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The Price of Leadership: Campaign Money and the Polarization of Congressional Parties

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We argue that the leadership selection system, which now gives significant weight to fundraising, helps explain the continuing polarization of the congressional parties. Focusing first on elected party leadership posts, we demonstrate that members will select ideologically extreme leaders over “ideological middlemen” when extremists redistribute more money than their more centrist opponents. We then show that redistributing campaign money also helps ideologues win posts in the extended party leadership, though appointment to such posts by the top leaders (rather than by the caucus) makes the role of money and ideology more complex. Specifically, we demonstrate that top leaders, who are now ideologues themselves, reward the contributions of ideologically like-minded members more heavily than those of ideologically dissimilar members. This produces a more polarized leadership in Congress.

Among the most striking developments in contemporary American politics is the rapid ideological polarization between the congressional parties. The past 15 years have produced starker party differences in Congress than at any time since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Han and Brady 2004). The roots of this recent elite polarization are found in the 1960s and 1970s, a period when the parties were uncommonly close together ideologically. Constituency changes caused by the civil rights revolution and the subsequent realignment of southern party preferences (Carmines and Stimson 1989) are key to this story. Intraparty heterogeneity decreased markedly as conservative southern Democrats were replaced in Congress by even more conservative southern Republicans (Rohde 1991), and liberal northeastern Republicans were replaced by even more liberal northeastern Democrats (Rae 1989).

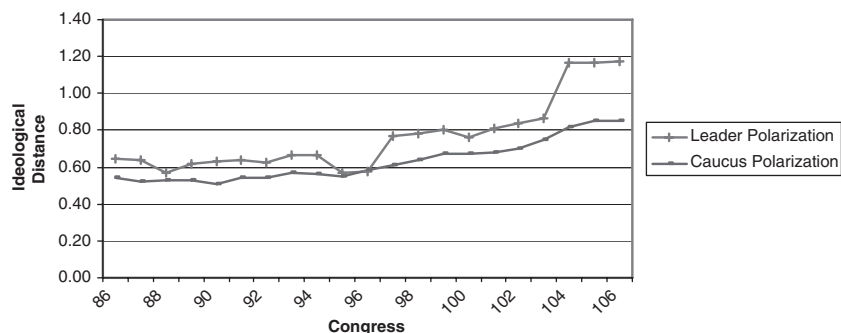
Although clearly important, these changes do not fully account for increasing polarization. Indeed, the process of regional sorting was under way well before the 1990s, and, yet, the rate of polarization between the parties in the House has greatly accelerated in the last decade (Poole and Rosenthal 2001). Most scholars agree that endogenous forces, as well as exogenous ones, are important (Jacobson 2004; Theriault 2004).

While the exogenous forces, such as changes in the electorate, particularly those in each party's activist base, have been well studied (Aldrich 1995; Fleisher and Bond 2004; Lowry and Shipan 2002), the effects of endogenous determinants of congressional party polarization are less well understood.

We focus on one such determinant, the campaign finance system. Parties organize congressional institutions to facilitate fundraising (Wright 2000), which is also one of party leaders' traditional roles (Baker 1989; Wilcox 1989). This role is now more important than ever before, given the remarkable increase in campaign costs and the razor-thin partisan majorities that characterize the contemporary Congress. Since party caucuses reward those who serve the collective interests of the party with leadership positions (Cox and McCubbins 1993), a plausible new route into party leadership is by demonstrating fundraising capacity for the benefit of the party. We argue that this new imperative has changed the ideological composition of leadership.

Whereas party leaders were once ideological “middlemen” (Cox and McCubbins 1993; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; Truman 1959), ideologically extreme leaders now dominate (Grofman, Koetzle, and McGann 2002; McGann, Grofman, and Koetzle

FIGURE 1 Ideological Distance Between Party Floor Leaders Relative to Ideological Distance Between the Rank and File, DW-NOMINATE Scores, 86th–107th Congress



2002). We show that many of these recently elected extremist leaders have used their fundraising prowess to compensate for their less attractive ideological profiles. In addition, we use data from the 103rd to 108th Congress to demonstrate that members who redistribute campaign money greatly enhance their prospects of being appointed to the “extended leadership structure” (Sinclair 1983, 1995). Since elected leaders, who are now ideologues, make these appointments, we hypothesize and find evidence to suggest that money is a particularly potent influence when it is contributed by conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats. In that sense, both the elected leadership itself and the farm system for elected leaders are increasingly populated by ideologues. Once in leadership, it is plausible that these ideologues can move the party’s policies toward their ideal positions (Collie and Mason 2000; Cox and McCubbins 1993; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; Roberts and Smith 2003; Sinclair 2002), thus producing greater polarization between the parties.

Party Leadership, Ideology, and Campaign Money

The conventional wisdom has long held that parties choose leaders close to their ideological medians (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 129; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991, 51; Truman 1959). The logic is straightforward. Party members select leaders to advance the party’s shared policy goals. Delegating power to leaders is inherently risky, however, since leaders might use their powers to advance policies inconsistent with the party’s interests. Choosing leaders from the party’s ideological median, whose policy goals are by definition unlikely to conflict with the party’s collective goals, provides a check against such “agency loss” (Aldrich 1995, 205; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991, 48).

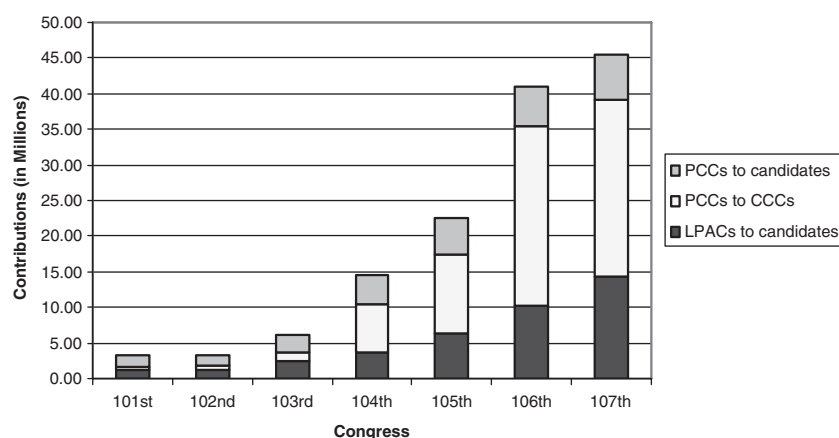
Consistent with the theory, Kiewiet and McCubbins (1991, 51) demonstrate that House leaders (1947–84) did in fact tend to come from each party’s ideological median.

Times have changed. Figure 1 tracks the distance between the DW-NOMINATE scores of the parties’ respective floor leaders compared with the distance between the average members of the respective party caucuses. From the 86th through the 103rd Congress, party leaders tended to be slightly more ideologically polarized than the average member of their respective caucuses. This changed fundamentally with the 104th Congress. Whereas the ideological distance between the floor leaders had been an average of .099 points larger than that of the average member of the respective rank and file from the 86th to the 103rd Congress, it was suddenly .345 points greater in the 104th, more than double the previous high and three and a half times the average.

Given the risk in selecting ideologically extreme party leaders, why do contemporary members increasingly turn to them? We contend that recent changes in the political environment have increased the need for would-be leaders to demonstrate their fundraising capacity, something at which ideological extremists tend to excel (Francia et al. 2003; Godwin 1988).¹ Campaign costs have skyrocketed due to the increasingly professionalized and technologically sophisticated nature of contemporary campaigns (Herrnson 2005). Although there are now fewer competitive seats

¹We do not argue that all extremists out-raise others in the caucus or even that extremists out-raise centrists on average. What is important is that extremists running for the small handful of leadership slots out-raise and out-redistribute their opponents. Still, we suspect that caucus members perceive ideologues to be more successful fundraisers because of their ability to tap into ideological direct mail networks and PACs (see, e.g., Francia et al. 2003).

FIGURE 2 Incumbent Contributions by Type



in the aggregate, much more money is spent on them (Jacobson 2004). The major reason is that razor-thin party majorities have further fueled the need for campaign money because majority party status is somewhat uncertain each election cycle (Heberlig and Larson 2005; Jacobson 2004). These two factors have combined to change the incentive structure of leadership selection for the rank and file. When money was less important and majority status was secure, members could afford to value leaders who specialized in coalition building or legislative management. In today's Congress, however, the insatiable need for money to maintain or win majority control has made fundraising ability a critical attribute for leaders.²

One indication that members now realize the importance of demonstrating their fundraising capacity is the rapidly increasing sums of campaign money redistributed by members of Congress to other congressional candidates and the congressional campaign committees (see also Bedlington and Malbin 2003; Heberlig and Larson 2005), which is presented in Figure 2.³ In the 101st and 102nd Congresses,

members redistributed less than \$3 million. By the 107th Congress, members redistributed more than \$40 million.⁴ Most of this money finds its way into the competitive contests on which majority party status hinges (Bedlington and Malbin 2003; Herrnson 2005), thereby providing a benefit to all party members.

A steep increase in the *number* of members redistributing campaign money has accompanied the increase in the *amount* of cash redistributed over the last decade. For example, only two House Republicans redistributed a total of \$10,000 to the NRCC during the 1991–92 election cycle. In stark contrast, fully 190 House Republicans (85% of the caucus) combined to give nearly \$15 million during the 1999–2000 cycle (Larson 2004). Similarly, the number of leadership PACs sponsored by members of Congress grew from just a few in the late 1970s to 186 in 2002 (Herrnson 2005, 103). Indeed, while party leaders have redistributed growing sums of campaign money in the past decade, the biggest growth in member contribution activity has actually been among nonleaders (Heberlig and Larson 2005).

Importantly, the ideological extremists who have won recent elected leadership races have also been the biggest redistributors. Between the 103rd and 108th Congresses, there were ten elections for the parties' respective whip and floor leader positions. In those ten elections, those in the most extreme third of their caucus won nine times. Not coincidentally, the median amount redistributed by those in the most ideologically extreme third of their caucus was \$1,004,705,

²In the 1980s, Tony Coelho (D-Calif.) was among the first to recognize that fundraising prowess could substitute for legislative expertise in winning leadership positions (Loomis 1988, 219–21). Even before Coelho, Lyndon Johnson demonstrated the efficacy of fundraising as a strategy for moving into the leadership (Caro 1983). It is important to note, however, that both Johnson and Coelho were unique in their times (Baker 1989). Only recently have members routinely and systematically used money to improve their chances of being elected to party leadership.

³Members may contribute \$1,000 per candidate, per election, through their personal campaign committees (PCCs) and \$5,000 per candidate, per election, through a leadership PAC. They may also legally contribute \$15,000 per calendar year to any national party committee from a leadership PAC and an unlimited sum of unobligated hard money to any national party committee from their personal campaign committees (11 CFR 113.2).

⁴Members of the elected party leadership increased their contributions from \$1,139,476 in the 101st to \$6,276,889 in the 106th. Members of the extended party leadership increased their total contributions from \$1,707,497 to \$18,806,087 in the same period.

while the median in the middle third was about \$250,000 less.⁵

If members value leaders who can raise funds for the party and its candidates, ideologically extreme leadership aspirants may well have found a new route into the elected leadership: by redistributing enough campaign dollars to compensate for their extreme policy preferences. The logic is that with campaign money so important, rank-and-file members could be expected to select ideologues over centrists if the former compiled stronger party fundraising records than the latter. Members may be willing to accept the risk of extreme leaders, and the potential for nonmedian policy outcomes, in exchange for the collective benefit of electoral resources and the individual career benefits that accrue from majority status. The rise over the last decade of floor leaders such as Dick Armey (R-Texas), Tom DeLay (R-Texas), and Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif)—all ideologues and aggressive fundraisers—suggests that this is precisely what is occurring.

An alternative account for why the party caucuses have been increasingly selecting extremist leaders is that so-called centrist and moderate members are actually “closet” extremists who prefer extremist leaders and whose voting records reflect district constraints (cf. Van Houweling 2003). Furthermore, knowing that the closet extremist caucuses prefer extremist leaders, outside donors—seeking to back expected winners in leadership contests—funnel their contributions to extremist leadership candidates, who in turn redistribute them to the party and its candidates at greater levels than do centrist leadership candidates. Although it looks like campaign money causes centrist members to support extremist leadership candidates, the causal arrow in this account is reversed: expected extremist leadership victories, which are a function of the caucus’s closet extremism, lead to both fundraising success and leadership victories for extremist candidates.

Theoretically, the alternative account is unlikely because it requires donors to back expected winners in what are notoriously difficult-to-predict races. Indeed, such contests are conducted by secret ballot, often have multiple candidates, and sometimes involve multiple rounds of balloting. The secret ballot allows members to commit their support to a candidate publicly but support a different candidate on the actual ballot; moreover, pledges of support on the first ballot

normally don’t extend to later ballots. Attempting to predict winners in most leadership contests is thus an exceedingly risky endeavor—almost certainly too risky for the generally risk-averse, access-seeking donors who provide much of the financial support to members of Congress.

To rule out this possibility empirically, we also compared the DW-NOMINATE scores of retiring members in their last Congress (when they knew they would no longer need to face the electorate in their districts) with their DW-NOMINATE scores in the Congress prior to their last (when they knew they would have to face the electorate in their districts). If members are closet extremists, constrained only by their districts, then we should expect members to compile much more extremist voting records when the constraint of district is removed. We performed the analysis for the 105th and 106th Congresses, though there is no reason to believe that these Congresses differ systematically from the other Congresses in our data set. Of the nearly 70 retirees, only four moved as much as .03 points, and two of them moved in a more moderate direction. In fact, about two-thirds of retirees moved less than .01 points in either direction. Moreover, among those who moved a paltry .01 points or more, almost as many moderated (9) as became more extreme (13).

This analysis squares with Rothenberg and Sanders (2000). They note that, although early studies provide mixed results, most find that legislators don’t change their voting behavior as they approach retirement. Although they find some changes in voting patterns, they find no discernable or systematic patterns (2000, 321; see esp. footnote 17). Such findings are inconsistent with the alternative “closet extremist” account of why members have been increasingly selecting extremist leaders.

Redistributing Campaign Funds and Change in the Elected Leadership

In this section, we test whether ideological extremists have managed to secure elected leadership slots because of their ability to raise money and their willingness to redistribute it. Although it would be desirable, multivariate analysis is not feasible for analyzing the determinants of winning elected leadership positions for several reasons. First, very few members actually win these top party posts. For Democrats, only 11 of 1,017 cases (1.1%) in our data set (1993–2003) represent members who won top elective party posts. For Republicans, only 20 of 1,032 cases (1.9%)

⁵These figures are adjusted amounts to account for the increase in redistribution over time. The method of adjustment is specified in detail in the model section below.

TABLE 1 Median Aggregate Contributions of New Elected Leaders and Caucus Members, by Congress and Party

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Median Aggregate Contributions		Median Aggregate Contributions	
	New Elected Leader	Not a New Elected Leader	New Elected Leader	Not a New Elected Leader
103rd Congress	—	1,500	4,250 (4)	0
104th Congress	69,000 (2)	2,000	81,500 (7)	3,500
105th Congress	—	7,000	154,500 (2)	11,197
106th Congress	87,250 (3)	11,250	57,366 (4)	21,500
107th Congress	525,377 (2)	35,000	140,586 (2)	46,750
108th Congress	969,725 (5)	40,000	581,966 (6)	40,153

Note: Number of New Leaders in Parentheses.

represent such members. Second, the effect of key independent variables surely differs radically depending on the specific post. For example, the amount of campaign money required to win, say, the Majority Leader post is surely much greater than the amount required to win the Caucus Secretary post. Third, not all members contest elected leadership posts. Hence, a multivariate design would require us to estimate discrete outcomes in specific leadership races using some form of maximum-likelihood estimation. However, the fact that we have only a handful of elected leadership races makes such estimation problematic, since maximum-likelihood estimates are inconsistent in small samples. Given the small number of cases, the inequality of observations, and problems with estimation, we use descriptive statistics in our analysis of the elected leadership.

Consistent with the middleman hypothesis, members close to the party median were greatly advantaged in races for elected leadership slots before the redistribution of campaign money became an important feature.⁶ We tracked leadership contests from the 97th–102nd Congresses, the five congresses prior to our period of interest, and found a total of 34 elected leadership slots filled by the two parties combined. To assess the effect of ideology, we tracked the relative success of centrists (defined as those scoring in the middle ideological third of their party), moderates (those scoring in the ideological third of their party

closest to the chamber median), and extremists (those scoring in the ideological third of their party closest to the ideological pole) in these races. We measure ideology using Poole and Rosenthal's DW-NOMINATE scores. If the outcomes were random, each of the ideological thirds would win roughly a third of the contests. They do not. Consistent with the middleman hypothesis, fully 59% of newly elected leaders were centrists, winning 20 of the 34 contests. Moderates won a paltry 6% of the elected leadership slots while extremists won 35%.

A much different picture emerges starting with the 103rd Congress, which is when redistribution increases significantly, through the 108th. Of the 27 leadership elections in this period, centrists won only seven (26%). Both extremists and moderates fared much better than before, with extremists winning 15 elections (56%) and moderates winning five (19%). While ideological middlemen won nearly 60% of contests before redistribution became important, they won barely one-quarter after. The conclusion is unmistakable; extremists are significantly more likely to win leadership elections today than in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Redistributing campaign money is a highly plausible explanation. Table 1 tracks the contributions of newly elected leaders compared to their caucuses in the 103rd through 108th Congresses. New leaders were big spenders in the previous election cycle. For example, the median contribution of a newly elected leader in the 104th Congress was a whopping 34 times the contribution of the median member in the Democratic Party and 23 times the median contribution in the Republican Party. Even as giving by rank-and-file members increased by the beginning of the 108th

⁶Elected leadership posts include the speaker, the majority and minority leaders, the majority and minority whips, the congressional campaign committee chairs, the conference/caucus chairs, vice chairs, and secretaries (GOP only), and chairs of the policy and research committees.

Congress, the median contribution of newly elected Democratic leaders was 24 times greater than the median contribution in the caucus; similarly, the median contribution of newly elected Republican leaders was 14.5 times that of the caucus median.

More illuminating, we compared each set of candidates for elected leadership positions for the 103rd through 108th Congresses (Amer 2003) based on their total contributions in the preceding election cycle. Of the 27 races, the largest contributor won 18 times, or two-thirds of the matches. In races that were not challenges to sitting members of the leadership, a group that would be greatly advantaged in their ability to raise and redistribute funds, the biggest redistributor won 75% of the time.⁷ Those who spread the most money around do not win all the time, but they do most of the time.

Extremists benefited handsomely from redistributing money. To take one high-profile example, extremist Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) defeated moderate Martin Frost (D-TX) for minority leader in the 108th Congress. While Frost dropped out of the race before the actual vote—he knew he didn't have the votes to beat Pelosi—the numbers are instructive. Pelosi, who had a DW-NOMINATE score at the 21st percentile, redistributed \$1,181,280 in the 107th Congress. Frost, who was 12 percentiles closer to the caucus median than Pelosi, contributed only about half as much. Dick Gephardt (D-MO) also seems to have been advantaged by his considerable fundraising prowess. Following the Democrats' 1994 electoral drubbing, and amid charges by some House Democrats that the leadership was too liberal, Gephardt nevertheless triumphed over his challenger for the floor leader post, Charlie Rose (D-NC)—despite being 14 percentiles further from the party median than Rose. Money, it appears, mattered. In the 103rd Congress, Gephardt redistributed nearly \$740,000 while Rose redistributed about a third less.

Examples are even more numerous in the GOP. Tom DeLay (R-TX) won the conference secretary slot in the 103rd Congress despite a DW-NOMINATE score that placed him in the most extreme 3% of his party. In defeating the much more centrist Bill Gradison (R-OH), DeLay redistributed 50% more funds.

⁷These percentages are very conservative. In many cases, leadership aspirants who had raised significant funds did not face opposition. (Indeed, redistributing large sums of campaign money may well have had the effect of warding off challengers.) Had these leadership aspirants been challenged, they almost certainly would have won. This would further benefit extremists in our analysis. They won another five elected leadership contests unopposed, while centrists won only one and moderates won two.

According to Connelly and Pitney (1994, 57), campaign money also helped Dick Armey (R-TX)—who was in the 98th percentile of his party in conservatism in the 102nd Congress—climb the leadership ladder in the 103rd Congress.⁸ Moreover, Armey used money to ward off any challenge to his ascension to majority leader in the 104th and to protect his post from three challengers in the 106th Congress.⁹ Absent a fundraising explanation, it is nearly impossible to understand why a party would turn to two members from the same state—and who were *both* in the most ideologically extreme 5% of their caucus—to fill two of the three top party leadership positions.

These outcomes generalize well beyond the specific examples. In 21 of the 27 contested leadership races during our period of interest, a candidate from one ideological third of the party faced at least one candidate from a different ideological third. Based on the middleman hypothesis, centrists should have won most of these races. Instead, extremists dominated, winning 12 with centrists winning only four and moderates five. In the 12 races where at least one extremist faced at least one centrist, extremists won nine times. Redistributing campaign money apparently helps explain the strong showing of extremist candidates against centrists. In the nine extremist victories over centrists, the extremist out-redistributed the centrist seven times.¹⁰ In the five races in which extremists were outredistributed, they won two and lost three.

We do not mean to suggest that redistributing campaign money benefits only extremists. Centrists, such as Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Jennifer Dunn (R-WA), and moderates such as Deborah Pryce (R-OH) and Steny Hoyer (D-MD), redistributed

⁸Connelly and Pitney point out that while Lewis actually redistributed more than did Armey, Armey gave to many of the new GOP freshmen after the election—minimizing the number of contributions that went to losing candidates (Connelly and Pitney 1994, 57).

⁹Armey redistributed more than all but seven members of his party during the 1993–94 election cycle and ascended unchallenged from GOP conference chair in the 103rd Congress to majority leader in the 104th. He successfully fended off a challenge to his majority leader post in the 106th Congress by redistributing far more campaign money than any member of his caucus. The only other member who redistributed more than Armey that year was Richard Gephardt (D-MO), who, perhaps not surprisingly, remained the Democratic floor leader.

¹⁰One of the two cases in which an extremist won over a centrist despite redistributing fewer dollars is Rep. Tom DeLay's (R-TX) victory over Bill McCollum (R-FL) for the majority whip post in the 104th Congress. One possible explanation for DeLay's victory over McCollum is that DeLay provided not only fundraising assistance to GOP candidates but also a host of other campaign services.

sizable sums and won leadership positions. The important part of this analysis is to demonstrate that the redistribution of campaign funds provides a path to leadership that was not previously available to extremists and that they have taken advantage of this new path. Tight partisan margins and expensive campaigns have heightened the incentive to select leaders willing and able to redistribute large sums—even if that means forgoing other desirable leadership attributes such as ideological centrism.

Redistributing Campaign Funds and the Extended Leadership

Now that the elected leadership is occupied by more ideologically extreme members, the redistribution of campaign money ought to produce a more ideologically polarized *extended leadership* as well. Because posts in the extended party structure are filled by the top leaders (rather than by caucus election), rank-and-file members who share the ideological proclivities of the top leaders would seem to be advantaged in winning extended party posts. Since congressional party leaders moved toward the ideological poles starting with the 104th Congress, extremists ought to have had more success moving into and up the extended leadership structure than they had before.¹¹

Not all ideologues looking to move up or into the extended leadership ought to benefit equally, however. Rank-and-file members would likely object to the appointment of ideological extremists *unless* they can offer some benefit to the party that leaders can tout as justification for their appointment. With campaign funds increasingly important to the party, redistributing money provides that justification. Extremists who fail to redistribute sufficient funds should remain disadvantaged, since they lack a critical attribute (party fundraising) that leaders can tout. Generous extrem-

ists, however, should be able to improve their chances of winning an extended party post significantly, in effect using campaign money to offset the negative impact of their ideology. When elected leaders appoint ideological centrists to the extended leadership, they do not need to justify the appointment solely on the basis of fundraising because centrists already possess an attractive quality—ideological centrism—that extremists don't possess. Redistribution should help centrists, too. But it ought to be more important for extremists because they need to *overcome* their ideology in the eyes of the caucus.¹² Thus, the effect of each dollar on advancement to the extended leadership should be larger for party extremists. Finally, campaign money is unlikely to have an impact on advancement to the extended leadership for party moderates (i.e., those in each party closest to the *chamber* median) because such members are ideologically unacceptable to both the centrist party caucus and to extremist leaders.

Explaining Advancement within the Extended Leadership

In this section, we develop a model of obtaining positions in the extended party leadership structure, which we then test empirically using multivariate analysis. Extended party leadership posts are more numerous than elected party posts, and they are important in their own right (Garand and Clayton 1986; Hibbing 1991, 61–62; Loomis 1984; Price 2000, 86, 173; Rohde 1991, 90; Sinclair 1983, 1995). From 1993 to 2003, we record 432 movements to and within the extended leadership, which represents 21% of the cases. Moreover, these lower-level positions serve as the primary stepping stones to elective party-leadership posts (Canon 1989; Herrick and Moore 1993; Loomis 1984; Price 2000). As evidence, 32 of the 35 members (91%)

¹¹In fact they do. Using data from the 96th through 107th Congresses, we estimated a simple logistic regression model of the likelihood of a member holding a post in the extended leadership. The independent variables were PARTY MODERATE (coded 1 if a member's DW-NOMINATE score fell within the third of his or her party closest to the chamber median), PARTY EXTREMIST (coded 1 if a member's DW-NOMINATE fell within the most extreme third of his or her party), POST-103RD CONGRESS (coded 1 for the 104th through 107th Congresses), and the interactive terms PARTY MODERATE*POST-103RD CONGRESS and PARTY EXTREMIST*POST-103RD CONGRESS. We found that, up through the 103rd Congress, centrists were significantly more likely than extremists to appear in the extended leadership. After the 103rd Congress, however, centrists and extremists were equally likely to have positions in the extended leadership.

¹²Another way of thinking about this is that a member's ideology informs how much latitude the leadership has in paying attention to fundraising when making appointments to the extended leadership structure. It would be difficult for extremist leaders to appoint an extremist with a poor redistribution record to the extended leadership structure because, lacking the benefit of ideological centrism, extremist appointees need a solid party fundraising record to be deemed acceptable by the caucus. By contrast, the leadership has more latitude in which centrists it appoints to the extended leadership because, good redistributors or not, all centrists have the benefit of being ideologically acceptable to the caucus. This means that the leadership can probably get away with, say, appointing a miserly but cooperative centrist over a generous but uncooperative one to the extended leadership (even though, ideally, the caucus would prefer getting the centrist who is *also* a good fundraiser).

who served in elected leadership positions between the 101st and 106th Congresses had previously served in the extended leadership, often in several different capacities.

To illustrate further the importance of the extended leadership in the career ladder, we compare the career outcomes, as of 2005, of members who served in these positions 20 years ago (in the 98th Congress) with those who did not. Of the 171 members in the extended leadership, 15 (9%) later became elected party leaders, 39 (23%) became chairs or ranking members of a committee, and 54 (32%) sought higher office (governor, U.S. Senate, mayor, executive branch appointment). Only 72 (42%) showed no evidence of ambition beyond their current post.¹³ In stark contrast, 130 of the 207 members (63%) who were not serving in the extended leadership in the 98th Congress showed no future evidence of ambition (Chi-square = 18.1, $p < .001$). Extended leadership posts are clearly important, then, both for members' careers and how the House functions.

Our dependent variable, then, is NEW EXTENDED LEADERSHIP POST, which is coded 1 if a member moved to a new position in the extended party leadership organization, 0 otherwise.¹⁴ New positions include a member's first leadership position, a switch in positions, or the accepting of an additional position. Positions in the extended leadership organization include members of the whip system as well as members of the congressional campaign committees, steering committees, policy committees, and research committees.¹⁵ These data were obtained from CQ's

Politics in America, the *Congressional Directory*, and the *Congressional Staff Directory* for the relevant years.

Most critical for our theory, we expect INCUMBENT CONTRIBUTIONS to other candidates and the parties to enhance the chance of movement to a post in the extended party leadership. We measure incumbent contributions as the sum of contributions from members' personal campaign committees to other federal candidates' campaigns and to the party congressional campaign committees plus contributions from members' leadership PACs to other federal candidates' campaigns. These contributions were calculated by the authors based on data obtained from the Federal Election Commission. We expect contributions to be positively related to winning a post in the extended party leadership structure.

To compare contributions across six election cycles in which the amount of funds contributed escalated substantially, we set all contributions at their 2000 value. Specifically, we multiplied the total contributions for each year by the inverse of its proportion of the total redistributed funds in 2000 to make those years' total contributions equivalent in 2000 dollars. Each member's contribution for that year was then multiplied by the same proportion. Essentially, we are measuring each member's percentage of total contributions for that year and expressing it in terms of 2000 dollars. In this way, the effect of each year's contributions on advancement can be assessed on the same basis as every other year's (see also Heberlig 2003).¹⁶

To measure the impact of ideology on advancement, we use two dummy variables, PARTY MODERATES and PARTY EXTREMISTS, with party centrists serving as the reference group. Party extremists are those who score in the most conservative (Republican) or most liberal (Democratic) third of their caucus as determined by DW-NOMINATE scores in the session of Congress prior to their appointment to leadership. Party centrists are those who score between the 33rd and 67th percentiles. And party moderates score in the most liberal (Republican) or most conservative

¹³The 98th Congress is used to illustrate the relationship between ambition and holding an extended leadership post because it is the first session in which a complete list of extended leadership positions appears in CQ's *Politics in America*. We exclude members already serving in elected positions, who were in extended leadership positions *ex officio*, or who were currently serving as committee chairs. Future positions were coded from CQ's *Politics in America* and the House's biographical directory (<http://biguide.congress.gov>, last accessed April 23, 2005). We also coded the 99th Congress and find that the results are extremely similar: 87 (55%) of members in the extended leadership show evidence of future ambition compared to 69 (32%) of those without extended leadership positions (Chi-square = 25.7, $p < .001$).

¹⁴Note that we are interested here not in whether a member is *in* the extended leadership structure but rather whether he or she *wins a new post* in that structure. Thus, the dependent variable in the present model (*winning* a new post in the extended leadership) differs from the dependent variable used in the model estimated in footnote 11 (*being* in the extended leadership).

¹⁵Our model assumes that all members desire advancement, following much of the research on progressive ambition (e.g., Black 1972; Rohde 1979) and intra-institutional advancement (e.g., Heberlig 2003; Herrick and Moore 1993; Wawro 2000, Chapter 5). Such an assumption seems eminently reasonable. As former

Speaker Tom Foley said, "There may be some members who don't want to move up . . . But most of the people around here are not like that" (quoted in Loomis 1988, 236).

¹⁶We produced very similar results estimating the model with several variations of this measure: (1) a member's contributions as a percentage of his or her party's total candidate spending during a given cycle, (2) a member's contributions as a percentage of total contributions made by his or her party's House incumbents during a given cycle, and (3) a member's contributions as a percentage of the total contributions made by his or her party's congressional campaign committee during a given cycle. All of these measures are highly correlated with the measure we use (r ranges from .90 to .97).

(Democratic) third of their caucus. Support for the middleman hypothesis would entail negative signs on the ideology dummies.

In their quest to fill extended leadership slots with fellow ideologues, elected leaders ought to reward campaign dollars redistributed by ideologues of their stripe more heavily than dollars redistributed by non-ideologues. Ideologues, then, ought to accrue a larger advantage for each dollar they contribute than nonideologues. To test this hypothesis, we include two interactive terms for money and ideology: *CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY EXTREMISTS* and *CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY MODERATES*. If elected leaders reward ideologues' contributions more heavily than those of party centrists, the coefficient for *CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY EXTREMISTS* will be positive.

Several other variables are likely to influence selection to leadership positions as well. The member's electoral security should influence advancement to a new position in the extended leadership (Peabody 1976, 471). Those who come from safe districts are less likely than others to compromise their party responsibilities or its policy agenda to deal with constituent concerns. To account for a member's electoral security, we include *PREVIOUS MARGIN*, a member's margin of victory in the most recent election.

Seniority should also matter. The more senior a member is, the more likely she is to have *already* moved up in the party system (Hibbing 1991). Hence *SENIORITY*, measured as the number of years a member has served at the time of the Congress under consideration, should be negatively associated with movement within the party system.

Experience in a party post may also play a role in winning a new one. Since many positions in the extended party leadership exist, members can move from one post to another *or* into a leadership post for the first time. We expect members who occupy a post in the previous Congress to be more likely to win a new party post in the present Congress. In other words, promotion should often occur from within the extended leadership itself since leaders often reward members with solid track records in their party posts (Canon 1989; Peabody 1976). Accordingly, we include a dummy variable, *EXTENDED LEADERSHIP POST*, coded 1 if a member already holds a position in the extended party leadership structure, 0 otherwise.

It may also be that leadership positions in the committee system help a member win a post in the extended leadership (Hibbing 1991; Loomis 1984; Sinclair 1983, 57). Thus, we include dummy variables for several types of committee posts: prestige committee slots, committee leadership positions, and subcom-

mittee leadership positions. For each of these variables, a member is coded 1 if he or she occupied the specific post in the prior Congress, 0 otherwise.

Finally, opportunities for advancement vary from year to year, depending on retirements and other factors. We use dummy variables for the individual Congresses (with the 104th Congress serving as the baseline) to control for the differing probabilities of moving in each Congress.¹⁷

Data and Methods

Our dependent variable measures advancement to a position in the extended leadership organization in Congress *x*, whereas our independent variables capture member behavior and characteristics in Congress *x-1*. We include in our analysis House incumbents for each Congress who did not hold an elective party leadership position and who sought and won reelection to the next Congress. We exclude members who do not return in the subsequent Congress because they cannot obtain a new leadership position, and we exclude elected leaders because they are unlikely to have regressive ambition to a lower leadership position.

We focus our multivariate analysis on appointments made to the extended leadership in the 104th through 108th Congresses. Our theory regarding the interaction of ideology and campaign-money redistribution requires ideologues to occupy elected-leadership positions. Only ideologically extreme elected leaders seeking to appoint fellow extremists to the extended leadership would have reason to weigh campaign money redistributed by extremists more heavily than campaign money redistributed by centrists. Importantly, the leaders elected for the 104th Congress were significantly more polarized than for previous Congresses, implying that the interaction we expect between campaign money and ideology should hold from the 104th Congress onward.

We estimate separate models for each party to allow the effect of the independent variables to vary by party. Since our dependent variable is dichotomous, we use logistic regression. Given that many members served in each of the Congresses we analyze, producing repeated observations of the same case in our pooled data set, we employ robust standard errors adjusted for clustering by individual members.

¹⁷Using the number of "moves" per party per session as an alternative measure of opportunities produces results that do not differ substantively from those presented here.

TABLE 2 Movement to a New Party Post in the Extended Leadership Structure, 104th through 108th Congresses (Logistic Regression)

Variable	Baseline Models		Interactive Models	
	Param. Est. (Std. Error)	Param. Est. (Std. Error)	Param. Est. (Std. Error)	Param. Est. (Std. Error)
	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats
Constant	-.165 (.460)	-.467 (.496)	-.192 (.472)	-.200 (.497)
Contributions (adjusted, in 1000s)	.002** (.001)	.001 (.001)	.001** (.0006)	.000 (.001)
Party Extremist	-.273 (.193)	.094 (.193)	-.531** (.252)	-.110 (.213)
Party Moderate	-.644** (.225)	-.456** (.214)	-.570** (.249)	-.653** (.250)
Contributions*Party Extremist	—	—	.003* (.002)	.003** (.001)
Contributions*Party Moderate	—	—	-.001 (.002)	.005 (.004)
Extended Leadership Post	.564*** (.176)	.433** (.177)	.544** (.178)	.385** (.178)
Committee Leader	-.163 (.459)	.131 (.441)	-.137 (.472)	-.052 (.462)
Subcommittee Leader	-.697*** (.229)	.003 (.197)	-.740*** (.233)	.018 (.204)
Prestige Committee Member	-.107 (.199)	-.073 (.227)	-.139 (.202)	-.135 (.226)
Seniority	-.113** (.051)	-.101** (.036)	-.115** (.052)	-.104** (.037)
Previous Margin	.005 (.007)	-.001 (.007)	.005 (.007)	-.003 (.007)
105th Congress	-.562** (.259)	.362 (.233)	-.537** (.260)	.351 (.234)
106th Congress	-1.886*** (.316)	-1.135*** (.284)	-1.818*** (.313)	-1.155*** (.285)
107th Congress	-1.047*** (.271)	-1.616*** (.302)	-1.003*** (.272)	-1.679*** (.305)
108th Congress	-.926*** (.291)	-.111 (.244)	-.880*** (.293)	-.164 (.243)
Chi-Square	87.41***	87.95***	86.61***	94.29***
Number of Cases	929	939	929	939

Note: Robust standard errors, adjusted for clustering by individual member, in parentheses.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, one-tailed.

Results

We first test our hypothesis that money matters in securing party posts in each party's extended leadership structure. Next, we test our hypothesis that the top elected leaders, in seeking to justify the appointment of fellow extremists to extended leadership posts, reward campaign dollars redistributed by ideologues more heavily than dollars redistributed by party centrists.

Table 2 presents the results for the baseline and interactive models of movement to and within the extended party leadership structure. We focus first on the baseline model, which assesses the link between redistributing campaign funds and winning a new extended leadership post.

Most of the results conform to expectations. As expected, holding an EXTENDED LEADERSHIP POST carries a positive sign and is statistically significant for Democrats and Republicans, indicating that the top

party leaders are more likely to appoint a member to a new party post in Congress x if that member occupied a party position in Congress $x-1$. Experience in a party position pays off in allowing a member to move about within the extended leadership structure. Also as expected, SENIORITY is negatively signed and statistically significant for both parties, illustrating that the more senior a member is, the less likely he or she is to advance within the extended leadership structure. These results are consistent with the conception of lower-level party posts as positions in which relatively junior members hone their leadership skills, gain a voice in party affairs, and position themselves to win more influential posts (Price 2000; Sinclair 1983). We find no relationship between serving as a committee leader and winning a party post, though Republican subcommittee leaders are less likely to win a post in the party structure. PREVIOUS MARGIN makes no difference for either Republicans or Democrats, suggesting that the top party leaders do not consider electoral security in selecting members to fill extended leadership posts. In this era of declining marginals, almost everyone is secure.

The results in Table 2 provide only limited support for the middleman hypothesis. Both of the PARTY MODERATE dummies are negatively signed and statistically significant. But neither of the dummies for PARTY EXTREMIST is significant. This suggests that, contrary to the middleman hypothesis, extremists are as likely to move into or move up the extended leadership ladder as are party centrists.¹⁸

Most important for our purposes, campaign money also matters—at least for House Republicans. The statistically significant coefficient for INCUMBENT CONTRIBUTIONS in the GOP equation indicates that House Republican leaders reward financial generosity

with positions in the extended leadership.¹⁹ Although the INCUMBENT CONTRIBUTIONS coefficient is statistically insignificant in the Democratic equation, it approaches conventional levels of significance ($p < .06$, one tailed). Moreover, we will show below that money matters a great deal for *certain* Democrats, indeed exactly those our theory would predict.

The Conditional Effect of Ideology on Contributions

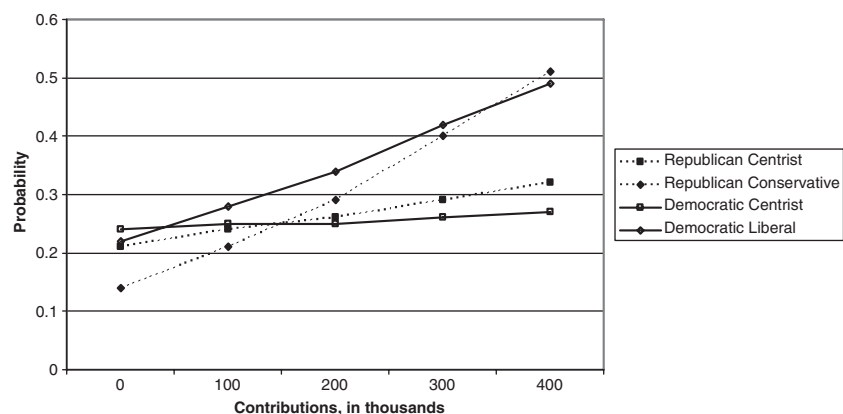
We next test our hypothesis that the top elected leaders, in their quest to fill the extended leadership posts with fellow ideologues, reward campaign contributions made by fellow ideologues more heavily than contributions made by party centrists. To do so, we include in our model two interactive terms for money and ideology: CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY EXTREMISTS and CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY MODERATES. Interpreting the effects of these interactive terms requires some care. Since CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY CENTRIST is the excluded category, its effect will be manifested in the coefficient estimate for CONTRIBUTIONS. The effects of CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY EXTREMISTS and CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY MODERATES should be interpreted as the effect of contributions made by party extremists and party moderates, respectively, relative to the effect of contributions made by party centrists. For example, if the top leaders in each party give more credit to party extremists than to party centrists for each dollar they redistribute, the coefficient for CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY EXTREMISTS will be positively signed and statistically significant for each party.

The results in the third and fourth columns of Table 2 follow the expected pattern. For Republicans, the significant effect for CONTRIBUTIONS alone suggests that the GOP leadership values the redistribution of funds from party centrists in making extended leadership decisions. More important, the positive and statistically significant coefficient for CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY EXTREMISTS indicates that Republican leaders assign greater credit to campaign dollars redistributed by fellow extremists than to those redistributed by centrists. For Democrats, we find that money matters, but only for extremists. The positive and statistically significant effect of CONTRIBUTIONS*PARTY EXTREMIST in the Demo-

¹⁸We tried several alternative cut points for differentiating liberals, centrists, and conservatives (e.g., 70-30, 75-25) in the caucuses and arrived at results that were extremely similar, both substantively and statistically. We also used a continuous variable, the distance from the party median, signed positively for those more extreme than the median and negatively for those more moderate than the median. The results using this measure confirm those presented here. In both parties, those who redistribute more generously are significantly more likely to obtain positions ($p < .01$ for Republicans; $p < .05$ for Democrats, one-tailed). The interaction between contributions and ideology are signed positively and are statistically significant as well ($p < .05$ for Republicans; $p < .05$ for Democrats, one tailed), indicating that contributions are a greater influence for members who are more extreme than the party median for obtaining extended leadership positions. The linear term for distance from the party median was not statistically significant for either party. We rely on the trichotomous measure because it lends itself to easier interpretation.

¹⁹We also estimated this model using the 101st and 102nd Congresses, a period when members were redistributing substantially less. As expected, campaign money had a statistically insignificant impact during this period. Complete results are available from the authors.

FIGURE 3 The Effect of Redistribution on Appointment to an Extended Leadership Post, By Ideology



cratic column suggests that Democratic leaders give more credit to party extremists than to party centrists for each dollar of campaign money they redistribute.²⁰

The advantage provided to ideologues for their campaign contributions is substantively important. Figure 3 presents the predicted probability of winning an extended party post for two Republicans—one extremist and one centrist—and two Democrats—one extremist and one centrist—at varying levels of campaign contributions. For each simulated member, all of the party or committee posts are set at zero, seniority and previous margin are set the respective party means, and the Congress is the 107th.

Consider the Republican members. At zero campaign contributions, the GOP centrist is 50% more likely than the conservative to win a new post in the extended leadership structure. When conservatives redistribute no campaign money, top party leaders find it difficult to justify appointing them to party posts over party centrists. But things change quickly for GOP conservatives when they redistribute campaign money. When both contribute \$100,000, the centrist's advantage nearly evaporates. At \$150,000 conservatives gain a small advantage, one that accelerates with increasing contributions. For example, when both redistribute \$300,000, the Republican conservative is 10 percentage points more likely to win an appointment than a centrist. The story for liberal and centrist Democrats is remarkably similar to that of the

GOP: liberal ideologues are rewarded significantly more for each campaign dollar they redistribute than are party centrists.

In sum, redistributing campaign funds provides the opportunity for extremists to offset their noncentrist ideology within the party caucus. Extremists leaders would prefer to appoint their ideological allies to the extended leadership, and fundraising performance gives the top leaders a rationale for doing so. These trends are especially pronounced in the GOP. Extremists who fail to redistribute sufficient funds remain disadvantaged in winning extended leadership posts, since neither their ideology nor their fundraising provides leaders with a rationale for appointing them. By contrast, generous extremists significantly improve their chances of winning an extended party post, allowing leaders to offset the negative impact of their ideology with the positive impact of their money. Since centrists are ideologically acceptable to the caucus, leaders need not supply a fundraising justification for centrist appointments to the extended leadership. Hence, redistributing campaign money has a much smaller effect on the advancement of party centrists than on the advancement of extremists.

Conclusion

Over the past ten years, the congressional parties have turned increasingly to ideologues to lead them, challenging the scholarly understanding of leadership selection. We demonstrate that a new phenomenon, redistributing campaign money, helps explain why. With tight party margins and expensive campaigns now seemingly the norm, members increasingly expect their leaders to be effective fundraisers. And as our analysis demonstrates, members appear willing to

²⁰It is also worth noting that the main effects for the PARTY EXTREMIST dummies begin to approximate the expectations of the middleman hypothesis. For the Republicans, the parameter estimate doubles from the baseline to interactive models, and for the Democrats, it moves to being properly signed. This means that, when contributions are 0, extremists are less likely to move up in the extended leadership than are centrists.

elect extremist leaders over centrist ones if doing so puts better fundraisers at the helm.

Leadership selection is important because of the potential for leaders to affect the collective image, as well as the legislative and electoral fortunes, of their colleagues. Extremist party leaders could use their agenda-setting and procedural powers to divide ideological moderates into their respective partisan camps, thereby facilitating party polarization. Indeed, Roberts and Smith (2003) have presented evidence that moderates have disproportionately polarized, implying the effectiveness of partisan procedural strategies.

Although ideologically distinct parties have appeal to some (e.g., Schattschneider 1960), they are problematic for others. As the political leadership and the party caucuses have moved toward the ideological poles, they have left most of the public behind. A quick glance at the ADA or ACU rankings on Congress portrays an institution with double-peaked preferences clustered at the ideological poles. In stark contrast, the two modal categories on the 2004 National Election Study's ideological self-identification question were, as usual, "moderate, middle of the road" and "haven't thought much about it." On most, if not all, issues, the public remains relatively centrist (Fiorina 2005). Of course, measures of ideology at the elite level and those at the mass level cannot be compared directly, so we must use care in interpreting them. Still it seems very clear that Americans' ideological predispositions, taken as a whole, are not well represented by the Congress they elect. To the extent that endogenous changes within Congress are important, the campaign fundraising regime provides at least part of the explanation.

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