



## **The Legislative Effectiveness of Party Faction Members in Congress\***

Andrew J. Clarke, Lafayette College  
Craig Volden, University of Virginia  
Alan E. Wiseman, Vanderbilt University

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### **Abstract**

Does joining an ideological caucus help or hurt the advancement of a lawmaker's legislative agenda? We argue that joining a faction creates opportunities for policy advancement, but also potential backlash from party leaders. In combination, these considerations yield conditions under which the lawmaking effectiveness of faction members is enhanced. We explore the relationship between caucus membership and a Representative's legislative effectiveness by drawing on data on the membership of eight different ideological caucuses between 1995-2016 in the United States House of Representatives. The analysis supports our main hypothesis that minority-party lawmakers – but not those in the majority party – enhance their legislative effectiveness through faction membership. Moreover, contrary to conventional arguments, we find that lawmaking effectiveness is not a product of the pivotal ideological centrist position of factions or of faction size, apart from their party status.

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\* Prepared for presentation at the 2018 Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association. Andrew J. Clarke is an Assistant Professor of Government and Law at Lafayette College ([clarkeaj@lafayette.edu](mailto:clarkeaj@lafayette.edu)). Craig Volden is Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy and Professor of Public Policy and Politics at the University of Virginia ([volden@virginia.edu](mailto:volden@virginia.edu)). Alan E. Wiseman is the Chair of the Department of Political Science at Vanderbilt University, the Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Political Economy, the Joe B. Wyatt Distinguished University Professor, and Professor of Political Science and Law ([alan.wiseman@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:alan.wiseman@vanderbilt.edu)). Volden and Wiseman thank the Madison Initiative of the Hewlett Foundation and the Democracy Fund for continued support of the Center for Effective Lawmaking ([www.thelawmakers.org](http://www.thelawmakers.org)).

### ***The Legislative Effectiveness of Party Faction Members in Congress***

Contrary to the wishes of George Washington, political parties have become pervasive features of all aspects of American politics, including the day-to-day operation of the United States Congress. While the relative strength and influence of party organizations in Congress has waxed and waned over time, for more than 200 years nearly all elected representatives have affiliated with at least one political party. A more recent political innovation, however, is the development of formally organized *factions* (i.e., Thomsen 2017) within congressional parties. Similar to the parties within which they are housed, these factions (which are formally referred to as caucuses) have become a common feature of the contemporary Congress. Their leaders, on both sides of the aisle, have become increasingly visible spokespersons for their organizations and their organizations' policy goals, presumably wielding influence over the legislative agenda and process.

Ideological factions collectively map onto a sizable share of seats in the U.S. House, and nearly all incoming members choose to join one of these organizations. In the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, for example, 76% of the voting Representatives claimed membership in one of eight intraparty ideological factions, and each of these groups contained a numerically critical bloc of votes. Hence, the majority party's legislative proposals conceivably could be in jeopardy if party leaders failed to manage a fractured medley of their co-partisans. Likewise, given the size of these subgroups, one would expect their members to be able to leverage the groups' collective resources to advance their own legislative interests.

Can intraparty factions harness the collective energies of their members to achieve their policy goals? Do members benefit, in regards to advancing their own legislative agendas, by joining a faction? Or, alternatively, are factions essentially fringe organizations that exist,

largely, to present voters (and other observers of Congress) with an alternative voice of the major parties, yet with very little impact over policy deliberations and outcomes in Congress? Should a newly elected member of Congress join a faction if she wants to advance her legislative agenda, or would she be better off by focusing her efforts at working with her party's leaders and (perhaps) other legislators from across the aisle?

We argue that party factions, embedded in the current congressional system of strong parties, have important but limited abilities to promote the policy goals of their members. Factions provide coalition building opportunities and staff support to help their members achieve their legislative goals. But, when those goals run counter to those of majority-party leaders, faction members' policy advancements can be significantly undermined. For majority-party faction members, these resources and party pressures often run in opposite directions, with faction proposals at odds with the preferences of the rest of the party. Whether on ideological grounds or based on trying to secure a coherent party brand, majority-party leaders may push aside proposals from factions within their own party. In contrast, majority-party leaders have little incentive to undermine minority-party factions, and may even wish to support their attempts to fragment the minority party. As such, we expect minority-party faction members to outperform other minority-party members in terms of their lawmaking effectiveness. We do not expect such differences to emerge for majority-party faction members, who may actually have their proposals dismissed more frequently by their party leaders.

To explore these hypotheses, we conduct a large-sample quantitative analysis of eight House intraparty factions, four Republican and four Democratic, with membership across the ideological spectrum from 1995-2016, testing whether Members of Congress become more effective lawmakers after joining an ideological faction. Our method of analysis employs a

difference-in-difference estimation strategy to evaluate the impact of faction affiliation on legislative effectiveness under various conditions. Consistent with our expectations, we find that minority-party faction members are more effective than non-faction members of their party, but such a boost does not emerge for majority-party faction members. Indeed, for the most important (substantive and significant) pieces of legislation, faction membership in the majority party seems to undermine legislative effectiveness. Additionally, our empirical findings run counter to alternative theoretical arguments suggesting that the lawmaking effectiveness of factions should be correlated with size (where smaller factions, perhaps due to their cohesiveness, are more successful than larger factions), and ideology (where centrist factions, due to their pivotal positions in the chamber, are more influential than ideologically extreme factions).

Taken together, these findings suggest that party factions can be influential agents in the lawmaking process, yet not in a way that is fully appreciated by scholars and observers of contemporary legislative politics. Simply stated, the size and ideological positions of party factions do not matter for their members' legislative effectiveness, *per se*. Rather, factions are most likely to be influential when the parties in which they reside are most disadvantaged in the legislative process, due to their minority status. These findings have important implications for our understanding of party organizations in Congress, and they are also of practical relevance to members of Congress, who might question the relative value of joining a faction with regards to their own lawmaking effectiveness and success.

### **Factions in the American Political System**

Factions are submerged political institutions that emerge in response to the American two-party system. While the 435 voting members of the House come from a varied set of congressional districts with competing interests and countervailing pressures, nearly every

elected Representative in American political history has nevertheless secured a nomination from one of the two major political parties. The reality of Duverger's (1959) law does not, however, impose ideological homogeneity on co-partisans in each of the two major parties. Co-partisans may act in concert to preserve a collective policy reputation, but Representatives benefit unevenly from their parties' labels (Cox and McCubbins 2007, Minozzi and Volden 2013). Dissatisfied co-partisans may, therefore, create submerged institutions (i.e., factions) to push and pull their party in their preferred direction (DiSalvo 2012).

On these points, a small literature has emerged that analyzes party sub-groups (which we equate with party factions) in Congress. DiSalvo (2012) and Bloch Rubin (2013), for example, explore how factions have historically worked to reshape their political parties and reform the political institutions in which they operate. Ragusa and Gaspar (2016), and Bailey, Mummolo, and Noel (2012) have explored the development and impact of Tea Party Republicans,<sup>1</sup> and several scholars have studied the role and impact of ideologically centrist groups of legislators (e.g., Jenkins and Monroe 2014; Lucas and Deutchman 2007; Medvic 2007; Seo and Theriault 2012) on policy outcomes. Much of the collective scholarship has focused on a specific ideological bloc or pairing of organizations, with relatively few studies analyzing broader aspects of sub-party politics (but see Koger, Masket, and Noel 2009; Lucas and Deutchman 2009). Some scholars have also engaged in more comprehensive analyses of particular factions by drawing on semi-structured interviews and archival resources (e.g., Bloch Rubin 2017).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See also Gervais and Morris (2012), Hendry and Sin (2014), Nguyen et al. (2015), Skocpol and Williamson (2012).

<sup>2</sup> There is, however, a rich body of comparative politics scholarship on the existence and role of factions in parliamentary systems (e.g., Bernauer and Brauning 2008; Dewan and Squintani 2015; McAllister 1991; Wood and Jacoby 1984).

Taken together, this literature has suggested that American party factions closely mirror the structure and practices of conventional political parties in government. Factions are hierarchical organizations, featuring elected leadership positions, whip systems, task forces, and communication directors. Faction leaders direct full-time staffers and coordinate the procedural and rhetorical strategies of their blocs. They also cultivate niche pockets of ideological donors, coordinate with activist organizations, and endorse candidates on a national scale (Clarke 2017). From their logo-emblazoned newsletters to their annual budget proposals, modern ideological factions have evolved to engage with different aspects of the policymaking process outside of the constraints that are imposed by a two-party electoral system.

At the same time, factions may actually impose *greater* constraints on their rank-and-file members than their parent party organizations. Factions screen candidates on a number of criteria – particularly ideology – before a thorough vetting and sponsorship process can be completed. Several groups employ ostensibly binding rules to improve faction unity, and individuals who frequently defy these supermajoritarian requirements (e.g., the Freedom Caucus’s “80% rule”) may be removed from the faction according to internal bylaws. Hence, unlike political parties, factions can tightly control their rosters to maximize their chances of voting as a cohesive bloc.

Besides establishing and enforcing criteria for membership, factions can provide a blend of electoral and public policy advantages to their members. First, they diversify the availability of high-quality information in the House, which may undermine the objectives of party leaders, who might seek to centralize information acquisition and distribution (Curry 2015). In this sense, factions provide social network benefits similar to those that exist among congressional membership organizations (Hammond 2001; Ringe and Victor 2013; Victor and Ringe 2009). Second, they may assist Representatives in signaling an ideological type to constituents within

their parties (Gervais and Morris 2012), although the evidence for this pattern is mixed (Miler 2011). Factions may also foster bridge-building between members and key political activists and donors (Clarke 2017), to facilitate the accumulation of critical campaign contributions (Cox and Rosenbluth 1993; Hendry and Sin 2014).

We explore the scope of one specific aspect of potential individual-level benefits of faction affiliation: the ability of factions to promote and advance their members' legislative agendas in Congress. There are many reasons that faction membership might be generally valuable to legislators in their efforts to advance their bills, as factions could potentially provide a means to counterbalance party pressures and/or complement party resources. As noted above, factions can (and sometimes do) provide customized information that is valuable to members. They might also offer a useful forum for communication, and the provision of political resources within and beyond the U.S. House, such as employing staffers to assist members in coordinating parliamentary procedures to help them advance their bills. Factions also offer their members a natural starting place for their coalition-building activities.

While it is possible that lawmakers unconditionally benefit with regards to their lawmaking successes from admission to an ideological faction, these factions do not operate within a political vacuum. Instead, given the major role of political parties in Congress today, faction members may be differentially effective depending on the size of their faction (and its power to block or advance legislation), the ideological position of the faction (whether it plays a pivotal central location), and the party status of the faction (whether the faction threatens to splinter the majority or minority party). We develop hypotheses around each of these three plausible conditional effects.

First, the size of factions may be critical to their role in lawmaking; though the relationship between faction size and legislative effectiveness is theoretically ambiguous. While large factions may be equated with a powerful voting bloc, factions may also lose some ideological cohesion and unity of purpose in growing their membership. Moreover, large factions may present latent threats to party leaders, which could lead to backlash when those leaders control the levers of governing in the House. When sub-party organizations seek to pursue policy objectives that are divergent from the goals of leadership, party leaders can potentially quell revolts by offering side payments of various forms to those faction members who are least-aligned with the faction's goals (i.e., Jenkins and Monroe 2012; Carroll and Kim 2010). Hence, the largest factions might, ironically, be the easiest for leaders to break; thereby undermining their potential size advantages. In contrast, smaller factions may be more effective at maintaining faction integrity in the face of carrots and/or sticks used by party leaders. Given these tradeoffs, faction leaders must weigh the relative value of faction size (given its implications for cohesion) when they build their organizations, as each lawmaker's individual probability of defecting from the faction during moments of intraparty conflict will influence the efficacy of the whole bloc.

In a more general setting, as illustrated by Olson (1965) and other scholars, organizations that remain relatively small and/or develop coercive instruments are better equipped to handle these kinds of collective action problems. Hence, factions can likely promote unity by creating thresholds under which all members are expected to vote as a bloc, which reduces the costs incurred by members from toeing the faction line and limits the scope of punitive actions that are available to party leaders (Bloch Rubin 2017). These membership caps can, in turn, increase the faction's potential for meaningful collective action. Consistent with this claim, the Blue Dog



Coalition caps its roster at 20% of the full Democratic Caucus and requires that all members vote together if two-thirds of Blue Dogs are in agreement. Small, tight-knit organizations such as this are more likely to overcome their collective action problems and thereby improve the prospects of their members' influence in the House. Large factions, by contrast, may maintain impressive research operations, but their vast membership lists belie their institutional weakness. Groups such as the Republican Study Committee draw on a broad network of support, yet they often lack internal cohesion and effective coordination.<sup>3</sup> Finally, for an individual legislator, the prospects of getting her own agenda items to the top of the list of faction policy goals are much more limited in large factions than in smaller ones. Taken together, these considerations motivate the following hypothesis:

***Faction Size and Legislative Effectiveness Hypothesis:*** *Legislators who belong to smaller factions will be more effective lawmakers, ceteris paribus, than those belonging to larger factions.*

Faction affiliation could also potentially help to increase a Representative's lawmaking effectiveness, depending on the ideology of the legislator. Legislators in centrist factions have opportunities to build out their supporting coalition in either a liberal or conservative direction. In turn, centrist factions may serve as valuable coalition partners for others. Promises to advance and support the agendas of more ideologically centrist legislators might be viewed as valuable currency by coalition leaders seeking to advance their bills (i.e., Krehbiel, Meirowitz, and Wiseman 2015, Snyder 1991). Such transactions, in turn, would result in members of centrist factions being more effective lawmakers than members of ideologically-extreme factions.

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<sup>3</sup> There are likely also nonlinear and conditional relationships with respect to faction size. For example, a faction of one is unlikely to wield much influence. Moreover, very small factions in the majority party that are not needed to advance the party's main objectives may be pushed aside entirely, in ways similar to what Volden and Wiseman (2014, chapter 4) find among Southern Democrats in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Consistent with this argument, political commentators often claim that narrow majorities allow moderate blocs of lawmakers to leverage greater policy concessions from fragile governing coalitions; and in these times, centrists have been observed to form sub-party, as well as bipartisan, coalitions to try to improve their influence in the House (Crabtree 2000).<sup>4</sup> These kinds of factions often portray themselves as being pivotal and influential actors in the legislative process. The Republican Main Street Partnership, for example, advertises its organization as a force that “brings strength and cohesion to the ranks of governing Republicans” by “bringing together some of the most effective members of Congress” and “governing beyond partisan, political rhetoric.”<sup>5</sup> In contrast, very conservative Republican factions, like the Freedom Caucus, tend to employ anti-government rhetoric that may be coupled with less interest in active lawmaking. Statements and observations such as these motivate the following hypothesis:

***Faction Ideology and Legislative Effectiveness Hypothesis:*** *Legislators who are members of ideologically centrist factions will be more effective lawmakers than legislators who are members of ideologically extreme factions.*

Finally, the relationship between a Representative’s faction affiliation and her legislative effectiveness may be conditional on whether she is in the majority or minority party. To the extent that faction leaders and their members are advancing agenda items that are at odds with those of party leaders, majority-party factions may be seen as a threat. From a bill’s committee referral to its receiving a rule and floor consideration, majority-party leaders in the House can wield tremendous procedural authority, which can influence the fate of legislative proposals

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<sup>4</sup> Blue Dogs and Main Street Partnership Republicans considered merging in the early 2000s, foreshadowing the development of new, bi-partisan coalitions of centrists, such as the Problem Solvers Caucus. Our focus, however, is restricted to intrapartisan organizations.

<sup>5</sup> <https://republicanmainstreet.org/> (accessed March 15, 2018).

(e.g., Cox and McCubbins 2007). Hence, majority-party leaders should be well-positioned to suppress any challenge posed by institutionalized factions.

In contrast, once relegated to the minority, party leaders have less influence over congressional procedures, and they have to employ a different calculus in managing their coalition. While several procedural tools (e.g., the motion to recommit) remain squarely in the jurisdiction of the minority party (e.g., Krehbiel and Meirowitz 2002), and there is evidence that majority-party leaders earnestly respect the requests of their political opponents in making committee assignments (e.g., Krehbiel and Wiseman 2005), the majority party generally maintains control over the most common mechanisms to advance bills through the legislative process. Having lost most of their direct influence over governing, minority-party leaders frequently turn to electioneering, messaging, and obstruction in an effort to reclaim the House (Green 2015).

In contrast to such electioneering, faction members may benefit from maintaining a policy focus even when in the minority party. Most join factions because of their ideological policy goals, and many hope to use faction resources to shift their party's overall positions. For example, the Blue Dog Coalition has continued to endorse numerous pieces of substantive legislation in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, while the Congressional Progressive Caucus once again released an annual budget ("The Better Off Budget"), and the New Democrat Coalition published a full-fledged policy agenda ("The American Prosperity Agenda"). While many of these proposals might have been advanced solely for position-taking purposes,<sup>6</sup> many others appear to be earnest attempts to change public policy. Moreover, modern factions are designed

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the Republican Study Committee attempted to usurp the messaging campaign of the minority party by offering several proposals between 2009 and 2010 to signal how the GOP would run things if they were to take the majority (Green 2015, 155).

to endure a drought of House-provided resources that accompanies minority-party status, allowing their members to continue to pursue their legislative agendas. Finally, majority-party leaders may be much more willing to allow the progression of legislation that is sponsored by members of factions that splinter the minority party, in comparison to bills that are sponsored by other minority-party members (and especially minority-party leaders). The consideration of these inter- and intraparty dynamics motivates our last hypothesis:

***Faction Party Status and Legislative Effectiveness Hypothesis:*** *Within the minority party, faction members will be more effective lawmakers than non-faction members; members of factions in the majority party will be less effective than other majority-party members.*

### **Data and Research Design**

To test our three hypotheses, we constructed a dataset covering forty-four years of legislative activity from 1973-2016. The unit of analysis is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives in a two-year session of Congress ( $n = 6,534$ ). These individual-level data provide both cross-time and cross-sectional variation to analyze the lawmaking advantages that accrue to faction members. Given that formally-recognized legislative service organizations were abruptly abolished in 1995, we begin measuring faction membership in the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress (1995-96), which provides a clean starting point for all caucus institutions.<sup>7</sup> We exclude from our data those lawmakers who left the House prior to the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress (i.e., those who could not have received the faction “treatment”).<sup>8</sup> Including potential faction members who served in

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<sup>7</sup> Prior to the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, there were numerous formally-recognized “legislative service organizations” that different members of the House belonged to, and the operating costs of these organizations were subsidized by House resources. As noted by Pearson (2018), when the Republicans took control of the U.S. House in the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, they abolished all legislative service organizations thereby “sending a strong message to rank and file members that caucuses would play no significant role in a centralized Republican Congress.” Caucuses that were created during, or following, the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress were technically independent of the House organization, and did not draw on House resources to underwrite their expenses.

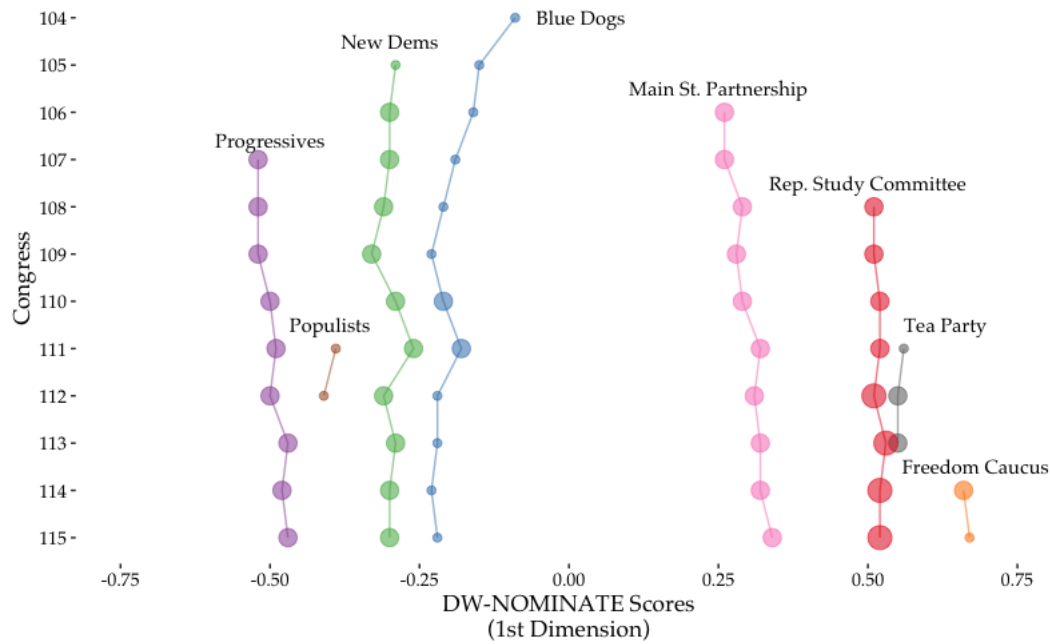
<sup>8</sup> Keeping these lawmakers in the dataset does not substantively affect any of the results reported below. Our results are similarly robust if we re-run our analyses with only those members who first entered Congress in 1995 or later.

Congress before 1995 allows us to detect their baseline effectiveness levels prior to joining a faction.

The party factions in our data include two centrist Democratic caucuses (the Blue Dog Coalition and the New Democrat Coalition) as well as two non-centrist Democratic organizations (the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the short-lived Populist Caucus). On the Republican side, we consider one centrist organization (the Republican Main Street Partnership, which includes members of the informal Tuesday Group) and three non-centrist blocs (the large Republican Study Committee, the Tea Party Caucus, and the House Freedom Caucus).

All eight groups were officially registered with the House, and self-identified in the public domain, precluding the need to employ latent measurement strategies to identify faction membership. Data on faction memberships were drawn from *CQ's Politics in America*, the archived websites of faction leaders, and journalistic accounts of each group. Rosters were further confirmed with numerous (and repeated follow-up) phone calls to congressional offices. That said, we were unable to obtain reliable data for the early years of two large caucuses: the Progressives (during the 104<sup>th</sup>-106<sup>th</sup> Congresses) and the Republican Study Committee (during the 104<sup>th</sup>-107<sup>th</sup> Congresses). Moreover, two groups in our analysis, the Populists and the Tea Party, were effectively disbanded during our time series. Figure 1 illustrates the mean ideological location, as approximated by first-dimension DW-NOMINATE scores (Poole and Rosenthal 1997), of each faction in each Congress that is covered by our analysis.

**Figure 1. The Mean Ideological Location and Size of Eight House Factions**



*Notes:* Each dot indicates the average first-dimension DW-NOMINATE score among faction members in each Congress; the smallest dots represent small factions, the largest dots represent large factions, and the intermediate-sized dots represent typical factions, as defined below.

We first create a *Faction Member* indicator variable for whether a member of the House belonged to any of these eight ideological caucuses. Next, to test our *Faction Size* hypothesis, we create three dichotomous variables indicating membership in a *small*, *typical*, or *large* faction.<sup>9</sup> Each faction's size can vary over time as its roster expands and contracts in the wake of congressional elections. Lawmakers are coded as being members of a *small* faction if the organization that they affiliate with is at least one standard deviation below the average faction size (i.e., fewer than 37 members). *Large* factions are identified as those with rosters that are at least one standard deviation greater than the average faction size (i.e., at least 132 members).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Approximately 5% of our observations indicated membership in at least two factions. For the faction size variables, multi-faction lawmakers were coded according to their largest faction.

<sup>10</sup> The results that we present below are robust to alternative coding protocols for faction size. More specifically, we obtain substantively identical results if we adopt a top and bottom 10% measurement approach. Similarly, we find positive and statistically significant results for the smallest decile of factions as well as a number of binned estimates

*Typical* factions have roster counts that fall between these two thresholds, which leaves unaffiliated House members as our reference category.

To test our *Faction Ideology* hypothesis, we interact our basic faction membership indicator variable with first-dimension DW-NOMINATE scores developed by Poole and Rosenthal (1997). More specifically, we employ the “interflex” package developed by Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu (2017) to flexibly estimate the marginal effect of faction affiliation, conditional on ideological location. Using this package, we estimate the marginal effect of faction affiliation at six ideological locations in DW-NOMINATE space that roughly correspond to centrist, mainstream, and non-centrist areas in the distributions in the Republican and Democratic parties in Congress.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, we create two dichotomous measures to test our *Faction Party Status* hypothesis. Minority party faction members are coded as “1” if they are both a member of the minority party and a member of any ideological faction. Majority party faction members are similarly coded as “1” if they are members of the majority party as well as being members of any faction, and “0” otherwise.

To measure the lawmaking effectiveness of Representatives in our dataset, we employ Volden and Wiseman’s (2014) Legislative Effectiveness Scores (LES). As defined by Volden and Wiseman (2014, 18) the LES measures the “proven ability to advance a member’s agenda items through the legislative process and into law.” To generate the Legislative Effectiveness Score, Volden and Wiseman collected fifteen bill-level indicators for every member of the U.S.

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(using the *interflex* package) from interactive models. The coefficients for our smallest factions remain positive, but not statistically significant, if we operationalize small factions as the smallest quartile or quintile of roster sizes.

<sup>11</sup> We do not manually set the ideological locations of these estimates. Instead, we direct the *interflex* package to create six automated bins, and estimate the marginal effect of faction affiliation within each of these local regions in the first dimension of DW-NOMINATE.

House of Representatives who served between the 93<sup>rd</sup>-114<sup>th</sup> Congress (1973-2016) from the Library of Congress website, [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov) (and its predecessor, THOMAS).

More specifically, for each Representative, Volden and Wiseman identify how many bills she introduced in each Congress, how many of those bills received any sort of action in committee and/or action beyond committee, how many of these bills passed the House, and how many became law. Each bill is likewise coded to account for whether it was primarily commemorative in nature, “substantive,” or “substantive and significant.” With these fifteen bill-level indicators, Volden and Wiseman calculate a Representative’s Legislative Effectiveness Score, which parsimoniously captures how successful a Representative is at moving her sponsored legislative agenda items through the lawmaking process in a two-year session of Congress in comparison to all other Representatives, accounting for the substantive significance of each bill. Scores are normalized to take an average value of “1” within each two-year Congress, facilitating easy comparison across legislators.<sup>12</sup>

Exploring the relationship between faction membership and legislative effectiveness raises an important measurement challenge. After all, Representatives voluntarily join each of these groups, which might induce a clear selection effect in each iteration of our treatment variable. Our results might easily be confounded if the reasons that lawmakers join a faction, such as being passed over for different institutional positions in Congress, their ideological preferences, or their innate level of entrepreneurship, are correlated with their subsequent legislative performance. To address these concerns, we include both Congress and Representative fixed effects in our analyses. Hence, our analysis approximates a generalized

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<sup>12</sup> See Volden and Wiseman (2014, chapter 2) for an extensive discussion of the measurement strategy employed to create the LES, as well as various robustness checks that have been employed to assess measurement validity of the scores.



difference-in-difference design, such that we can interpret our results as the relative change in a Representative's legislative effectiveness after she joins an ideological faction, while also controlling for other factors.<sup>13</sup>

We also include several Congress- and Representative-varying control variables that are not accounted for by our fixed effects. Here, too, we rely upon data presented by Volden and Wiseman (2014), to include dichotomous indicators for whether a Representative is a committee chair, a sub-committee chair, a member of the majority party, and/or on a "power" committee (i.e., Appropriations, Rules, Ways and Means), as each of these factors vary over time and could plausibly affect legislative influence and the decision to join an ideological faction. For similar reasons, we account for a Representative's congressional seniority, a non-linear measure of her electoral security, and her ideological distance from the median member of the House (using DW-NOMINATE scores).<sup>14</sup> Appendix Tables A1-A3 present the results from regression analyses to assess the relationship between these variables and a Representative's Legislative Effectiveness Score across various model specifications.

## Results

In testing the *Faction Size* hypothesis, we expect that smaller organizations will provide a relative advantage to their members in advancing their legislative agendas, whereas larger groups, perhaps because of underlying collective action problems, will provide no such benefits. Figure 2 presents the coefficients and 95% confidence intervals for small, typical, and large

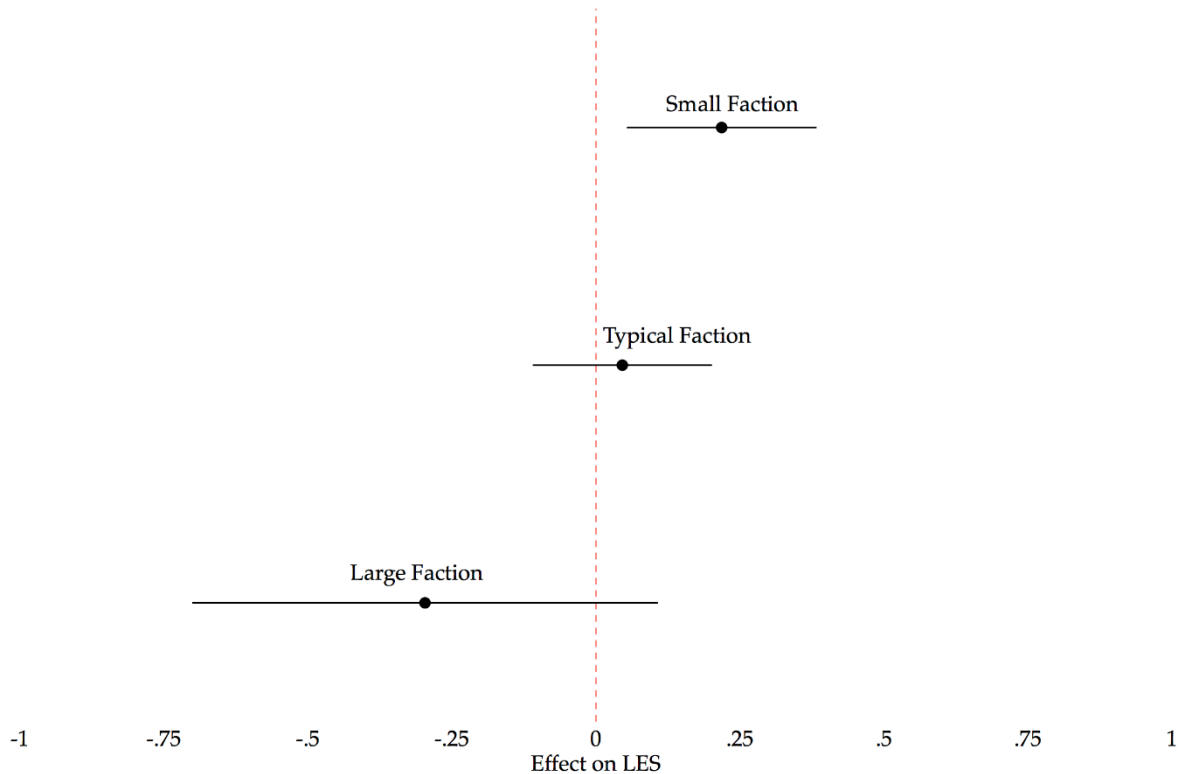
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<sup>13</sup> Our ability to draw causal inferences remain contingent on two key assumptions. First, we assume that faction members would maintain their pre-faction trajectories of legislative success had they not joined an intra-party organization. We explore this "parallel paths" assumption in Appendix Figures A4 and A5. Second, we address the possibility of simultaneous changes in faction affiliation and other predictors of legislative effectiveness by including a battery of time- and unit-varying control variables throughout our empirical models.

<sup>14</sup> We exclude the chamber distance measure from our controls when testing our *Faction Ideology* hypothesis, as our treatment variable interacts faction affiliation with DW-NOMINATE scores.

factions from a regression model where the dependent variable is Representative  $i$ 's LES in Congress  $t$ . As with all models presented in this section, these results include the full array of control variables, in addition to Congress and Representative fixed effects; and all standard errors are clustered by Representative.

**Figure 2. Faction Affiliation, Faction Size, and Changes in Legislative Effectiveness**



*Notes:* Ordinary least squares regression coefficients for three faction types with Representative and Congress fixed effects, clustered by Representative. Dependent variable is Representative  $i$ 's Legislative Effectiveness Score in Congress  $t$ . Small (large) faction indicates membership in a faction with a roster at least one standard deviation below (above) the average faction size. Our results indicate that affiliation with a small faction – and only a small faction – increases a Representative's Legislative Effectiveness Score.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the results provide initial support for the *Faction Size* hypothesis. Membership in a large faction does not provide a significant boost to a

Representative's legislative effectiveness, and a similar null finding is obtained for members of factions of a typical size. Being a member of a small faction, however, corresponds to a statistically significant increase a Representative's Legislative Effectiveness Score, even after accounting for her ideological location, institutional position, and other unobservable characteristics that she might possess (which are being captured by the Representative fixed effect). Consistent with Olson's (1965) argument about overcoming collective action problems, these results suggest that *only* the small factions provide clear tangible benefits to their members as they seek to advance their legislative proposals.<sup>15</sup> Given that Legislative Effectiveness Scores have an average value of 1.0, our results imply that membership in a small faction is associated with about a 25% increase in a Representative's overall lawmaking effectiveness. That said, this size finding may also be a function of a Representative being in a minority-party faction, which tend to have smaller memberships. Below we explore how this preliminary result holds up upon controlling for party status.

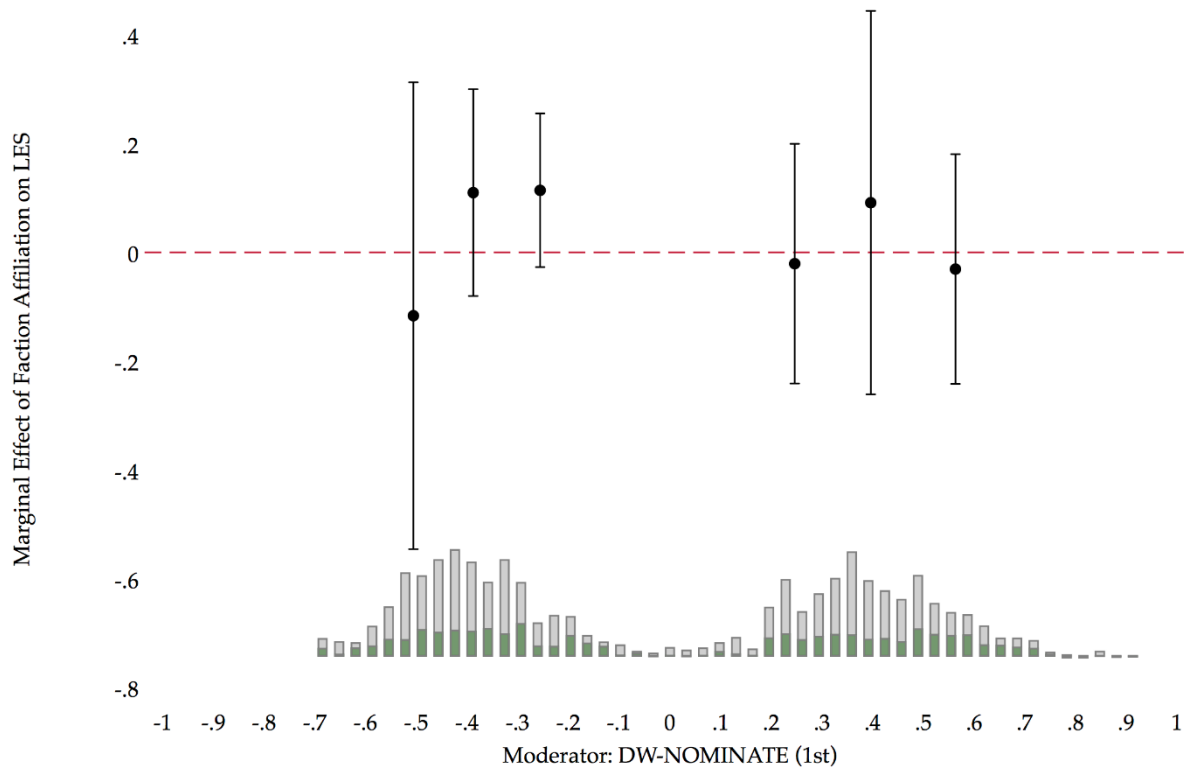
It is worth noting that these results do not appear to be driven simply by Representatives seeking to advance a large amount of symbolic or commemorative legislation. In the Appendix (Figure A1), we present the results from our analysis of models where the dependent variables are disaggregated counts of the numbers of substantive and significant proposal successes. We find that membership in a small faction correlates with an increase in the number of substantive and significant bills that a Representative proposes, as well as greater levels of success in advancing these bills through the different stages in the lawmaking process: from receiving action in committee to becoming public law. More broadly speaking, our results suggest that

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<sup>15</sup> In auxiliary analysis, we find no relationship between the ideological cohesion of a faction and the legislative effectiveness of its members. Hence, the size effect that we obtain here is not likely an artifact of smaller factions being more ideologically cohesive than larger factions.

while membership in a small faction may increase a Representative's legislative effectiveness, membership in a typical faction yields few clear benefits, and membership in a large faction may actually make legislating more difficult, especially on high-profile substantive and significant legislation.

**Figure 3. Political Ideology, Faction Affiliation, and Changes in Legislative Effectiveness**



*Notes:* Binned coefficients, with 95% confidence intervals, representing the marginal effect of faction membership for Representatives of different ideologies. Estimates are from an interactive model and include Representative and Congress fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by Representative. The Dependent variable is Representative *i*'s Legislative Effectiveness Score in Congress *t*. Our explanatory variable is membership in any faction, and the moderating variable is Representative *i*'s DW-NOMINATE score. The histogram indicates the distribution of faction members (green) and unaffiliated Representatives (grey) across the range of observed DW-NOMINATE scores. The results do not provide evidence that centrists' faction affiliation increases their legislative effectiveness. Rather, the results suggest that there is no substantive relationship between the ideology of a given faction and any enhanced or diminished legislative effectiveness of its members.

Turning to the *Faction Ideology* hypothesis, we would expect that those Representatives who are affiliated with an ideologically-centrist faction would be more successful in advancing their bills than non-affiliated Representatives and/or Representatives who are affiliated with more ideologically-extreme factions. Figure 3 presents the binned estimates of the impact of faction affiliation on a Representative’s legislative effectiveness, moderating by a Representative’s first-dimension DW-NOMINATE scores. The stacked histogram beneath these estimates illustrates where faction members (green) and unaffiliated legislators (grey) are located on this ideological spectrum.

In contrast to the *Faction Ideology* hypothesis, we see that there is essentially no substantive relationship between the ideological composition of a faction and the legislative effectiveness of its members. While the binned estimates of the left (i.e., Democratic) distribution suggest that legislators in more centrist factions may be somewhat more effective lawmakers, this finding is not statistically significant. Moreover, the binned estimates of the right (i.e., Republican) distribution point to a clear null finding; and these null findings hold across a variety of alternative empirical specifications.<sup>16</sup> In the Appendix (Figure A2), we explore how similar (null) findings are obtained if we analyze a set of models where the dependent variables are the disaggregated stages of lawmaking for substantive and significant proposals.

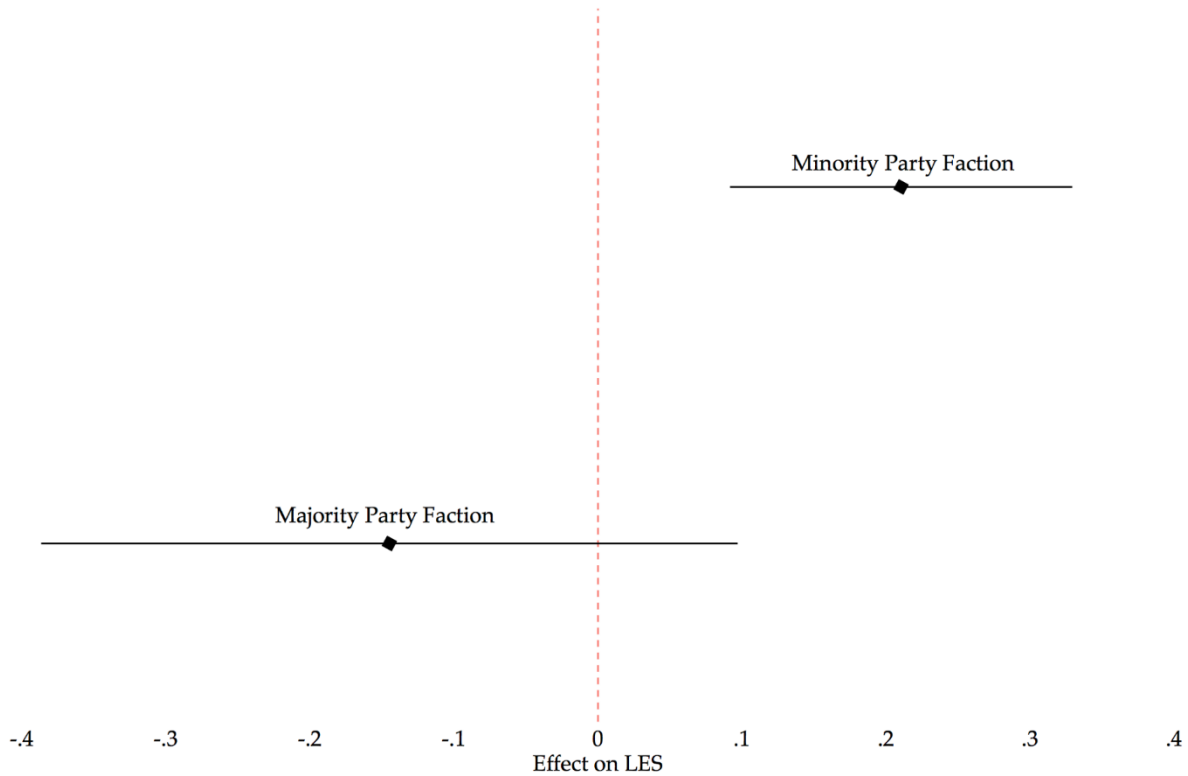
Turning to our final hypothesis, the *Faction Party Status* hypothesis suggests that Representatives who are members in a faction while they are in the minority party will be more effective lawmakers than their non-faction copartisans, while faction membership will lead to

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<sup>16</sup> Substantively similar findings are obtained if we estimate a non-parametric (i.e., kernel) regression model or if we employ a pair of dichotomous treatment variables (i.e., centrist faction and non-centrist faction). Table A2 presents the full results for the latter alternative.

decreased legislative effectiveness among majority-party legislators. This hypothesis is explored in Figure 4, which presents the coefficients from a regression where the dependent variable is Representative  $i$ 's LES in Congress  $t$ , and the key independent variables capture whether a Representative is in a minority-party faction or a majority-party faction.

**Figure 4. Faction Affiliation, Party Status, and Changes in Legislative Effectiveness**



*Notes:* Ordinary least squares regression coefficients with Representative and Congress fixed effects, clustered by Representative. The Dependent variable is Representative  $i$ 's Legislative Effectiveness Score in Congress  $t$ . Our results indicate that affiliation with a minority party faction – but not a majority party faction – increases a Representative's Legislative Effectiveness Score.

Consistent with the *Faction Party Status* hypothesis, we see that Representatives who are in factions while in the minority party are notably more effective than their non-faction-affiliated minority-party counterparts. Majority-party faction members, however, appear somewhat less

effective, but this finding does not achieve statistical significance. Because the average LES for all minority-party legislators is 0.43, the coefficient on the minority-party faction variable represents a remarkable 50% increase in lawmaking effectiveness for these faction members.

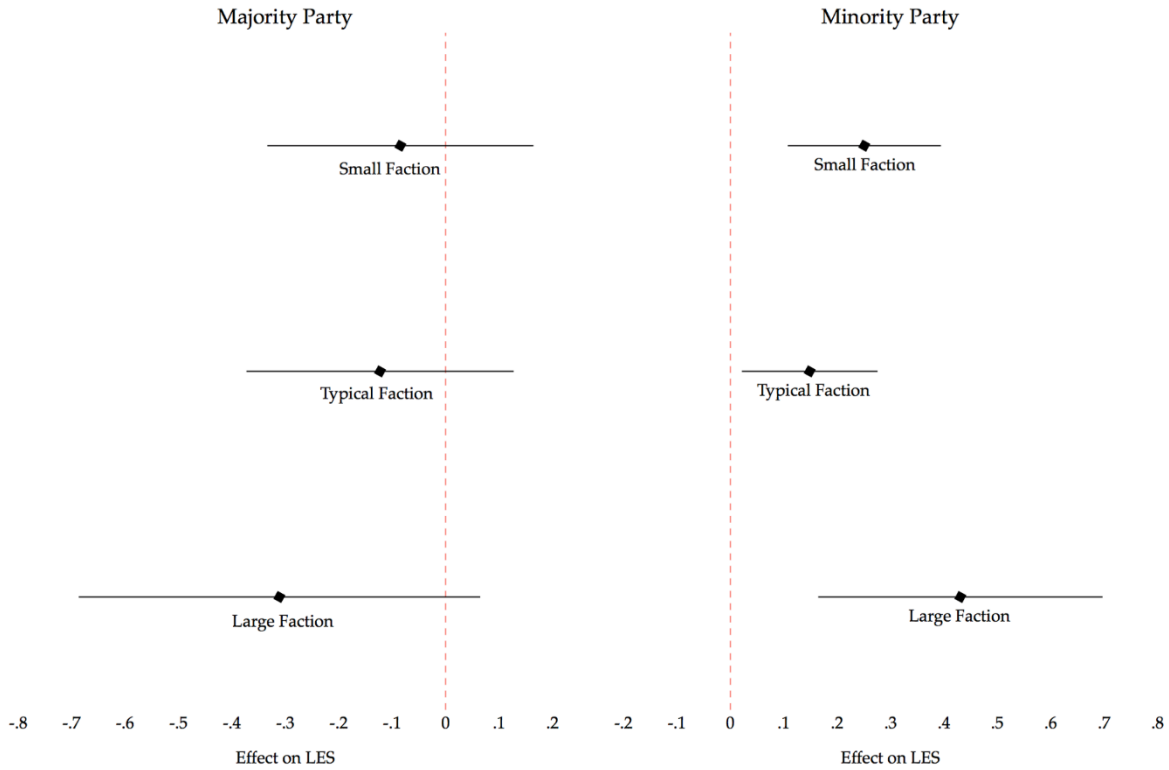
These results continue to hold when we analyze whether a Representative is more successful at advancing her substantively significant legislative proposals while in a minority-party faction. As we show in the appendix (Figure A3), minority-party faction affiliation is positively related to a Representative experiencing greater success at every stage in the legislative process, when we confine our analysis to include only the most salient set of proposals. In short, faction affiliation may increase a Representative's relative legislative effectiveness, but *only* when those factions are in the minority party. Hence, it appears that factions can promote legislators' agendas in a meaningful way, but only when their parties' leaders are not in a position to counter their legislative progress.<sup>17</sup>

These supplemental analyses also provide some support for the expectation that majority-party faction members would underperform at lawmaking, relative to their non-faction-affiliated majority-party peers. As shown in Figure A3, Representatives in majority-party factions introduce fewer substantive and significant bills in comparison to their non-affiliated majority-party peers; and even when they make such proposals, these proposals tend to fall by the wayside during later stages in the lawmaking process. Additional support for this hypothesis arises in the third model of Table A3, which controls for Representative fixed effects, but not Congress fixed effects. Taken together, these results suggest that minority-party faction members outperform their peers in advancing their bills, yet affiliating with a majority-party faction might be of limited value in trying to advance one's legislative agenda.

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<sup>17</sup> As an additional robustness check, we replicated our analyses in this section after iteratively dropping factions. Our results do not appear to be driven by any single faction.

**Figure 5: Evaluating the *Faction Size* and *Faction Party Status* Results**



*Notes:* Ordinary least squares regression coefficients with Representative and Congress fixed effects, clustered by Representative. The Dependent variable is Representative  $i$ 's Legislative Effectiveness Score in Congress  $t$ . The coefficients in the right panel indicate the effect of affiliation with a minority party faction of various sizes on a Representative's LES; the left panel presents the results of similar coefficients for majority party faction members. Our results indicate that affiliation in a minority party faction – irrespective of faction size – increases a Representative's Legislative Effectiveness Score.

Finally, in considering how the above conditional effects depend on one another, it appears that a Representative's legislative effectiveness is determined more by whether the faction she belongs to is in the majority or minority party, than by its relative size. To illustrate this point, Figure 5 presents the results of analyses of the relationships between the relative size (small, typical, large) of factions in the majority and minority parties and their members' legislative effectiveness.<sup>18</sup> Across all sizes we see that membership in a minority-party faction

<sup>18</sup> We employ the same categorization for faction sizes as defined above.



corresponds with a relative increase in a Representative's legislative effectiveness. In contrast, we see that members of majority-party factions, regardless of size, tend to be less effective than non-faction majority-party members (but this latter finding is not statistically significant). Hence, the relationship that was illustrated in Figure 2 seemed to have been driven largely by the increased effectiveness of legislators who belong to small factions within the minority party.<sup>19</sup>

In sum, the lawmaking success of members of Congress is indeed influenced by their participation in ideological caucuses. However, faction membership is not always a benefit for members' lawmaking aspirations and it may, in fact, be a detriment. Majority-party factions and their members' proposals may be at odds with the goals of majority-party leaders and of the Speaker. On average, this divide undercuts any boost in lawmaking effectiveness arising from the benefits of faction membership. Moreover, we find that majority-party faction members are less likely than other majority-party members to advance major substantive and significant legislation. In contrast, the resources of minority-party factions seem to expand the lawmaking opportunities of their members in ways that are not similarly undercut by the leadership, resulting in about a 50% overall boost in their lawmaking effectiveness relative to other minority-party members. These findings hold up regardless of faction size or ideological position.

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<sup>19</sup> Figure A6 presents the results of similar analyses that explores the relationship between a Representative's legislative effectiveness and faction ideology, across majority and minority parties. Consistent with the findings that are presented in Figure 5, we find that whether a faction is within the majority or minority party (rather than ideology, in this case) is significantly related to a Representative's legislative effectiveness. The finding of majority-party factions under-performing in lawmaking is consistent with evidence from Volden and Wiseman (2014, chapter 4), that Southern Democrats in the 1980s and early 1990s were significantly less effective than other Democrats.

## Conclusion

While political journalists and pundits often comment on the shifting positions of faction leaders to evaluate the likely fate of bills in the House, political scientists have provided scant evidence that these groups substantively matter for policymaking. In this paper, we have drawn on new data on the membership of eight ideological caucuses and decades of legislative activity to test three hypotheses regarding the individual-level effect of intraparty faction affiliation on a Representative's legislative effectiveness. Our results indicate that membership in an ideological faction corresponds with an increase in a Representative's legislative effectiveness, but this relationship is highly conditional on other factors. Contrary to conventional wisdom, we find little support for claims of a pivotal lawmaking role for centrist factions, or of ideologically extreme factions eschewing lawmaking altogether. We do find some evidence that membership in small, tight-knit blocs can improve a Representative's legislative effectiveness, but this finding appears to be driven primarily by broader partisan conditions. Most significantly, we find robust evidence that factions in the minority party – and only the minority party – improve their members' ability to advance their policy proposals.

These findings are consistent with the argument that factions possess the institutional capacity to support legislative activity for Representatives when they are in the minority party, but their efforts are blunted (or even undermined) by an empowered set of party leaders when these same Representatives reclaim majority-party status in the House. Looking ahead to future elections, our results suggest that Republican blocs, such as the centrist Main Street Partnership and the firebrand House Freedom Caucus, may become *more* important to conservative lawmakers if the Republicans lose the House in 2018. In contrast, Blue Dogs and Progressives may see notable growth in their ranks if the Democrats reclaim the House, but we should not

necessarily expect that these groups will experience a commensurate boost in policymaking success.

Although these findings are instructive, more research is needed to better understand the nature of American party factions in the contemporary Congress. While the analysis in this paper allows us to assess the relationship between intraparty faction affiliation and legislative productivity (as measured by the LES), we are not in a position to assess the ability of blocs to *obstruct* a party's governing agenda. Additionally, our analysis focuses on the individual lawmakers within caucuses, rather than on each faction's collective goals. Likewise, we also cannot comment on the relative effectiveness of interparty/bipartisan factions, such as the "Problem Solvers Caucus," which, in the words of one of its members, "come[s] together nearly every week to engage in a common sense approach to solving [the] nation's toughest issues."<sup>20</sup> It is also possible that faction membership provides benefits that are indirect, or even orthogonal, to lawmaking, such as promoting candidates in primary elections. Finally, it is worth noting that factions are not a phenomenon that is specific to U.S. national politics; legislative politics scholars might seek to examine the robustness of our findings as new, state-level factions (e.g., the Texas Freedom Caucus) continue to institutionalize across the United States.

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted on the website of Problem Solver's Co-Chair, Tom Reed (R-NY): <https://reed.house.gov/issues/issue/?IssueID=14901> (accessed July 10, 2018).

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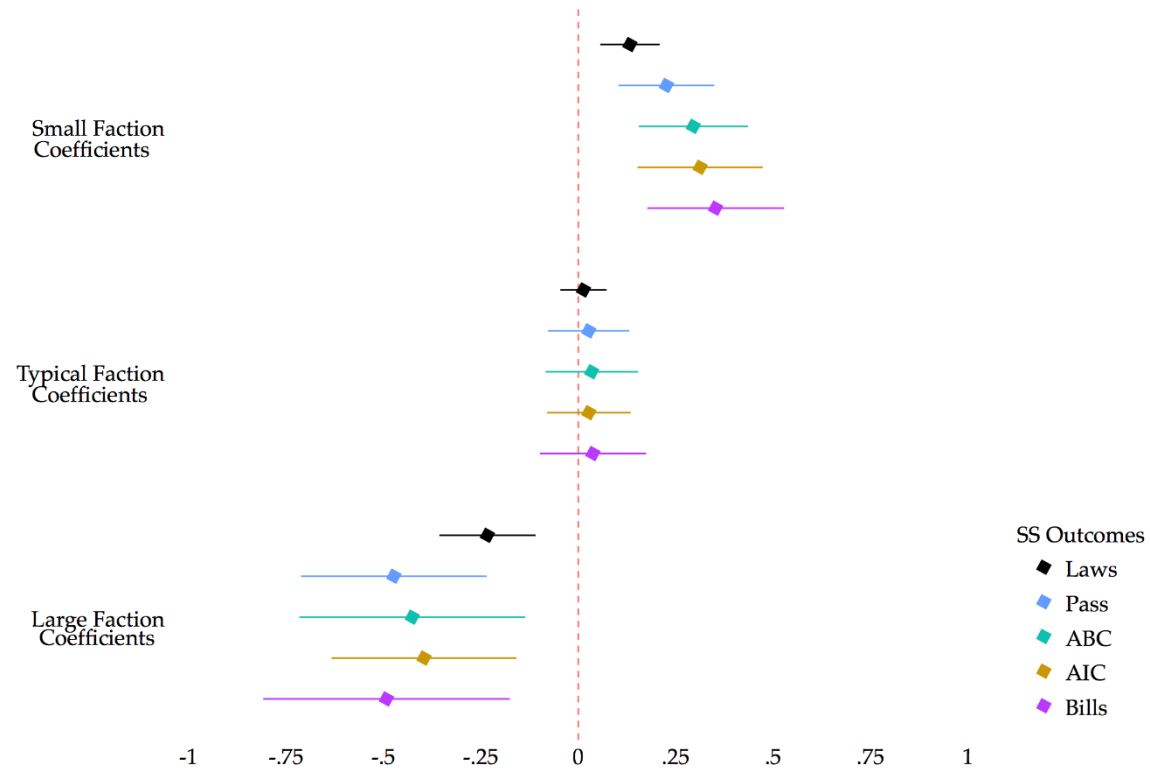
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## Appendix

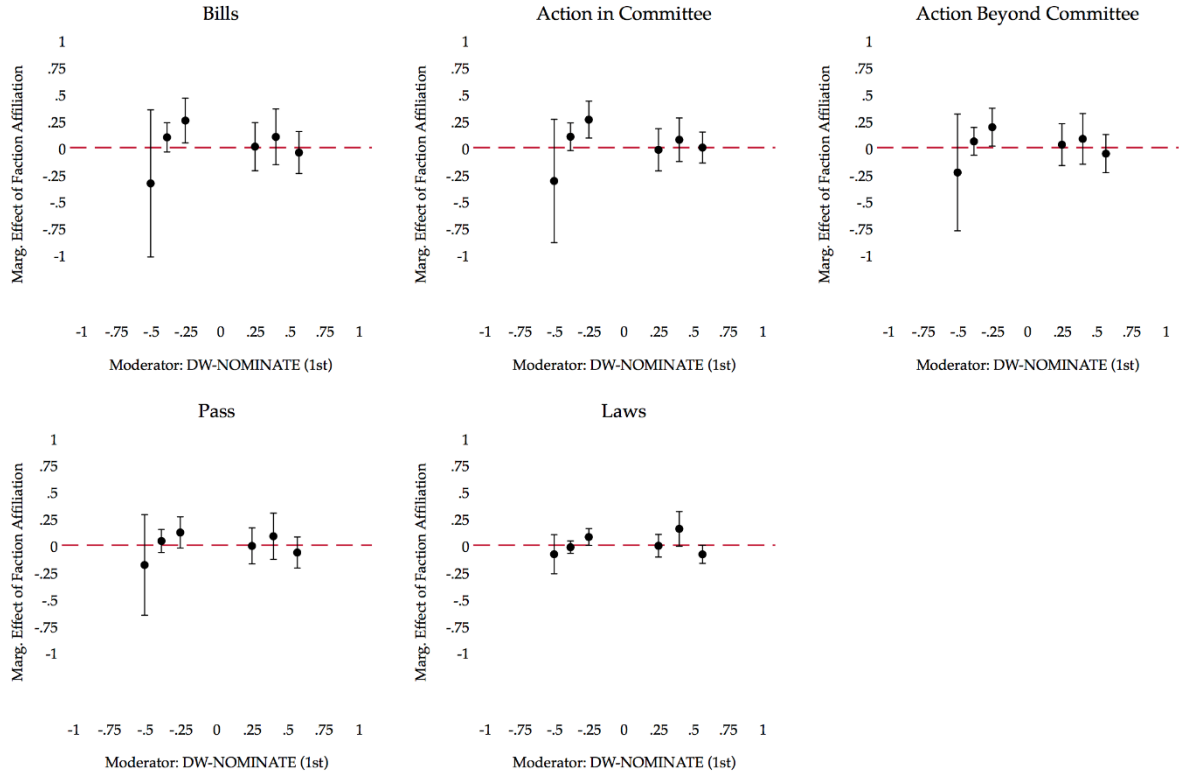
**Figure A1: The Effect of Faction Affiliation, by Size, on Substantive and Significant Legislative Outcomes**



*Notes:* Ordinary least squares regression coefficients from five distinct models with Representative and Congress fixed effects, clustered by Representative. The dependent variables across the regressions are: (1) Representative  $i$ 's number of substantive and significant legislative proposals, and (2) the number of those proposals to receive action in a committee, (3) receive action beyond the committee, (4) pass the House, or (5) become law in Congress  $t$ . Our results indicate that affiliation in a small party faction (i.e., those with rosters one standard deviation lower than the average sized faction) increases a Representative's legislative productivity and success in reaching each stage of the lawmaking process. Conversely, affiliation with a large party faction (i.e., those with rosters one standard deviation higher than the average faction) corresponds with a reduction in legislative productivity and success on substantive and significant issues.

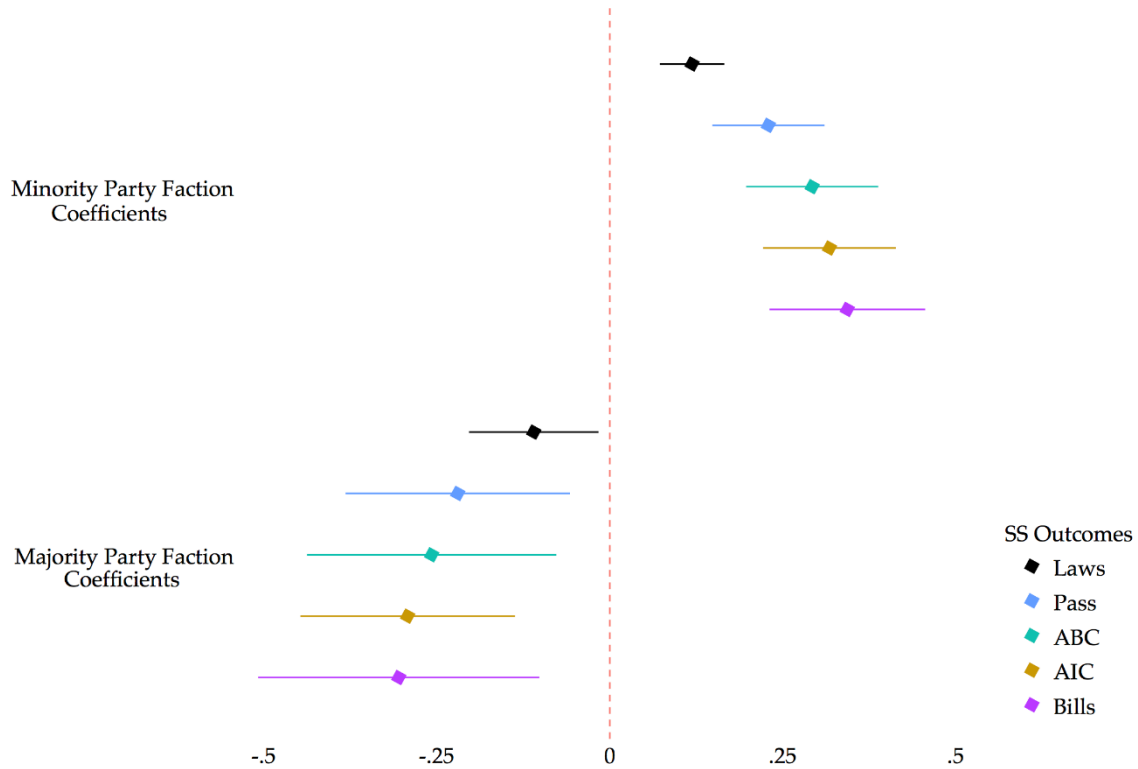


**Figure A2: The Effect of Faction Affiliation, Conditioned by Ideology, on Substantive and Significant Legislative Outcomes**



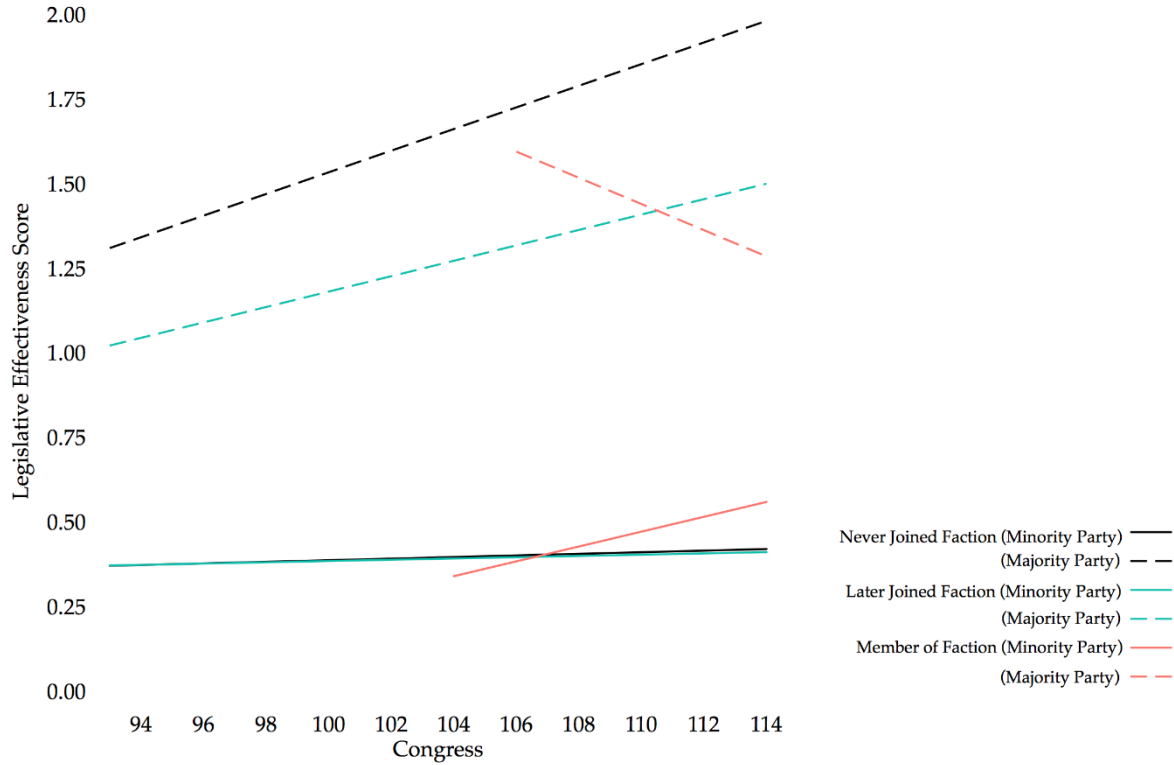
*Notes:* Binned coefficients, with 95% confidence intervals, from five distinct models representing the marginal effect of faction membership across the ideological spectrum. Estimates are from interactive models and include Representative and Congress fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by Representative. Our explanatory variable is membership in any faction, and the moderating variable is an individual Representative  $i$ 's DW-NOMINATE score. The dependent variables across the regressions are: (1) Representative  $i$ 's number of substantive and significant legislative proposals, and (2) the number of those proposals to receive action in a committee, (3) receive action beyond the committee, (4) pass the House, or (5) become law in Congress  $t$ . Our results provide suggestive, but inconsistent evidence that centrist Democrats become more productive and successful lawmakers after joining a faction.

**Figure A3: The Effect of Faction Affiliation, by Party Status, on Substantive and Significant Legislative Outcomes**



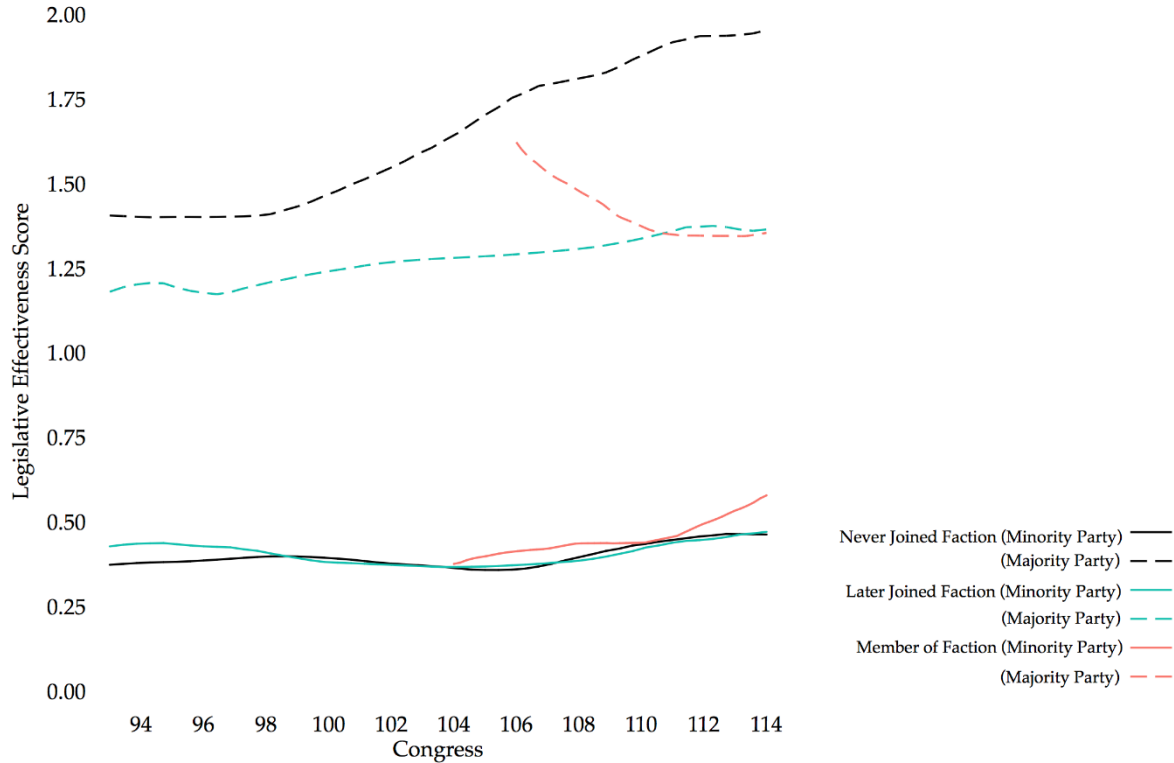
*Notes:* Ordinary least squares regression coefficients from five distinct models with Representative and Congress fixed effects, clustered by Representative. The dependent variables across the regressions are: (1) Representative  $i$ 's number of substantive and significant legislative proposals, and (2) the number of those proposals to receive action in a committee, (3) receive action beyond the committee, (4) pass the House, or (5) become law in Congress  $t$ . Our results indicate that affiliation in a minority party faction increases a Representative's legislative productivity and success in reaching each stage of the lawmaking process. Conversely, affiliation with a majority party faction corresponds with a reduction in legislative productivity and success on substantive and significant issues.

**Figure A4: A Linear Assessment of the Parallel Paths Assumption**



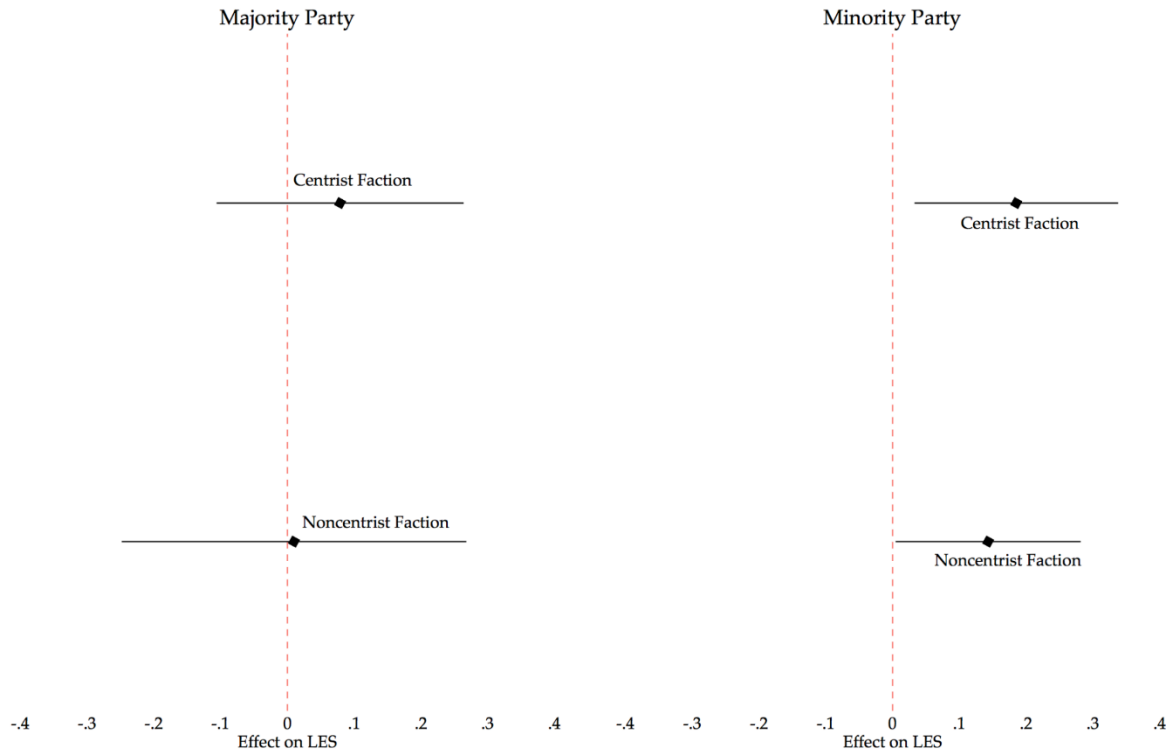
*Notes:* Linear fits for six categories of members. Dashed lines indicate trends for Representatives in the majority party; solid lines indicate minority party trajectories. Black lines indicate Representatives who never joined an ideological faction. Green lines indicate unaffiliated Representatives that eventually join a faction. Red lines indicate faction members. The linear trajectory of not-yet-faction members closely tracks those who never join a faction – especially among minority party members.

**Figure A5: A Non-Linear Assessment of the Parallel Paths Assumption**



*Notes:* Kernel-weighted local polynomial smoothing fits for six categories of members. Dashed lines indicate trends for Representatives in the majority party; solid lines indicate minority party trajectories. Black lines indicate Representatives who never joined an ideological faction. Green lines indicate unaffiliated Representatives that eventually join a faction. Red lines indicate faction members. Non-linear trends are generally, but not perfectly, parallel for those that either never join a faction, or join a faction later in their careers.

**Figure A6: Evaluating the *Faction Ideology* and *Faction Party Status* Results**



*Notes:* Results from an ordinary least squares regression model with observations clustered by Representatives. Dependent Variable is Representative  $i$ 's Legislative Effectiveness Score in Congress  $t$ . Each coefficient includes 95% confidence intervals. The coefficients on the right indicate the effect of affiliation with centrist (i.e., the Republican Main Street Partnership, the Blue Dog Coalition, or the New Democrat Coalition) or non-centrist factions (the Freedom Caucus, the Tea Party Caucus, the Republican Study Committee, the Populist Caucus, or the Progressive Caucus) in the minority party; the left pane indicates similar coefficients for those in the majority party. Results provide further support that affiliation with a minority-party faction improves legislative effectiveness – irrespective of faction centrism.

**Table A1: Full Results for the *Faction Size* Hypothesis**

	Dependent Variable: Legislative Effectiveness Score			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Small Faction	-0.06 (0.05)	-0.11 (0.07)	0.27*** (0.07)	0.22** (0.08)
Typical Faction	0.03 (0.05)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.05 (0.07)
Large Faction	-0.18 (0.10)	-0.15 (0.09)	-0.56** (0.19)	-0.30 (0.19)
Majority Party	1.05*** (0.06)	0.50*** (0.07)	0.76*** (0.18)	0.86*** (0.19)
Vote Percent		0.02 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Vote Percent (Squared)		-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.00002* (0.0001)	-0.0002** (0.0001)
Majority Leader		0.27 (0.16)	0.27 (0.17)	0.28 (0.18)
Minority Leader		-0.13* (0.06)	-0.21 (0.12)	-0.18 (0.12)
Chair		2.87*** (0.30)	2.92*** (0.28)	2.87*** (0.27)
Subcommittee Chair		0.72*** (0.10)	0.73*** (0.11)	0.71*** (0.11)
Power Committee		-0.26*** (0.07)	-0.17** (0.06)	-0.16* (0.06)
Seniority		0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.00 (0.02)
Chamber Distance		-0.25 (0.21)	0.26 (0.51)	0.53 (0.52)
Legislator Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	Yes
Congress Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes
R <sup>2</sup>	0.12	0.39	0.39	0.34
N	6,504	5,448	5,448	5,448

\*\*\*p < 0.001 (two-tailed); \*\*p < 0.01 (two-tailed); \*p < 0.05 (two-tailed).

**Table A2: Full Results for the *Faction Ideology* Hypothesis**

	Dependent Variable: Legislative Effectiveness Score			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Centrist Faction	-0.02 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)	0.07 (0.07)	0.06 (0.08)
Non-Centrist Faction	-0.03 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.11 (0.08)	0.01 (0.09)
Majority Party	1.02*** (0.05)	0.52*** (0.08)	0.83*** (0.18)	0.91*** (0.19)
Vote Percent		0.02 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Vote Percent (Squared)		-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.0002* (0.0001)	-0.0002** (0.0001)
Majority Leader		0.25 (0.16)	0.26 (0.17)	0.27 (0.18)
Minority Leader		-0.13* (0.06)	-0.21 (0.12)	-0.17 (0.12)
Chair		2.86*** (0.30)	2.89*** (0.28)	2.85*** (0.27)
Subcommittee Chair		0.71*** (0.10)	0.71*** (0.11)	0.70*** (0.11)
Power Committee		-0.26*** (0.07)	-0.17** (0.06)	-0.16** (0.06)
Seniority		0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.00 (0.02)
Chamber Distance		-0.14 (0.23)	0.57 (0.51)	0.73 (0.52)
Legislator Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	Yes
Congress Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes
R <sup>2</sup>	0.12	0.39	0.39	0.34
N	6,504	5,448	5,448	5,448

\*\*\*p < 0.001 (two-tailed); \*\*p < 0.01 (two-tailed); \*p < 0.05 (two-tailed).

**Table A3: Full Results for the *Party Status* Hypothesis**

	Dependent Variable: Legislative Effectiveness Score			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Minority-Party Faction	0.08** (0.02)	0.10** (0.03)	0.18*** (0.04)	0.21*** (0.05)
Majority-Party Faction	-0.11 (0.09)	-0.09 (0.08)	-0.23* (0.10)	-0.14 (0.11)
Majority Party	1.09*** (0.07)	0.54*** (0.07)	0.78*** (0.17)	0.89*** (0.18)
Vote Percent		0.02 (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Vote Percent (Squared)		-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.0002** (0.0001)	-0.0002** (0.0001)
Majority Leader		0.26 (0.16)	0.26 (0.17)	0.27 (0.18)
Minority Leader		-0.13* (0.06)	-0.21 (0.12)	-0.17 (0.12)
Chair		2.85*** (0.30)	2.88*** (0.28)	2.84*** (0.27)
Subcommittee Chair		0.72*** (0.10)	0.72*** (0.11)	0.71*** (0.11)
Power Committee		-0.25*** (0.07)	-0.16** (0.06)	-0.15* (0.06)
Seniority		0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.004 (0.02)
Chamber Distance		-0.26 (0.20)	-0.05 (0.51)	0.30 (0.52)
Legislator Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	Yes
Congress Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes
R <sup>2</sup>	0.12	0.39	0.39	0.35
N	6,504	5,448	5,448	5,448

\*\*\*p < 0.001 (two-tailed); \*\*p < 0.01 (two-tailed); \*p < 0.05 (two-tailed).



**Table A4: “Newly Treated” Observations, By Congress and Treatment**

Congress	Any Faction	Small Faction	Typical Faction	Large Faction	Min. Party Faction	Maj. Party Faction	Centrist Faction	Non-Centrist Faction
104	22	23	0	0	22	0	22	0
105	20	20	0	0	20	0	20	0
106	59	0	90	0	14	45	59	0
107	53	2	51	0	51	2	3	51
108	81	1	81	0	8	73	17	66
109	38	10	38	0	4	34	8	30
110	34	0	57	0	126	123	9	26
111	44	10	35	0	24	20	19	35
112	15	17	7	101	129	132	6	12
113	11	0	14	4	5	6	14	5
114	30	0	29	11	17	13	11	25
Total	407	83	402	116	420	448	188	250

*Notes:* Each cell indicates the number of Representatives in a given Congress to switch from a 0 to a 1 for the relative faction indicator. These counts exclude Representatives who immediately join a faction upon winning election. These counts include instances in which a Representative receives a faction treatment without selecting into a new group. For example, a Representative may be a member of the Blue Dogs in the majority, but that Representative receives the Minority Party Faction treatment (i.e., switches from a 0 to a 1 for that variable) after Democrats lose the House – even as her underlying faction affiliation remains unchanged.

**Table A5: Summary Statistics for Key Independent Variables**

Variable	Description	Mean	Std. Dev
Small Faction	1 = member of faction that is 1 st. dev. below average faction size; 0 = otherwise	0.03	0.16
Typical Faction	1 = member of faction that is +/- 1 st. dev. average faction size; 0 = otherwise	0.28	0.45
Large Faction	1 = member of faction that is 1 st. dev. above average faction size; 0 = otherwise	0.08	0.27
Centrist Faction	1 = member of Republican Main Street Partnership, Blue Dogs, or New Democrats; 0 = otherwise	0.18	0.39
Non-Centrist Faction	1 = member of Freedom Caucus, Tea Party Caucus, RSC, Progressives, or Populists; 0 = otherwise	0.22	0.41
Minority-Party Faction	1 = member of faction within minority party; 0 = otherwise	0.18	0.39
Majority-Party Faction	1 = member of faction within majority party; 0 = otherwise	0.20	0.40
LES	Legislative Effectiveness Score	0.97	1.47
Vote Share	Percent vote share in most recent election	67.91	13.37
Vote Share <sup>2</sup>	Square of Vote Share variable	4837.15	2013.43
Majority-Party Leadership	1 = in majority party leadership as identified in <i>Almanac of American Politics</i> ; 0 = otherwise	0.02	0.14
Minority-Party Leadership	1 = in minority party leadership as identified in <i>Almanac of American Politics</i> ; 0 = otherwise	0.02	0.15
Committee Chair	1 = Committee chair; 0 = otherwise	0.05	0.21
Subcommittee Chair	1 = Subcommittee chair; 0 = otherwise	0.21	0.41
Power Committee	1 = Representative sits on Appropriations, Ways and Means, or Rules Committee	0.26	0.44
Seniority	Count of number of 2-year Congresses that Representative served in	5.20	4.04
DW-NOMINATE (1 <sup>st</sup> )	First dimension DW-NOMINATE Score of Representative	0.02	0.42
Distance from Median	Absolute distance from Representative's first-dimension DW-NOMINATE Score to that of floor median	0.38	0.22
Majority Party	1 = Majority Party Member, 0 = otherwise	0.55	0.50