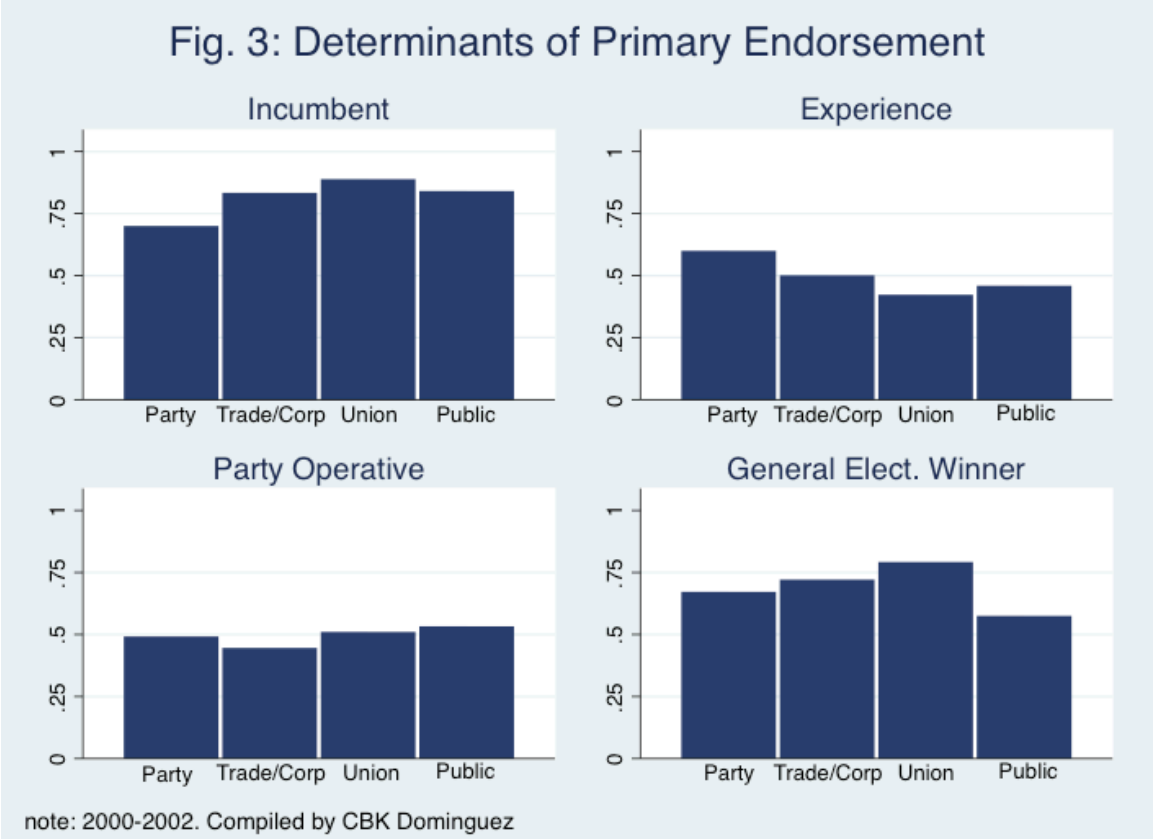
	TPOs		public igs		labor unions		trade assns	
	coef.	p	coef.	p	coef.	p	coef.	p
years exp.	0.037	0.105	0.025	0.175	0.057	0.082	0.061	0.022
	0.016		0.018		0.019		0.027	
gen perc	0.016	0.013	0.008	0.071	0.019	0.005	0.023	0.004
	0.006		0.005		0.007		0.008	
party operative	-0.434	0.277	-0.526	0.063	-0.244	0.518	-0.198	0.684
	0.400		0.081		0.378		0.485	
incumbent	-0.810	0.194	-0.192	0.664	-2.252	0.004	-0.685	0.307
	0.624		0.442		0.777		0.670	
constant	-0.991	0.001	0.302	0.125	0.295	0.308	-2.022	0.000
	0.272		0.197		0.289		0.366	

Note: All coefficients are the results of negative binomial regression. n=175
Source: Contrib data- Center for Responsive Politics. Candidate info- CBK Dominguez

The effect of elected experience, party operative status, and incumbency are less robust but, in most cases, still discernable. The two factors that are well known to contribute to electability – years of experience and incumbency status – produce mixed results. A candidate's years of experience in elected office achieves statistical significance in each subset of the data except public interest groups. However, in the case of public interest groups, the coefficient suggests a positive relationship and the p value is just 6 percentage points outside the 90 percent confidence interval. No other factors correlate with number of traditional party organization endorsements. The only other statistically significant relationships are between: incumbency status and labor union endorsements, and party operative experience and public interest group endorsements. In the latter case, however, the negative coefficient suggests party operative status predicts *fewer* public interest group endorsements. This gives some credence to the common trope of interest group antagonism toward party insiders.

Because negative binomial coefficients do not allow straightforward interpretation of effect size, the regression results reported above do not lend insight into the relative

weight interest groups and party committees put on the factors included in the model. One way to think about how much factors like incumbency, party operative status, electoral experience, etc., matter is to determine how many more endorsements a candidate who has one of these traits is likely to get.



The bar graphs in figure 3 indicate what proportion of party officials, trade associations, unions, and public interest groups endorsed the candidate with the trait indicated above each panel. More clearly than the regression coefficients, Figure 3 shows the same traits that predict traditional party organization endorsements also predict group endorsements. In fact, partisan interest groups tend to put even more weight on incumbency status and service to party (i.e. current or prior employment as a party operative) than party committees do. While it is surprising that party organizations more readily endorse non-incumbents than partisan interest groups, this is in keeping with Boatright's finding that

the vast majority of primary challenges are the result of scandal, not borne of a desire to purify the party. Unlike incumbency, experience in elected office is a clearer predictor of party endorsement than of group endorsement. In about 60 percent of cases, party organizations tend to prefer the primary candidate with the most time in office; public interest groups and unions support such candidates slightly less than half the time.

Going beyond traits that may signal electability and looking at electoral results, provides clearer evidence that groups of all sorts weigh electability approximately as heavily as party committees do. The last frame in Figure 3 indicates that both partisan trade associations and labor unions support general election winners at a higher rate than party committees do. Only public interest group endorsed candidates win at a lower rate. The fact that party committees pick winners with less frequency than most interest groups is an interesting and counter-intuitive finding. Admittedly, electoral outcomes are imperfect post hoc measure of the hard-to-measure qualities that interest groups and parties may use to predict a candidate's electability prior to an election. In fact, party and interest groups endorsements during primary elections may effect the outcomes of general elections. General election success may be endogenous to interest group endorsement and not party endorsement. Perhaps independents and weak partisans take interest group endorsements to be a reliable indicator of candidate quality in a way a party committee's endorsement – the presumptive bequest of partisan insiders – is not. Perhaps also, candidates who earn primary endorsements are more likely to benefit from group support after they seal up the nomination, thus affecting their chances of victory in the general election.

But, it may actually be the case that political parties actually take electoral viability into account less than most interest groups. Party insiders may not be willing to endorse outside of their own ranks even when an outsider seems more electorally viable. It is generally assumed that when party insiders and interest group outsiders prefer rival candidates, the insiders are acting with a view to electoral success while interest groups are acting with a view to ideological purity. But this is not always the case. While there are many examples of outsider candidates that stormed past establishment gatekeepers only to be mowed down in general election campaigns, party elites often endorse and aid candidates who were significantly less popular than their outsider opponents. In the 2016 presidential primary, for instance, Jeb Bush – who failed to generate any enthusiasm for his candidacy – was the clear favorite of party-connected elites and politicians. According to Dominguez's data, the 2016 primary is part of an identifiable trend; hesitance to weigh in on behalf of surging outsiders added up to a marginally lower success rate for party endorsed candidates as compared to interest group endorsed candidates. However, the differences are slight enough (less than 10 points) and party committees' success rates are still so high above the 50 percent mark (18 points) that it is safe to assume that both parties and partisan interest groups weigh electoral viability very heavily.

Looking at the timing of endorsements provides another indication as to whether interest groups or parties are acting independently in the primary process – freely choosing to support candidates on the basis of electability – or whether interest groups and parties are coercing or coopting the other. While it is impossible to measure every means of coercion, looking at which organizations generally voice their preferences first

may indicate which organizations take the lead in the decision-making process. Cohen et al's data on presidential primaries from 1980 to 2004 records the date of all presidential nominations allowing for such a comparison. Unfortunately similar data does not exist for congressional primaries.

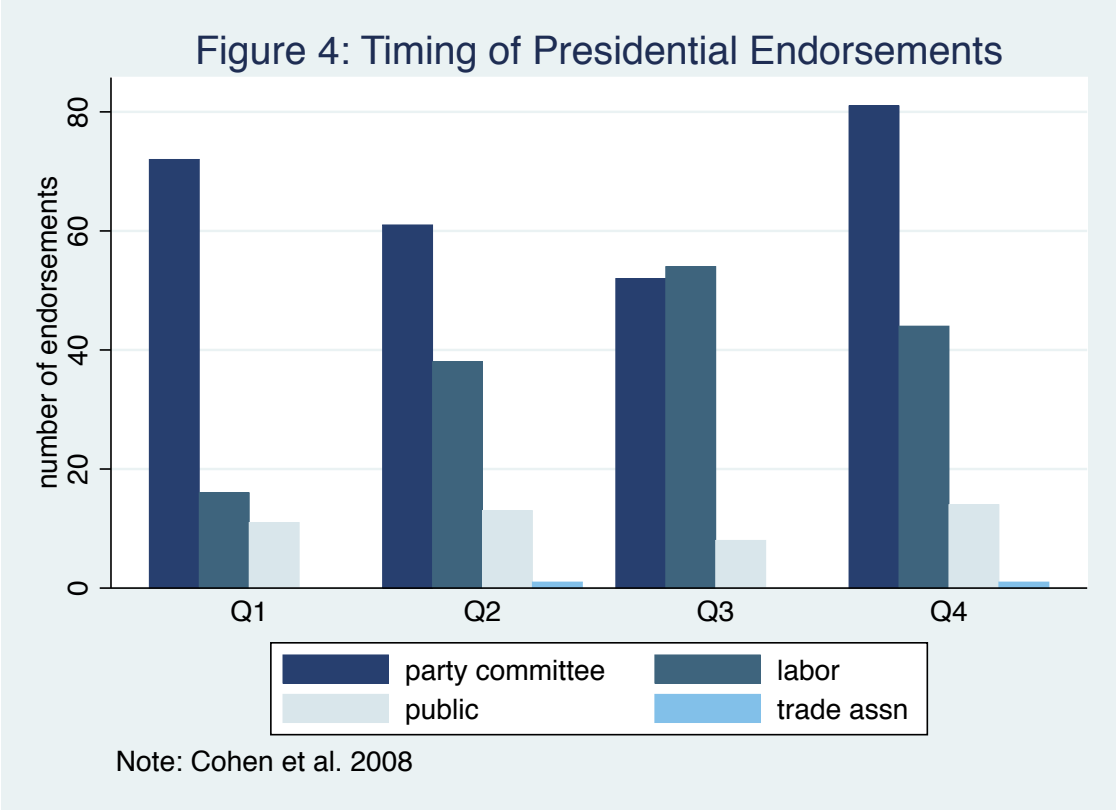


Figure 4 graphs the number of endorsements made in each quarter of the year prior to a general election. It does not seem that either interest groups or parties reliably lead the way in the yearlong primary process. In certain elections, party committees tend to endorse early on in the process. More often, they take a wait-and-see approach. There is no clear pattern when it comes to public interest group or trade association endorsement timing either. The endorsement of these groups is evenly scattered across the primary season. Labor unions, on the other hand, do tend to wait until a campaign has matured before making an endorsement in most cases.

The fact that, with the exception of labor unions, party and interest group endorsements are spread fairly evenly across the year-long primary campaign cycle suggests that neither group regularly takes the lead when it comes to candidate selection. Public interest groups and trade associations do not seem to wait to make their endorsements until party committees signal their own preferences. Nor does it seem party committees wait until shadow party interest groups coalesce around a candidate. Labor unions, on the other hand, do seem to wait to make their endorsements until most other groups and political parties have weighed in. There are many possible explanations for this. It may be that labor unions have a more ideologically diverse membership than most other interest groups and are, as a result, labor union leaders may be more hesitant to signal which candidate and which ideological faction of the Democratic party they favor. It may also be that labor union leaders are more attuned and responsive to their members and, thus, more hesitant to make an endorsement in the face of significant disagreement within their ranks.[81] It may also be that labor unions, given their long-lasting and very stable alliance with the Democratic Party, are more apt to take their cues from party committees. Whatever the explanation, it is worth noting that not all labor unions withhold support until the late stages of the primary process. In fact, more labor unions endorsed candidates in the first half of the year-long primary process as waited until the last quarter. Thus, even in the case of most labor unions, this data suggests most interest groups and party committees announce their endorsement decisions on their own time and, presumably, on their own terms.

Taken as a whole, the data above suggest interest groups and traditional party organizations both make endorsement decisions with general election viability in mind.

Interest groups that take up the functions of the party seem to behave much as traditional party organizations. Partisan groups tend to endorse the same candidates as party organizations due to the fact that both tend to select candidates on the basis of electoral viability. As the next section will show, when general election competition come into focus, the goal of party control of government dominates interest group strategy just as it does for traditional party organizations.

General Elections

As with primary elections, we can adduce from the vast literature on general elections and campaign finance several testable expectations regarding the sorts of candidates that parties and interest groups should tend to support. Given the classic definition of parties proffered by E.E. Schattschneider – "an organized attempt to get control of the government" – traditional party organizations should focus their efforts on toss-up races upon which control of government hinges. By contrast, interest groups should make their contributions on the basis of what Congressmen or Senators have done in the past for their organization or will be in a position to do in the future. Money should be allocated on the basis of a candidate's prominence and power in the case of access-seeking trade associations and corporate groups and ideological purity in the case of public interest and single-issue groups. These expectations follow neatly from the orthodox view that interest groups, in contrast to parties, are focused on policy gains often to the detriment of electoral goals. For interest groups, the goal is either to buy influence or instill party discipline.

Function-based interest group theory leads to very different expectations as to how both traditional party organizations and partisan interest groups should behave. According to this new account of interest group strategy, partisan interest groups should behave in much the same manner as traditional party organizations. Building strong relationships with powerful members, repaying favors, or promoting ideological purity, should be subordinated to the goal of assuring party control of government. To that end, partisan interest groups, like traditional party organizations, should focus their electioneering efforts on tight races.

Political scientists have shown that congressional committee chairmen attract more donations from industries under their committee's purview, that electorally vulnerable candidates get more money from party committees, and that partisan groups sometimes hold candidates to account for contradicting the organization's demands on key votes. However, no research design has yet tested the independent effect of all of these factors by combining them into the same model. Because no one has yet included all of these variables in one model, it is unclear if and when these various factors matter. Nor has any research design yet compared the political donations of partisan and non-partisan public interest groups, trade associations, and labor unions. As a result, all we can say, as yet, is that all of these factors matter some of the time for some groups. We do not yet know which groups and under what conditions each of these factors is decisive.

Methods and Measures

Of the various methodological problems confronting students of interest groups, none is quite so vexing as sample selection. Interest groups are less inter-comparable than almost any of the other subjects of large-n analysis in the field of political science. Interest groups have many different organizational structures and have very diffuse goals. Some are organized to achieve nothing short of revolutionary change and some are organized solely to change the speed limit on one city street. Some are only incidentally involved in public policy while others are organized solely for that end. Some have members that gather often and others have members whose only interaction with other group members is via a website, or newsletter. In fact, what constitutes an interest group is not an entirely settled matter. Some, like myself, consider trade associations – wherein members are not people but corporations – interest groups while others do not. Some include corporate PACs in their studies. Others exclude them. Some studies (also like this one) draw a distinction between groups that are established to accomplish a discrete goal and disband thereafter and those that have at least the goal of semi-permanence. Categorizing interest groups is no easy task. It ordinarily requires looking up the tax filings, lobbying disclosure forms, FEC records, and the Encyclopedia of Associations entry for a group. A deeper dive into a group's publications and, for larger groups, secondary source literature is often required to get a clear picture of a group's policy agenda, governing structure, candidate endorsements, and prominence in Washington and beyond. As a result of the massive heterogeneity between groups on almost every conceivable dimension and laborious nature of identifying key characteristics of a group, it is often difficult to generate a sample of relatively comparable groups or generalize the findings of any small-n sample or case study.

Because of the variety and diversity of interest groups, I wanted a manageable size such that I could observe as much as possible about their activities and motivations and guess as little as possible about their preferences. I also wanted variety in terms of a group's type (public interest, trade association, or union) and partisanship (Republican supporting, Democrat supporting, or bi-partisan). Here, as elsewhere in the dissertation, I define interest groups as Republican or Democrat if they give 85 percent or more of their electioneering funds via their 501(c) groups and PACs to one party *in each* of the last three elections and *aggregated across* each of the last three elections. Unless both of these conditions are met, I judge a group to be bi-partisan. I only include groups in my sample that have given some money to politics in the three election cycles of 2008, 2010, and 2012. For reasons I will discuss at length below, I also wanted groups that generate *voter scorecards* rating the degree to which members of congress have voted in accordance with the group's priorities over the past congressional session.

To select my sample, I turned to the Project Votesmart, a non-profit that collects and publishes the voter scorecards of hundreds of different groups involved in a wide range of policy areas. After categorizing each group that had released a scorecard for the previous election (at the time of this study, 2012) I selected my stratified sample. In all, I chose 30 groups, nine of which I later dropped because they had not made a political donation in the prior three election cycles. The final sample contains four unions, eight public interest groups, and nine trade associations. Five of these groups pursued a bipartisan strategy of influence, six groups gave almost exclusively to Republicans and ten groups heavily favored Democratic candidates. Optimally, I would have had a larger sample of bipartisan groups but, unfortunately, there simply are not many interest groups

in the middle that generate voter scorecards. Given the considerations above, it is easy to understand why few bipartisan groups – all of which are trade associations in my sample– would not publicize voter scorecards. If, as the literature suggests, these groups give primarily to gain access to powerful members of congress rather than to reward friends and punish enemies, a scorecard would only draw attention to the fact that legislators that vote consistently for the organization's agenda are not consistently rewarded.

In order to examine the predictive power of access-seeking, friends-and-enemies, and partisan electoral considerations on party and group campaign contributions, I found quantifiable indices to help predict which members of congress would be the likeliest recipients of campaign contributions according with each strategy.

Access-seeking strategies: Groups seeking to buy access to and time with influential members of Congress are likely to allocate their money to the congressmen and senators who are best positioned to push forward or hold back their agenda – members of congress who sit on committees particularly relevant to a group and prestige committees like Ways and Means and Appropriations.[82] Given the power of party leadership to set the agenda in congress, access-seeking groups may also give disproportionately to party leaders. Dichotomous variables for committee membership, committee chairmanship, and party leadership are included in the models that follow.

Friends-and-enemies: In order to determine whether an interest group is using its campaign contributions as a means of rewarding legislators who take hard votes on their behalf, I turned to *interest group scorecards*. Scorecards are published by many

organizations at the end of a legislative session, rating member of congress according to the percentage of the time they voted in accordance with the group's priorities on key votes. I used the scorecards from the 112th session of Congress – the session preceding the 2012 election – to assign each member of Congress a score per each group in the sample.

This method has several advantages over attempting to code bills for their relevance to a group on my own. First, interest groups frequently are little interested in the central objective of the bill but are interested, instead, in the inclusion of specific clauses and narrowly tailored provisions of particular interest to their members. Since there are often many votes on many version of a single piece of legislation – some of which may include a provision favored by a group while others do not – it is nearly impossible to determine which iteration of a bill an interest group supports simply from the congressional record. Second, procedural votes are often at least as weighty as votes on substantive legislation. Often, determining when and under what rules of amendment a bill is brought to the floor is determinative of its eventual fate. Again, looking at the congressional record would not give a sense of which procedural bills are important and which are *pro forma*. Third, focusing on all votes within a policy domain – for instance environmental policy or energy – ignores important distinctions between groups. In any broad policy domain, only one or two peak groups advocate on the total panoply of specific issues. Most organizations focus on a specific niche. Even regarding highly polarized issues like environmental policy, some of these niches are not particularly polarizing. Thus, every group in a broad policy area may not face the same incentives as it considers how to allocate its electioneering resources. Lastly, it is not clear that every

bill an interest group does lobby on behalf of should be accorded equal weight. Some might matter much more than others to a group's leadership; thus, while a congressman or senator might vote with an organization on every bill except one but if that bill is the most important that member of congress may fall out of favor regardless of their prior good deeds. The reverse may also be true. By relying on interest group scorecards all these difficulties are sidestepped because the group does the work of identifying the relevant bills and important votes for us.

Relying on interest group scorecards does present its own set of obstacles. Interest groups rarely include bills with very widespread support or disapproval in their scorecards.[83] Because the final verdict on these pieces of legislation is rarely in doubt, their efforts to support or oppose them would be a wasted effort. As a consequence, interest group scorecards often give a false impression that the parties are more neatly cleaved on a group's agenda than is actually the case. For my purposes, this may create a significant difficulty.[84] If all the members of one party receive a near perfect rating while all the members of the other party receive zeros, a group's scorecard loses its usefulness as a means of determining which congressmen and senators should receive a group's campaign dollars if they follow a friends-and-enemies strategy. The scorecard is, under these conditions, little more than an indicator of party affiliation; for groups that give only to one party, the measure loses any usefulness or predictive power.

Fortunately not all such scorecards so neatly bifurcate the parties. The groups in my sample all produced scorecards that demonstrate sufficient variation across but especially *between* parties to provide for meaningful analysis. Nevertheless, I felt it was necessary to include a few other indices of legislator loyalty to interest group agendas not

produced by the groups themselves. One additional measure I employ is *Nominate scores* generated by Poole and Rosenthal.[85] These scores are meant to give a sense of a candidate's conservatism/liberalism. While questions have been raised about the degree to which these scores measure what they purport to – they are more accurately a measure of the degree to which a legislator tows the party line– Poole and Rosenthal's scores are frequently used by students of congress nonetheless. The scholarly consensus seems to be that despite the imperfections of the Nominate scoring method, Poole and Rosenthal's measure largely concur with intuition – i.e. congressmen and senators who are generally regarded as extremists end up at the edges of the distribution while those understood to be moderates get middling values. Nominate scores are especially useful for my study insofar as interest groups are often blamed for increasing party polarization. If this is the case, groups that pursue friends-and-enemies campaigns should support candidates who rate as ideological extremists. If function-based theory holds, Nominate scores should not be strongly correlated with campaign contributions.

Unlike the interest group scorecards, Nominate scores do not give a sense of how a member of congress voted on the bills specifically relevant to a group. So, I decided a third group-specific measure was necessary to augment DWNominate scores and group scorecards. For this third measure, I used data collected by Maplight, a nonprofit dedicated to government transparency. In order to trace the influence of interest groups, Maplight's research team uses public record sources, like Congressional hearing testimony, news databases, and trade associations' websites to compile a list of groups supporting and opposing bills before congress. Their dataset represents by far the largest and most comprehensive source of interest group advocacy information. From the 109th

to the current congress, they have managed to collect data on over 13,000 pieces of legislation with over 10,000 interest groups or corporations appearing in their dataset. Using this vast catalogue of interest group positions, I was able to create a proxy scorecard for each group in my sample. While not as complete as the actual interest group scorecards, the Maplight proxy has the advantage of being untainted by potential gamesmanship on the part of partisan interest groups that might seek to grade the candidates they wish to support for strategic reasons on a scale.

Partisan electoral: For groups that follow a partisan electoral strategy, most campaign contributions should be made to candidates in close electoral competitions. I relied on the Cook Report's categorization of the competitiveness of house and senate races in the 2012 election cycle to determine which races were expected to be close. I chose the Cook Report primarily due to its strong reputation among practitioners. This was more important to me than predictive accuracy of a race's actual closeness on election day because it is the insight and information environment of practitioners I am trying to model. Since the vast majority of contributions from the groups in my sample were made between July and early November, I decided the Cook Reports between these months were likely the most relevant to group contribution decisions. Thus, any candidate involved in a race listed as a toss-up in at one Cook Report from July to November was denoted as a toss-up for the purposes of the regression analysis that follows.

Statistical Analyses and Findings

I ran three separate OLS regressions for each of the 21 groups in my sample: one using group scorecards, one using Nominate scores, and one using Maplight data as a means of capturing a congressman or senator's support for an interest group's legislative agenda. In this part of the analysis, I restrict myself to incumbents because challengers do not have a voting record and, thus, their fidelity to interest group goals cannot be assessed. In later analyses presented in this chapter, I will expand my focus to all races and show the trends in the table below appear to hold in races without an incumbent.

Instead of presenting an overwhelming mass of coefficients and standard errors resulting from 63 separate regressions, Table 2 lists the percentage of partisan and non-partisan groups for which a variable had a statistically significant effect (p value below 0.1) on the amount of money contributed during the 2012 election cycle. I also present average estimated effect size – that is, the average amount of additional money allocated to an incumbent owing to the factors listed in the left column. Bear in mind that these average coefficients only represent the averages of coefficients that were positive and statistically significant.

Table 2: Determinants of Interest Group Support of Incumbents

	Partisan		Non-Partisan	
	perc. p<.1	avg. coef	perc. p<.1	avg. coef
Toss-Up	0.94	68,598	0.20	795
years in (10 years)	0.06	300	0.40	360
DWNOM	0.50	4961	0.40	457
Scorecard	0.38	4,076	0.80	424
Maplight	0.38	3,869	0.80	392
prestige committee	0.56	4,071	0.60	1,514
relevant committee	0.31	1,361	0.40	5110
party leader	0.31	2,810	0.60	1,002
comm. Leader	0.13	820	0.40	3,767

Source: Center for Responsive Politics, Poole & Rosenthal DWNOMINATE Scores, group scorecards compiled by author

Reviewing the data, it appears the key expectation of function-based theory is borne out by the data. Every partisan interest group in my sample except one gave more to incumbents locked in toss-up races, all else being equal. Further, the amount of extra money allocated to candidates in toss-up races is much larger the amount of extra money allocated on the basis of any other variable. On average, incumbents involved in toss-up races receive nearly $70,000 regardless of their voting record, seniority, committee, or leadership status. Non-partisan groups, meanwhile, do not seem to take the closeness of an election into account when making allocation decisions. Only one sampled non-partisan group tended to give more to incumbents struggling through tight races and the amount of extra money allocated to such candidates was much lower than any of the partisan groups in my sample.

As expected, non-partisan groups tend to commit more money to candidates that consistently vote on behalf of their agenda as well as candidates who have a pivotal

position in Congress. Four out of five non-partisan groups in my small sample contributed an average of $424 to candidates who scored one standard deviation higher than the mean on the group's scorecard. My Maplight proxy scorecards confirm this finding, though the average effect size of a one standard deviation shift is somewhat smaller using this measure. This is probably because of the imperfections of interest group scorecards as a measure of ideology; interest groups often tend to focus on a few polarizing bills, which often results in all the members of one party rating very high, and all the members of the other party rating very low.[86] Two of five non-partisan groups also gave more to incumbents rated as more ideologically extreme by Poole and Rosenthal's Nominate system.

A smaller percentage of sampled partisan interest groups also rewarded members of Congress who consistently supported their agenda over the previous congress. According to both interest group scorecards and Maplight proxy scorecards, 6 of 16 partisan groups gave more money to incumbents on the basis of roll call votes. The effect size is also far smaller for this variable than for toss-up status; candidates who vote in support of a group's agenda one standard deviation more often than the average member of congress get about 5 percent the monetary boost an incumbent stuck in a tight race does.

Turning from group-specific scorecard measures to Poole and Rosenthal's Nominate scores, Table 2 reveals that half the partisan interest groups in the sample allocated more money to ideological extremists. This is a slightly larger proportion than non-partisan groups and calls into question slightly one of the expectations of function-based theory. Partisan groups, responding to the same incentives as party committees,

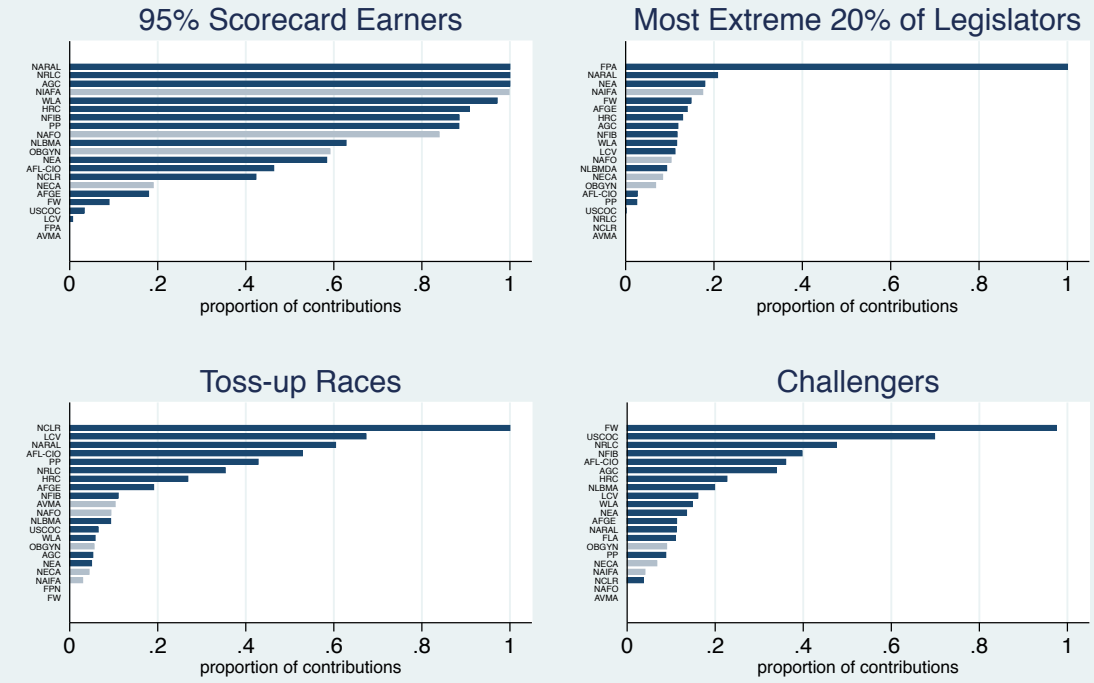
should tend to support moderates who can appeal to the median voter rather than ideologues who appeal to the base. However, ideological extremism pays relatively poorly compared to being locked in a tossup race. Moving one standard deviation away from the median member of congress only earns an incumbent candidate $4,961 more from partisan interest groups on average. Meanwhile, 40 percent of non-partisan groups gave an average $475 dollars to candidates for each standard deviation closer the ideological extremis.

Turning to measures of access-based campaign contribution allocation, it appears that, in line with the expectations derived from function-based theory, bipartisan groups tend to take into consideration factors like committee membership and leadership much more than regularly than partisan groups. The smaller proportion of partisan interest groups that did give more to members of relevant committees, committee chairs, and party leadership tended to give very little extra – about a fifth as much as bipartisan groups – on this basis. Further, only one of sixteen of the sampled partisan interest group gave more to senior members while two of the five non-partisan groups did. Lastly, while two-thirds of the bipartisan groups in my sample gave more to party leaders, only one third of partisan groups took this factor into account.

To further illustrate which factors are most important to partisan and bipartisan interest groups, Figure 5 below illustrates the percentage of a group's campaign contributions it donates to candidates or races that match one of four possible determinants. Each bar represents one group in my sample. Bar lengths represent the proportion of overall contributions made to candidates that possess the quality labeled atop the individual graph. These proportions listed below take into consideration both

contributions to incumbents *and* challengers. Dark bars represent partisan interest groups while lighter bars represent non-partisan groups.

Figure 5: Determinants of Campaign Contributions



Note: Center for Responsive Politics, Poole and Rosenthal, interest group scorecards compiled by author.

The left-most pane of the top row– which illustrates the funds given to incumbent members of congress who earn a 95 percent or higher on a group's scorecard, does not suggest a clear difference between the sampled partisan and non-partisan groups. The reason for this is the fact that partisan interest group scorecards tend to exhibit a more bifurcated distribution than bipartisan groups. Thus, a high proportion of the legislators of one party score above a 95 percent while a high number of legislators of the opposing party score near zero. There is far more variance in the scorecards of bipartisan groups, on the other hand. Typically, a far smaller percent are at either the very bottom or very top. This explains why the regression analysis revealed a much closer relationship between contributions from bipartisan groups and scorecards despite the fact that

bipartisan and partisan groups give roughly equivalent proportions of their overall contributions to legislators who earn a 95 percent or above.

The right panel of the top row – representing the proportion of campaign contributions allocated to the legislators with the highest/lowest 10 percent of Nominate scores (i.e., the most extreme 20 percent of legislators up for re-election) – evinces a somewhat clearer pattern. With one exception, every bipartisan group is in the lowest quartile in terms of the amount allocated to the most extreme candidates for office. Aside from one extreme outlier that gave 100 percent of its contributions to the candidates on the furthest edges of the political spectrum, no other group, either partisan or bipartisan, gave more than 20 percent of its funds to the most extreme 20 percent. In fact, four groups – one bipartisan and three partisan – gave no money at all to this subset of candidates. This largely confirms the conclusions drawn from regression analysis, summarized in Table 2, which revealed that a slightly higher percentage of partisan interest groups gave to extreme candidates.

Both bottom panes in Figure 5 indicate a very clear distinction between the allocation patterns of partisan and non-partisan groups. As expected, the partisan interest groups in my sample gave significantly larger proportions of their overall electioneering war chest to both toss-up races and challengers, though among these groups there is a wider range. Three groups – all partisan – gave more than fifty percent of their contributions to risky toss-up races and two gave as large a percentage to challengers. However, five partisan groups gave less than 10 percent to toss-ups and two gave 10 percent or less to challengers.

This apparently low level of commitment to assuring party control of government is surprising given the tenets of function-based theory. On the basis of this theory one would expect all interest groups that depend on one party for their agenda's success to commit the bulk of their resources to close races that could turn the balance of power in Congress. Challengers whose odds of success largely turn on the amount of money they raise and candidates in toss-up races should benefit from high levels of partisan interest group support. This is not always the case. Despite the fact that partisan interest groups do give, on average, significantly more to contenders in toss-up races and challengers, there are apparently other competing goals that cause them to allocate significant sums elsewhere.

Conclusions

More often than not, public interest groups and party committees support the same candidates for office during both primary and general elections. This finding is contrary to theories of group and party decision-making that focus on competition and institutional antagonism and supportive of V.O. Keys' assertion that partisan groups and parties often work in parallel toward the same objective. Given the characteristics and qualifications of the primary candidates, partisan groups endorse and the races they direct the bulk of their contributions to, it seems electability and control of government – not ideological purity – is the primary goal. It does *not* seem, moreover, that either parties or interest groups dominate the other entity. Much as V.O. Key would have expected, the relationship between parties and partisan interest groups seems to be one of collaboration rather than cooptation. If political parties are defined as organized attempts to control

government, the distinction between traditional party organizations and partisan interest groups may be breaking down in the 21st Century.

While my findings support the core intuition of the UCLA School – that political parties should be redefined as a loosely affiliated network of party elites, activists and interest group – my findings also invite scholars to go even further reimagining not just the definition of party but our basic understanding of interest groups as well. Many scholars associated with the UCLA school think that, despite the fact that interest groups have taken on many of the functions of traditional party organizations, they fulfill these duties differently. While bowing to the exigencies of electoral competition, interest groups remain ideological outliers at their core. My findings suggest that interest groups are *at least* as apt to pick moderate old hands with years of experience as party committees.

If the parties are more polarized today, if candidates for office are more radical, if elected officials run from compromises for fear of reprisal, partisan interest groups are not to blame – at least not primarily. There are, of course, groups known around Washington as aggressive enforcers of party discipline. The Club for Growth, Heritage Action, the NRA and Freedomworks on the right and groups like Progressive Majority, the Sierra Club, La Raza, and the National Organization for Women on the left, have uncompromising reputations. The data presented above suggest that at least some groups *do* reward members of Congress for their loyalty to group goals and, to a much lesser extent, general ideological purity. But, by far the greatest predictors of partisan interest group endorsements and campaign contributions are associated with partisan-electoral

goals. Controlling government may not be the only *desiderata* interest groups pursue during election season, but it is the principle one.

It may be cold comfort to a candidate who gets primaried that his fate is rare. The mere fact that a candidate might face an interest group inspired primary threat may be enough to intimidate members of congress. Still, candidates face many threats to their electoral success, not just from interest groups but from wealthy individual donors (who provide the largest portion of campaign funding by a wide margin), both general and primary voters, party leaders in Congress, and the press. Research has shown that the most dangerous threat members of Congress face is drifting out of touch with the median voter.[87] Despite the fact of some much-publicized conflicts between interest groups and party elites, these occurrences are not frequent enough to outweigh the countervailing threat of moving too far to the extremes of the ideological spectrum. In order to truly counteract the centripetal pull of the public, many more interest groups would have to consistently reward extremism. Of course, for partisan groups to act in this manner would be to jeopardize their own policy goals by foredooming the political party they rely on for influence.

As my theory dictates, the rules of electoral politics shape the behavior of those who step into the fray. No matter why they entered the arena of electoral politics – be it to reward ideologues or curry favor with powerful committee chairs, once a group is in the game, winning becomes the primary objective. There are no moral victories in November. There are no awards for getting 49 percent of the vote or outperforming expectations. A fervent advocate of a group's agenda who cannot hold his or her seat is

much less useful than a lukewarm Member of Congress who contributes to an electoral majority.

Some groups learn these lessons faster than others. For groups that do not learn Richard J. Daley's law – "don't make no waves…don't back no losers" –the repercussions can be swift as partisan groups, party elites, and even group members mobilize against the cancer in their midst. Leaders have been displaced and interest groups have disbanded under the weight of this sort of opprobrium. Groups that never learn how the game is played are a rarity; groups that do not learn do not typically live long. So, although the data in this chapter indicates rules are not always followed all the time, the trend is clear largely because the strategic incentives are unmistakable. In the next chapter, we will focus on another set of incentives that lead partisan interest groups to behave like traditional party organizations – the party preferences of group members.

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[6] On February 17th, after a meeting that was meant to settle the AFL-CIO's endorsement decision, an email from AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka to labor leaders was leaked to Huffington Post. "Following recent discussion at the AFL-CIO's Executive Committee meeting and subsequent conversations with many of you," Trumka's email read, "I have concluded that there is broad consensus for the AFL-CIO to remain neutral in the presidential primaries[.]" Under AFL-CIO procedures, leaders of the federation's member unions must ratify any endorsement and Clinton apparently did not have the necessary number of votes.

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[81] Theda Skocpol's research indicates that many organizations have very little interaction with their "members," who amount to little more than lines on a mass mailing list. See: Skocpol, Theda. "Associations without members." *American Prospect* 45 (1999): 66-73. The chairmen of such groups often determine who to endorse by themselves or, perhaps, with the advise and consent of a small number of ordinarily like-minded directors. See: Moe, Terry M. *The organization of interests: Incentives and the internal dynamics of political interest groups*. University of Chicago Press, 1988.

[82] But see Gopoian, J. David, Hobart Smith, and William Smith. "What makes PACs tick? An analysis of the allocation patterns of economic interest groups." *American Journal of Political Science* (1984): 259-281.
[83] Fowler, Linda L. "How interest groups select issues for rating voting records of members of the US Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (1982): 401-413.
[84] Fowler 1982; Snyder Jr, James M. "Artificial extremism in interest group ratings." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (1992): 319-345.; Kritzer, Herbert M. 1978. "Ideology and American Political Elites." Public Opinion Quarterly 42:484-502.
[85] Carroll, Royce, Jeff Lewis, James Lo, Nolan McCarty, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. "DW-NOMINATE scores with bootstrapped standard errors." *Available at: voteview. com/dwnomin. htm* (2011).
[86]Fowler, L. L. (1982). "How interest groups select issues for rating voting records of Members of the U.S. Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *7*(3), 401–413.
[87] Hall, Andrew B. "What happens when extremists win primaries?." *American Political Science Review* 109.1 (2015): 18-42.

Chapter 3: Parallelism and Partisan Coalitions

At the time of this writing, the Christian Coalition's website lists its policy agenda in the following manner:

> *1) Defunding or Rolling Back Obamacare*
> *2) Stand with Israel*
> *3) Reducing Government Spending and Debt*
> *4) Defending our Second Amendment Rights*
> *5) Stop Public Funding of Abortion – And End Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research*
> *6) Defending Traditional Marriage*
> *7) Energy Independence and Reform*
> *8) Ending Religious Discrimination Against Christians*
> *9) Opposing Liberal Judicial Nominees*
> *10) Opposing any Re-introduction of the "Fairness Doctrine."*

The Christian Coalition is not alone in taking on issues so tangentially related to its core focus. During the Reagan administration, Common Cause, a group best known for its advocacy on behalf of government transparency, lobbied against the MX Missile program.[1] In 2012, the National Council of La Raza's Board of Directors unanimously approved a resolution to support same-sex marriage.[2] Today, the Sierra Club actively promotes looser immigration controls through its Borderlands campaign. To its credit, the Sierra Club goes to almost comical lengths to reveal a connection between immigration and the environment. Immediately below the masthead on the webpage promoting the Club's stance, is a large picture of a stag and two dos staring, longingly, through a chain-link border fence blocking their migration route.[3]

That interest groups like the Christian Coalition, Common Cause, La Raza, and the Sierra Club would go out of their way to pick sides in such divisive policy contests is counter-intuitive for a number of reasons. First, groups risk alienating current and

potential members when they take controversial stands on issues outside their ordinary policy docket. Many members, or potential members, may agree with a group's primary policy agenda, but may not agree with the group's positions on largely unrelated questions. Second, research suggests interest groups devote a great deal of effort to establishing a unique brand distinct from other interest groups.[4] Groups with a clear identity have an easier time attracting members, receive more attention from the press, and garner more influence in Washington.[5] Identifying and dominating an issue niche is one way groups develop and defend their brand name.[6] When they dramatically broaden their slate of issues, interest groups do the very opposite. Instead of showcasing their particular area of expertise, they emphasize what they share in common with many other groups.

As we will see, when viewed in the context of contemporary party politics, the Sierra Club's Borderlands campaign and the Christian Coalition's oddly ordered list of priorities do not seem so counter-intuitive. As I have argued throughout, when interest groups take on the role of party boss, their newfound responsibility for the fate of the party changes how they wield their power. Instead of simply advancing their policy agenda, partisan groups also consider how their actions contribute to the party's electoral fortunes. In the preceding chapter, we examined how interest groups use their campaign contributions and endorsements to assure a governing majority just as traditional party organizations do. In this chapter, I will show how interest groups mirror the behavior of party committees and party bosses in yet another way: drafting a shared agenda – in effect, a party platform – to bind together and direct their partisan coalition.

The Tension Between Special Interests and the Public Interest

One of the primary differences between interest group politics and party politics, E.E. Schattschneider tells us, is the scope of conflict each prefers. According to Schattschneider, interest groups prefer policy to be determined by a set, small number of actors behind closed doors.[7] Interest groups represent the "special aims" of an "organized minority." They pursue "interests shared by only a few people or a fraction of the community; they *exclude* others and may be *adverse* to them" and, as such, can only win reliably when the majority of the voting public is not engaged.[8] Even groups that claim to represent the interest of a wide swath of the American public, like, for instance, the Chamber of Commerce, are no better. They are, in practice, "a group of busy, distracted individuals held together by the efforts of a handful of specialists and enthusiasts who sacrifice other matters in order to concentrate on one."[9] Parties, on the other hand, tend to widen the scope of conflict and focus on the broader *public interest*, which Schattschneider defines as "common interests shared by all or by substantially all members of the community".[10] According to Schattschneider, political parties are unique in their focus on the public interest. As Schattschneider— along with the other authors of the American Political Science Association's famous 1950 report on the state of the parties—writes:

> [O]rganized interest groups cannot do the job of parties. Indeed, it is only when a working formula of the public interest in its general character is made manifest by the parties in terms of coherent programs that the claims of interest groups can be adjusted on the basis of political responsibility.[11]

Most of Schattschneider's normative preference for party government over interest group government hinges upon this distinction.

Schattschneider's characterization of the difference between interest groups and parties has essentially won the day. In nearly every academic discipline, from law to sociology to political science, in policy case studies and in political theory, the language of "special interests" as defined against "public interests" is common.[12] Many contemporary pundits and politicians on both right and left share this view as well.[13] As President Reagan stated in his Farewell Address, interest groups "focus debate and overwhelming resources – like campaign money and letter writing campaigns – on issues that don't command broad and intense national attention."[14] As in Schattschneider's work, this understanding of the nature of parties and interest groups informs an appreciation of the former and a distrust of the latter. "The only way collective responsibility has ever existed, and can exist given our institutions," Morris Fiorina echoes, "is through the agency of the political party; in American politics, responsibility requires cohesive parties."[15]

Some claim that today's interest groups have become more narrowly focused and detrimental to the good functioning of government. There is research that suggests contemporary interest groups are even more narrowly focused than when Schattschneider lamented their displacement of traditional party organizations. Since the "associational explosion" of the 1960's, interest groups have become increasingly numerous. Grey and Lowery argue that, given the proliferation of interest groups now competing for attention from policymakers and members, many interest groups attempt to carve out narrow "issue niches" that do not overlap with other groups.[16] The proliferation of narrowly-focused groups signifies that the membership of any one such group is more

homogeneous than the memberships of the considerably more broad-based groups of the past. As Fiorina points out:

> At one time groups were viewed as moderating influences in politics…On some important issues groups were so heterogeneous internally that they could not take clear position or exert political influence…The economic groups formed in the previous generation are more focused and specialized than the older groups people joined before that. They represent single industries, not large sectors. Moreover, there has been a proliferation of 'single-issue groups' [like the NRA]. Today, people have their choice of hundreds, many involving matters far more esoteric than guns. Scholars today are more likely to view interest groups as a divisive force in politics, not a moderating one. [17]

Many scholars share Fiorina's view that it is not only the quantity of interest groups, but also the quality of their demands that makes interest groups a threat to the public interest. Single issue groups like the National Rifle Association, National Right to Life, and Greenpeace, are often viewed as the culprit for partisan polarization – a force that has pushed elected officials from both parties far away from the vital center of the American electorate. Without thought of the broader public welfare or the necessity of forming a majority coalition, these groups use campaign contributions and vituperative issue advertisements to bind politicians to their narrow mandates.

When interest groups work in concert with one another, the alliances they form are typically ad hoc and issue-specific.[18] They are not the sort of deep, multifaceted, and enduring ties that bind party factions. To the extent that groups do work regularly with the same organizations, it is ordinarily interest groups with very closely related agendas, like other trade associations from the same economic sector, for example.[19] As a result, many believe the interest group community does not equal more than the sum of its parts. For instance, in their canonical work *The Hollow Core*, Heinz et al. find that no single interest group is capable of convening far-flung stakeholders, mediating the claims of

these groups, and distilling them down to a coherent and palatable compromise position.[20] Instead, the policymaking process is dominated by unstable casts of characters, groups whose narrow set of interests dictates sporadic, rather than sustained, political involvement. No interest group has the wide scope of concern, the capacity, and the will to do what traditional parties once did: harmonizing the myriad and cacophonous voices shouting demands at policymakers.

Contemporary Interest Groups and the New Liberalism

Many dispute the common portrayal of interest groups as singularly focused actors unwilling or unable to widen their scope and compromise their principles in order to govern in the public interest. Interest groups, like the traditional party organizations of the past, have strong incentives to foster consensus and broker broad coalitions. As with party elites, the costs associated with intra-party squabbles can be damning. If, for instance, several interest groups working in the same issue area cannot agree on a consensus policy to advocate, they create latitude for politicians to pick and choose between the various proposals on offer or to abstain from action by pointing to a lack of consensus among important industry stakeholders.[21] As John Kingdon writes, "much of the time, a balance of organized forces militates against any change at all."[22] This same dynamic plays out among party elites. When the chairs of the state and the national party committee disagree, a big city mayor and the city council do not see eye-to-eye, or a committee chair and party whip are pulling for different bills, the lack of a clear signal from leadership liberates politicians to do as they please. Some research demonstrates that the cost of internal dissent leads interest groups to aggregate and synthesize demands

just as traditional party organizations and party regulars once did. Costain and Costain point out that when interest groups come together, aggregate their demands, and present policymakers with a "pre-digested" compromise proposal, they greatly increase their odds of overcoming the status quo bias that has become so characteristic of American government.[23] While most political science research focuses on the role of organized interests as articulators of policy demands, Costain and Costain convincingly argue that in contemporary American politics, interest groups are also leading aggregators of constituent demands.[24]

The proliferation of groups has contributed to the perceived necessity of interest group coalition-building. According to Burdett Loomis, the multiplication of groups means that no one group has the resources or reputation to have much influence on its own.[25] Additionally, at the same time that the interest group community has been expanding, traditional interest group powerhouses that could conceivably work their will alone have lost members, money, and influence. As Lee Saunders, the president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which, with nearly 1.5 million members, is the third largest labor union in the country, stated recently, "Labor can't do it alone. Our density dictates that we've got to have partners."[26] Before the interest group explosion and the sharp declines experienced by an older cohort of mostly materially focused interest groups, "doing it alone" was still a viable option in many instances.

Some argue that a new cadre of ideologically-driven interest groups that arose in the late 1960s,[27] and have only become more numerous and powerful since then, defies the Schattschneiderian account of the tendencies and weaknesses of interest group

politics.[28] While an older genus of material interest groups, like trade associations, corporate PACs, and labor unions, lobby for excludable material benefits on behalf of their members, public interest groups, like the Sierra Club, National Civil Liberties Union, and other groups, pursue *non-excludable* public policy goals.[29] While the dominance of narrowly-focused material interest groups seemed to signal the "end of liberalism", to borrow Theodore Lowi's apocryphal formulation, the dominance of these new interest groups signified the coming of age of a "new liberalism," as vibrant, representative, and participatory as ever it was, according to Jeffrey Berry.[30] According to Berry, public interest groups play the very opposite role that older material interests do; whereas material interests misdirected politicians and parties toward their special interest and away from the public interest, public interest groups assure politicians and parties *toward* the public interest.[31] In other words, public interest groups pressure modern parties to be the responsive parties the authors of APSA 1950 hoped they would become.

Public interest groups differ from material interest groups not only in the issues they advocate, but also in the way they interact with other interest groups. Kevin Hula shows that groups that construe their interests broadly – that is, as fighting for a clean environment, consumers, or Christian values – are more likely to seek coalition partners than groups that focus on a narrow range of issues directly pertaining to a single corporation, trade group, or segment of the economy. Hula argues that groups who cast their policy agenda in ideological terms are also more likely to engage in coalitions. This is because, as Kathleen Bawn writes, "ideology…causes people to have preferences and opinions about issues in which they have no direct stake."[32] Thus, even if two groups

have little other reason to work together, a shared political ideology can become the basis for an alliance. As Kevin Hula's work reveals, "some organizations by the very way in which they self-identify, become more attractive coalition partners for other organization that cultivate similar identities."[33] In a process that Layman and Carsey call "conflict extension", as groups explicate their ideological tenets, they begin to see that the obstacles that complicate their core policy issues – corporate greed, the short-sightedness of legislators, an undue focus on property rights – also underlie many other policy issues.[34] On the surface, groups that work on issues of immigration and environmental policy, prayer in school and firearm regulations, consumer protection and LBGTQ issues, might appear to share little in common, but if they share a common worldview and understand themselves as facing a common threat, they may very well form close and regular working conditions.

According to Hans Noel, ideology does not just serve as an impetus for far-flung groups to work together, but also unites groups far more tightly than a common material interest.[35] Groups that view their interests in narrow, material, and non-ideological terms, may work with another group often, but as soon as their interests diverge, the coalition will likely dissolve. Gabriel Kolko illustrated, in his magisterial work The *Triumph of Conservatism*, that the opportunism of business groups defies classic right/left ideological classification. For instance, while business groups are typically considered as rightward leaning, big businesses at the turn of the 20th Century actively supported many of the regulations promoted by Progressive reformers, knowing they could bear these new costs while many of their smaller competitors would buckle under their weight.[36] Today, business groups are no more unified; material interests regularly turn against erstwhile

allies. For instance, organizations representing nurses and physicians are often on the same side of issues effecting the medical profession but came to blows over portions of the Heath Truth and Transparency Act of 2006, which would increase the liability of nurses and technicians in cases of medical malpractice.[37] Similarly, building material groups frequently unite against environmental groups over land use issues, but interest groups representing the concrete and steel industry dueled over which building material should be considered more environmentally friendly for the purposes of the government's LEED green building standards, each fighting for the Sierra Club's endorsement.[38]

While it is more common for public interest groups to connect their core issues to ideological precepts, occupational groups sometimes do the same. For instance, individual labor unions often view themselves as part of a *labor movement* working toward the betterment of all American workers whether union members or not. This is a much broader and more ideologically tinged agenda than most occupational groups proffer. It would be very odd, for example, to hear the American Realtors Association speak of a *business movement*. As a result of their broader sense of purpose, labor unions historically have shown a tendency to build relationships with groups they believe share their commitment to "social justice" or, at the very least, share their antipathy towards "big business." In the 1960's, unions funded radical groups, like the Americans for Democratic Action and the Students for a Democratic Society. Today, they continue to play a vital role strengthening other groups and knitting together the Democratic coalition by funding organizations that advocate on behalf of a wide panoply of leftwing causes like the Progressive Majority and the Bluegreen Alliance.[39] Nonetheless, labor unions are often condemned for focusing too narrowly on collective bargaining issues and not

enough on the broader objectives of the leftwing coalition and, worse yet, undercutting other movements that they have perceived as threatening their dominance over the Democratic Party.[40]

Does Partisanship Affect Issue Coalitions?

Until recently, political scientists have studied interest group issue coalitions and interest group political coalitions separately. With a few exceptions, the partisan affiliation of groups has been largely left out of analyses of group interactions that are not overtly political. Whether two groups contribute to the same party has been viewed as largely irrelevant to whether those same two groups are of any use to one another in an issue campaign. Of course, there are many examples of strange bedfellow coalitions from across the aisle working together to achieve a discrete policy goal. For instance, agricultural interests that usually support Republicans and interest groups that represent low-income urban populations work closely to safeguard the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, which benefits both populations by creating a subsidized market for agricultural products and helping low-income households meet their basic needs. More recently, many Tea Party groups joined labor unions in opposing President Obama's Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which would have increased trade to Asian nations but may also have increased outsourcing and job loss.

Large N empirical analyses indicate strange bedfellow coalitions are not as strange as the name may suggest. In a 2009 study, Grossman and Dominguez attempted to determine the extent to which issue coalitions and electoral coalitions overlap. They found that electoral coalitions while groups tend to cluster in two distinct rival camps

during elections, when it comes to actual governance, interest groups form a much more complex web of alliances. Using *legislative support lists* included in the Congressional Record by members of Congress to indicate to other lawmakers and, perhaps, constituents, the breadth of interest group support for a piece of legislation, Grossman and Dominguez find that interest groups often reach across the political aisle in order to advance their policy agenda once November's sound and fury has subsided.[41]

However, other evidence suggests the ties that bind co-partisan interest groups extend beyond the electoral context. Koger, Masket, and Noel find interest groups connected to the same party often share donor lists with one another in an impressive signal of common purpose, given how jealously interest groups tend to guard the sources of their contributions.[42] Sociologists, too, have found many examples of social movement activists and interest group leaders working in far-flung policy domains sharing tactics, messaging, theoretical schemas, and human resources.[43] More recent research has found that social movement spillover rarely crests party lines. Michael Heaney and his coauthors find that it is very rare for activists to belong to both a left-leaning and a right-leaning group, but very common for volunteers to belong to multiple interest groups of the same partisan stripe.[44] In a prior study, Heaney found that interest groups do not only face bottom-up pressure to foster alliances with co-partisan groups, but also to hold groups from the opposing partisan camp at a distance.[45] At least in the context of health care policy, Heaney discovered that interest groups take into consideration the partisan reputation of possible coalition partners lest they offend their core supporters.

Recently, co-partisan coalition-building efforts have taken on a more formal, institutionalized dimension. In the early 2000's, to further solidify the bonds between co-partisan interest groups, a new sub-class of interest group was born, expressly dedicated to routinizing and stabilizing relations between coalition partners rather than advancing a policy agenda of their own. PowerPAC+ was launched in 2006 to establish ties between Hispanic and Black activists. The Bluegreen Alliance, which has representatives from fifteen of the largest labor unions and environmental groups in the country on its board of directors, was established to defuse disagreements between these two factions of the Democratic coalition. Other groups, like the Democracy Alliance and the Progressive Majority, bring together representatives from every corner of the Left's interest group panoply. Much like caucus leadership and national party committees, these groups' explicit goal is to hold each interest to the terms of the coalition's policy platform. As Gloria Totten, President of the Progressive Majority, told me of her organization's role as shadow party whip:

> Often, during primaries various progressive groups will try to defend their favorite candidate, even if they are weak of certain issues by saying: "they're progressive, just not on the environment, or women's rights or labor issues." What we are saying is you can't be progressive on labor and the environment and not on women's rights, or progressive on the environment and women's rights, but not labor and be a progressive.[46]

The fact that discipline-enforcing groups like Progressive Majority not only exist, but draw support and cooperation from interests like the AFL-CIO, the National Organization for Women, the Sierra Club, and others, is strong evidence that partisan interest groups understand the importance of maintaining a common policy platform.

What Factors Might Contribute to Shared Interest Group Issue Platforms?

There are five powerful incentives that should drive co-partisan interest groups to collaborate on issue campaigns that do not exist when two groups do not share a partisan affiliation. Top-down pressure from politicians and party elites, bottom-up pressure from group members, the high cost of lobbying against intra-partisan groups as opposed to contra-partisan groups, the electoral advantage of maintaining a stable and comprehensive policy platform, and the stabilizing effect a policy platform has on a partisan coalition, all lead partisan interest group alliances – shadow parties, in the UCLA School's parlance – to agree to and maintain a shared party platform. In many ways, these incentives mirror the reasons politicians and party elites draft and uphold a party platform.

Top-down pressure. Politicians and party elites, having a clear stake in stability and, thus, peace amongst their various constituents, often work to foster close working relations between co-partisan groups.[47] Politicians use their stature to convene meetings in order to build personal relationships, mutual respect, trust, and understanding between interest groups that ordinarily might not share the same perspective or interact organically. Suffragists and labor unions, labor and the civil rights movements, evangelicals and Goldwater-inspired small government Conservatives, immigration activists and environmentalists – at various times, politicians have pulled leaders from these interests together to defuse potentially explosive intra-party conflicts.[48]

Presidents are often particularly important in cementing co-partisan alliances.[49] President Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first to fully realize the utility of the chief

executive's convening authority. Roosevelt used both informal meetings and ongoing presidential committees to foster ties between left-leaning constituencies. Of particular concern during his presidency was integrating African-Americans into the Democratic coalition of organized interests. To this end, FDR created the American Council on Race Relations, which brought together predominantly black groups like the National Urban League, the NAACP, and the United Transport Service Employees of America, non-profits like the Young Man's Christian Association and the American Friends Service Committee, as well as interest groups like the National Farmers Union, and Democratic business leaders.[50] FDR was not the only president to employ this strategy. As Joseph Pika observes, Democratic presidents tend to engage in executive-led coalition-building with more vigor than Republican presidents since their "electoral support relied upon knitting together multiple groups with distinct interests, policy needs, and organizational forms."[51] Obama's presidency represents the apotheosis of president-led coalition brokering. Like other presidents, he regularly convened meetings of diverse interest groups to work through their differences, he was the first president to maintain a close relationship with a 501(c)(4) dedicated to his agenda. One of the main functions of this group was to provide leadership and a unifying common direction to the constellation of left-leaning interest groups.[52]

Bottom-up pressure. A second factor that contributes to intra-party issue coalitions is grassroots pressure. Ordinarily, voters care about a range of issues, some of which affect them directly, others of which do not.[53] One of the best predictors of an individual's preference on a given issue, including those which affect them intimately, is their

political party. Research has shown that the close relationship between party affiliation and issue preference is the result, by and large, of people aligning their attitudes on policy questions with their party's platform, not the other way around.[54] Even in regards to very high salience issues like abortion, most individuals change their mind instead of changing their party. What is true of the public at large is true of interest group participants as well. While logic suggests active members of public interest groups would choose their party on the basis of the issue they are most passionate about, research suggests otherwise. In fact, contemporary scholars find party is typically a more important source of identity than group affiliation.[55] Partisan identification in the American context is a profoundly deeply rooted and resilient source of identity and it is cognitively much less difficult to shift one's opinion on an issue than it is to shift from one party to the other.[56] Thus, well-informed, strong partisans – the very people who tend to join interest groups – tend also to hold what political scientists often refer to as *ideologically bounded* issue preferences; that is, issue preferences that are all in line with one of the two dominant political ideologies.[57]

The tendency of highly politically active individuals to have ideologically bounded issue preferences imposes a constraint on group leaders because, typically, partisan interest groups tend to draw members from one political party. For instance, Lawrence Rothenberg's survey of the left-leaning (though officially non-partisan) Common Cause revealed over 75 percent of the group's membership were Democrats or Democrat leaners. In their study of Anti-War groups protesting the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, Heaney and Rojas also found that the groups with the most politically homogeneous memberships were also the groups most likely to have close working

relationships with party officials and elected politicians.[58] Clyde Wilcox found the membership of the Moral Majority were nearly all Republicans.[59] Wilcox also confirmed that members of the Moral Majority were "full-spectrum" conservatives – conservative across fiscal, foreign policy, and social issues – confirming that partisanship typically predicts a broad range of policy preferences, not just a single, particularly salient one.[60]

Many interest group members not only agree with the issue positions taken by other groups within the party coalition, they actively support those groups with their money and time as well. Sociologists call the tendency of one social movement or interest group to share members with other groups that share important ideological foundations *social movement spillover*. Sociologists observed that activists who cut their teeth in the anti-war and civil rights movements later turned their attention to the environment, animal rights, consumer rights, and the women's movement.[61] As they did, they brought their tactics, organizational acumen, language, and ideological foundations with them. Contemporary interest groups also frequently have overlapping memberships. For instance, a 1981 poll of Common Cause members found that 21.5 percent of the group's members also belonged to environmental groups, 12.6 percent belonged to consumer groups, and 15.1 percent belonged to the League of Women Voters. While the memberships of co-partisan interest groups tend to overlap significantly, interest groups and 527 groups that support opposite parties rarely have intertwining grassroots.[62]

Compared to partisan identification, interest group membership is not as deeply rooted and stable a source of identity.[63] Even if being an environmentalist or a feminist is an important source of self, it does not follow that being a member of the Sierra Club or the National Organization for Women is similarly important. There are, after all, many

interest groups through which one could engage in these issues. When an individual faces the uncomfortable cognitive dissonance caused by holding an issue position that is out of line with their partisan affiliation, they will often respond by bringing their issue preference in line with party leadership. It does not follow that interest group members will bring their issue preferences in line with an interest group's leadership. When an interest group takes a position that deviates from the predominant party of their grassroots, they generally face pushback or even abandonment as members resolve cognitive dissonance in favor of the party rather than the interest group.[64] In this way, politically engaged individuals' tendency to hold ideologically bounded issue positions incentivizes interest groups to advocate ideologically bounded issue positions. Environmental group leaders may face pressure, therefore, to take a pro-immigrant stand even if some leaders think ease of migration contributes to overpopulation. In turn, labor unions might feel obligated to support environmental regulations even if they think these regulations may cost jobs. In this way, détente – if not active support – is assured between far-flung groups like the Sierra Club, La Raza, the AFL-CIO, and many other groups whose agenda feeds into the same major party's platform.

Decreases lobbying costs and increases the odds of victory. A third factor that leads interest groups to seek closer working relations with co-partisan groups is the additional costs – in terms of lobbying expenses and uncertain political outcomes – that attend intra-partisan conflict compared to inter-partisan conflict. As David Austen-Smith and John Wright demonstrate, interest groups tend to aggressively lobby members of congress only when an elected official is cross-pressured.[65] If a group knows that no opposing group

contributes to, or otherwise holds influence with, an ordinarily simpatico politician, they can assume that policymaker will need little prodding. But, groups that hold influence with the same politicians, as is usually the case with co-partisan groups, must spend a great deal of time and money counteracting each other's effects if and when they oppose each other. Thus, groups connected to the same party have a strong financial incentive to stay out of each other's way.

Electoral benefit. When co-partisan interest groups push conflicting issue agenda, not only do they jeopardize their policy agenda in the short term, they also risk their party's electoral fortunes in the long term. Stable, consistent, and comprehensive party platforms tend to be to the benefit of the politicians who bear a major political party's imprimatur.[66] One reason independent candidates have difficulty winning elections is because voters often do not know which issues they support. Educating the voter as to what a candidate hopes to accomplish while in office is an enormously expensive, laborious, and time-consuming task. Party labels decrease the cost of voter education in the same way brand names decrease the cost of customer education. Just as an established brand name helps a product sell by assuring the customer of a certain level of quality, a party label helps candidates attract voters by providing information about where the candidate stands.[67]

Without parties and their platforms, each candidate for office may represent a wholly *sui generis* set of policy positions. As appealing as it may sound for politicians to be their "own man", so to speak, a fully candidate-centered system makes retrospective voting impossible. After all, without some obvious through-lines connecting one candidate's policy program to any before him, it is impossible to see the past as prologue.

In essence, consistent platforms assure a vote cast for a candidate is not simply a verdict on a particular man or woman's idiosyncrasies, but a choice between two alternative directions for the country. But, for party labels to have meaning to voters, candidates and interest groups must work to give them meaning. Officeholders must vote – for the most part – along party lines, lest the party label cease to be a reliable signal to voters as to where candidates stand. Recognizing the usefulness of party labels for commuting meaning to voters and controlling government, interest groups must restrain from cross-pressuring politicians by taking positions that conflict with the policy goals of co-partisan groups.

Sustaining a stable electoral coalition. In so far as party platforms are upheld and abided by, they have yet another benefit by serving as a contract that can add to the longevity of a party coalition. Though staying true to the party line may require some sacrifice, the benefits of belonging to a stable majority are enormous.[68] As long as each individual is willing to honor their pledge to support the priorities of his or her fellows – or, in some cases, cede control over decision-making power in an area of particular concern to them – he or she is promised similar support and discretion in return.[69] In the public choice literature, this is called a "log-roll." While this sort of favor trading is often associated with pork-barrel politics, log-rolls are not limited to small bore distributive politics. In fact, at pivotal points when the platforms of the two major parties changed dramatically, the sea change is often facilitated by deals struck between factions of party elites.[70] Mugwumps, Stalwart Republicans, Half-Breeds, Goldbugs, Populists, and Progressives, all radically altered one or both party platforms by extracting compromises from other

party factions. Most recently, the exodus of disaffected Southern Democrats to the Republican Party following the GOP's emphasis on law and order during the Nixon years, redrew the political map.[71]

The Challenges Facing Cross-Partisan Coalitions

All of the incentives above apply to intra-partisan alliances uniquely. While there are many forces that may induce an interest group coalition, shared partisanship offers a set of additional rewards that do not apply to cross-partisan coalitions. When, for instance, the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), which seeks to bring together evangelical Christians and environmentalists, attempted to foster an alliance between environmental groups and evangelical Christians, prominent right-leaning religious organizations rebuffed their advances. According to some accounts, some vocal evangelical activists - who argued such a cross-partisan alliance would damage the electoral fortunes of the Republican Party - dissuaded groups like the National Association of Evangelicals from joining environmentalists.[72] Calvin Beisner of the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, a group formed to draw evangelical leaders away from the fledgling creation care movement argued:

> "[A]t stake is the strength and consistency of evangelical support for political candidates who are pro-life, pro-family, pro-free market, and pro-limited government (i.e. conservative), versus those who are pro-abortion, pro-easy divorce, pro-homosexual, pro-government planning in the economy, etc. (i.e., liberal), because, for whatever reasons (and they make an interesting study), people's views on climate change generally (not universally) tend to divide along those lines."[73]

These proved to be potent arguments. Groups like the EEN have faltered in terms of membership, money, and prominence since their peak of influence in the early 2000's. For interest groups that rely on a political party, questioning the wisdom of an important element of their party's platform is a risky prospect. Party platforms change slowly and, usually, only after significant blood-letting forces a party to reexamine its core tenets.[74] Thus, the surest and most immediate consequence of greening the environmental movement would be to turn the electoral map blue.

To the extent partisan interest groups do desire to form a cross-partisan alliance, they often face resistance from above and below. While resolving intra-party conflict makes it easier for politicians to meet the demands of a varied constituency, makes lobbying cheaper and victory considerably more likely, and relieves supporters of the cross-pressure of competing group memberships, cross-partisan groups have the opposite impact. They create tension, destabilize carefully calibrated policy platforms, and threaten to realign the memberships of parties and interest groups. After all, when an interest group forges friendship that crosses the political aisle, it often does so at the expense of an erstwhile ally on its own side.

Politicians, who actively seek to bring co-partisan groups together, often work to break apart strange bedfellows. Especially for Members of Congress from relatively safe districts, the chance that an organized constituency that they rely upon will change or expand their demands in a way that is almost certain to create tension with co-partisan groups, is a palpable threat. Because stable party platforms are a boon to them, politicians and party elites have strong incentives to thwart a cross-partisan coalition that threatens a plank of that platform. In response to growing news coverage of the creation

care movement and the EEN, many Republican politicians marshaled biblical arguments as to why climate change should not concern Christians.[75] It is easy to understand why. The Evangelical Environmental Network and groups like it threaten to create a schism between socially conservative groups on one side and fiscally conservative groups and business interests on the other. It took decades to merge these factions and the union has proven critical to Republican electoral fortunes.

Pundits and public intellectuals – the influential "academic scribblers" who Hans Noel convincingly shows are critical in cobbling together shadow party coalitions – are often even more outspoken in their criticism of cross-partisan alliances. When, for instance, the Evangelical Immigration Table (EIT) started to win support of influential megachurch pastors and organizations like the National Association of Evangelicals for comprehensive immigration reform, conservative pundits writing for the National Review, Breitbart News, the Blaze, jumped to action. Several articles publicized the fact that a significant portion of the EIT's funding came from well-known Liberal financier George Soros and portrayed the organization as a poorly disguised rouse meant to manipulate and use evangelical Christians. For pundits seeking to forestall a strange bedfellow alliance, reminding erstwhile allies of exactly who is included in their new circle of friends is an effective tactic, as is excavating old grievances that once divided strange bedfellows. Thus, in interest groups politics, buried hatchets do not stay buried long.

Not only do politicians and public intellectuals attempt to quash cross-partisan alliances from above, but such star-cross'd pairings also face significant resistance from the grassroots. As discussed earlier, most citizens are interested in several policy issues,

not just one. And, typically, engaged and knowledgeable citizens, of the type interest groups rely upon for donations and volunteers, have policy issues that are bound together by either Conservative or Liberal ideological tenets – the two dominant political ideologies that basically define the two major parties. This feature of American public opinion works to the advantage of intra-partisan coalitions and to the disadvantage of cross-partisan alliances. Coalitions that cross party lines are often thwarted by a lack of membership support. Sensible as an strange bedfellow alliance may seem to group leaders, if such an alliance seeks to combine a typically Conservative policy stance and a typically Liberal policy stance, cross-pressured members will likely voice their disapproval, vote to change their group's policy or leadership, or exit the group altogether.

Eventually organizations like the EEN must face the startling reality that diagram overlap they are attempting to mine for support is diminishingly small. According to a 2010 Pew Research Center survey, only 16 percent of churchgoing white evangelicals said climate change is a "very serious" problem, as compared to 31 percent of all Americans.[76] By 2012, Jim Ball, president of the EEN, admitted, while speaking at the World Wildlife Fund in D.C., that attempting to win over the right wing of the evangelical movement was a "fool's errand." Environmentally friendly evangelicals agreed. Jonathan Merritt, founder of the Southern Baptist Environment and Climate Initiative admitted, "The term 'environmentalist' is as toxic among evangelicals as the term 'evangelical' is among non-evangelicals." At the same time, the EEN President Mitch Hescox said the group wanted to keep "the far left" and groups like the Sierra Club, which he called "a bunch of weirdos," at a distance.[77] Hescox consistently

attempted to emphasize the distinction between the mainstream environmental movement and creation care. He emphasized that EEN's concern for the environment derived from a different set of values than most environmental groups. Instead of seeking the health of the planet as an end in itself, Hescox's group was focused on improving the conditions of – and sustaining the conditions for – human life. For this reason, Hescox has said: "We consider creation care an aspect of the pro-life movement." Such attitudes and frames ensure that the EEN will not only have difficulty winning over evangelicals to the environmental cause, but also in ingratiating itself to the big players operating in the environmental policy space, without the support of whom a true evangelical-environmental convergence is impossible.

Hypotheses

From the preceding theoretical considerations, I draw the following hypotheses:

H1: Interest groups should form far more intra-partisan issue-specific coalitions than cross-partisan coalitions.

As discussed earlier, powerful forces lead interest groups to form strong working relationships with other groups in the shadow party. For one, politicians and party elites often facilitate meetings between squabbling group leaders in an attempt to mend fences and end frustrating cross-pressures on themselves. More importantly, interest groups that seek to advance one party's control of government have the same incentives to form a stable party platform as traditional party organizations. Party platforms help foster a party brand and win elections. But, maintaining a party platform means upholding each of its planks. A platform is like a mutual defense treaty. By joining the shadow party, an organization mobilizes a large coalition behind its own objectives, but it also commits

itself to mobilizing in defense of other interest groups to which it might see little connection.

This hypothesis suggests something about what the interest group topography should look like. If it is the case that interest groups have strong incentives to assist other partisan groups, and to avoid conflict with them whenever possible, then the interest group population should tend to bifurcate into two rival partisan factions. Few ties should run across the fissure between these two factions while a dense web of connections should knit together co-partisan groups.

> *H2: Co-partisan interest groups should oppose each other's agendas very rarely.*

As Daniel Schlozman convincingly argues in his ambitious book *When Movements Anchor Parties*, joining a shadow party coalition means sacrificing autonomous action at the altar of shared purpose. Just like traditional party organizations, partisan interest groups have powerful incentives to limit fractiousness between factions. Internecine quarrels can create treacherous cross-pressures for friendly policymakers, candidates for office, and group members who accede to their party's agenda across the full spectrum of political issues. Oftentimes, everyone loses as the result of an intra-party feud as cautious policymakers, whose careers rest on pleasing their constituency, are frozen until a pleasing compromise is brokered. While any interest group conflict threatens to make policy gains costly and slow – if not altogether impossible – the costs described above are exclusive to inter-party conflict and should make such clashes much rarer than inter-party conflicts.

> *H3: Interest groups should engage with other co-partisan interest groups in the same fashion regardless of whether they are material or public interest groups.*

Partisan interest groups are driven by the desire to control government via electoral victories. For all the reasons discussed above, this overriding motivation should lead interest groups to form stable shadow party platforms just as traditional party organizations do. Ideological affinity is an unnecessary – and, perhaps, inconsequential – additional motivation. As we saw in the last chapter, electoral considerations trump ideology vis-à-vis campaign contributions and primary endorsements. Similarly, when deciding which policy fights to join, which issues to stay silent upon, and how to calibrate their issue stances relative to other partisan groups, the party's viability should come first. Groups that cast their interests in ideological terms and groups that focus solely on the material interests of their members are both equally served by a stable party platform and should both do their part to uphold it. Thus, both material and public interest groups should tend to form homophilous networks (i.e. engage in issue coalitions with only co-partisan groups) to roughly the same extent.

The smoke-filled rooms of the 19th Century in which party platforms were cobbled together were not driven primarily by ideology, but by an awareness of the advantages of a party platform that could give each party faction a clear sense of what they could (and could not) expect to get in return for their support. Later, party leaders learned the electoral advantages party labels bestowed on candidates for office. These alone were powerful enough to bind traditional party organizations together and they should also be sufficient to bind partisan interest groups today.

Operationalizing the variables

In order to test the above hypotheses, I need measures of the two explanatory variables mentioned: a group's connection to a major party (or lack thereof) and group type (either public or occupational). Measures for each are, fortunately, ready to hand. To determine a group's relationship to the two political parties, I turn to campaign contribution records available through the Center for Responsible Politics. Using campaign contribution data to identify nonpartisan strategies is fairly easy (these groups are, of course, the ones who give no money to any candidate), but distinguishing between partisan and bipartisan groups is a little more difficult. Many groups give a token amount to candidates of both parties, so the question becomes: when does an imbalance of campaign spending in favor of one party qualify as a *partisan* strategy? I adopt a two-part test to distinguish between bipartisan and partisan groups. To be considered partisan, a group must commit more than 65% of its contributions to one party in at least four of the past six election cycles, and, additionally, at least 65% of the aggregate contributions from the last six election cycles must have been contributed to one party. All other groups are considered bipartisan.

This classification scheme allows me to hone in on the coalition behavior of interest groups who view their fate as tied to one political party. Committing to one party's electoral success, after all, is the key pivot point in a group's transition from vanguard to old guard. Isolating the coalitional activity of partisan interest groups will hopefully add some clarity to the mixed findings of similar analyses. While there is some preliminary evidence that partisan interest groups form tight lobbying coalitions, the most comprehensive empirical analysis does not classify groups as left-leaning or right-leaning. Grossmann and Dominguez's study, which found that interest groups that

endorse and donate to different candidates often form issue coalitions nonetheless, did not differentiate between groups that contributed or endorsed candidates from one or both major parties. Since many interest groups support both parties, Grossmann and Dominguez's results may have been driven by organizations with no firm partisan allegiance. Thus, it is not possible to determine from this previous study whether partisan interest groups are significantly more likely to form issue coalitions with one another, despite the fact that their research design was very similar.

In order to determine whether an interest group is an occupational or public interest, I use each group's latest tax filing. When groups file their taxes, they have to denote what sort of organization they are because the IRS taxes different sorts of nonprofits differently. While there are 29 separate categories defined by the tax code, 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), 501(c)(5), and 501(c)(6) groups combined make up the vast majority of filers. These codes, listed on an organization's yearly 990 form, are very useful in trying to determine whether a group is best described as a public or occupational interest group. A group can file as a 501(c)(3) if it is religious, educational, charitable, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, established to foster national or international amateur sports competition, or to prevent cruelty to children or animals. 501(c)(4) groups are often termed "social welfare organizations." The main distinction between these two categories is how politically involved they are allowed to be. Donations to 501(c)(3)'s, but not 501(c)(4)'s, are totally tax deductible, but 501(c)(3)'s must stay clear of party politics entirely. They cannot endorse anyone for office, produce voter guides, give money, or make any in-kind donation to a candidate. I classify both 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) groups as public interest groups. Labor unions, which fall under section

501(c)(5), and trade associations and business leagues, which fall under section 501(c)(6), I categorize as occupational organizations.

For a measure of interest group positions, I turn to the public statements, either for or against a bill, made by the interest group itself. Often, when a bill is nearing a vote, interest groups will make their preferences known via a letter to congressmen. This is referred to either as a position statement or, when a number of interest groups endorse a joint statement, a "sign-on" letter. Since 2005, the website Maplight has been cataloguing the position statements and sign-on letters of approximately five hundred interest groups including many occupational and public interest groups. This is the same data source that I used in the last chapter, in combination with roll-call data, to gauge politicians' support for an interests group's policy agenda. While the full dataset I built from Maplight's generously provided raw data contains information on over 1,000 interest groups and over 5,000 bills, I use only a small sub-sample in the analyses that follow. I looked at the positions taken by a random sample of 280 interest groups across all bills considered during the 109th through the 113th Congress.

Of course, this method of measuring the scope of interactions between interest groups is subject to criticism. First, it does not provide a comprehensive accounting of every position taken by the interest group in the sample. A more comprehensive picture of all the policies lobbied by an interest group is possible; one could, for instance, turn to the lobbying disclosure forms interest groups file quarterly with the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Secretary of the U.S. Senate, but this method would reveal only that a group had a preference, not what that preference actually was.

The difficulty of systematically sampling interest group policy preferences is well-known. In fact, much of the interest group literature is built on case studies where the players and their motives are familiar to at least the researcher. Two recent pieces of scholarship pioneered innovative new ways of creating larger samples of interest group positions. Over the course of four years, Berry et al. called a random sample of active lobbyists registered and practicing in Washington, D.C. and asked what the issue they most recently worked on was, who the client was, and what the client's stake in that issue was.[78] While elegant, truly randomized, and ingenious, this sampling method is also highly time intensive and resulted in a relatively small sample of just under 100 policy issues.

Grossmann and Dominguez draw their sample of interest group positions from statements of interest group support for legislation and sign-on letters that are entered into the Congressional Record.[79] This strategy does not capture interest group opposition to bills, as these sorts of position statements are not often entered into the Congressional Record. As a result, Grossmann and Dominguez are only able to look at interest group cooperation, not interest group conflict. Both are significant indications of how consistently interest groups consider one another's policy preferences. It may also be that interest group cooperation and conflict are different animals. Like politicians, interest groups may seek to reach across the aisle to build support for their own policy agenda, though function-based theory holds that their efforts will often be forestalled as groups consider which political party will gain from the issue coalition's accomplishments. But, when an issue campaign requires lobbying against another co-partisan interest group, an organized interest's leadership may decide to hold fire and avoid costly internecine fight.

Ultimately, seeking strange bedfellows is far less costly than igniting enmities close to home. Thus, it is important to understand how partisanship effects both interest group cooperation and confrontation; collecting a sample that contains both the groups that support and the groups that oppose a piece of legislation allows me to do just this.

Methods

Like other scholars interested in the relationship between interest groups and factions, I will employ the tools of social network analysis. Generally speaking, social networking analysis is well-suited to questions about the effect of some property – be it alma mater, racial background, people with a particular illness, or, in this case, partisanship – on interactions between people or groups. In the parlance of networking analysis, all the people, groups, or any other object of interest are referred to as nodes. In the graphical representations that ordinarily accompany network analyses, nodes are often represented by a small symbol, the color, size, and shape of which can be used to denote different qualities. Relationships or interactions between nodes are referred to as ties and are typically portrayed as lines connecting one node to another. Commonly, the thickness of these lines varies depending on the strength of a relationship or frequency of an interaction. Once all nodes and ties are drawn, a number of summary statistics can give further insight into the nature of the network as a whole. To test both of my hypotheses, I will need to determine the following characteristics regarding the interest group network: *density*, *homophily,* and *propensity for conflict* which is a measure novel to this work.

Typically, a network's *density* is defined as the average number of ties shared between a pair of nodes. For instance, a network composed of three nodes, A, B, and C, with A and B connected by one tie, B and C connected by two ties, and A and C wholly disconnected, would have a density of 1. *Homophily* as the name implies, is a measure of the degree to which nodes with some shared property connect only with each other. One popular way of determining a network's homophily is by simply subtracting the number of edges joining nodes with a shared characteristic, generally referred to as interior ties, from the number of ties to groups without that characteristic, or exterior ties. The resulting "E-I Index" is a value running from 1 to -1, where -1 signifies a completely homophilous network composed entirely of interior ties and 1 signifies a network with all exterior ties and no interior ties. If hypothesis 1 holds, co-partisan interest groups should share more ties and oppose each other less often than pairs of interest groups that do not share a partisan bond. As a result, the interest group network should have a very low E-I index value, signifying a high degree of homophily. It also follows that a network composed only of co-partisan groups would have a far greater density than a network composed of all interest groups.

To test hypothesis 2, which focuses on the propensity for conflict between groups rather than the propensity for partnership, I will bring into the analysis data from Maplight regarding the number of times two groups lobby against one another. From this data, I create a statistic very closely related to the E-I index. Instead of subtracting the number of internal ties from external ties, I will subtract the number of times any one interest group opposes another from the number of instances that that same pair support the same outcome. The resulting *S-O index* (so named because it is derived by

subtracting instances of *opposition* from instances of *support*) runs from -1 to 1, where negative values suggest a pair opposes each other more often than they support each other. In accordance with hypothesis 2, I expect partisan networks to have large positive S-O values in comparison to the average S-O values across the entire network.

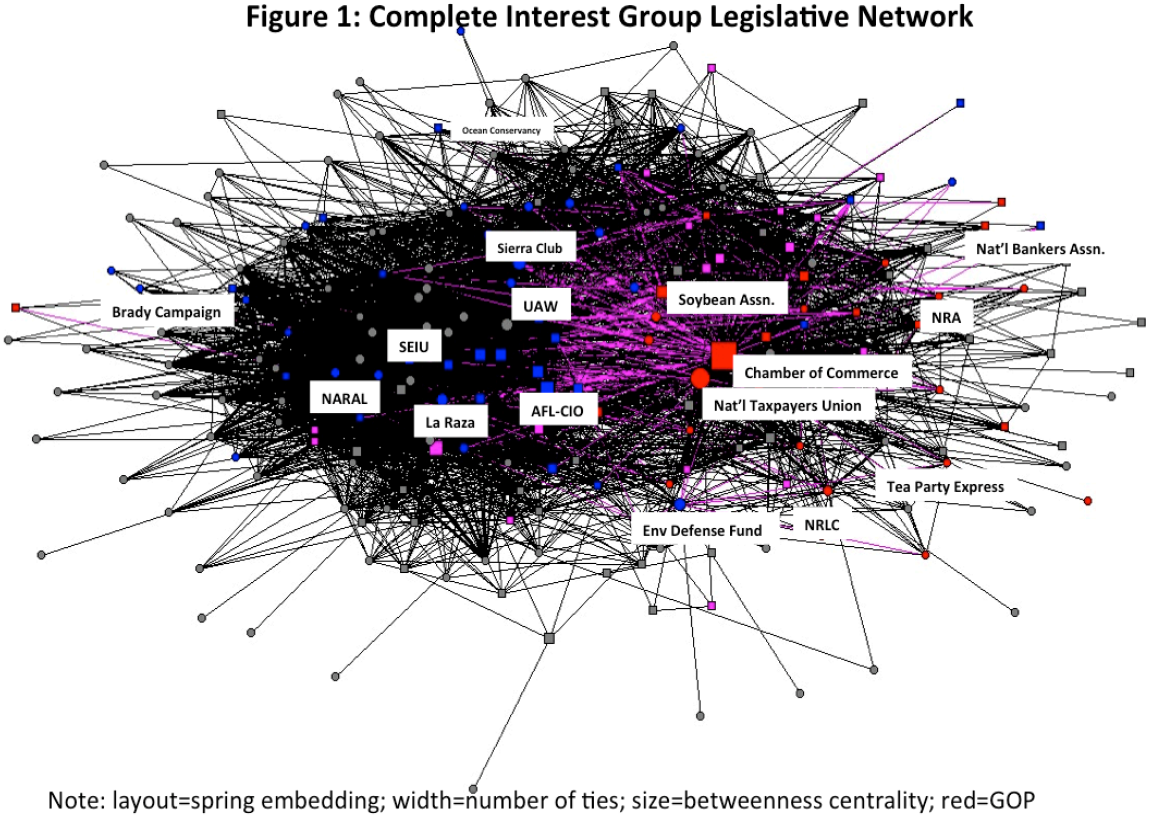
To test hypothesis 3, I will conduct the same analyses described above using group type – either public or occupational – as the discriminating characteristic instead of party allegiance. If ideology does, indeed, add a degree of durability and depth to partisan coalitions as Noel suggests, each parties' public interest group coalition should be denser, more homophilous, and less predisposed toward conflict than their respective occupational group coalitions. As mentioned above, function-based theory suggests a null finding. In other words, there should not be a difference in the network density (measured by the E-I Index) or degree of partisan infighting (measured by the S-O index) when public interest groups and occupational groups are compared. Reliance on the party, not a group's organization principle or substantive policy goals, should be the key determinate of a group's propensity to form strange bedfellow coalitions or spar with ideological allies.

Results

Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the interest groups in my sample and the relationships between them. Each node represents an individual interest group, while each tie represents one, or multiple, issue positions advocated by two groups. Node color, shape, and size all denote characteristics of the groups in the network. Color reflects a group's partisan affiliation. Red and blue are used for GOP-connected and

Democrat-connected groups respectively, purple denotes bipartisan groups, and grey is used for nonpartisan groups. Node shape distinguishes public interest groups, represented by circles, from occupational groups, represented by squares. The size of each node is a function of a group's betweenness centrality (in essence, how centrally located a group is in the network).

Figure 1: Complete Interest Group Legislative Network



Note: layout=spring embedding; width=number of ties; size=betweenness centrality; red=GOP donors; blue= Dem donors; squares=occupational, circles=public; purple ties=strange bedfellow alliances

While the interest group community certainly does not appear to be clearly bifurcated, Republican groups do tend to cluster together on the right, while Democratic groups cluster on the left. Bipartisan groups, almost all of which are occupational groups and trade associations, are found mostly on the Right. The Left, on the other hand, has the bulk of non-partisan 501(c)(3) groups like USPIRG, Common Cause, and the Ocean

Conservancy, on its side. A significant portion of the ties between groups on the right and groups on the left actually unite bipartisan and nonpartisan groups. Linkages between groups with opposing party ties are somewhat rarer. I have marked these true cross-partisan ties in purple. As is clear, these are a relatively small percentage of ties overall.

Another feature of the graph that immediately stands out is the high betweenness centrality of two groups – the Chamber of Commerce and the National Taxpayer's Association – compared to the rest. In brief, a node's betweenness centrality is equal the number of shortest paths from all vertices to all others that pass through that node. While there are other methods of determining centrality, this one is commonly used in studies like this one.[80] The fact that the Chamber and NTU have a high degree of centrality in the context of the overall network could suggest they serve as a bridge between the two parties. A further indication that this might be the case, at least regarding the Chamber, is the number of purple cross-partisan ties radiating out toward environmental groups like the Sierra Club at the top left of the graph, and a variety of labor unions at the center left. Conservatives have bemoaned the seemingly unprincipled advocacy of the Chamber on issues like immigration, the debt ceiling, and pork-barrel spending. Figure 1 suggests that the Chamber does, in fact, work across party lines more often than any other group in the sample. The NTU's centrality does not owe to exactly the same factors. As the graph shows, it seems to broker few true cross-partisan alliances. It has, however, lobbied alongside 501(c)(3)'s from across the aisle. The NTU's centrality also benefits from the fact that it frequently advocates the same policies as does the Chamber, often putting it on the shortest path between the most central group in the network and other nodes.

Lastly, it is evident that there is much more blue in the graph than red. This is true for two reasons. First, there are simply many more left-leaning interest groups than there are right-leaning groups. The Left has an overwhelming majority among public interest groups and a somewhat smaller advantage among occupational groups. In this regard, my sample mirrors reality. The associational explosion of the 1960's and 1970's was largely a phenomenon of the Left and, though new rightwing groups like the Moral Majority and the Club for Growth, garnered significant attention in the 1980's and 1990's, the Right never quite caught up. In terms of occupational groups, the Democrats have the advantage because labor unions tend to be consistent party supporters, while trade associations and corporate interests tend to split their contributions between Republicans and Democrats in bipartisan fashion.

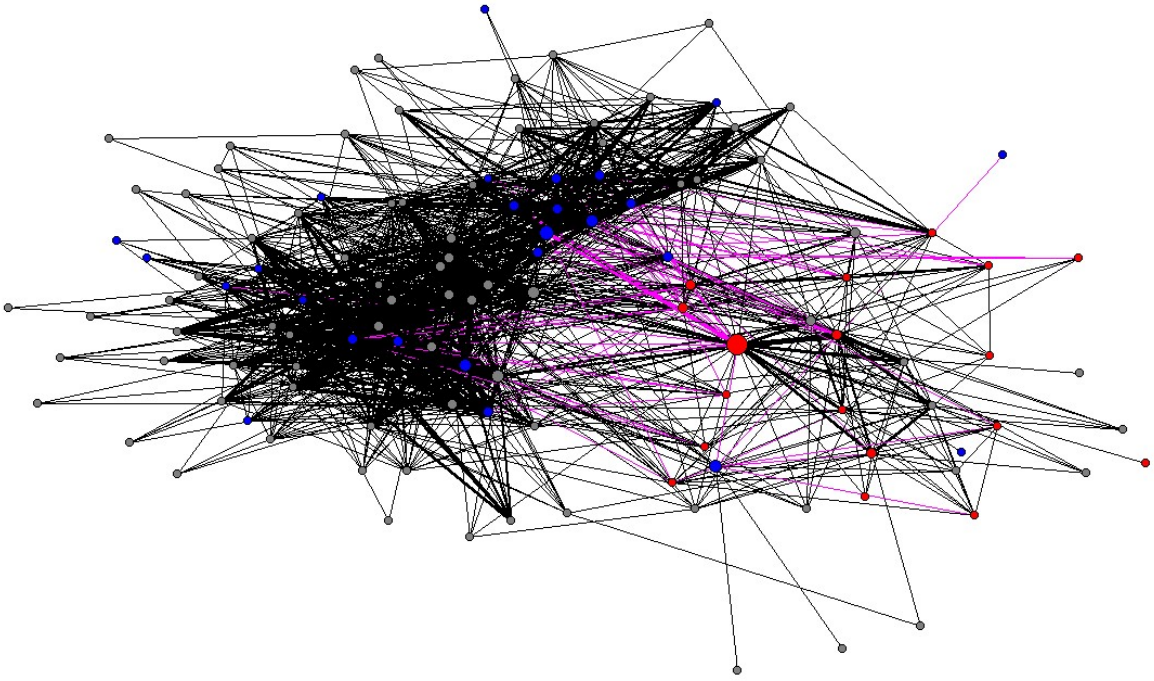
Not only are there more blue nodes in the graph, but, for the most part, they are larger. Again, size of node reflects betweenness centrality; this difference suggests leftwing groups are more tightly connected than groups on the Right. Many political scientists have claimed that the Republican Party is, in fact, the most homogeneous and disciplined.[81] While the Right's coalition is often portrayed as businesslike and sober, the Left is typically painted as a fractious band of outsiders. There is some truth to this. Interest groups on the Left do represent an extraordinarily diverse swath of the American people. Labor unionists, feminists, Hispanics, blacks, homosexuals, and environmentalists have all settled under the penumbra of the Democratic Party. However, while the Right's coalition may be more homogeneous in some ways, its interests are, arguably, more diverse. As James Ceaser argues, the primary adhesive between evangelicals and neo-conservatives, Burkean traditionalists and libertarians, is

their loathing of the Left.[82] The same could be said for rightwing interests like National Right to Life and the National Rifle Association. If the Right is superficially homogeneous and ideologically diverse, the very opposite might be said of the Left. Though groups like La Raza, the NAACP, and the AFL-CIO represent ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse constituencies, Figure 1 suggests that they lobby on behalf of the same policies as a matter of course. There are other possible explanations for the asymmetric density Figure 1 reveals. Perhaps the fact that groups like the Progressive Majority, the Bluegreen Alliance, and the Democracy Alliance have no analogue on the Right prevents the GOP's interest group network from achieving the same degree of interconnectedness and discipline. Perhaps the fact that the United States government seems able to borrow money at will means groups seeking to divert federal funds to aid their constituency no longer see themselves as in competition with each other. Perhaps a deep commitment to social justice serves as a stronger bond between groups than the ideological adhesives the Right relies upon. Whatever the explanation, lately, a number scholars have been surprised by similar findings in the course of their own research.[83] The asymmetry of the Republican and Democratic coalition has not been a major focus of political science research – and is not the subject of this study either – but presents an attractive avenue for future work.

To test hypothesis 2, which asks whether ideology rather than partisanship is doing the most work in binding interests together, I split my sample of interest groups and analyze public interest and occupational groups separately. For an initial sense of how these two sorts of interest groups might differ, Figure 2 and 3 isolates each, studying the ties between public interest and occupational groups in isolation. Starting with the

public interest group network, one of the most obvious features of the public interest group network is the imbalance both in the number of public interest groups on the ideological – and graphical – left and right, and also the density and homophily of the two sides. In comparison to leftwing public interest group, the right-leaning faction seems disjointed, scattered, and sparse.

Figure 2: Public Interest Group Legislative Network



Note: layout=spring embedding; width=number of ties; size=betweenness centrality; red=GOP donors; blue= Dem donors; purple ties=strange bedfellow alliances

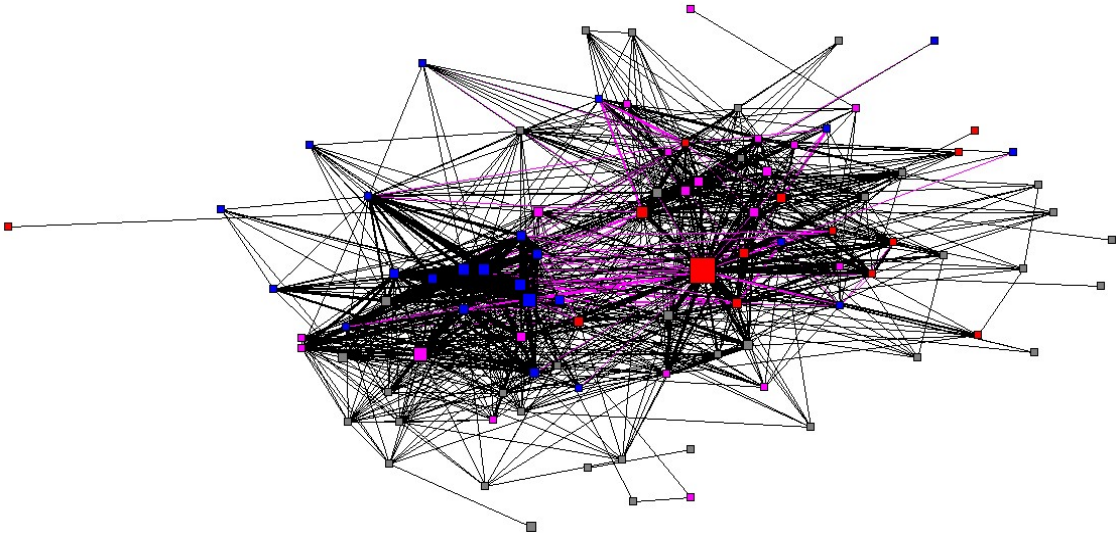
Furthermore, while a large cluster of left-leaning groups engage in negligible cleavage-defying alliances, the right seems shot through with purple indicating a very low level of party discipline. If ideology tightly binds interest group coalitions, we would expect that both conservative and liberal groups would be equally disciplined and cooperative. But

this is not the case. In fact, the diffuse and undisciplined nature of right-leaning public interest groups obscures the clear party divide that both Hans Noel's theory regarding ideology's role in coalition-building, and my own theory regarding the importance of shared partisan platforms, predicts should exist. This is yet another indication that hypothesis 1 needs some qualification. While there are clearly a division between right-leaning and left-leaning interest groups, there is clearly some value in building cross-partisan coalitions that compels even public interest groups which are the most often blamed for partisan polarization.

Turning to occupational groups, Figure 3 reveals a much more symmetrical dispersion of groups and ties between groups – at least on an initial glance.[84] Though, like rightwing public interest groups, right-of-center occupational groups do not appear to work together as often as groups on the Left, a fact evinced by the perceptibly higher density of ties between leftwing nodes. In support of Noel's hypothesis, labor unions – the occupational groups at the heart of the Democratic coalition – often frame their issues in ideological terms. While some craft or trade unions have historically focused assiduously on collective bargaining and lobbying on behalf of their members and industry, most large industrial and service sector unions set out to represent the working class and underprivileged whether they are union members or not.[85] This broad focus chimes loudly with Liberal ideological overtones. By contrast, with few exceptions, trade associations typically focus tightly on the material interests of their members. With the important exception of a few large groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers – both of which are included in my sample – most occupational groups on the right do not claim to represent business, entrepreneurs,

stockholders, or any economic class. They claim only to represent the thin sliver of those categories who pay dues to their organization. If ideology binds groups together, we would expect right-leaning occupational groups to be only loosely connected, given their distinctly non-ideological bent. This seems to be the case, which provides some validation for Noel's thesis.

Figure 3: Occupational Interest Group Legislative Network



Note: layout=spring embedding; width=number of ties; size=betweenness centrality; red=GOP donors; blue= Dem donors; purple ties=strange bedfellow alliances

Figure 3, like Figure 2 and Figure 1, lends only weak support to hypothesis 1. Again, while there is greater network density between co-partisan occupational groups, there are also enough cross-partisan ties to suggest that maintaining a shared party platform does not trump the desire to build broad issue coalitions.

The summary statistics presented in Table 1 confirm that shared partisanship seems to shape interest group coalition-building among both ideologically driven public

interest groups and occupational groups. As discussed earlier, if hypothesis 1 is true, there should be far fewer cross-partisan ties – in other words, *strange bedfellow* coalitions – than partisan ties. A *negative* E-I score would indicate just this. Also, because the nature of coalitional politics suggests interest groups support their allies more regularly than those outside the coalition, the density of ties should not be homogeneous across the network. Instead, the density of ties around the neighborhood of a party coalition should be much higher than the density of ties outside those regions of the network. As a result, the density of the party's respective networks should be greater than the density of the network taken as a whole. In accordance with hypothesis 2, there should also be a relatively insignificant number of intra-party skirmishes resulting in *positive* S-O scores. And, to test hypothesis 3, I will simply compare the relevant summary statistics – E-I Index, opposition rate, and density – of occupational and public interest groups as opposed to Right and Left partisan coalitions.

Turning first to network density, Table 1 provides strong evidence coalition partners regularly provide each other's agendas mutual support. On average, a pair of Democratic groups lobbies on the same side of a piece of legislation 2.78 times over the course of the four congresses included in my sample. As Figure 1 illustrated, rightwing groups are not as robustly connected. A pair of Republican groups provide mutual assistance to one another 1.35 times. Both party coalition's density statistics are significantly higher than the network's overall density.

Table 1: Network Density

	Complete	GOP network	Dem network	Right faction	Left Faction
Overall	0.4869	1.356	2.784	0.02	1.55
	(2.55)	(5.35)	(7.44)	(3.36)	(4.67)
Public	0.093	1.085	1.844	0.05	1.55
	(2.51)	(5.13)	(3.44)	(3.98)	(3.22)
Occupational	0.792	3.375	5.665	0.43	2.21
	(3.63)	(5.66)	(12.22)	(4.37)	(6.12)

note:Standard deviations in parentheses. Derived from permutation test, number of iterations=5000

Hypothesis 3 also finds strong support. Counter to both Noel and Bawn's expectations, ideology does not seem to be a stronger bond than material interest. In fact, each party's respective occupation group networks are denser than networks formed by public interest groups, a difference statistically significant at the .01 level.

Whether or not a group contributes an imbalance of dollars to one party is, of course, a crude measure of whether a group is associated with one party or affiliated with a party's constellation of supportive interest groups. Though a group might not give any money to any candidate for office or party organizations, the group may support the party or bolster the coalition in other, less visible, ways. If, for instance, an interest group consistently voices opposition toward one party's agenda and voice's support for another party's agenda, that may well have an impact on how club members – and voter's generally –appraise the parties. This suggests another way of understanding partisan networks or shadow party: a coalition of interest groups that consistently support the same legislative agenda (rather than the same candidates for office). This way of conceptualizing a party network makes a certain amount of intuitive sense. After all, it defies logic a bit to consider the Family Research Council or the National Immigration Forum as wholly non-partisan. Any definition of "shadow party" that leaves two such groups to the side is perhaps too restrictive.

Taking these considerations into account, I forced all interest groups into two factions or cliques using a tabu search minimization procedure to optimize this measure to find the best fit, as described by Fred Glover.[86] The densities of the two resulting factions are reported in columns 4 and 5 of Table 1. As before, occupational groups (loosely) associated the same party seem to advocate more pieces of legislation in common than do public interest groups. This is especially true regarding rightwing public and occupational interest group networks while the distinction between leftwing occupational and public interest group network density is comparatively slight and statistically insignificant at even the .1 level.

Turning from network density to network homophily, Table 2 presents the E-I index values for the entire network as well as various subsections of thereof. In the first column, I present the E-I indexes for the entire network, a network solely composed of the sampled public interest groups, and a network composed only of occupational groups.

Table 2: E-I Indexes

	E-I/ all	E-I /partisan strat.	E-I/factions
Overall	0.435	-0.441	-0.55
	(0.025)	(0.33)	(0.39)
Public	0.497	-0.442	-0.604
	(0.05)	(0.36)	(0.39)
Occupational	0.435	-0.435	-0.500
	(0.05)	(0.27)	(0.37)

note:Standard deviations in parentheses. Derived from permutation test, number of iterations=5000

The E-I values indicate ties between partisan groups and bipartisan or nonpartisan groups are more common than ties between co-partisans, a finding true both to public and occupational groups. This is somewhat surprising, but resonates with other interest group scholarship that suggests issue coalitions are often intentionally built to include

organizations with different expertise, reputations, and bases of support.[87] Insofar as electioneering on behalf of a party bespeaks a specific organizational core competency, it would make sense for partisan groups to seek out relationships with non-partisan or bipartisan groups in possession of some other skillset. It may also be the case that including bipartisan and nonpartisan groups in an issue coalition helps attract a broader base of support either in the body politic or Congress.

Homing in on alliances between partisan interest groups, I next stripped all bipartisan and nonpartisan groups out of the data analyzing the network homophily of only groups adopting a partisan strategy of influence. These results are shown in column 2. The large negative E-I values suggest partisan groups of all types are nearly twice as likely to bolster their allies than reach across the aisle. This provides relatively strong evidence for hypothesis 1. Still, as Figure 1, 2, and 3 clearly illustrates, there is a significant amount of bipartisan cooperation when it comes to lobbying. Partisanship certainly makes coalition building easier – or, at least more likely – but it does not forestall strange bedfellow alliances by any stretch.

Again, it appears that, to the degree partisanship binds groups together, it does so without regard to group type – though the data raise some interesting questions about the role ideology may play in coalition-building. It appears the public interest group network is slightly more homophilous than the occupational network, but the difference is not significant at the .05 confidence interval. However, the next column, which brings groups categorized as bipartisan or nonpartisan on the basis of their campaign contributions back into play, suggests that public interest groups in this category may differ somewhat from occupational groups.

When I bring every group in my sample – partisan, non-partisan, and bipartisan – and assign each to a political side (either right or left, conservative or liberal) on their issue advocacy patterns, the network density of public interest and occupational groups seems to differ. With partisan interest group coalitions defined in this admittedly looser way, the difference between public interest groups and occupational groups is statistically significant (at the .05 level). This suggests that occupational groups that give equivalent sums of money to both parties (or make no contributions at all) tend to lobby alongside partisan interest groups on both sides of the aisle regularly. The same does not seem to be true of non-partisan or bipartisan public interest groups. In contrast to trade associations that straddle the political aisle, groups like Greenpeace, Focus on the Family, the American Enterprise Institute, and Common Cause may not contribute to one party or the other, but their issue advocacy certainly binds them more closely to groups on one side of the partisan divide. At least among those public interest groups that lobby Washington D.C. on behalf of their policy agenda, true centrism is uncommon. It seems that the broader, non-material, non-excludable policies that public interest groups tend to push groups into one ideological camp; for occupational groups that generally lobby for narrower, material, and excludable benefits, the same does not seem to be true. In short, this suggests that shared ideology may interest groups together even in the absence of shared partisanship just as Bawn and Noel's work suggests. However, the analysis of groups that actively support one of the two major parties indicates, no additional adhesive is necessary to bind partisan groups. No matter the organizing principle – public interest or shared occupation – partisan groups seem to stand on a shared platform spanning many policy issues.

Lastly, we shift focus from how often interest groups side with one another, to how often they work at cross-purposes. Table 3 presents the S-O index for the entire network as well as relevant subsections of the data. Again, a negative S-O index indicates groups oppose each other more often than they support each other. A positive S-O index represents just the opposite.

Table 3: S-O Indexes

	All	Co-part (all)	Co-fact	GOP	Dem
Overall	0.53	0.94	0.81	0.9	0.95
	(.02)	(.10)	(.05)	(.04)	(.03)
Public	0.53	0.95	0.88	0.94	0.96
	(.05)	(.12)	(.10)	(.04)	(.03)
Occup	0.59	0.94	0.86	0.91	0.96
	(.05)	(.13)	(.11)	(.09)	(.02)

note: standard dev. in parentheses.

All values are positive, which suggests groups are generally more likely to form alliances than to spark enmities. This concords with a finding, replete throughout the interest group literature, that groups are generally risk averse and conflict avoidant.[88] Disputes with other organizations are always costly and groups avoid them when and if they can. But, internecine quarrels are by far the costliest sort of interest group conflict and groups should be especially cautious in avoiding them. The high S-O indexes in the second and third columns suggest this is indeed the case. Whether partisan interest groups are defined in terms of the candidates they contribute money to (the definition I employ in column 2), or as members of coalition of groups that tend to lobby on behalf of a common agenda (the definition I employ in column 3), turning against erstwhile allies is an unattractive proposition. In fact, two co-partisan groups are about half as likely to oppose each other as are two randomly selected groups. To put it another way, for every

1 intra-partisan conflict in the data, there are about 9.5 incidents of co-partisan groups lobbying alongside one another.

As before, the data shows that partisanship, rather than ideology, binds partisan coalitions together. The differences between the S-O index of the occupational and public interest group networks are not statistically distinguishable from one another. As with the previous analyses, public interest groups do not seem to be bound to one another more tightly than occupational groups. To be sure, they contend with each very infrequently, but the same can be said of co-partisan occupational groups. The difference between groups bound by ideological principle and groups bound by material interest is, again, not statistically significant.

Conclusions

Recent research demonstrating that interest groups actively seek out broad coalitions and work especially hard to foster strong relations with other interest groups connected to the same political party is inconsistent with Schattschneider's account of interest group and party interactions, but does accord with a function-based theory of organizational behavior. As hypothesized in Chapter 1 and demonstrated vis-à-vis primary and general elections in Chapter 2, function-based theory suggests that interest groups will work *in parallel* with parties, not at cross-purposes with them. This is because partisan interest groups – that is, interest groups who contribute to one party's electoral fortunes – begin to face the same incentives and respond according to the same logic as party leaders and traditional party organizations in general. In the electoral context, function-based theory predicts that interest groups should, by and large, endorse

and fund the same candidates traditional party organizations do. When it comes to coalition-building and selecting a slate of issues, interest groups should behave much as party leaders do: seeking to build broad coalitions on the organization's core set of issues and helping allies achieve their own policy goals – even if those goals are tangentially linked to their own. The fact that interest groups take such a wide array of positions, view coalition maintenance as so pivotal, and share scarce resources to help out other groups on their side of the aisle – as demonstrated by recent studies – suggests that the partisan interest groups that form the shadow party negotiate something akin to a *shadow party platform* of their own volition.

What binds partisan interest groups together seems to be partisanship itself, not, as some have claimed, ideology. The thesis that shared ideology provides a tighter and more durable bond between groups than material interest or partisan teamsmanship finds no support. Ideologically driven public interest groups are no more likely to lobby alongside one another or avoid lobbying against one another than trade associations or labor unions. The binds of shared partisanship are sufficient. No added fixative is needed or, in fact, useful. This is not to say that the standard account of the difference between public interest groups and material interest groups is wholly mistaken. Most trade associations do tend to contribute money to both Republicans and Democrats and make alliances (and enemies) on both sides of the aisle. Their narrow focus on their members and the profitability of their sector of the economy gives these groups the mercenary quality political scientists like Schattschneider and Lowi observed. Public interest groups, on the other hand, tend to either stay out of politics altogether or adopt a partisan strategy of influence. In fact, every public interest group in my sample donated

nearly all its political contributions to one party or made no contributions at all. However, once interest groups of any sort – public interests, trade association, or labor unions – joined the shadow party, they all served as equally reliable coalition partners.

A popular refrain among political scientists like E.E. Schattschneider was that coherent and enduring party platforms make democracy possible.[89] This may not be the case today. Though Traditional Party Organizations have lost considerable power, party line voting has never been more pronounced. This research presented above suggests shadow parties may be capable of devising and enforcing a party platform just as the party proper once did. Though they reach across the political aisle to foster cross-partisan alliances with some regularity, they rarely do so at the expense of party solidarity. The negligible amount of conflict between partisan interest groups indicates partisan teamsmanship not only when it comes to electioneering, picking candidates, and sharing resources – the focus of the UCLA School's research – but also when it comes to issue advocacy.

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[84]Looking at the size of the nodes – which symbolizes the amount of money interest groups give to their party – reveals that leftwing occupational groups give significantly more to the Democratic Party than interest groups on the right side of the network give to Republican candidates. This is, in part, due to the difference in the donation patterns of labor unions and trade associations. As discussed in Chapter 2, most trade associations do not adopt a partisan strategy, preferring, instead, to gamble on incumbents and buy the consideration of influential members of congress and members of important sub-committees regardless of their party.
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Chapter 4: The Sierra Club and the Politics of Parallelism

In the previous two chapters, I have presented evidence that, generally speaking, partisan interest groups work in ways that compliment rather than compete with the efforts of party committees and politicians. They tend to prefer the same candidates in primary elections, push their resources toward the same races during general elections, and work to build party unity while, at the same time, attempting to reach across the aisle to bipartisan or non-partisan coalition partners when possible. These findings give credence to V.O. Key's expectation that groups often work in parallel to political parties rather than at cross purposes. They do not, however, establish on their own the reason for interest group and party parallelism. These statistics certainly do not suggest that either interest groups or parties fully coopt the other institution, but they do not sufficiently demonstrate that the opposite is true. Given the data restrictions that exist vis-à-vis interest group advocacy and internal politics, it is perhaps impossible to empirically demonstrate all the factors that determine how interest groups allocate their campaign contributions or select policy positions.

In this chapter, I will take one interest group – the Sierra Club – and trace its evolution from a small, non-partisan nature conservancy group to the large, Democratic constituency partner it is today. In so doing, I will give a fuller and more nuanced account of how interest group and party strategies and issue positions coevolve. Poole and Rosenthal describe the connection between rising inequality and party polarization as a dance "with give and take and back and forth, where causality can run both ways."[1] The dance analogy fits the relationship between interest groups and parties equally well. It is hard to tell just by peering out on the dance floor which partner is leading and which

is following. What looks like seamless synchrony of movement from across the dance floor belies subtle cues – guiding glances or a change of pressure between clasped hands – to say nothing of the careful choreography that goes on far away from the dance floor.

The coarse indicators I employ in the chapters prior to this are not sensitive enough to pick up these discreet signals. Working with a high volume of cases, I am restricted to analyzing only what the couple on the dance floor wants me to see. Of course, both partners – interest groups and party – want the dance to appear as authentic, as free from coercion, as heartfelt as possible. Neither parties nor interest groups can appear as if they are weak, out of control, a pawn, an agent, a follower. And, yet, neither can dance alone. Leaving (at long last) the dance analogy, an interest group must appear as if its support for a political party and its candidates is freely chosen and well-rewarded. A party must express, in turn, that an interest group's support is the result of commonsense, pragmatic problem solving in the face of the opposing party's malignant extremism – not the mark of extremism on their own part.

In this chapter, I rely less on what I can observe from the outside and lean heavily on what interest group insiders say. Board of Directors minutes, private correspondence, interviews with former leaders, and autobiographies can all shed light on the internal processes and hidden interactions that determine the trajectory of an interest group's development. Qualitative methods of analysis do have their deficiencies, too. For one, relying on the words of interest group leaders is to rely on the perception and intuition of those same interest group leaders. What one person perceives as a pivotal moment or a significant meeting may pale in importance to something they may not have comprehended or even witnessed. However, the most substantial limitation of qualitative

analysis is its time-intensive nature, which limits any such study to one or a few case studies. Whether the findings of such small N analyses are generalizable is often difficult to know for certain. This is especially true in reference to interest groups, which are so numerous and diverse.

Given these challenges, it is critical to identify a group that not only typifies a broad swath of the interest group ecology, but about which insiders have written a significant amount. The Sierra Club meets both these criteria. Like many groups who have elected to join the shadow party, the Sierra Club started with no clear intention to engage in partisan politics. The Club began as an outing group in the late 19th Century, when conservationism was a not yet a partisan concern. The group's earliest allies were spread across both sides of the aisle and its leaders were more at home in the High Sierra than the halls of power. But, like many other interest groups, the Sierra Club became more partisan over time and, roughly contemporaneously, environmental policy became more polarizing. While the Sierra Club's evolving relationship with the Democratic Party is familiar, the amount of internal records and insider accounts available is uncommonly high. Three former Sierra Club executive directors have written memoires; the group has one of the most complete public archives of any interest group, containing hundreds of thousands of pages of internal memos, personal papers, archived political brochures, and all board of directors meeting notes going back to the Club's founding; the Sierra Club also has a highly active oral history program and has conducted in-depth interviews with prominent directors, board members, presidents, lobbyists, and chapter leaders. This trove of material means that no one voice – no one individual's recollections and insights

– has to be relied upon too heavily. Pivotal moments in the Sierra Club's history can be viewed from many different angles.

The Sierra Club makes an ideal subject for close analysis for yet another reason, as well. Like interest group and party interactions in general, there is an active debate about the degree to which the Sierra Club caused, exacerbated, or simply responded to growing party polarization. Most Sierra Club leaders publically argue their alliance with the Democratic Party was born of necessity as the Republican Party, they claim, jolted to the right on environmental policy in order to appease rich developers, the energy industry, and agribusiness.[2] For their part, Republican politicians claim the Sierra Club's leadership and donors are partisan Democrats first and environmentalists second.[3] They argue the Club ignores the GOP's continuing efforts on behalf of the environment in order to bolster the electoral fortunes of their own party. Digging beneath these self-serving narratives uncovers a much more complicated truth. As the previous two chapters suggest, interest groups may contribute to partisan differentiation but they do not necessarily promote partisan polarization. These are two distinct phenomena. While the former is useful to political parties and partisan interest groups, the latter forestalls control of government and, thus, serves neither groups nor parties.

The Sierra Club's Early Issue Advocacy

From its founding in 1892, the Sierra Club was interested in lobbying government on behalf of a policy agenda. However, with 182 charter members all from the Bay Area of Northern California, its goals were far more limited and parochial in its early days than they have become since. Essentially, the group's policy advocacy was restricted "to

enlist[ing] the support and cooperation of the people and government in preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada."[4] Limited though its purposes may have been, from the very beginning the Sierra Club proved an effective advocacy group. Under the leadership of John Muir, the organization's first president, the Sierra Club lobbied against proposals to diminish the size of state parks, dam rivers, and open up federal land for logging, mining, and grazing.

Important as these early efforts were in defining the political character of the group, throughout its first sixty years, the Sierra Club's political advocacy came second to its recreational purposes. The highlights of the group's annual calendar were not protests or letter-writing campaigns but weeks long hiking trips to the High Sierras. The Club's leaders were not chosen for their political acumen or policy knowledge but for their experience as mountain guides and rock climbing skills. Like its early issue advocacy, the group's membership also remained regionally concentrated for its first six decades of existence. It was not until 1950 that the group started its first chapter outside of California. Throughout the first half of the 20th Century, the Sierra Club's size fell well behind that of other larger environmental groups like the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, The Wilderness League, and the Izaak Walton League, in terms of both size and stature.[5]

David Brower's Transformation of the Sierra Club

The Club's character changed fundamentally with the selection of David Brower as the group's first Executive Director in 1952. In keeping with the character of the Club at that time, his ascent within the organization owed mostly to his daring in the

mountains, not the boardroom. Brower joined the Sierra Club at twenty-one years old and gained quick popularity while distinguishing himself as one of the nation's top mountaineers. Over the course of his mountain climbing career, he racked up an incredible seventy first-ascents up sheer mountain faces once thought insurmountable. After serving with the famous 10th Mountain Division in World War II, Brower returned to Berkeley, California to work for the University of California Press, edit the Sierra Club Bulletin, and lead the Sierra Club's annual four week long "High Trips" into the mountain wilderness.

Only after Brower was selected to lead the Sierra Club did the audacity of his vision for the group become evident. Almost immediately, Brower brought his publishing acumen to bear against a major proposed dam in Utah's Dinosaur National Monument. Brower worked with author Wallace Stenger and publisher Alfred Knopf to put together an edited volume that portrayed the scenic landscape in both text and photographs. The same year, the Bureau of Reclamation withdrew its plans for the project. While the group had led the fight against other development projects, the Sierra Club had typically returned to business as usual at the end of each foray into politics. The fight against the Utah dam marked the beginning of a quick succession of high-profile conservation campaigns. Over the next several years, the Club commissioned films and published editorials to turn public opinion against development projects throughout the American west. The Sierra Club also began holding annual Wilderness Conferences, which brought together conservationists from around the country to network, discuss their shared agenda, and strategize. The group's increased focus on political advocacy under Brower's leadership resulted in a significant expansion of

membership. From 1956 to 1960, the Sierra Club's membership grew from 10,000 to 15,000.[6]

In the 1960's David Brower's Sierra Club found itself at the forefront of a second wave of environmental activism. A new generation of environmental leaders claimed that humanity's impact on the planet represented a threat not only to the natural beauty of the wilderness, but to humanity itself. Influenced by this new, more holistic understanding of the danger posed by human development and environmental degradation, Brower, along with board members Fred Eisler and Ian Ballantine, convinced Stanford Professor Paul Ehrlich to write a book aimed at the general public outlining the dangers of overpopulation. *The Population Bomb*, published in 1968, became a New York Times bestseller and Ehrlich's thesis – that the earth's finite and insuperable "carrying capacity" would soon be breached – captured the public imagination.[7]

Despite the Sierra Club's bold issue advocacy, the group maintained strong allies on both sides of the political aisle throughout the '60's, with both Republicans and Democrats seeking the support of environmental groups. In 1960, both political party platforms promised to clean up streams and commit federal dollars to build waste disposal plants. Moderate Republican Representatives Robert Stafford, Bob Packwood, and John Chafee, regularly joined Democratic colleagues in combatting pollution and protecting wilderness. Republican President Richard Nixon signed into law the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts and oversaw the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. Even archconservative Senator Barry Goldwater said in 1969:

> While I am a great believer in the free competitive enterprise system and all that it entails, I am an even stronger believer in the right of our people to live in a clean

> and pollution-free environment. To this end, it is my belief that when pollution is found, it should be halted at the source, even if this requires stringent government action against important segments of our national economy.[8]

Green-friendly Democrats were at least as strident in their support for the early environmentalist's agenda. After witnessing the environmental degradation caused by the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill, Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin organized the first national Earth Day, co-sponsored by conservative Republican Pete McCloskey of California.

The Sierra Club also had enemies on both sides of the political aisle, as well. While president, Lyndon Johnson took aggressive action against the group following a clash over a proposal to dam the Colorado River. Despite warnings from the Johnson administration to keep silent on the plan, the Sierra Club ran four newspaper advertisements, including a full page in the New York Times, comparing the proposal to "flood[ing] the Sistine Chapel so tourists can get nearer the ceiling."[9] The day after the advertisements ran, the Internal Revenue Service notified David Brower that the group's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status was under review. After a two-year legal battle, the IRS ruled that the Club's lobbying and policy promotion went beyond the limits set for a 501(c)(3) group.[10] Since then, the Sierra Club has operated as a 501(c)(4).[11] Brower's gamble, while risky, ended up working to the Club's benefit. As David Brower said in an interview:

> People who had never heard of the Sierra Club began asking Sierra Club members how the club was getting along with the IRS. And people who had always known about the Grand Canyon but who had been quite unaware of any threat to it were now very much aware of the threat. The further advertisements, in the face of the IRS action, kept the public aware.[12]

By 1969, three years after the battle over the proposed Colorado River dams, the Club's membership had swelled to 70,000.

Despite the new members, the change in tax status and Brower's costly media campaigns cost the group dearly. The club lost $100,000 annually in the last two full years of Brower's tenure.[13] In the midst of the Club's economic turmoil, David Brower was asked to resign. Like a surprising number of the Sierra Club's midcentury membership, David Brower, the group's transformational leader of the 1960's, was a Republican – at least early in his career. While his approach to issue advocacy was aggressive and uncompromising, his approach to politics was decidedly non-partisan. Brower once said of the group's distinctive approach to lobbying under his watch: "We don't propose compromises; we let the politicians make the compromises." In other words, Sierra Club activists did not meet with Democratic politicians to determine what policies they could sell back home before going public with their demands. As a consequence, the group made enemies with both sides of the aisle, but also maintained a reputation as an honest broker when it came to environmental policy. In keeping with their non-partisan approach, during the Brower era, the Sierra Club did not give any aid to electoral campaigns, either directly, through in-kind contributions, or via a political action committee.

Under Mike McCloskey, who took over as Executive Director after Brower and served in that role from 1969-1985, the group maintained its commitment to working within the system, even while new groups like Greenpeace and Earthfirst employed radical, sometimes violent, methods of direct action in order to stop logging and whaling. The pressure to radicalize only increased over the course of the 1970's. By the late

1970's the protest movements of the prior decade and a half were beginning to lose steam. The Civil Rights Act had passed. Massive Resistance had ended. The draft was no more. While many activists stayed committed to continuing progress on these fronts, others sought pressing new problems to address.

Having gained new salience as a result of books like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* and groups like Greenpeace and the Sierra Club, environmentalism rode the cresting wave of 1960's political activism. But, as McCloskey wrote of the group's outlook during this period:

> Unlike those demonstrating against the war in Vietnam, we did not feel excluded from or disenfranchised by the normal political process. We felt encouraged by the success of many of our past efforts. We did not see the federal government as the enemy, though we did struggle over the direction the "ship of state" should take, and we had to work hard to get it to head in our direction. But to us, the federal government was a constructive force that could be used to counter the forces of environmental destruction.[14]

As a consequence of their decision to work within the system, the Sierra Club and other groups, like the League of Conservation Voters, solidified their place as the leading environmental advocacy groups in Washington.

Having avoided radicalization and marginalization, the Sierra Club had to confront another pair of obstacles: public apathy and partisan polarization. The group's early fights against dams, smog, and polluted streams were easier to galvanize support behind. The work that remained was more technical and costly, requiring the group to mobilize people against less visceral threats, like global warming. What Anthony Down terms the period of "alarmed discovery" that immediately follows the public's encounter with a new threat had ended.[15] In the late '70s, media attention dried up and the Sierra Club's membership numbers sagged.

At the same time public outcry regarding pollution subsided, opposition from the business community grew. Hundreds of trade associations and corporations moved their headquarters to Washington, D.C. in the early 1970's, including the National Association of Manufacturers. In 1975, James P. Low, president of the American Society of Association Executives, told a New York Times reporter that "the business community realized that it needed an organization to combat the harassment brought on by Federal laws."[16] By the end of the 1970s, K Street had become Gucci Gulch and a rift between the parties was starting to emerge.

The Sierra Club's Early Electioneering

The stark difference between the 1972 and 1976 Republican Party platforms illustrates the shifting political climate around environmental policy. "In January 1969, we found the Federal Government woefully unprepared to deal with the rapidly advancing environmental crisis," the GOP's 1972 platform stated. "Our response was swift and substantial."[17] The platform goes on to list, at length, Nixon's efforts on behalf of the environment. The platform touts the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, and the Council on Environmental Quality, and boasts that the expenditure of $2.4 billion on environmental programs was "three times more than was being spent when President Nixon took office."[18] In 1976, the Republican platform put far less emphasis on environmental policy. Though a much-abbreviated section on the subject began by asserting, "a clean and healthy natural environment is the rightful heritage of every American," it closed by clarifying that the party "also believe that Americans are realistic and recognize that the

emphasis on environmental concerns must be brought into balance with the needs for industrial and economic growth so that we can continue to provide jobs for an ever-growing work force."[19]

Perhaps in response to this early indication of party polarization, the Sierra Club launched the Committee on Political Education (SCCOPE) in 1976. Initially, the committee was to engage "only those things more appropriately termed education."[20] Still, the decision to lean more aggressively into electoral politics was a contentious one. As Phillip Berry, the Sierra Club's president from 1969-1971, a longtime chair of the Club's litigation committee and an early advocate of SCCOPE's creation, recounted, "There was vigorous debate within the club. The idea we would get involved in politics in any way was seen by some as the demise of the club."[21] According to Berry, this resistance was driven by the idea that "there's a certain purity about being for conservation and that you tarnish yourself when you become involved in politics generally."[22] Berry remarked that, "there was also fear that the Republican party, by and large, did not appear too sympathetic to our ideas, and it would tend to align us just with Democrats."[23] Another constraint on direct involvement in elections was the group's internal partisan divide. In the mid-1970s, an internal poll revealed that a third of the Sierra Club's members were Republicans.[24] Supporting candidates of either party risked rankling a significant number of the group's membership.

Given the reservations of some Club members, SCCOPE did not endorse any candidates or make any contributions during the first years of its existence. But the Sierra Club's tenuous position betwixt and between non-partisan issue advocacy and partisan politics would become increasingly hard to maintain. Soon, Democrats in

Congress began pressuring the Club to commit some of their resources to their reelections. As Michael McCloskey recalls in his 2005 memoir:

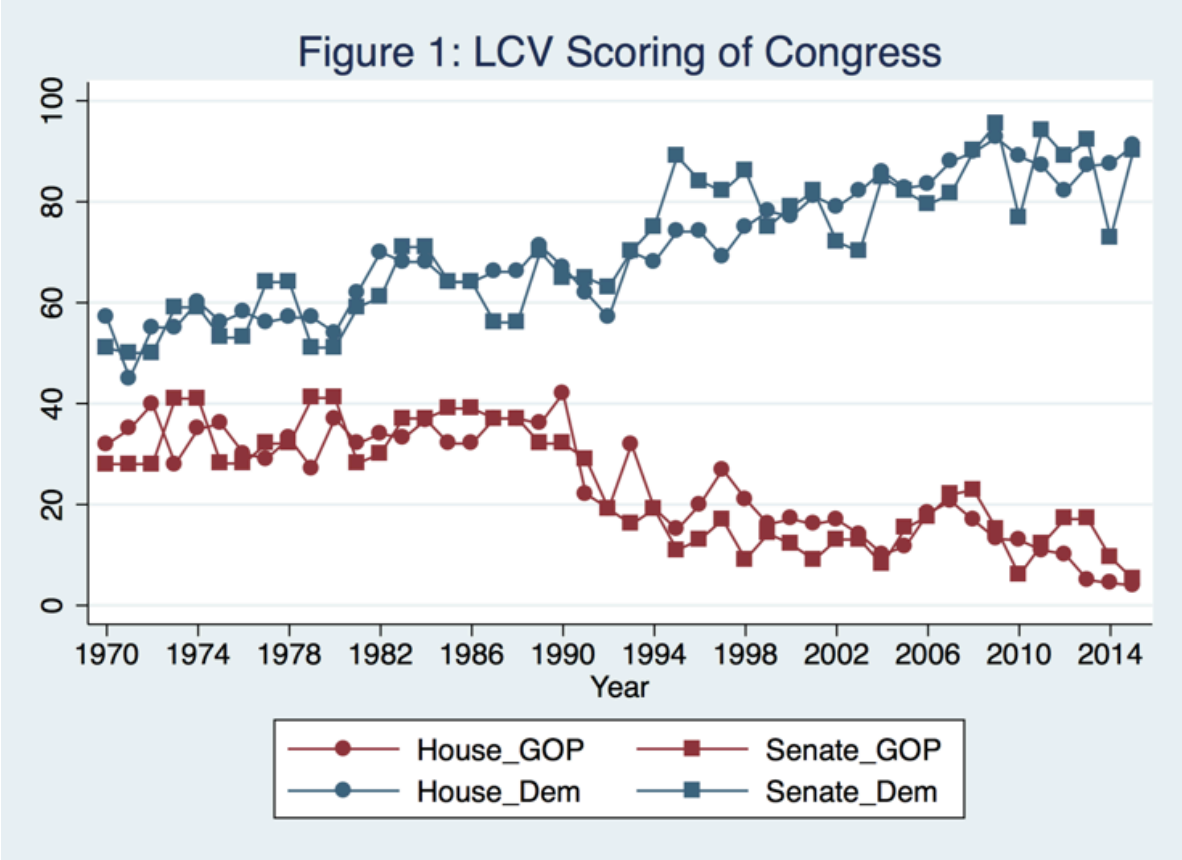
> Senator John Culver, a Democrat from Iowa with an excellent voting record, gave me a Dutch uncle talk. We were always asking people like him to do things for us, he complained, but he perceived that we did not want to do things for him. He wanted our help in securing his reelection. He insisted that 'this has to be a two-way street.' He claimed that we would not have many friends left in Congress if we did not stir ourselves to make sure that they came back.[25]

Their constituent's attention waning and business groups pressuring to oppose further environmental regulations, Culver and others no longer saw the upside in taking hard votes at the request of an interest group that would not help them to reelection.

Meeting these demands would be a risky gambit for the Sierra Club. While there was a clear partisan divide between Republican and Democrat elites, there remained a significant contingency of green Republicans. If the group adopted a bipartisan strategy –rewarding Republicans and Democrats alike with their electoral support – they would be giving some percentage of their funds to candidates who could overturn Democratic control of Congress and, in so doing, hurting the prospects of the Club's legislative agenda. On the other hand, if they endorsed and funded only Democratic candidates, they would likely infuriate Republicans who would go unrewarded for taking hard votes in support of the group's agenda. And yet, if the group waited too long to engage in electoral politics in earnest, they might lose influence over both parties as business groups moved their headquarters to Washington, D.C. and hired small armies of lobbyists to stanch further environmental regulations.

While the Democratic and Republican party platforms had diverged, political polarization in Congress followed a gentler trajectory. Figure 1 below illustrates the

average League of Conservation Voters (LCV) scorecard grade for Republican and Democrat representatives and senators. The LCV's scorecard is the most well-known and widely cited by environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, to justify their electioneering activity. As Figure 1 illustrates, since at least 1970, there has been a discernable difference between the voting patterns of Republicans and Democrats on key environmental roll call votes. Nonetheless, there was considerably more middle ground in 1976 than there is today.



Throughout the 1970's, the average LCV score for Republican members of Congress was in the mid to high 30's, while the average Democrat member of Congress earned a score in the 50's. In that decade, many Yellow Dog Democrats frequently opposed environmental priorities and a significant number of Republicans ranked among the most

environmentally friendly on Capitol Hill. According to the 1970 LCV scorecard, Rep. John Saylor (R-PA) voted pro-environment on 90 percent of key votes and Rep. Pete McCloskey Jr. (R-CA) earned an 85 percent rating– placing both significantly higher than the House Democrat average that year, which was a middling 57 percent. On the Senate side, Republican Sen. Clifford Case (R-NJ) earned a 95 percent rating from the LCV in 1970, making him the second most consistently green member of the senate that year, just one spot below Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D-WI), who famously launched the first Earth Day celebration.

Despite the danger of distancing themselves from key Republican allies, the Sierra Club took tepid steps into the electoral arena starting in 1980. In that election cycle, the Sierra Club only endorsed a handful of candidates for California state legislature seats and did not make any donations. Though the group made no official national endorsements, in a rose garden appearance alongside directors of other prominent environmental groups, McCloskey gave his personal endorsement to Jimmy Carter. McCloskey also raised money for Carter's campaign from Sierra Club staff members and local Sierra Club chapters were given latitude to engage in election activity. At a November meeting of the Sierra Club Board of Directors, a representative from the Midwest reported that eight of nine local chapters in that region engaged in some form of electioneering.[26]

The group's work on behalf of Carter was due in large part to McCloskey's sense that the environmentalist cause had a true ally in the White House for the first time. As McCloskey has written since:

> Kennedy and Johnson were old-style Democrats who had pushed public development. Nixon appointed some good people but vacillated, and in the

> end he turned against environmentalism. Ford wanted to be seen as a friend of the national parks, but he was a conventional, business-oriented president. Carter, though, was firmly in our camp.[27]

Throughout his four years in office, Carter consulted with McCloskey often and the two developed a close relationship. On one occasion, they even went canoeing together near Carter's home in Georgia. Carter put over forty committed environmentalists into his White House McCloskey estimates. Among them, Jim Moorman, of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, was selected to head the Justice Department's Division of Lands and Natural Resources. But, McCloskey adds in his memoires, "on the whole, they seemed to do no better than average. Many felt they had to live down their past and avoid implications of bias in our direction."[28] The Carter years were a disappointment in one other sense. Toward the end of his first term, Carter disappointed the Club by proposing the formation of an Energy Mobilization Board, authorized to waive environmental regulations to expedite energy production in response to spiking oil prices.

Regardless of McCloskey's close relationship with Carter and the Sierra Club's influence during his administration, the Club's electioneering on his behalf raised alarm with some Sierra Club leaders. At the board meeting immediately following the 1980 election, Director Marlene Fluharty voiced concern that "endorsement of a political candidate would remove the Club from its bipartisan position and align it with one party." Another member of the Board of Directors reported that the Midwest region, despite having engaged in local races, "viewed with concern the Club allowing the leadership to endorse President Carter. This act was viewed as close to [a] Club endorsement."[29] According to the meeting's minutes, Fluharty "called for action to keep the club at a multi-partisan level."[30] While that action never came, she and the other

concerned board members received assurance from SCCOPE Chair Howard Saxion that, while the Club "need[ed] to enlarge its political activities", all agreed the group "must remain bipartisan."[31]

The Reagan era would be a decisive test of the Sierra Club's determination to remain bipartisan in its approach to electioneering. Reagan represented a clear repudiation of the environmental policies of the Nixonian GOP. During his 1980 campaign, he shocked environmentalists by claiming that "trees cause more pollution than automobiles do." Once president, he pushed for deregulation across nearly every policy space, arguing that Great Society programs and agencies were grinding the nation's economy to a standstill.[32] The EPA and environmental regulations were no exception. The Reagan administration adopted a lenient stance toward Clean Air and Clean Water Act regulation and opened up large swaths of federal land to farmers and other private sector interests. James Watt and Ann Burford, whom Reagan appointed to lead the Department of the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency, reportedly undercut the efforts of careerist regulators and became reviled figures for environmentalists.

As the mid-term election approached, the Sierra Club decided more had to be done to safeguard Democrat's electoral fortunes. The dangers posed by Reagan's agenda made fortifying support in Congress all the more crucial. The group announced publically that 1982 would be the first year the Sierra Club would endorse candidates and make campaign contributions in federal races. That year, the Sierra Club made $200,000 of contributions through a newly formed Political Action Committee (PAC). In addition, the group dedicated more man-hours to canvassing and get out the vote efforts than ever

before. "We can't match the corporation PAC's in dollars," Michael McCloskey said, "but we intend to make it up in shoe leather."[33] By 1984, the Club made its first official endorsement of a presidential candidate: Walter Mondale. In an interview with the New York Times, a representative of the Sierra Club said that they were left little choice but to get more deeply involved in presidential politics as "Ronald Reagan [had] managed to subvert every agency and law designed to protect the environment" over the course of his first term.[34] The group's electioneering efforts did not stop with public endorsements. Over the course of the 1984 election cycle, Club members got involved in 150 congressional races, phone banking and canvassing on behalf of environmentally friendly candidates for Congress as well as for Mondale.[35]

During this early phase of the Sierra Club's political involvement, Club leaders still advocated and attempted to follow a bipartisan strategy. SCCOPE Chairperson Richard Fiddler said in a presentation to the board of directors a month after the 1984 election campaign ended, "It is important for the Club to emphasize that it is a bipartisan organization and is willing to go the extra mile to maintain that status." And, according to Fiddler, the Club still had a toehold in both parties. During the Club's December 1984 meeting of the board of directors, he reported that the party conventions had featured "an unprecedented number of environmental delegates to the Democratic Convention due to SCCOPE efforts, and several club leaders participated in the Republican platform discussions."[36]

Many leaders recognized the danger of the Club's increasing electioneering on behalf of Democrats. "While I've been on the side of greater activism," longtime activist and one-time Club president Phillip Berry disclosed in an interview, "I've also strongly

maintained the view that we should not become the captive of a particular party…It's a major mistake for the club to become part of a party." According to Berry, at least during the early stages of the Sierra Club's political involvement, his fears were widely shared. As Berry recalls:

> With every major expansion of the program, the issue was raised that this would ruin the Sierra Club. It would politicize the Sierra Club; it would cause us to be divided within; the members would leave; and it would change the nature of the club.[37]

And, yet, Berry added, "we've simply decided to run that risk." With Reagan in the White House maintaining the Club's precarious balance between the two parties was "temporarily impossible."[38] Though it put in jeopardy their relationship with environmentally friendly Republicans, the Reagan administration left leadership feeling as though they had no choice but to take "our last step of endorsing Mondale", according to Berry.[39] At a meeting of the Board of Directors, SCCOPE Chairman Fiddler admitted that "endorsement of Mondale was incorrectly viewed by many as endorsement of the Democratic Party."[40]

The Reagan years may not have been banner years for the Sierra Club's agenda, but the group's prominence and membership rolls both gained significantly. High-profile efforts to check the Reagan administration, like the group's petition of Congress to remove Watt as Secretary of the Interior, may have failed, but they established the Club as one of the most prominent voices of opposition to Republican policies. These efforts also attracted new members to the organization. The club's membership grew by 44 percent over the course of Reagan's second term in office.[41] A new cadre of Club members attracted by the group's opposition to the Reagan Administration and

electioneering on behalf of Democratic candidates presaged even more partisan activism going forward. McCloskey writes:

> I was under growing pressures to have the Club identify itself with all of the policies of the Democratic Party. Some of our members expected us to have positions on issues of every type – even those that had little to do with the environment. They expected us to behave just as if we were a political party – and a very liberal one at that.[42]

McCloskey, a mild-mannered lawyer, was not disposed to picking ideological fights that had little to do with the Club's core agenda or to antagonizing Republicans inside the beltway as well as those within the Club's own ranks. "Even though I came from the progressive wing of the Democratic Party," McCloskey said, "I thought the Sierra Club could be more effective as a group that addressed only environmental questions. I also did not want to alienate our Republican members."

Growing support for the Democratic Party within the Sierra Club's membership was not matched by increasing support for the Club's agenda from Democratic elites, however. Environmentalists ran afoul of civil rights groups and urban activists, whose constituencies could ill afford the higher energy prices and a lack of affordable housing that could result from the Sierra Club's efforts to keep oil and coal in the ground and wilderness wild. Over the course of the 1970's and 1980's, a deep rift developed between the Sierra Club and labor unionists who saw environmental regulations as a major threat to jobs. Nonetheless, "even as the Democratic Party became less of a cohesive force and continued its ambivalence about environmental issues," McCloskey says, "an increasing number of members wanted the Club to act as though it was the home for true believers with a liberal bent."[43] The internal shift McCloskey witnessed

created a bottom-up incentive for Club leaders to praise Democrats more than they might deserve and underplay the efforts of Republicans.

The Sierra Club as Partisan Ally

The departure of Reagan from the White House presented the last best opportunity for bipartisan cooperation on environmental policy. Throughout his 1988 campaign, George Bush Sr. portrayed himself as an environmentalist, emphasizing his commitment to aggressive enforcement of environmental regulations, promising to revise and strengthen the Clean Air Act, and vowing no net loss of wetlands and an end to acid rain during his tenure. Bush made clear his intention to use the full power of his office to advance a green agenda. At one campaign stop in Michigan, Bush said, "those who think we're powerless to do anything about the greenhouse effect are forgetting about the White House effect."[44]

Michael Dukakis, on the other hand, struggled to explain his own record on the environment. While serving as governor of Massachusetts, Boston Harbor developed a reputation for being among the most polluted bodies of water in the country. Instead of showing contrition, Dukakis attempted to push the blame onto the Reagan administration, a move Carl Pope, the Sierra Club's national political director at the time, admitted was "a major blunder."[45] Bush played on Dukakis's soft record on the environment to maximum advantage, running a national advertising campaign featuring B-reel footage of raw sewage, trash, dead fish and sludge, and the claim that Dukakis's negligence regarding Boston Harbor was "the most expensive public policy mistake in the history of New England."[46]

Instead of capitalizing on an opportunity to develop ties to, and wield influence with both candidates, the Sierra Club and other prominent environmental groups threw themselves decisively behind Dukakis. The League of Conservation Voters sent a clear signal when they gave Bush a "D+", even though the groups' executive director Jim Maddy admitted "when George Bush was a Republican Congressman from Texas, he had a good progressive record on the environment."[47] The low grade, according to Maddy, was based largely on Bush's association with the Reagan administration. "We all know that a Vice President is not a free agent," he stated, "but Bush went about it with great zeal, determination and visibility."[48] The Sierra Club largely concurred with both the League of Conservation Voters' scorecard and grading metric. Their sharp criticism of Bush focused almost exclusively on Reagan's policies, not Bush's own record, or campaign rhetoric.[49]

While Bush was deemed guilty by association, environmental groups tended to grade Dukakis on a curve. The League of Conservation Voters gave the former Massachusetts governor a "B", claiming, "when environmental and political leaders succeeded in getting him to focus on the environment he produced."[50] Though the Sierra Club had been tough on Dukakis before he was a national figure, the group discovered his charms around the time he started contemplating a run for office.[51] A Sierra Club election report attempted to shift focus off water pollution and onto strong opposition to oil exploration on the Georges Bank fishing grounds and to a proposed nuclear power plant in Seabrook, Massachusetts. The report also praised the governor for repeatedly suing the Reagan administration for damages related to acid rain.[52] As the Sierra Club's national legislative director reported to the press, "Vice President Bush's proposals for the

future are very limited…whereas Gov. Dukakis has laid out a very broad set of environmental agendas."[53]

Though the Sierra Club did not officially endorse a candidate in 1988 they did engage in electioneering on Dukakis's behalf. Environment-Victory '88, a coalition formed by the Sierra Club and several smaller environmental groups, canvassed for the Democratic presidential candidate and made press appearances on his behalf.[54] A rally organized by Sierra Club activists in Orange County, California attracted 3,000 participants to a union hall before the fire marshal barred the door.[55] George Bush won the election without the endorsement of a single environmental group. Though he had actively campaigned for the support of environmentalists, groups like the Sierra Club actively opposed his candidacy preferring, instead, a candidate whose commitment to the environment was very much in doubt.

Despite the lack of support from the Sierra Club and other environmental groups, once elected Bush quickly pushed forward with a green agenda. In the summer of 1989 Bush recommended several amendments to update and strengthen the Clean Air Act.[56] The New York Times wrote that the amendments were "the most comprehensive environmental statute ever enacted."[57] President Bush also established a 10-year moratorium on oil drilling off the coasts of New England, Florida and California and authorized the Energy Department and the Pentagon to spend nearly $7 billion to detoxify radioactive contamination from weapons manufacturing sites.[58] Bush's EPA administrator William K. Reilly, a former President of the World Wildlife Federation, aggressively targeted polluters, blocked dams, and managing Superfund sites during his nearly four years of service, all with George H.W. Bush's blessing.

As the American economy – and the president's poll numbers – began to slide in the latter years of his presidency, George H. W. Bush shifted his focus to job creation, sometimes at the expense of environmental protection. With sixteen months until the 1992 election, Bush called on legislators to open up half of the country's wetlands and thousands of acres of national forest to development, urged drilling in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, and undercut the Clean Air Act amendments he helped to pass by delaying the implementation of many of its provisions. While campaigning for reelection, Bush's rhetoric was worlds apart from the tone he set four years earlier. At a campaign stop in Colville, Washington Mr. Bush vowed to open up more virgin forest to the logging industry, calling the Endangered Species Act 'a sword aimed at the jobs, families and communities of entire regions like the Northwest.'"[59] The Sierra Club hit back with a televised advertising blitz six months before the election "to educate the public about the broken promises of the 'environmental' President".[60] For his part, Bush began referring to activists at the Sierra Club and other green groups as "environmental extremists" attempting to "shut down the United States."[61]

In 1992, Bush faced yet another governor with a spotty environmental record. Like Dukakis, Bill Clinton had prioritized jobs and resource extraction over environmental protection. The Institute for Southern Studies, a 501(c)(3) non-profit based in North Carolina, ranked Arkansas 48th on its 1992 Green Index, which takes into consideration both the state of the environment and the legal and regulatory climate. Chuck Cremeen, of Arkansas for Environmental Reform, told one New York Times reporter: "I would give him at best a 5 on a scale of 1 to 10."[62] But, as in 1988, the Sierra Club made its allegiance to the Democratic candidate clear. Instead of commending

Bush for his efforts or admitting that his time as Vice President had been an inaccurate predictor of his decisions as President, the Sierra Club doubled down on its partisan electoral strategy, giving Bill Clinton their second presidential endorsement. Throughout the campaign, the group stayed mute on Bush's positive accomplishments throughout his first term and essentially ignored Clinton's prioritization of jobs and energy production over the environment while serving as Governor of Arkansas focusing, instead, on Clinton's selection of Al Gore as his running mate.[63] Regarded as a committed advocate, Al Gore's selection signaled Clinton's trustworthiness vis-à-vis the environment. Despite the fact that the Democratic Party had again selected a candidate with dubious commitment to their agenda, the Sierra Club took a major new step in terms of its electoral involvement by starting a Political Action Committee through which it would funnel $612,000 in campaign contributions.[64] While only the 64th highest spending PAC that election cycle, the group had never spent more. [65]

Like many Liberal coalition partners, environmentalists were left cold by the Clinton presidency but either stayed silent regarding his broken promises or made apologies on his behalf. Shortly after election, Vice President-elect Al Gore publically promised the administration would stop the opening of a newly constructed hazardous-waste incinerator in East Liverpool, Ohio over concerns regarding possible ground water contamination. Three months later, the Clinton administration announced it would let the incinerator come online, a reversal that caught the attention of the New York Times.[66] Clinton also failed to follow through on a campaign promise to stop 100 year-old subsidies for loggers, miners and ranchers after western governors started to bridle.[67] In 1995, Clinton approved a budget that included a provision known as the "salvage rider",

that allowed fallen or dead wood to be harvested from protected federal forests. However, a single paragraph slipped into the salvage rider opened up federal lands in Washington and Oregon to logging of all kinds. Clinton vetoed the appropriations measure the first time it hit his desk over concerns about the slippery language in the salvage rider but, shortly thereafter, signed a version of the bill with a slightly amended version of the rider, despite receiving 50,000 letters and calls urging him to veto it again.[68] In each case, the Sierra Club's response was muted. For instance, in response to the president's acceptance of the salvage rider, a spokesman for the Sierra Club focused her ire at logging industry lobbyists claiming, "most of [the Democrat-controlled] Congress, the President and the American people were duped."[69]

After Republicans took control of congress in 1994, Gingrich and a new thoroughly conservative crop of Republican members of Congress became a useful foil. Gone were the green Republicans of the 1970s and 1980s. The so-called Republican Revolution also wiped out almost all the southern Blue Dog Democrats who regularly broke from the rest of the Democratic Party on environmental issues. By the mid-90s, the congressional parties were much more cleanly split on the Sierra Club's agenda than in previous years. From 1990 to 2000, the average difference between the two congressional party caucuses had grown from a little over 20 points to a chasmal 60 points.[70] During the last six years of his presidency, Clinton vetoed legislation that would have eliminated environmental regulations, lower air and water pollution standards, constrain the EPA, and cut funding necessary for enforcement. This built Clinton's environmental bona fides significantly, as did his use of powers granted to the executive by the National Monuments and Antiquities Act to protect three million acres of

wilderness.[71] But, in typical Clintonian fashion, the president tacked to the center during his administration, easing restrictions on land usage and backing away from pledges to tighten fuel efficiency standards. Still, with the Clinton years behind them, Sierra Club leaders admitted they regarded the previous administration as a missed opportunity. "When Clinton and Gore were elected eight years ago, many environmentalists thought that internal revolution would be handed to them," but, Executive Director Carl Pope confessed, "it was not, and frustrated hopes have left many in a grumpy mood[.]"[72]

Regardless of the disappointments suffered over the past eight years, Pope and the Sierra Club threw its support behind Al Gore, imploring environmentalists to not let "past disappointments…blind us to the historic opportunity before us to clean up our air and water, heal our cities and protect our natural treasures" by electing Al Gore.[73] The group's endorsement of Gore was not surprising. The group had rewarded far less trustworthy Democratic allies with its nomination. The greater drama was how the Sierra Club addressed Green Party candidate Ralph Nader. While Bush may not have expected the nod from the Sierra Club, Ralph Nader did believe he had a reasonable claim to Sierra Club support and let them know as much in an open letter to environmentalists – a move that gained national media attention. In the letter, Ralph Nader lists point by point the shortcomings of the Clinton administration before accusing environmental groups of having "adopted the servile mentality of the lesser of two evils."[74] By contrast, Nader wrote: "I offer the environmental community an opportunity to reassert its independence as a potent and uncompromising political force."[75] The attack from the left stung and Pope responded quickly and publically for running a spoiler campaign that "may be instrumental in electing the worst" environmental president in the nation's history in

George W. Bush. “You have called upon us to vote our hopes, not our fears,” Pope wrote. “My fear is that you, blinded by your anger at flaws of the Clinton-Gore Administration, may be instrumental in electing the worst.”[76]

Pope’s claim that Gore would be the “best environmental president in American history” was not particularly well-founded. Since his loss to Bush, Gore has become known for his prolific and public environmental advocacy, but prior to the 2000 presidential election, his record was not outstanding. As a congressman and senator, his lifetime League of Conservation Voters rating was an unimpressive 64 percent. As Vice President, Gore personally vowed the East Liverpool, Ohio toxic waste incinerator would not come online. It is also not clear what led Pope to believe Bush would be America’s worst president on environmental issues. Like his father, George W. Bush attempted to portray himself as a centrist who would seek the middle path between environmental protection and economic prosperity, vowing to initiate a new era of environmental protection by setting high environmental protection standards and using market-based incentives to spur on the development of new green technologies.

There was a clearer distinction between the campaign promises of Gore and Bush than there was between their actual records. Even as Bush promised to "maintain a strong federal environmental role”, he also expressed his desire “to return significant authority to states and local communities.”[77] And on the two core environmental issues of the campaign– opening up the Alaskan National Wilderness Reserve (ANWR) to drilling and abiding by the Kyoto Protocols – Bush was firmly on the side of business. In contrast to Bush’s equivocation and ambivalence, Al Gore was absolutely clear about where he stood. The Democratic nominee asserted that he wore claims of being an

environmental extremist like a "badge of honor."[78] Gore promised to keep ANWR pristine, the Kyoto protocols in place, and the regulatory environment strict. "When it comes to the environment, I've never given up, I've never turned back, and I never will," Mr. Gore said in stump speeches across the country.[79] At least publically, the Sierra Club claimed the clear distinction between the candidates made 2000 a gravely important contest. "Every election, we always say this is the most important election ever," a Sierra Club spokesman told USA Today, "but this year we really mean it."[80]

Environmentalists' fears that Bush would represent a significant shift from the Clinton years were soon realized. On his first day in office, Bush rescinded an executive order passed in the last days of the Clinton administration that sharply limited the amount of arsenic permitted in drinking water. The rule was deeply unpopular with coal country politicians, as it would have required about 3,000 communities to make expensive upgrades to their water systems.[81] Throughout his administration, Bush attempted to cut back a regulatory framework that, in his judgment, had become overly complex and unduly burdensome. Bush also made significant cuts in the EPA's regulatory enforcement staff and pulled out of the Kyoto Protocols, a move that Bush's own EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman called "the equivalent to 'flipping the bird,' frankly, to the rest of the world."[82] In his first year in office, the president signed an executive order directing all executive agencies to expedite energy exploration and drilling.[83] As a result, the number of Bureau of Land Management drilling permits increased 125 percent from 2001-2007.[84] Among the formerly protected wilderness spaces that saw petroleum drilling was ANWR – the Alaskan refuge shielded by Clinton just a few years earlier.

Many more of Bush's environmental initiatives were stanched. Bush's Clear Skies Initiative, which would have created a cap-and-trade market system for many air pollutants, did not make it through Congress. Nor did his Healthy Forests Initiative that would have allowed limited logging in national forests, ostensibly to limit the risk of fire in over-dense wooded areas. The Sierra Club and other interest groups actively opposed both these initiatives.

Though environmentalists had much to point to when decrying Bush as one of the most environmentally unfriendly presidents of the modern era, his legacy is more nuanced than it is typically portrayed. During his presidency, President Bush, like Clinton before him, often used the Antiquities Act to protect wild spaces and protect ecosystems. In fact, Bush safeguarded 125 million acres of America's Pacific territorial waters. He also signed legislation adding 2.5 million acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Bush also cut down on air pollution significantly over the course of his presidency. He was a strong proponent of the Energy Independence and Security Act set a 35 MPG national fuel efficiency target for 2020. The administration also secured approval of the nations that ratified the Montreal Protocols to speed up the phase-out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) by ten years. Not only was Bush rarely credited for his successes, he was often blamed for environmental missteps of the past. For instance, Bush received significant negative attention from both environmental groups and the press for the implementation of a more lenient arsenic standard in the Clean Water Act when the rule in question was actually proposed during the Clinton Administration.[85] Bush was also blamed for passing the cost of cleaning up large-scale environmental hazards known as "Superfund sites" – most of which are caused by industrial

malfeasance or accidents – onto ordinary taxpayers instead of levying a corporate tax, even though Congress failed to reauthorize the "polluters' pay" provisions of the Superfund legislations in 1995. At the time, President Clinton "made only a feeble effort to get the taxes reinstated" according to the New York Times.[86]

Still, polarization in Congress, the rhetoric of conservatives leaders, and Bush's clear prioritization of energy production over environmental protection left little doubt that the era of bipartisanship was not only dead, but long since buried. President Obama would be the first Democratic president to know beyond a reasonable doubt that the Sierra Club's support was a given. The Sierra Club could not plausibly threaten to throw its support behind the opposing party. To use Paul Frymer's phrase, the Club was *electorally captured*. However, progress on the Sierra Club's policy agenda during the eight years of Obama's administration demonstrates that a group's influence does not hinge on the threat of exit alone. There is upside to joining the shadow party. As Schlozman argues, partisan interest groups "forgo autonomous action to ally with major political parties" but, in return, they "shape parties' ideological development." The Sierra Club's relationship with Obama illustrates both the costs and returns of partisan strategies of influence.

The Sierra Club, the Obama Presidency, and Beyond

When there is no illusion of non-partisanship, proving a group's value to one party in the electoral arena becomes the clearest mode of assuring continued influence. While the Sierra Club's PAC was only the 64th highest spender in the 1992 election cycle, in 2008, the Sierra Club spent a total of $3.5 million, making it the 14th biggest

spending 501(c) group that election cycle.[87] Following the *Citizen's United vs. Federal Elections Commission* case, which allowed unlimited political expenditures by so-called "Super PACs," so long as those expenditures are not coordinated by a political candidate or campaign, the Sierra Club's started its own such group. In addition to the Sierra Club's other direct contributions, the Sierra Club's Super PAC spent $2.7 million over the last four election cycles. The Sierra Club's biggest contribution to the Democratic Party is harder to measure. Since 1988, the Sierra Club has made significant "in kind" contributions – renting out members rosters to the Democratic Party, paying staffers to work on congressional campaigns, and organizing volunteers to canvas and phone bank for Democratic candidates. [88] In 2008, the Sierra Club formalized and prioritized these efforts by initiating the Victory Corps. Since then, the Sierra Club's "ground game" – it's ability to meet the manpower needs of Democratic candidates with its veritable army of more than two million members – has become an indispensable asset.[89]

Despite strong support from environmentalists, President Obama's record on the environment during his first campaign was somewhat mixed. Despite campaign promises to address climate change, a strong majority in Congress, and a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate, no legislation was passed. Not only did Obama bypass an opportunity to push major environmental legislation, he made little use of executive power to either tighten federal regulations or protect more wilderness land. In the absence of any new legislation, Obama took some steps himself. His administration implemented significantly higher auto mileage standards, tough new emissions standards for power plants, and increased financial support for green energy innovation and promotion. However, at the last minute, Obama also scuttled the implementation of a new EPA rule

that would more strictly limit ozone pollutants. Obama's administration also supported expanded use hydraulic fracturing to increase natural gas development because, as Obama would say later in his 2014 State of the Union Address, "If extracted safely [natural gas is the] bridge fuel that can power our economy with less of the carbon pollution that causes climate change."[90] To his credit, Obama did ensure the imposition of new safety standards for hydraulic fracturing. The White House also punted several times on a decision regarding approval of the Keystone XL pipeline that would have traversed from oil sands in Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.[91]

The Sierra Club's response to the disappointments of Obama's first term were incongruous. Disillusioned by the lack of significant policy gains despite control of all three branches of government, the Sierra Club attempted to regain its reputation for fierce and uncompromising issue advocacy. The increasing frustration with the group's reliance on insider tactics precipitated a leadership change. Carl Pope, the group's Executive Director since 1992, sensed he was not the man to lead the group down the path it was committed to strike out along. Over his 18 years at the helm, Pope had greatly strengthened the Club's ties to both the Democratic Party and left-leaning interest groups. He also worked to find common cause with bipartisan trade associations and corporations when possible. As Pope explained upon stepping down from his post:

> I'm a big-tent guy. We're not going to save the world if we rely only on those who agree with the Sierra Club. There aren't enough of them. My aim is getting it right for the long term. I can't get anything accomplished if people think: 'This guy is not an honest broker. He's with the Sierra Club.[92]

The Club's new choice for Executive Director, Michael Brune, was cut from a much different cloth. While Carl Pope had started his career with the Sierra Club with

SCCOPE – the Club's political committee – and cut his teeth lobbying in Washington and managing the group's electioneering efforts, Brune had spent his career at the Rainforest Action Network and Greenpeace: organizations born of the New Left and committed to direct action.

True to form, within a year of taking over as Executive Director, the Sierra Club led a rally of over 12,000 in front of the White House. With cries of "Hey Obama, We don't want no climate drama," the crowd demanded the administration finally reject the long-delayed Keystone XL Pipeline. In February of 2014, following the release of the State Department's favorable assessment of the project's environmental impact, the Sierra Club organized vigils and marches in 283 locations in 49 states with a total of 10,000 participants.[93] Several days later, the Sierra Club took the lead in organizing a rally at the National Mall. This time, 50,000 participants took part, making it the largest climate rally in American history. That day, in the first act of civil disobedience in the Sierra Club's 120 year history, Executive Director Michael Brune and Board of Directors President Allison Chin joined 46 other protesters in handcuffing themselves to the White House fence, leading to their eventual arrests.

These were significant steps for a group sometimes criticized for its close ties to the Democratic Party. Still, the rhetoric Brune and others deployed at these rallies belied a hesitance to cast the administration in too negative a light. The press release announcing the group's 2014 Washington, D.C. protest sounded more like a friendly reminder of promises made than an excoriation for faith broken. According to Brune, the protest was the Sierra Club's way of "issuing a challenge to President Obama, who spoke stirringly in his inaugural address about how America must lead the world on the

transition to clean energy."[94] In fact, Brune seemed to suggest the protest was at the president's behest:

> As President Obama eloquently said during his inaugural address, 'You and I, as citizens, have the obligation to shape the debates of our time, not only with the votes we cast, but the voices we lift in defense of our most ancient values and enduring ideas.'"[95]

This was the most confrontational tone the Sierra Club struck with Obama. When other environmental groups criticized the administration for its slow response to the Deepwater Horizon disaster that led to tens of thousands of gallons of crude oil seeping into the Gulf of Mexico, the Sierra Club took out an advertisement not to criticize the government's response, but to praise the president for putting a hold on a drilling project in Alaska. When the president touted his administration's "all of the above" energy policy in a March 2012 speech in Oklahoma , announcing proudly that over the course of his first term millions of acres were opened for gas and oil exploration, the number of operating rigs in the U.S. had quadrupled, and that enough new oil and gas pipelines had been laid "to encircle the Earth", the Club's response was muted. Most of Brune's press release was a recollection of Obama's greatest moments while in office – moments when Obama demonstrated his "unique gift for capturing what's important, for showing that Americans of all political persuasions share common values, and for inspiring people to work together to solve complex problems."[96] After fondly recalling Obama's response to the shooting of Gabby Giffords and praising the president's jobs bill, Brune finally offered a light critique and modest request. "If President Obama is really committed to more drilling, mining, or fracking," Brune stated, "then he had better deliver an even stronger commitment to the clean, renewable energy resources that will put fossil fuels behind us once and for all ."[97] The Sierra Club issued no ultimatum. They did not threaten protests.

They proposed no moratoriums. This was not the sort of press statement one would expect from a Greenpeace activists or a Rainforest Action Network leader.

Though the Club had signaled a more aggressive, independent approach with Brune's selection, the reality of the group's position – a heavily Democratic membership base, a Republican Party that had long since given up hope of earning the group's support, and a president held in high regard by Liberals and left-leaning independents – made striking an oppositional posture a virtual impossibility. While the Sierra Club arguably gave up on the Republican Party too soon, by 2008 bipartisan compromise on environmental regulation seemed all but impossible. Both of Obama's Republican opponents signaled they would follow their party's evolving position on environmental policy despite the fact that both McCain and Romney had, at various stages in their careers, earned plaudits from environmentalists. John McCain, viewed as a maverick who followed his conscience even when it brought him into sharp conflict with his party, was among the greenest Republicans in the Senate when he decided to run for office. With Joe Lieberman, he co-sponsored the Climate Stewardship Act of 2003, which would have capped carbon dioxide emissions at 2000 levels by 2010. He also actively opposed offshore drilling and favored ending ethanol subsidies – both departures from the party line. He was a frequent critic of the Bush administration's failure to address climate change, as well. For his efforts, the League of Conservation Voters endorsed McCain in 2004 – though his opponent showed no promise of winning.

On the campaign trail, McCain started to move to the right in order to consolidate his base. He shifted positions on both ethanol and offshore drilling and claimed that, under his administration, 45 new nuclear power plants would come on-line. He held fast

to proposals made during the primary to sponsor an emissions cap-and-trade bill similar to what Clinton and Obama advocated and said addressing global warming would be one of the three key issues of his campaign, but he began to soften on the details. McCain argued that the timing was not right for any legislation that might forestall economic recovery and, while "the overwhelming evidence is that greenhouse gases are contributing to warming of our earth and we have an obligation to take action to fix it", the United States was right to stay out of the Kyoto Protocols and should make entry into any similar deal contingent on the entrance of India and China.[98] But the worst mark against McCain was not his choice of words, but his choice of running mate.

Sarah Palin, in style and in substance, was anathema to environmentalist groups. On the campaign trail, Palin supported drilling in ANWR and mining in Bristol Bay. While she served as governor, Alaska planned a legal battle against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over the polar bear's inclusion of the endangered species list and approved a pipeline to Alaska's natural gas-rich North Slope. Unlike the man at the top of the ticket, Sarah Palin denied the existence of climate change, calling it a "scam" and "junk science."[99] McCain, the maverick of the Republican Party, had chosen as his running mate the very embodiment of the GOP's new position on the balance between development and ecology: "drill, baby, drill."[100]

By the time Romney ran for office, the influence of the Tea Party, the shadow of Sarah Palin, and the GOP's emphasis on economic development, energy development and deregulation left little flexibility to strike out on a middle path. Romney, a blue state moderate molded in his father's image, refashioned himself as a "severe" conservative. In doing so, Romney had to walk back many long-held policy positions, not least of

which his position on global warming. Although, in 2009, Romney wrote that he believed "that human activity is a contributing factor" to climate change, once on the campaign trail, he backtracked saying: "we don't know what's causing climate change on this planet."[101] In reference to coal power plants, Governor Romney said, "I will not protect jobs that kill people"; but presidential candidate Romney traveled to West Virginia's coal country to decry Obama's "job-killing" regulatory regime and vowing to keep "good paying jobs" in the coal industry safe.[102]

Aside from minding the tenor of their critiques, the Sierra Club also continued to provide significant material assistance to Obama and congressional Democrats under Brune's leadership. In 2012, the Sierra Club stepped up their ground game considerably from years past. The Sierra Club worked closely with Obama for America, the president's state of the art campaign organization, to recruit more than 12,000 members for an offshoot group called Environmentalists for Obama. Additionally, Sierra Club's Victory Corps recruited and trained 328 volunteer team leaders and 3,300 volunteers to work for Democratic candidates in 53 contests and mobilize support for Obama in nine key battleground states.[103] For the first time in its long history, the Sierra Club gave all its employees around the nation Election Day off in order "to provide all staff and volunteers the opportunity to volunteer with Obama for America or another competitive federal or local race in their areas."[104] Environmentalists for America and Victory Corps volunteers utilized the Obama campaign's donor and voter lists and innovative "dashboard" tool to make highly granular information on each contact available to volunteers and campaign staff. In total, Sierra Club members and Environmentalists for America volunteers made 30,000 phone calls in the final two weeks of the election. On

November 9th, the Obama campaign acknowledged the Sierra Club's contribution, stating that the Club was "an integral part of (the) win."

The Sierra Club's spending has also stayed strong in the Brune era. The group raised and spent over $2 million through their Super PAC and non-super PAC independent expenditures committee.[105] 2010, Brune's first election cycle as Executive Director, was the first in which the Club gave no money to a Republican. The group's 2008 contributions of $1,250 to Representative Leonard Lance (R-NJ) and Representative Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ), both of whom were considered overwhelming favorites, are the last the group has made to any member of the GOP. Under Brune, even longtime environmental allies, like Maine Senator Susan Collins, have seen the group turn against them. Despite her strong record on environmental issues, the fact that she was certain to win against political novice Shenna Bellows, and other environmental groups like the Environmental Defense Fund supporting her, in 2014, the Sierra Club endorsed the long-shot challenger. According to Glen Brand, the director of the Maine chapter of the Club, "Susan Collins' reputation as a moderate has emerged, but I think it's really in the context of the party moving farther away from environmental [issues]." There is much truth behind Brand's statement. While Susan Collins scored a respectable 60%, that score placed her above only two Democrats – Joe Machin of coal-producing West Virginia and Heidi Heitkamp of oil and gas rich North Dakota. The highest scoring House Republican, Chris Gibson, received a 46%, exceeding just four members of the Democratic caucus. In 2015, the average Senate Republican earned a score of only 5.2% on the League of Conservation Voters scorecard while the average House Republican earned only a 3.4%. Meanwhile, the mean Senate Democrat scored a 91.8% while House

Democrats averaged a 90.6%.[106] To endorse Susan Collins or to fund Republican candidates for office might have symbolic value, but in reality these environmental moderates were a vanishingly small part of the Republican congressional caucus with little influence over the party's legislative agenda.

The party's continued efforts on behalf of the Democratic Party have been rewarded in some ways. Despite the fact that the Sierra Club specifically, and environmentalists generally, have nowhere else to turn, the Democratic Party is responsive to a surprising degree. While Obama's environmental leadership in his first term was disappointing, he became far bolder in his second term. With Republicans firmly in control of Congress, Obama tested the limits of executive power. He designated 23 national monuments, protecting 265 million acres of land and water — one hundred times the amount he safeguarded in his first term and more than any president before him. Obama also bypassed the Senate in ratifying the Paris Climate Accord without their advice and consent. And, although he punted on the Keystone XL issue during his first term, in November of 2015, the president rejected the proposal. Obama's boldest unilateral action on climate change may have been a step beyond what a president can do alone. As part of its so-called Clean Power Plan designed to reduce reliance on coal power plants, Obama's EPA announced it would treat carbon as a pollutant under the Clean Air Act; the Supreme Court, however, ordered a stay, stating serious concerns as to whether this overstepped the executive's discretion in interpreting the statute.

During Obama's second term, the Sierra Club enjoyed considerable access to and influence with the administration and its regulatory agenda.[107] As the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) crafted its' carbon dioxide cap and trade plan and fracking

regulations, Sierra Club officials met often with the agency's policy chief, Michael Goo. Internal emails between Goo and Sierra Club lobbyists reveal that the Sierra Club's influence may have been even greater at the EPA than in the White House. "If you want any hope of regulation of fracking", Goo advised a Sierra Club lobbyist, "then give us more time to try and remove the gun from our head and talk sense into OMB dickheads." As with other liberal coalition partners, the Sierra Club found the Obama administration to be a sometimes vexing combination of pragmatism and idealism, prudence and ambition, progress and stasis.

Standing behind the president, as the group so often did, bore with it costs as well. More hardline voices within the environmentalist community – many of whom cheered the selection of Michael Brune – lashed out at the group's apologetics on behalf of Obama. In response to the Sierra Club's glowing endorsement of Obama in 2012, Glenn Hurowitz, a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy, wrote:

> It's one thing to make a sober comparison of Obama's record against Romney's in August and endorse the stronger candidate, but it's quite another to tie our hands behind our backs while Obama twists himself in knots in a vain effort to appease polluters.[108]

Jane Hamsher, founder of FireDogLake.com, wrote a scathing article in the Huffington Post entitled "Why the Sierra Club No Longer Deserves Your Trust" in which she wrote: "it appears that they have opted for an 'inside' game, and have completely dropped the ball on pressuring elected officials from the outside — right when their efforts could have the most impact."[109] The fallout from Hamsher's article was severe enough that Brune responded with a Huffington Post op-ed of his own. While Brune pointed out several instances in which the Sierra Club had taken the president to task, he admitted: "I have seen a reluctance by smart campaigners and organizations to criticize the

president…That's a shame, because it is indeed possible to point out the faults of someone that you support[.]"[110]

As the Brune era shows, it is difficult, if not impossible, to turn back the hands of time once a partisan strategy of influence has been adopted. Each decision by a group like the Sierra Club elicits counter-moves from other political actors and, in so doing, constrains the strategic options available in the future. In this sense, interest groups strategies – to include the relationship they cultivate with the major political parties – is path dependent. Brune may have aspired to reestablish the bold, uncompromising approach to issue advocacy that David Brower had introduced to the group, but they found themselves bound by the decisions of the past.

The Sierra Club and the Shadow Party Coalition

As the Sierra Club came to work more exclusively with the Democratic Party, working effectively with other groups within the Democratic coalition became more crucial. All things being equal, an interest group would prefer to build as wide a coalition as possible but, in reality, some group's interests are bound to conflict. While conflict is always costly, intra-party friction is significantly more costly than inter-group conflict because the latter are more likely to affect the behavior of friendly legislators. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, interest groups go to greater lengths to avoid friction with groups on their side of the aisle. This has not always been easy for the Sierra Club. Since its incipience, environmental groups have coexisted uneasily with many of the most powerful interest groups on the left.

One of the most persistent internecine squabbles plaguing the Sierra Club and other environmental groups is with labor unions. Under David Brower, the organization's first national issue campaigns were aimed at stopping energy development projects and man's encroachment into wild spaces. Both goals have continued to be seminal to the group over the last half century. The Sierra Club is a reliable opponent of oil drilling, coal-mining, pipelines, fracking, and new power plants. The group also advocates for the strictest possible application of environmental statutes and EPA regulations as they apply to building permits and land development. As longtime executive director Carl Pope summarized at a Board of Directors meeting in 1995: "Our goal is to dramatically shrink the scale of human endeavor on this planet."[111] The Sierra Club's avowedly anti-growth agenda frequently rankles labor unions, especially those representing the workers in the building trades, who rely on an expanding scale of human endeavor for their livelihood.

As naturally opposed as labor union and environmental policy demands seemed to be, some Sierra Club leaders saw commonalities of interest. Dwight Steele, a member of the group's board of directors for many decades, stated: "the business establishment with which unions are constantly contesting is also the cause of most of the pollution and resource depletion which concerns environmentalists."[112] Starting with the Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1970, the AFL-CIO and Sierra Club began to work together on workplace safety and urban pollution issues. In the late 1970's, hoping to institutionalize a burgeoning alliance, McCloskey was asked to co-chair the OSHA-Environmental Conference with the chairman of the AFL-CIO's industrial union department. But the effort was short-lived. The scope of the OSHA-Environmental Conference's work was

quite narrow – almost exclusively restricted to toxics in the workplace – and did not interest many Sierra Club members. According to Michael McCloskey, "most of our members did not cross paths regularly with union members and thereby become acquainted with them or their concerns."[113] Furthermore, the Sierra Club's efforts to reach out to labor unions by getting involved in one of the AFL-CIO's core issues – workplace safety – did not translate into AFL-CIO support for their own core issues. McCloskey recalled of the group's abortive first attempt to build closer ties with organized labor:

> We found our investment did not translate into much concern on their part over issues that were fundamentally important to us and for which we had strong feelings… Again and again, its ruling council would take stands opposed to ours.[114]

So long as the majority of union leaders believed their fates relied on development, growth, building, consumption, an ever-expanding anthropic footprint, opportunities to work together with the Sierra Club would remain scant.

Fortunately from the perspective of the Sierra Club, over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, organized labor in America experienced several significant changes that ameliorated old tensions with the environmental movement. First, after ticking up briefly in the 1970s, labor union membership dropped precipitously from 1979 to 1984. At the end of the 1970s, 24.1 percent of wage and salary workers were members of a union. Ten years later, only 16.4 percent of workers were organized.[115] Labor, for many years the most potent partner in the Democratic coalition, began to lose esteem and influence with Democratic policymakers.[116] After union membership declined, politicians could not rely on unions alone to fund their campaigns and canvas their districts. Thus, pleasing labor was not enough to assure election for Midwestern rust belt Democrats. Labor no

longer had the luxury of keeping potential coalition partners at a distance. If the AFL-CIO wanted to continue to influence the Democratic Party, it had to elicit support from other organized interests.

A second factor that contributed to labor's eventual change of heart regarding coalition brokering with other elements of the Democratic shadow party is the changing demographics of the labor movement. The drop in union membership in the 1980s did not affect all unions equally. Building trades, miners, and heavy industry were particularly hard hit, while many public and service sector unions actually grew during the late 20th Century. Today, the three biggest unions represent schoolteachers, federal, state, and municipal employees, and service workers. These workers do not perceive their livelihood as depending on continued development of the wilderness or increased energy production. Thus, as the balance of power within the AFL-CIO shifted from the United Steelworkers, Teamsters, and United Mineworkers to the National Education Association, the Service Employees International Union, and the America Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, so too did organized labor's stance on environmental issues.

Today, labor and the environmental movement work more closely and clash far less than ever in the past. In 2006, former Sierra Club president David Brower and United Steelworkers union leader David Foster founded the BlueGreen Alliance which is meant to "facilitate dialogue" between labor and the environmental movement and lobby on behalf of a shared agenda across a very wide range of issues from environmental protection and foreign trade to veteran's health benefits and food labeling.[117] The organization has become an important player on K Street, spending nearly $2.5 million in

lobbying expense in 2014 alone. In 2004, the Sierra Club again joined up with organized labor to form America Votes, "a lean umbrella operation, aimed at coordinating its member groups' activities."[118] The group started when Gina Glantz of SEIU called a meeting with prominent Liberal interest group leaders Steven Rosenthal of American Coming Together, Ellen Malcolm of EMILY's List, Harold Ickes, a longtime Clinton ally, Andrew Stern president of SEIU, John Kerry's campaign manager Jim Jordan, and Carl Pope. The organization, made possible because of the mending of relations between the Sierra Club and some elements of the labor movement, ensured that more than $200 million in electioneering expenditures made by these organizations was spent wisely and in a concerted manner.

The alliance of environmentalists and labor has happened largely on environmentalist's terms. The Sierra Club has not wavered in its opposition to coal mining, new oil pipelines, or development of wild lands. It is the labor movement that has given ground. When the Sierra Club developed its "Beyond Coal" campaign to, in its words, "replace dirty coal with clean energy by mobilizing grassroots activists…to advocate for the retirement of old and outdated coal plants and to prevent new coal plants from being built," the AFL-CIO did not stand behind its member union the United Mine Workers of America. When the Sierra Club worked to block the Keystone XL Pipeline, the AFL-CIO did not support the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry, also a member union.

Assuaging other Democratic coalition partners has demanded significantly more effort and compromise. Creating common cause with ethnic minorities has been particularly challenging. As the Sierra Club appeared on the national scene in the 1960s,

their slate of issues did not resonate with disadvantaged racial demographics. A lobbyist for the Sierra Club recalls,

> At that time blacks were not interested in the environmental issues; that was not the issue that was concerning them. They wanted the right to vote. They wanted equality of opportunity. And what kind of place they lived in was not at the top of their agenda.[119]

Minority-focused civil rights groups were not just ambivalent to the Sierra Club's agenda; they feared it would detract attention from their own issues. Even if two interest group's policy agendas do not directly conflict, they are destined to compete to some extent since Legislator's time is a finite resource. Sierra Club members did not initially demonstrate much interest in the issues of greatest importance to lower-income minorities either. According to Dwight Steele:

> Because the membership of the Sierra Club is white, upper- middle class, there is no natural affinity within our membership for the views, desires, and even needs of the working class-- particularly the lower scales of the working class – the laboring blacks, Chicanos, and people who work with their hands.[120]

As with labor unions, the Sierra Club's racially and economically homogeneous membership made it difficult for them to build bridges to other Democratic shadow party groups.

Despite the seeming ambivalence of many rank-and-file members, Sierra Club leaders and lobbyists understood the benefits of making common cause with minority civil rights groups. In the 1970's, the group started working on a slate of issues designed to build inroads with urban communities. Sierra Club members began attending working groups and speaking up at city council meetings regarding

safe housing, air and water quality, traffic, urban planning and even noise pollution. In 1977, the Sierra Club sent a delegation to the annual NAACP convention, and prepared

recruiting materials tailored specifically to black potential members. A year later, the Club hosted the City Care Conference in Detroit with the Urban League. By the 1990's these efforts had given rise to a burgeoning environmental justice movement focused on economic inequality, social justice, and environmental protection. Some new groups – for instance, Green for All, which was originally headed by Van Jones, President Obama's initial pick to lead the White House Council on Environmental Quality – focused exclusively on these intersectional issues while established environmental groups began to direct more of their resources to these sorts of coalition-broadening policy spaces. In 1999, the Sierra Club established its own Environmental Justice Program and opened five environmental justice offices around the country.[121] The group also became a charter member of the Urban Environmental Conference, which Senator Philip Hart (D-MI) initiated to bring environmentalists, labor and urban community organizers together.

As the complexion of the Democratic Party began to change, the necessity of building relationships with minority communities took on added significance. The Sierra Club, like many other environmental groups, redoubled its efforts to attract minority support. As a spokesman for the Earth Island Institute, founded by David Brower after he left the Sierra Club, candidly stated: "When we look more like a Romney-Ryan election night gathering than an Obama-Biden election night gathering, we're in trouble."[122]

For all its initial promise and energy, the environmental justice movement had not significantly changed the demographic characteristics of environmental groups. Since Barack Obama came to office with the support of a new Democratic coalition – noticeably younger, more female, and more ethnically diverse than the coalition that

elected Bill Clinton just eight years earlier – the Sierra Club has not elected a white man to its presidency. Since 2008, Allison Chin, an Asian female, and Aaron Mair, a black man, have passed the office back and forth between themselves.

Building a party-wide consensus on environmental issues has demanded more than outreach programs and goodwill gestures. It has also demanded the Sierra Club to shift its position on important issues. Immigration is one such issue.

The Sierra Club first addressed immigration in the late 1960's. At that time, several members of the board of directors, including Fred Eisler, Dave Brower and Ian Ballantine, began to understand immigration to be a part of the larger issue of unsustainable population growth. In essence, permitting high amounts of immigration from third world countries to the United States would alleviate the strain of over-crowding in those nations, allowing their unsustainable population growth to proceed apace. Brower and Ballantine felt so strongly about the threat posed by runaway population growth in general and immigration in particular, that they persuaded Stanford professor and friend Paul Ehrlich to write the influential 1968 book *The Population Bomb*, which brought these issues into the broader national conversation. The next year, the Sierra Club's Board of Directors voted to take up the issue of population stabilization in the United States and, to that end, advocate capping immigration at a very low level. Throughout the 1970's, the Sierra Club continued to promote restrictive immigration policies in Congressional hearings, policy papers, and through the creation of the Club's new National Population Committee, headed by vocal immigration opponent John Tanton. But a simultaneous development within the Club would soon lead to internal pressure to shift the group's stance on this issue.

During the late 1970's and 1980's the Club was getting more involved in electioneering, starting the Sierra Club Committee on Political Education (SCCOPE) in 1976 and making its first endorsement for president for Walter Mondale in 1984. The group had, up until this point, worked in bi-partisan fashion to achieve its policy goals and had eschewed all electioneering efforts and many issue campaigns deemed unduly polarizing. Now, the Club was in the midst of transition that would reshape the group's membership and leadership cadre permanently. As Phillip Berry, a Sierra Club board member instrumental in the creation of the group's Committee on Political Action, describes it:

> In 1982, we had a pleasant surprise. We found that in many instances the people acting for the club politically had not been in leadership roles before. They were grass-roots activists who seemed to say, 'I wished somebody had done this, and now the Sierra Club has. I'm going to go join to help out.' And so, we got new blood - people wanted to be politically active. Their motivation was environmental politics, and we were the vehicle.[123]

The group's increasingly partisan –and sometimes polarizing – brand of environmentalism did not just attract new members; it also drove away members who found themselves out of step with the organization's new direction. Berry freely admits that the Club's tactics exacerbated the trend toward greater ideological homogeneity:

> With every major expansion of the program, the issue was raised that this would ruin the Sierra Club. It would politicize the Sierra Club; it would cause us to be divided within; the members would leave; and it would change the nature of the club.[124]

And, yet, Berry added, "we've simply decided to run that risk."[125]

As immigration became a more salient and polarizing issue during the Clinton administration, a more ideologically homogeneous and politically activist Board of

Directors challenged the Club's anti-immigration position with a proposal to adopt a neutral stance on the issue going forward. The 1996 vote was controversial and very tight, but younger board members and changing sentiments among some older members gave the "no position" motion sufficient support. In 1998, some Sierra Club leaders joined rank-and-file members in opposition to the new measure and generated enough dissent to bring the issue to an organization-wide vote. Sixty percent of the Club's membership affirmed the board's earlier decision to stay silent on immigration, instead favoring a "comprehensive approach" to population growth that would promote reproductive health, women's rights, and worldwide economic security.

While it is unclear how this internal battle affected rank-and-file members, it caused a serious rift at the top. David Brower, whose leadership in the 1960's had essentially refounded the Sierra Club as the activist organization it is today, left the organization in 2000 to found the Earth Island Institute as several other major donors stepped back from the Club as well. Longtime Sierra Club board member John Tanton, joined by newcomer Paul Watson, a co-founder of Greenpeace, continued to fight for the re-introduction of an anti-immigration plank, but to no avail. In 2004, a slate of anti-immigration candidates known as the Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization (SUPS) were soundly defeated in a 10 to 1 vote. One year later, Tanton made a final gambit via another organization-wide referendum but this time the measure was defeated by much wider margins. Soon thereafter, Tanton left the organization to devote himself more fully to his anti-immigration organization, Federation for American Immigration Reform.

While the adopting neutrality position left some high-profile Club leaders disaffected, doing otherwise would have been unpopular with other powerful members.

David Gelbaum, whose donations to the Sierra Club total ten million dollars confided to the LA Times that he had weighed in on the decision: "I did tell Carl Pope [then president of the Sierra Club] in 1994 or 1995 that if they ever came out anti-immigration, they would never get a dollar from me." As debate swirled around the adoption of the "no position" position, many members concluded that the issue of immigration was too divisive and too tangentially related to the Club's core issues to warrant action. According to Michael McGinn, a Sierra Club member and spokesman for the pro-neutrality Groundswell Sierra faction, "everything gets related back to the environment in one way or another, but that does not make it an environmental issue."[126]

Richard Cellarius a long-time lobbyist for the Sierra Club and a current board member, further explained that much of the pressure to evolve on the immigration issue had nothing to do with shifting perceptions of its environmental impact. Instead, many within the group viewed the anti-immigration stance as out of step with another core Liberal ideological commitment: racial egalitarianism. As Cellarius explains:

> The opposition to the club taking a stand on the issue is at one level, I would argue, anti-racist, and has nothing to do with population. Again, they say it's racial discrimination not to let these folks into the country. So, the issue that the club had to deal with these petitions was an absolute, flat political issue. That was the nature of the issue. It was so much beyond the issue of how do we deal with population growth, that it would have been a mistake. It would have been a disaster if we had passed that resolution, or the membership had, because it would have put us in an impossible position with folks that we need to work with.[127]

Not only would internal divisions arise, Cellarius also suggests that reifying the group's anti-immigration stance would have enhanced tensions between natural ideological allies in other corners of the Liberal/Democratic constellation of interest groups.

By 2013, pressures from inside and out overcame what little resistance remained within the organization and, with very little internal debate, the Sierra Club's board officially voiced support for comprehensive immigration reform. In several waves since the 1980's, immigration opponents in the Club had been peeled away, forming far smaller, less moneyed, and less influential groups like the Earth Island Institute, Federation for American Immigration Reform, and Support U.S. Population Stabilization (formerly Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization). Meanwhile, the push for immigration reform can now rely on the resources of the Sierra Club, which has undertaken a major lobbying campaign on behalf of the cause.

Conclusion

Political polarization has left the Sierra Club fully reliant on the Democratic Party, though this is a fate the group has hastened itself. Most of the Republican Party's leadership has given up on attracting support from environmental groups and the party has lurched to the right on these issues. The rightward shift of the GOP has been a double curse as it has left the Democratic Party without a strong electoral incentive to make serious concessions. After all, groups like the Sierra Club have nowhere else to turn. As Carl Pope, a former Executive Director of the Sierra Club, summarized:

> It used to be the Republicans and Democrats were competing to see who could be best on environmental issues. Now the Democrats tend to take us for granted. And the Republicans often tell me they can't get any credit for the good things they do, so they sometimes say "why bother?" and this is a bad dynamic and is something we really need to get back to the old days on.[128]

Pope's statement belies a certain sense of responsibility for partisan polarization regarding environmental policy. While many environmental activists portray environmentalists as victims of political polarization, Pope appraises things differently. His statement shows an awareness that groups like the Sierra Club were not co-opted by the party, nor were they fully successful in turning the party to their own purposes. They are not captives of the party as many activists claim, nor captors of the party as many political scientists claim. The Sierra Club's interest, as group leaders understand it, now parallels the interest of the Democratic Party.

[1] McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. MIT Press, 2016., p.2

[2] As Carl Pope, former Chairman of the Sierra Club writes: "The sad fact is that the GOP has been subjected to a hostile takeover by the oil-and-gas industry—and particularly Koch Industries, the conglomerate owned by ultra-right-wing brothers Charles and David Koch. It wasn't grassroots fear of solar cells that turned Republican candidates into boosters for climate change. Instead, think tanks funded by the Koch brothers, ExxonMobil, and others took advantage of the decline of fact-based media to transform climate change into a partisan issue." – Pope, Carl. "Hostile Takeover of the GOP: Polluter Cash Sets the Republican Environmental Agenda." *Sierra Magazine*. Sept/Oct. 2011. See also: Phillip S. Sierra Club Leader, *1960s-1980s: A Broadened Agenda, A Bold Approach*. 1988*,* Vol. 31.

[3] See, for example: U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Minority Staff Report. *Political Activity of Environmental Groups and Their Supporting Foundations*. Sept. 2008. Report available at: http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Minority.WhitePapers

[4] "History: Sierra Club Timeline". Sierra Club Website. Avaliable Online: http://vault.sierraclub.org/history/timeline.aspx
[5] Stephen Fox, *John Muir and His Legacy: The American Conservation Movement* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1981), pp. 125–319.
[6] Stephen Fox, *John Muir and His Legacy: The American Conservation Movement (Boston: Little, Brown, 1981), pp. 125–319.*
[7] Ehrlich, Paul R. (1968). *The Population Bomb*. Ballantine Books.
[8] Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Majority* (1969) in Brian Allen Drake, "The Skeptical Environmentalist: Senator Barry Goldwater and the Environmental Management State", *Environmental History*, (2010). p. 589
[9] This advertising campaign had a major impact according to Dan Dreyfus of the Bureau of Reclamation. "I never saw anything like it." Dreyfus said of the response. "Letters were arriving in dump trucks. Ninety-five percent of them said we'd better keep our mitts off the Grand Canyon and a lot of them quoted the Sierra Club ads." See the original advertisement as it appeared in the *New York Times* here: http://www.infomarketingblog.com/sistine-chapel/
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[11] This tax status still allows groups a tax write off on operating expenses but does not allow individual donors a tax deduction for their contributions. 501(c)(4) groups are also allowed to engage in a significantly greater amount of lobbying activity.
[12] Brower, David. "Grand Canyon Battle Ads." *Grand Canyon of the Living Colorado*. Ballantine Books: 1970. Online: http://content.sierraclub.org/brower/grand-canyon-battle-ads
[13] Coyle, Daniel. "The High Cost of Being David Brower," *Outside*. May 2, 2004. Online: https://www.outsideonline.com/1926486/high-cost-being-david-brower
[14]McCloskey, Michael. *In the Thick of It: My Life in the Sierra Club*. Island Press, 2005. p.129
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[16] Lyons, Richard D. "Lobbyists Shifting Quarters to Capital." *The New York Times*. June 8, 1975. Online: http://www.nytimes.com/1975/06/08/archives/lobbyists-shifting-quarters-to-capital.html
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[19] Republican Party Platform of 1976, August 18, 1976. Online: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25843
[20] Berry, Phillip S. Sierra Club Leader, *1960s-1980s: A Broadened Agenda, A Bold Approach*. 1988, Vol. 31. p.97
[21] Ibid, p. 95.
[22] Ibid, p. 95.
[23] Ibid, p.95.
[24] McCloskey 2005, p.222.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Sierra Club Board of Directors Meeting Minutes. Nov. 14-15, 1980. p.12
[27] McCloskey 2005.
[28] McCloskey, *In the Tick of It*. p.172
[29] ibid, p.12
[30] ibid, p.12
[31] ibid, p.12
[32] Harris, Richard A., and Sidney M. Milkis. *The Politics of Regulatory Change: A Tale of Two Agencies*. Oxford University Press, 1989.
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[35] Sierra Club Board of Directors Meeting Sept. 15-16, 1984. p.12 Online: http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/hb9290139g/
[36] Board of Directors Meeting Sept. 15-16, 1984. P.12
[37] Berry 1988.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Board of Directors meeting notes. Dec. 1-2, 1984 p22.
[41] Berry 1988.
[42] McCloskey 2005, p.222.
[43] Ibid. p.222
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[48] Ibid.
[49] MacClennan, Paul, "Sierra Club Raps Bush on Great Lakes Issues," The Buffalo News. Nov. 1, 1988. Online: http://buffalonews.com/1988/10/31/sierra-club-raps-bush-on-great-lakes-issues/
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