

I. Title**Arthur Pue Gorman and the Origins of Senate Party Leadership**II. Abstract (word count 174)

Whereas congressional parties and party leadership were not dictated or anticipated by the Constitution, political scientists continue to debate the origins and purposes of legislative parties. When and why did American legislative parties develop? What functions do they perform? What problems or new developments were party leadership posts meant to solve and to address? Although scholars previously have believed that Senate Democratic leadership emerged circa 1913, Gamm and Smith (2005) provide convincing new evidence that Arthur Pue Gorman (D-MD) developed the position of Senate Democratic floor leader in the 1890s. Not merely a historical "find," Gamm and Smith's discovery challenges dominant theories regarding the institutional development of the legislative parties and re-opens questions of when and why the Senate organized by party. Through intensive examination of Gorman's personal papers, this study will examine this founding moment of the Senate's floor leader post, assess the relative strength of competing theoretical explanations thereof, and examine the extent to which this founding moment impacted the subsequent development of the Senate party leadership.

### III. Research Description (word count 1464)

Legislative party leadership emerged early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century U.S. House of Representatives but did not appear in the Senate until much later (Nelson 1977; Peabody 1976). Recent path-breaking research challenges scholarly understandings of party development in the Senate as Gamm and Smith (2005) cast Maryland's Arthur Pue Gorman as the primary innovator who established a floor leadership post in the Senate. The project I propose is a first-ever use of Gorman's archived papers to provide an analytical history of the origins of Senate Democratic Leadership.

#### *I. Objectives:*

*a) Recover the history of the origins of the Senate Democratic Party in the papers of Arthur Pue Gorman (D-MD).* I will examine Gorman's political papers archived at the Maryland Historical Society (MHS) and other repositories to gain insight into his understanding of his strategic context and his leadership activities. To the detriment of our empirical and theoretical understandings, even historically-oriented political scientists tend to neglect the kinds of archival materials used by historians (Frisch and Kelly 2003). Gamm and Smith's study, for example, is based entirely on secondary sources - almost exclusively newspaper accounts - leaving analysis too remote to adequately assess Gorman's perspective and activities. By contrast, this study will be a first-ever primary document analysis of Gorman's invention of Senate Democratic leadership.

The MHS collections I will review include:

- i) correspondence related to Democratic Party organization and key legislative battles including elections laws, tariff schedules and policy, and the gold standard monetary policy;

ii) Gorman's diary chronicling his view of party coalition-building efforts during the Senate's debate over the approval of the Panama Canal Treaty, a particularly important political battle in Gorman's efforts to lead Senate Democrats;

iii) Gorman's internal notes and letters regarding national party electoral strategy in 1896, 1900, and 1904.

b) *Analyze the causes of the development of Senate floor leadership and the Senate party organizations more generally.* Inasmuch as political scientists disagree on when Senate parties developed, they differ too in their explanations as to *why* the Senate turned to party leadership structures. Did Senate party leadership develop in response to increasing national government policy scope and "workload" (Baker and Davidson 1991), the transformation of state party politics and cross-regional alliances (Rothman 1966; Brady 1980), the partisan balance in the Senate and the demands of inter-party competition (Gamm and Smith 2005), special conditions of the Wilson Presidency (Munk 1974; Oleszek 1991), or due to the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment's direct election of Senators (Kolodny 1997)?

Assessing these competing perspectives requires better analysis and more direct evidence. First, timing is key: if, for example, Gorman did develop forms of pre-modern legislative leadership in the 1890s neither the *17<sup>th</sup>* Amendment nor the Wilson-specific explanations can stand; Gamm and Smith (2005) use such temporal evidence to argue that it was inter-party competition concerns and the close balance between Senate Democrats and Republicans that sparked Gorman's innovations. Still, as plausible and persuasive as Gamm and Smith's account is, it nevertheless has only been indirectly "tested" with secondary press accounts. Testing a multiple causes perspective (Schickler 2001) against archival evidence, I

will ask: What do Gorman's papers (including his diary) reveal about how he perceived and responded to the pressures and opportunities for the development of party leadership structures? What problems was Gorman trying to solve and what opportunities was he trying to seize through party organization? And, how do Gorman's leadership efforts recorded in the archives comport with the structures, functions, and behaviors of Senate party leadership as it developed subsequently?

## *2. Importance.*

Engaged with some of the most important moments in congressional history and addressing some of the most highly regarded scholars in the contemporary political science study of Congress, this new examination of Gorman's invention and early practice of party floor leadership promises to shed important light on the development of the Senate Democratic Party in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as the overall rationales for, functions, and effectiveness of Senate Party leadership more generally. Indeed, one prominent theory (Panebianco 1988) suggests that the founding moment of a party (or party system) establishes a "genetic code" that predisposes that party to the performance of some functions at the expense of others and has a lasting legacy for the party's subsequent political development. And, given that Senate change is less procedural, more informal, and more likely to be affected by individual leaders than change in the House (Sinclair 1989; Swift 1996), Gorman's legacy is likely to be especially pronounced. As such, understanding Gorman's innovations is crucial to understanding the subsequent development of Senate leadership.

Finally, I should also note that archival research enlivens the classroom; students are extremely interested and responsive when I refer to actual documentary evidence uncovered in archives. This is a key moment in Senate history that I would like to know and teach better.

### *3. Methodologies and Timetable.*

I will hit the ground running having spent the Spring semester reading available secondary materials and analyzing leadership efforts and member participation as revealed in the published *Minutes of the US. Senate Democratic Conference, 1903-1964* (Ritchie 1998); this will allow me to spend May and June researching Gorman's papers at MHS as well as related papers at the National Archives. Papers will be analyzed for historical context, quotation, and (where possible) quantifiable data on Gorman's institutional developments, contacts with fellow Senators, and coalition-building efforts. Although the MHS and government collections likely provide the best available evidence on how Gorman saw the opportunities (and attendant problems) of organizing Senate Democrats, I will also access other related collections in my effort to produce a comprehensive accounting of Gorman's efforts to lead the Party and create the position of floor leader. A later Summer trip (likely late June) to central New York will be used to examine a subset of Gorman's papers located at Syracuse University. Other collections including Gorman's writings and correspondence are housed at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland, and the Library of Congress all of which I will consult during Summer 2009.

I plan to write a preliminary summary article for submission to the *Maryland Historical Magazine* by the end of the summer and a more complete and theoretically-oriented article suitable for submission to a political science journal by the end of Fall 2009 semester.

### *4. Research Support and Future Plans.*

Expanding my research focus on congressional party leadership, for the first time, to include Senate leadership (as opposed to merely House leadership), this project represents a significant significant step forward in my studies of the development of America's political

parties (particularly party leadership in Congress) and my methodological contention that archival resources are essential tools for scholars studying political parties and Congress. I am grateful to have received Summer Research Grants in the past for my research on congressional party leadership ("Tip O'Neill and the Austin-Boston Connection in Congressional Leadership," 2003), media leadership in Congress ("Party Message Operations in the House of Representatives," 2004 and "Congressional Parties and the Gender Gap," 2006) and, most recently, on party development ("Party Ideology and American Constitutional-Institutionalism," 2007). The research projects funded by these previous grants have resulted in a co-authored book manuscript forthcoming (2009) from Texas A&M University Press, a refereed journal article in *Congress & the Presidency* 2005, a note in the Legislative Studies Section's *Extension of Remarks* newsletter (to be reprinted in a forthcoming edited collection on scholarly use of archives), a book chapter on media politics in an edited collection under contract and forthcoming from Routledge Press 2009, and a paper presented at a 2008 Dartmouth College conference (the conference organizer is editing a book for publication). Two additional article-length manuscripts are in progress from the latter research grants.

There is no other financial support for this project, though I do plan to apply for a Lord Baltimore Research Fellowship from the Maryland Historical Society. Although this fellowship provides no financial support, it does provide enhanced access to the Society's collections including Gorman's papers.<sup>1</sup> I anticipate at least two publications to emerge from this research project. First, Lord Baltimore Fellows are encouraged to write preliminary articles on their research for *Maryland Historical Magazine* which I plan to do in addition to a second, more extensive scholarly research project that I will propose to present at the November 2009 meeting

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<sup>1</sup> Note that access to Gorman's papers is not contingent upon receiving the Lord Baltimore Fellowship; Fellows are only afforded enhanced access in terms of hours collections are available for research.

of the Northeastern Political Science Association and revise for submission to a journal. Likely outlets include *Social Science History*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, and *Congress & the Presidency*.

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