Media and Gridlock

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- I model most salient aspect of legislative process: whether losing party obstructs or not

- Main result: strategic obstructionism makes effect of less informative media even worse

- Not only bad policy more likely proposed, but good policy more likely blocked
Other related literature

Political science literature focuses on party polarization (Layman et al, APSR, 2006) - i.e. ideology dispersion - as gridlock cause.

My paper: can interpret as highlighting necessary role of uninformative media.

Or as providing alternative explanation.

In fact, maybe alternative explanation for stylized fact of party polarization?

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- (Politicians only acting more polarized -)
The model

Two political parties, a majority and minority

- Majority proposes policy, \(X\)
  - Either efficient, \(E\), or partisan and deadweight loss, \(D\) \((X \in \{D, E\})\)
- Minority then takes action, \(Y\)
  - Either accept, \(A\), or block, \(B\) \((Y \in \{A, B\})\)

Based on US system where minority party can block policy by filibuster

- If \((X, Y) = (D, A)\), then \(\alpha\) benefit to majority, \(\alpha\) cost to minority, and social loss
- If \((X, Y) = (E, A)\), then 0 benefit (cost) to majority (minority), social gain

Status quo, \(B\) payoff 0 for all
The model

- Two political parties, a majority and minority

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With $\phi \in (0.5, 1)$, the minority has private information $I$ on $X$ (denoted $I = \text{E}$ or $I = \text{D}$), otherwise, $I = \emptyset$.

Before minority acts, news reports $r \in \{r_E, r_D\}$.

'Public opinion' based on reports boiled down to policy = 'bad'/'good', publicly observable.

Media environment parameterized by $\pi = \Pr(r = r_E | E) = \Pr(r = r_D | D) \in [0, 1]$.

Media behavior/incentives not modeled explicitly (focus of other lit).
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- Why less informative?

- More partisan (cite)
- Faster news cycle, less vetting
- Newspapers cutting staff, oversight; Internet media less careful
- Views of public
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    graph
Each party one of two types, high or low ($\theta_i \in \{\bar{\theta}, \theta\}$)

Conventional interpretation: centrist/extremist or competent/incompetent

More realistic (?) given rise in anger (Pew research, April, 2010), questioning of motives (accusations of "playing politics"): idealist/cynic

If $\theta_{maj} = \bar{\theta}$, $X = E$

If $\theta_{min} = \bar{\theta}$, $Y = A$ iff ($I = E$) or ($I = \emptyset$, $r = r_E$)

If either party is the low type, then acts like high type with probability $\epsilon \in (0, 0.5)$

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3 types of voters: liberals, conservatives and centrists.

Centrists' priors that parties are the high type are $\lambda_{\text{maj}}$ and $\lambda_{\text{min}}$, with $\lambda_{\text{maj}} > \lambda_{\text{min}}$.

Liberals/conservatives always vote the same way (so analysis can ignore).

\[
\text{Prob(majority re-elected)} = f\left(\sim \lambda_{\text{maj}} - \sim \lambda_{\text{min}}\right),
\]

\[f'(\cdot) > 0\]

With probability $\psi \in (0.5, 1)$, majority objective function:

\[
u_{\text{maj}} = f\left(\sim \lambda_{\text{maj}} - \sim \lambda_{\text{min}}\right) + \alpha \Pr(A|X = D) I(X = D)
\]

With probability $1 - \psi$ myopic (transient property).

Minority objective function:

\[
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Prob(majority re-elected) = $f(\tilde{\lambda}_{maj} - \tilde{\lambda}_{min})$, $f'(\cdot) > 0$
3 types of voters: liberals, conservatives and centrists

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$\text{Prob(majority re-elected)} = f(\sim\lambda_{maj} - \sim\lambda_{min}), \quad f'(\cdot) > 0$

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Illustration of timing:

In PBE:

\[ X^* \text{ is optimal given voters beliefs and } \sigma^*(r, I) = \Pr(A|r, I); \]

\[ \sigma^*(r, I) = \Pr(A|r, I) \] is optimal given voters beliefs and \( X^* \).
Illustration of timing:
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Nature selects parties' types → Majority proposes new policy →
- News report is $r_D$: Minority accepts
- News report is $r_E$: Minority accepts, Minority blocks


In PBE:

voters beliefs about strategies are correct and posteriors about party types are Bayesian;
Illustration of timing:

In PBE:
voters beliefs about strategies are correct and posteriors about party types are Bayesian;
$X^*$ is optimal given voters beliefs and $\sigma^*(r, I) = Pr(A|r, I)$;
In PBE: voters beliefs about strategies are correct and posteriors about party types are Bayesian; $X^*$ is optimal given voters beliefs and $\sigma^*(r, I) = Pr(A|r, I)$; $\sigma^*(r, I) = Pr(A|r, I)$ is optimal given voters beliefs and $X^*$
Equilibria

First look for maximal gridlock:

\[ X^* = D, \quad \sigma^*(r, I) = 0 \quad \forall r, I \]

One IC for majority:

\[
\Pr(A \mid D)(\mathbb{E}(f(\sim \lambda_{maj} - \sim \lambda_{min}) \mid A, D)) + \alpha \geq \Pr(A \mid E)(\mathbb{E}(f(\sim \lambda_{maj} - \sim \lambda_{min}) \mid A, E)) + \Pr(B \mid E)(\mathbb{E}(f(\sim \lambda_{maj} - \sim \lambda_{min}) \mid B, E))
\]

Note \( \Pr(A \mid D) \geq (\lambda_{min} + \epsilon(1 - \lambda_{min})) \)

\( \Pr(min \ acts \ like \ high \ type) \)

\( \Pr(r \ E \mid D)(1 - \varphi) \geq \Pr(I = \emptyset) > 0 \) if \( \pi < 1 \)

Thus LHS of IC increasing in \( \alpha \)

Thus IC holds for large enough \( \alpha \)
First look for maximal gridlock: $X^* = D, \sigma^*(r, l) = 0 \ \forall r, l$
Equilibria

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$$
Pr(A|D)(E(f(\tilde{\lambda}_{maj} - \tilde{\lambda}_{min})|A, D) + \alpha) + Pr(B|D)E(f(\tilde{\lambda}_{maj} - \tilde{\lambda}_{min})|B, D) \geq
Pr(A|E)E(f(\tilde{\lambda}_{maj} - \tilde{\lambda}_{min})|A, E) + Pr(B|E)E(f(\tilde{\lambda}_{maj} - \tilde{\lambda}_{min})|B, E)
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Note $Pr(A|D) \geq (\lambda_{min} + \epsilon(1 - \lambda_{min})) (1 - \pi)(1 - \phi) > 0$ if $\pi < 1$

$Pr(\text{min acts like high type}) \Pr(r_E|D) \Pr(l=\emptyset)$
First look for maximal gridlock: $X^* = D$, $\sigma^*(r, I) = 0 \forall r, I$

One IC for majority:

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Equilibria

▶ First look for maximal gridlock: \( X^* = D, \sigma^*(r, l) = 0 \ \forall r, l \)

▶ One IC for majority:

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\]

▶ Note \( Pr(A|D) \geq \left( \frac{\lambda_{min} + \epsilon(1 - \lambda_{min})}{Pr(\text{min acts like high type})} \right) \left( 1 - \pi \right) \left( 1 - \phi \right) > 0 \) if \( \pi < 1 \)

▶ Thus LHS of IC increasing in \( \alpha \)

▶ Thus IC holds for large enough \( \alpha \)
Note

\[ u_{\min}(A | I = E) \geq u_{\min}(A | I \neq E) \]

Thus, only 2 ICs for minority:

1. \[ u_{\min}(B | I = E, r = r_D) \geq u_{\min}(A | I = E, r = r_D) \]
2. \[ u_{\min}(B | I = E, r = r_E) \geq u_{\min}(A | I = E, r = r_E) \]

Suppose \( \pi = 0.5 \).

Then can be shown 1 holds iff

\[ \lambda_{\text{maj}} - \lambda_{\text{min}} \leq \lambda_{\text{maj}}(A, r_D) - \lambda_{\text{min}}(A, r_D) \]

And 2 holds iff

\[ \lambda_{\text{maj}} - \lambda_{\text{min}} \leq \lambda_{\text{maj}}(A, r_E) - \lambda_{\text{min}}(A, r_E) \]
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Thus, only 2 ICs for minority:
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2. $u_{min}(B|l = E, r = r_E) \geq u_{min}(A|l = E, r = r_E)$

Suppose $\pi = 0.5$

Then can be shown 1 holds iff
$\lambda_{maj} - \lambda_{min} \leq \tilde{\lambda}_{maj}(A, r_D) - \tilde{\lambda}_{min}(A, r_D)$
Note \( u_{\text{min}}(A|I = E) \geq u_{\text{min}}(A|I \neq E) \)

Thus, only 2 ICs for minority:
1. \( u_{\text{min}}(B|I = E, r = r_D) \geq u_{\text{min}}(A|I = E, r = r_D) \);
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Suppose \( \pi = 0.5 \)

Then can be shown 1 holds iff
\[ \lambda_{\text{maj}} - \lambda_{\text{min}} \leq \tilde{\lambda}_{\text{maj}}(A, r_D) - \tilde{\lambda}_{\text{min}}(A, r_D) \]

And 2 holds iff \( \lambda_{\text{maj}} - \lambda_{\text{min}} \leq \tilde{\lambda}_{\text{maj}}(A, r_E) - \tilde{\lambda}_{\text{min}}(A, r_E) \)
IC1 holds iff
\[ \epsilon \geq \lambda_{\text{maj}} \lambda_{\text{min}} (1 - \lambda_{\text{maj}})(1 - \lambda_{\text{min}}) \] (1)

Intuition: if \( \epsilon = 0 \), then
\[ \sim \lambda_{\text{maj}}(A, r_{\mathcal{D}}) = \sim \lambda_{\text{min}}(A, r_{\mathcal{D}}) = 1 \]
Implies IC1 cannot hold (given \( \lambda_{\text{maj}} > \lambda_{\text{min}} \))

Larger \( \epsilon \), more likely \( Y = A \) due to fluke, relatively more so for minority

Can show IC2 holds if
\[ \left( \Pr(A, r_{\mathcal{E}} | \bar{\theta}_{\text{maj}}) - \Pr(A, r_{\mathcal{E}}) \right) \lambda_{\text{maj}} \geq \left( \Pr(A, r_{\mathcal{E}} | \bar{\theta}_{\text{min}}) - \Pr(A, r_{\mathcal{E}}) \right) \lambda_{\text{min}} \] (2)

Holds strictly if \( \lambda_{\text{min}} = 0 \), \( \lambda_{\text{maj}} > 0 \), since \( \Pr(A, r_{\mathcal{E}} | \bar{\theta}_{\text{maj}}) > \Pr(A, r_{\mathcal{E}}) \)

By continuity, both ICs hold for \((\pi, \lambda_{\text{min}})\) in neighborhood of \((0.5, 0)\)
IC1 holds iff

\[ \epsilon \geq \frac{\lambda_{maj} \lambda_{min}}{(1 - \lambda_{maj})(1 - \lambda_{min})} \]  

(1)

Intuition: if \( \epsilon = 0 \), then

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Larger \( \epsilon \), more likely \( Y = A \) due to fluke, relatively more so for minority

Can show IC2 holds if

\[
(Pr(A, r_E|\bar{\theta}_{maj}) - Pr(A, r_E))\lambda_{maj} \geq (Pr(A, r_E|\bar{\theta}_{min}) - Pr(A, r_E))\lambda_{min}
\]

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IC1 holds iff

\[ \epsilon \geq \frac{\lambda_{maj}\lambda_{min}}{(1 - \lambda_{maj})(1 - \lambda_{min})} \] (1)

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By continuity, both ICs hold for \((\pi, \lambda_{min})\) in neighborhood of \((0.5, 0)\)
Proposition

If and only if $\pi$ is sufficiently small, if $\lambda_{\min}(\alpha)$ is sufficiently small (large), then there exists a "total gridlock" PBE in which a strategic majority always plays D, and a strategic minority always plays B ($\sigma^*(r, I) = 0 \forall r, I$).

Strategic majority proposes D because of chance it slips by ($\phi < 1$).

When $\pi$ close to 0.5 implies voters learn only from political actions.

Small $\lambda_{\min}$ implies only $\lambda_{maj, sub}$ substantially changes due to actions (and B hurts it).

Large $\pi$ and $r = r_E$, then B primarily signals $\theta_{min} = \theta$ (so minority wants to play A and PBE fails to exist).
Proposition

If and only if $\pi$ is sufficiently small, if $\lambda_{\min}(\alpha)$ is sufficiently small (large), then there exists a "total gridlock" PBE in which a strategic majority always plays $D$, and a strategic minority always plays $B$ ($\sigma^*(r, I) = 0 \ \forall r, I$).
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If and only if $\pi$ is sufficiently small, if $\lambda_{\text{min}} (\alpha)$ is sufficiently small (large), then there exists a “total gridlock” PBE in which a strategic majority always plays $D$, and a strategic minority always plays $B$ $(\sigma^*(r, I) = 0 \ \forall r, I)$.

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- Large $\pi$ and $r = r_E$, then $B$ primarily signals $\theta_{\text{min}} = \theta$ (so minority wants to play $A$ and PBE fails to exist)
If IC2 not satisfied, next pure strategy equilibrium to consider:

\[ \sigma^* (r_E, E) = 1 \]

Requires \( \lambda_{maj} - \lambda_{min} \geq \sim \lambda_{maj} (A, r_E) - \sim \lambda_{min} (A, r_E) \)

Can show this cannot hold (given \( \phi > 0.5 \), implies \( A \) is strong signal \( I = E \))

Thus, must mix when \( r = r_E, I = E \)

Large \( \pi \) and \( r = r_E \), then \( B \) primarily signals \( \theta_{min} = \theta \)

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Thus, must mix when $r = r_E, I = E$

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- So, again equilibrium does not exist for large \( \pi \)
Proposition

If and only if $\pi$ is sufficiently small, if $\alpha$ is sufficiently large and a total gridlock PBE fails to exist, then there exists a "partial gridlock" PBE in which the strategic majority always plays D, and the minority plays $\sigma^* (r_E, E) \in (0, 1)$ and $\sigma^* (r_I, I) = 0$ otherwise. There does not exist a PBE in which $\sigma^* (r_E, E) = 1$ and $\sigma^* (r_I, I) = 0$ otherwise.
Proposition

If and only if $\pi$ is sufficiently small, if $\alpha$ is sufficiently large and a total gridlock PBE fails to exist, then there exists a “partial gridlock” PBE in which the strategic majority always plays $D$, and the minority plays $\sigma^*(r_E, E) \in (0, 1)$ and $\sigma^*(r, l) = 0$ otherwise. There does not exist a PBE in which $\sigma^*(r_E, E) = 1$ and $\sigma^*(r, l) = 0$ otherwise.
Parameter regions for total, partial gridlock equilibria; $\pi = 0.55$ (x-axis = $\lambda_{\text{min}}$; y-axis = $\lambda_{\text{maj}}$)
Next, look for opposite type of equilibrium

▶ Myopic majority always proposes E; suppose if non-myopic, E

▶ Showed above \( \sigma^*(r_E, E) = 1 \) for large \( \pi \) when \( X^* = D \) and different voter expectations–still true

▶ Suppose \( \sigma^*(r_E, \emptyset) = 1 \) also

▶ Then \( \sim \lambda_{maj}(r_E, B) = 0 \) (if \( \pi < 1 \), otherwise this is off-path)

▶ So in PBE, \( \sigma^*(r_E, \emptyset) < 1 \) if \( \pi < 1 \) and \( \sigma^*(r_E, \emptyset) = 1 \) if \( \pi = 1 \).

▶ Possible \( \sigma^*(r_D, E) > 0 \) but \( \sigma^*(r_D, I \neq E) = 0 \) for large \( \pi, \alpha \)

▶ Can show majority does lose reputation from \( (r_D, B) \), and \( \Pr(A|D) \rightarrow 0 \) as \( \pi \rightarrow 1 \)

▶ Thus non-myopic majority does play E (reputation dominates)
Next, look for opposite type of equilibrium

- $E$ proposed, accepted as much as possible
Next, look for opposite type of equilibrium

- $E$ proposed, accepted as much as possible
- Myopic majority always proposes $D$; suppose if non-myopic, $E$
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- Myopic majority always proposes $D$; suppose if non-myopic, $E$
- Showed above $\sigma^*(r_E, E) = 1$ for large $\pi$ when $X^* = D$ and different voter expectations—still true
- Suppose $\sigma^*(r_E, \emptyset) = 1$ also
- Then $\tilde{\lambda}_{maj}(r_E, B) = 0$ (if $\pi < 1$, otherwise this is off-path)
Next, look for opposite type of equilibrium

- $E$ proposed, accepted as much as possible
- Myopic majority always proposes $D$; suppose if non-myopic, $E$
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- Then $\tilde{\lambda}_{maj}(r_E, B) = 0$ (if $\pi < 1$, otherwise this is off-path)
- So in PBE, $\sigma^*(r_E, \emptyset) < 1$ if $\pi < 1$ and $\sigma^*(r_E, \emptyset) = 1$ if $\pi = 1$. 
Next, look for opposite type of equilibrium

- $E$ proposed, accepted as much as possible
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- Possible $\sigma^*(r_D, E) > 0$ but $\sigma^*(r_D, I \neq E) = 0$ for large $\pi$, $\alpha$
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- Can show majority does lose reputation from $(r_D, B)$, and $Pr(A|D) \to 0$ as $\pi \to 1$
- Thus non-myopic majority does play $E$ (reputation dominates)
Proposition
For sufficiently large $\alpha$, if and only if $\pi$ is sufficiently large, then there exists a "cooperative" PBE in which the strategic majority always plays $E$ when it is non-myopic, and the strategic minority plays $\sigma^*\left(r_E, E\right) = 1$, $\sigma^*\left(r_E, \emptyset\right) \in [0, 1]$ (only if $\pi = 1$), $\sigma^*\left(r_D, E\right) \in [0, 1]$ and $\sigma^* = 0$ otherwise. If $\pi = 1$, then $\sim \lambda_{maj}(B, r_E) > \sim \lambda_{maj}(A, r_E)$ and $\sim \lambda_{min}(B, r_E) < \lambda_{min}$. 

$\psi < 1$ guarantees $D$ sometimes played; avoids complicated mixed strategy analysis.

Summary: large $\pi$, cooperative PBE exists, no gridlock PBE; small $\pi$, gridlock PBE exists, no cooperative PBE.

Media good watchdog when accurate–forces both parties to "do the right thing"–political competition insufficient.
Proposition

For sufficiently large $\alpha$, if and only if $\pi$ is sufficiently large, then there exists a “cooperative” PBE in which the strategic majority always plays $E$ when it is non-myopic, and the strategic minority plays $\sigma^*(r_E, E) = 1$, $\sigma^*(r_E, \emptyset) \in [0, 1]$ ($=1$ only if $\pi = 1$), $\sigma^*(r_D, E) \in [0, 1]$ and $\sigma^* = 0$ otherwise. If $\pi = 1$, then $\lambda_{maj}(B, r_E) > \lambda_{maj}(A, r_E)$ and $\lambda_{min}(B, r_E) < \lambda_{min}$.
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For sufficiently large $\alpha$, if and only if $\pi$ is sufficiently large, then there exists a “cooperative” PBE in which the strategic majority always plays $E$ when it is non-myopic, and the strategic minority plays $\sigma^*(r_E, E) = 1$, $\sigma^*(r_E, \emptyset) \in [0, 1]$ ($=1$ only if $\pi = 1$), $\sigma^*(r_D, E) \in [0, 1]$ and $\sigma^* = 0$ otherwise. If $\pi = 1$, then $\tilde{\lambda}_{maj}(B, r_E) > \tilde{\lambda}_{maj}(A, r_E)$ and $\tilde{\lambda}_{min}(B, r_E) < \lambda_{min}$.

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Summary: large $\pi$, cooperative PBE exists, no gridlock PBE; small $\pi$, gridlock PBE exists, no cooperative PBE

Media good watchdog when accurate—forces both parties to “do the right thing”—political competition insufficient
Gridlock analysis

Lemma
For any gridlock PBE with $\pi_g$ and cooperative PBE with $\pi_c$,

$\pi_g \leq \pi_c$.

1. $\Pr(B|E, \text{gridlock PBE}) > \Pr(B|E, \text{cooperative PBE})$;
2. $\Pr(B|D, \text{gridlock PBE}) < \Pr(B|D, \text{cooperative PBE})$ if $\pi_c$ sufficiently large.

Efficient policies more likely blocked in gridlock PBE–direct effect of lower media accuracy.
But inefficient policies more likely blocked in cooperative PBE if $\pi$ large.

So, not obvious that gridlock more common in so-called gridlock PBE.
Gridlock analysis

Lemma

For any gridlock PBE with $\pi_g$ and cooperative PBE with $\pi_c$, $\pi_g \leq \pi_c$,
1. $\Pr(B|E, \text{gridlock PBE}) > \Pr(B|E, \text{cooperative PBE})$;
2. $\Pr(B|D, \text{gridlock PBE}) < \Pr(B|D, \text{cooperative PBE})$ iff $\pi_c$ sufficiently large
Gridlock analysis

Lemma
For any gridlock PBE with $\pi_g$ and cooperative PBE with $\pi_c$, $\pi_g \leq \pi_c$,
1. $\Pr(B|E, \text{gridlock PBE}) > \Pr(B|E, \text{cooperative PBE})$;
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Gridlock analysis

**Lemma**

For any gridlock PBE with $\pi_g$ and cooperative PBE with $\pi_c$, $\pi_g \leq \pi_c$,

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- So, not obvious that gridlock more common in so-called gridlock PBE
What about unconditional $Pr(B)$?

**Proposition**
For any $\pi_g \leq \pi_c$, $B$ is more likely to be played in a gridlock equilibrium with $\pi = \pi_g$ than a cooperative equilibrium with $\pi = \pi_c$.

Formalizes gridlock more likely in gridlock PBE

Result doesn't require $Pr(D|\text{gridlockPBE}) > Pr(D|\text{cooperativePBE})$!

If $D$ played more often, then $\lambda_{\text{maj}}$ lower

Then $\lambda_{\text{min}}$ lower (due to $\lambda_{\text{maj}} > \lambda_{\text{min}}$ assumption)

Then $Pr(B|E)$ higher and $dPr(B|D)/d\pi$ lower

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\text{Welfare} = \underbrace{\Pr(A|E)\Pr(E)\ W(E)}_{\Pr(E \text{ passed})} - \underbrace{\Pr(A|D)\Pr(D)\ W(D)}_{\Pr(D \text{ passed})}
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  - But $Pr(D|\text{cooperative})$ shrunk to zero by $\psi \to 1$ and $Pr(A|D, \text{cooperative}) \to 0$ by $\pi_c \to 1$
Voter polarization

▶ Natural to think partisan voters' opinions of opposing party decline as gridlock increases

▶ If I am pro-majority partisan, and policy blocked, I think minority more likely 'bad' (blocked good policy for political gain)

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Job Approval</th>
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<tr>
<td>Obama, March 9-12, 2009</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>Bush, April 18-22, 2001</td>
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<td>Bush, May 4-7, 1989*</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nixon, Mid-March, 1969*</td>
<td>65</td>
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</tbody>
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The majority is more likely to lose relative reputation ($\lambda_{maj} - \lambda_{min} < \lambda_{maj} - \lambda_{min}$) in a total gridlock PBE with $\pi$ sufficiently small than a cooperative PBE with $\pi$ sufficiently large.

Should be true in partial gridlock PBE too.

When the majority loses relative reputation in total gridlock PBE, the minority loses absolute reputation (if $\lambda_{maj} - \lambda_{min} < \lambda_{maj} - \lambda_{min}$, then $\lambda_{min} < \lambda_{min}$).

Less obvious.

Simple proof:

$$\Pr(r, B|\theta_{min}) > \Pr(r, B|\bar{\theta}_{min})$$
Lemma

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▶ (conjecture)

For a given percentage reputational advantage for the majority, a reversal in reputation advantage (i.e., $\sim \lambda_{\text{min}} > \sim \lambda_{\text{maj}}$) is more likely when the majority has a worse initial reputation.
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Re-election probabilities; \( \pi = 0.55 \) in gridlock PBE, \( = 0.95 \) in cooperative PBE;
\( \epsilon = 0.25, \phi = 0.75, \psi = 0.95, \alpha = 2, f(\tilde{\lambda}_{maj} - \tilde{\lambda}_{min}) = 0.5(1 + (\tilde{\lambda}_{maj} - \tilde{\lambda}_{min})^{0.3}) \) if \( \tilde{\lambda}_{maj} \geq \tilde{\lambda}_{min} \), and \( = 0.5(1 - (\tilde{\lambda}_{min} - \tilde{\lambda}_{maj})^{0.3}) \) otherwise.
Empirical implications

1. Greater probability of the majority losing reputation (Lem 3.7, Prop 3.9)
2. Greater probability of political turnover
3. No increase in minority’s approval even before turnover (Lem 3.8)
4. Exacerbation of both trends over time (Prop 3.1, Prop 3.10)
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Model shows political incentives to obstruct policy are strong in absence of informative media

Snowball effect due to incentives being stronger for minority with poor reputation; obstructionism further worsens reputation

Welfare losses

Model highly stylized; ignores, e.g.,

- Turnout
- Observable policy success
- Platforms
- Limited strategic thinking of public

Alternative explanation of trends: declining norms for cooperation/honesty? but maybe media is deeper cause?

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