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The Transformation of Congressional Policy Making in a Partisan Era

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1. I was wrong, committees are much more fascinating than I could've imagined.

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Dedicated to everyone who made this possible.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation explores the transformation of Congressional politics away from traditional practices and the consequences of those changes. In the House of Representatives, I consider this with respect to the party and chamber rule changes introduced by the new Republican majority after the 1994 election, while in the Senate I use the lens of paired voting to evaluate how the Senate has evolved. The first chapter discusses the literature on party government and theorizes how parties have used committees to achieve their goals.

Chapters 2 and 3 center how Speaker Newt Gingrich used rule changes to alter the relationship between parties and committees, as well as the consequences of those changes. Specifically, I theorize that the most consequential rule change regarding the relationship between parties and committees was the reconstitution of the Republican Steering Committee. The Republican Steering Committee was tasked with assigning members to committees and determining which members would receive. Gingrich remade the Steering Committee in a way that massively increased the voting power of the party leadership, with the intent to solidify party control over the committee process. Though not all at once, like the Republicans, the Democrats followed suit by adding party leadership members and appointees to their

own steering committee. In the second chapter, I examine the consequences of that change with regard to what members are assigned to committees they ask to be on. Journalistic accounts show that leaders have emphasized loyalty as the main important criteria, however my statistical tests show that party leaders are still focused on accommodating most members most of the time.

In the third chapter, I turn to the consequences of steering committee reform for legislative productivity in the House of Representatives. Committee and subcommittee chairs consistently produce the most legislation and laws of any members of Congress, but the degree varies tremendously. I argue that the degree changes based on the body that is charged with selecting committee chairs, and thus how free those chairs feel to push their own legislation. I compare chairs chosen by the seniority system, by the party caucus, and by the steering committee headed by the party leadership. I find that chairs are empowered under the seniority system and in the modern party leadership-led era. In the party era, the leaders are selecting committee chairs based on their congruence with the party leadership's ideology, and so their legislation is party legislation. This holds for members of both parties.

In the fourth chapter, I study the demise of paired voting in the Senate as a consequence of both political and practical changes. I find that paired voting occurred almost entirely within party. When parties became more ideologically homogeneous, there was no longer a reliably a copartisan with whom to pair. At the same time, absence rates were lowered, meaning there were less needs for pairs. In this study I note that while increased polarization and party centralization have been the dominant themes in congressional scholarship, these have happened alongside other changes in Congress and its environment, which must also be considered to fully characterize the evolution of the House and Senate. I conclude the dissertation by noting that the history of Congress is marked by periods of stasis punctuated

by massive reforms. My dissertation has aims to consider the modern, partisan era both in terms of how it came about and how it has subsumed traditional practices.

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Evolving Congress

Former Ways and Means chair Dan Rostenkowski wrote of Newt Gingrich in a Chicago Tribune op-ed "He's making basic changes that are a virtual guarantee that the House at the turn of the century will be significantly different than it was at the beginning of this decade, irrespective of how long the Republicans retain control. The Democrats won't be able to put Humpty Dumpty back together again. And they shouldn't want to." With nearly three decades of perspective, the present Congress remains the one that Gingrich made. His party's victory in the 1994 elections gave him the freedom to write party and chamber rules that gave the leadership significantly more control, particularly with regard to the committee system.

In the mid-1970s, the Democratic Party undertook so many reforms in the House of Representatives that scholars started referring to the period afterward as the "Post-Reform Congress." Despite the similarly drastic rule changes pushed by Newt Gingrich and his Republican colleagues after the 1994 election, these reforms and their consequences have not received the same amount of attention or scrutiny. I argue that those rule changes were a flashpoint for the modern domination of party leaders and fundamentally altered the

relationship between the party leadership and committees. In this dissertation, I examine the transformation of the House of Representatives into a party-centered institution, evaluate the consequences of that transformation for committee membership and legislative activity, and investigate the role of committees in the modern era. I contend that rule reforms introduced directly after the Republican Revolution turned committees from being principals in competition with the party leadership into agents of the party leaders.

The second part of my dissertation looks at the consequences of party centralization in the Senate and its influence on vote behavior. The Senate did not undergo the same organizational changes that the House did, but rather had a slower trend toward party governance. I show that the effects of party centralization can be seen earlier than most contemporary studies suggest, and that one such effect is the elimination of paired voting as a strategy available to members.

Previous Studies of The Consequences of Partisanship

For a generation, the dominant theme of congressional scholarship has been increasing polarization and partisanship. The parties have become more ideologically cohesive and distinct, and with that have chosen to empower the party leadership (Aldrich, Perry, and Rohde 2002; Cooper and Brady 1981; Rohde 1991). The increased responsibility of the party leadership is directly connected with a decline in the authority and autonomy of committee chairs (Bendix 2016; Berry and Fowler 2018). In particular, this trend is associated with the demise of the regular order of bill consideration. The precise definition of regular order varies, but in general it refers to a decentralized, committee-led process of policy development with open floor consideration (Aldrich and Rohde 2000b; Bendix 2016; Rohde 1991; Sinclair 2016). In contrast to regular order, the modern Congress frequently operates by "unorthodox

lawmaking," which is centralized, led by party leaders, and often bypasses committees before being considered on the floor without the opportunity for amendment (Curry 2015; Sinclair 2016). As party leaders have gained power, reliance on some of the traditional modes of congressional procedure have been altered. The seniority system is no longer one of the main considerations for committee advancement (Cann 2008; Deeing and Wahlbeck 2006; Herbelig and Larson 2012). Leaders have elected to use alternatives to conference committees, limiting the amount of influence that committee members have on bills after they pass the chamber (Park, Smith, and Vander Wielen 2017).

Some critics, led by Frances Lee, contend that the strength of partisanship and its role in Congressional behavior has been overstated. Lee (2011) finds that much of the increased polarization in voting behavior is due to an increase in the number of messaging bills rather than sharper policy disagreement. The focus on partisanship is a deliberate tactic by party leaders who are now tasked with winning and maintaining a majority, which requires highlighting cleavages between the parties (Lee 2016). In spite of that, legislative outputs are largely bipartisan, with most laws tending to receive at least 50% of the minority party's support (Curry and Lee 2020a). Further, Curry and Lee (2020b) find that there is not a higher level of partisanship on votes passed through unorthodox, leader-led procedures. Instead, such processes are frequently used to efficiently solve legislative impasses and uphold bipartisan deals and cooperation.

Similarly, Laurel Harbridge-Yong answers the provocative question that titles her book, *Is Bipartisanship Dead?*, in the negative. She argues that the amount of bipartisanship in the House is masked by a focus on the roll call record, as partisan legislation is more likely to receive a roll call vote. In spite of this fact, cosponsorship activity, legislative enactments, and voice votes still demonstrate considerable bipartisanship. The main data in the book, though, stops at the 108th Congress, and her conclusion suggests that more recent Congresses have seen a decline in bipartisanship across many different legislative measures. While opponents

of the partisanship thesis tend to focus on bill enactment, voting, and cosponsorship activity, I look at the less ambiguous case of congressional organization. Because the House of Representatives organizes in a distinctly partisan way, with party organs choosing committee leaders, determining committee sizes, and making committee assignments, characterizing the relationship between party leadership and committees is crucial to understanding Congress.

The centrality of party slowly built in the closing decades of the twentieth century. While the trend toward an empowered party leadership was evident in the 1980s with speakers like Jim Wright, reforms put into place by Speaker Newt Gingrich supercharged that change. He campaigned on the Contract for America, a set of government reforms and legislative proposals that were endorsed by almost every Republican running. When the party unexpectedly won a congressional majority, Gingrich was given wide latitude to rewrite party and chamber rules. Most of the reforms dealt with the committee system. Three committees and one-third of subcommittees were abolished. Committee chairs became term limited and so could no longer build up the independent base of power they once held. Gingrich also reconstituted the Republican Steering Committee, the body that selects committee chairs and assigns members to committees. It went from being made up mostly of regional representatives to one where the party leaders alone held almost a majority of the voting power. Further, the party came to a tacit understanding that all chairs would have to be approved by the speaker.

I argue that the Republican rule changes altered the relationship between party leadership and committees in a way that both set the stage for the modern domination of party leaders and subjugated committees and their chairs. While it was the Republicans who introduced the reforms, Democrats quickly followed suit, initially maintaining the committee chair term limit when they retook the majority in 2007, and adding a large number of speaker appointees to their own steering committee. Through these changes, committee seats became rewards that party leaders were more regimented about giving, and committee leaders went from being one of several principals in the House to being agents of the party leadership. Thus,

the proper characterization of power dynamics in the House is not party leadership versus committee, but rather party through committee. I demonstrate this in two empirical chapters.

The Giant Jigsaw Puzzle Resurgent: Committee Assignment Reform in the House of Representatives

In the first paper, I update research on committee requests and assignments to include the modern party era and compare the determinants for success under different methods for assigning members to committees. Gingrich's reconstitution of the Republican Steering Committee in 1994 gave the Speaker 5 of the 35 votes, and 14 in total to the party leadership. This bloc contrasts with the previous makeup of the Republican Steering Committee, which was mainly regional representatives, with party leaders having no formal vote until the 101st Congress. While Democrats did not altogether remake their steering committee in the way that Republicans did, they heavily increased the amount of leaders and leader appointees on the committee.

Since the 1990s, many party leaders have explicitly stated that loyalty was going to be paramount in determining who successfully obtains a requested committee seat. Gingrich disproportionately rewarded freshman and sophomore members, who were more uniformly conservative and who he saw as central to the coalition that won Republicans the majority. His successor, Dennis Hastert, started that success in fundraising for the party's campaign committee would be required to earn a spot on one of the top committees. On the Democratic side, leader Nancy Pelosi requested party dues that increased based on how valuable a committee slot a member held, before creating scores that integrated many different manifestations of party support that were to be considered when committee assignments were determined.

In this paper, I test what factors determine if a member earns a requested committee

spot, while accounting for the fact that members are non-randomly deciding when to request a committee. I test two competing explanations for member success. The first, loyalty, is that party leaders only give supportive members favored seats in order to use committee assignments as a tool that can reward cooperation. The second, accommodation, is that leaders are trying to satisfy as many members as they can, within the limits of committee size and competitiveness. To capture the multifaceted idea that is "party loyalty," I use multiple different operationalizations of loyalty. I use floor voting based measures, such as party support scores from the most recent Congress and ideological distance from the party median, as well as more active measures of support, like the amount raised for party campaign committees. However, I do not find any strong support that loyalty was treated differently in granting committee assignments in the partisan era. Instead, I find that the most consistent factors in determining request success were things like how popular the requested committee was, the number of seats available, and previous state representation on the committee, supporting the accommodation model.

Party leaders must be attentive to numerous competing pressures when determining committee assignments. Members are good judges of what assignments will make them more attractive to voters at home and party leaders, who want above all a legislative majority, try to accommodate as many members as they can. Thus, the main determining factors for committee assignments would be things like the number of available seats. With this perspective, loyalty matters mostly at the margins, but not enough to have a clear statistically discernible influence. Party leaders are still solving a giant jigsaw puzzle when determining assignments, and loyalty is only one piece.

Who Makes the Laws? The Institutional Foundation of Legislative Productivity

The second paper of my dissertation examines the changing pathways of legislation sponsored by committee and subcommittee chairs over three different power arrangements between committee chairs, party leadership, and rank-and-file members. I term these time periods "eras," and they are marked by large scale changes in party and chamber rules, especially with respect to the mechanism by which committee chairs are selected and retained. The first, in the mid-twentieth century, was the "committee government," where the seniority system determined who would be chair and there were few options to remove a sitting chair. The second era, "subcommittee government," is the period after the subcommittee bill of rights, where the most senior members were subject to a vote by their caucus every Congress before taking their committee chair. The ongoing era, "party government," is one where each party's steering committee, which determines who will become chair, is led and significantly influenced by the party leadership.

Under different institutional arrangements, committee chairs alter their behavior based on how secure they feel in advancing their own legislation and blocking the legislation of other members. In the committee government era, there is no fear of reprisal because there is no easy way to remove a committee chair. Committee chairs can exercise complete control over their committees, refusing to consider and vote on bills they do not like, while progressing their own personal legislation. Under subcommittee government, chairs have to accommodate the subcommittee chairs and rank-and-file members who have the potential power to remove them from their position, and so will be more likely to accommodate junior member legislation at the expense of their own policy priorities. In the party government era, the leadership-led steering committees are selecting chairs who match the party leadership ideologically, and so can advance their own legislation without worrying that the steering committee will remove

them for doing so.

In any era, chairs are the most productive Members of Congress, regularly sponsoring the most legislation and the most important legislation. However, the degree changes considerably across the three time periods under study. I find that committee chairs are most legislatively productive during the committee era. While I only have limited data for the committee era, during the period I have coverage, chairs are on average six times as productive as the average legislator. The subcommittee government era sees the lowest level of legislative productivity for chairs, though they are still three times as productive as an average legislator. This era also sees the highest productivity of subcommittee chairs, which is consistent with a system where full committee chairs are not exercising as much blocking power over junior member bills. The party era sees chairs that are about four times as effective as the average legislator, a return to more aggressive chairs.

This paper demonstrates that a view of modern party leaders in competition with committee chairs for control of the legislative agenda is too simplistic. Modern committee chairs are instead part of the party centralization. They get their seat through partisan means and keep it through being a loyal agent.

An Autopsy of Paired Voting in the U.S. Senate

The final empirical chapter of this dissertation turns to the Senate and leverages the disappearing practice of paired voting to understand contextual changes that condition the range of available voting options. Paired voting is a practice by which a senator who is absent makes an agreement with a senator in attendance who is voting opposite them. The attending senator votes and then withdraws their vote, announcing that they have a pair with the absent senator, and states how the absent senator would have voted. By pairing,

senators can ensure that their absence does not change the outcome of a roll call. Senators made hundreds of pairs in the mid-twentieth century, but the number has been declining since the 1970s and has now all but disappeared entirely.

To determine why pairing no longer occurs, I first investigate why members form pairs in the first place. The incentive for the absent member is obvious - they want their views recorded and to nullify the impact of their absence. Indeed, a low attendance rate is an important factor in explaining when members pair. Attending members, by contrast, rarely benefit by throwing away their vote, except by earning a reputation as someone willing to assist a colleague. I find that pairing is an overwhelmingly within-party phenomenon. Not only did most pairs occur between copartisans, but the parties set up an infrastructure to facilitate within-party pairs. One responsibility of the first whips was to arrange pairs. Each party developed the position of pairing clerk, who was to be informed when a senator had to be absent, and eventually folded this role into the duties of the party secretary. Party leaders actively discouraged pairing with opposite party members, not wanting to aid the attendance record of political rivals. As pairs require that two members be on the opposite sides of a roll call, this could only happen among members with some amount of ideological distances between each other. Thus, I find that paired voting is usually an arrangement made by ideologically distant copartisans.

The Senate has transformed over the course of the twentieth century both practically and politically, so I use time series methods to test what is associated with the overall decline in the level of pairing. Technological improvements made it faster and easier to traverse the country. Senate leaders shrunk the calendar by scheduling fewer recorded votes outside of the middle of the week. These meant that absences were not as much of a concern. Accordingly, the average attendance rate for senators has increased significantly, and as senators missed fewer votes, there is less of a demand for pairs. The total number of pairs in a Congress is lower as the aggregate attendance rate rises. Even in the age of jet engines, senators have

many different responsibilities that can force them to miss votes. Increased attendance rates do not wholly explain the disappearance of paired voting. Because pairs happened most often between ideologically distant copartisans, when the parties homogenized and became more ideologically consistent, there were fewer copartisans voting against each other who could pair.

While a departure from the specific subject of the preceding two chapters, paired voting fits the broad theme of this dissertation. Increased partisanship and polarization has significantly eroded many standard practices in both chambers of Congress. In the House, that means the decline in regular order and committee power, but the Senate has also altered its behavior.

Broader Implications

This dissertation aims to discuss how party polarization and party centralization have transformed congressional practice. I do this by highlighting how the 1994 Republican rule reforms gave the party leadership control over the Steering Committee, allowing them a greater role in choosing both which members are assigned to what committee and which members become chair of those committees. In doing so, I speak to the literature on party organization in Congress and note the consequences that the composition of the steering committees has for lawmaking and the distribution of power in the House of Representatives. Ultimately this project aims to examine the role of committees in the modern Congress. Despite headlines that decry "the Death of the Congressional Committee," I find that party leaders have used committees as a way to consolidate their control over policymaking in the House of Representatives.

Chapter 2

The Giant Jigsaw Puzzle Resurgent: Committee Assignment Politics in the House of Representatives

Following the 2018 election, Kathleen Rice (D-NY) tried to gain a seat on the Judiciary Committee. A former prosecutor and third-term member, the New York delegation promoted her as a natural choice for the spot. However, she was a vocal critic of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, voting against Pelosi's bid to return as speaker in the new Democratic majority. In what was widely reported as "Pelosi's Revenge," the speaker left Rice's name off the list of preferred candidates she submitted to the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, which assigns members to committees, despite the fact that Rice had around the average level of party support in her voting record. The steering committee was chaired by the speaker and filled with leader appointees, and so Pelosi's lobbying was enough to swing the vote and keep Rice off of the Judiciary Committee. This was the second such disappointment for New York

that Congress, as Anthony Brindisi, a freshman who also voted against Pelosi, was left off Armed Services. Pelosi was able to punish this disloyalty because of the voting power that the leadership commands on the party's steering committee, which determines committee assignments. In the opening of that same Congress, Pelosi dealt with another potentially uncooperative group, the Congressional Progressive Caucus. This growing group of Democrats argued that they energized the electorate to deliver the party's majority. Pelosi, both sensitive to the need for harmony among the wings of the Democratic Party and recognizing their value to the Democratic majority, promised to increase the group's representation on the most influential committees. This negotiation is one that House leaders face every two years and represents what scholars have called the "giant jigsaw puzzle." How do leaders balance a party's myriad goals when making committee assignments?

The question of what members get on which committees has been a subject of exploration for congressional scholars for decades. Early studies found the process to be largely one of accommodation and self selection, where members picked the assignments that suited them and leaders did their best to ensure most members were satisfied, while more recent studies have emphasized the effect of different types of party loyalty. While these studies well characterized committee assignment politics, they now largely describe a process that no longer exists. In 1994, after winning the first Republican majority in forty years, the Conference gave incoming speaker Newt Gingrich significant freedom to rewrite the party's rules. One major change was transforming the party's Committee on Committees into the House Republican Steering Committee, which controlled committee assignments. The party leadership, which accounted for about ten percent of votes in the Committee on Committees, now commanded around half of the votes and has ever since. This change was undertaken with the explicit goal of rewarding supporters and threatening defectors and subsequent leaders, on both sides of the aisle, have now made personal and political loyalty a central aspect of the committee assignment process.

While the reforms increased the power of the party leadership in making assignments, party leaders do not single-mindedly aim to reward loyalty and spur compliance. They also want to assist in their members' reelection chances and form a cooperative governing majority, and those goals sometimes mean elevating members who are not as loyal. Leaders may want to accommodate members in order to ensure that as much of the party as possible is being well served by committee assignments. Under an accommodation framework, the limiting factor in guaranteeing members get the assignment they want is space. The number of available committee seats is bounded, with the minority party having limited say in how many committee seats they get, and different committees have greater numbers of requesters. Accommodating leaders will attempt to support many members in getting their preferred assignments, rather than selectively trying to support party loyalists.

I examine whether the change in the parties' steering committees has changed the criteria on which members get assigned to committees. In particular, I evaluate whether leaders are using committee assignments as tools of loyalty or opportunities for accommodation. I show through journalistic accounts that recent leaders have insisted on loyalty, but have defined loyalty in different ways, which are often particularistic and idiosyncratic. To examine long-run changes in the committee assignment process that spans multiple leaders, I use multiple definitions of loyalty to test whether more loyal members are given their preferred committee assignments. In my quantitative analysis, though, I do not find consistent evidence, under any definition, that loyalty became a stronger determinant of committee assignments after Steering Committee reform. Instead characteristics of the requested committee, such as the amount of available seats or number of competing copartisans vying for spots, predict success in gaining a favored committee assignment. These factors are consistent with an accommodation model, where party leaders try to satisfy as many member's requests as possible.

Committee Assignment Politics

At the beginning of every Congress, many members choose to seek new committee assignments. They put much effort into gaining their preferred assignment, with some preparing elaborate presentations to their party's steering committee about how they will serve on the committee. Committee assignments have even helped motivate members to switch parties. Greg Laughlin crossed over to the Republican majority in 1995 for the promise of a seat on Ways and Means, and Phil Gramm's removal from the Budget committee was a key factor in his decision to abandon the Democrats in the early 1980s. The choice of committee assignment, thus, is not taken lightly. It influences the legislative priorities members pursue and how successful they are. About 40% of the legislation that members introduce is referred to a committee on which they sit (Congressional Bills Project). Moreover, if legislation is referred to a committee on which a member sits, it is much more likely to be successful. Since 1981, bills referred to a member's committee pass the House 21.4% of the time, and only 9.7% of the time when referred to a committee on which the member does not sit.[2] A member's choice to seek an assignment, and the subsequent committee on which they are placed, can have significant consequences for a member's personal career as well as their capacity for district representation. Then-Representative Chuck Schumer once said of the choice of what committee assignment to pursue, "It's the most important decision you can make. If you're on a good committee, you'll enjoy legislating and accomplish something. If you're on a bad committee, you won't enjoy it here" (Fuerbringer 1986).

At the same time, party leaders are concerned with what members attain coveted committee slots. They have to balance multiple, often competing, priorities when determining who to recommend for what assignment. They want to reward allies and punish defectors,

2. When minor bills are excluded from the calculation, bills referred to a members committee pass 16.3% of the time and 4.9% otherwise (Congressional Bills Project).

like Pelosi did with Kathleen Rice, but loyalty is just one consideration. Party leaders also want to keep harmony among divisions in their caucus, to attain or keep majority party status, and help each member's reelection chances. They must solve what Kenneth Shepsle called "the giant jigsaw puzzle (1979)." They attempt to optimize the committee assignments that will best serve party goals, while operating under constraints like committee size and the popularity of different committee seats.

The choice of what committees to request and which members are successful has received considerable scholarly attention. The pioneering work of Masters (1971) identified two important facets of committee assignment politics. First, researchers must be sensitive to the difference in party organization in how committee assignments are made. Second, he identified that party leaders use committee assignments strategically in order to reward loyalty and placate potential threats. While studies have consistently found evidence of some leadership influence, early studies of committee assignments saw the process as one of self-selection. With the exception of exclusive power committees, members requested assignments that were important to their constituency and party leaders did their best to accommodate those requests (Cook 1983; Davidson and Oleszek 1990; Gertzog 1976). Party harmony was prized and the most biggest factors influencing assignment were the amount of competition for the spot, electoral needs of members, and regional balance (Deering and Smith 1997; Smith and Ray 1983). Leaders were intentional and strategic about these goals, preferring to increase the size of committees in order to allow more members their requested slots (Ray and Smith 1984; Westefeld 1974). That latter point suggests that leaders are willing to give away a currency that could be used as a reward for loyalty or building a policy majority in favor of keeping the size of their majority.

In the 1980s, a series of more aggressive speakers led scholars to reevaluate the role of the party leadership. Party loyalty emerged as an expected criteria for committee assignments, and leaders routinely calculated loyalty scores when determining assignments (Frisch and

Kelly 2006; Rohde 1991; Smith and Ray 1983). Recent studies of assignment politics have consistently supported the idea that modern party leaders use committee assignments as rewards, using multiple different definitions of loyalty. Leadership support scores constructed from leadership speeches (Asmussen and Ramey 2018) and leaders' personal papers (Meinke 2022) find that better assignments go to members that help the leadership. The ability to raise funds for the party also increases a member's chance of landing a prized spot (Adler and Cayton 2022; Jenkins n.d.; Peterson 2015). The shift from party harmony to party loyalty is indicative of how the committee assignment process is not stagnant. Indeed, the process is occasionally upended completely and the mechanism by which representatives are placed on committees is restructured. One such instance, 1995 Republican rule changes that created the House Republican Steering Committee, is the motivation for this chapter.

Two major studies have tackled the question of whether steering committee reform influenced what members received preferred committee assignments. These analyses look at 1975 rule changes for the Democrats which took control away from the Democratic contingent on the Committee on Ways and Means and empowered the party leadership in a Steering and Policy Committee. Smith and Ray note the continuity of processes throughout both systems of committee assignment, both in terms of how members request assignments and how the selecting committee makes assignments (1983). Cox and McCubbins likewise find that the rule change did not consistently moderate the effect of loyalty on assignments (2007). These findings suggest that the Ways and Means committee had similar goals and considerations to the Steering Committee in making committee assignments. The creation of the House Republican Steering Committee, in an era where party leadership was growing stronger, presents a new arena to examine how selection committee process change can influence assignment outcomes.

While the literature on committee assignments is voluminous, it does not address the effect of recent changes in the makeup of the steering committees, and thus does not

adequately describe the committee assignment process in the modern House. The majority of studies predate Gingrich's reforms, and so naturally cannot comment on their effect, but even contemporary studies do not grapple with them. Research that covers Congresses before and after the Republican Revolution treat both eras equivalently despite the fact that the data generating process is different. In this chapter, I redirect the focus onto the rules governing modern committee assignments as a potential factor in how party leaders are able to exercise control over assignments.

Committee Assignment Process Reforms

Each party has a different process by which they assign members to committees, and both parties have seen that method change in the past few decades. In this section, I explicate major rule and procedural changes since the 1990s, as well as the consequences of those reforms as stated by party leaders in journalistic accounts.

Republican Steering Committee

For House Republicans, committee assignments had been made by the Committee on Committees since the early twentieth century. The Committee on Committees was regionally representative. Originally, the committee was made up of one member from each state who had voting power equivalent to the number of Republican members in that state's delegation. In the 1970s and 1980s, leadership influence was moribund. Leaders Gerald Ford and John Rhodes deferred to the Committee on Committees and often stressed the constraint that came from the Democratic leadership controlling the number of available seats when members asked for particular slots (Frisch and Kelly 2006). In the 101st Congress, the Committee

on Committees was reformed to include greater leadership influence, giving the Republican leader twelve votes and the whip six. The voting structure was such that this amounted to fewer than ten percent of the committee's 197 votes, with regional representation remaining the dominant force, and party leaders having only moderate success in getting their preferred candidates onto favored committee (Frisch and Kelly 2006).

In 1994, unexpected electoral success delivered the Republicans their first majority in forty years, and the architect of that victory, Newt Gingrich, was given wide latitude to restructure the Republican Conference's rules. Aides drafted a memo for Gingrich shortly after the election which read "The current Republican structure [for making committee assignments] is dominated by regional influences and intricate personal relationships. The leadership has little voting influence even if their voting bloc is enlarged substantially" (Novak 1994). Thus, Gingrich did not simply give the party leadership more votes on the Committee on Committees, he abolished it altogether. In its place, he created a new Republican Steering Committee, which the speaker chaired. It had a considerably different voting structure than the old committee.[3] Regional representatives were relegated from being the overwhelmingly dominant voice to a minority. The chief beneficiary was the speaker, who got five votes on the new panel, the Majority Leader, who got two, and other members of the leadership who earned representation for the first time. In the new system, the leadership accounted for about half the votes on the committee. Compounding this increase was a change in how

3. The precise membership of the Republican Steering Committee has varied since 1994, but the trend toward party leadership has remained. In the 105th Congress, the committee was made up of the speaker, Republican leader, whip, conference chair, National Republican Campaign Committee chair, chairs of the Appropriations, Budget, Rules, and Ways and Means Committees, ten regional representatives, and representatives of the freshman and sophmore classes. The leadership accounted for 14 of 26 votes. In advance of the 115th Congress, the committee underwent additional changes that increased the number of regional representatives to 17 and reduced the party leader to four votes instead of five. This adjustment left the leadership with 14 of 35 votes, which still far outpaced the control it had prior to Gingrich era reforms.In the 117th Congress, the Steering Committee included the Republican Leader, whip, deputy whip, conference chair, policy committee chair, conference vice-chair, conference secretary, NRCC chair, former NRCC chair, 17 regional representatives, representatives of the freshman and sophomore classes, the Dean of the House, a leadership appointee, and a rotating committee chairman.

committee chairs were selected. Seniority was dropped in favor of ideological congruence with party leadership and willingness to aggressively pursue party policy (Cann 2008; Deering and Wahlbeck 2006). As I argued in the previous chapter, this led committee chairs to act more consistently as agents of the party leadership. Thus, the spots on the Steering Committee held by committee chairs are indirect projections of leadership influence.

An immediate consequence of this altered assignment arrangement were the number of junior members that received spots on favored committees. Freshman were key to Gingrich's new majority. Ideologically conservative, they ran on Gingrich's Contract with America election platform and thus were considered both loyal to the new speaker and motivated to enact his agenda. In return for their anticipated loyalty, they received key committee assignments over more senior members. For the first time in decades, one freshman was put on the powerful Rules Committee, to which the speaker has unilateral power to appoint members (Ornstein 1995). Of the eleven new members Republicans appointed to the Appropriations Committee, seven were freshmen, and over the objections of committee chair Bill Archer, who favored a smaller committee, Gingrich expanded the Ways and Means Committee as a way to include three seats for first-term members (Aldrich and Rohde 2000; Owens 1997; Rae 1998). Gingrich also, though demanded political loyalty as a criteria to advance in the House. Republican members on the Appropriations Committee were required to sign a letter indicating their fidelity to Republican plans to slash taxes (Aldrich, Perry, and Rohde 2013). He noted that any member unwilling to support party priorities was replacable.

Following Gingrich's heavy-handed rule, subsequent Republican leaders pledged to have a more open, representative process for committee assignments. These promises were left unfulfilled, as those leaders too found the judicious awarding of committee assignments a useful tool. Robert Livingston, who chaired the Republican Steering Committee prior to the 106th Congress, categorically rejected making assignments that put individual member

interest before the party.[4] In a letter Livingston sent when challenging Gingrich for the speakership, he wrote "Members should not be assigned to Committees because of their districts. Fragile members are afraid to cast tough votes, and that inhibits the passage of credible legislation" (Eiperlin 1998). Livingston rewarded top fundraisers with plum assignments to top committees, while the freshman class - considerably smaller and less fundamental to the Republican base than the group that swept Gingrich into power - were less successful in seeking assignments.

Though Livingston was soon eclipsed by his personal indiscretions, successive Republican leaders did not fundamentally differ from their predecessors in their approach to committee assignments. In the 107th Congress, Hastert announced to his Conference that fundraising on behalf of the party would be considered favorably when determining assignments (Herberlig and Larson 2013). Hastert used assignments as a stick as well as a carrot, denying requested assignments to moderate members who had signed a discharge petition on a campaign finance reform bill that the party disliked. GOP Conference Chairwoman Deborah Pryce noted that "procedural betrayals" were being considered when giving committee assignments (Meinke 2015). The pattern continued with John Boehner, in addition to exercising discretion over which members received their preferred assignments, actively booted disloyal members from committees, violating the "property rights" norm that anticipates that representatives maintain their committee spots when available. Rebellious right-wing Boehner critic Tim Huelskamp lost his seats on Budget and Agriculture, David Schweikert was removed from Financial Services, and Justin Amash was taken off of Budget (Toeplitz and Lorber 2012). Boehner's demand for loyalty was indifferent to ideology, with the moderate Walter B. Jones being stripped of his assignment on Financial Services after voting against the party's budget

4. Livingston was expected to become speaker following Gingrich's 1998 resignation before his own scandals led Livingston to resign prior to taking up the position. However, as the expected leader, Livingston chaired the Steering Committee when it made assignments for the 106th Congress and as such exercised his influence as a party leader.

in the previous Congress.[5] Boehner and other Steering Committee members maintained that it was not a scorecard of voting records or any other single factor, but rather their unwillingness to work with the party leadership. Lynn Westmoreland, who was the Steering Committee's regional representative for southern states, cited the "a-hole factor" as key to their removal (Newhauser and Strong 2012). Boehner returned to this retributive tactic in 2015, declining to reappoint Richard Nugent and Daniel Webster to the Rules Committee after they voted against him for the speakership (Marcos 2015). Speaker Paul Ryan in the following Congress dropped all pretense, delaying committee assignments until after the speakership floor vote (Wong 2016). The transition to a leadership-dominated Republican Steering Committee has empowered leaders to strategically award committee assignments to allies and punish personal and political disloyalty. This is a significant departure from previous Republican leaders, and has persisted for more than two decades afterwards.

Democratic Steering and Policy Committee

In 1975, Democratic reformers wrested control from the Democratic contingent of the Ways and Means Committee, which had decided committee assignments since 1911 (Aldrich, Perry, and Rohde 2010). The Caucus gave that role to a new Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, which junior Democrats hoped would improve their chances of acquiring preferred assignments by empowering the party leadership. The new committee was made up of the speaker, Democratic Leader, whip, Caucus Chair, twelve regionally appointed members, and eight members appointed by the speaker. However, both before and after the speaker gained a formal role in the process, it was the habits of the individual leaders that determined their influence over committee assignments. Sam Rayburn, in the pre-reform era, stacked Ways and

5. One journalistic account suggested that Jones was removed to give cover to Boehner's goal to remove the conservative firebrands (Allen 2012). Whether it was for particular disloyalty or political cover, the removal demonstrates the amount of influence the speaker wielded in using committee assignments to further his goals.

Means with loyalists who conferred with him when making assignments (Manley 1970; Shepsle 1978). John McCormack and Carl Albert, conversely, faced a rank-and-file that was newly empowered and did not exercise as much influence over assignments (Shepsle 1978; Frisch and Kelly 2006). Speakers Tip O'Neill and Jim Wright, particularly the latter, reinvigorated the party leadership's role in the process, calculating party loyalty scores (Smith and Deering 1997; Smith and Ray 1983). Wright in particular was noted for the control he exerted as speaker, aiming to get both fellow Texans and partisans on favored committees (Frisch and Kelly 2006). Wright's influence was not lasting, as successors Foley and Gephardt did not aggressively pursue party loyalty through committee assignments (Patterson 2015). Pelosi, who has led the Democratic Caucus for nearly twenty years, received notice immediately for her willingness to reward allies and punish enemies through committee assignments. In her first few years as leader, she placed close associates on the Steering and Policy Committee, while high donors to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Rahm Emanuel, John Larson, and Mike Thompson received coveted seats on Ways and Means (Billings 2005). She has continued this trend throughout her career, selecting loyal members for preferred and prestigious committees (Patterson 2015). Because of her longevity, it is impossible to determine whether this practice is the new operating procedure of the Democratic Party or an idiosyncrasy of Pelosi herself.

The main evolution in the DSPC since its 1975 formation has been its growth, and particularly the expansion of deputy whip involvement and the number of leadership appointees.[6] In the early 1980s, the committee consisted of four members of the Democratic

6. Like its Republican counterpart, the composition of the DSPC changes slightly from Congress to Congress. In the 117th Congress, the committee consisted of the speaker, three co-chairs of the committee nominated by the speaker, the Democratic leader, whip, assistant speaker, caucus chair, caucus vice chair, chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, four co-chairs of the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee, caucus leadership representative, freshman leadership representative,chair of the Committee on Caucus Procedures, parliamentarian, two senior chief deputy whips, eight chief deputy whips, a freshman class representative, twelve regional representatives, chairs of the Appropriations, Budget, Rules, Energy and Commerce, Financial Services, and Ways and Means committees, as well as up to 15 members appointed by the Speaker (CRS Report R46786). Thus, the speaker and her appointees alone make

leadership, eight speaker appointees, and twelve regional representatives. By 2000, leadership representation had ballooned to 9 members of the leadership, three deputy whips, and sixteen leader appointees, while the number of regional representatives remained static (Meinke 2015). The committee has continued to grow and in the 117th Congress, members of the leadership, their appointees, and the whip organization made up 38 of the now 63 member committee. While the individual discretion of different leaders has determined how active they are in pursuing party goals through committee assignments, the formal voting bloc of the leadership has monotonically increased. Though Democrats only changed their process gradually, they came to resemble Republicans. Through those changes, Democrats have given the leadership the opportunity to exercise more control over assignments.

Loyalty and Accommodation in Committee Assignments

There are more members who want major committee seats than there are seats on those committees. Thus, the discretion of the selector is paramount in determining what members receive their preferred spots. A change in the selector provides an opportunity for a change in outcomes. While the locus of voting power was vastly different in the Republican Steering Committee than in their Committee on Committees, it does not necessarily follow that their criteria for granting plum assignments differ. Under both systems, there is still an interest in protecting electorally vulnerable members, ensuring regional representation, and promoting a cohesive governing coalition. Indeed, the continuity in these considerations is likely why there was little discernible change in the determinants of committee request success for Democrats after the 1975 reform. Here, I assess two explanations for request success. The first, loyalty, suggests that the reformed steering committees empowered leaders to more forthrightly dole

up 19 out of 63 votes. When the rest of the leadership organization is included, they make up a majority of the committee.

out committee assignments as reward for party cooperation. The second, accommodation, posits that party leaders, even with increased independent power, want to grant as many requests as possible, most of the time.

Party leaders want to develop policy majorities and so need members who will reliably support the party's priorities. Committee assignments can serve as selective benefits that help leaders create those majorities. In 1994, the party leaders were given more control over the assignment process and so could more freely distribute these benefits. These reforms came from the Republican leadership, with the precise intention of increasing their control over multiple aspects of the policymaking process. Beyond that, the party leadership made explicit their expectation for loyalty as a criteria for committee success. As described in the previous section, journalistic accounts make clear that House Republican leaders since 1994 have not been shy about using committee seats as a way to command political and personal loyalty and punish dissent. House Democrats, of course, did not undergo the same reforms as Republicans, increasing the leadership voting contingent on the Steering and Policy Committee only gradually. However, accounts of leadership involvement in committee assignment decisions, especially after Pelosi became the Democratic leader, demonstrated a strategy that mirrors Republicans.

If party leaders were to only serve the most loyal members, they would likely find their caucus small and unhappy. Instead, leaders understand that they must balance building a loyal policy majority with developing an electoral majority. As the 1994 reforms went into place, the House went from a long period of single-party rule to a time of insecure majorities, where the relative sizes of each party's contingent were closer and majority status was regularly in contest. As majority control depends on winning seats where both parties are competitive, members representing those districts often need to position themselves as moderates. Thus, while the party leadership expects, and wants to reward, loyalty from the average member of their party, their goal of gaining and retaining majority status requires

helping members get on committees useful for bolstering their reelection chances, even while those members must break from the party. For example, Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania represents a moderate Philadelphia suburban district that, prior to his 2018 election, had selected a Democratic congressman for the previous seventy years. He is currently the most moderate Republican in the House, with a party loyalty score of 69%, well short of the Republican median, which hovers around 90%. In spite of this, he was first chosen to the coveted Transportation committee, well known for its capacity to direct funds to one's district, and then to the powerful Ways and Means committee. When any seat has the potential to flip control of the chamber, the party leadership wants to accommodate as many members as it can.

Some initial evidence for accommodation lies in trends in committee size. Party leaders often manipulate the size of committee to further their party's interest, but that occur in multiple ways (Brady and Lee 2016; Ray and Smith 1984). If leaders want to award committee assignments as a prize for loyalty, then smaller committees makes each seat more valuable. If, instead, they want to accommodate more members, increased committee sizes are preferred. Figure 2.1 shows the number of total committee seats in each Congress. It seems that new Republican majorities cut the number of committee seats in the 104th and then 112th Congresses. However, as the Republicans retained their majority, committee seats were consistently added.[7] By the mid-2000s, the number of seats was higher than before the Gingrich takeover. A higher availability of seats makes it more difficult to use the distribution of those seats as selective benefits, but does fit with a model where party leaders are trying to get as many of their members on favored committees as possible.[8]

7. While it is interesting that the Republican leadership in the most recent Republican controlled Congresses have remained small, perhaps indicating a greater interest in loyalty, that is outside the scope of the present study.

8. The amount of committee seats is somewhat complicated by each party's rule about the number of committees on which a member can sit. Both parties have designated the Rules Committee, Ways and Means, Appropriations, Energy and Commerce, and Financial Services as exclusive committees, which means that a member can have no other committee assignments while serving on one of those committees. For Democrats, Energy and Commerce is only an exclusive committee to members elected in the 104th Congress and after

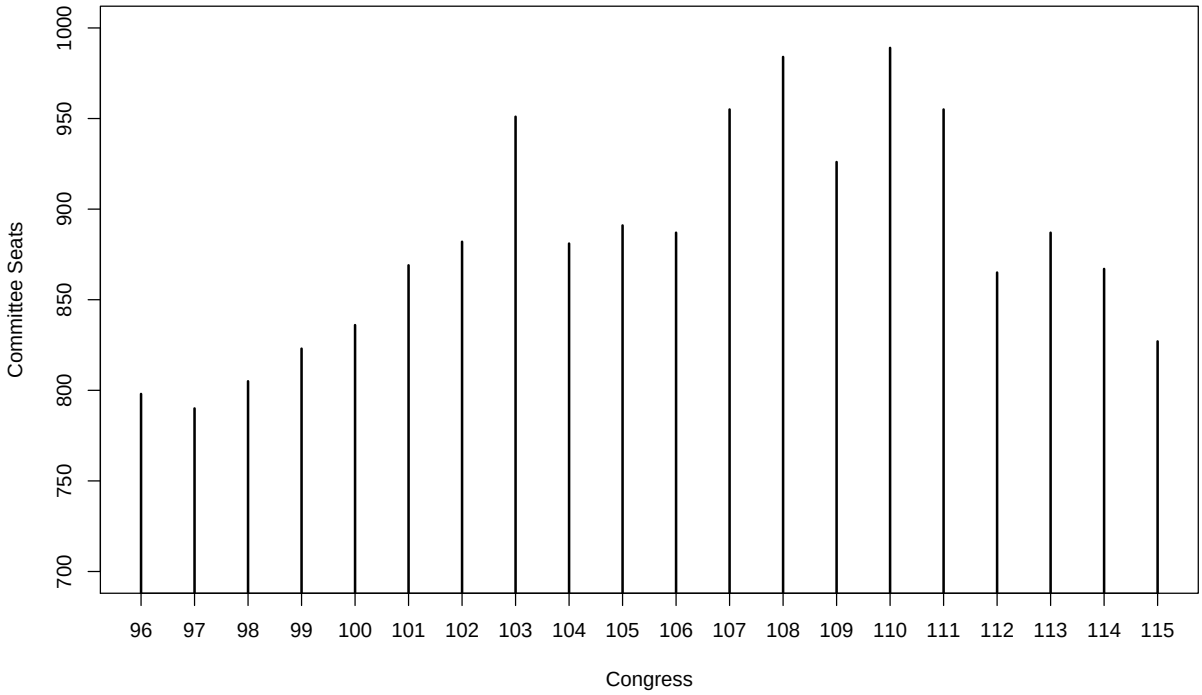

Figure 2.1: Total committee seats by Congress

While a loyalty model of committee assignment politics prioritizes individual characteristics, accommodation focuses on characteristics of the committees being requested, focused around the constraints faced by leaders. If only one member makes a request for an open seat on a committee, an accommodating party leadership would grant that request, regardless of that member's level of loyalty. These two countervailing forces, loyalty and accommodation set up two hypothesis:

Loyalty Hypothesis:After the 1994 rule changes, party loyalty will have an increased effect on being granted a requested committee assignment
Accommodation Hypothesis: Committee assignments will be determined predominantly by committee-level characteristics

Committee Requests and Size in the Party Era

To examine the changing criteria on which members are assigned to committees, I exploit committee assignment request data. Committee requests are the official medium by which members express their preferences to be on committees and are gathered from leaders' archival data (Frisch and Kelly 2006). While some studies assume that all committee aspirants want to be on influence committees, fewer than half of requesters list one of those committees as their first choice. Because these are party documents and not public documents, the data is limited by what previous leaders and Steering Committee members have made available in their papers. I use data from the 97th to 108th Congresses (1985-2005). This includes multiple years before and after the 1994 Republican reforms, and spans multiple leaders

and Financial Services is only an exclusive committee to members elected in the 109th Congress and after. Despite committee exclusivity, both parties consider service on the Ethics Committee and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to be exempt, so members can serve on one of those committees and an exclusive committee simultaneously.

for both parties, as well as majority and minority status for both parties. In Table 2.1, I present which members are requesting new committee assignments, broken down by party and seniority. In each era, about a third of members send request letters. With the exception of freshmen Republicans, though, fewer members are making formal requests for new committee assignments. This might be due to members may be making their desires known in informal ways, such as personally lobbying individual steering committee members. What this data certainly shows is that members are less likely to request committees the more senior they are, and most committee requests happen within a member's first two terms.

Table 2.1: Proportion of members that made a request for a committee assignment, separated by era, party, and seniority. The unit of analysis is member-Congress.

	97 th-103rd Congresses	104th-108th Congresses
	Request Letter Sent	Request Letter Sent
All Members	31.5%	29.3%
All Democrats	25.8%	20.9%
All Republicans	40.1%	37.2%
All Freshmen	80.2%	71.1%
Freshmen Democrats	82.0%	50.0%
Freshmen Republicans	78.1%	85.5%
2nd Term Members	57.3%	52.4%
2nd Term Democrats	44.5%	37.2%
2nd Term Republicans	73.4%	64.4%
Long Term Members	17.4%	15.0%
Long Term Democrats	13.0%	12.6%
Long Term Republicans	24.6%	17.5%

Table 2.2 shows the success of members at gaining a requested committee assignment, again disaggregated by party and seniority. Perhaps surprisingly, members are more likely to get desired assignments in the Party Era than before. This result is due in part to changes in committee size. While Gingrich eliminated three committees, and shrunk many other committees, their membership expanded over the next several Congresses, such that by 2001,

there were more committee slots than there were directly before the Republican Revolution. The biggest beneficiary during the party era appear to be first-term members, of which nearly three-quarters of requesters got a preferred committee assignment. This finding is in part due to the fact that first-term members submit more requests than members at any other level of seniority, however they are also extremely successful at getting their first choice committee assignment. The Democrats, notably, show a similar pattern to their Republican counterparts in terms of rewarding the most junior members.

Table 2.2: Proportion of members that received their requested committee assignment by era, party, and seniority.

	97th-103rd Congresses		104th-108th Congresses	
	Request Granted	1st Choice Request Granted	Request Granted	1st Choice Request Granted
All Democrats	46.0%	32.9%	51.6%	36.5%
All Republicans	41.9%	25.0%	55.9%	41.0%
Freshmen Democrats	53.7%	23.9%	72.1%	44.1%
Freshmen Republicans	63.1%	28.6%	76.0%	47.4%
2nd Term Democrats	31.5%	30.3%	38.1%	27.2%
2nd Term Republicans	30.2%	18.1%	48.8%	39.7%
Senior Democrats	44.8%	44.2%	44.8%	36.5%
Senior Republicans	56.9%	26.0%	39.7%	34.1%

In Table 2.3, I turn to differences in what committees are requested. Following Smith and Deering, I organize the committees into influence committees, policy committees, constituency committees, and service committees. Influence committees are, in general, the most requested committees, with the exception of the Rules Committee. As it is the speaker's prerogative to appoint members of the Rules Committee, members might be less likely to "waste" a request on a committee for which they are unlikely to be chosen. While there is some change in degree, there is much continuity across eras in terms of what committees are requested. The three most requested committees in both eras are the money committees, Appropriations and Ways and Means, as well as Energy and Commerce, which is the largest committee with the most jurisdiction. For constituency-oriented committees, the big change of the party era is the increase in Public Works as an attractive committee, garnering around as many requests as Energy and Commerce, though it is less frequently listed as a first choice request. Finally, the service committees remain rarely requested. Two such committees, Post Office and District of Columbia, were disbanded altogether during the Gingrich reforms, but made up fewer than one percent of requests beforehand.

The committees that members request is only half the story. The requests are necessitated by a limited number of available committee seats. Above, I show that the number of committee seats initially fell when the Republicans took control, but then soon surpassed the number of seats in the previous era. In Figure 2.2, I show the number of seats on the four most requested committees, Appropriations, Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Public Works, over time and changing party control. In Figure 2.3, I show the number of majority party seats on those committees. As the majority has the leverage when negotiating committee size, this is a clearer indication of how party leaders try to manipulate committee size to suit their interests. Both charts show that, despite a slight reduction in the number of seats in the 104th Congress, the most requested committees grew throughout the era after the

Table 2.3: Proportion of requests and first choice requests for committees separated by era.

	97th-103rd Congresses		104th-108th Congresses	
	Proportion of Requests	Proportion of First Choice Requests	Proportion of Requests	Proportion of First Choice Requests
Influence Committees				
Appropriations	10.0%	17.0%	13.6%	22.7%
Budget	9.2%	12.9%	4.6%	2.5%
Rules	2.4%	3.6%	1.6%	1.8%
Ways and Means	8.5%	14.9%	9.8%	16.8%
Policy Committees				
Banking	6.2%	4.6%	8.6%	6.2%
Education and Labor	2.1%	1.5%	3.5%	1.3%
Energy and Commerce	11.8%	14.9%	11.9%	17.5%
Foreign Affairs	4.9%	4.4%	5.6%	2.9%
Government Operations	4.2%	0.7%	2.0%	0.8%
Judiciary	1.5%	0.7%	3.9%	3.2%
Constituency Committees				
Agriculture	4.2%	5.5%	3.8%	2.4%
Armed Services	7.1%	8.1%	7.3%	6.4%
Interior	4.3%	2.8%	4.6%	4.4%
Merchant Marines and Fisheries	2.2%	0.7%	Abolished	
Public Works	6.0%	3.6%	12.0%	9.9%
Science	5.9%	1.7%	2.0%	0.8%
Small Business	4.8%	0.5%	1.9%	0.0%
Veterans' Affairs	2.6%	0.3%	1.6%	0.2%
Service Committees				
District of Columbia	0.1%	0%	Abolished	
Ethics	0.08%	0%	0.1%	0.2%
House Administration	1.1%	1.0%	0.4%	0.2%
Post Office	0.7%	0.2%	Abolished	

steering committee reforms.[9] This data is more consistent with an accommodation model than a loyalty model, as expanding committees allows a wider variety of members to occupy those seats, while a loyalty minded party leader might create scarcity among favored seats in order to create a selective incentive.

9. The Republican takeover in the 112th Congress brought a reduction in the size of committees. A new majority party is one of the few times that the party leadership can reduce the size of committees without jeopardizing the slots of their own members, as the previously minority party has fewer members actively holding those spots. It is notable that, after the initial reduction, the number of seats is largely stable.

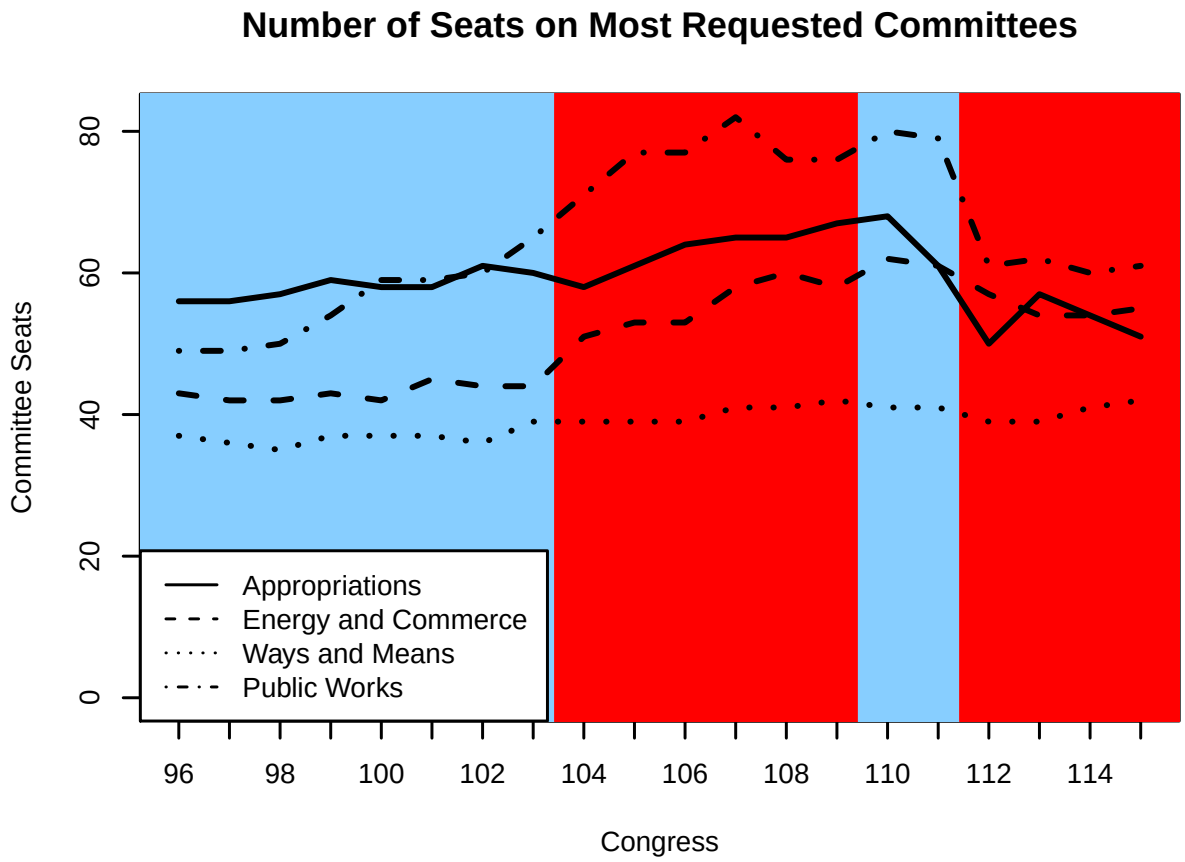

Figure 2.2: The number of seats on the four most requested committees. The blue background indicates Democratic majority control, while the red background indicates Republican majority control.

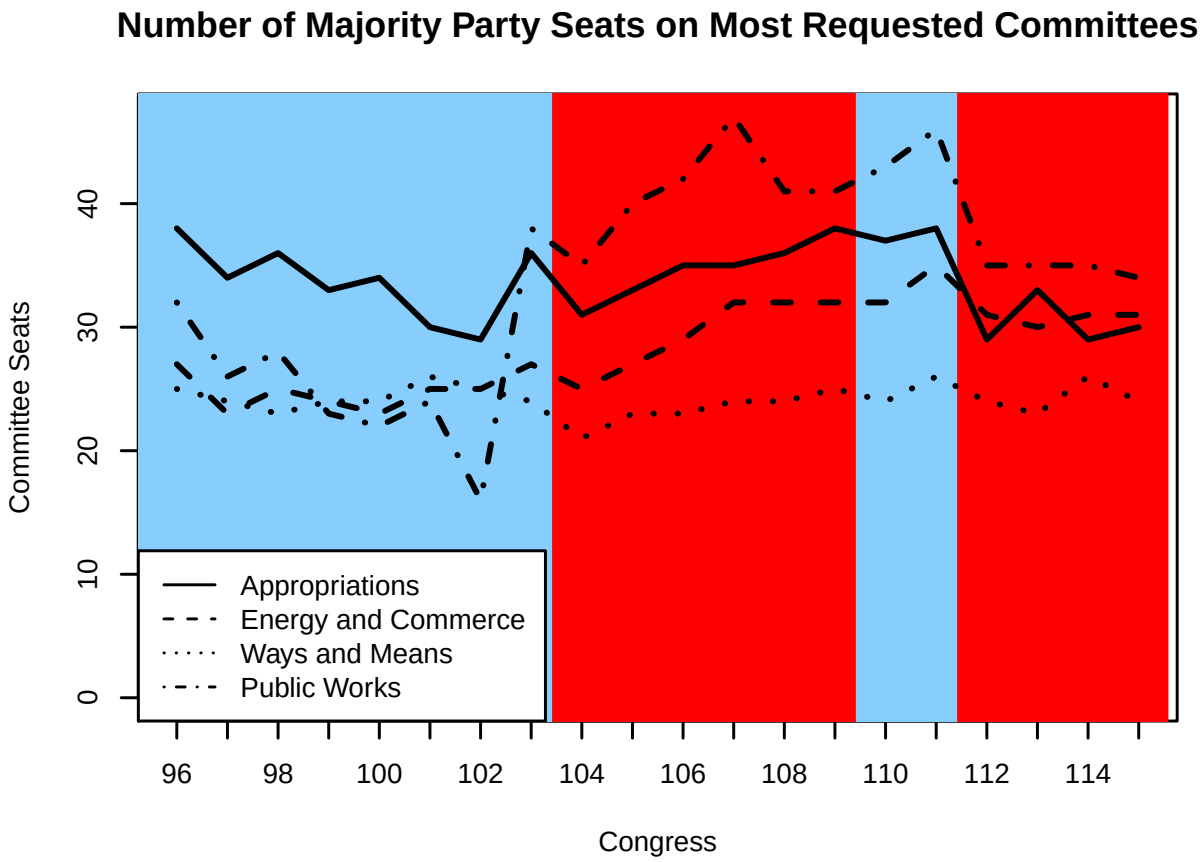

Figure 2.3: The number of majority party seats on the four most requested committees. The blue background indicates Democratic majority control, while the red background indicates Republican majority control.

Research Design and Methods

Having explored the data, I now move to testing the expectation that the effect of loyalty in the party era. Not every member makes committee assignment requests, and not every member makes one every Congress. Since members do not randomly select into this group, looking just at what members are successful in their assignments would result in biased estimates. I use a Heckman selection model to explicitly model the decision to make a request.[10] The outcome of the first stage equation is whether or not a member requests a committee assignment, while the second stage is whether the request is successful. Because the data generating process for committee assignments differs by party, I model the two parties separately. In both stages, I control for a number of characteristics that may affect a member's likelihood of being assigned to their preferred committee. I use vote percentage in a member's most recent election as an indicator of electoral marginality. I include the number of seats that the party has gained or lost in a given Congress as an estimate of the supply of committee seats. I also control for seniority and whether a requester is a member of the party leadership, as well as the loyalty variables that make up the main analysis for the second stage equation.

The historical record makes clear that different leaders have defined loyalty differently, and often in idiosyncratic ways that would elude easy quantitative analysis. For example, Boehner and Pelosi's personal loyalty that punishes those who did not support their speakership differs from Hastert's focus on fundraising or Gingrich's expectation of loyalty on the floor. While party dues and fundraising assistance are seen as near necessities for gaining plum assignments in the modern era, most members did not donate to their party's campaign committees at all until the late 1990s. This poses a challenge to scholars trying to examine

10. There is some controversy over whether the Heckman model is an appropriate strategy for selection problems. I detail those concerns and offer alternative models in the appendix.

long-term changes in the dynamics of House committee assignment politics. Many have devised innovative methods to capture how leaders define loyalty (see, for example, Amussen and Ramey 2018; Jenkins n.d.; Meinke 2022). All those methods, though, do not account for the fact that different leaders potentially orthogonal definitions of what loyalty and disloyalty are. I attempt to account for this by defining loyalty in three different ways.

In the second stage of the selection model, my variables of interest are the interaction between my three loyalty measures and an indicator variable for after the 1994 committee reforms. The first loyalty variable, ideological distance, is the absolute distance between a member's first dimension DW-Nominate score and the party median. Second is party unity, the frequency with which a member voted with the majority of their party against the majority of the opposite party in the Congress directly preceding the decision to make a request. As this is undefined for members who did not serve in the previous Congress, freshman are excluded from this model Finally, the third loyalty variable is the logged amount a member donated to their party's congressional campaign committee in the cycle preceding their request. As the loyalty variables are likely highly correlated, as they all represent attempts to capture the same concept, I run each of them in a separate model.

Additionally, I include variables in the second stage that are characteristics of the committee being requested. These variables represent the accommodation framework and focuses on the constraints that party leaders face when determining assignments. First, I look at committee size. I expect that requests for seats on larger committees are more likely to be granted because there is a greater supply of those slots. Similarly, I expect that the more copartisans who request assignment to a particular committee, and thus the greater amount of competition for that committee's seats, will make a request for that seat less likely to be granted. I specifically include a variable for requests to exclusive committee assignments,

which I anticipate will be negative due to the committees' popularity and outsized influence in the policymaking process. Party leaders are further constrained by the importance of different committees to various states. Some states assert ownership over seats on committees with jurisdictions that govern significant industries in the state, such as financial services for New York and New Jersey. I use two different state centered variables. First, I include a variable, *Open State Seat* that indicates whether a member is requesting a seat on a committee that another member of their state delegation just left. I expect that this will be associated with a greater likelihood of obtaining a requested assignment. The other state variable, *State Representation*, takes on a value of 1 if a member is requesting to be on a committee where another member of the state delegation already sits. I also interact seniority with era to see whether there is a change in how traditional, clearly defined criteria to gain a seat has changed after the committee reforms. Finally, I have a variable indicating whether a member made a request for the same committee in the previous Congress.

Empirical Results

Tables 2.4 and 2.5 contains the first stage results of the Heckman models, which estimates the circumstances under which a member will make a request. In both parties, more senior members are less likely to request new committee assignments. This result is intuitively sensible. As discussed earlier, members rarely make requests after their second term, and would likely not want to give up seniority that they have accrued over time on the committees on which they sit, unless they were confident about their chances of improving their assignment. For Republicans, members of the leadership are less likely to request a new assignment, as they are likely already satisfied with their placement. For the Democrats, members who are ideologically closer to the party median are more likely to make requests, as well as members who have donated less to their party's campaign funds.

Table 2.4: First Stage of a Heckman Model Estimating the Determinants of a Republican Member Requesting a Committee Assignment

	Dependent variable:		
	Request Made		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Vote Percentage	−0.003	0.001	−0.002
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Leadership	−0.628**	−0.583*	−0.581*
	(0.235)	(0.230)	(0.237)
Party Swing	−0.005*	−0.006**	−0.005**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Seniority	−0.341**	−0.287**	−0.337**
	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.018)
Ideological Distance	−0.082		
	(0.188)		
Party Unity		−0.001	
		(0.003)	
Logged Campaign Contributions Made			−0.011
			(0.007)
Constant	1.330**	0.833*	1.284**
	(0.198)	(0.334)	(0.183)
Observations	1,920	1,620	1,920
Log Likelihood	−902.017	−763.792	−901.026
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,816.034	1,539.584	1,814.052
Note:			p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.5: First Stage of a Heckman Model Estimating the Determinants of a Democratic Member Requesting a Committee Assignment

	Dependent variable:		
	Request Made		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Vote Percentage	−0.003	−0.002	−0.003
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Leadership	−0.071	−0.132	−0.078
	(0.237)	(0.230)	(0.238)
Party Swing	0.0001	0.001	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Seniority	−0.304**	−0.247**	−0.290**
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.017)
Ideological Distance	−0.675**		
	(0.149)		
Party Unity		−0.001	
		(0.003)	
Logged Campaign Contributions Made			−0.019*
			(0.007)
Constant	1.028**	0.471	0.831**
	(0.175)	(0.328)	(0.171)
Observations	2,248	1,999	2,248
Log Likelihood	−897.876	−750.381	−905.051
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,807.752	1,512.762	1,822.101
Note:			p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.6 shows the second stage of the selection model, estimating the determinants of receiving a requested committee assignment for Republicans. There is little and inconsistent evidence for the loyalty models. Lower ideological distance between a member and the party median is associated with a greater chance of the member being granted their preferred assignment in the partisan era. However, there is no statistically distinguishable effect for party unity voting or campaign contributions. The accommodation hypothesis performs better. Members are more likely to gain their favored assignment when the committees the member requests are larger, when the party has gained more seats in the last election, and when a member requests assignment to a committee with a seat previously held by someone from their state. Republicans were less likely to get their preferred committee assignments when they requested assignment to a committee that had many other copartisan requesters and when they requested assignment to an exclusive committee.

Table 2.7 shows the results for Democratic requesters. I do not find that the loyalty variables are significant, nor are their interactions with era. However, the interaction between seniority and era is negative and statistically reliable, indicating that the effect of seniority on determining committee assignments is greatly diminished in the party era. This result could show a movement away from deterministic criteria for committee assignments in favor of more particularistic and idiosyncratic considerations. Like in the previous model, the accommodation hypothesis is better supported. It is easier to gain assignment to larger committees, and harder to get placed on the more competitive exclusive committees.

Table 2.6: Second Stage of Heckman Model of the Determinants of Republican Committee Assignments

	Dependent variable:		
	Request Granted		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Ideological Distance x Era	−0.423*		
	(0.211)		
Party Unity x Era		0.006	
		(0.004)	
Log Amount Contributed x Era			0.009
			(0.008)
Vote Percentage	−0.002	−0.004	−0.003*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Exclusive Committee Request	0.001	0.092	−0.009
	(0.038)	(0.050)	(0.038)
Open State Seat	0.132**	0.126**	0.126**
	(0.036)	(0.047)	(0.036)
State Representation	−0.052	−0.016	−0.047
	(0.035)	(0.044)	(0.034)
Number of Copartisan Requests	−0.020**	−0.013**	−0.020**
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Party Swing	0.004**	0.009**	0.004**
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Committee Size	0.014**	0.009**	0.014**
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Seniority	0.067	0.149	0.050
	(0.062)	(0.083)	(0.062)
Era	0.302*	−0.373	0.080
	(0.121)	(0.400)	(0.071)
Ideological Distance	0.262		
	(0.168)		
Party Unity		0.005	
		(0.002)	
Log Amount Contributed			0.004
			(0.006)
Previous Request Made	0.041	0.028	0.038
	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.051)
Era x Seniority	−0.007	−0.013	−0.013
	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.020)
Constant	0.121	−0.002	0.310**
	(0.147)	(0.271)	(0.115)
Observations	1,920	1,620	1,920
R^2	0.169	0.145	0.171
Adjusted R^2	0.152	0.117	0.154
ρ	−0.423	−0.931	−0.425
Inverse Mills Ratio	−0.257 (0.256)	−0.608 (0.370)	−0.194 (0.261)
Note:			*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.7: Second Stage of the Heckman Model of Democratic Committee Assignments

	Dependent variable:		
	Granted1		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Ideological Distance x Era	−0.252		
	(0.262)		
Party Unity x Era		−0.007	
		(0.005)	
Log Amount Contributed x Era			−0.002
			(0.009)
Vote Percentage	0.001	0.002	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Exclusive Committee Request	−0.232**	−0.247**	−0.236**
	(0.045)	(0.056)	(0.045)
Open State Seat	0.024	−0.007	0.024
	(0.039)	(0.051)	(0.039)
State Representation	0.055	0.087	0.057
	(0.039)	(0.050)	(0.038)
Party Request	0.005*	0.008*	0.005*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Party Swing	−0.003*	−0.002	−0.003
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Committee Size	0.014**	0.012**	0.014**
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Seniority	0.053	−0.040	0.085
	(0.101)	(0.177)	(0.112)
Era	0.471**	1.026*	0.391**
	(0.133)	(0.416)	(0.073)
Ideological Distance	0.146		
	(0.260)		
Party Unity		0.004	
		(0.003)	
Log Amount Contributed			0.005
			(0.008)
Previous Request	−0.027	−0.037	−0.041
	(0.056)	(0.058)	(0.056)
Seniority x Era	−0.069**	−0.070**	−0.066**
	(0.021)	(0.024)	(0.021)
Constant	−0.475**	−1.046*	−0.412*
	(0.145)	(0.467)	(0.177)
Observations	2,248	1,999	2,248
R^2	0.164	0.153	0.164
Adjusted R^2	0.142	0.117	0.141
ρ	0.199	0.845	−0.172
Inverse Mills Ratio	0.085 (0.445)	0.530 (0.886)	−0.073 (0.506)
Note:			*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Discussion

I find little evidence that the effect of loyalty changed with changing Steering Committee rules. In this section, I discuss various potential explanations for the null result, in light of the qualitative evidence that we should expect an increased effect of loyalty. First, I contend that party leaders are acting in an accommodating capacity rather than a loyalist one. Party leaders have many different pressures when determining committee assignments. Above all, leaders want to obtain and retain majority status, and the best way to do that is to ensure that a member is equipped to represent their district well. Party leaders thus likely want to accommodate as many members as they can, while constrained by the number of available seats and how competitive each committee is. The empirical results support this idea of constrained optimization, with strong negative coefficients across almost every model for whether a popular power committee was requested, and positive coefficients for committee size. Further, Republicans were less likely to receive requested assignments when there were higher numbers of requests for the same slots, and more likely to receive assignments when a member can claim that a seat belongs to their state. Committee characteristics having more explanatory power than individual-level characteristics indicates a leadership that aims to satisfy as many members as possible. Party leaders are still trying to solve the giant jigsaw puzzle.

Beyond the accommodation model, there are some other potential explanations for the null result on loyalty. It may be the case that the steering committees were using consistent criteria to determine committee assignments before there was formal leadership representation. Even when the Republican Steering Committee was dominated by regional representatives, their interests were not solely parochial. Members of the old steering committees still wanted to gain majority party status and increase the size of their coalition. Similar to how Smith and Ray (1983) and Cox and McCubbins (2007) did not find any significant changes in

the way that the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee made committee assignments before and after the reforms of the 1970s, the overriding party interest may have already been baked into the process. Finally, the null result may be due to the difficulty of capturing loyalty as leaders and members think of it. Party leaders account for strategic disloyalty for members in cross-pressured districts, and may reward members who make difficult votes for the party, even if their overall loyalty scores are lower (See Baker 1985; Kirkland 2017; Meinke 2022). As Meinke (2022) shows, leaders keep track of what members are with the party when the leadership needs them, but not in ways that are clear or public until leaders archive their papers. Beyond that, different leaders may conceptualize loyalty in particular ways that do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis that pools multiple leaders across time. Many now see donations to party campaign committees as mandatory for gaining the most prestigious committee slots, when no leader before Hastert made them a clear requirement for advancement. Idiosyncratic, leader-based personal loyalty highlights how ephemeral these characteristics can be. Representative Rice's vote against Pelosi's speakership, for example, may not be as damning after Hakeem Jeffries takes over the Democratic leadership.

Conclusion

The opening of the 118th Congress was delayed by a speakership battle that saw Republican leader Kevin McCarthy face the recalcitrant House Freedom Caucus, made up of the most conservative Republicans. In their published list of requested changes to House and party rules, they mentioned steering committee reform, arguing that it had become an arm of the speaker and required more regional representation to better suit the whole party. In the end, the Freedom Caucus folded, but was not punished for their rabble-rousing. Many of the members obtained or retained good committee assignments, including three who were

appointed to the Rules Committee. The new speaker, with an eye toward the slim majority his party enjoyed and the necessity to placate divisive groups like the Freedom Caucus, made assignments that were about more than loyalty.

In this chapter I have characterized changes in the committee assignment process in the House of Representatives, with a particular focus on the changing role of party loyalty in determining what members receive requested committee assignments. I find that journalistic accounts, as well as the direct words of both committee aspirants and party leaders, show a stronger emphasis on party loyalty in the modern era. However, I am unable to demonstrate that finding in my empirical results. The disharmony in these two findings serves to highlight that party leaders and their associated steering committees operate under numerous pressures, and that their ability to reward loyalty or punish dissent on an individual level is limited by broader party goals. Instead, I find evidence that party leaders are trying to accommodate their members, but are constrained by things like committee size and the popularity of different committees.

This study advances previous studies of committee assignment politics in multiple ways. I explained how the process for assigning members to committees changed with steering committee reforms in the 1990s and found that, in spite of that, the main factors determining whether a member gains a requested committee assignment are largely unchanged. This result speaks to a limit on the extent to which party leaders can use committee assignments as a way to spur loyalty. This study also represents a methodological advancement, as I explicitly model the choice to make a committee request as the first stage to whether a request is granted.

Chapter 3

Who's Making The Laws? The Institutional Foundations of Legislative Productivity

In 2005, Representative Christopher Smith was removed as the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. A favorite of veterans' groups, he nevertheless rankled party leadership by opposing Republican budget resolutions that he felt did not adequately fund veterans' programs and pushed legislation expanding access to care even after being told that it was not the party's priority. For being so outspoken against the leadership, he not only lost his chair, but was removed from the committee altogether. He was replaced in his post by Steve Buyer, who had authored only three laws in six terms prior to taking the chairmanship. However, party leaders considered Buyer to be a "team player" that would work with the party leadership, rather than oppose it. Buyer was very legislatively active as chair, authoring 53 bills in his first term after replacing Smith, and never sparking the sort of conflict with

the party leadership that marred his predecessor.

Committee and subcommittee chairs introduce more than half of all non-commemorative legislation that becomes law, and often more than eighty percent. With such legislative control, these groups are prime targets for reformers that want to alter the balance of power in Congress, and recently for party leaders that want to secure their hold over what policies are pursued. However, scholarly and journalistic accounts contend that committee chairs have waned in importance with the rise of party leadership as the main organizing unit in the House of Representatives. I aim to characterize how the prominance of committee chairs in the legislative process has changed, and what role committee chairs have in a party-dominated Congress.

I argue that chamber and party rules serve as a foundation for legislative productivity. In this paper, I compare the legislative productivity of committee leaders through three periods in House history, including the modern House. Each period was marked by reforms that changed the power structure of the House. These reforms changed the members to whom committee chairs needed to be responsive in order to maintain the chair. I contend that committee chairs want primarily to keep their position and alter their legislative behavior to accommodate the members or groups that could jeopardize the security of their chair.

I show that patterns of bill authorship, and thus associated legislative effectiveness scores, change with different policymaking regimes. In a system where the top spot is automatically awarded to the most senior member, committee chairs are able to operate in a variety of different ways without fear of reprisal or losing their seats. Often, this system meant that chairs were able to get the bills they sponsored considered and passed, typically at the expense of legislative opponents, whose bills would not receive consideration, leading to a high legislative effectiveness. When committee chairs must win the approval of the entire caucus, which happened in the mid-1970s, chairs will try to accommodate the legislation of junior members of their party, and subcommittee chairs see their productivity rise. When

committee chairs only gain their position after being properly vetted and approved by the party leadership, as is the case in the modern House, they are more productive because the party leadership has chosen chairmen because they will vigorously pursue party goals.

Committee Chairs and Reform Eras

Studies of legislative effectiveness have consistently found that committee chairs are most successful at converting their bills into law (Anderson et al. 2003; Berry and Fowler 2018; Hitt et al 2017; Volden and Wiseman 2014; Volden and Wiseman 2018). This finding is intuitively sensible; committee chairs wield disproportionate influence over legislation under their domain. The chair can refuse to schedule full committee hearings or votes on a bill, and can have vast influence over a bill's content due to their role in the markup stage (Oleszek et al. 2016; Price 1978; Shepsle 1979; Smith and Deering 1984). Thus, the member that becomes chair can radically alter which policy outcomes are pursued and achieved (Hall 1987; Hall 1995; Matthews and Stimson 1975; Talbert et al. 1995). Committee chairs are also very desirable positions beyond policy success. They have historically exhibited low retirement rates (Hall and Van Houweling 1995), received increased campaign contributions (Ansolabehere and Snyder 1998; Romer et al. 1994), and higher federal spending in their districts (Cohen et al. 2011), and thus remain valuable. However, the degree of independence chairmen have has varied over congressional history in a way that has altered what type of members attain and retain these positions, and subsequently how well they are able to leverage their position into legislative success.

Because they occupy such a significant role in the legislative process, committee chairmen are the main targets for party leaders that want to consolidate their power or backbenchers who find their legislative goals stymied (Rohde 1974). In this section, I briefly review the

reforms that have altered the balance of power between the party leadership and committee chairs in order to show how institutional arrangement can insulate chairs from accountability or induce their responsiveness. In every case, a central point of contention is how committee chairs gain and keep their seats and the consequences of each system for patterns of bill sponsorship and consideration. During the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th, the power structure of the House was known as Czar rule. Speaker Joseph Cannon exercised such control over the committee chairs that he referred to committee chairman as his "cabinet," far from coequal partners in House governance (Busby 1927). The party leadership reserved top chairmanships for the leaders. The Speaker chaired the Rules Committee, the majority leader headed Appropriations or Ways and Means, and the whip was the top of Judiciary (Cooper and Brady 1981). Structurally, there was little, if any, separation between the party leadership and committee leadership. Remaining chairs were hand-picked by the speaker, who was not shy about removing chairs that did not serve his interests (Maltzman, Wahlbeck, and Lawrence 2001). Eventually, the progressive wing of House Republicans grew tired of the powerful leadership. They joined House Democrats in a revolt against Cannon's iron rule (Jones 1968). The Democrats gained the majority in 1910 and introduced a much less centralized and more automatic process. They took away the power of the Speaker to appoint committee chairs, and both parties created "committees on committees" to handle requests for members to serve on committees[11] (Smith and Deering 1984). Chairs would be awarded through an arrangement that would persist for the next several decades - the seniority system.

11. The Republicans created a separate committee on committees, whereas the Democrats vested that authority entirely in the Democratic contingent of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Committee Era

From the 1920s through the 1960s, the House used a simple criterion for advancement: the longer you serve, the higher leadership position you attained within committees. The longest serving members occupied committee chairs, regardless of their ideological fit within the party. Chairs routinely served in their position for more than a decade, and many close to two. This system disproportionately benefited southern Democrats, whose electoral fortunes were rarely in question in a region that had functional one-party rule (Cover and Mayhew 1977). They became known as "lords" or "barons" in recognition of the control they wielded. Wilbur Mills, an Arkansas Democrat, was often called "the most powerful man in Washington" during his 16 year tenure atop the Committee on Ways and Means (Zelizer 2000). Graham Barden, a southern Democrat who spent fourteen years chairing the Committee on Education and Labor, used his power to effectively block federal aid to education and thwart challenges to his conservative banking policies (Smith and Deering 1984). Meanwhile, he regularly advanced legislation to support his district, with one reporter summarizing his philosophy "Anything that doesn't concern the Third District of North Carolina can't be too important" (Price 1986). Barden's actions are typical of his time and the institutional arrangement of the House that supported it. His bills, like any chair's bills, would be the ones that became law, and those that countered or ignored his policy or district interests would be stifled. This era of committee government is considered the apex of committee chair power in the twentieth century, where chairs were insulated from outside influence by virtue of longevity.

Subcommittee Era

By the 1970s, the junior Democratic membership grew more ideologically consistent, with more liberals being elected. The rank-and-file found themselves frustrated by chairs out of

step with their policy aims who kept the legislation they introduced in the committee, with no chance of gaining a floor vote and becoming law. The 1970s brought a flurry of reforms aimed to rectify this disparity, known as the subcommittee bill of rights. This shook up the seniority system and brought in an era of subcommittee government, so called because subcommittee chairs were given more control over the consideration of legislation. Bills were required to be referred to subcommittees, and each subcommittee was given a staffer, increasing both their control and their capacity (Haeberle 1978; Rohde 1974; Rohde 1991). Additionally, the reforms kept members from serving as the chair of more than one subcommittee, distributing power more widely among the members. There were around 150 subcommittees, meaning that more than half of all Democrats chaired one. Further, subcommittee chairs went from being appointed by the full committee chair to being chosen by the majority party contingent on the committee (Sinclair 2006).

Beyond benefiting subcommittee chairs, the reforms induced accountability among the full committee chairs. The independence and power of chairs was curtailed. The Speaker was added to and became the chair of the Committee on Committees, with the majority leader and caucus chair joining him. the Committee on Ways and Means would be removed from the Committee on Committees altogether, and a separate Steering and Policy Committee was created (Deering 1982). The caucus, no longer seniority or the chairs themselves, were running the show, and the rank-and-file were ready to make the most of it. The greatest threat was that committee chairs now underwent automatic votes, which were allowed to be secret at the request of 20 percent of the members. The Democratic Party could now reject the most senior member. The seismic impact of these changes was felt at the beginning of the 94th Congress (1975-1977), the first after the reforms were passed. Secret voting ousted William Poage, who led Agriculture for eight years, Wright Patman, chairman of Financial Services for twelve years and Small Business for twelve years before that, and Edward Hébert, who sat atop Veteran's Affairs for four years (Jones et al. 1977). All three were southern

Democrats seen as out of step with the "Watergate Babies," the spate of liberal freshmen elected in 1974, and all three faced the consequences of institutional reforms that reduced chair independence.

Party Government

Through the late 1970s and 1980s, the Democrats slowly adopted procedures that gave more power to the party leadership. These slow moving reforms, though, contrast the rapidity of Republican rule changes in the 1990s. The 104th Congress came with the first Republican majority in 40 years and with it a sea change that would remake the House of Representatives. All the reforms of the subcommittee government era had been enacted by Democrats, largely in Democratic Caucus rules rather than chamber rules. Republicans, not indebted to that precedent, revised the rules significantly (Baughman 2006). Incoming Speaker Newt Gingrich, seen as the architect of the conservative triumph, made a centerpiece of his campaign the "Contract with America," a listing of reforms and legislation to be enacted within the first one hundred days (Evans and Oleszek 1997). Many of these proposed changes took on the committee system. For the first time since the 1946, the number of committees was reduced, this time by three, and the number of subcommittees was reduced by a third. Most significant was the redistribution of voting power of the House Republican Steering Committee, their organ in charge of awarding committee chairs. During the party's forty years in the minority, their chair selection process was moot, as they weren't selecting any chairs. In 1994, though, the reforms gave the party leader 5 votes and the deputy leader 2 votes, meaning that the party leadership, including whips and leader appointees, directly controlled 14 of 35 votes, and did not find it difficult to gather the remaining 4 votes needed for a majority. This change was followed by a three term limit on chairs, which meant that even the most senior members of the committee could not amass the personal power that chairs like Wilbur

Mills had and ensured that new chair slots would be regularly available as carrots the party leadership could dangle (Deering and Wahlbeck 2006). The reforms, though, went beyond what was promised in the contract. Authority was placed in the hands of the full committee chairs and away from subcommittees. Full committee chairs had control over all committee staff and were empowered to appoint subcommittee chairs, greatly reducing subcommittee independence. Subcommittee chairs were able to schedule meetings for their subcommittee, but were instructed by the rules to do so after consulting the full committee chair. Don Young, chairman of the Resources committee and later Transportation, described the balance of power: "If I was really nasty, there wouldn't be any subcommittees. There's no rule about having subcommittees. I run the committee, period. I keep what I want under my jurisdiction [at the full committee]" (Evans and Oleszek 1997).

Gingrich dictated that seniority should be only one consideration when determining chairmanships (Cann 2008). As the 104th Congress began, Gingrich hand-picked committee chairs, with Steering Committee approval as a mere formality. He violated the norm of seniority for three committees and only allowed some senior members to become chair after several meetings with Gingrich to ensure their support (Deering and Wahlbeck 2006; Owens 1997). The most notable of the latter group was Gerald Solomon, who became chair of the Rules Committee, one of the greatest sources of power in the House, who only gained the seat seniority would have automatically assigned to him after Gingrich was confident that he would support the party. A staffer for Majority Leader Richard Armey asserted "I think it ended up sending a very clear signal that you don't just rely on seniority: you've got to prove yourself as someone willing to pursue your agenda- or our agenda."(Owens 1997). Deputy Whip and future Speaker Dennis Hastert was even more direct, saying "The chairs will deliver on the leadership's agenda, because they know that if they fail, they won't be chairs anymore" (Cohen 1995, 531). It was apparent; only the chairs that served the party leadership would maintain their position. While Gingrich brought about stronger partisan

considerations when determining committee chairs, the practice survived his congressional career. The 107th Congress was the second congress after Gingrich resigned and the third after chair term limits were instituted. The latter fact meant that for the first time, the chairs selected by Gingrich had to step down. Instead, a reshuffling 7 of 15 chairs that changed hands went to former chairs of other committees. Thus, while their jurisdiction changed, the leadership structure stayed the same (Renka and Ponder 2008). The members who did receive new chairs were also party darlings, being ideologically closer to the party leadership (Deering and Wahlbeck 2006) and contributing more to the party leadership (Cann 2008). The people that held chairs were the ones that the party leadership felt would support them.

It was not long before the Democrats began to follow suit. Even in the 104th Congress, Minority Leader Richard Gephardt stripped Charlie Rose, who had challenged Gephardt for the leadership post, of his position as ranking member of the House Oversight Committee in favor of Vic Fazio, a member of the leadership who had never even served on the committee (Salant 1994). His successor, Nancy Pelosi, instituted interviews for ranking member candidates much in the same way Gingrich and Hastert had done. "She is establishing a new trend," said an aide to a rank-and-file Member. "It's set by the attitude of leadership that you need to be a team player. She's establishing herself as the leader of the Democratic Caucus. And in so doing showing that anyone who is loyal to the Caucus is loyal to her"(Billings 2005). When she gained the Speakership in the 110th Congress, Pelosi retained in the rules the three term limit for committee chairs despite the fact that it did not apply to any member, a gesture to show that the party was still in charge.[12] While the majority party may have changed, the control of the party leadership was now a hallmark of the era.

Even with chairs that were reliably loyal, party leaders exercised their influence in the bill drafting stage, despite legislative effectiveness credit nominally going to the committee chair

12. While John Dingall previously served as chair of the Energy and Commerce committee from 1981 to 1995, the rules specify consecutive terms and thus his reappointment to that position in the 110th Congress did not run afoul of the rules.

that introduced the legislation. In the 104th Congress, the leadership had already directed, through the Contract with America, what the legislative agenda would look like, and left it to committee chairs to introduce the legislation, while party leaders held them to a tight schedule (Aldrich and Rohde 1997; Sinclair 1998). Sinclair (2016) shows that party leaders chose to bypass committee consideration of an increasing number of bills after the 104th Congress, even those that were introduced by the committee's chair. Most major legislation, such as the Affordable Care Act, American Health Care Act, and Tax Cuts and Jobs Act were introduced by committee chairs, but were in fact the product of long negotiations between the committee chair and party leaders rather than independent acts by the chair.

Legislative Productivity By Era

As the relationship between party leadership and committees has evolved, committee chairs have had to change how they operate in order to keep their positions, which has altered their patterns of bill authorship and legislative success. Individual legislative success has gone by many names, including entrepreneurship, productivity, and effectiveness, but has always meant the same thing - the ability of members to move their bills through the policy process. Numerous previous studies find that committee chairs regularly find the most bill success of any members (Wawro 2010; Volden and Wiseman 2014; Volden and Wiseman 2018). Subcommittee chairs, while less effective than chairs, also find themselves more productive than the rank and file. Most work, though, has focused entirely on individual characteristics of the member, such as gender or position in the institution, and assumes that the institutional design that influences the effect of those characteristics is stagnant. I now consider how the institutional eras and the reforms that defined them influenced the success that chairs and subcommittee chairs have found. Under all arrangements, chairs receive benefits by virtue of their position and have the main goal of keeping their chair.

When the only way to advance in committees is by getting reelected, chairs will want to prioritize their individual legislative agenda - at the expense of other members - to pass policies broadly acceptable to their constituencies, and stop legislation that their voters would dislike. Graham Barden, a southern Democrat who spent fourteen years chairing the Committee on Education and Labor[13], used his power to effectively block federal aid to education and thwart challenges to his conservative banking policies (Smith and Deering 1984). Meanwhile, he regularly advanced legislation to support his district, with one reporter summarizing his philosophy "Anything that doesn't concern the Third District of North Carolina can't be too important" (Price 1986). Barden's actions are typical of his time and the institutional arrangement of the House that supported it. His bills, like any chair's bills, would be the ones that became law, and those that countered or ignored his policy or district interests would be stifled.

When the reforms of the 1970s inaugurated the subcommittee government era, Democratic backbenchers sent shockwaves through the House by showing that they were willing to remove longstanding committee chairs. Immediately, the security of the seniority system was shaken, and the rank-and-file became a force that committee chairmen needed to accommodate. The junior members' chief complaint was their inability to get their legislation considered and passed. Chairs angling to keep their seats were no longer able to be a bottleneck that kept out legislation they disliked. The subcommittee chairs were the chief beneficiaries of this system. Making up a significant proportion of the majority party, they served as policy entrepreneurs that chairmen could no longer ignore. Chairs became more obliging with subcommittee chair bills, accepting a reduction in their legislative success in order to maintain the still potent privileges of the chair.

The rules underlying each power arrangement created incentives for committee chairs to

13. In two congresses before the Legislative Reform Act of 1946 merged several committees, Barden chaired the Committee on Education, which would become the Committee on Education and Labor.

follow. I expect that the legislative productivity of chairs and subcommittee chairs responded to those incentives. Chairs' unconstrained security allowed them to pursue their agenda unfettered during the age of the seniority system, while the subcommittee government era required deference to subcommittee chairs' legislative priorities in order to maintain their position. This leads to the following expectations.

H1:In the committee government era, committee chairs will be more legislatively productive than during subcommittee government.
H2:In the committee government era, subcommittee chairs will be less legislatively productive than during subcommittee government.

After the Republican Revolution, party leadership asserted their control over committee chairs. An echo of 1975, the most senior Republicans on the Appropriations, Energy and Commerce, and Judiciary committees found themselves without their expected chair. The party leadership made clear that vigorous pursuit of party policies would be required to occupy a committee chair. The modern House is noted for its centralization in the leadership, and the leadership's ability to shape the rules (Aldrich et al. 2013; Jenkins and Stewart 2016; Rohde 1991). However, the classic account of centralization leaves out which members are introducing the bills that the leadership wants. I contend that committee chairs are part of that centralization. Chairs in the era of party government are useful tools to the majority party. The chair, knowing that their preferences match that of the party leadership, advances the party's agenda, understanding that by doing so they will be able to keep their seat. The chairs no longer needed to acquiesce to the preferences of the rank-and-file members and subcommittee chairs, as that is not where the authority to award chairs lies. I anticipate that

this selection mechanism in the party government era will result in productive, partisan chairs.

H3:In the party government era, committee chairs will be more legislatively productive.
H4 In the party government era, subcommittee chairs will be less legislatively productive.

These expectations may seem counterintuitive - strong committee chair control and strong party control produce the same observable implications about legislative productivity. Thus, it is important to draw upon congressional history to characterize the context of my theory and expectations. The independence of committee chairs during the seniority era, their insulation from removal, and their various institutional prerogatives brought their power. All of those strengths were significantly eroded in the 1970s and again in the 1990s. By asserting their control over which members became chairs and which members kept their chairs, the leadership ensured that it was in the chairs best interest to introduce and advance legislation that reflected the party priorities. Given the context, it is implausible that the same process is driving increased chair effectiveness in the committee government era and in the party government era, even if the observed results look similar.

Data and Modeling

Testing these hypotheses requires a measure of legislative productivity. I employ Volden and Wiseman's (2014) Legislative Effectiveness Score (LES), which is a summary measure of how far bills go through the lawmaking process from introduction until becoming law. The LES gives higher scores for members who introduce more bills and more important bills, and those whose bills advance further in the lawmaking process, normalized to a mean of one

in each Congress, allowing for comparability across congresses.[14] For the present study, I analyze the Legislative Effectiveness Scores of every member of the U.S. Congress who served between the 93rd and 116th Congresses (1973-2021). I also leverage the component parts of their measure in order to have a more granular understanding of how chairs are gaining (and losing) productivity, to show how changes in individual productivity have influenced the House of Representatives as whole.

I estimate an equation that captures the effects of holding chairmanships and reform eras on effectiveness to test my first four hypotheses. The independent variable is the interaction between holding a committee or subcommittee chair and the era, each representing a different form of institutional arrangement. The first, "committee government," consists of the 93rd Congress, the earliest available data prior to the subcommittee bill of rights. Though most of the committee reforms were adopted in 1974, the final year of the 93rd Congress, the were not fully realized until the next year. Thus, the results presented here are likely a lower bound on pre-reform legislative productivity. The second period, which I call "subcommittee government," from the 94th to the 103rd Congress, covers the Democratic committee reforms, and the third, from the 104th to 116th, follows the reforms of the Republican Revolutuion and is referred to as "party government." Because multiple reforms happen simultaneously with each package, we can not empirically disentangle each changes's singular effect. However, I contend that looking at any individual reform misses the point. They were all part of a broad concerted effort to accomplish the same goal - reduce the independent power of chairs.

I control for variables that are standard in the legislative effectiveness literature, including seniority and its square, vote percent and its square, state legislative service and professionalism, ideology, majority status, and leadership status. I depart from previous studies of legislative effectiveness by employing a fixed effects model. As I am interested in the estimated effects of holding chairs varies over eras, this is appropriate, though it drops

14. The full detailing of the equation is reserved for the appendix.

non-time varying characteristics that have been shown to influence productivity, such as race and gender. I also use heteroskedasticity robust standard errors clustered on member.

Results

In Table 3.1, I show first show Model 1, which is the typical model of legislative effectiveness (Volden and Wisemen 2014). This model pools all congresses and shows substantial effects of holding a committee or subcommittee chair, two of the three largest coefficients in the model. The second model adds an interaction term between being a chair and a factor variable indicating the committee government and party government Congresses. I use the period of subcommittee government as the omitted category both because it is more instructive to compare the period directly succeeding or directly preceding it. Model 3 interacts being a subcommittee chair with the same temporal indicator, and Model 4 includes both interactions. I find support in each model for the interactive effects, and that those interactions alter the degree of the coefficient considerably.

Table 3.1: The Effect of Chair and Subcommittee Chair Status Moderated by Institutional Era

	Dependent variable:			
	Legislative Effectiveness Score			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Committee Government x Chair		2.076** (0.588)		2.290** (0.599)
Party Government x Chair		0.942** (0.245)		0.843** (0.246)
Committee Government x Subcommittee Chair			−0.398* (0.175)	−0.657** (0.179)
Party Government x Subcommittee Chair			−0.660** (0.083)	−0.598** (0.081)
Chair	2.721** (0.130)	2.109** (0.167)	2.632** (0.129)	2.081** (0.169)
Subcommittee Chair	0.663** (0.041)	0.691** (0.040)	1.031** (0.064)	1.028** (0.064)
Committee Government		−0.856** (0.142)	−0.503** (0.149)	−0.591** (0.146)
Party Government		0.190 (0.172)	0.574** (0.179)	0.436* (0.180)
Seniority	0.004 (0.013)	0.004 (0.012)	0.002 (0.013)	0.003 (0.013)
State Legislature	−0.698 (0.447)	−0.712 (0.437)	−0.784 (0.478)	−0.753 (0.469)
State Legislative Professionalism	−1.164 (1.248)	−1.040 (1.222)	−0.931 (1.259)	−0.850 (1.236)
Majority	0.940** (0.093)	0.900** (0.093)	0.977** (0.094)	0.955** (0.093)
Majority Leader	0.370** (0.102)	0.371** (0.102)	0.331** (0.102)	0.330** (0.102)
Minority Leader	−0.169** (0.063)	−0.172** (0.063)	−0.169** (0.063)	−0.171** (0.063)
Speaker	−0.422 (0.225)	−0.370 (0.222)	−0.498* (0.231)	−0.444* (0.226)
Power Committee	−0.150** (0.032)	−0.141** (0.032)	−0.164** (0.033)	−0.153** (0.032)
Ideological Distance	1.045** (0.236)	1.043** (0.235)	0.896** (0.240)	0.955** (0.238)
State Delegation Size	−0.022 (0.011)	−0.021 (0.011)	−0.022 (0.011)	−0.021 (0.011)
Vote Percent	0.032** (0.008)	0.031** (0.008)	0.031** (0.008)	0.031** (0.008)
Vote Percent Squared	−0.0002** (0.0001)	−0.0002** (0.0001)	−0.0002** (0.0001)	−0.0002** (0.0001)
Constant	−1.862** (0.459)	−1.051* (0.512)	−1.173* (0.535)	−1.145* (0.526)
Observations	10,307	10,307	10,307	10,307
R^2	0.642	0.646	0.646	0.649
Adjusted R^2	0.551	0.556	0.556	0.560
Residual Std. Error	1.015 (df = 8224)	1.010 (df = 8222)	1.010 (df = 8222)	1.005 (df = 8220)
F Statistic	7.079** (df = 2082; 8224)	7.191** (df = 2084; 8222)	7.189** (df = 2084; 8222)	7.294** (df = 2086; 8220)
Note:				*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 3.2: Marginal Effects of Chair and Subcommittee Chair on Legislative Effectiveness

	Chair	Subcommittee Chair
Committee Government	4.371 (0.599)**	0.371 (0.181)**
Subcommittee Government	2.081 (0.169)**	1.028 (0.064)**
Party Government	2.924 (0.180)**	0.430 (0.050)**

In Table 3.2, I calculate the marginal effects of holding a committee chair or subcommittee chair conditional on the institutional era. Holding either type of chair, unsurprisingly, is associated with higher legislative productivity throughout, however the amount changes substantially between the eras. Committee chairs were less than half as effective after the subcommittee bill of rights as they were in the 93rd Congress. During the era of party government, chairs were about forty percent more effective than the previous era. Subcommittee chairs are most effective during the subcommittee government era; holding such a position is associated with an increase of nearly a point. However, in both the committee government and party government eras that effect is halved. These numbers must be put into the appropriate context. The dependent variable is designed so that the mean is one in each congress. The benefit, then, of holding a chair during committee government, is four times the mean, clearly indicating that chairmen were among the most productive members of the House. These results support H1-H4 and show that institutional era significantly and substantially impacts the legislative pathways in the House of Representatives.

Having shown the individual changes by era, I exploit data on how far bills advanced in the legislative process to explore how changing individual legislative effectiveness affects the centralization of lawmaking broadly in the House. This enhances the previous analysis by considering the House of Representatives in its entirety rather than just a set of individual members. The number of committee and subcommittee chairs increased in 1974[15] and

15. The Committee on Small Businesses was added as a standing committee and the number of subcommittees increased to nearly 150 over the course of the 1970s (Smith and Deering 1984).

decreased in 1994.[16] Thus, if there were no changes to the individual legislative productivity of either group, we would expect that both committee and subcommittee chairs would make up a greater proportion of legislative activity during subcommittee government. As has been shown, though, individual changes in effectiveness did occur that went beyond the changes in the number of committees and subcommittees. In Table 3.3, I present the proportion of substantive and significant legislation for which chairs and subcommittee chairs were responsible at each stage of the legislative process.

Table 3.3: Proportion of Legislation Attributed to Chairs and Subcommittee Chairs by Era For Substantive and Significant Bills

Chair	Committee Government	Subcommittee Government	Party Government
Bill Introduced	35.6 %	28.9 %	34.3 %
Bill Received Action in Committee	40.1 %	28.6 %	34.1 %
Bill Received Action Beyond Committee	41.8 %	31.1 %	38.1 %
Bill Passed the Chamber	42.7 %	30.4 %	37.7 %
Bill Became Law	46.1 %	32.9 %	41.5 %
Subcommittee Chair			
Bill Introduced	61.6 % (41.3 %)	72.9 % (51.7 %)	43.6 % (40.8 %)
Bill Received Action in Committee	68.0 % (45.8 %)	76.4 % (54.9 %)	48.5 % (46.3 %)
Bill Received Action Beyond Committee	69.1 % (44.5 %)	77.4 % (54.2 %)	45.5 % (42.4 %)
Bill Passed	70.8 % (44.7 %)	76.9 % (54.4 %)	45.5 % (42.3 %)
Bill Became Law	62.4 % (38.2 %)	73.9 % (51.3 %)	47.2 % (43.7 %)

Note: Many committee chairs also serve as subcommittee chairs for other committees. I present the proportion for subcommittee chairs with chairs excluded in parentheses.

As these numbers show, throughout all analyzed periods, chairs and subcommittee chairs sponsor around 85 percent of substantive and significant legislation that became law. However,

16. The Committees on Merchant Marines and Fisheries, on the Post Office, and on the District of Columbia were eliminated, and the number of subcommittees was reduced from about 120 to 81.

there is substantial variation between these periods. Under committee government, almost half of the substantive and significant bills that become law were introduced by committee chairs, whereas it is less than a third under subcommittee government. During the party government era, chair effectiveness rebounded, and chairs once again became responsible for over forty percent of significant bills that became law.

In Table 3.4, I present the proportion of lawmaking activity on all non-commemorative legislation. All the numbers are depressed when compared to Table 3.3 because the denominator is so much larger; many more lawmakers introduce legislation that does not necessarily have wide national implications. It is clear that chairs and subcommittee chairs are still the dominant forces in lawmaking, always introducing more than half of the non-commemorative legislation that becomes law. While the difference between the data for committee chairs under committee government and subcommittee government looks similar to the trend and magnitude for substantive and significant legislation presented in Table 3.3, chairs under party government are making up a lower proportion of House-wide legislation than even under subcommittee government. This result indicates that chairs in the partisan era are increasing their effectiveness predominantly on significant legislation, which is reasonable in a circumstance where a centralized party leadership wants to focus on their priorities.

Table 3.4: Proportion of Legislation Attributed to Chairs and Subcommittee Chairs by Era For Non-Commemorative Bills

Chair	Committee Government	Subcommittee Government	Party Government
Bill Introduced	7.4 %	9.1 %	7.0 %
Bill Received Action In Committee	33.7 %	20.0 %	17.9 %
Bill Received Action Beyond Committee	34.9 %	27.2 %	21.5 %
Bill Passed the Chamber	36.2 %	26.6 %	21.0 %
Bill Became Law	38.8 %	28.2 %	26.2 %
Subcommittee Chair			
Bill Introduced	29.8 % (29.2 %)	40.0 % (38.7 %)	24.4 % (24.4 %)
Bill Received Action In Committee	61.9 % (49.7 %)	61.1 % (53.5 %)	36.6 % (36.3 %)
Bill Received Action Beyond Committee	62.8 % (49.4 %)	68.9 % (56.2 %)	36.4 % (35.8 %)
Bill Passed the Chamber	63.4 % (49.3 %)	68.5 % (55.7 %)	35.7 % (35.1 %)
Bill Became Law	57.9 % (45.8 %)	66.4 % (54.0 %)	36.0 % (35.2 %)

Note: Many committee chairs also serve as subcommittee chairs for other committees. I present the proportion for subcommittee chairs with chairs excluded in parentheses.

Potential Alternative Explanations

I have shown that patterns of bill authorship in the House differ based on the institutional rules guiding the relationship between the party leadership, committee chairs, and rank-and-file members. I now consider two potential alternative explanations for my findings. First, I examine whether these results represent a change in the way the House operates or just a difference between how Republicans and Democrats run committees. Second, I explore whether this is a function of changes in House rules or of something in the broader political environment.

Party government has persisted and has endured changes in majority status in a way

that was uncommon through the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first. The 40 years of Democratic majority that ended in 1994 were followed by 12 years of Republican majority. However, the past fifteen years have seen as many flips in party control of the House as the previous sixty (Lee 2016). Though each party has distinct methods with which they approach committee governance, reforms during the era of party government showed similar attempts to subjugate committee chairs. The parties both increased the leadership voting bloc on steering committees[17], and Democrats maintained chair term limits with their 2006 electoral victory. Though Democrats were slower to adopt these processes than Republicans, they were in place by the time that the Democrats won back the majority. I expect, with the adoption of those strategies, that the Democratic chairs will similarly have become responsive to the party leadership and perform similarly to their Republican colleagues.

In Table 3.5, I present the results of a model using only data from the party government era. I interact the majority party with chair and subcommittee chair status and find that there are not significant differences in chair or subcommittee chair effectiveness based on what party controls the House. Thus, I find no evidence that chairs and subcommittee chairs differ in productivity based on what party controls the majority, suggesting that the Democrats' rule changes, which mimicked the Republican effort, achieved the same result. Party leadership asserting control over committee chairs is bipartisan.

Second, any study of institutions faces the difficulty of disentangling whether change in practice is the result of institutional design or broader political forces that shape the environment in which that institution exists. Studies of Congress benefit from its bicameralism, where both the House and the Senate face the same context, but with differing design. In this

17. As discussed previously, Republicans added the leadership contingent to their steering committee all at once during the rule changes in the wake of their 1994 victory, while Democrats added leadership appointees throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

Table 3.5: The Effect of Holding a Committee or Subcommittee Chair in the Party Government Era Moderated by Majority Party

	Dependent variable:
	Legislative Effectiveness Score
Democratic Majority x Chair	0.354 (0.399)
Democratic Majority x Subcommittee Chair	0.051 (0.105)
Democratic Majority	0.151 (0.282)
Chair	2.749** (0.219)
Subcommittee Chair	0.395** (0.060)
Seniority	−0.002 (0.024)
State Legislature	−1.042 (0.642)
State Legislative Professionalism	−0.886 (1.440)
Majority	0.800** (0.154)
Majority Leader	0.467** (0.103)
Minority Leader	−0.073 (0.062)
Speaker	0.004 (0.287)
Power Committee	−0.149** (0.047)
Ideological Distance From Median	0.822* (0.386)
State Delegation Size	−0.018 (0.017)
Vote Percent	0.044* (0.012)
Vote Percent Squared	−0.0003** (0.0001)
Constant	−0.878 (0.807)
Observations	5,629
R^2	0.647
Adjusted R^2	0.544
Residual Std. Error	0.955 (df = 4359)
F Statistic	6.296*** (df = 1269; 4359)
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01

case, the Senate did not alter committees substantially, and certainly did not pass reforms packages as sweeping as the subcommittee bill of rights or those listed in the Contract with America. Thus, changes to the productivity of chairs or subcommittee chairs in the Senate that correspond with the timing of those reforms would be indicative that something about the political environment was the true driver of change. I examine that possibility in Table 3.6[18], which uses effectiveness data from of senators that are constructed in the same way as the House data (Volden and Wiseman 2018).

None of the findings surrounding committee chairs are replicated in the Senate. As the Senate did not have the same committee reforms that the House did, these results are unsurprising. There is no evidence that major changes in legislative effectiveness occurred in an institution under the same national political context, but without the associated rule changes. Senate subcommittee chairs during the era of the committee government are no less effective, but they are during the era associated with party government. While interesting, this finding is beyond the scope of this paper.

18. For readability, I present only the main coefficients in here. In the appendix, I include the full table with controls.

Table 3.6: The Effect of Chair and Subcommittee Chair Status Moderated by Institutional Era in the Senate

	Dependent variable:
	Senate Legislative Effectiveness Score
Committee Government x Chair	0.245
	(0.376)
Party Government x Chair	0.106
	(0.138)
Committee Government x Subcommittee Chair	−0.146
	(0.126)
Party Government x Subcommittee Chair	−0.198**
	(0.060)
Chair	0.929**
	(0.110)
Subcommittee Chair	0.427**
	(0.064)
Committee Government	0.362
	(0.238)
Party Government	−0.497
	(0.288)
Observations	2,397
R^2	0.615
Adjusted R^2	0.532
Residual Std. Error	0.684 (df = 1974)
F Statistic	7.467*** (df = 422; 1974)
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Discussion and Conclusion

The defining feature of any legislative body is their capacity for lawmaking. Thus, the members who are legislatively successful reflect how the institution is governed and how power is distributed. I argue the three eras analyzed show three different power arrangements. Throughout, committee and subcommittee chairs are more effective than their fellow members, but the degree changes considerably. When committee chairmanships are awarded automatically on the basis of seniority, chairs can pursue their policies in a variety of ways without being concerned for the safety of their position. In the subcommittee government era, chairs needed to please the junior members of the party, and so subcommittee chairs found themselves advantaged. In the modern day, it is party that controls the award of chairmanships, but once the party leadership has ensured the loyalty of the chair, chairs are able to pursue their goals effectively.

This finding exists in spite of voluminous literature that shows a shift toward the power of party leadership that overtook the power once associated with committee chairs. I do not dispute those previous studies; I argue instead that this analysis adds to them by providing important nuance about the role of committee chairs in a partisan House of Representatives. Committee chairs have found their increased success at the cost of their independence. Present day party leaders select chairs based on their anticipated support of the party, rather than their seniority, and created a system to rotate chairs to prevent them from accruing too much individual power. In essence, mid-century chairs were productive because they could not be removed. Modern chairs are productive because they can be.

I further demonstrate that these changes in individual productivity have a significant impact on whose legislation becomes law. Despite making up just 20 members[19], modern

19. The Committee on Homeland Security was added in the 107th Congress in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

chairs introduce over 40 percent of the substantive and significant legislation that becomes law, an increase of 26 percent over the proportion for which chairs were responsible in the subcommittee government era. In a time where reform is unlikely for the foreseeable future (Rickert and Smith 2020), the success of partisan chairs will likely proceed as it has for a quarter of a century.

Previous studies have missed important variation in individual bill success based on institutional arrangement. The productivity of chairs and subcommittee chairs is conditional on the rules under which they operate. This analysis sheds light on how the relationship between parties and committees evolve. In a period where party is seen as singularly important in their control over the House of Representatives, this study shows that committees are still specifically useful, not as independent entities, but as agents of the party. Finally, this work serves as a caution to anyone studying the U.S. Congress, and in particular the use of legislative effectiveness scores. Drastically different institutional processes generate similar scores, which highlights their limitations as an explanatory tool. Legislative effectiveness scores demonstrate bill sponsorship, but are not a proxy for power or influence in Congress. Additionally, pooling together large swaths of data that span decades can mask important variation as the House changes its rules. A careful consideration of historical context is necessary for fully characterizing the House of Representatives through time.

Chapter 4

An Autopsy of Paired Voting in the U.S. Senate

In 2018, Senator Lisa Murkowski cast an unexpected vote. In the highest profile roll call of the year, the confirmation of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, Murkowski voted "present," in spite of her stated opposition to the candidate. She cast a paired vote, a system by which a present member makes an arrangement with an absent member that would vote opposite them to withdraw their vote, so the outcome is unaffected by the absence. Senator Steve Daines was at his daughter's wedding, and the Republican leadership wanted to push through the nominee while they had a majority. Thus, Murkowski did a favor to her colleague and helped out her party at the same time. While paired voting was once commonplace, happening hundreds of times each congress, it is almost never observed today.

The Senate is a dynamic body with members that change their behavior in response to changes in political context. Such context conditions the opportunities available to senators and constraints besetting them. I argue that paired voting was a casualty of multiple contextual changes and analyze each in turn. In particular, I explore the effect of declining absences,

leadership influence, and political polarization. Senate attendance rates increased because the electoral costs of absenteeism increased while changes in technology and scheduling practices made it easier to be in Washington when votes were cast. The heightened attendance rate removed much of the need to find pairs. Party leaders differed in the extent to which they supported members pairing. Increased polarization made it harder to find a pair within your party, as the parties became more ideologically homogeneous, and also increased the cost of helping a member of the opposite party. These changes happened concurrently and each contributed to the disappearance of pairing.

To understand paired voting and its decline, I examine the practice at two levels. First, I employ network analysis methods to investigate individual-level characteristics that determine paired voting behavior. This model allows me to make the relationship between senators, in this case the paired vote, the dependent variable while accounting for the violation of the conditional independence assumption necessary for traditional inferential methods. I find that senators with more absences and party leaders are more likely to pair, that ideologically distant copartisans are more likely to form a pair with each other. I then investigate the extent to which changing context eroded the amount of paired voting per Congress, I find that paired voting declined as the annual attendance record increased and as a party's ideological heterogeneity decreased. From these findings, I conclude that no single factor eliminated paired voting. Instead, multiple changes in Senate practice and context made paired voting untenable.

In this essay, I explore a practice whose disappearance has escaped the attention of congressional scholars. In doing so, I highlight how contextual factors influence the day to day workings of the Senate. Senators respond to changes in their environment and are particularly sensitive to the costs and opportunities available to them. When the cost of pairing was raised or the opportunity to pair becomes sparse, Senators abandoned it as a

strategy.

Pairing in Historical Context

Paired voting emerged as a solution to a specific problem - members could not attend every roll call, but still wanted to have their vote counted. By finding a pair, the member nullifies the impact of their own absence on the outcome, leaving the winning margin identical to what it would have been had the senator been present. Pairing was first mentioned in congressional documents in 1838, with a reference to several members who had "paired off" to excuse themselves from a session that had run late into the evening (*Congressional Globe* vol 6. pp 378). This episode indicates that paired voting was an informal arrangement between members meant to provide cover for missed votes, with the purpose of keeping absences from affecting vote totals directly stated in Senate debates three years later. The practice was initially seen as a controversial dereliction of duty, with the House narrowly voting against excusing the absence of a member who had arranged a pair in the 27th Congress (1841-1843) (*Congressional Globe* vol. 10 pp. 406). However, by the 36th Congress (1859-1861) pairing had become regularized and the practice of announcing pairs following roll call votes was routine (Rivers 1860).

Despite its ubiquity in the *Congressional Record*, few scholars have given paired voting serious consideration or commented on its decline. Luce noted that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, members would form long term pairs that lasted months (Luce 1922). However, throughout the twentieth century, pairing was more democratized with many members pairing with many others. In the early years of that century arranging pairs was one of the chief responsibilities of the first party whips, though that job fell to the party secretaries over time (Oleszek 1971; Scott 1992). Beyond those historical accounts, political

scientists have used paired voting in calculating ideology scores as position taking equivalent to a cast vote (Poole and Rosenthal 1997). While an expression of preference, there are reasons that members pair instead of casting votes, and examining trends in pairing can highlight features of congressional development.

Pairing was a fixture of congressional vote behavior, affecting numerous votes every session, until its disappearance in the late twentieth century. While the amount varied significantly from year to year, pairing has declined rapidly from the middle of the century to today. In Figure 4.1, I present the number of paired votes each decade from the 1960s to the present. While the decline is obvious, the Figure also indicates that pairing was a predominantly within-party phenomenon. In each decade, the number of pairs between two Democrats or between two Republicans dwarfs the number of cross party pairs. In the next section, I explore different changes in congressional context and how they influenced paired voting.

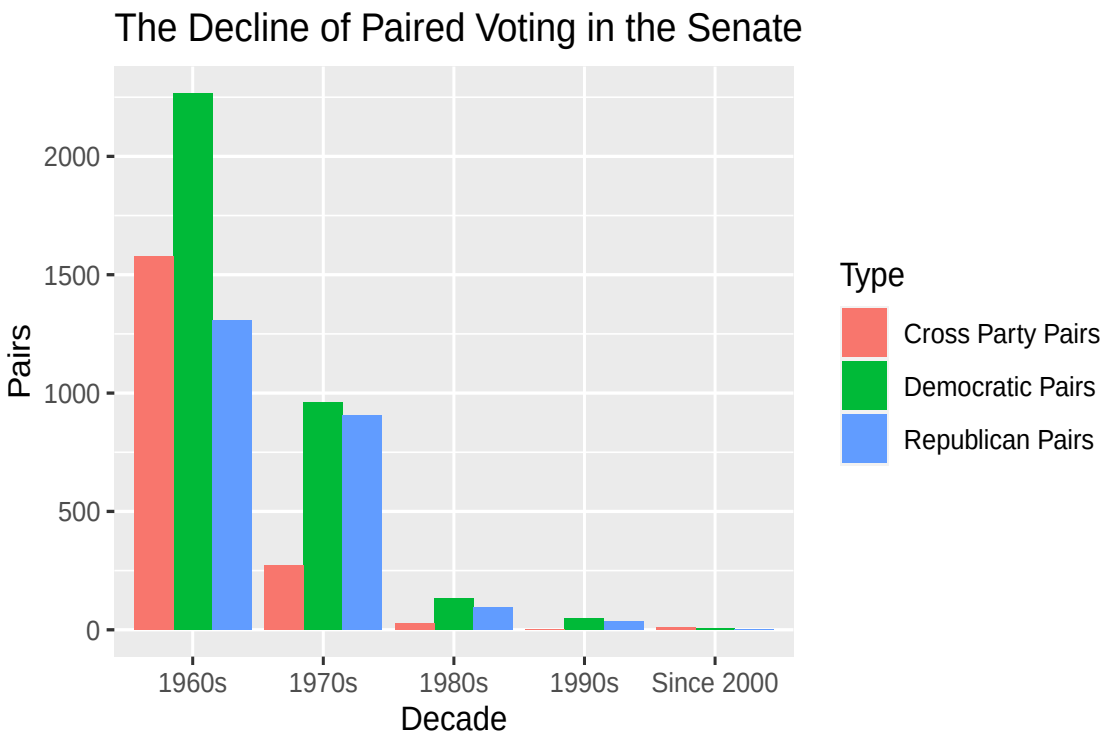

Figure 4.1: This plot shows the number of pairs by year, separated by whether the pair was between two Democrats, between two Republicans, or between members of the opposite party. Data collected by the author from the Congressional Record.

Paired Voting in Decline

In this section, I examine the potential factors that make paired voting a viable strategy, and how changes in those factors contributed to the disappearance in pairing overall. The most obvious reason that members pair is to nullify the impact of absences on a senator's personal attendance record. Senators have many responsibilities, both personal and political, that might detain them from casting votes. In announcing a pair, the senator is said in the Congressional Record to be "necessarily absent," lending legitimacy to their missed vote

for any curious constituent.[20] Pairs allowed members to claim that their vote was recorded without ever having to set foot on the floor. Secretary for the Majority Bobby Baker said "When accused of nonaction on the bill by some future opponent, they could bluster of how they'd been "been recorded"...It would take the opponent six days to explain all the parliamentary deceptions involved, by which time he'd be speaking to empty chairs" (Baker 1978). When election day got nearer, some senators would look back at potentially dangerous missed votes and ask for a correction to the Congressional Record that showed them as paired rather than absent. A senator's vote is a precious resource and members want to signal to their voters that they are not wasting it.

Senators today are casting votes with more reliability than in previous eras. Through the 20th century, innovations in technology and Senate practice made it easier for senators to spend time in their state without missing votes. A revolution in transportation technology took place that freed members from being bound to the speed of railroad cars. The inauguration of the Jet Age in the post-World War II period meant fewer stops on cross-country trips that now made it realistic for even western members to campaign in their states during the weekend and still show up for votes during the week (Loomis 2000). At the same time, the Senate constricted their calendar to facilitate this process even further. In the early 1900s, about 60 percent of roll call votes occurred on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, which is about what would be expected if the votes were not systematically scheduled in any strategic fashion. In Figure 4.2, I show that starting in the mid-century, the proportion of roll calls held in the middle of the week began a steady increase. The Senate leadership was scheduling fewer votes on Monday and Friday, thus making it easier for members to fulfill duties in their state without having to miss votes. Another factor in increased attendance is that senators are likely healthier than their predecessors and so less likely to miss long

20. The actual reason for the absence had no bearing on the phrase and often ran the gamut from illness or family obligations to betting at the racetrack (Ritchie 2009).

stretches of votes that historically were causes for pairing. While there is not a public, reliably consistent measure of health, senator mortality rates provide an illustration. Senate deaths have trended downward for a century, and are now a rarity. Two to three senators died per year, on average, in the first half of the twentieth century (Brant, Masthay, and Overby 2018). Since 1980, though, there has never been a year where more than one sitting senator died and 23 years when no senators died at all. Additionally, congressional deaths over the past few decades have been consistently lower than actuarial expectations (Maltzman, Siegelman, and Binder 1996). This means that, even though they are now older on average, senators are not suffering from debilitating, mortal conditions that frequently. Technology, scheduling, and health all mean that senators are missing fewer votes than ever before.

At the same time, the political cost of absenteeism has also increased. Newspapers call attention to missed votes, especially during campaign season. To provide an illuminating example, on January 1st, 2020, the Atlanta Journal Constitution, Georgia's newspaper of record, reported that senators Loeffler and Purdue missed a vote to override President Trump's veto of the N.D.A.A. Both were in the final days of a difficult campaign, but the paper was unforgiving. It reported that Loeffler had a private jet and had before rearranged her schedule to accommodate votes. Further, they quoted a Democratic party leader who charged the senator with "skipping work." In light of these factors, the average absence rate among Senators increased, as shown in Figure 4.3. Senators now miss fewer that five percent of votes, compared to an average of around fifteen percent in the middle of the century. If all senators vote, then none need pairs. Thus the number of paired votes should decline as the attendance rate increases.

Pairs are a "merely voluntary arrangement between individual Senators" according to Riddick's *Senate Procedure*(1992), but in practice they were the domain of the party. The first party whip, Hamilton Lewis, was specifically tasked with monitoring attendance and arranging pairs (Oleszek 1971). Over time, that position was copied by the Republicans, and

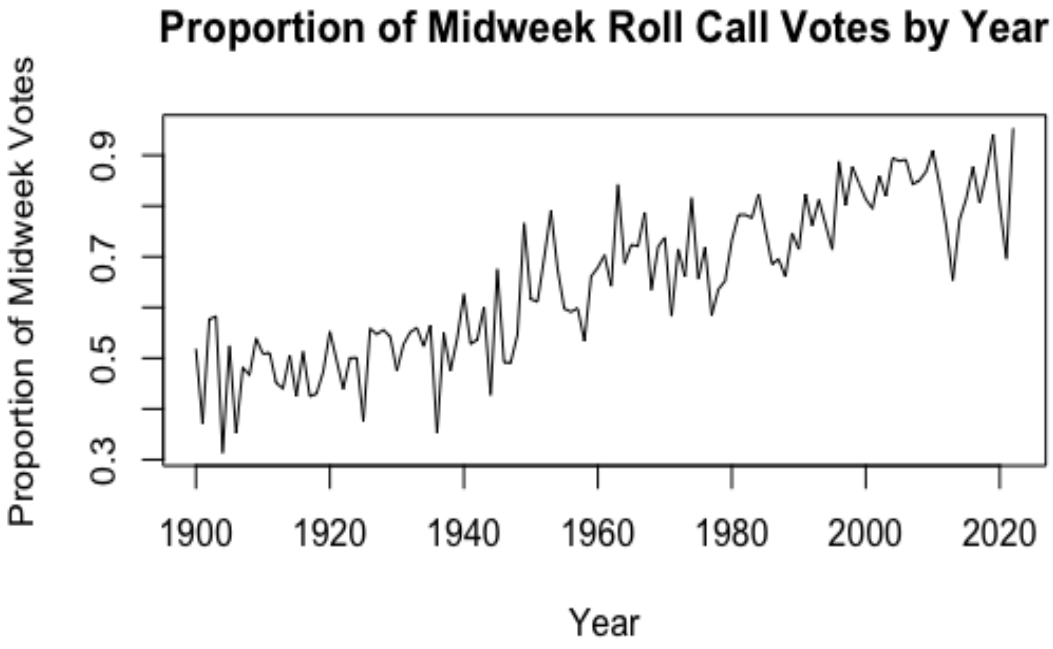

Figure 4.2: This plot shows the proportion of Senate roll call votes that occurred on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday aggregated by year.

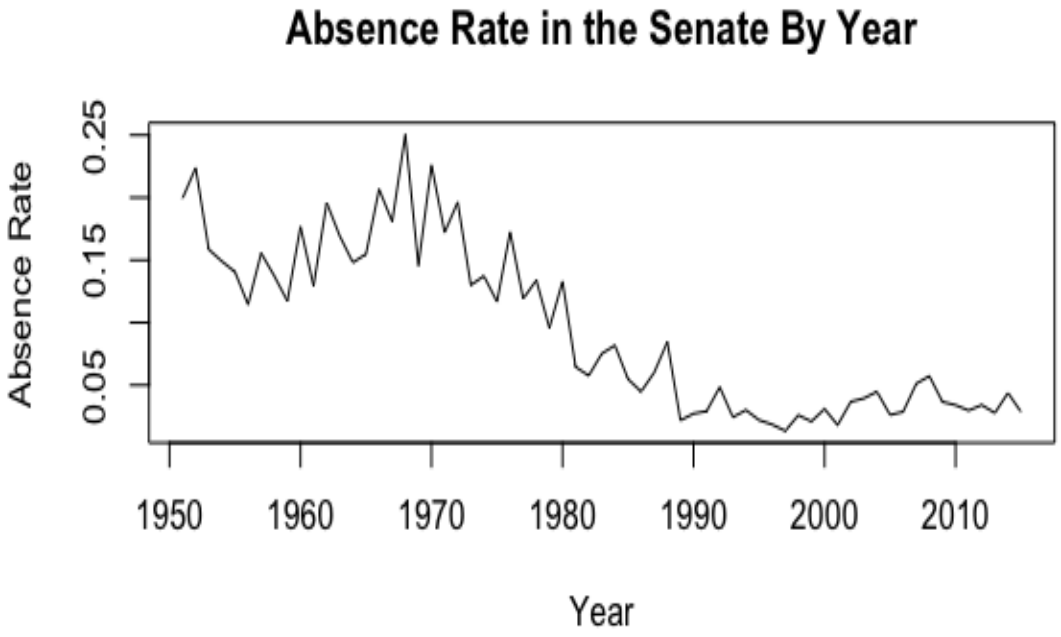

Figure 4.3: This plot shows the proportion of missed votes on Senate roll calls aggregated by year.

both shared the duty of setting up pairs with a party secretary. Parties too have an incentive to arrange pairs, as it helps the party to provide electoral cover for absent members and allows parties to internalize the cost of any defections by members. Because pairs were organized by the party, particularly an arm of the party leadership, some of the variation in paired voting is likely due to the varied approaches that leaders, whips, and party secretaries took toward arranging pairs. There is considerable historical evidence to support this assertion.

In the mid-twentieth century, the Democrats had three leaders that are illustrative of different approaches to pairing. Under Ernest McFarland, pairing was not of special interest to the party leadership (Caro 2002). Instead, pairs were arranged entirely by Felton "Skeeter" Johnston, the party secretary, or by informal, individual agreements (Scott 1992). Lyndon Johnson the Majority Leader was known to be much much less accommodating of pairs. He demanded that every vote be accounted for and tasked Secretary for the Majority, Bobby Baker, with always having a number for even the senators that did not want to be reached (Caro 2002). Consequently, we see fewer Democratic pairs during Johnson's tenure as leader. Pairing returned to prominence when Johnson left the Capitol for the Naval Observatory and new leader Michael Mansfield viewed pairing more favorably. According to the Democratic Party Conference minutes, in 1962 veteran senators Wayne Morse and John Sparkman decrying the disuse of pairing and suggesting its revival as a way to help protect senators that have to be out of Washington campaigning (Ritchie 1998). Accordingly, Democrats made more pairs in 1962 than any other year in my dataset.

Pairing as party strategy was not limited to the Democrats. In the 1950s, the Republican leader William Knowland repeatedly reminded his copartisans to make pairs through the party secretary rather than arranging them individually. He also urged members to not pair with Democratic colleagues and, if they must vote against the party, to pair with Republican senators who were absent (Wolf and Ritchie 1999). Similarly, Everett Dirksen warned the Democratic operative Baker to "stay on your side of the aisle" and "don't make deals with

my colleagues" after Baker got Glenn Beall to pair with Eugene McCarthy (Westman and Brandi 2015). While different party leaders' views toward pairing certainly contributed to the year-by-year variation in paired voting, it is unlikely that the decline can be wholly attributed to party leader preferences.

These anecdotes suggest that members generally prefer to pair within their party than across party lines. However, senators can only pair with members who are voting against them. In votes where each party is unified, even the most desperate senator will be unable to find a copartisan with whom to pair. The most studied trend in congressional politics is partisan polarization, and it too has conditioned the opportunities and costs of paired voting. Party polarization involves two elements: increasing ideological homogeneity within each party and increasing ideological distance between the parties. The former means that copartisans are voting similarly to each other, which in turn means that there are fewer opportunities to pair within one's party. Increasing ideological distance between the parties increases the costs of pairing with an out-party member. It becomes harder for senators to justify doing a favor for an increasingly distant political opponent when that favor could mean an electoral victory. This is a more salient consideration in an era of insecure majorities, where a change in a single seat could determine control of the Senate. There has not been a rise in cross-party pairing to compensate the reduced opportunity to pair within one's own party, even though there are ample opportunities to find potential pairs on the opposing side. In the 111th Congress, Majority Leader Harry Reid took to the floor to beseech Republicans to pair with the long-serving Democrats Ted Kennedy and Robert Byrd who had become too ill to attend votes. Polarization was too much to overcome. There were no Democrats voting against Kennedy and Byrd's positions, and there were no Republicans willing to assist their colleague.

The disappearance of paired voting is caused by a number of contextual changes that condition the opportunities and costs of senators. Practical considerations, like how easy it is

to cast votes, reduce the need for pairing, but do not tell the full story on their own. Partisan factors, like the electoral price of absenteeism and the ideological distance between the parties, make it more costly to pair with members of the opposite party. At the same time, ideological consistency within parties reduces the number of opportunities a senator has to pair within their own party. In the next section, I statistically test the degree to which these factors apply.

Research Design and Methods

I analyze paired voting in two ways. First, I look at pairing behavior on the individual level to determine what factors make members more likely to pair. By understanding why members pair, we can then infer that broad changes in those variables likely diminished pairing overall. To follow, I examine pairing at the Congress-level to see what overarching factors correlate with the decline in the total volume of pairing activity. I used the *Congressional Record* to collect the universe of paired votes in the Senate. While some previous data on paired voting does exist, it contains many errors.[21] Pairs were announced in a standardized way, with either the member or a floor leader (if the both members were absent) declaring that they had a pair, who was in it, and how each would have voted. My analysis depends on the relationship between members, rather than the individual member, and so the unit of analysis is the relationship, characterized as a network of possible and realized paired votes. I collected these data from 1951 to 2015. The final several years have under 10 pairs each, and include several zeroes after the turn of the century. Because of the small number of pairs, the networks were too sparse to be informative and so my model for testing the

21. The main roll call vote data, Voteview, has several problems. It does not always list both sides of a pair as having paired, it confuses announced votes and paired votes, and does not provide a way to tell who paired with whom on votes where there were multiple pairs. My method detects more pairs in most Congresses than this dataset.

determinants of pairs uses data only from 1951 to 1985.[22] The models to test the system level variables, though, use the number of pairs in a given year and can incorporate the entire series.

Individual-Level Analysis

The structure of the data at the individual level requires a network analytic approach which allows for the incorporation of both individual and dyadic dependent and independent variables. Simply looking at whether an individual member makes a pair loses important information about the member with whom they are pairing. Members do not select their pair partners at random, they choose with systematic regard to various factors, and those factors must be appreciated as a product of the tie rather than the individual. Using a more traditional generalized linear model with dyad-level data would also be problematic because the conditional independence assumption is not met. Pairs are exhaustible and once a senator is paired on a vote, they cannot typically be simultaneously paired with another senator.[23]. Members who pair, additionally, might be more likely to pair again with different members. My modeling strategy must be able to incorporate information about network structure to handle spatial dependence. Additionally, I expect some temporal dependency between each year's network. Institutional memory is largely preserved in each Senate, which has less potential year to year turnover than the House of Representatives, and so how each pairing network is organized is in part a function of the previous year's pairing network. These concerns require a model that can incorporate each of these dependencies.

22. It is computationally difficult to run the model with very few pairs, as there are past 1985, and the significantly diminished variation in later years might raise concern about bias. There is no problem with selecting on the dependent variable because the model compares senators that pair with senators that do not in every year, rather than years where there is pairing to years where there is not. Further, I examine the pairs in later years with the congress-level models.

23. Riddick's Rules for Senate Procedure state that for votes that require a two-thirds majority, one member voting nay can pair with two members voting yea. For my purposes, I have coded each of these as two separate pairs

To estimate the equation I use the additive and multiplicative effects latent factor model (AME).[24] The AME is structured to incorporate several different dependencies that plague networks to allow for better estimates on the coefficients of exogenous variables. This model takes into account first and second order dependencies in network structure.[25] Because this model is an extension of a typical regression framework, it can be interpreted similarly to an ordinal variable model, where the dependent variable is the number of pairs forming between two members in a given year.[26] Finally, I model the network as undirected, so it makes no difference to the model who the present and absent members are. Though this may seem like an odd choice, as the present member could be thought of as "giving" a pair to the absent member, many cases exist where both pairing members are absent and so no directionality could be determined.

The AME model can take dyadic and individual level covariates, and can also be estimated for a series of networks across time. The dependent variable is the the number of a pairs formed between a dyad in a given year. The main variables of interest are both dyadic and individual. Key individual-level variables are how often a member is absent in a given year, as defined by the proportion of roll calls on which a senator did not cast a yea or nay vote, and whether a member is part of the party leadership. While the latter variable does not reveal the extent to which the party controlled pairing, a positive result would suggest

24. Alternative specifications using the more common exponential random graph model (ERGM) and some of its extensions are given in Table C.1 and Figures C.1 and C.2 of the appendix. In Minhas et al. (2018), the authors find that the AME outperforms the ERGM on both the true positive and false positive rate for predicting pairs, while not performing worse on measures of network structure. In general, the ERGM is better for understanding the generative process of an entire network, while the AME is useful for predicting dyadic ties based on individual or dyadic covariates, which is what I am interested in accomplishing.

25. For example, values of the dependent variable might be more similar if they are all from the same nodes, or some nodes may be more likely to form ties than others. The model incorporates these dependencies using additive effects from the social relations model (Minhas et al., 2018). It is able to do this by decomposing the variance of observations in an adjacency matrix in terms of heterogeneity across row means, heterogeneity along column means, correlation between row and column means, and correlations within dyads. Full specification of the model can be found in equations one through ten in the appendix.

26. This framework can also incorporate alternative modeling strategies. For example, considering edges as dichotomous rather than ordinal. This specification is provided in Table C.2 of the appendix.

that the leadership helped support pairing by being willing to serve as a pair at a higher rate than other members. The dyadic variables of interest are whether two members share the same party, the ideological distance between those two members (measured by the difference between their first dimensional NOMINATE scores) and the interaction between the two. These variables enter the model as sets of matrices showing the relation between members i and j for all i and j.

Congress-Level Analysis

Analyzing the decline in pairing requires a different modeling strategy, as I now aggregate up to the Congress-level. The outcome variable is the number of pairs in a given year. Because the data generating process for pairing differs by party, I estimate three different equations with the dependent variable being the number of pairs between members who are both Democrats, between members who are both Republicans, and between members of different parties. My independent variables are the factors that contribute to the overall decline in paired voting. In the copartisan models, I analyze the absence rate of the Senate, defined as the proportion of votes cast that were neither a yea or nay, which represents the amount of pairs that could potentially occur. I use the size of the party as an indication of how many copartisans exist with whom one might pair and the standard deviation of the party's ideology, which indicates the frequency with which copartisans are opposing each other. I add fixed effects for each party leader, which controls for the varying extent that a particular party leader supports paired voting as a practice. I also control for the total number of roll call votes in a given year and whether or not it was an election year.

In the model for cross-party pairs, I again use absence rate as a main independent variable. I also use a series of independent variables meant to establish the political cost of cooperating across party lines. The size of the majority party is an indicator of how tenuous

majority control in the Senate is, and members should be less willing to form cross-party pairs when majorities are smaller. I have an indicator for whether or not it was an election year, when doing favors for members of the opposite party might be particularly costly. Finally, I assess political polarization, defined as the distance between the two parties' median DW-NOMINATE scores. I expect increasing political polarization will make members less willing to form cross party pairs. Again, I control for the total number of roll call votes.

Findings

Individual-Level Analysis

In Table 4.1, I present the results of the AME model, which speak to the factors that determine which individual members are pairing with what other members. The largest coefficient is for attendance. Senators with the lowest levels of attendance are about half as likely to pair as those with high attendance rates. Members of the leadership are slightly more likely to pair than their colleagues. The effect of polarization is found in the interaction between ideological distance and shared partisanship. The interaction in the model can be interpreted in the same way as it would in a typical ordinal probit GLM model. Figure 4.4 shows the marginal effect of shared partisanship at different values of the ideology variable, with 95% credible intervals. The effect of shared partisanship is indistinguishable from zero at low levels of ideological distance, which is expected because these members rarely find themselves opposing one another, and are thus unable to pair. However, the effect of shared partisanship grows as ideological distance increases. At 0.2 units of ideological distance, which is near the smallest for which the marginal effect is significant, shared partisanship is associated with being 1.5 times likely to form a pair. At 0.9 units, shared partisanship correlates with a 2.7

times greater likelihood of pairing. This is a large effect, and the different levels show how ability conditions willingness to form pairs.

Table 4.1: The Conditional Effects of Shared Partisanship and Ideological Distance on Pair Formation

	Dependent variable:
	Pair Formation
Attendance (nodal)	-0.737***
	(0.132)
Leadership (nodal)	0.038 *
	(0.021)
Same Party (dyadic)	0.255
	(0.260)
Ideological Distance (dyadic)	−0.239
	(0.483)
Party x Ideological Distance (dyadic)	0.896**
	(0.264)
Seniority (nodal)	0.002
	(0.036)
Intercept	0.175 ***
	(0.036)
Variance Parameters	
va	0.062
	(0.01)
ve	1.000
	(0.00)
n	3500
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table entries are AME coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

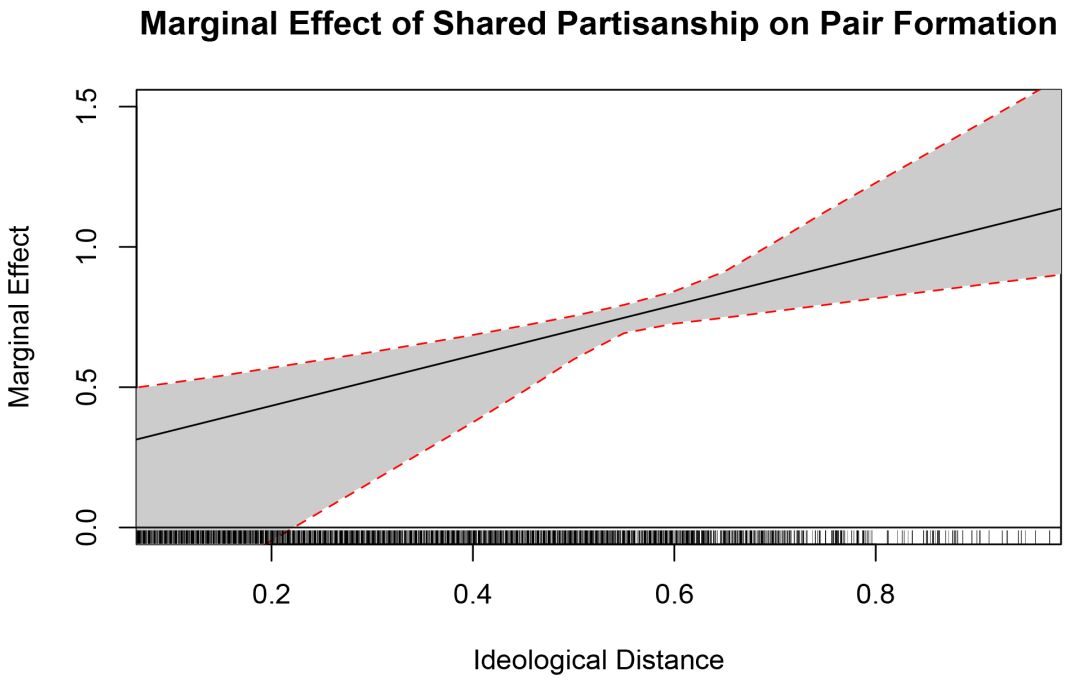

Figure 4.4: This plot shows the marginal effect of party at different levels of ideological distance. The rug at the bottom indicates the level of ideological distance between copartisans throughout the dataset.

We observe similar results by looking at the marginal effect of ideology at different values of the moderating variable of shared partisanship. When partisanship is set at zero, the effect of increasing ideological distance is -0.230 [-1.390, 0.990]. The marginal effect is negative and insignificant. When members do not have the same partisanship, ideological distance plays no role. The cost of cooperating with a member of the opposite party are too high, regardless of the ideological predilictions of the member. However, when senators share partisanship, they are more likely to form more pairs as ideological distance increases. This marginal effect is 0.666 [0.588, 0.753], large and statistically distinguishable from zero. Substantively, this effect indicates a member is almost twice as likely to form pairs (1.95 times as likely) with one unit of ideological distance.

Congress-Level Analysis

I now turn to Congress-level models to understand what factors affect the amount of pairing activity in the institution as a whole. Because the data generating process differs for the formation of pairs by party and for cross partisan pairs, I model each of them separately. Table 4.2 shows the model that estimates the number of pairs between two Democrats, Table 4.3 between two Republicans, and Table 4.4 between two members of the opposite party. In all three models, an increase in the amount of absences in a session is associated with a greater number of pairs. Accordingly, a decrease in the amount of absences, as was seen over time period under analysis, would be associated with a decrease in pairs between partisans. While election years and party size did not have a discernible effect, in both cases the number of pairs increased when parties were more ideologically heterogeneous. The opportunity for pairs, in the form of the amount of copartisans voting against each other, increases the number of pairs. Additionally, in both parties, the identity of the party leader often has

a statistically distinguishable effect on the number of pairs, which supports the idea that pairing is influenced in part by leader strategy.

Table 4.2: A negative binomial model predicting the number of pairs in a given year between two Democratic senators.

	Dependent variable:
	Democratic Pairs
Absence Rate	5.592**
	(2.697)
Number of Democrats	0.001
	(0.022)
Standard Deviation of Democratic NOMINATE Scores	21.721***
	(6.536)
Election Year	0.143
	(0.203)
McFarland	2.357***
	(0.843)
Johnson	3.132***
	(0.813)
Mansfield	3.770***
	(0.774)
Byrd	3.321***
	(0.604)
Mitchell	3.298***
	(0.694)
Daschle	1.007
	(0.781)
Total Roll Calls	0.002**
	(0.001)
Constant	−4.570***
	(0.983)
Observations	64
Log Likelihood	−223.849
θ	3.718*** (0.927)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	471.699
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4.3: A negative binomial model predicting the number of pairs in a given year between two Republican senators.

	Dependent variable:
	Republican Pairs
Absence Rate	21.474***
	(7.810)
Number of Republican Senators	0.048
	(0.030)
Standard Deviation of Republican NOMINATE Scores	32.512***
	(12.496)
Election Year	−0.204
	(0.305)
Bridges	0.839
	(2.059)
Knowland	2.119
	(1.632)
Dirksen	2.274
	(1.658)
Scott	2.066
	(1.535)
Baker	1.711
	(1.184)
Dole	2.015***
	(0.780)
Lott	0.809
	(0.959)
Frist	−0.354
	(1.188)
Total Roll Calls	−0.002
	(0.002)
Constant	−8.263***
	(2.930)
Observations	64
Log Likelihood	−218.336
θ	2.339*** (0.549)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	464.673
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The model analyzing cross-party pairs also shows a mix of the practical and the political. Similar to the partisan counterparts, there are more pairs when more members are absent. While senators may prefer to pair within their party, they still might turn to the other party when they must be absent. However, the model also shows that fewer cross-party pairs occur when it is politically costly. When the two parties are further apart ideologically, there are fewer cross party pairs. Similarly, during election years and when there are smaller majority parties, there are fewer cross party pairs. Senators do not want to excuse the absence of a member of a different party and thus help him in an election that might determine the majority party, especially when the parties diverge ideologically.

Table 4.4: A negative binomial model predicting the number of pairs in a given year between two senators of different parties.

	Dependent variable:
	Cross-Party Pairs
Absence Rate	18.658^{***}
	(2.325)
Majority Size	0.067^{**}
	(0.030)
Polarization	-14.333^{***}
	(3.381)
Election Year	-0.659^{**}
	(0.273)
Total Roll Calls	-0.002^{**}
	(0.001)
Constant	6.347^{***}
	(2.031)
Observations	64
Log Likelihood	-208.782
θ	1.461^{***} (0.352)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	429.563
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Norms and Partisanship

One factor unexplored in the preceding analysis is the changing role of norms in the Senate. While the Senate was once considered an inward-focused, clubby body with practices supported by norms, the rise of partisanship has meant that many old norms are no longer observed (Rohde, Ornstein, and Peabody 1985). Paired voting could be considered to be a manifestation of the reciprocity norm that senators ought to do favors for each other when they can, and keep their word once a bargain has been struck.[27] In this understanding, the decline in paired voting is caused by the shift towards individualism in the Senate that limited the benefit that norms could provide (Sinclair 1989). I have chosen to emphasize the changing context of the institution, and argue that this focus offers a more direct account of the disappearance of paired voting. If paired voting was reinforced norm, then this analysis highlights how norms can dissolve when the circumstances under which they could prosper change. Any norm of pairing was upheld by the context of widespread absences in the Senate and had a partisan dimension that was only possible through heterogeneous pairing. Changes in those factors led to the decline of the norm and the disappearance of the practice.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, I explored contextual explanations expectations both about why pairs occur and why they would decline. Pairing is both a functional and political process. An individual members' congressional attendance rate is associated with their pairing behavior. While I do not disaggregate between various explanations for increased attendance, be it technological

27. Indeed, There are several cases throughout Senate history where members keep to their pairing agreement even when reneging on the pair would allow a senator's side to win the vote. Senator Joe Biden, in 1986, tried to break his pair to sink the nomination of a Reagan-appointee Daniel Manion until Robert Byrd, himself an opponent of the nominee, counseled him against going back on his word.

advancement in travel or various electoral pressures. Any explanation reveals the same trend: Senators are showing up for votes and do not need to accommodate their absence. However, pairing is not solely a relic of a time when members had less incentive or ability to attend. My results suggest that pairing had a strategic political dimension as well. Members formed pairs with their copartisans when opportunities were available, but were less likely to form pairs with opposite party members when it became politically costly.

These results provide scholars with some lessons for any understanding of congressional politics. Broad advances in scientific technology, while seemingly benign, alter the bounds of what members are capable of doing. The ease of physical presence can change what members do. The use of virtual meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic emphasizes this idea, as our understanding of what is meant by presence changes. Though it is beyond the scope of this paper, the House of Representatives experienced a similarly steep decline in paired voting. Because the contextual factors discussed above also weighed on the House, it is likely that the same changes explain paired voting behavior in that chamber. Further, though the substance of cast votes rightly undergird scholarly understandings of polarization, the type of vote that a member cast can also shed light on how political context can facilitate or constrain their behavior.

This paper does not, nor does it aim to, fully characterize pairing throughout congressional history. Several important questions remain for future research. The historical record suggests that the early days of pairing were a more bipartisan process. It thus becomes necessary to ask how political context weighed on those members and what was responsible for the shift of pairing to an overwhelmingly partisan process. Additionally, how did the emergence of party whips, and then party secretaries, as those responsible for organizing pairing influence Senate procedure? Tackling any one of these questions would require significant work, but scholars have not reached the end of what lessons can be learned from paired voting.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: The Post-Post-Reform Congress

As the 118th Congress began, House Freedom Caucus members demanded rule changes in return for supporting their party leader's speakership bid. Their requests were in many ways reactions to the 1994 reforms and how party leaders have used them to consolidate power. They wanted reforms that would restore the independence of committees by having committee members elect chairs and ensuring that legislation does not go to the floor unless the committee of jurisdiction has acted on it. The Freedom Caucus also asked for changes to the Republican Steering Committee. Calling it the "strong arm of the Speaker," "packed with party leaders and close allies," they argued that increasing regional representation would better reflect House Republicans and their voters. In effect, they asked for the Republican Steering Committee as it existed in the 1970s and 1980s.

In spite of whatever informal promises Speaker Kevin McCarthy made to curry the group's favor, they were largely unsuccessful. No committee reforms occurred, and only one line was added to the House rules, changing the requirements for a motion to vacate the

chair. The Freedom Caucus' effort reveals two important facts relevant to this dissertation and the study of Congress broadly. First, the Gingrich era reforms fundamentally remade the House of Representatives as an institution in ways that have persisted to the present day, and the consequences of these reforms influence how members think about their place in the institution.

This dissertation started from a simple theme: Congress is different now. Polarization, party centralization, and an empowered party leadership have changed traditional practices. In the House of Representatives, this process was catalyzed by the election of the Republican majority that allowed Newt Gingrich to rewrite the chamber and party rules. Those rules upended the relationship between parties and committees, which had important consequences both for congressional organization and lawmaking. In the Senate, I show that political trends have even changed the way that members have voted.

The dominant narrative of congressional scholarship for the past couple of decades has been one where party is ascendant. While that is broadly true, my work paints a more complicated picture. In chapter two, I discuss continuity and change in the committee assignment process. The Republican leadership asserted control over the Republican Steering Committee, and gained significant voting power on the organization that determines committee assignments. I propose two different models of how they would use that increased authority. The loyalty theory states that leaders would try to save requested seats for their most dependable members, using the promise of a good committee assignment to spur cooperation. The accommodation theory posits that party leaders want to satisfy most members most of the time with a preferred assignment and are prevented from doing so chiefly through structural limitations like committee size. I document how recent party leaders have talked about making committee assignments and show that they emphasize party loyalty as a key determinant in gaining coveted committee slots. Statistical tests, however, do not consistently show that the impact of loyalty on gaining an assignment has changed

since the steering committee incorporated more leadership influence. Instead, I find that factors of the committee being requested, such as its size and the amount of competition for the seats, limit whether a member's request is successful. This finding is consistent with the accommodation model. Thus, I conclude that loyalty has become more prominent in how leaders discuss assignments publicly, but it is still secondary to leaders' goal of helping members get their preferred slots.

In the third chapter, I look at the changing legislative productivity among committee and subcommittee chairs through three different eras of party-committee relations. Once again, I center the reconstituted steering committees, as they are the vehicle by which modern parties choose their committee chairs. I argue that full committee chairs are most productive when they feel free to push their own legislation without fear of losing their seats. Chairs were able to do so in the era where the seniority system maintained their position and they did not have to worry about removal. Similarly, chairs in the modern era are thoroughly vetted by the party leadership, which chooses agents that they are confident will produce partisan legislation. In the subcommittee government era, where chairs were subject to a vote of the party caucus at the beginning of each Congress, chairs were not as vigorous about pushing their own legislation. I find that the productivity of chairs is conditional on the rules that bring them into power, and that even in an era of strong party governance, committee chairs still play a sizable role.

That the consequences of party centralization influenced committee politics is unsurprising, as parties and committees are established sources of power that often find themselves in contention. In my fourth chapter, I turn to the Senate to show that the reach of centralization also influenced routine interactions between members by analyzing the decimation of paired voting. I show that pairing happened almost entirely between two ideologically distant members of the same party. Thus, as parties grew more ideologically homogeneous in the 1970s and beyond, senators could no longer reliably find a copartisan voting against them

while remaining unwilling to cross the aisle to find a pair. At the same time, the Senate environment changed to make absences less common. Transportation became more reliable and the Senate calendar contracted such that most votes happened in the middle of the week. Thus, the need for pairs was also reduced, which contributed to the fall of pairing. This chapter shows both how long the arm of polarization is and that the trend of polarization coexisted with other simultaneous transformations in Congress which cannot be discounted.

These chapters show an evolving Congress with party at its core, but not to the exclusion of all else. The party leadership in the House, while empowered, has not supplanted committees, it has worked through them. In the Senate, partisan trends have complemented more benign practical changes. While the move towards party has impacted every aspect of Congress, party is not completely unchecked.

Future Work

I argue that the Gingrich era reforms fundamentally altered the relationship between parties and committees. They created the space for parties to exert control and had consequences for all levels of party-committee interaction and the work product of committees. As such, one dissertation is not enough to completely characterize the role of committees in a partisan House. In this section, I discuss future directions of research on this topic.

Heterogeneous Committees

Committees differ in the scope of their jurisdiction, their purpose, their legislative authority, and their relevance to party priorities. Thus, different committees are likely under different

degrees of pressure by party leaders and may respond disparately. Indeed, in my second chapter I find a great deal of difference in the committees to which members seek assignment, and how successful they are, indicating that both the members and leadership understand that differences in committees are important. While my dissertation has aimed to characterize committees on a macro-level, there remains untapped richness in that variation. Future research in this area should consider which committees are the most partisan. Examining which committees exhibit bipartisanship, both in terms of the divisiveness of votes on reporting bills and the proportion of minority party legislation that makes it through committee, could reveal how different chairs run committees and how party pressure alters chair independence.

Committee Legislative Activity

In chapter 3, I examined individual-level legislative productivity, centered on the changing effectiveness of committee and subcommittee chairs. Committees, though, could serve as units of analysis in their own right, with a similar productivity metric. The dwindling independence of committees and the rising importance of party leader priorities likely impacted which committees reported the most legislation and which committees were reporting legislation that was considered on the floor and became law. Committee productivity presents an interesting challenge because a significant amount of a committee's influence lies in negative power. A committee that does not report any legislation would be unproductive, but it would not necessarily be unsuccessful. If the chair and the majority party contingent on the committee want to maintain the status quo in their jurisdiction, they would aim to block legislation.

Committee productivity research would complement studies on committee heterogeneity. Committee productivity differs both within the same committee over time and between committees in a single Congress. Examining changes in what committees predominate

and whether that is stagnant over time would reveal information about how parties pursue their priorities and whether there are characteristics of chairs, both of full committees and subcommittees, that routinely report successful legislation.

Paired Voting

While this dissertation only attempted to explain its decline, paired voting as a broader subject should be of interest to congressional scholars. In particular, the development of paired voting and its institutionalization within the party could further detail personal and partisan changes in the Senate. Paired voting was a procedural innovation that was at first just a casual process to account for member absence. The transition of pairing from an informal arrangement between members into a party practice that required coordination by party whips, clerks, and secretaries has not been well documented. A study of that evolution could produce interesting conclusions for how party organization developed and became professionalized. As these processes, as well as the decline, occurred simultaneously in the House and the Senate, differences between the chambers can also be assessed.

Final Thoughts

The 1970s brought committee reforms that scholars found so momentous that they divided Congress into eras - the textbook Congress of the mid-twentieth century and the "post-reform Congress" that followed. The Gingrich reforms have moved us beyond the post-reform Congress, into the party era Congress. While nearly all researchers acknowledge the movement to party governance, I innovate by tracing the particular consequences of the those rule reforms with regard to how they empowered the party leadership over committee. The changes

had significant consequences for the distribution of power in the House of Representatives in a way that still resonates to this day.

In 1910, a coalition of Democrats and progressive Republicans revolted to remove Speaker Cannon from the Rules Committee and strip him of his ability to make committee assignments. In the 1970s, junior Democrats joined together to demand a more open process that empowered subcommittees. Now, nearly 30 years into the world Gingrich wrought, there has been no revolt and few attempts. The conditions that fomented the earlier reforms were significantly sized groups of members feeling that their legislative priorities were stymied by a leadership - party leadership in the earlier case, committee leadership in the latter - that did not represent their interest. Polarization has meant that the interests of copartisans are well aligned, such that party leadership controlled outcomes suit the party caucus pretty well. The moderates will not join with the minority party to revolt, because there are very few moderates in the present Congress. While the Freedom Caucus has enough members to make noise and delay the election of a speaker, there simply are not enough members demanding committee reforms to upend the power of the leadership.

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Appendix A

Appendix to The Giant Jigsaw Puzzle Resurgent: Committee Assignment Politics in the House of Representatives

A.1 Heckman Selection Models

Heckman selection models are meant to solve the problem of non-random selection into treatment. In the case of this chapter, I am interested in the factors that determine which members are successfully assigned to their requested committees. However, not every member requests to be on a committee, and members do not choose to request a committee randomly. Thus, there is the possibility of selection bias. Consider an example where members choose to make a committee request because they were extremely loyal in the previous Congress, but the party leader then chooses from that subset based on the requester's seniority. An analysis that compares members that had their requests granted to all other members would

conclude that party loyalty was very important to member success, even though that was not how the committee assignment process actually functioned. Heckman models have received wide use in political science as a way of accounting for selection bias (see, for example, Bömelt 2010, Drury et al. 2005, Hug 2010, Lebovic 2004, Plümper et al 2006) with a two step correction that first models the selection using probit and then the outcome variable is regressed on exogenous characteristics and fitted values from the selection equation (Heckman 1979; Verbeek 2000). However, recent research has cast doubt on the validity of this model in applied literature (Vance and Ritter 2014; Wofolds and Siegal 2018). Identification is possible in the Heckman model through the exclusion restriction. To satisfy the exclusion restriction, one needs a valid instrument, a variable that affects selection but not the outcome equation. When one does not have a valid instrument, the estimates may be inaccurate.

The problem of selection is compounded by the sequential nature of the assignment request process. Members decide whether to send a request letter, and then their request can be successfully granted or not. Members who do not request a new committee assignment can never have their request granted, regardless of whether they change committee assignments. This creates an asymmetric strategy set where there is no true counterfactual (Slough 2021).

These considerations present significant modeling challenges, and so here I offer two modeling strategies. The first set estimates a model where the outcome variable is whether a request was granted and uses only observations where a request was made. Implicitly, this model assumes that selection bias is not present. The second set of models are multinomial logistic regression that flatten the strategy set into categorical variables, where the outcomes are "no request made," "request made," and "request made and granted."

A.2 Alternative Modeling Strategies

First, I present models that only use observations where a request was made in Table A.1 for Republicans and Table A.2 for Democrats. These models produce results that are very similar to the ones presented in the main paper, where loyalty variables are not statistically distinguishable from zero, but accommodation variables, like committee size and exclusivity, are significant and in the expected direction.

In Tables A.3 through A.8, I subvert the selection problem by flattening the sequence by making the outcome categorical, as recommended in Slough (2021). I thus create a new outcome variable where the categories are members who did not make a request to be on a new committee, members who made a request, and members who made a request that was granted. I use members not making the request the base against which the other two are compared. This modeling strategy speaks to a subtly different question than the one in the main paper, it separately compares the determinants of making a request and making a request that was granted against members that did not make a request overall. This approach makes independent variables that are factors of the requested committees, like the size of the committee, nonsensical. I instead use a single variable that is the number of committee seats that a member's party has that Congress. Tables A3, A4, and A5 use the loyalty variables of ideological distance, party unity, and log amount contributed respectively for Republicans, while tables A6, A7, and A8 replicate that for Democrats

Across the board, these models provide support for the accommodation hypothesis. Under every model, members are more likely to make requests and have that request granted than to not make a request when committees are larger. Again, similar to the models in the paper, the loyalty interactions are inconsistent. In both parties, the interaction between ideological distance from the party median and era are negative and significant for the

Table A.1: Logistic Regression of the Determinants of Republican Committee Assignments Among Requesters

	Dependent variable:		
	Granted1		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Ideological Distance x Era	−2.352		
	(1.211)		
Party Unity x Era		0.018	
		(0.027)	
Log Amount Contributed x Era			0.062
			(0.045)
Size of Requested Committee	0.077**	0.049**	0.079**
	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.014)
Vote Percent	−0.015	−0.020*	−0.020*
	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.009)
Exclusive	0.022	0.508	−0.020
	(0.208)	(0.288)	(0.209)
Open State Seat	0.626**	0.630*	0.610**
	(0.189)	(0.258)	(0.188)
State Representation	−0.345	−0.198	−0.317
	(0.189)	(0.246)	(0.187)
Number of Party Requests	−0.095**	−0.057*	−0.096**
	(0.018)	(0.024)	(0.018)
Party Swing	0.015**	0.032**	0.019**
	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.006)
Seniority	0.031	0.153	0.027
	(0.090)	(0.116)	(0.090)
Era	1.527*	−0.898	0.298
	(0.703)	(2.532)	(0.392)
Ideological Distance	1.418		
	(0.989)		
Party Unity		0.028	
		(0.015)	
Log Amount Contributed			0.002
			(0.038)
Previous Request Made	0.281	0.121	0.256
	(0.280)	(0.294)	(0.280)
Seniority x Era	−0.025	−0.102	−0.071
	(0.110)	(0.145)	(0.115)
Constant	−1.912*	−3.811*	−0.865
	(0.821)	(1.557)	(0.623)
Observations	698	441	698
Log Likelihood	−382.045	−234.402	−380.931
Akaike Inf. Crit.	792.089	496.803	789.862
Note:			*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table A.2: Logistic Regression of the Determinants of Democratic Committee Assignments Among Requesters

	Dependent variable:		
	Granted1		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Ideological Distance x Era	−1.933		
	(1.525)		
Party Unity x Era		−0.038	
		(0.026)	
Log Amount Contributed x Era			0.005
			(0.049)
Committee Size	0.092**	0.076**	0.096**
	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.021)
Vote Percent	0.007	0.013	0.005
	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Exclusive Committee Request	−1.234**	−1.186**	−1.315**
	(0.279)	(0.333)	(0.287)
Open State Seat	0.152	0.049	0.155
	(0.226)	(0.281)	(0.226)
State Representation	0.189	0.231	0.200
	(0.230)	(0.277)	(0.228)
Number of Party Requests	0.028	0.043*	0.030
	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.016)
Party Swing	−0.016*	−0.014	−0.018*
	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Seniority	0.411**	0.373**	0.396**
	(0.084)	(0.106)	(0.085)
Era	2.832**	5.545*	2.131**
	(0.777)	(2.394)	(0.441)
Ideological Distance	1.192		
	(1.017)		
Party Unity		0.024	
		(0.016)	
Log Amount Contributed			0.036
			(0.032)
Previous Request Made	−0.034	−0.115	−0.123
	(0.324)	(0.331)	(0.321)
Seniority x Era	−0.416**	−0.413*	−0.415**
	(0.132)	(0.172)	(0.137)
Constant	−5.806**	−7.734**	−5.583**
	(0.895)	(1.775)	(0.886)
Observations	509	325	509
Log Likelihood	−261.504	−174.578	−261.262
Akaike Inf. Crit.	551.007	377.155	550.524
Note:			*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table A.3: Multinomial Logistic Regression Model for Determinants of Republican Committee Request and Assignment Using Ideological Distance

	Dependent variable:	
	Request Made	Made and Granted
	(1)	(2)
Party Committee Seats	−0.0002	0.022**
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Ideological Distance x Era	−1.144**	−0.850**
	(0.236)	(0.311)
Ideological Distance	0.732*	0.416
	(0.288)	(0.330)
Era	0.818**	−1.876**
	(0.259)	(0.323)
Vote Percent	−0.001	−0.016*
	(0.005)	(0.008)
Party Swing	0.010**	0.012**
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Seniority	0.632**	0.054
	(0.054)	(0.086)
Era x Seniority	−0.017	−0.214
	(0.073)	(0.110)
Constant	−1.940**	−8.368**
	(0.099)	(0.113)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,615.743	2,615.743
Note:		*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table A.4: Multinomial Logistic Regression Model for Determinants of Republican Committee Request and Assignment Using Party Loyalty

	Dependent variable:	
	Request Made	Made and Granted
	(1)	(2)
Party Committee Seats	-0.007^{**}	0.008^{**}
	(0.002)	(0.003)
PartyUnity x Era	0.008	0.020^{*}
	(0.005)	(0.008)
PartyUnity	0.007	0.019
	(0.006)	(0.011)
Era	1.711^{**}	-1.646^{**}
	(0.003)	(0.002)
Vote Percent	-0.006	-0.015
	(0.005)	(0.009)
Party Swing	0.016^{**}	0.023^{**}
	(0.005)	(0.007)
Seniority	0.704^{**}	0.147
	(0.068)	(0.117)
Era x Seniority	-0.234^{**}	-0.240
	(0.082)	(0.141)
Constant	0.263^{**}	-5.271^{**}
	(0.002)	(0.004)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,022.386	2,022.386
Note:		*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table A.5: Multinomial Logistic Regression Model for Determinants of Republican Committee Request and Assignment Using Party Contributions

	Dependent variable:	
	Request Made	Made and Granted
	(1)	(2)
Party Committee Seats	0.0001	0.022**
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Log Amount Contributed x Era	0.063*	0.033
	(0.029)	(0.043)
Log Amount Contributed	−0.005	−0.001
	(0.022)	(0.037)
Era	0.033	−2.354**
	(0.336)	(0.415)
Vote Percent	−0.004	−0.018*
	(0.005)	(0.008)
Party Swing	0.013**	0.014**
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Seniority	0.634**	0.057
	(0.055)	(0.089)
Era x Seniority	−0.058	−0.243*
	(0.075)	(0.117)
Constant	−1.482**	−8.130**
	(0.132)	(0.144)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,608.544	2,608.544
Note:		*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table A.6: Multinomial Logistic Regression Model for Determinants of Democratic Committee Request and Assignment Using Ideological Distance

	Dependent variable:	
	Request Made	Made and Granted
	(1)	(2)
Party Committee Seats	-0.007^{**}	0.021^{**}
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Ideological Distance x Era	-0.532	-3.266^{**}
	(0.664)	(0.409)
Ideological Distance	1.268^{*}	1.083
	(0.576)	(0.599)
Era	0.757^{*}	6.107^{**}
	(0.335)	(0.418)
Vote Percent	0.003	0.010
	(0.005)	(0.007)
Party Swing	-0.006	-0.014^{*}
	(0.005)	(0.007)
Seniority	0.878^{**}	0.468^{**}
	(0.063)	(0.075)
Era x Seniority	-0.373^{**}	-0.598^{**}
	(0.084)	(0.122)
Constant	1.384^{**}	-14.673^{**}
	(0.227)	(0.181)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,231.568	2,231.568
Note:		*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table A.7: Multinomial Logistic Regression Model for Determinants of Democratic Committee Request and Assignment Using Party Unity

	Dependent variable:	
	Request Made	Made and Granted
	(1)	(2)
Party Committee Seats	-0.006^{**}	0.019^{**}
	(0.002)	(0.002)
PartyUnity x Era	-0.018	-0.044^{**}
	(0.009)	(0.008)
Party Unity	0.016^{*}	0.027^{*}
	(0.007)	(0.012)
Era	1.665^{*}	7.545^{**}
	(0.675)	(0.308)
Vote Percent	0.005	0.016
	(0.005)	(0.008)
Party Swing	-0.007	-0.015
	(0.005)	(0.008)
Seniority	0.700^{**}	0.382^{**}
	(0.069)	(0.087)
Era x Seniority	-0.169	-0.420^{**}
	(0.097)	(0.146)
Constant	0.526	-15.795^{**}
	(0.356)	(0.167)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,786.525	1,786.525
Note:		*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table A.8: Multinomial Logistic Regression Model for Determinants of Democratic Committee Request and Assignment Using Party Contributions

	Dependent variable:	
	Request Made	Made and Granted
	(1)	(2)
Party Committee Seats	-0.006^{**}	0.019^{**}
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Log Amount Contributed x Era	-0.045	-0.032
	(0.032)	(0.046)
Log Amount Contributed	0.026	0.015
	(0.022)	(0.031)
Era	1.117^{**}	4.452^{**}
	(0.248)	(0.337)
Vote Percent	0.006	0.008
	(0.005)	(0.007)
Party Swing	-0.006	-0.012
	(0.005)	(0.007)
Seniority	0.851^{**}	0.447^{**}
	(0.064)	(0.077)
Era x Seniority	-0.331^{**}	-0.565^{**}
	(0.088)	(0.131)
Constant	0.969^{**}	-13.188^{**}
	(0.063)	(0.089)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,243.721	2,243.721
Note:		*p<0.05; **p<0.01

outcome of members who had their request granted. That indicates that members who are closer to the party median are more likely to earn a favored assignment. This finding supports the contention that ideology was a greater consideration after the changes to the steering committees that allowed more leadership participation. The other loyalty variables, however, do not provide as clear a picture. For the interaction between party unity and era, the Republicans have a positive coefficient for the outcome of having a request made and granted, while the Democrats have a negative coefficient. The estimates are consistent with theoretical expectations and journalistic accounts for Republicans but not for Democrats. For Democrats, this could be the result of rewarding members who were strategically disloyal who toed the party line when needed, but voted more moderately otherwise. In both parties, the effect of party contributions is indistinguishable from zero for the outcome of having a request made and granted, though for Republicans, there is a positive association between making contributions and requesting a new seat. These estimates justify inferences similar to the ones in the paper, though there is stronger support for a strengthened role of party loyalty. In all cases, party leaders are trying to accommodate as many members as possible and still solve the giant jigsaw puzzle.

Appendix B

Appendix to Who's Making the Laws? The Institutional Foundation of Legislative Productivity

B.1 The Construction of Legislative Effectiveness Scores

In the following equation, I show how legislative effectiveness scores are calculated, following Volden and Wiseman (2014).

$$LES_{alpha} = \left[\begin{array}{l} \left(\frac{\alpha BILL_{it}^{C} + \beta BILL_{it}^{S} + \gamma BILL_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} BILL_{jt}^{C} + \beta BILL_{jt}^{S} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} BILL_{jt}^{SS}} \right) \\ + \left(\frac{\alpha AIC_{it}^{C} + \beta AIC_{it}^{S} + \gamma AIC_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} AIC_{jt}^{C} + \beta AIC_{jt}^{S} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} AIC_{jt}^{SS}} \right) \\ + \left(\frac{\alpha ABC_{it}^{C} + \beta ABC_{it}^{S} + \gamma ABC_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} ABC_{jt}^{C} + \beta ABC_{jt}^{S} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} ABC_{jt}^{SS}} \right) \\ + \left(\frac{\alpha PASS_{it}^{C} + \beta PASS_{it}^{S} + \gamma PASS_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} PASS_{jt}^{C} + \beta PASS_{jt}^{S} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} PASS_{jt}^{SS}} \right) \\ + \left(\frac{\alpha LAW_{it}^{C} + \beta LAW_{it}^{S} + \gamma LAW_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} LAW_{jt}^{C} + \beta LAW_{jt}^{S} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} LAW_{jt}^{SS}} \right) \end{array} \right] * \left[\frac{n}{5} \right]$$

Where $BILL$ refers to the introduction of a bill, AIC refers to a bill receiving action in committee, such as a hearing or markup, ABC refers to the bill receiving action beyond committee, $PASS$ refers to if the bill passed the House, and LAW refers to if a bill becomes law. α, β, and γ refer to the weights put on commemorative, substantive, and substantive and significant legislation, which are one, five, and ten respectively. Commemorative legislation includes bills that name post offices, substantive and significant bills include those that received a write-up in Congressional Quarterly, and substantive bills are all others. The equation is scaled so the average for each Congress is equal to one.

B.2 Full Model of Senate Legislative Effectiveness

In Table B.1, I present the full results of the model for effectiveness in the US Senate. The main results, of course, are identical to the ones presented in the paper.

Table B.1: Full Model of House Reform Packages on Senate Legislative Effectiveness

	Dependent variable:
	Legislative Effectiveness Score
Committee Government x Chair	0.245
	(0.376)
Party Government x Chair	0.106
	(0.138)
Committee Government x Subcommittee Chair	−0.146
	(0.126)
Party Government x Subcommittee Chair	−0.198**
	(0.060)
Chair	0.929**
	(0.110)
Subcommittee Chair	0.427**
	(0.064)
Committee Government	0.362
	(0.238)
Party Government	−0.497
	(0.288)
Seniority	0.157**
	(0.025)
Seniority Squared	−0.006**
	(0.001)
State Legislature	−2.673**
	(0.987)
State Legislative Professionalism	17.104**
	(4.982)
Majority	0.315**
	(0.068)
Majority Leader	0.101
	(0.093)
Minority Leader	−0.020
	(0.057)
Power	−0.133**
	(0.045)
Ideological Distance from the Median	0.236
	(0.192)
Vote Percent	−0.003
	(0.014)
Vote Percent Squared	0.00003
	(0.0001)
Constant	−0.284
	(0.477)
Observations	2,397
R^2	0.615
Adjusted R^2	0.532
Residual Std. Error	0.684 (df = 1974)
F Statistic	7.467*** (df = 422; 1974)
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Appendix C

Appendix to An Autopsy of Paired Voting in the U.S. Senate

Pairing Data Collection

I contend that my method of data collection improves upon the list of pairs in the VoteView dataset. My process uncovers as many or more pairs than VoteView in 25 of the 33 congresses under study. There are additional reasons, though, to favor my data. First, I identified several instances where announced votes were errantly recorded as pairs and pairs were recorded as announced votes. Further, in no congress does VoteView report that the number of paired yeas match the number of paired nays, including one congress that reports nearly twice as many yeas as nays. This implies that the VoteView record inconsistently includes both sides of a pair and/or recorded votes that were not pairs as pairs. Assessments of my method by comparing it to hand-coding the Congressional Record in a few select congresses increases confidence that my method is exhaustive.

AME Specification and Description

In this section, I provide the full specification of the AME latent factor model, all of which comes from Minhas et al.,2018. The AME incorporates the following covariance structure into the systematic component of the GLM framework $\beta^T X_{ij} + a_i + b_j + \epsilon + ij$, where $\beta^T X_{ij}$ incorporates dyadic, sender, and receiver covariates. The covariance structure is given by

$$y_{ij} = \mu + e_{ij} \tag{C.1}$$

$$e_{ij} = a_i + b_j + \epsilon_{ij} \tag{C.2}$$

$$\{(a_1, b_1), ..., (a_n, b_n)\} \overset{iid}{\sim} \mathcal{N}(0, \Sigma_{ab}) \tag{C.3}$$

$$\{(\epsilon_{ij}, \epsilon_{ji}) : i \neq j\} \overset{iid}{\sim} \mathcal{N}(0, \Sigma_\epsilon), \text{ where} \tag{C.4}$$

$$\Sigma_{ab} = \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_a^2 & \sigma_{ab} \\ \sigma_{ab} & \sigma_b^2 \end{pmatrix} \tag{C.5}$$

$$\Sigma_\epsilon = \sigma_\epsilon^2 \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \rho \\ \rho & 1 \end{pmatrix} \tag{C.6}$$

Where μ is a baseline measure for the mean density of the network and e_{ij} is the residual variation. That variation then decomposes into a row effect (a_i), a column effect (b_j), and a within-dyad effect (ϵ_{ij}). The row and column effects are modeled jointly to account for correlation in sending and receiving ties. Row and column mean heterogeneity is captured by σ_a^2 and σ_b^2 respectively, while σ_{ab} is the linear relationship between the two. Second order dependencies are described by σ_ϵ^2 and the within dyad correlation ρ.

The model also handles third order dependencies that often plague networks. An example of a third order dependency is triadic closure. If member A forms a tie with member B, and member C forms a tie with member B, that may impact the probability of a tie forming

between A and C. This is done with a multiplicative effects latent variable extension that incorporates higher order dependencies after accounting for the covariates in the model.

$$y_{ij} = g(\theta_{ij}) \tag{C.7}$$

$$\theta_{ij} = \beta^T X_{ij} + e_{ij} \tag{C.8}$$

$$e_{ij} = a_i + b_j + \epsilon_{ij} + \alpha(u_i, v_j), \text{ where} \tag{C.9}$$

$$\alpha(u_i, v_j) = u_i^T D v_j = \sum_{k \in K} d_k u_{ik} v_{jk} \tag{C.10}$$

With this structure, the observations are independent conditional given θ, where θ depends on unobserved random effects $a_+ b_j + \epsilon_{ij}$, which are modeled to capture the effect of the first and second order dependencies discussed above. The multiplicative effects, $u_i^T D v_j$ capture higher order dependence patterns in θ after accounting for known covariate information (Minhas et al., 2018).

ERGM and TERGM Specification and Modeling

In the following section of the appendix, I discuss some potential issues with the data and their solutions, as well as exploring some alternative modeling strategies. I begin by detailing an alternative model to deal with network data as a robustness check for the model presented in the paper, the exponential random graph model. The ERGM is the canonical model for the inferential analysis of network data (Cranmer and Desmarias 2017). It treats the network, as the adjacency matrix, as a single draw from a multivariate distribution. It is a probability model that estimates the probability of determining a dyadic tie Y according to the formula

$$P(Y) = \frac{\exp(\sum_{j=1}^{k} \theta_j h_j(Y))}{\sum_{Y^* \in \mathcal{Y}} \exp(\sum_{j=1}^{k} \theta_j h_j(Y^*))}$$

Where $\mathcal{Y}$ is the set of all networks with the same number of nodes as Y and contains every permutation of edges within the network, h_j are statistics theorized to influence the likelihood of observing the specific configuration of the adjacency matrix, and θ are parameters that give the effect of the network statistic on observing a particular instance of the matrix (Desmarias and Cranmer 2012; Cranmer and Desmarias 2017). Thus the θ act similar to regression coefficients that model the effect of a network statistic on observing a network. h_j can also take exogenous covariates as well as network statistics. All statistics, then, are sums over subgraphs and give you the influence of covariates and network level statistics in observing the particular realization of the network that is the data. The Temporal Exponential Random Graph Model (TERGM) is an extension of the ERGM that models a series of networks over time by including lagged networks as statistics in h_j, and so can include temporal dependencies as well as those across space (Leifield, Cranmer, and Desmarias 2018). TERGMs do not weight strength of the edges by number of pairs, and so one assumption underlying this modeling strategy is that one pair is sufficient to establish a paired voting relationship and that additional explanatory purchase would not be gained by incorporating the frequency of pairs between members.

ERGMs and TERGMs handle covariates in a different way than the typical regression framework. The coefficients on the covariates represent the change in the log-odds of observing a link between nodes with some covariate value, similar to logistic regression. However, because this model is concerned with the relation as the unit of analysis rather than the individual, there are several different ways to think about how covariates might relate to each other that must be taken into account when specifying the model. The first is 'match', which takes on

a value of one if the covariates are the same between two observations, and zero otherwise. I use match to model party, and expect the coefficient to be positive, indicating that pairs are more likely to form among copartisans. The second way is to use the absolute value of the difference between the value of covariates, and so a negative coefficient would show that more similar members on that dimension are more likely to form a tie and a positive would mean the opposite. I use absolute difference to model ideology and expect this to be positive, indicating that ideologically dissimilar members are pairing with each other. Additionally, a researcher can just model individual level nodal covariates if they believe that the singular characteristic, and not the relationship between actors, is driving the effect of the covariate. I model leadership status and attendance as nodal covariates. Leadership is an indicator variables coded 1 if the member is in party leadership. Attendance is a variable gathered from Congressional Quarterly's annual voting scores of the proportion of votes the member took a position on. TERGMs allow researchers to model endogenous network characteristics to get a sense of how probable the observed network, given the set of all possible networks with those characteristics. I add a covariate for the geographically weighted edgewise shared partners, which controls for triadic closure by at least one shared partner. TERGMs also incorporate temporal characteristics of network strucutre and so I include an autoregressive memory term, as I expect institutional memory to create similarly structured networks on a year to year basis.

In Table C.1, I first present the results of a bootstrapped temporal exponential random graph model (TERGM) that allows me to pool the networks across time.

Table C.1: TERGM for Paired Voting Network, 1951-1985

	Estimate	2.5%	97.5%
Edges	-4.981	-5.422	-4.633
Party (Match)	1.471	1.299	1.724
Ideology (Difference)	1.091	0.863	1.275
Attendance	-0.009	-0.016	-0.001
Leadership	0.223	0.147	0.290
Seniority	0.008	0.004	0.012
GWESP	0.429	0.369	0.494
Memory	0.957	0.818	1.131

TERGM coefficients are difficult to interpret because, much like logistic regressions, the magnitude of a one-unit shift in one covariate is dependent on the values of the other variables. I will thus interpret changes under specified assumptions about the other variables. The `Edges` term is akin to an intercept, it controls for the density of a network. If we knew nothing about a network at all, the probability of any two nodes forming a tie would be equal to the network density. From this coefficient, we can find the probability of any two members pairing is .007. I will now shift to interpreting each coefficient in terms of predicted probabilities.

The probability of a member who is not a leader, not from the south, with five years in the Senate and with an attendance rate of 90% forming a tie with someone who is .5 units away ideologically, but not a member of their party is 0.012, whereas with an identical pair who are copartisans, the probability is .051, a fourfold increase. Similarly, if we take our non-south, rank and file, moderately senior copartisan with 90% attendance, the probability that they pair with someone .1 ideological units away versus .8 is .033 and .069 respectively,

a probability that is twice as large with some ideological distance. From this, we see clear evidence that paired voting relationships are more likely to occur between members of the same party and members who are ideologically dissimiliar, implying that this is a function of heterogeneous parties.

There are smaller, but still statistically distinguishable effects for seniority, attendance and leadership. Taking the member described in the first scenario, with a copartisan pair, with a one year tenure, the probability of them forming a pair is .049, while with ten years, the probability goes up to 0.053. The effect of attendance is minescule, if we vary that member's attendance record from 90% to 50%, the probability that they form a pair increases from 0.0506 to 0.0507. Finally, if we make the member a leader, their probability of forming a paired voting relationship goes from 0.051 to 0.062, a modest increase.

The two final terms in the model correspond to network structure and temporal dependency in the model. While unrelated to the main argument made in this paper, I will briefly describe the effects. The geometrically weighted edgewise shared partners term (GWESP) indicates that the network structure is more likely to have triadic closure, which is to say that when member A pairs with member B, and member B pairs with member C, we often observe member C pairing with member A. The memory term accounts for autoregression in the temporal domain, indicating that the network structure is similar from one year to the next.

These grouped coefficients mask some important variation in the effect of the variables across time that are important for understanding the evolution of the role of party and ideology in constructing these relationships. In Figures C.1 and C.2, I present coefficient plots from individual year ERGMs for party and ideology.[28]

28. The coefficient for 1982 is not shown on the figure because it was so high (19.42), as there were no cross-party pairs in this year.

Figure C.1: Single Year ERGM Coefficient Plots for Party

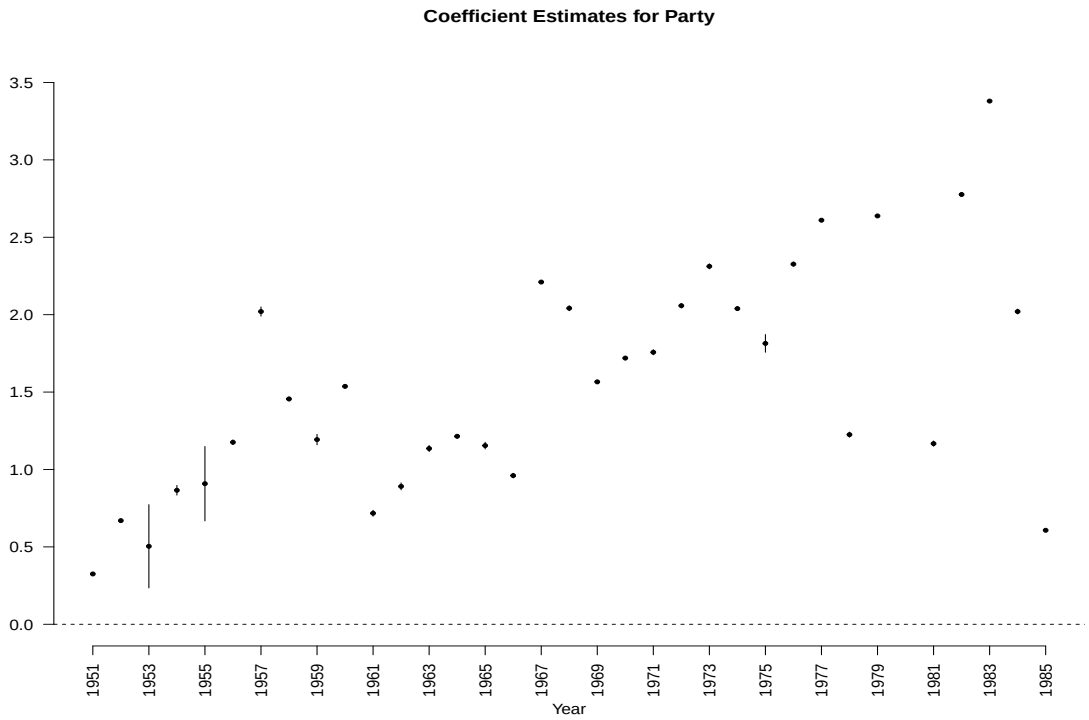
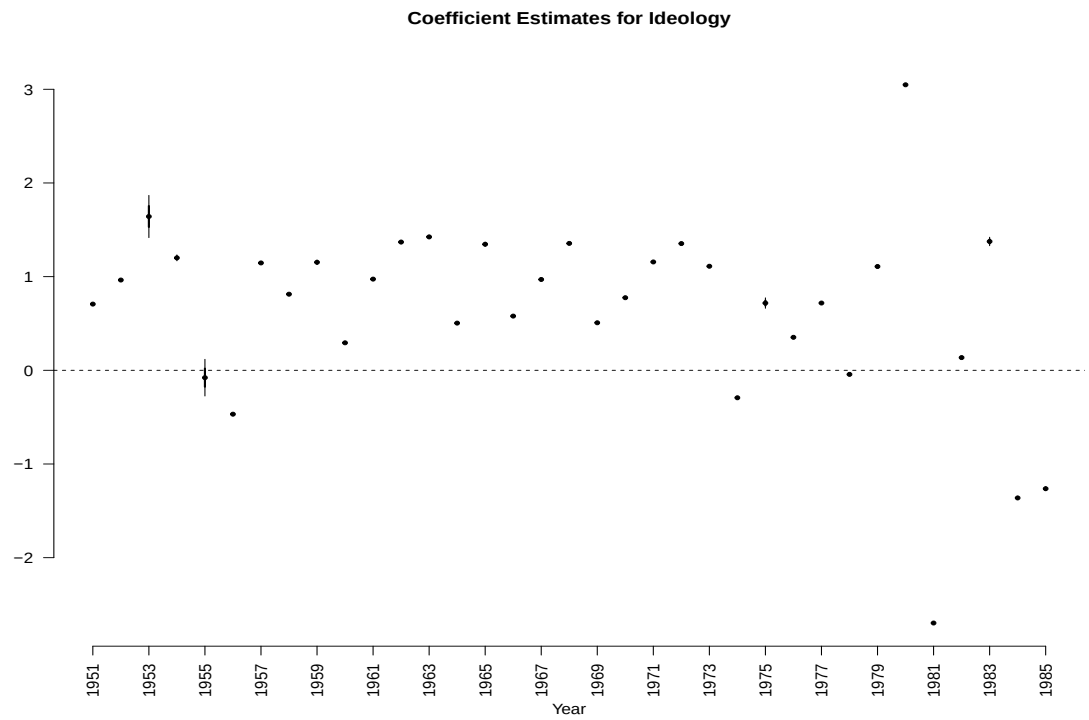


Figure C.2: Single Year ERGM Coefficient Plots for Ideological Difference



In these figures, we can see that the effect of sharing partisanship was generally larger throughout the 1970s and 1980s, indicating an increased preference for same party pairs. The effect of ideology is relatively stagnant over this period, until the final years in the dataset, where there is a decline, with some coefficients even being negative. I argue that this is due to ideologically sorting parties, making it unsustainable for members to have pairs that are both within party and with ideologically distant members. These results broadly support the conclusions in the paper that pairs were more likely between copartisans and those who are ideologically different.

AME Alternative Specification

In Table C.2, I present the results of the AME model that takes instead as the dependent variable a dichotomous edge value for any pairs between two members. The interaction in the model can be interpreted in the same way as a typical probit interaction. As such, the coefficients on the constituent parts of the interaction cannot be interpreted as unconditional marginal effects (Brambor et al. 2006). The interaction is large, positive, and significant, and so I can interpret the variables of interest with regard to the interaction.

The marginal effect of a variable is the partial derivative with respect the variable of interest. Thus, the marginal effect of being in the same party on tie formation between two members is equal to the coefficient of party plus the coefficient of the interaction multiplied by the value of the moderating variable, ideological distance. In Table C.3, I present the marginal effects of the party and ideological distance variables at different values of the moderating variable. As ideological distance increases, the impact of being in the same party on the probability of forming a tie increases. More interesting are the divergent results of the marginal effect of ideology. For members who are not copartisans, an increase in ideological distance reduces the odds that they will form a tie, whereas for members who are copartisans. These results all support the view that pairing largely occurred among heterogeneous copartisans. In substantive terms, at 0.1 units of ideological distance, being a member of the same party is associated with being about 1.11 times as likely to form a pair. At 0.3 units of ideological distance, being a member of the same party makes one 1.43 times as likely to pair. On the other side, one unit of ideological distance, which is a very wide gulf and somewhat unrealistic within party, relates to a member being over twice as likely to form a pair with a copartisan and only about 66% as likely to form a pair with an out party

Table C.2: Additive and Multiplicative Effects Latent Factor Model on Pair Formation

	Dependent variable:
	Pair Formation
Same Party (dyadic)	−0.018
	(0.133)
Ideological Distance (dyadic)	−0.422
	(0.306)
Party x Ideological Distance (dyadic)	1.264***
	(0.264)
Seniority (nodal)	0.002 **
	(0.001)
Attendance (nodal)	-0.828***
	(0.088)
Leadership (nodal)	0.033
	(0.023)
Intercept	− 0.641 ***
	(0.057)
Variance Parameters	
va	0.215
	(0.024)
ve	1.000
	(0.00)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Main Variable	Moderater	Moderater Value	Marginal Effect	Odds Ratio
Same Party	Ideological Difference	0.1	0.108 [0.060, 0.142]	1.11
Same Party	Ideological Difference	0.3	0.360 [0.331, 0.390]	1.43
Ideological Difference	Same Party	0	-0.422 [-0.591, -0.334]	0.656
Ideological Difference	Same Party	1	0.842 [0.758, 0.928]	2.321

member. These results replicate the ones presented in the main text of the paper and show that the results are robust to different modeling choices.