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Efficacy or Rigidity:
Power, Influence, and Social Learning in the U.S. Senate, 1973-2005[*]

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Abstract
Organizations have idiosyncratic norms and practices that govern the exercise of power. Newcomers learn these unwritten rules through organizational socialization. In organizations with dominant and subordinate groups, structural power can shift between groups as the resources they control ebb and flow. We examine how entering the organization in a dominant group affects: (1) the ability to exert influence following subsequent structural shifts in power; and (2) the rate at which people learn to wield influence. On one hand, entering in a dominant group may boost self-efficacy and catalyze social learning about effective influence tactics. On the other, entering in a dominant group may make people susceptible to the adverse psychological consequences of experiencing power, which inhibit social learning. We examine these dynamics in the context of the U.S. Senate from 1973 to 2005. We find partial support for both accounts: (1) senators who entered in the political majority were less effective than their counterparts who entered in the minority at converting subsequent structural shifts of power into influence; however, (2) majority entrants learned to how to wield influence following such shifts at a faster rate than did minority entrants. We discuss implications for research on power, learning, and socialization.

The structural positions that people occupy within organizations are often conduits to valuable resources, which can in turn be sources of power (Pfeffer, 1981). Yet organizations have idiosyncratic norms and practices that govern the exercise of power (Schein, 2010), and people vary in their ability to convert structural power into influence (Brass & Burkhardt, 1993). Some of this variance derives from differences in the rates at which newcomers learn these unwritten rules through organizational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In this article, we ask: To what extent do newcomers' initial experiences upon entry to the organization affect their subsequent ability to convert structural power into influence and their rate of social learning about effective influence tactics?

We examine these questions in the context of organizations that contain dominant and subordinate groups—for example, a firm that is the product of a larger firm acquiring a smaller competitor or one in which emergent business units vie for resources with an established unit. In such settings, members of the dominant group tend to wield structural power over their counterparts in the minority. Yet structural power can also shift between groups as their relative fortunes—and the resources they accordingly control—ebb and flow. For example, in the merger example, the legacy business might shrink while the acquired entity grows rapidly. Or in the multiple business unit example, an emergent business unit might experience rapid growth such that it overshadows the established unit.

The consequences for interpersonal influence of entering such an organization as part of the dominant group are conceptually ambiguous. On one hand, entering in the dominant group may boost self-efficacy and catalyze social learning about effective influence tactics. On the other, entering in the dominant group may make people susceptible to the adverse psychological consequences of experiencing power, which inhibit social learning.

We consider these dynamics in the context of the U.S. Senate from 1973 to 2005. Although the particular manifestations of power, influence, and socialization observed in our data are unique to this setting, the overall context has important parallels to the typical differentiated organization (Liu & Srivastava, 2015). We find partial support for both accounts: (1) senators who entered in the political majority were less effective than their counterparts who entered in the minority at converting subsequent

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structural shifts of power into influence; however, (2) the former learned to how to wield influence following such shifts at a faster rate than did the latter. We discuss implications for research on power, learning, and socialization.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

We follow a long line of work in defining power as control over valuable resources on which others depend (Cook & Emerson, 1978; Emerson, 1962) and in assuming that it derives in part from the structural positions that people occupy in organizations (Pfeffer, 1992). Changes in structural positions are often accompanied by shifts in resources and dependencies, which in turn change the distribution of power. All else equal, those who wield structural power can exert greater influence on their counterparts in disadvantaged structural positions. In organizations that have dominant and subordinate groups, members of the dominant group have, by definition, greater control over valuable resources and therefore power over subordinate group members (Nemeth, 1986). Yet power differentials between groups can also shift as they achieve varying levels of external success and their control over valuable resources correspondingly swells or diminishes.

Whether in a dominant or subordinate group, people vary in their ability to derive advantage from positions of structural power (Brass & Burkhardt, 1993). One prominent line of work has examined this heterogeneity through the lens of individual differences (for reviews, see Anderson & Brion, [2014]; Galinsky, Chou, Halevy, & Van Kleef, [2012]). For example, those perceived by others as intelligent, competent, or skilled are more likely to ascend to and benefit from occupying a powerful structural perch (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009). Similarly, personality traits such as extraversion, conscientiousness, trait dominance, and self-monitoring orientation are linked to the ability to gain and build support from others, depending on the nature of the collaborative work being undertaken (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Anderson, Spataro, & Flynn, 2008; Flynn & Ames, 2006). Other individual differences linked to power include social skills such as empathy, verbal acuity, and emotional intelligence (Bass & Bass, 2009), as well as the ability to expand one's social network (Ingram & Morris, 2007).

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A separate stream of research examining variation in the advantages that accrue to power holders has instead focused on the actions they take (for a review, see Fleming & Spicer, [2014]). For example, those who activate the right social network connections can often sway important decisions in their favor (Bozionelos, 2005; Gargiulo, 1993). Similarly, impression management tactics employed by power holders and their use of cultural resources, such as narratives and rituals, can amplify their ability to secure others' cooperation (Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Maitlis, 2004). This work highlights the importance of idiosyncratic norms and practices, which people must pay attention to and learn if they are to effectively wield influence in a given organizational context.

Socialization and Power

While acknowledging the importance of stable individual differences and contemporaneous influence tactics, we bring in the roles of *time*—in particular a person's past experience with dependence relations—and *social learning* to account for differences in the current ability to mobilize others' cooperation from a position of structural power. We draw on insights about organizational socialization— the process by which an individual acquires knowledge about prevailing values, norms, and expected behaviors needed to become an active and effective organizational member (Doyle, Goldberg, Srivastava, & Frank, 2017; Srivastava, Goldberg, Manian, & Potts, 2018; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). A central insight from socialization research is that the process typically unfolds in multiple stages (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). In the initial—or encounter—stage, newcomers often experience heightened uncertainty and anxiety as they discard familiar routines and prior assumptions and learn how to navigate their new social environment (Feldman, 1976; Feldman & Brett, 1983; Reichers, 1987).

Because of this uncertainty and anxiety, newcomers—even when they have had considerable prior experience in other organizational settings—are especially susceptible to being influenced by aspects of their social environment (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Chatman, 1991; Schein, 1971). Moreover, differences in social learning during the encounter stage can have lasting career consequences (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Fang, Duffy, & Shaw, 2011; Morrison, 2002). For example, Srivastava et al. (2018) report that newcomers to a mid-sized technology firm exhibited, on average, a sharp increase in the degree to

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which their styles of communication—as reflected in the categories of language they used in internal email messages—corresponded to those of their proximate colleagues through the process of enculturation. Moreover, employees who more rapidly learned to fit into their local cultural milieu in their first six months of employment were less likely to be fired than those who were slower to learn.

Similarly, McEvily, Jaffee, and Tortoriello (2012) report that initial assignments to mentors affected the kinds of knowledge that newly minted lawyers acquired and their subsequent job performance. Along the same lines, Cable, Gino, and Staats (2013) find in the context of a large business process outsourcing firm in India that newcomers whose socialization experiences emphasized their personal, rather than organizational, identity had higher rates of customer satisfaction and experienced lower rates of turnover.

Building on insights about organizational socialization and the social psychology of power, we examine how the structure of dependence relations people encounter early in their tenure in a new organization can impede or enhance their downstream capability to translate structural power into influence and how it affects their rate of social learning about effective influence tactics.

Early Socialization Experiences with Power: Efficacy or Rigidity?

Existing literature points to competing expectations about how the experience of entering an organization as part of a dominant, rather than subordinate, group might affect the capacity for influence and social learning. One perspective suggests that such an experience might build influence capabilities and promote learning. This view is based, in part, on the notion that dominance is frequently associated with numerical advantage, which in turn projects power: the greater the size of the dominant group, the more members of that group can exert influence over others (Tanford & Penrod, 1984; Wood, Lundgren, Ouellette, Busceme, & Blackstone, 1994). The dominant group's influence also derives from having greater control over valuable resources, informational advantage—that is, the dominant group's view is more likely to be perceived as correct—and normative pressures—that is, deviations from the dominant group's view are more likely to be met with disapproval (Nemeth, 1986).

The experience of successfully exerting influence on others should, in turn, boost dominant group members' perceived self-efficacy, or "beliefs in one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands" (Wood & Bandura, 1989: 408). A long line of research has established that—all else equal—those who think they can perform well on a task do better than those who lack this efficacy perception (Bandura, 1982, 1993; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Moreover, self-efficacy is a powerful predictor of an individual's motivation to learn and persist in the face of obstacles (Zimmerman, 2000). Overall, this perspective suggests that, relative to newcomers to a subordinate group, newcomers to a dominant group will experience greater success in exerting influence, which will boost their self-efficacy and motivate them to engage in ongoing learning about how to be influential in their new setting.

An alternative view suggests that the experience of entering an organization as part of a dominant group might instead create social rigidities that dampen the capacity for influence and social learning. This perspective assumes that initial experience of advantage can, in some cases, producing lasting disadvantage. For example, employees who enter an organization during periods of extreme resource abundance or scarcity are less well adapted to times of typical resource availability and thus have lower average levels of performance over their tenure (Tilcsik, 2014). In a similar vein, social psychological research has consistently shown that people who control valuable resources on which others depend tend to disregard others' perspectives (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006), overestimate the extent to which others are allied with them (Brion & Anderson, 2013), and increase their demands of others (Sivanathan, Pillutla, & Murnighan, 2008). As Brass and Burkhardt (1993: 466) explain, "Skillful political activity is one tool for overcoming a lack of resources or making less valuable resources more potent. Actors in powerful positions, who control ample resources, are less dependent on their capabilities to use resources strategically than are actors who lack ample resources." A similar point is made by Molm (1990: 446): "Powerful actors…have less need to use power strategically." Overall, this perspective suggests that dominant group newcomers who wield power during the encounter stage of socialization

may have an impaired capacity for influence and a slower rate of social learning because they are less dependent on, and thus less attuned to, subordinate group perspectives.

Power, Socialization, and Influence in the U.S. Senate

We turn next to considering which of these two conceptual views better characterizes the dynamics of power, socialization, and influence in our specific empirical setting: the U.S. Senate. In this context, perhaps the most important source of variation in structural power is whether a senator is a member of the minority or the majority party (Chown & Liu, 2015). Leaders from the majority party set the legislative agenda, deciding whether or not, and when, to schedule bills for a vote. The scheduling of bills importantly determines senators' ability to advance their legislative agenda (Den Hartog & Monroe, 2011).

There are many ways for senators to influence their colleagues—for example, enlisting colleagues as co-sponsors on bills they originate or successfully passing amendments to colleagues' bills (Fowler, 2006a, b). Given that these intermediate legislative outcomes may be driven by other factors not directly related to interpersonal influence (Campbell, 1982), we focus on the most direct and concrete manifestation of influence: a senator's ability to pass bills he or she introduces out of the Senate Chamber.

Whether a senator's party is in the political majority or minority is a key indicator of that senator's structural power (ten Brinke, Liu, Keltner, & Srivastava, 2016). We further suggest that early socialization experiences in the Senate may affect the capacity for influence and the rate of social learning—even for senators who have had considerable prior experience in other organizations. Support for this view comes, in part, from biographies of senators such as Lyndon Johnson (Caro, 2002), Dan Quayle (Fenno, 1989), and Arlen Specter (Fenno, 1991). As these texts vividly illustrate, newly minted senators often feel uncertain and anxious about what the role entails on a day-to-day basis and how they are expected to act by the many constituencies they have to manage (e.g., fellow senators, senior party leaders, constituents in their home state, special interest groups, the press).

Even senators who enter the chamber with past experience in the House find that they have much to learn about their new setting. In his studies of socialization into the Senate, Fenno (1986) reports that

newly minted senators have to operate in a setting that is colder, more atomistic, and yet more personalized than the House. At the same time, they must learn a variety of rules, procedures, and norms that are often informal yet make every senator "a force to be reckoned with by his colleagues" (Fenno, 1986: 137). In addition, in comparison to the House, dealings between legislators in the Senate are more likely to be mediated through their staffs. Thus, newcomers to the Senate must also learn how to collaborate with other senators through staff-to-staff interactions. For all of these reasons, the encounter stage of socialization into the Senate can last a long time: Fenno (1991) estimates that it takes senators approximately two years to acclimate to their new environment.

METHODS

Empirical Setting: The United States Senate from 1973 to 2005

We examined structural power, initial dependence relationships, and influence in the context of the U.S. Senate. This setting is especially well-suited to evaluating the two conceptual perspectives described above because senators' structural positions and influence, such as bills that pass the Senate, are part of the public record. Moreover, we can characterize every senator's early experiences with dependence relationships and measure the extent to which early socialization experiences affected their subsequent ability to convert structural power into influence and their rate of social learning. Our analyses, which spanned the years 1973 to 2005[1], were conducted at the individual unit of analysis. This data structure allowed for the inclusion of detailed controls, including individual fixed effects that account for time-invariant attributes. Moreover, observing individual senators over time allowed us to examine

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[1] The Senate context changed dramatically in the early 1970s (Lee 2009, 2012, Sinclair 1989, Theriault 2013). Before then, there was greater correspondence between senators' structural positions and their ability to exert influence (Matthews 1960). With changed institutional norms and practices such as a modified cloture process (whereby 60 senators, rather than two-thirds of those present and voting, could force a measure to a final vote), the introduction of electronic voting, and increases in co-sponsorships and amendments that reflected growing individualism among senators, there emerged greater scope for senators with the same structural position to have varying levels of influence. Thus, 1973 is an appropriate starting point for this investigation. It ends in 2005 because the data needed for our analyses were only available to us in consistent form up until this year.

multiple shifts in power—in particular, changes in the majority status of parties—and many opportunities for senators to parlay these changes in power into influence.

Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable was the number of bills a focal senator introduced that passed the Senate in a given Congress.[2] Passing the Senate is a significant milestone for a bill, and this measure reflects the outcome of many composite actions senators could take to influence colleagues' voting behavior. Figure 1 depicts the distribution of our dependent variable: the number of bills a focal senator initiates that passed the Senate in a given Congress. As this variable is a skewed, count variable, we logged the measure (after adding one to account for 0s).

*****Figure 1 about here*****

Using alternative dependent variables, such as bill co-sponsorships, yielded similar results to the ones reported below. It is also worth noting that, in robustness checks reported below, we constructed an alternative measure of influence based on eigenvector centrality (Bonacich, 1987) in the bill-co-sponsorship network. We obtained comparable results when we used this alternative measure of influence.

Independent Variables

Our time-varying measure of a senator's structural power is based on the majority or minority status of her party. The majority party wields significant power, setting the legislative agenda and deciding which bills are to be considered and voted upon. The majority can choose to suppress the bills of the minority party, using what has been called negative agenda control (Cox & McCubbins, 2005; Gailmard & Jenkins, 2007). Majority party members enjoy greater success in adding amendments to bills

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[2] Bills, which are prospective pieces of legislation, are introduced to the Senate by a single senator. The senator introducing a bill seeks public endorsements (i.e., co-sponsorships) for the bill from his or her peers, with varying levels of success. Introduced bills are assigned to a committee, with only a small minority of bills emerging from the committee for a vote in the Senate Chamber. A positive majority vote is then necessary for the bill to pass the Senate Chamber. Our dependent variable is based on successful passage of these bills. For these bills to ultimately become law, they must also be passed in the House of Representatives and then signed into law by the President.

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(Den Hartog & Monroe, 2011), raising campaign funds (Cox & Magar, 1999), and allocating federal resources to their constituents (Balla, Lawrence, Maltzman, & Sigelman, 2002).

These are just the directly observable consequences of majority party status. As Lee Hamilton notes: "Party status affects pretty much everything. The majority not only gets nicer spaces and meeting rooms, it also gets to determine which members and staff will go on overseas fact-finding trips, and enjoys all sorts of little perks that make life on Capitol Hill more pleasant." [3] Stated differently, majority party status yields both tangible and intangible resources that can be used in horse-trading, thereby enabling majority-party senators to exert more influence. Thus, our measure of an individual's structural power is *Majority Party*: a time-varying indicator set to 1 if a senator's party was in the majority in a given Congress and to 0 otherwise. Figure 2 depicts the party composition of the Senate by Congress.

There were five discrete (i.e., between Congress) changes in majority party status during the observation period. Notably, the 107th Congress had multiple within Congress changes in majority party status. For example, Jim Jeffords switched his allegiance away from the Republican party on June 6, 2001, causing the Republicans to lose majority status to the Democrats. As the Democrats held majority party status for the bulk of the 107th Congress, we coded the data accordingly. Dropping the 107th Congress from our analysis did not materially change our results.

Lastly, two Congresses, the 94th and the 95th stand out as the Democratic party had greater than 60 members, commonly called a filibuster proof majority, and passing this compositional threshold augmented Democratic power substantially.[4] To test the robustness of our results, we excluded these periods from our analysis and obtained similar results.

<center>*****Figure 2 about here*****</center>

A core premise of this paper is that legislative influence will be contingent on an individual's initial experiences as a member of the dominant (in our setting, majority) or subordinate (in our setting, minority) group. To evaluate this proposition, we generated a time-invariant variable called *Initial:*

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[3] http://congress.indiana.edu/why-holding-the-majority-matters; accessed July 22, 2014
[4] We thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this to our attention.

Majority Party, which was set to 1 if the senator entered in the majority party and to 0 otherwise. As this variable does not vary over time, the main effect is subsumed by the individual fixed effects in our regression analysis. To examine the contingent effects of an individual's initial experiences, we interacted a senator's time-varying majority party status indicator with the time-invariant initial experiences variable to generate: *Majority Party X Initial: Majority Party.*

We further posited that these initial experiences may lead to varying rates of social learning. Drawing on the extensive literature on learning curves in organizations (e.g., Argote, 2013; Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011; Reagans, Argote, & Brooks, 2005), we used *Tenure*, as captured by the number of Congresses in which a senator served, as a proxy for social learning. To examine whether entering in the majority affected how rapidly people learned how to exert influence following shifts in power, we included a three-way interaction term, *Majority Party X Initial: Majority Party X Tenure*, and all relevant lower order interaction terms and main effects. Using an alternative measure of organizational experience—the stock of congressional bills originated—yielded similar results. However, as this measure is more closely associated with our dependent variable (i.e., bills that pass the Senate), *Tenure* is our preferred measure of social learning.

Estimation

We estimated ordinary least squares regressions of interpersonal influence on a time-varying measure of shifts in structural power and its interactions with the imprinting variable and tenure. To control for time-period and individual-level idiosyncrasies, we included Congress and senator fixed effects. Formally, regression models were represented as:[5]

$(1)\quad E[y_{it}|X_{it}] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Tenure_{it} + \beta_2 Majority\ Party_{it} + \delta_t + \gamma_i + \varepsilon_{it},$

$(2)\quad E[y_{it}|X_{it}] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Tenure_{it} + \beta_2 Majority\ Party_{it} + \beta_3 Majority\ Party_{it} \times Initial:\ Majority\ Party_i$

$\quad\quad + \delta_t + \gamma_i + \varepsilon_{it}$

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[5] Note that the main effect of the *Initial: Majority Party* cannot be estimated in these models because it is time invariant and therefore subsumed by the senator fixed effects. Moreover, we focus not on the main effect of the initial conditions (i.e., *Initial: Majority Party*) but rather on its interaction with shifts in structural power.

(3) $E[y_{it}|X_{it}] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Tenure_{it} + \beta_2 Majority\ Party_{it} + \beta_3 Majority\ Party_{it} \times Initial:\ Majority\ Party_i + \beta_4$

$Majority\ Party_{it} \times Tenure_{it} + \beta_5 Initial:\ Majority\ Party_i \times Tenure_{it} + \beta_6 Majority\ Party_{it} \times Initial:$

$Majority\ Party_i \times Tenure_{it} + \delta_t + \gamma_i + \varepsilon_{it}$

where y_{it} is the influence measure for senator i in Congress t, *Majority Party$_{it}$* indicates if senator i's party

is in the majority in Congress t, *Initial: Majority Party$_i$* indicates whether the senator was in the majority

in senator i's first Congress, and *Tenure$_{it}$* captures the senator's Congressional experience. X_{it} is a vector

of control variables, δ_t represents fixed effects for each Congress, and γ_i corresponds to senator fixed

effects. Equation (1) represents the model used to examine baseline conditions, while equations (2) and

(3) represent the models used to test initial experiences and the impact of initial experiences on

organizational learning, respectively.

Addressing Concerns about Endogeneity

The inclusion of senator fixed effects allowed us to examine within-senator variation and helped

alleviate concerns about endogeneity arising from omitted variable bias. The individual fixed effect

subsumed all time-invariant characteristics of senators—for example, gender, charisma, collegiality, and

prior work experiences. To put it differently, these models enabled us to estimate how *changes* in a given

senator's structural power led to varying levels of influence as a function of his or her initial experiences.

The inclusion of Congress fixed effects accounted for unobserved time heterogeneity—for example, years

in which the President was a Republican or Democrat and years in which a focal senator's party

affiliation matched or did not match that of the President. It also accounted for majority-minority party

caucus size and thus, for shifts in the risk set of same-party versus different-party senators available as

potential supporters of a focal senator's bills.

Our analytical strategy depends on the assumption of exogenous variation in power and senators'

initial organizational experiences. We turn next to considering the plausibility of each of these

assumptions. Our indicator of structural power is a senator's majority or minority party status. In the

timeframe of our dataset, no party was able to remain in the majority for more than four Congresses, and

there were five shifts in majority party status. Given the relatively balanced representation of parties during this time period, we posit that shifts in majority party status were a function of a small number of elections whose outcomes were uncertain and therefore difficult for any individual to anticipate.[6] Thus, it is reasonable to think of shifts in power arising from majority / minority party changes as exogenous to the individual.

There are also reasons to suspect that initial experiences with power were also largely outside the control of individual senators. An individual's entry to the Senate as a majority or minority party member is based on the uncertain outcome of many other elections. These outcomes are even more uncertain at the time a senator makes the choice to run for office—particularly in light of the considerable lead time involved in planning, funding, and staffing an election campaign.

RESULTS

We begin with a description of the data. Table 1 describes the characteristics of the 1,451 senator-Congress observations in our dataset, spanning the years 1973-2005. Within these observations are 260 senators whose careers span a portion of the 16 Congresses (i.e., two-year time periods) within our dataset. Democrats and Republicans were nearly evenly represented. Female senators were relatively scarce in the data (4.4% of observations). The typical senator joined in the 95th Congress and served for almost six Congresses (i.e., they were elected to two terms of office spanning 12 years).

Within a given Congress, the average senator had seven bills that passed the Senate, although there was wide variation in this influence measure, ranging from zero to 137 (see also Figure 1). Using a bill co-sponsorship measure of a senator's eigenvector centrality within the Congress, we found that senators had an average score of 0.095, and this score ranged from 0 to 0.175.

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[6] For example, in August 2014, Democrats were in the majority with 53 seats. Republicans held 45 seats. There were two Independents who caucused (i.e., affiliated) with Democrats. Of these seats, 33 were contested in November 2014. According to one forecast, accessed on August 20, 2014 (http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2014/senate-model/), Republicans had a 61% chance of being the majority party in 2015. As this example illustrates, even the outcome of an imminent election can be highly uncertain.

Lastly, fifty-six percent of observations were of senators in the majority party. Moreover, sixty-one percent of senators entered as members of the majority party and were thus coded with 1 for the indicator variable *Initial: Majority Party*.

Pairwise correlations between our variables seemed to make logical sense. For example, females were evenly represented across both parties but appeared to have entered the Senate more recently (i.e., 0.23 correlation between *Female* and *First Congress*). The correlation between *Bills that Passed Senate* and *Majority Party* was positive and significant at 0.25. The correlation between an alternative, bill co-sponsorship dependent variable, *Eigenvector Centrality*, and *Majority Party* was also positive and significant at 0.17.

*****Table 1 about here*****

Our main results are presented in Table 2. Model 1, a baseline with both Congress and senator fixed effects, reveals that influence increased with tenure. Each additional period of experience (i.e., two years or a Congress) increased a senator's ability to pass bills by 34%.[7] Consistent with our argument that being in the majority party equates to a position of high structural power, Model 2 indicates that individuals in the majority party were more influential in getting bills passed through the Senate. Majority party status boosted the number of bills passed by 121%, an effect on par with four Congresses of experience in the Senate. Model 3 indicates a negative interaction between majority party status and entering the senate as a member of the majority (i.e., *Initial: Majority Party*). Indeed, senators who entered in the minority had 178% greater cooperative support when they were in the majority party. By contrast, being in the majority party produced only an 87% boost in influence for senators who entered in the majority. This result is consistent with the notion of early experiences with power leading to rigidity and eroding the ability to translate future positions of high structural power into influence. Figure 3 provides a graphical description of these results.

*****Figure 3 about here*****

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[7] Given our log-linear specification, effect sizes can be calculated by exponentiating the coefficient.

We examined how initial experiences may lead to differential rates of social learning in Model 4. We found a positive three-way interaction between entering the senate as a member of the majority party, majority party status, and social learning (as measured by tenure). This positive interaction suggests that while individuals who entered as a member of the majority party received less cooperative support when they were in the majority party, this subset of individuals learned at a 9% faster rate than their counterparts.

We evaluated the robustness of these findings using several other specifications. First, we were concerned that the presence of a Democratic filibuster-proof majority (i.e., 60 or more seats) could skew our results. Accordingly, in Model 5 we limited our analysis to data from the 96th Congress and on. The results were materially unchanged when these observations were excluded from the analysis.

We also addressed the possibility that senators who were especially politically astute might have chosen to run in Senate elections with favorable political climates, and that this political savvy is correlated with their subsequent level of influence in the Senate. To address this possibility, we drew inspiration from the literature on regression discontinuity designs based on election results (Imbens & Kalyanaraman, 2012; Lee, 2008). Following Lee (2008), we assumed that senators elected with just over 50% of the vote are statistically indistinguishable from contenders who fell just shy of the 50% threshold, assuming there is some random chance component to election margins. We further assumed that there are no systematic differences in quality or underlying capacity for influence among the subset of senators elected with just above 50% of the vote. To put it differently, since these senators were on the cusp of not even getting elected, we can safely infer that they did not enter the chamber just because the political environment strongly favored their party.

With this insight in mind, we collected data on the *first-elected-year* popular vote margins for each senator in our dataset. As noted above, we focused on the first-elected-year because, following Lee (2008), we believe that this approach creates a quasi-experiment where marginal senators could have plausibly lost the election. Thus, we can think of this subsample as including senators who were randomly "treated" with the experience of entering as part of the organization's dominant group. Results based on

this subsample of senators are reported in Table 2, Model 6. In our dataset, 46 senators received less than 51% of the popular vote in their first elected year, and we track these individuals for 233 senator-congress observations. In Model 6, even estimated on a much smaller sample, our results remain consistent.

Lastly, we examined the robustness of our results to an alternative measure of influence based on eigenvector centrality (Bonacich, 1987) in the bill cosponsorship network. Reassuringly, as presented in Model 7, we obtained comparable results with this alternative measure.

*****Table 2 about here*****

Because research on the "dark side of power" focuses on the effects of the experience of power on a person's subsequent likelihood of losing power (Anderson & Brion, 2014), we conducted a supplemental analysis to decompose the effects of early experience with majority group membership on the gain (i.e., moving from minority to majority party status) versus the loss (i.e., moving from majority to minority party status) of structural power in Table 3. Model 8 illustrates that those without rigidity (i.e., those in the minority in their first Congress) gained 160% more support when they first ascended to majority party status. Similarly, those starting in the majority lost 73% of their support when they first moved to the minority. In other words, following the first shift in power between the parties, the gain and loss of cooperative support were approximately symmetrical between the two groups.

A different pattern emerges following the second shift in power, as highlighted by Model 9. When individuals who started in the majority moved back to the majority following a period of being in the minority (i.e., *Second Change in Party Status × Initial: Majority Party*), they were predicted to increase cooperative support by 70%. Individuals who started in the minority party and then moved to the majority, however, experienced no decline in support when they fell back again to the minority position. That is, consistent with the dark-side-of-power literature, those who began their senate careers in the majority appeared to receive less support when they later lost power, whereas those who started in the minority did not experience a comparable loss of support when they later experienced a decrease in structural power.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article has sought to add to our understanding of how people vary in their ability to derive advantage from positions of structural power. Whereas prior work has emphasized the role of individual differences among power holders and of the contemporaneous influence tactics they employ, we adopted a temporal, historical perspective on this question, arguing that early socialization experiences can affect the downstream ability to convert power into influence and the rate of social learning about effective influence tactics. We began with a baseline expectation that, all else equal, changes in structural power will lead to corresponding shifts in influence.

We then engaged a conceptual puzzle in the literature. One theoretical perspective suggests that entering the organization as part of its dominant group may boost self-efficacy and catalyze social learning about effective influence tactics (e.g., Bandura, 1993; Wood & Bandura, 1989). An alternative theoretical view implies that entering in the dominant group may make people susceptible to the adverse psychological consequences of experiencing power, which inhibit social learning (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2012; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). We evaluated these competing perspectives in the context of the U.S. Senate from 1973 to 2005 and found partial support for both accounts: (1) senators who entered as part of the majority were less effective at converting subsequent structural shifts of power into influence; however, (2) such senators learned to how to wield influence following such shifts at a faster rate than their counterparts who entered as part of the minority.

Theoretical Implications

Although our data do not permit us to pin down the mechanisms that produced these effects or to rule out all competing mechanisms, these findings nevertheless point to some tantalizing implications for research on the social psychology of power, which has shown that the experience of power can subtly shift the power holders' dispositions and orientations in ways that leave them susceptible to the subsequent loss of power (Anderson & Brion, 2014; Galinsky et al., 2012). First, this work suggests that

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the susceptibility to this "dark side" of power can vary considerably over the course of a career. The subtle changes arising from the experience of power are more likely to have lasting consequences when they occur in the sensitive period following entry to a new organization than when they occur during more stable career periods. Second, our findings suggest that this social rigidity can persist in a person's career backdrop for extended periods—several years in the case of many senators in our sample—and then move to the fore when a person later experiences a change in power (cf. Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001). Finally, our finding that senators who entered in the majority learned how to exert influence following structural shifts at a faster rate than those who joined in the minority suggests that people can either recover from the adverse psychological consequences of wielding power or experience positive but delayed learning as a consequence of initially holding power. Given the nature of our data, we are not able to adjudicate between these alternative explanations.

In addition, the present study contributes to research on organizational socialization by demonstrating that people are susceptible to being influenced during the encounter stage of socialization even when they join an organization at an advanced career stage. Senators, many of whom entered the legislative body after long careers in multiple organizational settings, still appeared to be affected by their initial experiences with the structure of dependence relations they encountered at the time of entry. In addition, whereas prior work has tended to treat socialization as having discrete stages and a concrete endpoint (but see Srivastava et al., 2018 for a notable exception), our work suggests that social learning about effective influence following power shifts persists long after a newcomer is thought to be socialized into the new context.

Managerial Implications

A better understanding of the conversion of power into advantage has clear implications for the management of organizations. In fact, in a literature dating back to Barnard (1938), one could argue that a major role of hierarchy within organizations is to place managers into positions that enable coordination within the firm. And yet we know that, while managers vary considerably in how effective they are when they seek to influence others. Thus, we not only return attention to a topic of central interest to managers,

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but we also begin to unpack a mechanism—early socialization experiences—that can moderate the conversion of structural power into influence.

Our focus on an individual's early experiences identifies a subpopulation of individuals—those who entered the organization as part of a dominant group—who might be particularly amenable to mentorship and training about effective influence tactics. Finally, in examining changes in power, we highlight the importance of examining not only gains in power but also *losses*. As individuals in firms that have been merged into a larger dominant entity can appreciate, shifts in power are a fact of organizational life. Our results suggest that the loss of structural power does not necessarily lead to the loss of influence if individuals have accumulated the right kind of social learning.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the Senate represents a strategic research site for the study of power and influence, the chamber's specific institutional features also raise questions about the generalizability of the findings. We anticipate that the results would generalize to organizational contexts where there are clear dominant and subordinate groups. Yet replications of this approach in more traditional organizational settings are clearly needed to identify the conditions under which the experience of being a newcomer in a dominant group produces social ability versus rigidity.

Findings from this investigation point to a number of promising directions for future research. For example, what other social skills do people acquire or fail to acquire as a result of their early socialization experiences and what other downstream consequences, beyond the ability to derive advantage from structural power, can they have? Are some kinds of organizations—for example, those with strong cultures (Sørensen, 2002)—more likely to produce social rigidity or ability through newcomer socialization? How is social rigidity or ability acquired in one setting carried over to new organizations a person joins and how are they transformed in the process? We see great potential in future research that explores how factors such as these might affect the strength, durability, and downstream consequences of the rigidities and acuities that people acquire when they enter a new organizational setting.

**FIGURE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE MEASURE BASED ON BILLS THAT PASSED
THE SENATE**

N = 1,451 Senator-Congress observations; 16 outliers not shown
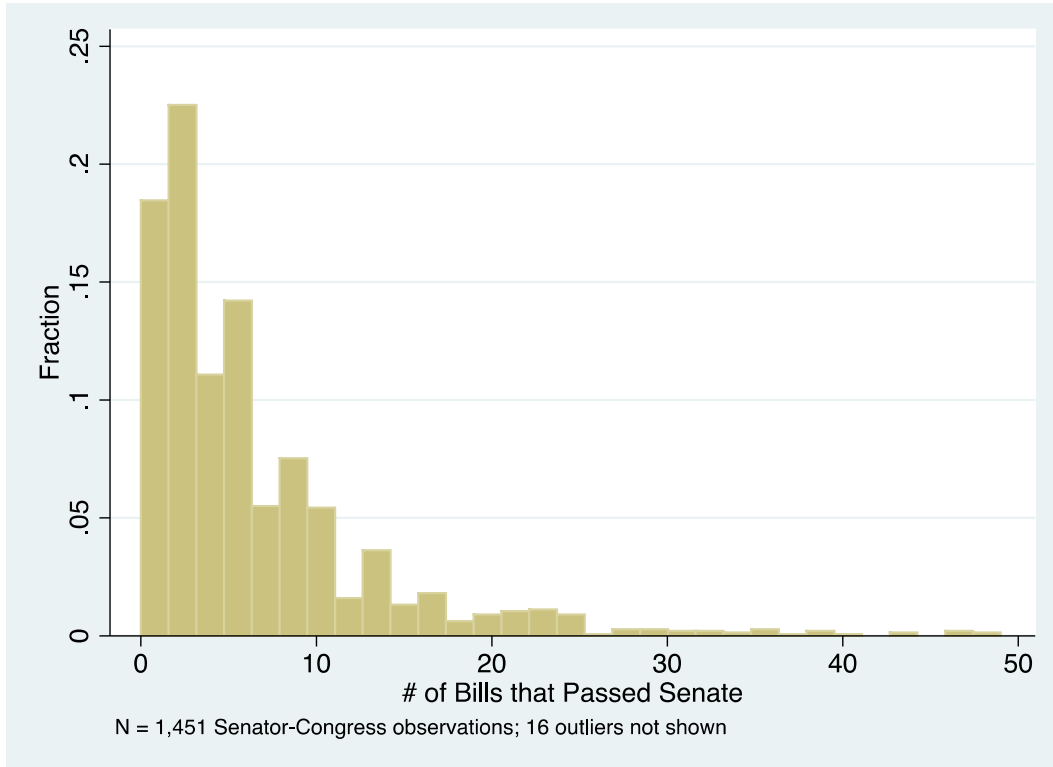
Note: This figure depicts the number of bills a focal senator originated that ultimately passed the Senate
Chamber within a given Congress. For our first dependent variable, we added one to the variable and took
the log.

FIGURE 2: PARTY COMPOSITION OF SENATE BY CONGRESS
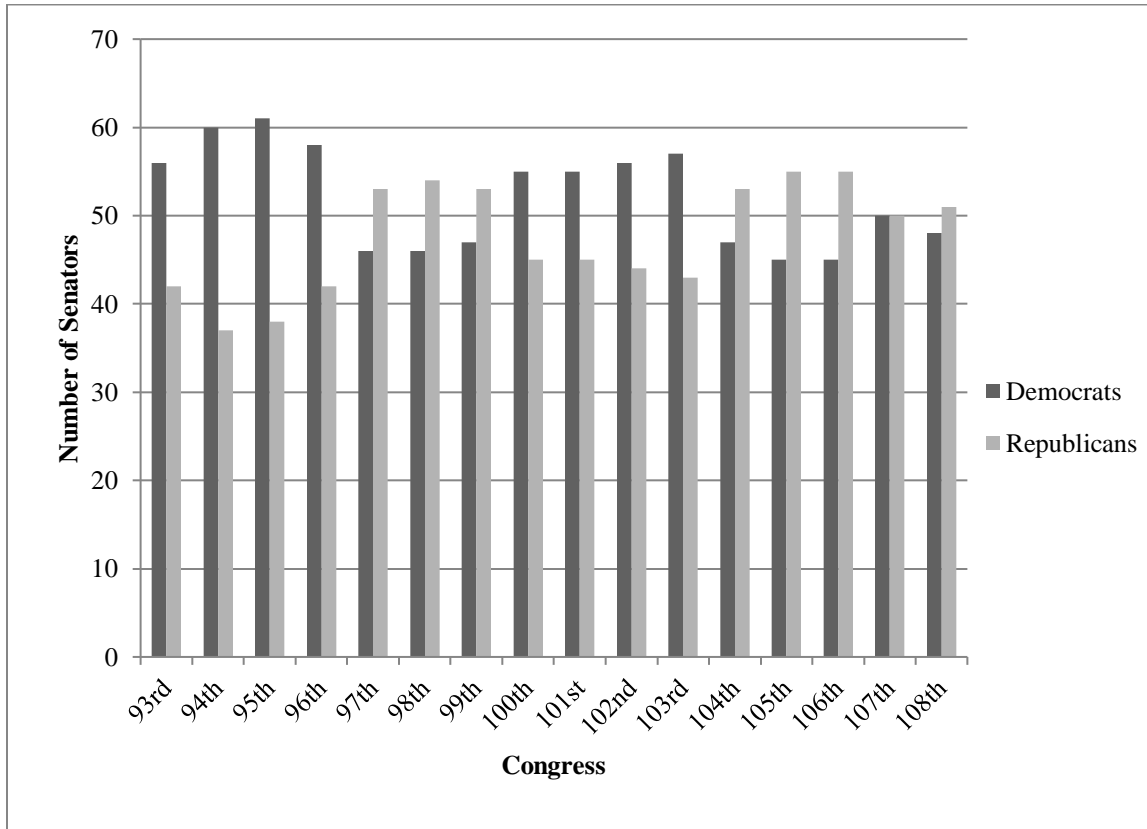
Note: Darker bars tally the number of Democratic senators and lighter bars tally Republican senators. Numbers reported are for the first day of the Congressional Session. For the 107th Congress, the Democratic Party was counted as the majority party because of the departure of Jim Jeffords from the Republican Party a quarter of the way through the Congress.

FIGURE 3: AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS OF MAJORITY PARTY STATUS ON INFLUENCE (WITH 95% CONFIDENCE INTERVALS)
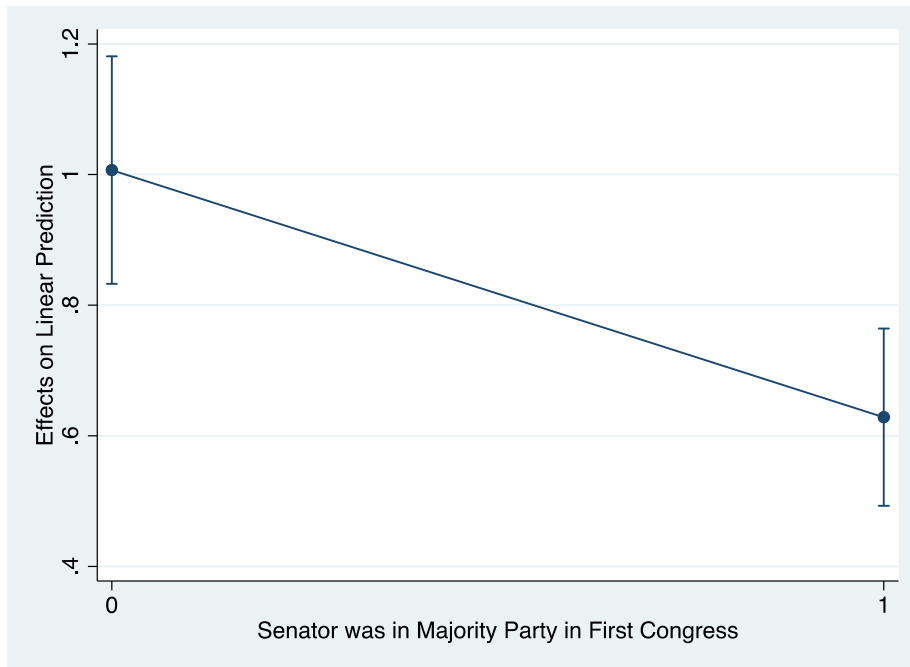
Note: This figure presents predicted marginal effects for Senators that had a value of 1 for Initial: Majority Party to the right, and a value of 0 to the left using regression models from Table 2, Model 3.

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND CORRELATION MATRIX (N=1,451)

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
(1) Democrat	0.511	0.500	0	1									
(2) Republican	0.484	0.500	0	1	**-0.99**								
(3) Female	0.044	0.205	0	1	0.03	-0.03							
(4) First Congress	95.38	5.904	80	108	**-0.14**	**0.15**	**0.23**						
(5) Last Congress	105.2	5.554	93	112	0.03	0.04	**0.18**	**0.60**					
(6) Tenure	5.907	4.151	1	21	**0.12**	**-0.12**	**-0.12**	**-0.60**	-0.04				
(7) Bills that Passed Senate	7.411	11.72	0	137	0.03	-0.03	-0.05	**0.21**	**-0.06**	**0.24**			
(8) Eigenvector Centrality	0.095	0.031	0	0.175	-0.03	0.05	0.01	-0.09	0.01	**0.17**	**0.31**		
(9) Majority Party	0.559	0.497	0	1	**0.11**	**-0.11**	-0.03	0.01	-0.04	-0.05	**0.25**	**0.17**	
(10) Initial: Majority Party	0.610	0.488	0	1	**0.53**	**-0.53**	-0.02	0.07	**0.06**	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02	**0.25**

Note: Correlations that are significant at 0.05 level are indicated in bold.

TABLE 2: OLS ESTIMATES OF INFLUENCE ON COVARIATES: STRUCTURAL POWER BASED ON MAJORITY/MINORITY PARTY STATUS, WITH SENATOR AND CONGRESS FIXED EFFECTS

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
DV	Bills that Passed Senate (Log)						Eigenvector Centrality
Observations	All				>95th Congress	<51% Popular Vote	All
Tenure	0.293***	0.247***	0.268***	0.301***	0.303***	0.247***	0.002*
	(0.032)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.035)	(0.038)	(0.001)
Majority Party		0.795***	1.021***	1.007***	0.993***	0.785***	0.014***
		(0.055)	(0.092)	(0.089)	(0.102)	(0.127)	(0.002)
Majority Party X Initial: Majority Party			-0.395**	-0.368**	-0.262*	-0.136	-0.004
			(0.123)	(0.120)	(0.131)	(0.163)	(0.003)
Majority Party X Tenure				0.003	-0.007	-0.057+	-0.002***
				(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.033)	(0.001)
Initial: Majority Party X Tenure				-0.021	-0.020	-0.086+	-0.001
				(0.025)	(0.030)	(0.051)	(0.001)
Majority Party X Initial: Majority Party X Tenure				0.088**	0.090**	0.107*	0.004***
				(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.049)	(0.001)
Constant	3.175***	2.342***	2.604***	3.013***	2.336***	1.131***	0.090***
	(0.260)	(0.214)	(0.231)	(0.235)	(0.177)	(0.124)	(0.007)
Senator FE	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Congress FE	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
R-Squared	0.108	0.327	0.334	0.366	0.393	0.532	0.127
# of Senators	260	260	260	260	193	46	260
N	1451	1451	1451	1451	993	233	1451

Note: *Majority Party* is a time-varying indicator of a senator party's majority/minority status at time *t*. *Initial: Majority Party* is set to 1 if the senator's party was in the majority in his or her first Congress. Senator tenure is measured in Congresses (i.e., every two years). All models include senator and congress fixed effects. Robust standard errors. Two-tailed tests. + $p<.01$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

TABLE 3: OLS ESTIMATES OF INFLUENCE ON COVARIATES: STRUCTURAL POWER BASED ON INCREASES AND DECREASES IN POWER, WITH SENATOR AND CONGRESS FIXED EFFECTS

	(8)	(9)
DV	Bills that Passed Senate (Log)	
Observations	All	
Tenure	0.288***	0.296***
	(0.047)	(0.047)
First change in party status	0.957***	0.917***
	(0.122)	(0.136)
First change in party status X Initial: Majority Party	-1.292***	-1.110***
	(0.134)	(0.156)
Second change in party status		-0.029
		(0.129)
Second change in party status X Initial: Majority Party		0.529***
		(0.136)
Constant	3.131***	3.222***
	(0.350)	(0.348)
Senator FE	Included	Included
Congress FE	Included	Included
R-Squared	0.232	0.257
# of Senators	260	260
N	1451	1451

Note: *Majority Party* is a time-varying indicator of a senator party's majority/minority status at time *t*. *Initial: Majority Party* is set to 1 if the senator's party was in the majority in his or her first Congress. Senator tenure is measured in Congresses (i.e., every two years). *First Change in Party Status* and *Second Change in Party Status* represent the first and second times a senator experienced a shift of his or her party from or to the majority. All models include senator and congress fixed effects. Robust standard errors. Two-tailed tests. + p<.01, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

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