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*Congressional Leadership and Party
Voting in the McKinley Era:
A Comparison to the Modern House**

This paper examines some aspects of the relationship between leadership structure, constituency bases of congressional parties, and party voting in the U. S. House of Representatives at the turn of the century. The findings for the McKinley era are compared to the modern House. The analysis shows that the higher levels of party support found in the two McKinley Congresses were related to the centralized leadership structure and the homogeneity of the constituencies represented by each party. The leadership structure in the late 1890s gave the party organizational leaders control over the committee system, more control over policy formulation, and a monopoly on voting cues. The homogeneity of the congressional parties along an industrial-agricultural continuum insured policy differences which encouraged party voting. Moreover, the leadership of the two parties represented the extremities of the continuum, and given their power this reinforced the basic party cleavages.

OF THE CONGRESSES for which we have information on levels of party voting, the 55th and 56th United States House of Representatives stand out for their high levels of party voting. Table 1 shows the proportion of party votes in the House of Representatives for selected Congresses from 1845 to 1966. The criterion for a party vote in this table is 90 percent of one party voting against 90 percent of the other party.

If the criterion for characterizing a roll call as a party vote is reduced to a majority of one party voting against a majority of the other party, then the percentages of party votes in the 55th and 56th House rise to 93.9 percent and 92.2 percent respectively. No matter how party voting is defined, it is clear that party voting was more visible at the turn of the century than at any other time in the known history of the House.

The two variables which have been most consistently related to high levels of party voting in American legislatures are a strong centralized leadership and ideological parties representing distinct poles

*I would like to thank two anonymous *Journal* critics for their cogent comments on the original manuscript for this article.

of a continuum—normally a socio-economic class continuum.¹ Comparing the House of Representatives at the turn of the century to the modern House leads to the conclusion that the House in the 1890s had a centralized leadership and congressional parties representing separate ends of an industrial-agricultural continuum.² The Speaker of the House in the 55th and 56th Houses (1897-1901) appointed the committees, was chairman of the Rules Committee and generally had at his command more sanctions to invoke against dissenting members than does his modern counterpart.³ The combination of these characteristics as shown in the research of Ripley and others demonstrates convincingly that the House leadership in the 1890s was both powerful and centralized.

The electoral realignment of the 1896 period led to the formation of two congressional parties located at distinct ends of an industrial-agricultural continuum.⁴ Table 2 shows the dispersion of the two

¹ Malcolm Jewell and Samuel Patterson, *The Legislative Process in the United States* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 425; Duncan MacRae, Jr., "The Relation Between Roll Call Votes and Constituencies in the Massachusetts House of Representatives," *American Political Science Review*, 46 (December 1952), 1046-55; Thomas A. Flinn, "Party Responsibility in the States: Some Casual Factors," *American Political Science Review*, 58 (March 1964), 60-72; and Thomas Dye, "A Comparison of Constituency Influences in the Upper and Lower Chambers of a State Legislature," *Western Political Quarterly*, 14 (June 1961), 473-80; Malcolm Jewell, "Party Voting in American State Legislatures," *American Political Science Review*, 49 (September 1955), 773-91; and Nelson Polsby *et al.*, "The Growth of the Seniority System in the U. S. House of Representatives," *American Political Science Review*, 63 (September 1969), 787-807.

² In regard to the structure of leadership in the U. S. House in the 1890 to 1910 period see: Randall Ripley, *Majority Party Leadership in Congress* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1969), pp. 2-4; Randall Ripley, *Party Leaders in the House of Representatives* (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institute Press, 1967), Chap. 2; Lewis Froman, Jr., and Randall Ripley, "Conditions for Party Leadership: The Case of the House Democrats," *American Political Science Review*, 59 (March 1965), 52-63; Nelson Polsby, "The Institutionalization of the U. S. House of Representatives," *American Political Science Review*, 62 (March 1968), 144-69; Nelson W. Polsby, *et al.*, *op. cit.*; DeAlva Stanwood Alexander, *History and Procedures of the U. S. House of Representatives* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), Chap. 4; and Lauros McConachie, *Congressional Committees* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1898), pp. 154-71.

³ McConachie, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-98; George Galloway, *History of the House of Representatives* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), pp. 52-53 and 134-38; Ripley, *Leadership in Congress*, pp. 2-5.

⁴ Walter A. Burnham, "The Changing Scope of the American Political Universe," *American Political Science Review*, 59 (March 1965), 7-29; V. O. Key, Jr., "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, 17 (February 1955), 3-18.

congressional parties along an industrial-agricultural and a sectional continuum.

Thus we can conclude that relative to the modern House the 55th and 56th Houses were characterized by centralized leadership and congressional parties representing distinctly different constituencies.

TABLE 1
PARTY VOTING IN THE U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

| Year | Congress | President | Percent of Party Votes |
|-----------|----------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1845-47 | 29th | Polk | 10.7 |
| 1863-65 | 38th | Lincoln | 30.2 |
| 1887-89 | 50th | Cleveland | 13.6 |
| 1897-99 | 55th | McKinley | 50.9 |
| 1899-1901 | 56th | McKinley | 49.3 |
| 1921 | 66th | Harding | 28.6 |
| 1928 | 70th | Coolidge | 7.1 |
| 1930-31 | 71st | Hoover | 31.0 |
| 1933 | 72nd | Roosevelt | 22.5 |
| 1937 | 74th | Roosevelt | 11.8 |
| 1944 | 78th | Roosevelt | 10.7 |
| 1945 | 79th | Roosevelt-Truman | 17.5 |
| 1946 | 79th | Truman | 10.5 |
| 1947 | 80th | Truman | 15.1 |
| 1948 | 80th | Truman | 16.4 |
| 1953 | 83rd | Eisenhower | 7.0 |
| 1959 | 86th | Eisenhower | 8.0 |
| 1963 | 88th | Kennedy | 7.6 |
| 1964 | 88th | Johnson | 6.2 |
| 1965 | 89th | Johnson | 2.8 |
| 1966 | 89th | Johnson | 1.6 |

Sources: W. Wayne Shannon, *Party, Constituency and Congressional Voting*, p. 42; and Julius Turner and Edward Schneier, Jr., *Party and Constituency: Pressures on Congress*, p. 17.

However, the connections between party voting, centralized leadership and the constituency bases of congressional parties remains problematical.

This paper examines three aspects of the relationship between leadership structure and levels of party support. First, an overview of the level of party support among congressional leaders in the 55th and 56th Houses is given. Second, the leadership of the 1890s Houses is

TABLE 2
OCCUPATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMPOSITION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL PARTIES
IN THE 55TH AND 56TH CONGRESS
(in percentages)

| Congress and Party | Type of District * | | | Region | | | |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| | Industrial (Less than 25% farming) | Mixed (26-70% farming) | Agricultural (more than 70% farming) | East | Midwest | South | Border |
| <i>55th House</i> | | | | | | | |
| Democrats | 14 | 24 | 65 | 10 | 25 | 87 | 65 |
| Republicans | 86 | 76 | 35 | 90 | 75 | 13 | 35 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| <i>56th House</i> | | | | | | | |
| Democrats | 38 | 30 | 62 | 33 | 26 | 98 | 70 |
| Republicans | 62 | 70 | 38 | 67 | 74 | 2 | 30 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* Of the 300 districts for which occupational data were collected, 51 were industrial, 123 were mixed and 126 were agricultural. In percentages, 17 percent of all districts for which data were available were industrial, 41 percent were agricultural.

compared to the leadership of a modern House in regard to levels of party support. Third, the causes of the high levels of party support among leaders in the 1890s Houses are analyzed, and the contrast between levels of support among leaders in the two eras is examined.

MEASURING THE PARTY VOTE IN THE 55TH AND 56TH HOUSE

Before the question of leadership effect on the vote can be ascertained it is necessary to discuss the method used to measure the party vote. The first test used to measure the party vote was to run a Q-analysis on all roll call votes in both Houses. Q-analysis runs each roll call against every other roll call, thus providing a measure of association between all pairs of votes. The value of Q ranges from -1.0 to 1.0 . The higher the Q value the greater the association of the roll calls. The analysis of all the roll calls determines which roll calls cluster together. MacRae, in his study of the 81st Congress, fed different voting clusters into a Guttman scalogram analysis, thereby generating the issue dimensions in that Congress.⁵ For the present study, the same type of Q-analysis was run on the 55th and 56th Houses of Representatives.

There were 182 roll call votes taken in the 55th Congress. Since 18 of these votes were unanimous or nearly unanimous (less than 10 percent voting negative), they were deleted. Members of the 56th House answered the roll call 146 times, with 10 of these being unanimous or nearly unanimous; they also were dropped. Thus the 56th House is analyzed on the basis of 136 roll call votes.

The Q formula requires that a minimum Q value (Q min) be selected for purposes of eliminating roll calls from clusters with which they are only loosely associated. That is, one does not wish to include, in a set of related roll calls, votes which are likely to be only minimally related to the dimension the researcher is seeking to separate out from the universe of roll calls. Anderson, Watts and Wilcox suggest that if errors (including minimally associated roll calls in a dimension cluster) are to be extremely small then the criteria or value of Q should be set high, at .8 or above.⁶ My purpose is to determine the pervasiveness of party voting in the 55th and 56th House of Representatives and to exclude from the party votes those roll calls which

⁵ Duncan MacRae, Jr., *Dimensions of Congressional Voting* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), pp. 315-23.

⁶ Lee F. Anderson *et al.*, *Legislative Roll Call Analysis* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 103.

are only minimally associated with the party votes. Therefore, the minimum Q value accepted as showing association between two roll calls was .8, the values suggested by Anderson, Watts and Wilcox. Setting the Q value at .8 insures that the roll calls which cluster together are highly related.

Since the analysis seeks to discern the strength of the party vote in these two nineteenth century Houses, it is necessary to identify a party vote to which all other roll calls can be compared. The vote on the election of the Speaker of the House traditionally has been, and still is, a straight party vote. By comparing all other roll calls to this party vote, choosing a Speaker, the extent of party voting should be ascertained. In short, if a large number of the remaining roll calls are highly related, .8 or above, to the straight party vote the pervasiveness of the party factor will have been demonstrated. In the 55th House of Representatives the vote on election of a Speaker was related to 148 of the remaining 163 roll calls at a level of .8 or above. Of the 16 roll calls unrelated to the initial party vote, six of these were related to other bills which were part of the original cluster, leaving only ten roll calls not directly related to the initial party vote. These unrelated roll calls did not ostensibly fit into any coherent issue dimension.

The scheme used in analyzing the 55th Congress was also applied to the 56th Congress. The initial party vote was used as the key variable. One-hundred and eleven of the 135 roll calls were related to the adoption of the rules vote at a level of .8 or above. Of the 24 remaining votes 19 were related to at least five other roll calls which in turn were related to the party vote, leaving only five votes which did not fall into the original cluster.

Thus the conclusion that party was pervasive in these two Congresses seems inescapable. The Q-analysis over all roll calls showed less than 10 percent of the votes unrelated to the party vote. Those roll calls which did not relate to the initial party vote were found to be issues on which either a direct state or district vote replaced the party loyalties.⁷

The party support scores for the representatives of the 55th and 56th House were calculated over the roll calls which were strongly

⁷ A set of Varimax rotated factor analyses was performed on all roll calls in both Houses and the results showed a one factor solution for both Houses; the roll calls that loaded significantly (.5 or above) on the first factor were discovered to be party votes where 75 percent or more of one party opposed 75 percent or more of the other party.

related (.8 or above) to the vote for the Speaker. Thus, in the 55th House there were 148 party related roll calls and in the 56th House 111 party related roll calls. A support score for each representative was calculated on the basis of the percentage of times the representative voted with a majority of his party. In short, a representative's support score measures the percentage of times a congressman voted with a majority of his party on 148 party votes in the 55th House

TABLE 3
PARTY SUPPORT IN THE 55TH AND 56TH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BY PARTY

| | Percent of times voted with party majority | 55th House | | 56th House | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------|-----|------------|-----|
| | | D | R | D | R |
| Strong Republican Support | 85 + | 0 | 34 | 0 | 50 |
| Moderate Strong Republican Support | 70 to 84 | 0 | 149 | 0 | 121 |
| Republican Supportive | 60 to 69 | 0 | 21 | 0 | 8 |
| Mixed | 40 to 59 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| Democratic Supportive | 60 to 69 | 17 | 0 | 32 | 0 |
| Moderate Strong Democratic Support | 70 to 84 | 72 | 0 | 84 | 0 |
| Strong Democratic Support | 85 + | 36 | 0 | 30 | 0 |
| Total | | 127 | 206 | 152 | 181 |

and 111 party votes in the 56th House. Table 3 shows the dispersion of party voting.

LEADERSHIP EFFECTS

Truman, in his study of the 81st Congress, discovered that "just as a Floor Leader's influence may be augmented by the assumption that he will one day be Speaker, and correspondingly diminished if the feeling gets around that he is not first in the line of succession, so it seems likely that the 'speaker's boys,' especially the older ones, may have their informal followings which help to knit the party together . . . Informal and in gross probably immeasurable, these ties are part of the stuff of party leadership in the House as they are in

the Senate.”⁸ Given the informality of the decisional process in the 55th and 56th House, such ties probably were more important than they are in the modern House. In an attempt to discern the effects of such ties the leadership will be separated from the membership and a comparison of voting scores will be run. In order to conserve space wherever the results for both Houses are nearly identical, extensive remarks will not be made in regard to the 56th House. However, the tables which present the data for the 56th House are given.

Ripley and others have shown that in the late 1890s party and committee leadership were fused; that is, the party leaders were also the chairmen of the important committees, so that Speaker Reed was the chairman of the Rules Committee and Cannon was chairman of Appropriations and floor leader.⁹ Given this arrangement, it is relatively easy to separate the leadership in the House from the membership by selecting the most important committees and their most important members. Selecting the top leadership in the House does not pose a serious problem since all of the historical sources agree on which committees were the most important, namely: Rules, Appropriations, and Ways and Means.¹⁰ Thus, the Republican members of the Rules Committee, the Chairman and ranking majority member of the Ways and Means Committee and the chairman and ranking majority member of the Appropriations Committee plus Representative Tawney of the Judiciary Committee were separated out as the top leadership of the Republican party. Representative Tawney was included because Tawney was the Republican whip in both the 55th and 56th Houses of Representatives. The ranking Democratic members of Ways and Means, Rules and Appropriations Committees were selected as the Democratic top leadership. The number of representatives selected as composing the top leadership by this method resulted in 8 Republican and 6 Democratic top leaders in the 55th House, and 7 Republican and 7 Democratic top leaders in the 56th House.

A second set of criteria was used to select the secondary leadership

⁸ David B. Truman, *The Congressional Party* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1959), pp. 205-6.

⁹ Randall Ripley, “Party in Congress: Whip Organizations in the United States House of Representatives,” *American Political Science Review*, 58 (September 1964), 561-64 and McConachie, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-85.

¹⁰ Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-36; McConachie, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-91. For committee rankings from 1914-1947, see: John B. Everhart’s rankings, which are quoted in George Galloway, *Congress at the Crossroads* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1963), p. 90.

in the House. The rules of the 55th and 56th House revealed that 15 committees had the right to report to the House at any time, so these committees were used as the basis for identifying the secondary leadership. The selection of these committees is based on McConachie's analysis of committee importance and the assumption that the right to report at any time signified importance.¹¹ Of the 15 committees with the right to report at any time, Elections, Territories, Invalid Pensions, and Printing were dropped because their right to report appears to have been an historical right rather than of contemporary political importance.¹² Those committees which had won the right to appropriate funds on their own accord rather than through the Appropriations Committee were added to the 11 important committees which had the right to report at any time, and these 18 committees constitute the important House committees.¹³ The total membership of the Rules, Appropriations, and Ways and Means Committees, other than those in the top leadership group, was selected as secondary legislative leaders. The chairman and ranking minority members of the remaining 15 important committees were added to the members of the three most important committees, and for the purpose of this study those members were the secondary leaders. In short, the secondary leaders were the chairmen of the important, but not top rank committees, plus the regular members of the Rules, Appropriations, and Ways and Means Committee. The number of secondary leaders in both Houses was as follows: 24 Democratic and 34 Republican secondary leaders in the 55th House and 23 Democrats and 32 Republicans in the 56th House. Members of these two Houses who were not selected in either the top or secondary leadership groups were placed in the membership category.

The partisan nature of the McKinley Congresses plus the analysis of leadership structure leads to the hypothesis that the congressional party leadership in these Congresses will have been more supportive of the party position than were the members and to a secondary hypothesis that both leaders and members of the 55th and 56th Houses will have shown higher party support scores than their modern counter-

¹¹ McConachie, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-75; Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 230 corroborates this point.

¹² McConachie, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-200 and Appendix 6.

¹³ The committees are: Rules, Ways and Means, Rivers and Harbors, Appropriations, Naval Affairs, Military Affairs, Militia, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Indian Affairs, Post Offices and Road, Banking and Currency, Judiciary, Public Lands, Enrolled Bills, Accounts, Commerce, and Coinage, Weights and Measures.

parts. That is, the House leadership in the 1890s was hierarchical, informal, and centralized which resulted in policy formation by the leadership. It should be noted that one major reason why the centralization of leadership produced more party support is that committee chairmen and members of key committees were often picked because of loyalty or allegiance to the leadership and not because of seniority. Further, even if seniority was not violated in choosing chairmen and making committee assignments, the Speaker had the power to remove dissenting members in the next session. If the policy was formulated by the leadership and the leaders had more sanctions to invoke against dissenting members, then the leaders should have the highest party support scores within the 55th and 56th Houses, and the overall level of party support should be higher than is the case in the modern House.

In contrast, the modern House is characterized by a decentralized leadership structure in which the party and committee leaders are not fused but conspicuously separated.¹⁴ Further, in the modern House both party and committee leaders orient themselves to the presidential program and are, relatively speaking, less autonomous in regard to the President than were their counterparts in the 1890s. On this basis then the leadership of the 89th House of Representatives ought to be less supportive of the party position than were the leaders of the 55th and 56th U. S. House of Representatives.

In order to test this hypothesis, the top and secondary leaders were separated from the membership in the 89th House. The top congressional leaders were the majority and minority leaders, the whips, and the chairman and ranking members of the Rules, Ways and Means, and Appropriations Committees. The secondary leaders were the chairman and ranking members of the remaining standing committees, the regional whips in both parties, and the remaining members of the Rules, Ways and Means, and Appropriation Committees. Those members not falling into either of the above two categories were classified as rank-and-file members. The party support score for each representative was taken from the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* for the 89th House. The Congressional Quarterly's party support score measures the number of times a representative voted with a majority of his party on 185 party related roll calls. The hypothesis is that congressional leaders in the 55th and 56th House will show greater

¹⁴ Ralph Huitt, "Democratic Party Leadership in the Senate," in Ralph Huitt and Robert Peabody, eds., *Congress: Two Decades of Analysis* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 140-42.

support for their party than will the congressional leaders in the 89th House. Table 4 shows the levels of party support by categories of leadership and Congresses.

The results clearly substantiate the hypothesis. Both top and secondary leaders in the 55th and 56th House were more supportive of their party than were their equivalents in the 89th House, and the overall level of party support was higher in the two 1890s Houses than was the case in the 89th House. In the two nineteenth century Houses there is a progression of levels of support as one moves from top leaders to rank-and-file members, with the top leaders being more supportive of the party position. In the 89th House this pattern does not obtain. That is, top leaders were not significantly different from secondary leaders or rank-and-file members in terms of their levels of party support; and it is interesting to note that the 89th House has been interpreted as one of the more partisan in modern times. The only exception to this general finding is that 100 percent of the Republican leaders in the 89th House supported their party on at least 70 percent of all roll calls. However, it should be noted that only 20 percent of the Republican leaders in the 89th House were supportive of the party position on 85 percent or more of party-related roll calls. One way to account for the differences noted in this table is to divide the leadership of the 89th House into party organizational leaders and committee leaders. In the 89th House Democratic party leaders voted with a party majority 88 percent of the time while committee chairman voted with a party majority 59 percent of the time on the same roll calls. For the Republicans, the pattern was the same. Party organization leaders voted with a party majority more often than did committee leaders.¹⁵

CAUSES OF THE LEADERSHIP'S EXTREME SUPPORT

Part of the reason for the leader's strong support of the party in the two turn-of-the-century Houses was due to the fact that the leadership of the House determined the party position on issues. The House leaders determined which issues were to have legislative priority, and also on which issues the full weight of the congressional party would be brought to bear. For instance, in the 56th House the Republi-

¹⁵ In regard to the distinction between party and committee leaders see: Barbara Hinckley, "Congressional Leadership Selection and Support," *Journal of Politics*, 32 (May 1970), 268-87. She shows that there are behavioral differences between committee and party leaders in terms of liberal-conservative support.

TABLE 4
LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE 55TH, 56TH AND 89TH HOUSE
COMPARED ON PARTY SUPPORT
(in percentages)

| Party Support | Democrats | | | Republicans | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| | Top Leaders | Secondary Leaders | Rank-and-file Members | Top Leaders | Secondary Leaders | Rank-and-file Members |
| <i>55th House Support Scores *</i> | | | | | | |
| Strong | 50 | 29 | 29 | 63 | 24 | 15 |
| Moderately Strong | 50 | 50 | 57 | 37 | 74 | 72 |
| Supportive | 0 | 17 | 13 | 0 | 2 | 12 |
| Mixed | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> |
| <i>56th House Support Scores *</i> | | | | | | |
| Strong | 43 | 22 | 19 | 71 | 47 | 23 |
| Moderately Strong | 57 | 56 | 55 | 29 | 44 | 72 |
| Supportive | 0 | 22 | 22 | 0 | 6 | 4 |
| Mixed | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> |
| <i>89th House Support Scores *</i> | | | | | | |
| Strong | 27 | 17 | 22 | 20 | 22 | 20 |
| Moderately Strong | 27 | 25 | 37 | 80 | 45 | 42 |
| Supportive | 19 | 19 | 11 | 0 | 18 | 18 |
| Mixed | 27 | 39 | 30 | 0 | 15 | 20 |
| | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> |

* Strong = voted with party majority on 85 percent + of roll calls
 Moderately strong = voted with party majority on 70 to 84 percent of roll calls
 Supportive = voted with party majority on 60-69 percent of roll calls
 Mixed = voted with party majority on less than 59 percent of roll calls

can leaders decided that the currency question would have top priority, and that Negro voting rights were not a party issue. The leaders, then, set the party position by framing policy and the membership either supported or rejected their position. The data for the 55th and 56th Houses revealed that the party rank-and-file seldom, if ever, went against the party leaders' position.

Demonstrating that the congressional parties in the McKinley era were cohesive does not, of course, prove that the leaders of the parties formulated policy. The assertion is that if the congressional parties' leadership structure was centralized and did set the parties' positions, then one would expect that the leaders strongly supported their own policies. Further, the leaders could have been expected to be more supportive of their policies than was the rank-and-file. The data have shown that precisely this pattern of support occurred in both the 55th and 56th Houses. Further evidence is needed, however, to indicate that the leaders made their policy the equivalent of party policy.

Professor Shannon, in his book on party voting in the House, asks why party voting dropped from 85.7 percent in the first session to 20 percent in the second session of the 55th House.¹⁶ The answer to his question sheds light on the process whereby party leaders made their policy position the congressional party's position. The leaders of the 55th House, assured of re-election, met in Washington months before the House convened, decided on legislative priorities, and formulated specific policy proposals. Many of the bills before the first session of the 55th House had been formed in the 54th House, but not voted upon.¹⁷ The point is that because the leaders were assured of re-election, they were able to bring continuity to the House's legislative business. Thus, the leaders of the 54th House decided what legislation would have priority before the 55th convened. Before committees were appointed, the top priority legislation was presented to the House for passage. In the 55th House, Speaker Reed refused to appoint committees for 131 days. During this period, on 85.7 percent of all votes 90 percent of one party opposed 90 percent of the other (a party vote). Given the large number of first and second term congressmen (over 60 percent), a majority of representatives were voting on specific and technical legislation with which they were entirely unfamiliar.¹⁸

¹⁶ W. Wayne Shannon, *Party, Constituency and Congressional Voting* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), p. 42.

¹⁷ McConachie, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

¹⁸ Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

In this situation, the rank-and-file of the congressional party had only leadership cues to guide their vote, and the analysis of the data demonstrates the extent to which they accepted the leadership's position as their own. During the passage of the Dingley Tariff in the opening days of the first session of the 55th House, Representative Bailey (Democrat, Texas) voiced his objections to the style of the Republican leadership outlined above. He said: "It [the Dingley committee] met and submitted, in hot haste, its bill on Tuesday. Then one day to look at 162 pages and a final vote."¹⁹ The complicated Dingley Tariff bill was presented, discussed and passed within fourteen days of the opening of the 55th House. Unlike the modern House, where there is a flurry of business before the closing of the final session, the House in the McKinley era was not pressed in the final session. Indeed, the number of members voting in the later sessions was 25 percent less than the average for the first sessions, and most of the official business consisted of voting on motions to adjourn. In contrast, the modern House normally is pressed with business at the end of a session and relatively unencumbered at the opening of a session. The reason for the press of business at the end of a session of the modern House is that legislation is hammered out in committee while the House is in session, and a significant number of committees report bills in the final days of a session. The difference between the modern House and the 1890s House is a stylistic difference between a relatively hierarchical centralized leadership and a decentralized leadership. Part of the reason for the leaders' strong party support is surely the centralized and unified structure of leadership in the House in the 1890s. The second part of the answer to the "extremity" lies in the nature of the leadership's constituencies.

From previous research it is known that at the turn of the century a typical Republican district was mixed agricultural-industrial, located in the East or Midwest and modified competitive, while the typical Democratic district was agricultural, located in the Southern or Border regions and usually safely Democratic.²⁰ In what follows it will be shown that both the top leaders and secondary leaders of both parties were drawn from districts which over-emphasized the critical features of typical districts. The importance of this fact is that the very constituency factors which best account for party differences are accentuated.

¹⁹ *Congressional Record*, 55th Cong. 1st Sess., 1897, 30, p. 17.

²⁰ David W. Brady, *Party Voting in the McKinley Era*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa (1970), Chap. 5; and see Table 2 of this paper.

ated in the leadership of both parties. The critical elements in defining the typical districts of each party were: (1) Democrats tended to be elected from agricultural districts while Republicans represented industrial districts; (2) Democrats tended to come from the Southern and Border states while Republicans came from the Eastern and Midwestern States. The argument being made is that the leaders of the two congressional parties represented districts which accentuated the differences between the parties. That is, Republican leaders came from highly industrial districts while Democratic leaders came from highly agricultural districts. Further, Democratic leaders came exclusively from the Southern and Border regions with Southern leaders predominant, while Republican leaders came exclusively from the Eastern and Midwestern states with Eastern leaders predominant. The fact that the leaders of the parties represented districts at opposite ends of the industrial-agricultural continuum and came from separate regions which were solidly one-party in nature, meant that the leaders in both parties came from non-competitive districts. Thus, the hypothesis is, Republican leaders represented safe, Eastern and Midwestern industrial districts while Democratic leaders represented safe, Southern and Border agricultural districts.

If this hypothesis is correct, then the congressional leadership was not affected by constituency cross-pressures, and as a result the leaders of both parties were totally opposed on the central economic questions of the day. Given their constituencies, Republican leaders could strongly support policies favoring industrial interests, and Democratic leaders could strongly support a holding action unfavorable to the industrial interests in America. Table 5 compares the leaders of the 55th and 56th House with the rank-and-file members on districts, number of terms served, and region where the districts are located.

The pattern revealed by the data in the table is clear. The top leaders of both parties are drawn from districts which accentuate the differences between the parties. That is, Republican leaders came from highly industrial districts while Democratic leaders represented agricultural constituencies. Both parties' top leaders came from non-competitive districts and were experienced hands in the legislative process. Republican top leaders came from Eastern states and Democratic top leaders came from the Southern states. The critical difference between the leaders of the two parties is that they represented districts whose economic interests were perceived as opposites. Republican leaders represented industrial constituencies for whom the continued expansion of American industry was a necessity. Democratic

TABLE 5
LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE: A COMPARISON OF CONSTITUENCIES
FOR THE 55TH AND 56TH CONGRESSES
(in percentages)

| Constituency Characteristic | Top Leaders | | Secondary Leaders | | Members Rank-and-File | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Democrats 55th | Democrats 56th | Democrats 55th | Democrats 56th | Republicans 55th | Democrats 56th | Republicans 55th | Republicans 56th | | | | |
| <i>Competitiveness of District *</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| One-party (100% \geq V \geq 71.0%) | 75 | 66 | 50 | 63 | 49 | 52 | 13 | 10 | 25 | 20 | 5 | 7 |
| Modified one-party (70.9% \geq V \geq 61.0%) | 25 | 34 | 50 | 37 | 17 | 26 | 27 | 30 | 24 | 16 | 13 | 12 |
| One-party competitive (60.9% \geq V \geq 56.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 13 | 27 | 23 | 8 | 7 | 23 | 27 |
| Competitive (55.9% \geq V \geq 49.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 9 | 33 | 37 | 43 | 57 | 59 | 54 |
| Total | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>100</u> |

TABLE 5 (Continued)
LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE: A COMPARISON OF CONSTITUENCY
FOR THE 55TH AND 56TH CONGRESSES
(in percentages)

| Constituency Characteristic | Top Leaders | | | | Secondary Leaders | | | | Members Rank-and-File | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Democrats 55th | Democrats 56th | Republicans 55th | Republicans 56th | Democrats 55th | Democrats 56th | Republicans 55th | Republicans 56th | Democrats 55th | Democrats 56th | Republicans 55th | Republicans 56th |
| <i>Occupational Composition of District</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Industrial (Less than 25% farming) | 0 | 0 | 25 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 21 | 15 | 4 | 17 | 27 | 17 |
| Mixed (26% to 70% farming) | 0 | 0 | 63 | 75 | 5 | 15 | 48 | 55 | 29 | 26 | 49 | 50 |
| Agricultural (More than 70% farming) | 100 | 100 | 12 | 0 | 75 | 70 | 31 | 30 | 67 | 57 | 24 | 33 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| <i>Number of Terms</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 12 | 6 | 12 | 85 | 76 | 61 | 53 |
| 2 through 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 56 | 50 | 68 | 61 | 13 | 21 | 37 | 44 |
| 5 + | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 27 | 38 | 26 | 27 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

TABLE 5 (Continued)
LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE: A COMPARISON OF CONSTITUENCY
FOR THE 55TH AND 56TH CONGRESSES
(in percentages)

| Constituency Characteristic | Top Leaders | | Secondary Leaders | | Members Rank-and-File | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Democrats 55th | Democrats 56th | Democrats 55th | Democrats 56th | Democrats 55th | Democrats 56th | Republicans 55th | Republicans 56th |
| <i>Region of District</i> | | | | | | | | |
| East | 0 | 0 | 57 | 75 | 13 | 16 | 44 | 50 |
| Midwest | 0 | 0 | 43 | 25 | 9 | 8 | 47 | 41 |
| South | 86 | 83 | 0 | 0 | 61 | 63 | 0 | 0 |
| Border | 14 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 13 | 6 | 6 |
| West | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | | | | | 22 | 7 | 34 | 42 |
| | | | | | 23 | 26 | 50 | 42 |
| | | | | | 36 | 43 | 3 | 5 |
| | | | | | 18 | 18 | 6 | 8 |
| | | | | | 1 | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| | | | | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* Computed over a 10 year, 5 election period. The numeric formulas read (For one-party $(100\% \geq V \geq 71\%)$. Average percentage of victory margin less than 100 percent but greater than 71 percent.

leaders represented agricultural constituents who perceived the continued growth of American industry as inimical to their well-being. The "safeness" of the leaders' seats was due to homogeneity of interests within the districts and the region. That is, industrial districts favored industrial growth and agricultural districts favored agrarian growth. The Republican party was the party of industry, while the Democratic party was the party of the small cash crop farmer. Moreover, the most heavily industrial districts were in the East while the South was entirely agricultural. Thus, the Republicans were *the* party of the East and the Democrats *the* party of the South. Given the simple fact that seniority and specialization were necessary conditions for obtaining leadership positions, the safeness of Eastern industrial and Southern agricultural districts insured representatives from these districts positions of leadership. And, as we have seen, the leadership in the House during the 1890s was capable of exercising great control over what legislative issues would receive priority and the substantive nature of priority issues.

In contrast to this pattern in the 55th and 56th House, the top leaders of the 89th House were not drawn from homogeneous districts. Table 6 compares the top leaders in the 55th House with the top leaders in the 89th House.²¹

The table reveals that the top leaders in the 89th House represent a greater range of district types than did their counterparts in the 55th House. Democratic top leaders represented districts which ranged from the heavily blue collar industrial district of Representative Madden of Indiana to the essentially rural agricultural district represented by William Colmer of Mississippi.²² Further, the regional dispersion of Democratic top leaders in the 89th House was greater than was the case in the 55th House. The pattern for the Republican top leaders in the 89th House was somewhat similar to the homogeneity found in the 55th House. The top Republicans represented primarily white collar and agricultural districts located in the Midwest. However, even though the Republican top leaders in the 89th House came from more homogeneous districts than did their Democratic

²¹ The breakdown of district classifications was compiled by the author from the *1890 Census* and the *Congressional District Data Book* for the 89th House.

²² The districts for the 89th House were classified according to percentage white collar, percentage urban population, and percentage urban-suburban population. However, no classification would yield a bipolar distribution similar to that discovered for the 55th House.

counterparts, the district types represented were not as homogeneous as was the case in the 55th House. The most obvious explanation for the differences found in Table 6 is that in the 89th House the congressional Democratic party as a whole was composed of members from

TABLE 6

A COMPARISON OF CONSTITUENCY CHARACTERISTICS OF TOP LEADERS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 55TH AND 89TH CONGRESSES
(in percentages)

| | 55th House | | 89th House | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | Democrats | Republicans | Democrats | Republicans |
| <i>Competitiveness of Districts</i> | | | | |
| One-party | 75 | 50 | 55 | 20 |
| Modified one-party | 25 | 50 | 45 | 40 |
| One-party competitive | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40 |
| Competitive | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| <i>Occupational Composition *</i> | | | | |
| Industrial | 0 | 25 | 45 | 20 |
| Mixed | 0 | 63 | 36 | 40 |
| Agricultural | 100 | 12 | 19 | 40 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| <i>Region</i> | | | | |
| East | 0 | 57 | 0 | 10 |
| Midwest | 0 | 43 | 18 | 60 |
| South | 86 | 0 | 54 | 10 |
| Border | 14 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| West | 0 | 0 | 9 | 20 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

* For the 89th House, districts where over 60 percent of the work force was blue collar were classified as Industrial; districts with from 35 to 59 percent blue collar were mixed, and districts with less than 35 percent blue collar and more than 30 percent engaged in agricultural were classified agricultural. For the 55th House the criteria are the same as in Tables 5 and 6.

both industrial Northern districts and relatively rural Southern districts. Thus, the top leadership of the party reflected these disparate elements within it. In the 55th House the regional and industrial continuum was for all practical purposes the same; thus, the terms of East and

Industrial, South and Agricultural were interchangeable. In short, the differences found in the types of districts represented by the top leaders in the two eras is a reflection of the occupational and regional bases of the entire congressional parties.

COMMENTS

The primary finding of this paper is that both the leadership and membership of the late 1890s Houses were more supportive of the party position than are their modern counterparts. This was shown to be related to two structural characteristics of the 55th and 56th Houses. First the top and secondary leadership were selected in a fashion which contributed to the centralization of leadership, by melding the party and committee leadership. Second, the fusion of party and committee leadership insured that the committee system would be controlled by the party leaders. Thus, representatives in these two Houses were not cross-pressured by both party and committee leadership cues. That is, of course, in contrast to the modern House where committee leadership cues often outweigh party cues. The fact that the leadership in the two nineteenth century Houses were more supportive of the party position than are their modern counterparts is also partially attributable to the relative autonomy in policy matters enjoyed by the centralized leadership in the late 1890s. The other major factor which accounts for the higher support scores of both the leaders and members of the 55th and 56th Houses is the much greater homogeneity of the constituencies represented by each party.

The results of this study seem to indicate the essential correctness of Polsby's assertion that a large part of the behavior of the House is affected by the structure of the House.²³ In short, different leadership structures have differing effects on voting behavior. In the case of the 55th and 56th Houses the pattern of leadership reinforced rather than moderated basic cleavages.²⁴

²³ Polsby, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-66.

²⁴ John Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, *et al.*, *The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962), pp. 414-31 and 343-76.