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The Evolution of Party Leadership

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[–] Abstract and Keywords

Party leadership has always been a focus of studies on leadership in Congress. From 1922 to 1991, party leadership has been the subject of many congressional studies. Today, party leadership is at the heart of many congressional theories of behavior and organization, and the degree to which party leaders exercise influence has been the most studied question in Congress for the last two decades. While party leadership has been one of the most studied areas in Congress, much of the studies from 1922 to 1991 were largely time bound and focused on the existing party leadership within a particular congressional era. This article discusses the evolution of party leadership by examining studies of different eras. It describes how meaningful leadership emerged in the early nineteenth century, how it grew slowly for a time before rising dramatically late in the century, peaking during the “strong party” from 1890 to 1910, and how it declined before resurging again in the late 1970s. It also discusses how party leadership has evolved in Congress and the Senate. The article also indicates the significant substantive gaps that exist in the literature and future directions of party leadership scholarship.

Keywords: party leadership, leadership, Congress, evolution, nineteenth century, strong party, 1890 to 1910, late 1970s, Senate

THE study of leadership in Congress has nearly always focused on *party* leadership as the key driving force. Party leadership has been the subject of congressional studies since George Rothwell Brown's *The Leadership of Congress* in 1922 and Paul Hasbrouck's *Party Government in The House of Representatives* in 1927.¹ Since then, party leadership has continued to elicit the interest of congressional scholars, from the era of “committee dominance”—which includes Randall Ripley's *Party Leaders in the House of Representatives* in 1967 and *Majority Party Leadership in Congress* in 1969—to the era of “party resurgence”—which includes David W. Rohde's *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House* in 1991. Today, party leadership is at the heart of many congressional theories of behavior and organization, and the degree to which party leaders wield influence (generally in Congress, and specifically within each chamber) has been perhaps the most studied question in the Congress field over the last two decades (see Chapter 17 by Randall Strahan in this volume).

One limitation in the aforementioned studies is that they have been largely time bound, as scholars have focused mostly on examining party leadership within particular congressional eras. How party leadership has *evolved* over time, by comparison, has elicited far fewer treatments. This chapter takes up the question, by incorporating studies of different eras to trace out how party leadership in Congress has evolved from the late eighteenth century through the present day. In doing so, I will describe how meaningful party leadership emerged in the early nineteenth century, how it grew slowly for a time before rising dramatically late in the century and peaking during the “strong party” period between 1890 and 1910, and then how it dropped off considerably before resurging yet again beginning in the late 1970s. Over the course of this historical tracing, I will note how party leadership in the House and Senate may have evolved similarly or differently over time. Finally, I will also indicate where significant substantive gaps exist in the literature and what the frontiers for future studies of party leadership might look like.

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Party leadership in the antebellum era

Party leadership in Congress prior to the Civil War can be divided—relatively neatly—into three more or less distinct periods: 1789–1811, 1811–37, and 1837–61. These periods witnessed a fairly linear increase in party leadership.

Weak beginnings, 1789–1811

Party leadership in Congress was weak early in our federal system, in part because parties were not part of the nation's formal landscape. Indeed, as Hofstadter (1969) notes, parties were cast in an exceedingly negative light by the Founders and other enlightened citizens, often excoriated as “factions” that were driven by intrigue and selfish motives. Yet, informal party organizations in Congress emerged almost immediately to serve as solutions to collective-action problems that existed in the legislative process (Aldrich 1995). These informal party organizations—proto-caucuses, proto-whips, and so on—were not institutionalized, however, and more importantly, the formal (constitutionally designated) leadership positions in Congress—the Speaker in the House, and the Vice President and President Pro Tempore in the Senate—did not become overt partisan positions during the new nation's first two decades.

In the years preceding the War of 1812, the election of Speaker and other House officers (like the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms, which were created by statute) occurred in a chamber whose internal institutions were in flux. Party affiliation among the rank and file was loose, even as some polarization was evident around the personalities and policies of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. The general consensus in the literature, according to Jenkins and Stewart (forthcoming), is that Speakers gave little weight to party (however construed) in overseeing the House, and the basic authority given to the Speaker to control debate and appoint committees was rarely used to programmatic ends.

The only meaningful exception to this Speaker-as-non-partisan perspective occurred during John Adams's administration, during the tenures of Jonathan Dayton and Theodore Sedgwick, Federalist Speakers in the 5th and 6th Congresses (1797–1801). According to Risjord (1992), both Dayton and Sedgwick used their powers to hasten a Federalist agenda. Dayton took an active part in House debate and began the process of using committees for partisan benefit (see, also, Strahan, Gunning, and Vining 2006). Sedgwick was an especially aggressive partisan, actively stacking committees to hasten a distinctly partisan policy agenda. He was also crucial (via a tie-breaking vote) in removing from the House floor two reporters from the *National Intelligencer*, a Republican newspaper that had been critical of the Federalists and the Speaker in particular. This move produced a Republican uproar over censorship and denial of free speech that lasted for months. Both Dayton and Sedgwick left the speakership amid a good deal of partisan rancor.² Consequently, the two succeeding Republican Speakers, Nathaniel Macon and Joseph Varnum, were less overtly partisan.

Thus, except for a brief period in the late 1790s, the speakership was regarded as a minor prize among the rank and file and those who might rise to the office. At least four Speaker elections during the first eleven Congresses were multi-ballot affairs,³ not because the chamber was riven with deep partisan divisions, but because politicking for the post was haphazard and personal factions and nascent party organizations were not strong enough to winnow down the field prior to the actual convening of the House. The lack of intense and lasting animosities over the choice of Speaker is evident in that none of the multi-ballot affairs were protracted. Thus, the repercussions of organizational jockeying tended to be minor.

Alexander (1916) and Harlow (1917) note that the informal position of floor leader emerged during this era, and was in fact more powerful than the Speaker. Rather than being a distinct *party* leader, the floor leader acted as lieutenant of the president, especially during Jefferson's reign.⁴ Thus, the floor leader could best be viewed as channeling presidential preferences rather than broader party preferences (when these, in fact, differed).⁵ Beyond these early studies, however, little is known of the floor leader's evolution during this time.

The literature on Senate party leadership during this era is much spottier than that of the House. (This will actually be a recurring theme throughout most sections of this chapter, as scholars have devoted far less time to the study of Senate party leadership.) In her book on Senate change, Swift (1996) notes that informal party organizations developed early, just as in the House, but that these organizations were weak and sporadically employed. Moreover, she notes that neither the Vice President nor President Pro Tempore “had much influence over the Senate's proceedings” (1996, 76), mirroring the limited Speaker-organized environment of the House. Instead,

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leadership in the Senate was committee-based rather than party-based, with important figures on key select committees effectively holding the reins of power. Swift's book remains the best account—and one of the very few—of leadership, and party leadership more specifically, in the pre-War of 1812 Senate.

This period also witnessed procedural decisions in each chamber that would influence the development of party leadership. As Binder (1997) notes, a previous question rule—a procedure for cutting off debate and proceeding to a vote on the underlying subject of a bill—was passed in the House in 1811, while such a rule, which had been in place in the Senate, was eliminated in 1806.⁶ Thus, after 1811, a cohesive majority in the House—perhaps led by an active leadership—had a clear procedural means to work its will, while a cohesive majority in the Senate lacked a similar procedural mechanism to stifle a vocal minority.⁷ This, according to Roberts and Smith (2007), created different incentives for the development of party leadership, and consequently set the two chambers on different evolutionary paths.

Emergence of party leadership, 1811–37

From a modern perspective, the House during the first eleven Congresses was underdeveloped. As the speakerships of Jonathan Dayton and Theodore Sedgwick show, however, it was possible for leadership positions to be put to partisan use. Still, in an era where a “Jeffersonian ethos” (Cooper 1970; cf. Risjord 1992) characterized the House culture, there were no loud and persistent voices who argued that the organization of the chamber should be constructed self-consciously with partisan ends in mind. The House as a formal institution was underfunded and underorganized. As a consequence, any role that the incumbent of a House office might play in policy or partisan intrigues was ad hoc and far from institutionalized.

That began to change around the time Henry Clay, a freshman House member from Kentucky, became Speaker in the 12th Congress (1811–13).⁸ From Clay's first speakership until the time when the House began to ballot for its Speakers publicly in the 26th Congress (1839–41), the formal structure of the House became more complex, the role of political parties was transformed, and the value of House offices, including subsidiary positions like the Clerk and Printer, was much enhanced.

In the Speaker's chair, Clay showed that the office could be used to the programmatic advantage of the faction that controlled it, whether that faction be personality-driven or purely partisan. As Stewart (2007) describes, Clay's dynamic leadership in the run-up to the War of 1812 demonstrated that it was possible for the House to take an active, leading role in momentous policy decisions. Clay used relatively new parliamentary tools, such as the ability to cut off floor debate, in a skillful way—taking advantage of Republican homogeneity on war-related issues to pass a clear policy agenda. The 1810s also were the time when both chambers of Congress shifted from select to standing committees to process most legislation (Gamm and Shepsle 1989; Jenkins 1998). Although the power and capacity of these standing committees was still in the formative stages, it was the Speaker who appointed them (see Chapter 31 by Eric Schickler in this volume). Thus, the Speaker was now in possession of parliamentary tools—ruling on points of order, recognizing members in debate, and appointing committees—that could, at least in principle, make this office the most influential policy post in the nation.

Clay's leadership-led policy success unraveled after the war, as the Federalists' demise left a one-party (Republican) system in place that factionalized into regional camps around powerful presidential hopefuls (see Young 1966; Gamm and Shepsle 1989; Jenkins 1998). Yet, the leadership potential of the speakership was a lesson that all now realized. This became clear when the House balloted to replace Clay for Speaker in the second session of the 16th Congress (1819–21).⁹ The contest required twenty-two ballots stretching over three days before John W. Taylor (NY) was elected. This battle had strong sectional undercurrents, as the contest took place amidst the extended proceedings on Missouri's admittance into the Union. As Jenkins and Stewart (2002) note, both supporters and opponents of Taylor based their votes largely on beliefs as to what he might do in staffing the committees, especially those that dealt with the Missouri question. Although Taylor attempted to be conciliatory in his appointment of committees and the “Missouri Compromise” was considered to be a slight victory for pro-slavery advocates, southern House members distrusted Taylor and succeeded in ousting him from the Speaker's chair in favor of one of their own in the next Congress.

By the late 1820s, a new two-party system was beginning to form around the policies and personality of President Andrew Jackson. Jackson's supporters selected Andrew Stevenson (VA) as their speakership candidate, and he

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served from 1826 to 1834, working closely with Jackson to further the president's policy agenda in Congress. In 1834, Stevenson accepted an ambassadorship to England, and six Jacksonians competed to replace him in the Speaker's chair. The contest required twelve ballots, and eventually reduced to a race between James K. Polk (TN) and John Bell (TN), with Bell emerging triumphant by appealing directly to Anti-Jacksonians (soon to be called "Whigs") who were willing to join in coalition with pro-Bank Democrats (Sellers 1957). Bell, in turn, favored Anti-Jacksonians in making his committee assignments and eventually took on the Anti-Jacksonian (Whig) label himself. Bell's actions as Speaker galvanized Jackson's supporters, who rallied behind Polk at the opening of the 24th Congress (1835–7), electing him easily on the first ballot. Polk would be a loyal Jacksonian in the Speaker's chair, while Bell, now a leader of the minority in the House, would harass Polk throughout his tenure as Speaker, employing the full range of dilatory tactics at his (and the minority's) disposal. Thus, within a quarter-century of Clay's initial election, the speakership had evolved from a chamber office with partisan potential to a clearly partisan office. And the often contentious and lengthy battles over the speakership, as evidence of the strong partisanship attached to the office, would continue—and heighten—into the future.

Also during this time, as Jenkins and Stewart (2003; forthcoming) note, other House officer positions would be viewed through a partisan lens. The two most prominent were the Clerk and Printer.¹⁰ The Clerk presided over a sizeable patronage empire, controlled the House's contingent fund (worth upwards of US \$10 million in today's dollars), and was the presiding officer in the chamber at the opening of each new Congress (calling the roll of members-elect and thereby formally determining the House membership for organizational purposes). The Printer was responsible for printing and distributing House reports and other official documents, as well as disseminating such information to newspapers throughout the country (which came with funds to keep said newspapers afloat financially), and possessed considerable patronage capacities as well. As the Second Party System developed, and Democratic (formerly Jacksonian) politicians looked for ways to maintain an advantage over the newly forming Whigs, the Clerk and Printer positions would be reconfigured as party leadership positions, with their internal capabilities and sets of resources rechanneled for the benefit of the party rather than the overall chamber. Election struggles over the two positions took on a distinct partisan hue in the mid-1830s, mirroring the situation in speakership elections. And when the Democrats lost the printership at the beginning of the 26th Congress (1837–9), thanks to a cross-party intrigue, Democratic leaders began calling for a new leadership institution to coordinate nominations and elections on the floor. The new leadership institution, a party nominating caucus, will be examined in the next section.

The informal floor leader, who had been a tool of the presidency prior to 1811, increasingly became an agent of the majority party in the House during this era. As the speakership emerged as a partisan power center, other nodes of power were also needed. As Alexander (1916) and Riddick (1949) argue, the Speaker typically selected the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee to serve as the informal floor leader in the chamber. This was often a concession to intra-party harmony, as the Ways and Means Chair was often a rival of the Speaker. How the floor leader's functions and duties changed as the position became more partisan has never been examined in any detail, and the subject deserves a comprehensive examination.

On the Senate side, less is known about the evolution of party leadership between 1811 and 1837. For example, while scholars have studied the development of the major House officer positions, little attention—other than a few short overviews by Byrd (1991)—has been paid to the subsidiary positions (the Secretary and the Printer) below the Senate's presiding officer. These were positions that, at a minimum, provided the same sorts of benefits as their House counterparts. And while Smith (1977) notes that the amounts paid to Senate Printers were roughly one-third of what House Printers received, he describes Senate Printer elections as being very contentious during this time (just as in the House). This is clearly an area begging for research.

What is known about the evolution of Senate party leadership during this era has been provided almost exclusively by Byrd (1991), Swift (1996), and Gamm and Smith (2000; 2002). These studies show that, unlike the Speaker of the House, the Senate's presiding officer never developed as a strong party leader. This was because the Vice President, who served as the President of the Senate, was not elected by the chamber and thus not trusted by the members. The President Pro Tempore, who chaired proceedings in the Vice President's absence, was elected by the Senate, but the position itself was only temporary in nature. That is, whenever the Vice President appeared in the chamber, the current President Pro Tempore's term officially ended. The partisan ramifications of the Senate's weak presiding officer relative to the House's stronger presiding officer are put into context nicely by Roberts and Smith (2007, 184):

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The Senate, which did not have a previous-question motion or a presiding officer elected from its membership, lacked the means by which a majority party could assert control over the floor agenda. Instead, it evolved mechanisms that, under most circumstances, require the consent of both majority and minority members to organize floor debate and amending activity.

As a result, as the speakership was evolving into a party leadership institution during this era, the majority party in the Senate struggled to consolidate its power. For example, from 1815–37, the Senate adopted different arrangements for staffing committees, sometimes granting the President Pro Tempore the power (if it was felt that he would be available—and could be trusted—to perform the duty) and at other times choosing instead to ballot (for a breakdown, see Table 6–1 in Gamm and Smith 2000). The ballot option would become a stronger consideration as partisanship ramped up in the 1830s. Indeed, the Anti-Jacksonian majority turned to the ballot in 1833, unwilling to allow Hugh White, the President Pro Tempore and a Jacksonian holdover from the previous Congress, to appoint the committees. As Gamm and Smith (2002, 222) note, “It was in this era, when control of the chamber was fiercely contested and often in doubt, that committee chairmanships became partisan positions.” And just as partisans in the House began searching for a new party leadership mechanism to better secure positions of power, partisans in the Senate also sought such an institutional solution. Interestingly, the answer in the Senate would be the same as in the House—a party caucus.

Fits and starts, 1837–61

To better secure the formal House leadership positions, the Democratic majority pushed for two institutional changes: 1) a move from a secret to a public ballot in House officer elections and 2) the adoption of a party nominating caucus to settle intra-partisan differences and decide on partisan nominees in advance. As Jenkins and Stewart (forthcoming) explain, these choices were pushed by Martin Van Buren, the titular leader of the national Democratic Party. Van Buren came to power in New York state politics in the 1820s, where the caucus stood at the heart of an organization—the Albany Regency—built on tenets of strict party discipline and unwavering party loyalty (Wallace 1968; Hofstadter 1969).

The public ballot—or *viva voce* voting—was first adopted in a replacement election for House Clerk in 1838, and was extended to all House officer elections in 1839. The passage of *viva voce* voting would allow Van Buren and his supporters to institutionalize a party nominating caucus in the House, which would meet just prior to the start of a new Congress. Within the confines of the caucus, nominations for each of the major House officer positions would be held, after which elections would be conducted and choices made. Minority factions—those members of the party who supported unsuccessful nominees—would be placated, usually through committee assignments or promises of patronage, and in exchange their support of the caucus nominees on the House floor (or “being regular”) was expected. And unlike the secret-ballot era, Democratic leaders could examine whether party members followed through and voted for the caucus nominees. Dissidents could no longer defect and escape punishment. The caucus thus had the potential to be *binding*.¹¹

Wasting no time, the Democrats organized a party nominating caucus prior to the opening of the 26th Congress (1839–41). The Whigs made a half-hearted attempt to follow the Democrats' lead, before actively adopting the same caucus machinery prior to the opening in the 27th Congress (1841–3), wherein they would enjoy majority control of the House. And, as a result, a caucus-led system of House organization had begun.

The first decade of Van Buren's caucus-based nominating system produced mixed results. In 1839, the majority Democrats lost the speakership, thanks to key defections from the Calhounites, while in 1841, the majority Whigs lost the clerkship, thanks to the rejection of Henry Clay's handpicked candidate by the rank and file. The next three sets of officer elections, in the 28th through 30th Congresses (1843–9), followed the caucus dictate exactly, giving party leaders hope that Regency-level discipline and loyalty was institutionalizing. These general successes hid the fact that groups of northern and southern firebrands continued to defect from the caucus agreement, but their numbers were not large enough in these Congresses to prevent the majority party from achieving its preferred outcome.

Beginning in 1849, the tenuous caucus-based nominating system would flounder. The sectional strains that had permeated nominations and speakership elections over the past decade broke through with a vengeance. The U.S. victory in the Mexican-American War brought the slavery issue front and center, as newly acquired western land

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would need to be organized. Several years later, similar slavery-extension concerns would crop up in the organization of the Kansas–Nebraska territories (after the Missouri Compromise was annulled). The slavery issue would eventually tear the nation apart and lead to Civil War in 1861. But before then, House organizational politics were a spectacle.

Lengthy speakership elections would take place in 1849 (31st Congress), 1855–6 (34th Congress), and 1859–60 (36th Congress). In 1849, the plurality Democrats finally elected their caucus nominee after sixty-one ballots and three weeks, but then went on to lose the clerkship to the Whigs in a twenty-ballot affair. Officer elections went according to the caucus plan in 1851 and 1853, thanks to the Democrats' large majorities in the chamber. In 1855–6, the newly formed Republicans, comprising a plurality of the chamber, were able to elect a Speaker after 133 ballots and two months, but lost the Printer to a coalition of Americans and Democrats. In 1857, the Democrats took advantage of Republican-American electoral squabbling to elect their caucus slate. And, finally, in 1859, the Republicans were able to capture all major House offices, including the speakership, after forty-four ballots and two months, but only after dropping their initial choices for those offices.¹²

Thus, the initial attempt to bind party members to nomination choices in caucus was undermined by sectional divisions. Van Buren's dream to further party consolidation in the House by using the caucus as a leadership device did not come to fruition. At least not yet.

In the Senate, the caucus was also at the forefront of members' partisan machinations. Because the presiding officer did not develop as a partisan leader in the Senate, as the Speaker did in the House, the majority party sought to influence the composition of committees (and notably, committee chairmanships) directly. By 1845, as Gamm and Smith (2002) explain, a decision was made to assemble committees by public ballot on the floor—and thus bypass the presiding officer completely—using the caucus as the coordination mechanism. Very quickly, the Democrats and Whigs established a precedent by which committee lists (organized and ranked by party) would be assembled in caucus and adopted on the floor by unanimous consent. Soon thereafter, in 1847, the Democratic caucus created its first committee on committees, which “quickly became a powerful organ of the party” (223). The Republicans would follow suit with their own committee on committees in 1859.

Thus, the Senate parties' adoption of the caucus to deal with their chamber-specific collective-action problem (assembling committees) followed shortly after the House parties' adoption of the caucus to deal with *their* chamber-specific collective-action problem (electing officers, like the Speaker, who among other things assembled committees). This pattern of the House acting first and the Senate copying the behavior also occurred at least once before—in the conversion of the committee system from one in which select committees dominated to one in which standing committees dominated. This parallel has not been noted before in the literature, and the notion of Senate decision-makers reacting to (and following) House decision-makers probably deserves further investigation.

Party leadership from the Civil War through the pre-New Deal

From the Civil War through the 1920s, party leadership in Congress went through various cycles. First, there was an early consolidation, centering around the emergence of the party caucus as a viable and influential leadership mechanism. This led to a period of party power in Congress—unrivaled until the present day—that spanned two decades around the turn of the twentieth century. Finally, a backlash against strong party leadership occurred, and power was decentralized in both chambers. A brief resurgence of traditional party leadership took place in the 1920s, but this proved to be a temporary respite from the trend toward greater decentralization.

Party consolidation, 1861–90

The difficulties that the parties faced in organizing the House seemingly vanished with the advent of the Civil War. As Jenkins and Stewart (forthcoming) describe, beginning in 1861, no speakership election would extend beyond a single ballot for more than sixty years. And no other House officer elections would ever require more than a single ballot. The party nominating caucus, which had only limited success in the antebellum era, finally took firm hold. And while sectional issues would emerge again to test the parties—see Chapter 33 by Richard Bense in this volume—caucus decisions, however contentious, would be honored on the floor.

The importance of a caucus in advance of floor voting was underscored in the days before the speakership

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election of 1863. There, the House Clerk, Emerson Etheridge, planned an institutional coup by organizing Democrats and border-state Conservatives to join in coalition against the Republicans, who by themselves lacked a floor majority. Etheridge had been the Republican's Clerk candidate in 1861, but broke with the party after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. As presiding officer of the new Congress, Etheridge planned to use his ability to determine the roll of members-elect to reject certain Republicans who did not have their election certificates properly in order. But, as Belz (1970) describes, Republican leaders got wind of Etheridge's plan and were able to resolve the certification issue and thereby snuff out the Clerk's coup attempt. This served as a wakeup call for the Republicans, who were slow in adopting a nominating caucus. Beginning with the 39th Congress (1865–7), both major parties made their officer nominations in a caucus that met shortly before the convening of a new Congress.

Notable caucus nomination battles involved the tussle between Democrats Samuel Randall (PA) and Joseph J. Blackburn (KY) in 1879 and the bruising 16-ballot affair between Republicans Frank Hiscock (NY) and J. Warren Keifer (OH) in 1881.¹³ In each, and in all other cases during this era, the caucus loser was magnanimous in defeat and called for party unity on the floor. For example, Blackburn's statement upon losing the caucus nomination in 1881 is especially revealing of how far the caucus had come as a leadership institution within the party: "The edict of this caucus is to be final and conclusive, and if there be one among the 57 gentlemen whose partial friendship has given me their votes that hesitates or doubts, to him I now appeal to make the verdict of this caucus effective when to-morrow's roll is called" (*New York Times*, March 18, 1879, 1). According to Jenkins and Stewart (forthcoming), fidelity to the caucus occurred because party "losers" were compensated by the newly elected Speaker through his distribution of committee assignments. Thus, the caucus was an important institution, along with the Speaker and the committees, in maintaining cohesion within the majority party.

As the party caucuses grew in importance, the caucus chairmen, who directed their proceedings and helped determine their rules, took on positions of leadership within each party. The floor leader as a partisan position also continued to evolve during this period; for example, beginning in 1865, floor leadership responsibility often shifted from the Ways and Means Chairman to the Appropriations Chairman (Alexander 1916; Riddick 1949).¹⁴ Finally, House officer positions under the Speaker became less influential in the postbellum era. The House Clerk receded into the background after Etheridge's failed coup attempt, while the House Printer (and its Senate counterpart) was eliminated entirely in 1860 after a series of public printing scandals were uncovered. Both positions—especially the printership—had been important sources of patronage and funds that could be used for party development. In their place, congressional campaign committees (CCCs) appeared. As Kolodny (1998) documents, the Republican Congressional Committee (RCC) was created in 1866, with the Democratic Congressional Committee (DCC) following two years later in 1868. These institutions were created to direct and fund their respective party's efforts to achieve (or maintain) majority party status in the House. Beyond Kolodny's impressive study, little is known of the evolution of CCCs (see also Chapter 10 by Robin Kolodny in this volume).

On the Senate side, Gamm and Smith (2002) have culled through an older and often fragmented literature on party leadership, while also expanding our collective knowledge through intensive archival work. They observe that each party established formal caucus chairmen during this time—the Democrats in 1857 and the Republicans in 1873—and that subunits within the Democratic caucus, an ad hoc steering committee and a committee on committees, began taking responsibility for policy recommendations and committee decisions within the party. Moreover, Gamm and Smith note that Democrats in the 1870s began making officer positions, like the Secretary, the Clerk, the Doorkeepers, etc., into elected positions, thereby transforming them into distinct patronage engines. This is interesting, as Smith (1977) and others note that some Senate positions like the Printer in the antebellum period were elected—and a perusal of the *Congressional Globe* suggests that other positions, like the Doorkeeper, were also occasionally elected. Both perspectives are likely correct, as changes in methods of officer selection probably occurred from time to time. More broadly, this suggests that a more comprehensive examination of Senate officer positions during the nineteenth century is needed, so that the evolution is fully documented.

Finally, the continuing divergence in institutional evolution between the House and Senate is detailed nicely by Roberts and Smith (2007). As noted, the chambers differed because of early decisions in their histories (presiding officer differences, previous question differences), which affected subsequent decisions about setting the floor agenda. In the House, special orders first emerged in the 1880s, as a way to centralize authority in the Rules Committee (staffed by the Speaker) to dictate how business would be conducted on the floor. (The active use of such special rules would not become prevalent for another decade.) Around the same time, complex unanimous

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consent agreements (UCAs) emerged in the Senate, to limit debate or amendments. While special orders clearly benefitted the majority party in asserting procedural control in the House, UCAs required cross-party coalitions to work efficiently. Thus, party leadership in the two chambers continued to evolve on very different paths.

The high tide of party, 1890–1910

The two decades between 1890 and 1910 would emerge as the high tide of party government in the U.S. Congress. Powerful leaders and leadership organizations would dictate legislative proceedings and outputs in both chambers of Congress.

In the House, Republican Thomas Reed (ME) was elected Speaker in the 51st Congress (1889–91), and under his leadership the majority party would work its will in a way never before seen in chamber history. In the years prior to Reed's ascension, hints that the House majority was attempting to gain firmer control of the chamber abounded—mechanisms like special orders emerged (as already noted) to help manage House business, and, as Binder (1997) and Dion (1997) note, attempts to stifle minority dissent (through limits on procedural rights) were plentiful but only marginally successful. As a result, Cox and McCubbins (2005) consider 1880s-era House politics to have been governed by a “dual veto,” wherein dilatory threats (and often behavior) by the minority along with antiquated rules for doing business on the floor (the calendar system of the time) effectively meant that each party shared agenda power. Once in the Speaker's chair, Reed set out to eliminate minority obstruction. This story is well known and has been described in detail by many scholars (see, e.g., Schickler 2001). With his Republican majority backing him on the floor in the face of Democratic challenges, Reed changed the rules by which quorums were counted, reduced the quorum requirement in the Committee of the Whole to 100 members, and provided the Speaker with discretion to rule dilatory motions out of order. In addition, Reed oversaw the transformation of special orders into special rules, which further enhanced the authority of the Rules Committee (chaired by the Speaker) and gave the majority party much more flexibility in shaping the legislative agenda.¹⁵

Thanks to these changes, the House majority party—when cohesive—could govern effectively and efficiently. Reed's mantle was later taken up by Republican Joseph Cannon (IL), who, beginning in the 58th Congress (1903–05), would further consolidate power in the speakership.¹⁶ Elsewhere in the House, the floor leader position continued to evolve. Beginning in 1896, the Chair of Ways and Means largely took control of the position from the Chair of Appropriations (Riddick 1949), and in 1899, the floor leader became a formally identified position—the Majority Leader (Ripley 1967).¹⁷ Also, in 1897, a new formal party position, the Whip, was created by the majority Republicans (with the minority Democrats following suit in 1900) to serve as an information conduit between leaders and the rank and file (Ripley 1964).

In the Senate, the lack of a Speaker-like presiding officer made it more difficult for party leadership to emerge. Instead of a single individual, a group of four powerful Republican senators—Nelson Aldrich (RI), William Allison (IA), Orville Platt (CT), and John Spooner (WI)—emerged to coordinate party activity. Key to their success, as discussed by Gamm and Smith (2002), was the expanding power of the Republican caucus. Instead of using ad hoc caucus committees, which had been the norm in the 1870s and 1880s, the Republicans instituted a regular steering committee in 1892, to organize the party's legislative agenda. Thanks to its more permanent institutional status, the new steering committee was considered more legitimate by party members, and its influence grew accordingly.¹⁸ (The minority Democrats would adopt their own regular steering committee a year later in 1893.) And while party leadership centralization occurred in the Senate—to the point that, as Rothman (1966, 59) states, “Senators knew they had to consult the [steering] committee before attempting to raise even minor matters”—it did not approximate the level reached in the House. The process and structure of the Senate, relative to that of the House, limited what could be achieved.

As to why party leadership consolidated during this time, scholars such as Rohde and Shepsle (1987) point to the electorally induced preference distributions of the parties.¹⁹ In the House, parties became more internally homogenous and polarized from one another, creating a context that allowed—and encouraged—members to delegate authority to leaders. In later work, Rohde (1991) would refer to this homogeneity/polarization requirement as the *condition* that is needed to produce delegation and subsequent strong party government.²⁰ Smith and Gamm (2009) generally agree with the Rohde and Shepsle account for the House, but note that a similar story does not hold for the Senate, as the timing between homogeneity/polarization and Republican Party consolidation is not nearly as clean. Schickler (2001) and Jenkins, Schickler, and Carson (2004) question the Rohde/Shepsle

explanation more generally, however, as they find—using district-level economic data and constituency characteristics, rather than roll-call votes—that Republican districts did not become increasingly homogenous and polarized from Democratic districts until several years after the adoption of the Reed Rules. Strahan (2007) acknowledges the logic of the homogeneity/polarization argument, but contends—in a case study of Reed's speakership—that the individual skills of (would-be) leaders are important considerations that have been undervalued in the literature. Valelly (2009) makes a related point, stating that leadership is also related to political context, which in his view has largely been ignored; more specifically, he makes the claim that Reed's rise to power occurred as part of “a grand strategy of Republican party building” that centered on federally regulating southern House elections (2009, 115).

In short, questions remain regarding why (and how) party leadership consolidated during the 1890–1910 period, the high-water mark of party government in Congress. Additional studies are needed before any kind of consensus can be reached.

Insurgency, the binding policy caucus, and the resurgence of party leadership, 1910–33

Although Speaker Joe Cannon presided over a centralized party organization in the first decade of the twentieth century, disaffection was growing within the majority Republican party. As Jenkins and Stewart (forthcoming) recount, young House Republicans—the so-called “progressive” Republicans—were increasingly unhappy with Cannon and the way that he used his powers to favor the interests of senior, “Old Guard” Republicans.²¹ As a result, spirited calls for reform emerged in the latter part of the 60th Congress (1907–09), but fell just short of being enacted. A show of opposition against Cannon was then made in the Republican caucus elections in March 1909, in advance of the opening of the 61st Congress (1909–11). Cannon, who had received the Republican speakership nomination by acclamation three previous times, received 162 votes, with 25 votes scattering and 30 absences.

The caucus vote on Cannon would be a harbinger. In March 1910, the progressive Republicans, led by George W. Norris (NE), would combine with the Democrats in the chamber to change the House rules by removing the Speaker from the Rules Committee and expanding its membership from five to ten, with Rules Committee members elected by the House (see Holt 1967; Schickler 2001).²² When the Democrats took control of the House in the following (62nd) Congress, they finished the job by stripping the Speaker of his ability to make *all* standing committee assignments. This famous episode in the history of the House would have lasting effects, as the decentralization of power from the Speaker to the committees would remain the institutional status quo until the latter part of the twentieth century.

A similar “revolt” against the leadership did not occur in the Senate, but the Republican-led coalition faced significant challenges to its authority during the same time.²³ Increasingly, as Smith and Gamm (2009) detail, a determined minority was able to use the filibuster and other dilatory tactics to stymie the Republican policy agenda. And there were simply more internal divisions within the Senate Republican party during the Aldrich era of Republican rule, making party consolidation extremely difficult. Inevitably, a weak organization (due to the particulars of the Senate institutional context) simply got weaker over time. And by 1911, with Aldrich's retirement from the Senate, the group of four powerful Republican senators who had coordinated Republican Senate activity were all gone.

The first six years of President Woodrow Wilson's administration (1913–19) would usher in unified Democratic control of government for the first time since 1893–5. Once in power, the Democrats would turn to a new organizational tool to consolidate party power and push a party agenda: the binding policy caucus. Part of the move to caucus government in the House followed on progressive changes in the wake of the Cannon revolt.²⁴ For example, the caucus would now be supreme on organizational matters—choosing both the Speaker and the Majority Leader. The Majority Leader would be appointed by the caucus to chair the Ways and Means Committee, and the Democrats on Ways and Means would fill out the rest of the House's committee assignments. The Speaker thus was a bit player in the new caucus-led drama, with the Majority Leader being the most important individual leader. The caucus would be secret in its proceedings and a two-thirds vote would bind all members on subsequent floor action (see Galloway 1961). In the Senate, the Democratic takeover would usher in formal leadership changes, with the caucus chairman (John Worth Kern, IN) becoming the designated Majority Leader and a Whip position created, both in 1913. (Republicans would follow suit by designating a Minority Leader in 1913 and a Whip in 1915.) To better mimic the House's ability to centralize decision-making—and to fortify its spot in the

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binding caucus system—the Majority Leader made decisions directly, bypassing the former steering committees that had emerged in the late nineteenth century (Smith and Gamm 2009).

The best analysis of the binding caucus, by far, is provided by Green (2002), who examines the Democratic caucus in the House from 1911 to 1919. Green argues that the caucus was not as powerful as some historians have thought, as he finds that “the caucus bound Democrats' votes on just 15 legislative measures in four Congresses” (2002, 622). Moreover, many of these binding caucus resolutions proved to be unnecessary, as they were linked to bills that were already supported by a sizeable majority of Democrats on pure ideological grounds. When a measure was ideologically divisive, a binding caucus resolution could not typically compel party allegiance on the floor, as defections were often numerous. In sum, Green's results suggest that instituting parliamentary-style rules on matters other than organizational votes is difficult, especially when cross-cutting or ideologically dividing issues emerge. A similar analysis to Green's for the Senate has not been conducted.²⁵

The Republicans returned to power in the 66th Congress (1919–21) and controlled both chambers of Congress through the early 1930s. While they would not continue with the Democrats' use of a binding policy caucus, a resurgence of partisanship would take place during this time, in both the House and Senate, in the face of new progressive challenges. These episodes have been recounted in detail by Schickler (2001) and Jenkins and Stewart (forthcoming).

In the House, the first multi-ballot speakership battle since before the Civil War took place in 1923, at the opening of the 68th Congress (1923–5).²⁶ A new generation of progressive Republicans, demanding a liberalization of House rules to free up legislation that languished in committees dominated by Republican regulars, used their pivotal numbers (roughly twenty members) to delay the reelection of Republican Speaker Frederick Gillett (MA). Nicholas Longworth (OH), the Republican Majority Leader, was enraged by the progressives' actions and tried to face them down—without success. After eight speakership ballots over two days, Longworth conceded and offered the progressives a deal, which would provide an opening for the liberalization of House rules. The progressives accepted the deal, threw their support behind Gillett on a ninth floor ballot—thereby electing him—and then used Longworth's opening to initiate several rules changes, such as developing a workable discharge rule to draw legislation out of committee and eliminating the power of the Rules Committee Chairman to perform a “pocket veto” on resolutions approved by the Rules Committee. A portion of this progressive group of Republicans would then defect from the Republican presidential ticket of Coolidge and Dawes in 1924, in favor of Robert La Follette's Progressive Party candidacy.

In the 69th Congress (1925–7), Longworth was elected Speaker, and he would have his revenge on the progressives. Thanks to “regular” Republican electoral gains in the 1924 elections, the progressive wing of the party was no longer pivotal in officer selection. Thus, Longworth, with the help of Bertrand Snell (NY), the Rules Committee Chair and Majority Leader, and the Republican Committee on Committees (RCOC), kicked 13 progressives out of the Republican caucus and announced that they would be welcomed back when they became “regular” once again on speakership votes. Longworth's hard line was intended to reestablish a strong party organization in the House and return the speakership to a position of prominence. And, once in the Speaker's chair, he proceeded to oversee the rolling back of the progressive-led rules reforms of the previous Congress. The progressive Republicans rejected Longworth's demands for a time, but being read out of the Republican caucus and losing their committee seniority was eventually too much to bear—and they returned “home” and voted for Longworth for Speaker in the 70th Congress (1927–9). Thus, Longworth had reestablished a Speaker-led system of party organization in the House, albeit one that incorporated the intra-party power sharing realities of the post-Cannon era. Moreover, as Bacon (1998) documents, Longworth ushered in procedural leadership that struck observers as a friendlier version of the Reed–Cannon years.

In general, less is known about Senate party leadership during the 1920s. Schickler (2001) does note, however, that an anti-progressive backlash occurred that mirrored the House case. In 1925, the Republican Senate conference excluded Robert La Follette (WI), Edwin Ladd (ND), Smith Brookhart (IA), and Lynn Frazier (ND) for refusing to support the Coolidge–Dawes ticket. This punishment aside, the regular Republicans often found the progressive element in their ranks—midwestern and western members, often referred to as the “Farm bloc”—too large to contain adequately. This Republican heterogeneity, as Smith and Gamm (2009) note, made it difficult for strong party leadership to develop. Indeed, Gould (2005) goes so far as to refer to Republican party leaders—formal Majority Leaders like Henry Cabot Lodge, Sr. (MA), Charles Curtis (KS), and James E. Watson (IN), as well as

informal leaders like William Borah (ID)—as “spearless” during this era.²⁷

Party leadership from the New Deal through the present

Beginning in the 1930s, a period of weak party leadership emerged in both chambers, as contextual conditions led to power residing almost wholly within the committee system. Over time, conditions would evolve and create a congressional environment that was ripe for a resurgence in partisanship. In turn, a strengthening of party leadership would occur. This would be most clearly visible in the House, thanks to the passage of a host of party and chamber rules designed to strengthen the hand of leaders. In the Senate, where a similar spate of formal rules changes did not take place, leaders have had to rely upon more informal techniques to enhance their authority.

Committee ascendancy, 1933–60

After the Democrats won control of both chambers of Congress in 1932, as part of FDR's electoral tidal wave, they would maintain their status as the majority party—aside from two blips in the 80th (1947–9) and 83rd (1953–5) Congresses—until Ronald Reagan's election in 1980. Thus, majority party leadership for much of the New Deal era and beyond would be shaped by contextual conditions within the Democratic Party.

The first four years of FDR's presidency saw executive-led policymaking in Congress, as Democrats in both the House and Senate largely acquiesced to the New Deal agenda. For example, the Rules Committee in the House worked hand-in-hand with FDR to get his legislative priorities passed. Beginning in 1937, however, a transformation occurred as conservative Democrats and Republicans began cooperating to stymie FDR's momentum. This “conservative coalition” has been well documented in the literature—put simply, conservative southern Democrats, were concerned about the expansive liberal direction that FDR and northern Democrats were taking, especially in terms of how it might affect (and challenge) the Jim Crow system that had developed in the South after Reconstruction. Thus, in the House, the Rules Committee stopped being an arm of the majority party leadership and began operating as an independent bipartisan force, one that represented ideological (conservative) rather than partisan interests (Galloway 1961).

From 1937 through 1960, therefore, a very different system operated in Congress. Party leadership was weak in each chamber, thanks in part to the heterogeneity within the majority Democratic Party. With large liberal and conservative wings, located in the North and South, no consensus emerged about a “party” agenda, and thus little power was delegated to leaders. House leaders (the Speaker and Majority Leader) were very much like Senate leaders (the Majority Leader) during this time, operating as agents who could work to coordinate interests, but possessing little to no formal authority to dictate or compel behavior. Leadership influence thus occurred at the margins, and relied heavily upon the interpersonal skill and savvy of the leaders themselves; Speaker Sam Rayburn (TX) in the House and Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson (TX) in the Senate, for example, were noted for their ability to use communication networks and individual relationships to help achieve certain partisan goals (see, e.g., Huitt 1961; Cooper and Brady 1981; Hardeman and Bacon 1987; Caro 2002).²⁸ Instead, power was decentralized in the standing committees (and especially in the committee chairmen), jurisdictional control was paramount, and intercommittee reciprocity was how business got done (Sinclair 2005). Positions of power on committees were determined by seniority, and, as a result, southern Democrats—thanks to their long tenures in Congress—came to control many of the jurisdictional fiefdoms. As Shepsle (1989) notes, this portrait represents the “textbook Congress” that many scholars post-World War II came to know so well.

While this account of party leadership weakness during the conservative coalition era is widely shared, Cox and McCubbins (1993, 2005) have offered some evidence to the contrary. Simply put, they have argued that parties in the House have exerted influence continuously going back to the Reed Rules—such influence has been *procedural* in nature, as majority-party members have been expected to support caucus decisions on rules (or risk punishment, which can include being passed over for committee chairmanships and can be as severe as expulsion from the caucus) and majority-party leaders (the Speaker, committee chairs, the Rules Committee) have been expected to avoid taking actions that would harm a majority of the majority party. These works by Cox and McCubbins have been influential, and scholars have responded to their claims. The chief critiques have come from Schickler and Rich (1997a, 1997b), Schickler and Pearson (2009), and Pearson and Schickler (2009), who examine such legislative features as House rules, committee jurisdictions, seniority violations, and discharge petitions during the conservative coalition era and argue that cross-party coalitions were more important than majority-party

leadership in explaining observed outcomes. Cox and McCubbins (1997, 2005) have responded to many of these critiques, and in doing so have helped foster a lively academic debate. Currently, both sides agree that the conservative coalition exerted *negative* influence in this period—blocking liberal Democratic initiatives that many Democrats favored—but they disagree about whether the conservative coalition exerted *positive* influence—pushing an agenda actively hostile to majority-party Democratic interests. Sorting out these conflicting claims in a definitive way will require new (and better) theories of positive agenda control—a phenomenon we know less about as a scholarly community than negative agenda control—and (very likely) new and better empirical measures as well.²⁹

Reform, transformation, and contemporary party leadership, 1960–2010

To understand the current state of party leadership in the contemporary Congress, scholars have typically focused on the 1958 congressional elections as an initial flashpoint. In that year, a swath of new liberal Democrats were elected to the House and Senate, and they found (very quickly) that their programmatic policy demands were stymied by the conservative-based, committee-dominated system that was in place in both chambers. This tension—which escalated through the 1960s as subsequent elections brought in more liberal Democrats—led to chamber development that occurred along two separate paths: institutional reform in the House and a transformation in behavior in the Senate. A number of excellent book-length treatments exist on the development of the House and Senate during this era. Examples include Rohde (1991), Sinclair (1989, 1998, 2006, 2007), and Smith (1989). Other, shorter, accounts include Sinclair (2005), Smith (2005), and Aldrich and Rohde (2009). This section borrows heavily from these various works.

In the House, an initial change occurred in 1961, when Speaker Rayburn helped spearhead an expansion of the Rules Committee (from twelve to fifteen members), in response to concerns that President Kennedy's legislative agenda would otherwise stagnate. A significant burst of change would then occur between 1969 and 1975, as the Democratic caucus continued to move in a liberal direction, helped along by the electoral effects of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Such changes included the elimination of the seniority system that automatically governed committee chairmanships, as a caucus rules change provided for a secret ballot for all chairmanships at the beginning of each Congress (conditional on the request of 20 percent of the caucus membership); a decentralization of authority from committees to subcommittees; an expansion of resources throughout the congressional ranks, which gave junior members more opportunities to participate; and a strengthening of the powers of the Speaker, who was granted the ability to appoint the Chair and Democratic members of the Rules Committee (making the Rules Committee once again an arm of the party leadership), given new authority to determine appointments to all other standing committees (through disproportionate influence on the new Steering and Policy Committee), and provided with the right to refer bills to more than one committee (i.e. "multiple referral") and set deadlines for reporting.

In the early years after the reforms, decentralization of power in the House predominated, as party leaders, like the Speaker, were reluctant to exert their newfound influence. But as politics in the House became unwieldy, thanks to a proliferation of participatory efforts by members looking to make their mark and appeal to constituent sentiment, the Democratic rank and file looked to the leadership for guidance and coordination. Because the Democratic Party had become increasingly homogenous by the late 1970s, as southern conservative Democrats began disappearing, the caucus was willing to allow leaders more discretion in setting and overseeing the legislative agenda. To control proceedings, the leadership began relying on special (restrictive) rules to structure debate and floor voting—by the late 1980s, as Sinclair (2005, 231) notes, "Democratic leaders developed restrictive rules into powerful tools for advancing their members' legislative preferences." Leaders also took on a more active role at the pre-floor stage, negotiating with committees on the content and language of legislation and generally using their authority to insure that the party's agenda proceeded expeditiously. By this time, the Republican minority, increasingly homogenous as a conservative group, began adopting similar caucus-based rules in the hopes of better countering the Democrats. When the House changed partisan hands after the 1994 elections, the Republicans under Newt Gingrich (GA), and then later under Dennis Hastert (IL), further centralized decision-making authority in the Speaker, who took an ever more active role in committee selection (chairs and members) and legislative policymaking. Nancy Pelosi (CA), who became Speaker when the Democrats recaptured the House following the 2006 elections, has followed the Gingrich–Hastert plan in terms of activity and assertiveness, but has also relied more upon the expertise of committee chairmen to share in leadership decisions.

In the Senate, the decentralization of the textbook era gave way to individualism. With the influx of new, liberal members eager to make their mark, norms that had operated in the previous era—respect for seniority, deference to committees and committee chairs, etc.—quickly eroded. Much as in the House, floor participation increased, especially in regards to amendment votes and extended floor debate (Sinclair 1989). In addition, and more problematically, obstruction also increased, as members' use of filibusters and other forms of dilatory behavior (such as “holds”) became more prevalent. But, unlike the House, the dominant party caucus in the Senate has not formally delegated new procedural authority to the Majority Leader to respond to these changing chamber conditions. As throughout history, the Senate's institutional path—as a smaller, more consensual body, with biases toward relatively weak leadership and unimpeded debate—have limited what chamber leaders could accomplish. If anything, the post-1960 era has made majority-party leaders rely even more upon bargaining and persuasion to direct the policymaking process in the Senate. That said, they have also sought new ways to lead effectively, especially as dilatory behavior by the minority has escalated. For example, Smith and Gamm (2009) note that Senate leaders have become more creative in managing Senate business—examples include attempting to stave off filibusters by splitting or combining bills, seeking unanimous consent agreements to require sixty-vote majorities, and bypassing the conference stage in inter-chamber proceedings and negotiating directly with House leaders.³⁰ In addition, Lee (2008) argues that as Senate parties have become more effective in recent years at steering the legislative agenda toward party cleavage issues—those on which there is internal party unity and wide divergence between the two parties—a strengthening of formal leadership structures in the Senate has also occurred, with party caucuses meeting more frequently and enhanced resources (both funds and staff levels) being devoted to party leadership offices.³¹

While these new leadership developments have been helpful, the minority's privileged procedural position in the Senate is a never-ending problem—as Harry Reid, the Democratic Majority Leader since January 2007, has discovered time and time again. In the end, the majority's inability (or, perhaps more accurately, *unwillingness*) to delegate broad formal authority to its leader has limited what can be accomplished in the Senate relative to the House. Instead, the majority party in the Senate has relied upon more informal channels to achieve its goals, along with a basic (and sometimes slightly naïve) “hope that its dedicated floor leader can improve efficiency and persuade the public of its program” (Smith and Gamm 2009, 161).

What's next? Frontiers in studying the evolution of party leadership

While party leadership in Congress has been a central focus of study over the past two decades or more, a number of interesting and important research avenues remain. A complete list is beyond the scope of this chapter, but I will highlight several that strike me as especially ripe for study.

The turn to the historical study of Congress is still relatively new, and as I have indicated throughout this chapter, there is still much that we (as an academic community) do not know about party development in the U.S. Senate. Gamm and Smith (2000, 2002; Smith and Gamm 2009) have done a tremendous job of filling in many of the gaps in our collective knowledge, but a host of additional questions remain. Perhaps the biggest question is: how did party leadership develop, and how did it affect Senate decision-making, in the antebellum era? Moreover, the historical role of the Senate Majority leader—and how the position evolved from a more informal “floor leader” position—begs for greater explanation. This includes evolution extending into the “modern” period. For example, Smith (2007, 68) notes that the Majority Leader achieved the “full range of modern leadership responsibilities,” which included the right of first recognition, in the 1930s—yet, scholars know little about even these more recent developments. In addition, Lee's (2008) work on the rise of informal mechanisms of party power offers a fresh perspective for understanding party leadership development in the Senate—and one that is not tied to “orthodox” ideas stemming from House-based theories. In short, someone looking to make a mark in the study of party leadership in Congress would not go wrong in selecting the Senate as his/her area of focus.

Much more is known about the evolution of party leadership in the House. But this does not mean gaps in our collective knowledge do not exist. While the development of the speakership has elicited a good amount of attention (e.g. Peters 1997; Peters and Rosenthal 2010; Jenkins and Stewart, forthcoming), as has the whip system (e.g. Ripley 1964; Evans and Grandy 2009), very little is known about the development of the Majority Leader position. In general, understanding the evolution of floor leadership in *both* the House and the Senate is fertile ground for systematic inquiry.

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The timing of institutional adoption across chambers has also not been studied systematically. For example, in noting that the House and Senate adopted standing committees (1810s) and caucuses (1840s) around the same time, one question to ask is: does cross-chamber “learning” go on? Do party leaders in one chamber analyze what institutional choices work (or not) in the other chamber—and copy (or not) accordingly? And are there other examples of “copying” beyond standing committees and caucuses? Relatedly, the differing membership sizes of the House and Senate over time may affect leadership choice and, more generally, how party leadership in the two chambers has evolved. While other cross-chamber choices early in congressional history have been stressed—on presiding-officer capabilities and previous-question rule decisions—the increasing size gap between the House and Senate through the early twentieth century is an institutional (structural) factor that deserves greater attention in future explanations of cross-chamber leadership development.

Examining how congressional party leaders manage relations with the president is also an area that requires greater attention. The president's role in influencing the party agenda in Congress is not often part of contemporary theoretical treatments (see Cox and McCubbins 2005 for an exception); this was not always the case, as Truman's (1959) study of the congressional party focused heavily on the intersection between party leaders and the president. Prime questions for examination would include: when do party leaders depend on presidential help, given unified party government?; to what extent are leaders' jobs dictated by a president's strategic choices rather than a simple product of what most caucus members want?; and how has the interaction between congressional leaders and the president varied by time and by chamber?

Finally, in studying the contemporary Congress, a number of topics Barbara Sinclair refers to as “unorthodox lawmaking” deserve more systematic analysis (see Sinclair 2006, 2007). First, she notes the emergence of “task forces” in both the House and Senate in recent decades; these task forces represent both complements and challenges to the chambers' committee systems. When and under what conditions do leaders turn to task forces? And is there evidence that the existence of task forces affects political outcomes in some predictable ways? Second, Sinclair describes party leaders being more active in the policymaking process in both chambers, sometimes bypassing the committee system (and their established jurisdictions). Does this happen often? And is it more likely to happen with committees that are less representative of the majority party? Third, Sinclair notes that party leadership also involves thinking beyond the particular chamber in question—House leaders and Senate leaders often have to coordinate on policy questions in order to expedite the production of laws. When do leaders bypass the traditional cross-institutional mechanisms for cooperation (i.e. conference committees) and negotiate directly with the other chamber's leaders? Is this happening more often over time? And what explains the variation—the substantive issue area under consideration, coalition size in each chamber, ideological dispersion in each chamber, divided government, or something else?

In sum, while the congressional literature on party leadership is full of important and insightful works, opportunities for new research abound. Studies that focus on the *evolution* of party leadership are especially well positioned to make a significant scholarly impact. As we, as an academic community, learn more about how party leadership operates in different eras (and sub-eras), the next logical step is to assess how, when, and why party leadership *changes* (or not) across eras (and sub-eras) in a *systematic* way. Some excellent research in this regard is being done, as I have indicated throughout this chapter, but more is needed—and will undoubtedly be produced in upcoming years. I eagerly await such work.

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Notes:

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- (1) Identifying the earliest studies of “party leadership in Congress” is open to some interpretation. Earlier academic studies of party influence existed, such as Lowell's (1902) comparison of voting in the U.S. House of Representatives and British House of Commons, but did not focus on party leadership explicitly. A number of narrower academic studies, focusing only on the House speakership, such as Follett (1896) and Fuller (1909), preceded Brown and Hasbrouck. And, finally, journalistic accounts of party leadership, like Thompson (1906), existed, but were designed mainly as biographical compilations without a distinct theoretical overview or perspective.
- (2) As a result of their overt partisanship, Dayton and Sedgwick received divided votes of “thanks” as their tenures came to an end, 40–22 and 40–35, respectively (*Annals of Congress*, 5–3, 3/3/1799, 3054; 6–2, 3/3/1801, 1079). Such votes of thanks, prior to that time, had been unanimous.
- (3) Ballot data for the first two Speaker elections do not exist.
- (4) As Harlow (1917, 177) notes, during Jefferson's presidency, “[floor leaders] were presidential agents, appointed by the executive, and dismissed at his pleasure.” This differed from the Federalist-dominated era, when the floor leader acted more as “an assistant to the Speaker” (176).
- (5) The distinction between presidential and party preferences was not often great, as the president (and his cabinet members) often defined the party at this point.
- (6) In addition, Binder finds evidence to suggest that partisanship was a *cause* of the passage of the previous question rule in the House, despite the fact that party feelings were very much in a formative stage in Congress at this time.
- (7) While Wawro and Schickler (2006, 64) agree that “[t]he absence of a previous question rule did complicate efforts to end Senate obstruction,” they contend there were other rules and precedents available to floor majorities in the Senate to overcome obstructionist behavior. More generally, they argue that the Senate was fairly majoritarian during much of the nineteenth century, and that minority obstruction was a bigger problem in the House than the Senate prior to 1890 (and the advent of the Reed Rules). For a burgeoning debate on procedural development, minority power, and governing in the Senate during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Binder (1997); Binder and Smith (1997); Wawro and Schickler (2006); Binder, Madonna, and Smith (2007); Koger (2010).
- (8) Much has been written about Clay and his role in the institutionalization of the House, both by augmenting the Speaker's role in guiding debate and in developing the standing committee system. See particularly Gamm and Shepsle (1989); Jenkins (1998); Strahan, Moscardelli, et al (2000); Stewart (2007); Strahan (2007).
- (9) Clay retired to Kentucky temporarily because of health and financial reasons.
- (10) Other more minor elected Houser officer positions included the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Doorkeeper, and the Postmaster. While all had significant patronage potential, none compared in stature and influence to the Clerk and Printer.
- (11) Caucuses themselves were not a new phenomenon on the congressional landscape. They had a long history in congressional politics, with legislative party caucuses going back to the early federalist era and the Congressional Nominating Caucus (or “King Caucus”) dictating party selection of presidential nominees from 1800 through 1824. But for the first four decades of our federal system, a regular party caucus to select House officer candidates never took hold, perhaps due to the secret ballot (and resulting “enforceability issues”) that ultimately determined officer selection on the House floor.
- (12) The Republicans did not make explicit caucus nominations until the 38th Congress (1863–5). Prior to that time, they adopted an informal agreement that members would be allowed to vote their true preferences on the first ballot (for a given office) and then coordinate around the top vote-getter thereafter.
- (13) Perhaps the most contentious caucus nomination battle occurred just outside of the sub-era, in 1891, as Democrats Charles F. Crisp (GA) and John Q. Mills (TX) clashed for thirty ballots over two days, before Crisp was finally nominated.

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- (14) This occurred after Appropriations became a stand-alone committee in 1865. Such a shift was not *complete*, however, as several Ways and Means Chairmen during the 1870s and 1880s, like William Morrison (IL), Fernando Wood (NY), William Kelley (PN), and William McKinley (IL), also doubled as floor leaders.
- (15) While a special order provided for the consideration of bills reported from committee, they did not typically alter the *procedures* by which the bills would be considered. A special rule provided for consideration *and* stipulated procedural limits, such as restrictions on debate and/or amendments.
- (16) The Democrats, after taking back the House in the 52nd Congress (1891–3), would repeal the Reed Rules. But after facing dilatory behavior led by Reed himself, they would reinstate many of the Reed Rules in the 53rd Congress (1893–5). The Republicans would retake the House, and Reed would return to the Speaker's chair in the 54th and 55th Congresses (1895–9), before yielding to David Henderson (IA) in the 56th and 57th Congresses (1899–1903). Historians have generally considered Henderson to have been a weak presiding officer, but recent work by Finocchiaro and Rohde (2007) suggests that this may be an overstatement.
- (17) Discrepancies exist as to when a formal Minority Leader position emerged. Ripley (1967) suggests 1881, while other sources (like Galloway (1961) and Heitshusen (2007)) suggest 1899 or 1901.
- (18) Schickler (2001), based on a survey of the secondary literature, points to 1897 as the key date in which party-leadership influence fully consolidated.
- (19) See, also, Cooper and Brady (1981) on this general point.
- (20) Rohde referred to this as “conditional party government.”
- (21) Recently, a debate has emerged around Cannon's committee assignments and whether he truly acted as a majority-party “tyrant.” Krehbiel and Wiseman (2001, 2005) find evidence to suggest that Cannon's committee slates often reflected a bipartisan tinge, while Lawrence, Maltzman, and Wahlbeck (2001) find that partisanship was one of several factors that helped explain Cannon's committee assignments.
- (22) Progressive Republicans lost their initial skirmish with Cannon in March 1909, on the adoption of the House rules, thanks to a few Democrats who backed Cannon in exchange for a minor reform concession. Later, after winning their showdown with Cannon in 1910, the progressive Republicans stopped short of a complete “coup” by leaving him—now shorn of much of his agenda power—in the Speaker's chair. See Holt (1967) and Schickler (2001) for detailed overviews.
- (23) Schickler and Sides (2000), however, do note an earlier insurgency within the Republican- controlled Senate—in 1899, a set of junior and western senators took on the Aldrich/Allison leadership and successfully decentralized appropriations away from Allison's Appropriations Committee. This was indicative of the difficulty that Republican leaders in the Senate had—relative to Republican leaders in the House—throughout the “strong party era” of 1890–1910.
- (24) One such progressive change was to eliminate much of the remaining patronage controlled by the subsidiary House officers (Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, Doorkeeper, Postmaster) and redirect it to a Committee on Committees within the Democratic caucus. See Jenkins and Stewart (forthcoming).
- (25) The best portrait of Senate party leadership during the 1910s is provided by Oleszek (1991).
- (26) This would also be the *last* multi-ballot speakership battle on the House floor.
- (27) See Chapter 6 of Gould's (2005) history of the modern Senate, entitled “Spearless Leaders in the 1920s.”
- (28) “Persuasion” seemed to be the main tool of party leaders during this era, regardless of chamber. For example, Republican Speaker Joe Martin noted, “I worked by persuasion and drew heavily on long-established personal friendships” (Martin 1960, 182), while Democratic Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson argued, “The only real power to the [majority] leader is the power of persuasion” (quoted in Peabody 1976, 339).
- (29) For an overview of negative and positive agenda control, see Cox and McCubbins (2005) and Finocchiaro and Rohde (2008).

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(30) For additional evidence of majority-party effects in the Senate—which are not tied exclusively to leadership influence—see the essays in Monroe, Roberts, and Rohde (2008).

(31) More generally, Lee contends that majority-party members have *informally* delegated authority to leaders to pursue common goals, by willingly acquiescing to leaders' agenda decisions; this contrasts with the formal delegation that has occurred in the House.

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