plexity, not universalism and determinism, should be the premises that en-
ergize and guide analysis.

We will, admit, in closing, that we cannot know for certain whether the
search for universalism and determinism errs by underestimating the limits
that the complexity of human nature and the social world impose on sim-
plicity. What does seem clear, in terms of both logic and evidence, is that a
search for universalism and determinism leads to assumptions in orienting
research that are not only unrealistic but also not as useful as assumptions of
contingency and uncertainty. In the natural world, the quest for lawlike
statements has in recent decades been constrained by an increasing recogni-
tion that the conditions of relationships need to be uncovered and specified
and that even then, elements of uncertainty may remain and be inherent in
the complex ways in which variables combine. In the social world, the case
for such an approach is even stronger, given the embeddedness of intention
and action in social contexts (Scharpf 1997). We conclude, then, by recom-
mending it in the study of legislative decision making. In our view, the way
to knowledge is to focus on the conditions of relationships and not to shape
the lenses we apply to make sense of the empirical world to fit the assump-
tion that knowledge, to be valid or useful, must be universalistic and deter-
ministic in character.

Chapter 5

Agenda Power in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1877-1986

GARY W. COX AND MATHEW D. MCCUBBINS

Congressional organization and politics seem to change roughly every gen-
eration. The literature has identified twelve eras of congressional organiza-
tion—outlined in Table 5.1 (see Galloway 1976 and Hinckley 1988)—that
can be classified by their degree of centralization of power. In some eras,
strong party leaders (such as Joe Cannon or Newt Gingrich) control legisla-
tive organization and policy outputs. In other eras, control is decentralized
to committee chairs, subcommittee chairs, nonpartisan coalitions, and so on.
The fifth and tenth eras listed in Table 5.1 are good examples of the more
decentralized end of the spectrum of congressional organization. Indeed,
Richard Fenno's (1973: xiii) summary of conventional wisdom on congres-
sional organization in the tenth era reached back to Gilded Age commen-
tary for the appropriate touchstones (see also Cater 1964; Fenno 1966, 1973;
Davidson 1981; Eulau and McCluggage 1984; Shepsle and Weingast 1984a,
1987a, 1987b; Dodd 1989; Shepsle 1989a; Weingast 1989):

> The oldest and most familiar [characterization of congressional organi-
> zation] is Woodrow Wilson's book-length assertion that committees
> dominate congressional decision making. A corollary states that com-
> mittees are autonomous units, which operate quite independently of
> such external influences as legislative party leaders, chamber majorities,
> and the President of the United States. Other staples of committee
> commentary hold . . . that each committee is the repository of legisla-

Table 5.1
The Twelve Partisan "Arrangements" in Congress

Name	*Years*
1) Federalist-Democrat	1789–1816
2) "Era of Good Feelings"	1817–1824
3) Multiparty Competition	1825–1860
4) Republican Hegemony	1861–1874
5) "The Gilded Era"	1875–1895
6) Republican Hegemony II	1896–1908
Pivotal Progressives	1909–1910
7) Democratic Interlude	1911–1920
8) Republican Hegemony III	1921–1932
9) New Deal Democratic Hegemony	1933–1936
10) Conservative Coalition	1937–1972
*11) Liberal Hegemony	1973–1994
*12) Republican Revolution?	1995–

SOURCE: Except for the asterisked eras, which we have added, the eras are drawn from Galloway 1976.

tive expertise within its jurisdiction; that committee decisions are usually accepted and ratified by other members of the chamber; that committee chairmen can (and usually do) wield a great deal of influence over their committees.

Both of these eras of decentralization—the fifth and the tenth—ended when power was transferred away from committee chairs—mostly to party leaders after the Gilded Age, to both party leaders and subcommittee chairs in the 1970s.

How should we understand the shifts in congressional organization listed in Table 5.1? One possible perspective is that parties have never been of much independent force in congressional politics, so that the eras sometimes described as party government—such as Republican Hegemony II—are at best tending in that direction. Another perspective is that party government is conditional on the homogeneity of preferences within the majority party (see, e.g., Brady, Cooper, and Hurley 1979; Collie and Brady 1985; Collie 1988b, Rohde 1991; Aldrich and Rohde 1997a, 1998).[1] From this perspective, the periods labeled "party government" really evinced party government and the periods labeled "committee government," such as the Conservative Coalition, really evinced committee government. A third perspective is that important aspects of party government are ubiquitous throughout congressional history. From this perspective, one might talk of decentralized party government in era 10, but talk of bipartisan committee government would be misleading.

This last perspective is closest to that articulated in our previous work (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 1994b), and especially because this seems to have caused the most confusion—or outright disbelief—among our readers, we wish to explain and defend it here. We begin by noting that at least if one focuses on the post–Civil War organizational eras, there are some noticeable constants in legislative organization. In particular, the majority party (1) selects *all* institutional leaders such as the Speaker, committee chairs, and subcommittee chairs (Hinckley 1988; Oleszek 1989; Sinclair 1994); (2) holds a supermajority on the Rules Committee (see Oleszek 1989: 131–32); (3) controls appointments of its own members to standing, select, and conference committees (Oleszek 1989; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; Cox and McCubbins 1993); (4) controls a disproportionate share of staff and other legislative resources; and (5) because of the first four points, controls access to the floor agenda.[2] This suggests that while some aspects of party government may be conditional, other aspects are not.

Indeed, we will argue the following points:

1. The majority party's formal agenda powers allow it to, and are used to, keep issues off the floor agenda that would foreseeably displease significant portions of the party. This *negative agenda power* is *unconditional*, in the sense that its exercise should not theoretically and does not empirically vary with the similarity of the party's members' (constituency-induced or personal) ideas of good public policy.
2. In addition to its power to stop new legislation, thereby preserving past gains, the majority can also propose changes to existing policy. However, the size of the majority party's agenda (i.e., the volume of new policies it seeks to implement) waxes and wanes, depending on how similar party members' policy goals are (cf. Rohde 1991; Aldrich and Rohde 1998; Peters 1990: 11; Cox and McCubbins 1993), because leaders do not wish to waste their time leading where their followers will not (or cannot be induced to) follow. That is, *positive agenda control* is ever present, but the frequency with which the party uses this power varies with the degree to which the party membership agrees on what the party's collective reputation should

be and hence on what should be done (Cox and McCubbins 1993: 154–55).

The formal basis for these conclusions is a garden-variety spatial model of legislative procedure onto which we graft two starkly different assumptions about who controls the floor agenda. In one model, we assume that the floor agenda is determined by majority vote on the floor and hence by the median legislator on the floor. We call this the *floor agenda model*, and its predictions about what the floor agenda will look like form our null hypothesis. We contrast the floor agenda model with an alternative we call the *cartel agenda model* (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 1994b), which contends that agenda control is partisan in nature. It asks, if the majority party leadership determines the floor agenda, what would that agenda look like?

Simply put, we present two polar models of agenda power. In what follows, we contrast these two models with each other and test their predictions head to head. Using outcomes from the 45th to 99th Congresses (1877 to 1986), we find that we can reject the floor agenda model. In contrast, there is substantial and credible evidence supporting the cartel agenda model. In particular, we show that negative agenda control is indeed a largely *invariant* advantage of majority status and that positive agenda control is variable, changing with the internal homogeneity of the majority party. Variations in these two aspects of agenda control, we suggest, explain some of the basic tensions and historical fluctuations in congressional organization.

Modeling the Floor Agenda

BACKGROUND ASSUMPTIONS

In pathbreaking research, Shepsle (1979) and Shepsle and Weingast (1981, 1987a, 1987b) modeled the House agenda process and examined the consequences of agenda power. They relied on a spatial analogy wherein policy choices correspond to points in a multidimensional Euclidean space (cf. Black 1958; Downs 1957). For simplicity and ease of exposition, we will adapt their well-known model to our purposes.

We use the following five assumptions to model agenda setting in the House:

- *Dimensions of policy choice.* First, there are n policy instruments that can be adjusted by the legislature. For example, the minimum wage can be increased or decreased, the criteria to qualify for welfare payments can be loosened or tightened, and so forth. A status quo point for each instrument (or dimension) is commonly known.
- *Legislators.* Second, there are N members in the legislature, whose preferences over the policy dimensions are additively separable and who vote strategically. Specifically, on any given dimension j, legislator k has a unique ideal point on that dimension, x_j^k, which is common knowledge. The utility that legislator k derives from a given policy vector, $z = (z_1, \ldots, z_n)$, declines with the sum of the distances between x_j^k and z_j: $u_k(z) = -\Sigma_j \mid x_j^k - z_j \mid$. We assume that members seek to maximize the utility that they derive from the final policy choice of the House (i.e., to minimize the summed distances between their ideal points and the final choices on each dimension).[3] A consequence of this assumption is that the model of policy choice is, in essence, reduced to a series of independent unidimensional choices.
- *Agenda setters.* Third, there exist agenda-setting agents who have the right to propose bills to the floor within their (fixed) jurisdictions; for convenience, we assume that the bills they offer can propose changes in only one dimension at a time.
- *Legislative sequence.* Fourth, the legislative sequence consists of only three stages: (1) some agent selects (or some agents select) the bills that the floor will consider; (2) the floor then considers the bills presented to it, amending them as it sees fit; (3) the floor then votes on final passage of the amended bill.
- *Open rules.* Fifth, we consider the special case in which all bills are considered under open rules, subject only to a germaneness restriction. Extending the model to include closed rules only increases the majority party's agenda power.

Shepsle (1979: 350) suggests that there are three possible agenda-setting agents in the House: the Committee of the Whole, legislative parties, and committees. The third possibility, wherein autonomous and independent committees set the floor agenda, is the topic of Shepsle and Weingast's (1981, 1987a, 1987b) classic analyses. Our focus is on the agenda-setting powers of the first two of the agents listed: the floor as a whole and the parties—in particular, the majority party.

In one of the models to follow, the median legislator of the majority party has the unilateral power to put bills on the floor agenda, directly or through committees. Alternatively, one can think of the agenda setter in this model as the majority party leader, whose reelection incentives ensure a centrist-

within-the-majority-party stance. In our second model, parties are not appropriate "analytic units," and the floor agenda is determined as if by majority vote on the floor (in the spirit of Mayhew 1974 and Krehbiel 1998).

For ease of exposition only, and without loss of generality, we also incorporate in our model an assumption that members of the majority party are generally to the left of members of the minority party (we are thinking of the long period of Democratic dominance from the early 1930s to the mid-1990s). More formally, let m_j denote the location of the median member of the minority party on dimension j. Let M_j denote the location of the median member of the majority party on dimension j. Finally, let F_j denote the location of the median member of the House on dimension j. We assume that $M_j < F_j < m_j$ for all j.[4] Note that the assumption allows some Democrats to be to the right of some Republicans, or even to the right of a majority of them, on some (or even all) dimensions. Similarly, some Republicans may be to the left of some Democrats, or even a majority, on some (or even all) dimensions. Note also that no assumption is made that the same member of Congress is the median on all dimensions, although this too is possible within our model.

We also assume that the location of the status quo on any given dimension—which we also assume is the reversion—may vary. The world deals out "shocks" that upset the best-laid plans of previous legislatures, so that the status quo outcome on any given dimension may have drifted over a number of years (e.g., a once generous minimum wage erodes with inflation) or experienced a sudden shift (e.g., various foreign policy dimensions looked quite different after the fall of the Berlin Wall). Formally, we assume that the status quo on dimension j at time t, denoted SQ_{jt}, is such that $SQ_{jt} = SQ_{j,t-1} + \varepsilon_{jt}$, where $SQ_{j,t-1}$ is the status quo as it was at the end of the previous legislature and ε_{jt} is the shock (thought of as arriving at the beginning of Congress t) dealt out by nature.[5]

The model is simplest if one assumes that the policy shocks chosen by nature become common knowledge at the beginning of the game. With this assumption, the location of the status quo on each dimension is also common knowledge.

All told, the sequence of moves in the model is as follows. First, nature chooses the policy shock ε_{jt} for each dimension j, which then becomes common knowledge. Second, the agenda setting agent or agents decide to put various bills on the floor agenda (where all bills must deal with a single dimension). Third, the floor considers all bills reported, amending them as the members see fit. Fourth, the floor then either passes or rejects the amended bill by majority vote.

VOTING ON THE FLOOR

Regardless of how the floor agenda is set, the following observations hold. At final passage, some bill b_j (possibly an amended version of the bill originally reported to the floor) will be pitted against the status quo SQ_j on dimension j. Because the vote at this stage is binary, a member with ideal point x will vote for the bill if and only if b_j is closer to x than SQ_j is.

This conclusion can be restated with some further notation. Let $R_j(x) = 2x - b_j$ denote the point that is equally far from x as b_j is but on the opposite side of x from b_j. If $x < b_j$, then $R_j(x)$ is just as far to the left of x as b_j is to the right of x. If $x > b_j$, then $R_j(x)$ is just as far to the right of x as b_j is to the left of x. In either case, $R_j(x)$ is utility-equivalent to b_j for the member with ideal point x. Then

Lemma 1: Consider a member with ideal point x on dimension j voting on final passage of bill b_j.

a. If $x < b_j$, the member votes in favor of b_j if and only if $SQ_j \notin [R_j(x), b_j]$;
b. If $x > b_j$, the member votes in favor of b_j if and only if $SQ_j \notin [b_j, R_j(x)]$.

Proof: Omitted.

THE CARTEL AGENDA MODEL

Legislators face a number of collective action problems—allocating scarce legislative time and resources, cooperating to secure their own personal as well as their party's reputation for the next election, coordinating so that work gets done, and so forth. We have argued elsewhere (cf. Cox and McCubbins 1993) that parties overcome these collective action problems through the institutionalization of a central authority, much as Alchian and Demsetz (1972) have argued that firms overcome similar problems.[6] In the case of the U.S. House, the central authority is the majority party leadership, to which significant authority is delegated to ensure coordination and cooperation among individual legislators. The majority party leadership controls various mechanisms, such as appointments to control committees and the scheduling of plenary time, to keep party members in line. Party members, in turn, maintain ultimate control through the power to select and remove their own leaders. For this reason, we assume that the majority party leadership is strongly responsive to the median member of the majority party.

In the cartel agenda model, we assume that the leader of the majority party is the median of his or her party (or acts in the median's interests) and has the unilateral power to put bills on the floor agenda or keep them off. Equivalently, we can assume that the agenda is set as if by majority vote in the majority party's caucus.

What should happen in this model? Lemma 1 leads to the following results. We only sketch the proofs, as they are fairly transparent given the simple model constructed so far. We discuss plausible wrinkles to the model —including uncertainty about the location of the status quo or about member ideal points—later.

Result 1: No dimension j on which SQ_j is preferred to F_j by a majority of the majority party is ever scheduled for floor consideration.

Proof: The median majority party agent can anticipate that if he or she puts a bill dealing with dimension j on the floor agenda, this bill will be amended to the floor median. The agenda-setting agent will therefore report only dimensions on which he or she prefers F_j to SQ_j. But this is equivalent to never reporting a dimension on which SQ_j is preferred to F_j by a majority of the majority party.

Corollary: Every bill b_j passed results in policy being moved closer to M_j, the median majority party agent's ideal point.

Proof: In light of Result 1, all status quo points in the interval $[M_j - |M_j - F_j|, M_j + |M_j - F_j|]$ are not reported to the floor. In other words, all status quo points in an interval centered on the median member of the majority party's ideal point are stabilized, while all others are brought closer to this point.

Result 2: No bill opposed by a majority of the majority party's members ever passes.

Proof: From Result 1, the median majority party agent will report to the floor only bills concerning dimensions on which the party prefers F_j to SQ_j. Thus the bill, as amended, will always pass, and a majority of the majority party will always favor passage.

Figure 5.1 helps illustrate these results. If the status quo lies anywhere between $2M - F$ and F (indicated by the solid line), then a majority of the majority party will oppose putting the issue on the floor agenda. Hence, per Result 1, dimensions with status quo points in the solid-line region will never be scheduled for floor consideration; all others will be. Thus a bill to change SQ_2 will be reported to the floor (as F is preferred by M to SQ_2), while a bill to change SQ_1 will *not* (as SQ_1 is preferred by M to F).

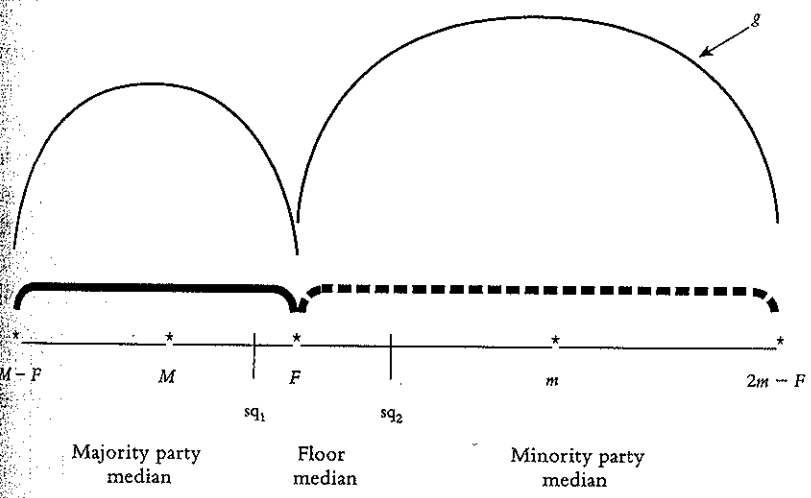

Figure 5.1. Spatial model of legislative voting.

Results 1 and 2 both have testable implications that can be stated in terms of the concept of a "roll." We say that a party is rolled at the agenda-setting stage when a majority of the party unsuccessfully opposes the placement on the floor agenda of a particular bill. A party is rolled at final passage when a majority of its members unsuccessfully oppose a particular bill's final passage. In terms of rolls, Result 1 says the majority party is never rolled at the agenda-setting stage, while Result 2 says it is never rolled at final passage.

We should hasten to note that these "majority party never gets rolled" predictions are similar in analytic status to other predictions drawn from complete information models, such as "there is never any war" or "there are never any vetoes" (cf. Cameron 2000). These sorts of results should be viewed as baselines illustrating the extreme case of zero uncertainty. Add a little uncertainty into these models, and it is well known that one begins to get "mistakes"—in the present context, mistakes in which the agenda setter schedules a bill that a majority of majority party agents dislike (because, for example, the status quo point turns out not to be where it was most likely to be). We plan to extend the model to include uncertainty, but for now, this simple model—similar to that in Krehbiel (1998) and many other applications of the unidimensional spatial model—yields the main insights: (1) if the majority party controls the agenda, then bills that (are likely to) lead to policy changes opposed by a majority of majority party agents never (rarely)

make it onto the floor agenda, and (2) if the majority party controls th
agenda, policy changes (almost) always bring policy closer to M, the media
majority party agent's ideal point.

We make four further observations about these results. First, they are n
automatic consequences of the majority party's having a majority of seats
the legislature, as will be seen in the next section.

Second, aspects of the same results survive into multidimensional mod
in which legislators have spherical indifference contours. In particular, if t
agenda is set as if by majority vote in the majority caucus, then the only bi
that are scheduled move policy closer to the majority party yolk (the sma
est hypersphere that intersects all majority party median hyperplanes). In t
unidimensional model, the yolk collapses to the median, and so it is the m
dian that acts as the "policy attractor."

Third, the standard unidimensional spatial model assumes that there
no opportunity, consideration, or proposal costs. Changing any of th
zero-cost assumptions would not centrally affect the majority party's ne
tive agenda-setting success.

Finally, we should note that the (complete information) model yields
clear predictions about the exact bills that will be put on the floor age
and whether they will be amended. If the median majority party ag
prefers (1) reporting a bill at its own ideal point, seeing that bill amended
the floor median and then passed, to (2) reporting a bill at the floor me
and having the bill as reported passed, there can be amendments and t
will always go *against* a majority party majority. But this story implicitly
sumes that agents care about the positions they are associated with and
just about the final outcome. Although we certainly think that legisla
agents do care about position-taking payoffs, and we intend to explore m
els with such act-contingent utilities (cf. Sinclair 1998a), we do not el
rate that point here.

THE FLOOR AGENDA MODEL

In the floor agenda model, we assume that the bills to be considered on
floor are determined by majority vote on the floor. It is simplest to ima
that the median legislative agent moves that a bill implementing F be
onto the floor agenda. (If some other bill is put on the agenda, it wi
amended to F before passage in any event.)

Under this agenda structure, *all* dimensions j with SQ_j not equal
are considered on the floor. (Recall that there are no opportunity, prop
or consideration costs in the standard unidimensional spatial mod
which we are building.) If SQ_j is to the left of F_j, then the median and

his or her right will vote to consider a bill and then to pass it (as amended if amended). If SQ_j is to the right of F_j, then the median and all to his or her left will vote to consider a bill and then to pass it (as amended if amended).

Will a majority of majority party agents ever vote against the placement of a bill on the floor agenda in this model? Will they ever oppose a bill on final passage? The following results give the answers:

Result 1: A majority of the majority party will vote against putting a particular dimension j on the floor agenda (but will lose) if and only if SQ_j is closer to M_j than F_j is.

Corollary: The probability with which a majority of the majority party unsuccessfully opposes placing an issue j on the floor agenda is a function of (1) how large the interval between M_j and F_j is and (2) the distribution of SQ_j.

Result 2: A majority of the majority party will vote against a bill pertaining to dimension j on final passage (but will lose) if and only if SQ_j is closer to M_j than F_j is.

Corollary: The probability with which a majority of the majority party unsuccessfully opposes a bill on final passage is a function of (1) how large the interval between M_j and F_j is and (2) the distribution of SQ_j.

Note that similar results hold for the minority party. Just substitute *minority party* for *majority party* and m_j for M_j in these claims.

OCAL VERSUS GLOBAL AGENDA CONTROL

our discussion of the cartel model, we assumed that the majority party's edian member (or the leadership acting in that member's interest) set e floor agenda. Another variant of the cartel model, slightly more nuced, assumes that the majority party contingent on each committee in e House sets the floor agenda in the committee's jurisdiction. The first odel assumes that the floor agenda is set by the majority party's global edian, whereas the second assumes that it is set, in each jurisdiction, by e majority party's local median. A similar distinction between a global ajoritarian model (agenda set by floor median) and a local majoritarian odel (agenda in each jurisdiction set by the relevant committee median) n be made.

The predictions of the local models are similar to those made by the obal models. For example, when considering just one committee, the lo- cartel model predicts that the majority party contingent will never be lled, while the rate at which the minority party contingent is rolled deds on the distance between the minority's local median and the interval

between the floor and committee median. (The reason that the relevant distance is that between the minority median and the interval between floor and committee medians can be indicated by considering a status quo point that lies between the floor and committee medians. A bill proposing to change such a status quo will never be reported from committee, because the committee median will correctly anticipate that such a bill would end up at F, worse than the current status quo from his or her perspective. Thus the minority cannot be rolled on such bills; only those outside the intermedian interval can generate minority rolls. See Cox 1999 for details.)

In the next section, we use final passage votes on the floor to pit global versions of the cartel and floor agenda models against one another, and we use committee reports to pit local versions of the two models against one another. This leaves for another time the task of judging whether a global cartel (floor) model outperforms a local cartel (floor) model.

Comparing the Two Models

The floor agenda model and the cartel agenda model produce distinct point estimates and distinct comparative statics regarding the frequency of certain legislative outcomes. While we ultimately rely more on comparative statics to test the veracity of our models, we begin by examining the models' competing point estimates.

POINT ESTIMATES

Here we look at how often the majority party fails to stop legislation on which a majority of its members disapprove at either of two critical junctures in the legislative process. First, how often does the majority party get rolled on final passage votes on the House floor? That is, how often does a majority of the majority party oppose a bill that nonetheless passes? Second, how often does the majority party get rolled on committee votes? That is, how often does a majority of the majority party contingent on the relevant committee oppose a bill that nonetheless passes?

The cartel agenda model says that the majority party never gets rolled. The floor agenda model says that the majority party may be rolled less often than, as often as, or even more often than the minority, depending on where M_j, m_j, and F_j are and on how the status quo points are distributed on each dimension j. Assuming that the distribution of status quo points has no areas of zero density, a necessary and sufficient condition for the majority party to have a zero probability of losing under the floor agenda model is: $M_j = F_j$ for all j. This might happen, for example, if the majority party

consisted of a single unitary party that successfully imposed a single ideal point on its members. But it should be a rare event in cases where parties cannot be taken as "analytic units."

FINAL PASSAGE VOTES

We look first at final passage votes on the House floor. The set of final passage votes that we analyze is drawn from roll call votes for the 45th Congress through the first session of the 99th Congress.[7] We coded each final passage vote as either ordinary (only a majority required for passage) or extraordinary (a supermajority of two-thirds required for passage), excluding the latter from analysis. The analysis is restricted to H.R. bills.

We identify rolls by examining how the membership of each party voted on each final passage votes. If the nay votes exceeded the aye votes for one party (on committee or on the floor) but the measure passed nonetheless, we code that party as having been rolled on that vote. As shown in Table 5.2, the modal number of times, by Congress, that the majority party was rolled on final passage votes on the House floor is *zero*, as the majority party is not rolled at all in eighteen of the fifty-five Congresses in our study. The average number of times the majority party is rolled in a congress is 1.5, and the median number is 1. By contrast, the average number of rolls of the minority party is 13, with a median of 10. The average number of ordinary final passage votes per Congress is 51, and the median is 32.

Consider next the party roll rates (the number of times a party was rolled in a Congress divided by the total number of ordinary final passage votes). Roll rates for the majority and minority parties are given in Figure 5.2. The (weighted) average roll rate for the majority party in the fifty-five Congresses under study here is less than 3 percent. By contrast, the (weighted) average for the minority party is 25 percent.

The differences between the frequency of rolls on final passage votes and the roll rates for the majority and minority party meet our expectations very well. Nonetheless, the majority party was rolled 84 times in 2,826 votes in fifty-five Congresses (compared to 713 for the minority party), and we can reject the hypothesis that the average roll rate was zero for both the majority and minority parties. Is this close enough to our expectations to motivate further examination of the cartel agenda idea?

We believe so. To dispel one potential point of confusion that might convince some readers otherwise, we stress that there is no reason to expect the majority party to have a low roll rate merely because it has a majority. Let us elaborate this point before moving on to more systematic tests of the floor and cartel models.

Table 5.2

House Rolls on Final Passage Votes for Majority and Minority Parties, by Congress

Congress	*Majority Rolls*	*Minority Rolls*	*Total Final Passage Votes*	*Majority Party*
The Gilded Era/1877–1897				
45	5	7	21	Democrats
46	6	19	56	Democrats
47	5	15	45	Republicans
48	1	8	46	Democrats
49	6	4	27	Democrats
50	4	3	11	Democrats
51	1	17	25	Republicans
52	1	4	18	Democrats
53	1	11	25	Democrats
54	0	8	12	Republicans
Republican Hegemony II/1897–1909				
55	1	12	18	Republicans
56	0	6	7	Republicans
57	3	4	13	Republicans
58	0	3	4	Republicans
59	1	5	11	Republicans
60	0	3	5	Republicans
Pivotal Progressives/1909–1911				
61	1	10	11	Republicans
Democratic Interlude/1911–1921				
62	0	10	24	Republicans
63	1	10	23	Democrats
64	2	7	27	Democrats
65	0	6	37	Democrats
66	1	11	38	Republicans
Republican Hegemony III/1921–1933				
67	0	16	34	Republicans
68	1	7	22	Republicans
69	0	6	20	Republicans
70	0	2	10	Republicans
71	0	5	10	Republicans
72	1	8	16	Democrats

(*continued*)

Table 5.2
(*continued*)

Era/Congress	*Majority Rolls*	*Minority Rolls*	*Total Final Passage Votes*	*Majority Party*
New Deal Democratic Hegemony/1933–1937				
73	0	13	27	Democrats
74	2	12	31	Democrats
Conservative Coalition/1937–1973				
75	0	10	22	Democrats
76	2	10	32	Democrats
77	0	9	38	Democrats
78	4	1	29	Democrats
79	2	5	41	Democrats
80	0	7	35	Republicans
81	2	14	41	Democrats
82	0	7	23	Democrats
83	0	8	38	Republicans
84	2	3	43	Democrats
85	2	5	43	Democrats
86	2	16	49	Democrats
87	1	19	56	Democrats
88	2	29	81	Democrats
89	0	34	114	Democrats
90	1	16	121	Democrats
91	4	12	150	Democrats
92	4	7	150	Democrats
Liberal Hegemony/1973–1989				
93	1	30	236	Democrats
94	3	57	227	Democrats
95	2	44	187	Democrats
96	1	31	157	Democrats
97	2	24	96	Democrats
98	3	44	103	Democrats
99	0	19	40	Democrats

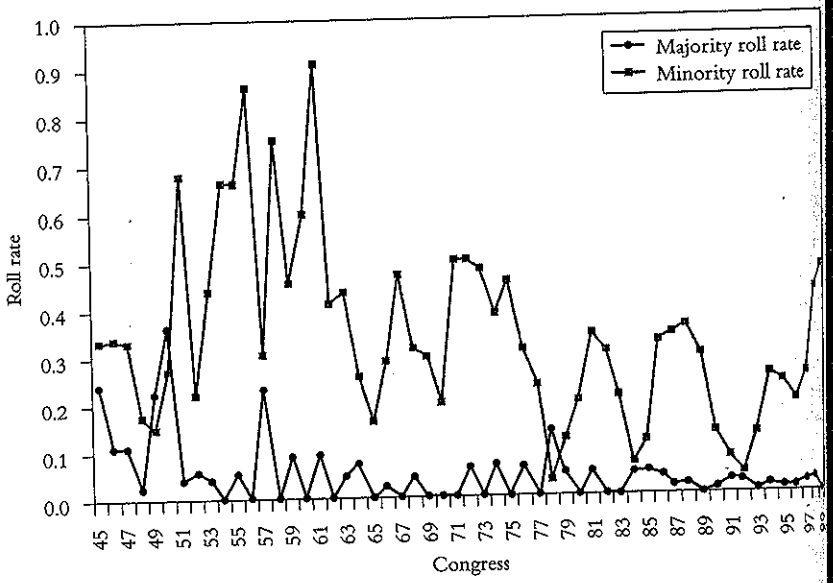

Figure 5.2. Majority and minority roll rates, by Congress.

Imagine a majority party that holds less than 100 percent of the seats in the House, and suppose that each legislator has a distinct ideal point. For any such majority, it is necessarily true that a majority of the party members' ideal points lie either to the left of the median legislator's ideal or to the right. Suppose that they lie to the left and a bill moving a status quo SQ to F is proposed, where $M < SQ < F$ (i.e., the status quo lies between the majority party and floor medians). Under the floor agenda model, the bill will pass despite the fact that a majority of the majority party will vote against it. In other words, the mere fact that the majority party has a majority, even a very big one, does not guarantee that it will not get rolled. The frequency of majority rolls depends on how many status quo points there are in the interval between M and F relative to the total number of status quo points altered in the session, not on the majority's size.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

We can also ask how often the majority party gets rolled in committee (that is, how often does a majority of the majority party contingent on a committee oppose reporting a bill to the floor but lose?). To do so, we employ a data set from Cox and McCubbins (1993) that contains 5,628 committee reports on bills introduced to the House in the 84th, 86th, 88th, 90th,

Table 5.3
Democrats' and Republicans' Roll Rates on Committee Reports, by Congress

Congress	Number of Committee Reports	Democrats' Roll Rate (%)	Republicans' Roll Rate (%)	Notes
84	905	0.11	0.55	Democrats rolled once, in Post Office Committee
86	782	0.13	2.56	Democrats rolled once, in Judiciary Committee
88	671	0	3.58	
90	621	0.16	3.22	Democrats rolled once, in HUAC
92	622	0	1.61	
94	672	0	7.44	
96	663	0.15	6.33	Democrats rolled once, in Interior Committee
98	686	0	9.04	
	Sum: 5628	Average: 0.07 (4/5628)	Average: 4.14 (233/5628)	

NOTE: Democrats were majority party in all Congresses.

92nd, 94th, 96th, and 98th Congresses. We count the majority contingent as being rolled when a majority of them file a dissent to the committee's report.

The data are summarized in Table 5.3. We find that the majority party was rolled on the committee report only 0.07 percent of the time (4 reports out of 5,628).

We also examined rolls on House-Senate conference reports (as evidenced by who signed and who did not sign the report). We found that the majority party in the House was rolled on final passage of the conference committee report only once in 240 times from the 96th through the 101st Congresses (data from Hennig 1996).[8]

The paucity with which the House majority party is rolled at the agenda-setting and final passage stages seems to fit nicely with the predictions of the cartel agenda model. Indeed, there are far fewer majority party rolls at all levels then we anticipated. This evidence is somewhat ambiguous, however, when it comes to choosing which model—the floor agenda or the cartel

agenda—is better at explaining the history of congressional behavior. First, the floor agenda model merely predicts a positive roll rate for the majority, the exact size depending on how many dimensions have status quo points between M and F. The distribution of (unobserved) status quo points just might be such that very few status quo points lie between M and F. Thus the floor agenda model is also potentially consistent with the low roll rates for the majority that we observed. Second, while the (complete information) cartel model predicts no majority rolls, there are a few. That the roll rate for the majority is low but not zero suggests that some omitted considerations—such as uncertainty or divided government (which we explore more fully later in this chapter)—are producing an occasional roll of the majority party. It is to more definitive tests that we now turn.

COMPARATIVE STATICS

To bolster our confidence that the cartel model outperforms the floor model, we now examine the two models' competing comparative statics predictions, beginning with final passage votes. Under the floor agenda model, the probability that the majority party loses a final passage vote increases with the distance between M_j and F_j for all j, while the probability that the minority loses an agenda-setting or final passage vote increases with the distance between m_j and F_j for all j.[9] Under the cartel agenda model, the second of these comparative statics expectations holds—the opposition should lose more often the more distant its median member is from the floor median—but the first does not: the majority party should never lose, and any fluctuations in its roll rate should be unrelated to the distance between the majority party and floor medians.

We cannot observe the distance between party medians and the floor median on a dimension-by-dimension basis. But we can use multidimensional scaling results, such as the NOMINATE scale produced by Poole and Rosenthal (1985,1997), to estimate the average location of the party and floor medians across all dimensions in a Congress. If we denote party c's estimated median in Congress t by P_{ct}, the estimated floor median by F_t, and the distance between these two by $D_{ct} = |P_{ct} - F_t|$, then the foregoing discussion suggests estimating the following regression to test the two models:

$$Pr[ROLL_{cjt} = 1] = G[\alpha_c + \beta_c \times D_{ct}] \quad (1)$$

where $ROLL_{cjt}$ is a dummy variable that takes on a value of 1 if party c was rolled on ordinary final passage vote j in Congress t and 0 otherwise; α_c and β_c are parameters; and G is a cumulative distribution function.

Note that while our dependent variable takes on a value of 0 or 1 for each vote, our independent variables do not vary by vote but rather by Congress. This presents special estimation problems. Although we have many votes in a Congress, they may not be independent. While we might believe that votes are independent if the floor agenda model is true, the cartel agenda model implies that they are not. But if votes are not independent, estimating Equation 1 for each observation of $ROLL_{cjt}$ may exaggerate our true number of observations and make our standard errors seem smaller than they really are. We therefore estimate Equation 2:

$$ROLL\_RATE_{ct} = \chi_c + \beta_c D_{ct} + \varepsilon_{ct} \quad (2)$$

where $ROLL\_RATE_{ct}$ is the roll rate for each party c in Congress t.

Equation 2 can be estimated by ordinary least squares (OLS) because the number of observations that make up the denominator in the proportion, $ROLL\_RATE_{ct}$, averages more than 50 and thus $ROLL\_RATE_{ct}$ should approximate a normal distribution asymptotically. We expect that Equation 2 will suffer from heteroskedasticity as the number of votes per Congress varies by two orders of magnitude. Examining roll rates in Figure 5.2 leads us to believe that our estimation will also suffer serial correlation. We found evidence of both problems. We corrected for this using the Huber-White sandwich estimator of variance. To correct for autocorrelation, we included one and two term lags of the dependent variables as right-hand side variables. Further diagnostics of our regression suggested no other problems for our estimation.

Maddala (1983: 18–30) suggests the minimum logit chi square (MLCS) technique of Berkson (1953) as an alternative method to estimate Equation 2. In this technique, the dependent variable is the smoothed logit of the roll rate:

$$\log\left[\frac{ROLL\_RATE_{ct} + (2TOTAL\_FPV_t)^{-1}}{1 - ROLL\_RATE_{ct} + (2TOTAL\_FPV_t)^{-1}}\right]$$

where $TOTAL\_FPV_{ct}$ is the total number of final passage votes for Congress t. One estimates the model using weighted least squares with weights $TOTAL\_FPV_t \times [ROLL\_RATE_{ct} + (2TOTAL\_FPV_t)^{-1}] \times [1 - ROLL\_RATE_{ct} + (2TOTAL\_FPV_t)^{-1}]$. This technique should approximate a logit regression on $ROLL_{cjt}$ without exaggerating our number of observations and biasing our tests.[9]

The floor agenda model predicts that the coefficient β_c in Equation 2 will be positive and significant for both the majority and minority parties. That

is, the floor agenda model predicts that as D_{ct} increases, the likelihood that the majority (minority) party is rolled on vote j increases.

The cartel agenda model, in contrast, predicts that the coefficient β_c for the majority party will be zero: the likelihood that the *majority* party is rolled on vote j is not systematically related to D_{ct}. However, β_c is predicted to be positive for the minority party.

Which of these two stark models better fits the observed data? Table 5.4 provides an answer.

FINAL PASSAGE ROLLS

The results from an OLS estimation of $ROLL\_RATE_{ct}$ for final passage floor votes is reported in the middle of the table. As the cartel agenda model predicts, the estimated coefficient $\hat{\beta}_c$ for the majority party is statistically indistinguishable from zero ($p < .324$, two-tailed test), while the estimated coefficient for the minority party is positive and highly significant ($p < .00$ two-tailed test). This implies that the likelihood of rolling the majority party on the floor is unrelated to the distance between the majority party and floor medians; but the likelihood of rolling the minority increases the more distant its median member is from the floor median. This flatly refutes the floor agenda model.

The MCLS estimates for final passage floor votes are also reported in the middle of Table 5.4. The results are quite similar to the Huber-White OLS estimates: we cannot reject the null hypothesis that $\hat{\beta}_c$ for the majority party ($p > .418$) is equal to zero, but we can reject the null hypothesis that β_c = 0 for the minority party ($p > 0$). This too flatly rejects the floor agenda model.

COMMITTEE ROLLS

In our analysis of the House committee data, the unit of observation is a Congress-committee-party vote. Thus the dependent variable, $ROLL_{clcj}$, is whether or not party c was rolled on vote j in committee l in Congress t. Unlike the situation with final passage votes, the number of observations per committee is often relatively small. We cannot rely on large numbers to produce normally distributed proportions. Accordingly, OLS is not an attractive estimation procedure in the case of the committee data. Here we present estimates from an MCLS model. (Estimating the model directly with a logistic regression produces comparable results, as it does in the case of final passage votes.)

Our sample of committee votes was restricted to even-numbered Congresses from the 84th to the 98th (inclusive). The main independent vari-

Table 5.4

Effect of Distance from Floor Median on Party Roll Rates: Cartel Model vs. Floor Model

Predicted Coefficients from the Cartel and Floor Models

	Majority $\hat{\beta}$	*Minority* $\hat{\beta}$
Cartel agenda control model	0	+
Floor agenda control model	+	+

Estimated OLS and MLCS Coefficients, House Final Passage Votes

	Majority $\hat{\beta}$	*Minority* $\hat{\beta}$
Effect of D_{ct} on roll rates for House final passage votes, estimated using OLS[a]	0.091 (0.091)	0.514 (0.096)
Effect of D_{ct} on roll rates for House final passage votes, estimated using MLCS[b]	1.569 (1.92)	2.108 (0.412)

Estimated MLCS Coefficients, Committee Bill Reports

	Majority $\hat{\beta}$	*Minority* $\hat{\beta}$
Effect of D^l_{ct} on roll rates for House committee bill reports	−0.378 (0.481)	1.436 (0.394)

[a]The estimated constant term is .022 (majority) and .036 (minority). The estimated coefficients for the autoregressive terms are $\gamma_1 = -.006$ (majority) and .250 (minority) for the first lag of the dependent variable and $\gamma_2 = .029$ (majority) and −.067 (minority) for the second lag of the dependent variable. A joint test of the null hypothesis that $\gamma_1 + \gamma_2 = 0$ can be rejected in both cases. $N = 53$, $F(3, 49) = .61$ (majority) and 12.8 (minority), Prob > $F = .614$ (majority) and .000 (minority), $R^2 = .013$ (majority) and .50 (minority).

[b]The estimated constant term is −2.15 (majority) and −1.68 (minority). The estimated coefficients for the autoregressive terms are $\gamma_1 = .130$ (majority) and .243* (minority) for the first lag of the dependent variable and $\gamma_2 = .247$* (majority) and −.145* (minority) for the second lag of the dependent variable (*$p > |.05|$). A joint test of the null hypothesis that $\gamma_1 + \gamma_2 = 0$ can be rejected in both cases. $N = 53$, $F(3, 49) = 4.64$ (majority) and 15.8 (minority), Prob > $F = .006$ (majority) and .000 (minority), Adjusted $R^2 = .174$ (majority) and .461 (minority).

in our estimation of committee rolls is the distance between the median Democrat on the committee and the interval between the committee median and floor median, D^i_{ct}.

Because the number of bills considered by a committee can differ widely, we expected, and found, our regression estimates to suffer from heteroskedasticity. We corrected for this using the Huber-White sandwich estimator of variance. Further diagnostics of our regression suggested no other problems for our estimation.

The results from our MLCS estimation of $ROLL^i_{ct}$ is reported at the bottom of Table 5.4. As the cartel agenda model predicts, the estimated coefficient $\hat{\beta}$ is statistically indistinguishable from zero for the majority party ($p = .43$, two-tailed test), while the coefficient is positive and highly significant for the minority party ($p < .001$, two-tailed test). These results clearly support the cartel agenda model and refute the floor agenda model.

DISCUSSION: CONDITIONAL VERSUS UNCONDITIONAL PARTY GOVERNMENT

Our research shows that the majority party is very rarely rolled on (1) votes to report a bill from committee (0.07 percent of the time in our sample), (2) votes to report a bill from a conference committee (0.04 percent of the time in our sample), and (3) final passage votes on bills (about 3 percent of the time in our sample). We also find no systematic relationship between (1) the distance between the majority party median and the House median and (2) the party's roll rate on final passage votes. Similarly, we found no systematic relationship between (1) the distance between the majority-party median on a committee and the interval between committee and floor medians and (2) the party's roll rate on committee reports.

These results support the cartel agenda model and the simple view of negative agenda control it proposes. As our analysis spans more than a century of congressional history, this in turns suggest that the majority party's negative agenda power has been a constant feature of congressional organization during that time. In terms of the notion of conditional party government (see, for example, Rohde 1991 and Aldrich and Rohde 1997a, 1998), *the majority party's negative agenda control is not conditional*: in other words, it does not vary with the party's heterogeneity.

To verify this point, we regressed the majority party $ROLL\_RATE_t$ for each Congress from the 73rd through the 99th on the party's heterogeneity (measured by the standard deviation for majority party members from the party mean on the first dimension of D-NOMINATE scores).[10] We found that heterogeneity had no effect on the majority party's roll rates ($\hat{\beta} = -.041$; SE = 0.117; $p < .73$, two-tailed test; $R^2 = .005$; constant term = .033; $N = 27$).

The majority party's consistent ability to keep things off the legislative agenda, at least under single-party control of both chambers of Congress, means that any social agent wishing to enact new legislation must deal with the majority party. This fact is very useful in raising campaign finance (see, for example, Cox and Magar 1999). Indeed, the dollar value of secure agenda control provides one reason to expect procedural powers to be stably cartelized.

DISCUSSION: DISRUPTING THE MAJORITY'S AGENDA CONTROL

Because the majority party's roll rate is not actually zero, as the complete-information model presented previously would have it, what explains majority rolls? Three important actors might compete with the House majority in setting the House agenda: the Senate; the president; and an alternative majority coalition in the House, such as the Conservative Coalition. We found that divided government, comprising either a division of partisan control between the House and the Senate or between the House and the president had no systematic effect on party roll rates.[11] We found, however, that the activity of the Conservative Coalition did have a significant effect on roll rates, and it is to a report of these activities that we now turn.

It is conventional wisdom that the Conservative Coalition (an alliance of conservative Republicans with conservative Southern Democrats) was extremely influential in the House from its first appearance in 1937 through the mid-1970s. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear that this coalition, rather than the Democratic party, really ruled the roost during this period. Our results pose a direct challenge to this view.

First, consider all the committees chaired by conservative Southern Democrats during this period. Suppose that one of these chairs decided to push a bill through his committee with Republican and Southern Democratic votes, in the teeth of Northern Democratic opposition—in other words, to activate the Conservative Coalition at the committee stage. Had any chair done so, one should have found Republicans and Southern Democrats on the committee signing the majority report of the committee, with Northern Democrats filing a dissenting report. Assuming that the North held a majority of the Democratic seats on the committee, as it did on most committees most of the time during this period, such an episode would nec-

essarily have appeared in our data as a roll of the majority (Democratic) party. However, from the 84th Congress (1955–56) through the 92nd (1972–73), no Southern chair *ever* pushed a bill out of their committee on the basis of the Conservative Coalition—a surprising finding if one believes that the Conservative Coalition was the real power in the House.[12]

This is not surprising from our perspective: our model implies that the majority party should never get rolled in committee, which necessarily entails a "ban" on the appearance in committee of the Conservative Coalition. The ban, evidently, held throughout the heyday of the Conservative Coalition, despite the many opportunities (temptations) that Southern chairs must have faced.

Our model also implies that the Conservative Coalition should have been "banned" at the final passage stage: if the only bills put on the agenda changed a status quo that a majority of Democrats agreed needed changing, then at final passage one should not find a majority of Democrats voting against (in the complete-information version of the story presented here). So how often did the Conservative Coalition appear on final passage votes, as opposed to earlier floor votes (amendments mostly)?

The vast majority of the Conservative Coalition's appearances came at the amendment stage, rather than at final passage or procedural stages.[13] Of the 11,211 votes from the 84th to 100th Congresses, 3,686 were final passage votes on bills and resolutions.[14] Of these, the Conservative Coalition formed (a majority of Southern Democrats voting with a majority of Republicans) and opposed the Democratic majority on 305 (8.3 percent). There were 1,999 votes involving suspension of the rules or special rules, both procedures the majority party typically controls. Of these, the Coalition formed in opposition to the Democrats on 89 occasions (4.3 percent). What remains are 5,449 "prefinal votes," mostly concerning amendments and parliamentary maneuvers of various sorts.[15] Of these, the Conservative Coalition formed in opposition to a majority of Democrats on 1,303 (or 23.9 percent). Thus the Conservative Coalition appeared about four times as often (and at a rate that was three times higher) on prefinal as opposed to final votes, and the contrast is even greater with the key procedural steps that the majority controls.

How often was the Conservative Coalition successful on final passage votes for ordinary bills? How often did it hijack the House agenda and roll the Democratic majority? The data to answer these questions are given in Table 5.5. The rows in Table 5.5 indicate whether the Conservative Coalition was active (i.e., a majority of Southern Democrats voted with a majority of Republicans) and in what sense (favoring or opposing passage). The columns indicate whether a majority of the Democratic party favored or opposed passage. The top portion of the table looks at all 2,313 final passage votes on ordinary bills from the 84th to 100th Congresses; the bottom portion is restricted to ordinary bills that actually passed (2,238 in all).

Table 5.5
Influence of the Conservative Coalition on Final Passage Votes

Voting on Final Passage Overall

	DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY VOTED	
	Against	*In favor*
Conservative coalition		
Did not form	16	477
Voted against	16	143
Voted in favor	38	1623

Voting on Final Passage When the Bill Passed

	DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY VOTED	
	Against	*In favor*
Conservative coalition		
Did not form	9	463
Voted against	0	110
Voted in favor	33	1623

A look at Table 5.5 shows that the Conservative Coalition was for the most part either inactive (493 times) or in agreement with the Democratic majority (1,639 times) on final passage votes. On only 181 such votes (7.8 percent of the total) did the Coalition oppose the Democrats, and most of these (143) were cases where the Coalition opposed while the Democrats favored passage. There were 38 occasions (an average of twice per Congress) on which the Coalition favored while the Democrats opposed passage. Of

these, the Democrats were rolled 33 times (about twice per Congress). These Democratic rolls represented about 1.5 percent of all final passage votes. Democratic roll rates on procedural votes were even lower—1.2 percent on votes on special rules and 0 percent on votes on suspension of the rules (which require a two-thirds majority to pass).

In our view, the Conservative Coalition was mostly a *substantive floor alliance*. It was a *floor* alliance in that it appeared almost never in committee. It was a *substantive* alliance in that it appeared rarely on procedural votes and then with little success. It appeared most often prior to the final passage vote stage and on nonprocedural votes—such as amendments and dilatory motions. The Democratic party, in contrast, was a procedural alliance that appeared almost always (in the negative sense of preventing rolls) in committee, on floor procedural votes, and at final passage.

Contrasting the Cartel Agenda Model and Pivot Models

So far we have tested two models of how the plenary agenda in the U.S. House of Representatives is set: one in which it is set as if by majority vote on the floor of the House (the floor agenda model) and one in which it is set as if by majority vote in the majority party's caucus (the cartel agenda model). We now contrast the cartel agenda model not with the pure majority rule floor model but instead with the pivot model recently advanced by Krehbiel (1998).

Krehbiel's pivot model differs from pure majority rule in that it incorporates two nonmajoritarian features of U.S. policymaking: the filibuster in the Senate and the presidential veto. Because of these features, the pivot model, unlike the floor agenda model, features a "gridlock zone." If the status quo policy lies in this zone, the model predicts no policy change.

Here we ask the following questions: Does the presence of these nonmajoritarian features in the pivot model produce predictions similar to those of the cartel model (which also has a zone of "protected" status quo points)? How do the two models differ in their observable implications? In particular, do they predict different roll rates?

PARTY ROLL RATES: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Under the cartel model, the majority party never loses on agenda-setting or final passage votes. How often the minority party gets rolled increases as the distance between m_{jt} (the median ideal point of the minority party) and F_{jt} (the median ideal point of the legislature) increases.

What about the pivot model? In this model, any status quo point in the gridlock interval is left alone, while those outside the interval are brought inside it. If a status quo point happens to lie *outside* the gridlock interval but *inside* the majority party roll region, the majority party will be rolled on the dimension in question. So what are the gridlock zone and the majority roll zone precisely?

In the case of a left-wing majority and right-wing president, for example, the gridlock zone extends from f_{jt} (the filibuster pivot, on the left) to v_{jt} (the veto pivot, on the right). Any status quo point to the left of the filibuster pivot will be sufficiently far left that there exists a bill to change it that can overcome a filibuster—that is, one that can attract the support of three-fifths or more of the Senate. Any status quo point to the right of the veto pivot will be sufficiently far right that there exists a bill to change it that can overcome a presidential veto—that is, one that can attract the support of at least two-thirds of the House and Senate. (In principle, the two-thirds point in the House and Senate could differ. Krehbiel's model ignores this potential complication.)

The majority party roll region is $(2M_{jt} - F_{jt}, F_{jt})$. Here M_{jt} is the median ideal point of the majority party's members and F_{jt} is, as noted before, the median ideal point of the legislature.

All told then, in the pivot model, the majority party is rolled on dimension j if and only if SQ_{jt} is in the interval $(2M_{jt} - F_{jt}, f_{jt})$. If $f_{jt} \leq 2M_{jt} - F_{jt}$, then this interval will be null, leading to the same prediction—that the majority is never rolled—as in the cartel model. If $f_{jt} > 2M_{jt} - F_{jt}$, in contrast, then the pivot model predicts that the majority party's roll rate will be positive.

Should one expect $f_{jt} > 2M_{jt} - F_{jt}$, so that the model predicts a positive roll rate for the majority? By way of answer, note that M_{jt} will be about the 25th percentile of the House ideal points for a party with a bare majority of seats (larger for larger parties), while f_{jt} is the ideal point of the 40th percentile in the Senate. If the quantiles of the distribution of ideal points in the Senate and House are identical, then any status quo point lying in the interval from M_{jt} (the 25th percentile) to f_{jt} (the 40th percentile) of ideal points in the House will produce a majority party roll.[16]

AN INITIAL CONTRAST BETWEEN THE PIVOT AND CARTEL MODELS

Before considering party roll rates, we consider here how often the median legislator gets rolled on final passage votes on the House floor, compared to

the median member of the majority party. Recall that in our model, each member's ideal point can vary from dimension to dimension so that the member who is the median on one dimension may not be the median on all others. It is possible, therefore, that there is no median legislator, if by that one means a legislator whose ideal point is the median on all dimensions. Nonetheless, suppose that there is a member who is usually at or near the median on each dimension, and compare this legislator to one who is usually at or near the majority party median on each dimension.

Operationally, we shall define the median legislator as the member—denoted F—whose Poole-Rosenthal D-NOMINATE score (first dimension) is the median in a particular Congress. We can similarly define the median majority party member—denoted M—for each Congress from the 85th to the 94th. Let us suppose that the operationally defined median members just identified—F and M—are typically *near* the relevant median on all dimensions but not necessarily *at* the median. More precisely, assume that F's ideal point on dimension j, x_j^F, is symmetrically distributed with mean F_j and variance s_j^2, and that M's ideal point on dimension j, x_j^M, is symmetrically distributed with mean M_j and variance t_j^2.

Under the cartel model, M should be rolled less often than F. This is because M's expected ideal point is in the middle of the majority party's block zone. M will be rolled only if his or her ideal point on a dimension is far enough from expected as to lie outside the zone $(2M_j - F_j, F_j) = (M_j - |F_j - M_j|, M_j + |F_j - M_j|)$. In contrast, F's expected ideal point is on the right-hand edge of the majority's block zone. Thus F's actual ideal point will lie outside the majority's block zone about half the time (assuming that the distribution of x_j^F is continuous), and thus F will not be protected from rolls by the majority agenda setter's preferences.

Under the pivot model, one expects exactly the opposite: M should be rolled more often than F. This is because F is now expected to be near the center of the gridlock zone on each dimension and hence will be protected from rolls by the fact that bills that the member would oppose will not be scheduled. In contrast, M is now outside the gridlock zone (for small enough majorities) and will not be protected.

So which is it? Is the majority party median (M) rolled more often or less often than the overall median (F)? To answer this question, we examined how M and F voted on each final passage vote and compared this to actual outcomes, thereby calculating roll rates for each. As shown in Table 5.6, we found that the median voter (F) was rolled between 4 percent and 29 percent of the time, for an average of more than 10 percent for the whole period. By comparison, the median of the majority party (M) was rolled less than one-sixth as often (20 times out of 1,227 final passage votes from the 84th to 94th Congresses, or 1.6 percent).

Table 5.6
Number of Rolls and the Roll Rates on Final Passage Votes for Floor Median, by Congress

Congress	*Median Rolls*	*Median Roll Rate (%)*	*Majority Roll Rate (%)*
85	9	21	5
86	14	29	4
87	10	18	2
88	18	22	2
89	11	10	0
90	18	15	1
91	9	6	3
92	6	4	3
93	22	9	0
94	11	5	1
Average	12.8	10	2

PARTY ROLL RATES WHEN PREFERENCES SHIFT: THEORY

Let us turn now to consider some differing predictions that the cartel and pivot model make regarding how party roll rates should react when congressional preferences shift. Suppose bills are passed at $t - 1$ in accordance with the pivot model and that these bills establish the status quo on each dimension at the end of period $t - 1$ (call this $Q_{j,t-1}$). Suppose also that nature adds a "policy shock" to each dimension ($\varepsilon_{j,t}$) at the beginning of period t. The status quo at the beginning of period t is then $SQ_{jt} = Q_{j,t-1} + \varepsilon_{j,t}$. The distribution of SQ_{jt} thus depends on (1) what Congress did at $t - 1$ and (2) the distribution of $\varepsilon_{j,t}$. We can make similar assumptions about the cartel model, with the $Q_{j,t-1}$ values established in accord with that model, then perturbed by nature.

With these assumptions about how status quo points are generated, what can we say? Consider nine cases, depending on whether the policy shocks tend to push things left, right, or in neither direction and whether prefer-

ences, as measured by the floor median's ideal point at time t, F_{jt}, shift left, right, or in neither direction. Formally, the policy shock tendency can be captured by the expected value of $\varepsilon_{j,t}$. If $E(\varepsilon_{j,t}) < 0$, nature tends to push the status quo leftward. If $E(\varepsilon_{j,t}) > 0$, nature tends to push the status quo rightward. Finally, if $E(\varepsilon_{j,t}) = 0$, nature pushes neither left nor right. With respect to preference shifts, the simplest case to consider is one in which the entire distribution of ideal points shifts left or right by a fixed amount, δ_{jt} (so that $\delta_{jt} = F_{jt} - F_{j,t-1}$). Preferences shift left, right, or in neither direction as δ_{jt} is less than, greater than, or equal to zero.

In what follows, we shall first consider how the pivot and cartel models differ in terms of their point estimates of the majority and minority roll rates. We shall then examine the more important subject of the models' competing comparative statics predictions.

POINT ESTIMATES

To explore the models' point estimates, let us consider the special case in which $E(\varepsilon_{j,t}) = 0$ and $\text{var}(\varepsilon_{j,t}) = 0$. In this case, nature does not shock any policy, and everything depends on how preferences shift. There are thus only three cases to consider: $\delta_{jt} < 0$, $\delta_{jt} = 0$, and $\delta_{jt} > 0$ (preferences shift left, stay the same, or shift right).

If preferences shift toward the right ($\delta_{jt} > 0$), the only status quo points that fall outside the new (time t) gridlock zone are those on the left. If $2M_{jt} - F_{jt} < f_{jt}$, some of these points will produce majority party rolls (see Figure 5.3, where the shaded area indicates the status quo policies produced at $t - 1$). In contrast, the minority party will *never* be rolled in this case because there are no status quo points to the right of the new gridlock zone (the gridlock zone has shifted right, and all status quo points to the right of the old gridlock zone were dealt with by the $t - 1$ Congress). This prediction—that the majority will be rolled at a positive rate, while the minority is never rolled—contrasts strongly with the cartel model's prediction in this case that neither party will be rolled.[17]

If preferences do not shift at all ($\delta_{jt} = 0$), the pivot model predicts that there will be no new legislation at time t. The cartel model predicts the same. Both these predictions would of course soften were one to allow policy shocks by nature.

Finally, if preferences shift left ($\delta_{jt} < 0$), the only status quo points that fall outside the new (time t) gridlock zone are those on the right. If $2m_{jt} - F_{jt} > v_{jt}$, some of these points will produce minority party rolls (see Figure 5.3). In contrast, the majority party will never be rolled in this case because

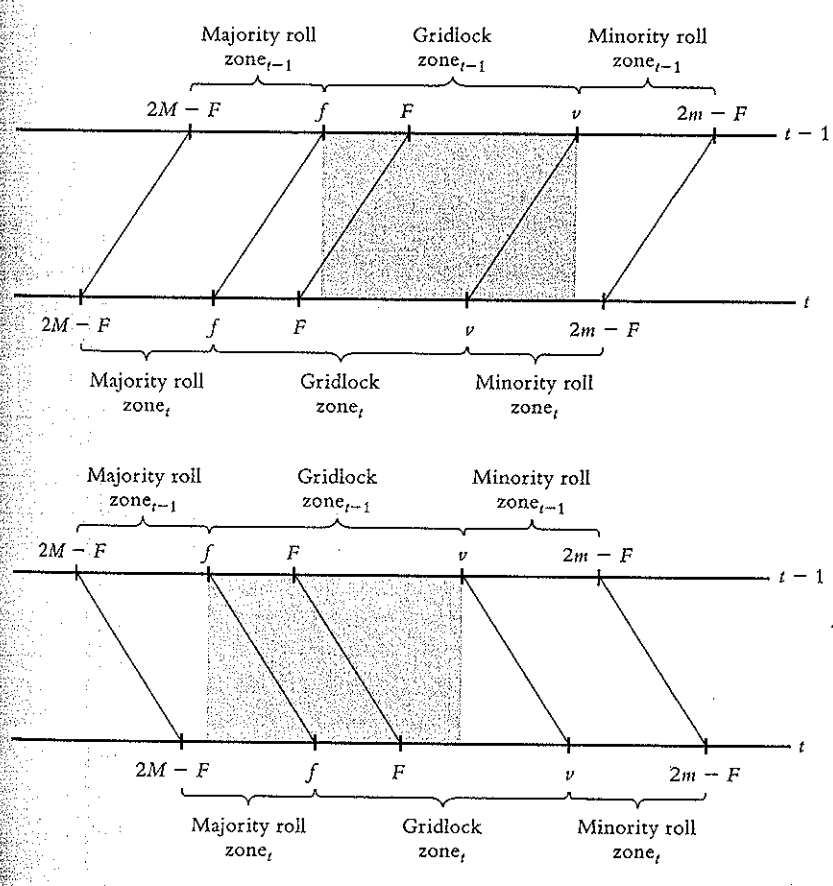

Figure 5.3. Gridlock zone and shifting preferences.

there are no status quo points to the left of the new gridlock zone (the gridlock zone has shifted left, and all status quo points to the left of the old gridlock zone were dealt with by bill by the $t - 1$ Congress). This prediction—that the minority will be rolled at a positive rate, while the majority is never rolled—agrees with the cartel model's prediction in this case.

All told, then, the predictions of the pivot and cartel models differ only in the case where preferences shift toward the minority party ($\delta_{jt} > 0$). Their difference in this case is stark and is not due simply to our considering the special case of $E(\varepsilon_{j,t}) = 0$ and $\text{var}(\varepsilon_{j,t}) = 0$. For leftist majorities, as long as the distribution of the policy shocks is symmetrical, the pivot model predicts that the majority roll rate will exceed the minority roll rate after right-

ward preference shifts, whereas the cartel model predicts the opposite. This difference provides us with an empirical wedge, a means to test the cartel agenda model against another prominent theory, the pivot model.

COMPARATIVE STATICS

What about the two models' comparative statics predictions? The pivot model predicts that the roll rates of both the majority party and the minority party should be sensitive to congressional preference shifts. The majority party, for example, should be rolled more often after preferences shift away from it (to the right in our case), but be rolled less often after preferences shift toward it (to the left). In contrast, the cartel model agrees that preference shifts will affect the minority party's roll rate but claims that such shifts will have no effect on the majority party's roll rate.

To explain the pivot model's predictions regarding the majority party, recall that the probability (before nature's policy shock is realized) that the majority party will be rolled on dimension j can be expressed as $P = Pr[SQ_{jt} \in (2M_{jt} - F_{jt}, f_{jt})]$. Because $SQ_{jt} = Q_{j,t-1} + \varepsilon_{jt}$, $M_{jt} = M_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt}$, $F_{jt} = F_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt}$, and $f_{jt} = f_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt}$, P can be rephrased as $P = Pr[Q_{j,t-1} + \varepsilon_{jt} \in (2M_{j,t-1} - F_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt}, f_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt})]$. Subtracting $Q_{j,t-1}$ throughout gives $P = Pr[\varepsilon_{jt} \in (2M_{j,t-1} - F_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt} - Q_{j,t-1}, f_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt} - Q_{j,t-1})]$. If we denote the cumulative distribution function of ε_{jt} by G, then $P = G(f_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt} - Q_{j,t-1}) - G(2M_{j,t-1} - F_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt} - Q_{j,t-1})$.

Differentiating P with respect to δ yields $\partial P/\partial\delta(\delta) = g(f_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt} - Q_{j,t-1}) - g(2M_{j,t-1} - F_{j,t-1} + \delta_{jt} - Q_{j,t-1})$, where g is the probability density function associated with G. We know that $Q_{j,t-1} \in (f_{j,t-1}, v_{j,t-1})$ because Congress will have altered any status quo points lying outside the $t-1$ gridlock zone. Thus $\partial P/\partial\delta(0) = g(f) - g(f-d)$, where $f = f_{j,t-1} - Q_{j,t-1} \leq 0$ and $d = f_{j,t-1} - (2M_{j,t-1} - F_{j,t-1}) > 0$—so that $f - d < f$. If g is single-peaked about zero, then $f - d < f \leq 0$ implies $g(f) - g(f-d) > 0$; hence $\partial P/\partial\delta(0) > 0$. Since $\partial P/\partial\delta(\delta)$ is a continuous function of δ, this suffices to show that $\partial P/\partial\delta(\delta) > 0$ for all δ in an interval I around zero. [It can be shown that $I = (-\infty, -f + 0.5d)$.] In words, the probability P of a majority party roll increases as preferences in Congress shift more to the right—that is, away from the majority, which is presumed to be leftist.[18]

Thus the pivot model's prediction—$\partial P/\partial\delta > 0$—is in stark contrast to the cartel model's prediction that $\partial P/\partial\delta = 0$. It can be shown, however, that both models predict $\partial p/\partial\delta(\delta) < 0$ for all δ in an interval including zero; that is, the minority party's roll rate decreases with larger rightward shifts in congressional preferences.[19]

PARTY ROLL RATES: EVIDENCE

To test the competing comparative statics claims just made, we again analyzed final passage roll rates for both the minority and majority parties on the House floor. The unit of analysis is thus a party Congress, and we estimate separate regressions for the majority and minority parties. Our dependent variable is again $ROLL\_RATE_{ct}$.

The main independent variable is $PrefShift_{ct}$, a variable capturing the preference shift away from party c between Congress t and $t-1$ (so rightward shifts are positive if c is the Democratic party, and leftward shifts are positive if c is the Republican party).[20] We also include, as a control in our analysis, the measure of Conservative Coalition activity used earlier.

The cartel model predicts that (1) the constant term will be positive and significant in the minority party regression (the minority party should be rolled significantly often, preference shift and conservative coalition activity held constant) but insignificant in the majority party regression and that (2) the coefficient on $PrefShift_{ct}$ will be insignificantly different from zero in the majority party regression but positive and significant in the minority party regression.

The pivot model predicts that the constant term in both the majority and minority regressions will be insignificantly different from zero: if $PrefShift_{ct}$ is zero, there should be no status quo points outside the gridlock zone and hence no rolls of either party. It also predicts that the coefficient on $PrefShift_{ct}$ will be positive and significant for both parties. Thus the pivot model agrees with the cartel model regarding the constant term in the majority party regression (it should be zero) and the slope term in the minority regression (it should be positive). But the two models disagree regarding the slope term in the majority regression and the constant term in the minority regression.

The results of OLS and MLCS regression,

$$ROLL\_RATE_{ct} = \chi_c + \beta_c PrefShift_t + \gamma_c CC\_SCORE_t + G_t \qquad (3)$$

are reported in Table 5.7.

The results conform closely to the predictions of the cartel agenda model and refute the predictions for the pivot model. In particular, while $\hat{\beta}_c$ is positive and significant in the regression for the minority party, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that it is zero for the majority party.[21] Interestingly, the analysis also shows that the greater the activity of the Conservative Coalition in a Congress, the greater the roll rates for both parties. These results give us added confidence that the cartel agenda model captures, at least

Table 5.7
Effect of Shifting Preferences on Roll Rates: Cartel Model vs. Pivot Model

Predicted Coefficients from the Cartel and Pivot Models		
	Majority $\hat{\beta}$	*Minority* $\hat{\beta}$
Cartel agenda control model	0	+
Pivot control model	+	+

Estimated OLS Coefficients[a]		
	Majority $\hat{\beta}$	*Minority* $\hat{\beta}$
Effect of $PrefShift_\alpha$ on roll rates for House final passage votes	0.08 (0.09)	0.33 (0.16)

Estimated MLCS Coefficients[b]		
	Majority $\hat{\beta}$	*Minority* $\hat{\beta}$
Effect of $PrefShift_\alpha$ on roll rates for House final passage votes	1.53 (0.84)	1.90 (0.58)

[a] $N = 53$ (for both regressions), $F(4, 48) = 2.00$ (majority) and 6.98 (minority), Adjusted $R^2 = -.12$ (majority) and .42 (minority), CC_SCORE (majority) = .02 (.01)* and CC_SCORE (minority) = .03 (.02)* ($p > .05$).
[b] $N = 53$ (for both regressions), $F(4, 48) = 14.36$ (majority) and 10.49 (minority), Adjusted $R^2 = .54$ (majority) and .42 (minority), CC_SCORE (majority) = .60 (.12)* and CC_SCORE (minority) = .11 (.60)* ($p > .05$).

partly, some of the underlying principles of legislative organization and some of the important forces that animate congressional history.

Positive Agenda Power

On the one hand—the dominant hand—we view the majority party as a procedural cartel dedicated to preserving vetoes over policy change. On the other hand, the majority party is also a substantive coalition capable of taking positive action. Here we examine features of this other hand of agenda power.

In *Legislative Leviathan* (Cox and McCubbins 1993), we argued that the heterogeneity of the majority party determines the size of what we called the "party agenda," defined as the set of bills on which the party leadership takes a united stand (see also Sala 1999). Our argument—consistent with that of Rohde (1991) and others—was that majority parties whose members' core constituencies are more similar tend also to be those whose leaders use party resources to push a wider range of issues, while majority parties whose members' core constituencies are less similar tend also to be those whose leaders use party resources to push a narrower range of issues. We also noted that members' support of their leadership, conditional on the leadership's presenting a united front, varies little from Congress to Congress—typically hovering around the 90 percent mark.

If one imagines that party leaders take a united stand on a bill if and only if it is favored by at least T percent of the party, then the complete information cartel agenda model sketched in this chapter conforms to our previous work. For $T = 9$, for example, the model predicts that the party agenda consists of every dimension j on which the status quo is outside the interval $[R(M_{10}), \max(F, R(M_{90}))]$, where M_{10} is the position such that 10 percent of the majority party's members' ideal points lie to the left of M_{10}, and similarly for M_{90}. If we knew the "correct" value of T, we might take the distance between M_{100-T} and M_T as a measure of the party's heterogeneity, in which case the model would predict an inverse relation between heterogeneity and the size of the party agenda.

Note that the model does not assume that party leaders can pressure their members into voting for the party line (something we believe indeed happens) but instead assumes that they accurately aim for a minimum threshold of party support. We believe that this aiming is an important phenomenon not just in the United States but worldwide; thus the present model stresses "aiming in light of what the leaders think followers will like" rather than "aiming in light of how many followers leaders think can be pressured into support." Even if we were to allow for some pressuring in our model, however, the amended model would still predict an inverse relationship between the size of the party agenda and party heterogeneity, assuming that it is more costly to "buy" support from those more emphatically opposed to any given change in the status quo.

Not knowing T, we here try two alternative measures of the majority party's heterogeneity: first, the distance between F and M, and second, the

Table 5.8
Effects of Party Heterogeneity on Size of Positive Party Agenda

	Coefficient	*Standard Error*	*t*	*p*
Party heterogeneity	−0.656	0.242	−2.710	0.012
Constant	0.389	0.054	7.204	0.000
$N = 26$				
$R^2 = 0.234$				
Adjusted $R^2 = 0.202$				
Root MSE = 0.107				
$F(1, 24) = 7.34$				
Prob > $F = 0.012$				

NOTES: Coefficients are OLS coefficients.
Dependent variable is size of the majority party's positive agenda, which is measured as the number of roll calls (in a given Congress) on which (1) the majority leader and majority whip vote the same way, *and* (2) the minority leader and/or the minority whip vote in opposition to the position of the majority leaders (Cox and McCubbins 1993: p. 145–6).

standard deviation of NOMINATE scores within the party. The relation between d and the size of the party agenda is given in Table 5.8.

There are three points to make about the results. First, we tested the same model with an alternative operationalization of the independent variable, using instead the standard deviation about the majority party median; this produced the same qualitative results.

Second, our results show an inverse relationship between party heterogeneity (d) and the size of the party agenda for the majority party. Specifically, as predicted, the sign of the estimated coefficient for party heterogeneity is negative and significant ($p < .01$, one-tailed test). Thus positive agenda control is a *conditional* aspect of party government: the number of bills the party seeks to push through the House depends directly on the party's heterogeneity. But as we have argued previously (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 1994a) and as we showed earlier in this chapter, negative agenda control is an *unconditional* aspect of party government: the party's ability to keep issues off the legislative agenda, thereby preventing substantive change on those issues, is consistently strong and unrelated to party heterogeneity.

It is because of the constancy of the majority party's procedural advantages that we emphasized in *Legislative Leviathan* the image of parties as procedural cartels. It is because of the variability of the majority party's substantive achievements that we, following Rohde (1991) and others, have emphasized the importance of party heterogeneity.

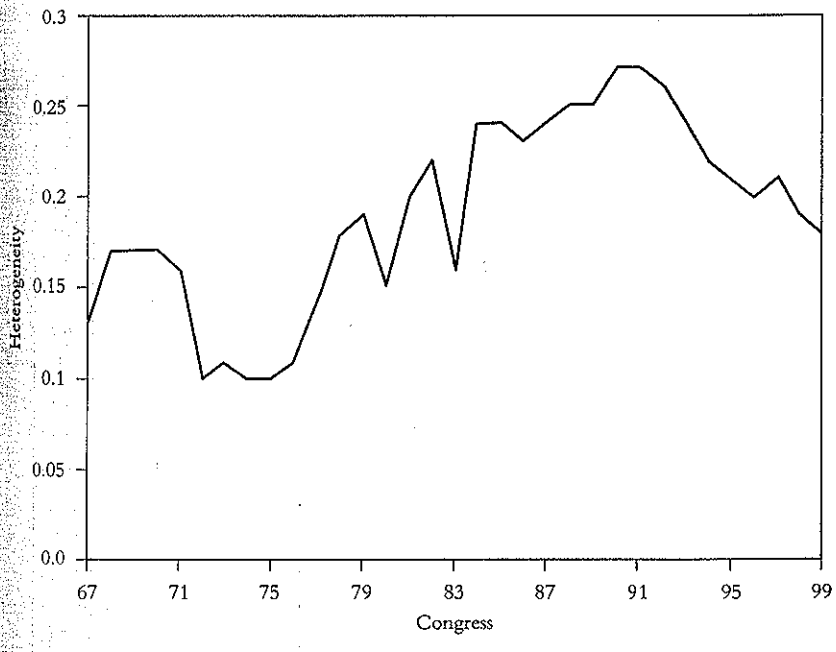

Figure 5.4. Major party heterogeneity, 1921–89.

Finally, as can be seen in Figure 5.4, changes in the heterogeneity of the majority party correspond to the changes in congressional organization that scholars have observed (outlined earlier in Table 5.1). The majority party was becoming decreasingly heterogeneous prior to the 72nd Congress. Majority party heterogeneity was at its ebb during the first two New Deal Congresses, when the Democratic party was able to translate increased homogeneity of preferences among its members into a sizable party agenda. This went hand in hand with the reemergence of the Democratic caucus and a recentralization of agenda setting. Starting in the 75th Congress, with the rise of the Conservative Coalition, we see a swift increase in heterogeneity until the 92nd Congress. This corresponds to the era of "committee government" and the decentralization of agenda power in the House and, as we have shown in our previous work (Cox and McCubbins 1993), a decrease in the size of the party agenda. This is followed by a swift decrease in heterogeneity, corresponding to the modern period, with a recentralization of agenda setting and an increase in the size of the party agenda.

Conclusion

Postwar congressional history is often described as a transition from "committee government" to "party government" (e.g., Rohde 1991). This viewpoint, probably dominant in the literature, has been attacked from two different directions. One set of scholars (e.g., Krehbiel 1993, 1998) argue that party government is always more illusory than real in the United States. By this view, the transition was from committee government to more of the same. In contrast, we (Cox and McCubbins 1993) have essentially argued that committee government is best thought of as a decentralized form of party government. By this view, the transition was from decentralized party government to a more centralized form of party government.

In this chapter, we have defended the latter view over a wider range of congressional history, one that includes many episodes of decentralization and recentralization. We stress the following points.

First, consistent with the notion of conditional party government, more homogeneous majority parties have systematically undertaken larger substantive agendas (see Table 5.7). We also believe that more homogeneous majorities have delegated more power to their leaders to prosecute their (larger) agendas. Here the case study evidence is compelling (Rohde 1991; Brady and Epstein 1997), but some analysts have argued that the idea does not explain the full range of rules changes observed in the House (Schickler and Rich 1997). Despite the latter work, it does seem that what distinguishes the conventional periods into which congressional history is divided are the differing levels of homogeneity of the majority party in each era.

Second, throughout all periods of congressional history from the end of Reconstruction to the present, the majority party has maintained a secure grip on the floor agenda. Access to the floor agenda has always been sufficiently stacked in the majority's favor that it is rarely unsuccessful when it opposes bills at the agenda-setting or final passage stage. Examining a wide range of Congresses, we find that the majority unsuccessfully opposes the report of a bill in committee only 0.07 percent of the time, while it unsuccessfully opposes final passage of a bill on the floor about 3 percent of the time. Negative agenda control—the ability to keep issues off the floor—is an *unconditional* power of the majority (not dependent on the party's internal homogeneity).

In contrast to these figures for the majority party, we find that the minority unsuccessfully opposes the report of a bill in committee about 4 percent of the time, while it unsuccessfully opposes final passage of a bill on the floor about 25 percent of the time. The minority's negative agenda power is weaker.

Third, the extremely low rates at which the majority party loses, when it attempts to prevent either the appearance of a bill on the floor agenda or a bill's final passage, has important consequences for how we understand phenomena such as the Conservative Coalition. This coalition (of conservative Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans) is best thought of as an occasional floor voting alliance that was most active and successful at the amendment stage. As such, it significantly limited what the Democratic party could do. But it was not a procedural alliance. Yes, Judge Smith stood as a bulwark against civil rights legislation. But Judge Smith was a leader of the Southern Democrats, who exploited the anticipated support of Republicans on the floor, not a leader of a bloc interested the usual sorts of coalition maintenance activities one associates with party leaders.

Fourth, the majority's ability to keep things off the floor agenda has important policy implications. If only bills favored by the majority party leadership (assumed to serve the majority party's median legislator) are considered on the floor of the House, then even if not all of them pass, the only policy changes actually made will be those palatable to the majority. Other issues, that the minority might have preferred to take up, languish. Thus policy drifts in the direction of the majority because only problems that need fixing from the majority's viewpoint are addressed.

If one were to ask, "Where's the Party?" the answer would not lie in an analysis of roll call votes, where ideological and partisan voting are hard to distinguish (Krehbiel 1993; but see Groseclose and Snyder 1996 and Cox and Poole 2001). Rather, by controlling the agenda, the party controls what gets voted on to begin with, which influences what ultimately passes the House. Where the party is is mostly in the setting of the agenda and control over rules, procedure, and organization. The party manifests itself through its control of the agenda and scheduling of rules and procedure (Sinclair 1998b); of committee assignments and chairmanship appointments (Cox and McCubbins 1993); of the procedures for establishing reversionary policy, reconciliation, budgeting, and appropriations (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991, Stewart 1989); and of leadership selection.