

The Allocation of Rights to Congressional Leaders*

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Abstract

Congressional parties face a dilemma in the allocation of procedural rights and political resources to their leaders. The more resources the party gives its leader, the more collective goods he can produce for the party. However, the more resources the leader controls, the more he can entrench himself, and the more difficult it is for the party to remove ineffective leaders from office. I present a model of how parties navigate this tradeoff, which finds that the key variable that determines how parties allocate resources to their leaders is the relative importance of the leader's talent over the leader's resources for collective goods provision. This simple result integrates hitherto competing ideas as empirical implications of a common theory and generates novel predictions about the relationship between recent developments in Congress and the allocation of resources to leaders.

1 Introduction

Congressional parties allocate control over an array of important political resources to their leaders. Over the course of American history, Speakers of the House of Representatives have exercised varying degrees of control over committee assignments,

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access to plenary floor time (and hence the legislative agenda), the whip organization and its attendant information and influence, the dispersion of campaign funds, patronage, perquisites of office, the party's messaging apparatus, and more. Control over these resources is often but not always secured by procedural rights: the right to appoint members of the Committee on Committees, the right to preside over the floor, the right to refer bills to committees, the right to appoint and chair the Rules Committee, the right to appoint the chair of the hill committees, the right to nominate certain House officers and staffers, the right to dispense unused office space, the right to approve or deny requests for official travel, and others. Variation in the rights and resources of party leaders determines the capacity of congressional parties to influence the behavior of their members. This variation is therefore intimately connected to fluctuations in partisan polarization, gridlock, electoral accountability, and Congress's capacity to compete with the other branches of government.

Previous research seeks to understand changes in leaders' rights and resources over time (e.g. Polsby, 1968; Dodd, 1977; Cooper and Brady, 1981; Sundquist, 1981; Aldrich and Rohde, 1998; Schickler, 2000; Cox and McCubbins, 2005, 2007; Volden and Bergman, 2006; Patty, 2008; Richman, 2010; Rohde, 2010; Jenkins and Stewart, 2012; Koger and Lebo, 2017), but Section 2 provides several illustrative examples that challenge these arguments. In order to understand variation in leaders' control over resources, political scientists must account for a dilemma facing the party. When the leader controls more resources, he or she can distribute them in a way that solves collective action problems and hence provides collective goods for the party (Cox and McCubbins, 2007). However, these resources can be put to other purposes; in particular, the leader can distribute them in a way that makes it more difficult to remove them from office, even if the leader is ineffective at providing collective goods. Thus, providing more resources to the leader increases collective goods provision by improving the leader's capacity to solve collective action problems, but in the long run it also decreases collective goods provision by eroding the party's capacity to

remove inefficient leaders from office. This paper presents a model of how parties navigate this tradeoff. The model shows that when the leader's resources are more important for collective goods provision than the leader's talent, the party grants all leaders control over substantial resources as a right of office, even though this makes it difficult to remove untalented leaders. When the leader's talent is more important, the party withholds resources until it can assess the leader's talent. Once the party has completed its assessment, it removes untalented leaders from office and grants talented leaders de facto control over the party's resources. The last 150 years of congressional history can be profitably categorized in terms of which of these two strategies the parties played, and the emphasis parties placed on talent versus resources explains major transitions in how parties allocated resources to their leaders.

Moreover, the theory offers a solution to two of the major challenges facing the literature on parties and leaders. Prior research has identified many variables that seem to influence leaders' control over resources (Schickler, 2001), but it has proven difficult to reconcile and integrate these arguments in a way that provides clear, concise predictions. New developments in Congress that plausibly influence the allocation of resources compound this difficulty. The theory presented here overcomes this challenge by offering a clear prediction - parties play the ex-officio strategy when the returns to resources are relatively high and the merit strategy when the returns to talent are relatively high - that is nevertheless consistent with many of the existing observations from the literature. Section 6 shows that the result provides a framework for generating predictions about how features of the political context affect the party's choice of strategy. It then uses this framework to derive how the presence of a large dissident faction within the majority party affects the allocation of resources to leaders, a result that bears substantial resemblance to conditional party government (Aldrich and Rohde, 1998). In fact, the same framework can be applied to many (but not all) arguments from the existing literature on parties and

leaders - including partisan polarization (Aldrich and Rohde, 1998; Diermeier and Vlaicu, 2011), the other party's discipline (Koger and Lebo, 2017), and the growing dominance of the president over the congressional agenda (Dodd, 1977; Green, 2007), showing that seemingly competing ideas can be integrated as implications of one common theory. It also generates novel predictions about how new developments in Congress that have not yet been connected to the rights and resources of party leaders, such as increased emphasis on partisan messaging (Lee, 2016), the emergence of the public speakership (Harris, 1998), and the growing role of money in congressional organization (Powell, 2018), affect the party's choice of strategy. All of these variables can therefore be understood as influencing how parties allocate resources to their leaders through their effects on the relative returns of resources versus talent.

2 Challenges from History

Existing studies on the allocation of rights and resources to congressional leaders examine a variety of variables, but they all share a set of common presuppositions. First, all focus on features of the political context in which leaders operate: the ideological homogeneity within a party, the degree of ideological polarization between the two parties, the size of a party, and competition with an opposite-party president, to give some examples. Second, they assume that leaders serve at the pleasure of their respective parties. If a majority of the party (or perhaps a majority of the chamber, in the case of the Speaker of the House) were dissatisfied with the performance of a leader, that majority could depose the incumbent and install a new leader. The historical record calls both of these presuppositions into question and underscores the need for a new theory.

Changes in the Political Context: Unnecessary and Insufficient

Major changes in the political context - such as the ideological composition of the parties, their respective sizes, and divided versus unified government - seem to be neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for changes in leaders' control over resources. Nancy Pelosi's 15 year tenure as the the leader of the House Democrats illustrates the insufficiency of these variables. She has served with both Republican and Democratic presidents, with a sizable and influential contingent of moderate Blue Dogs and with a largely homogeneous liberal caucus, over imposing majorities and hopeless minorities and everything in between. Throughout it all she has enjoyed effective control over her party's resources unrivaled since the time of Joe Cannon. The same can be said of Sam Rayburn, who throughout his 21 years as leader of the House Democrats enjoyed de facto control of important party resources such as committee assignments, leadership positions, and access to the floor (Hardeman and Bacon, 1987, p. 246, 260).

Frederick Gillett and Nicholas Longworth jointly illustrate that changes in the political context are not necessary conditions for dramatic changes in the leader's control over resources either. Gillett enjoyed only minimal control over Republican resources throughout his tenure. James Mann seized of control over committee assignments and the appointment of committee chairmen during Gillett's first term (Margulies, 1996, p. 97-99), Majority Leader Frank Mondell's influence exceeded Gillett's (Brown, 1922, p. 201), and Gillett eventually lost the right to ignore discharge petitions and rule nongermane revenue amendments out of order (Bacon, 1998, p. 133-134).

The election of 1924, which saw Gillett depart for the Senate and Longworth replace him as Speaker, did not herald any major changes in the political context from the Gillett years. The Republicans won enough seats so that the progressives

no longer held the balance of power, but the party held about the same number of seats as when Gillett first took office and fewer seats than they had during his second term. Calvin Coolidge remained the president. Yet Longworth, unlike Gillett, dominated the Steering Committee and Committee on Committees, replaced unreliable members of the Rules Committee with his allies, and weakened the discharge petition so much that it became functionally useless (Bacon, 1998, p. 132-135). His control over the House Republicans quickly swelled to such an extent that members of the press christened him “Czar Longworth” in an homage to the notoriously powerful Speakers Reed and Cannon (Bacon, 1998, p. 140). Thus, the resources controlled by the leader sometimes remain stable in spite of significant changes to the political context and sometimes change dramatically in the absence of meaningful changes to the political context.

The Difficulty of Removing Leaders

At various times, parties have had trouble removing leaders in spite of widespread sentiment that they were liabilities for the party. Nancy Pelosi’s survival as minority leader of the House Democrats offers a salient example of this phenomenon. In spite of, or perhaps in part because of, the impressive legislative output under Pelosi’s leadership in the 111th Congress (2009-2010), the House Democrats in 2010 suffered the worst election rout suffered by any party since 1948. Many House Democrats blamed Pelosi, who figured prominently in the Republican attack advertisements that brought down many incumbents (Draper, 2013, p. 59). She nevertheless crushed an attempted coup (Bresnahan and Allen, 2010). As House Democrats continued to fare poorly in successive House elections under Pelosi’s leadership, discontent mounted not just among moderates, but also among liberals and former Pelosi allies. Even so, Pelosi retained control of the Democratic Caucus (O’Keefe, 2014; Kane, 2016; Snell and Kane, 2016). Republicans under Newt Gingrich and John Boehner suffered the same frustrations. While Gingrich and Boehner

ultimately retired under duress (Gingrich under the pall of a threatening leadership challenge from Bob Livingston and Boehner in spite of his relative security in office), they were nevertheless able to crush attempted coups that formed well after their shortcomings as leaders were plain for all to see, as detailed in Appendix F. This appendix highlights that these leaders were difficult to remove from office because of their control over substantial resources.

3 Theory

These challenges from the historical record underscore the need for a new theory of how parties allocate resources to party leaders that is consistent with three facts. First, the level of resources available to leaders are sometimes stable in spite of significant changes to the political context. Second, the level of resources varies across leaders even in the absence of changes to the political context they inhabit. Third, resource-rich leaders are difficult to remove from office. This section presents such a theory verbally, and the next formalizes it in a model.

As the seminal work by Cox and McCubbins (2007) argues, members of congressional parties want to win the majority of seats in the next election so that they can organize the chamber to their advantage and pass desired legislation. However, acquiring this collective good usually requires individual members of the party to incur private costs, because they must periodically vote contrary to their ideological preferences or the preferences of their constituents. Thus, parties face a collective action problem. The institution of party leaders offers a solution to this collective action problem. Insofar as leaders control the distribution of valuable resources, they can disperse these resources to secure compliance with the party agenda and thereby increase the party's chances of securing the collective good. The Cox and McCubbins argument serves as a useful starting point for theorizing about congressional leadership, but it is missing two important ideas.

First, leaders vary in their efficiency at transforming resources into collective goods.¹ Lawmaking and winning a partisan majority in elections are both challenging tasks. Neither political scientists nor practitioners have devised a widely accepted recipe for either. Consequently, for a given endowment of resources, some leaders systematically produce more collective goods than others. This variation in efficiency can be traced to a host of individual characteristics: parliamentary expertise, strategic vision, knowledge of the personalities and needs of party members, personal charm, media savvy, negotiating skill, and more.²

Second, leaders who have more resources at their disposal are more difficult to remove from office, even if they are inefficient at transforming resources into collective goods. While several mechanisms can produce this result and any mechanism that leads resource-rich leaders to be more difficult to remove would lead to the same substantive conclusion derived below, the most empirically plausible is the preference for reciprocity: legislators, like most human beings, like helping those who have helped them.³ Leaders disperse committee assignments, consideration of bills and

¹The notion that stable individual differences play a role in the performance of political actors has deep roots in the qualitative literature, but it has also recently begun to gain traction in the quantitative study of Congress. Volden and Wiseman (2014) show that legislative effectiveness is partially contextual, but also partly traceable stable individual differences. Ramey *et al.* (2017) show that legislators' personality traits predict a variety of behaviors. However, political scientists have not yet explored the consequences of variation in the innate quality of leaders on legislative organization.

²The precise mapping from these and other personal characteristics into collective goods provision may depend on the context (Cooper and Brady, 1981).

³While this intrinsic preference for reciprocity is foreign to standard game theory, it is well-supported by a considerable literature in evolutionary psychology (Trivers, 1971; Cosmides and Tooby, 1989; Chudek and Henrich, 2011; Boehm, 2012), social psychology (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004), and behavioral economics (Fehr and Gächter, 2000; Fehr *et al.*, 2002; Sanfey *et al.*, 2003; Sobel, 2005). Social emotions like guilt and anger facilitate the costly reciprocation of past favors and transgressions (Trivers, 1971; Frank, 1988; Sanfey *et al.*, 2003; López-Pérez, 2008). Experimental evidence on behavior in anonymous, non-repeated games has documented patterns that are consistent with an internalized norm of reciprocity and inconsistent with reciprocity as a purely rational strategy for maximizing future rewards, as in standard arguments about reputational concerns under infinitely repeated play (Fehr *et al.*, 2002; Yamagishi *et al.*, 2009). Actors behave as if they will incur a psychological cost for behaving in a non-reciprocal fashion. Qualitative research on congressional leadership also emphasizes the importance of leaders drawing on the “goodwill” and “credits” cultivated from past favors in securing compliance with the party agenda, see (Matthews, 1960, p. 126-129), Peabody (1967), (Sinclair, 1983, p. 83), and Peters and Rosenthal (2010). Legislators themselves, and leaders in particular, often emphasize the role of reciprocity in explaining their own motivations and behavior (Martin and Donovan, 1960; O’Neill and Novak, 1987; Albert and Goble, 1990; Panetta, 2003; Frank, 2015).

amendments, assistance securing votes, campaign funds, office space, junkets, and appointed leadership positions to party members. In so doing, they cultivate goodwill towards the leader.⁴ When the leader needs a member's assistance, he can draw upon this goodwill to secure compliance with his requests. The member complies not (or at least not only) because they want to secure more future favors from the leader, but because they are grateful for the favors they have already received and would feel guilty refusing a leader who has done so much for them.⁵ As a result of this preference for reciprocity, a party member who has received favorable committee assignments, assistance passing their bills, the opportunity to amend legislation, information about the disposition of other legislators, inclusion in important conference committees, campaign assistance (including funds), a choice office, approval for pet congressional delegations to exotic destinations, and perhaps even an appointed leadership position will not just be more likely to comply with the leader's requests to support the party program. That member will also be disinclined to vote to remove the leader from office, even if the leader is ineffective at converting party resources into collective goods and even if the prospective replacement would in the future lavish favors upon the party member. Because of the deeply ingrained preference for reciprocity, the legislator would feel guilty betraying someone who has done so much for them. Personal loyalty may trump their material interest in replacing the incumbent leader with someone potentially more effective.

As a result of variation in efficiency and the difficulty of removing resource-rich leaders, the party faces a dilemma. On the one hand, it wants to give its leader control over plenty of resources like committee assignments and floor time so that

⁴Some leadership activities are not useful for building up goodwill with individual party members, but may still be useful for directly securing collective goods for the party. The right of the Speaker to count present but non-responsive members towards a quorum inaugurated with Thomas B. Reed is one such example; it helps the majority pass bills, but it is unlikely to make any member of the party feel individually grateful. Such rights do not entrench low quality leaders and therefore fall outside the scope of the theory.

⁵Cox and McCubbins argue that cooperation between party leaders and the rank-and-file is sustained by infinitely repeated play, but concede that this explanation has several shortcomings: the existence of multiple equilibria, potentially short time horizons (for both the leaders and party members), and unobservability of certain actions (Cox and McCubbins, 2007, p. 92-94).

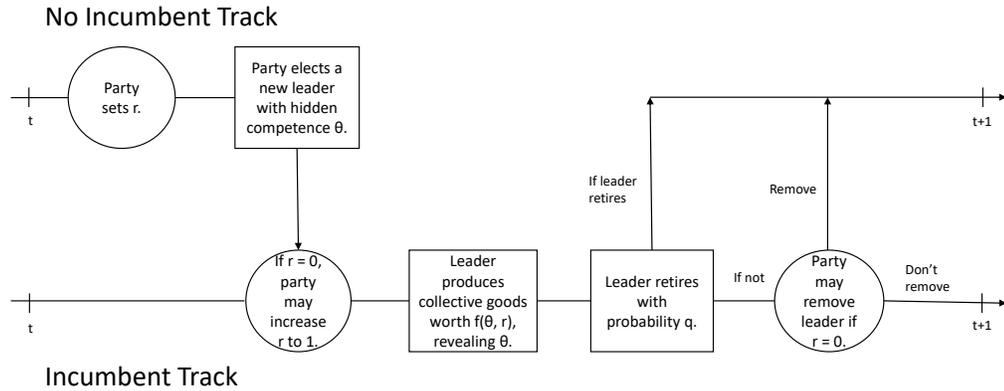
leaders can build up more goodwill with individual party members. The leader can draw on this goodwill to secure the passage of the party program and increase the probability that the party will win the majority of seats in the next election. On the other hand, some leaders are less efficient at transforming resources into collective goods than others. The more resources a leader controls, the more goodwill he can build up with party members, and the more difficult it becomes to remove the leader, even if he is inefficient at transforming resources into collective goods.

4 Model

This tension underscores the need for a model of how parties allocate procedural rights and control over resources to their leaders. During each period of the model, members of a congressional party must decide whether they want to give the leader control of many or few resources. The more resources a leader controls, the more public goods he produces and the more difficult he is to remove from office. The appendix considers extensions to the baseline model below in which a strategic leader must allocate goodwill between securing reelection to the leadership office and producing collective goods (Appendix B), the party consists of heterogeneous actors who make decisions collectively (Appendix C), and attempts to depose the leader succeed probabilistically as a function of the resources a leader controls (Appendix D). These extensions yield the same substantive conclusions as the simpler model below, where the party is a unitary actor, the activities of the leader are treated in reduced form, and it is impossible to remove leaders who control many resources. This facilitates the exposition by reducing the model to an infinitely-repeated decision problem, which is easy to solve and easy to analyze.

Variation in the quality of leaders and the difficulty of removing resource-rich leaders from office are embedded in the model as assumptions rather than derived as results: leaders vary in their effectiveness at providing collective goods and leaders

Figure 1: Sequence of the Model



r is a binary decision variable, where $r = 0$ corresponds to the party allocating few resources to the leader and $r = 1$ corresponds to the party allocating many resources to the leader. Circles are nodes in the model where the party must make a decision. Rectangles correspond to nodes in the model where party does not need to make a decision.

are more difficult to remove when they control more resources. This is because the goal is not to explain where variation in leader’s quality comes from or how leaders translate favors into votes. Rather, the goal is to explain how these processes can explain how parties allocate rights and resources to their leaders.

4.1 Sequence

Figure 4.1 illustrates the sequence of this model for an arbitrary period. In each period, the sequence depends on whether the leader from the previous period is still in office or not. If the leader from the previous period is no longer in office, the party starts on the “No Incumbent Track.” The party first writes the rules, which determine the procedural rights available to the leader and hence the resources at his disposal. The party may write rules that give the leader control over substantial resources ($r = 1$) or few resources ($r = 0$).

Once the party has written the rules, it elects a leader. The leader has a hidden quality, $\theta \in \{0, 1\}$. When $\theta = 0$, the leader is inefficient at producing collective

goods; when $\theta = 1$, he is efficient. While the party does not know θ , it knows that the probability of electing a high-quality leader is p .⁶

After electing a leader, the party moves to the incumbent track and to the decision node that it would start if it had retained the leader from the last period. In this node, if the rules give the leader control over few resources ($r = 0$), the party can give de facto control of the resources to the leader ($r = 1$). However, the party cannot take resources away from the leader (it cannot reduce r from 1 to 0).⁷ Substantively, this corresponds to situations in which actors such as the Committee on Committees, the Rules Committee, lower level leaders, and committee chairmen defer to the wishes of the leader even though they are under no formal obligation to do so.⁸ If the party just elected a new leader, then this opportunity is not very useful. It just chose the level of resources to give to the party leader, and has not learned anything about the leader's quality since then. If, on the other hand, the party still has its leader from the last period, then this is potentially useful. The party may have learned that the leader is high-quality; if so, it knows that it will not want to remove the leader and will give him a generous allocation of resources if it has not done so already.

Then, the leader produces collective goods for the party equal to $f(\theta, r)$, which reveals θ to the party. Because Cox and McCubbins (2007) show how leaders can use resources to resolve collective action problems and thereby produce collective goods, f takes their result as given and treats collective goods provision in reduced form for simplicity. Appendix B shows that this reduced form produces the same

⁶The exogeneity of p precludes the possibility that competent leaders are more likely to run for office when $r = 1$. Relaxing this assumption would make the ex officio strategy described in this section more attractive, but would otherwise not change the logic of the solution.

⁷Whenever the party wants to reduce the resources controlled to a leader, it also wants to remove the leader from office. Leaders will not sit idly by as parties strip away their resources so that they can later remove them from office; they will use whatever resources they have to resist. Thus, taking resources away from the leader is no easier than removing the leader, and whenever the party wants to do the former, it also wants to do the latter.

⁸These actors are assumed to be unable to reverse their decision to grant de facto control over the resources to the leader because the leader's first priority will often be to deploy resources in a way that cultivates these stakeholder's goodwill. This was, for example, a key part of Sam Rayburn's strategy for securing his informal but impressive power (Frisch and Kelly, 2006, 194).

conclusions as a more complicated model wherein the leader strategically allocates resources and the goodwill that follows from their distribution between collective goods provision and securing reelection. Section 6 shows how treating f in reduced facilitates connecting the model to prior work and making novel predictions. For now, collective goods production is a simple function of the resources available to the leader and the leader's quality:

$$f(\theta = 0, r = 0) = 0$$

$$f(\theta = 0, r = 1) = \beta$$

$$f(\theta = 1, r = 0) = \alpha_0$$

$$f(\theta = 1, r = 1) = \alpha_1 + \beta$$

This parameterization makes the comparative statics easy to interpret. α_r captures the value of having a high-quality leader conditional on the resources he controls. When α_r is large, a high-quality leader who controls resources s produces far more collective goods than a low-quality leader who controls s . When $\alpha_1 < \alpha_0$, electing a high-quality leader is not as important if the leader will control many resources (quality and resources are substitutes). When $\alpha_1 > \alpha_0$, electing a high-quality leader is extra important if that leader will control many resources (quality and resources are complements). β captures the value of giving a leader control over resources. When β is large, resource-rich leaders can produce high levels of collective goods regardless of their quality. When β is small, a leader's quality is more important than his control over resources for collective goods provision.

To maintain consistency with the verbal exposition, assume collective goods provision is increasing in the leader's quality ($\alpha_1 > 0$ and $\alpha_0 > 0$) and that high-quality leaders produce more collective goods when they control more resources ($\alpha_1 + \beta > \alpha_0$). No assumption about the sign of β is necessary. As a result, the model accommodates situations where low-quality leaders produce collective bads,

either because they are utterly incompetent or deploy resources maliciously.

After producing collective goods for the period, the leader retires with some exogenous probability q .⁹ Retirement can be caused by voluntary resignation or death. If the leader retires, then the party moves to the next period on the no-incumbent track. If the leader does not retire, the party has the opportunity to depose the leader.

Because party members have internalized the norm of reciprocity, the party can depose the leader only if he does not control many resources ($r = 0$). If he controls sufficient resources ($r = 1$), then the leader is able to perform enough favors for members to remain in office, even if he is low quality ($\theta = 0$). If the party can depose the leader and chooses to do so, the party moves to the next period on the no-incumbent track. Otherwise, the party retains the current leader and moves to the next period on the incumbent track. Appendix B considers the case in which securing his position in office requires the leader to divert resources (or goodwill) away from collective goods provision, but that produces the same results as this simpler model.

The party's objective is to maximize the sum of discounted rewards, $\sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \delta^t f(\theta_t, r_t)$ where δ is the discount rate and θ_t and r_t give the values of the leader's quality and the level of resources he controls during the collective goods provision step of period t .

4.2 Solution

Depending on the values of the parameters, one of two strategies is optimal. The two strategies are graphically illustrated in Figure 4.2. In the first, the party can write the rules so that leaders control many resources ($r = 1$) in the decision node

⁹The exogeneity of r precludes the possibility that leaders are more likely to retire when they control few resources. Under the optimal strategies, competent leaders without control over substantial resources know they will get de facto control in the next period by the time they decide whether to retire, so this assumption is not restrictive.

before it elects a leader. The leader can then produce $f(\theta, 1)$ for each period he is in office; high quality leaders produce $\alpha_1 + \beta$, the highest level of collective goods possible, while low quality leaders produce β . However, the party cannot remove incompetent leaders. This can be usefully called the “ex-officio strategy” because the party writes rules that give the leader control over resources as a right of office.

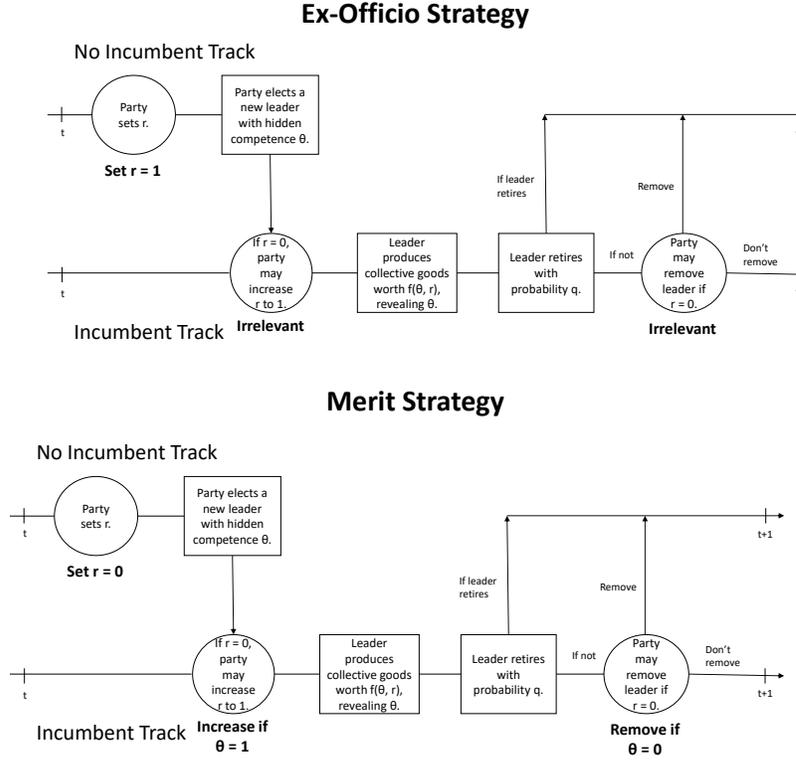
The second candidate strategy is for the party to withhold resources until it can learn the leader’s quality by writing rules that deprive the leader of resources ($r = 0$) in the node before it elects a leader. In the first period of a leader’s tenure, the leader produces $f(\theta, 0)$. If the party discovers that the leader is low quality, it deposes the leader and elects a new one at the beginning of the next period. If the party discovers that the leader is high quality, it retains the leader and grants him de facto control over more resources (sets $r = 1$ in the first node of the incumbent track) so he can produce more collective goods. Once the competent leader retires from office, the party elects a new leader and withholds resources from that leader until he too proves his merit. This strategy can be described as the “merit strategy” because the party awards control over resources only to leaders who have already demonstrated their competence.

The optimal strategy can be determined by comparing the expected payoff of following each strategy starting from a period with no incumbent leader. Appendix A provides the details of the solution summarized in the following proposition:¹⁰

Proposition 1. *Let Δ be the difference in expected payoff from playing the ex officio strategy versus playing the merit strategy, $\Delta = \frac{p\alpha_1 + \beta}{1 - \delta} - \frac{\delta p(1 - q)(\alpha_1 + \beta - \alpha_0) + p\alpha_0}{(1 - \delta)[1 - \delta(1 - p)(1 - q)]}$. If $\Delta > 0$, then the ex-officio strategy is the optimal strategy. If $\Delta < 0$, then the merit strategy is the optimal strategy.*

¹⁰The technical assumptions that $r \in \{0, 1\}$, $\theta \in \{0, 1\}$, and it is impossible (rather than simply more difficult) to remove a leader when $r = 1$ are all for convenience. The logic of the solution strategy from Appendix A extends naturally to cases where r and θ can take on many different values, although actually writing the solution down would be tedious. Likewise, the solution extends naturally to cases where attempts to depose a leader succeed probabilistically as a function of s , see Appendix D.

Figure 2: Ex-Officio and Merit Strategies



Δ can be interpreted as the party's preference for enshrining the leader's control over resources through procedural rights in the rules versus through requiring the leader to first win the confidence of power brokers within the party. Taking Δ 's partial derivatives yields comparative statics. If $\frac{d\Delta}{dx} > 0$ (where x is any parameter of the model, such as r or β), then as x increases the ex-officio strategy becomes more attractive. If $\frac{d\Delta}{dx} < 0$, then as x increases the merit strategy becomes more attractive. Appendix A derives comparative statics, and Table 1 summarizes the results.

The comparative statics show that the merit strategy is more attractive when electing a high-quality leader is more important: when α_1 and α_0 are large (because then high-quality leaders substantially increase collective goods provision)¹¹, when β

¹¹The scope condition on α_1 simply notes that if the party is very impatient, the fact that the merit strategy enables it to give resources to a high-quality leader does them little good. If r is too high, the party will seldom have the opportunity to give resources to a high-quality leader because good leaders will retire too quickly. Except for the 18th and early 19th century (when leaders often

Table 1: Comparative Statics of the Model

x	Interpretation	$\frac{d\Delta}{dx}$	Scope Condition
β	Marginal return of giving a leader control over substantial resources	> 0	
α_0	Marginal return of high-quality leader given control over meager resources	< 0	
α_1	Marginal return of high-quality leader given control over substantial resources	< 0 ≥ 0	if $\frac{\delta(1-q)}{1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)} > 1$ otherwise
q	Leader retirement rate	> 0	

Δ is the expected value of following the ex-officio strategy minus the expected value of following the merit strategy. When $\Delta > 0$, the party prefers to give all leaders control over substantial resources as an unconditional perquisite of holding the office. When $\Delta < 0$, the party prefers to allocate resources to particular leaders after they have proven their competence.

is small (because then collective goods provision does not depend much on resources), and when r is small (because then good leaders can be retained for many periods after they are discovered). This result is straightforward, but, as Section 6 shows, it admits of a rich and non-obvious set of implications.

Variation in the quality of leaders and the difficulty of removing resource-rich leaders are both essential for obtaining this result. Prior work focuses on the special case in which the leader's quality does not affect collective goods provision ($\alpha_1 = \alpha_0 = 0$ and $\beta > 0$). The model predicts that parties use the ex-officio strategy in this case, because there is never a need to remove a leader. On the other hand, if resource-rich leaders are as easy to remove as resource poor leaders, then there is no reason to pursue the merit strategy except under the controversial assumption that β is large and negative.

retired after one term and when members tended to leave office quickly and therefore have high discount rates), δ has probably been large enough and r has probably been small enough for most of American history to satisfy the scope condition. Incumbent legislators are reelected at a very high rate and leaders tend to serve for many terms before retiring.

5 Consistency with the Historical Record

The model clarifies that parties allocate resources to leaders according to one of two strategies: the ex-officio strategy or the merit strategy. These two strategies are identifiable from data. Under the ex-officio strategy, the party writes party and (if the majority) chamber rules that grant the leader procedural rights that cement control over important resources as soon as the leader takes office and that guarantee control over the same resources to his or her successor. Under the merit strategy, these procedural rights are only written into the rules after the party has had time to take the leader's measure and are designed to give one leader but not his or her successors control over resources - if they are written into the rules at all. Often under the merit strategy, the leader's control over resources is de facto rather than de jure - acknowledged by congressmen and outside observers but not formally written into the rules. Admittedly, parties have always granted some formal procedural rights to their leaders under the rules, and have relied on informal delegation of authority to supplement the resources of the most effective leaders. The practical choice parties make is not whether to fully institute the ex-officio strategy or fully implement the merit strategy, but instead where on a continuum between ex-officio and merit the rules should lie. Nevertheless, it is possible to characterize whether the party's behavior is closer to one pole or the other.

While the party's choice of strategy is in principle discernable from the rules, unfortunately, no comprehensive data set of chamber or party rules over the span of congressional history exists. The current Rules of the House of Representatives include annotations that document the timing of many (but not all) previous rule changes, but these annotations only sporadically detail the nature of the changes. By supplementing the current chamber rules with previous rules from 1859, 1885, 1893, 1915, 1925, 1947, 1961, 1973, 1983, and 2001, it is possible to construct a reasonably comprehensive history of House rules. Republican Conference Rules and Democratic

Caucus Rules from the 100th, 105th, 110th, and 115th Congresses (1987, 1997, 2007, and 2017) were obtained from the Office of the House Parliamentarian through the assistance of Richard Stern of Tom McClintock’s Office, and Democratic Caucus Rules from 1995, 1999, 2001, and 2003 were supplied by the Democratic Caucus by way of Chad Powell of Anna Eshoo’s office. Democratic Caucus Rules from 1975 were obtained from the Gerald Ford Presidential Library, and Republican Caucus Rules from 1991 and 1993 were obtained from the Newt Gingrich Archives. These rules were supplemented with details from research in history and political science, such as Shepsle (1978), Frisch and Kelly (2006), and Rohde (2010).

Hundreds of relevant rule changes can be drawn from these data sources. The full set of rule changes is available as an online appendix.¹² Because these rule changes vary substantially in their importance and because it is difficult to precisely define the universe of relevant changes and their directions (for example, changes that weaken committee chairs would expand the Speaker’s pool of resources in the 1970s, but would contract it in the 1890s), qualitative assessment presents a more promising mode of analysis than statistical inference. Both the data itself and the surrounding secondary literature agree that parties tune the resources available to their leader primarily through modifying control over committee assignments, access to the agenda, and appointment to lower leadership offices. Focusing on these three key resources allows for a sensible and concise division of the history of the post-Civil War House of Representatives into periods where parties were acting more consistently with the ex-officio strategy and periods where parties were acting more consistently with the merit strategy.

The division of history into ex-officio and merit periods is summarized in Figure 3. Beginning in 1789 and continuing until 1911, the Speaker of the House had the right to make committee assignments. Through his control over the Rules Committee (cemented both through their right to appoint all committees and, beginning in

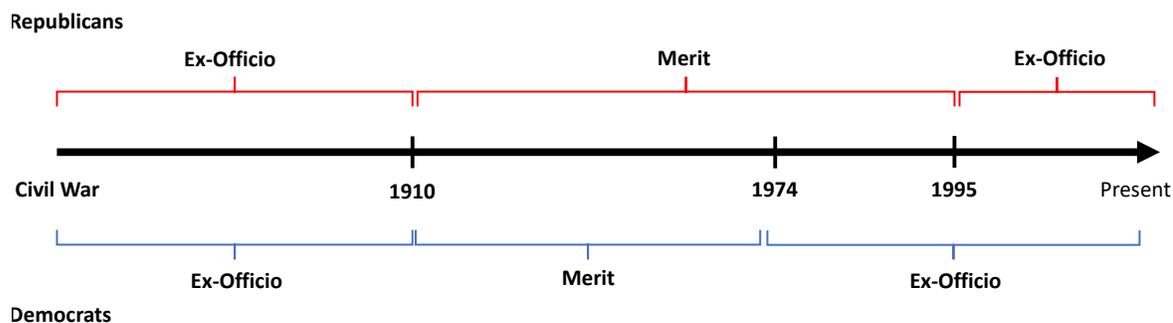
¹²See <https://cjfong.people.stanford.edu/research>.

1858, their chairing of that committee), the Speaker also controlled access to the agenda. Speakers also appointed committee chairmen, which implicitly included the right to appoint the floor leader (who was synonymous with the chair of the Ways and Means Committee in the post-bellum era). Thus, from at least the Civil War until about 1910, both parties structured the rules in a manner consistent with the ex-officio strategy. Starting in 1909 and then rapidly accelerating in 1910, both parties began to strip the Speaker of his procedural rights. The introduction of the consent calendar, Calendar Wednesday, and the discharge petition undermined the Speaker's control over access to the agenda. In 1911, Democrats deprived their leader of the right to make committee assignments, and the Republicans followed suit in 1919. These changes inaugurated a period in which both parties followed the merit strategy. Some leaders during this period, such as Nicholas Longworth (Bacon, 1998) and Sam Rayburn (Hardeman and Bacon, 1987), were able to win the confidence of their parties' power brokers and establish de facto control over party resources. Others, such as Champ Clark (Fleming, 1998), Frederick Gillett (Bacon, 1998, p. 128-131), and Henry Rainey (Waller, 1977), did not. In the early 1970s, Democrats enacted a series of reforms that restored the Speaker's control over committee assignments and access to the agenda, inaugurating a new ex-officio period for Democrats. Republicans followed suit when they recaptured the majority in 1995. During this latter ex-officio period, both parties added new procedural rights to the Speaker's arsenal, such as control over official travel and the right to delay floor votes.

5.1 Removal

The model predicts that more leaders will be removed from office under the merit strategy, and that leaders will be better able to resist removal under the ex-officio strategy. Four party leaders have been removed from office in competitive leadership elections since 1861: Samuel J. Randall (1876-1881), James Mann (1911-1919),

Figure 3: Choice of Strategy in the House of Representatives



Joseph Martin (1939-1959), and Charles Halleck (1959-1965). Additionally, two leaders were sidelined by their nominally subordinate floor leaders: Champ Clark (1911-1919) and Frederick Gillett (1919-1925) (Fleming, 1998; Bacon, 1998).¹³ Five of these six served during a merit period. Five leaders have successfully resisted serious attempts to remove them from office: Joseph Cannon (1903-1911), John McCormack (1962-1971), Newt Gingrich (1995-1999), John Boehner (2007-2015), and Nancy Pelosi (2003-Present). Four of these five served during the ex-officio period, and the fifth, McCormack, owed his success in significant part to favors he had performed for Southern Democrats while he was floor leader by interceding with the powerful Speaker Sam Rayburn (Champagne *et al.*, 2009). McCormack was pressured into retirement not long after. As predicted by the model, successful removal is more common during the merit period and successful resistance to removal is more

¹³The model predicts that untalented leaders are quickly removed from office under the merit strategy, while in practice they are retained for some time. There are two extensions to the model that would give rise to this behavior (without disrupting its core conclusion that the choice of strategy is determined by the relative return of talent versus resources). First, if the leader's quality has some probability of decaying from 1 to 0 each period, then there will exist a potentially optimal strategy in which the party never gives the leader control over resources, so that it can ensure that it is never stuck with an untalented leader. This extension is consistent with the experience of Joseph Martin, who was ejected from office because many in his party felt that he had grown too old and senile to effectively challenge the Democrats. Alternatively, if the leader's talent is only revealed gradually, then there may be an optimal strategy in which the party takes several sessions to decide whether to empower or remove the leader. This extension is more consistent with the experience of James Mann and Charles Halleck, both of whom displayed some promising qualities at first but ultimately proved unsuitable.

common during the ex-officio periods.

5.2 Transitions

As predicted by the model, parties transitioned between the ex-officio and merit strategies in response to changing perceptions about the relative importance of talent versus resources. The movement from the ex-officio strategy to the merit strategy in both parties around 1910 was motivated by the speakership of Joseph Cannon. Cannon inherited a set of rules that had been in place for decades, but he put the resources at his disposal to unprecedented use. He made no pretense of fairness when distributing his party's committee assignments, stripping dissidents of their seniority or removing them from committees altogether. Cannon notoriously refrained from making committee assignments at the beginning of the session until legislators voted on certain key bills - an unsubtle threat to punish those who voted the wrong way (Shepsle, 1978). Although Cannon compromised with Theodore Roosevelt's administration in passing progressive legislation, once William Howard Taft became president, Cannon used his dominance over access to the agenda to strangle progressive legislation. This bold exercise of his procedural rights sparked a backlash in the mass electorate and alienated the growing progressive insurgency within the Republican party. In spite of the mounting discontent with Cannon within the chamber, he was personally charming and always more popular within the chamber than he was with journalists and the mass public (Peters, 1997). The favor he was able to cultivate with the bulk of his party made him difficult to remove; when he sensed danger in 1908, he dispatched his lieutenants to secure enough commitments to guarantee his reelection as Speaker (Chiu, 1928). This inability to remove Cannon from office proved costly for the Republicans. Cannon's passage of the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill in 1909 coupled with his continued antagonization of both progressives inside the House and of significant segments of the electorate led to a disastrous performance for the Republican party in 1910 (Brown, 1922). While the rule changes

that stripped the Speaker of the House of much of his control over resources were passed by a coalition of insurgent Republicans and Democrats, over the next 10 years, a consensus emerged across the majority of the Republican party that the way in which Cannon had used the resources at his disposal had done grievous harm to the Republican party. While the reformers themselves had insisted their motives were institutional rather than personal, Cannon, in a floor speech shortly after the passage of the most significant reforms, correctly observed that the procedural prerogatives that he had enjoyed were exercised by his predecessors, Thomas Reed and David Henderson, without such incident. The issue was not the rules themselves, but the possibility that a leader like Cannon could (from the insurgents' perspective) deploy the generous endowment of resources in a way that would damage the party. In the terms of the model, the reformers agreed that β was large and negative - having a resource-rich leader with insufficient understanding of the cleavages within his coalition could spell disaster, hence talent was more important for collective goods provision than resources.

By the late 1960's, the Democrats' priorities had changed. The growing liberal majority within the party was increasingly disgruntled with how conservative Southern committee chairmen exercised their procedural rights. A number of reformers within the party began to feel that a resource-rich Speaker would serve as a useful counterweight to the dominance of committee chairmen, and would improve the prospects of realizing important liberal policy goals (Rohde, 2010). In a letter to his constituents, one of the leading reformers, Morris Udall, wrote, "It is true that under such exceptionally strong and skilled men as Sam Rayburn and Lyndon B. Johnson Congress could produce enough legislation to mask for a time its broken machinery. But Speaker McCormack and Senate Majority Leader Mansfield are able men trying against overwhelming odds to operate a ship which is all anchor and no sail." In the terms of the model, Udall recognized that even a low θ leader could provide substantial collective goods given enough resources. In other words,

β was large, and so resources were more important than talent for collective goods provision. These pressures culminated in the procedural reforms of the early 1970s that gave the Democratic Speaker consequential new procedural rights.

The Republican transition to the ex-officio strategy in 1995 was motivated by different concerns. The election of 1994 heralded the first Republican majority in over thirty years. This new majority ran on an ambitious policy program that they called the Contract with America. The Contract with America sought to transform American government and political culture, but Republicans recognized that they had precious little governing experience to match their political goals (Gingrich, 1998). The Republican minority leader had acquired a couple new procedural rights in the 1980's, most notably the right to appoint members of the Rules Committee (not terribly useful while in the minority) to allow the party to more effectively compete with the Democrats. Come 1995, Republicans lavished new procedural rights on Newt Gingrich to ensure that he would be able to enforce party discipline in fulfilling the Contract (Strahan, 2007).

6 Other Implications

While the model predicts that a party plays the ex-officio strategy when resources are more important than talent for collective goods provision, it can also be used to generate predictions about how more readily observable features of the political context, such as the ideological composition of the majority party, affect the party's choice of strategy. On an intuitive level, this kind of analysis proceeds by asking three questions. First, what tasks do leaders need to perform to provide collective goods for the party? Second, which is more useful for completing each task: the resources the leader controls or the innate quality of the leader? Finally, what variables make each task more or less important to the party? Variables that make resource-intensive tasks more important make the ex-officio strategy more attractive, while

variables that make skill-intensive tasks more important make the merit strategy more attractive. Formally, this analysis proceeds by replacing the reduced form collective goods provision function, f , with a collective goods provision game. As stated in Section 4, the expression $\Delta = \frac{p\alpha_1 + \beta}{1-\delta} + \frac{\delta p(1-q)(\alpha_1 + \beta) + [1-\delta(1-q)]p\alpha_0}{(1-\delta)[1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)]}$ measures the party's preference for the ex-officio over the merit strategy. α_1 , α_0 , and β are parameters derived from $f(\theta, r)$, a function that captures the relationship between the leader's quality, the leader's resources, and collective goods provision. In the model, f was simply a function, but it is both possible and useful to make f the outcome of a collective goods provision game played between a leader and rank-and-file legislators.¹⁴ In fact, specifying the game that produces f allows for the derivation of more concrete and hence more useful comparative statics than was possible in the baseline model. The parameters α_r and β can be obtained by solving for the equilibrium of the game, and applying the chain rule gives comparative statics for any given variable. After providing a concrete example, I will show that this framework can be used to integrate many ostensibly competing ideas from the literature as implications of one common theory.

6.1 The Effect of a Dissident Faction

To provide a concrete example, consider the effect of a large dissident faction within the majority party whose cooperation is needed to pass legislation. On an intuitive level, the leader needs to pass legislation to provide the party with a strong reputation on which it can run in the next election, but passing legislation requires the leader to secure the votes of legislators who incur a private cost if they vote for the bill. The leader can pass the bill by using resources they control to buy votes (a resource intensive task) and adding valence to the bill - writing it in a way that it yields a larger collective good if passed (a talent-intensive task). When the leader

¹⁴This assumes that the collective goods provision subgame gives the leader no strategic leverage in the resource allocation game, and vice versa.

must secure the cooperation of a large dissident faction within the party, adding valence is more important, because it reduces the cost of buying every vote in the dissident coalition. Thus, when the leader must secure the cooperation of a large dissident faction within the party, talent is more important and the merit strategy is more attractive.

To derive the result formally, consider a majority party leader who wishes to pass a bill in order to enhance the party's legislative reputation and thereby improve the party's prospects in the next election.¹⁵ The bill passes if at least m of the n legislators in the chamber vote in favor of the bill. All party members accrue a collective benefit of 1 if the bill passes. However, in order to vote for the bill, each legislator i must incur a private cost, c_i , if the bill departs from their ideological preferences or is unpopular with some of their constituents.

Without loss of generality, assume legislators are ordered by their private costs such that $c_i \leq c_{i+1}$. Let there be $n_{\text{main}} < m$ mainstream members of the party who incur no private cost for voting for the bill, and thus vote for it in equilibrium without any further inducements. For the next legislators $i \in \{n_{\text{main}} + 1, \dots, m\}$, let $c_i = 1 + \gamma c \frac{\exp(\eta i)}{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}+1}^m \exp(\eta i')}$ for $i = 1, \dots, m$, where $\gamma \sim \text{Uniform}(0, 1)$ is a random variable and $\eta > 0$ is a parameter that characterizes the distribution of costs among these legislators.¹⁶ As η shrinks towards 0, the aggregate cost incurred by these legislators remains constant, but it becomes more evenly spread across them. Conversely, in the extreme case in which $\eta \rightarrow \infty$, only the m th legislator incurs any cost in voting for the bill. The goal is to decipher how the party's preference for the ex-officio strategy changes as a function of η .

The leader can defray costs in one of two ways. First, he can offer resources at his disposal as transfers to legislators in exchange for voting for the bill, where $t_i \geq 0$

¹⁵Conventionally, CPG focuses its analysis on the majority party. Since the majority party controls the agenda (Cox and McCubbins, 2005), I follow this convention and focus on majority party leadership as well.

¹⁶The costs incurred by the remaining $n - m$ legislators are irrelevant because they are never incurred in equilibrium, so it is not necessary to specify them.

is the transfer offered to i . These transfers are subject to the budget constraint $\sum_{i=1}^n t_i \leq B_0 + (B_1 - B_0)r$. Alternatively, if he is high quality ($\theta = 1$), the leader can add valence to the bill.¹⁷ Adding valence to the bill increases the value of the collective good by v . Assume $B \leq \sum_{i=1}^m \max(c_i - v, 0)$, so that there is always a chance that the bill fails even if the leader is talented. For the purposes of this collective goods production subgame, θ and s are both exogenously given. Thus, the collective goods production game proceeds as follows:

1. Nature draws and reveals the salience factor $\gamma \in \text{Unif}(0, 1)$.
2. The leader offers transfers t_i for $i \in 1, \dots, n$ subject to the budget constraint $\sum_{i=1}^n t_i \leq B_0 + (B_1 - B_0)r$.
3. Each legislator i independently and simultaneously votes for the bill by choosing $x_i \in \{0, 1\}$. $x_i = 0$ is a vote against the bill. $x_i = 1$ is a vote in favor of the bill.

The utility accrued by the leader is $u_\ell(x, t) = \mathbf{1}\{\sum_{i=1}^n x_i \geq m\} - \epsilon \sum_{i=1}^n t_i$ for $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ (the second term is merely a computational convenience to ensure uniqueness).

The utility for a rank-and-file member is

$$u_i(x, t_i) = (1 + v\theta)\mathbf{1}\{\sum_{i=1}^n x_i \geq m\} - x_i(\gamma c_i - t_i)$$

In equilibrium, party members vote for the bill if (1) they are pivotal and (2) $t_i + 1 + v\theta \geq \gamma c_i$. Accordingly, the party leader offers a transfer of $\max(\gamma c_i - v\theta, 0)$ to $i = 1, \dots, m$ if building a winning coalition is feasible (if $\sum_{i=1}^n \max(\gamma c_i - v, 0) \leq B_0 + (B_1 - B_0)r$) and offers no transfers if it is infeasible to build a winning coalition.

$f(\theta, r)$ can be calculated from the probability that the party accrues the collective good times the value of the collective good (1 if no valence is added, $1 + v$ if valence

¹⁷Permitting the valence to also influence the value of the collective good would not alter the results.

is added). This is the expected utility accrued by a member for whom $c_i = 0$ (presumably the majority of the party, for it would be unusual for a bill to be distasteful to the majority of the party and yet still provide a collective good if passed).¹⁸ Members $n_{\text{main}} + 1$ through m get a payoff of 0 whether the bill passes or not and are therefore indifferent about the strategy pursued, so it makes sense to treat the preferences of the mainstream members of the party as decisive. Appendix E formally derives $f(\theta, r)$, uses it to derive α_1 , α_0 , and β as functions of η , and then computes their partial derivatives. It shows that $\frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_0} < 0$, $\frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_1} < 0$, and $\frac{d\Delta}{d\beta} = 0$, and thus, combining with the results from Table 1,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d\Delta}{d\eta} &= \frac{d\Delta}{d\beta} \frac{d\beta}{d\eta} + \frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_0} \frac{d\alpha_0}{d\eta} + \frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_1} \frac{d\alpha_1}{d\eta} + \frac{d\Delta}{dr} \frac{dr}{d\eta} + \frac{d\Delta}{dp} \frac{dp}{d\eta} + \frac{d\Delta}{d\delta} \frac{d\delta}{d\eta} \\ &= \frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_0} \frac{d\alpha_0}{d\eta} + \frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_1} \frac{d\alpha_1}{d\eta} > 0 \end{aligned}$$

Hence, when dissatisfaction is concentrated in a few intense hold-outs rather than a broad coalition (when η is large), the ex-officio strategy is more attractive. Otherwise, the merit strategy is more attractive. This result parallels Cooper and Brady (1981) as well as the first half of conditional party government (CPG) due to Aldrich and Rohde (1998), which states that more heterogeneous parties give their leaders control over fewer resources. It is not precisely the same, because the empirical work on this subject often quantifies “heterogeneity” as the standard deviation of the ideal points as party members. This is conceptually distinct from η , in part because simply adding more extreme members to the party in excess of those needed for a winning coalition increases the former but not the latter, and because the standard deviation can be quite large even when η is low.¹⁹ However, the re-

¹⁸Incidentally, it is also the utility accrued by members $n > m$, because they enjoy the collective good but never actually vote for the bill in equilibrium.

¹⁹For the same reason, this analysis does not yield equilibrium party government (Patty, 2008) as an implication of the model. Equilibrium party government predicts that as the size of the party increases, the resources under its leader decrease. But here, adding or subtracting members with $i > m$ has no effect on which strategy the party prefers. The effect of adding or subtracting members between 1 and m could go in either direction, depending on how it affects the skew of the distribution of private costs.

sult derived here aligns with conditional party government's empirical justification, which emphasizes the importance of the sizeable faction of conservative Southern Democrats in explaining the meager procedural rights of mid-20th century Democratic Speakers. Before the 1960s, Democrats relied on the cooperation of a large, conservative Southern contingent to pass legislation. In the language of the model, they were a low η party. From the 1960s onwards, the party enjoyed a larger liberal contingent and needed the cooperation of only a few conservatives and moderates in order to pass legislation; in other words, the Democrats became a high η party. This increase in η made the ex-officio strategy more attractive, because the ability to add valence was relatively less valuable and the resources to buy votes were relatively more valuable.

6.2 Applying the Framework to Other Variables

This same kind of analysis can be applied to many variables emphasized in the existing literature on parties and leaders, showing that they can all be understood as affecting the party's choice of strategy through their effect on the relative returns of resources versus talent. Space constraints forbid treating all of these in the same detail as the preceding example, reiterated in the first row of Table 2. Nevertheless, brief sketches of arguments suggest that many of the most interesting (and ostensibly competing) ideas from this literature can be derived as implications of the result that parties play the ex-officio strategy when the leader's resources are more important for collective goods provision and the merit strategy when talent is more important. While none of these derivations captures all of the nuance of the original articulations of these arguments, they produce many of the same observable implications and thus together provide a rich account of how the strategic environment in which parties decide how to allocate resources to their leaders has changed over time.

First, when partisan polarization is low, skilled leaders have a comparative advantage over resource-rich leaders, because compromises and valence improvements

Table 2: Implications of Theory and Connections to Existing Literature

Variable	Tasks	Preference for Ex-Officio	Previous Literature
Necessity of Dissident Faction	Vote-Buying ↓ Valence-Building ↑	↓	Cooper and Brady (1981), Aldrich and Rohde (1998) Schickler (2000)
Partisan Polarization	Valence-Building ↓	↑	Aldrich and Rohde (1998) Diermeier and Vlaicu (2011)
Other Party's Discipline	Vote-Buying ↑	↑	Koger and Lebo (2017)
Presidential Agenda-Setting	Agenda-Designing ↓ Valence-Building ↓ Vote-Buying ↑	↑	Dodd (1977), Sundquist (1981) Green (2007)
Competitiveness of Majority Status	Vote-Buying ↑	↑	Lee (2016)
Public Speakership	Media Relations ↑	↓	Harris (1998)
Leadership PACs	Subtle	↑	Powell (2018)

can be used to construct a bipartisan coalition while many resources (such as committee assignments and campaign funds) are not transferrable across parties. Thus, increasing partisan polarization makes the ex-officio strategy more attractive. This prediction parallels both CPG (Aldrich and Rohde, 1998) and Diermeier and Vlaicu (2011).

Koger and Lebo (2017) argue that party discipline plays an important role in the allocation of rights and resources to party leaders. A more disciplined majority party has a better chance of passing legislation that will improve the party brand, and a more disciplined minority forces the majority to whip more vulnerable majority party members against their individual electoral interests. Accordingly, they characterize competition between parties as an arms race, in which even a small advantage in party discipline can lead to a substantial increase in the likelihood of winning partisan clashes. The more highly disciplined the opposite party is, the more inclined a party is to grant its leader valuable rights and resources (Koger and Lebo, 2017, p. 39). This, too, can be cast as an implication of the model. When one

party's leader controls lots of resources, he can buy the votes of his party members. This makes it more difficult for high-quality leaders in the other party to attract bipartisan support through compromise and valence improvements, and hence makes the ex-officio strategy more attractive.

Dodd (1977) and Sundquist (1981) contend that parties grant control over resources to their leaders in order to compete with the presidency for supremacy in the federal government, and this too is an implication of the model. Presidents have invested in developing their own legislative program to present to Congress. One reaction to this development, and one that has dominated since the late 20th century, is for leaders of the president's party to act as lieutenants responsible for the passage of the president's program and for leaders of the opposite party to try to frustrate the president's legislative goals (Green, 2007). The growing legislative influence of presidents diminishes the importance of the leaders designing the party program and identifying compromises (as the executive can perform both of these functions) and increases the importance of buying votes, because many of the most valuable resources are not controlled by the executive. All three of these make the ex-officio strategy more attractive as presidents assume a larger role in the legislative process.²⁰

The model's implications are not limited to prior arguments. It also yields predictions about variables that political scientists have not yet explicitly connected to how parties allocate resources to their leaders. Lee (2016) argues that when elections are highly competitive and both parties have a reasonable chance of winning the majority, party discipline becomes more important for the minority party. The minority party withholds its votes so that the majority party must whip its most vulnerable members into voting for the party program, which makes resources more

²⁰If, on the other hand, leaders attempt to compete with copartisan presidents in setting the agenda, as Joseph Cannon did with Theodore Roosevelt (Remini, 2006, p. 270) and try to work cooperatively with opposite party presidents to get the best deal that they can, as Sam Rayburn did with Dwight Eisenhower (Hardeman and Bacon, 1987, p. 372-374), then the program-creation task becomes more important, and the merit strategy becomes more attractive. Why parties might take one orientation or the other is a question for future research.

important and hence the ex-officio strategy more attractive. By Koger and Lebo (2017)'s argument about competition between parties, this ought to also make the ex-officio strategy more attractive to the majority party. Harris (1998) argues that since the tenure of Tip O'Neill, the Speaker of the House has been the public face of their party whenever their party does not control the White House. Making a favorable media impression is a skill-intensive task, and so the rise of the public speakership makes the merit strategy more attractive.

Powell (2018) documents the rise of legislators "buying influence" by raising funds for their peers. She shows that this practice influences which legislators are elected as leaders, but a natural question that follows is how this practice affects the proclivity of parties to grant their leaders procedural rights. Powell's analysis can be interpreted as the emergence of a new task for leaders: raising funds for party members. However, this new task is more complicated and interesting to analyze than the previous tasks, because the goodwill built by the dispersion of these campaign funds fortifies the leader's position in office but parties cannot practicably prevent the leader from raising these funds. How does the injection of resources outside of the party's control influence how the party disposes of the resources it does control?

If the party wishes to follow the merit strategy, it must withhold even more resources than it would in the absence of leadership fundraising to ensure its ability to remove party leaders. On the other hand, the goodwill built by raising campaign funds may be so great that it is effectively impossible to implement the merit strategy; even if the leader were stripped of all of his procedural rights, he would still be impossible to remove. Even in the less extreme case where the leader is merely difficult to remove even if he controls no other resources, the party has less to lose by granting him control over more resources under the plausible assumption that the relationship between controlled resources and difficulty of removal is concave. Thus, the rise of leadership PACs makes the ex-officio strategy more attractive, but

gives the leader even fewer procedural rights under the merit strategy when it is employed in spite of the enhanced attractiveness of the ex-officio strategy.²¹

7 Conclusion

Prior work starts from the supposition that parties in Congress grant control over important resources to their leaders so that those leaders can produce collective goods for the party. This useful starting point omits two important ideas: leaders vary in their efficiency at converting resources into collective goods and leaders with more resources are more difficult to remove. Incorporating these two ideas allows for a model that provides an intuitive framework for predicting how a wide class of variables affects how parties allocate rights and resources to their leaders. The model integrates many of the predictions from previous work as implications of the theory - predictions concerning the ideological composition of the party, partisan polarization, cooperation and competition with the presidency, and competition with the other party. It also generates predictions for variables that have been raised by other studies but not explicitly connected to the rights and resources available to party leaders: volatility of majority status, media attention to Speakers of the House when the opposite party controls the presidency, and the rise of leadership political action committees that raise funds for rank-and-file party members. All can be understood as affecting the party's choice of strategy through their influence on the relative returns of talent versus resources. While a detailed analysis of the history of Congress and the success of these variables in explaining institutional change must be left for future work, just the four variables already identified by the literature collectively have a good track record of explaining changes in the procedural rights

²¹One might object that raising funds is a skill-intensive task, and so its emergence ought to make the merit strategy more attractive. But Powell (2018) contends that party members can discern the fundraising capabilities before they elect the leader. This stands in contrast with more subtle skills that find full expression only when a legislator actually becomes leader, like their strategic vision in designing a party program or how their image will hold up under constant media scrutiny.

of party leaders (Schickler, 2001).

Because there are so many variables that affect the relative importance of talent versus resources, it can be challenging to predict from the political context alone whether each party prefers the ex-officio or the merit strategy. Given Schickler (2001)'s historical analysis, which emphasizes that conflicts over leadership change are in practice battle royales of multiple potentially reinforcing and potentially competing interests, this difficulty is probably unavoidable. Still, the model provides a clear, unique prediction: when a party believes that the returns to talent are increasing relative to the returns of resources, the merit strategy becomes more attractive. These perceptions are in principle measurable. Additionally, the theory usefully highlights the sources of stability for a given leader-rights regime and the impetuses for change. Presently, both the Republicans and Democrats are following the ex-officio strategy. These strategic decisions are held in place by the ideological homogeneity of each party, partisan polarization between the two parties, the desire to cooperate with same-party presidents and resist the proposals of opposite-party presidents, intense competition between the two parties for majority status, and extensive fundraising by party leaders. However, emerging forces push in the direction of the merit strategy. House Republicans count among their ranks a sizable faction that has proven difficult to control not just because of their conservatism but because of their attitudes about governance. Attempts to bribe and coerce this faction have met with failure, so evidently a skilled leader is needed to yoke them to the rest of the party. House Democrats have learned a painful lesson about the importance of their leader's image in the mass public for electoral success. While the balance of forces favors the continuation of the ex-officio strategy in the short term, the theory clarifies the pillars of support that would have to be knocked down in order to inaugurate a transition to the merit strategy.

Finally, the theory's implications extend beyond the literature on parties and leaders. Insofar as the theory provides a better understanding of the dynamics of how

parties allocate resources to their leaders, it also provides a basis for understanding the dynamics of phenomena that are themselves consequences of leadership activity: polarized voting, gridlock, congressional capacity, and the facilitation of electoral accountability through responsible party government. The relative returns of talent versus resources for collective goods provision is thus a potential confounder for empirical analyses of all of these phenomena. Future research should take care to address the possibility that changes are attributable to changes in the capacity of leaders, rather than changes in the preferences of legislators or the mass public. Additionally, the theory potentially has applications outside of Congress. The logic upon which it relies applies equally well to any self-governing institution that both elects its own leaders and makes its own rules. It may therefore provide useful insights for constitutional design in sovereign states, the organization of political parties in parliamentary systems, self-governing non-governmental organizations, and international organizations.

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A Solution to the Baseline Model

The model in Section 4 contains three decision nodes in each period:

- Should the party set $r = 0$ or $sr = 1$ before electing a new leader?
- If $r = 0$ and there is an incumbent leader, should the party increase r to 1?
- If $r = 0$, should the party depose the incumbent at the end of the period?

Consider the possible decisions in the first node. If the party sets $r = 1$ before electing its leader, the other two nodes are never reached and behavior in them is irrelevant. If the party sets $r = 0$ before electing its leader, then in the third node it should depose leaders for whom $\theta = 0$ and retain leaders for whom $\theta = 1$. As for the second node, the party should increase $r = 1$ whenever it has retained an incumbent from the last period, because only leaders with $\theta = 1$ are retained across periods. Since the model is decision-theoretic, it is neither necessary nor informative to specify actions in decision nodes that are not reached on the optimal path.

This defines two potentially optimal strategies. The former can be called the *ex-officio* strategy (because each leader gets $r = 1$ as a right of office) and the latter the *merit* strategy (because leaders get $r = 1$ only after proving that $\theta = 1$). Since the party has already made all of the relevant decisions about which strategy to pursue before it observes θ (and since there is neither temptation nor opportunity to deviate after making this first decision), the optimal strategy can be obtained by comparing the ex ante expected utility of following each strategy starting from a period with no incumbent.

The ex ante expected utility from following the *ex officio* strategy is v^e , which

solves the following system of equations:

$$v^e = p[\alpha_1 + \beta + \delta qv^e + \delta(1 - q)v_1^e] + (1 - p)[\beta + \delta qv^e + \delta(1 - q)v_0^e]$$

$$v_1^e = \alpha_1 + \beta + \delta qv^e + \delta(1 - q)v_1^e$$

$$v_0^e = \beta + \delta qv^e + \delta(1 - q)v_0^e$$

The solution is

$$v^e = \frac{p\alpha_1 + \beta}{1 - \delta}$$

The ex ante utility from following the merit system is v^m , which solves

$$v^m = p[\alpha_0 + \delta qv^m + \delta(1 - q)v_1^m] + (1 - p)\delta v^m$$

$$v_1^m = \alpha_1 + \beta + \delta qv^m + \delta(1 - q)v_1^m$$

The solution is

$$v^m = \frac{\delta p(1 - q(\alpha_1 + \beta)) + [1 - \delta(1 - q)]p\alpha_0}{(1 - \delta)[1 - \delta(1 - p)(1 - q)]}$$

The ex-officio strategy is optimal when $v^e \geq v^m$. The merit strategy is optimal when $v^e \leq v^m$.

Comparative statics can be obtained by taking partial derivatives of $\Delta = v^e - v^m$.

When $\frac{d\Delta}{dx} > 0$, the ex-officio strategy becomes more attractive as x grows larger.

When $\frac{d\Delta}{dx} < 0$, the merit strategy becomes more attractive as x grows larger. Using

the assumptions that $\alpha_1 + \beta > \alpha_0 > 0$ and $\alpha_1 > 0$,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_1} &= \frac{p}{1-\delta} \left(1 - \frac{\delta(1-q)}{1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)} \right) \\ \frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_0} &= -\frac{[1-\delta(1-q)]p}{(1-\delta)[1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)]} < 0 \\ \frac{d\Delta}{d\beta} &= \frac{1}{1-\delta} \left(\frac{1-\delta(1-q)}{1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)} \right) > 0 \\ \frac{d\Delta}{dq} &= \frac{\delta p(\alpha_1 + \beta - \alpha_0)}{(1-\delta)[1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)]} > 0 \\ \frac{d\Delta}{dp} &= \frac{\alpha_1}{1-\delta} - \frac{[1-\delta(1-q)]\{\delta(1-q)(\alpha_1 + \beta) + [1-\delta(1-q)]p\alpha_0\}}{(1-\delta)[1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)]^2} \\ \frac{d\Delta}{d\delta} &= \frac{\Delta}{1-\delta} - \frac{p(1-p)(1-q)\alpha_0}{(1-\delta)[1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)]} \end{aligned}$$

The sign of $\frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_1}$ depends on $\frac{\delta(1-q)}{1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)}$. When $\frac{\delta(1-q)}{1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)} > 1$, $\frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_1} < 0$. This is true when δ is sufficiently large and r is sufficiently small, both plausible criteria in light of the high reelection rate of incumbents and the tendency of leaders to serve many terms in office. When $\frac{\delta(1-q)}{1-\delta(1-p)(1-q)} < 1$, $\frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_1} > 0$. The sign of $\frac{d\Delta}{dp}$ is a convex quadratic function of p . This admits of many possible cases depending on the roots of the quadratic function. For $p \rightarrow 0$, the ex-officio strategy is optimal iff $\beta > 0$. For $p \rightarrow 1$, the ex-officio is also optimal. Thus, if the merit strategy is ever optimal, it is for intermediate values of p . The comparative static on δ shows that if there exists some δ such that the merit strategy is optimal, the merit strategy is also optimal for all larger δ , all else equal.

B The Decisions of Leaders: Collective Goods versus Security in Office

The baseline model casts leaders as mechanical actors who combine their innate abilities with resources to cultivate goodwill with the party, and then draw upon that goodwill to produce collective goods for the party and secure their positions in

office. What if strategic leaders have to choose between allocating goodwill towards collective goods production and reelection? The following analysis shows that this extension makes it somewhat more complicated to solve the model but does not disrupt its core conclusion.

In this extension, leaders can use their individual skill and the resources under their control to build up goodwill with party members. Let $g(\theta, r)$ be the goodwill generated by a leader with skill θ and resources r . Assume, consistent with the verbal theory, that $g(1, 1) > g(1, 0) > g(0, 0)$ and $g(0, 1) > g(0, 0) = 0$. Leaders can apply goodwill to one of two objectives: providing collective goods for the party (by, for example, cajoling recalcitrant legislators to support the party program) and securing their own reelection. Let y be the amount of goodwill applied toward collective goods production and z be the amount of goodwill applied towards retaining office. These are subject to the budget constraint that $y + z \leq g(\theta, r)$. During each period, the leader accrues utility $y + \phi$, where $\phi > 0$ is an exogenous parameter reflecting the intrinsic value of holding office.²²

Due to the internalized norm of reciprocity, the party pays a cost for deposing a leader who has cultivated a great deal of goodwill and draws upon it for his own reelection. Denote this cost by kz , where $k > 0$. Thus, during each period, the party accrues $y - dkz$, where $d \in \{0, 1\}$ is 1 if the party deposes the incumbent leader and 0 if it does not.

Restricting attention to Markov perfect equilibria, there are as before two candidates. The first is for the party to pursue the merit strategy while the leader allocates all resources to collective goods provision: $y^*(\theta, r) = g(\theta, r)$ and $z^*(\theta, r) = 0$. The second is for the party to set $r = 1$ before electing the leader and to depose leaders for whom $\theta = 0$ if it is not too expensive, while the leader allocates just enough goodwill to secure his reelection: $y^*(\theta, r) = g(\theta, r) - z^*(\theta, r)$ and $z^*(\theta, r) = (1 - \theta)r\bar{z}$. \bar{z} is a threshold to be solved for shortly.

²² ϕ could be an increasing function of s , but so long as $\phi(0) > 0$ this would lead to the same conclusions as the model I present here.

Consequently, the optimal choice of (y, z) for the leader conditional on (θ, s) is

$$(y^*, z^*) = \begin{cases} (g(1, r), 0) & \text{if } \theta = 1 \\ (g(0, 1) - \bar{z}, \bar{z}) & \text{if } \theta = 0 \text{ and } r = 1 \text{ and } \bar{z} \leq \max\{g(0, 1), \frac{\delta(1-q)}{1-\delta(1-q)}[g(0, 1) + \phi]\} \\ (g(\theta, r), 0) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

The condition in the $(\theta, r) = (0, 1)$ case ensures (1) that $(\theta, r) = (0, 1)$ gives the leader enough resources to secure his position in office and (2) the return to the leader for staying in office is large enough to justify foregoing some consumption of the collective good this period to stay in office for the next period.

So long as \bar{z} satisfies the given inequality, this extension is equivalent to the mechanical leader in the baseline model by setting $\beta = g(0, 1) - \bar{z}$, $\alpha_0 = g(1, 0)$, and $\alpha_1 = g(1, 1) - g(0, 1) + \bar{z}$.

To see what must be true for this condition to be satisfied, it is first necessary to obtain \bar{z} . \bar{z} solves the following system of equations:

$$\begin{aligned} v^e &= pg(1, 1) + (1-p)[g(0, 1) - \bar{z}] + \delta qv^e + \delta(1-q)[pv_1^e + (1-p)v_0^e] \\ v_1^e &= g(1, 1) + \delta qv^e + \delta(1-q)v_1^e \\ v_0^e &= g(0, 1) - \bar{z} + \delta qv^e + \delta(1-q)v_0^e \\ \delta v_0^e &= \delta v^e - k\bar{z} \end{aligned}$$

The first three equations give the expected value for the party for following the ex-officio strategy starting the period with no incumbent, an incumbent with $\theta = 1$, and an incumbent with $\theta = 0$. The fourth equation is the incentive constraint condition: \bar{z} must make the party indifferent between paying the cost necessary to depose the leader and starting the next period with a low-quality leader.

Solving these equations for \bar{z} ,

$$\bar{z} = \frac{\delta p}{k[1 - \delta(1 - q)]} [g(1, 1) - g(0, 1)]$$

In order for \bar{z} to be both feasible given $g(0, 1)$ and incentive-compatible, the following two inequalities must hold:

$$\begin{aligned} \left(\frac{k[1 - \delta(1 - q)]}{\delta p} + 1 \right) g(0, 1) &\geq g(1, 1) \\ \left(\frac{k(1 - q)}{p} + 1 \right) g(0, 1) + \frac{k(1 - q)}{p} \phi &\geq g(1, 1) \end{aligned}$$

Both inequalities are satisfied for a large enough k . Substantively, this requires that reciprocity is a meaningful motivator of party members' behavior, which the verbal theory already presupposes. Thus, the simpler model in the paper yields the same conclusions as this extension with a strategic leader and requires no additional substantive assumptions.

C Disaggregating the Party

The baseline model treats the party as a unitary actor deciding how to allocate rights and resources to the leader. In fact, the party consists of many individuals with potentially divergent interests. However, the unitary party from the baseline model can be interpreted as either the median party member or the chamber median (the results of the model carry through for either choice) for an appropriate ordering.

Consider an extension of the game where the party consists of n members (where for convenience n is odd), and all decisions are made via majority rule. Suppose that each party member i has his own $\alpha_{1,i}$, $\alpha_{0,i}$, β_i , and δ_i . p and r , as properties of the leader, are constant across all legislators. By the same logic as in the unitary party, i 's most preferred strategy is determined by $\Delta_i = \frac{p\alpha_{1,i} + \beta_i}{1 - \delta_i} - \frac{\delta_i p(1 - q)(\alpha_{1,i} + \beta_i - \alpha_{0,i}) + p\alpha_{0,i}}{(1 - \delta_i)[1 - \delta_i(1 - p)(1 - q)]}$. If $\Delta_i > 0$, then i prefers the ex-officio strategy, and if $\Delta_i < 0$, then i prefers the

merit strategy. Voting sincerely is a weakly dominant strategy for each legislator, so there exists an equilibrium in which the collective choice follows the ex-officio strategy if $\text{median}_i \Delta_i > 0$ and follows the merit strategy if $\text{median}_i \Delta_i < 0$.²³

If a given leader is effective at producing collective goods for certain members but not others (metaphorically, if quality is in the eye of the beholder), solving for Δ_i is more complicated, but a similar logic applies. Let θ_i define the leader's quality from the perspective of legislator i . Let $p_i = Pr(\theta_i = 1)$ and $\rho_i(\theta_i) = Pr\left(\sum_{j=1}^n \theta_j \geq \frac{n+1}{2} \mid \theta_i\right)$. The continuation values from which it can be derived from the following system of equations:

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta_i &= v_i^e - v_i^m \\ v_i^e &= \frac{p_i \alpha_{1,i} + \beta_i}{1 - \delta_i} \\ v_i^m &= p_i \{ \alpha_{0,i} + \delta_i [q + (1-q)(1 - \rho_i(1))] v_i^m + \delta_i (1-q) \rho_i(1) v_{i,1}^m \} \\ &\quad + (1-p_i) \{ \delta_i [q + (1-q)(1 - \rho_i(0))] v_i^m + \delta_i (1-q) \rho_i(0) v_{i,0}^m \} \\ v_{i,1}^m &= \frac{\alpha_{1,i} + \beta_i + \delta_i q v_i^m}{1 - \delta_i (1-q)} \\ v_{i,0}^m &= \frac{\beta_i + \delta_i q v_i^m}{1 - \delta_i (1-q)}\end{aligned}$$

Solving this gives $\Delta_i = \frac{p_i \alpha_{1,i} + \beta_i}{1 - \delta_i} - \frac{[1 - \delta_i (1-q)] p_i \alpha_{i,0} + \delta_i (1-q) [p_i \rho_i(1) (\alpha_{1,i} + \beta_i) + (1-p_i) \rho_i(0) \beta_i]}{(1 - \delta_i) \{ 1 - \delta_i (1-q) [1 - p_i \rho_i(1) - (1-p_i) \rho_i(0)] \}}$.

In this case, too, legislators can be ordered by Δ_i and the preferences of the median prevail. It is straightforward to verify that the comparative statics in this case are the same as in the simpler case when quality is not defined differently for each party member (omitting p and δ since little could be learned from them in the baseline model).

²³There are other equilibria, but they rely on the use of weakly dominated strategies.

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{d\Delta_i}{d\alpha_{1,i}} &= \frac{p_i}{1-\delta_i} \left(1 - \frac{\delta_i \rho_i(1)(1-q)}{1-\delta_i(1-q)(1-p_i\rho_i(1) - (1-p_i)\rho_i(0))} \right) \\
\frac{d\Delta_i}{d\alpha_{0,i}} &= -\frac{p_i(1-\delta_i(1-q))}{(1-\delta_i)(1-\delta_i(1-q)(1-p_i\rho_i(1) - (1-p_i)\rho_i(0))} < 0 \\
\frac{d\Delta_i}{d\beta_i} &= \frac{1}{1-\delta_i} \left(\frac{\delta_i(1-q)}{1-\delta_i(1-q)[1-p_i\rho_i(1) - (1-p_i)\rho_i(0)]} \right) > 0 \\
\frac{d\Delta_i}{dq} &= \frac{\delta_i p_i \rho_i(1)(\alpha_{1,i} + \beta_i - \alpha_{0,i}) - \delta_i(1-p_i)\rho_i(0)(p_i\alpha_{0,i} - \beta_i)}{(1-\delta_i)\{1-\delta_i(1-q)[1-p_i\rho_i(1) - (1-p_i)\rho_i(0)]\}^2}
\end{aligned}$$

The one exception is $\frac{d\Delta_i}{dq}$, which can now be negative if $(1-p_i)\rho_i(0)$ is large relative to $p_i(1)\rho_i(1)$. This is not a substantively important case, because a legislator whose preferences about quality are anti-correlated with the rest of the party will prefer the ex-officio strategy anyway.

D Probabilistic Removal

The baseline model assumes that the party can always remove leaders who control few resources ($r = 0$) and can never remove leaders who control many resources ($r = 1$). Reality is not so simple. If Newt Gingrich had not retired, there was a reasonable chance that Bob Livingston could have unseated him, even though Gingrich controlled many important resources. Even though House Democrats had doubts about John McCormack's fitness to lead in 1968 and McCormack controlled relatively few resources compared to later Speakers, he still successfully defeated a challenge from Mo Udall. The success or failure of coups is probabilistic rather than deterministic. When leaders control more resources, success is less likely, but it is not impossible; when leaders control few, success is more likely, but not assured.

Extending the model to have coups succeed probabilistically leads to more complicated expressions but does not change the logic of the solution. Let d_r (for depose) be the probability that a coup is successful given that the leader controlled resources equal to r during the period. As before, the two optimal strategies are the merit and

ex-officio strategy. Using the notation above, continuation values for the ex-officio strategy solve the following system of equations:

$$v^e = \beta + p[\alpha_1 + \delta q v^e + \delta(1-q)v_1^e] + (1-p)\{\delta[q + (1-q)d_1]v^e + \delta(1-q)(1-d_1)v_0^e\}$$

$$v_1^e = \alpha_1 + \beta + \delta q v^e + \delta(1-q)v_1^e$$

$$v_0^e = \beta + \delta[q + (1-q)d_1]v^e + \delta(1-q)(1-d_1)v_0^e$$

Solving,

$$v^e = p \frac{[1 - \delta(1-q)(1-d_1)]}{(1-\delta)[1 - \delta(1-q)(1-pd_1)]} \alpha_1 + \frac{\beta}{1-\delta}$$

For the merit strategy, the system of equations is

$$v^m = p[\alpha_0 + \delta q v^m + \delta(1-q)v_1^m] + (1-p)\{\delta[q + (1-q)d_1]v^m + \delta(1-q)(1-d_1)v_0^m\}$$

$$v_1^m = \alpha_1 + \beta + \delta q v^m + \delta(1-q)v_1^m$$

$$v_0^m = \delta[q + (1-q)d_1]v^m + \delta(1-q)(1-d_1)v_0^m$$

Solving,

$$v^m = \frac{p[1 - \delta(1-q)(1-d_0)]\{[1 - \delta(1-q)]\alpha_0 + \delta(1-q)(\alpha_1 + \beta)\}}{(1-\delta)[1 - \delta(1-q)(1-pd_0)]}$$

By way of comparative statics,

$$\frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_1} = \frac{p}{1-\delta} \left[\frac{1 - \delta(1-q)(1-d_1)}{1 - \delta(1-q)(1-pd_1)} - \delta(1-q) \frac{1 - \delta(1-q)(1-d_0)}{1 - \delta(1-q)(1-pd_0)} \right]$$

$$\frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_0} = -\frac{p[1 - \delta(1-q)(1-d_0)][1 - \delta(1-q)]}{(1-\delta)[1 - \delta(1-q)(1-pd_0)]} < 0$$

$$\frac{d\Delta}{d\beta} = \frac{[1 - \delta(1-q)][1 - \delta(1-q)p(1-d_0)]}{(1-\delta)[1 - \delta(1-q)(1-pd_0)]} > 0$$

$$\frac{d\Delta}{dq} = -\frac{p}{1-\delta} \left\{ -\frac{(1-p)d_1\alpha_1}{[1 - \delta(1-q)(1-pd_1)]^2} + \frac{(1-d_0)(\alpha_1 + \beta - \alpha_0) + \frac{d_0(1-p)(\alpha_1 + \beta - pd_0\alpha_0)}{[1 - \delta(1-q)(1-pd_0)]^2}}{1 - pd_0} \right\}$$

$\frac{d\Delta}{d\alpha_1} > 0$ if $\delta(1-q) > \frac{1-\delta(1-q)(1-pd_0)}{1-\delta(1-q)(1-pd_1)} \frac{1-\delta(1-q)(1-d_1)}{1-\delta(1-q)(1-d_0)}$ (a generalization of the condition in the baseline model). Simulations exploring the parameter space show that $\frac{d\Delta}{dq}$ can take either sign, unlike in the baseline model. The other two core comparative statics remain the same, so this model produces the same key conclusions as the simpler baseline model.

E Revisiting Conditional Party Government

$$\begin{aligned} f(0,0) &= \frac{B_0}{(\sum_{i=1}^m c_i)^2} \\ f(0,1) &= \frac{B_1 - B_0}{(\sum_{i=1}^m c_i)^2} \\ f(1,0) &= (1+v)\gamma_0^* \\ f(1,1) &= (1+v)\gamma_1^* \end{aligned}$$

γ_0^* and γ_1^* are both defined implicitly. Because $g_0(\gamma) = B_0 - \sum_{i=1}^m \max(\gamma c_i - v, 0)$ is continuous, decreasing in γ , and has $g_0(0) > 0$ while $g_0(1) < 0$, there exists some γ_0^* such that the bill passes if and only if $\gamma \leq \gamma_0^*$. Since γ is drawn from the uniform distribution, γ_0^* is the probability the bill passes given $\theta = 1$ and $r = 0$. γ_1^* is defined analogously with B_1 replacing B_0 .

Normalizing $f(0,0)$ to 0, the parameters of the baseline model are

$$\begin{aligned} \beta &= \frac{B_1 - B_0}{(\sum_{i=1}^m c_i)^2} \\ \alpha_0 &= (1+v)\gamma_0^* - \frac{B_0}{(\sum_{i=1}^m c_i)^2} \\ \alpha_1 &= (1+v)\gamma_1^* - \frac{B_1}{(\sum_{i=1}^m c_i)^2} \end{aligned}$$

The effect of η on the preference for the ex-officio strategy can be derived by

taking partial derivatives with respect to η .

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{d\beta}{d\eta} &= \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{d\beta}{dc_i} \frac{dc_i}{d\eta} \\
&= -\frac{c(B_1 - B_0)}{(\sum_{i=1}^n c_i)^2} \sum_{i=n_{\text{main}}+1}^n \frac{\exp(\eta i)}{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}+1}^n \exp(\eta i')} \left(i - \frac{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}}^n i' \exp(\eta i')}{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}}^n \exp(\eta i')} \right) \\
&= 0 \\
\frac{d\alpha_0}{d\eta} &= (1+v) \frac{d\gamma_0^* c}{d\eta} = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{d\gamma_0^*}{dc_i} \frac{dc_i}{d\eta} \\
&= -\sum_{i=n_{\text{main}}}^m \frac{\frac{dg_0}{dc_i}}{\frac{d\gamma_0}{d\eta}} \frac{dc_i}{d\eta} \\
&= -\frac{(1+v)\gamma_0^*}{\sum_{i=n_{\text{main}}}^n c_i \mathbf{1}\{\gamma_0^* c_i \geq v\}} \times \\
&\quad \sum_{i=n_{\text{main}}}^m \frac{\mathbf{1}\{\gamma_0^* c_i \geq v\} \exp(\eta i)}{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}}^n \exp(\eta i')} \left(i - \frac{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}}^n i' \exp(\eta i')}{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}}^n \exp(\eta i')} \right)
\end{aligned}$$

The second line of $\frac{d\alpha_0}{d\eta}$ follows from the implicit function theorem. Note that $\sum_{i=n_{\text{main}}}^m \frac{\exp(\eta i)}{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}}^n \exp(\eta i')} \left(i - \frac{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}}^n i' \exp(\eta i')}{\sum_{i'=n_{\text{main}}}^n \exp(\eta i')} \right) = 0$, and the terms are sorted from smallest to largest. $\mathbf{1}\{\gamma_0^* c_i \geq v\}$ zeroes out all of the negative terms before it zeroes out any positive terms, hence $\frac{d\alpha_0}{d\eta} < 0$. By the same argument, $\frac{d\alpha_1}{d\eta} < 0$.

F The Entrenchment of Resource-Rich Leaders

One key stylized fact that motivates the model is that resource-rich leaders can be difficult to remove from office, even if they are doing a poor job of providing collective goods. The Speakerships of Nancy Pelosi, Newt Gingrich, and John Boehner support this assertion.

F.1 Nancy Pelosi

The efforts of the Democrats to remove Nancy Pelosi from office have already been described above. Their difficulty in doing so stemmed from Pelosi's control over re-

sources. The rules of the House of Representatives and the Democratic Caucus gave Nancy Pelosi procedural rights that put her in an excellent position to build goodwill with the rank-and-file. She had the right to nominate members for committee assignments, both useful for its own sake and for controlling the Rules Committee and hence the agenda (when she was in the majority) (Peters and Rosenthal, 2010, p. 69), as well as the right to appoint a number of party leadership offices, including the chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (Allen, 2010). In an analysis of why Democrats did not depose Pelosi after the 2010 election, one contemporary account emphasized, “Pelosi has wielded such power in the House that every Democrat with an influential position, a decent committee assignment, reasonable office space or an extra staff member has the speaker’s good graces to thank for it” (Harris and Allen, 2010). Democratic Whip Jim Clyburn echoed this analysis, proclaiming that Pelosi had cultivated enough goodwill in the caucus to resist any attempt to remove her (Kane, 2012). Appendices ?? and ?? show that the initial successes of Newt Gingrich and John Boehner at resisting efforts to remove them from office can be understood in the same way.

F.2 Newt Gingrich

It was not long before Newt Gingrich’s liabilities as leader of the House Republicans started to emerge. In January of his first term as Speaker of the House, he was embroiled in an ethical scandal over an advance he had accepted for a book contract - a particularly damaging scandal because Gingrich had destroyed Democratic Speaker Jim Wright over similar violations (Drew, 1996, p. 53-55). This was the first of several such investigations that would plague Gingrich’s tenure as Speaker (Weisskopf and Maraniss, 1996). As early as February of 1995, Republican congressmen expressed worries that Gingrich was “overexposed,” a euphemism for the Gingrich’s unfortunate tendency to make ill-considered statements in front of television cameras (Maraniss and Weisskopf, 1996, p. 10). In spite of his brilliance in leading Repub-

licans to their first majority since the 1950s and the brisk pace he set during the Hundred Days, he displayed questionable strategic judgment once he had cemented control over the House agenda - most notably in his decision to precipitate a government shutdown in an unsuccessful attempt to force Clinton to give into Republican budgetary demands (Weisskopf and Maraniss, 1996). Democrats weaponized Gingrich's plunging popularity in the 1996 elections, tying him as an anchor around the neck of presidential candidate Bob Dole (Marcus, 1996). House Republicans facing competitive elections sought to distance themselves from Gingrich (Kurtz, 1996).

By the beginning of the 105th Congress, House Republicans had ample evidence of Gingrich's faults. But even as he faced yet another ethics investigation, they chose to keep him in office (Yang, 1996). The blunders continued, until frustrations mounted to the point that disaffected Republicans plotted a coup against Gingrich. Yet when Gingrich discovered the plot, he quickly deflated it (Yang, 1997). How, in spite of the widespread misgivings about Gingrich's ability to lead the Republicans to future electoral victories, was he able to stay in office?

Gingrich's key advantage was that he had many opportunities to build up goodwill with members of his party. He was the visionary who had led the Republicans to their first House majority since the Eisenhower years (Balz, 1996). Many held him personally responsible for their election to Congress, both for his strategy and for the campaign assistance he distributed (Balz and Kovaleski, 1994). Gingrich operated at the beginning of what in the terms of the model can be called an ex-officio regime. Immediately upon his assumption of office, Republicans wrote the rules in a manner that gave Gingrich the right to appoint committees, committee chairmen, and the chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee (Drew, 1996, p. 36-37). As Speaker, he put his control over the agenda to good use by deputizing rank-and-file members to pursue pet projects, providing support for their initiatives rather than imposing his own upon them (Drew, 1996, p. 37-38). Since the rules were written immediately upon his election as Speaker, the party

could not evaluate his skill in the job before deciding whether to give him control over such an impressive array of resources.

Fortunately for the Republicans, Gingrich made some crucial mistakes in the dispersement of the resources under his control. Gingrich viewed himself as a revolutionary leader who operated best in the world of ideas. He delegated the day-to-day drudgery of setting the legislative calendar and rounding up votes to his lieutenants, Dick Arney and Tom DeLay (Panetta, 2003). As a result, while Gingrich was able to build credit with his members initially through election assistance, committee assignments, appointment to leadership positions, and empowering the rank-and-file to pursue their own projects, and he was able to build a considerable degree of goodwill with Arney and DeLay by giving them responsibilities that outstripped their formal authorities, he forfeited the right to distribute resources that could have renewed his store of goodwill with the rank-and-file.

Gingrich led the Republicans to a surprisingly poor performance in the midterm elections of 1998 (Connolly and Eilperin, 1998). Even then, it was not clear Gingrich would be removed. Angry congressmen considered leaving Gingrich in place and instead targeting Arney or DeLay (Eilperin and Gugliotta, 1998). Once Bob Livingston announced his candidacy for Speaker, Gingrich stepped down (Balz, 1998). Some familiar with the leadership race argued that Gingrich had a reasonable chance of defeating Livingston had he chosen to stay (Gugliotta and Eilperin, 1998). The behavior of other leadership aspirants supports this view; several announced their candidacy only after Gingrich was out of the race (Gugliotta and Eilperin, 1998), presumably because they believed their chances of beating Livingston were better than their chances of beating Gingrich. Whatever the reason, Republicans could have avoided several foreseeable disasters had they removed Gingrich in response to his 1996 conviction of ethical violations or had the 1997 coup against Gingrich succeeded. The lost opportunities of the 105th Congress and the 1998 elections were the price they paid for following the ex-officio strategy.

F.3 John Boehner

Unlike Gingrich and Pelosi, John Boehner was not a significant electoral liability. Republicans did reasonably well in elections throughout his leadership. Instead, Boehner's major weakness was his inability to unite his conference, particularly members of the Tea Party, behind a shared legislative program. From the time Boehner ascended to the Speakership in 2011 to his resignation in 2015, his party lurched from one crisis to another, largely but not exclusively in the realm of fiscal policy. The names of the events themselves underscore the chaos that prevailed during this period: the debt ceiling crises of 2011 and 2013, the fiscal cliff, the Cromnibus. Repeatedly, Boehner squandered months negotiating with the Senate and the White House to arrive at a bargain only to find that it was unacceptable to his own conference (Cillizza, 2015). Discontent with Boehner's leadership was most intense in the Tea Party faction, where it started almost as soon as Boehner became Speaker (Sherman and Allen, 2011). The number of legislators who voted against Boehner's reelection on the floor was never even close to half of the conference, but the number of dissidents was large enough to nearly cause the election to go to a second ballot in 2013 (Sherman and Bresnahan, 2013). By end of 2013, the string of frustrations had grown so long that even his allies realized that the party would not be an effective lawmaking coalition so long as Boehner remained at the helm (Bresnahan and Harris, 2013; Bresnahan *et al.*, 2015).

As with Pelosi and Gingrich, the procedural rights and control over resources that Boehner enjoyed cemented his place in office. While many of Boehner's most vexing critics came from the class of 2010 Tumulty *et al.* (2015), he won over many members of the same class bringing them into the leadership organization and appointing others to seats on prestigious committees (Sherman *et al.*, 2010). Boehner followed up on these initial overtures by ramping up his fundraising operation and donating generously to junior members, aided in significant part by extra staff he was entitled to hire as perquisites of his office (Cohen, 2011). Even more importantly, Boehner

systematically pacified everyone who could have been a credible alternative Speaker. With the partial exception of Eric Cantor, who was helpfully neutralized by his own primary voters, the elected Republican leadership team was stacked with Boehner loyalists (Bresnahan *et al.*, 2015). This left committee chairmen as the most fertile supply of potential candidates. Indeed, Boehner himself was a former committee chairman who made the jump to the leadership ladder, vaulting over House Majority Whip Roy Blunt to become House Majority Leader. But Boehner had played a significant role in selecting the committee chairmen (Cohen, 2010), and had further cultivated goodwill by giving each a meaningful share in the setting the party's agenda through his commitment to "bottom-up" legislating (Allen and Sherman, 2012). As a result, the numerous efforts to remove Boehner from office were starved of experienced leadership and could not present a credible alternative candidate. This difficulty was epitomized by an episode from the 2013 election of the Speaker on the House floor - the challenge that came closest to depriving Boehner of a majority. Majority Leader Eric Cantor, who supported Boehner, attracted the plurality of the anti-Boehner votes. Cantor was described as shaking his head in exasperation when dissidents voted for him (Sherman and Bresnahan, 2013).

Boehner's eventual resignation cannot be described as voluntary. Certainly, the intransigence of the vocal minority that opposed him motivated his decision to leave. However, his resignation cannot be described as motivated by the expectation of defeat either. No alternative candidate who could have credibly challenged Boehner ever emerged. Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, who ran to replace Boehner (although he eventually withdrew), and Ways and Means Chairman Paul Ryan, who was eventually drafted, were both staunch Boehner supporters (Bresnahan *et al.*, 2015). Thanks to impressive array of resources at his disposal as a result of chamber and conference rules and the goodwill built through the dispersal of these resources, Boehner was able to leave at a time of his choosing.