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LEGISLATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN THE ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Abstract

A path analysis depicting personal attributes, personal political characteristics, political circumstances, and institutional structures is developed and tested with data drawn from the 1991–1992 Arkansas General Assembly. With legislative effectiveness conceptualized as success in bill passage, direct paths to success include personality, ambition, district socioeconomic status, parliamentary expertise, networking, attention to casework, and formal position. Institutional variables have the strongest impact on legislative success and political circumstances the weakest. Educational level, political ambition, and seniority affect legislative success indirectly through their effect on formal position, an intervening variable. The results of the path analysis provide strong support for the proposed model, with over 50% of the variance in legislative success explained by antecedent variables.

In any legislative body, political influence is unequally distributed. Legislators differ with respect to their distribution of political resources and the skill with which they use their political resources for legislative gain. The current state of research on legislative research and its antecedents is marked by a degree of confusion. Definitions of legislative influence lack conceptual and methodological clarity (Hall 1992). For example, few attempts have been made to engage in casual analysis of power relationships at the legislative level (for exceptions, see Meyer 1980, Ellickson 1992), despite its obvious advantages over weaker bivariate and multivariate approaches (Nagel 1975). Finally, a major weakness is that the models vary greatly in the variables they emphasize. This lack of inclusiveness has made it difficult to assess accurately the relative importance of the various determinants of legislative influence.

The present study attempts to address these concerns and to extend previous research by developing a causal model of legislative influence in a single southern state. Data were obtained from the lower house of the Arkansas General Assembly during the 1991 legislative session and the model is tested using recursive path analysis techniques.

IDENTIFYING LEGISLATIVE INFLUENCE

Political influence is one of political science's most elusive and complex concepts (Dahl 1976) and is marked by numerous attempts at conceptualization (Nagel 1975, 7–9). Early attempts to distinguish between various "influence-terms" such as power, influence, authority, coercion, force, control, persuasion, and so forth (Bierstedt 1950; Bachrach and Baratz 1963) encountered the problem that investigators were not consistent in the use of these terms, i.e., one person's "power" is another person's "authority." More recent attempts at conceptualizing influence (and its many close cousins) have focused on its causal nature. Drawing upon the earlier works of Simon (1953), March (1955, 1957), and Dahl (1957, 1968), Nagel (1975) argues that influence should be viewed as a type of causation. Nagel defines influence as "a causal relationship between the preferences of an actor regarding an outcome and the outcome itself" (Nagel 1975, 29).

This view equates legislative influence with those who are successful in acquiring observable, valuable legislative outcomes (Dahl 1991, 44–45). The operational focus is on a legislator's ability to convert his or her legislation into law (Matthews 1960; Olson and Nonidez 1972; Frantzich, 1979; Moore and Thomas 1991; Ellickson 1992). We employ this as our indication of legislative success as well (see Appendix A).

Legislators are influential who successfully maneuver their bills through the legislative arena. Some are presumably advantaged by virtue of possessing certain attributes. In addition, members may acquire positions for influence that precede and facilitate their actual obtaining of things within the legislative process. We turn now to a review of the literature on the antecedents of legislative influence.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND MODEL DEVELOPMENT

The literature on legislative power/influence indicates that four categories of factors are associated with being an effective legislator: personal attributes, personal political characteristics, political circumstances, and institutional structures.

Personal Attributes. Personal qualities such as educational level, gender, race, and personal assertiveness are important since they may affect the perceptions of fellow legislators and qualify as independent bases of power. Better educated representatives should be better able to communicate, grasp important issues, and formulate solutions to problems (Meyer 1980; Rosenthal 1981; Rosenthal 1989) as well as being held in higher regard by other representatives (Calderia and Patterson, 1988).

While several studies have discerned no significant differences in legislative success based on race or gender (Hamm, Harmel, and Thompson 1983; Thomas and Welch 1991; Moncrief, Thompson, and Schuhmann 1991), others have noted the disproportion of women and minorities in many state houses and in leadership positions (Simon 1988, 82–83; Luttbeg 1992, 228–229). Thomas (1992) provides preliminary evidence that female and minority office holders spend more time on constituency service than males and whites at the expense of other legislative activities, e.g., bill passage.

Recent studies have demonstrated that Type A personalities–assertive and competitive–tend to outperform Type B personalities (i.e., less assertive and competitive) on most tasks that require persistence and endurance, e.g., bill passage (Taylor, Locke, Lee, and Gist 1984). Ironically, Type A personalities, while often high achievers, typically do not obtain leadership positions as traits associated with this personality tend to conflict with the requirements of leadership positions (Stahl 1983).

Political Attitudes/Characteristics. Political attitudes and values often structure the formation of institutional friendships and collegial respect (Calderia and Patterson 1987). The conventional wisdom regarding legislative influence has been that those who place institutional harmony before personal, political, or policy ambitions are favored by the legislative system (Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan, and Ferguson 1962). And, although perceptions of institutional norms are changing, interpersonal behaviors are not yet affected (Moncrief, Thompson, and Kurtz 1994, 18). Rosen (1974) found that accommodative behavior in three state legislatures was linked with legislative influence while issue-oriented legislators were significantly less effective.

Similarly, politically ambitious representatives (those with one eye toward higher office) would seem to be less likely to attain positions of leadership and bill passage success since such ambition would direct attention and energy away from legislative duties in a quest for publicity and personal aggrandizement (Matthews 1960).

Finally, the ability to function effectively and efficiently within legislative set-

tings may favor those with previous governmental experience. Analyses by Meyer (1980) and Calderia and Patterson (1988) have yielded findings that link previous political experience with gains in formal office and legislative influence.

Political Circumstances. Another subset of attributes concerns the environmental milieu within which legislators must operate. The electoral safety of a legislator's district (i.e., absence of competition), the type of district (i.e., urban or rural, wealthy or poor), and the strength of interest groups operating in those districts are all frequently viewed as critical factors in determining legislative influence. Jewell and Patterson (1966) reported that influential legislators were from safe districts, as did Rosenthal (1981). On the other hand, Meyer's (1980) study of the North Carolina legislature found no relationship between district competition and formal position or reputation for influence. Likewise, Ellickson's (1992) study of the Missouri House uncovered similar results regarding electoral safety and formal position and success in bill passage.

The influence of interest groups on legislative decision making is well known (Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan, and Ferguson 1962; Zeigler and Baer 1969). In southern legislatures where party competition is low and professional staff is limited (hence, legislators are more likely to rely upon information provided by lobbyists), we would expect interest groups to fill this power vacuum and exercise increasing degrees of influence.

A third political environment factor, whether the legislator represents an urban or a rural district, has historically been a major source of legislative conflict (Francis, 1967). Until "one man, one vote" became a reality in the 1960's, most state legislatures were severely malapportioned permitting rural representatives to wield excessive power at the expense of their urban counterparts. Rural power, however, has been slow to dissipate in some southern states (see Tickamyer 1983). Moreover, some southern states have sought to perpetuate rural control by placing rural conservative Democrats in key leadership roles (Saffell 1987, 122).

Finally, districts' socioeconomic status may impact upon their representatives potential for influence. Lower socioeconomic districts demand more services from state legislatures (Jewell 1982, 145). Lower socioeconomic state districts are more likely to contain ethnic minorities represented by black and Hispanic representatives who spend more time on service activities, while representatives from higher socioeconomic districts report fewer requests and time spent on service (p.146—See also, Moore and Thomas; Hibbing and Thomas 1990).

Institutional Factors. One of the most widely discussed correlates of legislative influence is seniority. In a tradition-laden institution such as the legislature, seniority provides a rough but apt indicator of political experience, achievement, and accumulated wisdom—all plausible contributors to success (Francis 1962; Frantzich 1979; Meyer 1980; Hamm, Harmel, and Thompson 1983; Hibbing 1991; Ellickson and Whistler 1991). For example, Frantzich (1979) demonstrated that long tenure not only determines leadership positions, but also deference from colleagues. Moreover, Frantzich reported that "senior members consistently do better at getting legislation through the process than junior members, regardless of leadership position" (1979, 422). He attributed this to senior member's mastering the complex rules of the legislative game and to their well-developed sense of what will pass and what will fail. Senior legislators are also viewed as electorally secure and able to concentrate on legislative strategies rather than on reelection strategies (Weissert 1988).

Policy expertise is another factor that has frequently been linked to legislative influence (Francis 1962; Best 1971; Moore and Thomas 1991; Weissert 1991b). By developing expertise in a relatively few policy areas, policy experts can acquire a high degree of control over an issue and reputation for competence (Matthews 1960; Francis 1962; Best 1971; Hibbing 1991, 119–123). Moreover, in state legislatures without large specialized staffs (e.g., southern legislatures), this should serve to augment the importance of legislative expertise (Weissert 1991b).

The importance of networking for purposes of acquiring influence in an organization is well-documented in the power literature (Salancik and Pfeffer 1977; Pfeffer 1981; Brass 1985). Francis (1962) years ago recognized that "influence is exercised through interaction" (p. 955), while Mooney (1991) more recently observed that legislators who interact and network are more likely to influence policy outputs than those who do not. Still others have emphasized the advantages derived from membership in informal networks, i.e., "old boys' networks" (Moore 1992).

Yet another factor to be investigated is the use of parliamentary rules and procedures as an effective power source. Those legislators who understand the complexity of rules of procedure should gain additional power/influence as a result (Lockard 1969, 274–276).

Majority party status has also been linked to legislature influence. Citing a greater responsibility for policy development and the inherent political advantages that accrue to the majority party under these conditions, a number of scholars have addressed the importance of this variable (Frantzich 1979; Meyer 1980; Hamm, Harmel, and Thompson 1983; Weissert 1991a). However, the influence of political parties in the legislative process in predominately one-party states (southern states) is more difficult to assess. Lacking party discipline and the ability to bring their legislators "into line" on issues, politics in southern legislatures often operates on a more personal level (Whistler and Ellickson 1988). Nonetheless, we project that members of the majority party will be more successful in acquiring leadership positions and passing legislation since they should exercise greater control over the legislative agenda and be able to produce the necessary votes for passage.

Finally, we hypothesize that representatives who concentrate their attention and energy on constituency service tasks will be less successful at guiding their legislation out of the chamber than those who make policy making their primary focus. These expectations are consistent with recent findings by Moore and Thomas (1991) and Hibbing and Thomas (1990) in their studies of the modern U.S. Senate.

Endogenous Variables. Serving the legislature in a formal leadership capacity (i.e., party leadership and/or committee leadership) is highly coveted not only for its prestige, but as a means of influencing legislation (Clucas 1992). Party leaders have access to numerous sources of formal and informal power (Rosenthal 1981), and thus exert considerable influence upon the activities of the legislature (Jewell and Patterson 1986). The agenda-setting power of committee chairpersons is also widely recognized (Francis 1989), and prestigious committee assignments can allow legislators to become leading experts on select subjects—thereby enhancing their special status among colleagues (Sinclair 1986).

The fact that legislative leaders are viewed with greater respect, have enhanced reputations, and are more likely to see their bills passed than nonleaders is clearly demonstrated in state legislative studies (Meyer 1980; Hamm, Harmel, and Thompson 1983; Calderia and Patterson 1988; Ellickson and Whistler 1991; Weissert 1991a;

Ellickson 1992). These relationships are perhaps best summed up by Frantzich's observation that formal leaders "control access to many resources that can lead to power over other members, and can therefore be translated into legislative effectiveness" (p. 422).

DATA COLLECTION AND MEASUREMENT

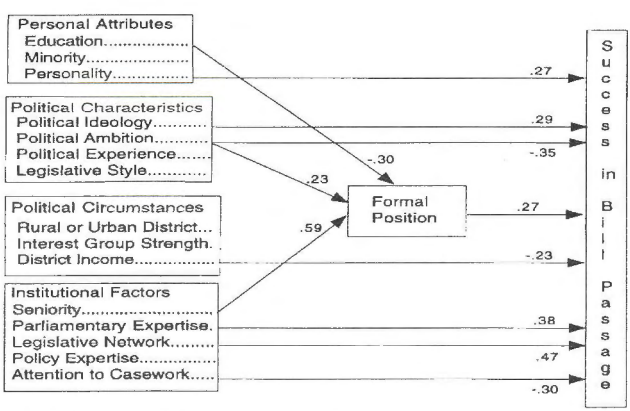
The focus of analysis in this study are state representatives in the 1991 legislative session of the Arkansas House of Representatives. Data were collected from an initial mail-out in November 1991 of the entire House membership. A follow-up questionnaire was mailed in late December 1991 to those representatives who had not responded. The final response rate was 51 percent. (Fifty-one of the 100 members of the Arkansas House.) This compares favorably with return rates reported in other questionnaire-based studies of legislatures.[1] The measurements used for the exogenous/independent variables in this study are described in Appendix B.

MODEL

Our model combines the variables that research literature indicates may be important for bill passage success. We employ path analysis as the statistical technique with which to test our model. Path analysis is a causal modeling technique which provides the opportunity to assess the direct and indirect impact of exogenous/independent variables upon endogenous/dependent variables. In our model (see Figure 1) we hypothesize that a set of variables (personal attributes, personal political characteristics, political circumstances, and institutional structures) will have a direct, independent influence on success in bill-passage. And we hypothesize that, these same exogenous variables will also have an indirect impact on bill-passage success through the institutional factors of leadership positions held in the legislative chamber. Path analysis not only permits this direct and indirect causal analysis, but also provides a method of determining the total impact of the direct and indirect combined (Heise 1975; Welch and Comer 1988, Ch. 10).

Statistical Analysis. In using path analysis, care was taken to minimize violations of the assumptions underlying path analysis (Pedhazur 1982; Dillion and Goldstein

FIGURE 1
Direct Effects of Personal, Political, Institutional, and Political Environment Characteristics on Formal Position and Legislative Success



Note: Standardized path coefficients (B) are reported; all are significant at the .05 level or better.

1984). First, the intercorrelations between exogenous variables revealed no evidence of multicollinearity; that is, no correlation was greater than .80 (Billings and Wroten 1978, 679; Asher 1983, 52). The correlations ranged from -.48 to .44. A more stringent test for collinearity (as advocated by Lewis-Beck 1980, 59-61) involved regressing each independent variable on all remaining independent variables. In doing so, we found the largest coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) to be .62. When applying this test for collinearity to the reduced model, the largest coefficient of multiple determination was .36. In either case, we were satisfied that multicollinearity was not a major problem in this study.

Second, the scattergrams indicated that the relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables were approximately linear. Third, scatterplots of standardized residuals against predicted values revealed no major violations of the equality of variance assumption. Finally, it was assumed that the residual error terms were uncorrelated and that the causal paths involved no reciprocal causation.[2]

The data show that the antecedent variables as a whole explain 38% of the variance in formal position ($p \leq .01$), and 58% of the variance in legislative success ($p \leq .001$). The results also indicate that minority (race, gender), legislative style, policy expertise, and urban/rural district have no effect on either formal position or legislative success. Following Heise (1969, 1975) we excluded these variables from further analysis in order to trim the model and make it more parsimonious. During the second stage of analysis, political experience and interest group strength were deleted from the model due to statistical insignificance and insufficient linkage within the model. The remaining antecedent variables explain 36% of the variation in formal position ($p \leq .001$) and 52% of the variation in legislative success ($p \leq .001$).

RESULTS

The results of this study display the relative importance of personal, political, institutional, and to a lesser extent, of political circumstantial factors on formal position and legislative success. As Figure 1 illustrates, three exogenous variables have significant direct effects on formal position: education (B = -.30), political ambition (B = .23), and seniority (B = .59). In other words, positions of leadership in the Arkansas House tend to accrue to less educated senior representatives who harbor aspirations for higher office.

The importance of seniority is especially notable: its direct effect on formal position is nearly twice that of any other variable. Certainly in any legislature seniority would play a primary role in determining leadership positions. However, the dominance of seniority in acquiring such positions no doubt is a consequence of Arkansas' one party-no party system. Arkansas is a one-party Democratic state (Bibby, Cotter, Gibson, and Huckshorn 1990, 92) whose lower house ranks among the five least competitive (in terms of party competition among Democrats and Republicans) in the United States (Luttbeg 1992, 175, 177). Without political parties to channel conflict, we would anticipate to find formal office holding heavily dependent upon personal accumulation of years of service. Likewise, that representatives with political ambition should seek out highly visible positions of power in the legislature is consistent with our expectations.

Results regarding the linkage between lower educational levels and formal position suggest a more complex relationship at work. Undoubtedly this relationship reflects the age and generational discrepancy between formal leaders today and educa-

tional requirements of years past. Whereas a bachelors degree twenty years ago was considered a major educational achievement, today it is not uncommon for elected members of state legislatures to possess masters or even professional degrees. Since the selection of formal leaders in the Arkansas House is so strongly influenced by seniority, we would also assume these leaders to be older, and thus, on average, to have obtained lower levels of education.

Personality (B = .27), ideology (B = .29), political ambition (B = -.35), legislative network (B = .47), parliamentary expertise (B = .38), attention to casework (B = -.30), district income (B = -.23), and formal position (B = .27) all have significant direct effects on legislative success. Moreover, the role of formal position as an intervening variable is confirmed by the finding that education, political ambition, and seniority influence legislative success indirectly through their effects on formal position.

With respect to the personal attributes of a successful legislator, the study results confirm the importance of personal assertiveness and aggressiveness in the successful maneuvering of one's bills through the legislative labyrinth. Apparently, the frustrations and setbacks typically associated with passage of major legislation pose fewer problems for Type A personalities than for others. Contrary to expectations, neither educational level nor minority status (black and/or female) were related to success in bill passage. Notably, black and/or female representatives fared no worse (or better) than their white male colleagues.

With respect to the political characteristics of a successful legislator, the results both substantiate and contradict our hypotheses. As was projected, ideology (moderate) and political ambition for higher office (low) are important determinants of legislative success. The impact of political ambition is muted somewhat by the fact that highly ambitious legislators are more likely to attain leadership positions. Contrary to expectations, previous political experience and willingness to compromise were not significantly associated with success in bill passage.

The path analysis results pertaining to institutional factors uncovered some of this study's most intriguing findings. For example, a key finding was the extremely strong positive effect of legislative networking on legislative success. Specifically, the direct and total effects (B = .47 and B = .48, respectively) of networking on success in bill passage exceeded that of any other variable in our model. The importance of informal contacts, whether characterized as an "old boys' network" or "web of strategic relationships," is undoubtedly enhanced within amateur legislatures dominated not by party discipline but social camaraderie.

The value of parliamentary expertise was also clearly evidenced in this section of the model. As hypothesized, understanding parliamentary procedures provided such legislators with an effective power base for enacting public policy, thus confirming the old adage, "knowledge is power." In fact, parliamentary expertise was the second most powerful factor associated with our dependent variable (B = .38 and B = .35 for direct and total effects, respectively).

Attention to casework was negatively related to success in bill passage (B = -.30), as was anticipated. Contrary to expectations, both policy expertise and seniority were unrelated to legislative success, although seniority did exercise some influence on success indirectly through formal position (B = .16).

Finally, the importance of political circumstances on legislative success was limited. As shown in Figure 1, neither district type (urban or rural), nor interest group strength manifested themselves as meaningful explanatory variables for either mea-

sure of influence. However, district socioeconomic status did exert a significant effect upon bill success, although in a manner opposite of that originally hypothesized. Specifically, legislators from poorer districts were more successful at bill passage than their colleagues from wealthier districts. Despite the fact that lower socioeconomic state districts are likely to be represented by ethnic minorities who tend to focus on service activities, some research has indicated that minority legislators often pursue single-issue legislation aimed specifically at acquiring public projects and monies for their constituents (Nelson and Van Horne 1974; Cole 1976; Conyers and Wallace 1976; Thomas 1992).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The path to formal office in the Arkansas General Assembly is more heavily trodden by its somewhat more ambitious members who have considerable seniority but less education than the typical member. The exogenous variables in our model explain somewhat more than one-third of the variance (36%) in formal office-holding in the Arkansas House of Representatives and the model is a good statistical fit. The model eliminates several factors that were anticipated to affect formal office with, it turns out, good substantive (as well as statistical) justification. To wit, the type of district represented did not matter: representing a rural or a poor district were irrelevant to formal office, as were the strength of district's interest groups and electoral marginality of the district. The substantive reason why the model would eliminate these is that there is little variance within these variables; that is, most Arkansas House members are "in the same boat" on these district characteristics — most districts are rural, most are not wealthy, most have the same limited variety of interest groups, and most members are electorally safe. For similar substantive (as well as statistical) reasons of little variance, the model also eliminated: ideological moderation (most members are moderate to conservative), previous political experience (most have had limited experience at local/county levels), those willing to "take half a loaf" (most are so willing), policy-specialists (few are, most are concerned with whatever local issues arise with perhaps some local situation that produces "specialized" concerns, e.g., the presence of a university in their district or some specialized business [poultry, timber, banking-investment, etc.]), constituency-oriented (most are), and members with networks (these may be viewed by most other members as having an agenda which formal office would be used to enhance, rather than being more concerned with the legislative system's needs).

The formal positions which this research tapped ranged from speaker to positions on committees. In 1991 the formal presiding officer position in the Arkansas House of Representatives was secured by an informal election system consisting of obtaining "pledges" of support. Informal campaigns for pledges were waged two or more years in advance. Members report that speakers were expected to not be beholden to "special interests" nor to pursue their own political-legislative agenda, but instead to look after the needs of the House as a whole (see Whistler, forthcoming, *The Arkansas General Assembly*). Speakers were expected to have personal characteristics of being trusted to keep their word and to be "fair" in their dealings with all members. In a legislature where political party did not organize, leadership was expected to expedite the needs of the members. While seniority was not the deciding factor in determining speakers, obviously it was necessary for potential speakers to have established a record upon which to be judged when pledges were made. Most speakers had consid-

erable seniority (four or more terms). Speakers made appointments to the standing committees of the House. These appointments were based upon member's individual preference plus their seniority. House standing committee chairperson positions were determined solely by most senior majority party status on that committee. Other committees in the House which are important are the Joint Budget Committee and the Legislative Council. The nine House members of the Joint Budget Committee were appointed by the speaker on the basis of seniority. The House members of the Legislative Council were elected through complex procedures where seniority is of consequence but is not the absolute requirement (there were also some ex officio members).

We suspect that the 1991 session of the Arkansas General Assembly is a legislative chamber in transition whose formal offices still reflect the accumulated practices of recent decades. The gender and race composition of the General Assembly is changing. A 1988 federal court-ordered reapportionment of an Arkansas House of Representatives district (*Smith* v. *Clinton* , 687 F. Supp. 1310) resulted in an additional black House member and subsequent litigation in 1989 (*Jeffers* v. *Clinton*, 687 F. Supp. 195) produced 13 majority voting age black districts with a total of 9 black representatives in the House (in the Senate this produced 3 black majority age districts out of 35 and 3 black senators). Additional court action extending from *Jeffers* v. *Clinton* (supra) was involved in the 1990 decennial reapportionment. While our data show no impact of race or gender upon formal office, the numbers were small and these newer members had not yet acquired seniority. We suspect the impact of these changes (plus the increasing education levels of the general population, as well as House members) will require a few years before their influence is apparent upon formal offices. Thus the longer term impact of these changes will, we anticipate, alter some of the paths to formal office. Meanwhile, the past formal and informal practices continue in effect with regard to formal office-holding. Given the formal and informal factors that have been at work within the Arkansas General Assembly during the past few decades, we are confident that our model has eliminated the appropriate variables and that the model accurately establishes the strength of relationships among the variables which we have included.

The pathway to legislative success in the Arkansas House of Representatives is more complex but our model provides a strong explanation, accounting for some 52% of the variance. It is also a good statistical fit. Arkansas House members' success at bill-passage is directly enhanced by being somewhat personally assertive yet moderate ideologically. Such members persevere but were not pursuing issues unacceptable to most other House members, who are typically moderate to conservative. House members who were not concerned with higher office are more successful. Their concerns and interests were within the House and is reflected in their interactions with other members and their approach to the House's procedures. They became part of a network within the House that builds "ties that bind" politically and which pay off in legislative results. And they learned the nitty-gritty of parliamentary procedures thereby facilitating their ability to accomplish legislation. Meanwhile, constituency factors also spur the more successful. Representing poorer districts, more successful members were constituency-service oriented. Finally, formal position as an intervening variable did not dramatically improve the legislative success of House members.

APPENDIX A

For each legislator, self-reported measures of success in bill passage were collected. Since a legislator's "sphere of influence" is primarily located in the chamber in which he or she resides, bill passage refers to a bill clearing the House chamber and not necessarily its passage into law. A distinction was also drawn between bills passed that were of statewide scope versus those of a local nature (although data was collected separately for both measures). Only major (statewide scope) bills were included in the analysis.

Formal position was measured using a scale similar to that used by Meyer (1980, 566). Specifically, a seven-point ordinal scale was utilized which incorporated both party position and committee position. It assigned the following values to positions:

Party Leader or Whip = 6;
Two or more Committee Chairs = 5;
Committee Chair and Vice Chair simultaneously on different committees = 4;
Committee Chair only = 3;
Two or more Committee Vice Chairs = 2;
Committee Vice Chair only = 1; and
Member only = 0.

This measure of formal position allows both majority and minority party members to receive the highest, lowest, and intermediate scale values.

APPENDIX B

Educational Level
1 = less than high school diploma
2 = high school diploma
3 = some college
4 = bachelor's degree
5 = master's degree
6 = professional degree (e.g., Ph.D.)

Personality
Legislators were asked to describe their personalities on a five-point scale ranging from extremely laid-back and easy-going to extremely hard-driving and assertive.

Ideology
Legislators were asked to identify their political ideologies on a five-point scale ranging from very conservative to very liberal.

Political Ambition
Legislators were asked if they planned to seek a higher political office or position.

Political Experience
Legislators were asked if, other than membership in the legislature, they had ever held any other public offices. If so, they were asked to identify them. One point was awarded for each public office previously held.

Legislative Style
Representatives were asked to select which of two types of legislators they most sought to emulate:
— the legislator seeking to initiate and/or take action on various issues; or
— the skilled negotiator and compromiser, able to work out differences of opinion, but without any specific issue orientation.

Policy Expertise
Legislators were asked to self-identify themselves as either policy generalists or policy specialists.

Legislative Networking
Legislators were asked how often during the legislative session they met with other legislators (informally and after hours) to work out positions or bills.

Parliamentary Expertise
Legislators were asked to classify their knowledge of parliamentary procedures on a five-point scale ranging from parliamentary expert to parliamentary neophyte.

Attention to Casework
Legislators were asked to rank order four legislative activities (i.e., casework, lawmaking, acquiring state or federal monies and projects for their districts, and communicating with their districts) from most to least time consuming.

Urban/Rural Dimension
Legislators were asked to describe their districts as mostly urban or rural.

District Income
Legislators were asked to describe their districts' average income levels on a five-point scale ranging from very poor to very wealthy.

Interest Group Strength
Legislators were asked to describe how organized interest groups were in their districts on a five-point scale ranging from very well organized to not organized.

Race, Gender, and Seniority
All three of these factors were self-reported items.

NOTE: Educational level and legislative networking were recorded so as to be normally distributed, and minority (black and/or female, white male), ideology (extremist, moderate), ambition (no/maybe, yes), legislative style (initiator, compromiser), policy expertise (generalist, specialist), attention to casework (little, a lot), and constituency (urban, rural) were coded as dummy variables.

NOTES

1. Wayne Francis in *Legislative Issues in the 50 States* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967), p. 108, reported a 52 percent response rate, while Eric Uslaner and Ronald

Weber in *Patterns of Decision Making in State Legislatures* (New York: Praeger, 1977), p. 4, had a 38 percent response rate in their study.

2. Autocorrelation and the problems it presents are more likely to appear with time-series data than with the cross-sectional data used in this study (see Lewis-Beck 1980, 28; Schroeder, Sjoquist, and Stephan 1986, 72–75).

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