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Author(s): Jill N. Wittrock, Stephen C. Nemeth, Howard Sanborn, Brian DiSarro, Peverill Squire
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The Impact of the Australian Ballot on Member Behavior in the U.S. House of Representatives

Jill N. Wittrock

Stephen C. Nemeth

Howard Sanborn

Brian DiSarro

University of Iowa, Iowa City

Peeverill Squire

University of Missouri, Columbia

Katz and Sala linked the development of committee property rights in the late-nineteenth-century U.S. House of Representatives to the introduction of the Australian ballot. If, as they posited, members sought personal reputations to carry them to reelection in the new electoral environment, the current article argues that behaviors with more immediate political payoffs also should have changed in ways their theory would predict. The article examines whether committee assignments, floor voting behavior, and the distribution of pork barrel projects changed in predicted ways and finds supportive outcomes, but usually only when the office bloc ballot, and not the party bloc ballot, was in use.

Keywords: *U.S. House of Representatives; Australian ballot; committee assignments; party voting; pork barrel projects*

One of the more inventive theories about Congress's institutional evolution is Katz and Sala's (1996) linkage of the development of committee property rights in the late-nineteenth-century U.S. House of Representatives to the introduction of the Australian ballot. Katz and Sala argued that the Australian ballot—a government-printed ballot cast in secret that replaced a party-produced ballot cast in public—greatly increased the incentive for members of the House to pursue personal constituency votes. This, in turn, led to the rise of committee property rights as members sought to keep their committee assignments from term to term because of the potential electoral benefits they derived from them.

While Katz and Sala's (1996) theory is believable, it seems reasonable to expect that an assertion of committee property rights was not apt to be among House members' first responses to the new electoral process. After all, committee property rights generally pay off only over the long run, particularly when associated with some variant of a seniority system (and, of course, an intention to serve over a long period of time). If, as Katz and Sala suggest, members of Congress were motivated to seek personal electoral benefits to carry them to reelection in the new Australian ballot electoral

environment, then behaviors with more immediate political payoffs also should have changed in ways their theory would predict.

In this article, we examine whether three different sorts of everyday member behavior changed in hypothesized ways in the wake of the adoption of the Australian ballot. Specifically, we test whether the reform influenced committee assignments, floor voting behavior, and the distribution of pork barrel projects. We conjecture that House members in states with the Australian ballot pursued more prestigious committee assignments, felt less compelled to vote with their party, and chased pork barrel projects more successfully than their colleagues from states without the reform.

We also take an additional step beyond that taken by Katz and Sala (1996) by examining the behavioral impact of the Australian ballot's two different forms, an important distinction they did not explore. Simply stated, states adopting the Australian ballot had to either choose a party column ballot design or an office bloc ballot design. Arguably, the office bloc design was more likely than the party column design to change the electoral incentive structure in the manner that Katz and Sala ascribed to the Australian ballot reform generally (Squire et al. 2005).

The Katz and Sala Theory

Katz and Sala (1996, 23) presented their theory succinctly.

This is our argument in a nutshell: The ballot changes raised the interest of members of Congress in institutional arrangements that would help them build personal reputations. Stable committee assignments give members the leeway and confidence they need to become policy experts within their committee jurisdictions. Policy experts are better equipped to claim credit and are more noteworthy position takers on policies within their committee's jurisdiction than are randomly selected members of Congress. Hence, a "norm" of reappointing incumbents to their same committees would be consistent with a widespread desire for building a personal reputation.

Katz and Sala saw committee property rights as contributing to the building of personal reputations, specifically as policy experts in a given issue area. But reputation building in this regard is a long-term process. As we argue below, political reputations can be established and enhanced more quickly through a variety of short-term behaviors.

Personal Reputations and the Different Forms of the Australian Ballot

The Australian ballot is treated as being uniform across the states that adopted it by Katz and Sala (1996). There were, however, variations in the design of the Australian ballot that have significant implications for their theory. When a state took responsibility for producing an official ballot, it had to decide how names, contests, and party labels would be organized on it. Most, but not all, of the first states that adopted the Australian ballot opted for the office bloc design, also known as the Massachusetts or blanket ballot. The office bloc ballot is designed so that the names of candidates are grouped together under the title of the office they are contesting. Most states adopting the reform in later years organized their ballots using party columns, which came to be called the Indiana ballot (Ludington 1909, 260). Party column ballots place the names of candidates for various offices in a column under their respective party name.

Once chosen, a state's ballot design was not necessarily fixed. Indeed, by 1905, six states that first employed the office bloc ballot had switched to the party column design, while four states had changed to the office bloc ballot from the party column ballot. Nebraska flipped back and forth, first adopting the office bloc ballot in 1891, then switching to the party column ballot in 1897, and returning to an office bloc ballot in 1899 (Ludington 1909, 260; 1911). Ultimately, the party column ballot became much more popular than the office bloc ballot across the states, probably because it resembled the old party produced ballots and was thus preferred by party organizations.

Politicians and knowledgeable observers at the time understood the potential electoral consequences of the Australian ballot's different variations (Allen 1910). Ludington (1909, 259), for example, observed,

Since the chief object of the "party column" ballot is to facilitate the voting of a "straight ticket," while that of the "Massachusetts" ballot is to make the voters stop and think about each office in turn, it is natural that most of the States which have the former type of ballot provide specifically for the "straight ticket" voting and that most of those which have the latter do not.

Analysis of voting data from 1890 to 1908 confirms that ballot type differences influenced the way people behaved (Allen 1906; Rusk 1970, 1235).

The difference in ballots is crucial to the Katz and Sala (1996) theory because the office bloc ballot more easily allowed for split ticket voting, thus giving legislators from states using such ballots substantial incentive to pursue personal reputations as a way of distinguishing themselves before the voters. In contrast, party column ballots, which often made it more difficult to split ticket vote, gave legislators less reason to differentiate themselves from their parties and from each other. Katz and Sala made a passing reference to this difference, noting, "A system that allows voters to evaluate and vote for candidates on an office-by-office, case-by-case basis encourages incumbents to invest more in their personal reputations than when voters cannot discriminate between individual candidates on a partisan slate" (p. 24). While they did not incorporate this distinction into their analysis, it seems clear that the incentive to develop a personal reputation would be more likely to develop in states with office column ballots than in states with party column ballots.

The Australian Ballot, Personal Reputations, and Immediate Behavioral Changes

We think that in their efforts to distinguish themselves from other members of Congress, representatives from states with Australian ballots of the office bloc type would behave differently than their colleagues from other states in at least three ways. First, members motivated to establish personal reputations ought to be more aggressive in securing positions on preferred committees. Second, they should feel freer to deviate from the party line in floor voting. And third, they should seek to bring more pork barrel projects and dollars back to their constituents.

Committee Assignments

During the early history of the House, speakers used committee assignments as a reward for loyalty to themselves and to the party (Gamm and Shepsle 1989; Jenkins 1998). As the number of standing committees increased, party leaders had more opportunities to solidify their control over a larger number of representatives. Arguably, it was not until the adoption of the Australian ballot that House members gained an incentive to seek positions on certain committees to establish a personal reputation with their constituents.

As noted above, the type of Australian ballot used for electing legislators is important in understanding the motivations of House members. Those who were elected from states that issued a party column ballot did not have the same motivation to pursue a preferred committee assignment that office bloc representatives had. Party column ballots left a great deal of control to the party organizations; members elected from districts that used these ballots were beholden to the party leadership for their place in Congress. Personal reputation and name recognition were not as important for members running on party column ballots as they were for their colleagues running on office bloc ballots. With office bloc ballots, voters directly chose the candidates for each office and could more easily determine whom to reward or punish in the voting booth. Representatives elected with these ballots should be more inclined to pursue committee assignments that would give them the resources to gain their constituents' favor and increase their chances of remaining in office.

Our analysis of committee assignments covers the Forty-ninth through Fifty-sixth Congresses. This

period allows us to investigate the effects of ballot type on member behavior as the Australian ballot gained widespread use throughout the country. We limit our examination to only those committees whose existence spanned the entire period under study. This restriction minimizes any idiosyncrasies that might arise from the pursuit of short-lived bodies or the dissolution of committees. We draw heavily from Canon, Nelson, and Stewart's (2006) historical work on standing committees, as well as biographical information available from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR).

There have been a number of articles that systematically classify committee hierarchies in the House. Bullock and Sprague (1969) determined the rate of transfers into a committee as a ratio of all transfers in and out of that committee. In their view, the higher the rate of transfers into a committee, the more desirable the committee assignment is. In contrast, Munger (1988) suggested using a net transfer dominance measure, where committees are compared in pairs. The logic behind this approach is to specifically determine which committees are preferred to others. After developing a large-scale matrix and running several iterations of comparisons, one would have a long chain of hierarchies with the most preferred committee at the top and the least preferred committee at the bottom.

Groseclose and Stewart (1998; Stewart and Groseclose 1999) developed a technique to more intuitively assess the value of serving on a given committee. Their "Grosewart index" assigns a cardinal value to each committee based on transfers. This is generated by maximizing a likelihood function to obtain the average valuation of each committee by the members who served during the period under investigation.¹

The fundamental assumption of this method is that a committee member has "property rights" on his assignment. If he transfers onto a committee, he stays on for as long as the committee holds enough value to assist him in his work. If he transfers off, he does so willingly. A transfer from a committee implies that there is a better assignment awaiting the member. He would not leave a plum assignment unless promised an even better one.

Unlike the previous measures, the Grosewart index has intrinsic meaning. A positive value implies that the committee is beneficial to the member. In addition, we can develop a quantitative understanding of each committee's relationship to one another. Consider a member serving on the Appropriations Committee (Grosewart

index = 2.61). This member would need to transfer to at least two other committees, say Rules (1.26) and Rivers and Harbors (1.43), to justify leaving the Appropriations Committee.

A score of zero connotes indifference toward serving on a given committee; a member receives neither benefit nor penalty from the assignment. A negative score signifies that the committee is a burden to the member. He would rather not belong to any committee than continue service on the burdensome one. This could be because of the time and effort required of service and a dearth of subsequent benefits to the member's career.

Our dependent variable in this analysis is the overall value of a House member's committee portfolio. We sum the average values (v_j) of each committee that a member belongs to in a given congress to create the portfolio value. Members with high portfolio values belong to the most sought-after committees. Those members with negative portfolios belong to committees that are burdens to their service in the House (Canon and Stewart 2002). For example, let us consider Rep. Lemuel Quigg (R-NY). During the Fifty-fourth Congress, he served on the State Expenditures Committee (Grosewart index = -0.04), the Foreign Affairs Committee (1.78), and the Library Committee (1.09). His portfolio value would be 2.83, well above the average portfolio value of 0.974. In short, we can use the Grosewart index to compare committees to one another and contrast the value of those committee assignments across members in a given congress.

We test two hypotheses. The first hypothesis focuses on Katz and Sala's (1996) claim that the adoption of the Australian ballot had a positive effect on the career-driven motivations of House members:

Hypothesis 1: During the period 1885 to 1901, if a representative is elected from a state that uses the Australian ballot, then the value of his committee portfolio will be higher than those who are elected from pre-Australian ballot states.

Our second hypothesis is a means to test our argument: does the type of Australian ballot used, specifically the office bloc ballot, affect member behavior? Are members from states that adopted these ballots more career-oriented than those from states that did not?

Hypothesis 2: During the period 1885 to 1901, if a representative is elected from a state that uses an office bloc ballot, then the value of his committee

portfolio will be higher than those elected from pre-Australian and party column ballot states.

There are, of course, other variables that must be entered as controls. Canon and Stewart (2002) accounted for a number of factors in assessing committee hierarchies. Accordingly, we control for two variables associated with member characteristics. First, the South variable is a dichotomous measure of whether a member is elected from a former Confederate state, entered to capture any residue of the argument that region explains much of political behavior in late nineteenth century. Southern representatives might have sought and been granted committee assignments for reasons other than the ballot used in their states. Second, we include a college variable to account for the ancillary effects of education on committee assignments. There is evidence that members who had attended college were inclined to seek specific committee assignments or were better able to assess which committees could provide them the most advantages.

We also look at a number of variables that control for organizational constraints on member behavior. We conjecture that seniority, measured as the cumulative number of years and months in office at the beginning of a given Congress, could have influenced committee assignments. As a seniority norm became more institutionalized, many members with longer tenures might have received preferred positions. First-term status is also included as a control variable. A new member to the House might not have been given any particularly plum assignments.

Additionally, we include measures for the distances from the chamber and party medians based on DW-NOMINATE scores (Poole and Rosenthal 1997). Extreme members of the House might have been likely to gain membership on preferred committees. The same might hold true for extreme members of the Republican and Democratic parties. Finally, we include a control for whether a representative was a member of a majority party that controlled less than 55 percent of the House. Leaders with tight majorities might have been more likely to secure their party's representation on desirable committees.

We test our hypotheses using a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions. Model 1 in Table 1 reveals that the Australian ballot is statistically significant in explaining committee service.² Our first hypothesis is supported; members elected from a district using the Australian ballot possess slightly more valuable committee portfolios than their counterparts.³ Our

Table 1
Effect of Ballot Structure on Preferred
Committee Assignment, Ordinary Least Squares
(OLS) Regressions

	Model 1: Australian Ballot	Model 2: Office and Party Ballots
South	.022 (.049)	-.007 (.049)
Freshman	-.320*** (.040)	-.317*** (.040)
Seniority	.081*** (.005)	.081*** (.005)
College	.123*** (.033)	.121*** (.033)
Small party majority	.130*** (.040)	.131*** (.040)
Distance from party median	-.124 (.130)	-.130 (.130)
Distance from chamber median	.020 (.039)	.020 (.039)
Australian ballot	.063* (.034)	
Office ballot		.176*** (.044)
Party ballot		-.005 (.039)
Constant	.547*** (.050)	.554*** (.050)
Adjusted R^2	.241	.246
$N = 2,585$		

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: value of a member's committee portfolio in each Congress.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$ (one-tailed test).

contention, however, is that it is the type of Australian ballot that matters. To test this, we separate the Australian ballot variable into distinct ballot types: office bloc and party column.

We find support in model 2 for our second hypothesis. Members elected with office bloc ballots possessed, on average, portfolios 0.18 units greater than those elected with another ballot. The size of the coefficient for the office bloc ballot is three times greater than the coefficient for the Australian ballot in model 1. Thus, not only is the office bloc ballot highly significant statistically, but substantively it has a larger effect on the behavior of members in pursuing committee assignments.

We can conclude that representatives from states that used office bloc ballots—not those from the larger group of Australian ballot states—gained more attractive committee assignments. These representatives now

had more of an incentive to build a connection with their constituents than their colleagues from party column states. With this new level of accountability, representatives from office bloc districts needed to appeal to the voters in their home district as a means of electoral survival. By joining more valuable committees, representatives could increase their chances of reelection in a number of ways. They enhanced their institutional prestige, potentially gaining influence over the internal functioning of the House. More important, however, representatives could use their committee membership to provide services and pork to their constituents.

Party Unity

The introduction of the Australian ballot should also influence the level of party voting by representatives. The late nineteenth century represents one of the most partisan times in the nation's history and has been referred to as the "golden age of party politics." The heightened sense of party unity was produced by the political culture of nineteenth-century America, political institutions within the House, and a ballot structure that favored party loyalty.

One of the core political beliefs of nineteenth-century America was faith in the benefits of party government. Parties, especially during presidential elections, were believed to bring cohesion to the government by linking the executive and legislative branches (Sundquist 1988). Representatives were elected based on their party platforms and were judged by the performance of their party while it was in power. Representatives were expected to vote in accord with their party's wishes, even when they conflicted with their own personal beliefs (Cooper and Brady 1981). Members who rejected their party leadership were seen as rejecting the mandate given to them by the voters (Jones 1968).

Within the House of Representatives, member behavior was controlled by powerful speakers, colorfully referred to as "czars" (Galloway 1961). The speaker appointed committees, presided over the Rules Committee, and had the ability to use a variety of political rewards and sanctions to ensure compliance with his prerogatives (Cooper and Brady 1981). In this atmosphere, any representatives who sought to advance their legislation or their own legislative careers had to remain in the speaker's favor. Given that one's success was tied to the speaker's whim, this made it difficult for members to assert any measure of independence (Cooper and Brady 1981).

Party unity also was reinforced by the control exerted by political parties over the nomination and election processes. Members' electoral fortunes were, in large part, under the control of their parties and various levels of party officials. In many situations factional candidates arose, making the official candidate beholden to a range of party officials for their support against these factions. The candidate also needed to appeal to party officials for their help on election day, such as paying for individual ticket peddlers to ensure the correct ballots were distributed (Reynolds and McCormick 1986). The process of voting during the era was characterized by an atmosphere of auctioneering and spectacle rather than civic responsibility (Rusk 1970). Peddlers, mavericks, and others provided a variety of ballots, party-approved and otherwise, and opportunities for voters to deviate from their party's wishes. Those that received their party's ballots received a distinctive form, on paper either of different color or size than those of other parties. In the best case scenario, a party's ballot was openly cast, making each individual's political preferences obvious to party workers and other voters. While the election process itself did not cement the loyalty of the candidate to the party leadership, he still needed their support to overcome various threats that could arise during the course of a campaign.

The adoption of the Australian ballot structure should have allowed members of the House to exercise greater independence from the party, particularly if there was a conflict between the views of the party and the member's constituency. Moreover, even if party and constituency policy preferences were congruent, members increasingly needed to develop personal constituencies to remain in office under office ballot systems. In Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina's (1987) term, they had to establish a "personal vote," which typically requires independent actions.

All of this suggests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: During the period 1885 to 1901, representatives from states that adopted the Australian ballot will have lower party unity scores than representatives from pre-Australian ballot states.

Hypothesis 4: During the period 1885 to 1901, representatives from states that adopted the office bloc ballot will have lower party unity scores than representatives from pre-Australian ballot and party ballot states.

We test our hypotheses using the standard measure of party unity (Brady, Cooper, and Hurley 1979, 383).

Table 2
Party Unity Scores, Forty-Ninth to Fifty-Sixth Congresses

Congress	Average Unity (by Party)		
	Average Party Unity	Democrats	Republicans
49	82.38	78.94	86.84
50	83.71	77.70	90.27
51	91.39	88.20	94.31
52	78.33	74.84	88.04
53	88.03	86.79	90.17
54	84.52	87.88	83.11
55	92.31	90.63	93.36
56	92.37	89.91	94.49

This score is a percentage representing the number of times a member of the House votes with his party on party support votes divided by the total number of party support votes the member voted on per Congress.⁴ Party support votes are defined as those in which at least 50 percent of one party vote against at least 50 percent of the opposing party. For our particular time period, members were noted for their high party support scores; very few individuals in the analysis have scores lower than 50 percent. Also of note is the higher score for members of the Republican party, in line with Brady, Cooper, and Hurley (1979), who noted the more centralized system of leadership typical of that party during this time period. Table 2 shows the degree of party unity by Congress and by party over this time period.

For Hypothesis 3, the independent variable of interest is whether a state has adopted the Australian ballot structure. For Hypothesis 4, we examine two variables that indicate whether the state adopted one of the two variants of the Australian ballot: the office bloc ballot or the party column ballot. We include appropriate control variables in the equations. We add a variable that indicates how long the representative has served in the House, conjecturing that members with greater service may be more likely to rely on voting cues other than party. Second, we also hypothesize the inverse—first-term representatives may be more likely to follow party cues rather than other possible cues (Weinbaum and Judd 1970). Consequently, we include a variable indicating first-term status. We enter a variable for the margin of victory in the general election for each representative, testing whether more comfortable victories afford members greater independence from party leaders. Because Republicans during this time period employed a more centralized leadership system

(Cooper and Brady 1981) that resulted in higher party unity scores (as indicated in Table 2), we include a dichotomous variable for political party. We also include controls for distance from the party median and distance from the chamber median based on DW-NOMINATE scores (Poole and Rosenthal 1997). A variable indicating small majorities (those under 55 percent) is included because we suspect that smaller majorities prompt members to be more supportive of their party. A control for each Congress is entered, because over time members of Congress adapt to the changing political landscape of new ballot rules and may change their behavior within the House accordingly. Finally, we again add a dichotomous variable to control for the South.

Because party unity for each Congress is our dependent variable, special consideration must be given to the particular statistical method used. Because the variable is constructed as a fraction, OLS will provide biased coefficients and standard errors (Smith 2001). Another concern is that our dependent variable is made from groups (Democrats and Republicans) that vary in size for each particular Congress. This means that OLS assumptions about constant variance in the error terms are violated (Binder 1999). As a result, grouped logit with weighted least squares estimates to account for heteroskedasticity is the more appropriate model to employ.

As indicated by the results in Table 3, we find mixed support for our two hypotheses. The coefficient for the Australian ballot reform, while in the predicted direction, is not statistically significant. Representatives from states with office bloc ballots, however, demonstrate lower party unity scores than representatives from party column and pre-Australian states, consistent with Hypothesis 4. Predicted probabilities generated from model 2, while small, lend further support.⁵ Representatives from states with these ballot reforms have a lower average score—76.8 percent compared to the baseline of 79.8 percent.

The control variables provide a variety of substantive results. Following the results of Table 2, we find that party has a positive and statistically significant effect on party unity as Republicans were more likely to have higher party unity scores than their Democratic counterparts. Longer House service resulted in more, not less, party unity and first-term status, while not statistically significant, accounts for less, not more, party unity. These results are the reverse of our original contention. The South exhibits a strong and positive effect on party unity scores. Small majorities do have the expected effect; when a majority has less than 55 percent of the total seats, we see that party

Table 3
Effect of Ballot Structure on Party Unity Scores, Grouped Logit Analysis

	Model 1: Australian Ballot	Model 2: Office and Party Ballots
South	.674*** (.041)	.685*** (.041)
Freshman	-.016 (.035)	-.013 (.035)
Seniority	.014*** (.003)	.014*** (.003)
Margin	-.0009 (.001)	-.0008 (.0007)
Small party majority	.195*** (.037)	.195*** (.037)
Distance from party median	.034 (.111)	.029 (.111)
Distance from chamber median	-.030 (.030)	-.030 (.030)
Party	.700*** (.032)	.706*** (.032)
Congress	.070*** (.010)	.072*** (.010)
Australian ballot	-.063 (.042)	
Office ballot		-.178*** (.052)
Party ballot		.006 (.046)
Constant	1.00*** (.043)	.986*** (.043)
Adjusted R^2 $N = 2,496$.256	.260

Note: Unstandardized weighted least squares logit estimates are reported with standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < .001$ (one-tailed test).

unity increases. Coefficients for distance from the party median and chamber median are statistically insignificant.

There are two potential explanations for the relatively subdued impact of ballot reforms. One is that parties were so central to the functioning of the House that their power over member behavior largely survived the imposition of new ballot rules. One particularly suggestive comment to this effect was made by Rep. Jacob Fassett, a New York Republican, in 1910, a full decade after the end of the period in our analysis:

We are robust partisans, every one of us. . . . I take it that no Democrat was elected to cooperate with our party nor was any Republican elected to hand over the Republican control of this House to our political opponents. . . . A man ought to have

opinions and convictions. . . . In my judgment, the place to adjust differences of opinion on unimportant questions, and on important questions of public policy and party policy is not in public . . . but in the family caucus. (Jones 1968, 630)

In effect, the impact of the Australian ballot reform was swamped by the institutional import given to party within the House. The changes that occurred in the wake of the “revolt” against Speaker Cannon, such as the removal of the speaker from the Rules Committee, the election of members to the Rules Committee, the ability of members to discharge bills from committee, and the election of all standing committees, probably meant more for the development of independent representatives than did the introduction of the Australian ballot (Cooper and Brady 1981, 415-16). So in essence, while ballot reform was important to Progressives, the creation of the more “personal vote” oriented representative may well have been more the result of internal House changes than of a shift in external electoral procedures.

The second potential explanation revolves around viewing the creation of new ballot rules not as an antiparty reform, but rather a reform undertaken with the full blessing and support of the major parties (Reynolds and McCormick 1986; Ware 2000; Walker 2005). In effect, this is a nuanced argument—corrupt party organizations spawned the adoption of Australian ballot rules (the classic thesis) in the Northeast and Midwest and volatility in congressional elections led to their adoption in the West. The desire to admit Republican states to the union and concern over fusion tickets in North Dakota and South Dakota led to the adoption of the Australian ballot by Republicans in those areas (Walker 2005). This behavior, however, did not remain confined to Republicans or to the West. In the South, the presence of Republicans in several congressional seats led Democratic-controlled statehouses to adopt the Australian ballot. While this not only resulted in the reduction of the fortunes of the opposition party, it also produced a decrease in the mobilization of other party factions as well. Consequently, members elected under this system were more amenable to party control and more likely to exhibit the loyalty the party required for certain votes. This might help to account for limited findings here.

Pork Barrel Expenditures

Credit claiming for pork barrel projects is another behavior that might have been influenced by the

adoption of the Australian ballot. Appropriations for river and harbor projects were a major federal budget outlay during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Wilson (1986) reported these particular appropriations were usually six times greater than those obtained for agriculture projects and even exceeded military appropriations for forts and fortifications. From 1888 to 1901, in a given congressional term, the average representative in the House received 3.3 river and harbor projects with each being worth about \$154,000. The projects passed by the Rivers and Harbors Committee usually involved the dredging of waterways and the reinforcing of river banks and thus were identified with specific districts. Members could easily claim credit for delivering these projects to their constituents, making them appetizing targets for representatives seeking to establish personal reputations.

The Katz and Sala (1996) theory would suggest that members from Australian ballot states should have been more motivated to bring back pork to their districts than their colleagues from non-Australian ballot states. Given the differences in ballot types, we argue that members seeking reelection in the office bloc ballot states ought to be the more motivated to bring federal money to their district in order to enhance their reelection prospects.

To test these notions, we use data collected by Wilson (1986) on river and harbor projects from 1888 to 1901. The data set contains, among other items, information regarding the number of river and harbor projects received by a district and the dollar share of projects received by a district. For the purposes of our analysis, all river and harbor projects are included.

Our hypotheses about the distribution of river and harbor appropriations are straightforward:

Hypothesis 5: During the period 1888 to 1901, if a representative is from a state that has the Australian ballot, then his district will receive more in appropriations for river and harbor projects than the district of a representative from a state with the pre-Australian ballot.

Hypothesis 6: During the period 1888 to 1901, if a representative is from a state that has an office bloc ballot, then his district will receive more river and harbor appropriations than would the district of a representative from a state with a party column or pre-Australian ballot.

Our focus on the number of projects produces the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 7: During the period 1888 to 1901, if a representative is from a state that has the Australian ballot, then his district will receive more river and harbor projects than the district of a representative from a state with the pre-Australian ballot.

Hypothesis 8: During the period 1888 to 1901, if a representative is from a state that has an office bloc ballot, then his district will receive more river and harbor projects than would the district of a representative from a state with a party column or pre-Australian ballot.

The most direct test of these hypotheses is through a series of OLS regressions. Wilson's pork barrel data (1986) contain information at the district level regarding the number of river and harbor projects, the dollar share of the projects obtained by the district, and information about the representatives from the district. During the late nineteenth century, the House River and Harbor Committee reported one omnibus bill and several large project appropriation bills every Congress. Most of the political maneuvering on the omnibus and large project appropriation bills occurred within the River and Harbor Committee. These bills were rarely amended after leaving the committee.

We constructed two series of models for both the amount of appropriations and the number of projects. The dependent variables, appropriations and projects, reflect appropriations data for river and harbors projects during a thirteen-year period and refer to the pork barrel quantities obtained during a congressional session. The natural log of appropriations and the number of projects was used to normalize the variables. Adoption of the Australian ballot was the dichotomous variable used in Hypotheses 5 and 7. We focus on ballot type in Hypotheses 6 and 8 and use dichotomous measures for office bloc and party column ballots. Appropriate control variables were added, among them party affiliation, seniority, committee assignment, and margin of victory.

The parameter estimates for the four models are reported in Table 4. For our first model testing the relationship between the presence of the Australian ballot and the amount of appropriations, we find that adoption of the Australian ballot is statistically significant and in the correct direction. Party also is significant and in the expected direction. And as Wilson (1986) found, being on a power committee (Rules, Appropriations, Ways and Means) is statistically significant and in the predicted direction. The remaining explanatory variables—margin of victory and seniority—did not

Table 4
Effect of Ballot Structure on Pork Barrel Expenditures and Projects, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Analysis

	Expenditures		Projects	
	Model 1: Australian Ballot	Model 2: Office and Party Ballots	Model 3: Australian Ballot	Model 4: Office and Party Ballots
Party	.183* (.088)	.193* (.088)	.084* (.039)	.088* (.039)
Seniority	.001 (.008)	.001 (.008)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)
Committee	.590*** (.117)	.591*** (.117)	.208*** (.052)	.208*** (.052)
Margin	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)
Australian ballot	.285*** (.002)		.080* (.042)	
Office ballot		.299** (.116)		.124** (.052)
Party ballot		.211* (.101)		.044 (.045)
Constant	10.357*** (.094)	10.382*** (.093)	.706*** (.042)	.709*** (.042)
Adjusted R ²	.026	.024	.021	.022
N = 1,355				

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable is the natural log transformation of dollars or projects.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (one-tailed test).

have a statistically significant impact on how much money a representative received for his district. The impact of the Australian ballot on appropriations for the River and Harbor committees is consistent with Katz and Sala's (1996) theory.

Once again, as indicated in model 2, committee assignment and party matter in determining how much representatives receive in appropriations. More important, however, we find that both the office bloc and party column ballot variables are significant and in the expected direction. The office bloc coefficient is, however, larger. Therefore, representatives from office bloc states received more river and harbor appropriations than representatives from party column and pre-Australian ballot states.

The second set of models estimates the impact of the Australian ballot reform, as well as the specific reforms of office bloc and party columns ballots, on the number of projects. Model 3 indicates that the relationship between number of projects and the presence of the Australian ballot is significant and in the

hypothesized direction. The results also show that party and a seat on a power committee are statistically significant and in the hypothesized direction. While not a substantial change from representatives in pre-Australian states, these results suggest that members operating under Australian ballot rules secured more projects for their district than their colleagues from pre-Australian ballot states.

The fourth model accounts for differences in the number of projects received by representatives for their district. The results are similar to those in model 3. Party is statistically significant and in a positive direction. As in the previous results, committee is highly significant and is in the positive direction. Importantly, however, the office bloc coefficient, but not the party column coefficient, is statistically significant.

What do these results suggest? The Katz and Sala (1996) theory is correct in that the presence of the Australian ballot matters for pork barrel behavior on the Rivers and Harbors Committee. Ballot type also makes a difference in how many projects a representative receives.⁶ Representatives from office bloc ballot states receive more projects—but not much more money—than their party column ballot colleagues. This suggests that not only the presence of the ballot, but also the type of ballot, matters to pork barrel legislation in the late-nineteenth-century House of Representatives.

Conclusion

According to our findings, representatives adjusted their behavior on routine legislative behavior in ways consistent with the theory developed by Katz and Sala (1996). Members operating under the reformed electoral rules were more likely than their other colleagues to engage in activities consistent with efforts to build personal reputations. Our general findings, however, confirm an important codicil to the Katz and Sala theory: But it was often members in states using the office bloc form of the ballot—not members from states using party column ballots—who were more apt to gain preferred committee assignments, to deviate from voting with their party, and to bring home federal dollars for pork barrel projects.

These findings are important because they constitute substantial support for the basic reasoning underpinning the Katz and Sala (1996) theory. Evidence that members altered their more immediate legislative behavior in predictable ways in response to the changing electoral environment lends credence to the notion that they also altered their more distant legislative behavior by asserting committee property rights.

Notes

1. The likelihood function is constructed as follows:

$$\prod_{t=1}^T \Phi \left(\frac{\sum_{j=1}^J v_j x_j^t}{\sigma \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^J |x_j^t|}} \right),$$

where T is the total number of transfers in the data set, J is the number of committees in existence during the period, v_j is the average valuation of committee j , and x_j^t is the member's action with regard to committee j at transfer t (-1: transfer off, 0: no transfer, 1: transfer on). $\sigma = 1$ is assumed; the denominator is the number of committees involved in transfer t .

2. We use one-tailed tests throughout the analysis because all hypotheses indicate a specific sign to the slope of the coefficients.

3. We attempted to predict the likelihood of being assigned to the Ways and Means, Appropriations, and/or Rules committees, which is the focus of Katz and Sala's (1996) work. Both the Australian ballot and the office-bloc models were not significant.

4. Party unity scores are calculated for members who have participated in at least ten party support votes.

5. The predicted probabilities were calculated by setting continuous variables to their mean and nominal or ordinal variables to their mode and then changing a variable of interest (office ballot). The baseline member in this case was a Northern Democrat with 3.4 years of service and who was relatively close to the party and chamber medians (0.005 and 0.046, respectively).

6. We reran the analysis with expenditures as a log-transformed dependent variable; however, the parameter estimates did not change significantly.

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