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The Allocation of Party Controlled Campaign Resources in the House of Representatives, 1989-1996

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Despite the well-documented decline of political parties in the electorate, the evidence shows that parties remain highly salient and visible within government, particularly in Congress, and the formal party organizations continue to play an active role in campaigns. Building on this evidence, we attempt to offer further insight into the goals and activities of contemporary American political parties by investigating the allocation of party-controlled resources in congressional elections. In particular, we examine the resource allocation strategies employed by the Democratic and Republican parties' congressional (the DCCC and the NRCC) and national (DNC and RNC) campaign committees to assess if these resources are used to enhance party support within Congress or are motivated strictly by electoral concerns. Via tobit analysis, we test our specification using data for challengers and incumbents of both parties from 1989-96. Our results suggest that these resources, particularly for the Republican party, are prompted by campaign-specific factors and are not used to facilitate party support within Congress.

Studies of the role of political parties in the American political system have suggested two broad conclusions. First, the role of parties in the electorate is weaker than it once was. At the same time, however, the role of the formal party organizations appears to have strengthened, and parties remain

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the dominant organizing principle of American politics (Cox and McCubbins 1993). This is particularly the case within Congress, where the parties continue to be highly partisan and salient (Rohde 1991). In light of these patterns, recent scholarship has begun to reexamine the organization, activity, and structure of the parties in an attempt to assess their role and function in elections (Cantor and Herrnson 1997; Herrnson 1988; Jacobson 1985-86, 1993; Leyden and Borrelli 1990) and in the governing process (Aldrich and Rohde 1996; Cox and McCubbins 1993).

Building upon this literature, we investigate the resource allocation strategies employed by the Democratic and Republican parties' congressional (the DCCC and the NRCC) and national (DNC and RNC) campaign committees as a function of the larger institutional context in which members, party leaders, and the party organizations work to achieve their specific and, at times, conflicting goals. Consistent with past research in this area, we examine if these allocations are made in a manner that fosters party support or as a function of campaign-specific factors such as vulnerability, challenger quality, and need. However, in contrast with prior research, we extend our analysis to account for allocations to both challengers and incumbents across election cycles, control for a number of potentially significant variables, and use more appropriate methodology.

In doing so, we have the opportunity to increase our understanding of the dynamics and linkages between behavior occurring in Congress with behavior occurring in the campaign arena, as well as to shed light on how the preferences and goals of individual members and the parties in Congress are juxtaposed and balanced. Collectively, these concerns have broader implications regarding issues of representation and the role and health of the parties in our political system.

COMPETING GOALS AND THE ALLOCATION OF PARTY CONTROLLED CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

Central to the congressional research is the contention that the primary goal of individual members is reelection. Indeed, as Mayhew (1974) and others have argued, the bulk of members' activity is directly or indirectly geared toward achieving reelection. However, the pursuit of members' reelection goals can inhibit the ability of the parties to fulfill their goals; most notably the passage of legislation and the creation of public policy that reflects the parties' preferences.

This intersection of goals and the resulting tension between them presents an interesting puzzle: when are the interests of individual members subordinated to those of their party and vice versa? And, what are the institutional mechanisms that are used to balance these competing and, at times, conflicting

goals? Some scholars focus on the use of norms that allow members to maximize their individual goals and still allow the institution to function effectively (Krehbiel 1986; Weingast 1979). Others suggest that the tools available to the leadership and the style of particular leaders allow Congress to overcome these tensions (Cox and McCubbins 1993; Sinclair 1986).

In particular, Sinclair contends that party leaders can induce individual members to subordinate their own goals in favor of pursuing their party's collective goals by constraining the actions of individual members. She notes that "leaders' potential to influence their members' behavior depends on the impact leaders can have on members' goal achievement. The more leaders can help or hurt members in attaining their individual goals, the greater leaders' potential influence" (1986: 177). Support for Sinclair's perspective can be gleaned from a number of sources. For example, Cox and McCubbins find that committee transfers, especially to the power committees (Appropriations, Rules, and Ways and Means), are granted in return for party loyalty. Aldrich and Rohde (1996) contend that party leaders make use of their agenda-setting powers and their ability to control the flow of legislation to discipline members.

Building on this general framework, we argue that the parties' campaign committees present an additional mechanism that party leaders may use to alleviate the tension between the goals of individual members and those of the parties within Congress. Specifically, leaders may use the resources of the national and congressional campaign committees to encourage party support by helping to offset candidates' fund-raising needs (the party support model) or to maximize their party's representation within Congress by strategically allocating resources to vulnerable incumbents and quality challengers (the campaign driven model).

Limited scholarly attention has been given to the study of the activities and strategies of the campaign committees.¹ Using data for incumbents from the 1984 election cycle, Leyden and Borrelli (1990) find that Democrats reward loyal members and contributions to Republicans tend to increase subsequent party loyalty. In their examination of party contributions to candidates in the 1984 and 1992 elections, Cantor and Herrnson (1997) conclude that party loyalty exerts no systematic influence over contributions from either party's national and congressional campaign committees. Jacobson (1993) contends that the impact of party-controlled resources is limited because the committees overinvest in incumbents at the expense of quality challengers.

¹ For a detailed discussion of the activities and structure of the DNC, DCCC, RNC and NRCC, see Herrnson (1988).

While extant research does provide insight into the allocation of party-controlled resources in congressional elections, much of the research either examines single election cycles or does not address the allocation of other campaign resources such as coordinated expenditures. Cantor and Herrnson, while developing the most complete model to date, only examine contributions to a small sample of candidates in the elections in their data set. Further, scholarship in this area has focused exclusively on incumbents, overlooking challengers.

In contrast, we expand upon this general research question by investigating allocations by the congressional and national campaign committees to both incumbents and challengers across a series of elections. In addition, we account for the influence that a number of previously unexamined factors may have on the relationship. Underlying our argument is that regardless of the success of campaign committees in raising resources, these resources are likely to be finite. That is, the campaign committees will not have sufficient resources to fund all of their party's candidates to the fullest extent allowed by the Federal Election Commission (FEC).² These constraints dictate that the party committees develop resource allocation strategies.

A Party Support Model of Resource Allocation

The ability of party leaders to build effective coalitions to facilitate or block the passage of legislation is enhanced by high levels of party cohesion (Rohde 1991). As discussed above, leaders can attempt to encourage intra-party cohesion by helping or hindering members achieve their individual goals (Sinclair 1986). Given the importance that members attach to reelection and the link between election outcomes and campaign resources, leaders may use their influence over their party's campaign committees in this manner. In this respect, campaign resources are both a reward and incentive that leaders may use to foster loyalty.

It follows that incumbents who are valuable to the party will be rewarded with allocations from the party committees, while those who are not may receive minimal or no allocations. Thus, we hypothesize that the more members

² As Jacobson (1993) notes, because Federal Election Commission (FEC) laws limit parties to giving \$5,000 to candidates (the FEC considers primary and general elections as separate and thus, the parties can give \$5,000 for candidates' primary campaigns and an additional \$5,000 for their general election campaign), direct party contributions account for a very small share of the money raised by congressional candidates. However, parties also are able to spend over \$100,000 per election cycle on behalf of House candidates in the form of coordinated expenditures.

support their party's position on roll-call votes, the more campaign resources the member will be allocated. Additionally, we expect that senior members will be more likely to receive allocations from the committees given that these members may be close to those responsible for overseeing party allocations or, because of their visibility, skills, and experience, they may be an asset to their party.³ These allocations may be further increased if the member holds a formal leadership position or is a ranking member of a committee. Finally, parties have an interest in the passage of legislation, particularly when this legislation reflects party preferences. Thus, given the complexity of most legislation and the unwieldy nature of the legislative process, parties may reward those members capable of navigating bills into law.

Similar logic can be extended to account for allocations to challengers. Specifically, a party may have an interest in targeting incumbents of the opposition who are most able to hinder the passage of legislation favorable to a party's interest. Therefore, we expect that challengers contesting seats held by more loyal members of the opposition party will be allocated additional resources from their party's campaign committees. In addition, parties may have an interest in targeting more senior members of the opposition, as well as those opponents who hold leadership positions or are ranking committee members. While these challengers may not necessarily deserve extra party funding based on their objective probability of defeating these incumbents, the parties may decide that funding a decent challenger is worth the investment in order to embarrass the targeted incumbent with an exceptionally close election and/or generate bad publicity for the party of which the incumbent is a visible symbol. Finally, challengers facing effective legislators of the opposition party may be allocated additional resources because any legislation that is authored by a member of the opposition party is likely to be at odds with a party's policy goals.

A Campaign Driven Model of Resource Allocation

Alternatively, the allocation of party-controlled resources may be driven by campaign-specific factors. Allocating resources based on election-specific factors allows party leaders to maximize representation and leverage in Congress. More specifically, in terms of the distribution of resources within the House (i.e., determining who will be the Speaker, proportion of committee

³ Alternatively, one might expect that senior members would be less in need of party campaign contributions, given that senior members are more likely to have access to other, non-party, campaign resources (e.g., PACs). However, these factors are controlled for in the campaign driven model developed below.

assignments, and staff and office allocations), maximizing representation within Congress allows the party the greatest share of these benefits.

Based on these considerations, allocations by the party campaign committees to incumbents and challengers will be based strictly on campaign-specific factors. Thus, we expect that incumbents with narrow margins of victory in their previous elections or those incumbents facing quality and well-financed opponents will be allocated a greater share of campaign resources. Also, we anticipate that incumbents running unopposed and those able to raise money from non-party sources will receive less party support than those incumbents who are facing a challenger and who are less adept at tapping PACs and other donors.

In a similar manner, the parties may invest in challengers who have a better than average chance of defeating incumbents of the opposition. Thus, we expect that challengers facing marginal incumbents of the opposition party will be allocated increased resources while challengers facing non-marginal incumbents will not. Additionally, quality challengers (those with previous elective experience) represent a good investment for a party and therefore should receive additional campaign resources. Similarly, challengers capable of raising money and other resources from non-party sources may be perceived as viable candidates who present better-than-average opportunities to gain seats from the opposition party, and thus may merit additional allocations.

MODEL SPECIFICATION

To evaluate these two models of party resource allocation, data were gathered and pooled for incumbents ($n = 1,490$) and challengers ($n = 1,328$) for four recent election cycles (1989-96) from various issues of *The Almanac of American Politics*, *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, and *Federal Election Commission* reports.⁴ The data are divided into four subsets: one subset for incumbents and challengers of each party. For each of the subsets, party committee allocations are regressed on the party support and electoral variables.⁵ The dependent variable is left-censored—that is, it cannot be observed below a critical value. In this case, the censoring cut-off is zero,

⁴ Excluded from the data set are candidates from Louisiana (because of the state's unique election laws), incumbents defeated in primary elections, and candidates competing for open seats.

⁵ In all models, dummy variables for the 1992, 1994, and 1996 election cycles are included but not reported. We also ran the models separately for each election cycle. The results are largely consistent across elections cycles. That is, for each election cycle the campaign variables dominate the models. Moreover, given that we have no a priori theoretical expectations that there should be differences across election cycles and due to concerns with parsimony, we present only the results of the pooled models here.

preventing negative values of the dependent variable from being observed.⁶ Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) is inappropriate under these circumstances because parameter estimates will be biased and inconsistent (Long 1997). The tobit model estimated via maximum likelihood provides consistent parameter estimates for models with censored dependent variables and thus, we employ this model here.⁷

The dependent variable in all models is the dollar amount (in 1996 dollars) of campaign resources allocated to either an incumbent or challenger by his or her respective party committees (as reported by the FEC).⁸ For Democratic candidates, this is measured as the total amount of direct contributions and coordinated expenditures allocated by the DCCC and the DNC. For Republican candidates, the dependent variable is measured as the total amount of direct contributions and coordinated expenditures allocated by the NRCC and the NRC.

The main independent variable for the party support model is an incumbent's level of *Party Support*. The coding of this variable is a two-step process. First, each incumbent's average level of party unity for the previous Congress (accounting for absences), as reported in the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, is regressed onto district-level support of the incumbent's party's presidential candidate in the most recent presidential election. The residuals from these analyses are then used as the *Party Support* measure. Using the residuals as our measure serves as a control for the effect of district ideology on incumbents' levels of party support.⁹ The decision to account for district ideology is based

⁶ Specifically, we assume that there is an underlying and not fully observable dependent variable — the amount of money that the party committees ideally would like to contribute to the candidate. Although this underlying dependent variable could theoretically assume negative values, this, of course, cannot actually occur. Thus, the observed dependent variable is censored at zero (Long 1997).

⁷ Because we have pooled observations from three electoral cycles, there are multiple observations for some incumbents who ran in multiple elections in the data set. Therefore, we estimate the models with robust standard errors and cluster on incumbents to alleviate any estimation problems associated with correlation in the error term.

⁸ In addition, we ran the models with the dependent variable coded as the percentage of the total resources allocated by the party committees to each candidate. However, for ease of interpretation, consistency with past research, and given that the results of these analyses are virtually identical to those reported here, we use the actual dollar amounts as the dependent variable.

⁹ Several scholars have employed similar techniques to assess the extent to which a member's observed behavior can be attributed to the effects of district preferences (e.g., Segal, Cameron, and Cover 1992). Although this procedure has been shown to be problematic for earlier elections, this is a valid measure of constituent ideology for the presidential elections used here (Leogrande and Jeydel 1997).

on the belief that, for example, it is easier for a Democrat to exhibit strong party support if representing a relatively liberal district than if representing a conservative district. Party support is expected to have a positive impact on contributions by the respective campaign committees to both challengers and incumbents. *Seniority* is measured as the number of consecutive terms that a member has served in the House. As incumbents' seniority increases so should allocations from their party's campaign committees. Challengers facing senior incumbents will be allocated increased resources from their party's campaign committees as well. *Legislative Effectiveness* is measured as the number of bills proposed by a member in the respective Congress which ultimately became law. This is hypothesized to have a positive impact on allocations to incumbents. *Party Leader* and *Committee Leader* are dummy variables coded 1 if a member holds either a formal leadership position or is the chair or ranking minority member of a standing committee.¹⁰

Five independent variables are included to evaluate the hypotheses suggested by the campaign-driven model. Incumbents who ran *Unopposed* are coded as 1, all others as 0. This variable should have a negative impact on the allocations to incumbents. Incumbents are considered *Marginal* if they received less than 60 percent of the vote in their last general election. Marginal incumbents are coded 1 and non-marginal incumbents 0. Marginality should positively affect allocations to both challengers and incumbents. An incumbent facing a *Quality Challenger* is coded 1, otherwise 0. A challenger is considered to be a quality challenger if he or she has previously held an elected office (Jacobson and Kernell 1983). Quality challengers and incumbents facing quality challengers will likely receive increased allocations from the campaign committees. *Challenger Spending* is measured as the total dollar amount spent by the challenger during the campaign (as reported by the FEC). The variable should positively influence allocations to incumbents. Finally, the amount of non-party campaign resources (*Other Contributions*) raised by an incumbent or challenger is measured as the total amount of money raised from sources other than his or her party's campaign committees (as reported by the FEC). This should negatively influence allocations to incumbents and positively affect allocations to challengers.

¹⁰ For Democrats, the formal leadership positions used are: Speaker and Majority Leader (1989-94), Minority Leader (1995-96), Whip, Chief Deputy Whips, Caucus Chair, Caucus Vice Chair, Chair of Steering and Policy Committee, and Chair and Vice Chair of the DCCC. For Republicans, the formal leadership positions used are: Speaker and Majority Leader (1995-96), Minority Leader (1989-94), Whip, Chief Deputy Whips, Chair of Committee on Committees, Chair of Policy Committee, and Chair and Vice Chairs of the NRCC.

≡ TABLE 1
 TOBIT REGRESSION FOR THE ALLOCATION OF PARTY-CONTROLLED
 CAMPAIGN RESOURCES (IN 1996 DOLLARS): POOLED MODEL

Independent Variables	Parameter Estimates (robust standard errors)			
	Democratic Incumbents	Republican Incumbents	Democratic Challengers	Republican Challengers
<i>Party Support Variables</i>				
Party Support	60.45 (56.75)	-69.86 (92.87)	-5.76 (97.91)	-178.69 (114.83)
Seniority	-296.40 (156.31)	-1023.36 (345.24)	-94.10 (329.73)	430.03 (323.99)
Legislative Effectiveness	-497.10 (379.14)	-781.53 (815.91)	-681.79 (937.47)	528.35 (760.19)
Party Leader	-6364.05 (2562.89)	-6447.08 (2782.74)	-2714.42 (4559.38)	1193.33 (4430.56)
Committee Leader	-2047.86 (1828.02)	5062.72* (2377.61)	-629.41 (3518.03)	-5921.85 (4652.80)
<i>Campaign Variables</i>				
Unopposed	-4244.34*** (1269.79)	-920.47 (1562.71)	—	—
Marginal	9364.07*** (1674.90)	15838.67*** (2995.77)	8979.26*** (2646.35)	19931.48*** (3095.62)
Quality Challenger	1835.73 (1784.93)	8295.07** (2990.98)	5626.65* (2580.35)	12413.97*** (3497.60)
Challenger Spending	.031*** (.003)	.039*** (.007)	—	—
Other Contributions	.001 (.002)	-.003 (.005)	.020*** (.006)	.061*** (.008)
Constant	1577.13 (1483.23)	6958.81* (4009.31)	-1466.09 (2690.80)	-33582.53*** (3048.287)
Numbers of Obs.	841	649	566	762
χ^2	525.48***	391.82***	133.65***	550.83***
σ	14134.22	19882.36	21243.13	25689.33

Note: Dummy variables for the 1991-92, 1993-94, and 1995-96 election cycles are included in the model but the estimates are not presented here. * p ≤ .05 ** p ≤ .01 *** p ≤ .001 (all one-tailed tests).

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the estimates of the tobit analysis for the four candidate types. Collectively, the results suggest that electoral considerations far outweigh

party support in accounting for the variance in the allocation of party controlled campaign resources. Indeed, across all models, all but one of the campaign variables are in the predicted direction and all but four are statistically significant (one-tailed test). The bulk of the party support coefficients are in the wrong direction and only one of the variables obtains conventional levels of statistical significance. The results appear to hold for challengers and incumbents of both parties. Overall, the model fit appears to be fairly strong for all four candidate types. The probability of obtaining similar chi-square values of the four models by chance is virtually zero. This indicates that each of the models provides a significant improvement in explanatory power over the intercept alone.

With respect to incumbents, the results suggest that Democratic incumbents running unopposed are allocated less resources than Democratic incumbents facing Republican opposition. Surprisingly, this hypothesis does not hold for Republican incumbents, suggesting that the NRC and NRCC back incumbents even if they are not facing opposition. The results also suggest that marginal incumbents of both parties are allocated additional resources by their parties' campaign committees and that allocations to incumbents are not affected by these candidates' abilities to raise money from other sources. Moreover, Republican incumbents facing quality Democratic challengers are awarded increased allocations. Allocations to incumbents of both parties are further augmented in response to the amount of money raised and spent by their opponents. This is consistent with our expectations and with past research suggesting that incumbents gather resources in response to the size of their opponents' war chests.

For challengers of both parties, competing against marginal incumbents results in increased party allocations. These resources are further boosted for challengers who are viewed as quality candidates. In addition, it appears that both parties' campaign committees support challengers capable of raising their own resources from non-party sources.

With one exception, the party support variables fail to obtain statistical significance in the predicted direction (one-tailed tests). Only the coefficient for the *Committee Leader* variable for the model run for incumbent Republicans is positive and statistically significant. The poor performance of the party support variables suggests that factors that may lead to increased party support within Congress do not influence the allocations of party controlled campaign resources.

Substantive interpretation of the tobit coefficients is not entirely straightforward.¹¹ When attempting to assess the impact of the independent variables on

¹¹ These coefficients can be interpreted in the same manner as those produced by OLS when considering the impact of the independent variables on the latent, underlying

the observed dependent variable, tobit coefficients cannot be interpreted in the same manner as OLS coefficients due to the nonlinearity of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Thus, to illustrate the substantive impact of the statistically significant variables on the allocation of party controlled campaign resources, we present in Table 2 predicted values based on variations of the independent variables. For these results, we vary the independent variable of interest while holding all other variables at their means.¹²

≡ TABLE 2
PREDICTED CAMPAIGN RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS (IN 1996 DOLLARS)

Independent Variable Values	Democratic Incumbents	Republican Incumbents	Democratic Challengers	Republican Challengers
Committee Leader				
0		13,853		
1		18,027		
Unopposed				
0	12,576			
1	9,182			
Marginal				
0	10,115	10,792	13,032	10,244
1	18,714	23,899	20,230	22,511
Quality Challenger				
0		13,257	14,489	11,799
1		20,246	19,080	19,697
Challenger Spending				
\$100,000	10,128	11,997		
\$500,000	21,848	25,693		
Other Contributions				
\$100,000			13,795	10,429
\$500,000			20,530	27,154

Note: Predictions are calculated by varying the independent variable in question while holding all other variables at their means.

dependent variable. Here, however, we are primarily interested in the impact of the independent variables on the observed dependent variable.

¹² To calculate the expected value of the observed dependent variable, the following formula is used (Greene 1997: 963):

$$E[y_i/x_i] = \Phi((\beta'x_i)/\sigma) (\beta'x_i + \sigma\lambda_i)$$

where:

$$\lambda_i = \frac{\phi((\beta'x_i)/\sigma)}{\Phi((\beta'x_i)/\sigma)}$$

and:

Φ = the cumulative normal distribution function
 ϕ = the normal density function

The results presented in Table 2 illustrate a number of interesting insights pertinent to our research question. First, most of the statistically significant variables also exert a very strong substantive effect on allocations of party controlled resources. For example, marginal Democratic incumbents receive over \$8,000 more and marginal Republican incumbents receive more than an additional \$13,000 than their non-marginal counterparts. Likewise, Democratic challengers receive \$7,000 more and Republican challengers receive more than an additional \$12,000 when facing marginal incumbents as opposed to incumbents who are more electorally secure. Moreover, the impact of the *Challenger Quality*, *Challenger Spending*, and the *Other Contributions* variables also exert a strong substantive effect on the relationship.

Second, the *Unopposed* variable does not have as much of a substantive effect as the variables discussed above. Indeed, as previously mentioned, the coefficient for the variable is statistically insignificant for Republican incumbents and, while statistically significant for Democratic incumbents, appears to have a small substantive effect on allocations to these candidates. Specifically, Democratic incumbents running unopposed receive a mere \$3,500 less than those competing against a Republican challenger. This finding, in conjunction with the strength of the effects of the *Challenger Quality* and *Challenger Spending* variables, indicates that from the parties' perspective (particularly the Republicans), facing an inexperienced and poorly funded challenger is akin to facing no challenger at all.

Finally, the results in Table 2 suggest that the statistically significant variables in our model substantively and consistently matter more for Republican candidates than for Democratic candidates. For example, the difference between allocations to quality and non-quality Democratic challengers is approximately \$4,500, while this difference is nearly \$8,000 for Republican challengers. Marginality translates into an additional \$8,500 for Democratic incumbents, while marginal Republican incumbents receive over \$13,000 more than non-marginal Republican incumbents. Indeed, these inter-party differences hold across all statistically significant variables. Moreover, these patterns suggest that Republican allocations are based almost entirely upon strategic considerations, while the Democrats appear to be more equitable in their distribution of campaign resources (within the constraints of the campaign-driven model). That is, the Republicans may target only those candidates with strong probabilities of winning, while the Democrats may invest in a greater number of candidates, but provide each of these candidates with less support.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A number of interesting points can be gleaned from the analysis presented above. First, we find no support for the notion that the parties attempt to use their campaign resources to build stronger parties. Instead, our results suggest

that party support does not pay, or at least does not matter in the allocation of campaign resources from each party's campaign committees. More specifically it appears that party leaders allocate the resources of the campaign committees based exclusively on campaign-specific factors.

It is important to note, however, that within the campaign-based strategy employed by both parties our results suggest some inter-party differences. In particular, we find that the Republican allocations are more strongly determined by strategic considerations, as compared to those made by the Democrats. Although to some degree this discrepancy may reflect the Republican's greater access to resources, it also suggests a strategic difference between the parties that offers some insight into recent Republican success in House elections. Specifically, the Republicans target those candidates with the best probabilities of winning instead of allocating party resources in a somewhat more equitable manner as appears to be the case with the Democrats. While such a focused strategy makes pragmatic sense, it also reduces a party's chances for pulling an upset in other seats (Jacobson 1993). That is, by concentrating so heavily on a small number of races, the parties may leave other potentially winnable seats safe for their opponents.

In addition, it does not appear that the results are affected by minority or majority status (see note 5). Rather, both parties are more concerned with expanding or holding their relative strength within Congress, irrespective of being in the majority or minority. Such an approach, however, is consistent with an overall strategy for maximizing leverage within the institution. That is, given that the allocation of resources within Congress (e.g., committee assignments, the speakership, staff, and office space) is determined by the relative sizes of the majority and minority, a seat maximizing strategy allows the parties to maximize their share of these institutional resources. Perhaps, as suggested by others (Aldrich and Rohde 1996; Cox and McCubbins 1993), party leaders use their control over these institutional resources to induce party cohesion.

Our findings are consistent with other research examining the allocation strategies used by the parties' congressional and national campaign committees. In particular, in their examination of party contributions to incumbents in the 1984 and 1992 congressional elections, Cantor and Herrnson (1997) conclude that the contemporary American political parties appear to use their resources to fulfill electoral as opposed to policy ends. In essence, practical politics appear to outweigh any normative considerations regarding the role of parties in the political system. Our research confirms this contention and strengthens it by suggesting that this same strategy extends to allocations to challengers of both parties as well as to incumbents.

However, despite the robustness of our findings and those of previous research, one should not completely dismiss the link between party support

and the allocation of party-controlled campaign resources. The relationship may exist, but at a more subtle level than the aggregate measures used here are capable of tapping. For example, the relationship may be teased out if one were to look at the timing of contributions, the brokering of PAC money to candidates by party leaders, or campaign visits to candidates' districts by party leaders. In short, the allocations of financial resources, while clearly an important source of party support, are but one of many potential campaign resources that the parties have at their disposal.

In sum, this research presents an investigation into an important and understudied component of the American political process: how the goals and activities of the parties in the electoral arena affect the goals and activities of the parties in government and vice versa. We have attempted to examine these linkages in the context of campaign contributions from the parties' campaign committees. Continued research in this area should yield insights into the dynamics between a number of components of the American political system. Most notably, such research should allow for a better understanding of how the processes of congressional elections and the organization and structures of Congress interact and how the goals of individual members and the parties are balanced within this framework.

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