Valence, Elections, and Legislative Institutions

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Abstract: *To the degree that voters care about competence, expertise, and other valence characteristics of their representatives and political parties care about winning elections, parties have an incentive to signal that their legislators have such characteristics. We construct a model of parties, motivated by both reelection and by policy, that attempt to signal individual incumbents' valences to voters through the assignment of these members to positions of authority. The model illustrates how electorally motivated party leaders will have an incentive to promote less competent incumbents than they would if voters did not make inferences from promotion decisions. We derive the model's empirical implications and test them with original data on the careers of Chilean senators serving between 1998 and 2013. In support of the model's insights, we find that promotion to a leadership position is an effective signal to voters only if the promoted incumbent has extreme views relative to the party.*

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A long-standing question in legislative studies is how legislatures and/or legislative parties allocate positions of authority. The most high-profile example of such a position is that of a committee chair: those members who, to various degrees, individually control intrachamber agenda powers.[1] While legislatures assign these powers in different fashions in both de jure and de facto senses, a fundamental regularity across chambers is the fact that ideological extremists are frequently assigned to these positions.[2]

The theoretical and empirical powers of the positive model of collective institutional choice—the median voter model combined with the strategic realities of gatekeeping (e.g. Crombez, Groseclose, and Krehbiel 2006;

Denzau and Mackay 1983; Krehbiel 1999; Patty 2007) — lead one to question why relatively extreme legislators are appointed to positions of apparent influence. Although, in some cases, what appear to be positions of authority are influential only in appearance, in a significant proportion of cases they actually possess or convey real influence. This regularity has led to the development of several productive theories of the policymaking process(es) that attempt to explain or reconcile this regularity with the basic tenets of the canonical model. Gains from exchange (Weingast and Marshall 1988), collusion through policy differentiation (Shepsle and Weingast 1981), and interchamber and/or interbranch bargaining (Gailmard and Hammond 2011) have, among others, been forwarded as parsimonious and

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[1]The scholarly attention on other positions, particularly intraparty positions, has not been as consistent or sustained across legislatures. Because our theory applies equally well to such positions, our article adds to this very important, if understudied, literature as well.

[2]For example, among many others, consider Gilligan and Krehbiel (1989), Hall and Grofman (1990), Krehbiel (1990), Smith and Deering (1990), Groseclose (1994), Adler and Lapinski (1997), Aldrich and Rohde (2000, 2004), Overby and Kazee (2000), Parker et al. (2004), Frisch and Kelly (2004), and Sin (2014).

efficient rationalizations of this apparent conflict between empirics and theory.

Each of these explanations, which rely upon various institutional realities of the policymaking process, is per se indifferent to the electoral process. That is, the predictions of each of these explanations are—quite understandably—insensitive to the electoral prospects or motivations of the individuals and/or parties involved therein. In this article, we extend the previous research by incorporating the electoral dimension. Specifically, we lay out a framework that is broadly compatible with the main existing "internal" institutional rationalizations of committee assignments and also brings to bear potential variation in the electoral prospects of the member(s) and party in question.

More specifically, we know that parties adopt a variety of strategies in order to earn votes and win seats. One of those strategies is to field quality candidates, or at least those who appear to have valued qualities like competence. From formal (Groseclose 2001; Schofield 2003) to observational (Adams, Merrill, and Grofman 2005; Buttice and Stone 2012) to experimental (Kulisheck and Mondak 1996) work, we have learned that voters put an emphasis on candidate valence, even relative to partisanship or ideological proximity. Much of the existing literature focuses on incumbents' efforts to make their quality known through campaign expenditures (Arnold 2004; Meirowitz 2008) or legislative obstruction (Patty 2016). In this article, we focus on the relatively understudied question of how parties, prior to the campaign, can signal to voters that their incumbent candidates have high valence.

We offer a model of signaling through *promotion* that explains under which circumstances granting a leadership position to an incumbent will improve her valence appeal and electoral performance. We reason that if a party promotes an incumbent to a position of authority inside the legislature, it may serve as a signal to voters that party elites believe that the member in question is highly competent. However, not any promotion will be an effective signal about the incumbent's valence. For an incumbent whose ideology is relatively divergent from the party leadership, a promotion has a large impact on voters' inferences about the incumbent's valence. By placing a relatively extreme member in a position of authority, the party signals that her other qualities are so positive that they outweigh any concerns that might be raised on ideological grounds.[3] Conversely, promoting a member

who shares the party leaders' preferences may only signal to voters that the party views the incumbent as safe or trustworthy. Thus, beyond questions of seniority (Abram and Cooper 1968; Polsby, Gallaher, and Rundquist 1969), party loyalty (Brewer and Deering 2005; Deering and Wahlbeck 2006), or fundraising abilities (Heberlig and Larson 2005), we argue that key institutional positions are handed out with electoral concerns in mind.

In what follows, we develop a model of how parties choose to reward one of their legislators with a promotion to a leadership position and under which circumstances this promotion will boost the candidate's valence. An important contribution of the model is incorporating the electoral dimension into the institutional features of the policymaking process. After explicitly spelling out the predictions derived from the model, we show support for our theoretical reasoning with original data from the upper chamber of a bicameral, presidential system.

The Baseline Model

The baseline model focuses on the essential trade-offs faced by a party within our setting.[4] The model consists of a single party, P, that is attempting to influence how a voter, V, will evaluate an incumbent legislator, I. The incumbent, I, is characterized by a *type*, consisting of two components: a unidimensional *ideology* represented by an ideal point $x \in [-1, 1]$, and a unidimensional *valence* or *competence*, represented by a number $y \geq 0$, so that the incumbent's type is the pair (x, y).[5]

In order to keep the model tractable and reach our main conclusions as simply as possible, we assume that the incumbent's ideology is observable and common knowledge to all players (the voter, the party, and the incumbent),[6] but that the incumbent's valence, y, is observed

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[3]Becker and Moscardelli (2008) also point out that ideologically extreme members are appointed as committee chairs, but they put this down to the use of seniority for choosing chairs and generational

coincidence of members particularly distant from their party's current median. Asmussen and Ramey (2014) argue that ideologically extreme members will be rewarded with key committee posts *if* they vote with the party on particularly key votes, putting aside personal/district preferences for the good of the party.

[4]A generalization of the model is presented in Appendix in the supporting information (SI).

[5]We assume that the valence is nonnegative essentially for parsimony. Our results continue to hold so long as the valence is not "too" negative.

[6]The assumption that the incumbent's ideology is observable and exogenous while valence is unobservable greatly simplifies the presentation of our analysis. Furthermore, relaxing this assumption would require making several further assumptions about the information held by both the party and the voter. This is an interesting direction to extend the model, particularly by considering

only by the party and the incumbent: The voter knows only that the incumbent's valence is drawn according to the Uniform[0,1] distribution.[7] Assuming that valence is not observed opens up the possibility that the party might promote an incumbent in order to promote her electoral prospects, because if the voter were to perfectly observe valence and ideology, the promotion decision should not have a direct effect on the voter's decision.

The Voter's Reelection Decision. We assume that the voter, V, must cast a ballot for either a challenger or an incumbent. This vote choice is denoted by $b \in \{I, C\}$, where $b = I$ represents voting for the incumbent and $b = C$ represents voting for the challenger. Prior to the voter's making this choice, the party, P, chooses *rank r* after observing the incumbent's type, (x, y). The party can assign the incumbent to a position of influence ($r = 1$) or relegate her to the backbench ($r = 0$).

After the party chooses r, the voter observes

1. The ideologies of the incumbent, x, and those of the challenger, $x_c \in [-1, 1]$,
2. Whether the incumbent was promoted by the party, $r \in \{0, 1\}$, and
3. The realization of a random variable, $\varepsilon \in \mathbf{R}$, which represents the voter's unmodeled preference bias for the challenger.

When $\varepsilon > 0$, the voter is predisposed toward the challenger, and, conversely, when $\varepsilon < 0$, she is predisposed toward the incumbent. Although only the voter observes ε, the party is aware of its distribution, which for simplicity we assume is the Uniform$[-^1/_2, {}^1/_2]$ distribution.[8] The voter's payoff is defined as follows:

$$u_V(b|x, y, \varepsilon) = \begin{cases} y - (x - \tau)^2 & \text{if } b = I, \\ \bar{y}_C - (x_C - \tau)^2 + \varepsilon & \text{if } b = C, \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

where $\tau \in \mathbf{R}$ represents the voter's ideological preferences (i.e., τ is the voter's ideal point), $\bar{y}_C$ represents the expected valence of the challenger, and x_C denotes the challenger's ideology. As standard, we assume that $\bar{y}_C$ and x_C are common knowledge to the party and voter.[9] We as-

sume for simplicity that the challenger's expected valence is equal to the incumbent's: $\bar{y}_C = E[y] = {}^1/_2$.

Assumption 1. *The challenger and incumbent have identical expected valence: $\bar{y}_C = E[y] = {}^1/_2$.*

Abstracting from Other Electoral Impacts of Ideology. In order to focus directly on the marginal effect of ideology x on the electoral impact of promotion on reelection, we assume that the challenger's and incumbent's ideological positions are equal to each other and the voter's ideal point: $x = x_C = \tau$.

Assumption 2. *The challenger and incumbent each share the voter's ideological position: $x_C = x = \tau$.*

The Party's Information and Choices. After observing the incumbent's type, the party chooses a *promotion choice*, which amounts to simply assigning her a *rank*, r. After this, the voter observes only the ideology and rank of the incumbent (i.e., x and r), but not her valence (i.e., not y). After observing (x, r), the voter forms a belief about the valence of the incumbent, which we denote by $h(x, r)$. In equilibrium, we require that this belief be consistent with the party's incentives, to which we now turn.

The Party's Objectives. The party's payoff from its promotion choice, r, depends on the incumbent's ideology, x, the incumbent's valence, y, and the voter's beliefs about the incumbent's valence, $h(x, r)$. Substantively, we assume that the party's benefit from promoting an incumbent is higher when

1. The incumbent is ideologically closer to the party,
2. The incumbent has high valence, and
3. Promoting the incumbent will increase the incumbent's probability of winning the election.

Formally, the party's preferences are represented by the following function:

$$\hat{u}_P(b, r, x, y) = \begin{cases} \omega - r(\gamma x^2 - \lambda y) & \text{if } b = I, \\ -r(\gamma x^2 - \lambda y) & \text{if } b = C, \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

where $\omega \geq 0$ represents the strength of the party's desire to see the incumbent reelected, $\gamma \geq 0$ represents the strength of the party's ideological preferences, and $\lambda \geq 0$

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the incentives the equilibrium behavior in this setting imply for incumbents when adopting ideological stances early in their careers. However, due to space constraints, we leave this interesting extension for future work.

[7]We generalize to other probability distributions in SI Appendix A.

[8]This assumption ensures that the idiosyncratic term does not favor either candidate and, furthermore, that the results are driven only by the party's strategic considerations, rather than other (unmodeled) factors affecting the voter's decision.

[9]This assumption can be relaxed. If we assume that the voter has some, but imperfect, information about the incumbent's ideology

and the party has better information about the incumbent's ideology (which is plausible), then the impact of promotion on the voter's beliefs about the incumbent's valence will be smaller than the effect calculated here. However, the qualitative results will remain unchanged, as they flow from the structure of the party's payoff function.

represents the value of the incumbent's valence to the party if the incumbent is promoted. The function $\hat{u}_P$ is with respect to the voter's vote choice, but the party must make its decision without knowing the voter's ballot choice, which depends on the (unobserved to the party) realized value of ε. Thus, letting $v(r|x, h)$ represent the probability that the incumbent will be reelected given the promotion choice r, the party's expected payoff from promotion choice r is given by

$$u_P(r|x, y, h) = \omega\, v(r|x, h) - r\big(\gamma x^2 - \lambda y\big). \quad (3)$$

With this in hand, we now describe the substantive interpretations of the parameters, ω, γ, and λ.

Capturing Elections: ω. Substantively, ω represents the party's electoral motivations, capturing how important the party considers reelection of the incumbent. Intuitively, ω will tend to be higher when the number of seats the party holds and/or expects to control after the election is near 50% (or any other relevant threshold, such as the three-fifths cloture requirement in the U.S. Senate). It does *not* represent the nature of the electoral environment the incumbent faces (e.g., the expected closeness of the election).

Capturing Gatekeeping: γ. The parameters γ and λ are institutional in nature. For example, one can think of γ as representing the "gatekeeping" powers the incumbent will possess if promoted by the party.[10] When γ is large, the party incurs a larger policy cost from giving the position to an incumbent whose ideological preferences diverge from those of the party (i.e., $x \neq 0$).[11]

Capturing Leadership: λ. Political powers and responsibilities extend beyond formal controls over policy outcomes. In a legislative context, leadership positions involve a variety of responsibilities, such as coalition maintenance (e.g., whipping votes), coordination of legislative activities (e.g., shepherding bills through the process), and making public appearances (e.g., fundraising), to name a few. To the degree that the incumbent's valence represents her ability to carry out such responsibilities, the parameter λ measures the importance to the party of such

nonpolicy responsibilities. High values of λ mean that the party reaps a larger benefit from giving the position to an incumbent with high valence.

Sequence of Play. The sequence of play is as follows:

1. The party, P, observes the incumbent's ideology and valence, (x, y).
2. The party chooses the incumbent's rank, denoted by $r \in \{0, 1\}$.
3. The voter observes the incumbent's ideology, x, and rank, r.
4. The voter updates his or her beliefs about the incumbent's valence, y, denoted by h.
5. The party and voter each receive their payoffs, and the game ends.

Equilibrium: The Party's Decision and the Voter's Beliefs

Although the baseline model contains only one active choice (the party's decision whether to promote the incumbent), the model is strategic insofar as we require that the party's decision be consistent with the voter's beliefs, h. Specifically, the voter's beliefs about the incumbent after observing the incumbent's ideology, x, and the party's promotion choice, r, must be correct. By the beliefs, being "correct," we mean that $h(x, r)$ is consistent with Bayes' rule and the party's *strategy*.

The party's strategy is a function $\rho : \mathbf{R}^2 \to [0, 1]$, where $\rho(x, y)$ denotes the probability that the party promotes the incumbent when the incumbent's ideology is x and his or her valence is y:

$$\rho(x, y) \equiv \Pr[r = 1|x, y].$$

Then, for any ideology x and promotion decision r, the voter's beliefs are *correct* with respect to ρ at (x, r) if it satisfies the following two conditions at (x, r):

$$
\begin{aligned}
&h(y|x, r, \rho) \\
&= \begin{cases}
\frac{\rho(x,y) f(y)}{\int \rho(x,z) f(z)dz} & \text{if } r = 1 \text{ and} \\
& \quad \int \rho(x, z) f(z)dz > 0, \\
\frac{(1-\rho(x,y)) f(y)}{\int (1-\rho(x,z)) f(z)dz} & \text{if } r = 0 \text{ and} \\
& \quad \int (1 - \rho(x, z)) f(z)dz > 0.
\end{cases}
\end{aligned} \quad (4)
$$

In formal terms, we require that the voter's beliefs be equal to those supported in a perfect Bayesian equilibrium of the game.[12]

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[10]To keep exposition of the baseline model simple, we assume that the marginal cost of ideological divergence, γ, is symmetric: Divergence is equally costly to the party regardless of its direction. We relax this assumption in Section the section "Choosing between Incumbents: Scarce Positions."

[11]In terms of comparability with spatial models of policymaking, we have normalized the problem such that the party has an "ideal point" of zero. In this baseline model, this is without loss of generality.

[12]As is common in games of asymmetric information, Equation (4), derived in SI Corollary A.1, does not pin down the voter's beliefs when she observes the party choosing a promotion decision r that is

The Voter's Vote Choice. Because only the voter observes ε, from the party's standpoint, the voter's behavior will be "probabilistic." Our assumptions in this baseline model imply that the voter votes according to the linear probability model. Specifically, given the assumption that $\varepsilon \sim \text{Uniform}[0, 1]$, combined with Assumptions 1 and 2, the probability that the voter votes for the incumbent, conditional upon the incumbent's ideology, x, the voter's beliefs, h, and the party's promotion decision, r, is

$$v(r|x, h) = \Pr\{\varepsilon : b = I|r, x, h\} = E[y|r, x, h]. \quad (5)$$

The Party's Promotion Decision. In equilibrium, the party promotes the incumbent legislator if and only if the incumbent's valence exceeds an endogenous threshold.[13] That is, for any given ideology x, there will be some level of valence, $t^*(x)$, such that the party's equilibrium promotion strategy will be of the following form:

$$\rho^*(x, y) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } y < t^*(x), \\ 1 & \text{if } y \geq t^*(x). \end{cases}$$

Thus, the threshold $t^*(x)$ describes the minimal level of valence at which the party will promote an incumbent with ideology x. Because we consider perfect Bayesian equilibria (which require that the voter's beliefs be correct), we can represent the voter's beliefs, h, simply as a threshold, t. The equilibrium threshold, $t^*(x)$, will be a function of the features of the position (i.e., the marginal importance of valence in the position, λ, and the position's policy impact, γ), the marginal importance to the party of the incumbent's reelection (i.e., ω), and—most relevant for our empirical analysis—the incumbent's ideological divergence from the party, x.

We now turn to the comparative statics of the effect of a promotion on a voter's inference about the incumbent's valence. In equilibrium, the voter should always believe that a promotion ($r = 1$) signals that the incumbent has (weakly) higher valence than the voter would believe if the incumbent were not promoted ($r = 0$). We are interested in the difference between the incumbent's probability of being reelected conditional upon being promoted relative to her ex ante probability of reelection, which is $^1/_2$ by construction.

supposed to never occur under the strategy ρ. In SI Proposition A.2, we demonstrate that our assumptions imply that, in equilibrium, there is always a (perhaps very small) probability that an incumbent will be promoted, regardless of his or her ideology, x, but when the incumbent's ideology is sufficiently close to the party's, it will be the case that the incumbent will always be promoted in equilibrium.

[13]As is standard in this kind of setting and formally demonstrated in SI Proposition A.1, the party will use a threshold rule when deciding whether to promote the incumbent.

The voter's equilibrium expected value of the incumbent's valence, conditional upon the incumbent's ideology, x, the party's promotion decision, r, and the party's equilibrium threshold, t^*, is as follows:[14]

$$E[y|r, x, t^*(x)] = \begin{cases} \frac{t^*(x)}{2} & \text{if } r = 0, \\ \frac{1 + t^*(x)}{2} & \text{if } r = 1. \end{cases} \quad (6)$$

Proposition A.4 in SI Appendix A, combined with Equations (5) and (6), implies that the equilibrium threshold $t^*(x)$ is defined by the following:

$$t^*(x) = \max\left[0, \min\left[1, \frac{\gamma}{\lambda}x^2 - \frac{\omega}{2\lambda}\right]\right]. \quad (7)$$

When $|x|$ is sufficiently close to zero, $t^*(x) = 0$ and the party promotes every incumbent possessing ideology equal to x. Similarly, if $|x|$ is sufficiently large, $t^*(x) = 1$ and the party never promotes any incumbent.[15] Because Equation (5), combined with Equation (6), implies that the probability that the voter votes for a promoted incumbent is increasing in the threshold t^*, we now turn to comparative statics of t^*. Before doing so, we assume—simply for expositional purposes—that the ideological divergence between the incumbent and the party is not too extreme.

Assumption 3. *The ideological divergence between the incumbent and the party leadership is bounded as follows:*

$$|x| < \sqrt{\frac{2\lambda + \omega}{2\gamma}}.$$

Assumption 3 allows us to rewrite Equation (7) more simply as

$$t^*(x) = \max\left[0, \frac{\gamma}{\lambda}x^2 - \frac{\omega}{2\lambda}\right], \quad (8)$$

which will serve as the basis for the baseline predictions, to which we now turn.

Baseline Predictions

The following proposition describes how voters' subjective evaluations of a promoted incumbent's valence will vary with features of the incumbent, the party leadership, and the position to which the incumbent was promoted.

[14]This follows from Equation (4). In SI Proposition A.4, we also discuss the definition of beliefs for the case when $t^*(x) = 0$.

[15]Note that this second conclusion is due only to the fact that the distribution of valence is bounded above in this baseline example where $y \sim \text{Uniform}[0, 1]$. In SI Appendix A, we assume that the distribution of valence is unbounded above.

The following four predictions follow directly from Equation (8).[16]

Ideological Divergence, Promotion, and Electoral Support.

The effect of the ideological divergence between the incumbent and his or her party leadership is arguably the most interesting substantive prediction of the model.

Prediction 1. *The voter's evaluation of the valence of a promoted incumbent will be increasing in the ideological divergence between the incumbent and the party leadership ($|x|$).*

In a nutshell, so long as the position has some control over the ideological leaning of policy outcomes—such as putatively possessed by positions like committee chairs—the party must weigh the potential valence and electoral benefits of promoting a given incumbent (proxied by λ and ω, respectively) against the ideological/policy costs of promotion. This ideological cost is increasing in $|x|$, implying that, as the divergence between the incumbent and the party leadership increases, promotion of that incumbent signals to the voter that the incumbent's valence exceeds a higher minimum threshold. Accordingly, increased ideological divergence increases the electoral prospects of an incumbent who is promoted to a position with meaningful impact on policy.

The Nature of the Position: Value of Valence.

Some positions depend more on classical "leadership" qualities than others. For example, successfully prosecuting the responsibilities of positions with broad authority—such as managing public relations, scheduling consideration and handling of "normal business" both ideological and logistical, and maintaining cross-chamber and interbranch comity—is arguably more dependent on the holder's ability to "get things done," "be organized," and "keep his or her cool" than on the ideological leanings of the holder. Though few positions are completely nonideological in nature, the model predicts that being awarded a position that is more reliant upon the holder's individual nonideological ability will generate a smaller bump in the voter's beliefs about the promoted incumbent's valence.

Prediction 2. *The voter's evaluation of the valence of a promoted incumbent will be decreasing in the degree to which the incumbent party leadership values the valence of any individual promoted to the position in question (λ).*

Prediction 2 follows from the fact that the party leadership is presumed to also care about the successful pros-

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[16] SI Proposition A.5 presents analogue predictions with a larger set of distributions of valence.

ecution of the position's responsibilities. Thus, as the degree to which the party leadership values a given level of valence increases, they will be willing to promote members with *lower* levels of valence to this position. Accordingly, as the party leadership values valence more highly, the informative value of promotion from the voter's perspective is reduced. The result follows from the fact that λ represents the degree to which the party leadership wants to promote the incumbent.

The Nature of the Position: Control over Policy.

Legislative positions vary with respect to the degree to which their holder can influence policy outcomes in an ideological fashion. The effect of the degree of such control inherent in a position is complementary to that of the holder's ideological preferences. Accordingly, the effect of a position's policy weight on the electoral prospects of an incumbent promoted to it is analogous. Promotion to a position with greater policy influence will result in better electoral prospects for the incumbent—*so long as the promoted incumbent is sufficiently ideologically divergent from the party leadership.*

Prediction 3. *The voter's evaluation of the valence of a promoted incumbent will be increasing in the position's amount of control over policy outcomes (γ).*

Although Prediction 3 mirrors the conclusion discussed above regarding the effect of an incumbent's ideological divergence, this comparative static is particularly interesting once one considers its influence on incumbents' aspirations when confronted with a heterogeneous slate of possible positions. Our framework highlights an additional, but conditional, value to pursuit of policy-relevant (e.g., gatekeeping) positions. Specifically, incumbents who are ideologically divergent from their party leadership will strictly prefer promotion to positions with more policy weight. Thus, even if all incumbents (but not the party leadership) are purely electorally motivated, those incumbents whose ideological goals diverge more from their party leadership will have a greater incentive to secure promotion to policy relevant *for electoral reasons.*

The Party's Value for Reelection.

As the party assigns more importance to securing the incumbent's reelection, the party will become more willing to promote the incumbent. This lowers the voter's inference about the incumbent's valence upon the incumbent's being promoted.

Prediction 4. *The voter's evaluation of the valence of a promoted incumbent will be decreasing in the degree to*

which the party leadership values the voter's having positive evaluations of the incumbent (ω).

Note that Prediction 4 implies that a positive correlation between an incumbent's electoral importance and his or her promotion to positions of influence is based on the party's electoral motivations to signal the incumbent's competence/valence characteristics. Accordingly, the correlation between promotions and electoral success is not based on the voter's perceiving the incumbent as having some sort of "seniority" or "property rights" advantages that a newly elected representative would lack. This, of course, is not to say that voters do not perceive and vote as if incumbents have such advantages, but it illustrates that observing a positive correlation between such property rights and electoral success need not imply that they do.

Similarly, Prediction 4 is not based on either the party's wishing to give positions to incumbents who are "safe" in electoral terms or on any sort of bargaining process within the party caucus. That is, even though such motivations and causes are undoubtedly at play in the processes through which promotion decisions are made, the theory presented in this article illustrates that those "internal" theories of how promotion decisions are made are not necessary for one to observe a positive correlation between promotions, party leadership motivations, and electoral returns.

With these predictions described, we now turn to an extension of the model that tackles the fact that any party leader usually has fewer promotions to offer than incumbents worth promoting.

Choosing between Incumbents: Scarce Positions

Extending the model to capture the possibility that positions of prominence are scarce and that party leadership is forced to choose which one of two incumbents to promote, provides valuable insights into the trade-offs facing the party leadership when the number of incumbents who can be promoted is limited.[17]

Scarce Positions. Consider a simple extension of the baseline model in which there are two incumbents, and the party leadership must choose exactly one to be promoted. Then, applying the baseline payoffs from Equation (3) to the two-legislator case, and for any pair of ideologies $x = (x_1, x_2)$, the party leadership seeks to

[17]Details of these extensions are presented in SI Appendix B.

maximize

$$u_P(r|x, y, h) = \sum_{i=1}^{2} \omega_i W_i(r, x, h)$$

$$- \sum_{i=1}^{2} r_i \left(\gamma x_i^2 - \lambda y_i \right), \qquad (9)$$

where i indexes Incumbents 1 and 2, $\omega_i \geq 0$ represents the strength of the party's desire to see incumbent i reelected, and $W_i(r|x, h)$ represents the probability that incumbent i will be reelected. We capture the fact that there is a scarcity of positions by constraining the party to choose between promoting either the first incumbent ($r = (1, 0)$) or the second incumbent ($r = (0, 1)$). To keep comparisons as clear as possible, we assume that the legislators' valences are independent and identically distributed according to a cumulative distribution function F, as described in the baseline model above.

This extension represents an explicit incorporation of constraints on the party leadership in terms of the number of positions and available incumbents. The equilibrium promotion decisions in this setting lead to the following predictions, the first of which we test in the next main section.

The Effect of Ideological Divergence. When forced to choose between two or more incumbents, the party leadership would prefer, ceteris paribus, to promote the incumbent whose ideology is closest to that of the leadership. This is in spite of the electoral incentive to promote an ideologically more extreme incumbent identified in Prediction 1 and stated formally in the following prediction.

Prediction 5. *Suppose that Incumbent 1 is more ideologically distant from the leadership than Incumbent 2 ($|x_1| \geq |x_2|$) and $\omega_1 = \omega_2$. Then the equilibrium probability of promoting Incumbent 1 will be less than or equal to 50%.*

Although space precludes a full treatment of strategic promotions among many incumbents to multiple positions, it seems clear that this logic will carry forward into a straightforward extension of this model. To the degree that is the case, such an extension would link the party leadership's policy and electoral incentives with the emergence of what one could describe as a "fractured" party elite: In the extreme, moderates would control the "insider" policy positions (e.g., members of important legislative committees, agenda positions such as committee chairs, the speakership), whereas (some) extreme, high-valence incumbents would hold sway in public "leadership" positions (e.g., national party leadership, party

whips, fundraising positions). In lieu of exploring such an extension in this article, we now turn to our empirical application of the model's insights.

Empirical Analysis

Much of the theoretical analysis revolves around the concept of valence and any conditional factors that influence voters' perceptions of it. In this empirical portion of the article, we will get at whether voters infer that extreme incumbents who are promoted have a higher level of valence than normal. If this is the case, the impact of promotion should boost the probability that an extreme incumbent obtains reelection more than it does for a moderate incumbent (see Prediction 1 above). Remember that we define an extreme or moderate incumbent according to how far (extreme) or close (moderate) she is with respect to the party's median. On a closely related note, we will also address whether party leaders are more likely to promote members whose ideological positions are closer to them; if our thinking about the valence-signaling impact of promoting an extreme member is correct, then on certain occasions the party leadership should still be willing to pay the policy cost of appointing an extreme incumbent to a leadership position (see Prediction 5 above).

To explore these two predictions of our model, we analyze parliamentary careers in the Chilean Senate between 1998 and 2013. The Chilean case is ideal in many ways. Two large center-left/left and center-right/right pre-electoral coalitions have dominated elections since the reestablishment of democracy. The use of binomial (two-member) districts with open lists means that each major pre-electoral coalition fields a slate of two candidates, and voters cast a vote at the candidate level. Votes pool to the level of the coalition slate, meaning the number of seats a slate wins is a function of the total votes won by its two candidates combined. This confluence of characteristics works well for us for three reasons.

First, the formation of the pre-electoral coalitions and the use of the open lists mean that most voters will have the option of choosing from among at least two ideologically proximate options: either the two members of a pre-electoral coalition or even a more moderate member of the opposition coalition. This variety of choices makes discerning the importance of the traits of the individual candidates, including their valence, from the ideological brand of their electoral banner distinguishable in ways that would not be possible in single-member district plurality (SMDP) systems like the one used in the United States (Crisp, Kanthak, and Leihonhufvud 2004; Hirano

and Snyder 2009). In SMDP systems, voters can face a single, very stark ideological choice that makes valence concerns secondary if not entirely irrelevant.

Second, due to the seat allocation formula, in the vast majority of districts, the two pre-electoral coalitions split the seats. Coupled with the relatively high rates at which incumbents seek reelection (Carey 2002), this means that within each coalition, most voters will see an incumbent who has either been decorated with chamber positions of importance or not, paired with a slate mate who has had no such opportunity to be decorated in this way. In sum, as suggested above, in a single-member district setting, it is likely that only one candidate will be an incumbent, making it difficult for us to separate a signal of valence from other traits, including ideological position, of the candidate. Given the use of two-member districts in Chile, it is unlikely that voters will see two equally decorated or equally undecorated *but* ideologically proximate incumbents. Thus, looking at candidates across districts, any signal sent—or not sent—to voters by chamber leaders should be discernible from other characteristics of candidates.

Finally, because the number of seats elected across districts is small and constant, it is not unreasonable to expect voters to have some knowledge about individual candidates—especially for candidates ideologically close to a particular voter (Dow 1998; Londregan 2002). Hence, we get the empirical leverage provided by open lists and multiple seats without the potentially confounding characteristics of high and varying district magnitudes, which would certainly affect the visibility of the candidates' valence.

Beyond electoral characteristics, the cameral procedures also make the Chilean Senate a good case for seeking some empirical reflections on our model. First, party leaders are central to the appointment of legislators to committees and to chair positions (Aninat et al. 2008). Second, every bill that enters the chamber, including those proposed directly by the executive branch, *must* be sent to committee, and only a unanimous vote by the floor can remove a bill from committee before the committee's final markup is complete (Procedures of the Chilean Senate, Article 36).[18] As a result, committees have strong gatekeeping powers and are able to influence policy. Third, the chamber has 38 elected legislators serving

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[18]Although the executive can deem a bill "urgent" so that Congress has to consider the bill in a predetermined number of days, the rules of the Senate (or the House) do not specify that these bills can avoid committee consideration. Furthermore, there is no formal penalty for noncompliance, and empirical work has failed to find evidence that urgent bills are ultimately looked upon differently by members of Congress (Siavelis 2002).

8-year mandates and 21 standing committees. Due to the relatively large number of committees, it might be argued that serving as chair of a committee is not a scarce resource. Whereas gatekeeping powers are constant across committees, the extent to which they deal with important legislation is not. Thus, leaders' decisions to award posts chairing important committees is not one that they will dare to take lightly. Put another way, it should be seen by voters as a clear signal that any incumbent anointed with such a reward has attributes the party leadership values.

Finally, our formal thinking builds upon models that either implicitly or explicitly were meant to further our understanding of the U.S. Congress. Employing data from another separation of powers system is in a sense a tougher, "out of sample test" (Cox, Kousser, and McCubbins 2010). As we show below, the model travels nicely to a new context.

Data

We created an original data set of 76 legislator-terms in the Chilean Senate between 1998 and 2013. Specifically, the analysis includes senators who served (or were serving) the following mandates: 1997–2005, 2001–9, 2005–13, and 2009–16.[19] We are interested in which ones received prestigious leadership positions, whether such rewards went to those closest to the median of their parties, whether such rewards had electoral payoffs, and the extent to which any payoff was conditioned by the members' ideological extremism. To get at these, for each elected legislator, we collected the committee chair positions held, the roll-call votes cast (to calculate the ideological distance between the member and the median of his or her party), and whether he or she was successfully reelected.[20]

We do *not* include in our study a small number of senators appointed by the Security Council, the president, and the Supreme Court—also called "institutional senators"—and two former presidents who had been installed as senators for life. These appointed senators do not have "electoral" incentives as their colleagues do and were removed from their positions in 2005 by a constitutional amendment. We also do *not* include in the analysis three independent senators. Not belonging to any pre-electoral bloc means their promotion, or lack thereof, is not in the

hands of a party leadership trying to balance policy and electoral concerns. We dropped them for sound theoretical reasons, but our empirical results are not sensitive to the inclusion of these three independent senators in the study.

As we noted above, promotion to chair of just any committee may not serve as a signal of a legislator's valence in part because such positions are not sufficiently scarce and in part because many committees have limited influence over parts of the policy agenda that voters would deem important. To identify the most influential committees, we rely on the responses of Chilean senators to a survey conducted by the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in 2002, which asked them to mention the (three) most important committees in the chamber. Looking across all responses, the most mentioned committees out of 21 standing committees were (1) Public Finance (*Hacienda*); (2) Constitution, Legislation, Justice, and Rules; and (3) Foreign Affairs.[21] Whereas 85% (65) of the legislators observed here held at least one leadership position during their term in office, only 38% (29) of the senators received *promotion* to chair of (at least) one prestigious committee.

In order to discern how divergent senators' ideological preferences are relative to the party leadership and their co-partisans, we use the senators' ideal points on the left-right dimension—estimated with roll-call vote results[22]—to calculate the absolute distance between an individual senator's ideal point and the median preference of the party to which she belongs. Formally, the distance D_{ij} is measured for each legislator i within party j as

$$D_{ij} = |L_{ij} - M_j|,$$

in which L is the ideology of legislator i who belongs to party j, and M is the position of the median member of party j. In this measure of *ideological divergence*, higher values indicate that the senator is further from the party median, whereas lower values indicate that the senator is closer. The incumbent's level of ideological extremism ranges from 0 to 1.25, with 50% of the values lying between 0.04 and 0.28.

Finally, examining whether promotion improves electoral prospects is straightforward. In our analysis, *Reelection* is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the incumbent was reelected, coded as 1, or otherwise coded as 0. We proceed to consider Predictions 1 and 5.

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[19]To the senators who were elected, we added three who replaced those leaving the chamber before the end of their mandates.

[20]Committee assignments were provided by the Parliamentary Office of the Chilean Senate and collected from the Senate's official website. In total, 1,126 roll-call votes were collected from the Senate's official website. The procedures of the Chilean Senate specify that all votes are by roll call (Article 154).

[21]For more information on the survey see Sánchez, Nolte, and Llanos (2005) and Llanos and Sánchez (2006).

[22]We rely on the Bayesian item response theory model proposed by Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (2004) (see SI Appendix D).

Examining Prediction 1

Prediction 1 suggests that a promotion to a leadership position provides a boost to an incumbent's electoral fortune only if she is sufficiently divergent from her party. A promotion has less of an impact on an incumbent's probability of reelection if she is ideologically close to her party because voters recognize that the party bears no policy cost for such an appointment. To analyze this empirical implication, we focus on the 55 senators who completed their mandate, and we exclude those who resigned before completing their mandate and those who have not had a chance to seek reelection (because they were serving the 2009–16 mandate).[23]

We fit a Bayesian hierarchical logit model in which the reelection y_i of each incumbent $i = 1, \ldots, 44$ is assumed to be distributed binomially:

$$y_i \sim \text{Binomial}(p_i).$$

Then we model the impact both of receiving a *promotion* and of the incumbent's *ideological divergence* relative to her party, on probability of reelection p_i. We include an interaction between these two variables to explicitly study the effect of receiving a promotion on the probability of reelection for different levels of an incumbent's ideological position. By way of controls, we reason that the past electoral performance of an incumbent is a potentially confounding variable. Rewarding an incumbent with promotion might be most attractive when that member was electorally vulnerable. In such an instance, promotion might make the difference between retaining the seat and losing it. Of course, past electoral performance itself is a predictor of future performance as well—originally strong candidates are likely to fare well in the future. Given this, to avoid omitted-variable bias, we include an indicator for an incumbent's past electoral performance. We capture the *electoral weakness* of incumbents measured as the difference in the vote percentage received by the first loser (third-place candidate) in the district and the incumbent in the last election.[24] Lower values indicate that the elected candidate did well in the last election, whereas higher values signal that the incumbent was vulnerable in her district.[25]

Formally, the model can be written as

$$p_i = \text{logit}^{-1}(\alpha_j + \beta_1 \textit{Promotion}_i$$
$$+ \beta_2 \ \textit{Ideological Divergence}_i + \beta_3 \textit{Promotion}_i$$
$$\times \ \textit{Ideological Divergence}_i, + \beta_4 \ \textit{Electoral Weakness}_i),$$

where, to capture any systematic differences between incumbents' party labels, we include varying intercepts α_j for each party $j = 1, \ldots, 6$. These party-specific intercepts are assumed to follow a normal distribution with mean μ_α and with freely estimated variance σ_α^2:

$$\alpha_j \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu_\alpha, \sigma_\alpha^2).$$

We specify weakly informative prior distributions for all parameters, which, multiplied with the data likelihood, yield the full posterior distribution. To obtain estimates of all relevant parameters, we implement a Bayesian Markov chain Monte Carlo estimation procedure in JAGS.[26]

For the moderate incumbent who received a promotion, the probability of reelection is 0.49. If she did not receive a promotion, her probability of reelection drops to 0.41. Thus, for moderates, the impact of promotion on the probability of reelection is 0.09, suggesting that receiving a promotion slightly increases her probability of reelection. However, because the 90% credible interval for this first-difference probability includes zero, the impact of promotion is not credible (see Figure 1). On the other hand, for an ideologically divergent incumbent who receive a promotion, the probability of reelection is 0.59, and that probability drops sharply to 0.26 if she did not receive a promotion. In other words, for an extreme incumbent who received a promotion, the probability of reelection is 0.32 greater than that for one who did not receive a promotion. As Figure 1 illustrates, the 90%

[23]Decisions not to run for reelection could be strategic responses to perceived poor electoral prospects. During the period under study, only a handful of elected incumbents chose not to run for reelection, and in each case, we are confident that we can rule out a strategic decision to retire as a function of perceived electoral prospects.

[24]Electoral results were collected from the website of the Chilean Electoral Service (*Servicio Electoral de Chile*) at http://ww2.servel.cl/SitioHistorico/.

[25]At its lowest levels, the variable suggests that the first loser (third-place candidate) won a much smaller percentage of the vote than

the incumbent. The minimum of the variable is −27.15%, which indicates that the incumbent surpassed the first loser by 27.15 points. On the other hand, higher levels of *electoral weakness* indicate that the difference in vote share between the first loser and the incumbent is small, suggesting that the incumbent was vulnerable in her district. The maximum value of the variable is 4.21% because the first loser won a higher vote percentage than the incumbent. Positive values of the variable are possible because of vote pooling in the open-list proportional representation system. In some instances, a candidate received the third-most votes individually, but her slate received enough votes to obtain a seat. Put another way, this senator's situation is tenuous because another slate competing in the district came close to winning both seats (because both its members received more votes individually than the incumbent did) or because an independent candidate received more votes than she did but did not have a slate partner (thus, the slate received fewer votes). These senators are among the most electorally vulnerable: They won the seat in large part thanks to the number of votes that their slate partner received.

[26]We ran three chains in JAGS. We evaluate standard nonconvergence diagnostics and find no evidence of nonconvergence in any of the Markov chains. SI Table E.1 presents the findings.

FIGURE 1 Effect of Incumbent's Promotion to Chair of an
Influential Committee on Probability of Reelection
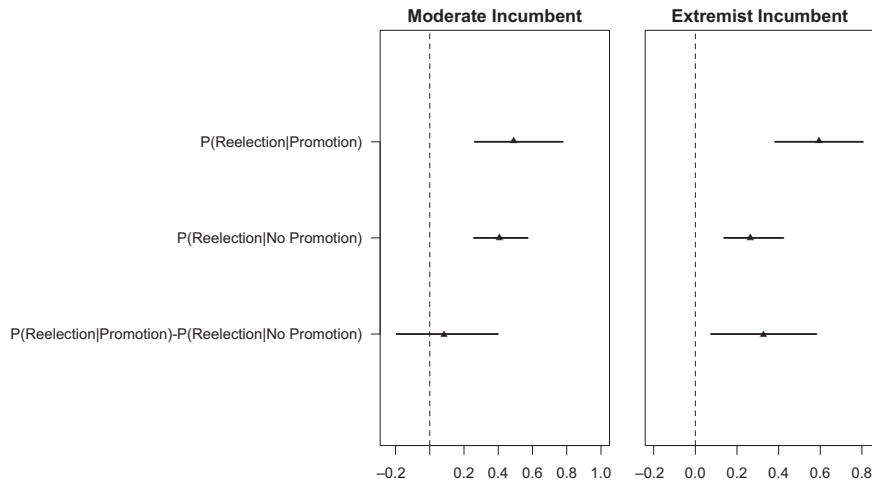
Note: The 90% credible intervals are included.

credible interval for this first-difference probability does not include zero, making the effect reliably distinct from zero. In support of our prediction, the evidence indicates that promotion to a position with meaningful impact on policy increases the electoral prospects of divergent incumbents.[27]

Examining Prediction 5

Prediction 5 suggests that the party leadership is more likely to promote an incumbent who is, on average, ideologically close to them, but that they will sometimes promote a legislator who is ideologically extreme. In order to analyze the effect of an incumbent's *ideological divergence* on the probability of receiving a promotion, we also fit a Bayesian hierarchical logit model. The outcome variable is a dichotomous variable coded as 1 if the incumbent was promoted to chair of a prestigious committee and 0 otherwise. More formally, the outcome variable y_i is assumed to be distributed binomially:

$$y_i \sim \text{Binomial}(p_i),$$

where i indexes incumbents $i = 1, \ldots, 76$. We include *ideological divergence* as our explanatory variable of interest and an incumbent's *electoral weakness* as a control variable because, as we mentioned earlier, an electorally vulnerable senator could be rewarded with a promotion.

Not being electorally vulnerable, on the other hand, may be an indicator of basic competence, making electorally strong incumbents better candidates for leadership positions.

Because legislators belong to different partisan blocs and party leaders could value valence differently (as suggested by our formal model), we also specify varying intercepts α_j by legislative party $j = 1, \ldots, 6$, which are included along with the explanatory variables as follows:

$$p_i = logit^{-1}(\alpha_j + \beta_1 \textit{Ideological Divergence}_i$$
$$+ \beta_2 \textit{Electoral Weakness}_i),$$

where varying intercepts are assumed to follow a normal distribution with mean μ_α and with freely estimated variance,

$$\alpha_j \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu_\alpha, \sigma_\alpha^2).$$

As in the previous model, we specify weakly informative prior distributions for all parameters.[28]

Supporting our rationale, Figure 2 shows that the probability that an ideologically moderate incumbent receives a promotion is 0.46, whereas the probability that an ideologically extreme incumbent receives a promotion is lower, 0.34 to be exact.[29] Comparing moderate and extreme incumbents, the mean probability difference of

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[27]To calculate the predicted probabilities, we use the interquartile values of *ideological divergence* as ideologically moderate and extreme. *Electoral weakness* is set at its observed value.

[28]We run three chains in JAGS and conduct standard nonconvergence diagnostics, which show no evidence of nonconvergence. SI Table E.2 presents the results.

[29]To calculate the predicted probabilities, we use the interquartile values of the *ideological divergence* variable, and *electoral weakness* is set at its observed value.

FIGURE 2 **Effect of Incumbent's Promotion to Chair of an Influential Committee on Probability of Reelection**
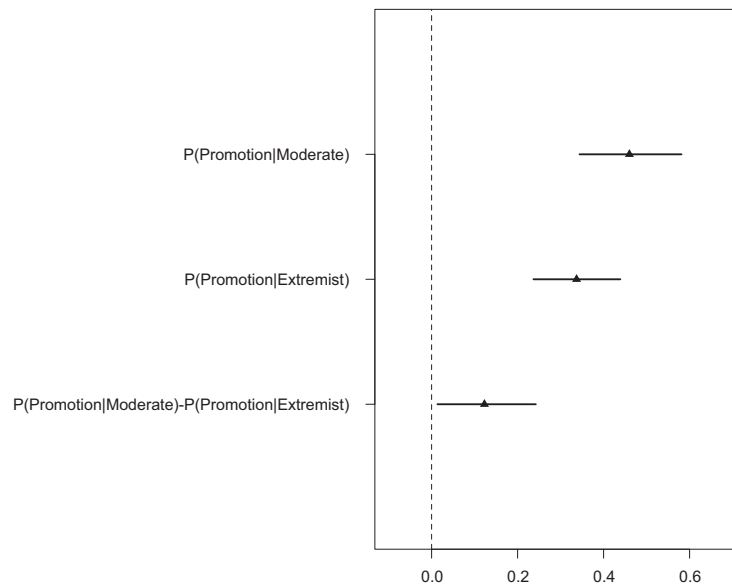
Note: The 90% credible intervals are included.

promotion is positive (0.12), meaning that senators who are closer to the partisan median are more likely to receive a promotion than those further from the partisan median. This difference in the levels of promotion across moderate and extreme incumbents is credible because its 90% credible interval does not include zero. Note that, also in line with our theoretical reasoning, although moderates are more likely to be promoted to posts with policy weight, ideologically divergent incumbents are not prohibited from such positions.

To sum up, data on promotions in the Chilean Senate support two of the main implications derived from our formal model. As the model posits, we found that even though incumbents whose ideological position is closer to their co-partisans are more likely to receive a promotion to a leadership position than divergent incumbents, extremists still receive promotions but at a lower rate. When the party leadership is willing to pay the policy cost of appointing an extreme incumbent to a leadership position, voters infer that he or she has a level of valence that is higher than normal. Our formal model suggests that this explains why our empirical evidence shows that the impact of promotion does not improve the valence appeal of moderate incumbents, but it boosts the probability of reelection for incumbents who are ideologically divergent from the party.

Conclusions

We have presented a theory of party decision making in which party leaders seek to maximize both electoral and policy goals. The tool that we focus on is the choice of which incumbents to reward with legislative positions that might carry both policy and valence responsibilities. Positions such as party whips, chairs of committees and subcommittees, and other visible "promotions" can change voters' beliefs about the holders' individual capabilities. In a sense, our theory is leveraging the simple reality that most jobs are better done by individuals who are "competent" in a commonsense and generally portable fashion.

Our theory indicates that, to the degree that such competence is valued by the party leadership when making these promotions *and* is valued by voters when making reelection decisions, electorally motivated party leaders will have an incentive to promote *less competent* incumbents than they would if voters did not make inferences from the promotion decisions. This is another example of the ironic difficulties that arise from electoral representation by career-motivated politicians and/or parties (e.g. Ashworth 2012; Fox and Shotts 2009).

By viewing internal legislative positions as tools through which legislative parties can signal an incumbent's valence to voters, our theory clearly speaks to some practical, but fundamental, issues for political representation. If valence characteristics are commonly valued by both voters and political leaders, then the classical divergence of interests between politicians and their constituents can muddy the waters with respect to "the best person getting the job(s)" within the legislature.

Utilizing new data from a system that is fairly uniquely well suited to examine our theory's predictions, we find support for some of those predictions. In particular, because of the trade-off between policy and electoral goals that party leaders face, we find that promotion to a position with policy impact generates a larger probability of reelection for members who are more ideologically distant from their party's leadership. In spite of the increased electoral prospects that the party leadership can bestow upon ideologically distant incumbents in their own party, we also show that promotions tend to go to ideologically moderate incumbents.

The combination of the theoretical and empirical analyses with respect to these two predictions is particularly potent. This is because they get at the very heart of the logic of the theory: *In equilibrium, voters "reward" promotion of ideologically extreme incumbents precisely because such promotions are rare.* That is, the promotion of an ideologically extreme incumbent is something that, ceteris paribus, party leaders do not want to do. Accordingly, and in line with the logic of Calvert (1985), when the party leadership promotes an ideologically extreme incumbent, voters can safely infer that the incumbent in question must have significantly higher than average valence characteristics. Thus, viewed from a slightly different angle, our theoretical and empirical findings, provide a more complete understanding of the long recognized fact that valence and extremism are regularly observed together.[30]

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[30]They are consistent with the conclusion by Serra (2010) that extremist candidates will be most willing to invest in obtaining valence, but our approach takes the perspective of party leaders who have valence-generating resources—leadership positions—to allot among their incumbents.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

Appendix A: Full Formal Version of Baseline Model
Appendix B: Scarce Position Extension
Appendix C: Proof of Fact 1
Appendix D: Roll-Call Votes and Ideal Points
Appendix E: Tables of Results