Stamps of Power and Conflict: Imprinting and Influence in the U.S. Senate, 1973-2005

Christopher C. Liu
Rotman School of Management
University of Toronto
Chris.Liu@Rotman.Utoronto.Ca

Sameer B. Srivastava
Haas School of Business
University of California, Berkeley
srivastava@haas.berkeley.edu

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*Direct all correspondence to Sameer B. Srivastava: srivastava@haas.berkeley.edu; 617-895-8707. Both authors contributed equally. We thank Cameron Anderson, Anne Bowers, Tiziana Casciaro, Jenny Chatman, Serena Chen, Katy DeCelles, Laura Doering, Andreea Gorbatai, Ming Leung, Jo-Ellen Pozner, Eliot Sherman, András Tilcsik and participants of the 2014 Organizational Theory Workshop for Junior Faculty, the 2014 INSEAD Network Evolution Conference, the 2014 Wharton People and Organizations Conference, the 2015 Organization Science Winter Conference, and seminar participants at National University of Singapore and Washington University in St. Louis for helpful comments and feedback. We also thank Don Ritchie, the Senate Historian. The usual disclaimer applies.

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Abstract
Gains in power are often assumed to lead to greater influence. Yet people vary in their ability to convert power into influence. We bring a temporal, historical perspective to account for this heterogeneity. We propose that—even when they have had considerable prior experience—people can acquire organization-specific imprints when they join a new organization and that these career imprints can affect how influential they become when they later gain or lose power. We theorize about two such imprints: a stamp of power, which refers to rigidities that accrue to individuals who enter an organization as part of a dominant coalition; and a stamp of conflict, which references the learning benefits that people gain when they participate early on in conflictual work groups. We propose that the former negatively moderates, while the latter positively moderates, a person’s ability to translate downstream changes in power into influence. We evaluate and find support for these propositions in analyses of the U.S. Senate from 1973 to 2005. We discuss implications for research on power, conflict, and imprinting.

Keywords: Power; Influence; Imprinting; Conflict; Networks; Collaboration.
I. Introduction

Power derives in part from the structural positions that individuals occupy within organizations. Because power is often equated with influence, when people move into structural positions that confer greater power, they are often assumed to become more influential (Pfeffer 1981). Yet people vary considerably in their ability to convert shifts in structural power into corresponding increases in influence (Molm 1981, Brass 1984, Brass and Burkhardt 1993). Explanations for this heterogeneity have tended to focus on stable individual differences such as personality traits or interpersonal styles (for a review, see Anderson and Brion 2014) or the contemporaneous behaviors through which power is enacted (for a review, see Fleming and Spicer 2014).

Missing from this literature has been a temporal, historical perspective that considers how initial experiences upon joining a new organization can affect a person’s ability to convert later shifts in power into influence. Yet we know that past organizational experiences can have profound consequences for people’s later behavior (Dokko, Wilk, Rothbard 2009, for a review, see Marquis and Tilcsik 2013). Just as the environmental conditions and founder characteristics at the time an organization was established can leave lasting imprints on its structure (Beckman and Burton 2008) and the relative power of its subunits (Boeker 1989), so there is reason to expect that initial experiences upon entering a new organization can leave enduring imprints that affect a person’s subsequent ability to influence others.

The imprinting literature has tended to focus on the formative, early stages of careers and on general traits that are carried by people when they move from one organizational setting to another (e.g., McEvily, Jaffee, and Tortoriello 2012). As a result, it remains unclear whether people—even when they have had considerable prior work experience—can still can acquire organization-specific imprints at the time of entry to a new organization and whether these career imprints (Higgins 2005) might affect their later outcomes in the new setting. Given that the experience of power can produce a variety of rigidities (for a review, see Galinsky et al. 2012) and that influence often relies on learning about how to effectively manage group conflict (Pfeffer 1981, Park, Westphal, Stern 2011), a person’s initial experiences with power and conflict in a new organization would appear to be important manifestations of these career
imprints. Moreover, whereas prior work on imprinting has examined how individuals acquire features of the organizations they enter, little is known about whether the heterogeneous groups and teams in which people initially work can also leave lasting and consequential individual-level imprints. These gaps in our understanding stem in large part from the twin empirical challenges of obtaining detailed, longitudinal career histories for cohorts of new organizational entrants and of empirically disentangling measures of power and influence within these histories (e.g., Finkelstein 1992).

In this article, we seek to fill these gaps by bringing together insights from research on power, conflict, and organizational imprinting. We posit that, all else equal, the gain or loss of structural power within an organization produces corresponding shifts in the degree of influence that people have over their colleagues; however, these effects are contingent upon imprinting experiences with power and conflict at the time of organizational entry. We theorize about two such imprints: a stamp of power, which refers to rigidities that accrue to individuals who enter an organization as part of a dominant coalition; and a stamp of conflict, which references the learning benefits that people gain when they participate early on in conflictual work groups. We propose that the former negatively moderates, while the latter positively moderates, a person’s ability to translate downstream changes in power into influence.

We evaluate these propositions in the context of the U.S. Senate from 1973 to 2005. Although the particular manifestations of power, conflict, and influence observed in our data are somewhat unique to this setting, the overall context nonetheless has important parallels to the typical differentiated organization (Pfeffer 1981). Indeed, the Senate has previously served as a strategic research site for the study of power (Brescoll 2011), conflict (Lee 2009), and influence (Liu and Srivastava 2015). For four reasons, it is especially well-suited to our theoretical aims. First, senators vary in their initial experiences with power, depending on whether or not their political party was in the majority at the time they joined, and with group-level conflict, based on the level of political division they experienced on the committees to which they were initially assigned. These initial experiences are largely outside of a senator’s control and exogenous to their subsequent shifts in power (Fenno 1989, Deering and Smith 1997). It is therefore
possible to examine how variation in these initial experiences promotes or inhibits a senator’s later ability to convert power into influence.

In addition, at various points in their careers, senators experience changes in structural power—for example, shifts in their party’s majority or minority status or ascension to the role of committee chair. These changes are governed by factors outside any individual senator’s control—for example, longstanding tradition and institutional norms. Thus, they too can be thought of as quasi-exogenous shifts, which provide insight into how initial experiences in the Senate enhance or constrain a senator’s later ability to convert power into influence. Third, election to the Senate often represents the culmination of a political career: it is rarely, if ever, the first organization to which a senator is exposed. Thus, the Senate is an apt setting for the study of the potential effects of career imprints acquired later in one’s career.

Finally, senators’ legislative behavior is part of the public record, and their varying influence can be readily observed. As a result, we can analytically distinguish power, based on structural positions, from influence, as measured by the number of cosponsors senators successfully enlist on bills they originate and the number of amendments they succeed in passing. Still, given the peculiarities of the Senate context, we discuss below the extent to which these findings might generalize to other contexts.

II. Theory and Hypotheses

Power and influence have long served as cornerstones of organizational theory (Cyert and March 1963, Hickson et al. 1971, Salancik and Pfeffer 1974). Although many definitions of these terms have been proposed and debated over the years, we focus on a recent one that is based on a distillation of research in sociology, social psychology, and organizational theory. We follow Sturm and Antonakis (2015: 139) in defining power as “having the discretion and the means to asymmetrically enforce one’s will over others.” Influence, then, is defined as successfully enforcing one’s will over others.

A longstanding theme in this line of work is that gains in power—all else equal—increase a person’s ability to influence others, while losses have the opposite effect. One reason is that having more power enables people to reduce their dependence on others for valued resources and thereby makes them more influential (Emerson 1962, Cook and Emerson 1984, Molm 1990). For example, Zajac and
Westphal (1996) found that boards of directors with greater power had greater independence and could therefore influence CEO succession choices in the direction of their own demographic profile. Second, power holders are often perceived by others as being more powerful, whether or not they actually control resources, and these perceptions boost their influence (Fombrun 1983). Finally, positions of formal authority confer legitimacy, which can also lead to greater influence (Goldhamer and Shils 1939, Weber 1947, French and Raven 1959). Raven and French (1958: 83), for instance, argued: “Legitimate power in formal organizations is largely a relationship between offices rather than between persons. Assuming that the factory worker accepts the right of his supervisor to hold his position, that supervisor will, by virtue of this occupancy, have the legitimate right to prescribe behavior for his worker; the worker will, in turn, feel obligated to accept these orders.”

Recognizing that the mere possession of power does not always equate to influence (Brass and Burkhardt 1993), including in the U.S. Senate (Den Hartog and Monroe 2011), we posit that changes in structural power will, ceteris paribus, lead to corresponding shifts in influence. Because this expectation has become nearly axiomatic in the literature, we refer to it as a baseline hypothesis that we later use for theory building: **Baseline Hypothesis: Gains in (losses of) power will lead to corresponding increases (decreases) in influence.**

How might we expect this baseline hypothesis to play out in the context of the U.S. Senate? In this setting, the two most important sources of change in power are: (1) when a senator’s party moves from the minority to the majority (and vice versa); and (2) when a senator ascends to or gives up a committee chair role. 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 and Monroe 2011). Similarly, committee chairs control valuable resources that senators vie for: they decide which items should appear on the committee’s agenda, determine how the committee’s sizable staff will be supervised, and choose how to communicate about the group’s deliberations and decisions to the external world (Deering and Smith 1997).
There are many ways for senators to exert influence over one another within and outside the legislative body; however, a key arena of interpersonal influence is in senators’ decisions to support, not support, or modify one another’s legislative initiatives. In particular, two of the most concrete manifestations of influence are a senator’s ability to garner support from other senators—particularly those with very different ideological preferences—for her policy initiatives and her ability to successfully pass amendments to proposed legislation (Fowler 2006a).

Thus, we propose that the power senators wield will increase or decrease as a function of changes in their party’s majority or minority status and their movement in and out of the role of committee chair. These shifts in powers will lead to corresponding changes in influence, as indicated by bill cosponsorships and amendments passed.

*Imprinting and Influence*

Having established the foundational expectation of a positive relationship between changes in power and ensuing influence, we turn next to theorizing about the role of imprinting in moderating this effect. Imprinting is “a process whereby, during a brief period of susceptibility, a focal entity develops characteristics that reflect prominent features of the environment, and these characteristics continue to persist despite significant environmental changes in subsequent periods” (Marquis and Tilcsik 2013: 199). Much of the research on imprinting has operated at the community or organizational levels—for example, considering how the early founding of a nonprofit organization in a community affects the likelihood of the community forming a new nonprofit in a different domain (Greve and Rao 2012), how the social technology available at their establishment shapes community-based intercorporate networks (Marquis 2003), or how initial founding conditions affect firms’ subsequent organizational structure and management team composition (Johnson 2007) and the relative power of their subunits (Boeker 1989).

*Organization-to-Individual Imprints*

In parallel, a growing body of work has shown the myriad ways in which organizational experiences can leave lasting imprints on individuals and their careers (Higgins 2005, Briscoe and Kellogg 2011). People are especially susceptible to such influence during the formative period after their
initial entry to an organization (Schein 1971, Chatman 1991, Cable, Gino, and Staats 2013). For example, initial assignments to mentors affect the kind of knowledge that lawyers acquire and later shape how effective they are when they become partners (McEvily, Jaffee, and Tortoriello 2012). Consistent with this finding, scientists tend to adopt their advisors’ orientations toward commercial science, and this imprint affects their later patenting behavior (Azoulay, Liu, and Stuart 2014). Similarly, past exposure to university peers who transitioned into entrepreneurship increases a focal individual’s likelihood of making a similar transition (Kacperczyk 2013).

Whereas much of the prior research has focused on organization-to-individual imprints that people acquire early in their careers and emphasized general inscribed traits that people carry from one organization to another, we build on Higgins’ (2005) insight that people can also receive career imprints that are specific to an organization and that may be acquired at later life and career stages. Indeed, careers often include multiple, though short, sensitive periods when people are susceptible to imprinting effects (Marquis and Tilcsik 2013). These sensitive periods are especially likely to occur during role transitions, when people are becoming socialized to a new organizational setting with uncertain role requirements (Ashforth and Saks 1996). As Higgins (2005: 338) explains, “Transitions of any kind are marked by anxiety that individuals want to reduce as they extend themselves into new roles, new identities….Such vulnerable times amplify the potential for imprinting. This is consistent with adult development theory—being in between stages of development and experiencing tension one wants to resolve.” As we will argue and illustrate below, entry to the Senate—even for someone who is older or has considerable prior political experience—often produces high levels of uncertainty and anxiety, which in turn render new entrants vulnerable to being imprinted by institutional features of the Senate at their time of entry.

Moreover, we propose that—even when people have had considerable prior work experience—the career imprints they receive upon joining a new organization can still have downstream consequences in that new setting. Because the experience of power can produce a variety of rigidities (Galinsky et al. 2012) and influence typically requires the effective management of group conflict (Pfeffer 1981), we
argue that a person’s initial experiences with power and conflict in a new organizational setting represent important manifestations of these career imprints (Higgins 2005).

We further suggest that these career imprints are most likely to have observable behavioral consequences when they are activated by shifts in power experienced later in one’s career. Support for this view comes from social psychological research that demonstrates how the experience of power can activate behavioral tendencies that are otherwise latent. For example, Chen, Lee-Chai, and Bargh (2001) showed that those with an underlying communal orientation act in socially responsible ways when they experienced power, while those with an underlying exchange orientation act in more self-interested ways when they experienced power. In a similar vein, Schmid Mast, Jonas, and Hall (2009) reported that the experience of power enhances perspective-taking among empathetic leaders but not among egoistic ones. Along the same lines, Côté and colleagues (2011) found that power amplifies the association between dispositional tendencies and perspective-taking with strangers (see also Gordon and Chen 2013).

Although these studies have tended to focus on the short-term effects of experiencing power in laboratory settings, Winter and colleagues (1985, 1988) have demonstrated that socialization experiences at earlier stages in life can influence how people orient and respond to changes in power much later in their lives. Thus, extrapolating these arguments to the domain of imprinting, we posit that the career imprints acquired at the time of organizational entry will be activated and expressed when a person later gains or loses structural power within the same organization.

The Stamp of Power

In some cases, initial organizational experiences can have adverse career consequences. For example, early exposure to extreme resource abundance or scarcity in an organization can deprive individuals of the problem solving and interaction skills needed for future career success (Tilcsik 2014). Prior work experiences can also “bring rigidities that act as baggage, weighing down…responsiveness” to, and effectiveness in, new situations (Dokko, Wilk, and Rothbard 2009: 4). Building on this insight, we theorize that initial organizational experiences with structural power, which make people more influential
at the time they wield that power, can also—paradoxically—create rigidities that dampen their ability to transform power into influence at later career stages.

Indeed, from its early days, research on power has called attention to its dark side—for example, power’s tendency to promote selfishness, aggression, and the devaluation of others (Milgram 1963, Kipnis 1972). A comprehensive account of how the experience of heightened or reduced power can change people appears in Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson’s (2003) Approach-Inhibition Theory of Power. The theory posits that power activates the behavioral approach system, which increases sensitivity to rewards, while powerlessness galvanizes the inhibition system, which enhances vigilance to threats.

These propositions have received consistent empirical support across a wide range of studies (Galinsky et al. 2012, Anderson and Brion 2014). Those who feel more powerful tend to disregard others’ perspectives (Galinsky et al. 2006), overestimate the extent to which others are allied with them (Brion and Anderson 2013), increase their demands of others (Sivanathan, Pillutla, and Murnighan 2008), and build coalitions with similar (Pfeffer and Fong 2005) and flattering others (Park, Westphal, and Stern 2011). These behavioral changes occur in part because powerful people perceive greater social distance from less powerful others (Magee and Smith 2013), which leads the former to objectify (Gruenfeld et al. 2008), disregard the advice of (See et al. 2011), and inhibit the voice of the latter (Ferguson, Ormiston, and Moon 2010). Insofar as these changes arising from the experience of power manifest in the sensitive period following entry to a new organization, they are apt to create rigidities that will persist over time.

Initial experiences with power are importantly shaped by whether or not a person joins as part of the organization’s dominant coalition. Organizations have long been conceived of as coalitional entities (e.g., Cyert and March 1963), with some groups—for example, the set of leaders pursuing a promising growth initiative that has the CEO’s or board’s backing—wielding greater power over others—for example, the people stewarding legacy or declining parts of the business. It is not uncommon for organizations to have cleavages that yield majority and minority factions and for new entrants to these settings to be affiliated with one side or the other. Examples from traditional organizational settings include: a company in which distinct business units vie for resources and control and where the CEO hails
from and tends to favor one business unit over the others; a matrix organization in which power oscillates through frequent restructuring between global brand management and geographic regions; and an organization adopting a superior new technology that places a premium on the skills or expertise of one employee group over another (e.g., Barley 1986). In each of these cases, new employees are likely to become affiliated with either the dominant or the non-dominant coalition depending on their backgrounds.

We propose that, relative to people who enter an organization as part of a non-dominant coalition, those who join as part of a dominant coalition are more likely to acquire rigidities, which we call the stamp of power, that—all else equal—will tend to make them less influential when they later experience shifts in power. Thus, we anticipate: **Hypothesis 1**: Individuals who enter a new organization as part of its dominant coalition will be less effective at converting future shifts in power into influence than will those who enter as part of a non-dominant coalition.

Entry to the U.S. Senate often marks a sensitive period that creates the conditions for the new entrant to experience imprinting effects (Marquis and Tilcsik 2013). For example, biographies of Lyndon Johnson (Caro 2002), Dan Quayle (Fenno 1989), and Arlen Specter (Fenno 1991), among others, indicate that newly minted senators—even when they have had considerable prior political experience—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). During this sensitive period of socialization (Ashforth and Saks 1996), senators are constantly adapting to and learning from their new environment. Indeed, Fenno (1991) estimates that it takes senators approximately two years to acclimate to their new environment. Thus, we propose that the learning and adjustment that occurs during this sensitive period can have lasting behavioral consequences (Dokko, Wilk, and Rothbard 2009).

We further anticipate that the stamp of power will manifest through a senator’s party affiliation at the time of entry. Those who enter when their party is in the majority are more susceptible to acquiring the stamp of power than those who enter when their party is in the minority. In principle, a senator could also acquire a stamp of power by assuming a committee chair role when she begins her service. In
practice, however, senate rules and traditions almost always preclude first-term senators from occupying committee chair roles. Thus, we anticipate that the stamp of power will operate primarily through affiliation with the majority party.

The Stamp of Conflict

Having argued that the stamp of power will negatively affect the conversion of power to influence, we turn next to proposing a positive contingent effect. To develop this argument, we begin with the observation that much of organizational life unfolds in work groups. Though they may belong to a single subunit in the formal structure, people often participate in myriad work groups that constitute an organization’s semiformal structure (Biancini, McFarland, and Dahlander 2014). Just as people vary in whether or not they belong to a dominant coalition at the time they enter a new organization, so we suggest that their initial experiences in work groups can produce individual-level imprints.

One key dimension along which work groups vary is in the level of conflict among members (Simmel 1955, Jehn 1995, Gibson and Vermeulen 2003). A vast literature has examined the question of whether conflict—based on tasks, relationships, and process—is harmful or beneficial for work group performance. These studies have surfaced a host of contingent factors, and meta-analyses of this work have yielded mixed empirical evidence (De Dreu and Weingart 2003, Jehn and Bendersky 2003, de Wit, Greer, and Jehn 2012). Whereas this literature has focused on the consequences of conflict for group-level outcomes, we instead consider how exposure to conflict in work groups can affect individual-level outcomes through the mechanism of learning.

Indeed, a long line of research has examined how experiences in work groups can promote learning among their members (for a review, see Gillies and Ashman 2003). We focus on a particular kind of learning: that which arises from observing and modeling the behavior of one’s colleagues (Bandura 1977). Consistent with this mechanism, several scholars within the imprinting literature have similarly theorized—though sometimes implicitly—that experiences within founding teams can produce learning that leads to changes in individual values and behavior (e.g., Leung, Foo, and Chaturvedi 2003).
We extend these arguments to the domain of conflict within work groups. Although conflict can have a variety of positive and negative consequences for the work groups in which it occurs, it has also been consistently linked to individual-level growth and development (for a review, see Levine, Resnick, and Higgins 1993). Recognizing that the experience of conflict can produce both rigidities and positive learning benefits, we propose that early experiences with work group conflict in a new organization will—on balance—yield more of the latter than the former with respect to the management of conflict within the new setting and following a change in structural power. This is especially likely to be true in settings such as the Senate that have strong, deeply rooted norms and rituals about conflict resolution.

We suggest that initial experiences with work group conflict can help people learn to understand and synthesize the ways in which their new colleagues present divergent perspectives, engage in constructive debate, and manage disagreements (Rahim 2002, Tjosvold 2008). These insights can, in turn, enhance their capacity to manage future work group conflict among their new colleagues.

As with the case of joining an organization as part of the dominant coalition, this capacity to manage work group conflict—which we term the stamp of conflict—will tend to remain latent until the person experiences a shift in power that makes it salient. It will then aid its bearers when they later acquire power by enabling them to diagnose and manage the conflicts that arise in the exercise of influence. In contrast to the stamp of power, we theorize that this stamp of conflict will arise through, and later manifest in, interactions that people have in work group contexts. Thus, we expect: Hypothesis 2: Individuals who are exposed to high levels of work group conflict when they enter a new organization will be more effective at converting future shifts in power into influence than will those who are exposed to low levels of initial work group conflict.

In our setting, the primary means for senators to experience and navigate group conflict is through the committees to which they are assigned. In committees, senators debate, amend, and sometimes forward preliminary pieces of legislation, or bills, to the broader legislative body for consideration. Committee deliberations are often fraught with conflict. Though committee composition reflects the overall mix of parties in the Senate, committees still vary in the ideological mix of their
members and the tenor of their discussions. One key axis of variation is political division: some committees consist of senators with a track record of cosponsoring bills extensively across party lines, while others have members who cosponsor bills primarily within party lines (Liu and Srivastava 2015). We propose that members’ likelihood of experiencing conflict will be greater on committees with higher levels of past division. Senators who are assigned to more divided committees are more likely to acquire the stamp of conflict when they first enter the chamber, and this imprint will enhance their ability to translate future changes in power into influence.

In sum, we anticipate that swings in power will, all else equal, translate to corresponding shifts in interpersonal influence. This effect will be moderated by two career imprints that people acquire at the time of organizational entry: it will be dampened by the stamp of power and amplified by the stamp of conflict. Figure 1 provides a schematic representation of these arguments.

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

III. Data and Methods

Empirical Setting: The United States Senate from 1973 to 2005

To test these hypotheses, we examined power dynamics, interpersonal influence, and organizational imprints in the United States Senate. For reasons noted above, we believe that this setting is especially well suited to evaluating our theoretical arguments. Because senators’ structural positions, including committee assignments, and actions, such as bill cosponsorships, are part of the public record, we can characterize every senator’s initial experiences with power and conflict and measure the extent to which these initial career imprints affected their subsequent ability to convert changes in power into influence. Consistent with our hypotheses, our analyses, which spanned the years 1973 to 2005, were conducted at the individual unit of analysis. This time period included multiple shifts in power—for example, changes in the majority status of parties and ascension of multiple senators to committee chair roles—and many opportunities for senators to parlay these changes in power into influence.
Dependent Variable

Bill cosponsorships define a network of collaboration within the Senate. A focal senator originates a bill and then enlists support for the legislation from other senators. That support manifests in other senators’ choices to publicly cosponsor or not cosponsor the focal senator’s bill. As political scientist Sean Theriault (2013: 96, emphasis added) explains, “When members of Congress introduce legislation, they frequently invite their colleagues to ‘cosponsor’ the measure as a sign of support to either the sponsor or the piece of legislation…. [C]osponsorship data [provide] insight into many things, including… a legislator’s influence in the chamber…. ” Although cosponsorship choices partly reflect a senator’s public identity—that formed in response to public commitments, normative obligations, and the expectations of party leaders (Liu and Srivastava 2015)—they also represent one senator’s ability to exert direct influence over another (Browne 1985).

Indeed, Fowler (2006a, 2006b) develops a measure of legislator connectedness based on bill cosponsorships and establishes that this measure is associated with various indicators of legislative influence. He also demonstrates that—consistent with the notion that cosponsorships reflect a senator’s level of interpersonal influence—senators with less power—for example, junior senators, members of the minority party, and those who are politically vulnerable—are more likely to sign on as cosponsors to others’ bills than those with more power. Moreover, it seems unlikely that cosponsorships are merely a form of “cheap talk.” From 1973 to 2005, the average senator cosponsored less than 3% of proposed bills, suggesting that cosponsorships are not freely given out.

Yet not all cosponsorships are equally reflective of interpersonal influence. In particular, the ideological distance between senators is negatively related to their tendency to cosponsor one another’s bills (Harward and Moffett 2010, Chown and Liu 2015). In other words, it is harder for a focal senator to enlist a colleague as a cosponsor when that colleague’s political ideology differs significantly from his or her own. Thus, cosponsorships among colleagues who are ideologically distant are more likely to reflect acts of interpersonal influence than cosponsorships among colleagues who are ideologically similar.
We draw on a widely used measure of political ideology developed by political scientists Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal (2007) to account for this difference in the nature of cosponsorships. This index maps each senator onto a linear space, roughly corresponding to “liberal” versus “conservative,” based on that senator’s roll call votes in a given Congress. The measure ranges from -1 (very liberal) to +1 (very conservative). Although the two main political parties occupy different ends of this spectrum, there is still considerable voting behavior heterogeneity among senators in each party.

We used the index to derive the ideological distance (ranging from 0 to 2) between each pair of senators in each Congress. We then weighted each cosponsorship by this distance. To eliminate the noise of purely symbolic cosponsorships that are not reflective of interpersonal influence—for example, all senators signing on to a ceremonial, patriotic bill—we restricted the analysis to bills with twelve or fewer cosponsors. (We report below on the robustness of the findings to different cutoff points and to no cutoff point.) This restriction excluded approximately 14% of bills, suggesting that little signal was lost with the dampening of the noise. In our approach, if two senators, $i$ and $j$, have similar ideologies based on their roll call votes, then $j$ signing on to $i$’s bills would count relatively little towards $i$’s influence score. By contrast, if $i$ and $j$ are far apart ideologically (regardless of whether or not they are in the same political party), then $j$ signing on to $i$’s bills would factor more heavily into $i$’s influence score. For each senator, we summed the (weighted) number of cosponsorships he or she accrued in a given Congress.\(^3\)

To further refine our measure of influence, we also included the number of amendments a senator succeeded in passing in a given Congress. As Fowler (2006a: 475-476) explains, “The most widely used measure of legislative influence is the number of successful floor amendments….Amendments are used instead of bills and resolutions because they tend to reflect more specific changes to a bill that are less susceptible to deviations from the sponsor’s original intent. Also, the number of amendments passed is used as a measure instead of the success rate because of the problem of crosscutting tendencies—more influential legislators who have a better chance of getting things to pass probably propose more amendments, which reduces their success rate.” In support of this view, Hall (1992) demonstrated that the
number of amendments passed is closely tied to a survey-based measure of legislative influence based on
the responses of Congressional staffers.

In sum, our dependent variable was a logged composite of bill cosponsorships (weighted by
ideological distance) and amendments passed by a focal senator in a given Congress (alpha = 0.73).
Figure 2 depicts the distribution of the resulting variable.

*****Figure 2 about here*****

Independent Variables

To test the baseline hypothesis, we constructed two time-varying measures of a senator’s
structural power. The first is based on the majority or minority status of a senator’s 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 and McCubbins 2005, Gailmard and Jenkins 2007). Majority party
members enjoy greater success in adding amendments to bills (Den Hartog and Monroe 2011), raising
campaign funds (Cox and Magar 1999), and allocating federal resources to their constituents (Balla et al.
2002). Thus, our first measure of an individual’s 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. There were five changes
in majority party status during the observation period.

Our second measure of structural power is Committee Chair: a time-varying indicator set to 1 for
senators who served in a committee chair role in a given Congress and to 0 otherwise. Committee chairs
command enormous power in the Senate: “[The chair] benefits from years of experience in dealing with
the policy problems and constituencies of the committee, exercises considerable control over its agenda,
schedules meetings and hearings, influences the scheduling of subcommittee meetings and hearings,
normally names conferees, controls the committee budget, supervises a sizable staff, and often serves as a
spokesperson for the committee and party on issues that fall within the committee’s jurisdiction.
Consequently, the support of the full committee chair can be critical to bill sponsors” (Deering and Smith
1997: 131). Moreover, a senator’s rise to committee chair is the outcome of a process governed by a
longstanding and closely guarded bureaucratic rule—deference to seniority (Tobin 1986). We will return to this and other ascension rules in the section below on concerns about endogeneity.

Our theory suggests that the effects of a change in power on influence will be contingent on an individual’s initial experiences as part of the dominant or non-dominant coalition and exposure to work group conflict. Hypothesis 1 contends that, relative to senators who entered the organization when their party was in the minority, those who entered when their party was in the majority will be less effective at converting future changes of power into influence. To test Hypothesis 1, we interacted a senator’s time-varying majority party status indicator with a time-invariant variable: *Stamp of Power*, which was set to 1 if the senator entered in the majority party and to 0 otherwise.

Hypothesis 2 suggests that senators’ initial experiences with work group conflict will also shape their subsequent ability to translate changes in power into influence. As Deering and Smith (1997: 124) note: “[A]s new members join longstanding committees, they discover that the panels have ingrained moods, habits, and personalities that generally go unquestioned by the more senior members.” Our premise is that the nature of committees to which senators were initially exposed will shape their later ability to exercise influence: we anticipate that senators who began their careers in more politically divided committees will tend to learn the skills needed to manage conflict and that these skills will make them more influential when they later assume roles that require the management of group conflict.

Consistent with prior research (Liu and Srivastava 2015), we measured each senator’s exposure to committee political division by first separating out bill cosponsorships that were within the same political party from those that were across party lines and then identifying the ratio of within-party to cross-party cosponsorships. When this ratio is close to 1, bill cosponsorships are just as likely to occur between senators from the same party as between senators from opposing parties, indicative of cross-party cooperation. By contrast, ratios much greater than 1 indicate cross-party division within that committee.

At the individual level, we generated a comparable ratio by dividing within-party to cross-party cosponsorships across all committees on which an individual served. This aggregate ratio controlled for differences in legislative activity across committees: committees with many cosponsorships contributed
more to this ratio than those with few. From this continuous measure, we then generated a time-invariant variable, called *Stamp of Conflict*, an indicator set to 1 if a senator was in the top quartile of exposure to contentious committees and to 0 otherwise.⁵ Although the level of committee division can change over time, this measure is time-invariant because we measure a senator’s exposure to political division at a single point in time—when he or she first entered the Senate. To test Hypothesis 2, we examined the interaction of this variable with the other time-varying measure of power: *Committee Chair*.

**Estimation**

We estimated ordinary least squares regressions of the composite measure of interpersonal influence on time-varying measures of shifts in power and their interaction with the two imprinting variables. Formally, regression models were represented as:

1. \( E[y_{it}|X_{it}] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Power_{it} + \beta_2 X_{it} + \delta_i + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{it} \)
2. \( E[y_{it}|X_{it}] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Power_{it} + \beta_2 Power_{it} \times Imprint_i + \beta_3 X_{it} + \delta_i + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{it} \)

where \( y_{it} \) is the influence measure for senator \( i \) in Congress \( t \), \( Power_{it} \) indicates if senator \( i \) is (a) in the majority or (b) in a committee chair role in Congress \( t \), and \( Imprint_i \) indicates whether the senator (a) was in the majority or (b) was exposed to high levels of political division on committees in senator \( i \)’s first Congress. \( X_{it} \) is a vector of control variables, \( \delta_i \) represents fixed effects for each Congress, and \( \gamma_t \) corresponds to senator fixed effects. Equation (1) represents the models used to test the Baseline Hypothesis, while equation (2) represents the models used to test Hypotheses 1 and 2.

Because we theorize that the stamp of power operates diffusely across interpersonal relations, we focused analyses related to Hypothesis 1 on changes in power defined by shifts in a senator’s majority party status. These shifts altered the power dynamics between a focal senator and all other senators. By contrast, because we theorize that the stamp of conflict operates in specific work group contexts, we focused analyses related to Hypothesis 2 on changes in power defined by senators’ occupation of a committee chair role. This change altered the power dynamics between a focal senator and the subset of other senators who were that individual’s co-committee members.⁶
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 initial organizational experiences. To put it differently, these models enabled us to estimate how changes in a given senator’s 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 shifts in the risk set of same-party versus different-party senators available as potential co-sponsors.

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 these assumptions. Our first indicator of power is a senator’s majority or minority party status. As Figure 3 indicates, 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. Thus, it is reasonable to think of shifts in power arising from majority / minority party changes as exogenous to the individual.

Our second indicator of power is whether or not a senator served as a committee chair. Longstanding tradition dictates that the majority party’s committee member with the longest tenure on that committee serves as committee chair (Tobin 1986). This assignment procedure reduces interpersonal conflict within committees, ensures that committee leaders have sufficient experience, and buffers committee members from the influence of party leaders. Figure 3 displays, by senator tenure, the distribution of senators who were, and who were not, committee chairs. Given the seniority rule, it comes as no surprise that senators with longer tenure were more likely to hold committee chair roles. Yet the figure also reveals considerable variation in the tenure of committee chairs. For example, some senators
even held committee chair roles during their first three sessions in Congress, likely reflecting an unusual number of retirements or lost elections among more senior committee co-members. Thus, the timing of ascension to the chair role also appears to be idiosyncratic and exogenous to the individual.

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

Next, there are reasons to suspect that initial organizational experiences 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.

More complicated is the question of how much control senators have over their initial committee assignments. Detailed accounts of the committee assignment process suggest: (1) the prestige ordering of Senate committees has remained relatively stable over time; (2) committee prestige factors heavily in senators’ assignment preferences; and (3) senior senators are more likely to receive their preferred committee assignments than are junior senators (Bullock 1985, Endersby and McCurdy 1996).

In other words, we can think of committee assignments as a process resembling vacancy chains (White 1970, Chase 1991). As committee seats open up through retirements, lost elections, or reapportioning after an election, individual senators, in descending order of seniority, are given the opportunity to take on more desirable committee assignments. As the most junior colleagues, first-term senators select among the residual opportunities available to them after their senior colleagues have chosen. Thus, there is little scope for first-term senators to choose committees on the basis of factors that could potentially confound our analyses.

IV. Results

We begin with a description of the data. Table 1 describes the characteristics of the 1,023 senator-Congress observations in our dataset. Democrats and Republicans were nearly evenly represented. Female senators were relatively scarce in the data (6% of observations). The typical senator joined in the 98th Congress and served for just over 4.6 Congresses (i.e., one and a half terms).
Within a given Congress, the average senator scored 3.35 on our influence measure, although there was wide variation in influence with a standard deviation of 0.82 (see also Figure 2). Fifty-seven percent of observations were of senators in the majority party. One-eighth of observations were of senators who were committee chairs.

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

We tested our hypotheses using two separate measures of changes in power: majority / minority party status and occupancy of a committee chair. Table 2 reports results of analyses based on the first measure. Model 1, a baseline with both Congress and senator fixed effects, reveals that influence increased with tenure. Each additional Congress increased a senator’s influence by 6.8%.\(^8\)

In support of the baseline hypothesis, Model 2 indicates that moving into the majority party, with its concomitant increase in structural power, allowed an individual to exert more influence. Majority party status boosted influence by 23\%, an effect on par with a Congressional term (i.e., 6 years) of experience in the Senate. In support of Hypothesis 1, Model 3 indicates a negative interaction between a change in majority party status and entering the senate as a member of the majority. Indeed, a change in a senator’s majority party status led to a 36\% increase in predicted influence for senators who entered in the minority. By contrast, the comparable shift produced only a 20\% boost in influence for senators who entered in the majority. This result is consistent with the notion of a stamp of power that erodes the ability to translate future changes in power into influence.

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 and Brion 2014), we conducted a supplemental analysis to decompose the effects of the stamp of power 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 power. Model 4 illustrates that those without the stamp of power (i.e., those in the minority in their first congress) gained 38\% more influence when they first ascended to majority party status. Similarly, those starting in the majority lost 31\% of their influence when they first moved to the minority. In other words, following
the first shift in power between the parties, the gain and loss of influence were approximately symmetrical between the two groups.

A different pattern emerges following the second shift in power, as highlighted by Model 5. 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 × Stamp of Power), they were predicted to increase influence by 39%. Individuals who started in the minority party and then moved to the majority, however, experienced no decline in influence 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 become less influential when they later lost power, whereas those who started in the minority did not experience a comparable loss of influence when they later experienced a decrease in structural power.

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

Table 3 reports results of analyses based on the second indicator of changes in power: shifts in the occupancy of a committee chair role. In Model 6, consistent with the baseline hypothesis, occupying a committee chair was positively associated with influence, boosting an individual’s composite bill co-sponsorships and amendments measure by 44%. In support of Hypothesis 2, Model 7 reveals a positive interaction effect between initially experiencing divided committees and the subsequent ability to exercise influence after becoming a committee chair. Those who experienced high levels of committee division when they entered the chamber were predicted to have 82% more influence when they become a committee chair. Their counterparts, who were not initially exposed to divided committees, only experienced 29% more influence when they become a committee chair. This result is consistent with the notion of a stamp of conflict, which boosts a person’s ability to convert future gains in power into influence. Finally, a fully specified Model 8 illustrates that the stamp of power and the stamp of conflict appear to have independent effects on a senator’s subsequent influence. Taken together, we find solid support for both the stamp-of-power (H1) and the stamp-of-conflict (H2) hypotheses.9

****Table 3 about here****
We conducted two additional analyses to assess the robustness of our findings. As noted above, in constructing our dependent variable, we focused the cosponsorship component on bills with twelve or fewer cosponsors. To assess how robust the findings are to the choice of this cutoff point, we generated alternative dependent variables in which the cosponsorship component was defined with no cosponsor cutoff (i.e., including all bills) and varying cutoff points. Using these alternative dependent variables did not materially change the results (see online supplement) and alleviated concerns that our results are simply an artifact of the choice of cutoff point.

A second concern relates to a possible confounding effect related to Hypothesis 2 (the stamp of conflict). Committee assignments in the first session expose a focal senator to a set of colleagues. When that senator later becomes a committee chair, he or she may simply reach out to these initial contacts for support. To assess whether the experience of conflict makes senators more influential when they become committee chair, one would ideally want to see them have greater influence on senators they were not exposed to through committee co-memberships in their first session. That would help rule out mere exposure to contacts as an explanation for their increased influence. Given this concern, we re-estimated our main models using a variant of the dependent variable that was based on cosponsorships from senators who did not serve as committee co-members in the first session. These analyses (see online supplement) produced comparable results.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

This article has sought to add to our understanding of the conditions under which power does not necessarily equate to influence. We adopted a temporal, historical perspective on this question, arguing that experiences with power and conflict when a person first enters a new organization can leave career imprints that affect the subsequent ability to convert power into influence in the new setting. We began with a baseline expectation that, all else equal, changes in power will lead to corresponding shifts in influence. Next, we argued that the experience of entering as part of an organization’s dominant coalition can create enduring rigidities that impair the ability to translate power into influence. By contrast, initial experiences of work group conflict can provide valuable learning about conflict management that can
subsequently boost a person’s capacity for influence when she later experiences changes in power. We evaluated and found support for these propositions in the context of the U.S. Senate from 1973 to 2005.

These findings have important implications for social psychological research on power and influence. They help to reconcile the apparent incongruities about power that social psychologists have illuminated through a variety of laboratory studies. For example, Anderson and Brion (2014: 81) observed: “As the empirical investigations into power maintenance and loss accumulate, so too do the apparent contradictions in findings….Power holders appear to be simultaneously astute and aloof, prosocial and antisocial, self-assured and overconfident.” The present study suggests that one way to resolve these paradoxes is by considering the role of time.

Our work highlights at least two contingent effects of time on the social psychological consequences of power. First, it suggests that the susceptibility to the 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 originate 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 stamp of power 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, and Bargh 2001). Together, these findings underscore the need to bring the role of time more directly and forcefully into social psychological research on power and also point to the need to complement traditional laboratory studies with longitudinal field research.

In addition, our study makes an empirical contribution to research on power by providing a concrete illustration of how power and influence can be analytically distinguished from one another. We derived separate indicators of power—based on majority / minority party status and ascension to committee chair role—and of interpersonal influence—based on cosponsorships and amendments passed. Insofar as this empirical approach can be extended to other settings, it can help illuminate the conditions under which people succeed or fail to translate changes in power into influence (cf. Finkelstein 1992).
Our investigation also contributes to research on the relative merits of work group conflict. This literature has long recognized that conflict—whether task-, relationship-, or process-based—can have both positive and negative effects (de Wit, Greer, and Jehn 2012). Yet this work has predominately focused on the contemporaneous consequences for organization- or group-level outcomes, such as team performance. Our work points to an important omission in these previous accounts: neglecting the potential downstream benefits of conflict for individual-level outcomes through the mechanism of learning. In our setting, initial experiences with conflict in Senate committees boosted senators’ subsequent influence when they ascended to committee chair roles (cf. Bennis and Thomas 2002).

The identification of a stamp of conflict also speaks to research on work group composition and its effects on learning and performance (Gibson and Vermeulen 2003, Lau and Murnighan 2005, Li and Hambrick 2005). These studies have surfaced the conditions under which various forms of diversity—for example, task-related or demographic—promote or inhibit group effectiveness (for reviews see Williams and O’Reilly 1998, Horwitz and Horwitz 2007). Whereas many aspects of team diversity can be observed on the surface, deep-level composition variables—for example, underlying psychological characteristics such as personality factors, values, and attitudes—can also affect group outcomes (Harrison, Price, and Bell 1998, Bell 2007). Our findings suggest the need to complicate these accounts of diversity and group performance by incorporating the role of a previously overlooked deep-level composition variable—group members’ formative experiences with conflict after organizational entry. A stamp of conflict that people bear and bring with them to their work groups may enhance their ability to influence one another in overcoming current conflicts. How it affects group-level performance remains to be explored.

Finally, the present study contributes to research on organizational imprinting by demonstrating that organization-to-individual imprints are not only acquired in the early stages of a person’s career. 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 conflict and power at the time of entry. These organization-specific imprints acquired later in their careers still had consequences for senators’ influence when they later experienced changes in power.
In addition, our work calls attention to the formative role of experiences within work groups and teams. Whereas prior imprinting research has examined how initial team characteristics—particularly those of founding or top management teams (e.g., Beckman and Burton 2008)—create organization-level imprints, our findings demonstrate that team-level features such as the propensity to engage in contentious discourse can also produce imprints at the individual level. This insight relates to the notion of second hand imprinting (Tilcsik 2014), whereby a focal individual is influenced by exposure to the imprints of veteran coworkers through team interaction. A core difference is that second hand imprinting involves the transmission of characteristics between individuals who come into contact with one another on teams, while the stamp of conflict represents the imprinting of group-level characteristics onto individuals who participate in those groups. It suggests a previously overlooked mechanism by which individuals are shaped by features of the organizations in which they work.

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 pertaining to the stamp of power would generalize to organizational contexts where there is a clear division between majority and minority factions—for example, organizations adopting a superior new technology that favors the skills of one employee group over another (e.g., Barley 1986) or a matrix organization in which the balance of power shifts repeatedly between global product groups and regional sales and distribution units. We expect that the stamp-of-conflict results would apply even more broadly given that interactions and conflicts among employees within organizations frequently take place in the context of myriad work groups, task forces, and governance bodies (Biancani, McFarland, and Dahlander 2014). In such settings, new entrants experiencing uncertainty- and anxiety-producing role transitions are apt to acquire one or both of these imprints during their initial period of socialization (Ashforth and Saks 1996, Marquis and Tilcsik 2013).

With respect to the magnitude of the effects we document, this setting, on one hand, affords a conservative test of how imprinting might operate in other organizational contexts. First, senators are the embodiment of political elites (Moore 1979) who are likely to be especially skilled in the use of power.
As such, the correspondence between power and influence should be particularly strong for these individuals. Moreover, organization-to-individual imprints tend to be stronger at earlier, rather than later, life stages (Lee and Battilana 2013). As noted earlier, newcomers to the Senate are typically seasoned veterans who arrive in the chamber already bearing the imprints of past work experiences. Our results nevertheless suggest that they remain susceptible to acquiring new career imprints as they get acclimated to the Senate and that these layered-on imprints still have lasting effects on interpersonal influence.

On the other hand, the Senate’s peculiar features may also magnified the effects of imprinting relative to what would be observed in other organizational settings. For example, the dark side of power is more likely to infect leaders who are entrenched and therefore face little risk of losing power. Such leaders become less vigilant and are therefore more likely to succumb to power’s negative psychological consequences (Anderson and Brown 2010). Given the enormous financial resources required to win a Senate seat and macro-structural changes such as the geographic sorting of voters along party lines (Theriault 2008), turnover rates in the Senate are relatively low and many senators face little risk of losing their seat. Similarly, with respect to the stamp of conflict, Senate committees can be thought of as factional groups, which are especially prone to experiencing intra-group conflict (Li and Hambrick 2005). Insofar as Senate committees experience more conflict than that found in typical work groups, newcomers to the Senate may be at greater risk of acquiring the stamp of conflict than typical organizational entrants.

In sum, we believe that this investigation paves the way for further research into how career imprints shape professional trajectories. For example, what are other types of career imprints that people can acquire and what other consequences, beyond influence, can they have? Are some kinds of organizations—for example, those with strong cultures—more likely to leave imprints on new entrants than others? Can career imprints be carried by people to new settings and, if so, how do they evolve in the process? Lastly, how do newly acquired career imprints interact with previously acquired ones to affect individual career success? We see great potential in future research that explores how these sources of variation might affect the strength, durability, and downstream consequences of the imprints that people acquire when they enter a new organizational setting.
References


Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Summary of Conceptual Framework

Figure 2: Distribution of Influence Measure.

Note: This is a composite measure of influence that a focal senator wields within a given Congress and serves as the dependent variable in the main analyses. We generated this measure using both the bill co-sponsorship network and a senator’s success in passing amendments to bills. Using the bill co-sponsorship network (based on bills with twelve or fewer co-sponsors), we summed all co-sponsorships on bills originated by the focal individual, weighted by each co-sponsor j’s ideological distance from originating sponsor i. We then added i’s passed amendments in that Congress to generate a composite measure (alpha = 0.73). We then took the log of this composite measure. The resulting distribution is depicted in this figure.
Figure 3: Distribution of Committee Chairs by Tenure

Note: The histogram represents 1,023 senator-Congress observations.

Table 1: Descriptive Stats (N = 1,023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>Max</th>
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<td>4.142</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Congress</td>
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<td>4.584</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>112</td>
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### Table 2: OLS Estimates of Influence on Covariates: Structural Power based on Majority/Minority Party Status

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<td></td>
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<td>(0.017)</td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.063)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party × Stamp of Power</td>
<td>-0.173*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>First Change in Party Status</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Majority Party is a time-varying indicator of a senator party’s majority/minority status at time $t$. Stamp of Power 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. Robust standard errors. Two-tailed tests. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

### Table 3: OLS Estimates of Influence on Covariates: Structural Power based on Committee Chair Status

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<td>0.045**</td>
<td>0.055***</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
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<td>Committee Chair</td>
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<td>0.256***</td>
<td>0.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.064)</td>
<td>(0.071)</td>
<td>(0.076)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Chair × Stamp of Conflict</td>
<td>0.422**</td>
<td>0.474**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.145)</td>
<td>(0.146)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.264***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.061)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party × Stamp of Power</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.210**</td>
<td>(0.076)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.215***</td>
<td>2.217***</td>
<td>2.261***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.268)</td>
<td>(0.266)</td>
<td>(0.273)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-Squared</td>
<td>0.584</td>
<td>0.590</td>
<td>0.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of senators</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1023</td>
<td>1023</td>
<td>1023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Committee Chair is an indicator variable set to 1 for senators who served as a committee chair in a given Congress, and 0 otherwise. For each senator, we generated the focal individual’s composite exposure to committee division, by first aggregating within- or across-party co-sponsorship patterns and then generating the ratio between these two measures. Stamp of Conflict is set to 1 for the individuals who had the highest 25% exposure to committee political division in their first Congress, and to 0 otherwise. Senator tenure is measured in Congresses (i.e., every two years). Robust standard errors. Two-tailed tests. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.
1 Senators can, of course, experience conflict outside of committees—for example, in hallway conversations and private meetings. We focus on the committee context because it represents the focal point for discussion and debate among senators (Deering and Smith 1997) and given that informal, private interactions are not consistently tracked.

2 The Senate context changed dramatically in the early 1970s (Lee 2009, 2012, Sinclair 1989, Theriault 2013). Before then, there was greater correspondence between a senator’s structural position (e.g., committee chair role) and his or her ability to exert influence (Matthews 1960). With changed institutional norms and practices, 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.

3 We obtained comparable results when we tallied cosponsorships without weighting by the ideological distance between senators.

4 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.” Put 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.

5 Unlike the stamp of power, the stamp of conflict is based on a continuous underlying measure. We opted to use a spline, rather than the continuous measure, because this specification does not assume a linear relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable. We began by estimating models with three splines: 25th to 50th percentile; 50th to 75th percentile; and 75th to 100th percentile (with the bottom quartile serving as the reference group). The effects were concentrated only in the top quartile. In other words, the Stamp of Conflict was operative only for senators who experienced especially high levels of conflict on their initial work groups. For ease of presentation, we therefore opted to report models that only include the single spline (top quartile of exposure). Note, however, that we also obtained comparable results (see online supplement) as reported in Table 3, Model 8, when we used the continuous measure rather than the spline.

6 In supplemental analyses (see online supplement), we also considered potential “cross-effects”—that is, whether the stamp of conflict could manifest through changes in a senator’s occupancy of a committee chair role and whether the stamp of conflict could be activated by changes in majority / minority party status. We found support for the latter proposition but not the former. That is, senators who were exposed to high levels of conflict in their initial committee assignments became even more influential when they moved into the majority than did senators who were exposed to lower levels of conflict. By contrast, the experience of entering in the majority or minority did not make a senator any more or less influential when she assumed a Committee Chair role.

7 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.

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

9 We also considered whether the imprinting effects were stronger for senators with no prior political experience, relative to those with prior political experience. Results (see online supplement) indicated that the stamp of conflict had a stronger effect on the former than on the latter. By contrast, the stamp of power had comparable effects on both groups.