Ideological Shifts and Congressional Leadership

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Abstract

This paper examines the differences in ideological change in Congress between those in party leadership and those outside of it. Using the Nokken-Poole version of DW-NOMINATE an analysis examines the importance of leadership on ideological change. No significant difference is found in many groups. However, especially among Democrats and also during the New Deal political system there is a higher significance of the effect of leadership on a legislator's ideology. The significant effects are all towards the more liberal end of the ideological spectrum. Theories regarding party stability and a party's margin in a chamber are used to better understand how and why these legislators may change. The paper concludes with a call for greater research into the subject, in particular with some case studies on leadership in order to better understand the effects occurring a smaller level and also to eventually bring more complicated statistical methods to better solve this problem.

Introduction

When Boehner announced his retirement from his role as House Speaker on September 25th, 2015 pundits thought they believed they knew who was going to be the next Speaker. They placed their bets on Kevin McCarthy, the House Majority Leader and a Representative from California, to move up to the position of House Speaker, as it often is the tradition to do. However there were fractures in the Republican party that were unable to be mended with McCarthy as Speaker, and after a period of wooing, the 2012 Republican Vice Presidential nominee and Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, a Representative from Wisconsin, was elected to become the new leader of the House. He was less establishment and more right wing than Speaker Boehner, who himself was less establishment minded and more conservative than Majority Leader McCarthy. Paul Ryan was significantly closer to the mean ideology of the other members of the House Freedom Caucus. This quite likely made his ascension to Speaker a less controversial pick than McCarthy would have been (Enten 2015). But now that Paul Ryan is Speaker, how do we expect his ideology to change now that the he holds arguably the second most powerful position in American politics after the Presidency itself?

This question has so far gone unexplored in the study of political ideology. How do leaders move ideologically compared to a non-leader Member of Congress? Past research has looked at how leaders are chosen from their party to become leaders, but the research typically has ended there. This paper's analytical tools are primarily

quantitative. Using measures of ideology from a `NOMINATE` dataset models are fit based on party and leadership status. The leaders are then compared to the non-leaders on how their ideology changes compared to the mean ideology of Congress at the time and the models are assessed for statistical significance. There are five possible outcomes. They are:

1. A null result is found - the leaders and non-leaders do not change in significantly different ways.
2. Leaders move to be more conservative, or right-leaning, when compared to non-leaders.
3. Leaders move to be more liberal, or left-leaning, when compared to non-leaders.
4. Leaders move to be more moderate, or centrist, when compared to non-leaders.
5. Leaders move to be more extreme when compared to non-leaders.

It seems like the null result should be expected the most due to the large number of other factors that could cause changes in a legislator's ideology and just due to trends in the literature. Null results are common, but often not reported. That being said there are good reasons for all the hypotheses above. For Hypothesis 2 it could make the most sense; as leaders are getting older, people often become more conservative the older they get. Hypothesis 3 could be explained by a country that has moved to the left on a number of issues, in particular social issues, in the last generation. Hypothesis 4 would make sense in the context of a leader's desire to form compromise between the two parties that are dominant in the American Political system. Finally, Hypothesis 5 would make sense due to the number of loud forces that exist on both the Democratic and Republican sides that have pushed polarization in Congress recently farther than it has gone in the past century. These hypotheses are tested later in this paper.

The paper begins with a literature review to try to comprehend the previous research done on the subject of ideology and Congressional leadership as it applies

to this paper. Then the dataset is described in more detail and the methods to be used in the analysis are presented. Next the results are displayed. A discussion of the results follows, and the paper ends with a conclusion of the results found in the study and a look towards future research in this field.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

1.1 Congressional Leaders

Party leaders are hugely important in Congress. Perhaps their most important role is setting the legislative agenda in Congress (Rohde 1991, Sinclair et al. 1983). By setting the agenda in arguably the most powerful branch of government, congressional leaders have extraordinary power over which bills are brought to a vote and eventually passed. They also have the power of being able to shift congressional actions away from an otherwise simple answer to a problem.[1] Leaders in Congress have large sway over the leaders who they can choose to fill the many roles below them. They are also the "brand image" of their party, especially when their party does not control the presidency. Understanding the ideology of leaders is important for a Congressional scholar to better understand why leaders act the way they do.

There has often been the question of whether or not congressional leaders are moderates in their party, near to their party's mean, or extremists. Moderates would often be effective legislators, as they would be able to propose more centrist policies that might apply to both political parties. Extremists might be selected due to their

[1]For a recent example of this, see how in 2008 Harry Reid (D) (then the majority leader of the Senate) was able to remove the possibility of a nuclear waste repository from being created at Yucca Mountain.

Table 1.1: Ideologies Presented for Median Voter Theorem Example

Name	Ideology
Warren	-0.538
Reid	-0.422
Wyden	-0.381
Warner	-0.238
Collins	0.061
McCain	0.367
Rubio	0.531
McConnell	0.568
Cruz	0.754

ability to placate the louder wings of both the Republican and Democratic parties. A political scientist or an economist might be quick to answer that a Member of Congress near the median voter in a political party has a strong theoretical reason for being chosen.

Understanding what a median voter is as well as the median voter theorem is important for many quantitative approaches to the study of political ideology. A median voter is the voter in the middle of a group of voters measured among one or more dimensions.[2] A table of voters, Table 1.1, is displayed with their names and respective ideologies, picked from the actual numbers from the Nokken and Poole version of the D-NOMINATE dataset. These are the first dimensions scores, often categorized as ideology, with -1 being extreme liberalism and 1 being extreme conservatism. They are from the 113th Congress, the most recent Congressional session available in the dataset.

Here the median voter would be Senator Susan Collins, as her ideology, 0.061, puts her at the middle point, or the median, of the list of voters. The median voter theorem applies in majoritarian voting systems. The median voter, in this circumstance Senator Collins, will have their preferred outcome chosen by the voters in the system. A

[2]As the number of dimensions increases however it can get more complicated to decide which voter is in fact the median voter. You have to properly scale each dimension to make sure some do not overpower others.

majoritarian voting system is when a vote is won when more than half of the votes are for a specific option. This is different than a plurality system, which just makes whichever has the most votes the winner, regardless of whether or not they have a majority of the votes. For example, if 40% voted for option A, 30% voted for option B, and 30% voted for option C then option A would be chosen under plurality rule, but not under majority rule. One of the options would need to be more than 50%. If say in a new vote option D got 50% of the vote that would not be enough to win in a majoritarian system as option E could also have 50% of the vote at the same time.

To continue the discussion above, the reason why you might expect the congressperson elected to serve a leadership position to occupy the median space in the party is because in these elections the votes are taken solely within the party.[3] The median voter theorem states that "a majority rule voting system will select the outcome most preferred by the median voter" (Holcombe 2006, 115). This builds off the assumption that there is only one dimension along which politics exists, for example, left to right or liberal to conservative. It is also assumed that a voter will choose the option, or in this circumstance the politician, closest to their own ideal point along the singular dimension. In a majoritarian system this ideal median point will prevail, having more than 50% of the vote in the final vote tallied.

Studies have examined where leaders come from ideologically speaking (Grofman, Koetzle, and McGann 2002; Jessee and Malhotra 2010). One has found, using the DW-NOMINATE scores of congressional leaders, that these leaders do in fact come from near the median of their party, with a tiny preference towards the slightly more extreme candidate, left-leaning for Democrats and right-leaning for Republicans. DW-NOMINATE scores place Members of Congress on a single dimension from -1 to 1, with -1 being left-leaning and 1 being right-leaning. The numbers are found

[3]With the exception of the vote for Speaker in the House of Representatives, although that vote often ends up being made up entirely of the majority party's congresspersons voting in affirmation with the minority party avoiding casting a positive ballot.

by taking the roll call votes over a single Congress and then placing the legislator's scores within the range of possible values. A senator like Ted Cruz would end up with a number close to 1[4] whereas for senator like Elizabeth Warren you would see a point near to -1[5]. House Democrats were found to be on average -0.050 away from the median point whereas their leaders were on overage -0.097, slightly farther away but still close to the median. For Senate Democrats these numbers are 0.016 and -0.059 respectively; again the leaders are slightly more extreme than the median but still being quite close to it. For the Republicans the results are similar, although in the other direction. In the House, for leaders the average distance away from the party median for leaders is 0.044 whereas for the rest of the House Republicans it is -0.025. For the Senate Republicans the numbers are 0.048 and 0.057, respectively.[6] They find it "heartening to note that leaders–who some political observers argue have strong influence over agenda setting and lawmaking under certain conditions–are, on balance, fairly representative of their parties. If leaders came from the far extremes of the chambers... then policy might be even less reflective of the preferences of the median voter in the electorate" (Jessee and Malhotra 2010, see specifically 386). Jessee and Malhotra (2010) also find that the winner of a congressional leadership race is not "ideologically distinctive" from the entire pool of candidates (2010, 361).

This evidence found in Jessee and Malhotra (2010) looked to revise earlier studies on the subject. Harris and Nelson (2008) looked at the old "Austin-Boston" alliance that encourage the selection of middlemen in the Democratic party, and also examined the changes within the Republican party leadership as well. Surprised by the election of the relatively extreme Pelosi to the Speakership, the two authors felt the need to revisit the question of whether the median voter theorem still held.[7] Using the same

[4]In the 113th Congress his point was measured at 0.754.

[5]In the 113th Congress her point was measured at -0.538

[6]The Republicans in the Senate are the only group who elect leaders slightly more moderate on average than the party median in that chamber.

[7]While the middle*men* theory could still hold, the middle*person* theory was in doubt.

dataset as Jessee and Malhotra (2010), they came to a new conclusion, that perhaps more partisan leaders were needed as political polarization increased. Seeing the role switch from a place for compromise during a "bargaining era and bipartisan Congress" to a new bully pulpit, often active in the media and courting donors, middlepersons seemed to no longer be the most appropriate leaders of their party on the national stage of Congress (Harris and Nelson 2008, 54). Their final hypothesis is that as partisan divisions increase it will exacerbate the extremism of Congressional leaders.

Older research is more theoretical and is less likely to use datasets, like the many NOMINATE datasets available. In May (1973) leaders are suggested to be more extreme than the rest of their party when ideology is strongly important, which may connect well to the modern era. Studies of both British and Norwegian legislative systems cast doubt on May's concept, the law of curvilinear disparity. The middleman theory is further promoted by Clausen and Wilcox (1987), who finds the best support for the theory in the House and then best within the Democratic party, which had at the time been the majority power for 32 years. Quickly stated, they claim that "leaders are chosen who are... dedicated to represent and prosecute the party position" (Clausen and Wilcox 1987, 261). More studies find evidence that leaders are more extreme than the median voter theorem would suggest, as Grofman, Koetzle, and McGann find that Democratic leaders are to the left of the median of their party and Republican leaders are to the right of the median of their party (Grofman, Koetzle, and McGann (2002)).

1.2 DW-NOMINATE

Keith Poole's and Howard Rosenthal's previous work about congressional ideology is the backbone of this study. They have constructed a way to fit members of Congress across a unidimensional metric that measures primarily ideology. Their typical dataset

measures a single "ideal point" for each congressperson throughout their career and is able to plot them against other members of Congress throughout its existence. There are alternative versions of their dataset that also exist, and I use the Nokken and Poole version, which allows members to shift their ideology throughout different sessions of Congress (Nokken and Poole 2004). There is often a clamoring by many for the structure of Congress to be displayed in multiple different dimensions, sometimes even one dimension for every issue available. More often however there is a request for a second dimension that allows not just a conservative versus liberal axis but instead a socially liberal versus socially conservative axis and a fiscally liberal versus fiscally conservative axis. While at times a second axis is useful, and in the most recent session of Congress can be viewed as a measure of establishment versus non-establishment leanings, Poole and Rosenthal as well as those who have used their datasets in the past primarily looked to create their models solely from this one dimension due to its explanatory power (Poole and Rosenthal 2007, 21). Part of the reason why complicated legislators are able to be represented along a single metric is due to the prevalence of logrolling or vote trading (Poole and Rosenthal 2007, 17). The primary dimension is not solely concerned with political party; it also strongly relates to issues of economic redistribution (Poole and Rosenthal 2007, 70).

Looking ahead to how the legislators, specifically the leaders, might change within my own study is evidence that "essentially all movement is captured by simple linear movement" along the single explanatory dimension, which suggests that more complicated ideological flip flops are rare within Congress (Poole and Rosenthal 2007, 29). Poole and Rosenthal are able to look at the patterns of how ideology has changed in the history of Congress. I will solely be looking at post-WW2 data as that is when congressional leadership started becoming truly strong in both the House and Senate.[8] They note that "[t]he period from the late New Deal until the mid-1970s

[8]Before that it was sometimes non-existent, especially in the smaller Senate, where leadership was not needed as much to organize the many members of each party.

saw the development of the only genuine three-political-party system in American history. The southern and northern Democrats may have joined together to organize the House and Senate but they were widely separated on the second dimension. This dimension picked up conflict over civil rights" (Poole and Rosenthal 2007, 54). During this time there was a conservative coalition between the southern Democrats and most Republicans that was in conflict with the northern Democrats as well a a few northern Republicans (Poole and Rosenthal 2007, 54–56). It is unfortunate that this sole time of a three-political-party stem exists during the data that I plan to use, but this may make my results stronger in less turbulent times. By the "mid-to-late 1970s the party-line voting returned to a more [unidimensional] pattern" (Poole and Rosenthal 2007, 57). This was due to the passage of civil rights legislation that either revolved conflicts within the parties or caused legislators to switch from one party to another. Throughout the rest of recent Congressional history the single dimension remains but what the dimensions refers to evolves slowly. Within each individual Congress it is easy to see the majority of conflicts along a single dimension (MacDonald and Rabinowitz 1987).

Something that should help my analysis is the movement towards more "unidimesional politics" in the most recent sessions of Congress. The ideological overlap along this single dimension between the parties is essentially gone. The last Congress in which there was an overlap in the Senate was the 109th, which ended in early 2007. The second dimension has lost much of its explanatory power towards party since the 104th Congress, which began in 1995. Poole and Rosenthal said that "the modern Congress is truly unidimensional" in 2005, which was before the even greater polarization that began then and continues to move the two parties father apart (Poole and Rosenthal 2007, 55). The first dimension, while often referred to as "ideology," can be though of in a few different ways. It could be that the dimension is "thought of as ranging from strong loyalty to one party" to a strong dislike of the policies of

another party; this can often explain the placement of many independent or otherwise third-party congressmen[9] existing seemingly deep within another party (Poole and Rosenthal 2007, 55).

Poole and Rosenthal put dimensional and roll call voting agendas well in the following quote: "In a nutshell, the roll cal voting agenda of Congress is always a cornucopia of diverse issues, even if many issues are screened from the agenda. This diversity notwithstanding, to the extent that spatial models are useful in describing the roll call voting data, only low-dimensional models are needed" (2007, 69).

[9] As every third-party Representative or Senator has been a man.

Chapter 2

Dataset and Methodology

2.1 Dataset

NOMINATE, the method developed by Poole and Rosenthal has evolved over many years: first seen as D-NOMINATE, W-NOMINATE, then DW-NOMINATE, from which the Nokken-Poole dataset is built. Seen within a two-dimensional space, each legislator is given an "ideal point," or where they would most likely fit given their role call voting. This is seen as where the legislator maximizes their utility, perhaps by increasing the chance they are elected by being located there as Mayhew might argue (2004). They will most often vote for items that are close to this "ideal point" and the farther away a vote will lie from this point the less likely it is that the Member of Congress will vote "Yea" on the bill or resolution.

The dataset that I am using a special version of the DW-NOMINATE dataset that was created by Timothy Nokken and Keith Poole for a 2004 study to research congressional party defection throughout the history of the United States. What it shares with the DW-NOMINATE dataset is a first and second dimension coordinate for each legislator across the Congresses. But it differs in that across different Congresses the members ideal points change. This is what makes this dataset unique

among the NOMINATE datasets, as normally a legislator holds the same ideal point across their career. This allows me to compare a legislator's past ideology with their present ideology, helping the eventual model understand the importance of a predictor indicating leadership on this ideological shift. The dataset is large enough for the tests I intend to do on it, as the Senate has close to 5000 total observations and the House has nearly 25,000.

In order to properly subset my data I completely removed all independents from the dataset. In a later study it might be more useful to instead mark independents as a member of the Republican or Democratic party if they decide to caucus with them, such as Senator Sanders, an independent who caucuses with the Democrats, or Senator Joe Lieberman, a independent who also caucused with the Democrats. This did not seem to be a huge reduction in the total dataset size, as during the period this study looks at there were only sixteen total third party members of the Senate and only thirty-two total third party members in the House.[1] The variables a reader of this paper might be most interested in are:

- Congress Number, 1st Congress through 113th Congress
- ICPSR ID Number: A unique five digit code assigned to each legislator.
- State Code: A two digit code assigned by state.
- State Name: The name of the state the legislator is from.
- Party Code: 100 if a Democrat, 200 if a Republican, and many others exist for third parties.
- Name: The legislator's last name and occasionally first name and middle name initials.
- 1st Dimension Coordinate: The most important dimension, can place a legislator in a party with over 80% accuracy across most Congresses, and with 100%

[1] A significant percentage of these thirty-two are members of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor party or members of the Progressive party.

accuracy in the current polarized environment.

- 2nd Dimension Coordinate: The second dimension of voting data pulled out from the roll call votes. Across history it has often reflected disagreement within the parties. For example, in the 1960s within the Democratic and Republican party it reflected views on Civil Rights. Currently the dimension is not very predictive, but does help designate who is a member of the "establishment" versus the anti-establishment Members of Congress.

New variables were added during the cleaning and coding of the data. They are:

- Role: Blank if none, "W" if whip, "L" if leader, and "S" if Speaker.
- Leadership Position: "Y" if Role is not blank, "N" if Role is blank.
- Party Mean: The mean 1st dimension score of the party for the current Congress. Continuous and Numerical.
- Past Party Mean: The mean 1st dimension score of the party for the past Congress. Continuous and Numerical.
- Past Ideology: The 1st Dimension score for the Member of Congress for the past Congress.

The mean ideologies by party for each chamber are given below to offer greater context of how parties move within their chamber and in particular the extreme polarization of the past Congresses. Tables of the past twenty Congresses exist for both chambers below, along with graphs showing how ideology has changed across all available data.

Table 2.1: Senate Mean Ideology By Party, 94th to 113th Congress

Congress	Dem. Ideology	Rep. Ideology
94	-0.30610	0.25354
95	-0.30317	0.25055
96	-0.29536	0.26485
97	-0.28809	0.27152
98	-0.28170	0.26649
99	-0.28200	0.26920
100	-0.31091	0.28628
101	-0.30773	0.30042
102	-0.31257	0.30668
103	-0.31242	0.32486
104	-0.32581	0.35945
105	-0.34491	0.39311
106	-0.34037	0.38618
107	-0.34046	0.39400
108	-0.33088	0.36725
109	-0.34327	0.41862
110	-0.34360	0.44063
111	-0.34595	0.44511
112	-0.33365	0.50675
113	-0.36271	0.53037

Table 2.2: House Mean Ideology By Party, 94th to 113th Congress

Congress	Dem. Ideology	Rep. Ideology
94	-0.29602	0.20225

Congress	Dem. Ideology	Rep. Ideology
95	-0.27936	0.17991
96	-0.28246	0.21078
97	-0.29003	0.24574
98	-0.29203	0.27044
99	-0.30741	0.29505
100	-0.30495	0.31453
101	-0.29785	0.32149
102	-0.29964	0.34878
103	-0.31627	0.39454
104	-0.34211	0.48100
105	-0.35750	0.51788
106	-0.36091	0.54278
107	-0.35842	0.55918
108	-0.35822	0.58535
109	-0.37146	0.60593
110	-0.35234	0.64415
111	-0.33722	0.67488
112	-0.38793	0.68400
113	-0.38112	0.69508

In the above tables the polarization trend is clear. This trend is stronger in the House than in the Senate, and stronger among Republicans than among Democrats. This has partly lead to the sharp criticism of the Republicans that has been increasing in recent years (Mann and Ornstein 2012). The Democrats begin farther from the perfectly "moderate" point of 0, but as the years progress the Republicans move significantly farther than the Democrats do.

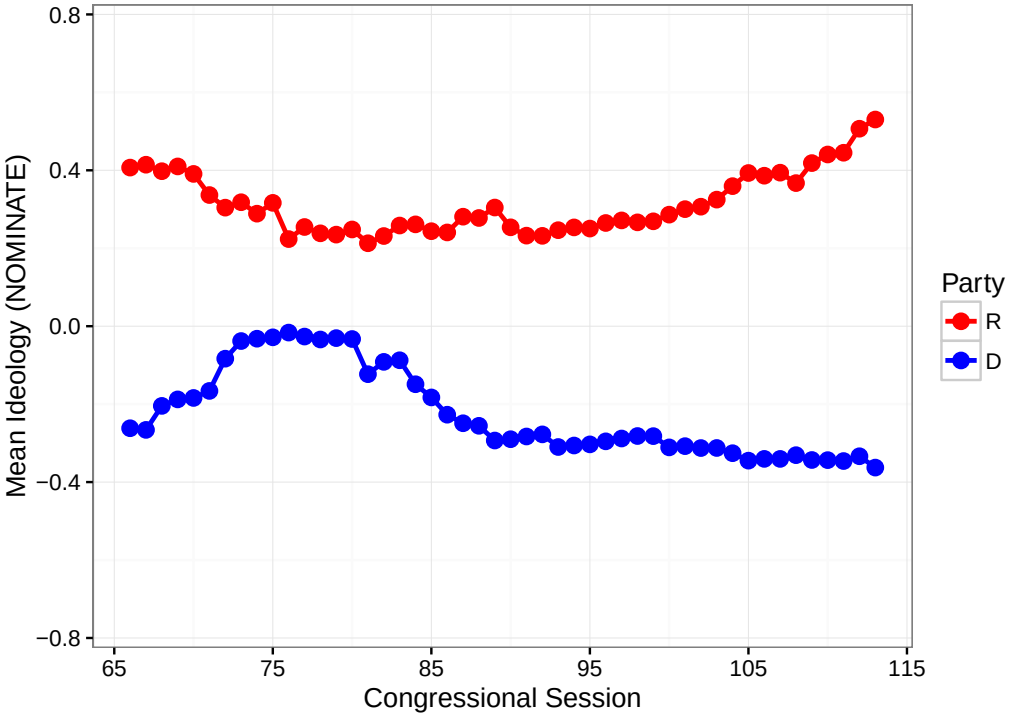

Figure 2.1: Mean Senate Ideological Scores Separated By Party

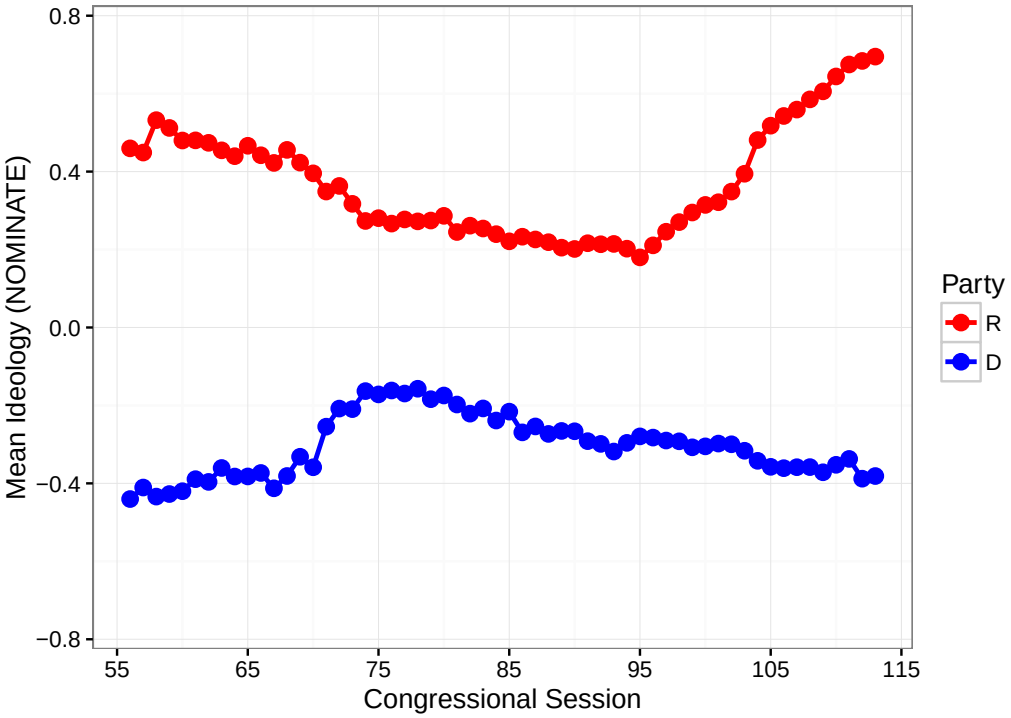

Figure 2.2: Mean House Ideological Scores Separated By Party

Finally to better understand the current distribution of a Member of Congress in their chamber there are violin plots below that will help a reader better understand the density of the party across different ideologies, again indicated by the first dimension in the NOMINATE dataset. Violin plots are essentially a density plot, the larger the space between the two lines the larger number of Members of Congress have their first dimensional score in that area. They are similar to boxplots, but are a little better at getting a look at the data beyond just the robust statistics.

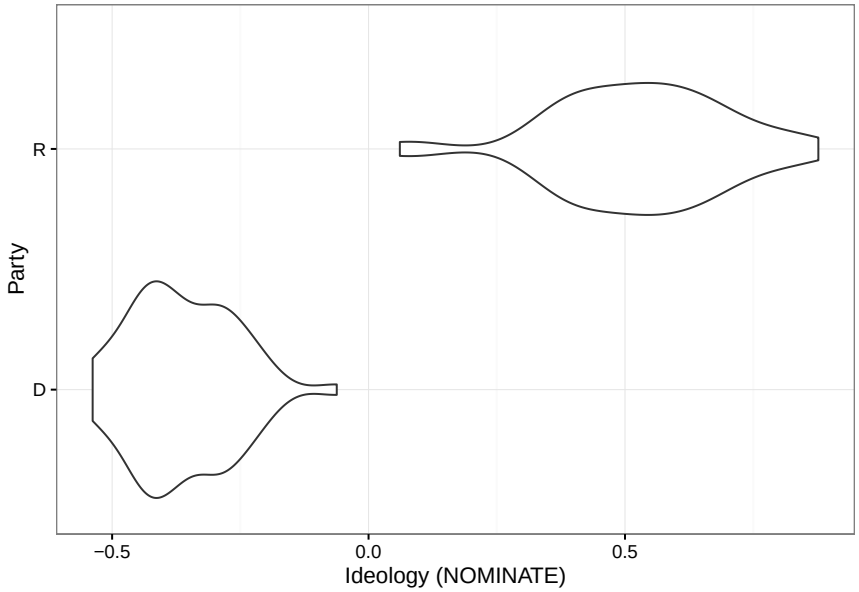

Figure 2.3: Ideology in the Senate by Party for the 113th Congress

2.2 Methodology

My goal is to understand how leadership positions affect the ideology of a Member of Congress. A Member of Congress during one Congress is my unit of observation. I looked at four independent variables and one dependent variable. The independent variables are:

- Past ideology: The 1st dimension score of the Member of Congress for the past Congress. Continuous and Numerical.

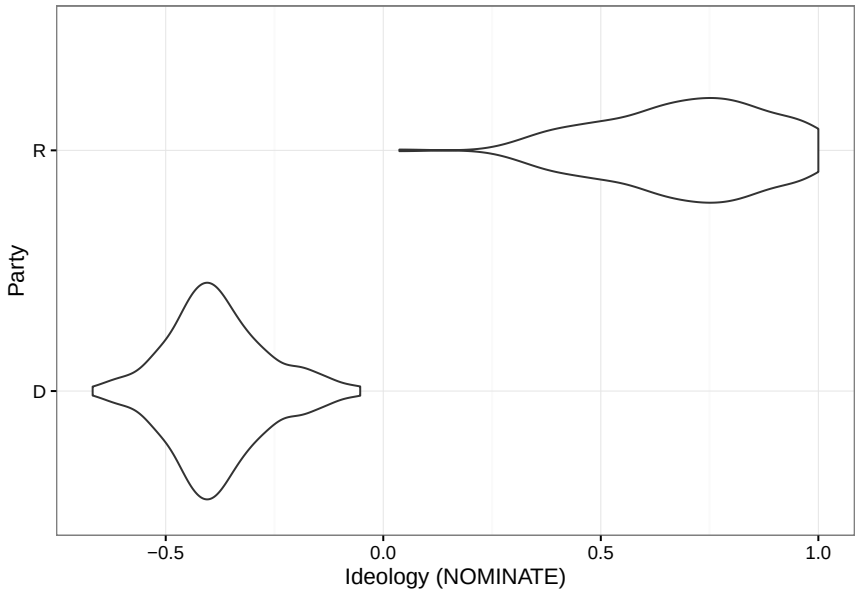

Figure 2.4: Ideology in the House by Party for the 113th Congress

- Past party ideology: The mean 1st dimension score of the party for the past Congress. Continuous and Numerical.
- Current party ideology: The mean 1st dimension score of the party for the current Congress. Continuous and Numerical.
- Leadership status: If the Member of Congress is a "leader," as described above in the dataset section. The variable of note. Binary.

I am looking to eventually use these variables to predict the response variable, current ideology. Current ideology is the 1st dimension score of the legislator of interest for the current Congress. I would expect the legislator's past ideology to be the most predictive, followed by the party's current ideology, with the third most predictive variable being the party's past ideology. Leadership status is expected to be the least predictive variable of the four variables tested for here.

The few assumptions needed for a linear regression model had to be checked for. There is a chance that the model would be better represented by a non-linear model but due to the author's statistical know-how a linear regression seemed most appropriate. Normality in the error terms as well as a constant variance of the error

terms also seemed to be met. The needed assumption that may have been hardest to work around was multicollinearity, or when predictor terms within the regression are able to predict each other with great accuracy. The variables around ideology could have some issues here and a future paper might try to further tease out whether there is a strong problem of collinearity in this dataset and model.

Again, this model is acceptable, but a model that better fits this Congressional phenomena would certainly exist. Further research with more advanced statistical methods might be able to more properly tease out the true effects of holding a leadership position on ideology. Yet even a simple linear regression ends up with results, displayed in the next chapter. The final plot displayed shows the Senators of the 113th Congress, and should help the reader understand where the ideology of specific Members of Congress lies. You do not even need a second dimension to split the legislators, as a split along the first dimension around 0 would break up the parties perfectly with zero classifications. However this second dimension is displayed to give the reader a little bit more understanding about how the legislators group themselves, especially within their own parties.

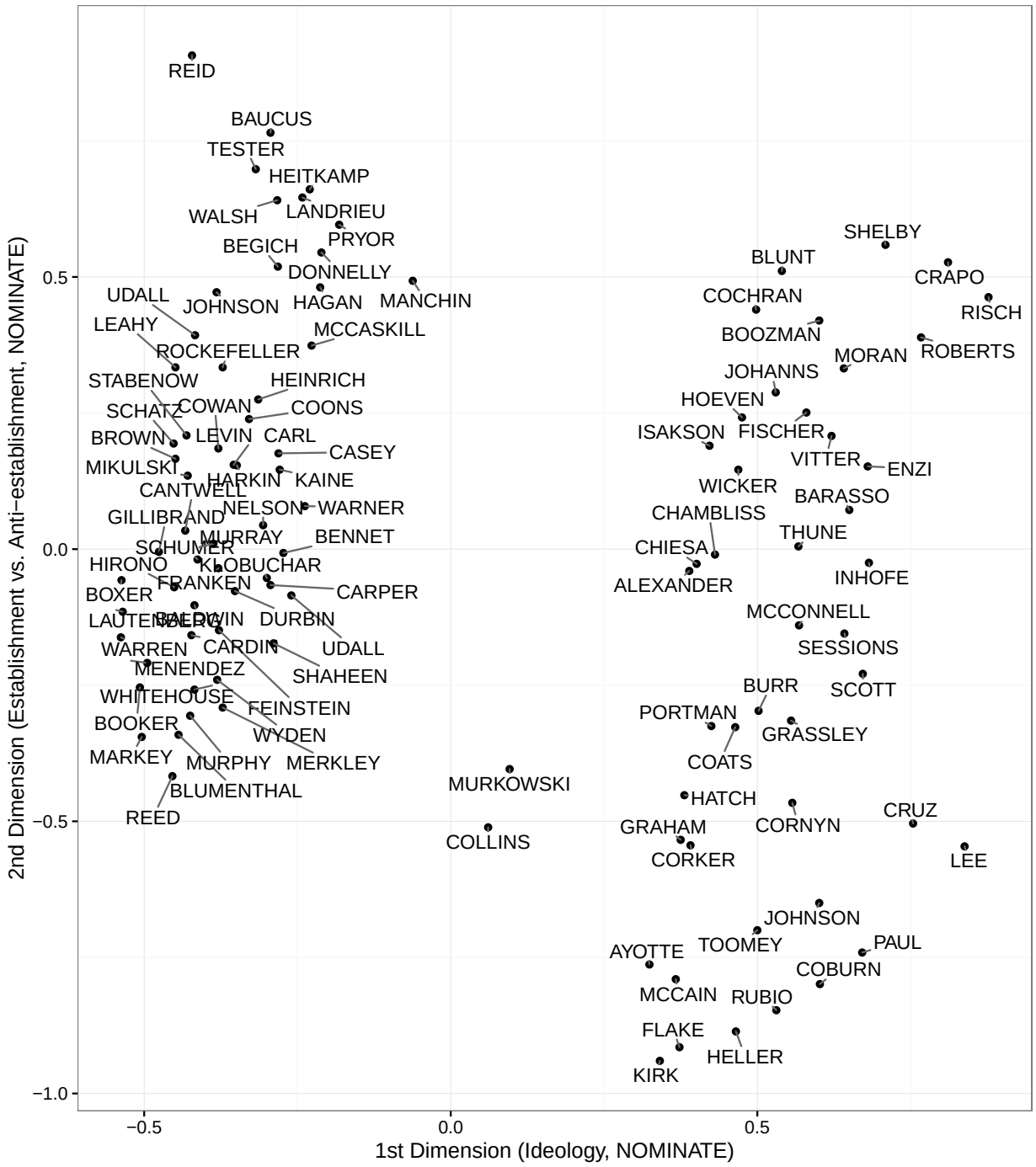

Figure 2.5: The Senate with Both Dimensions for the 113th Congress

Chapter 3

Results

3.1 Results for Complete Dataset

Some statistically significant results are found in my most basic regression. These are the linear regressions computed across all the available congressional sessions that have complete leader data in both the House and the Senate, from the 67th Congress (1921-1923) to the recent 113th Congress (2013-2015).

Table 3.1: Summary of Models Across All Years, House and Senate: Bolded items are significant leadership predictors

	Senate Ds	Senate Rs	House Ds	House Rs
(Intercept)	0.00489	0.00259	0.01131	0.00405
Party Ideo. Mean	0.51583	0.61344	0.73047	0.67749
Prev. Party Ideo. Mean	-0.38112	-0.50989	-0.57483	-0.53415
Prev. Ideo.	0.87467	0.87061	0.87636	0.85013
Leader (Yes)	**-0.01863**	0.01289	**-0.03022**	-0.00417
Adjusted R-Squared	0.802	0.781	0.781	0.824
N	2239	1817	11380	9270

All of the control variables, those above the leadership variable, were found to be statistically significant with a p-value of less than 0.001. These three variables were the ideological mean of congress, the ideological mean of congress from the previous congressional session, and the congressperson's ideology from the previous

congressional session. For all three of these variables across both parties in both the House and Senate the p-value was always less than 0.0001. It is clear that a legislator's current ideology would be affected by what their ideology was in the previous congressional session. While not as obvious, it also makes sense that you would need to understand the greater political environment that their party is in within their chamber. For example, if congresspeople as a whole were becoming more polarized at a rapid rate, as they are currently, you would expect a singular congressperson to be rapidly polarizing as well. Knowing how the party has changed from the previous Congress to the most recent one allows you to help control for this effect.

3.1.1 Democrats

Across all of the years the leadership variable was statistically significant for the Senate Democrats and the House Democrats, represented by the bold text in Table 3.1 above. The Senate Democrats noticed a small shift, approximately a 0.02 leftward shift on the NOMINATE scale, indicating that leaders become slightly more liberal across Congresses than their non-leader counterparts, on average. The result was not significant at a significance level of 0.05, but with a p-value of 0.059 it would be recognized as significant at a slightly higher confidence level. For reasons laid out farther below, I do not think that this is reason enough to disregard this result, as I would guess that this is an underestimate rather than an overestimate. The overall shift is small, only a 0.02 movement towards the more liberal side, but not insignificant.

A statistically significant shift was also noticed among the House Democrats. They had an even more statistically significant result, with a p-value of about 0.015, a much stronger result than that found above with the Senate Democrats. It is strong enough that with the somewhat arbitrary confidence level of 0.05 the predictor remains

significant. The coefficient attached is also larger, 0.03, again with a leftwards shift farther towards the Democratic party extreme, farther towards congresspeople like Senator Sanders and Senator Brown and away from conservatives like Senator Collins and Senator Risch. Again, the overall shift is small but not worth disregarding, however if one was looking to predict the ideological score of a House Democrat you would not pick leadership status as one of your first predictors.

3.1.2 Republicans

It is important to talk about the null results received for Republicans in both the House and Senate. While neither of the results were significant, the regression for the Senate did hint at a possible ideological change due to leadership, with a coefficient of 0.013 towards the more conservative side. Accompanied by a p-value of 0.19 they must be looked at skeptically, and instead perhaps taken as a hint for future study as opposed to a specific result. The coefficient found here is similar to the results found for the Democrats: that they moved more towards their party's extreme edges when they were leaders. It was not as strong as the coefficient found for either the House Democrats or the Senate Democrats, but it is not as weak as the Republican House, covered below. While significance was not found in this elementary regression, perhaps a regression with better controls and a stronger method might be able to find results that are not just statistically significant but also are statistically sound.

The House Republicans however seem to be very far away from any possible impact of leadership on ideology. They had a p-value of 0.65, far away from any reasonable confidence level. Even if it had been significant the coefficient attached was incredibly small, 0.004, towards the more moderate wing of the Republican party or the Democratic party itself. These results are not in sync with the results found for the other three groups analyzed here, and certainly suggest a finding of null results with any reasonable significance level chosen.

3.1.3 Comments on Null Results

With the model I have created I think it is likely that the significance of leadership on ideology is underestimated. The change in leadership could have an effect on how the ideology of an entire caucus moves. Speaker Ryan right now is trying hard to make his ideology the ideology of the entire party, as he has pushed his agenda of "Confident America" (Steinhauer 2016). Ryan is closer to the mean ideological scores of the Freedom Caucus, and one would imagine that a concerted effort to continue to elect leaders of more extreme ideologies might allow the rest of the party to move along with them towards their more extreme wings (Enten 2015).

Also the model might underestimate the importance of being a leader for a few another reasons. For example, leaders are a part of the data on the last congressional ideological mean and the current congressional ideological mean. Also leaders might have altered their early, pre-leader ideology because they expected or wanted to become leaders in the future. All of these could account for the differences among the significance of the leadership variable among the Democrats when compared to the Republicans. Perhaps Republicans were more likely to know they wanted to pursue leadership since they first entered office, or maybe they were more likely to shift along with their leaders, causing the entire mean of the party to move, possibly nullifying the effects of a leader's move.

3.2 Results for Subsets of Dataset

I took subsets of the data by Congressional periods to try to see if leaders were ever more important across certain time periods then they were over the entire dataset. There are many different ways to break up Congress, one way suggested by (Stewart 2012, 96–97) is the breaking into six different eras, or systems, of which only three are

during the time period that was able to be coded with leaders.[1] They are:

- **Industrial System**: 1921-1932: The system actually runs from 1894-1932, but due to our coding of leaders only going back so far a smaller amount of the era is analyzed. A party of industry and a party of labor, with northern and southern regionalism factoring into parties heavily. Republicans were primarily northern and industrial, whereas Democrats were primarily southern and labor focused.
- **New Deal System**: 1933-1972: Democrats become more liberal as the Republicans become more conservative compared to industrial system, but the regionalism does not completely fade away.
- **Candidate-centered system**: 1973-present: After the tension that existed in the United States in the sixties, the regional importance shifts away as ideology begins to matter more and polarization of the parties continues (Stewart 2012, 96).

This system of breaking up the parties is not the only manner in which one could break them up, and subscribes to the views that are not taken as true across all of the political science literature. Some push both the Industrial and New Deal system together as one Congressional period. Yet the years themselves above seem to delineate good beginning breaking points for me to subset the data.

3.2.1 Republicans

Subsets were not useful to explain how House Republicans voted. During all of the systems the p-values were relatively high. That being said the subsetting did reduce the p-value by a significant amount, bringing the p-value for all three eras to between 0.22 and 0.26. The coefficients were also stronger than they were when all of the

[1] The rest were pre-1921 and before my data was able to be clearly coded due how Congressional leadership existed back then.

systems were lumped together, but they still are smaller than the absolute value of the coefficients that exist for the Republicans in the House and Senate.

The values obtained for the Senate Republicans did not all become more explanatory as they did for the House Republicans. The p-value increases for all eras except for the New Deal era, when it moves down to 0.14. But during the Industrial and Candidate-centered systems the p-values increase dramatically to a point where they seem unable to be rationalized in any way. So again subsetting is overall mostly ineffective at helping try to tease out statistically significant ideological change due to a leadership position among the Republicans.

3.2.2 Democrats

Subsetting is more effective in talking about the importance of leadership when it comes to ideological change among House Democrats however. Null results are found for both the industrial and candidate centered systems, with p-values reaching far above 0.20. However for the House Democrats during the New Deal era, from 1933-1972 or the 73rd Congress to the 92nd Congress, the subsetting increases the significance of the data. Not only does the p-value decrease from the all full dataset p-value of 0.015 to the even stronger p-value of 0.006 but the coefficient increases as well, doubling from a 0.03 shift towards the left to a 0.06 shift towards the left. This is a very significant shift among the NOMINATE scale, so this will be revisited in the discussion of the results later. It did not come at a reduction of the importance of the other variables, which stayed statistically and substantively significant.

Subsetting is also effective in explaining during which congressional systems leadership has its greatest effect on the ideology of Senate Democrats. Again, the period in which the strongest p-value and coefficient is found is during the New Deal system (1933-1973). The p-value for this time period is 0.08 and its corresponding coefficient is a 0.03 shift towards the left, stronger by 0.01 than the baseline analysis of the

Senate Democrats. Since there is slowed polarization in the Senate when compared to the House the ideological shift here means more than a simple comparison to the House number would suggest.

Table 3.2: Importance of Leadership In Subsetted Data:
Bold Values Are Significant. Data Formatted "Leader=Yes Coefficient (P-Value)"

System	Senate Ds	Senate Rs	House Ds	House Rs
Industrial	0.012 (0.72)	0.019 (0.59)	-0.045 (0.28)	0.044 (0.24)
New Deal	**-0.032 (0.08)**	0.021 (0.14)	**-0.060 (<0.01)**	-0.016 (0.26)
Candidate-Centered	-0.013 (0.16)	0.002 (0.86)	-0.008 (0.55)	-0.013 (0.22)

3.3 Conclusion

Overall it is clear that Democrats were more likely to have significant results than Republicans. The New Deal system was also more likely to produce significant results than the other systems were. In the discussion section below I expound on these results and try to tie them into my earlier hypotheses about how leadership positions affect ideology.

Chapter 4

Discussion and Conclusion

4.1 Discussion

As discussed in the introduction section, there were five different possible hypotheses that we were able to come up with - one null hypothesis and four alternative hypotheses. Again, I will repeat all five of them below.

1. A null result is found - the leaders and non-leaders do not change in significantly different ways.
2. Leaders move to be more conservative, or right-leaning, when compared to non-leaders.
3. Leaders move to be more liberal, or left-leaning, when compared to non-leaders.
4. Leaders move to be more moderate, or centrist, when compared to non-leaders.
5. Leaders move to be more extreme when compared to non-leaders.

Luckily I need not pick only one hypothesis above to describe the phenomena observed because three of the hypotheses seemed to be correct, depending on the circumstance.

Firstly, the null hypothesis seems to be correct in the vast majority of situations. While leadership can seem like an important identifier from the outside, it would make

sense that they primarily follow or lead their party[1] in such a way that their ideologies do not drastically change when compared with the mean change of the party.

The null hypothesis might also have been found for a number of reasons related to the statistical analysis. For example the controls that I used could have also factored in a lot of the leadership variable outside of its specific predictor. This would be problematic for my results as I would be unable to find significance despite the actual leadership position having an effect on the legislator's ideology. A stronger understanding of statistics might allow a researcher to better tease out the significance of leadership on a legislator's ideology. Despite all of this however, it would not seem completely off-base for a null result to be found here. Perhaps party leaders are not unlike the rest of their caucus and they might just shift along with the rest of their legislators.

Secondly, the Democrats seemed to be explained well by the third and fifth hypotheses above, that leaders become more liberal or extreme when compared to non-leaders. There are a number of reasons why this could take place. Perhaps one of the most largest reasons I see being the case is that one of the largest threats for these leaders is that they are receiving a large amount of media attention and may attract a primary opponent. Leaders in both the Senate, and especially in the House because of the frequent elections, are often in seats that have a non-competitive general election. This can often mean that during the primary election that the incumbent may be challenged by a member of his own party, and this challenge will often come from the left. This would encourage the current leaders in Congress to shift farther towards the left in order to prevent an opponent from appearing or, if they do appear, from successfully challenging them for their seat. This again follows from Mayhew (2004) where the leaders are primarily focused on reelection.

[1]It is impossible to know which direction the causality would go in from this analysis.

This would also seem to make sense in the context of the ideology of the leaders that are elected by their fellow Members of Congress to lead their party. To reiterate, these leaders are not often middlemen, and instead are closer to their party's extremes than would be expected (May 1973; Clausen and Wilcox 1987; Grofman, Koetzle, and McGann 2002; Jessee and Malhotra 2010).

Finally, the results were more significant for the Democrats during the New Deal era, or from 1933 to 1972, a period when the Democrats were in power in the House for a significant period of time, with only four years during this entire period with a Republican Speaker.[2] While the literature review does not suggest why this period might be one of a greater shift towards the left by Democratic leaders there are possible reasons for this difference. It could be that as the party was feeling more comfortable in its position in the House the voters and other legislators wanted to see the party move farther towards the left. To understand why, imagine if party members were to always vote along party lines. You would have little incentive to move father towards the center once you had a majority of the seats in your chamber. As you keep gaining seats you gain a larger margin in the chamber. But if you pass a bill with 70% of the chamber it passes just the same as a bill that passes with 51% of support. So during this time of large Democratic margins and a sense of security of their leadership, the Democrats may have wanted more liberal policy to be passed. This would encourage the leaders to perhaps become more liberal than they otherwise would be.

4.2 Conclusion

Overall it seems as if leadership positions can affect the ideology of a member in Congress, but that it is not always significant and when it is the degree to which it moves the Member of Congress can be small. Republicans were more likely to find

[2]This occurred in the 80th and 83rd Congress, from 1947-1948 and 1953-1954, respectively. Joe Martin, a Representative from Massachusetts, was Speaker during this time.

null results, perhaps due to the long periods in which the party was out of power or due to a different attitude around leadership within the party. Democrats were more likely to have a leadership position affect their overall ideology, but the results were often small. The one time when the results seemed quite significant in their effect on the leader was during the New Deal system in Congress, from 1933 to 1972. This could have been due to the stronger party that existed at the time, and the pressure that a more liberal wing a larger party might put on the leaders of that party.

This study was important because while information exists about how ideology matters when Members of Congress are elected to their leadership positions, the research had ended there. So while we might have been able to predict that John Boehner and Paul Ryan had ideologies that made them both reasonable choices for Speaker, the research did not yet speak to how their ideology might change when they obtained their position. This is an integral question as leaders have a large amount of power when compared to legislators that do not sit in leadership roles.

These results found are far from the final word on the subject; they are actually the first. Subsequent analyses of this data could look at non-parametric approaches to try to better explain the variation in the data. More control variables could be added in order to better assess significance of the leadership predictor. For example, an age variable, or time spent in Congress variable, might have elicited some interesting results. More work could be done to examine the differences between the Republicans and Democrats - perhaps some case studies on how specific leaders changed their ideologies might be informative to the theory and story underlying the main question of this paper. Breaking down the data based on the type of leader that they are could also be useful. Bringing this research into committee leadership could also prove useful but would require a significant amount of additional coding to be done.

Overall, this paper has looked to narrow the gap of knowledge that exists around ideology and congressional leaders after they take their positions in their respective

chambers. This study is imperfect and offers as many new questions as it strives to answer. Despite this, the information found on House Democrats during the New Deal system seems to be particularly robust. Research could be expanded in many areas, in particular it would be interesting to see if a researcher could try to establish an understanding of causality throughout different Congresses of whether the leaders are picking the ideology of the party or the party is encouraging the leaders to follow. This could help the burgeoning field of polarization research that surrounds the study of ideology in American politics currently.

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