On Measuring Legislative Agenda-Setting Power

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We propose a typology for measuring agenda-setting success and failure in a legislative context. Our typology goes beyond the most commonly used measure ("rolls") and includes the full range of agenda-setting outcomes—rolls (opposing a proposal that subsequently passes), as well as "blocks" (opposing a proposal that is subsequently defeated), "successes" (supporting a proposal that subsequently passes), and "disappointments" (supporting a proposal that subsequently defeated)—and thus takes into account instances of both positive and negative agenda power. We discuss these measures, and the theoretical questions surrounding them, with the hope of providing some guidance to scholars of the U.S. House, as well as those analyzing agenda power in other legislatures. As a first step in this direction, we explore variation in agenda-setting measures in 85 American state legislative chambers, the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, and the Canadian House of Commons.

As studies of legislative agenda setting originated with the U.S. House in mind and focused primarily on the majority party's ability to exercise negative agenda control (i.e., to prevent consideration of proposals), the literature has tended to focus on "rolls" (when an agenda setter opposes a proposal that nonetheless passes) as the appropriate measure of agenda power.[1] But rolls are not the whole story when it comes to assessing agenda power, and in fact rolls may not always be the most appropriate or useful measure for investigating *negative* agenda power.

This overly narrow measurement strategy has consequences well beyond scholarship on the U.S. House. Recent years have seen a significant expansion of agenda-centric theories of legislative power, as scholars have begun to adopt and adapt the insights of research on the House to explain decision making in the Senate (Campbell, Cox, and McCubbins 2002; Chiou and Rothenberg 2003; Den Hartog and Monroe 2011; Gailmard and Jenkins 2007; Koger 2010), American state legislatures (Aldrich and Battista 2002; Anzia and Jackman 2013; Cox, Kousser, and McCubbins 2010;

Gamm and Kousser 2010; Jackman 2014; Wright and Schaffner 2002), and legislative bodies around the world (Amorim Neto, Cox, and McCubbins 2003; Calvo and Sagarzazu 2011; Chandler, Cox, and McCubbins 2006; Cox, Heller, and McCubbins 2008; Crisp, Desposato, and Kanthak 2011; Jones and Hwang 2005). But if the agenda-setting institutions in these legislative bodies do not map well onto those in the U.S. House, the transition from theory to measure will suffer. Moreover, where theoretical innovation is sometimes hampered by the anticipation of measurement limitations, the over-focus on rolls as *the* measure of agenda control stunts the growth of agenda-setting theories beyond the U.S. House.

In this article, we seek to loosen that restraint by proposing a typology for measuring legislative agenda-setting power. Our typology includes the full range of agenda-setting outcomes—rolls, as well as "blocks" (when an agenda setter opposes a proposal that is subsequently defeated), "successes" (when an agenda setter supports a proposal that subsequently passes), and "disappointments" (when an agenda setter

[1]Note that we use the terms *agenda control* and *agenda power* throughout the article, but not interchangeably. Agenda power is the abstract ability to affect the agenda, whether actualized or not. Agenda control is the manifested results of actual attempts to affect the agenda.

TABLE 1 **Typology of Measures of Agenda-Setting Power**

		Proposal Outcome	
		Pass	*Fail*
Agenda Setter	*Support*	Success	Disappointment
Position	*Oppose*	Roll	Block

supports a proposal that is subsequently defeated)—and thus takes into account instances of *both* positive and negative agenda power. Our key motivation is to provide more nuance in measuring agenda power, and to suggest more points of connection between theories and measures of legislative agenda setting in various forms. While we hope to offer some guidance to scholars taking another look at the House, our primary goal is to set the stage for more appropriate analyses of agenda power in other legislatures—both in the United States (in the Senate and at the state level) and beyond.

The article proceeds as follows. We first describe our measurement typology in more detail and then consider how these measures could be used as counts versus rates, as well as how subsequent empirical results could be sensitive to such decisions. We then discuss (a) how measures follow from spatial theories of agenda setting (using rolls and the "cartel agenda model" as our example) and (b) how and when different measures of negative and positive agenda power are most theoretically appropriate. We conclude by exploring variation in agenda-setting measures in 85 American state legislative chambers, the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, and the Canadian House of Commons, and by then performing comparative static tests on the state legislature data based on propositions derived in earlier theoretical sections.

Moving Beyond Rolls

Our typology of agenda-setting outcomes is illustrated in Table 1. The rows and columns in this simple 2 × 2 table provide the two pieces of information necessary to construct a measure of agenda-setting power: (1) whether the relevant agenda setter supports or opposes a given proposal (rows) and (2) whether the proposal passes or fails (columns). This yields four distinct outcome cells, which we label "success," "disappointment," "roll," and "block."

As noted, much of the literature to date has focused on the case in the lower-left cell, a roll, where an agenda setter opposes a proposal that nonetheless passes. This

indicates a *failure* to exercise negative agenda control effectively. This measure, however, may not fully capture the presence of negative agenda power. If we move beyond the contemporary U.S. House, where defeating objectionable proposals is largely a *pre-floor* activity and thus only failures (or rolls) are easily observable using roll-call data, and examine a chamber where most screening is done by manipulating floor votes or through a mix of pre-floor and floor agenda power, then looking at blocks—instances where an agenda setter opposes a proposal that is subsequently defeated (lower-right cell)—would be as or more useful in measuring negative agenda power.

The logic for the cells in the top row, which are indicators of positive agenda power, is slightly different. If an agenda setter supports a proposal that gets to the floor and passes—resulting in a success (upper-left cell)—this indicates the favorable exercise of positive agenda control. But to get a full picture of positive agenda power, one must also look at disappointments, those cases in which an agenda setter supports a proposal that subsequently goes down to defeat (upper-right cell). While disappointments may not be numerous in the contemporary U.S. House, where the majority party rarely moves forward on a proposal unless it knows it has the votes, the same may not be true in other legislative bodies where agenda-setting power typically occurs through vote buying at the floor stage (Snyder 1991).

Combinations of these four outcome categories can also be helpful, especially in the context of understanding whether an agenda setter effectively gets what she wants. If one seeks a measure of how often an agenda setter "wins" in pursuit of agenda power, then successes and blocks can be aggregated. Likewise, if one seeks a measure of how often an agenda setter "loses" in pursuit of agenda power, then disappointments and rolls can be aggregated. Thus, while agenda power type is organized left to right by row (i.e., categories of positive agenda power outcomes in the top row, categories of negative agenda power outcomes in the bottom row), the end result of agenda power (for the agenda setter) is organized along the diagonals (i.e., wins on the positive slope, losses on the negative slope).

The Consequences and Sensitivity of Variable Construction

To this point, we have talked about legislative agenda-setting outcomes, such as rolls and their companion categories, in terms of distinct units. This would lead to the construction of a measure based on a "count" of such outcomes. A count of rolls, for example, would suggest that,

for the agenda setter, four rolls (in Congress *x*) is twice as bad in terms of exercising negative agenda control as two rolls (in Congress *y*). Such a count-based approach is often referred to as a *numerator study*. Alternatively, a count of actual agenda-setting outcomes, like rolls, could be compared to a similar count of *possible* or *hypothetical* outcomes. For example, a ratio-based measure of rolls (or "roll rate") could be constructed—the count of actual rolls over the count of possible rolls (or roll opportunities). A higher roll rate (in Congress *x*) for an agenda setter would be worse than a lower roll rate (in Congress *y*), as this would indicate a poorer performance in exercising negative agenda control after accounting for the number of roll opportunities. This ratio-based approach is often referred to as a *denominator study*.

Both numerator and denominator approaches appear in legislative studies, and a spirited debate has ensued in the lawmaking literature as to which approach is better or more appropriate, with some arguing in favor of numerators (Mayhew 2005) and others advocating for denominators (Binder 2003; Edwards, Barrett, and Peake 1997).[2] In the literature on agenda-setting power, numerators (counts) are typically provided as descriptive data, but denominators (rates) are more often used as dependent variables in multivariate analyses. The most common denominator is the roll rate developed by Cox and McCubbins (2002, 2005),[3] but other denominators include the success rate (Jenkins and Nokken 2008) and the win rate (Jenkins and Stewart 2013; Lawrence, Maltzman, and Smith 2006; Smith 2007).

All else equal, if methodological issues are not serious, denominators seem preferable to numerators since performance is relative and must be interpreted in terms of opportunity. For example, how often an agenda setter gets rolled is dependent, in part, on how many would-be rolls she is confronted with; thus, a rate (ratio) better captures the environmental context. In some cases, however,

numerators might be preferred if denominators cannot be constructed easily or validly. On the broader issue of numerators (counts) versus denominators (ratios) in analyzing agenda-setting power, we believe that the measure employed should first and foremost reflect the theory being tested. Here, a discussion of Cox and McCubbins's (2002, 2005) roll rate measure is instructive.

Cox and McCubbins developed their roll rate measure with the intent of testing their model/theory of negative agenda control (which will be covered in more detail in the next section). Very simply, they examine how often a majority of the majority (or minority) opposed a bill on final passage that nevertheless went on to pass, relative to the full set of final-passage votes considered in a congress. Looking back at Table 1, one can see that their roll rate measure considers rolls (lower-left cell) relative to outcomes in *all four cells*. That is, their roll rate is constructed by dividing rolls by [rolls + blocks + successes + disappointments].

The problem with this construction is that outcomes associated with *both* positive and negative agenda control get conflated in a measure that is intended to test *only* negative agenda control. For example, imagine a majority party that is active in pushing a *positive agenda*; if so, then the number of outcomes in the top two cells (successes and disappointments) of Table 1 will be large. This active display of positive agenda power—trying to get new policies that the majority favors onto the agenda and passed—will in fact lead to a *decrease* in the majority's roll rate, as constructed by Cox and McCubbins. This result is perverse, of course, as a true measure of negative agenda control should not be affected by cases involving positive agenda control.

Given the problematic nature of Cox and McCubbins's roll rate measure, what can be done? Two options seem available: (1) constructing a new rate that is more closely tied to the theory in question (negative agenda control) or (2) using rolls as a count (numerator). If the former is chosen, a new denominator is needed. One option is to try to assemble a hypothetical set of cases that might have rolled the majority party, if such bills would have been allowed on the agenda (and thus were not screened out). Because negative agenda control (as conceived by Cox and McCubbins) is tied directly to pre-floor behavior, and the roll rate is a floor-based measure, the connection between the observed cases (numerator) and the hypothetical cases (denominator) is slippery. Another option is to consider only those cases that cannot be excluded at the pre-floor stage by the majority—in which case, the roll rate would be premised on rolls relative to rolls + blocks. A low roll rate, therefore, would indicate

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[2] Much of the debate centers on the validity of the chosen denominator in denominator studies. Numerators (counts) are readily observable, but denominators are often hypothetical—or must be constructed from different sources, based on particular assumptions. For specific arguments regarding the value of numerators versus denominators in lawmaking studies, see Mayhew (2005, 34–37, 200–202) and Binder (2003, 35–38).

[3] A number of studies have utilized rolls or roll rates to study the House (Carroll and Kim 2010; Carson, Monroe, and Robinson 2010; Gailmard and Jenkins 2007; Roberts 2005; Wiseman and Wright 2008) as well as other legislative chambers (Akirav, Cox, and McCubbins 2010; Anzia and Jackman 2013; Campbell, Cox, and McCubbins 2002; Chandler, Cox, and McCubbins 2006; Cox, Heller, and McCubbins 2008; Cox, Kousser, and McCubbins 2010; Cox, Masuyama, and McCubbins 2000; Den Hartog and Monroe 2011; Gailmard and Jenkins 2007; Jackman 2014).

that the majority party *on the floor* is able to successfully defeat (block) most of the proposals that it would have preferred to exclude at the pre-floor stage.

A set of simple regressions shows how results can be sensitive to the composition of the dependent variable. The focus in these regressions, the results of which appear in Table 2, is on the *minority party* and its ability to exercise negative agenda control in the House between the 45th (1877–79) and 105th (1997–98) Congresses. The first column of results replicates Cox and McCubbins's analysis (2005, 112, Table 6.1), where the dependent variable is their basic roll rate measure and the model is estimated using extended beta binomial (EBB); the second column of results is based instead on ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. The third and fourth columns display results of models estimated via EBB and OLS, respectively, which use a "modified" roll rate measure (where rolls are divided by rolls + blocks) as the dependent variable.[4] Finally, the fifth column displays results of an OLS model that uses a count of minority rolls (and thus *not* a rate). Key independent variables include a distance measure (the absolute value of the first-dimension DW-NOMINATE distance between the floor median and the minority party median by Congress) and a dummy variable for congresses operating under the Reed Rules.[5] Additional controls include dummy variables for (a) congresses after the revolt against House Speaker Joseph Cannon, when chamber power was decentralized and embedded in committees; and (b) congresses in the post-Reform era, wherein chamber power was increasingly recentralized in the majority party.[6]

The key predictions for Cox and McCubbins's theory are that the distance and Reed Rules variables should be positive and significantly related to the minority party roll rate measure. That is, because the minority party in the House does not possess negative agenda power, it will not have a "blockout zone" like the majority. The minority instead has a "roll zone." Distance, therefore, should be positively related to the minority's roll rate, in that greater distance indicates (all else equal) more status quos that can be readjusted to the floor median (to the harm of a majority of the minority). In addition, with the adoption of the Reed Rules, a regime change occurred, as the House moved from a system in which the minority possessed a set of informal veto rights to a system in which the minority

possessed *no* meaningful negative agenda power. Thus, the minority party roll rate should be positively related to congresses that operate under the Reed Rules.

When we look at the results in columns 1 and 2 of Table 2, the EBB replication and the OLS estimation, we find Cox and McCubbins's key predictions borne out—both the distance and Reed Rules variables are positive and significant. When we move to columns 3 and 4, however, and examine the estimations on the "modified" roll rate, both the distance and Reed Rules variables fall short of standard significance levels (with the Reed Rules variables also taking on the wrong sign). Finally, when we shift to the roll count in column 5, both the distance and Reed Rules variables once again wash out (with *both* variables taking on the wrong sign).[7]

This simple set of regressions indicates that results are (or, at least, can be) sensitive to measurement. That is, the basic structure of the dependent variable will affect the type and magnitude of results that are generated. In the example above, Cox and McCubbins's key results regarding the determinants of the minority party's roll rate washed out when the rate was modified or a count was used instead. This underscores that one must be careful in variable construction, and that the best justification for a particular variable (in this case, a dependent variable)—at least in our minds—is the closeness to which it approximates the theory being tested.

From Theory to Measures

As noted, the heavy emphasis on rolls is a product of the relationship between that measure and the "cartel agenda model," as developed and tested by Cox and McCubbins (2002, 2005). Their model is a one-dimensional representation of a policy space, where pivotal actors' ideal points play the essential role in generating various hypotheses.

More formally, the cartel agenda model assumes that M_j, the majority party median (or party leaders acting in the interests of M_j), decides whether to allow consideration of bills dealing with the given policy dimension *j*. If consideration of a bill dealing with dimension *j* is allowed, then it is dealt with under an open rule and passes at the ideal point of F_j, the floor median. As shown in Figure 1,

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[4]The correlation between the "standard" and "modified" roll rate measures is a significant, but modest, 0.433.

[5]*Reed* takes on a value of 1 in Congresses 51 and 54–105, and 0 otherwise.

[6]*Post-Revolt* takes on a value of 1 in Congresses 61–105 and 0 otherwise. *Post-Reform* takes on a value of 1 in Congresses 94–105 and 0 otherwise.

[7]If we follow Wiseman and Wright (2008) and include the total number of final-passage votes in a congress as an additional covariate in the roll count regression, to account for the increase in such votes over time (and thus the great possibility of rolls occurring), then the distance variable becomes positive and significant, while the Reed Rules variable continues to wash out (and display the incorrect sign).

TABLE 2 Estimating Minority Party Roll Behavior in the House, 45th–105th Congresses

Explanatory Variable	C&M Roll Rate (EBB)	C&M Roll Rate (OLS)	"Modified" Roll Rate (EBB)	"Modified" Roll Rate (OLS)	Roll Count (OLS)
Distance	2.884**	0.592**	1.817	0.183	−3.519
	(0.489)	(0.141)	(1.023)	(0.114)	(8.152)
Reed	0.883**	0.232**	−0.367	−0.018	−1.008
	(0.331)	(0.079)	(0.674)	(0.043)	(3.054)
Post-Revolt	−0.285	−0.085	0.565	0.002	2.364
	(0.335)	(0.095)	(0.698)	(0.059)	(3.406)
Post-Reform	0.224	0.023	0.303	0.058	32.579**
	(0.153)	(0.030)	(0.331)	(0.032)	(3.590)
Constant	−2.732**	−0.086	1.164	0.807**	11.094*
	(0.368)	(0.095)	(0.799)	(0.079)	(5.509)
Pseudo R^2	0.055	–	0.031	–	–
LR χ^2	238.90 **	–	21.94**	–	–
R^2	–	0.542	–	0.105	0.747
F-statistic	–	11.11**	–	1.89	41.36**
N	61	61	61	61	61

Note: Each column is a separate model of the House minority party. Standard errors are in parentheses (robust standard errors in OLS models). Column 1 results are a perfect replication of Table 6.1 in Cox and McCubbins (2005, 112). Although some of the variable results are based on directional hypotheses, we report p-values of two-tailed tests to be consistent with the original Cox and McCubbins model. *p < .05, **p < .01 (two-tailed tests).

FIGURE 1 The Cartel Agenda Model
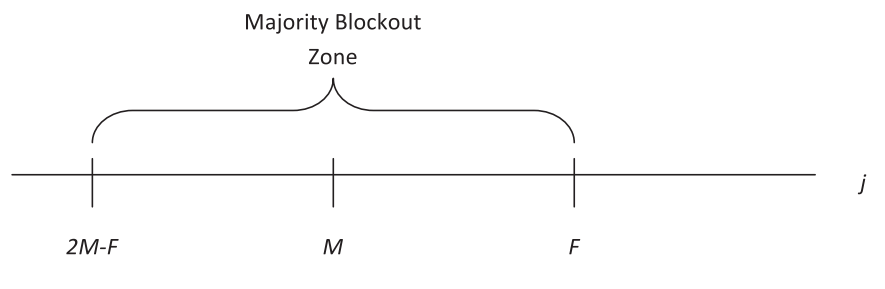
M_j therefore prevents consideration of any bills that seek to amend SQ_j, the status quo policy, if it resides in the "majority blockout zone" between $2M_j$-F_j and F_j. If SQ_j is outside the majority blockout zone, however, then policy on dimension j will be moved to F_j.[8]

With this in mind, it is easy to see how predictions about rolls follow naturally from the theory. Recall that a majority party roll is an instance where a majority of the majority party votes against a bill that then passes.

[8]Note that the use of restrictive rules by the majority party median could cause the blockout zone to be cut in half. Any status quo that falls between $2M_j$-F_j and M_j—all of which lead to rolls under an open rule—could be moved to the majority median's ideal point, protected by a closed rule, and adopted by the chamber. If this were the case, then the blockout zone would only stretch from M_j to F_j. The same basic result is true for our more general model, detailed in the next section.

By assuming a one-dimensional arrangement of member preferences, the cartel model necessarily assumes that the preference of the median member of the majority party will always be in concert with a majority of her copartisans. Thus, by coding outcomes as rolls when a majority of the party votes in opposition, the measure is in close harmony with the assumptions of the model.

Moreover, the measure lends itself to straightforward, testable hypotheses. If the majority party is perfectly successful at screening out bills that address status quos in its blockout zone, then no rolls should occur. And, short of perfection, the more effective the majority is at controlling the agenda, the lower its roll rate should be.

Given Cox and McCubbins's model, rolls are a well-conceived measure—but they are also a function of very specific assumptions. Our aim is to consider how we

might broaden our measurement tool kit and thus move beyond the confines of the cartel model. In doing so, however, it is crucial that we keep theory in mind. While our intent is to suggest a class of measures that might be applied in a variety of theoretical settings, we can rest our measures on some general theoretical principles that are likely to apply across a number of contexts.

In the next two sections, we consider when and how different measures of negative and positive agenda power are theoretically appropriate.

Measuring Negative Agenda Power: Rolls versus Blocks

In pursuit of an explanation of agenda power in the U.S. House, the dominant partisan theories (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005; Rohde 1991) assume that the mechanisms of agenda control are employed predominantly at the pre-floor stage. That is, party leaders are able to filter what makes it to the House floor by leveraging committees, special rules, and scheduling discretion. As a result, proposals the majority party deems as unfavorable should not reach a vote of the whole chamber. Thus, if the majority is effectively exercising negative agenda control, there should be no direct evidence of this when we observe floor actions. Instead, scholars are left to look for what Gailmard and Jenkins (2007) refer to as the "fingerprints" of partisan agenda control.

In this context, given the choice of either blocks or rolls, employing rolls as a measure of negative agenda power is the correct course of action. If all of the agenda control occurs at the pre-floor stage, then it is not clear what a theory would predict about blocks. Recall that a block, in this case, is an instance where a majority of the party votes against a proposal on the floor and it is subsequently defeated. But given the assumption that bills of this sort should be *screened out*, one might view blocks as agenda control *failures*. On the other hand, since the bills in question do not pass, they ultimately do not harm the party (at least in a policy change sense). Thus, observing a higher versus lower block rate is theoretically ambiguous in this setting.

Rolls, on the other hand, are clear failures, and thus theoretically unambiguous. If the majority of the party votes against a bill that nonetheless passes, it demonstrates a failure of negative agenda control. Accordingly, pre-floor agenda control theories make a clear prediction: More effective agenda control results in a lower roll rate.

So when are blocks the right measure of negative agenda power? In short, the answer is that as the exercise of negative agenda control shifts from the pre-floor stage to the floor stage, blocks become a more useful measure. Of course, under the open rule and sincere voting assumptions of the cartel model, if a status quo located in the blockout zone is considered on the floor, then the agenda setter will be helpless to block it; by the median voter rule, the bill will eventually be amended to the floor median's ideal point. In a world where pre-floor agenda control is limited or nonexistent, however, floor-based tactics (which represent departures from the assumptions of the cartel model) can be used to effectuate negative agenda control.[9] Specifically, blocks can occur (1) through the use of restrictive rules to protect bills from being amended (what we will refer to as "proposal placement" power) or (2) through vote buying.

To see this more formally, consider a model similar to the cartel model shown in Figure 1, but with the actors relabeled to fit a broader set of theoretical conditions. Specifically, assume an "agenda setter" rather than a majority median and a "median voter" instead of a floor median. Further assume that agenda control takes place on the floor, rather than at the pre-floor stage.

Under these conditions, blocks can occur when the agenda setter targets a status quo located in her own blockout zone, but does so by proposing an extreme bill (further from the floor median than the status quo) and then protecting it with a restrictive rule. Consider, for example, the scenario shown in Figure 2. Under an open rule, the status quo—just to the left of the floor median—would eventually be paired against an amended proposal at the floor median's ideal point, which would result in the agenda setter and most of her coalition being rolled. However, if the agenda setter can instead propose the bill shown on the far right side of the space and use proposal placement power to protect it from moderating amendments, the bill will fail—blocked by "nay" votes from the agenda setter and more than a majority of her coalition.

This sort of block occurs when the agenda setter can "get ahead of the game." That is, while she may prefer to let that status quo lie dormant, if some constellation of forces aligns such that it is inevitable that that status quo will be addressed, the agenda setter has an incentive to preempt the process and avoid a roll. While it is implausible that the agenda setter herself would propose a bill that falls on the opposite side of the spectrum, she may strategically choose among competing proposals and use her gatekeeping power to allow an extreme bill onto the floor (instead of more moderate alternatives) and provide it with a restrictive rule.

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[9] A good example of this is the motion to table in the U.S. Senate (Den Hartog and Monroe 2008, 2011).

FIGURE 2 An Agenda-Setting Model with Placement Power Causing a Block
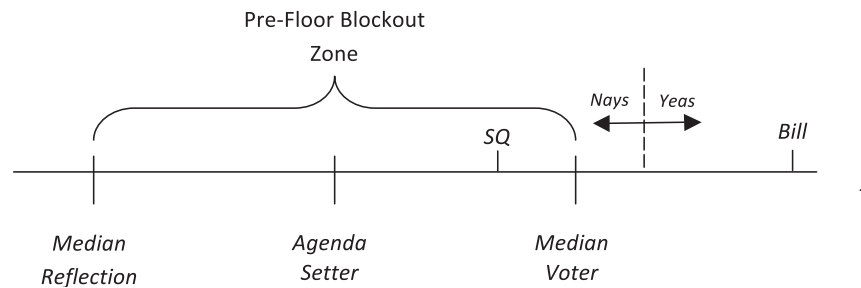
FIGURE 3 An Agenda-Setting Model with Vote Buying Causing a Block
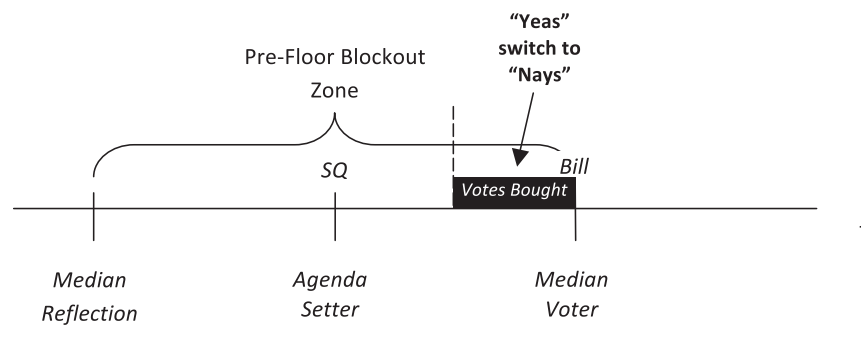
Blocks can also occur when the agenda setter buys votes. Consider the scenario depicted in Figure 3, where a bill seeks to change a status quo located at the agenda setter's ideal point by moving it to the median voter's ideal point. Under sincere voting, the bill would pass, with about half the legislators between the agenda setter and the median voter voting yea and the other half voting nay. In order to defeat the bill, the agenda setter must convince—through vote buying (broadly conceptualized)—those yea voters to become nay voters. Unlike the aforementioned proposal placement blocks, which are proactive in nature, vote-buying blocks are *reactive.* That is, the agenda setter not only fails to prevent consideration of the bill at the pre-floor stage, but she is also unable to procedurally steer it away from the middle of the chamber. Thus, the agenda setter is left to her last resort: to buy the votes of moderate members of her coalition.

So when should we observe more blocks? In short, the frequency of blocks should be greater (and block rates should be higher) when agenda control is exercised on the floor, rather than at the pre-floor stage. Stated differently, blocks should be more numerous in chambers where pre-floor agenda screening is weak or nonexistent. Later in the article, we investigate this proposition empirically.

Measuring Positive Agenda Power: Successes versus Disappointments

While negative agenda power may occur at either the pre-floor or floor stage (or both), positive agenda power must *at least* exist at the floor stage in order for an agenda setter to exercise positive agenda control effectively. However, the theoretically expected relationship between agenda power and "success," as defined by our measurement matrix in Table 1, depends on where in a given policy space the targeted status quo resides. Thus, in order to illuminate "where successes come from," it will be useful to first ask: What is the minimum level of agenda power required to produce a success for any given status quo?

To illustrate this discussion, Figure 4 takes our previous policy space, with an agenda setter and a median voter, and breaks it into four regions. Recall that the basic median voter model suggests that in this single dimension, in the absence of agenda control, any status quo that is addressed will be moved to the median voter's ideal point. Also recall that a success (as we have defined it) requires that a bill pass with the support of the relevant agenda setter.

FIGURE 4 Minimum Conditions for "Successes" by Region
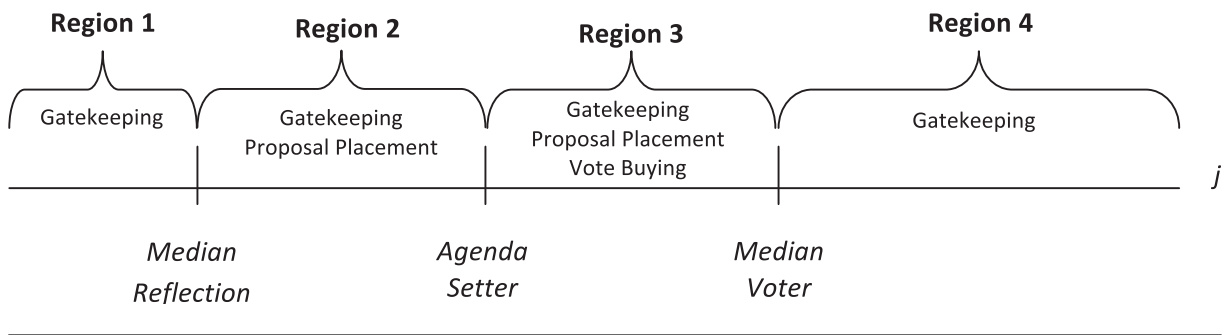
With this in mind, notice that for any status quo in Regions 1 and 4, successes will accrue to the agenda setter as long as she has a monopoly on *gatekeeping power*. That is, as long as there is no other actor with the ability (and incentive) to prevent status quos in Regions 1 and 4 from receiving floor consideration, the agenda setter can simply allow proposals onto the floor that move these status quos to the center of the policy space, where they will pass (by the median voter theorem) with the support of the agenda setter (and at least a majority of her coalition).

The support of the agenda setter, in this case, comes from the basic spatial distances defined by the region. The median reflection point represents the point at which the agenda setter would be indifferent between a status quo and a new policy at the median voter's ideal point (Romer and Rosenthal 1978). Thus, the agenda setter prefers the median voter's ideal point to all status quos in Region 1. The same rationale applies to status quos in Region 4.

This logic sets the stage for understanding the dynamics within Regions 2 and 3. The agenda setter prefers every status quo in these regions to a new policy at the median voter's ideal point. Thus, in a basic negative agenda control model, where the agenda setter's only options are to deny proposals floor consideration or to allow them at the median voter's ideal point (i.e., gatekeeping only), she will reject any proposals that address status quos in these regions.[10]

Thus, the minimum conditions to produce successes from status quos in Regions 2 and 3 are higher. First, consider what is necessary for Region 2. The agenda setter prefers to move all of the status quos in this region *closer to* the median voter (as both the agenda setter and the median voter are on the same side—to the

right—of these status quos), and thus any proposal the agenda setter makes will pass. However, to pass *with the support of the agenda setter*, the proposal must stop short of the median voter's ideal point, such that the proposal is closer to the agenda setter's ideal point than is the status quo. Therefore, in addition to possessing a monopoly on gatekeeping power, the agenda setter must also have *proposal placement power* in order to prevent complete convergence to the median voter's ideal point and thus generate a success. This is akin to the agenda setter being able to make a take-it-or-leave-it offer to the median voter. The typical mechanism, in the context of the U.S. House, is through the use of a closed rule. But, more generally, this insight is useful for any chamber procedure that provides an agenda setter with the ability to restrict amendments or counterproposals.

Now consider what must be true in the toughest case, Region 3. Status quos in this region are in perfect tension between the agenda setter and the median voter. That is, any move toward the agenda setter will be rejected by the median voter, and thus it will fail. But the agenda setter will not initiate a move toward the median voter, as she would prefer the status quo in that case. Thus, in order to generate a success in this region, the agenda setter must propose to move policy away from the median voter but persuade the median (and some individuals to his left) to vote for the proposal and *against* their sincere policy preferences. In order to achieve this *vote buying*, the agenda setter might employ some combination of side payments, threats, and bargaining (Jenkins and Monroe 2012; Snyder 1991). Thus, in Region 3, the minimum conditions to produce a success are all three positive agenda-setting powers: gatekeeping, proposal placement, and vote buying.

So how do disappointments come about? Recall that a disappointment is when a proposal fails to pass, despite the support of the agenda setter. To understand how these

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[10]Note that the combination of Regions 2 and 3 represents the blockout zone in Cox and McCubbins's cartel agenda model, where the agenda setter is the majority party median.

outcomes occur, we can piggyback on the logic just used to understand successes. In terms of status quos in Regions 1 and 4, any proposal that will pass will also have the support of the agenda setter. Thus, since proposals that pass, by definition, cannot be disappointments, then disappointments are not expected to occur for status quos in these regions.

Proposals to shift status quos in Region 2, on the other hand, can pass without the support of the agenda setter (including all proposals made at the median voter's ideal point). But these failures (i.e., letting proposals slip too far toward the median voter) will produce rolls, not disappointments. Thus, disappointments are not expected in this region either.

In fact, disappointments can *only* come from agenda-setting failures vis-à-vis status quos in Region 3.[11] That is, disappointments only occur when the agenda setter attempts to move policy away from the median voter's ideal point but fails to successfully buy enough votes, which results in the proposal failing. Understandably, then, disappointments in the modern U.S. House are rare, both because there are few status quos that are capable of producing a disappointment and because the agenda setter will likely have the votes lined up well in advance of the proposal being considered by the full chamber.[12] However, this may not be true of other legislatures, where time is less scarce and agenda setters are either less informed or less risk averse. Thus, disappointments may be an important measurement tool for testing some theoretical formulations of agenda power.

In sum, choosing which measure(s) of positive agenda power is (are) appropriate depends both on the assumed powers of the agenda setter and on the range of status quos being addressed. By viewing positive agenda power as an additive typology of specific types of agenda control, scholars will not only have more conceptually satisfying measures, but they will perhaps also be able to generate clearer predictions from their theoretical models.

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[11]Of course, by assuming proposal power and vote buying for status quos in Region 4, we could produce expected disappointments in those cases too. And we would encourage anyone using disappointments as a measure to carefully think through these theoretical issues. Probably the most likely theoretical scenario for such disappointments would involve the agenda setter attempting to "leap frog" policy over the median voter (Monroe and Robinson 2008). In this case, the agenda setter could take a status quo from Region 4 and make a proposal in Region 3, but place it too far away from the median voter to draw his support, and fail to successfully buy enough votes to get the proposal passed.

[12]For a theory of positive agenda setting with vote buying, which offers explicit predictions about (a) who should be bought and (b) how much each vote buyee should receive in equilibrium, see Snyder (1991).

Data Variation Beyond the U.S. House

While the modern U.S. House may not be a good venue for observing variation in the four agenda control measures, American state legislatures and national legislatures outside the United States offer a window into the potential utility of our measurement typology.

Table 3 displays the disappointment, roll, success, and block rates for the majority and minority parties for most of the American state legislative chambers for the 1999–2000 sessions. The data, generated by Anzia and Jackman (2013), include all "competitive" final-passage votes, where *competitive* is defined as votes where at least 5% of legislators are on the losing side (see Wright 2004). Several states are excluded from the table because data were not available for 1999–2000 or because final-passage votes could not be identified.[13]

We first focus on variation across the summary statistics at the bottom of Table 3. Comparing the average majority (3.8%) and minority roll rates (27.2%), we see that the majority party across the states is much better able to prevent votes that will pass and split their copartisans. However, when we look at the minimum and maximum roll rates, we find important variation. In the Texas House, for example, the majority party's pre-floor negative agenda power appears very weak relative to other chambers; there, the majority roll rate (18.8%) is 50% *higher* than the minority roll rate (12.5%). Conversely, in the Hawaii Senate, the majority party is *never* rolled, whereas the minority party has an extremely high roll rate (91%), suggesting a near total lack of negative agenda power in a very divisive chamber.

With regard to the more floor-centric measure of negative agenda power, we find significantly less disparity between the parties, on average. Across all chambers, the majority blocks about 3.9% of bills at final passage, just slightly more than the minority's 3.6% block rate. Similarly, as compared to the roll rate, the range of disparity in the block rate is much smaller, and the majority and minority block rates are much more in concert across the range. For example, the highest minority block rate is in the North Carolina House (16.1%), where the majority block rate is exactly the same. But there are exceptions. In the Alaska Senate, which has the highest majority block rate in the sample (19.3%), the minority blocks bills at final passage about one-tenth as often (2.5%).

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[13]These include Idaho, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, Wyoming, Delaware (House), North Dakota (Senate), Pennsylvania (House), and Tennessee (Senate). The Washington House is excluded because majority and minority parties could not be identified, due to a tie in the number of seats held by each party.

TABLE 3 **Disappointment, Roll, Success, and Block Rates by Minority/Majority Party, U.S. State Legislatures, 1999–2000**

State (Chamber)	Disappointment Rate		Roll Rate		Success Rate		Block Rate		Total Votes
	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority	
Alabama (H)	1.1	0	1.1	17.4	96.7	80.4	1.1	2.2	92
Alabama (S)	1.5	1.5	0	22.1	97.1	75	1.5	1.5	68
Alaska (H)	0	0	0	42.1	99.3	57.1	0.7	0.7	140
Alaska (S)	0	16.8	3.4	33.6	77.3	47.1	19.3	2.5	119
Arizona (H)	4.8	0.6	5	25	88.5	68.5	1.8	6	685
Arizona (S)	6.3	0.2	7.3	15.8	82	73.5	4.5	10.5	494
Arkansas (H)	3.7	6	1.9	19.4	82.4	64.8	12	9.7	216
Arkansas (S)	2.5	6.2	4.3	21.6	78.4	61.1	14.8	11.1	162
California (H)	1.2	0	0.1	62.8	98.7	36	0	1.2	1430
California (S)	0.3	0.3	0.6	77.7	98.5	21.4	0.5	0.6	1147
Colorado (H)	1.2	7.3	10.7	21.8	78.7	67.6	9.4	3.4	413
Colorado (S)	2.7	5.5	6.9	23.4	93.2	66.8	7.1	4.4	364
Connecticut (H)	0	2.1	2.1	27.1	95.8	70.8	2.1	0	96
Connecticut (S)	0	0	0	29.2	100	70.8	0	0	48
Delaware (S)	2.3	4.5	6.8	22.7	84.1	68.2	6.8	4.5	44
Florida (H)	0	1.4	2.9	24.6	95.7	73.9	1.4	0	69
Florida (S)	0	0	2.3	25.6	97.7	74.4	0	0	43
Georgia (H)	1.1	2.2	0	20.7	95.7	75	3.3	2.2	92
Georgia (S)	1.7	0	0	41	98.3	57.3	0	1.7	117
Hawaii (H)	0	0	0	48.7	100	51.4	0	0	148
Hawaii (S)	0	0	0	91.8	100	8.2	0	0	97
Illinois (H)	3.3	0.4	1.6	20.1	93.1	74.7	2	4.9	553
Illinois (S)	2.6	0	6.9	20.7	87.9	74.1	2.6	5.2	116
Indiana (H)	3.4	0	0.7	35.5	95.2	60.3	0.7	4.1	290
Indiana (S)	3.4	2.7	4.1	16.3	84.5	72.3	8.1	8.8	148
Iowa (H)	0.8	0	1.6	22.2	97.6	77	0	0.8	126
Iowa (S)	0	0	6	35	94	65	0	0	100
Kansas (H)	2.1	5.4	8.7	14.5	92.2	76.4	7	3.7	242
Kansas (S)	0.9	0.5	2.7	11.3	94.6	86	1.8	2.3	222
Kentucky (H)	2.8	0	2.1	21.1	94.4	75.3	0.7	3.5	142
Kentucky (S)	1.1	0	2.2	15.7	95.5	82	1.1	2.2	89
Louisiana (H)	3.3	3	3.3	15.2	83.2	71.3	10.2	10.6	303
Louisiana (S)	2.9	0.2	2.7	10.2	90.5	82.9	3.9	6.6	410
Maine (H)	4	1.6	4	46	88.9	46.8	3.2	5.6	126
Maine (S)	10.3	3.4	6.9	62.1	77.6	22.4	5.2	12.1	58
Maryland (H)	0.7	1	1.3	26.4	97	71.9	1	0.7	303
Maryland (S)	1.4	2.4	4.7	23.1	90.1	71.7	3.8	2.8	212
Massachusetts (H)	0	0	0	77	99.3	22.2	0.7	0.7	135
Massachusetts (S)	0	0	14.3	42.9	85.7	57.1	0	0	14
Michigan (H)	0.4	0	0.8	41.6	98.9	58	0	0.4	262
Michigan (S)	0.1	0.1	0.2	8.4	99.5	91.3	0.2	0.2	1070
Minnesota (H)	1.2	0.8	3.1	29.6	93.4	66.9	2.3	2.7	257

TABLE 3 **Continued**

State (Chamber)	Disappointment Rate		Roll Rate		Success Rate		Block Rate		Total Votes
	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority	
Minnesota (S)	0	2.6	8.5	22.2	88.9	75.2	2.6	0	117
Mississippi (H)	2.2	1.7	1.3	6.9	91.8	86.1	4.8	5.2	231
Mississippi (S)	4.3	1.4	2.9	18.8	88.4	72.5	4.3	7.2	69
Missouri (H)	1.6	0.3	0.6	22.1	96.8	75.3	1	2.2	312
Missouri (S)	1.8	1.2	0	17.4	97	79.6	1.2	1.8	167
Montana (H)	1.1	2.2	4.2	13.6	92.4	82.9	2.3	1.2	733
Montana (S)	0.6	0.6	3	20.8	94.6	76.8	1.8	1.8	336
Nevada (H)	0.7	3	1.5	21.6	93.3	73.1	4.5	2.2	134
Nevada (S)	2.5	0	0.8	22.5	96.7	75	0	2.5	120
New Hampshire (H)	0	0	17.6	23.5	76.5	70.6	5.9	5.9	17
New Hampshire (S)	8.1	8.1	8.1	33.9	67.7	41.9	16.1	16.1	62
New Jersey (H)	0	0	0.7	26.3	99.3	73.7	0	0	152
New Jersey (S)	0	0	1.5	32.4	98.5	67.6	0	0	68
New Mexico (H)	3.7	0.3	2.1	44.8	92.7	50	1.5	4.9	328
New Mexico (S)	3	5.5	5	35.5	83.4	52.9	5.9	6.1	361
North Carolina (H)	4	0	0	19.8	93.2	73.4	16.1	16.1	177
North Carolina (S)	0	4.9	0	22	95.1	73.2	0	0	82
North Dakota (H)	1.8	16.7	1.8	12.7	57.7	46.7	0	0	503
Ohio (H)	0	0	0.9	13.8	99.1	86.2	0	0	116
Ohio (S)	0	0	0	44.2	100	55.8	0	0	52
Oklahoma (H)	1.9	1.2	2.3	20.2	92.8	74.8	3.1	3.7	485
Oklahoma (S)	1.7	1.2	1.7	39.2	92.9	55.5	3.6	4.1	411
Oregon (H)	2.6	0.2	3.7	31.4	93.1	65.4	0.6	3	465
Oregon (S)	2.2	0.4	2.2	31	94.4	65.5	1.3	3	461
Pennsylvania (S)	0	4.5	0	18.2	95.5	77.3	4.5	0	22
South Carolina (H)	1.7	0	8.5	22	88.1	74.6	1.7	3.4	59
South Carolina (S)	0	12.5	0	12.5	87.5	75	12.5	0	8
South Dakota (H)	3	6.6	4.4	15.7	76.5	65.2	16	12.4	362
South Dakota (S)	1.7	7.4	6.2	15.7	80.2	70.7	12	6.2	242
Tennessee (H)	2.8	0	2.8	9.7	88.9	81.9	5.6	8.3	72
Texas (H)	0	0	18.8	12.5	81.3	87.5	0	0	16
Texas (S)	0	0	9.1	9.1	90.9	90.9	0	0	22
Utah (H)	2	5.2	10.4	17.3	78.7	71.8	8.9	5.8	347
Utah (S)	2.6	1.9	11.6	28.4	81.9	65.2	3.9	4.5	155
Vermont (H)	4.3	8.7	17.4	43.5	65.2	39.1	13	8.7	23
Vermont (S)	0	4.5	0	40.9	95.5	54.5	4.5	0	22
Virginia (H)	4.4	2.8	7.5	5.8	79.2	80.9	8.9	10.5	789
Virginia (S)	2.4	5.6	12	14.1	71.5	69.5	14.1	10.8	249
Washington (S)	3	0	3.4	36.8	93.6	60.3	0	3	234
West Virginia (H)	0	0	2	15.7	98	84.3	0	0	51
West Virginia (S)	2.7	1.3	1.3	20	92	73.3	4	5.3	75
Wisconsin (H)	2.1	1	0	28.1	96.9	68.8	1	2.1	96
Wisconsin (S)	1.9	0	0	44.4	98.1	53.7	0	1.9	54

TABLE 3 Continued

	Disappointment Rate		Roll Rate		Success Rate		Block Rate	
	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority
Average	1.8	2.2	3.8	27.2	90.4	66.7	3.9	3.6
Minimum	0	0	0	5.8	57.7	8.2	0	0
Maximum	10.3	16.8	18.8	91.8	100	91.3	19.3	16.1

TABLE 4 Block, Roll, Disappointment, and Success Rates by Party, Chamber of Deputies, 61st Legislature of the Mexican Congress (2009–12)

	Block Rate	Roll Rate	Disappointment Rate	Success Rate	Total Votes
PAN	4.1	4.5	1.8	89.7	738
PRI	5.7	0.0	0.1	94.2	738
PRD	0.7	10.0	5.1	84.1	738
PVEM	5.1	0.9	0.7	93.2	738
PT	1.8	30.2	4.1	64.0	738
PANAL	4.6	2.4	1.2	91.7	738
CONVE	1.9	10.6	3.9	83.6	738

TABLE 5 Block, Roll, Disappointment, and Success Rates by Party, House of Commons, 40th Canadian Parliament (2008–11)

	Block Rate	Roll Rate	Disappointment Rate	Success Rate	Total Votes
Bloc Québécois	4.7	53.5	4.7	37.2	43
New Democratic	0	58.1	9.3	32.6	43
Conservative	9.3	14.0	0	76.7	43
Liberal	7.0	23.3	2.3	67.4	43

Turning to measures of positive agenda power, we see that while the majority is disappointed less often (1.8%) on average than the minority (2.2%), the margin is small. Unsurprisingly, the highest minority disappointment rate is in the Alaska Senate (16.8%), where the majority party is never disappointed, whereas the highest majority disappointment rate is in the Maine Senate (10.3%), where the minority is disappointed only about a third as often (3.4%).

Both the range and majority-minority disparity in success rates, however, are much larger. On average, the majority achieves success at final passage 90.4% of the time compared to just 66.7% for the minority. There are several cases where the majority has a 100% success rate (the Ohio and Connecticut Senates as well as both chambers in Hawaii), but within those cases, there is a wide range of minority success rates, from 70.8% in the Connecticut Senate to 8.2% in the Hawaii Senate (which is also the lowest minority success rate in the sample).

In Tables 4 and 5, we move beyond the United States and consider final-passage votes in two North American national legislatures: the Chamber of Deputies in the 61st Legislature of the Mexican Congress (2009–12) and the House of Commons in the 40th Canadian Parliament

(2008–11).[14] Analyzing block, roll, disappointment, and success rates by party provides a different take on agenda power, as no single party in *either* legislature controlled a majority of seats.

In the Chamber of Deputies in the 61st Legislature of the Mexican Congress (2009–12), seven different parties split the 500 seats: the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) controlled 239 seats, the National Action Party (PAN) 142, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) 69, the Ecologist Green Party of Mexico (PVEM) 23, the Labor Party (PT) 13, the New Alliance Party (PANAL) 7, and the Convergence for Democracy (CONVE) 6.[15] Thus, the PRI was clearly the plurality party (after making significant gains in the midterm races), but it fell just short of majority status. However, the PRI's pre-election ally, the PVEM, controlled enough seats to effect a post-election coalition (or coalition government), which congressional rules require. Jointly, the PRI and PVEM controlled nearly 52% of the seats.

Our measures thus provide a lens to examine the following question: To what extent was the PRI-PVEM coalition able to control the legislative agenda despite sharing power? Looking at roll rates, the answer appears to be "quite well." The PRI was never rolled, and the

[14]Final-passage votes in the Canadian House of Commons are akin to votes on bills that receive a third reading.

[15]The Convergence for Democracy relabeled itself as the Citizens' Movement in July 2011, during the 61st Legislature.

PVEM was rolled less than 1% of the time. Every other party was rolled at a higher rate, with the PT rolled more than 30% of the time. The PRI and PVEM were also rarely disappointed (less than 1% of the time), with every other party experiencing higher disappointment rates. The PAN and especially the left PRD were often rolled and disappointed. (PAN still enjoyed a plurality in the Senate and controlled the presidency.) PANAL often negotiated with the PRI-PVEM coalition, and that is visible in its lower roll and disappointment rates. Interestingly, the PRI and PVEM were also the most effective parties in terms of blocking (each at more than 5%), with the PRD being the least successful (less than 1%). Thus, while many proposals pass unanimously or nearly so, as seen by the high success rates for each party (with the PT being the lowest at 64%), the variance in roll, disappointment, and block rates is telling.

In the House of Commons in the 40th Canadian Parliament (2008–11), four different parties split the 308 seats: the Conservative Party controlled 143 seats, the Liberal Party 77, the Bloc Québécois 49, and the New Democratic Party 37.[16] Thus, much like the PRI in Mexico, the Conservative Party was clearly the plurality party (after making slight gains in the 2008 election), but it fell just short of majority status.

As is the case with the PRI, the Conservative Party does best across all four measures; of the four Canadian parties, the Conservatives have the lowest roll (14.5%) and disappointment (0%) rates and the highest block (9.3%) and success (76.7%) rates. The "official" opposition (i.e., the party holding the second most seats), the Liberal Party, did not fare as well, though it did not do dramatically worse, experiencing a somewhat higher roll rate (23.3%), but only a modestly higher disappointment (2.3%) rate and slightly lower block (7%) and success (67.4%) rates. This is not surprising, as the Liberals often joined the Conservatives on votes. The "real" opposition was found among the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party, which opposed the "government" on many votes and, as a result, experienced very high roll rates and very low success rates.

Note, however, an important contrast between the PRI's agenda control in Mexico and the Conservative Party's agenda control in Canada: While the PRI was never rolled, the Conservative Party was rolled on about one out of every seven final-passage votes; but the Conservative Party was *never* disappointed. Making sense of this contrast requires an understanding of agenda power in Canada.

In the House of Commons, bills can come from a member of the Cabinet or from any backbencher. When a Cabinet member introduces a public bill, acting as an agent of the "government," it usually involves spending public money from the treasury or raising taxes. In most cases, bills require the support of a House majority to pass; if a bill from the Cabinet fails to be adopted, it signals that the House has lost confidence in the government, which typically results in either a change of government or a new election. In other words, a government "disappointment" completely undoes the power of the controlling party. This has occurred only a couple of times in Canada's history.

The same disastrous scenario for the controlling party does not transpire, however, when bills roll the government. That is, if a bill introduced by a backbencher (either from within government or from the opposition) is adopted over the objections of the plurality party, it does *not* signal a loss of confidence in the government. Thus, while the government has reasons to exercise negative agenda power effectively, it is imperative for the Cabinet's survival that it *not* fail to wield its positive agenda power.

This example highlights the need for our broader typology for measuring legislative agenda power. Because negative agenda power is paramount in theories born from the U.S. House, rolls are the ultimate signal of agenda control failure. In parliamentary settings like Canada, where lack of support for the government on the floor is the ultimate failure, disappointments are the essential measure of agenda power. It takes little imagination to conceptualize other legislative settings that would call for yet a different focus.

Comparative Static Tests

At the end of our discussion on measuring negative agenda power, we advanced the proposition that block rates (and block counts) will be higher in chambers where agenda power is more concentrated on the chamber floor. In this section, we test that proposition—and a corollary using a measure of the minority party's positive agenda power—using the Anzia and Jackman (2013) state legislature data described above.

The intuition behind this comparative static is that when an agenda setter possesses strong pre-floor agenda power, there will be significantly less need to exercise agenda control at the floor stage. Accordingly, observing blocks, which are the prototypical sign of floor-based agenda power, will be rare. Thus, if we compare chambers with strong pre-floor agenda power to chambers with

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[16]There were also two Independents.

TABLE 6 Estimating Majority Party Block Behavior across State Legislatures

Explanatory Variable	Block Rate (EBB)	Block Rate (OLS)	Block Count (OLS)	Block Count (OLS)
Majority Sets Calendar (β_1)	−1.072**	−0.009	−28.63	−26.21*
	(0.326)	(0.025)	(17.79)	(14.88)
Committee Gatekeeping (β_2)	−1.607**	−0.038*	−33.93*	−38.25*
	(0.305)	(0.019)	(18.22)	(17.92)
Calendar × Gatekeeping (β_3)	0.721**	−0.007	27.93	28.91*
	(0.436)	(0.027)	(18.27)	(16.71)
Majority Party Size (β_4)	0.105	−0.015	23.44	6.08
	(1.324)	(0.073)	(21.38)	(18.82)
Intraparty Heterogeneity (β_5)	0.161	0.007	−7.10	−5.19
	(0.280)	(0.011)	(5.09)	(4.02)
Interparty Heterogeneity (β_6)	−0.711**	−0.013	−10.42	−21.66
	(0.258)	(0.011)	(9.11)	(13.06)
FPVs (β_7)				0.038*
				(0.019)
Constant	−1.052	0.097*	39.64	56.26
	(0.977)	(0.052)	(32.19)	(34.81)
Postestimation Test: Strong Pre-Floor Agenda Control ($\beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3$)	−1.959**	−0.053**	−34.63*	−35.54*
	(0.297)	(0.017)	(17.77)	(16.09)
Pseudo R^2 (EBB)/R^2 (OLS)	0.188	0.183	0.264	0.384
N	81	81	81	81

Note: Each column is a separate model of the House majority party. Standard errors are in parentheses (robust standard errors in OLS models). We adopt Anzia and Jackman's (2013) model of agenda control and thus have directional hypotheses. We therefore report p-values for one-tailed tests. *Strong Pre-Floor Agenda Control* is a linear combination of *Majority Sets Calendar*, *Committee Gatekeeping*, and *Calendar × Gatekeeping*.
*p < .05, **p < .01 (one-tailed tests).

weak pre-floor agenda power, we should see more blocks (and higher block rates) in the latter type of chamber.

To test this proposition, we adopt Anzia and Jackman's (2013) model of agenda control, but we apply it to majority block rates rather than majority roll rates. Specifically, we regress *Majority Block Rate*—the number of majority blocks on final-passage votes over all final-passage votes—on a set of variables that indicate the presence of pre-floor agenda power. *Majority Sets Calendar* is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if a majority party leader makes decisions about when bills appear on the floor, and 0 otherwise. *Committee Gatekeeping* is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if a chamber's committees (controlled by the majority) possess nonhearing or nonreporting rights, and 0 otherwise. *Calendar × Gatekeeping* is the interaction of these two variables, which captures the effect of having both of these powers as compared to just one. Finally, *Strong Pre-Floor Agenda Control* is a postestimation linear combination of the interaction of *Calendar × Gatekeeping* and the constituent terms (*Majority Sets Calendar* and *Committee Gatekeeping*), capturing the comparison between a

chamber that has *both* calendar and committee-gatekeeping rights and one that has *neither*. Our key expectation is that *Strong Pre-Floor Agenda Control* should have a significant, negative effect on *Majority Block Rate.* That is, majorities in chambers that can screen effectively at the pre-floor stage, relative to majorities in chambers that cannot screen at the pre-floor stage, should not often find themselves in the position of having to block bills on the floor.

We also incorporate Anzia and Jackman's (2013) controls for *Majority Party Size*, which is the proportion of seats in a given chamber held by the majority party; *Intraparty Heterogeneity*, which is the sum of the proportion of Democrats who are more conservative than the most liberal Republican and the proportion of Republicans who are more liberal than the most conservative Democrat; and *Interparty Heterogeneity*, which measures the average distance between the median ideal points of the parties in each state.

Table 6 includes four columns of results. The first and second columns present the results of the EBB and OLS (with robust standard errors) estimations just

TABLE 7 Estimating Minority Party Disappointment Behavior across State Legislatures

Explanatory Variable	Disappointment Rate (EBB)	Disappointment Rate (OLS)	Disappointment Count (OLS)	Disappointment Count (OLS)
Majority Sets Calendar (β_1)	−1.196**	−0.028	−14.90*	−13.94*
	(0.357)	(0.018)	(7.83)	(6.73)
Committee Gatekeeping (β_2)	−1.605**	−0.043**	−17.77*	−19.49**
	(0.326)	(0.014)	(7.90)	(7.80)
Calendar × Gatekeeping (β_3)	0.697	0.018	14.75*	15.14*
	(0.495)	(0.019)	(8.01)	(7.43)
Majority Party Size (β_4)	1.457	0.027	16.33	9.45
	(1.511)	(0.052)	(10.88)	(10.13)
Intraparty Heterogeneity (β_5)	−0.121	−0.004	−3.80*	−3.05
	(0.352)	(0.008)	(2.28)	(1.94)
Interparty Heterogeneity (β_6)	−0.383	−0.009	−3.15	−7.60
	(0.272)	(0.007)	(3.79)	(5.50)
FPVs (β_7)				0.015*
				(0.008)
Constant	−2.925**	0.057	14.76	21.35
	(1.109)	(0.038)	(14.19)	(15.33)
Postestimation Test: Strong Pre-Floor Agenda Control ($\beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3$)	−2.105**	−0.053**	−17.92*	−18.28**
	(0.331)	(0.013)	(7.75)	(7.10)
Pseudo R^2 (EBB)/R^2 (OLS)	0.163	0.296	0.322	0.409
N	81	81	81	81

Note: Each column is a separate model of the House minority party. Standard errors are in parentheses (robust standard errors in OLS models). We adopt Anzia and Jackman's (2013) model of agenda control and thus have directional hypotheses. We therefore report p-values for one-tailed tests. *Strong Pre-Floor Agenda Control* is a linear combination of *Majority Sets Calendar*, *Committee Gatekeeping*, and *Calendar × Gatekeeping*.
*p < .05, **p < .01 (one-tailed tests).

described.[17] In the third column, the OLS model specification is the same, but the dependent variable is the majority party block count rather than the majority party block rate. The fourth column is identical to the third, except that a control for the total number of final-passage votes in a given chamber (*FPVs*) is added to account for differences in the size of the floor agenda across state legislatures.

In each of the four iterations, we find support for the proposition. Of the two types of pre-floor agenda control, committee gatekeeping has the larger negative effect on majority party block rates and block counts. And, looking at the *Strong Pre-Floor Agenda Control* linear combination, we find that majorities in chambers with both calendar and committee-gatekeeping rights have significantly lower block rates (5.3 percentage points) and block significantly fewer bills (roughly 35) than majorities in chambers that have neither.

A second testable implication of the presence of pre-floor agenda control stems from the logic that such pre-floor control will preempt floor proposals from the agenda setter's *opponents*. Stated differently, strong pre-floor agenda control will prevent the *minority party* from getting floor votes on its bills. An upshot of this is that we should be less likely to observe the minority losing in chambers with strong pre-floor agenda control; thus, there should be fewer minority disappointments (defined as a majority of the minority supporting a bill that fails to pass) in these chambers.

To test this corollary, we repeat in Table 7 the models described above, except that we use *Minority Disappointment Rate* as the dependent variable in columns 1 and 2, and the number of *Minority Disappointments* as the dependent variable in columns 3 and 4. We find strong support for the corollary. As with blocks, committee gatekeeping has a larger negative effect on minority disappointments than does calendar gatekeeping. And, looking at the *Strong Pre-Floor Agenda Control* linear combination, we see that minorities in chambers with both calendar and committee-gatekeeping rights have

[17]Anzia and Jackman (2013) use OLS exclusively in their article. We include the EBB estimation to allow comparisons to the models presented in Table 2.

significantly lower disappointment rates (5.3 percentage points) and experience significantly fewer disappointments (roughly 18) than minorities in chambers that have neither.

These comparative static tests indicate the possibilities that exist when one moves (a) beyond rolls and (b) outside of the U.S. House to investigate elements of legislative agenda-setting power. From our perspective, these tests are just the tip of the iceberg. Depending on the particular legislature being studied and the type of agenda power being explored, additional tests can be undertaken—and not just on the ultimate form of decision making (i.e., final-passage votes), but also at earlier points in the process (i.e., procedural and amendment votes), as the relevant theory dictates.

Conclusion

Our goal in this article has been to draw greater attention to issues of typology, measurement, and theory estimation in research on legislative agenda-setting power. Much of the existing literature relies too heavily on one measure—"rolls"—while neglecting the existence and appropriateness (given the particular theoretical question being pursued) of other such measures. Thus, we first lay out a typology, based on how an agenda setter behaves (supporting or opposing a legislative proposal) and what the outcome of the legislative process is (whether the proposal passes or fails). For any given proposal, this leads to four possible outcomes: the now-ubiquitous roll as well as a "block," a "success," and a "disappointment." We then discuss how such outcomes, when aggregated, might be used effectively as dependent variables in multivariate studies. The rub is whether such an aggregation is sufficient on its own (leading to a count variable, or a numerator study) or whether the aggregation must be compared to some larger aggregation of possible/hypothetical outcomes that could have occurred (leading to a rate variable, or a denominator study). As we show in a set of minority party regressions, the choice of dependent variable may influence the types of results that are generated.

These typology/measurement issues then lead us into a broader discussion of the issues involved in moving from theory to measures. More than likely, in our pursuit of theory estimation, any measures that we adopt will be flawed in some way. We note, for example, that Cox and McCubbins's (2002, 2005) roll rate measure conflates positive and negative agenda control outcomes in what is ostensibly intended to be a measure simply of negative agenda control. Our own "modified" roll rate measure, which only taps negative agenda control outcomes (rolls + blocks), is likely inflated (and perhaps considerably so)

because it excludes a distribution of block outcomes at the pre-floor stage (when the majority successfully blocks proposals, and when the minority does not move forward with proposals *in anticipation of* being blocked) that are unobservable in the roll-call data.

More fundamentally, though, choosing the right measure must be driven by the particulars of the theory being tested. As a matter of fact and, hopefully, of theory, agenda power is conceived very differently across different legislative bodies. Agenda power emanates from institutional arrangements and agenda setter incentives, and thus where there is meaningful variance in either of those two components, so too will there be variance in our expectations about the consequences of effective agenda control. As we show empirically, this is certainly true across the U.S. state legislatures, and through a juxtaposition of the Mexican and Canadian federal legislatures. The variance in our four measures across these settings is substantial, and in some instances it is easily explained by differences in the institutional arrangements of these bodies. Comparative static tests on the state legislatures, exploring calendar and committee-gatekeeping rights and their effects on majority blocks and minority disappointments, support the more general point.

In the end, the lesson here is that measures can be constructed to better match the theory being tested, but all such measures will involve some inferential loss. The goal is to have a sense of the inferential limitations of each possible measure, such that the estimated results can be interpreted properly and ascribed the appropriate confidence. In this imperfect empirical world, one strategy to pursue is a kind of triangulation, whereby a theory is tested using different measures with different (but well-understood) inferential limitations. If multiple flawed measures can each tell us something—and perhaps something different—about a theoretical phenomenon, we are likely better off than proceeding with only one measure (regardless of its popularity or widespread usage).

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