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Boehner versus the GOP: Examining the 2015 Vote for Speaker of the House

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Abstract

Why did Speaker of the House John Boehner face the largest intraparty challenge to an incumbent speaker in over 150 years in January 2015? Goal salience theory will be used to explain this event. In addition, since this protest took place during the public vote for speaker and not during a private caucus, every vote in a leadership challenge can be examined for the first time. While the conventional view of leadership elections is that policy differences can fuel campaigns, this article argues that procedure is also important. Since it appears that the revolt was against the policies and practices of the speaker, party unity is hypothesized to impact the vote. Analysis supports this and other hypotheses, suggesting that goal salience theory is useful when modeling votes for speaker.

Introduction

Shortly following the 2014 midterm elections, House Republicans caucused in private to decide who would represent their party in the election for speaker in January. The incumbent speaker, John Boehner, ran unopposed. However, this vote did not foreshadow an easy re-nomination for Boehner when Congress met to vote for speaker. Twenty-five of Boehner's fellow Republicans did not support him and scattered their votes among 13 different candidates.

The unusualness of this scenario cannot be understated. In their definitive study of elections for the speakership, Jenkins and Stewart (2012) noted that, through 2010, a member of the majority party had voted for someone who was not the nominee of the caucus only once since 1925. The vote against Boehner was the largest challenge to an incumbent speaker from his own party since 1860. What can help explain this type of intraparty revolt against the speaker?

Such a public challenge to a sitting speaker from his or her own party has not been seen in modern times. However, a framework does exist to study the individual factors that influence leadership votes within a caucus: *goal salience theory*. Though never used to model the actual vote for speaker, this article will examine whether or not goal salience theory gives context and clarity to Boehner's reelection.

Goal salience theory emphasizes that legislators vote for candidates in leadership elections who can assist that legislator achieve her or his goals. These goals include reelection, the enactment of public policy, and internal advancement. Which goals are the most salient, however, are dependent upon the candidates and the substance of their campaigns. Given these conditions, it is worthwhile to analyze Boehner's relationship with his party to see what may have motivated this protest against him.

In this case, however, there was little formal opposition to Boehner, and those that did run stressed that their campaigns were not against the sitting speaker but against authority itself. This is unique, as past challenges have historically been spearheaded by a distinct challenger. Republicans had increased their ranks over the previous three election cycles by tapping into a conservative and anti-status quo sentiment in the electorate. This fervor subsequently spread throughout much of the Republican caucus, which made life difficult for Boehner. Many of the speaker's largest pieces of legislation had consistently been challenged from within his own party on both substantive and procedural grounds.

In keeping with the three prongs of goal salience theory (reelection, public policy, internal advancement), it appears as if policy differences may be one of the primary motivators of the vote against Boehner. However, contrary to the conventional view in the literature, there may be two dimensions to 'the enactment of public policy' that is causing upheaval within the Republican caucus. Traditionally in the literature on intraparty challenges, members who are upset with policies wish that legislation was more ideological (Green 2008); therefore, it is hypothesized that increased conservatism will be associated with a decreased likelihood of supporting Boehner.

However, Republicans may also object to *how* policy is being enacted. That is, these members of the House may not like that Boehner has tried to introduce bills without their consent or input. In other words, they object to the process of legislating. This implies that ideology alone would not be enough to capture this effect; it is possible that a legislator may agree with the content of a bill but disagree with its creation. Therefore, a measurement is needed to capture dissatisfaction with legislation that is not identical to ideological disagreement. To measure this, it is hypothesized that those with lower levels of *party unity* may be more likely to vote against Boehner for the speakership.

In order to analyze this vote, two new contributions are made to the literature on intraparty challenges. First, since the campaign against Boehner appeared to be based on policy and procedure, party unity will be used as an independent variable for the first time to model an intraparty challenge. In addition, past studies of leadership votes have had to rely on incomplete data sets. The votes were cast when parties would caucus in private, so scholars relied on archival data or public declarations of voting intentions. In contrast, this challenge was made during the actual vote for speaker. This allows for the entire population of votes in an intra-party challenge for speaker to be analyzed for the first time.

A logit model of vote choice among Republicans finds support for the hypothesis regarding party unity and for other hypotheses borrowed from the goal salience literature. These results suggest that goal salience theory is a useful framework for evaluating votes for speaker. In addition, the results of earlier studies on intraparty leadership elections receive further support as those findings that were based on partial data sets are corroborated. Furthermore, these results foreshadowed the unusual demise of Boehner's speakership and suggest how Paul Ryan will operate in this environment, both of which are discussed in the conclusion of this article.

This article will proceed as follows. First, the prior studies on votes for speaker and intraparty contests will be reviewed, followed by a close look at the challenge to Boehner. The hypotheses will be explored in more detail. The data will then be described and modeled, followed by a brief conclusion.

Literature Review

Early studies on the vote for Speaker of the House focused on qualitative or anecdotal aspects of those elections. Hinds (1909) noted that the vote for speaker was different from almost

all other types of elections, because, "Most of those who elect a speaker know him personally..." (159). Peabody (1976) also focused on the personal characteristics of leaders, while Nelson (1977) was more concerned with party idiosyncrasies with regards to issues such as succession and challenges. Yet even these early studies noted that specific missteps may lead to a challenge; as was noted by Hinds (1909), a speaker may be replaced if he "betrays or mal-administers the trust" that was given to him or her (162).

The most rigorous review of voting for speaker comes from Jenkins and Stewart (2012). The authors studied every vote for speaker through 2010. In it, they lay out a theory they name "organizational cartel theory" to understand the development of the vote for speaker. They argue that the current system of election was introduced following the Civil War. Prior to this, numerous votes for speaker were contentious, as members of the House were influenced by their competing loyalties to both their party and to their region of the country. That is, differences between Democrats and Republicans may be felt as strongly as differences between northerners and southerners. However, a system quickly formalized once the Republicans were the only party in Congress. The party would caucus prior to the vote for speaker to decide on a nominee. Once the nominee had been decided, the vote for speaker then fell along party lines. The speaker would attempt to quell dissent and punish protesters through the subsequent granting and removal of committee assignments.

Though their work is impressive, the framework established by Jenkins and Stewart (2012) does not allow for a full understanding of the machinations that were taking place within Republicans during the vote for Boehner in 2015. Those authors found that contentious votes were due to the differences between the parties, but this study is interested in the conflict *within* a party.

Therefore, it is worthwhile to turn to the literature on intraparty challenges to understand how Republicans voted for speaker.

The field of intraparty challenges laid rather dormant until it was revived by Green (2006) and Harris (2006). Green (2006) sought to develop a theory to explain challenges to incumbent speakers. First, Green (2006) emphasized that party leaders are perceived to assist legislators accomplish at least one of the following goals: secure reelection, further their policy goals, or increase their internal influence. Therefore, there should be a challenge to the leadership if a member feels that the speaker is not helping them in one of these important ways. Green (2006) then introduced a framework labeled *goal salience theory*. According to this theory, the candidates seeking a leadership position and their respective campaigns will highlight some combination of those three aforementioned variables. That is, whether or not reelection, policy goals, or internal influence will impact a intraparty challenge is dependent upon the environment of the election.

For example, Green's (2006) study focused on the challenge by Mo Udall to Speaker John McCormack within the Democratic Party in 1969. Given the liberal bent of Udall's challenge as well as his pledge to assist younger members, it was hypothesized that ideology and age would be among the most important variables. Using an assortment of archival data to test the results of this secret ballot, support was found for these and additional hypotheses.

Goal salience theory has guided much of the subsequent work in this field. For example, Green and Harris (2007) studied the 2006 House Republican majority leader's race between John Boehner, Roy Blunt, and John Shadegg. Boehner and Shadegg positioned themselves as outsiders in their respective campaigns; unsurprisingly, the statistical analysis found that those who were elected in 1994 as part of the 'Gingrich Revolution' were more likely to support those two than Blunt. Green (2008) found that policy differences on abortion were a leading factor in Steny

Hoyer's win over John Murtha for the position of Democratic majority leader in 2006, as Murtha was more pro-life than Hoyer and those with higher scores from the pro-choice group NARAL were more likely to support Hoyer. Frisch and Kelly (2008) also found that camaraderie was important in the Senate Republican whip race in 2006, as those who served with Trent Lott in the House were more likely to support him over Lamar Alexander than those who did not.

These studies have tested goal salience theory in a variety of contexts in different eras, but there has been one constant throughout: the presence of a sustained and substantive opposition. These studies have only analyzed elections where there has been a serious contest for the position. To date, there has not been a study of a contest where there is no true campaign against an incumbent. Such a scenario would be a unique test of the theory that would serve to further highlight the importance of campaign context.

Furthermore, all of these studies have relied on fragmented data. Leadership races have historically been conducted via secret ballot during a party caucus. Therefore, there is no public record of the vote. Data from past studies has relied on the personal tallies of candidates (Green, 2006) or media reports of public declarations of support (Green, 2008; Frisch and Kelly, 2008) that have not included every individual vote. While there is little reason to suspect that legislators are not truthful in their pledges or that there are systematic differences between those who publicize their votes and those who do not, the lack of a complete data set of every single vote across all of these studies suggests that a full record could serve to bolster their conclusions. Fortunately, the election of the speaker in 2015 incorporates both of these aforementioned aspects.

The 2015 Vote for Speaker of the House

Boehner was elected speaker when the Republicans gained the majority in the House in 2010. While that election was relatively uncontroversial, there was an unusual public challenge to his post following the 2012 election when 11 Republicans voted against him. It appeared that that number may double when it came time to vote in 2015.

Speaker Boehner had been consistently flummoxed by a sizeable portion of his caucus. Starting in 2010, many Republicans came to Congress under the banner of the "Tea Party," which has been argued to have been fueled by conservative and anti-establishment ideals; this put them at odds with their leadership. These members consistently decried both the procedure and substance of many pieces of legislation that were introduced by Boehner. For example, a "grand bargain" was negotiated behind closed doors by Boehner and President Obama in 2011 that would have greatly altered taxes and entitlements. However, the deal would have called for an increase in some taxes, which was anathema to many within the Republican caucus. There was worry that such a proposal "might lead to outright insurrection and a breakaway third party" (Bai, 2012). Boehner eventually walked away from the deal.

A similar situation occurred in 2012 when Boehner attempted to pass a bill to avert going over the "fiscal cliff," which was the nickname given to the simultaneous raising of taxes due to the expiration of tax cuts and reduced government spending due to sequestration that was due to take place in January 2013. First, a $2 trillion deal that would have increased taxes on millionaires and reduced entitlement spending while also lifting the debt ceiling was negotiated between Boehner and the White House. When word of the proposal leaked to his caucus, the subsequent protestations from his party led to it being quickly scuttled. Boehner's "Plan B" was to focus only on taxes and then negotiate with the White House over spending. This bill sought to freeze income

taxes at their current levels for most people while allowing the rates to rise for millionaires. After ensuring the public that the bill would pass, Boehner had to pull it off of the floor shortly before the vote because not enough Republicans supported it (Kane, O'Keefe, and Montgomery, 2012).

As 2014 came to a close, the anti-establishment wing of the House caucus was again a thorn in Boehner's side. That November, President Barack Obama had taken extensive executive action regarding the deportation of undocumented immigrants. This outraged House Republicans on both political and procedural grounds. They felt that the spending bill that passed in December should have had provisions in it targeted at the enforcement of immigration laws, but Boehner ignored their pleas and instead promised to deal with immigration in 2015 (Sherman and Bresnahan 2015).

Partially because he knew that the vote for speaker could be challenging, Boehner tried to make amends with many in his caucus. Aside from personally campaigning for them, Boehner also distributed money in amounts of either $5000 or $10,000 to many House Republicans. In all, Boehner's Freedom Project PAC donated $1,225,000 to campaigns for the House (OpenSecrets; French and Bresnahan, 2015).

After the November election, the Republicans held their caucus and voted on their nominee for speaker. Boehner ran unopposed. Following this vote, however, many Republicans expressed their displeasure with the party's leadership and policies. Representative Dave Brat (R-VA), who had upset the sitting majority leader in a primary in 2014, wrote that, "Washington is broken in part because our party's leadership has strayed from its own principles of free market, limited government, constitutional conservatism." (Brat, 2015). Brat also expressed displeasure at the lack of time provided by the leadership to review legislation. In addition, Representative Walter Jones (R-NC), when asked why he supported a challenge to Boehner, said, "I want us to have [a] leader

who is willing to stand up for conservative, religious principles I believe in. It is to make a statement and it's based on many months of consideration" (Book, 2015).

Though many were publically displeased, there was little in the form of a formal campaign by any candidate against Boehner. Furthermore, the campaigning that did take place emphasized that the movement was not for anyone but was against the current leader's style. Representative Ted Yoho (R-FL) declared on January 4 that he would run if no one else chose to challenge Boehner. Yoho, in a prepared statement, wrote, "The American People have spoken loud and clear by their choice to elect conservative Representatives to serve them in Washington. It's our turn now, as Members of the People's House, to echo their demands by electing a new Speaker." However, Yoho went on to write that this challenge was not meant as an affront to the current speaker, stating, "Our vote for a new Speaker is not a personal vote against Representative Boehner - it is a vote against the status quo. Our vote is a signal to the American people that we too, have had enough of Washington politics, and that we will stand with the American people" (Boyle, 2015).

This sentiment was echoed by the second person to enter the race against Boehner, Representative Louie Gohmert (R-TX). In his statement, Gohmert stressed that, "...the Speaker's election is not about a particular candidate. It is about whether we keep the status quo or make the change the country demands" (Gohmert, 2015). Following the election, Gohmert maintained this theme in an interview on "Fox and Friends," where he stated, "As I said from the beginning, it was never about me, that's why I urged Yoho to get in, that's why I urged [Representative] Daniel Webster to get in, and was urging a couple others that didn't..." (McCalmont, 2015).

The third challenger, Representative Daniel Webster (R-FL), also had an unconventional campaign. Webster, who had served as speaker in the Florida legislature, gained the attention of

many conservatives following a November speech to the Republican Study Committee. Many of his fellow legislators urged him to run; however, Webster did not announce his campaign until the day before the vote. At the time that, he realized that he would be nominated for the position whether he announced or not. His "campaign" was so muddled that many were still unsure if he was actually running (French and Bresnahan, 2015). In keeping with the motivations of Yoho and Gohmert, Webster said afterwards, "In the end this is not personal. I was in this to try to influence the process. Done. John Boehner is a friend" (Leary, 2015).

Though the campaigns against him may have been unconventional, Boehner still faced the largest challenge to a sitting speaker since the Buchanan Administration. Boehner needed a majority of all of the ballots cast to keep the speakership. Out of 408 ballots cast, 216 were for Boehner. While the Democratic caucus was largely united against him, a total of 25 Republicans did not vote for him. Among the declared Republican challengers, Webster was the leading vote-getter with 12 votes. Gohmert was in second place with three votes while Yoho garnered two. The other votes were scattered among other Republican government officials (Sherman and Bresnahan, 2015).

Following his re-election, Boehner directly confronted the notion that he was too strongly tied to the status quo of Washington while also acting quickly against those who had opposed him. In a speech, he declared, "I'm the most anti-establishment speaker we've ever had." Boehner cited the elimination of earmarks and his belief that all members of the House should participate in governing in support of this assertion (Sherman, 2015a). Additionally, two members of the House who voted against Boehner were removed from the powerful Rules Committee just hours after the formal vote. Boehner said that, "Because of some activities on the floor, two of our members

weren't put back on the committee immediately" (Pappas, 2015). Those members were permanently replaced in April (Marcos, 2015).

Theory and Hypotheses

Goal-salience theory suggests that the records of the candidates and the context of the campaign need to be considered when developing hypotheses. This campaign features a unique test of the theory because there was little sustained challenge by those running and much deference among the candidates towards each other and towards the incumbent speaker. Instead, those running against Boehner agitated against "Washington as usual" politics and desired more conservative legislation. Therefore, if there was a theme among the challengers, it was one of policy and procedure. Many House Republicans not only disapproved of the substance of Boehner's bills, but they also disapproved of how he brought bills to the floor and therefore sought relief by voting against him.

According to goal-salience theory, legislators have three primary goals. Those goals are re-election, public policy, and internal advancement. Given the context and nature of the campaigns against Boehner, all three prongs are relevant.

Re-election is always a concern among elected officials. Therefore, Boehner used his ample campaign war chest to assist his caucus during the 2014 campaign season and to try to head off a challenge to his speakership. Earlier studies have found a link between campaign expenditures and leadership votes (Green and Harris, 2007); therefore, it is hypothesized that those who receive money from Boehner's PAC will be more likely to vote for him.

Internal advancement goals have traditionally been measured in two different ways to try to capture the competing goals at stake. This is because of differences between those in leadership

positions and those who are not: those that lack power wish to have it, while those who have it wish to keep it. Past studies have included variables to capture "cohort" effects (Green, 2006; Harris, 2006; Green and Harris, 2007). The logic behind such measurements is that members that are elected together at certain times seem to share a kindred spirit. Given the changes in the composition of the House, it is reasonable to assume that those who have been elected recently share a similar anti-authority belief. Therefore, it is hypothesized that newer members will be less likely to vote for Boehner.

On the other hand, other studies have modeled inclusion in party leadership as a factor in leadership votes (Harris, 2006; Green, 2008). Those that are in power have historically supported the status quo. Since this is a challenge fueled by protest, it is hypothesized that those that are the heads of committees or in the party leadership will be more likely to support Boehner.

Past studies of leadership votes have tried to model public policy displeasure in two ways: ideological extremity (Harris, 2006; Green, 2006; Green and Harris, 2007) or by positions on specific policies (Green, 2008). Given that many legislators wanted bills that were more conservative, ideology appears to be an appropriate variable to use in modeling. Therefore, it is hypothesized that increased conservatism is associated with an increased probability of voting against Boehner.

Aside from ideological considerations, many of the speaker's largest pieces of legislation had consistently been challenged from within his own party on based on procedural grounds. Many House Republicans were opposed to the deal-making between Boehner and Obama and felt left out of the legislative process. Therefore, while these members may have agreed with the *substance* of the bill, they did not agree with the *process*. If this is so, then ideological extremity will not

capture this particular effect. What is needed is variable that measures displeasure with legislation but is not merely a substitute for ideology.

If those who voted against Boehner for speaker did so to voice their displeasure with how he negotiated policies, it is likely that this same behavior manifested itself in other ways. One of the most public ways of making such a protest would be by voting against legislation that was proposed by Boehner. That is, House Republicans may have protested against "Washington as usual" politics by their earlier votes against their own party. This dissention within House Republicans implies that those with lower levels of *party unity* may be more likely to vote against Boehner for the speakership. This variable hopefully captures dislike for how legislation is crafted. By consistently refusing to "go along to get along," it is hypothesized that those who voted against the wishes of their party with greater frequency were also more likely to vote against Boehner.

Data

Previous tests of goal-salience theory relied on incomplete data sets. Leadership votes are always conducted in secret, so the actual votes by legislators are never revealed. Therefore, past studies used archival data from the personal papers of the candidates (Green, 2006; Harris, 2006) or publicly declared votes (Green and Harris, 2007; Green, 2008; Frisch and Kelly, 2008). Though many of the studies could not model every legislator's vote, the authors often argued strenuously and convincingly that their inferences were sound.

This study, on the other hand, analyzes intraparty conflict using the public vote for speaker. This election was aired live on CSPAN and every vote was recorded. For the first time, analysis using goal salience theory will include all of the votes with no question pertaining to their veracity. Therefore, the dependent variable in this analysis will be whether or not a Republican voted for or

against Boehner. There were 216 votes in support of Boehner from his own caucus, with 25 votes against him.

The independent variables come from myriad sources and descriptive statistics may be found in the appendix. Ideology, in the tradition of earlier studies in the literature (Green 2006), will be measured using first-dimension DW-NOMINATE scores from the prior Congress. This measure takes the votes made by members of Congress and then places the members along an ideological spectrum based on how often legislators vote with one another Larger scores are associated with increased conservatism. This variable ranged from a low of 0.176 to a high of 0.636. Party unity scores come from OpenCongress, a product of the nonpartisan non-profit Sunlight Foundation. It records how often an individual member voted with a majority of other Republicans and includes every vote taken during the prior Congress. This variable ranged from 75.1 to 98.2. Information regarding those who received money from Boehner's PAC (Freedom Project) comes from OpenSecrets.org and is dummy coded. Of the 197 members of Congress that are analyzed, data on leadership membership and years served in Congress comes from Congressional Quarterly.

Analysis and Results

Since the dependent variable for this analysis is dichotomous, a logit model is used. Since they did not have party unity scores nor measures of ideology, this model omits freshman. A description of a separate analysis on freshman is discussed later in the article. Four additional members were excluded: Clawson (FL), Graves (LA) and Brat (VA) because they joined the previous Congress late and did not have ideology nor party unity scores; and Guinta (NH) who was not a freshman but did not serve in the previous Congress.

Given that the estimated proportional reduction in error (ePRE) of the model is upwards of 25%, it is suggested that this model improves upon the naive model. Diagnostic tests suggest no evidence of multicollinearity. Most importantly, this model lends support for almost every proposed hypothesis. Since interpreting a logistic regression table is not intuitive, this section will detail the findings.

Table One: Logit Model for Vote against Boehner

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err.
Party Unity	**-0.290**	0.065
Ideology	**6.465**	2.316
Seniority	**0.122**	0.041
Freedom Project PAC	**-1.215**	0.673
Constant	-223.03	80.105
N	197	
McFadden's R^2	0.306	
ePCP	86.9	
ePRE	27.93	

Note: All variables significant at the 0.05-level (one-tail) are in **bold**

First, those in positions of power were unanimous in their support for Boehner, so that variable was not included in the model. Everyone that served in the leadership or as the chair of a committee voted for Boehner. This provides support for the hypothesis that those in the leadership fought to preserve the status quo and did not protest.

Those Republicans who were more conservative than the rest of their party were also more likely to vote for someone other than Boehner. For a standard deviation increase in conservatism, the odds of supporting anyone but Boehner are 2.05 times as great, holding all other variables constant. This gives support to the hypothesis that suggests that those who are more conservative would be less likely to support Boehner.

In addition, it is also apparent that Boehner's PAC wielded an influence as well, as those who received a donation from the speaker were more likely to support him. All else constant, with a donation for Boehner's PAC, the odds of supporting him for speaker are 0.30 times greater. This supports the re-election hypothesis that those who received campaign money from Boehner would be more likely to support him. Seniority also impacted the vote; those who had been in Congress longer were more likely to vote for Boehner.

The results up to this point bolster the findings from past studies of intraparty leadership votes. These variables had been in prior studies, but this is the first time that they had been examined using a complete data set of every single vote. This support for earlier findings helps to confirm the robustness of earlier work in addition to the applicability of this framework to analyze a vote for speaker.

Most importantly for this study, there is strong support for the unique hypothesis regarding party unity. Those who voted less often with their party were also less likely to vote for Boehner. Specifically, for a standard deviation decrease in party unity, the odds of supporting Boehner decrease by a factor of 0.39, holding all else constant. Party unity as measured by Poole and Rosenthal was substituted for this measure and the results were substantively similar. This supports the hypothesis that those who were upset by the procedures of the leadership during the previous term continued to voice their displeasure when they voted for the speakership.

This result is also presented graphically in Figure One, which plots the predicted probability of supporting Boehner given a member's level of party unity. As can be seen, the effect is quite dramatic. Among those who supported the party over 90% of the time, the predicted probability of voting against Boehner is almost zero. However, that quickly changes; as party unity drops to only 75%, the lowest score of any House Republican, the predicted probability of voting

for Boehner is close to zero. This provides strong support that this variable captures a unique part of the protest against Boehner's tactics.

Figure One: Party Unity on the Probability of Voting against Boehner
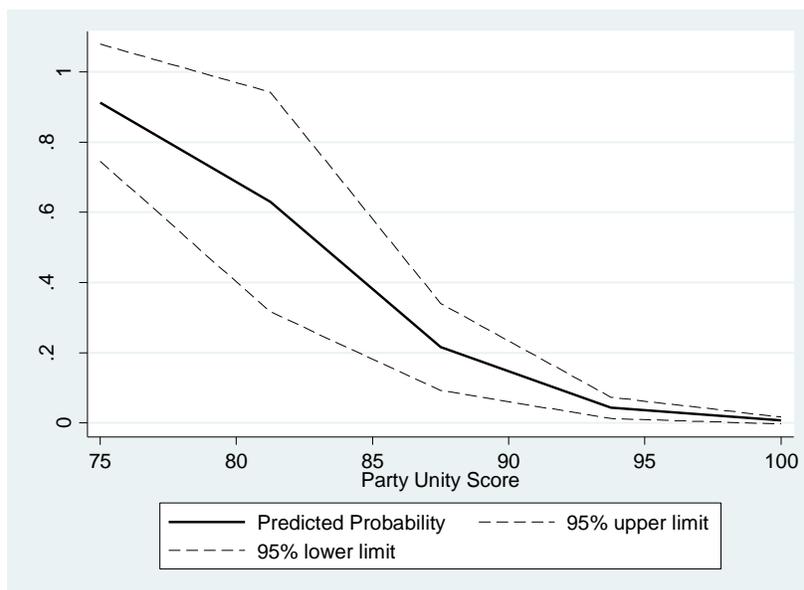
A model with all of these independent variables requires a representative to have served in Congress; therefore, all of the freshman are dropped from analysis. Therefore, an additional omitted model was tested that only included freshman. The most interesting information comes from an analysis of Boehner's PAC contributions. Of the 41 freshman, Boehner's PAC contributed to 37 of them. Unexpectedly, the four that did not receive money all supported Boehner. In a logit model of vote choice, this variable predicts failure perfectly and must be dropped. Broadly speaking, this suggests that these PAC donations may not have much influence on the leadership votes of freshman members of Congress.

Other variables have been included in previous studies leadership votes, but since the framework established by goal-salience theory did not suggest that they would have an impact, they were not expected to have an effect. Those include: age (Green, 2006); region (Green and Harris, 2007; Green, 2008); and margin of victory (Green, 2006). Jenkins and Stewart (2012) also

suggest that region may matter. These variables were tested and found to not be significant, so they have been omitted.

It may be argued that a more direct measure of the protestations of the Republican caucus, such as membership within the Tea Party caucus is warranted. However, as noted by Gervais and Morris (2014), it is difficult to identify members of the Tea Party in Congress because the Tea Party Caucus is dormant. Gervais and Morris (2014) categorized Tea Party membership using campaign contributions, endorsements, activism on Twitter, membership in the Tea Party Caucus, Tea Party self-identification on social media, and news media references. The results suggested four different categories of Tea Party membership. These four categories were included in a model, as was membership in the Tea Party caucus, and none were significant

It may be argued that the partisanship of the representative's districts should also be modeled. It could be the case that the members of Congress were simply responding to the preferences of their constituents. This was measured in three ways: as the percent of the district that voted for the Democratic nominee in 2012, 2008, and the average of the two years. These variables were never significant and were omitted.

Discussion

During the fiscal cliff negotiations, Boehner's job was likened to "herding cats" (Parker and Peters, 2013). That analogy could aptly describe his tenure as speaker. Though a significant portion of House Republicans objected during the vote in 2015, Boehner held on to his position. However, he was not in power for long. In September of 2015, Boehner announced that he would soon be resigning from his position. There was a threat of a "no-confidence vote" that had the support of numerous members of the Republican caucus. If the vote had been successful, Boehner

may have had to rely on the votes of Democrats to retain his speakership, which would not have been a sure bet.

What does this study tell us about Boehner's departure from the speakership? Based on these results, his departure was not unexpected. The "no-confidence vote" was first floated by Representative Mark Meadows in July. Meadows resolution had little to do with Boehner the person and much to do with Boehner the leader. Meadows noted that Boehner had "endeavored to consolidate power and centralize decision-making, bypassing the majority of the 435 Members of Congress and the people they represent" (Miller 2015). Therefore, this was a protest much in line with the policy and politics strain of Boehner's earlier vote for speaker.

Meadows was a member of a group that formed shortly into the 114th Congress named the House Freedom Caucus. This group almost perfectly encapsulates those who would be the most likely to oppose Boehner based on the results from this study. Fifteen of their members voted against Boehner in the 2015 vote for speaker. Their members are more conservative and have less seniority than the average Republican in the House (Bialik and Bycoffe 2015). However, their protestations are not solely fueled by ideology. Rather, the crux of the groups appears to be dissatisfaction with procedure. Representative Justin Amash, a founding member of the Freedom Caucus, said with regards to Boehner that, "the problem isn't that he isn't conservative enough. The problem is he doesn't follow the process" (Sherman 2015b). Amash stated that the group simply wants the House to follow the rules of the institution. "In some cases, conservative outcomes will succeed. In other cases, liberal outcomes will succeed. And that's OK," said Amash. "The worst scenario is where you have one person or a small group of people dictate to everyone else what the outcome is going to be in advance" (Sherman 2015b).

Informed by this paper, the difficulties that were caused by the Freedom Caucus for Boehner would hardly be unexpected. Based not only on their demographics, but on the clearly stated purpose for the existence of the group based on dissatisfaction with process, it could have been anticipated that the Freedom Caucus would not make life easy for Boehner. This suggests that the ideas introduced and furthered in this study may be relevant in analyzing other similar scenarios.

What does this work suggest for the speaker who succeeded Boehner, Representative Paul Ryan? Prior to his election to speaker, Ryan appeared to seriously consider the demands of the Freedom Caucus. Following a meeting with them, Ryan gained the support of a supermajority of the caucus. It appears as if this may be due to Ryan agreeing with the premise of the group. According to the leader of the group, Representative Jim Jordan, "We do have a commitment from Paul to work on changing the rules..." (Scanlon 2015). If Ryan is able to successfully satiate the institutional demands of the group, he may not have the same fate as his predecessor.

Conclusion

The leadership vote examined in this article was unique due to the public nature of the agitation towards Boehner and the availability of data. Studies of past leadership votes have relied on the goal-salience theory, but this vote included a component that was lacking in all earlier studies: a public election. The history of Boehner's speakership also suggested the inclusion of a new variable: party unity. This variable was large and impactful, suggesting that future studies should consider including a past history of individual dissention in their models. Furthermore, this unique scenario provided a strong test of the goal-salience theory. Since it proved to be adaptable, this study provides further verification of its usefulness. Most importantly, the results of this study

do not greatly differ from those in past studies, which suggests that those studies should not be ignored due to their incomplete data.

This study suggests that no leadership vote should be seen as perfunctory nor unexplainable. If there is measurable dissention in the caucus during the previous Congress on policy or procedural grounds, a challenge may be expected. Even if no actual challenger steps up against the incumbent leader, there is now little reason to suspect that a protest vote will not take place. In addition, if future caucuses prove to be unwieldy and break from the party often, there is little reason to suspect that such challenges will not become more commonplace. What remains to be seen is if and how the leadership chooses to respond to these intraparty insurrections. Will the leadership propose more ideologically extreme bills? Will legislators have a greater say in policy? Will there be greater turnover within the leadership? It will be interesting to see what strategies are adopted and how effective they prove to be.

Appendix

Table Two: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Vote	242	0.103	0.305	0	1
Party Unity	197	93.516	3.269	75.1	98.2
Ideology	197	0.439	0.111	0.171	0.67
Year	242	2008	7.645	1973	2015
Freedom Project PAC	242	0.583	0.494	0	1

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