

Setting the Senate Apart: Institutional Variation and Political Career Patterns in the State Legislatures

Jonathan Winburn

State legislators routinely run for the state Senate after having served in the state House; however, this rarely occurs in the other order. Do members simply look to move up based on the conventional view of the political ambition ladder? Alternatively, do institutional reasons exist that make the Senate the preferred chamber? I examine the differences between the state legislative chambers and discuss institutional reasons why members may prefer the Senate to the House. Overall, I find chamber size is an important intra-institutional variable in explaining this variation along with the professionalism of the legislatures and term limits.

Between 1967 and 2003, 21 percent of all candidates for state Senate seats across the country had previous experience in the lower chamber. While only .31 percent of all House¹ candidates had previous experience in the upper chamber.² These numbers are quite astonishing. Clearly, candidates with previous legislative experience view the Senate as a “step-up” as this fits with the common view of electoral ambition in American politics. But we do not know as much about why this delineation occurs between the chambers. Do members simply look to move up based on this conventional view of the political ambition ladder? Alternatively, do institutional reasons exist that make the Senate the preferred chamber? In this article, I examine the differences between the state legislative chambers and discuss institutional reasons why members may prefer the Senate to the House.

While most facets of the chambers are quite similar, several important differences emerge both between chambers and across states. In terms of institutional rules and structure, chamber size and term length are the two primary variations between chambers. Across states, levels of professionalization and term limits play important roles in the decision to run for the Senate over the House. Overall, I find smaller Senate chambers have more candidates with prior experience in the House. Additionally, professionalism and term limits also have a significant influence on the types of candidates running for the Senate.

This paper proceeds as follows. The first section briefly discusses the role of political ambition and career patterns of legislators. The next section lays out a theoretical argument that suggests smaller chambers, in general, and state Senates, more specifically, offer more benefits to legislators. In the

JONATHAN WINBURN is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Mississippi.

third section, I specifically examine the hypotheses derived from the theoretical overview. I then lay out the analysis, the data, and test my hypotheses. My findings indicate an important role for the number of members in terms of both absolute size of the Senate and the ratio between chambers. A discussion of the results follows with a concluding look at the implications of these findings and potential extensions of this research.

Political Ambition and Career Patterns

Generally, legislators are strategic about their political careers (Schlesinger 1966) and pursue their career goals through strategic and rational behavior in attempts to maximize their preferences (Hibbing 1999). From this working assumption, it is important to recognize the role of ambition in the strategic preferences of legislators. Schlesinger (1966) presents a typology of progressively ambitious politicians, static politicians, and discrete politicians. Ambitious politicians “aspire to attain an office more important than the one he now seeks or is holding,” static politicians are content to make a “long run career out of a particular office,” and discrete politicians only seek office for a limited time with limited strategic plans (Schlesinger 1966, 10). While politicians may not share the same ambitions, most share the desire of not losing their positions and most would prefer a higher office if it came cost and risk free (Rohde 1979). Specifically, Francis asserts “that most state House members prefer the alternative of staying in office to the alternative of leaving elective office, and most state House members would prefer a state Senate seat too if it could be obtained on a cost-free, risk-free basis” (1993, 311).

An ambitious politician’s calculation of whether to enter the state legislature, make a career of the position, and then whether to leave for higher positions or retire will be shaped by not only the election and campaigning process but the characteristics of the state and institutional structure of the office (Berkman 1994). Few studies have investigated the effect of structural factors on individual career opportunities and member retention in legislatures (Squire 1988). If we are to understand why legislators stay, move up, or drop out, we need to explore the career incentives embedded in legislative structures (Polsby 1968).

Institutional Structure of the State Legislatures

Unlike other types of bicameral systems found throughout the world, the state legislatures³ do not have any specific distinctions that set the upper chambers apart as being more powerful or historically significant.⁴ However, conventional wisdom and scholars alike suggest the chambers are not equal

and, in fact, the Senates are the upper chamber in terms of power and prestige (e.g., Franics 1993; Francis and Kenny 1997, 248; Squire 1992, 1032; Soule 1969, 442-443). For example, in discussing the appeal of public office and public ambition, Rosenthal states, "Members of the House tend to run for the Senate when a seat becomes open; members of both bodies often jump at a chance to run for a congressional seat or for statewide office" (1996, 115). From an ambitious politician's perspective, it is easy to understand the political benefits of seeking a congressional seat or statewide office. However, it is not quite as obvious what the incentives are for moving within the legislature. A closer theoretical examination provides a better understanding of the gain for moving within the legislature from the House to the Senate.

In several key areas, the differences between the chambers are negligible: compensation, service time, and professionalization.⁵ Professionalization is an important factor in politicians' career decisions as studies show professionalized legislatures attract more ambitious politicians since they offer not only good legislative learning experiences but also a livable wage as they wait for the opportunity to advance towards Congress (Berkman 1994). If long-term advancement beyond the state legislature looks promising, ambitious politicians also use the legislature as a training ground to improve their political skills. If circumstances change and the advancement opportunity does not present itself, they use the state legislature for long-term service (Squire 1992). Fowler and McClure (1989) suggest that this works in the other direction as well. For the less professionalized states, ambitious politicians are more likely to skip the state legislatures in their move up the career ladder as they are seeking a more challenging position. In each of these ways, the upper and lower chambers appear quite similar.

Term length and chamber size are the primary institutional provisions that differentiate the chambers from one another. As at the Congressional level, most state Senates offer a longer term than in the House, but none are as drastic as the six-year to two-year term differences in Congress. Thirty-two states provide for longer terms in the Senate with 30 states having four-year Senate terms and two-year House terms. Seventeen states have equal terms for both chambers with 12 states having two-year terms and five providing four-year terms.

All state Senates are smaller than their respective lower Houses, but not in a uniform manner. Within each of these states are separate criteria and provisions for the size of these chambers, which create varying opportunities for office seekers and influences on political actors in the strategic environment of the capital. As Table 1 shows, state legislatures have a large variation in their total membership with an average membership of 150 with a standard deviation of 58. The Senate averages 40 members with a standard

Table 1. Summary Statistics of Legislative Membership

	Average Size	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Both Chambers	150.51	58.80	60	424
Senate	39.49	10.63	20	67
House	111.02	55.93	40	400

N = 49
Source: Calculated by author from Squire and Hamm (2005).

deviation of 10 while the House averages 111 members with a standard deviation of 56. However, the House is skewed a bit because of the unusually large New Hampshire House, which consists of 400 members. By dropping New Hampshire, the House averages 105 members with a standard deviation of 37. Even without New Hampshire included, the lower chambers are still over 2.5 times larger than the Senates. The size differences between the chambers' average nearly 72 members with a standard deviation of 55 (without New Hampshire the numbers are 65 and 33 respectively). Forty-six of the 49 states have lower chambers that are at least twice the size of the Senates. Of these 46 states, 16 states have lower chambers at least three times larger than the Senates.

The benefit a legislator gains from a longer term is most evident in the electoral safety it brings as the individual avoids the potential for defeat at the polls by advancing to Senates with longer terms (Squire 1988). However, the benefits of a smaller membership are not quite as obvious.⁶ Overall, scholars have not devoted a lot of studies to this issue. Baker (2001) and Lee and Oppenheimer (1999) examine the importance of size in Congress while Squire and Hamm (2005) mention the importance of the issue in the states. From a democratic theory perspective, the ability of any decision-making body to govern effectively is often related to the quality of deliberation within the group. This concern about deliberative quality often revolves around a formation of a size principle that addresses the question of the optimal group decision-making size (Ostrom 1987). *The Federalist Papers* address such a principle when discussing the appropriate size of the House of Representatives and conclude that bigger groups may hurt the quality of deliberation (Ostrom 1987). From the Ostrom perspective, the preference for smaller legislative bodies stems from a concern for the deliberative quality within the group and the idea that smaller groups will enhance deliberation, which will have a positive influence on passing better public policy.

Gaining information and cues for decision-making is important for any legislator who hopes to be well informed and effective. Studies have shown that acquaintances and friendships are important in the decision making process of legislators (Caldeira and Patterson 1987; Jewell and Patterson 1985; Uslander and Weber 1981). These studies coupled with the findings that many friendships are of those with which interaction is the highest (Patterson 1972) suggests that the fewer members a legislator works with would allow them a greater chance of having individual interaction with a greater percentage of their fellow legislators and gaining important cues, such as trustworthiness (Shepsle and Weingast 1984), in the legislative process. *The Federalist* 58 argues “the larger the number, the greater will be the proportion of members of limited information and of weak capacities” (Ostrom 1987, 96). Therefore, a chamber of 40 members, as compared to one of 100 members, will be a much easier environment for an individual to not only establish friendly communications but will also reduce the number of potential adversaries for getting proposed legislation killed in committee or on floor votes. Put simply, the fewer members the more likely any one legislator will have of developing trust and enforcing agreements that can lead to a greater chance of policy success and consensus building.⁷

While the importance of smaller chambers is up for debate from a democratic theory perspective, in terms of policy success the answer is more clearly defined. Francis (1985) identifies one of the major benefits of serving as a state legislator is policy success and one of the major costs as amount of days spent in session. While session length is equal across the chambers, chances for policy success are not. The Senate offers a better chance for achieving policy success as it has fewer members who pass more legislation, per capita, than their House counterparts (Rogers 1998; Tucker 1989; Francis 1985). While the House generally has a higher volume of legislation both introduced and passed, when this is broken down per member, individual senators have a better chance of gaining policy success. According to Francis, “The fact is that most legislators want to initiate change in the status quo. The agenda for most legislators is an agenda for change” (1985, 629). The easiest way for legislators to initiate change is through policy proposals, and the smaller Senates provide a greater opportunity for this policy success.

Overall, the most important benefit of a smaller chamber is the chance for greater policy success; moreover, fewer members allow easier access to cues and information and make the enforcement of informal agreements more likely. While House and Senate membership are equal in many ways, state Senates offer the likelihood of greater policy success which any strategic politician recognizes as a key component of electoral success.

From the electoral standpoint, the huge incumbency advantage at the state legislative level provides another insight into this question. First, in

states without term limits, legislators can generally stay in their seats, regardless of chamber, until they decide to leave. Secondly, the most competitive races are found in open seat districts. In either a race with an incumbent or an open seat, House members need some incentive to take the electoral risk to move from their House seat to the Senate. House members routinely risk electoral defeat and attempt to move from the House to the Senate, and this only makes sense if they gain some type of benefit from the change.

An Empirical Look at the Influence of Institutional Structure

Hypotheses

After examining the theoretical reasons why state Senates may be more beneficial than the lower chambers, I now discuss the hypotheses generated from this discussion. While there are many ways to examine this question, I focus on the importance of these structural differences in terms of electoral patterns. The stunning statistics to open the paper clearly demonstrates that candidates with previous legislative experience attempt to move from the House to the Senate and not vice versa.

For the progressively ambitious politician, the Senate is a step up in their climb on the political ladder (Squire 1992), and for the legislator content to serve their careers in the state capitol, the Senate offers more potential for policy success (Francis 1985). However, while all state Senates have fewer members, the size difference varies across the country. These variations will change not only the electoral opportunities in a state but the power and prestige relationship between the chambers. States with similar sized chambers should both offer similar benefits for its members, and House members looking to either advance beyond the state House or those looking to make a career in the legislature should have no incentive to move up to the Senate. In states with the smallest Senates and largest Houses, both ambitious and static politicians should prefer to move up to the Senate for the added benefits, given the electoral opportunity to make the jump. If the Senate is not a more beneficial chamber then neither ambitious nor career legislators should risk electoral defeat or the costs of learning a new constituency to make a lateral move that does not provide greater benefits.

***Hypothesis 1:** Smaller Senates will have more Senate candidates with previous House experience.*

There are two important ways to think about the issue of chamber size. The first is the absolute size of the Senate. My theoretical view suggests

smaller Senates are more attractive than larger Senates. As such, legislators from the House will be more likely to attempt a jump to the Senate. Relative size is also important. In states with a large ratio of House to Senate members, the Senate should be more attractive to those House members. If the House and Senate are the same size (or similar in size) then the differences between the chambers diminish.

Other than chamber size, term length is one of the few variables that vary between chambers within a state. Term length is a common factor all legislators must consider when making their electoral decisions. Most state legislators win by large margins and most legislators occupy safe seats (Francis 1993; Ray and Havick 1981); however, a longer term offers politicians more time to avoid the potential of electoral defeat and a position with a longer term should be more desirable.

***Hypothesis 2:** Senates with longer terms than the House will have more candidates with previous House experience.*

While chamber size and term length are important intra-legislative variables, several other key variables should also influence legislator's career paths across states. Professionalization is an important institutional variable to test for differences across states, and the variations are great between the most professionalized states of full-time legislators and those of the least professionalized citizen legislators (King 2000). Legislators who only seek a discrete term in office will not have the same benefits as either those who are using the state legislature as a stepping-stone in their political careers or those who seek to make a career in the state capitol. Therefore, the citizen legislators found in the least professionalized states will not place such an importance on which chamber they serve their time in office since they are only in office for a small amount of time. In addition, the most professionalized legislatures may offer a career for the legislators. For these career legislators, the Senate should be the preferred chamber for them to make their legislative livelihood.

***Hypothesis 3:** The more professionalized a state legislature the more Senate candidates with previous House experience.*

Term limits are becoming an important part of the institutional make-up of state legislatures as 21 states adopted term limits during the 1990s.⁸ Term limits force legislators, who may have been perfectly content in their previous position, to consider their options for staying in elected office. Legislators must be aware of these new rules, as they must plan their electoral future knowing they cannot be static in their current positions (Francis

and Wayne 1997). Sarbaugh-Thompson, Thompson, Elder, Strate and Elling (2004) find term limits force legislators to be more strategic when opportunities arise in other positions and may leave their current position before they are termed based on these opportunities. Term limits either force House members out of office or lead to House members, who face forced retirement in the near future to look for other opportunities for their political careers. The Senate is one logical place for these legislators to turn.

***Hypothesis 4:** States with term limits will have more Senate candidates with previous House experience.*

Research Design

To look at the influence of these institutional rules, I examine candidates for state Senate during the 1990s. This allows me to look at the entire decade of elections without having to account for the confounding influence of redistricting. Additionally, the 1990s are interesting period to studying this question as term limits first became applicable during this time period. The State Legislative Elections Return, 1967-2003⁹ project provides information for all candidates running for the state legislature. I use this data to determine Senate candidates and their legislative background from their previous electoral experience. I use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression clustered by state. The use of robust standard errors helps account for any state-by-state variation not accounted for in the model.

Previous Lower Chamber Experience. My dependent variable is the percentage of candidates running for the Senate who had previously served in his or her state's lower chamber. I examine this from the state level since my concern is at the institutional level and not the individual. This variable shows whether the structure of a state's legislature has an overall influence on the type of candidates running for the Senate.

Difference in Chamber Size. When examining the importance of chamber size, I use two measures. The first is the actual size of the Senate. I expect a negative relationship as a Senate's membership increases the percentage of candidates with House experience should decrease. The second is the ratio of House membership to Senate membership (Squire and Hamm 2005). The higher the ratio the more beneficial the Senate is for a legislator as the ratio represents how many times larger the House is over the Senate. In my analysis, I expect to find a positive relationship between this ratio and the experience of individual members. The states with the smallest ratios are those closest in size, and those that offer the most similarities between their upper and lower chambers. Therefore, as the House gets larger in comparison to the Senate the less beneficial it is and the more members should move up to the Senate.

Professionalization. To measure the professionalism of each state I turn to King's (2000) measure. This measure takes into account three factors: compensation (salary and living expenses), days in session, expenditures for services and operations. These factors are common across the chambers. Thus, each state has one score, a percentage ranking, with the most professionalized states scoring the highest.

Term Limits. For the period under consideration, 12 states had term limits take effect. My main concern is between the fundamental difference of those states that have them in effect and those that do not to test whether or not term limits are significant in the determining if a state has more Senate candidates with House experience. For my analysis, the term limit variable is coded as a dummy variable with states having term limits in effect receiving a 1 and those that do not a 0.

Term Length. As mentioned earlier, 32 states provide their Senate members a longer term than the House. In 12 states, senators serve two year terms while in the rest of the country, senators serve four year terms.¹⁰ For my analysis the term length variable was coded as dummy variable of 1's for states with the longer Senate terms and 0's for states with even term lengths.

Analysis

Table 2 presents the average percentage of a state's Senate candidates with previous House experience for elections in the 1990s.¹¹ In states without term limits, nearly a quarter of all candidates had previous experience in the lower chamber. However, there is quite a bit of variation across the country during this time. The standard deviation is 11.22 with zero House members running for the Senate in New Mexico (1994), New Jersey (1999), and Rhode Island (2000). At the upper end, eight states had over 50 percent of their Senate candidate's with prior House experience during the 1990s. In term limited states, we see a nearly 20 percent increase in the average number of candidates with House experience. Overall, a significant number of candidates had House experience, but there was a wide variation across the country.

Not surprisingly term limits increased the number of House members (or former House members) running for the Senate, but what else accounts for why House members run for the Senate? Table 3 presents an institutional look at this question with three models accounting for the chamber size, professionalization, term length, and term limits. The models also include year dummies to account for the different elections throughout the decade. Each model includes slightly different operationalizations of chamber size. This is necessary to avoid high levels of multicollinearity in the models. The first model includes the number of Senate seats along with the ratio of House

Table 2. Percentage of Senate Candidates with Previous House Experience

Year	No Term Limits		Term Limits	
	%	N	%	N
1992	24.12	42	N/A	
1994	24.04	46	N/A	
1996	23.75	41	38.17	2
1998	24.13	39	35.72	7
2000	23.02	33	47.35	11
Overall	23.85	201	42.37	20

Table 3. Influence of Institutional Structure on Senate Candidates with Prior House Experience

	% Candidates with Previous House Experience		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Senate Seats	-.303 (.1352)**		-.354 (.1261)***
House Seats			.0248 (.0132)*
Ratio of House Seats to Senate Seats	.5679 (.2935)*	.9701 (.2866)***	
Professionalization	23.09 (8.429)***	19.33 (9.161)**	22.86 (8.300)***
Difference in Term Length	2.974 (2.672)	4.543 (2.843)	3.166 (2.615)
Term Limits	14.75 (2.106)***	16.19 (2.125)***	14.74 (2.104)***
1994	-.118 (1.280)	.1887 (1.286)	-.112 (1.275)
1996	-.388 (1.375)	-.403 (1.406)	-.386 (1.375)
1998	-.590 (1.507)	-.494 (1.539)	-.597 (1.498)
2000	1.346 (1.314)	1.067 (1.328)	1.352 (1.311)
Constant	26.34 (6.497)***	13.08 (3.340)***	27.24 (5.969)***
N	221	221	221
R ²	0.35	0.29	0.35

OLS regression clustered by state.
Robust Standard Errors in parentheses.
1992 is the reference year.
*p < .10; **p < .05; ***p < .01

seats to Senate seats. The second model only includes the ratio measure while the third model drops the ratio measure but includes the number of House seats.

The three models present essentially the same findings. First of all the obvious, term limits have an important influence on the likelihood of Senate candidates to emerge with previous House experience. This leads to roughly a 15 percent increase in the percentage of candidates with House experience. Interestingly, the initial years of term limits did not lead to an onrushing of senators running for the House. From 1996-2000, less than 1 percent of all House candidates had previous Senate experience. Granted, there was a slight increase in term limited states compared to non-term limited states during this time (.60% in term limited states compared to .35% in non-term limited states), but nothing like the nearly 15-20 percent increase in the Senate.

In addition, more professionalized legislatures see more candidates with House experience run for the Senate. This is also not very surprising given the linkage between professionalized legislatures and ambition (Squire 1988). Professionalized legislatures are more likely to see members serve longer terms and be more ambitious about moving up the political ladder. Both of these components help explain the importance of professionalization. If a candidate seeks to spend a career in the legislature then they should seek to serve in the more preferred chamber. State Senates are the preferred chamber as evidenced by the patterns of candidates running for the office. Additionally, ambitious politicians are more likely to move up the ranks from House to Senate members in more professionalized states. Overall, this finding fits with previous research and shows the upper chamber in more professionalized legislatures has more appeal to candidates with previous House experience than less professionalized legislatures.

Turning to the institutional variables that vary between chambers, term length does not play an important role in producing more candidates from the lower chamber. This measure does not reach statistical significance in any of the three models.¹² More interesting is the influence of chamber size. Overall, the three models demonstrate that smaller Senates (both in absolute and relative terms) have more candidates emerge with previous House experience.

In the first model, for every ten member increase in membership the percentage of candidates with House experience decreases by just over 3 percent. As expected, the ratio variable is also significant and shows a positive relationship. As the lower chamber gets larger compared to the Senate, the percentage of Senate candidates with previous experience in the House increases. The second model confirms the importance of the ratio measure as the coefficient remains significant and nearly doubles in size. The second

model indicates the finding for the ratio measure is robust without the potential biasing effect of the absolute size of the Senate. This is a concern since the size of the Senate goes into calculating the ratio measure.¹³

The third model drops the ratio measure and includes the absolute size of the House. The results are similar to the first model. The number of House seats in a state has a positive influence on who runs for the Senate. As the House gets larger, more Senate candidates emerge with previous House experience. Let me take a second to look at this relationship more closely.

One argument is that this is simply a mathematical relationship since states with larger House memberships will have more candidates to run for the Senate. As shown in model 3, this is partly the case. However, this mathematical factor is only a small part of the overall relationship. When dropping the Senate seats variable and only including the House seats to account for membership size, the House seats variable does not reach statistical significance and the R^2 drops from .35 to .26.¹⁴ This shows smaller Senates are important in explaining this relationship, and the findings are more than a mathematical artifact.

Previous research also supports this finding. Squire shows, “There is virtually no correlation (.02) between these two variables [the ratio of higher elective positions to seats in the lower House and the percentage of those higher positions held by former members of the House]. That is, there is no linear relationship between the number of positions available for advancement and the percentage of those positions filled by former lower House members” (1988, 68). Furthermore, Francis (1993) demonstrates that House members are quite selective in making career decisions and unless the odds of winning are very favorable do not attempt to move up.

Overall, the three models show smaller Senates, in terms of the number of seats and relative to the larger lower chambers, have more candidates emerge with previous House experience. On average, chambers with 50 members or more (one standard deviation above the mean) have 10 percent more candidates with previous House experience than those with 30 members or less while states with House memberships less than double the Senate have roughly 5 percent more candidates from the House than those states with House memberships more than double the Senates.

Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis shows the importance of institutional structure on influencing who runs in legislative elections. In particular, chamber size is one of the few institutional variations between state legislative chambers and it has a significant influence on the candidates running for the upper chamber. My findings provide a basis to support the conventional wisdom that state

Senates are a step up the career ladder from the state House. While chamber size is an often-overlooked variation in the state legislatures, it appears to be one of the driving forces behind the benefits gained from serving in the Senate as opposed to the House.

My analysis raises several important questions and opens areas for further research. While I show size is a significant institutional variable, much more work is needed to better understand the implications of size from both a policy outputs and member behavior perspective. This article looks at the influence of institutional variations at the chamber level and not on what influences an individual candidate to run for the Senate from the House. However, these findings suggest chamber size, along with professionalization and term limits, is an important variable to explore when studying an individual candidate's strategic electoral decisions.

On the institutional side, several questions emerge from these findings. Do Senates with more experienced members have a stronger influence in controlling the policy agenda or outcomes, and how does this experience influence relations with the House? As Squire and Hamm (2005) suggest, more work needs to be done to better understand the implications of having bicameral state legislatures. Overall, this paper takes a step in that direction and provides some basis for the conventional wisdom that state Senates are the upper chamber in more than name alone.

NOTES

¹I refer to the lower chamber throughout this paper as the "House," but in five states (CA, NV, NJ, NY, and WI) they are referred to as the Assembly and in three states (MD, VA, and WV) they are referred to as the House of Delegates.

²In the Senate, 7,538 out of 34,191 candidates in general election races had previous House experience while only 461 of 146,074 candidates for the House had previous experience in the Senate. Data compiled from the State Legislative Elections Return, 1967-2003 data set (<http://www.unc.edu/~carsey/research/datasets/data.htm>).

³Nebraska is the only unicameral system.

⁴Lijphart's (1999) classification of bicameral systems and Squire and Hamm (2005) provide more details.

⁵The one exception is Virginia, where senators make only \$360 more a year (National Conference of State Legislators, 2001).

⁶I argue for the theoretical benefits of smaller membership size, but note that several counterarguments are also plausible. My purpose is to illustrate one view of why more experienced candidates prefer state Senates to state Houses.

⁷The specialization argument counters this view. This argument suggests, primarily based on Congressional research, the lower chamber has more political power than the upper chamber since it is easier to specialize and dominate specific policy areas (Brams 1989; Konig and Brauning 1996). Rogers (1998) argues that larger chambers have

informational advantages when dealing with smaller chambers since a chamber with more members has lower information acquisition costs.

⁸Four states (ID, MA, OR, and WA) had their term limits repealed either by the courts or legislative proposals.

⁹[Http://www.unc.edu/~carsey/research/datasets/data.htm](http://www.unc.edu/~carsey/research/datasets/data.htm)

¹⁰Several states stagger Senate terms to include one two-year term along with two four-year terms. In some states, this is done to account for redistricting changes between electoral cycles.

¹¹I include states with Senate elections in odd years with the previous year's data.

¹²Alternatively measured as simply the years of the Senate term and not as a dummy variable for a difference in term length between chambers produces similar results.

¹³The two variables show a negative correlation (-.25). While a moderate correlation exists, I do not think this overly biases model 1. More importantly, the size of the House is the driving factor in the ratio variable as the two variables show an overwhelming correlation (.88).

¹⁴Results not shown but available upon request.

REFERENCES

- Baker, Ross K. 2001. *House and Senate*, 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Berkman, Michael B. 1994. State Legislators in Congress: Strategic Politicians, Professional Legislatures, and the Party Nexus. *American Journal of Political Science* 38:1025-1055.
- Brams, Steven J. 1989. Are the Two Houses of Congress Really Coequal? In *The Federalist Papers and the New Institutionalism*. New York: Agathon Press.
- Caldeira, Gregory A., and Samuel C. Patterson. 1987. Political Friendship in the Legislature. *Journal of Politics* 49:953-975.
- Fowler, Linda L., and Robert D. McClure. 1989. *Political Ambition: Who Decides to Run For Congress*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Francis, Wayne L. 1985. Costs and Benefits of Legislative Service in the American States. *American Journal of Political Science* 29:626-642.
- Francis, Wayne L. 1993. House to Senate Career Movement in the U.S. States: The Significance of Selectivity. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 18:309-320.
- Francis, Wayne L., and Lawrence W. Kenny. 1997. Equilibrium Projections of the Consequences of Term Limits Upon Expected Tenure, Institutional Turnover, and Membership Experience. *The Journal of Politics* 59:240-252.
- Hibbing, John R. 1999. Legislative Careers: Why and How We Should Study Them. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 24:149-171.
- Jewell, Malcolm E., and Samuel C. Patterson. 1985. *The Legislative Process in the United States*, 4th ed. New York: Random House.
- King, James D. 2000. Changes in Professionalism in U.S. State Legislatures. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 25:327-343.
- Konig, Thomas, and Thomas Brauning. 1996. Power and Political Coordination in American and German Multi-Chamber Legislation. *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 8:331-360.
- Lee, Frances E., and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. 1999. *Sizing Up the Senate: The Unequal Consequences of Equal Representation*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- National Conference of State Legislators. 2001. 2001 State Legislator Compensation and Living Expense Allowances During Session.
- Ostrom, Vincent. 1987. *The Political Theory of a Compound Republic: Designing the American Experiment*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Patterson, Samuel C. 1972. Party Opposition in the Legislature: The Ecology of Legislative Institutionalization. *Polity* 4:344-366.
- Polsby, Nelson W. 1968. The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives. *American Political Science Review* 62:144-268.
- Ray, David, and John Havick. 1981. A Longitudinal Analysis of Party Competition in State Legislative Elections. *American Journal of Political Science* 25:119-128.
- Rogers, James R. 1998. Bicameral Sequence: Theory and State Legislative Evidence. *American Journal of Political Science* 42:1025-1060.
- Rohde, David R. 1979. Risk-bearing and Progressive Ambition: The Case of the United States House of Representatives. *American Journal of Political Science* 23:1-26.
- Rosenthal, Alan. 1996. The Legislature: Unraveling of Institutional Fabric. In *The State of the States*, 3rd ed. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Sarbaugh-Thompson, Marjorie, Lyke Thompson, Charles D. Elder, John Strate, and Richard C. Elling. 2004. *The Political and Institutional Effects of Term Limits*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Schlesinger, Joseph A. 1966. *Ambition and Politics*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A., and Barry R. Weingast. 1984. When Do Rules of Procedure Matter? *Journal of Politics* 45:206-221.
- Soule, John W. 1969. Future Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent State Legislators. *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 13:439-454.
- Squire, Peverill. 1988. Career Opportunities and Membership Stability in Legislatures. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 13:65-82.
- Squire, Peverill. 1992. The Theory of Legislative Institutionalization and the California Assembly. *Journal of Politics* 54:1026-1054.
- Squire, Peverill, and Keith E. Hamm. 2005. *101 Chambers: Congress, State Legislatures, and the Future of Legislative Studies*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press.
- State Legislative Election Returns, 1967-2003, Thomas M. Carsey, William D. Berry, Richard G. Niemi, Lynda W. Powell, and James M Snyder, Release Version 3.
- Tucker, Harvey J. 1989. Legislative Calendars and Workload Management in Texas. *Journal of Politics* 51:631-645.
- Uslaner, Eric, and Ronald Weber. 1981. *Patterns of Decision-Making in State Legislatures*. New York: Praeger.