

Ambition and Legislative Organization*

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Abstract

A model is constructed to show how differential advancement opportunities impact legislators' preferences over the manner in which their legislature is organized. The structures that comprise the organization of the legislature are viewed as legislative resources and rules. Voters are assumed to penalize legislators for awarding themselves additional resources. Legislators must also choose between rules that promote their retention and those that promote their advancement to higher office. The intuition of the model is that legislators who enjoy sizeable advancement opportunities are less likely to favor resource enhancements because voters can penalize not only their chances of re-election but also their promotion prospects. In contrast, legislators with poor advancement opportunities are, on balance, more likely to support resource improvements because voter sanctions impact these legislators less. Following a similar logic, legislators with little likelihood of advancement are more likely to support legislative rules that enhance their chances of promotion, even when a consequence is a reduced likelihood of re-election. A third prediction is that as the percentage of House members with few advancement opportunities increases, the structures of the House steadily change. The plausibility of the assumptions underlying the model are then discussed. Finally, using roll call data from 1850-1980, the implications of the model regarding House benefits and rules are tested. Finally, it is shown that the distribution of legislator types changed between 1860 and 1910, burgeoning the ranks of legislators with few advancement opportunities. These "careerist" legislators, it is argued, made a substantial contribution to reorganizing the House.

BACKGROUND

Legislatures are organized to serve the goals of legislators. In the case of the U.S. House, Fenno (1973) determined that these goals include re-election, good public policy, and advancement in the chamber/promotion to higher office.¹ Before legislators decide to pursue some combination of these goals, of course, they must commit to a career in politics. Thus, early studies of the seniority system, and other norms of the House, argued that they resulted from rising tenure rates, or careerism, among House Members (Polsby 1968; Polsby, Gallaher, and Rundquist 1969; Epstein, Brady, Kawato, and O'Halloran 1997).

Organizing the House to facilitate *re-election* has been argued to lead to the creation of a number of familiar structures, including committees, staff, roll call votes, franked mail, and even proposed legislation itself (Mayhew 1974). It has alternatively been suggested that facilitating re-election requires agreement upon 1) a universality norm whereby all Members are allocated a share of some distributive pie (Weingast 1979), 2) a collective logroll (Buchanan and Tullock 1962, Tullock 1967), or 3) gains from exchange enhancing institutions (Weingast and Marshall 1988). Finally, election-minded legislators can permit party leaders to construct a procedural coalition and set the agenda, in order to enhance the value of the party reputation and enhance the prospects of obtaining district-benefiting legislation (Cox and McCubbins 1993).

Organizing the House to adopt good *public policies* (such as those that are in equilibrium) involves the construction of a committee system and adoption of jurisdictional germaneness rules (Shepsle 1979) or the creation of political parties in government that resolve social choice dilemmas (Aldrich 1995). On the other hand, organizing the House to collect information regarding the likely policy consequences of legislation involves providing incentives to specialized committees who

¹ Since promotion to higher office precludes intrachamber advancement, I treat these as alternative forms of the same goal.

invest in becoming experts and agreeing upon floor rules that promote this specialization (Krehbiel 1991, Gilligan and Krehbiel 1987, 1990).

One shortcoming of some of these theories is their prediction that legislators unanimously agree on the selection of institutions. What legislators, after all, would oppose the adoption of institutions that advance their re-election (Mayhew 1974) or promote stable policy choices (Shepsle 1979)? Alas, many roll call votes on House rules, staff allocation, committee jurisdiction, and the franking privilege are not decided unanimously. However, it is not the goal of this study to indict election- or policy- oriented models of legislative organization. Rather, an ambition-focused account of legislative organization is proposed to enhance, rather than displace, existing models.

In contrast to the bevy of work elaborating how Congress is organized to serve the goals of re-election and policy making, little effort has been expended on the effect of intra-/extra-institutional ambition on legislative organization.² One study has examined the opposite causal relationship -- the effect of legislative organization on the ambitions of the individuals attracted to run for office (Squire 1988). According to this view, "legislators face significant obstacles in changing the existing conditions of legislative service. . . . Thus . . . the causal relationship is that the existing internal organization attracts those individuals who find that it meets their career needs" (page).

In contrast, I treat legislative organization as a series of institutions that are endogenous to the career goals of legislators. That is, I argue that the oft-discussed liberal/conservative and Democrat/Republican conflicts that are advanced to account for legislative institutions should be supplemented by the conflict between legislators with substantial opportunity for advancement to higher office and legislators with little opportunity for promotion.

² Instead, some attention has been paid to the effect of intra- or extra-institutional ambition on various forms of legislative behavior, such as bill introduction and success, floor activity, and staff hiring (Herrick and Moore 1993) or the changing roll call behavior of legislators seeking higher office (Hibbing 1986), or the effect of advancement opportunities on the length of legislative careers (Squire 1988).

One other study of which I am aware models legislative organization (loosely defined) as a function of legislator career goals (Mooney 1995). However, the Mooney study differs from this paper in several respects. First, its substantive focus was on state legislative professionalization, rather than U.S. House organization.³ Second, its goal was to arrive at a comprehensive empirical model, rather than to derive a series of theoretical propositions. Third, it argued for a *positive* relationship between state legislator advancement opportunities and legislature professionalization. The reasoning was that legislators with greater advancement opportunities would be more likely to adopt increased salary and session-length rules.⁴ In contrast, this analysis derives a prediction that opportunities for legislator advancement are negatively related to legislator preferences for the benefits of office, which overlap with common definitions of professionalization.

I construct a simple decision theoretic model that explains legislator preferences for revising legislative organization as a function of the legislator's opportunity for career advancement. Namely, legislators with little hope of promotion are more likely than their promotion-minded counterparts to favor increasing the resources at their disposal. These resources include personal staff, the franking privilege, and salary. Members with slight advancement opportunities are also more likely to favor revising the rules of the House to promote their advancement to higher office. An example of such a rule is a proposal to decrease the number of Members required to discharge a bill from committee.

³ On the difference between professionalization and institutionalization generally, see Squire (1992).

⁴ Mooney tested his hypothesis on data for the periods 1963-1966, 1970-1971, 1982-1985, and 1986-1988, finding a positive relationship between advancement opportunities and professionalization in three of the four periods. This finding (which contrasts with those below) may be explained by measurement differences between professionalization and organization, or by incentive differences between state legislatures and the U.S. House.

MODEL

Assumptions:

1. Newly elected Senators all serve in the House the preceding term;
2. All House Members from the same state have an equal probability of winning a Senate seat;
3. The probability of re-election to the House is decreasing in the benefits of office that Members receive;
4. The benefits of a Senate seat are greater than the benefits of a House seat;
5. Members vote sincerely.

Define the expected career return (R) of Congressperson i according to Von Neumann-Morgenstern expected utility, as follows:

$$E(R_i) = (\Pr_{Ht})(B_{Ht}/1+r) + (\Pr_{Ht+1})(B_{Ht+1}/1+r)^2 + \dots + (\Pr_{HT})(B_{HT}/1+r)^T + \\ (\Pr_{St})(B_{St}/1+r) + (\Pr_{St+1})(B_{St+1}/1+r)^2 + \dots + (\Pr_{ST})(B_{ST}/1+r)^T$$

ignoring for simplicity the costs (including most importantly opportunity costs) of holding political office. Or, a legislator's expected career return is a function of the anticipated benefits (B) of holding a seat in the House (H) or the Senate (S) in period t , discounted by r , the discount rate, and weighted by the probability that the legislator will hold a seat in each of the chambers that period. All legislators receive the same benefits from a House seat. Each Member's probability of re-election is randomly drawn from a normal 0, 1 distribution. By assumption, all newly elected Senators serve in the House in the previous period, or only House Members are eligible to run for the Senate. This condition converts the probability that each legislator will obtain a Senate seat in each period from a simple to a compound probability:

$$E(R_t) = (Pr_{Ht})(B_{Ht}/1+r) + (Pr_{Ht+1})(B_{Ht+1}/1+r)^2 + \dots + (Pr_{HT})(B_{HT}/1+r)^T +$$

$$((Pr_{Ht-1})(Pr_{St}))(B_{St}/1+r) + ((Pr_{Ht})(Pr_{St+1}))(B_{St+1}/1+r)^2 + \dots + ((Pr_{HT-1})(Pr_{ST}))(B_{ST}/1+r)^T$$

Also by assumption, all House Members from state j have an equal probability of success in a Senate race. It follows that as the size of a state's House delegation (D_j) increases, the probability that each Congressperson representing a district in that state will reach the Senate $\rightarrow 0$, or for period t :

$$\partial Pr_{St} / \partial D_t < 0$$

The third assumption is that the probability of re-election in period t is a function of the benefits legislators receive in this period -- such as would be true if voters are less likely to support incumbents who allocate themselves greater benefits, or

$$\partial Pr_{Ht} / \partial B_{Ht} < 0$$

and that changes in Pr_{Ht} are permanent.

Benefits Legislation

Consider the effect of proposed legislation changing the benefits of a House seat from B_H in period t to B_H' in period $t+1 \dots T$, where $B_H' > B_H$. This intervention would not only increase the expected benefits of office, it would also decrease the probability of re-election for all Members from Pr_H in period $t+1$ to Pr_H' in period $t+1 \dots T$ if voters can sanction legislators in the same period in which benefits change. Ignoring for the moment the effect this would have on the

expected reward of holding a Senate seat, if $\Pr_H(B_H) > \Pr_H'(B_H')$ the proposal will be unanimously defeated, whereas if $\Pr_H(B_H) < \Pr_H'(B_H')$ the proposal will be unanimously approved.

To explain nonunanimous outcomes requires that the expected benefits of a Senate seat be reintroduced into House Members' consideration of a bill proposing to increase B_H to B_H' . Recall that House Members do not enjoy the same probability of election to the Senate (Members belonging to larger state delegations being disadvantaged due to greater competition), and that the probability of election to the Senate is conditional on the probability of election to the House the previous time period. Thus, a decrease in the probability that a Member will be elected to the House also decreases the probability that the Member will be elected to the Senate. However, *because Members do not have the same ex ante probability of election to the Senate (due to varying D_j), the effect of a decrease in the probability of House re-election has a differential effect on Members' calculations of their expected benefits from Senate service.*

Define \Pr_S^* as the cut point dividing *ambitious* types, for whom $\Pr_S > \Pr_S^*$, and *static* types, for whom $\Pr_S < \Pr_S^*$. As the likelihood of re-election declines, the additional benefits producing that effect are offset much more quickly among ambitious types than among static types. In this manner, static types may realize an expected benefit from a change in the benefits of office ($E(R)' > 0$) while ambitious types will anticipate a loss ($E(R)' < 0$). These gains and losses are magnified, of course, because they must be summed over the entire stream of expected (albeit discounted) returns.

Proposition 1: If $\Pr_H'(B_H') > \Pr_H(B_H)$, there exists some $B_H' > B_H$ and $\Pr_H' < \Pr_H$ where $E(R)' > 0$ for static types and $E(R)' < 0$ for ambitious types.

Figure 1 provides an illustration of how differential opportunities to advance to the Senate across Members of the House can produce nonunanimous roll call votes on increasing the benefits of office. For the purposes of this example, the benefits of a House seat (X) are equal to half the benefits of a Senate seat ($2X$). The ex ante probability of re-election to the house is .9. Legislation is proposed to increase the benefits of House Members from X to $X + .2X$, which, in this example, has the effect of decreasing the probability of re-election to .8. Figure 1 then plots the change in expected return $E(R)'$ of an individual House Member from supporting the legislation, given the Member's probability of election to the Senate (Pr_S). Members with positive change in return expectations will support the legislation; Members with negative return expectations will oppose it. In this case, a Member is indifferent about the legislation when the Member's probability of promotion is .3 ($Pr_S^* = .3$).

Figure 1: A Nonunanimous Roll Call on House Benefits

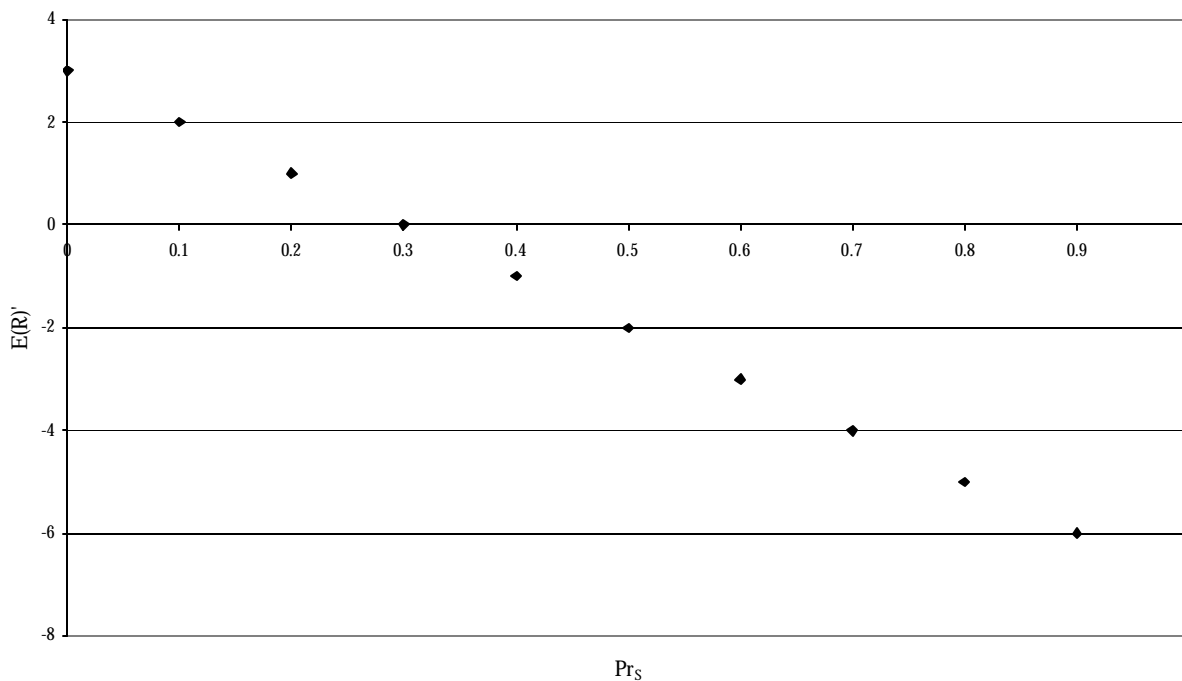


Figure 1 shows that static types will agree to a set of bills which increase the benefits of office but decrease the probability of re-election, and that ambitious types will oppose static types on these bills.

Rules Legislation

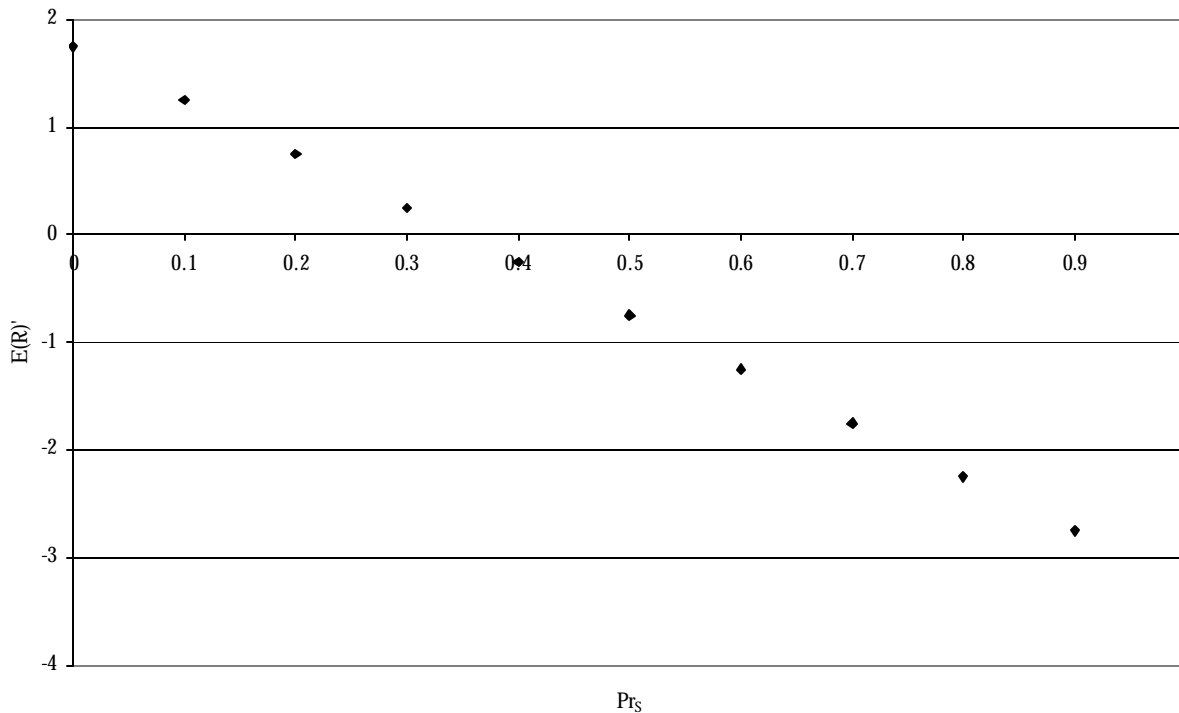
The logic regarding legislation affecting the rules of the House is similar. Consider the effect of proposed legislation changing the rules of the House to improve opportunities for advancement to the Senate from Pr_S in period t to Pr_S' in period $t+1 \dots T$, where $Pr_S' > Pr_S$. All Members would support such legislation if it were costless. However, the adoption of rules that promote advancement might present a lost opportunity to adopt rules that promote re-election. In this case, increasing Pr_S in period t to Pr_S' in period $t+1 \dots T$ would also decrease the probability of re-election to the House from Pr_H in period $t+1$ to Pr_H' in period $t+1 \dots T$.

Proposition 2: There exists some $Pr_S' > Pr_S$ and $Pr_H' < Pr_H$ where $E(R)' > 0$ for static types and $E(R)' < 0$ for ambitious types.

Figure 2 provides an illustration of how differential opportunities to advance to the Senate across Members of the House can produce nonunanimous roll call votes on increasing these opportunities by changing the House rules. For the purposes of this example, the ex ante probability of re-election to the house is .9. A proposal is made to change the House rules, which will have the effect of increasing every Member's probability of advancement to the Senate by 5%. The tradeoff is that the rule will also decrease every Member's probability of re-election to the House by 5%. As shown in the Figure, static types ($Pr_S < \sim .38$) would support such a proposal,

while ambitious types would oppose it. In other words, static types are willing to trade greater opportunity for advancement for smaller guarantees of retention. Somewhat counterintuitively, ambitious types are not willing to trade off greater advancement opportunities for lower retention probabilities.

Figure 2: A Nonunanimous Roll Call on House Rules



The third proposition follows from the first two. Proposition 1 is that there exists a set of bills to increase House benefits that static types will support and ambitious types oppose. Proposition 2 is that there exists a set of bills to change the rules to increase members opportunity for office advancement that (only) static types will support. If the proportion of static and ambitious types in Congress changes such that the number of static types increases, we would anticipate a secular shift in the benefits and rules of the House toward the institutions preferred by static types.

Proposition 3: As the percentage of static types in the House increases, the benefits of office will increase and the adoption of rules promoting advancement to the Senate becomes more likely.

TESTS

This section first tests the five assumptions on which the model is based. Then, it tests its three propositions.

Assumptions

The first assumption is that all Senators serve in the House prior to their election to the upper chamber. A second, related assumption is that each House Member has an equal probability of election to the Senate. These assumptions are (jointly) necessary if the model is to equate the ex ante probability of election to the Senate with the size of a state's Congressional delegation. Table 1 presents descriptive evidence lending some support to the first assumption. A "manifest" office is defined as the office Senators held just preceding their election. According to the Table, more than one-third of U.S. Senators from 1960-1987 arrived directly from the U.S. House, more than from any other single office type. Controlling for former governors (which is logical since their number does not vary across states), nearly one-half of all Senators worked in the House as their manifest office.

Table 1: Manifest Offices of U.S. Senators

	1913-1959	1960-87
U.S. House	32.7%	36.9
State Governor	23.2	13.7
	55.9 (358)	50.6 (160)

Source: Canon (1990).

If Members have an equal ex ante probability of election, then the larger the size of a state's congressional delegation, the lower the probability that each House Member will be elected. If the probability that a House Member will run for the Senate is positively related to the probability of winning the office, we would expect that House Members from states with larger state delegations will be less likely to run for the Senate. Table 2 presents evidence testing this implication. According to the data, there appears to be an inverse, log-linear relationship between the size of a congressional delegation and the probability that House Members run for the Senate.

Table 2: Effect of Delegation Size on Advancement Opportunities

Number of Districts in State	Percent of Opportunities Taken to Run for Senate
1-2	36.1% (83)*
3-6	10.1 (139)
7-10	3.9 (306)
11-19	3.8 (287)
22+	2.8 (648)
Total	5.8 (1463)

*Number of Opportunities
Source: Rohde (1979)

The third assumption is that voters punish all Members of the House for enhancing the benefits of office. This punishment reduces the legislator's underlying probability of re-election, which may lead to voluntary retirement or involuntary defeat. In terms of congressional pay as a benefit of office, this assumption is supported by previous studies showing that a House Member who is less electorally secure is less likely to support an increase in congressional pay (Bartlett 1979; Hibbing 1983; Bianco 1994; Bianco, Spence, and Wilkerson 1996, but see Mills 1989). As Bianco, *et al.* argue: "raise proposals are always controversial: most legislators want pay raises, most

constituents oppose them (154)."⁵ The other benefits I investigate are also potentially controversial – personal staff and the franking privilege.

The fourth assumption is that the value of a Senate seat is greater than the value of a House seat. This may not have historically been true, as evidenced by the high turnover rate of Senators in the early Congress (Young 1966). In the modern period, though, the evidence is clearer -- the value of a seat in the Senate has been argued to be greater than the value of a House seat, on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Rohde (1979) suggested that Senate seats are more desirable than House seats due to their longer term and greater ability to affect policy. Diermeier, Keane, and Merlo (2002) conducted an empirical test of the value of House and Senate seats, finding that House seats are worth (in 1995 dollars) nearly \$700,000, on average, while Senate seats are worth nearly \$1.8 million, on average. By comparison, Groseclose and Milyo (1999) estimate the value of a House seat to be about \$3 million, or \$250,000 if they assume a linear utility function (Groseclose 2002).

The fifth assumption of the model is that legislators vote sincerely. In the area of congressional benefits, where the threat of voter sanction is high, theoretical models (Ordeshook 1986) and anecdotes (CQ 1990) of strategic voting have appeared. The reasoning is that legislators would prefer to vote against the proposal but for it to pass. However, in these models at least a majority of legislators vote sincerely, even when some do not. The reason is that legislators prefer to pass a pay raise and vote for it than to fail to pass a raise and to vote against it. As a general matter, then, it is not controversial to assume that legislators as a group vote sincerely, at least on benefits increases. Nevertheless, consistent with this assumption, in the empirical tests of the model I have endeavored to select roll call votes that are most likely to capture legislators' sincere preferences. For instance, when there is evidence that a significant number of legislators oppose a

⁵ In a study of congressional voting on a tax break, Hibbing (1983) states, "[n]one of the legislation dealt with by members of Congress elicits more emotion, bitterness, and controversy than that pertaining to their own remuneration. . . . It is perhaps the clearest instance of the desires of the member conflicting with the views of constituents" (219).

bill on a procedural question and support it on final passage, I test the model using the procedural vote.

Implications

This section tests Propositions 1-3. Analyzing roll calls as the method to test Propositions 1 and 2 was chosen over alternative methods because in this context preferences are revealed, rather than stated.⁶ Moreover, studying changes in Congressional structures promulgated through roll call votes informs our understanding of all of the structures in Congress. That is, if a majority is able to pass a bill, it creates a presumption that all other House structures are acceptable to that majority, else they would take action in other areas.

Proposition 1 states that Members who belong to larger state delegations will be more likely to support increases in the benefits of office, even when this results in a decreased likelihood of re-election. These benefits include Member salaries, but also include personal and committee staff and the franking privilege. The models that follow predict Member roll call behavior on proposals to amend Member salaries, personal staff, and the franking privilege.

Salary

Table 3 reports the results from a series of estimations of prominent roll call votes on congressional pay. They were selected based on the percentage change in pay being proposed, as well as their historical importance. Previous roll call analyses of congressional pay raises include those by Bartlett (1979); Hibbing (1983); Bianco (1994); and Bianco, Spence, and Wilkerson (1996). The basic empirical model emerging from these studies is that legislator preferences on pay raises are a function of their party affiliation, their age, and their electoral margin in the last election. The

⁶ Other studies of House rules use the year as the unit of analysis, coding each year as a change in favor of the majority/minority/no change, for example (Schickler 2000, Binder 199_).

specifications of congressional pay roll calls reported in Table 3 differ somewhat from this baseline. First, they include the size of each Member's state congressional delegation (at times logged) to account for the effect of advancement opportunity on preferences over increasing member salary. According to Proposition 1, delegation size should be positively related to support for increased salaries. These estimations also control for Member ideology, due to the prominent role that ideological divisions have been argued to play in congressional organization (Krehbiel 1991, Schickler 2000). Ideology is measured using Poole's NOMINATE scaling algorithm. Given that this is a roll-call based measure, and that it is determined by other explanatory variables in the model, it will by its very definition weaken the effect of other elements of the model. I include it not as an accurate measure of ideology but as a strong bias in favor of a null finding. Finally, a control for electoral margin is included only in the 1989 estimation; a future version of this paper will include this control to the remaining estimations. A description of the content of each proposal is included in the notes to the Table.

The parameter estimates indicate that legislators from larger state delegations were more likely to support pay *raises* in 1818, 1955, and 1989, and more likely to oppose pay *decreases* in 1873 and 1977. These estimates are all bounded above/below zero at a 95% confidence level in a one-tailed test (which is appropriate given the unidirectional hypothesis). The parameter estimate for the 1816 vote is not distinguishable from zero. The substantive significance of these effects was simulated using CLARIFY. In each case, the explanatory variables were set at their mean values while the variables were sequentially shifted from their 25th to 75th percentile values in the distribution. The results of these estimations indicate that such a shift in delegation size leads to an 8-12% increase (decrease) in a legislator's propensity to support (oppose) a pay raise. By comparison, the (absolute) effect of party ranged from 0% to 52% across the six resolutions, and the effect of ideology ranged from 2% to 63%. In half of the cases party affiliation had no significant

effect on the roll call. If the ideology variable is excluded from the estimation, the substantive effect of congressional delegation size and party affiliation are, in each model, about (+/-) .10.

Table 3: Roll Call Votes on Congressional Salaries

	1816 ^b	1818 ^c	1873 ^d	1955 ^e	1977 ^f	1989 ^g
Delegation Size ^a	-0.010 (0.013)	0.021 (0.012)*	-0.017 (0.008)**	0.019 (0.006)***	-0.014 (0.006)**	0.193 (0.089)**
Party Affiliation	0.003 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.009 (0.005)*	0.008 (0.002)***	0.001 (0.002)	0.016 (0.004)***
NOMINATE	1.789 (0.713)**	0.563 (0.324)*	1.350 (0.648)**	-2.035 (0.367)***	2.027 (0.363)***	-2.862 (0.483)***
Vote Share _{t-1}						0.044 (0.010)***
Constant	-0.210 (0.432)	0.236 (0.302)	1.715 (0.888)*	-0.768 (0.325)**	0.103 (0.275)	-5.765 (0.821)***
Observations	147	169	269	401	425	331

^aNatural log used in 1989 model.

^bTo change the mode of compensation from \$6 per diem to \$1500 annually.

^cTo amend H.R. 28 such that Members of Congress will be paid \$8 per diem and an additional \$8 for travel expenses.

^dTo amend H.R. 793 setting Member of Congress salaries at \$6000 annually.

^eTo amend H.R. 3828 raising the salary of Members of Congress, Executive Branch Officials, and standing committee staff, including an 80% increase for Members of Congress.

^fTo amend H.R. 7932 by rescinding the 29% pay raise of March 1, 1977 for Members of Congress.

^gTo increase Congressional salaries 40% over the next three terms. This model also controls for the number of federal workers in the district ($p < .05$)

Standard errors in parentheses

* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Staff

While roll call analyses of congressional pay raise decisions have been common, I am not aware of such analyses of staff allocation votes or (to follow) votes on the franking privilege. I model staff allocation votes (once again) as a function of state delegation size, party affiliation, and

legislator ideology. In one instance, I excluded the ideology measure for comparative purposes. The results of these estimations, reported in Table 4, indicate that in four of the five cases studied legislators from larger state delegations were more likely to support increasing member and committee staff, and more likely to oppose reductions in personal staff resources. These parameter estimates are significant at a .95 confidence level in a one-tailed test. Once again, the substantive effect of delegation size on roll call behavior is somewhat modest -- increasing/decreasing the vote choice probability by about 6-12%.

Table 4: Roll Call Votes on Member and Committee Staff

	12.7.1944 ^b	10.1.1974 ^c	5.21.1975 ^d	7.20.1979 ^e	6.6.1984 ^f	
Delegation Size ^a	0.012 (0.007)*	0.137 (0.079)*	-0.163 (0.094)*	-0.005 (0.008)	-.032 (.106)	-.161 (.093)*
Party Affiliation	0.003 (0.002)	-0.009 (0.002)***	0.010 (0.002)***	-0.004 (0.002)*	.005 (.003)*	.023 (.002)***
NOMINATE	-1.509 (0.424)***	0.254 (0.309)	2.416 (0.406)***	-3.207 (0.493)***	4.60 (.617)***	
Constant	-0.005 (0.363)	1.024 (0.311)***	-1.330 (0.341)***	1.068 (0.346)***	-.452 (.617)	-2.67 (.331)***
Observations	290	398	410	336	392	392

^aLogged value for 1974, 1975, and 1984 models.

^bTo consider H.R. 672, a rule for consideration of the clerk hire allowance, H.R. 5990.

^cTo amend H.R. 988 to increase the staff of standing committees to 30.

^dTo amend H.R. 6930 to prohibit funds necessary to increase the Member allowance for travel, staff, office expenses, and newsletters.

^eTo pass a clerk hire allowance, H.R. 359, permitting hiring of four temporary staff.

^fTo reduce the allowance for clerks by \$13 million.

Standard errors in parentheses

* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Franking Privilege

The third topical area related to benefits I analyze is votes on the franking privilege. This has been an active area of congressional action, particularly in the latter half of the 1800s. In Table 5

I report estimates of the effect of delegation size, party, and ideology on legislators' vote choice propensities on proposed changes to the franking privilege. In six of the ten cases, delegation size has a statistically significant effect on legislator propensity to support retaining the privilege.

Table 5: Roll Call Votes on the Franking Privilege

	Delegation Size	Party Affiliation	NOMINATE	Constant	Observations
<i>3.2.1816^a</i>	-0.006 (0.014)	0.001 (0.001)	1.15 (0.703)	-0.04 (.04)	136
<i>1.20.1869^b</i>	-0.206 (0.120)*	0.002 (0.004)	-0.595 (0.488)	0.89 (0.65)	222
<i>12.8.1870^c</i>	-0.017 (0.105)	0.001 (0.006)	-0.313 (0.723)	0.084 (1.004)	234
<i>12.13.1870^d</i>	0.132 (0.11)	0.015 (0.007)**	-2.259 (0.812)***	-2.053 (1.105)*	235
<i>1.27.1873^e</i>	0.307 (0.121)**	0.003 (0.005)	-0.216 (0.602)	-0.291 (0.828)	239
<i>2.26.1874^f</i>	-0.367 (0.104)***	-0.004 (0.004)	0.623 (0.506)	1.02 (0.734)	290
<i>3.2.1875^g</i>	-0.389 (0.105)***	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.263 (0.436)	1.847 (0.646)***	287
<i>4.6.1910^h</i>	0.002 (0.092)	-0.014 (0.004)***	-0.231 (0.439)	2.455 (0.724)***	390
<i>9.19.1962ⁱ</i>	0.258 (0.106)**	-0.012 (0.003)***	-1.075 (0.375)***	0.435 (0.38)	372
<i>12.3.1973^j</i>	.152 (.076)**	-.003 (.002)	.132 (.301)	.511 (.308)	427

^aTo amend a bill pertaining to the post office to give Members of Congress the franking privilege.

^bTo amend H.R. 1549, a bill restricting the franking privilege, to prohibit Members of Congress to receive through the mail any matter free of postage.

^cTo amend H.R. 2295 relating to consolidation of postal laws to prevent abuse of the franking privilege.

^dTo amend H.R. 2295 by repealing laws granting franking privileges.

^eTo suspend the rules and introduce H.R. 2982, 17 Stat. 421, a bill abolishing the franking privilege.

^fTo abolish the franking privilege for Members of Congress.

^gTo Table a motion to reconsider concurring in an amendment to H.R. 4529, a postal appropriation bill which reopens the franking privilege.

^hTo prohibit the use of the franking for campaigning purposes.

ⁱTo move to insist on disagreement to Senate amendment to prohibit the use of the Congressional franking privilege if mail is addressed to "occupant" rather than a particular person.

^jTo clarify the proper use of the franking privilege by Members of Congress.

Standard errors in parentheses

* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Moreover, a significant effect is observed in five of the six most recent votes cast on this issue.⁷ By comparison, party affiliation predicts vote choice in just three of the ten cases and ideology predicts vote choice in but two of the ten cases. Substantively, the pattern is similar to the pay and staff results -- a legislator from the delegation at the 75th percentile of the distribution is about 10% more likely than a legislator from the delegation at the 25th percentile of the distribution to support the retention of the franking privilege.

House Rules

Proposition 2 posits that static types -- legislators from large state congressional delegations will be more likely to support changes in House rules that increase the probability of advancement to the Senate, while decreasing the Member's ability to be re-elected to the House. Table 6 reports the results from a series of estimations of notable roll call votes over the period 1849-1980 related to parliamentary rules, committee jurisdictions, and other House procedures.

In most all the cases, delegation size is a significant predictor of vote choice, though often only when the NOMINATE ideology measure is excluded. Examining the content of the votes, we observe that members of large state delegations are more likely to support such proposals as the adoption of Calendar Wednesday (allowing committees to call up bills of their choice), the creation (and retention) of the 21-day rule (which made it easier to bypass the Rules Committee), the enlargement of committees, the relaxation of discharge petition requirements, and the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 (which encouraged open committee meetings, required that committees have written rules, required that all committee roll call votes be made public, allowed radio and television coverage of committee hearings, safeguarded the rights of minority party members on committees, and prohibited general, but not specific, proxies for committee

⁷ Note, though, that the sign of the 1874 vote is not as predicted.

votes in an attempt to prevent their indiscriminate use by committee chairmen and other members).

Table 6: Roll Call Votes on House Parliamentary Rules and Committees

	Delegation Size	Party Affiliation	NOMINATE	Constant	Observations
<i>12.171849^a</i>	-0.017 (0.017)	0.009 (0.002)***	-3.919 (0.535)***	-0.58 (0.285)**	221
	-.05 (.01)***	.02 (.002)***		-.65 (.24)**	221
<i>8.30.1893^b</i>	-0.038 (0.012)***	0.007 (0.002)***	1.770 (0.332)***	-0.735 (0.402)*	259
<i>3.15.1909^c</i>	-0.043 (0.012)***	0.022 (0.006)***	-6.234 (0.825)***	-2.569 (0.953)***	384
<i>3.15.1909^d</i>	0.034 (0.011)***	-0.02 (0.006)***	5.476 (0.734)***	2.595 (0.895)***	385
<i>1.17.1924^e</i>	0.032 (0.008)***	0.004 (0.003)	-4.777 (0.555)***	-1.508 (0.472)***	388
<i>1.3.1945^f</i>	-0.011 (0.009)	-0.03 (0.004)***	8.363 (0.877)***	4.387 (0.611)***	394
	-.026 (.006)***	.01 (.001)***		-.96 (.19)***	394
<i>1.3.1951^g</i>	0.018 (0.008)**	0.027 (0.004)***	-8.654 (0.845)***	-4.21 (0.556)***	426
<i>1.3.1951^h</i>	-0.018 (0.008)**	-0.029 (0.004)***	8.558 (0.823)***	4.477 (0.564)***	423
<i>1.31.1961ⁱ</i>	-0.001 (0.011)	0.008 (0.003)**	-9.818 (1.041)***	-0.881 (0.393)**	428
	.025 (.006)***	-.02 (.002)***		2.27 (.22)***	428
<i>1.4.1965^j</i>	.015 (.014)	.016 (.005)***	-14.09 (1.73)***	-3.17 (.693)***	424
	.037 (.007)***	-.021 (.002)***		2.11 (.22)	424
<i>1.10.1967^k</i>	-.015 (.011)	-.016 (.004)***	12.35 (1.43)***	2.93 (.658)	417
	-.043 (.007)***	.017 (.002)***		-1.52 (.221)	417
<i>9.17.1970^l</i>	0.010 (0.015)	0.014 (0.003)***	-3.398 (0.669)***	-0.100 (0.436)	345
	0.023 (0.011)**	0.002 (0.002)		0.986 (0.364)***	345
<i>1.31.1973^m</i>	-0.001 (0.007)	0.006 (0.002)***	-3.26 (0.434)***	-0.105 (0.326)	375
	.014 (.006)**	-.005 (.001)***		1.28 (.25)***	375
<i>3.7.1973ⁿ</i>	0.003	-0.027	-2.59	3.747	394

	(0.011)	(0.002)***	(0.522)***	(0.341)***	
4.9.1974 ^o	0.002	0.011	0.353	-1.26	400
	(0.006)	(0.002)***	(0.317)	(0.270)***	
10.8.1974 ^p	0.012	-0.015	1.424	2.089	369
	(0.006)**	(0.002)***	(0.342)***	(0.300)***	
3.25.1980 ^q	.145	-.004	-1.40	.639	408
	(.081)*	(.002)**	(.374)***	(.340)*	

^aTo table a resolution appointing a committee to report about how the House might best be organized.

^bTo amend the proposed rules submitted by the Rules Committee to increase the number of committee members from 17 to 19, and further that the additional members should be appointed from congressional districts West of the Mississippi River.

^cTo revise section 1 of rule 10 such that the Rules Committee shall consist of 15 members, elected by the floor, and that the committee shall elect its own chairman.

^dTo adopt Calendar Wednesday.

^eTo amend H.R. 146 to change from 150 to 100 the number of signatures required to discharge a bill from committee.

^fTo pass the Rankin amendment on establishment of the HUAAC.

^gTo move the previous question on the Rules of the House.

^hTo adopt the Cox substitute to delete the 21-day rule.

ⁱTo enlarge the Rules committee by two Democrats and one Republican.

^jTo move the previous question on new rules (including readoption of 21-day rule).

^kTo delete 21-day rule.

^lTo pass the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970.

^mTo pass H.R. 132, a resolution to create a committee to study the jurisdictions of House standing committees.

ⁿTo move previous question on H.R. 272, a rule under which H.R. 259, a resolution to amend the rules by strengthening the requirement that committee meetings be held in open session.

^oTo Amend H.R. 998 by striking the section amending the process of ordering a recorded vote in the Committee of the Whole.

^pTo pass the Hansen Amendment, a replacement for H.R. 988, a proposal of the Bolling Commission.

^qTo revise the jurisdiction of the Committee on Energy.

Standard errors in parentheses

* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

It is also notable that several, general resolutions to study/conduct the reorganization of the House were passed by a coalition of large state delegation members. In these estimations, party affiliation and member ideology are also important predictors of member rules preferences, consistent with earlier findings by Schickler (2000). Indeed, as was observed in the previous models, party affiliation and member ideology each consistently have a larger impact on rules roll calls than does the Member's likelihood of advancement.

Admittedly, it is difficult to reach dispositive conclusions about the extent to which these resolutions improved the prospects of members for advancement to the Senate and, at the same time, decreased members' re-election probabilities. It might be contended, though, that rules changes that improve the ability of rank-and-file Members to enhance their visibility by sponsoring successful legislation or otherwise appear influential will improve promotion prospects. In turn, there appears to be some evidence that members from large state delegations tend to favor changes of this type.

DISCUSSION

To this point, it has been shown that legislators with little opportunity for advancement are more likely to adopt increases in the benefits of office and to favor rules that promote their advancement to higher office.

This penultimate section offers a speculative attempt to explain change in congressional organization over time. This section argues that the changing composition of member types in Congress helps to account for the timing of change in the benefit levels members have chosen and the rules by which they enact legislation. That is, change in the structures of the House has come about in part due to the changing goals of House members. The goals of House members have changed, in turn, because the distribution of state delegation sizes has changed.

As illustrated in Figure 3, the average size of state congressional delegations increased nearly 50% from 1860 to 1910 (from 6.75 to 9). At the same time, the variance in state delegation size increased substantially (from 6.5 to 8.6), with nearly all of this change in variance occurring at the upper end of the distribution. While the average state delegation dipped slightly thereafter, the variance of state delegation size has continued to increase (it was 9.75 in 2000). In combination,

these two trends had the effect of 1) increasing the average level of competition for Senate seats and 2) further distancing the interests of large- and small-state legislators.

These trends in the distribution of state congressional delegations coincide with the period thought to be crucial for the emergence of the “institutionalized” House of Representatives (Polsby 1968). It is no surprise that as the percentage of members that were presented with static ambition opportunities increased, member turnover declined,⁸ and over time institutions were adopted in the House that were favorable to these large-state legislators (Polsby 1968; Kernell 1977; Squire 1988). This coincided with a greater propensity of large-state members to support increases in congressional pay (Table 3), as well as the franking privilege (Table 5).

Figure 3: State Congressional Delegations, 1860-2000



⁸ Members of larger state delegations are less likely to move to higher office, as well as less likely to retire (Schansberg 1994, Kiewiet and Zeng 1993, Cox and Katz 2001), and thus typically enjoy longer careers in Congress.

CONCLUSION

This paper has generated and tested predictions about the effect that different expectations of advancement to the U.S. Senate have on the preferences of House members for organizing the chamber. In particular, the model developed here projected that House members who belong to large state delegations will be more likely to support increases in various benefits of office, even if these benefits are offset by a decreased likelihood of re-election. This prediction was tested on roll call data concerning congressional pay, personal staff, and the franking privilege, and were generally supported. The second prediction of the model was that House members belonging to large state delegations will be more likely to trade an increase in the likelihood of advancement to the Senate for a decreased likelihood of re-election. This expectation was tested using roll call data on House rules changes. Again, the prediction was substantially supported. Finally, the paper examined the changing composition of member types in Congress over time. It was shown that the number of members who hail from large congressional delegations has increased, which helps to explain the rise of many familiar house structures, particularly during the period 1870-1900.

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