

“Let’s Play Hardball: Congressional Partisanship in the Television Era”

Congressional partisanship has been on the rise over the last three decades; congressional parties’ media strategies have exacerbated this tendency toward partisanship, marginalizing congressional moderates and increasing inter-party polarization. Based on archival research in the papers of former House Democratic and Republican leaders as well as personal interviews with congressional staff, this paper examines legislative party leaders’ uses of media strategies and their consequences for partisan conflict in Congress. In carrying out their media strategies, party leaders intentionally marginalize their own moderates, target moderates in the opposing party, and look to their most ardent partisans to carry party messages on the floor and in the media. Inasmuch as resurgent partisanship outside Congress serves as an important contextual basis for new media strategies in congressional party leadership, the implementation of those strategies, in turn, has reverberating and reciprocal effects on partisanship in Congress and in national politics outside Congress.

Academic Biography:

Douglas B. Harris is Associate Professor of political science at Loyola University Maryland. He received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. His research on Congress, political parties, and media politics include articles in *Political Science Quarterly*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *American Politics Research*, *Congress & the Presidency*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *P.S.: Political Science & Politics*, *The New England Journal of Political Science*, *The Historian*, and *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. He is co-author of *The Austin-Boston Connection: Fifty Years of House Democratic Leadership* (Texas A&M University Press) and co-editor of *Doing Archival Research in Political Science* (Cambria Press).