

Uncovering the Party Effect in the US Congress*

Amerikan Kongresi'nde Partilerin Etkisi

Alper Tolga BULUT**

Abstract

Although there has been a voluminous literature on American foreign policy and its effect on several regions, research on American domestic politics has been relatively scarce. Due to its significant impact on foreign policy formation, the Presidency received a lot of scholarly attention. This paper, on the other hand, focuses on another important actor in American foreign and domestic policy: The United States Congress. In this respect, we specifically aim to contribute to the literature on American Congress which aims to uncover the party effect on legislative behavior. Current studies on the topic usually rely on roll-call votes. Although this method has been quite popular, recent studies indicate problems in terms of measuring the true effect of the party. Hence, this study proposes an alternative method which has been widely used in the European Politics literature. The proposed methods involves using expert surveys to determine the level of party effect.

Key Words: Congress, Party effect, Roll-call, expert-survey, legislative theories

Öz

Her ne kadar Amerikan dış politikası ve bu dış politikanın farklı bölgelere etkisi konusunda detaylı akademik çalışmalar yapılmış olsa da, Amerikan iç siyaseti ile ilgili çalışmalar son derece sınırlı kalmıştır. Amerikan dış politikasında başkanlık makamının daha büyük bir etkisi olması nedeniyle, yapılan çalışmalar da daha çok Başkanlık makamı üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Bu çalışma Amerikan iç ve dış siyasetinin bir diğer önemli belirleyicisi olan Kongre'ye odaklanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda özellikle Amerikan Kongresi çalışmalarında partilerin Kongre üzerindeki etkisini ölçmeye çalışan literatüre katkıda bulunmak amaçlanmaktadır. Hali hazırda literatürde mevcut olan çalışmalar daha çok kayıtlı oyların (roll-call) istatistiki analizi üzerinden gerçekleştirilmektedir. Her ne kadar bu metot çok popüler olarak kullanılsa da, partilerin etkisinin net bir şekilde ölçülmesini tam olarak sağlayamadığı gerekçesiyle eleştirilmektedir. Bu bağlamda eldeki çalışma Kongre'deki parti etkisini ölçmek için, Avrupa demokrasilerini çalışan siyaset bilimcilerin yoğun olarak kullandığı alternatif bir yöntem önermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kongre, Parti etkisi, Kayıtlı-oy, Uzman anketi, yasama teorileri

Introduction

Do parties matter? Or more specifically do the parties have an impact on the voting behavior of the individual legislator? This question has long been debated in the American Legislative Politics literature. Although there is a great volume of research on the topic, a consensus does not exist and the debate

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** Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi, İİBF Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi, E-Posta: atbulut@ktu.edu.tr

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still prevails. It is agreed that disclosing the real party effect¹ in the House is not a straightforward mission since it is hard to differentiate the effect of party from the individual legislator's preference. In his article "Where is the Party?" Krehbiel clearly states this point:

In casting apparently partisan votes, do individual legislators vote with fellow party members in spite of their disagreement about the policy in question, or do they vote with fellow party members because of their agreement about the policy in question? In the former case, parties as groups are significant in a potentially policy-relevant way. That is, their partisan behavior may well result in a collective choice that differs from that which would occur in the absence of partisan behavior. In the latter case, however, parties as groups are surely less policy-relevant in terms of the difference they make relative to a non-partisan baseline. Thus, the apparent explanatory power of the variable, party, may be attributed solely to its being a good measure of preferences².

This essay aims to provide a snap-shot of the literature regarding the party effect in the American Congress. Although there have been significant scholarly work on American policy and its influence on various regions³, the domestic politics of the country is rather neglected. The paper will start with a brief review of the three major theories of legislative process in the American politics. After providing the basic arguments of each approach, the paper will focus on the partisan theory and will discuss the studies that tried to reveal the party effect in the legislature. After presenting the different approaches and methods aiming to disclose the party effect, as well as the objections to those methods, the paper will conclude with a suggestion of a new method that might be useful in the study of parties in the Congress. The proposed method is expert surveys which are widely used in European party politics literature.

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- 1 "Party Effect" refers to the role and impact of party (leadership/ideology) on legislative activities such as roll-call votes (Stephen Ansolabehere et al., "The Effects of Party and Preferences on Congressional Roll-Call Voting", *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 2001, pp. 533-572; Nolan McCarty, "The hunt for party discipline in congress", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95 No. 3, 2001, pp. 673-687; Susan Welch-Eric H. Carlson, "The Impact of Party on Voting Behavior in a Nonpartisan Legislature", *American Political Science Review*, 1973, Vol. 67 No. 3, pp. 854-867; legislative debate (Douglas B. Harris, "Orchestrating Party Talk: A Party-Based View of One-Minute Speeches in the House of Representatives", *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2005, pp.127-141; bill initiation (Alper T. Bulut, "Measuring Political Agenda Setting and Representation in Turkey: Introducing a New Approach and Data Set", *Party Politics*, Vol. 23 No. 6, 2017, pp. 717-730).
- 2 Keith Krehbiel, "Where's the Party?" *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, 1993, p. 238.
- 3 See for example: Özgür Tüfekçi, "Turkey: A Pivotal Exemplary State", in: Domestic and Regional Uncertainties in the New Turkey, Hüsrev Tabak, et al., Eds., Cambridge Scholars IIEI Publishing, 2017, Newcastle upon Tyne, pp. 125-142; Özgür Tüfekçi, *The Foreign Policy of Modern Turkey: Power and the Ideology of Eurasianism*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2017.

Theories of Legislative Process

Scholars of Congressional politics have long been studying the legislative behavior in the US Congress especially in the House of Representatives. That being said, most influential studies were usually written after 1950s. In 1959, Fenno started his study of congressional appropriations politics which resulted in the groundbreaking book *The Power of the Purse*⁴. This period is usually depicted by a relatively small number of studies mainly producing descriptive research on congressional politics. Starting with 1960s a new generation of scholars emerged with a focus on behavioral-empirical research. For instance Charles Jones wrote about Agriculture Committee⁵, whereas Peabody⁶ focused on role of party leadership in legislative decision-making. Similarly, Nelson Polsby⁷ extensively wrote about the majority leadership struggle and the institutionalization of the US House of Representatives. Randall Ripley⁸ examined the party discipline mechanism (whip system) in the House of Representatives, and finally, Donald Matthews⁹ focused on the role of Senate in American politics.

More recent studies on the US legislative politics can be summarized under three distinct theories each of which focus on the problem from different angles. Distributive theory first offered by Adler and Lapinski¹⁰, and later advanced by the studies of other scholars (Carsey and Rundquist¹¹; Adler¹²) is more focused on legislators' preferences and puts emphasis on gains from exchange using logrolling, in other words, of exchanging favors, especially in politics by reciprocal voting for each other's proposed legislation. This theory argues that legislators' constituency and the interest groups are the principals motivating the actions of legislators (agents) in designing the legislature's committee assignment and bill scheduling procedures.

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- 4 Richard F. Fenno, *The power of the purse: Appropriations Politics in Congress*, Little Brown, 1966.
 - 5 Charles O. Jones, "Representation in Congress: The Case of the House Agriculture Committee", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55 No. 2, 1961, pp. 358-367; Jones Charles O., "The Role of the Congressional Subcommittee", *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 1962, Vol. 6 No. 4, pp. 327-344.
 - 6 Robert L. Peabody, "Party Leadership Change in the United States House of Representatives", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 61 No. 3, 1967, pp. 675-693.
 - 7 Nelson W. Polsby, "The Institutionalization of the US House of Representatives", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 62 No. 1, 1968, pp. 144-168.
 - 8 Randall B. Ripley, "The Party Whip Organizations in the United States House of Representatives", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 58 No. 3, 1964, pp. 561-576.
 - 9 Donald R. Matthews, *United States Senators and Their World*, University of North Carolina Press, 1960.
 - 10 Scott E. Adler-John S. Lapinski, "Demand-Side Theory and Congressional Committee Composition: A Constituency Characteristics Approach", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 41, 1997, pp. 895-918.
 - 11 Thomas M. Carsey-Barry Rundquist, "Party and Committee in Distributive Politics: Evidence from Defense Spending", *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, 1999, pp. 1156-1169.
 - 12 Scott E. Adler, "Constituency Characteristics and the Guardian Model of Appropriations Subcommittees, 1959-1998", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, 2000, pp. 104-114.

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In other words, the committees will be composed of members from congressional districts with higher demand for policy benefits. Distributive theory introduces the legislature as a highly decentralized entity whose re-election motivated members pursue the preferences of their constituents. In this regard, members self-select committee assignment and chose committees that control policy jurisdiction relevant to their electoral interest¹³.

Informational theory was first proposed by Gilligan and Krehbiel¹⁴ and later developed by other studies¹⁵. Informational theory emerged as a challenge to distributive theory and argued that committees are the agents and the floor¹⁶ is the principal. In other words, According to this theory, the committees are not composed of homogenous preference outliers and their main function is to inform the floor and reduce uncertainty. The preference of the floor, in particular the pivotal legislator, determines the outcomes of legislation. A common feature of these two theories was that they omitted the role of party in agenda setting.

Cox and McCubbins¹⁷, challenged these non-partisan theories and argued that the majority party enjoys a significant agenda setting power by using the rules and procedures giving advantage to them. Building on the theory of Cox and McCubbins, Aldrich and Rohde¹⁸ accepted that parties matter but they also argued that the agenda setting power is conditional. As the authors argue, *the condition in conditional party government involves the degree of preference agreement within parties and of preference conflict between them*¹⁹. Similarly, Lebo et. al²⁰ find that the strongest predictors of one party's voting unity are the unity of op-

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- 13 Richard G. Forgette, "Reed's Rules and the Partisan Theory of Legislative Organization", *Polity*, Vol. 29 No. 3, 1997, pp. 377.
 - 14 Thomas W. Gilligan-Keith Krehbiel, "Asymmetric Information and Legislative Rules with a Heterogeneous Committee", *American Journal of Political Science*, 1989, pp. 459-490; Thomas W. Gilligan-Keith Krehbiel, "Collective Decisionmaking and Standing Committees: An Informational Rationale for Restrictive Amendment Procedures", *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, Vol. 3 No. 2, 1987, pp. 287-335.
 - 15 Keith Krehbiel, "Legislative Organization", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 18 No. 1, 2004, pp. 113-128; Keith Krehbiel, "Are Congressional Committees Composed of Preference Outliers?", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, 1990, pp. 149-163; Keith Krehbiel, *Information and Legislative Organization*, Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press, 1991.
 - 16 The place where official debates and discussions are held, especially between members of parliament, is referred to as the floor. In other words, the floor of a legislature is the place where members sit and make speeches and cast their votes on bills.
 - 17 Garry W. Cox-Mathew D. McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
 - 18 John H. Aldrich-David W. Rohde, "The Republican Revolution and the House Appropriations Committee", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 62 No. 1, 2000, pp. 1-33
 - 19 *Ibid*, pp. 2.
 - 20 Mathew J. Lebo, et al., "Strategic Party Government: Party Influence in Congress, 1789-2000", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 51, 2007, pp. 464-481.

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posing party and the difference between the parties in the preceding year²¹. It should be noted that both Aldrich and Rohde and Lebo et. al based their conditionality argument on Cooper and Brady²² who argued that ups and downs in the majority power strength is determined by intra-party cohesion and inter-party polarization, which is caused by polarization in the electorate.²³ In other words, when the electorate moves to ideological extremes, this increased polarization also impacts the level of majority party power.

Gailmard and Jenkins²⁴, on the other hand focus on both chambers and investigate whether the previous studies' findings regarding the strong negative agenda control²⁵ of the majority party travels to the US Senate. Comparing majority party roll rates across legislatures and chambers of the Congress, the authors find that the majority party enjoys a significant negative agenda control power in the Senate as well²⁶.

Although these studies point to the existence of significant party effect, as mentioned earlier, Krehbiel in his article "Where is the Party?"²⁷ challenged the partisan theory and argued that that high level of correlation between partisanship and voting cannot be an evidence of strong party influence rather it may reflect a high correlation between party affiliation and legislators' personal or constituency preferences. In order to *uncover the hidden effect of the party effect* one must look at the situations where the legislator's preferences are different than those of the party's. In this situation, if the legislator votes in line with the party, this should point to party effect, if not it should show us that the legislator prioritizes his/her own preferences over parties'.

In another study Krehbiel, finds that partisanship had no significant influence on the 1994 A to Z" discharge petition campaign in the U.S. House of

21 *Ibid*, pp. 464.

22 Joseph Cooper-David W. Brady, "Institutional Context and Leadership Style: The House from Cannon to Rayburn", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 75, 1981, pp. 411-25; Joseph Cooper, "Strengthening the Congress: An Organizational Perspective", *Harvard Journal of Legislation*, Vol. 12, 1974, pp. 307-68; Davis Brady, *Congressional Voting in a Partisan Era*, University of Kansas Press, 1973.

23 Polarization in the electorate refers to the ideological polarization of the voters.

24 Sean Gailmard-Jeffery A. Jenkins, "Negative Agenda Control in the Senate and House: Fingerprints of Majority Party Power", *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69, 2007, pp. 689-700.

25 There are two forms of agenda control in parliaments. Negative agenda control usually refers to the ability to block items from floor consideration, whereas positive agenda control refers to the ability to bring items to floor consideration. For more information regarding these two concepts and their application in legislatures see: Jeffery Jenkins-Nathan Monroe, "Buying Negative Agenda Control in the US House", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 56 No. 4, 2012, pp. 897-912; Jeffery Jenkins-Nathan Monroe, "Negative Agenda Control and the Conservative Coalition in the US House", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 76 No. 4, 2014, pp. 1116-1127; Radoslaw Zubek, "Negative Agenda Control and Executive-Legislative Relations in East Central Europe, 1997-2008", *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 17 No.2, 2011, pp. 172-192.

26 Sean Gailmard-Jeffery A. Jenkins, *op.cit*, 2007, pp. 689.

27 Keith Krehbiel, "Where's the Party?", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, 1993, pp. 235-266.

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Representatives, and it was the legislators' preferences that explained the legislative behavior²⁸. In the United States Legislative procedure discharge petitions are used as a tool to bring a bill out of the committee and to the floor for consideration. Doing so effectively by-passes the committee and "discharges" it from further consideration of a bill or resolution.²⁹

Binder et al., on the other hand challenge Krehbiel and using an alternative measure of preference (by using the Concord Coalition scores instead of the highly partisan NTU scores) and changing the time frame for the dependent variable (using the May 24 list instead of June list) they find that there is indeed a significant party impact. As noted earlier, Krehbiel is a persistent opponent of the partisan theory; however he is also quite helpful in pointing out new directions on how to reveal the real party effect in the Congress. As mentioned above his main argument was that to be able to measure the real party effect, one must look at situations where the party and the legislator disagree.

Taking into account this advice, Snyder and Groseclose use a simple procedure that is built on three main points³⁰: First, they assume that for the lop-sided roll-calls³¹, the outcome is known in advance by the party. Second assumption is that on these lop-sided roll-calls parties do not intervene in the voting choice of the legislators and therefore legislators vote freely. To be more specific, the model assumes if 65 percent or more legislators are located on one side of the voting spectrum, legislators do not get party influence. In this regard, the lop-sided votes are good sources of information on legislators' preferences, which are independent of party influence. Lastly they employ a standard scaling technique to a set of sufficiently lop-sided roll calls.

If the first two assumptions are valid, then the authors argue that scaling these lop-sided votes produces consistent estimates of each legislator's "true" preferences that are independent of party influences.' After this procedure, the authors run regressions on all close roll calls, using the estimated preference parameters plus a party dummy variable³² as regressors. If the coef-

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- 28 Keith Krehbiel, "Cosponsors and Wafflers from A to Z", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 39 No. 4, 1995, pp. 906-23.
- 29 For more information regarding the discharge petitions see: John W. Patty, "The House Discharge Procedure and Majoritarian Politics", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69 No. 3, 2007, pp. 678-688; Eric Schickler-Andrew Rich, "Controlling the Floor: Parties as Procedural Coalitions in the House", *American Journal of Political Science*, 1997, pp. 1340-1375; Kathryn Pearson-Eric Schickler, "Discharge Petitions, Agenda Control, and the Congressional Committee System, 1929-76", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 71 No.4, 2009, pp. 1238-1256; Christophe Crombez et al., "Gatekeeping", *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 68 No.2, 2006, pp. 322-334. In 1994 representatives William Zeliff and Rob Andrews proposed the A to Z spending cuts where a petition campaign was initiated.
- 30 James M. Snyder-Tim Groseclose, "Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, 2000, pp. 193-194.
- 31 Loopsided roll-calls are those where one side lower or smaller than the other. This usually refers to roll-calls where one side acquired more than 65 percent of the votes.
- 32 Party dummy variable is a dichotomous variable, which takes the value of 1 if the legislator

ficient on the party variable is large and statistically significant in a large fraction of these regressions, then one can conclude party influence is frequently present³³. The authors perform these steps on the US Congresses from 42nd to 105th (1871-1998). The results indicate that in all US Congresses party had a large influence on representatives' voting decisions. On average, in the House of Representatives the coefficient on the party dummy variable was highly significant in nearly 54 percent of the close roll calls and party effect is denser on key procedural votes like the rule on a bill, motions to cut off debate etc. which is compatible with the procedural cartel theory³⁴.

Obviously, Snyder and Groseclose employ a clever design. However, it should be noted that, in order to believe in their method one should buy the first two assumptions above, which might not hold up most of the time. It is hard for parties to determine "safe bills"³⁵ correctly. Although it is easy to spot controversial bills such as "healthcare", in many other instances party leadership might lack the mechanism to determine the opposition to a bill. Therefore they will more likely prefer close oversight. Noting these points, it should be acknowledged that, Snyder and Groseclose's study is an important step towards uncovering the party effect in the US Congress.

However, vote based measures of partisanship has been criticized as being invalid measures or ineffective detectors of real party effect. In his detailed quantitative analysis Krehbiel³⁶ "employs a cut-point model to analyze how some of the vote based partisanship measures respond to changes in preference distributions and to different forms of behavior such as party-based discipline and nonpartisan or undisciplined behavior". His analysis reveals three core findings:

1. The well-known and widely used party-voting score fails to discriminate between polar types of behavior.
2. All five measures tested in the model leads to false inferences regarding party effect by presenting intraparty preference homogeneity as party discipline.
3. "Of the four measures that can discriminate between partisan and nonpartisan behavior, historic congressional averages are often nominally high on a 0-100 scale, however, the averages tend to be closer to no-discipline expectations than to party-discipline expectations"³⁷.

is from a certain party and 0 otherwise.

33 James M. Snyder-Tim Groseclose, *op.cit.*, 2000, pp. 193-211.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 193-211.

35 Safe bills are those which have a high chance of being passed. For example a bill is considered safe if it has more than 55 percent of the votes.

36 Keith Krehbiel, "Party Discipline and Measures of Partisanship", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44 No. 2, 2000, p. 212.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

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Krehbiel interprets these findings as a solid proof that vote-based measures of partisanship are ineffective tools for disclosing the real partisan voting, as well as party strength, and leadership support. His evidence seems sound and convincing. If this is the case, then what other ways can scholars use to disclose the party effect in the US Congress?

Quasi Experimental Designs

Another way to uncover the party effect in the legislative politics is using quasi-experimental designs. It is a fact that causal inference is a crucial part of any model. In terms of party effect, one needs to be sure that party causes the voting behaviors of the legislators. The best way to determine this pattern would be to use a counterfactual case where a legislator voted with and without party effect. However, the fundamental problem of causal inference prevents us to observe both treatment and the control effect in the same unit at the same time. In other words, we cannot have the same vote happen at the same time, under same conditions with and without party effect since it is theoretically impossible.

To overcome this problem one should find control groups, which are very similar to the treatment group and see whether the treatment group significantly differs from the control group once treated. In this case, the treatment group would receive the treatment which is party effect and the control group would not. In real life (especially in social sciences) it is extremely hard to find a valid control group. However Jenkins³⁸ brilliantly applies this method to US Congress. He uses Confederate House which had nearly identical institutions with the US House except for the party.

Jenkins argues that these two houses are similar (almost identical) except for one thing. US House had a disciplined party system whereas Confederate House did not. Using Poole and Rosenthal's³⁹ scaling techniques, Jenkins tries to reveal whether voting behavior in a party system significantly differs from a nonparty system. His results convincingly show that roll call voting in the US House was significantly more predictable than the Confederate House. He also finds that "state authority" was the primary source of conflict in both houses which means that the dimension of conflict in both houses was the same. To convince the reader that this pattern was not prevalent before secession Jenkins also uses separate regional scalings of the US House prior to secession and shows that voting in both the North and South was highly predictable.

38 Jeffery A. Jenkins, "Examining the Bonding Effects of Party: A Comparative Analysis of the Roll-Call Voting in the U.S. and Confederate Houses", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 43, 1999, pp. 1144-1165.

39 Keith Poole-Howard Rosenthal, "Patterns of Congressional Voting", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 35, 1991, pp. 228-78.

This study is a perfect example of employing a quasi-experimental design. Confederate House was almost a surrogate of the US House. Jenkins took advantage of this gloomy part of US history and showed that “all things being equal” party has a significant effect on voting behavior. Wright and Schaffner⁴⁰ use a similar method to Jenkins. They compare partisan Kansas Senate with nonpartisan Nebraska unicameral. The value of this article, besides using a quasi-experiment, lies in the fact that it does not only look at party at legislative arena but also in electoral arena. That way the authors incorporate parties’ efforts to win the office and the consequent authors go one step further and investigate the role of partisanship and ideology in the campaigns. To measure candidate’s ideologies they use Project Vote Smart (PVS)⁴¹ data. And then using NOMINATE they find that, based on these PVS scores one cannot differentiate two states. That is, *although there is no party effect in Nebraska legislative elections, in nonpartisan Nebraska, differences between Democrats and Republicans (outside the legislature) are similar to those in partisan Kansas, and the issue response sets are similarly structured in two states*⁴². But in terms of roll-call voting the story changes. Kansas Senate presents evidence regarding partisan voting whereas in Nebraska Unicameral there is no pattern of partisanship in voting behavior. This finding introduces yet another strong support for the party effect theory in the legislature.

Conclusion and Discussions

The role of parties in the voting behavior of US Congress is an important area of research. As the studies mentioned above clearly present, disclosing the real party effect in the legislature is no easy task and it requires careful scrutiny. The proponents of a party effect approach provided a wide range of studies presenting evidence of a strong party influence on voting behavior.

However, an alternative line of research, especially led by Krehbiel, convincingly showed that many studies that present a party effect suffered from statistical problems and what they actually reported was nothing but a measure presenting the voting records of like-minded politicians. Krehbiel’s critiques has provided significant insights to the study of party effect in the Congress and introduced necessary guidelines for researchers who aim to measure the real party effect.

These studies form a clear path in front of us to walk through. The role of parties in the in the Congress is fundamental to the study of legislative politics

40 Gerald C. Wright-Brian F. Schaffner, “The Influence of Party: Evidence from the State Legislatures”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, 2002, pp. 367-379.

41 Project vote smart evaluates candidates for both national and state level office. The Information provided by the project includes voting records, campaign issue positions, evaluations by special interests, campaign contributions, backgrounds, previous experience and contact information. For more information see: <https://votesmart.org/>

42 Gerald C. Wright-Brian F. Schaffner, *op.cit.*, pp. 367-379.

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in the US and the above mentioned articles have presented several ways to uncover the party effect in the US congressional politics. As far as different methods concerned, quasi experimental designs seem to offer the most reliable technique to reveal the party effect since these methods give the researcher the opportunity to isolate (to a great degree) all other variables that might affect the outcome. On the other hand, as mentioned above, it is extremely hard to come up with a valid control group in quasi-experimental designs which limits the application of these kinds of researches. Jenkins' and Wright and Schaffner's studies are particularly valuable in this regard. The clever research design employed by Jenkins contributes greatly to the literature stressing a significant party effect. His study also helps to mitigate the questions regarding the causal link between the party and the voting behavior. Similarly, Wright and Schaffner provide new insight by both using a quasi-experimental design and utilizing state legislatures to infer the role of parties in Congress.

The fundamental problem in revealing the party effect seems to be the lack of a method that will enable to discriminate the roll call votes on which the party and the legislator disagrees. Snyder and Groseclose's approach is a significant step in this direction. However, as mentioned above their framework relies on certain restrictive assumptions. What alternative methods can be used then?

One alternative is using expert surveys. I believe this method, which is widely used in the field of European politics can be applied to US context. Expert surveys are quiet common in the studies of European politics. The basic method is creating a questionnaire, which sorts a wide range of policies from social policy to issues like: immigration, abortion, economic policy, environment, freedom of speech-religious practice etc. Then, the experts, who are generally the prominent scholars of the field, are asked to place the parties in a scale (usually ranging from 1 to 10).

The downside of this approach is that the respondents might be biased. To reduce this bias respondents are also asked to place themselves on those scales. The same survey can be conducted with the legislators or candidates and a measure of ideological similarity between the party and the legislator can be obtained.⁴³ At this point one should keep in mind Krehbiel's warning and find issues on which the party and the legislator have different views. Based on these scores, the bills (and roll calls regarding those bills) on which the party and the legislator have a significantly different view can be sorted out. Then following in the footprints of Snyder and Groseclose one can run regressions on all of these roll calls, using the estimated preference parameters plus a party dummy variable as regressors.

Although this method has its own flows, for decades scholars have utilized expert surveys. Applying this method in the US context will at least enable researchers to approach the problem from a different methodological angle. All in all, the current literature on the party effect in the Congress has provided insightful evidence using innovative methods. Yet there is still to be done and scholars should think of borrowing alternative methods and measures from other literatures to further enrich the research in this area.

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