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A significant and influential body of research suggests that electoral systems influence legislators' behavior. Yet, empirical research frequently fails to uncover the existence of such a relationship. This study offers a potential solution: The core suggestion is that the mechanisms by which prized post-election positions (mega-seats) are distributed within a legislature impacts legislative behavior. When party leaders cartelize the allocation of mega-seats, the anticipated effects of the electoral system on legislators' behavior may dissolve. Ireland's candidate-centered electoral system and party-controlled mega-seat allocation provides for a hard empirical test of the argument. New data on mega-seats and voting behavior in the Irish parliament between 1980 and 2010 supports the notion that mega-seat considerations rather than the electoral system shapes roll-call behavior. The implication is that what goes on within the legislature may be more important for influencing legislators' behavior than what goes on at the ballot box. This observation may resolve the puzzle of why electoral systems do not always exert their purported influence.

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At least since Mayhew's (1974) discovery of an "electoral connection" and Fenno's (1978) study of House members' "home style," conventional wisdom suggests that the electoral system shapes legislators' behavior. Arguably, candidate-centered elections promote centrifugal legislatures (such as the U.S. Congress) characterized by relatively weak levels of party voting unity (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1987; Poole and Rosenthal 1997), congruence between constituency preferences and representative behavior (Miller and Stokes, 1963), and a strong committee system privileging individual members over political parties (Katz and Sala 1996; Shepsle and Weingast 1987, but see further Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). In contrast, as Katz (1980) argued, party-centered electoral systems expectedly produce strong-party legislatures making party labels the defining explanation of individual legislative behavior in many legislatures (Carey 2007, 2009). In short, whether or not incumbents need to cultivate a personal-vote or a party-vote defines incumbents' interests and behavior (Carey and Shugart 1995).

This study questions the centrality of the influence of electoral systems in shaping legislators' behavior. Contrary to conventional perspectives focusing on electoral origins of actions, it is suggested that what legislators must do to secure prized post-election positions matters. Using a term introduced by Carroll, Cox, and Pachón (2006), allocation of "mega-seats," should be considered in explaining legislative behavior. Valuable "mega-seats" motivate behavior, and the variation in value and allocation mechanisms can explain behavior and ultimately even sever the link between electoral incentives and the behavior of legislators. Mega-seat allocation can occur under different rules, ranging from seniority and secret floor votes to systems in which party leaders, as a cartel, determine which legislator receives which assignments. Ignoring mega-seats and the mechanisms by which they are allocated

may explain the confusing and contradictory empirical research exploring the consequences of electoral systems.¹

This study's empirical focus is Ireland, whose political system provides a significant opportunity to test the degree to which mega-seats *matter*. Ireland's Single Transferrable Vote (STV) electoral system is strongly candidate-centered, but control of mega-seats rests with party leaders within the legislature. As the research demonstrates by exploring all cases of indiscipline in the lower chamber of the Irish Parliament (Dáil) between 1980 and 2010, rebellions are extremely rare with only 15 breaches of unified party voting in a 30-year period. To anticipate, the case study provides strong evidence that incentives to cultivate mega-seats shapes legislative behavior, resulting in a strong-party legislature emerging from a candidate-centered electoral environment.

The significance of the argument and empirical findings extend well beyond the Irish example. Despite Strøm's (1997) suggestion that a number of goals motivate parliamentarians in parliamentary systems, prominence in the academic literature remains with the re-election incentive as the motivational basis of observed behavior. Part of the significance of this research is the suggestion that winning post-election offices strongly motivates legislators, with consequences for observed behavior. This argument has potentially broader consequences for the study of political institutions and the impact of electoral rules. Scholars have used variations among electoral systems to explain significant policy outcomes, from economic growth to balanced budgets (see, for example, Persson and Tabellini. 2003). Such research, arguably, may be overstating the impact and significance of electoral institutions by ignoring the political consequences of activities within the legislature.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: A review of the literature links electoral rules to legislators' behavior is followed by a discussion of variations in the mechanisms to allocate mega-seats and the impact on the behavior of legislators. The Irish case is then introduced, providing evidence for the candidate-centered nature of elections but the strong-party nature of the legislature and the proposal that mega-seats trump the electoral system. Matching analysis confirms the strategic allocation of Irish mega-seats to induce loyal partisanship and discourage party rebellions. The concluding section discusses the need to understand better incentivizing mechanisms within the legislature itself.

Literature Review

Research seeking to explain the behavior of Members of the United States Congress suggest an electoral connection. The candidate-centric nature of American elections compels Members of Congress to dedicate appropriate attention and resources to the priorities of their district's constituents (Mayhew 1974; Fenno 1978). Members behave in the legislative arena not as agents of their parties but as representatives of the preferences of their constituents (Miller and Stokes 1963). Partisan loyalty in roll-call behavior can adversely affect legislators' electoral fortunes (Canes-Wrone et al. 2002; Carson, Koger, Lebo, and Young 2010). Indeed, the goal of re-election, has implications beyond the behavior of individual members of Congress, perhaps even determining the internal organizational design of Congress itself (Shepsle and Weingast 1987, Weingast and Marshall 1988).

Variations in election processes should provide an opportunity to test, comparatively, the electoral connection. One of the first to study the impact of electoral rules on legislator behavior is Katz (1980) who theorized a link between the

ballot structure and the degree of legislative voting according to party suggested that “where intraparty choice is allowed, parliamentary parties will tend to be disunited” (Katz 1980: 34). When voters choose between candidates from the same political party, candidates must differentiate themselves from their colleagues. One way to move beyond the party label is to act independent of the party in the legislative arena. Legislators must be sensitive to constituencies’ demands and work to build an independent electoral base. Empirically, Katz (1980) found only limited evidence that electoral systems impacted the level of party voting unity in the chamber.

Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina (1987) suggested that the degree to which incumbents must cultivate a personal vote to be re-elected matters, and they contrasted the behavior of Members of the US Congress with the roles of Members of the British House of Commons (MPs). British MPs, operating in a party centered electoral environment, are much more likely than their US counterparts to vote strictly along party lines in the legislative arena. Indeed, Cox’s (1987) path-breaking study related the evolution of strong parties in the British House of Commons to the emerging significance of the electoral value of a strong party label for MPs.

In classifying electoral systems based on the degree to which they create incentives for incumbents to cultivate personal votes, Carey and Shugart (1995) suggested that the personal versus party nature of the electoral system should have consequences. This renewed interest in the consequences of candidate-centered versus party-centered electoral systems motivates empirical tests of the effects of different electoral systems on legislator behavior. For example, with an empirical focus on Latin America, Carey (2007, 2009) tested the impact of competing principals on legislative voting unity and discovered evidence of an electoral connection.

Comparative research focusing on Western European countries has reached largely different conclusions. Contrary to expectations, Sieberer (2006) found that party voting unity is marginally stronger in candidate-centered than party-centered environments. Using roll call data from 16 countries, Depauw and Martin (2009) determined that election rules only partly explain party voting in European legislatures. As Owens (2003), observed, eliminating the impact of national covariates when attempting to uncover and isolate the impact of electoral systems on legislative behavior in different national and institutional environments is difficult.

Legislatures elected using a mix of ballot structures permits further investigation of the impact of electoral rules on legislators' behavior by effectively reducing the confounding effects of cross-nationally sensitive variables. Counter intuitively, Becher and Sieberer (2008) discovered that party-listed legislators in Germany are more likely to defect from the party leadership than their district-elected counterparts. However, considering the 16th German Bundestag (2005–2009), Sieberer (2010) found evidence that the electoral system matters for party discipline, although he concluded that higher levels of indiscipline among plurality MPs is not an attempt to satisfy local constituencies' demands. The presence of dual candidacy in Germany (candidates on both the party-list and in single-member districts) creates difficulty in testing for a relationship between the methods of election and subsequent behavior (Zittel and Gschwend 2008).

Haspel, Remington, and Smith (1998) determined that the level of voting unity within parties in the Russian Duma relates to whether or not a Deputy's election is by single-member plurality or party-list. Thames (2005), however, asserted that the Russian Duma is an exception. Party discipline is, he claimed, shaped by the electoral system in the Russian Duma, but not in the other two mixed-mandate legislatures he

explored (the Hungarian National Assembly and the Ukrainian Rada). Herron (2002) further investigated the latter and found that dual candidacy and the “safety” of the Deputy’s district or listed position impacts discipline. Research by Jun and Hix (2010) suggested that members of the Korean National Assembly, elected in single- member districts are less likely to vote in opposition to their party’s leadership than their counterparts elected on PR lists.

The European Parliament, composed of MEPs elected under nationally determined electoral rules, provides another laboratory for the study of an electoral system’s impacts on legislative behavior. Bowler and Farrell (1993) found that electoral systems influence MEPs’ constituency service behavior, and Farrell and Scully (2007) confirmed that electoral systems’ variations impact MEPs’ considerations for and undertaking of their representative roles (see also, Farrell and Scully 2010). Scully and Farrell (2007) noted a shift in the behavior of British MEPs following the move from single-member districts to proportional representative ballot structures for electing British MEPs. Considering roll-call voting in the European Parliament, Hix (2004) determined that politicians elected under plurality rules are less responsive to their national party’s delegations than members elected in single districts (see also, Hix, Noury, and Roland 2007).

Studies of individual countries are somewhat less conclusive regarding the impact of electoral environments on legislators’ behavior. For example, in Estonia, according to Tavits (2010), having local roots renders MPs less likely to break from party unity compared to MPs with weaker local roots. For the Netherlands, Andeweg and Thomassen (2011) determined that campaigning for personal votes does not affect an MP’s party loyalty, reaffirming Heidar’s (2006) conclusion that the electoral system coincides little with levels of voting unity in the Dutch parliament.

The literature is, therefore, inconclusive: Many scholars theorize an electoral connection, expecting the ballot structure to shape legislators' behavior. In contrast, empirical studies find only a weak electoral connection, no electoral connection, or a connection in opposition to theoretical prediction. The next section suggests the need to consider influences beyond the electoral system for explaining the strength of parties in legislative roll-call voting.

The Impact of Mega-Seats on Legislators' Behavior

In a significant contribution, Carroll, Cox and Pachón (2006) suggested that democracy represents a series of choices for offices, beginning with legislative elections but continuing thereafter with the allocation of so-called "mega-seats" among legislators. Such positions of power reflect, in part, the need to control access to the plenary session and the need to avoid legislative bottlenecks (Cox 2006).

Virtually all parliaments endow certain members with extra authority and responsibilities. The post of Prime Minister (PM) is likely one of the most sought-after positions in a parliamentary system, followed closely by other seats in the cabinet. The post of presiding officer (or, as in many parliaments, membership of the *presidium*) is highly cherished for its status and practical benefits to the officeholder (Jenny and Müller 1995). The significance of committees may vary considerably among parliaments, but Committee Chairs in strong-committee legislatures can be extraordinarily powerful in terms of legislative process, executive oversight, and particularistic politics. Carroll, Cox and Pachón (2006) focused on the allocation of such seats among parties, suggesting that the allocation of seats forms "Chapter Two" in the democratic electoral cycle.

Scholars have long considered the impact of “Chapter 1” of electoral democracy on legislators’ behavior (the electoral connection literature discussed earlier) but researchers have been largely silent on the impact of “Chapter 2” (the allocation of mega-seats among legislators) on the behavior of legislators. The core contribution of the current research is to suggest that mega-seat availability and the mechanisms for their allocation influences legislative behavior - in particular the level of unified party voting arising from party discipline.

Allocation of mega-seats occurs by a variety of means: A strictly non-partisan election involving all legislators as independent voters can occur, either by secret vote or open roll-call. Election of the Speaker of the British House of Commons occurs without involvement of the party leaders. The selection of Speaker is an issue for the House as a whole. Controversy arose with the selection of Selwyn Lloyd as Speaker in 1971 because Lloyd had received assurances of support from both the government and opposition leadership (Lloyd 1976). The irate response of ordinary MPs ensured a strengthening of the norm that ordinary MPs rather than party leaders select the Speaker.

The United States Congress presents a clear example of mega-seat allocation under rules of seniority. The length of time served as a Member of the House or Senate, or more technically the continuous period of tenure in office, impacts greatly committee assignments. To facilitate appointment by seniority, the Clerk of the House of Representative maintains a seniority list. Since the downfall of Speaker Joseph Cannon in 2011, seniority has become the norm – with brief exceptions, most notably when Speaker Newt Gingrich attempted to regain control of committee chair appointments. Today, allocation of committee chairs continues according to the longest serving member of the committee from the majority party (Deering and

Wahlbeck 2006, Cann 2008). The important point to note is that, with few violations, party leaders have little control over mega-seat allocation in the US Congress.

In contrast to the above mechanisms, significantly more examples of mega-seat allocation by the leadership of the legislative party exist. However, machinations of the operations and functions of parties within the legislative arenas remain relatively obscure, reflecting, perhaps, the often secretive and closed-door nature of those organizational units. Yet, legislative parties are clearly central to understanding the operation of modern parliaments and legislatures, even if operations of parties remain mysterious. Importantly, the leadership of the legislative party (defined as either the leader of the legislative party or some form of leadership committee) often retains formal or effective allocation rights over mega-seats. In parliamentary systems, the prime minister is usually the leader of the political party, and typically enjoys formal control over the allocation of other mega-seats, such as ministerial positions. Likewise, even when a chamber formally appoints individuals to mega-seats, the party leader may retain sufficient effective control to ensure control over appointments to relevant positions.

The core contribution of the current research is to suggest that the impact of mega-seats' appointments mirrors in significance the impact of electoral system on legislators' behavior. Party leader-centered allocation of mega-seats induces loyalty to the party leadership (as with party-centered electoral systems). In contrast, if the party leadership has no control over re-election (a candidate centered electoral system) or over the allocation of mega-seats (a seniority-based system) individual legislators are free to act within the legislative arena without the need to act in accordance with the preferences of their party leaders. Figure 1 presents the likely consequences of this for

one of the most observed and researched aspects of legislator behavior – the degree to which legislators from the same party vote the same way.

<Figure 1 around here>

Two of the four typologies provide clean-cut predictions for the level of unified party voting: Mega-seats filled through seniority, or those more generally free of the involvement of party leaders, combined with a candidate-centered electoral system should result in a decentralized legislature with the party leadership incapable of enforcing party discipline. Party voting unity should only occur when parties are ideologically cohesive – otherwise individual members will roll-call on the basis of their own preferences or the preferences of their constituents, with little regard for the wishes of the party leadership. The leadership can neither give nor remove much that the individual legislator values. Empirically, the U.S. Congress, perhaps, approaches most closely a reflection of this situation – the party leadership has little control over selection, election, and mega-seat allocation. The result is relatively low levels of observed unified party voting.

When the party controls both the electoral fortunes of the incumbent and the allocation of mega-seats which the incumbents seeks to hold, a legislator risks serious career damage by contravening the party's leadership. The prediction then is that unified party voting should be relatively high in such cases. Empirically, Norway would appear to fit this category – a party-list electoral system with assignments controlled by the party leadership (for example, individual legislators rank-order their preference for committee assignments in the Norwegian Storting and the party leaders then selects a committee's membership), and relatively high levels of party voting unity.

Legislators may have complementary or competing principals in each stage of electoral democracy (seat and mega-seat). Here, each legislator must maximize their potentials for holding each type of seat, given their behavior. Voters in a candidate-centered electoral environment may punish their legislators for voting along party lines (as noted in the literature review) but party loyalty may be essential to retain a mega-seat and/or guarantee access to mega-seats in the future. The case study of Ireland in the next section provides empirical evidence for this typology: a candidate-centered electoral environment with a mega-seat allocation controlled exclusively by the party leadership.ⁱⁱ Finally, the European Parliament provides an example of a legislature elected primarily under party-centered electoral rules, but in which the party leadership does not control allocation of mega-seats.

To understand why mega-seats influence behavior, appreciation of the degree of significance which legislators attach to such positions is necessary. Four advantages accrue to occupying mega-seats, as evident in most national legislatures:

1. If a politician's motivation for entering a political career is a desire to change and enhance public policy, doing so as an ordinary legislator (that is to say, a legislator not holding a mega-seat) poses difficulty. Instead, mega-seats provide a critical avenue and means to influence policy. For example, under parliamentarism, Cabinet Ministers wield significant influence over public policy making and implementation. Under presidentialism, the chairs of legislative committees may be significant in shaping, vetoing, and monitoring policy.
2. Beyond policy, mega-seats are inherently prestigious and a hierarchy of sought-after political offices exists in most political systems. For example, the Speaker of the US House of Representatives is third in Presidential succession

according to the US Constitution. The Speaker of the British House of Commons is the “first commoner,” outranking in protocol even the Prime Minister.

3. Mega-seats can be financially lucrative, carrying valuable additional salary, enhanced pensions, extra resources, and entitlements, including private office staffed by publicly-funded staff, living accommodations, and chauffeur service.
4. Mega-seats can assist re-election. In candidate-centered electoral systems, mega-seats, such as committee chairs, can provide distributional electoral advantage (Shepsle and Weingast 1987). In party-centered electoral systems, performing well in a mega-seat adds to a legislator’s visibility within the legislative party, and, assuming competency, further enhances credibility with party leadership.

Although widely underestimated as a source of behavior, some scholarship has implied importance for legislative office for influencing legislators’ behavior: Strøm (1997) provides a theoretical neo-institutional framework, which includes party office and legislative office as determinants of legislators’ roles. Similarly, much of earlier descriptive literature on the causes of voting unity identified “carrots and sticks” as potential tools to compel unified party voting (for a recent review, see Kam 2009). More recent empirical study of roll-call behavior found that executive office and parliamentary party explain patterns of defection in the Germany parliament (Becher and Sieberer 2008). Benedetto and Hix (2007) found that government rebels in the 2001-2005 British House of Commons were mainly those rejected for, or ejected from, ministerial offices. Jun and Hix (2010) reached similar conclusions for the National Assembly of South Korea. Considering 16 countries, Depauw and Martin

(2009) determined that the level of observed party unity relates to opportunities for ministerial promotion (measured as the proportion of the legislature that obtain a ministerial office) when ministerial autonomy is strong.

Exploring the actual behavior of legislators elected under a candidate-centered electoral environment but with mega-seat allocation controlled by party leaders provides a hard empirical test of whether or not mega-seats *matter*. As discussed next, the Irish case provides such an opportunity.

Ireland's Candidate-Centered Elections

Seven elements of Ireland's electoral environment and incumbent behavior suggest that incumbents must cultivate a personal vote rather than party vote to gain re-election:

1. Under STV, voters formally vote for individual candidates. Electors rank-order candidates, giving a first preference vote to their most favored candidate, a second preference vote to their second preferred candidate, etc..., until reaching indifference toward the remaining candidates. District magnitude varies between 3 (17 constituencies), 4 (15 constituencies) and 5 (11 constituencies). To help voters identify candidates, photographs of each candidate accompany their names on the ballot (Buckley, Collins, and Reidy 2007).
2. In terms of voting behavior, evidence suggests that that the Irish electorate votes for individual candidates rather than on the basis of party identification. Asked to explain their voting choices, 45 percent of survey respondents indicated that candidates' personal attributes were the reason for voting for

that candidate; whereas, only 10 percent of respondents indicated that party label influenced their choices (Marsh 2007).

3. Candidates and incumbents from the same party compete against each other for electoral success. Between 1922 and 1997, 34 percent of defeated incumbents lost their seats to a candidate from the same party (Gallagher 2000: 97). With the main competition for seats coming from candidates within the same party (Sinnott 2005: 121), campaigning at constituency-level often concentrates on securing votes otherwise destined for a co-partisan candidate rather than competing with candidates from other parties.
4. Non-party candidates (independents) are an important feature of the Irish political landscape. For example in the March 2011 General Election, of the 165 TDs elected, 14 were affiliated with no political party. As Weeks (2011) argued, such independent politicians are a persistent and significant feature because of their ability to respond to certain features of Irish political culture, particularly localism (preference of voters to vote for a candidate from their immediate neighborhood) and personalism (preference of voters to vote for candidates known personally to them). The emergence and success of non-party candidates reflects the candidate-centered nature of Irish elections.
5. STV permits an analysis of transfer patterns, from higher preferences to lower preferences upon elimination of candidates or the transfer of surplus votes. For the two largest parties, estimates indicate that 40 percent of voters assigned their first and second preferences to candidates from different parties in the 2002 election (Gallagher 2003: 106).
6. The loss of a party label, for whatever reason, does not lead to the loss of the seat at the subsequent general election. To the contrary, incumbents who lose

the party label often increase their popular vote at the subsequent general election. For example, amid allegations of impropriety, Michael Lowry's forced resignation as a Cabinet Minister in 1996 and his Fine Gael party's removing him from the party ticket resulted in him standing as an independent candidate. His share of the vote increased to 29 percent from 23 percent in the previous election.

7. Further evidence of the importance of personal votes under STV arises from the observation that Dáil deputies spend a significant proportion of their time focused on constituency matters. Wood and Young (1997) identified that Irish legislators dedicate almost 60 percent of their time to constituency affairs and spend 2.5 days per week in the constituency. Martin (2010) found that the proportion of the working week spent attending to constituency-related activities was just over 60 percent.

In summary, incumbents seeking re-election face a candidate-centered electoral environment. Before providing evidence of roll-call behavior of Irish legislators, the next section reviews the availability of mega-seats in the Dáil and, crucially, the nature of the role party leaders play in allocating mega-seats.

Ireland's Party-Controlled Mega-Seats

Table 1 provides details of the most significant mega-seats available to Irish parliamentarians. The table shows mega-seats, number of available positions, and the immediate financial rewards additional to Dáil Deputies basic parliamentary salaries. Perhaps most striking is the number of mega-seats available. For a legislature with 166 members, this research calculates that 128 mega-seats affording legislators enhanced salaries from public funds are available. When excluding membership of the

opposition frontbench (which tend to be funded by the parties themselves), a mega-seat is effectively available to any Dáil Deputy belonging to a political party.ⁱⁱⁱ Beyond the monetary value and prestige, mega-seats confer a whole series of benefits: For example, the Ceann Comhairle (presiding officer of the Dáil) receives a remuneration and expenses package equal to that of a Cabinet Minister. An added benefit is that the Ceann Comhairle, at the time of dissolution prior to a general election, gains automatic re-election to the Dáil. Clearly, a hierarchy of mega-seats exists and in practice, lower-level mega-seats tend to be a necessary condition for promotion to more significant and valuable mega-seats. Thus, not only can most parliamentarians expect a mega-seat, but also the possibility exists for advancement to an even more rewarding and significant mega-seats in the future.

<Table 1 around here>

In Ireland, allocation of mega-seats occurs, formally, according to two different mechanisms for appointing office holders and is dependent on the specific office. An open vote of the chamber fills positions such as that of the Taoiseach and Ceann Comhairle, but in reality, party leaders determine nominations for their co-partisans. This access-control renders any floor vote a mere formality. Thus, unlike the election of the Speaker of the British House of Commons, election of the presiding officer of the Dáil is by a partisan vote with party leaders determining the nominees.

The Taoiseach nominates cabinet ministers, and during periods of single party government, the Taoiseach (who is also the party leader), has complete authority over the nomination and dismissal of individual cabinet ministers. During periods of coalition government, the situation becomes slightly more complicated. Formally, the Taoiseach has authority to nominate individual legislators to cabinet positions, but in

reality having allocated portfolios to each party, each party leader selects which party member assumes a particular mega-seat (O'Malley 2006). Ultimately, of course, what is important is that the party leader always controls access to high office.

In the case of committee assignments and committee chairs, a committee of the party's whips determines assignments. Party whips are responsible for ensuring discipline and good behavior among their parliamentary party's members, and interestingly the whips play a key role in determining which legislators receive which mega-seat assignments. The party whip, itself a mega-seat, is the result of direct selection by the party leader. Clearly then, party leaders or their immediate agent, in the form of the party whip, maintain a cartel-like grip on the appointment of members of their legislative party to mega-seats.

Evidence suggests that party leaders have effective control over removing members from mega-seats, for example, the Taoiseach can re-shuffle the cabinet. It is also standard practice for members who are removed from the parliamentary party to also resign from, or alternatively face a motion to remove them from, mega-seats. For example, in 2001, upon expulsion from the Fianna Fáil Parliamentary Party, Deputy Liam Lawlor immediately faced calls to resign as vice-chairman of a parliamentary committee. He resigned ahead of a vote for removal (The Irish Times January 12, 2001). Thus, both the allocation to, and continuation in, a mega-seat are subject to the dominion and preferences of the party leader.

The next section discusses the competing impacts of a candidate-centered electoral system and party-controlled mega-seat allocations on the roll-call behavior of Irish legislators.

Mega-Seats' Influence on Inducing Party Discipline

Floor votes garner greater scrutiny than other parliamentary behavior for at least three reasons: First, and very practically, votes tend to be recorded and available, making them a rich and accessible data source for legislative scholars. Second, each individual legislator has the right to vote in plenary. As Cox (2006) suggested, this is an unusual occasion where all members of the legislature are formally equal in power and significance, and all legislators' roll-call votes are observable. Third, in many countries, finding variations in roll-call behavior is common, providing the opportunity to hypothesize and test for causal relations.

A common assumption is that the level of voting unity in Irish parliamentary parties is exceptionally high. Indeed, undertaking a roll-call analysis of voting provides results so close to 100 per cent that some might question the reason for doing so, mirroring Beer's (1969:350-351) comment that party voting in the British House of Commons "was so close to 100 per cent that there was no longer any point in measuring it."

This study, following (Gallagher 2010), takes a slightly different approach by isolating breaches of voting unity in Irish parliamentary parties. Table 2 reports details of all cases of voting unity breaches between 1980 and 2010 involving a member who either voted against the party's position or abstained from a vote without the party's permission (deliberate abstention). To identify breaches of party discipline *The Irish Times* daily coverage of parliamentary proceedings was reviewed. The same media coverage of votes involving abstentions is the source for determining whether or not abstentions were in agreement with the party leadership, were the result of an error (either on the part of the individual member or the party whip), or were deliberate actions of indiscipline. Of the large number of votes taken annually in the

Dáil, virtually none recorded members' deliberately abstaining or voting against their parties' position. An abstention or contravening vote against the party's leadership makes front-page headlines.^{iv}

<Table 2 around here>

Between 1980 and the end of 2010, only on 8 occasions did an individual member cast a vote contrary to the party, and only on 7 occasions did a member deliberately abstain in a floor vote. By any comparative standard, the level of parliamentary party unity is extraordinarily high, as confirmed by earlier comparative studies, which include Ireland (Depauw and Martin, 2009). Interestingly, only one deputy (Deputy Broughan, Labour Party) breached party discipline on more than one occasion— in his case, he did so three times. The remaining 12 Dáil Deputies breached party voting guidelines only once in the 30 years period under review.

To confirm that discipline drives roll-call behavior requires addressing the issue of party cohesion as a source of voting unity. Members of the same party may vote the same way because they have ideologically similar preferences, which differentiates them from members of a different party. In contrast, party discipline occurs when a parliamentarian would prefer to vote against the party position on a given vote, but nevertheless, chooses to vote in accord with the party's leadership. Part of the challenge for roll-call scholars and in particular scholars of parties in the legislative arena is to differentiate discipline-induced behavior from “natural” levels of underlying cohesion. This undertaking is not easily accomplished, absent independent measures of members' ideological preferences. As explained next, discounting ideological cohesiveness of Irish parties as the cause of voting unity is possible.

By conventional agreement, the Irish party system appears to be unusual in the European context, because it lacks party families with well-structured policy differences (Mair 1987). Often disentangling policy preferences of the two major political parties as presented to the electorate is impossible (Weeks 2009), leading to characterization of political parties in Ireland as broad churches, even in the parliamentary arena (Hansen 2009). At the party level, the amount of variance in positioning Irish political parties on a left-right ideological continuum (Benoit and Laver 2005), indirectly confirms the broad church hypothesis – both voters and experts have difficulty locating parties’ ideologies, in part because Irish political parties consist of elected officials with differing ideologies. The Laver and Benoit (2002) analysis of speeches in the Dáil using *Wordscore* confirms the expectation that significant variation in positions on policies exist within the same political parties. All these reasons allow discounting ideological cohesion within the parliamentary party groups as the source for party voting unity within the Dáil.

A reasonable conclusion is that party leaders’ authority to allocate mega-seats and not the electoral system (which would predict low levels of unified party voting), drives Irish legislators’ roll-call behavior. Examination of the consequences in terms of mega-seat allocation for those Dáil Deputies who breach party discipline provides further observable evidence that mega-seats influence legislative roll-call behavior.

Among the immediate consequences for a Dáil Deputy who defies the party leadership is loss of membership of the parliamentary party and removal from any mega-seat. Expulsion from the parliamentary party is effectively a suspension with most members returning after some months. What is generally not at stake is the loss of the parliamentary seat, even if the member does not regain the party label (see page 14, point 6). The party leadership cannot afford to deselect an incumbent; the member

can easily gain ballot access (albeit without the party label) and gain re-election without the party, effectively costing the party a seat in the next general election. Thus, removal from the party and de-selection as a party candidate is not a credible threat or response to indiscipline.^v

Of Dáil Deputies who rebelled, one subsequently became Tánaiste (deputy Prime Minister) but only after switching parties. One more Fianna Fáil Dáil Deputy did secure high office despite indiscipline, although only after several years and a change of party leadership. Overall, the picture is clear: the cost of indiscipline is the removal of opportunities to hold mega-seats.

To test more accurately the relationship between indiscipline and mega-seat allocation, the current research estimates the likelihood of two groups of legislators holding a mega-seat. The first group includes the 13 rebels previously discussed; the second group consists of 13 Dáil Deputies who remained loyal to the party but who are otherwise most similar to the rebels. Identification of the 13 loyalists used nearest-neighbor matching (Ho, Imai, King and Stuart. 2007) which involves matching legislators who breached party discipline (labeled ‘rebels’) with otherwise most similar non-rebelling Dáil Deputies (labeled ‘loyalist’). Variables used to match legislators include: party, gender, years in office (at the time indiscipline occurred), mega-seat occupied (at the time indiscipline occurred), and electoral success (again, at the time indiscipline occurred). Biographical data is from the *Nealon’s Guide/Irish Times Guide* series published after each general election.

After matching, the sample consists of 26 legislators: 13 rebels and 13 loyalists. For this sample, the probability of winning a mega-seat is estimated using a logit model.^{vi} The only explanatory variable included in the estimated model is *Indiscipline* – a dummy variable coded 1 if the legislator rebelled and 0 otherwise.

This variable is akin to a “treatment” variable, which identifies “treatment” as deliberately abstaining or voting against the party line. The use of nearest neighbor matching obviates the need for any additional control variables.

The empirical expectation is that rebellion will reduce the probability of obtaining a mega-seat. The results reported in Table 3 corroborate this expectation: Legislators who rebel have a much lower chance of getting a mega-seat. The estimated coefficient on the variable, *Indiscipline* is negative and statistically significant. The magnitude of the estimated effect is large, as reported in Table 4.

<Table 3 around here>

Table 4 reports the average treatment effect of *Indiscipline* estimated from Monte Carlo simulations using the logit model reported in Table 3. Holding all else equal (via nearest-neighbor matching), legislators who rebel are nearly 60 percent less likely to obtain a mega-seat than party loyalists are. On average, rebels have a 25 percent chance of achieving a mega seat, contrasted by loyalists who have, on average, an 82 percent chance of obtaining a mega-seat. This high probability is consistent with the fact that the number of mega-seats is almost equivalent to the number of Dáil deputies. In sum, indiscipline dramatically reduces a legislator’s chances of obtaining a mega-seat (by 57 percent). The results would have been significantly stronger had the analysis ignored the situation of mega-seat allocation following party-switching.

<Table 4 around here>

Conclusion

Existing research theorizes an important role for electoral rules in explaining the orientations and behavior of legislators. For example, conventional consensus argues that engineering of electoral systems impacts the level of party voting unity. Such well-established theories contrast with the difficulty of finding empirical relationships

between electoral systems and legislator behavior in the real world. The puzzle of exactly what shapes the behavior of individual legislators remains.

This study suggests exploring “Chapter 2” of electoral democracy (Carroll, Cox, and Pachón 2006). Unlike “Chapter 1” (election to the chamber) which occurs outside the legislative arena, “Chapter 2” involves the allocation of mega-seats within the chamber. This study suggests that the mechanisms for allocating mega-seats is a significant influence on the behavior of legislators. When party leaders cartelize the distribution of mega-seats, legislators must be responsive to the party’s leadership, all else equal. What members must do in order to achieve re-election may be of significance, but what they must do in order to win mega-seats may be of even greater significance.

The example of the Irish provides a hard-test of the argument that mega-seats are of significance to party unity. Irish legislators face competing principals: In order to gain re-election, Dáil Deputies must cultivate personal votes, requiring them to be responsive to the interests and preferences of voters in their geographical constituencies. Yet, extremely high levels of unified party voting prevail within the chamber, suggesting evidence for this study that the politics of winning and retaining mega-seats retains significant value for Irish political elites. That the cost of rebelling against the party leadership is forgoing current and future mega-seats provides further evidence of the tradeoff between mega-seats’ value and indiscipline.

The research contributes to the expanding literature that seeks to explain political elites’ balancing potentially competing motivations of office, policy, and re-election (Müller and Strøm 1999). Further empirical research to uncover the mechanisms by which these competing motivations shape not just individual

behaviour but ultimately roles and functions of legislatures in monitoring government and producing public policy would be a valuable addition.

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Table 1: Mega-Seats in the Irish Parliament 2007-2010

<i>Mega-Seat</i>	<i>Number Available</i>	<i>Additional Monetary Value (percentage of base salary) ^(a)</i>
Taoiseach (Prime Minister)	1	136
Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister)	1	116
(Other) Cabinet Minister	13	99
Ceann Comhairle (Presiding Officer)	1	99
Junior Minister	15	47
Leas-Ceann Comhairle (Deputy Presiding Officer)	1	47
1st Opposition Party Chief Whip	1	19
Government Chief Whip	1	18
2nd Opposition Party Chief Whip	1	15
Assistant Chief Whip	1	15
Committee Chair	20	15
Member, House of the Oireachtas Commission	3	15
Subcommittee Chair	5	10
1st Opposition Party Assistant Chief Whip	1	10
Committee Vice Chair	20	8
Committee Whip (2 per committee)	40	6
2nd Opposition Party Assistant Chief Whip	1	6
Smaller Party Chief Whip	2	6

Notes: ^(a) A percentage of a Dáil Deputy's basic salary of €100,191, which mega-seat holders continue to accrue in addition to the allowance for holding the mega-seat, expresses the additional monetary value of the mega-seat. The basis for all figures is 2009 data. Excludes allowances paid to Dáil Deputies from Party funds (for example, Leader of the Opposition Party). Number of available positions is calculated from an analysis of parliamentary proceedings and committee reports. The Houses of the Oireachtas provided information for the value of allowances.

Table 2: Breaches of Party Voting Unity, Dáil Éireann 1980-2010

<i>Vote Date</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Party^(a)</i>	<i>Vote Type</i>	<i>Issue Objected to</i>
21-Nov-85	Mary Harney	FF	Voted Against Party Position	Voted with Government on Angle Irish Agreement
14-Dec-88	Willie O'Dea	FF	Voted Against Party Position	Failed to support Government on vote on local hospital motion
01-Jul-93	Tony Killeen	FF	Voted Against Party Position	Failed to support Government on Shannon Airport
01-Jun-94	Derek McDowell	LAB	Abstained	Failed to support Government position on a locally-based company (Aer Lingus)
01-Jun-94	Joe Costello	LAB	Abstained	Failed to support Government position on a locally-based company (Aer Lingus)
01-Jun-94	Sean Ryan	LAB	Voted Against Party Position	Failed to support Government position on a locally-based company (Aer Lingus)
01-Jun-94	Tommy Broughan	LAB	Voted Against Party Position	Failed to support Government position on a locally-based company (Aer Lingus)
01-Apr-95	Paddy Harte	FG	Voted Against Party Position	Failed to support Government's Abortion Information Bill
01-Oct-95	Michael J Noonan	FF	Voted Against Party Position	Failed to support Government's Divorce Referendum Bill
10-Feb-99	Beverley Flynn	FF	Voted Against Party Position	Voted against motion criticizing behavior of ex-Minister Padriag Flynn, her father.
28-Nov-07	Ned O'Keefe	FF	Abstained	Failed to support Government Motion of Confidence in Minister for Health
13-Nov-08	James McDaid	FF	Abstained	Failed to support Government on Opposition motion regarding cervical cancer vaccine
01-Jul-09	Tommy Broughan	LAB	Abstained	Failed to vote against Government anti-crime legislation
01-Jul-10	Mattie McGrath	FF	Abstained ^(b)	Failed to support Government legislation outlawing stag hunting
01-Jul-10	Tommy Broughan	LAB	Abstained	Failed to vote against Government legislation outlawing stag hunting

Notes: ^(a) FF= Fianna Fáil; LAB = Labour; FG = Fine Gael. ^(b) Fianna Fáil TD Mattie McGrath voted with the Opposition in an electronic vote and abstained from the walk-through vote. The analysis conforms to Gallagher's (2010) data which covers the period 1993-2010. Here, we focus on voting behavior only rather than other forms of indiscipline.

Table 3: Logit Model of Winning a Mega-seat with Nearest-neighbor Matching

Treatment	-2.909*** (1.01)
Constant	1.705** (0.77)
Observations	26

Table 4: Average Treatment Effect of Indiscipline With Nearest-neighbor Matching

	<i>Probability of Obtaining a Mega-Seat</i>
Rebel	0.25 (0.11)***
Loyalist	0.82 (0.11)***
<i>Average treatment effect of rebellion</i>	-0.57 (0.16)***

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. *** p < 0.01.

Figure 1: Complementary or Competing Impact of the Electoral System and Mega-seat Allocation System on Incentives for Unified Party Voting

		Mega-Seat Allocation	
		Party-centred	Other (e.g., seniority)
Electoral System	Party-centred	Strong discipline, unified party voting (example, Norway)	Level of voting unity reflect relative significance of seat to mega-seat (example, The European Parliament)
	Candidate-centred	Level of voting unity reflect relative significance of seat to mega-seat (example, Ireland)	Little discipline, low levels of party voting unity (example, US Congress)

ⁱ. In considering mega-seats (Carroll, Cox, and Pachón 2006) are concerned with the degree of proportionality in the allocation of mega-seats between political parties.

ⁱⁱ. In equilibrium, the reasons for different allocation rules for seats (the electoral system) and mega-seats (seats within the legislature) occurring remains unclear. In the case Ireland, the dominant party in 1959 and again in 1968 attempted, without success, to change the electoral system to a single member plurality system.

ⁱⁱⁱ. Non-Party Dáil Deputies generally do not receive mega-seat assignments. Exceptions occur when minority governments rely on independent members for support. In such situations, the government has allocated Committee Chairs to select independent Deputies.

^{iv}. To check the robustness of this approach, traditional roll-call analysis was undertaken for a randomly selected year (1996). As roll-call data is not available in machine-readable form, for each of the 93 divisions that year, each “Yes” or “No” vote was reconciled with membership in each legislative party. As expected from the media analysis for 2006, no cases of party indiscipline emerged for that year, confirming the reliability of using media reports to identify indiscipline in the Irish case.

^v. Shomer (2009) discussed the impact of candidate selection rules on behavior in the Israel Knesset. Much of the personal vote literature fails to differentiate between the selectorate and the electorate.

^{vi}. Due to use of the matching technique, the logit model includes no control variables.