Reflections on the Practice of Theorizing: Conditional Party Government in the Twenty-First Century

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This article focuses on the theory of Conditional Party Government (CPG). It seeks to recapitulate the development of the argument for CPG, pulling together various strands articulated during work on the theory over the last four decades in order to explain why the theory took the form it did. The discussion focuses on some of the most important evidence that relates to the predictions of CPG, in order to account for the evolution of the theory over time in interaction with that evidence. It also offers some reflections at various points on the implications of this theoretical and empirical effort for the study of Congress.

My focus in this article[1] is the theory of Conditional Party Government (CPG).[2] In it, I have three goals. First, I seek to recapitulate the development of the argument for CPG, pulling together various strands articulated during work on the theory over the last four decades.[3] My main goal here is not just to summarize but to explain why the theory took the form it did. Second, I want to focus attention on what I consider some of the most important evidence that relates to the predictions of CPG, in order to discuss the evolution of the theory over time in interaction with that evidence, while addressing some criticisms it. Finally, I will offer some reflections at various points on the implications of this theoretical and empirical effort for the study of Congress.[4]

CPG developed out of my personal academic interests and the training I received at the University of Rochester. Even as an undergraduate, I was interested in the strategic choices of elite political actors, and my graduate studies offered me the tools to pursue that interest systematically. Consequently, at its core, CPG is a rational-choice theory that focuses on goal-oriented actors who make instrumental choices among perceived alternative strategies in order to achieve the best possible outcomes in light of their goals. It is, moreover, a particular type of rational-choice theory in two ways. First, it represents a version of the ''new

[1]This article is a revised version of Professor Rohde's Presidential Address delivered at the 2013 annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association in Orlando, Florida.

[2]One of the reviewers of this article asked: ''Is CPG a theory?'' Obviously various scholars have different perspectives on what constitutes a theory, as the presidential address of my predecessor, Kim Hill (2012), made clear. I have opted for a relatively informal view on this topic. To put the matter in its briefest form, for me a theory begins with a set of assumptions about the phenomenon of interest. From those assumptions, one deduces one or more hypotheses about the real world, which are then subjected to empirical analysis. If the hypotheses are borne out, then the terms of the theory offer an explanation, at least provisionally, of the phenomenon. From that perspective, I am comfortable calling CPG a theory.

[3]Some critics (e.g., Hill 2012; Smith 2007) have noted that various discussions of the theory have been spread over many works, leaving no complete and comprehensive statement of the argument. This presentation does not offer sufficient space to accomplish that task, but I hope it is a useful partial step in that direction.

[4]The development of CPG has been a largely shared experience with my colleague John Aldrich. Each of us has made some individual contributions (e.g., Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991), but since 1995 almost all of the work has been joint. Thus, when I use the word ''we'' in this discussion, it will usually not merely be the traditional editorial ''we,'' but a reflection of that collaboration which I value most highly.

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institutionalism'' that argues that ''[p]olitical outcomes are the product of goal-seeking behavior by actors, choosing within both a set of institutional arrangements and a particular historical context'' (Aldrich 1994, 209)[5] All of these elements—goals, institutions, and context—are central to the analysis. Second, it is a principal-agent theory, focused on decisions of one set of actors to delegate power and authority to another set.[6] I will say more about these features as we proceed.

First, however, it may be useful to very briefly summarize the core argument of CPG for the benefit of readers who are not already familiar with the details. The theory assumes that members of Congress have both electoral and policy goals and that they seek to design their institution to foster those goals. Within a party, members may have similar or different preferences, and similarly the collective preferences of the two major parties may be similar or different. These two features—intraparty homogeneity of preferences and interparty divergence—will govern the willingness of members to delegate strong powers to party leaderships. When a party has homogeneous views, and when the views of the other party are very different, members will have incentives to delegate in order to help to accomplish their goals, and they will have little reason to fear that the leaders will pursue ends incompatible with those the members want. If views are heterogeneous, however, and the differences with the other party are small, members will be reluctant to delegate. There are many additional details to the argument, but these are the central ideas. I will now turn to a discussion of the theory's origins.

The Initial Formulation: Solving a Puzzle

The initial formulation of CPG occurred as a solution to a puzzle. My choice of the term ''puzzle'' does not imply merely something that was not fully understood; rather I mean it in a more theoretical sense: a pattern of evidence that does not make sense in terms of accepted theory.[7] In this case, the accepted theory was the ''electoral connection'' argument of Mayhew (1974), and the pattern of evidence is related to the congressional reforms of the 1970s. I will not try to restate completely the various ways in which Mayhew's deservedly influential analysis is linked to CPG. Aldrich and I have discussed this at length in various places.[8] I will just note the most salient points here.

Mayhew's main theoretical assumption was that congressmen were motivated solely by the desire to be reelected. The fact that members of Congress were largely responsible for the design of their institution, coupled with that single motivation, led Mayhew to the argument that the House and Senate were constructed in order to foster members' reelection. To quote one of the often-cited passages from his book, Mayhew said: ''if a group of planners sat down and tried to design a pair of American national assemblies with a goal of serving members' electoral needs year in and year out, they would be hard pressed to improve on what exists'' (1974, 81–82). His analysis presented a coherent argument that marshaled much evidence in support of his view.[9]

Particularly important for our purposes, Mayhew focused on two major institutional features: independent members within committees and weak parties. Committees were among the main arenas where members pursued the strategies (advertising, credit claiming, and position taking) that supported their electoral ends. And protecting them from pressure from outside the committees as they did so was the

[5]Aldrich terms this ''the 'fundamental equation' of rational choice theory in political science'' (1994, 209).

[6]See Epstein and O'Halloran (1999) and Shepsle (2010). For additional applications to the congressional context, see Sinclair (1995, 2006).

[7]See Zinnes (1980). I think this kind of situation is a primary driver of the development of new theory in political science and (within my limited knowledge) other sciences as well. When we observe patterns in the real world that are not consistent with our ideas about causal forces, we are naturally led to wonder why, and that can spur theoretical innovation. Other sources are possible too, I think. One possibly related avenue is applying a theory in a different context than the one in which it was originally developed. Another is an effort to address a topic that has not yet been considered, although that is less common now than earlier in my career due to the great collective progress the discipline has made.

[8]See, especially, Rohde (1991), Aldrich (2011), Aldrich and Rohde (2001), and Rohde and Aldrich (2010).

[9]Mayhew's book focuses primarily on the House of Representatives and so does the lion's share of our research on CPG. Therefore, I will also focus mainly on the House in this account. However, even very early on, I contended that the central ideas of CPG applied to the Senate (see, e.g., Rohde 1992), and more recent work (e.g., Aldrich and Battista 2002) has applied the theory to state legislatures. Whether the ideas are transportable to non-American legislatures is unclear at this point. The application and evaluation of the theory requires a lot of knowledge about institutional detail, and while I have thoughts about its relevance to parliamentary contexts, I have not been able to pursue the matter.

seniority system. Mayhew contended that what "the seniority system does as a system is to convert turf into property; it assures a congressman that once he initially occupies a piece of turf, no one can ever push him off it" (1974, 95–96). Relatedly, parties were also shaped to support members' electoral needs; they were designed to have little influence over members. According to Mayhew, electoral success was linked to position taking on policy, not policy results, and so members had little concern for outcomes. As a result, members did not want parties to be able to influence their choices about positions, nor did they want them empowered to produce results. As far as what members *did* want, Mayhew argued that "the best service a party can supply to its congressmen, is a negative one: it can leave them alone" (99–100). In other words, congressional parties were institutionally weak because they were designed to be that way.

Mayhew's views were shared by a large proportion of students of Congress, and in the 1970s and 1980s research on congressional parties was at a low ebb.[10] Yet much had changed in congressional organization between 1970 and 1976, and there were many effects of those changes that developed over the next decade and more. Much of this seemed unexpected in light of Mayhew's argument and, in many instances, contrary to it. To put the point generally, in the reform era new rules were adopted that strengthened the powers of party leaders (mainly the majority leadership), and other rules undermined the independence of committee leaders and members. Let me note a few of the most consequential specifics.

Regarding the strengthening of party leadership, the most important change (indeed, in my opinion, the most important institutional change in Congress in my lifetime) was the empowerment of the Speaker by House Democrats in 1974 to appoint the party's membership and the chair of the House Rules Committee. Rules, which controlled access to the floor for legislation and set the terms of debate for bills that were considered, had been a core feature of the power of dominant speakers until the revolt against Speaker Joe Cannon in 1910. Before the revolt, speakers chaired Rules and appointed the other members; afterward, Rules vacancies were filled by normal committee-appointment procedures (over which party leaders had very limited influence), and chairmen were chosen solely via seniority as on other committees.[11] Thus until 1974, the House's floor agenda was under the control of members who had no significant incentive to take into account the wishes of their party or its leaders. Thereafter, Rules was, in Oppenheimer's words (1977) an "arm of the leadership." Another move that increased leadership influence was the shift of the Democrats' committee-assignment power from the party contingent on Ways and Means (where the leadership had no votes) to the new Steering and Policy Committee, which was dominated by members of the leadership and Speaker appointees. By this move, the leadership was given substantial influence over the distribution of institutional positions that were highly desired and valued by members.

With respect to committee power and independence, the Democrats adopted a *secret-ballot* vote on each committee chair at the opening of every Congress. If a chair failed to receive majority support, an alternative nominee for the position would be chosen. The fact that the ballot was secret meant that no one had to fear retaliation for their votes, and no credible side payments could be promised. Thus, the seniority norm no longer protected "turf" the way Mayhew described. A simple majority of Democrats could replace any chair (and after the 1974 elections, they did replace three of them). The independence of chairs was no longer protected. In addition, a set of 1973 reforms (known collectively as the "Subcommittee Bill of Rights") reduced the authority of committee chairs over subcommittee assignments, staff, and the handling of bills within committees, further undermining committee autonomy.

These and other parallel developments had important implications relating to Mayhew's theory. To begin with, a general point that has relevance beyond just the study of Congress, Mayhew was asserting an institutional equilibrium: members' reelection goal led to the creation of the observed institutional arrangements, and the combination of the goal and those arrangements resulted in the persistence of the structure. We would only expect a change in an equilibrium structure if the posited goal(s) no longer motivated actors or if the structure no longer served the goal(s). That is, the explanation for a change in equilibrium must come from within the theory. But neither Mayhew nor anyone else argued that members had ceased to pursue the reelection goal or that the structure that was built to serve that goal was now failing it (and that the substitutes did a better job). That was the puzzle that faced congressional analysts. Given the real-world developments, the electoral-connection theory was either wrong or incomplete.

[10]See Rohde (1991, chap.1).

[11]For information on the Committee both before and after reform, see Oppenheimer (1977) and Rohde (1991).

Since, like most readers, I had found Mayhew's electoral analysis persuasive, my thoughts turned to an elaboration of the theory to solve the puzzle. From my first encounter with *The Electoral Connection*, I had regarded it as a rational-choice account—an application of Downs's (1957) perspective to Congress with a focus on individual members rather than party teams. In my view, a large part of the theoretical leverage in rational-choice accounts derives from the specification of the actors' motivation. If a rational-choice theory did not successfully account for behavior, it was often because the motivations of the actors were not adequately captured. Despite the obvious merits of Mayhew's analysis, I had not been convinced by the idea that reelection was plausible as members' sole motivation. Rather, Fenno's (1973) multiple-goal perspective (reelection, influence within the chamber, and making good policy) seemed more persuasive. Of course Mayhew addressed this juxtaposition of views directly, making the strong argument that reelection "underlies everything else" (1974, 16), and so he gave it primacy. But the ubiquity of the reelection motive did not seem to me to support the view of its exclusivity. In thinking about the Congress, I had no trouble coming up with situations where electoral motives were visible, but it was also easy to find plenty of instances in which power and policy were relevant. This was especially true in the reform context.

My understanding of the Congress was also shaped by my personal experience. In 1972–73, I had the opportunity to go to Washington as an American Political Science Association (APSA) Congressional Fellow, and my responsibilities in both the House and the Senate related to congressional reform. It was in light of my DC experiences that I thought about members' motivations, and particularly about a corollary of Mayhew's motivation assumption: because members were only concerned with reelection, they did not care about policy outcomes, only positions on policy questions. He argued: "The notion of members as seekers of effects needs a razor taken to it; the electoral payment is for positions, not effects" (1974, 146n). While that might arguably be true for electoral payments, at least in the 1970s, positions without results offer little payment for those with policy motives. And a large number of the representatives and senators I observed and talked to appeared to care—often passionately—about policy outcomes.

This was most clearly brought home to me in connection with activities I engaged in as part of my fellowship. My initial assignment was in the House, working for Benjamin Rosenthal, a Democrat from Queens, NY. Rosenthal wanted me to assist in drafting his brief for the first formal challenge against a committee chairman under the party's new selection rules.[12] During this task, I worked with the office's chief legislative assistant, Peter Barash. As we worked, we discovered that we shared the view that while the unqualified protection of seniority had undermined majority-party influence over committees, another aspect of the institutional structure that produced that result was the often unrestricted power of committee chairs. In pursuit of that view, we drafted a set of proposed amendments to the Democratic Caucus rules that would place limits on chair powers and vest final authority in most instances in the majority caucus of each committee. We brought our proposals to the staff director of the Democratic Study Group (DSG), Richard Conlon, himself a former Congressional Fellow. Persuaded by our arguments, Conlon presented the proposals to the DSG Executive Committee, which endorsed it with minor changes. The DSG formally proposed these reforms at an early January meeting of the Democratic Caucus, where they were adopted by voice vote. This resulted in the Subcommittee Bill of Rights mentioned above.

The point I want to make from this historical foray is that at every stage of the consideration of these proposals, from initial drafting though the various levels of DSG evaluation, every discussion of them revolved around the effects they would have on the kinds of policies the House would adopt. At no point did I observe or hear of concern for the consequences for individual members' electoral success. I am not arguing that this was a perfect vantage point from which to theorize, nor that policy motives operate to the exclusion of electoral interests. Rather, I contend that this experience made it reasonable to entertain a concern for policy outcomes alongside previously accepted motives.

Moreover, this perspective seemed to square with other developments during the reform era mentioned earlier. For example, if (as Mayhew argued) the seniority system was a cornerstone of the legislative independence of members and of their ability to use committees to their electoral advantage, then what possible individual electoral motive explains members' willingness to destroy that protection via the

[12]The chairman was Chet Holifield (D, CA) of the Government Operations committee, one of Rosenthal's assignments. Rosenthal regarded Holifield to be autocratic and unfair in his treatment of other members, and because of that, a roadblock to achieving the policy outcomes Rosenthal favored.

Democrats' seniority reforms?[13] And whose reelection interests were served by restoring to the Speaker control of the floor agenda through the Rules Committee? It seemed to me that a large part of the explanation for these and other reforms related to members' concern for policy outcomes. To put it succinctly, liberal Democrats believed that the configuration of institutional arrangements in the House was preventing them from securing adoption of the policy proposals they favored. Therefore they sought to impose a different set of rules that they thought would lead to different outcomes. The set of Democrats who shared this view grew as the character of the Democratic Caucus changed over time, with southern Democratic policy views gradually becoming more similar to those of northerners. By the 1970s, the mix had changed sufficiently that a majority of House Democrats shared the reform orientation pushed by the DSG, and so the changes were enacted.

A key point to recognize here is that the reformers targeted the rules of the Democratic Caucus, and not the rules of the House, because they recognized that they did not yet constitute a numerical majority of the chamber. But within the Caucus, there was sufficient homogeneity of policy views that a majority was comfortable with delegating an amount of power to the majority party leadership that had not been seen since 1910 and to correspondingly reduce the autonomous power of the leadership of House committees. This became a core part of the argument of CPG: a significant portion of the membership cared about policy and outcomes, and they perceived that institutional rules affected what policies the chamber adopted. When the parties were deeply divided internally over policy and the distribution of opinion within both spanned most of the ideological spectrum (as was true at least from the end of World War II through the 1960s), members would be unwilling to cede much power to parties because those powers might be used to ends they did not support. When, however, the views within the parties became more homogeneous and the degree of overlap of the opinion distributions of the two parties declined (the two "conditions" in CPG), members would see a much-reduced risk from delegation to party leaders. The members would grant power to leaders, monitor the behavior of those leaders (as would be expected in any principal-agent relationship), and support the leaders' exercise of their powers for partisan ends.[14]

I have emphasized that my theoretical ideas were influenced by my observation of the Congress. Yet such a first-hand encounter does not automatically lead to a particular conclusion, for David Mayhew had also been an APSA Congressional Fellow, five years earlier than I was, and he acknowledged (1974, vii) the impact of that experience on his work. Certainly different work tasks and different experiences partly account for our differing perspectives, but an additional point is that the Congress itself changes. The House during the last Congress of Johnson's presidency was a very different place in important ways from the House in the reform era in the wake of Watergate. It does not seem too surprising, then, that Mayhew's account emphasized stability, while I felt the need to seek an explanation for change.

In addition to my own observations, my work was influenced by the research of others. Many other scholars were interested in the changes in Congress, and they offered a variety of perspectives and analyses. Among the most important to me was Cooper and Brady (1981). Working at about the same time, they developed a perspective that was very similar to mine in which the empowerment of leaders was dependent on context, especially the electoral environment. The compatibility of their work with the ideas of CPG gave me confidence I was on the right track. Also very important was the work of Barbara Sinclair and of Steve Smith. Sinclair had a very detailed and close perspective on party leaders that I drew on extensively.[15] Smith, alone and with collaborators, delved into the details of the consequences of institutional reforms, especially in the House.[16] And as my book was nearing completion, I interacted at length with Gary Cox and Mat McCubbins, sharing our respective perspectives on congressional parties. I could go on

[13]I use the word "destroy" advisedly, because I share the view of Polsby, Gallaher, and Rundquist (1969, 790) that seniority only provided a dependable protection for members if it was inviolable. Of course in the 1990s and later, the Republicans went much further than the Democrats in reducing the impact of seniority on committee leadership selection.

[14]While it took over 15 years after my Washington experience to produce the full account of CPG, the core of the idea was visible only a few years later. For example, in Ornstein and Rohde, we described the reempowerment of the majority leadership and concluded: "in the future, if the majority leadership *wants* to lead, the potential is there. If they are not successful, it will be more because they lack ability and the support of their fellow party members, and less because the character of the House and party rules blocked their way" (1978, 292).

[15]For example, see Sinclair (1983, 1995, 2006).

[16]Smith and Deering (1984) followed Fenno (1973) in examining the structure and operation of the congressional committee system. Bach and Smith (1988) tracked in detail the changing operation of the House Rules Committee. And Smith (1989) extensively analyzed the shift of congressional decision making from the committees to the floor.

listing many others, some of whom are cited below, but the point is that my ideas were not developed in solitary contemplation but in active interaction with those of colleagues. The legislative politics subfield has always been a collaborative and cooperative one, and I and my work were much the beneficiaries.

Before moving on, I want to draw attention to a couple of other features of the original formulation of CPG to which I will return later. First, I sought to emphasize that CPG was a "bottom up" theory. That is, it accepted and endorsed the view of Mayhew and others that the organizational structure of the House was the way it was because that is the way members wanted it to be (while recognizing the difficulties of securing change from a status quo). But more than that, it sought to show that the impetus for the organizational changes came from rank-and-file representatives and not from the leaders who could personally benefit from the shifts in power they entailed. Indeed, the contemporary leaders were usually either silent on the reforms or resistant to them and reluctant to exercise the new powers they were granted. Second, I argued that the personal orientation of party leaders potentially mattered in how strong leadership would be (emphasizing the contrast between Speakers Jim Wright and Tom Foley in this regard). This was to a degree in contrast to the views of Cooper and Brady's (1981) contextual theory of leadership (which was, as I noted, in other respects very compatible with CPG), as well as the opinions of some other analysts.[17]

Out-of-Sample Tests and Evolving Theory

My initial analysis of CPG, extended by Aldrich (1995), sought to explain the Democrat-controlled Congress through 1994. But the elections of that year brought a sea change to the institution, with a Republican majority in the House for the first time in 40 years. It was obvious that any interested observer would see the implications of our theory for the situation that the elections produced, so we agreed to pursue jointly an analysis of the subsequent developments. This would provide a strong test of the theory's expectations that could potentially provide even firmer evidentiary support. The original formulation was developed contemporaneously with the events that would provide the data for testing its implications. One can have more confidence in a theory if its structure is determined before the data used for analysis occurred. The "Republican Revolution" gave us the chance for the first significant out-of-sample test of CPG.

We pursued this effort mainly in four pieces published between 1997 and 2001.[18] With the GOP making substantial gains in the south, replacing many of the more moderate Democrats with strong conservatives, virtually all observers accepted the view that the two parties had become more divergent and more homogeneous ideologically. Given that, the expectation from CPG was that the Republicans would be even more willing than the Democrats had been to delegate strong powers to the party leadership. The evidence in favor of that prediction was, to us, overwhelming. I will cite just a few examples.[19] Further undermining the impact of seniority for choosing committee leaders, the prospective Speaker, Newt Gingrich, simply asserted the right to choose the chairs of a number of the most important committees, and this was accepted by the GOP Conference. Of the three committee chairs chosen by this route, none was the most senior Republican on the committee. The prospects for committee autonomy declined further with the imposition of six-year term limits on their leaders and by a substantial reduction in the number of slots on committees and subcommittees (reducing the amount of "turf" available to members). Finally, the House GOP adopted a new committee-assignment system (designed by Gingrich himself) that substantially increased the leadership's influence over members' initial committee assignments.

All of these changes pointed in the same direction, as expected by CPG. The top party leadership was made stronger, and the independent power of committees was reduced. This was strong support for the delegation aspect of the theory. The next step was to assess evidence related to whether the majority leadership sought to use its powers to secure policy outcomes that were tilted in favor of the preferences of the dominant faction of the party, and if so, to what degree they were successful. The centerpiece of this aspect of our work was a study of the House Appropriations Committee in the 104th Congress (1995–97). Appropriations seemed a difficult venue for discovering the kinds

[17]See Strahan (2007, chap. 2), for a discussion of this issue. Joe Cooper and I recently discussed the relationship between Cooper-Brady and my work. He was bothered by the view of some people that there was a significant conflict between us. He did not share that view, and neither did I.

[18]Aldrich and Rohde (1997–98, 2000a, 2000b, 2001).

[19]Details on these and other developments can be found in Aldrich and Rohde (1997–98).

of consequences CPG anticipated because earlier research had shown that it had a tradition of a bipartisan approach to policymaking (Fenno 1966, 1973; White 1989). Despite this, the patterns we discovered provided strong support for the theory's predictions.

First, the Republican leadership stacked the deck in their party's favor through rules and appointments. Appropriations was one of the committees on which Gingrich chose the chair. In addition, the party gave itself a larger share of seats on the committee than they had in the House, and seven of the 11 new GOP appointees were freshmen. The appointment of freshmen was a major departure from past practice, but these newcomers could be expected to be especially responsive to Gingrich's lead. The Speaker then asked for letters of commitment from each of the 13 subcommittee chairs regarding the leadership's plans for substantial budget cuts.

But the leadership's plans went beyond just reducing spending. The Republicans also wanted to enact major changes in substantive policy. Normally that would have been handled by the legislative committees with jurisdiction, but the conservative wing of the party did not trust that senior-committee Republicans would be willing to terminate policies they had overseen for years and had in some cases even helped to create. So the leadership chose to use the Appropriations Committee for this purpose, despite the fact that the inclusion of legislative language in appropriations bills was a violation of House rules. However, the Rules Committee could grant exceptions to that rule as they could to most others, and the Speaker controlled the Rules Committee. So the Republicans repeatedly used this device to include legislative changes in appropriations bills and secured their passage though the House. And this happened despite frequent resistance from senior Republican appropriators (who were told to accept the leaderships' demands or face negative consequences). Only Senate disagreement and the president's vetoes prevented most of them from becoming law.[20]

Here again the evidence was consistent with the theory. The Republican majority exhibited strong interest in achieving conservative policy outcomes, going so far as to permit the government to shut down twice during their efforts. The GOP leadership used their procedural advantages and delegated powers to pressure their party's contingent on Appropriations to pursue the desired ends. But the Republican Revolution was unusual in many ways, and some analysts questioned whether the patterns of that period would continue or if the House would revert to be more like earlier days.[21] Gingrich's fall from the speakership in 1998, and his replacement with Dennis Hastert, offered the opportunity for another out-of-sample test of CPG.

The selection of Hastert appeared to offer a challenge to CPG. There was no reason to believe that the GOP contingent in the House had become less ideologically homogeneous or that the two parties had become less divergent, so the theory would predict that delegation of power to the leadership would persist, as would the use of those powers to foster the majority party's interests. Yet on assuming the speakership, Hastert indicated that he intended to return the House to the past's ''regular order,'' with policymaking centered on the committees of jurisdiction and not direction from the leadership. But as he settled into his office, it soon became clear that rather than overseeing a decline in leadership power, Hastert instigated a further increase.

As with the previous periods we have discussed, most of Hastert's important actions revolved around controlling committees.[22] Probably the most important of these occurred when the six-year term limits that had been imposed in 1994 were reached on most committees. Hastert first blocked the efforts of many senior members to have the limits abolished or delayed. Then he arranged to have the leader-dominated Steering Committee choose the successors for the new vacancies, and in many instances, they bypassed more senior and more moderate members to choose more conservative chairs. The Speaker used the Rules Committee to restrict the floor-amendment process even more than the Democrats had, according to the former Republican staff director of the Committee (Wolfensberger 2003). And in what was probably the strongest exercise of leadership power in many decades, in 2005, the Republicans retaliated against their chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee, Chris Smith of New Jersey. Smith had been vocally opposing GOP efforts to cut funding for veterans. In reaction, Smith was removed as chair and then was also removed from committee membership. Thus, even a Speaker who had initially indicated a commitment to the previous ''regular order'' was induced by the political context to exert his powers

[20]For more details, see Aldrich and Rohde (2000b) and Marshall, Prins, and Rohde (2000).

[21]See, for example, Dodd and Oppenheimer (1997).

[22]See Aldrich and Rohde (2009) and Rohde and Aldrich (2010) for more details.

for his party's benefit at least as strongly as had Gingrich and Jim Wright before him.[23]

I have argued to this point that over the last four decades, the evidence on organizational change and the behavior of parties and members has generally been consistent with the implications of the theory of conditional party government. But that does not mean that the theory exists in exactly the same form that it did in the initial formulation. I have long believed that theories in the social sciences might appropriately evolve over time for a variety of reasons. First, the repeated confrontation between theory and evidence often makes visible to us features and implications of theory that were not apparent at the beginning. Second, if one accepts the view that behavior and outcomes are the consequence of the interaction of preferences, rules, and context, then one must also recognize that each of these features can change over time, potentially altering theoretical expectations. The potential effect of changing distributions of preferences is explicitly recognized within CPG, and much of the analysis flowing from the theory involves assessing the impact of the existing set of rules or of rules changes. Finally, as an explicitly contextual theory, CPG recognizes that changes in that realm also can affect expected results.[24]

Indeed, changing context has had a significant impact on our thinking about, and our statement of, CPG with regard to members' goals. I noted that my initial formulation began with Fenno's three primary goals. That has been altered by the election of 1994 and its legacy. From the 1958 elections through the 1992 elections, the Democratic majority in the House never fell below 55%. Most members were subjectively certain, from one election to another, which party would have majority control at the beginning of the next Congress. In fact, this was one reason why senior Republicans were often willing to work with Democrats, especially within committees (Connelly and Pitney 1994; Rohde 1991). The surprise Republican sweep of 1994 changed all that, and from that point on, majority control has been contested and uncertain.

As a consequence, we believed that such a development ought to have altered the decision calculus of the actors in our theory. Therefore, more recent statements of CPG have included majority control as a fourth goal of members. Majority status has always been important for its own sake, because certain benefits to members stem directly from it. But we believe it is even more consequential than that because it affects the members' ability to achieve each of the three original goals. For example, being in the majority gives disproportionate access to distributive benefits that members' believe are relevant to reelection success (Evans 2004). Majority status also makes a huge difference in the amount of power individual members wield within the House, and the contrast increases as they move higher in institutional positions. Subcommittee and committee leaders in the majority have much more influence than the corresponding ranking members in the minority, and that disparity has increased in the last quarter century. And the powers of the Speaker are much greater than those of the minority leader. Finally, for those with policy goals, majority status in the polarized era offers much greater opportunities to have an impact on the content of policy than does being in the minority, both in committees and on the floor. This is especially true given the increased use of special rules to restrict the ability of the minority to offer floor amendments discussed above.[25]

Of course adding another goal to the theory increases its complexity, and it makes drawing clear inferences about behavior more difficult. But that is the price that must be paid to enable the theory to adequately capture the real-world calculi of members. Furthermore, it permits us to draw some inferences about matters of interest that would not be possible without the inclusion of this element. For example, while we have argued that each of the goals might influence all members, we have also contended that they are likely to vary in salience for different categories of representatives. Consider seniority. More senior members, who are more likely to hold positions of party and committee leadership, would be more affected by a shift from majority to minority status than would junior members. Thus we would expect them, on average, to weigh both the power and the majority status goals more heavily. So, if members were faced with a trade-off between those goals and policy interest, we would expect the more senior members to be more influenced by the former considerations and more junior representatives to place relatively more emphasis on the latter. I will return to this point below.

[23]We have not yet produced as detailed analyses of the Pelosi speakership as of her predecessors' periods of service, so I will not discuss it here. However, preliminary evidence indicates that it was equally consistent with the theory. See Aldrich and Rohde (2009) and Rohde and Aldrich (2010). I will, however, say something about the Tea Party era in my conclusions.

[24]A reviewer noted that this could render a theory unfalsifiable. I do not think that is a problem with CPG since there are many implications to be evaluated and most have been stable and supported over time.

[25]For some recent work on this point, see Finocchiaro and Rohde (2008) and Duff and Rohde (2012).

This more elaborated goal structure also yields additional inferences about how the expectations of members about the responsibilities of party leaders evolved over time. Before and during the reform period, the national apparatuses of both parties played very little role in the electoral efforts of their candidates. Raising money and the provision of professional campaign advice were centered in the personal campaign organizations constructed by self-recruited candidates (Herrnson 2012, chap. 4). As, however, the party structures within Congress grew stronger (due in part to the successive waves of reforms), the congressional parties came to assume a greater role in elections. Money spent by the national parties (in the form of direct contributions, coordinated expenditures, and independent expenditures) now amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars in each cycle. And while each party tries to involve all members in the process of raising those funds, the task falls disproportionately to the top party and committee leaders. This fact reflects not only that such activities have become part of the leaders' "job description" but also that they have personal incentives to do so. No member has a greater interest in which party will have the majority than the Speaker, and so he spends a great deal of time crisscrossing the country raising money for individual candidates and for the party.[26]

A related matter, reflecting the same incentives, is the leaders' concern for the "party brand." Cox and McCubbins (1993) argued that the protection of the party's reputation was one of the main responsibilities of the leadership and that the reputation had a significant impact on a party's electoral success. With the increase in the strength of party structures in Congress and of partisan polarization since they wrote, congressional elections have exhibited a growing impact from national forces, as in the three successive "wave" elections in 2006–2010. There is also systematic evidence for such effects in a number of studies.[27] The burdens of time and effort this task imposes on leaders are great enough when pursuing majority control is consistent with members' policy and other goals. Things get even more difficult when there is tension among goals. For example, after the government shutdowns of 1995–96, the public mainly blamed congressional Republicans, and their approval level in opinion polls plummeted. Gingrich perceived that the party's control of the House was at stake, and he exerted great effort to persuade his party's conservative wing that they needed to compromise with President Clinton to survive politically. He retained sufficient credibility with the rank-and-file at this point that he was successful, and they were able to keep control in 1996. Since then, protecting the party brand has been one of the main concerns of party leaders.

Thus the addition of the majority-party goal to CPG yielded somewhat different details for the theory's expectations. The original incarnation was mainly about the majority faction of the majority party trying to extract the policy benefits of majority status and to prevent the minority faction of the Democrats from blocking their initiatives. The expanded version also dealt with (and, we think, helped to explain) the party leadership's growing responsibility for their party's electoral success. This is CPG as it stands today. Now I want to turn to a few clarifications of CPG's expectations.

Clarifications and Defenses

Goals and Dimensionality

I have noted that a multigoal perspective makes the task of inferring predictions about behavior complex. This set of assumptions alone makes the actors' decision space multidimensional, and different actors (even if they have the same goals) may make different trade-offs among them, yielding different behavior. Another source of multidimensionality is the multiplicity of issues with which the Congress deals. Because of these factors, the CPG perspective has been explicitly multidimensional, and a part of my research has been devoted to producing evidence that demonstrates the accuracy of this view. For example, an examination of voting on agricultural legislation (both farm policy and agriculture appropriations) in the 104th Congress demonstrated that some roll calls were almost perfectly partisan, while other roll calls on the same bill divided both parties along an urban-rural dimension (Hurwitz, Moiles, and Rohde 2001). Another, more general, analysis considered all votes on the 13 regular annual appropriations bills considered by the House for eight congresses (1987–2001). The votes were divided according to the subcommittees of jurisdiction, and separate NOMINATE scores were computed for each jurisdiction. If congressional voting were really one-dimensional, we would expect to find essentially the

[26]Among the studies of the growing role of parties and leaders in raising and allocating campaign money are Cann (2008), Currinder (2009), and Herberlig and Larson (2012).

[27]See, for example, Jones and McDermott (2009) and Grynaviski (2010).

same ordering of members for each jurisdiction. Instead, the analysis revealed considerable variation in the ordering (Crespin and Rohde 2010).

In addition to underscoring the plausibility of our assumptions of multiple goals and multidimensionality, I focus on this evidence for another reason. One of the tasks of congressional leaders is to get their party members to stick together. Sometimes this involves bringing inducements to bear to influence choices, a point we will consider shortly. But, given multiple dimensions, another potential persuasion task is rhetorical, trying to encourage members to focus on one dimension as opposed to others (usually the one that would lead to party solidarity).[28] For example, during the budget fights in the 104th Congress, Gingrich frequently urged his members to maintain cohesion on tough votes because failure to do so would lead to the press portraying the party as being unable to govern. He wanted members to perceive that intraparty divisions would negatively affect both their policy goals and other goals. Recognizing this role of party leaders (and additionally recognizing that, given collective action problems, no other institutional actor would be in a position to carry out this task) provides another incentive to members for empowering leaders to act for them.

Not Everything is Partisan in Congress

We have made this point a number of times in various works, but it is worth emphasizing it here both to clarify the theoretical reach of CPG and to further elaborate the implications of the multigoal perspective. The Congress deals with many issues that do not produce conflict at all, and not all conflict is along party lines. This is revealed in data on all bills that were referred to committees and either reported or considered on the House floor in four congresses from the 96th to the 108th (Carson, Finocchiaro, and Rohde 2010). Despite using a very modest definition of the existence of conflict, the data show that in each congress, only about one-fourth to one-third of the bills involve any conflict at all.[29] To make it out of committee, these bills had to be important to some members, but without conflict, they do not require the efforts of party leaders that partisan issues invoke. The committee system, unimpeded by the intervention of the party leaderships, deals quite well with these issues and permits members to serve their personal goals. But the powers of leaders stand available to be invoked on those issues where party interests are at stake. As Mayhew argued, the institutional structure of the House is designed to serve member interests. CPG recognizes that to be true for both partisan and nonpartisan interests simultaneously.[30]

CPG and Cartel Theory

Of course CPG is far from the only approach to understanding parties in Congress. Since the low ebb of interest in the subject I mentioned earlier, a huge amount of work has been done. One prominent alternative approach is the "procedural cartel theory" originated by Cox and McCubbins (1993, 2005).[31] Cartel theory focuses on the majority party in the House, operating as a procedural cartel, to control the floor agenda and thereby obtain advantages (primarily electoral) relative to the minority. Space constraints prohibit a full exploration of cartel theory and CPG, but I do want to deal with a couple of points.[32]

First, in my view, the two theories are generally very compatible. The principal difference is one of focus. Cox and McCubbins (2005) distinguish between negative and positive agenda control. The former is the ability of the majority party to keep from the floor policy proposals that are opposed by a significant portion of the party. The latter is the ability to secure a floor vote on proposals that the majority party favors. Negative agenda control is the means by which the majority protects favorable policies that had been adopted in the past from revision or reversal, and that is Cox and McCubbins's main focus. They see it as the more important power because in their theory, it is unconditional—not subject to variation because of varying levels of homogeneity of preferences within the party. On the other hand, they see positive agenda power as conditional (consistent with CPG). There is nothing in CPG that conflicts with the idea that negative agenda power is very important, nor that it is available to the majority even when it is ideologically divided. However, partly because of the reasons for its genesis, CPG focuses more on positive power and the efforts of the majority to adopt policies.

[28]See Aldrich (1995, 207–08).

[29]A bill was said to exhibit conflict if there was even a single roll call in committee or on the floor that had a minority larger than 10% of those voting.

[30]For elaboration of this point, see Aldrich and Rohde (2009, 262–63).

[31]Other significant approaches include the work of Krehbiel (1991, 1993, 1998), Sinclair (e.g., 2006) and Smith (e.g., 2007). I will address Krehbiel's work shortly.

[32]For a more extensive discussion, see Finocchiaro and Rohde (2008).

Second, Cox and McCubbins see some conflict between the theories, but it stems from what I would argue to be a mistaken characterization of what CPG expects. In cartel theory, majority party power stems from the ability to use procedural advantages to control the agenda, while in Cox and McCubbins's view of CPG, party power is due to pressuring members in floor votes. This is a misperception in two ways. One is that CPG also views procedural power as central to the majority party's influence. The work on the theory by Aldrich, other collaborators, and myself is replete with discussions of the ways in which the agenda is manipulated to produce outcomes favored by the majority. This is especially true with regard to very detailed accounts of the use of special rules to secure the majority's advantage.

The other misperception involves the perceived primacy in CPG of pressure on floor votes. Now it may be that we have not been sufficiently clear on this, so let me try to be as clear as I can now. It is true that CPG accounts recognize and discuss pressure on floor votes, but there is no place I know of that indicates or implies that this is the main avenue of majority influence. Instead, the view consistent with CPG is that when floor votes are very close and going against the majority, the party's leaders would be expected to try to change a small number of votes sufficient to carry the day. And this happens to be exactly the view of cartel theory that Cox and McCubbins argue (2005, 214). This is not surprising, because it is the only view that makes sense. It seems extremely implausible that the majority leadership could consistently bring to the floor proposals that were many votes short and then pressure enough members to win.

These two avenues of influence, however, do not exhaust the relevant possibilities. In addition to agenda control and what we might call "retail" pressure on individual floor votes, CPG has given a lot of attention to institutional structures that create incentives for members to side with their party, on roll calls as well as in earlier stages of the legislative process. The effects of these devices often make unnecessary retail pressure on the floor. They include the Democrats' seniority reforms for committee chairs (because members fear disloyalty could lose them their posts) and greater leadership influence over initial committee assignments (because members know that loyalty would be considered in filling vacancies on the most desired committees). And evidence indicates that the devices had the hypothesized effect. For example, the party unity score of Jamie Whitten increased fourfold between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, presumably because he wished to retain his committee leadership positions on Appropriations (Rohde 1991, 76). The effect is shown more generally in other work (Crook and Hibbing 1985; Wright 2000).

Some final points about positive and negative agenda control involve a further evolution of CPG, because this important distinction has led to insights from our theory that I had not recognized before Cox and McCubbins's work. Negative power is always important because there will always be existing policies that the majority wants to protect. However, positive agenda power will also always be important because there are some bills that must be dealt with even if the majority would rather not[33] and because the majority will have new policies it wants to pursue. The insight is that both are important, but their relative importance to the majority will vary with conditions in the political context.[34] One relevant condition is how long the House majority has been in power.

Consider two contrasting situations. From 1989 to 1993, with Tom Foley as Speaker, the Democrats had been the majority party for over three decades. During those decades, they had created many new programs and expansions of many earlier Democratic initiatives. Thus, there were many policies they wanted to protect. While they still favored new initiatives, their interests were more tied up with negative agenda power than positive power. For most aspects of the agenda, they could rely on the gatekeeping power of the committees, and they did not often require aggressive procedural action by the leadership. Now contrast this with the situation after 1994. After 40 years out of power, the Republicans wanted large-scale changes in national policy. There were few policies they wanted to protect, and many they wanted to change. For the new GOP majority, negative agenda power was only of modest benefit, and positive power was essential. So we can make this theoretical inference: ceteris paribus, when a new majority takes control, the relative importance of positive agenda power to negative power will vary directly with the number of years since the party last held control. On the other hand, the longer a party has held majority control, the more important negative agenda power will be relative to positive power.

The corollary of this argument relating to delegation and the exercise of leadership powers is that in

[33]These include, for example, appropriations bills to prevent the government from shutting down, increases in the debt ceiling, and so on.

[34]The initial formulation of some of these ideas appeared in Finocchiaro and Rohde (2008). I have pursued them further in joint work with others (Rohde, Stiglitz, and Weingast 2008).

situations like 1989–93, the party will not need to be as concerned with empowering the leaders and choosing an aggressive activist Speaker. But in cases like 1995–96, powerful active leaders are likely to be seen as more necessary and desirable. It also seems to me that a parallel argument is persuasive in relation to the presidency and unified versus divided government, at least for the polarized era. When a new president takes over while also having control of Congress, there will be a premium on positive agenda power in Congress and less value for negative power. When, however, divided government is imposed on a president who is already in office, the relative value shifts, with negative power increasing in importance. I think these theoretical propositions offer the opportunity for a lot of interesting analysis.

The Floor Median and Partisan Advantage

I have tried to make clear that, since its inception, CPG has focused on the efforts of members to use congressional parties to secure political advantage in various forms, particularly with respect to policy outcomes. We have argued that parties will employ the procedural advantages and incentives I have discussed to pull outcomes toward their preferred position. Ideally the majority wants to move outcomes away from the position of the floor median and close to that of the party median. These views have probably provoked the most criticism of CPG, so I want to offer both clarification of our position and some defense of our conclusions.

First, while ''nonmedian'' outcomes are desirable to the majority, CPG does not claim that they will always be achieved or even that they will always be attempted. The view is just that they will be sought sometimes and achieved sometimes—often enough that such results are of theoretical and substantive import. On some occasions, nonmedian outcomes will not be attempted due to the influence of other goals, like collective or individual electoral interests. (The Democrats refraining from seeking new gun control legislation between 2007 and 2011 is an example.) In other cases, the majority may face formidable institutional or political obstacles such that moving a status quo favorable to the opposition to the floor median is the best that can be done. But CPG research has focused a lot of attention on the effort to achieve nonmedian results because we think that providing a theoretical justification for such results is more challenging and more interesting than the alternative scenarios and because we think that providing evidence of the achievement of such efforts offers some of the strongest support for the CPG account.

Second, there is the question of evidence. One critic of partisan theories of Congress in general, and of CPG in particular, is Keith Krehbiel (1991, 1993). His position is that to conclude that parties are important as analytical units, one must show that they have consequences over and above the direct effects of the preferences of members. As a theoretical matter, he argued that because House rules are made by majority vote, members would not grant to individuals or institutional groups powers that would lead to outcomes other than that favored by the median voter. In subsequent argument, Krehbiel (1998) adopted the position that party organizations are not necessarily inconsequential but that they counterbalance one another, having no net effect. Further, he contended that evidence for the kinds of effects party theories imply is not found in relevant analysis.

Moreover, Krehbiel is not the only critic who does not see evidence for nonmedian outcomes. Smith (2007, 123) finds the evidence for CPG's claims about delegation to leaders and the exercise of leadership powers to be strong, but he thinks the evidence that nonmedian outcomes are achieved is ''weak.'' Now, it is likely that analysts will almost always think their evidence is stronger than critics do, but even so I want to offer some defense of our views on this matter. If we take Smith's point to be that there has not been any large-scale statistical study that systematically demonstrates nonmedian outcomes across a range of congresses, we would have to agree. However, this is, we think, not a failing of CPG theory, but rather a reflection of measurement problems. Neither we (nor anyone else we know of) have been able to offer a systematic measure of outcomes that is fully convincing and free from serious methodological defects or dependable measures of members' preferences (and especially their personal preferences) on a large set of proposals. We hope that future developments will solve this problem. But short of that, we still believe that the evidence that has been offered is solid.

First, we have offered evidence with regard to a dozen or more specific legislative results where the outcome was either certainly or very probably nonmedian.[35] Nor are these trivial cases, for they include major budget and appropriations measures as well as the resolution of impeachment for President Clinton. Second, we have marshaled evidence on voting on bill passage across 21 congresses between 1953 and 1997

[35]See, especially, Aldrich and Rohde (2000a, 2000b).

that we regard to be relevant and persuasive (Aldrich and Rohde 2000a, 66–67). If policies were unidimensional and the majority party had no net effect on outcomes as Krehbiel posits, then when party majorities are opposed, it should be no more likely that the winning majority is made up nearly exclusively of the majority party as opposed to a majority constituted from the minority plus a sufficient number of majority members to prevail. Yet the evidence shows that in situations like that, the majority is almost always majority-party dominated, and the minority party almost never wins. Furthermore, this effect is much stronger from the beginning of the reform era than before.

Finally, I want to offer a more informal argument on this point. In the movie *Duck Soup*, Chico Marx says to another character: "Who you gonna believe, me or your own eyes?" I want to urge a more acceptable standard of evaluation here: believe your own eyes.[36] Think about congressional politics over the last three decades. If the floor median ruled, when major pieces of legislation passed we would observe the members in the center being ecstatic about the policy outcome and those at the majority party median constantly complaining.[37] Moreover, those close to the median would not need side payments to get their support, because the outcome would be close to their most preferred result. Is this an accurate description of what we have observed in the legislative process over the last 30 to 40 years? I think not. Instead, we almost invariably hear complaints from centrists about the way policy is made and the results that are achieved. Indeed, in recent years, we have watched a procession of moderate members in both chambers announce that they were quitting and protesting about the failings of the process. I am not claiming that we cannot misperceive what we observe, but is it likely that our observations and the testimony of so many participants are so systematically wrong?

Conclusions: Conditional Party Government in the Tea Party Era

In this essay, I have sought to describe how the theory of conditional party government was developed and to offer my view of how the theory's expectations fit with the evidence. I have also emphasized that the theory evolved as a changing Congress revealed new perspectives on legislative organization and behavior. And the Congress continues to change. The tumultuous election of 2010 brought another reversal of party control of the House (the third in 16 years, after 40 years of stability) and the influx of a large number of populist conservatives linked to the Tea Party. So I would like to offer a few brief comments on those most recent developments and then close the discussion with some general points. Lacking systematic analyses, it is too soon for any firm conclusions, but I do think that some preliminary judgments regarding some interesting links to CPG are possible.

First, I think the events of the 112th Congress demonstrate that both of the conditions in CPG—intraparty homogeneity and interparty divergence—are important. The influx of a set of very conservative Republicans moved the GOP median to the right, increasing the distance between the party medians and further depleting the number of moderates in the House due to the departure of about half of the Democratic Blue Dogs. Thus, the divergence condition continued to be satisfied. However, the Republican Party became more heterogeneous ideologically, spreading out toward the extreme. This was similar in many ways to what occurred in 1994, but there was at least one significant difference. Unlike 1994, when the new members believed they owed their success to Newt Gingrich and rallied behind his exercise of leadership, the Tea Party conservatives distrusted John Boehner and thought that he owed his position to their success. So they continually resisted his efforts to lead, and they restricted his freedom of action (again what one would expect in a principal-agent relationship under these conditions).[38]

Second, I have said that CPG theory, from its inception, has been presented as a "bottom up" theory of party leadership. As noted above, the impetus for strengthening parties came from a large number of rank-and-file members (particularly the DSG). Their efforts were met with indifference or resistance from contemporary leaders. This basic character is underlined

[36]This argument is an embellishment of the case made in Aldrich (2011, 321–22).

[37]Indeed, many observers would see this as an accurate characterization of the relatively "weak party" era before the reforms of the 1970s.

[38]The events in this congress raise the question of whether homogeneity of the majority is more important than divergence between the two parties. It was not feasible to address this issue previously because the two variables have tended to move together. I should note that the theory has always distinguished between the delegation of powers to leaders and tolerance of the exercise of those powers. The powers delegated to Boehner are not less than for his predecessor. Boehner's problem was that the conservatives were not willing to give him a free hand. It seems plausible that great divergence coupled with relative heterogeneity would have that implication.

by Boehner's travails in working with the 2010 freshmen. Even Gingrich had similar problems by his second (and last) congress as Speaker. CPG is a contextual theory, and the most important feature of the party leadership's context is the nature and preferences of its members. Both the institutional structure of the House, and the manner of its operation, are shaped by those contextual features.

Finally, I also noted that I had argued that the personal orientation of leaders had an influence on the character of their leadership style. Boehner's first term as Speaker appears to reinforce that view, despite the continued primacy of contextual effects. When they were in the minority in 2007–11, Boehner and the Republicans constantly complained about the Democrats' restrictions on amendments. Boehner had pledged during the 2010 campaign, and again when he took the gavel in 2011, that a Republican-led House would be allowed to "work its will" and that all appropriations bills would be open to amendments.[39] That specific promise appears, in large measure, to have been kept. In the first session of the 112th Congress, there were 521 roll calls on amendments, compared to only 321 in the entire 112th. And most of that increase was on appropriations bills, with 279 roll calls in 2011 compared to 160 in the 112th.

On the one hand, Boehner's honoring of his pledge (in most cases) has made his job more difficult and has limited the GOP's ability to structure the agenda to their advantage. On the other hand, it should be noted that part of the reason for the greater openness on amendments was pressure for that from the freshman Republicans. Furthermore, one should not infer from the greater number of amendments that Boehner and his party had given up partisan agenda manipulation. First, at the beginning of the 112th Congress, the GOP altered the House rules "to prohibit amendments that would increase spending or even offset the cost from another account." During the voting on the fiscal 2011 spending bill, scores of Democratic amendments were ruled out of order on this basis and thus never got a vote (Gettinger 2011, 964). Moreover, the promise regarding appropriations bills was not kept in every case. For example, the continuing resolution adopted in September 2011 was considered under a closed rule. And on nonappropriations bills, restrictive special rules were still used frequently (Newhauser 2011).

So the major causal forces in CPG still appear to produce the expected pattern of results, but secondary influences like leaders' personal orientation also continue to have an independent effect. As long as the conditions of CPG continue to be met in a polarized Congress, I would anticipate that the theory will continue to provide a dependable guide to the patterns of members' behavior. However, it also seems likely that a changing Congress will lead to additional insights and to adjustments to the theory in the future.

In this essay, I have attempted to make clear the reasons that the formulation of the theory of conditional party government took the course it did. In the discussion, I have emphasized that there are pros and cons to my general approach to theorizing and to the particulars of CPG. Let me close by returning to those ideas. I noted that the choice of a multiple-goal perspective raised problems for inferring specific hypotheses. Theories that assume that there is only one thing that is valued find it easier to make predictions. That is the downside. However, I think that CPG (and other multiple-goal theories of Congress) have demonstrated that it is possible within that framework to account for behavior and outcomes that a single-goal perspective cannot. Using the example of the seniority system that I discussed above, one can easily see why that structure might come into existence and persist if members are only motivated by their own election goals, but it is not easy to explain from the same perspective why they would then jettison the system. Similarly, if members were only interested in policy outcomes, it would be hard to understand why they would vest their leaders with the power to prevent consideration of desirable policy proposals in order to protect the party's collective electoral interests. In my view, the benefits of the multiple-goal perspective are considerable, if not without problems. I certainly do not argue that those scholars who pursue parsimony and formalization as the central tenets of theorizing should stop. I do think that we are better off if that impulse is not universal.

Another problem for CPG, this time on the empirical side, is its central focus on the role of members' preferences. If we could directly measure the private personal preferences of actors, then testing the implications of CPG would be greatly simplified. Unfortunately, however, that is not generally possible, and surrogates, like measures derived from roll-call data, are imperfect substitutes that raise at least equally serious problems. How then are we to evaluate the theory? Our approach has been to focus mainly on patterns of behavior and outcomes that are linked to patterns of collective preferences about which there is widespread agreement among analysts (e.g., that the party contingents in the House were

[39]See Gettinger (2011).

more homogeneous and more divergent in 1995 than in preceding congresses) and to apply this approach in multiple situations with as many alternative measures as possible. Another imperfect solution, but I think it is better than not being able to address an important set of issues at all. If many analyses in varying contexts using many different empirical indicators all support the implications of a theory, then I think we can have a fair amount of confidence in that explanatory framework—at least until an alternative comes along that can account as well for the previous patterns while explaining more in terms of behavior and outcomes.

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