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Majority-Party Status and Gender:
Understanding Productivity in the U.S. House of Representatives

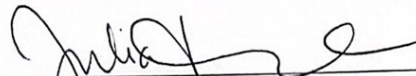
by

Carissa M. Occhipinto

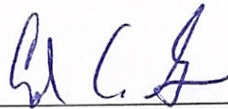
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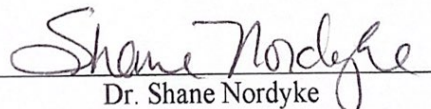
The members of the Honors Thesis Committee appointed
to examine the thesis of Carissa Occhipinto
find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.



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ABSTRACT

Majority-Party Status and Gender: Understanding Productivity in the U.S. House of Representatives

Carissa Occhipinto

Director: Dr. Julia Hellwege, Ph.D

This thesis examines differences in productivity levels from members of the 93rd to 115th United States House of Representatives with respect to majority-party status and gender. Using data from the Center of Effective Lawmaking, the study conducts a basic regression model using productivity as a function of whether or not the individual is a majority party member and their gender. Although the traditional measure of legislator success is legislative effectiveness, these measures take into account institutional differences. Productivity is measured by the amount of bills an individual legislator introduces and is dependent on the individual, not institutional approval that favors male legislators. Consistent with expectations, the regression models find strong patterns that majority-party status is, on average, predictive of productivity. However, within majority-party membership, there is no different in productivity between gender. These results could set a new standard for how we measure legislative success; rather than measuring success based on institutional approval, it is important to consider individual productivity as well.

KEYWORDS: Majority-Party, Gender, Legislative Effectiveness, Productivity, Congress

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Introduction

In the United States Congress, legislation is proposed by elected representatives over a variety of different issues. A legislator's success can be determined by how many of their sponsored bills pass through Congress and ultimately become law (Frantzich 1979; Matthews 1960; Volden and Wiseman 2010). However, some legislators may have their legislation blocked for a variety of different reasons. As such, they may not be as traditionally successful as other legislators. This is not because they are not productive as their legislative counterparts, but because the institution has certain barriers that limit their success.

Legislative effectiveness is a traditional measure of a legislator's success, and several scholars have established measures to account for the different institutional barriers that may prohibit some legislators more than others (Frantzisch 1979; Matthews 1960; Volden and Wiseman 2010). Measures include 'hit rates,' which measure the number or percentage of bills that are passed out of committee and House (Frantzich 1979; Matthews 1960) or the Legislative Effectiveness Score (LES), which accounts for all stages of the legislative process to measure an individual legislators' effectiveness (Volden and Wiseman 2010). LES allows variation for each bill and legislator, thus making it a better indicator overall for legislative effectiveness.

There are several factors that can influence legislative productivity and effectiveness, including seniority, majority-party status, and gender (Bucchianeri et al. 2020; Lazarus and Steigerwait 2018; Volden et al. 2010). The US Congress is a deliberative assembly with many rules and procedures governing its actions. Majority rule is an important component of this process, and allows for whichever party receives the most seats, termed the majority party, to control the top leadership posts and chairs and majorities committees and subcommittees. As a whole, party politics heavily influences the political process, and parties are gatekeepers of

politics, taking part in candidate recruitment and selection, setting legislative agendas, and congressional redistricting (Krehbiel 1993; Krutz and Jorgensen 2008; McCarthy et al. 2009; Sanbonmatsu 2006). Because the majority party controls Congress, several studies have previously found that the majority party is more legislatively effective than the minority party as a whole (Bucchianeri et al. 2020; Lazarus and Steigerwait 2018; Volden and Wiseman 2016; Volden et al. 2010).

Gender is also an important factor of legislative effectiveness. Women are viewed as more competent in “gender equity, education, health care, and poverty” and are more likely to sponsor legislation for ‘women’s issues’ (Lawless 2015, 359; Sanbonmatsu 2003). Other differences can even be found in their leadership styles (Lazarus and Steigerwalt 2018; Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Rosenthal 1998). As such, research has been conducted to determine the difference in legislative effectiveness by gender (Jeydel and Taylor 2003; Lazarus and Steigerwalkt 2018; Volden et al. 2010). Lazarus and Steigerwalt (2018) found that “for every stage of the legislative process, male House members see a greater percentage of their bills reach that stage of the process than female House members” (131). However, it is important to note that the gendered institution of Congress is better suited for male legislators.

Male legislators, as whole, outnumber females. For the 117th Congress, 144 of 539 seats are held by women; 14% of which are Republican and 38% Democrat (Pew 2021). Political institutions, like the United States Congress, reward traditional male qualities over female qualities, with men being perceived as more competent in military, crime, and economic issues (Lawless 2015; Paxton and Hughes 2013; Volden et al. 2010). On the other hand, women are viewed as more competent in “gender equity, education, health care, and poverty” (Lawless 2015, 359). These are traditionally women’s issues, and at times female legislators can be pushed

to pursue these issues in their agenda over others. By pursuing these issues, however, it can be argued that fewer of their bills will receive action or pass, solely because the gendered institution does not provide much support for these items.

Rather than looking at the institutional barriers that influence female legislative effectiveness, it is important to look at behavioral differences. Because measures of legislative effectiveness include variables of the gendered institution, such as a male dominated arena in which voters and congressional approval favor male legislators. Male legislators hold the majority of leadership positions in both Congress and party, acting as gatekeepers. In this scenario, productivity becomes a more useful measure. Legislative effectiveness measures both an individual's effort and institutional approval. However, productivity is measured by how many bills are introduced by an individual legislator. Because productivity is dependent on the individual, rather than the institutional gatekeeping that may favor male legislators, majority-party membership should be a better predictor overall. Gender matters for legislative effectiveness, but when looking at individual behavior and removing the institutional components of Congress, there is no difference in productivity.

This paper analyzes the relationship between gender, majority-party status, and productivity for the 93rd to 115th House of Representatives. Two regression models were conducted, both using productivity as a function of whether or not the individual is a majority party member and their gender. Consistent with expectations, I find strong patterns that majority-party status is, on average, predictive of productivity. In both regression analyses, majority party members are more productive than minority party members. Results further show that female and male legislators are equally as productive when accounting for majority-party membership and controlling for seniority. This is an important relationship because it shows that while

productivity may not be gendered, success likely is. These findings show that a new model should be formulated to measure legislative success – productivity allows us to acknowledge individual behavior and possible institutional barriers. Rather than solely looking at legislative effectiveness, it is important to consider a number of other variables as well.

Literature Review

The United States Congress, as a deliberative assembly, has many procedures governing its actions. These include both written rules and established norms or precedents adapted by the body. Even Thomas Jefferson, while formulating parliamentary procedure for the upper chamber, noted that “it is very material that order, decency, and regularity be preserved in a dignified public body” (Davidson et al. 2018, 219). The main goal of Congress, for members in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, is to “make prospective law throughout the broad field of procedure” as mandated in Article I of the American Constitution, in a process that is often unpredictable and ever-changing (Burbank 2004, 1681). As such, the rules governing Congress create a procedure that allows them to do so, while also providing institutional barriers for specific members of Congress.

Members of Congress have a duty to represent their constituents, and they can do so through constituent service and drafting legislation. Their success is measured through their legislative effectiveness, which can be measured in a variety of different ways. For individual constituents, legislative success is measured stylistically; constituents look for candidates that share a similar identity, attempts to connect with them personally, and whose policy stance does not stray too far from theirs. Although constituent service is a very vital component of their roles and helps legislators connect with their constituents, sponsoring legislation is a large determiner

of a legislator's success (Fenno 1973). Once legislation is sponsored, the rules and procedures governing Congress provide mechanisms for legislation to pass through and ultimately become law. Several studies have measured legislative effectiveness by 'hit rates,' the number or percentage of sponsored bills that are passed out of committee and house. (Frantzich 1979; Matthews 1960). However, because the proportion of sponsored bills that become law is not the only element that determines how effective a legislator is, Volden and Wiseman's Legislative Effectiveness Score (LES) is widely used. LES takes into consideration five measurable steps, including bills introduced, bills that receive action in committee, bills that receive action beyond committee, bills that pass the House, and bills that become laws, they created a Legislative Effectiveness Score (LES). Each bill is weighted to account for how substantively significant it is. LES accounts for all stages of the legislative process and allows variation for each bill and legislator, thus making it a better indicator overall for legislative effectiveness.

Majority rule is an important component of the legislative process and can often impact a legislator's success. Congress is organized by party affiliation; whichever party receives the most seats, termed the majority party, controls the top leadership posts and chairs and committees and subcommittees. Party leadership is important for lawmaking. Davidson et al. (2018) explain that the Speaker of the House, in consultation with their party, committee leaders, and the president, determines "whether, when, how, and in what order bills come up" (228). Essentially, the majority party controls decision making, and can behave as a "legislative cartel" to manipulate the "structural power of the House" (Cox and McCubbins 2005, 15).

One advantage of being a member in the minority party is that they are able to obstruct the majority party's efforts, which often leads to a fight between which party can win the most. Representative Patrick McHenry, a Republican from North Carolina, explained that "being in the

minority in the House is the absolute worst, most painful position to be in” (Davidson et al. 2018, 229). The majority party has the ability to control the entire institution of Congress; several studies have accumulated a wealth of knowledge regarding the processes of majority rule (Binder 1997; Black 1958; Rubinfeld 1996). Procedures governing the upper chamber do have more protections against majority rule, however. One senator explained this as “it isn’t good enough to have the majority. You’ve got to have 60 votes” (Davidson et al. 2018, 253). Despite this, the Senate is still organized by majority-minority party leadership, and as such, there is still a majority advantage in some manners, namely agenda setting and legislation scheduling.

Several studies have found that the majority party is also more legislatively effective than the minority party as a whole (Bucchianeri et al. 2020; Lazarus and Steigerwait 2018; Volden and Wiseman 2016; Volden et al. 2010). Because of the institutional advantages awarded to majority members, as a member of the majority party, it is easier to pass legislation— not only do the majority of individual legislators’ plans align with that of their party, due to party cohesion, they are also more likely to receive party support in efforts to ‘win’ legislatively. Thus, majority-party members are more likely to be legislatively effective relative to their counterparts in the minority party. Party leaders themselves are also at the forefront of lawmaking, and affiliation with them can determine success. Take the “A-to-Z” Bill for example, when despite the majority of the Democratic Party’s initial support, after pressures from Democratic party leaders, the bill, which would have completely “[undermined] the leadership’s control over the floor agenda,” was not discharged from committee (Binder et al. 1999, 819). Gaining party leadership approval can mean getting legislation approved.

Postell (2018) also notes the party’s critical role as mediating institutions; parties’ moderate politics, translate the majority will into public policy, and reinforce separation of

powers. Parties can be thought of as gatekeepers to politics, taking part in candidate recruitment and selection, setting legislative agendas, and congressional redistricting (Krehbiel 1993; Krutz and Jorgensen 2008; McCarthy et al. 2009; Sanbonmatsu 2006). Despite the tension often created between the factions, party polarization can also be a helpful motivating factor for Congress. When an ideological divide occurs between the two parties, the majority party has an increased interest to strengthen leadership in order to advance its own parties' goals and "thwart" the minority party (Bucchianeri et al. 2020, 15). As a result, despite the rules and procedures that govern the assembly, party politics often make it difficult for much work to occur. Binder (2015) agrees, noting that "the intense partisanship and electoral competition of recent years appears to be undermining Congress's broader problem-solving capacity" (Binder 2015, 86).

In an effort to win the so-called partisan competition between parties, the political powers at be pressure their members to vote with the party, otherwise known as party cohesion (Norpoth 1976; Volden and Bergman 2006). Polarization, on the other hand, occurs when there is separation of political attitudes to ideological extremes (Heltzel and Laurin, 2020). Both party cohesion and partisanship have increased greatly over the recent sessions of Congress. As the competition between parties increases, parties are forced to take opposite stances from each other and ensure their party members act in accordance with party lines. Former Senator Barbra Mikulski, D-MD describes this as "today's era of shutdown, slow-down, slam-down politics" (Davidson et al. 2018, 219).

There are several key factors that have contributed to increased partisanship in Congress. The most impactful can be seen in philosophical positions. Congressional parties are becoming increasingly homogeneous in their policy positions, while the differences between the two major parties' stances on major issues are increasing. Liberals and Democrats are less likely to trust

traditional family institutions, religious institutions, and the economic system (Azari 2010). Conservatives and Republicans are less likely to trust in the scientific process, higher education, the mass media, and the role of the government (Newport 2019). Dunlap and McCright (2008) cite climate change as one of the most apparent partisan gaps between the parties; many Republicans remain skeptical global warming exists and is a pressing issue. Although Hetherington (2006) explains that voter preferences are not “moving towards ideological poles;” as many continue to have moderate stances on most issues, the ‘elites’ are at the core of the recent increase in polarization (4). Major issues fought over in the United States, including gender, race, and immigration, are neatly divided under party labels, with Republicans unified under one set of beliefs and Democrats under the other (Postell 2018). They are thought to own those issues, and often, are perceived as more competent in those areas as well (Walgrave et al. 2015). Even in presidential elections, candidates try and force voters to select candidates based on issue ownership, or what issues a candidate is able to “handle” better than their opponent (Petrocik 1996, 826). Therefore, it is the elected officials and party activists that have made the current political climate so polarized. Esdall (2017) notes: “hostility to the opposition party and its candidates has now reached a level where loathing motivates voters more than loyalty ... The building strength of partisan antipathy – ‘negative partisanship’ – has radically altered politics. Anger has become the primary tool for motivating voters.”

Partisan division can be seen by gender as well. Women as a whole, vote and identify consistently in a more liberal direction, which could be an explanation why Democrat women far outpace the number of Republican women in Congress (Burrell 1994; Clark 1998; Jeydel and Taylor 2003). For the 117th Congress, 144 of 539 seats are held by women; 14% of which are Republican and 38% Democrat (Pew 2021). It is important to note; however, that there are

several behavioral barriers that could explain why there are so few women legislators relative to men. Voters may for example reward traditional male qualities over female qualities, with male candidates being perceived as more competent in military, crime, and economic issues (Lawless 2015; Paxton and Hugues 2017; Volden et al. 2010). On the other hand, female candidates are viewed as more competent in “gender equity, education, health care, and poverty” (Lawless 2015, 359). These are traditionally women’s issues, and at times female legislators can be pushed to pursue these issues in their agenda over others.

Several studies have explored the relationship between gender and legislative effectiveness, with varying results. Volden et al. (2010) found that, between 1973 and 2008, on average, female legislators are more effective legislatively than men. Lazarus and Steigerwalt (2018), however, found that “for every stage of the legislative process, male House members see a greater percentage of their bills reach that stage of the process than female House members” (131). Fundamentally, there is notion that women act differently than men in Congress, either in the type of legislation they introduce or their differing leadership styles (Lazarus and Steigerwalt 2018; Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Rosenthal 1998). As such, it makes sense that the gendered institution of Congress is better suited for male legislators, and it can be argued that female legislators should be less legislatively effective than men.

Furthermore, another individual level factor that could affect a legislator’s success is seniority. This is especially evident because of the importance of leadership positions. As Pollock (1925) explains, “after men have been in Congress for several years, they realize that they are only units of the four hundred and thirty-five atoms which make up the house, and that their influence is nil unless they have secured preferment by being appointed to the chairmanship of some major committee” (235). This appointment is done by seniority. Not only does being a

Congressman for longer give a legislator a better chance at a leadership position, but they also have several other advantages, including a higher chance of reelection, a network of colleagues who will support their legislation, and an increase in resources (McKelvey and Riezman 1990).

On the other hand, the relationship between majority-minority party status and gender is an important consideration. Volden et al. (2010) found that minority party women are more likely to keep their sponsored bills alive than minority party men. However, majority party women are not as successful relative to their male counterparts. This shows that majority party membership weighs a great deal, because even when there are gender effects on legislative effectiveness, women are more effective in the minority party. That said, looking at the behavior side, not taking into consideration if female legislators are able to get their work approved by the institution, I ask, how productive are males and females in the House of Representatives? Gender matters for legislative effectiveness, but when looking at individual behavior and removing the institutional components of Congress, there should be no difference in productivity. Productivity, in comparison to legislative effectiveness, is dependent on the individual; therefore, gender should not matter. Given the political power and opportunity that majority members have, as outlined above, majority party membership should be a better predictor of the number of bills produced than gender is, even when controlling for seniority.

Therefore, the hypothesis of this paper is:

H₁: Regardless of gender, majority party members are more productive than minority party members.

Data & Methods

All data used was collected from 1973-2018 from the Center of Effective Lawmaking. The dependent variable for this research is productivity, or the amount of bills introduced by an individual legislator. Productivity is a good measure of individual behavior, and as such, will allow me to acknowledge the institutional barriers that female legislators face. The key independent variable is a four-category composite measure of gender and majority or minority party status, where 1=minority party, male, 2=minority party, female, 3= majority party, male, and 4=majority party, female.

I control for seniority to account for variations in experience and the resources that come with this. The variable is measured as the number of terms a legislator has served in Congress. While this paper builds upon previous studies conducted by Volden and Wiseman (2012, 2014, 2017), rather than examining legislative effectiveness, which is the “proven ability to advance a [representative’s] agenda items through the legislative process and into law,” (6), I use number of sponsored bills as a measure for productivity. Legislative effectiveness measures include institutional variables within Congress that allow legislation to advance, while bill sponsorship is a measure of primarily individual behavior. Several additional variables are included in the data set, most specifically the majority-party status and gender.

Looking at data provided by the Center of Effective Lawmaking from the 93rd to 115th House of Representatives, there were 10,263 observations. Of those observations, 89% are male and 11% are female. **Table 1** shows the distribution of gender.

Table 1

Gender Representation in Congress		
	Frequency	Percentage
Male	9,135	89.01
Female	1,128	10.99
Total	10,263	100

In terms of party status, 4,452 observations are members in the minority party (43%), and 5,811 (57%) are members in the majority party. **Table 2** shows the distribution of majority-party membership. **Table 3** shows the distribution of gender in majority-party membership. Of the minority party, there are 3,817 males and 635 females. Of the majority party, there are 5,318 males and 493 females.

Table 2

Majority-Party Membership in Congress		
	Frequency	Percentage
Minority Party	4,452	43.38
Majority-Party	5,811	56.62
Total	10,263	100

Table 3

Gender Representation by Party in Congress		
	Male	Female
Minority Party	86%	14%
Majority Party	92%	14%

Table 4 shows the average seniority by gender. On average, male legislators served 5.4 terms, while female legislators served 4.32 terms.

Table 4

Average Seniority	
Average	
Male	5.4
Female	4.32
Total	5.28

My dependent variable is the number of bills sponsored; **Table 5** shows the mean number of bills by gender. On average, men sponsored 16.82 bills, while women sponsored 16.43 bills. I conducted a two-sample t-test with equal variances, reporting that there is no statistical difference between male and female productivity ($t=0.70$). This shows that the null hypothesis that the difference of the means is 0 cannot be rejected (with a p-value is 0.49).

Table 5

Total Bills Sponsored	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.
Men	9135	16.82	0.19	17.83
Women	1128	16.43	0.42	14.19
t	0.70			
Degrees of Freedom	10261			

However, as reported in **Table 6**, there is a substantive difference in productivity between members of the majority-party and the minority-party. On average, a majority party-member introduces 18.18 bills, while a minority-party member introduces 14.93 bills.

Table 6

Total bills sponsored by party membership	
Average	
Minority Party	14.93
Majority Party	18.19

After analyzing the descriptive statistics on each of my variables, I conducted a basic regression model to assess the effects of both gender and majority-party membership on the productivity in the 93rd to 115th House of Representatives. These analyses look at the number of bills an individual produced as a function of whether or not the individual is a majority-party member and their gender.

This paper will test the effect of the composite variable measuring the member's gender and majority-party status on productivity, with a control for seniority. In order to explore the relationship between productivity and gender, I conducted multiple OLS analysis.¹ The equation for the multiple regression is:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where x_1 represents the composite of gender majority-party status and x_2 represents seniority. β_1 represents the coefficient for the slope, which is the average change in y associated with a unit change in gender when majority-party status is held constant. I run the model twice, varying the base comparison of my four-way composite variable, first comparing all other groups to minority men, and second compared to majority men.

Results

Results from the first regression model are reported in **Table 7**, which shows productivity as a function of whether or not the individual is a majority party member and their gender, compared to a reference category of minority men with a control for seniority. Compared to minority men, minority women are not statistically different in their productivity. Furthermore,

¹ Although a time series would be a more accurate representation of the relationship over time, due to limited time and resources, a basic regression will still allow us to determine how strong the relationship between majority-party membership and legislative effectiveness is within gender.

the average productivity for men in the majority party was 3.27 bills greater than productivity for minority party men. This difference is statistically highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Majority party members are more productive than minority party men, regardless of gender. On average, majority party members introduce more legislation than minority party members. Minority party females, however, on average, are no different statistically than minority party men.

Table 7

Total Bills Sponsored	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P > t 	95% Conf.
Minority party, female	0.52	0.74	0.70	0.48	-0.92
Majority party, male	3.27	0.36	8.96	0.00	2.55
Majority party, female	4.36	0.83	5.29	0.00	2.75
Seniority	0.63	0.04	15.3	0.00	0.55
Cons	14.76	0.32	45.48	0.00	14.12
Number Observations	10,263				
R ²	0.03				
Adjusted R ²	0.03				

Results from the second regression model are reported in **Table 8**, which shows productivity as a function of whether or not the individual is a majority party member and their gender, compared to a reference category of majority men with a control for seniority. Compared to majority men, majority party women are not statistically different in their productivity. The average productivity of majority party women was 1.09 bills higher than majority party men. Minority party members, regardless of gender, are less effective than majority party men. Majority party women are no different statistically from majority party men; on average, they both are equally as productive. For both regression models, the regression analysis had an R-squared of 0.03. This means that only 3% of the variance is explained by the model. Seniority was also positive and significant in both models, as expected.

Table 8

Total Bills Sponsored	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P > t 	95% Conf.
Minority party, male	-3.27	0.36	-8.96	0	-3.98
Minority party, female	-2.75	0.72	-3.8	0.00	-4.17
Majority party, female	1.09	0.81	1.35	1.78	-0.50
Seniority	0.63	0.04	15.3	0.00	0.55
Cons	14.76	0.32	45.48	0.00	14.12
Number Observations	10,263				
R ²	0.03				
Adjusted R ²	0.03				

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Given previous literature in the field, it is expected that majority-party status and gender can influence legislative effectiveness (Bucchianeri et al. 2020; Lazarus and Steigerwait 2018). Volden et al. (2010) found that minority women are more likely to keep their sponsored bills alive through-out the stages of the legislative process. On the other hand, majority party women are not as successful relative to their male counterparts. Because this study compared legislative effectiveness to these factors, it took into consideration both the institutional and behavioral factors prevalent in Congressional proceedings. Based on the results above, when looking at productivity, there is no statistical difference between majority party men and majority party women, nor is there a difference between minority party men and minority party women. This is consistent with expectations; majority-party members compete with minority-party members and are more incentivized to introduce more legislation if they are more likely to have it approved by

the institution. Gender differences are both institutional and behavioral. For example, female legislators are viewed as more competent in “gender equity, education, health care, and poverty,” by voters (Lawless 2015, 359). In turn, they are more likely to sponsor legislation regarding ‘women’s issues’ (Sanbonmatsu 2003). This legislation may not be as likely to be approved by the institution of Congress, thus not being taken into consideration in the traditional legislative effectiveness measures. This is one explanation why female legislators have a lower legislative effectiveness score than their male counterparts, on average. They are not, however, less productive than male legislators. On average, female legislators introduce the same number of bills per term as their male counterparts when taking into account their majority-party status. It should be noted that gender differences in legislators are not innate but are more likely a byproduct of perception and institutional barriers.

There are several limitations to this research that may have affected the results. It is important to note that only 3% of the variation in the response is explained by the model (Adjusted R-squared= 0.03), suggesting that there are several other missing variables that could potentially account for the variation in productivity. Although seniority was controlled for in the model, it is not a predictive model that is normally distributed. Future research could manipulate this variable (e.g. by squaring seniority), which could allow for the model to explain a larger variation in the response. Further, because of limited time and resources, a basic regression was conducted rather than a time-series analysis. Future analysis should also seek to estimate the models using a time series analysis to control for how a previous year’s productivity might influence the next. Relative to men, there is also a smaller proportion of females that have served in the United States House of Representatives, and as such, the variation in observations is an important factor to consider for future research.

Future analysis should seek to estimate an ideal model to measure legislative success. Although my research model only accounted for 3% of the variation in the response, it showed that productivity is an important measure of individual behavior. This shows that legislative effectiveness is not the only consideration that should be taken into consideration. Rather, there are a number of different variables that should be included in an ideal model of legislative success, including both institutional and individual, behavioral factors.

Institutional factors that could influence success include committee assignment, staffing, and leadership positions. If a legislator is assigned to a high-ranking committee, there is a greater likelihood of their bills being passed through the committee and they have a greater likelihood of their bills passing on the floor, solely because it could be advantageous for a legislator to support a high-ranking committee members' legislation. Working through Congress is all about the network a legislator can build and gaining support from their colleagues is extremely important. The same could be said for legislators in leadership positions – not only do they have party-backing, and as such usually gain approval and votes from their party, but they also have access to institutional mechanisms and control what legislation is proposed and when. On the other hand, a legislator with a larger staff generally has the ability to do more work and be more productive, and as such, have a higher likelihood of being successful compared to those with a smaller staff.

Individual, behavioral factors that could influence success include the membership of a particular identity, such as race and ethnicity or LGBTQ+. This membership is important for descriptive and substantive representation, but it also is predictive of support of voters in some districts. Additionally, caucuses in Congress are often organized by these identities, in groups such as the Congressional Black Congress, made up primarily of African American legislators,

and the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus. Caucuses are a group of individuals in Congress that are aligned together based on interests and common goals. As a member of a specific identity, legislators gain support and resources, as well as a large network of their peers.

Furthermore, electoral competitiveness is also a factor that should be considered. If a legislator is in a competitive race, they are incentivized to better represent their constituents so they will be re-elected. One way to better represent constituents is by sponsoring a larger number of bills but also by ensuring those bills pass so as to show they are better qualified than the opposing candidate during re-election. On the other hand, if a legislator is not in a competitive race, they do not have as much incentive to work as hard introducing and sponsoring legislation because they already have an advantage as the incumbent candidate and do not have to worry about re-election as much.

Both institutional, electoral, and individual/behavioral factors are important in determining a legislators' success. Legislative success should not be based solely on legislative effectiveness. My research shows that productivity is an important consideration for a legislator, especially because it is a measure of both individual behavior and the institutional barriers many legislators face and shows that a more comprehensive model measuring legislative success should be developed.

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