"Chamber Hopping" in the US Congress: Structure-Induced Learning and

the Development of a Partisan Senate

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April 4th, 2010

Abstract

This study marks a first step in the direction of understanding the practical implications of career patterns on legislative development and behavior. Specifically, this paper explores a particular pattern referred to by the author as "chamber hopping"—sequential service in the House and Senate. No published work has systematically explored this career pattern despite the fact that nearly half of today's Senate adopted this path—a trend which has doubled over the post-War period. Utilizing this unique phenomenon, the present study presents evidence that individual-level party behavior has its origins in a process of structure-induced learning. That is, partisanship stems from a social-psychological learning process reinforced by the House's partisan environment and hierarchical structure. And, because of the modern proliferation of chamber hopping, the Senate has developed partisan patterns analogous to the House without parallel factors or institutional reforms. Not only does this help us understand historical trends in partisanship, it presents a parsimonious theory on the origin of individual-level partisan behavior outside the conventional rational, goal-seeking paradigm.

Introduction

More than a century ago, Woodrow Wilson (1885, 195) remarked that "The Senate can have in it no better men than the best men of the House of Representatives." Though perhaps intuitive, this view conflicts with the classic liberal defense of bicameralism. Recall Madison's promise to the American people that the "*dissimilarity* in the genius of the two bodies" would protect basic rights such as individual liberty and private property and delay the passage of undesirable policies (*Federalist* #62, emphasis added).[1] Even contemporary academics (e.g. Riker 1992; Tsebelis and Money 1997) advocate that the Senate's disparate institutional structure creates a more professional, deliberative and civil chamber. This begs the questions: To what extent is the Senate composed of the "same men" as the House? And what are the practical consequences?

On the one hand, a literal interpretation of Wilson's claim is irrefutable. Though the Constitution prevents *simultaneous* service (Article I Sec. 6), lawmakers regularly serve *sequential* terms in each chamber. It is quite common, in fact, for senators to begin their federal legislative careers in the House. Though referenced in published studies, there has been no systematic analysis of this phenomenon. This is surprising given the importance of sequence in leading research (e.g. Pierson 2000, 2004; Romer and Rosenthal 1978; Shepsle and Weingast 1987) and because sequential legislative service has *doubled* over the post-War period. In the 111th Congress, 48 senators previously served in the House compared to only 19 in the 80th.

This study marks an important first step toward understanding the practical implications of "chamber hopping"—sequential service in the House and Senate.[2] Utilizing this phenomenon, and drawing on research in various disciplines—psychology, social psychology and

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[1] All *Federalist* citations refer to Clinton Rossiter's (ed.) *The Federalist Papers* (1961).
[2] The use of "chamber hopping" is more than stylistic; the term refers to a clause in a recent British constitutional renewal bill that aimed to prevent politicians from switching from Lords to Commons. Lacking an analogous term in the American context, I felt it appropriate here. See Parker, Geoerge, "Straw blocks Mandelson's escape from Lords," *Financial Times of London*, August 26, 2009.

organizational theory—, this paper argues that partisanship is, in part, a *learned behavior*.

Because of the House's disparate institutional structure, representatives internalize a more

partisan behavioral style than their Senate colleagues. And because of the modern proliferation

of chamber hopping, the Senate has developed a partisan ecology analogous to the House. Thus,

the close correspondence between historical partisan trends in each chamber is not solely a

manifestation of shared factors, as the current literature emphasizes, but also shared lawmakers.

This overall sequence is one of *structure-induced learning*—a process where learned behavioral

routines are fostered and reinforced by political institutional arrangements.

The core contribution of this paper is the development of an alternative to the

conventional rational, goal-seeking explanations of partisan behavior. Utilizing chamber

hopping as a natural test, I demonstrate that partisanship is not only a manifestation of the

"electoral connection" (e.g. Mayhew 1974) or a byproduct of solutions to the collective action

problem (e.g. Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005; Rohde 1991). Rather, individual-level partisan

behavior is also due to a socio-psychological learning process. This perspective has been

generally overlooked. In addition to supporting this alternative theory, the empirical results

make sense of the close correspondence between partisan trends in each chamber. A number of

researchers have suggested that some direct, intercameral factor underlies this pattern. Yet no

study has developed a satisfactory theoretical explanation of this mechanism.[34] Moreover, the

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[3] For example, Hurley and Wilson (1989) asked whether interchamber oscillations in partisanship were "merely historical happenstance" (247). They concluded that important matters regarding Senate partisanship "remain to be answered" (248). More recently, Han and Brady (2007, 512) point out that research on the parallel trends in House and Senate partisanship "should take both chambers into account" and that such explanations have "important implications."

[4] In the concluding section of their recent study, Gailmard and Jenkins (2007) suggest the perspective advanced by the present paper as a worthy avenue for future research. Citing a potential social-psychological explanation of party power, they argue that such a theory "would account for the similarity in party power across legislative chambers with relatively different internal institutions. Obviously,

results help explain why the Senate has become more partisan over the post-reform period without reforms paralleling those in the House. Finally, the paper has implications for the liberal canon regarding House and Senate behavioral differences. The findings in this paper suggest the pervasiveness of chamber hopping in modern legislative career patterns have eroded the "dissimilarity" of each chamber in a fashion unforeseen by Madison and his colleagues. In this respect, Wilson's somewhat pessimistic claim has an element of truth.

Partisanship in the Contemporary Senate

The steady increase in House and Senate partisanship over the post-War era is well-rehearsed. This pattern has been identified with a variety of measures—party votes (Fleisher and Bond 2000, Stonecash et al. 2003), multidimensional scaling measures (Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Jacobson 2000), interest group ratings (Stonecash et al. 2003), party leadership votes (Cox and McCubbins 1993) and party unity votes (Fleisher and Bond 2000; Rohde 1991; Stonecash et al. 2003). Common explanations for variation in partisanship include historical political and policy disputes, issue evolution, electoral and geographic realignment and legislative reforms. The vast majority of this research cites these shared factors as the cause of parallel partisan trends in both chambers.

Contemporary congressional partisanship has been explained, in part, by lingering political and policy disputes. For example, many trace increases in partisanship back to the 1970s, citing two energy crises, the Vietnam War, global stagflation, presidential impoundment and the Watergate scandal (Dodd 1991; Uslaner 2000). Not only did these events spawn intense political conflict, but they were part and parcel to what has been labeled "conflict displacement"

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however, any such approach runs against the grain of contemporary research on parties-in-legislatures" (699).

(Sundquist 1983) or more commonly "ideological realignment"—the recasting of cultural and religious issues (Adams 1997, Layman 2001, Leege et al. 2002; Green, Plamquist and Schickler 1996), economic issues (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006) and civil rights (Carmines and Stimson 1989). Aided by the growing role of the media in politics (see Sinclair 2000 or Cook 2000), the evolution of these issues enhanced polarization by translating previously multidimensional disputes into unidimensional ones.

Perhaps the most frequent explanation of increased polarization and partisanship is electoral and geographic realignment. Changing migration patterns in the first half of the post-War era aided southern Republicans while electoral realignment simultaneously splintered the Democratic Party (Jacobson 2000; Polsby 2004; Rohde 1991). Ultimately, these regional dynamics generated a "more responsible two party system" (Polsby 2004, 109). Facilitated by changing party platforms regarding civil rights (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Sundquist 1983; Leege et al. 2002), realignment fostered a more homogenously liberal Democratic party and a lack of electoral competition for Republicans in the South.

A number of studies add institutional reforms to the polarization milieu. Legislative reforms, mostly in the 1970s, simultaneously decentralized Congress—weakening the power of committee chairman—and enhanced the capacity of the majority party to influence policy outcomes. According to one prominent theory, when the majority party is homogeneous and distinct from the minority, the leadership exploits institutional rules and powers to ensure their members act in a way consistent with the party's goals (Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991). A similar but alternative view elaborated by Cox and McCubbins (1993, 2005) posits that political parties behave a kind of "legislative cartel" that derives power by "[seizing] the structural power of the House" (2005, 15). In particular, the leadership of the majority party controls the consideration

of policy—known as negative agenda control. Though the Senate has yet to reform to the extent of the House, recent research finds significant party power in the upper chamber (Gailmard and Jenkins 2007). Indeed, important Senate reforms have occurred. For example, in the mid-1990s the Senate expanded the size of the whip system as well as adopted reforms designed to enhance the responsiveness of the leadership to the party's rank-and-file (see Sinclair 2000, 64-65).

Of course, partisanship in the Senate is also due to the minority's increased use of the filibuster and the tendency of individual Senators to obstruct (Binder 2003; Sinclair 2000, 2002, 2005). Indeed, the frequency of filibustering has increased considerably over the post-reform era (Sinclair 2000, 61). Sinclair's (2005) oft cited "individualist, partisan Senate" is hardly academic; partisanship and increased filibustering has led to greater gridlock. Thus, the Senate "has become a major choke point in the legislative process" (Sinclair 2002, 259; see also Binder 2003).

Though these theories are often differentiated by their proximate causal mechanisms, they share, at the most basic level, a rational, goal-seeking conception of individual-level partisan behavior. Lawmakers respond to exogenous pressures—political and policy realignments, constituents' policy preferences, etc.—in pursuit of reelection (e.g. Mayhew 1974). Politicians will even engage in "strategic disagreement" when electorally beneficial (Gilmour 1995). Lawmakers also take advantage of institutional rules and procedures in their pursuit of ideologically extreme policy and an electorally beneficial party record (e.g. Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005; Rohde 1991). Though the present study does not question these conceptions, if we start at micro-level and work upward, what emerges is an alternative perspective that adds to our understanding of the origins of individual-level partisan behavior.

Reconsidering the Origin of Partisanship

Two characteristics dominate our modern conceptualization of political parties. The first depicts parties as *formal* groups (i.e. permanent with a unified purpose). The second posits that parties have the capacity to affect the behavior of their members (though see Krehbiel 1993). On both points, it is surprising that researchers rarely draw upon the large body of group behavior research in psychology, social psychology and organizational theory. A survey of research in these disciplines lays the foundation for an alternative perspective concerning the origin of individual-level partisan behavior.

At a fundamental level, "belonging" to groups is one of only a few human needs (see Fiske 2004). And the act of belonging implies conformity to the salient behavioral norms and routines of the group (Postmes and Spears 1998; Cialdini, Reno and Kallgren 1990). The best known example of group conformity is a landmark study by Solomon Asch. Asch's (1956) famous "vision test" revealed that respondents would give clearly wrong answers to factual questions when other group members—hired confederates—responded (wrongly) first.

Perhaps most interesting to political scientists is research demonstrating that the kinds of partisan behaviors exhibited by representatives and senators are emblematic of more general group effects. Not only do groups engender polarized within-group dispositions, but researchers have found that groups commonly (and often wrongly) believe their rivals are the ones with extreme views—known as "false polarization" (Lord, Ross and Lepper 1979; Ross and Ward 1996; Keltner and Robinson, 1997; Pronin, Puccio and Ross 2002). These extreme views not only characterize group decision-making, individuals often internalize the group's views as their own (see Moscovici and Zavalloni 1969). Finally, groups engender competitive interaction with rivals (see studies by McCallum et al. 1985; Sherif et al. 1961; Insko et al. 1987).

The point being alluded to thus far is that parties, like groups, have the capacity to inherently engender conformity to norms, foster polarized views among members and enhance competition with the rivals. Thus, parties can have *indirect* effects on the behavior of individual members in addition to the *direct* effects political scientists focus on (e.g. Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005; Rohde 1991). I contend that these indirect effects comprise the process of *learning*, defined as a "relatively permanent change in behavior potentiality that results from reinforced practice or experience" (Hamner 1974, 87). Learning[5] is not synonymous with "intelligence," rather it reflects the "transmission" or "encoding" of information and previous experiences (Heclo 1994; Levitt and March 1988; March and Olsen 1989).

Some of the best known theories of learning are of the conceptual form B=f(E)—where behavior is a function of environmental stimuli. According to this view, the individual is a passive agent who simply responds to the exogenous world and learns through reinforcement. Well know examples include Pavlov's (1927) "classical conditioning" and Skinner's (1953) "operant conditioning." Another class of theories adopts the form B=f(P)—where behavior is a function of the person's internal attitudes, belief, goals and attributions. These approaches place cognitive processes at the fore of human behavior and argue against the simplistic "stimulus-response" model of behavioralism (see studies by Weiner 1974, 1980 and Vroom 1964).

The SOBC model, popular in organizational behavior, represents a middle ground between competing theories of learning and behavior—incorporating various concepts into a single model. Of the form B=f (E,P), the SOBC model (situation, organism, behavior and

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[5] Of course, much like disputes in political science (e.g. between distributive, informational and partisan theories), diverging theories of learning exist. These disagreements are exacerbated by the interdisciplinary nature of learning research. Needless to say, it is far beyond the scope of this paper to meaningfully distinguish among these perspectives. Thus, the present paper advocates various elements and perspectives.

consequence), holds that behavior stems from a range of factors including social learning, the external environment, reinforcement mechanisms and internal cognitive constructs (see studies by Davis and Luthans 1980 or Luthans and Kreither 1985; for a review see Miner 2005). In addition to blending features of the behavioral and cognitive frameworks, the SOBC model advocates that its constituent parts interact in a cybernetic manner—with the consequences of human action, behavior and reinforcement affecting learning as well as the external environment.

Fundamental to this middle ground is the concept of social learning theory. Social learning theory holds that individuals internalize norms and routines by observing, recording the consequences of and, ultimately, modeling the behavior of others (see Bandura 1973, 1977). Thus, learning is not simply a "stimulus-response" process, rather learning occurs vicariously. As Bandura (1976, 5) explains, "Although behavior can be shaped into new patterns to some extent by rewarding and punishing consequences, learning would be exceedingly laborious and hazardous if it proceeded solely on this basis…Most of the behaviors that people display are learned either deliberately or inadvertently, though the influence of example." In political science, this basic idea is evident in the work of Wildavsky (1987, 3), who argued that "Preferences come from the most ubiquitous human activity: living with other people" (though see also Dodd, 1994).

Reinforcement is also a crucial component of learning and behavior according to this perspective. In fact, Bandura posited that vicarious learning is regulated and maintained by reinforcement processes. For example, classic positive reinforcement mechanisms employed in organizational settings include praise, advancement and financial rewards (Miner 2005). The ultimate goal of reinforcement is some form of behavior modification, which researchers have found to be highly successful (Komaki, Coombs and Schepman 1996; Miner 2005).

Typically, research on learning within organizations exists outside the orbit of political science. However, Lawrence C. Dodd's (1994) *Political Learning, Change, and Development* advocates a view analogous to the present perspective. Building on the work of anthropologist Gregory Bateson, Dodd argues that political development is preceded by epistemological change. Epistemological change occurs when the deviation between ontology and lawmakers' conceptions of social reality becomes sufficient to generate a metacrisis—"behavioral dilemmas unresponsive to resolution through the operation of existing epistemological principles, structures, and procedures" (335). Thus, our understanding politics can be advanced by seeing political behavior and development as a "process of learning" (355).

Rooted in a constructivist conception of learning, Dodd's theory emphasizes how subjective reality is reflected in, and reinforced by, our governing institutions. Research by James G. March and his colleagues adopts this view as well; though the two perspectives appear to have developed independently. For example, March, Schulz and Zhou (2000) posit that formal organizational rules are the "products of learning and... carriers of knowledge" (6). Of course, March and Olsen's (1989, 23) well-known "logic of appropriateness" posits that rules are obeyed because of their perceived legitimacy. Thus, based on the work of Dodd, March and Olsen, we can think of institutions (in this case legislative institutions) as reflecting and, most importantly, *reinforcing* conceptions about proper behavioral routines.

Before proceeding to a more specific discussion of the preceding points, a word on rationality is in order. This paper's suggestion that learned norms and routines underlie human behavior espouses a view in line with what has been referred to as "bounded rationality," "satisfying" or "narrow cognition" (Simon, 1957; March and Simon 1958; Jones 1994). Indeed, part of Simon's (1957) conception of agency is a belief that behavior is bound by a person's

habits, values and identities. At the same time, the theory of *structure*-induced learning

advocates the development of endogenous preferences (see also Wildavsky 1987). In other

words, institutions foster, rather than simply structure, particular behavioral routines. None of

this is to say that individuals are irrational, nor does this challenge the neoclassical view of

exogenous preferences; rather, I contend that lawmakers' behavior is determinate partly (perhaps

largely) by a rational, goal-seeking component *and* by a habitual or bounded component.

Support for the theory of structure-induced learning can be found in the political science

literature. Indeed, prominent political scientists have argued that junior lawmakers are

intentionally socialized to party norms. Both Sinclair (1981) and Loomis (1984) describe a party

strategy of "inclusion." Largely in response to the decentralizing trends on the reform era,

inclusion entrails bringing junior members into leadership positions with some policy making

autonomy. For example, Loomis (1984) identified the expansion of the House's leadership

structure in the post-reform era as advancing this party goal. Indeed, reforms such as the

expansion of the whip system (Dodd 1979) and the development of the Steering and Policy

Committee in 1973 (Rohde 1991) enhanced the reach of the leadership and promoted close

interaction between leaders and junior members. Garand and Clayton (1986) recognize the same

process in their analysis of the Speaker's task force (but see also Sinclair 1981). As they explain,

task forces generate "an increased awareness of partisan norms…and build and strengthen the

norm that one should be a 'team' player-all at a time when they will be most susceptible to such

a strategy" (411). In summary, the House's leadership structure is used to intentionally socialize

members to party norms. Though likely always the case, this effect has almost certainly

accelerated in the post-reform era.

Of course, similar structure-induced learning processes likely exist in a range of formal and informal party organizations; the party leadership is simply the most obvious and direct. For example, the Conservative Opportunity Society (COS) took dramatic action to defend or advance the conservative cause, such as brining ethics charges against Speaker Wright, obstructing House business and adding controversial "poison pill" amendments to regular bills (Uslaner 2000). A number of the COS members and Gingrich disciples—such Jon Kyl, a founding member of the COS—moved onto Senate careers. Uslaner (2000, 40 emphasis added) elaborated the key point: "More than a handful of today's Republican Senators cut their teeth in the House, where they *learned* first-strike tactics from the master guerilla turned leader, Newt Gingrich." It is intuitive to think that as former COS and Gingrich Republicans transitioned to the Senate throughout the late 90s and early 2000s, the Senate developed routines analogous to the Republican-revolution era House. This may include the increasing use of rules and procedures in the pursuit of partisan outcomes. In short, House members of this era simply learned a tool-kit of legislative and political strategies which they maintained their entire career.

Despite this paper's emphasis on indirect party effects, direct party effects play a role in structure-induced learning as well. For example, Rohde (1991) argues that members of the majority use inducements to control wayward members. But if we think of inducements—take for example a favorable committee assignment—as a positive reinforcing mechanism, it is plausible that near-term inducements have long-term effects by enhancing party identity and loyalty. At the same time, the expanded capacity of parties to enforce homogeneity—such as the power of scheduling—or sanction wayward members—such as the threat of deposing committee chairman—act as negative reinforcement mechanisms and foster a norm in opposition to independence from the party's label. Thus, the present perspective is not at odds with

conventional narratives. Rather, the conventional wisdom only explains one side (the "short term effects") of the *same* coin (why lawmakers behave in a partisan fashion).

Important variation in structure-induced learning exists across time and across chambers. Both are fundamental points. As I and others advocate, the nature of legislative reforms over the past 40 years not only aided the majority in their ability to directly control wayward members; the reforms significantly increased the ability of the majority to socialize junior members (Garand and Clayton 1986; Sinclair 1981, 1992; Loomis 1984). And because of the changing nature of legislative politics—namely the exploitation of rules and procedures by the majority— members have developed stronger partisan identities and roles. Thus, the theory of structure-induced learning (at least as it related to partisan learning) has accelerated in tandem the House's institutional development. At the same time, structure-induced learning is almost certainly greater in the House than the Senate. Both the expansion of the leadership system and the tendency of the majority to exploit rules and procedures in the House indicate that the House is likely to have a greater capacity (need?) to instill party norms and values. Moreover, the Senate's individualism norm (Sinclair 2002, 2005), permissive rules and less hierarchical structure afford members wide behavioral latitude. The Senate, in other words, is more tolerant of uncharacteristic lawmakers compared to the House.

Figure 1 condenses the previous discussion into a behavioral flow chart using the SOBC framework. Under "situation" you have environmental factors that can influence (and are influenced by) a senator's internal dispositions. Most important is the link between group membership and polarization and structure-induced learning. These linkages reflect the process of social-learning reviewed earlier. At the same time, structure-induced learning is affected by feedback from the consequences of behavior. This feedback process includes institutional

reinforcement—such as the long-term effect of inducements and the effect of institutions in reflecting subjective realities and appropriate forms of behavior (Dodd 1994).

In summary, the alternative theory advanced by the present paper draws on a range of literatures and argues that individual-level partisan behavior is partly a learned behavior. Specifically, groups have an inherent tendency of develop polarized views and engage in competitive behavior. This process is amplified by social learning—observing and internalizing the behavior of others—and the capacity of political parties and political institutional arrangements to reinforce partisan behaviors. Research within political science supports such a view, arguing that parties intentionally socialize members to partisan norms. This capacity is both more pronounced in the House and has accelerated over the post-reform era. Conceptually, the implication is that partisan behavior is not *only* a form of rational, goal-seeking behavior, but part of a deeper and perhaps more permanent social-psychological process.

Hypotheses

The dearth of quantitative research on social-psychological processes in Congress is almost certainly due to modeling difficulties. Fortunately, the phenomenon of chamber hopping provides a natural approach to the questions raised in the previous section. Since members who transition from the House to the Senate share a number of relevant factors with "indigenous senators"—for lack of a better term, those senators who bypassed the House on their way to the Senate—any discernable behavioral differences should be reasonably attributable to their House career.[6] The preceding theory identified a plausible dynamic which suggests behavioral

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[6] An important limitation of the present study it the inability to model political career paths other than service in the House. Indeed, senators who bypassed the House do not arrive *tabula rasa*; they certainly have relevant career experiences while serving in state legislatures, as governors, or in non-partisan fields including law and business. Of course, if these career patterns contribute to the statistical results

differences do indeed exist and specifies the precise nature of this difference. Statistically, this dynamic can be parsimoniously tested with two hypotheses. The first is:

H1 (First-Term Hypothesis): First-term senators who previously served in the House will be more partisan on average than first-term Senators who did not previously serve in the House.

This hypothesis posits that in the period immediately following their intercameral transition, former House lawmakers will have higher levels of partisanship than what I have referred to previously as "indigenous Senators." Theoretically, I have argued that these senators rely on cognitive shortcuts, heuristics, norms, etc. learned during their House career. It is important to examine a senators first-term in isolation from his or her entire career given possibility of an analogous process—Senate learning. It is possible that the effect hypothesized in this paper dissipates throughout a senator's career. Indeed, a key component of learning theories is the fundamental role played by updated, proximate experiences and information. This effect can be tested by the second hypothesis:

H2a (Degradation Hypothesis): Senators who previously served in the House will exhibit less partisan behavior on average over their career than Senators who did not previously serve in the House.

That is, former House members enter the Senate with higher party unity than non-former House members (H1) but, over time, the two groups develop indistinguishable behavioral styles. This hypothesis posits that the effect of previous institutions on behavior is short lived. Of course, a null effect is evidence of a more substantively interesting phenomenon—that the level of

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presented in this study, those "biases" only reinforce the general theory of this paper. Still, more work is needed in this regard and the reader is encouraged to consider these other career dynamics.

partisanship engendered during a Senator's House career is relatively permanent (or, at least, not easily modified). This effect could be observed for a variety of reasons. First, it may be that behavioral routines learned earlier in a lawmaker's career have more durable effects.[7] Second, a null effect may stem from the Senate's less imposing partisan institutional and environmental structure. Perhaps most important in this regard is Senate individualism (Sinclair 2005), which affords members greater latitude their behavioral style. Thus, the alternative to H2a is the hypothesis:

H2b (Durability Hypothesis): Senators who previously served in the House will *not* exhibit more or less partisan behavior over their career than Senators who did not previously serve in the House.

Both hypotheses (H2a and H2b) specify an interaction effect between chamber hoppers and the number of terms they serve in the Senate.

Data and Methods

We can straightforwardly test the previous hypotheses using *party unity scores*—the percentage of party unity votes on which a senator votes with their party.[8] A party unity vote is one where 50% of one party votes against 50% of the other. Conceptually, senators with high party unity scores are those who support their party most often on contentious matters. For example, in the 110th Congress, Senator Jim DeMint (SC) voted with Republicans 98.9% of the time on party unity votes while Senator Susan Collins (ME) voted with Republicans only 48.6% of the time.

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[7] One limitation of the present study is the inability to account for pre-House political careers. Indeed, almost every member technically "began" their political career in a state, local or even business setting. Still, the fact remains that in the case presented here, a lawmaker's time in the House occurred earlier in their career than their time in the Senate.

[8] The raw data is available on Keith Poole's *Voteview* website: http://voteview.com.

Senators who previously served in the House of Representatives (i.e. "chamber hoppers") were identified using Keith Poole's corrected ICPSR ID numbers.[9] Any member who served in the House prior to his or her Senate career is matched across chambers and coded 1, while all other Senators are coded 0.

Figure 2 charts the percentage of former House members who served in the Senate over the post-War era. We observe a linear increase, such that the Senate added about one former House member every electoral cycle—hardly an inconsequential trend. Figure 3 charts the mean Senate unity score for former House lawmakers over the corresponding period. Included is the mean Senate unity score for non-former House members (labeled "indigenous senators"). For 27 of the 31 post-War Congresses (87%), former House members voted with their party more often on contentious roll-call votes. This pattern reaches 100% (15 of 15) after 95th Congress. If we calculate the difference between the unity score of each senator from the average of the corresponding Congress and pool the time-series, the divergent party unity scores for chamber hoppers and indigenous senators is statistically significant at the .001 level over the entire, post-War period (t=-3.31) and a sample restricted to senators who entered the Senate after the reforms of the 1970s (t=3.60). In the entire sample the average senator votes with their party 2.0% more often on contentious votes if they began their federal legislative careers in the House. In the restricted, post-reform sample the average senator votes with their party about 2.5% more often on contentious votes if they began their federal legislative careers in the House.

[Figures 2 and 3 about here]

An issue worth attention is the role of the "reelection incentive" as a kind of selection bias. That is, lawmakers who climb their party's ranks or are generally successful in the House

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[9] Ibid.

may be more partisan than the average representative and simultaneously have a greater capacity to win a Senate election. On the one hand this reelection incentive should have no effect upon entering the Senate—where the first-term senator will encounter the same reelection incentives as the entire chamber. Still, it is difficult to account for this thorny effect in non-experimental research. In the final paragraphs of the analysis section, I utilize a methodological approach that directly accounts for this issue. Though I am unconvinced that a selection effect negates the findings of this paper, this section should alleviate any concerns in this regard.

The remaining data is organized in a panel format—where the cross-section contains observations for each Senator while the temporal component spans every two-year Congress from the 80th to the 110th. Accordingly, the modeling strategy accounts for a range of time-varying and time-invariant factors.

In addition to the time-invariant dummy variable indicting a House career (*Former House Career),* I include a series of region dummy variables using the ICPSR coding scheme. Separate variables indentify senators form the *Northeast*, *North Central* and *West*. Also included is a dummy variable *Solid South*; operationalized as states carried by Strom Thurmond in 1948 plus Georgia.[10] These variables account for the effect of electoral and geographic realignments as well as regional variation in state size (e.g. Lee and Oppenheimer 1999).

The forthcoming analysis includes a number of macro-time-varying factors (i.e. those that are constant within the cross-section but vary over time). The first is the level of conditional party government (Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991). When inter-party preference homogeneity and inter-party preference divergence are high, party leaders are empowered to exploit rules and procedures to ensure members act consistent with the party's goals. Denoted *CPG*, the variable is constructed as an additive index of two standardized variables—the ideological distance

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[10] In each model the reference category is "non-Solid Southern Senators."

between the party medians and the average standard deviation of both parties.[11] The second

factor is *Divided Government*; coded 1 whenever the rival parties occupy the White House or

hold a majority in the House. With researchers finding a negative relationship between divided

government and the passage of legislation (Alt and Lowry 1994; Binder 2003; Coleman 1999;

Edwards III, Barrett and Peake 1997; Howell et al. 2000; Kelly 1993), I expect a positive effect

on party unity.[12] The final factor is the percentage total turnover during the previous election.

Higher values indicate a larger cohort of freshman lawmakers. Periods of high turnover—such

as the "Revolution of '94" or the 1964 midterm—typically result in a unified agenda, thus the

effect of *Turnover* is expected to be positive.

Finally, I include five micro-time-varying variables (i.e. those that vary both temporally

and within each cross-section). The first is *Majority Party* status; coded 1 if majority and 0 if

minority. The capacity of the majority party to control the agenda in the Senate (Gailmard and

Jenkins 2007), suggests a positive effect.   Along these lines, I include a variable for the

numerical size the Senator's party. Because larger caucuses require less discipline to pass

legislation, the coefficient on *Party Size* is expected to be negative. The third variable taps

historical within-party variation in unity. This variable, denoted *Democratic Party*, is coded 1

for Democrats and 0 for Republicans. Because of greater diversity within the Democratic

Party's primary constituency, the expected effect is negative. I also include a dichotomous

measure for whether the Senator is of the same party as the president (coded 1 if same, 0 if

opposing). Senators who are of the same *Party of the President* are less constrained in their roll

call behavior and act with a party mandate; thus, I expect a positive effect. The level of unity

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[11] I used Keith Poole's Optimal Classification data for this. This data is available on his webpage:
www.voteview.com. The standardized average standard deviation variable was multiplied by -1 before
being included in the index. Thus, higher values indicate greater conditional party government.
[12] This assumes that gridlock stems from the lack of compromise during divided government.

within the opposition party is also an important factor. Such unity may spawn reciprocal unity (Lebo, McGlynn and Koger 2007). I construct *Opposition Unity T$_{-1}$* as the mean party unity score for the rival party in the preceding Congress.

Because H1 (the first-term hypothesis) specifies only cross-sectional effects, without observations over a senator's entire career, the effects can be modeled using a Generalized Linear Model (GLM). Because the dependent variable (party unity) is a proportion, bound between the values 1 and 0, the specification employs a binomial error structure and logit link function. This approach produces efficient estimates compared to OLS when the response is not normally distributed.[13] Though reducing the number of observations by over 80%, restricting the analysis to a senator's first-term provides a parsimonious specification and allows us to isolate the primary effect. To account for temporal heterogeneity, model parameters were estimated using robust standard errors clustered by Congress (for a discussion see Greene 2008).

Because the second hypotheses (H2a and H2b) use the full range of observations over a senator's career, cross-sectional and temporal effects are modeled using a cross-sectional time-series generalized estimating equation.[14] An extension of the GLM, this approach accounts for correlated responses within subjects—specified in this analysis as AR(1)—as well as handles a non-normally distributed response. As with the model testing H1, the specifications employ a binomial error structure and logit link function in order to properly model proportions data. Though this approach is more appropriate, consistent results were obtained with a conventional random-effects cross-sectional time-series model.[15]

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[13] Though GLM is more appropriate given the current application, the same results are achieved using OLS.
[14] The command is *xtgee* in STATA 10.
[15] In the random-effects analysis, I tested for over identifying restrictions using a Sargan-Hansen test, a generalization of the classic Hausman test (Schaffer and Stillman 2006). These tests were insignificant; there is no reason to reject the random effects assumption.

Findings

Table 3 presents the results testing the first-term hypothesis (H1) for the full, post-War (80th – 110th congresses) and restricted, post-reform (94th – 110th congresses) periods. Overall, both models perform quite well, explaining 23% and 30% of the variation in a senator's first-term party unity score.

[Table 3 about here]

Despite the limited sample sizes (n=293 and n=204), the effect of serving in the House prior to joining the Senate is positive and significant, as predicted by the theory of structure-induced learning. Calculating the marginal effects reveals that first-term senators vote with their party on contentious roll call votes about 2.8% more often in the full, post-War sample and 2.2% more often in the restricted, post-reform sample if they began their federal legislative careers in the House. Given that these two groups share the same institutional arrangements, we can reasonably infer that this result reflects a process political learning—where former House members learn more extreme partisan behavioral routines compared to their Senate colleagues. However, contrary to expectations, the magnitude of this effect is not greater in the post-reform sample. I have suggested that this difference may stem from reforms which increased the role of parties in the House over the corresponding period; namely the expansion of the House leadership system (but see also Garand and Clayton 1986; Loomis 1984; Sinclair 1981, 1992). Still, such an effect is more discernable in the full cross-sectional time-series analysis where we can leverage observations over a senator's entire career.

A number of control effects are significant and correctly signed as well. The Republican Party and an environment of conditional party government (Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991) increase

the level of party voting in both models. Both models also show that senators from the West

exhibit more unified voting patterns. This effect is linked to smaller state sizes. For example,

Lee and Oppenheimer (1999) show that smaller states elect senators who more easily move into

leadership positions (because of fewer campaign and electoral time constraints). As expected,

senators from the Solid South vote less often with their party on contentious votes, but only in

the full sample, including the civil rights era. In the full analysis only, the results show that high

party unity for opposition party members engenders reciprocal levels of party unity, as expected

(see Labo, McGlynn and Koger 2007). Finally, in the restricted, post-reform analysis electoral

turnover is significant and negative, contrary to expectations.[16]

Table 4 presents the results testing the Senate degradation and durability hypotheses (H2a

and H2b) using observations over a senator's entire career. Consistent with the previous

analysis I present models for the full, post-War (80th – 110th congresses) and restricted, post-

reform (94th – 110th congresses) periods. Overall, both models perform well, explaining 17%

and 15% of the overall variation in a senator's career party unity score.

[Table 4 about here]

Consistent with the previous analyses, I find that former House members vote most often

with their party on contentious votes. This is further evidence in favor of the structure-induced

learning theory. Calculating the marginal effects reveals that first-term senators vote with their

party on contentious roll call votes about 3.7% more often in the full, post-War sample and 4.7%

more often in the restricted, post-reform sample if they began their federal legislative careers in

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[16] In three of the four models presented in this article the coefficient on turnover is insignificant. Lacking
a firm theory for the one positive and significant coefficient, the best explanation is that this effect is
simply anomalous. Indeed, in estimating 52 separate coefficients (13 variables * 4 models), we would
expect 2-3 to have significant coefficients at random at the 95% level.

the House. I have suggested that the prime determinant of this effect has been the expansion of the House leadership system over the corresponding period (but see also Garand and Clayton 1986; Loomis 1984; Sinclair 1981, 1992).

The additional insight provided by the results in table 4 is the *insignificant* coefficient on the interaction terms between chamber hoppers and the number of terms served in the Senate. This indicates that a senator's previously learned House routines are relatively permanent (supporting H2b at the expense of H2a). That is, we could plausibly expect the effect demonstrated during a senator's first-term (H1) would dissipate as a senator updates their behavioral routines. Eventually, Senate structure-induced learning would "correct" the "deviant" partisan behavior exhibited by chamber hoppers and, over time, both groups would exhibit similar behavioral styles, *ceteris paribus*. The negative coefficients on the interaction terms indicate that this does indeed happen, but the effect is very minor—thus the lack of statistical significance. Thus, the conclusion is that the process of political learning foster during a senator's career in the House is a relatively permanent behavioral effect, with heightened party unity exhibited by first-term chamber hopping senators remaining throughout their career. In additional to the House's more imposing partisan structure, I have argued that the Senate's individualism norm (Sinclair 2002, 2005) and permissive rules afford senators wide behavioral latitude and is more tolerant of uncharacteristic lawmakers. I have also suggested that this effect is due to the importance of early career political learning. Regardless of which mechanisms explain this outcome (likely both), this is an intriguing finding.

I also find significant control effects in the second set of results. In both models, member of the majority, with smaller party cohorts and a more unified opposition are exhibit higher levels of party unity. In the full, post-War sample, I find that senators exhibit less party unity

over their career. This is like due to less reliance on the party label due to incumbency advantages. Interestingly, though in the same direction, this effect is insignificant in the reform era. Senators from the Solid South voted less often with their party in the entire post-War era, with the effect significant at the .10 level in the reform era. I also find that senators from the West are more partisan on average in the entire sample (Lee and Oppenheimer 1999). Finally, senators from the North East are less unified in the modern era. This effect likely stems from a number of moderate Republican senators like Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe.

A potential concern with the results, outlined earlier, is that the explanation advanced here for higher levels of party unity for chamber hoppers—structure-induced learning—is confounded by a senator's reelection motivation. That is, representatives who climb the party's ranks and are successful during their House career are more partisan on average *and* have a greater likelihood of winning their initial Senate election. An argument may arise that higher unity for these members is not necessarily a result of a learning process but due to the continued effect of this reelection incentive. That is, the effect highlighted previously is spuriously generated. Of course, I find more convincing the argument that upon entering the Senate the previous (House) reelection incentives are replaced by those particular to state-wide elections and that in this regard chamber hoppers have no reelection or institutional differences than their indigenous colleagues. Though chamber hoppers may have been more likely to win a Senate election because of their loyalty to the party whist in the House (ceteris paribus), that effect should disappear their first day in the Senate. Still, as it turns out, we can leverage one additional piece of information to account for this possibility while providing a strong test of this paper's central thesis. Indeed, some may find the parsimonious analysis presented below to be the most convincing of the paper

To address this thorny issue we need to approximate an experimental design where the "reelection incentive" is controlled for. As it turns out, we can do this by leveraging the fact that a large number of chamber hoppers are *paired* in the same-state with indigenous senators. These matched pairs share a wide range of observable and unobservable geographic and state-level factors. Most important is the obvious fact that they have the exact same reelection constituency. If we further restrict our analysis of these matched pairs to same-state senators of the same party, we can further control for party-effects on party unity such as the desire to create a beneficial party label and legislative agenda control. By pairing senators in this fashion the only major factor that differs is previous House service.

Thus, in this final analysis I identified same-state senators who shared the same party during each two-year Congress from the 80th to the 110th. One senator in the pair previously served in the House, one did not. This matching process yielded 288 pairs in the full sample ($80^{th} - 110^{th}$) and 185 pairs in the post-reform sample ($94^{th} - 110^{th}$). Next, I calculated the difference in party unity scores between the chamber hopper and his or her paired indigenous colleague. Higher values indicate that the senator who formerly served in the House is more partisan than their match who did not serve in the House. In both samples, the differences are statistically discernable from "0" (or no effect) and *positive* at the .0001 level (t=4.8 and t=3.3 respectively). Thus, when approximating an experimental design and including quite effective controls for both the reelection incentive and party affects on behavior, we can unequivocally infer that senators who formerly served in the House are more partisan on average than senators who did not serve in the House. This provides further evidence in favor of the structure-induced learning hypothesis and a social-psychological basis for individual level partisan behavior.

Conclusion and Discussion

Over a century ago, Woodrow Wilson (1885, 195) cautioned that "there cannot be a separate breed of public mean reared specially for the Senate. It must be recruited from the lower branches of the representative system, of which it is only the topmost part. No stream can be purer than its sources. The Senate can have in it no better men than the best men of the House of Representatives." Of course, Wilson's writings often reflected his aversion to our constitutional framework (see Rintala 1968). Still, it is curious that nearly half of our contemporary senators began their federal legislative careers in the House—a phenomenon which has more than doubled over the post-War period. Thus, in at least one respect, Wilson's claim has elements of truth.

The present paper began with a simple question: What are the practical consequences of this "chamber hopping" phenomenon? The scope of the analysis was relatively modest. Indeed, volumes could be filled exploring the topic. Nonetheless, the results have some important implications. Relying on the unique opportunity created by chamber hopping, the empirical results confirm an alternative theory of partisan behavior, developed in this paper, outside the conventional rational, goal seeking paradigm. The core contribution of the paper, then, is the conclusion that individual-level partisan behavior is due, in part, to a process of structure-induced learning. Though not in conflict with the conventional accounts, the results suggest a second (latent) party process is at work. Parties, as social groups, have inherent effects on behavior. Thus, though we may not observe party effects (e.g. Krehbiel 1993), this does not imply they are entirely non-existent.

At the same time, the results make sense of the close correspondence between partisan trends in each chamber. For decades, researchers have suggested that some direct, intercameral

factor underlies these trends but have failed to develop a satisfactory theoretical explanation of this mechanism. Indeed, this correspondence is not a spurious phenomenon—due simply to factors *shared* by the two chambers (issue evolution, electoral and geographic realignments, institutional reforms, etc.). Rather, it is due to a more direct relationship—shared members. Moreover, the results help explain why the Senate has become more partisan over the post-reform period without reforms paralleling those in the House.

The findings also have implications for our philosophical conceptions of bicameralism; namely House and Senate representational differences.   One the one hand, the notion of hyper-partisanship in the Senate, and the behavioral routines associated with it, is antithetical to the chamber's original design. Insulation from popular "whims" via staggered six-year terms and appointment by the state legislatures, greater membership constraints compared to the House,[17] smaller size and historical prestige are believed to enhance policy deliberation and expertise effects, engender long term thinking and foster stable, civil interpersonal interaction (see *Federalist* #62-63; Levmore 1992; Muthoo and Shepsle 2008; Riker 1992; Tsebelis and Money 1997). Indeed, the framers believed the two chambers would be "dissimilar" with respect to the people serving within each chamber (e.g. Federalist #62). The present research suggests that modern career patterns have reduced this dissimilarity in a way unforeseen by our legislature's architects. Not only are "similar men" serving in each chamber, but, as the present research shows, the practical implications of this phenomenon have made the Senate behaviorally like the House (at least regarding partisanship). These trends are especially important given the ability of partisans to obstruct in the Senate. A single member socialized to norms of incivility in the House can wreak havoc in the Senate. This is evident in light of Jim Bunning's (R-KY)

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[17] Article I Sec. 3 sets the minimum age for Senators at 30, with nine years of US citizenship. Article I Sec. 2 sets the minimum age for Representatives at 25, with seven years of US citizenship.

objection in the 111th Senate to a relatively non-controversial unanimous consent agreement regarding the extension of unemployment insurance. Bunning, some will recall, served in the House from 1987 to 1999, during the so-called "Gingrich era." Thus, without formal procedures to limit debate, the Senate provides greater ability for partisans to stymie the legislative process.

Along this line, we talk about the declining norm of comity in the Senate (see Uslaner 1993)—conceptually a social-psychological construct—yet scholars have failed to consider the extent to which a parallel socio-psychological process serves as the explanation for this decline, opting instead for goal-seeking and institutional explanations. This reflects our general thinking about norms—that they are primarily dependent variables. Norms are independent variables, too. This exact point has suggested by others: "One major reason [for the simultaneous decline in comity in both chambers]… is the influx in the past few years of hard-charging, antipolitical renegades, especially some members of the class of 1994 who had previously served in the minority in the House" (Ornstein 2000, 238).

The perspective advanced by this paper may also add to our understanding of the timing of Senate institutional reforms. Whereas reform in the 1970s was the aided by electoral changes which brought a number of liberal Democrats into an institution unsatisfactorily arranged to meet their needs (Rohde 1991), Senate reforms in the 1990s can be explained by a surge of conservative Republicans who were accustomed to the House's more hierarchal partisan structure. For example, in the mid to late 1990s many junior Senate Republicans were upset with the lack of party control in the upper chamber.   In response, senators Trent Lott and Tom Daschle (both House alumni) adopted more partisan leadership styles to reflect the wishes of their junior members (see Sinclair 2000, 64-65). These junior partisans pushed a series of (successful) Senate reforms adopted by the Senate Republican conference which limited

chairmen to three terms and required a secret ballot for their appointment. These reforms were designed by the young rank-and-file to enhance the responsiveness of more moderate senior senators to the party's goals (Sinclair 2000, 65). Thus, in this case, the timing of reforms can be explained by the proliferation of chamber hopping and the dissatisfaction of new members with the Senate's lack of party discipline compared to what they were accustomed to in the House.

On how we think about political institutions, the findings suggest that greater work is needed examining not only how institutions *structure* short-term behavior (e.g. Shepsle and Weingast's 1981 "structure-induced equilibrium"), but the long-term impact of institutions on behavior. The present paper advocates the existence of what may be called institutional legacy or path dependent effects. This is perhaps an odd or counterintuitive argument on its face, but the findings show that institutions can affect outcomes even after lawmakers are physically removed from the compass of those institutions. The present paper advanced only one such effect—structure-induced learning.

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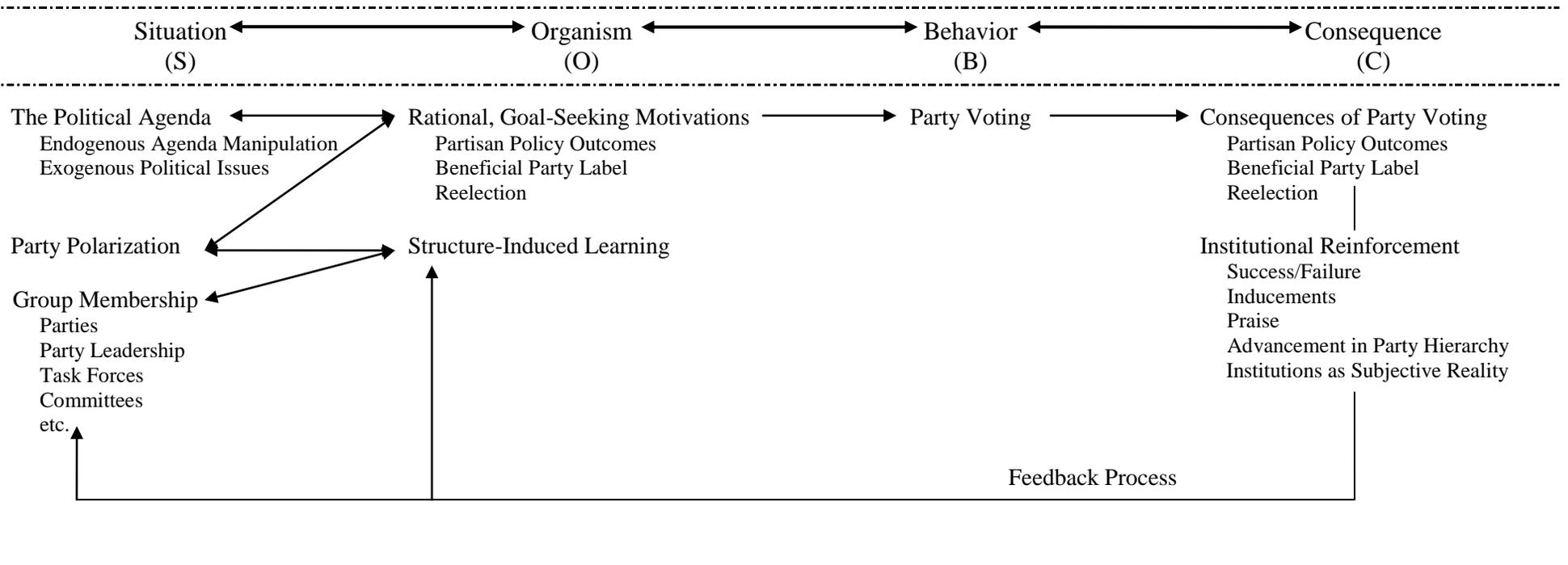
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Tables and Figures

Figure 1: A Modified SOBC Model of Party Voting

Situation (S)	Organism (O)	Behavior (B)	Consequence (C)

The Political Agenda
    Endogenous Agenda Manipulation
    Exogenous Political Issues

Rational, Goal-Seeking Motivations
    Partisan Policy Outcomes
    Beneficial Party Label
    Reelection

Party Voting

Consequences of Party Voting
    Partisan Policy Outcomes
    Beneficial Party Label
    Reelection

Party Polarization

Structure-Induced Learning

Institutional Reinforcement
    Success/Failure
    Inducements
    Praise
    Advancement in Party Hierarchy
    Institutions as Subjective Reality

Group Membership
    Parties
    Party Leadership
    Task Forces
    Committees
    etc.

Feedback Process

Modified by the author. The original figure appears in Luthans and Kreither (1985)

Figure 1: Percentage of Former House Lawmakers Serving in the Senate by Congress
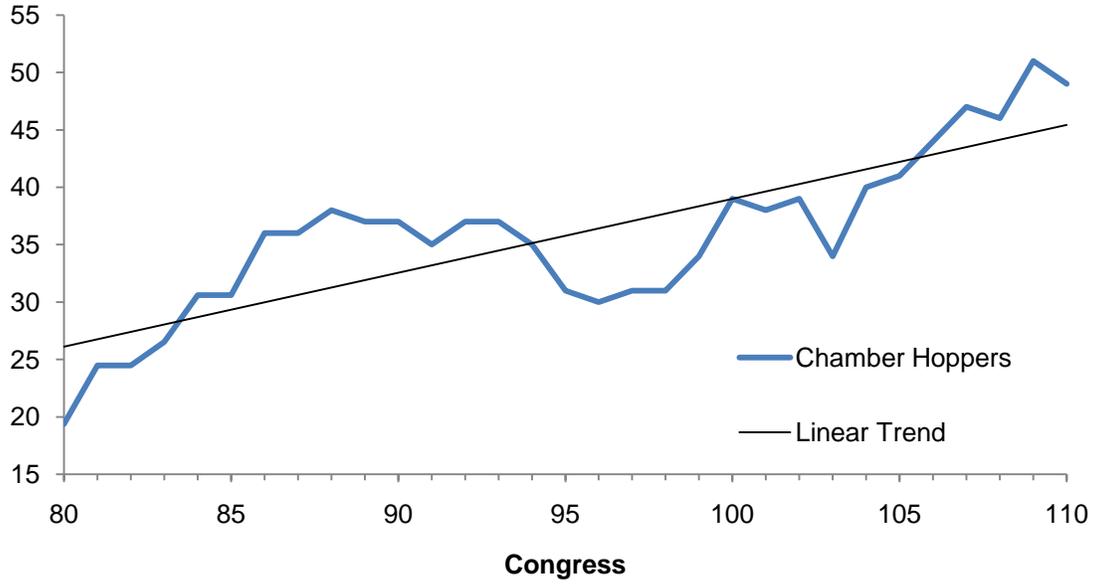
Note: The values of 80th-85th Congresses are adjusted by dividing the number of former House members by 98.

Figure 2: Mean Senate Unity Score for Indigenous Senators and Chamber Hoppers by Congress
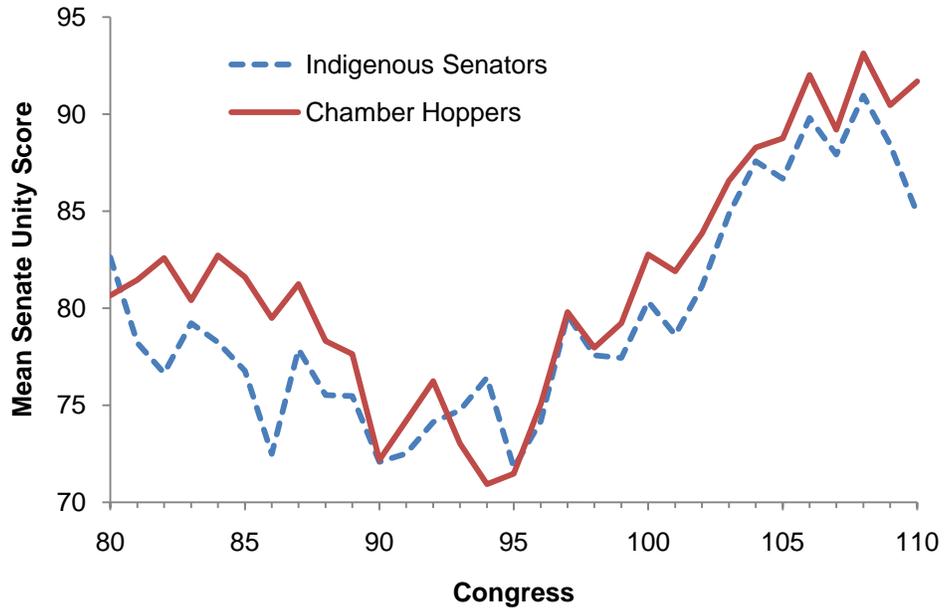
Table 2: Determinants of First-Term Senator Party Unity (GLM)

Factors	80th -110th		94th – 110th	
	Coefficient	Robust SE	Coefficient	Robust SE
Chamber Hopper	0.22***	(0.06)	0.19**	(0.09)
CPG	0.06*	(0.04)	0.27***	(0.09)
Divided Government	0.07	(0.14)	-0.18	(0.13)
Turnover	-0.57	(1.64)	-6.26***	(1.59)
Majority Party	0.42**	(0.17)	0.11	(0.16)
Party Size	-0.00	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.02)
Democratic Party	0.00***	(0.00)	0.00**	(0.00)
Party of President	-0.09	(0.11)	0.02	(0.14)
Opposition Unity T_{-1}	5.10***	(0.97)	-0.76	(2.10)
North East	-0.08	(0.16)	-0.05	(0.34)
North Central	0.22*	(0.13)	0.13	(0.18)
West	0.50***	(0.13)	0.44**	(0.22)
Solid South	-0.57***	(0.20)	-0.13	(0.30)
Constant	-3.24***	(1.16)	2.62	(1.96)
N	393		204	
R-Squared	.23		.30	

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, *p<.10; Robust standard errors clustered by Congress in parentheses. Estimates were derived using a binomial family and logit link function. Stata 10 does not compute an R-Square in GLM; those reported here are simply the squared correlation between the response and the fitted response (see Zheng and Agresti 2000).

Table 3: Determinants Senator Party Unity (Cross-Sectional Time-Series Generalized Estimating Equation)

Factors	80th -110th		94th – 110th	
	Coefficient	Robust SE	Coefficient	Robust SE
Chamber Hopper	0.25**	(0.11)	0.39**	(0.15)
Terms	-0.03***	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.02)
Chamber Hopper*Terms	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.02)
CPG	0.08***	(0.02)	-0.04	(0.05)
Divided Government	0.01	(0.02)	-0.04	(0.03)
Turnover	-0.20	(0.21)	-0.74*	(0.43)
Majority Party	0.33***	(0.03)	0.42***	(0.06)
Party Size	-0.01***	(0.00)	-0.02***	(0.01)
Democratic Party	-0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
Party of President	0.07**	(0.03)	0.02	(0.04)
Opposition Unity T$_{-1}$	0.77**	(0.35)	3.48***	(0.64)
North East	-0.18	(0.15)	-0.54**	(0.23)
North Central	0.26*	(0.13)	-0.25	(0.17)
West	0.34***	(0.13)	0.12	(0.17)
Solid South	-0.45**	(0.19)	-0.52*	(0.29)
Constant	1.49***	(0.40)	0.10	(0.61)
N	2829		1182	
R-Squared	.17		.15	

*** $p<.01$, ** $p<.05$, *$p<.10$; Robust standard errors with an AR(1) error structure in parentheses. Estimates were derived using a binomial family and logit link function. Stata 10 does not compute an R-Square in GEE; those reported here are simply the squared correlation between the response and the fitted response (see Zheng and Agresti 2000).