DETERMINANTS OF LEGISLATIVE STAFF TURNOVER

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by

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

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presented by Hanna K. Brant, a candidate for the degree of doctor of philosophy, and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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1. Introduction

"The quality and accessibility of staff personnel exert a tremendous influence on the wisdom of solutions… to resolve the Nation's problems. As a result, every effort must be made to upgrade the quality and the availability of our committee staffs to each Member. It is by no means a luxury to invest in the brainpower necessary to assure to Congress the retention of its role as a coequal branch of Government. Rather, it is a necessity. The brainpower gap-if we can call it that-between executive personnel and legislative personnel is exceedingly great… Nonetheless, the potential resources with which imaginative ideas may be generated by the Executive far overshadow the resources at the disposal of the Congress."

-Senator James R. Pearson (R-KS) speaking at the Joint Committee on the Organization
of Congress (May 18, 1965)

Senator Pearson's remarks leading up to the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 make an important point: Congress cannot rely on outside actors, particularly the same branch that it is mandated to oversee, to conduct policy research and draft legislation. Instead, Congress must build its capacity and expertise by investing in its own staff to compete with, and effectively oversee, the executive branch. While Senator Pearson's comments shed light on the importance of investing in legislative staff, his comments fall short of another point: Congress can invest in its capacity by increasing the number of staff for members', but if Congress cannot retain its most qualified and expert staff, congressional capacity is at risk. Broadly, my dissertation seeks to understand staff employment and work environments at both the congressional and state level with an

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emphasis on staff turnover to understand modern legislative capacity for policy development and constituent service.

Extant studies on turnover among public officials focuses on bureaucrats (Lewis 1991; Bertelli 2006; Lee and Whitford 2007; Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Pitts et al. 2011; Grissom and Keiser 2011; Teodoro 2011; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012; Bertelli and Lewis 2012; Grissom, Viano, and Selin 2015) and legislators (e.g., Polsby 1968; Price 1971; Fiorina et al. 1975; Squire 1988; Moncrief et al. 2004; Overby and Masthay 2017). Of the studies that examine turnover among staff, the focus is predominately on explaining why staff leave Congress (Fox and Hammond 1977; Salisbury and Shepsle 1981b; Henschen and Sidlow 1986; Jensen 2011), or, more specifically, when and why staff leave for the revolving door (LaPira and Thomas 2014; Cain and Drutman 2014; McCrain 2018). I couple this literature with studies on bureaucratic turnover to understand what factors impact staff turnover intra-institutionally and exit from the legislature. Given this, I define turnover as exit from the staffing profession completely and as exit from a current position to a new staffing position either within the same office/committee or to another office/committee within the legislature.

My dissertation builds upon the growing body of literature on legislative staff. First, I explore the variables that make congressional staff want to leave Congress by using a survey of staff to examine staffer intention to leave and observable turnover. Second, I explore the factors that make staff continue to work in Congress by extending the analysis of staffer turnover and the revolving door to employment histories within Congress. Third, I turn my focus to staff in state legislatures by leveraging the variation

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across states' hiring practices, salary, and benefits for staff to understand their impacts on turnover. Importantly, all three chapters draw on the literature on bureaucratic turnover to inform the theories and empirical strategies I use to study legislative staff.

My dissertation makes important contributions to the scholarly literature and is also of practical use to political actors. My first analysis will provide important insight into the success of outside organizations ability to recruit staff and how member and committee level factors impact staff turnover. This analysis is the first empirical work to capture staffer intent to leave their current position and to track their next employment position within or outside of Congress. The importance of studying employee intention to leave has been recognized in the public administration literature, but not in the legislative literature (e.g., Bertelli 2006; Moynihan and Pandey 2007; but see Jensen 2011). By describing what factors influence intra-institutional movement among congressional staff, the second analysis makes another contribution by explaining what variables help retain staff in Congress and contribute to the capacity of the institution. Again, the public administration literature recognizes different factors influence employee exit and mobility (e.g., Grissom, Viano, and Selin 2015) while the staff literature is predominately focused on explaining exit to K Street. My third analysis adds to the literature on state legislatures by building upon the limited research that uses staff as the unit of analysis. This analysis also contributes to an understanding to how variation in management and benefits of staff across legislative bodies impacts turnover.

To be sure, turnover, when not excessive, can have some positive implications for legislatures. Staff turnover can introduce new policy viewpoints and ideas (Whiteman 1995) and allows for the possibility that a new employee is higher-performing (Meier and

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Hicklin 2008). However, turnover imposes costs on both legislators' offices and the large legislative institution. When a position becomes open, time and energy must be devoted to fill the position, resources must be devoted to training the new employee, and there is a loss of human capital (Kellough and Osuna 1995; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012). Staff help legislators obtain policy-relevant information to draft legislation, conduct oversight of the executive branch, and serve as an important representative linkage by assisting legislators with constituency service. Excessive turnover among staff inhibits legislators' ability to effectively conduct the duties of their office.

The type of turnover occurring in legislatures matters and is an overlooked point in extant studies on staff turnover. When a staffer exits completely from the legislature, they take with them their institutional memory. When a staffer advances on the career ladder within a legislature their institutional memory is retained. The former type of turnover is more harmful to the institution than the latter. Certainly, staff turnover can also pose issues for democratic legitimacy when staff use their skills and connections gained while working in the legislature to become lobbyists. A growing body of work has begun to position staff as the unit of analysis, but there remains to be a comprehensive understanding of staff turnover. I seek to contribute to this area by conducting studies on staff turnover that is informed by the literature on bureaucratic turnover in the public administration field.

By studying what variables influence staffer intention to leave and by observing turnover intra-institutionally, my dissertation has important implications for the study of Congress and state legislatures. Recent work on Congress suggests the best way to increase institutional capacity is not to increase members' representational allowances for

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staff or the number of staff, but rather, to retain the most experienced people they have (Crossoen et al. 2018). A key contribution of my research is that it may help legislators identify policies to retain staff, and in turn, aid institutional capacity.

I begin by providing a broad overview of the congressional literature to position staff as the missing component. Next, I detail the growing body of work on congressional staff and the more the limited work on staff in state legislatures, before turning my focus to my three empirical analyses of legislative staff turnover.

2. A History of Legislative Staff

Before overviewing the literature on congressional staff, I first discuss what we know about members of Congress to position staff as the missing component in the congressional literature.

The institutionalization of the House of Representatives helped organize and structure members' career opportunities (Polsby 1968). At the same time, as "single-minded seekers of reelection" (Mayhew 1974a) members will structure Congress in such a way to reduce electoral uncertainty to aid reelection efforts. One way that members do this is by cultivating a "home style" to gain constituents' trust in order to get reelected, and in turn, make good public policy and obtain power in Congress (Fenno 1973; 1978).

The structuring of Congress to aid members' reelection efforts has resulted in strong incumbency advantages (Mayhew 1974b; Erikson 1971). Studies have shown that the incumbency advantage deters strong challengers from running, but not weak challengers (i.e., those with previous elective experience compared to those without) and weak challengers are therefore more prevalent and likely to run for office (Jacobson and Kernell 1983; Banks and Kiewiet 1989; Canon 1990). However, the strong incumbency advantage does not suggest that members feel secure in their reelection bids (Mann 1978; Jacobson 1987). Members can help secure their incumbency advantage by developing a home style (Fenno 1978; Taggart and Durant 1985), credit claiming for the work they accomplished in office (Mayhew 1974a), and, at least marginally, by conducting constituency service/casework (Yiannakis 1981; Cover and Brumberg 1982; Serra and Cover 1992; but see McAdams and Johannes 1988; Parker and Goodman 2009) to create their own electoral base of supporters (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987). To be sure,

campaign war-chests help members foster their incumbency advantage, but campaign

contributions are not the main driving force of members' careers or legislative behavior

(Hall and Wayman 1990; Abramowitz 1991; Endersby and Munger 1994; Wright 1996).

Joseph Schlesinger's (1966) seminal theory of political ambition links politician's

elective office and career goals. The decision to run for higher office is strategic and

individuals account for many considerations; these include but are not limited to, the

candidate's viability, funding, the flow of political power, and the risks and rewards

involved in pursuing higher office (Black 1972; Rohde 1979; Brace 1984; Francis and

Kenny 2000; Palmer and Simon 2003; Fulton et al. 2006; Maestas et al. 2006; Squire

2014). However, the desire for a career in politics is different based on an individual's

gender and race (e.g., Johnson et al. 2012). Scholars have identified a gender gap in

political ambition, with fewer women running for political office, and in turn, higher

office (Carroll 1985; Palmer and Simon 2003; Fox and Lawless 2005; Fulton et al. 2006;

Fox and Lawless 2010, 2014; Greenlee, Holman, and VanSickle-Ward 2014; Fox,

Lawless, and Baitinger 2014), and when women do seek office, they run later in life as

compared to men (Thomas, Herrick, and Braunstein 2012; Windett 2014).

Most ambition literature focuses on the House because senators have fewer

opportunities for advancement (e.g., governor, vice president, cabinet, or president)

(Abramson et al. 1987). While political ambition is a psychological concept, scholars

have found progressively ambitious legislators exhibit markedly different behavior than

their colleagues who do not harbor such higher office goals. Here, studies have found that

progressively ambitious legislators in Congress will alter their legislative behavior to

comport with a different constituency (Hibbing 1986) in an attempt to increase their

likelihood of winning. Ambitious House members have larger staffs in Washington D.C. (Herrick and Moore 1993), and will alter their introduction and co-sponsorship activity (Victor 2011), but this uptick in activity is present for male MCs and not female MCs who have larger pre-existing legislative agendas (Schmitt and Brant 2019).

Other studies focus on members' behavior in office separate from the interaction with political ambition. Here, research finds that when casting votes, members take into consideration their own policy views and their perception of their constituencies' views (Stokes and Miller 1962), their constituencies' opinion (McDonagh 1993; Overby 1991), and partisanship and ideology (Jackson and King 1989; Poole and Rosenthal 1997). In addition, members' voting decisions are also influenced by other members of Congress, interest groups, executive agencies, congressional staff, the media, and party leadership (Kingdon 1989). At the same time, party leadership impacts rank-and-file members access to information regarding legislation by controlling the legislative agenda (Curry 2015), which may at times be done in the interest of protecting members' electoral goals (Arnold 1992).

Next, I turn my focus on member behavior while in office, but through the lens of oversight of the bureaucracy. Whether members delegate to executive agencies because they want to distance themselves from policy or because they may be uncertain about policy outcomes (McNollGast 1987; Epstein and O'Halloran 1999), members have structured Congress in such a way to make oversight of the executive branch less costly. Congress can utilize ex-ante or ex-post controls to oversee the bureaucracy. Ex-ante controls are put in place before the bureaucracy acts (*e.g.* administrative procedures like notice and comment process; McNollGast 1987, 1989), while ex-post controls occur after

the bureaucracy acts (e.g., oversight hearings or "fire-alarms"; see McCubbins and Schwartz 1984; Calvert, Moran, and Weingast 1986). Importantly, a key component missing from the oversight literature, and the congressional literature more broadly, are legislative staff.

Congressional staff have been referred to as the "invisible force" (Fox and Hammond 1977), the "third House" (Hill 1986), and "unelected representatives" (Malbin 1980). Yet, few studies use congressional staff as the unit of analysis, instead, extant research is predominately focused on members of Congress. To be sure, members do not pursue electoral, legislative, and oversight goals and duties unaided. For example, one way that members have made oversight of the bureaucracy less costly is to have staff filter which witnesses will be invited to hearings (Leyden 1995; Heitshusen 2000). In addition, members do not open or reply to their own constituency mail (Cover and Brumberg 1982). With the inclusion of staff in the discussion, it begins to be clear how members of Congress can pursue electoral and policy goals, career advancement and influence within the institution (Fenno 1973), cultivate a home style (Fenno 1978), and conduct casework and credit claim at the same time (Mayhew 1974a), all while maintaining a presence in her home district or state and simultaneously serving as a full-time legislator because of her staff (Loomis 1979).

In the next section I overview the literature on legislative staff by briefly detailing the history, allocation, impact, and the characteristics and careers of congressional staff before turning to staff in state legislatures.

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History of Congressional Staff

     Understanding staff in Congress cannot be done in isolation. Because Congress is

one component of the United States' system of government, attempts to describe

congressional staffing must account for Congress' interactions with the executive branch,

political parties, organized interests, and constituents (Kofmehl 1977). It is through this

lens that the staffing of Congress is best understood.

     In 1856, the Senate Committee on Finance and the House Committee on Claims,

Ways, and Means hired full-time clerks for the first time.[1] However, it was not until 1885

that all House and Senate committees got clerks, and, it was not until 1924 that Congress

passed legislation allowing the appropriation of permanent funds for committee staff

(Patterson 1970).[2] Congress retracted this progress in 1929 with the Legislative Pay Act

and passed one of the first pieces of legislation that set limits on the number of staff

allocated to members and committees and limited staffers' salaries.[3] In 1939, an attempt

by members of Congress to add clerks and assistant clerks who had more than four years

of service to be protected under the Civil Service Act was thwarted (Rogers 1941).

     However, not all members were on-board with building Congress' information

capacity through expert staffs. Perkins (1944, 508) writes, "at least one representative has

looked askance at staffing, out of a fear that Congress would be confronted by a

combination of the new Congressional experts and departmental specialists [read:

bureaucratic agencies] whose common interests and information would make them

intimate." There were also fears that having staff specifically devoted to Congress would

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[1] 11 Stat. 102 (1856)
[2] 23 Stat. 388 (1885)
[3] 46 Stat. 32 (1929)

increase the divide between the legislative and executive branches. Additionally, congressional staff were thought to be unnecessary because the government bureaucracy already served the needs of Congress; the argument here was that taxpayers would be paying for the same thing twice, effectively doubling the money necessary for that service (Perkins 1944). It was also argued that expert staffs would disproportionally benefit appropriations committees. The following quote by Representative Monroney (D-OK) speaking at the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress in March 1945 highlights some of these concerns: "Where one body of the Congress with a properly staffed and intelligent committee is studying this item, we are foolish to set up an absolutely duplicate system over in the other House. It requires some liaison to avoid that duplication and terrific waste" (Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress 1945, 19).

Yet, the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 solidified the presence of staff by authorizing four professional staff and six clerks to each committee.[4] This was largely driven by actions in the 77th and 78th Congresses (1941-1944), which saw a series of reforms aimed at institutional improvement. Among these reforms was an emphasis on adding more congressional staff to increase Congress' information capacity. These reforms were due in part to Congress' dissatisfaction with the information provided by the executive branch and a historical power struggle between the two branches. One such example of Congress' desire to build its expertise separate from the executive branch can be found in the following quote from Representative Howard Smith (D-VA) speaking at the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress in March 1945:

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[4] 60 Stat. 812 (1946)

I will not bore you with further illustrations, but I think the things I have mentioned . . . the desirability of having the very best staff of draftsmen that Congress can get, accountable solely and only to the Congress of the United States, who will be picked without regard to patronage but solely upon qualifications, so that the Congress may at all times be in a position to draft its own legislation and know what is in it and why it is in it (Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress 1945, 191).

As a result, Congress set out to gather information via its own expert staffs and passed the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946.

After the passage of the 1946 Act, public expectations of the federal government continued to increase, and so too did the demands placed on members of Congress by constituents. Changes regarding congressional staff in the middle of the 20th century were motivated by a desire to improve members' responsiveness to constituent needs, and thereby enhance their reelection prospects (DeGregorio 1995; Mayhew 1974a). In response to these pressures, five years after forming a Joint Committee on the Organization of the Congress in 1965, Congress passed the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970.[5] Broadly, the 1970 Act sought to improve and expedite procedures in both chambers, while also increasing leadership resources, increasing staff, research resources, and creating a Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. It is also important to note that the 1970 Act coincided with other congressional reforms occurring in the 1970s (Kofmehl 1977).

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[5] Joint Committee: S. Rep. 426 (1965); LRA of 1970: 84 Stat. 1140 (1970)

Then, in 1994 Newt Gingrich ushered in the Republican takeover of the House with the Contract with America.[6] Among other things, the Contract stipulated that within the first 100 days of the new session, the Republicans would not only restructure the committee system, but also cut committee staff by one-third. Once Republicans gained a majority in both the House and Senate they reduced the number of staff by 33 percent and 15 percent, respectively (see also Romzek and Utter 1997). In 1995, there were 7,186 staff in the House and 4,247 in the Senate (Brookings Institute 2018). In 2018, staff levels have risen to 9,497 in the House and 6,639 in the Senate.[7]

Current statute stipulates that House standing committees can appoint, by majority vote, no more than 30 professional staff, while Senate standing committees (excluding Appropriations) may appoint no more than six professional staff, with other statutes outlining the appropriation of funds for additional staff as needed for both chambers.[8] Individual House members may not employ more than 18 permanent employees and no more than four additional employees from following categories: interns, part-time, shared, temporary, employees on leave without pay (Brudnick 2017).[9] There are not explicit caps on how many personal employees a Senator may hire, giving Senators much more agency over the allocation of staff in individual offices (Brudnick 2016).[10]

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[6] A copy of the text of the Contract with America can be found here: http://wps.prenhall.com/wps/media/objects/434/445252/DocumentsLibrary/docs/contract.htm

[7] See LegiStorm at https://www.legistorm.com/

[8] § 4301(a)

[9] 2 U.S.C. § 5321 (2018).

[10] § 6313.

The historical context of Congress expanding and restricting legislative staff paints an important picture of congressional capacity. Given that Congress has traditionally not viewed the bureaucracy as enough to meet its legislative needs, scholars have given particular emphasis to the unique positions of congressional staff in an attempt to understand their role in the policymaking process.

Member Allocation and Use of Staff

Once elected to office, members of Congress (MCs) must decide who to hire as support and how to best allocate staff to fit their needs (Weatherford 1985; Fenno 1978). As the historical overview of congressional staff discussed above demonstrates, members have great discretion over how they operate their offices and who they employ. One way to conceptualize the allocation and use of staff is through the lens of members serving as the head of an enterprise (Salisbury and Shepsle 1981a; Whiteman 1995) or small business (Loomis 1979). No longer are congressional offices viewed as "Mom and Pop" operations (Loomis 1979; Kofmehl 1977). Through this framework, scholars began to explore how members' pursuit of these goals impacts their allocation and use of staff.

As mentioned previously, an individual member manages a large network of staff. By viewing MCs as the head of an enterprise, it begins to be clear how MCs can pursue electoral goals, policy goals, career advancement and influence in Congress (Fenno 1973), cultivate a home style (Fenno 1978), and conduct casework and credit claim at the same time (Mayhew 1974a). A member can maintain a presence in her home district or state and simultaneously serve as a full-time legislator because of her staff (Loomis 1979). In Fenno's (1978) famous study of how House members cultivated their home styles in 1973, he finds that the allocation of staff resources to members' districts is a

complement to how much time a member spends in their district, rather than serving as a substitute. More recent work by Parker and Goodman (2009) supports Fenno's argument that staff cannot serve as a full substitute for the member. In fact, they find that the allocation of more staff to district offices is related to more negative comments on members' policy expertise by constituents (Parker and Goodman 2009). Interestingly, Fenno found that region impacts allocation, with members' representing Eastern states (e.g., Connecticut, Maine, and New Hampshire) allocating more district staff compared to border and Southern states. In addition, more senior and members in un-safe districts do not allocate more resources to district staff (Fenno 1978). Importantly, Bond (1985) argues that members may not allocate more staff to districts and casework because of vote margins, but rather, because of perceived electoral threat (see also Mann 1978).

More recent studies examine how members allocate and use staff differently based on member gender, partisanship, and tenure in office. Focusing on allocation and gender, Wilson and Carlos (2014) find that, while women members do hire more women staffers than men, women staffers comprise a greater proportion of the lower level positions than more prestigious positions within the members' offices. Put another way, the gender difference in hiring patterns between men and women members dissipates as the position within the members' office becomes more prestigious (Wilson and Carlos 2014). Similarly, through interviews and oral histories of women congressional staff, Dittmar (2018) finds that women are historically and continually over-represented in secretarial roles and lower-level positions.

In regard to partisanship, Wilson and Carlos (2014) find that Democratic congressional offices have a slight impact on the presence of women congressional staff.

Republicans are less likely to have a female chief of staff, legislative director, and legislative counsel than Democrats. However, Republicans are more likely to hire female deputy chiefs of staff (Burgat 2017). In both chambers, female staffers employed by Democratic members are promoted at faster rates than female staffers employed by Republicans (Ritchie and You 2018).

Members also allocate staff differently across issue area and gender. Using summary statistics from the Spring 2016 Congressional Directories, in a Monkey Cage post Burgat (2017) presents descriptive statistics showing differences in issues portfolios between male and female staffers with men being more prevalent in most issue areas except for "women's issues." In addition, Burgat finds that Democrats assign more female staff to an issue than Republicans. In my own research with Lael Keiser, in the 114th session of Congress (2015-2016) we find that women staff are descriptively represented in issues that are traditionally women's issues (e.g., abortion, education, health, family, social welfare, and women's equality). This allocation is similar for both parties, but because Democratic members hire more staff to cover legislative issues, female Democratic staff are more represented in women's issues compared to Republican female staff.

Members also allocate staff differently as members' needs and goals change over time (Fox and Hammond 1977). Examining House freshman D.C. personal offices from 1981-1996, Leal and Hess (2004) find that women, Republicans, and representatives with larger electoral margins are more likely to hire staff with experience (measured as service in the previous session) in Congress. In contrast, African American and Latino representatives are less likely to hire experienced staff. Likewise, Loomis (1979) argues

that the famous freshman class of 1974 benefited immediately from the increases in staff allowances during the mid-1970s. Through interviews and a survey of the freshman class of 1974, he found that members' emphasized constituency service to aid their re-election goals more compared to policy or legislative goals. Members are acutely aware of the connection that staff can help foster with constituents. For example, in Fox and Hammond's (1977) analysis of congressional staff through the 92nd-93rd congresses (1971-1974), they find that 80 percent of the House members in their sample preferred staff with personal ties to the district. This was especially true for Southern Representatives, but not as much for representatives from Western states.

In addition, in their analysis of the impact of progressive ambition on House members' legislative behavior from 1954 to 1984, Herrick and Moore (1993) find that progressively ambitious representatives differently allocate their staffs than members who do not harbor such ambitions. Ambitious members place a greater proportion of their staff in Washington D.C., while members who are only concerned with being reelected for their current position place most of their staffs in their home district (Herrick and Moore 1993). Extending further back in time, Schiff and Smith (1983) examine House members' allocation of staff in 1960, 1968, and 1976. Focusing on MC cohorts, Schiff and Smith found that more recent cohorts in their time series allocated more staff to district offices than to Washington offices. Similar findings are present in the more modern Congress. In their analysis of House staff between the 103rd-113th Congresses, Burgat et al. (2018) find that members allocate more resources to constituent service and fewer to legislative work. The authors argue this is due in part to the parties' fight for

control of the chamber and perpetual campaigning (see also Mayhew 1974a and Fenno 1978).

Nearly all of the research on staff allocation focuses on personal staff. However, Kofmehl (1977) provides a historical overview of how changes in Congress relating to staff impacted committees. For example, the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 allowed for increases in the allocation of staff to the minority party in committees. The increase in staff caused individuals to reassess and figure out how to organize and even title themselves, particularly as the addition of new positions created different seniority and prestige dynamics. Staff also had to learn how to navigate interactions with other committee staff (Kofmehl 1977). In addition, in Fox and Hammond's (1977) survey of staff, the authors find that the type of committee (e.g., appropriations versus legislative) does not impact committee organization of staff and House and Senate committee organization is very similar. However, as time passed, committee staff positions became viewed as more prestigious than personal positions due in large part to greater autonomy, tenure, and influence over policy (Romzek and Utter 1996, 1997) and Fox and Hammond's (1977) finding of the lack of differences between committees and chambers may not be present today.

A missing component from the literature on member allocation of staff regards how member and office characteristics impacts staff turnover. The closest study to do so is in a working paper by Ritchie and You (2018) that finds female staffers employed by Democratic members are promoted at faster rates than female staffers employed by Republicans. However, Ritchie and You do not approach their research through the lens of turnover, but instead, through a gendered-lens. Yet, recent data released by LegiStorm

garnered headlines by ranking the "worst bosses" in Congress.[11] LegiStorm's rankings are based on turnover in individual MCs' offices and weights turnover among more senior-level staff more heavily than turnover among lower-level staff. Not only are the rankings publicly available, but because the rankings received so much attention among the media, it is embarrassing for MCs to be put on notice. For example, Representative Todd Rokita's (R-IN) poor office management and difficult personality garnered headlines as many staff walked out of Rokita's office because of a hostile working environment.[12] Interviews with staff conducted by Romzek (2000) supports the notion that the personal attributes of members impacts staffers' job satisfaction (Romzek 2000). There are similar findings in regard to turnover among civil servants (Grissom and Keiser 2011; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012).

At the same time, studies on public sector employees find that supervisor demographics impact employee turnover. For example, race congruence between supervisors and employees among public school teachers increases employee satisfaction, and in turn, decreases employee turnover (Grissom and Keiser 2011). Other work explores the impact of gender congruence between principals and public school teachers and finds that when male teachers work under a female principal they report lower levels of job satisfaction and higher rates of turnover (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012). In addition, organizational level factors, such as positive relations and a sense of obligation to co-workers (Bertelli 2006; Moynihan and Pandey 2007) and satisfaction

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[11] See, for example, Politico: https://www.politico.com/story/2018/03/21/worst-bosses-congress-476729
[12] See: https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/09/01/former-aides-say-rep-todd-rokita-yelled-staff-docked-pay/624152001/

with an organization (Lee and Whitford 2007; see also Hirschman 1970), impacts turnover intention among civil servants as well.

Importantly, the hiring and allocation of staff has implications for both policy outcomes and the policymaking process. I overview the findings of the impact of staff in the next section.

The Impact of Staff

Staff have also been found to impact MCs' legislative behavior. House members with more experienced staff, measured as the accumulation of all staffers' years spent employed in a given office (Crosson et al. 2018), and members with more policy-oriented and policy-experienced staff (McCrain 2017) are more effective legislators, meaning they not only advance their policies further through the legislative process, but also advance more significant legislation. In addition, House members during the 103rd-111th Congresses were similar in their legislative effectiveness according to the staff they exchange (Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). Given that staff influence policy and MCs' behavior in substantive ways, in a working paper Miler (2018) seeks to understand staffers' policy and procedural knowledge by analyzing a survey of staff conducted in 2017. Miler finds Senate staff are slightly more knowledgeable on policy issues like healthcare and national security compared to House staff, but there are no significant differences on knowledge of budget and appropriations issues. Interestingly, Miler finds that committee staff are less knowledgeable compared to personal staff regarding policy knowledge, but not regarding procedural knowledge.

Other studies focus on the impact of staffer demographics. If given the opportunity, women committee staff will actively represent women's interests (Rosenthal

and Bell 2003). Canon (1999) asserts that a racially diverse staff could influence a MC to act differently than would a racially homogenous staff. Wilson (2013) examines the impact of Latino staffers on House members' bill introductions, and finds that the presence of Latino staffers has a positive relationship with members' bill introductions related to symbolic Latino interests. Likewise, Grose, Magnum, and Martin (2007) find that the hiring of African American district staff members empowers the African American community within that congressional district. Taken together, these studies suggest that staff influence policy in important and substantive ways, and staff demographics in particular, matter.

Wolman and Wolman (1977) set forth to understand the extent to which senators and their staff have similar perceptions of public opinion and perception of each other's opinions. They conducted a case study of senators and staff serving on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee and their perceptions of public opinion regarding population and family planning policy. Through interviews and surveys, Wolman and Wolman find that while staff do matter for senators' information acquisition regarding policy, staff do not drastically impact senator's perception or personal attitudes regarding family planning policy (see also Romzek and Utter 1996; 1997). In a similar line of work, Whiteman (1995) sought to understand how information is acquired and processed by congressional offices, or enterprises, via networks within Congress. Through interviews with over 300 staff and members during the 99th session of Congress (1985-1986), Whiteman argues that staff are critical to policy analysis and shaping communication and information gathering in Congress. Similarly, previous work by Fox and Hammond (1977) suggested that how members organize their office (e.g., hierarchically) and

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geographic proximity impacts the flow of information between staff, MCs, and the executive branch. In Kingdon's (1989) analysis of members' voting decisions, he argues that while staff have become increasingly influential and important in the legislative process, staff are not the most important actors influencing members' voting decisions. At the same time, recent work by Curry (2015) on the power of the leadership in the House to control the legislative agenda and flow of information helps position the role that staff play in aiding members', and particularly rank-and-file members, information acquisition.

Other studies examine staff through the lens of building congressional capacity and expertise. Through interviews with committee staff and a focus on taxation and the policy-making process, Manley (1968) argues that staff provide an important link not only between chambers, but also between Congress and the executive branch and non-governmental groups. Manley's work was descriptive in nature, however, he laid the groundwork for future research on committee staff. For example, using a dataset on congressional staff and committees spanning 2000-2017, Burgat and Hunt (2018) examine the relationship between House committee productivity (i.e., "important" bills voted out of committee, bills passed under by the chamber under the committee's jurisdiction, and hearings held by a given committee) and staff. Burgat and Hunt (2018) find that committee staff impact committee's legislative output in important ways, particularly as staffers' experience and expertise fits the needs of the committee. Work by Fox and Hammond (1977) suggests that committee staff have more routine and frequent contacts with executive branch personnel compared to personal staff. At the same time,

recent work by Kosar (2018) suggests that committee staff benefit from the "help-desk" services provided by the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Also focusing on capacity, Hill (1986) finds that the institutional changes during the 1970s (e.g., increased regulatory activity, increases in staff, and Watergate, etc.) caused committee staff to be more involved in oversight activity, and as a result, modern regulatory decision-making to be driven by informal negotiations between staff and agency officials. At the same time, MCs delegated more informal authority to committee staff via hearings (e.g., oversight, appropriations, and confirmation), and committee investigations and reports. One consequence of this delegation is the increased power and influence of committee staff in the oversight and legislative processes. A more recent study also seeks to understand the dynamic between congressional committees and the executive branch by examining committees' use of detailees (Mills and Selin 2017). Detailees are typically midcareer civil servants who have policy knowledge to the committee's relevant jurisdiction and serve short-term assignments on the committee while the detailee's home agency pays their salary. Mills and Selin (2017) examine committees' use of detailees from 1997-2015. The authors find that House committees use fewer detailees than Senate committees, but that both chambers use detailees more as the interest-group environment surrounding the committee increases.

Still focusing on committee staff, Price (1971) uses the Commerce, Finance, and Labor and Public Welfare Senate committees in the 89th Congress (1965-1966) as case studies to understand the impact of staff on committee performance. Price finds that the Commerce Committee was particularly successful in its legislative goals because of its staff. Staff complemented the chairman's leadership by conducting research to make sure

policies were politically viable, interacting with the public and relevant organized interests, and helping to publicize to committee's work on legislation. Taken as whole, Price's case studies demonstrate that committee staff influence is impacted by the orientation are enabled and empowered by members to staff take regarding policy making. For example, if staff are positioned to take a more "professional" (i.e., neutral and nonpartisan) role, they serve a less activist role in policymaking. Another outcome of Price's (1971) study is that, overall, members are the main source of authority in Congress, and not staff. I explore this point in the next section as it relates to staffer characteristics, careers, and accountability.

Taken as a whole, what does this all mean for staffer turnover? The discussion above demonstrates that staff are influential policy actors, however, previous studies do not explore how this impacts staff turnover. Research in the field of public administration can help shed light on this issue. For example, public service motivation among civil servants has been shown to help with recruitment and retention (Perry and Wise 1990). In addition, when senior executives report having little influence over policy, they are more likely to report their intention to leave (Bertelli and Lewis 2012). At the same time, the incentive structure for civil servants to acquire expertise creates a conundrum: because the investment of time and resources to develop expertise may not transfer well to other occupations, civil servants will be less likely to acquire such expertise, with the caveat that one way to mitigate this problem being superiors allowing subordinates greater influence over policy (Gailmard and Patty 2007). When applied to staff, these findings suggest that staff who are motivated by public service and staff with greater influence over policy may be less likely to turnover.

In the next section I examine the literature on staffer characteristics, careers, and accountability, while also positing how these factors apply to staff turnover by highlighting the findings on bureaucratic turnover.

Characteristics, Careers, and Accountability of Staff

As Congress invested in increasing its capacity via staff, working on the Hill as a staffer became viewed as a legitimate career (Patterson 1970; Hammond 1975). Congressional staff share similar characteristics and career trajectories as other professions, with the caveat that most staff work is largely partisan and dependent upon individual MCs. The working environment in Congress has made it so that staff experience shorter career ladders and simultaneously experience the ability to garner more responsibilities in a shorter time compared to other, similar professions (Fox and Hammond 1977; Petersen 2012). In fact, working as a staffer can be an important stepping stone to a career in politics and elective office (Salisbury and Shepsle 1981b; Hammond 1989). However, recent studies suggest that men and women congressional staff face distinct working environments.

Here, research finds that female staffers are systematically paid less and face slower rates of promotion than male staffers (Ritchie and You 2018). Unfortunately, being employed by a female MC does not increase female staffers' promotion rate once controlling for staffers' education level. In addition, more female staff in an office of higher rank has a negative impact on female staffers' promotion rate in the Senate but not in the House, while more female staff of the same rank in an office increases the gender gap in promotion in both chambers. There are also concerns that the working environment, with long hours and low pay, attracts individuals from affluent backgrounds

to Congress because they can afford the costs associated with the work in order to bolster their credentials by having worked in politics. For example, in a working paper, Carnes (2018) used a survey of staff conducted in 2017 to explore staffers' economic backgrounds. Carnes finds that a majority of staff report coming from white-collar professions, but that nearly half of staff report experience in working-class jobs.

Other studies seek to understand the characteristics and job-duties of staff. Romzek and Utter (1996, 1997) conducted interviews with 40 staffers in both chambers and political parties in the spring of 1995. Through these interviews, the authors find personal staffers will work for one member at a time and "provide political, analytical, and logistical support to members of Congress as the members pursue their partisan, legislative, and constituent service agendas" (Romzek and Utter 1996, 418). These job duties can range from mundane tasks, such as managing the member's schedule, to more difficult and important tasks like analyzing legislation and writing speeches.

For personal staffers, the member is the epicenter of their work. Here, the most trusted staffers have the greatest access to the member and may even act as a surrogate for the member; examples include: chief of staff, legislative director, or press secretary (Romzek and Utter 1996). The newer a personal staffer is to the job, the further they are from the member's trusted circle. However, these staffers do the most constituent work and are expected to build expertise across policy areas; such examples include legislative analysts and research assistants (Romzek and Utter 1996). Evidence also suggests that for committee staff working for the majority party, enhancing the chair's reputation is driving force for staff activities (Price 1971). Specifically, committee staff help members oversee the executive branch by meeting with agency officials, conducting investigations,

casework, and creating reports on government programs (Kofmehl 1977). Overall, the member's leadership style and personality set the tone for staffers in the office, and their interactions with other staffers in different offices.

Because staffers' careers are linked to members', the prestige of the office or committee a staffer is employed by impacts their working environment. For example, staffers who work for more prestigious members report receiving quicker responses from other members' offices because their member's higher status. In addition, staffers who serve the members holding leadership positions help with policy development and management of legislation, and also have more direct interactions with other members in the chamber (Romzek and Utter 1996).

The autonomy afforded to staffers by members of Congress, staffers' expertise, and the low visibility of staffers provides staffers ample opportunities to influence policy (Romzek and Utter 1996; Romzek 2000). Taken as a whole, this poses issues for representative government because legislative staff cannot be held accountable by elections (Malbin 1980). Congress is one of the key oversight institutions of the bureaucracy (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984), and like bureaucrats, staffers are not elected officials and "have only an indirect mandate to carry out the public's" interests (Romzek 2000, 414). However, accountability means similar things for staffers and bureaucrats: responsiveness and competence to their principals.

Romzek (2000) identifies four types of accountability relationships for congressional staff: political, professional, legal, and hierarchical. Political accountability is a form of external control and has low autonomy, meaning that the staffer must be responsive to the "wishes and agenda of the *other*" (Romzek 2000, 418). Professional

accountability is internal and has a higher degree of autonomy. Hierarchical

accountability is internal and affords the staffer a very low level of discretion. Legal

accountability is external and involves being held accountable to external standards

   While bureaucratic accountability emphasizes being responsive to the public's

interests, accountability for staffers means "whether staff performance is consistent with

expectations of the various stakeholders" (Romzek 2000, 420). Members delegating

policymaking authority and constituent services to staffers is problematic (Malbin 1980;

DeGregorio 1995). When staffers exhibit behavior that would be considered an abuse of

authority it is often within the context of doing so without members' knowledge;

however, Romzek (2000) notes that such abuses of authority are rare. Furthermore,

through interviews with committee staff and chairs, DeGregorio (1995) argues that

members delegate to staff selectively by delegating to staff who are loyal to the member.

   Staffers have incentives to be responsive to constituent interests because they are

vital to their job security; constituents help determine whether or not their boss, the

member of Congress, will be reelected (Mayhew 1974a). In addition, officials in the

executive branch play important roles in holding staffers accountable because of the

members' working relationship with the White House. Knowing to whom staffers are

accountable leads to a second concern: what are staffers accountable for? In short,

staffers are accountable for not making their member of Congress look bad, to gather

information, and maintain the member's confidentiality in the information they do gather.

Romzek (2000) notes that much of what staffers are accountable for may vary depending

on the personality of the member of Congress; for example, if the member is a

micromanager, it can limit staffers' authority and level of job satisfaction (see also Fox and Hammond 1977).

Hierarchies are present in congressional offices (Fox and Hammond 1977), but there are relatively few levels and its function as an accountability check on staffers is weak. Some offices do use formal performance evaluations, but they are not the norm. At the same time, many offices have office procedure manuals that help staffers understand job expectations (Romzek 2000). The Congressional Management Foundation is a nonprofit organization founded in 1977 that focuses on "improving congressional operations and enhancing citizen engagement through research, publications, training, and management services". It is unclear how many members the Foundation provides services to, yet the fact that such a resource exists for staffers could be an additional check on staffers influence. Staffers also report maintaining open communication with the Ethics Committee to ensure that they are following ethics mandates accurately. In addition, members' offices are routinely audited by the Office of the Inspector General to assure that funds are being spent legally (Romzek 2000), and, while rare, staffers can be held legally accountable via testifying in Court regarding members' activities.

However, the high rate of staff turnover makes it difficult for members to discern when a staffer has gone rogue. Yet at the same time, similar to the bureaucracy, congressional staff have professional norms and standards that reinforce appropriate behavior. While a specific licensure or certification process may not be present, the close working quarters and the social networks act as a check on staffers' behavior as word travels quickly (Romzek and Utter 1997). Congress can be an ambiguous work setting, but staffers have norms that help structure the unique environment (Fox and Hammond

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1977). Such norms include: loyalty and deference to members and the institution of Congress; credentials are built around partisanship (Democrats do not get hired by Republicans); and the maintenance low visibility, meaning "avoid self-promotion and remain relatively invisible" (Romzek and utter 1997, 1269). Additional norms regard staffers' tasks: always maintain courtesy, especially with constituents; be flexible to ensure tasks get completed; work long hours; balance quality and quick response; and do not forget ethics (Romzek and Utter 1997). Staffers should also know what is going on in Congress; it is important that they have accurate information and do not disseminate it to parties who may harm the member they are employed by (Fox and Hammond 1977). Additionally, staffers are also expected to have a network from which they can gather information but maintain confidentiality to increase their level of trustworthiness, which in turn, builds credibility (Romzek and Utter 1997).

Most evidence suggests that congressional staff can be held accountable. Patterson (1970) did not perceive staffers as a threat because "Congress is a highly institutionalized political organization which provides well-developed constraints on the behavior of professional staff personnel" (36). While congressional staffers have mostly informal means of being held accountable, Congress has also attempted to do so through legislation. The Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 attempted to rein in and impose accountability constraints on members of Congress' workings, but the consequences of the Act for congressional staff are different; for example, staff are protected by antidiscrimination statutes, but their employment is contingent upon political compatibility with members and invoking an anti-discrimination protection would likely end the staff member's career in Congress (Romzek and Utter 1996). In

addition, because Congress is member-focused, members are the primary authority to whom staffers are accountable (Romzek 2000). DeGregorio (1995) asserts that fears of staffers abusing their authority are overstated because staffers do not have civil service protections, and congressional staffers are as dangerous to democratic legitimacy as much as their bosses, the elected representatives of Congress, let them be (see also Patterson 1970).

Taken as a whole, what does this all mean for staff turnover? Again, the public administration literature on bureaucratic turnover can provide helpful insights. Generally, civil servants' intention to leave their current positions is influenced by age, education, satisfaction with pay and current position, outside opportunities, fit within the organization, agency size, and solidarity and obligation to coworkers (e.g., Lewis 1991; Kellough and Osuna 1995; Bertelli 2006; Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Lee and Whitford 2007). This suggests that individual, office, and institutional level factors influence turnover. As previous studies demonstrate, the considerable latitude of members to organize their offices means there is not a uniform organizational structure for offices or committees within Congress. It remains unclear how these factors work to influence turnover among staff.

The acceptance of congressional staff positions as legitimate professions coupled with the findings regarding the influence of staff in the policy making process, lead scholars to turn their focus to staff turnover in Congress and the revolving door to K Street.

Congressional Staff Turnover and the Revolving Door

Once staffing was considered a legitimate profession, a few studies were published on staffer careers through the lens of turnover. Congressional staffers can be personally ambitious; they desire visibility, power, influence over policy, and to do what they see is best for the public, while other staffers can be ambitious for the member they work for (Romzek and Utter 1996). Like turnover among members, turnover among staff can speak to the "standing" of the institution (Hibbing 1986). When a member or staff leaves Congress, their institutional memory departs with them (Fox and Hammond 1977; Whiteman 1995). Studying staffer turnover has important implications for understanding the working environment in Congress and institutional memory more broadly. Importantly, which staff turnover matters. For example, Fox and Hammond (1977) find evidence that turnover varies by type of position and level of responsibility afforded to a staffer, with legislative aides having the shortest tenure (averaging 2.3 years) and administrative assistants having the longest (averaging 9 years) in the House. At the same time, recent work by Crosson et al. (2018) suggests that the best thing Congress may be able to do to help its congressional capacity is to retain experienced staff.

Salisbury and Shepsle (1981b) interviewed nearly 100 House and Senate staff between 1978-1979 and the *Congressional Staff Directories* to understand staffer turnover. The authors found that turnover follows partisan turnover in the executive branch, the Senate has a higher turnover rate than House, some staff use work on the Hill as credentialing experience, staffers follow MCs (when they leave or seek higher office in Senate), and committee staff stay in Congress longer than personal staff. While turnover varies by chamber, it also varies by type of committee. In the House, constituency

committee staffers (i.e. Armed Services, Interior, Merchant Marine, Public Works) are more likely to say they will remain on the Hill, while staff on policy/prestige committees (Appropriations, Budget, Government Operations, and Ways and Means) are more likely to say they will seek other government service (48% versus 27%, respectively) and work in the private sector (62% versus 49%, respectively) (Henschen and Sidlow 1986).

Other studies focus on staffers' careers through the lens of the revolving door. Congressional staffers gain valuable connections, expertise, and skills while serving members, which make them marketable in the lobbying sector. Legislative decision making is undermined if ex-staffers can use their connections to influence policy outcomes. In an analysis of randomly selected registered lobbyists in 2008, LaPira and Thomas (2014) found that ex-staffers specialize in appropriations earmarks, have more economically diverse clients, and market their connections in Congress rather than their issue or technical expertise.

The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act (HLOGA) of 2007 attempts to curtail the revolving door by placing one-year bans on contracts between former and current staff (Cain and Drutman 2014). HLOGA impacted Senate staffers to a greater extent than it did House staffers, meaning that the number of staffers becoming lobbyists within a year declined after the Act took effect. However, the number of staffers entering lobbying still increases during midterm elections, when a greater proportion of members may lose their seats; this suggests that staffers may not enter lobbying because it is their first choice, but rather because it is their only option to be able to stay in D.C. (Cain and Drutman 2014). Through lobbying disclosures and staffer employment history from 2000-2016, McCrain (2018) finds that ex-congressional staffers who have more

connections to current staffers are paid more in their lobbying position. By conducting a survey of personal staff in the House, Jensen (2011) finds that staffer intention to seek employment outside of Congress is influenced by close career ties to the MC, commitment to their political party and community, whether they find the work rewarding, interest in public policy, and satisfaction with their salary.

Staff in State Legislatures

Thus far, the discussion has been focused on congressional staff. However, to varying degrees state legislatures also have staff to support legislators' policymaking goals. The literature on staff at the state-level is even less well-rounded than the congressional literature. That is not to say the importance of staff in state legislatures goes unacknowledged (Squire 2012). In the 1960s, state legislatures experienced a series of reforms focused on improvement (Huwa and Rosenthal 1977). At the state level, this included extending sessions, updating facilities, conducting more oversight, and adding more staff (Squire 1992). In an overview of staff development in state legislatures since the 1930s, it becomes clear that similar to Congress, state legislatures needed to respond to changing economic and technological situations, and staff were directly influenced as a result (Squire 2012; Lattimer 1985). Wisconsin, for example, implemented a series of reforms with an emphasis of increasing staff during the 1960s and 1970s partly as a partisan response to compete with the governor (Rosenthal 1973).

However, not all state legislatures are created equal. The National Conference of State Legislatures conducts a survey of legislative staff in state legislatures approximately

every six to seven years.[13] States vary in the size and type of type of staff employed (e.g.

permanent or session-only staff). In addition, states vary in how staff are hired and staff

salary and benefits. Taking into account the variation across states and using Congress as

a baseline, Squire's professionalization index accounts for legislator pay, days in session,

and of most important for my purposes, the number of staff per legislator (Squire 1992,

2007). The more staff per legislator increases state legislatures' professionalization.

While staff help Congress increase policy influence relative to the president, staff in state

legislatures increase influence relative to the governor. This is due in part to the benefits

staff provide to legislators: equipping legislators to be more informed regarding policy,

the ability to focus on lawmaking, and in turn, greater job satisfaction and better re-

election prospects (Rosenthal 1974; Squire 2007). For example, legislators in Virginia

and Michigan (in 1974 and 1970, respectively) reported that the most difficult part of

their job included obtaining adequate information, becoming knowledgeable on

proposals, and understanding effects of legislation (Porter 1975; see Whiteman 1995 and

Curry 2015 regarding information and staff at the congressional level). In addition, in a

case study of the Illinois legislature in the mid-1990s, Herbst (1998) finds that legislative

staff were critical in helping legislators understand public opinion.

A study conducted by Sabatier and Whiteman (1985) supports the argument that

staff help legislators be more informed regarding policy. Through interviews with staff

and other policy actors in the California Legislature in 1977, the authors find that staff are

legislators' primary source of policy information. In addition, in a survey of Minnesota

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[13] See: http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/staff-change-chart-1979-1988-1996-2003-2009.aspx

legislators and staff conducted in 1997, Gray and Lowery (2000) find that while most policy ideas derive from legislators and their constituents, staff are heavily relied upon by legislators during policy formulation. In addition, staff report gathering additional policy information from executive agency officials, other states, and legislative study commissions (Gray and Lowery 2000). However, variation exists across both time and space. In Porter's (1975) interviews with members of the Virginia House in 1974, he finds that legislators found information from other members and personnel in administrative agencies to be more helpful than information form personal legislative or committee staff.

In 1976, Huwa and Rosenthal (1977) conducted a case study of five state legislatures (Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, and New Jersey) to understand interactions between committee members and staff by interviewing both legislators and staff. In their sample of 69 committee members and 26 staffers, the authors find that staff are more likely to have completed graduate work in a social science field, while legislators were more likely to have law degrees. In addition, legislators report focusing more on legislation, while staff are more concerned with research and transmitting information to legislators. However, for committee staff at least, Huwa and Rosenthal (1977) findings suggest that staff provide more procedural knowledge than policy knowledge to legislators. Taken as a whole, the divergence of staff and legislators' roles in legislatures indicates that both serve important and distinct roles in the policymaking process.

In a more recent piece, Provins (2018) examines the impact of control over informational resources, which she operationalizes as control over staff allocation, and

party cohesion on floor voting. Provins finds that the centralization of staff, or when leadership controls staff allocation in the chamber, there is greater party cohesion. Importantly, Provins work builds on previous work on the impact of staff on policy (Sabatier and Whiteman 1985; Gray and Lowery 2000), in that it is not simply that staff help legislators be informed on policy, but that who controls the allocation of staff also matters.

Relatedly, because staff can help foster institutional memory and policy knowledge in state legislatures, it is important to understand turnover of staff at the state level too. Using Nebraska and Ohio as case studies, Anderson (1990) examines personal and committee staff turnover biennially from 1979-1989. Anderson finds that personal staff turnover at a similar rate both legislative bodies, but that personal staff turnover at a higher rate compared to committee staff in both bodies. Importantly, Anderson finds evidence that the rules governing staff allocation influence turnover. For example, in Ohio committee staff assignments are centralized and the director of the Legislative Service Commission assigns staff, while in Nebraska the committee chairman hires staff directly. Committee staff turnover is significantly lower in Ohio than Nebraska, which Anderson argues is due in part to how staff are assigned to positions. In Huwa and Rosenthal's (1977) analysis of committee staff and legislators, they find that while committee staff report little desire to remain in the legislature long-term, they do not have clear career patterns or expectations. With the introduction of term-limits on state legislators, some discussion was given to the impact on and influence of staff. However, Weberg and Kurtz (2010) do not find a causal connection between staff size and term limits in state legislatures, and legislators and staff alike do not report staff in term-

limited legislatures are more influential than staff in non-term limited legislatures (Carey et al. 2006).

3. Determinants of Congressional Staff Turnover Intention

Introduction

"DC is one of the most expensive cities in the country. Beyond income, it's tough to see other ways [to help attract and retain the best staff]."

-Interview with Chief of Staff for a Member of the House of Representatives

Freshman Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) made headlines shortly after taking office when she announced a starting wage of $52,000 for her staff to, as she argued, champion a "living wage" (Gstalter 2019). It is no secret that most staff are paid poorly compared to lobbyists and that by leaving Congress they are likely to reap financial benefits make an exit from staffing even more appealing (McCrain 2018). At the same time, reports of mistreatment of staff by Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) suggests non-pecuniary incentives, like workplace environment and culture, also impact staffer turnover (Flegenheimer and Ember 2019). Yet, the existing research that focuses on congressional staff turnover does so only through the lens of the revolving door to K Street (Salisbury and Shepsle 1981; Jensen 2011; Cain and Drutman 2014; LaPira and Thomas 2014). In this chapter, I take a different approach, one that is informed by the public administration literature on turnover among civil servants. Doing so allows me to extend my analysis beyond the revolving door. I do this through interviews with congressional staff, as well as a survey of congressional staff and a novel dataset of staff turnover in the 115th session of Congress in order to understand staffer intent to leave their current position and to track their next employment opportunities, both within and outside of Congress.

Such an analysis is needed because statute suggests equal opportunity of legislators to hire staff, but not all legislators have equal opportunity, incentive, or means to attract and retain the best staff (Brudnick 2016; 2017). As the headlines surrounding Senator Klobuchar's treatment of her staff suggests, management style matters. But it remains unclear how management of staff actually impacts staff turnover. Staff turnover influences the ability of legislatures to respond to constituent needs, policy implementation, and ultimately, legislative performance. Staff turnover also has consequences for the government more broadly by severing longstanding working relationships with the bureaucracy. Excessive turnover among staff inhibits legislators' ability to effectively conduct their constitutional duties and is a loss of institutional memory. Taken together, staff turnover has important consequences for performance, capacity, and institutional memory at a time when the public has increasing expectations of government. Staff serve as gatekeepers of information and access in members' offices. Because of this, there are electoral and representational costs to staff turnover. Expertise, connections, and ability to serve constituents are at risk.

I start with an overview of the congressional literature on staff turnover before leveraging the public administration literature on bureaucratic turnover to inform my theory and expectations of staff turnover intention. Studying exit *intention* is imperative to gain a broader understanding of the best practices Congress can implement to increase recruitment and retention among staff. Grumblings among staff about leaving their position sends important signals about the workplace environment within Congress more generally; such "water cooler talk" about leaving shape workplace attitudes and morale,

which in turn, impacts the effectiveness of Congress and the ability to fulfill its representational duties.

I then turn the focus to *actual* turnover among staff by tracking their next employment opportunities. Similar to bureaucratic turnover, I find that turnover intention and actual exit are positively correlated, but different factors explain intention versus actual exit (Cohen et al. 2016; Doherty et al. 2019). My findings provide important insight into how members of Congress can best manage and retain staff. This question is of such importance to members, that the House created the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress at the start of the 116th session to deal with it.[14]

Staff Turnover

Congressional staffers can be personally ambitious; some desire visibility, power, influence over policy, and to do what they see is best for the public, while others can be ambitious for the member they work for (Romzek and Utter 1996). Like turnover among members, turnover among staff can speak to the "standing" of the institution (Hibbing 1986). To be sure, turnover, when not excessive, can have positive implications for legislatures. Staff turnover can introduce new policy viewpoints and ideas (Whiteman 1995) and creates the possibility that the new employee is higher-performing (Meier and Hicklin 2008). The positive implications of staff turnover is further confirmed by the comments of a chief of staff in the Senate; "in some ways it's a value to us to have people go do bigger things… if you create the right work culture people go do big things and

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[14] For more detailed information on the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress see: https://modernizecongress.house.gov/. As well as blog posts by the Legislative Branch Capacity Working Group at LegBranch: https://www.legbranch.org/category/reform-efforts/

then they come back to you… and you can build an empire in Washington" (personal interview). However, turnover imposes costs on both legislators' offices and the institution. When a position becomes open, time and energy must be devoted to fill the position, resources must be devoted to training the new employee, and there is a loss of human capital (Kellough and Osuna 1995; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012). Put simply, excessive turnover among staff inhibits legislators' ability to effectively conduct the duties of their office.

Yet, the type of turnover occurring in legislatures matters and is an overlooked point in extant studies on staff turnover. When a staffer exits completely from the legislature they take with them their institutional memory, however, when a staffer advances in the career ladder within the legislature their institutional memory remains (Fox and Hammond 1977). The former type of turnover is more harmful to the institution than the latter. Certainly, staff turnover can also pose issues for democratic legitimacy when staff use their skills and connections gained while working in the legislature to become lobbyists (Jensen 2011; Cain and Drutman 2014). For example, ex-congressional staffers who have more connections to current staffers are paid more in their lobbying position (McCrain 2018). Additionally, ex-staffers specialize in appropriations earmarks, have more economically diverse clients, and market their connections in Congress rather than their issue or technical expertise (LaPira and Thomas 2014).

One way to conceptualize the allocation and use of staff is through the lens of members serving as the head of an enterprise (Salisbury and Shepsle 1981a; Whiteman 1995) or small business (Loomis 1979). No longer are congressional offices viewed as "Mom and Pop" operations (Loomis 1979; Kofmehl 1977). Recent work also suggest

how members organize and staff their offices and committees matters for performance

(Burgat and Hunt 2018; Crosson et al 2018; Curry 2015; McCrain 2018; Montgomery

and Nyhan 2017). However, it remains unclear how management of staff impacts staff

turnover.

Importantly, which staff turnover is important. Crosson et al. (2018) suggest that

the best thing Congress may be able to do to help congressional capacity is to retain

experienced staff. For example, Fox and Hammond (1977) find evidence that turnover

varies by type of position and level of responsibility afforded to a staffer, with legislative

aides having the shortest tenure (averaging 2.3 years) and administrative assistants having

the longest (averaging 9 years) in the House. Salisbury and Shepsle (1981b) used

interviews with nearly 100 House and Senate staff between 1978-1979 and the

Congressional Staff Directories to understand staff turnover. They find that turnover

follows partisan turnover in the executive branch, the Senate has a higher turnover rate

than House, some staff use work on the Hill as a credentialing experience, staffers follow

MCs (when they leave or seek higher office in Senate), and committee staff stay in

Congress longer than personal staff. In a similar vein, a survey of House personal staff

finds that staffer intention to seek employment outside of Congress is influenced by close

career ties to the MC, commitment to their political party and community, whether they

find the work rewarding, interest in public policy, and satisfaction with their salary

(Jensen 2011).

While turnover varies by chamber, it also varies by type of committee. In the

House, constituency committee staffers (i.e., Armed Services, Interior, Merchant Marine,

Public Works) are more likely to say they will remain on the Hill, while staff on

policy/prestige committees (Appropriations, Budget, Government Operations, and Ways and Means) are more likely to say they will seek other government service (48percent versus 27 percent respectively) and work in the private sector (62 percent versus 49 percent, respectively) (Henschen and Sidlow 1986). More recent work by Burgat and Dukeman (2019) finds that staff tenure (with Appropriations in both chambers having the longest tenure), retention (with House Ethics and Senate Armed Services retaining the longest), salary (with House Financial Services and Senate Intelligence having the highest average salary), gender parity, and pay gap varies by committee as well. While a growing body of work has begun to position staff as the unit of analysis there remains to be a comprehensive understanding of staff turnover. Taken together, most of the studies on congressional staff that focus on turnover do so by emphasizing observable turnover and/or turnover to the revolving door rather than turnover *intention*, either as exit from Congress or intra-institutional advancement. To fill this gap, I will rely on insights from the public administration literature on turnover intention among civil servants to inform my theory of staff turnover.

To be sure, my reliance on the public administration literature to inform my theory of staff turnover is not without faults. Civil servants and legislative staff operate in distinctly different working environments and labor markets; however, I argue that the findings on bureaucratic turnover can provide valuable insights into the theoretical and empirical approach to studying staff turnover. Unlike civil servants, legislative staff do not have civil service rules providing protection against arbitrary removal and are not hired or promoted via a formal merit system. Staff positions are highly political and do not have the same professional norms or expectations of neutral competence as civil

servants (Romzek and Utter 1996, 1997). Importantly, the president does not seek control and does not possess tools to control individual member offices like he does government agencies (Heclo 1977; Moe 1985; Lewis 2010). Yet, like civil servants, legislative staffers' departure decisions are complex choices influenced by a number of variables.

Theoretical Framework

To understand staff turnover intention, I consider staff as participants in an economic labor market. Within this framework, staff must weigh the opportunity costs of remaining in their current position against other employment opportunities, both within or outside the legislature. As with all markets, the staff labor market has both a demand and supply side.

The labor demand side accounts for the number of positions available for qualified individuals (Grissom, Viano, and Selin 2015) and is driven by the demands placed on the legislature (Guarino et al. 2006). Current statute in Congress places limits on the number of staff positions available, while simultaneously enabling members great flexibility in office management and staff allocation (Brudnick 2016; 2017). In the 115th session of Congress, members of the House of Representatives could not employ more than 18 permanent employees and no more than four part-time, shared, or temporary staff, as mandated by Members' Representational Allowances (MRAs).[15] Senators receive a yearly Official Personnel and Office Expense Account (SOPOEA) that varies by state population and does not limit the number of staff individual senators may

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[15] 2 U.S.C. § 5341 (2018).

employ.[16] Representatives and senators serving in leadership positions receive additional allowances for personnel and expenses.

While operating within these bounds, individual legislators are given great authority over the organization of their offices and must decide how to best allocate resources based on career and legislative considerations. For example, how much or little of their resources will be allocated to their district office(s) or the capital, or how they will allocate staff based on policy, constituent, or press needs (for more on allocation of staff see: Fenno 1978; Schiff and Smith 1983; Bond 1985; Herrick and Moore 1993; Leal and Hess 2004; Parker and Goodman 2009; Wilson and Carlos 2014; Burgat 2017; Burgat et al. 2018).

Still focusing on the demand-side, the allocation and use of resources has consequences for employee turnover. The number of positions available impacts economic opportunity and opportunities for advancement, which have been shown to impact the decision to stay or exit (Lee and Whitford 2008; Teodoro 2011; Bertelli and Lewis 2013; Cain and Drutman 2014). Elections also impact the demand-side of the staff labor market: an election may mean loss of current position or create new opportunities for advancement (Salisbury and Shepsle 1981), or create ideological divergence with the new administration, both of which impact the decision-making calculus to exit or stay (Doherty et al. 2018).

The supply side of the economic labor market for staff accounts for the number of qualified individuals willing to take those positions. Within the supply side, legislatures and individual offices can make positions more or less appealing through pecuniary and

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[16] 2 U.S.C. §§ 4575(d)(1)(A); 6313 (2018).

nonpecuniary compensation. To be sure, satisfaction with salary is an important driver of employee turnover (Pitts et al. 2011; Moynihan et al. 2008). However, nonpecuniary factors also influence exit decision, such as public service motivation and the ability to influence policy in meaningful ways (Downs 1967; Perry and Wise 1990; Bertelli 2006; Gailmard and Patty 2007, 2012; Jensen 2011), satisfaction with and a sense of obligation to coworkers (Bertelli 2006; Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Brehm and Gates 1997), and satisfaction with an organization more broadly (Lee and Whitford 2007; Hirschman 1970) have been found to impact bureaucratic turnover and are likely to also impact staffers' decision to exit. Additional studies find satisfaction in a position is also impacted by race (Grissom and Keiser 2011) and gender congruence (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012) between employees and supervisors.

Supply-side elements can be manipulated at the office, committee, or legislature level to bring supply in line with demand. Still, the legislature also must face competition, both from offices within the legislature, the government more broadly, and the private sector, to make positions more attractive to potential and current staff. As noted above, statute in the 115th Congress holds the demand-side constant by regulating staff allowances via MRAs and SOPOEAs. Because the demand-side is fixed at the beginning of a session of Congress, I leverage this opportunity to explore the factors influencing turnover, with particular attention to the supply-side, in one session of Congress.

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Data and Methods

To examine the determinants of turnover intention among congressional staff, I use original data from the 2018 Survey on Congressional Capacity.[17] The overall response rate for the survey is 4.3 percent (525 of 12,332). As we might expect there were more responses from House staffers (72) than from Senate staffers (28) and from among personal staff (83) compared to committee staff (17). The number of observations in the models estimated below was further reduced once excluding "don't know" responses to the dependent variable as discussed in greater detail below. Two important limitations of these data must be noted: first, the sample is over-representative of male and Democratic staffers, and second, the overall low response rate. Because I am interested in understanding turnover *intention* among staff, a survey targeted at all congressional staff is the best data source available. As a supplement to the survey, I also conducted interviews with congressional staff in Washington DC during March and July 2019. Taken together, these unique data and subsequent analyses should be considered an important first step in a larger effort to evaluate the theoretical claims of the factors that influence turnover intention among congressional staff.

The dependent variable constitutes responses from the following question, "How likely is it that you will leave your office [committee] in the next 12 months?" Responses ranged from very unlikely (26.2 percent), unlikely (22 percent), likely (23 percent), to very likely (29 percent). Responses for "not sure" were dropped (32 observations).

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[17] Contact information for all congressional staff was obtained from the *Congressional Yellow Book* for all staff assigned to personal and committee offices in Washington DC and district offices during the 115th session of Congress (2017-2018). The survey was administered via email between January 16-July 8, 2018.

Importantly, the dependent variable does not distinguish between leaving for work in another office or the private sector, rather, simply that the staffer intends to leave their current position. I explore this distinction in greater detail later. Of the personal staff in the sample, 21 percent (39 of 186) reported they were likely and 32 percent (60 of 186) very likely to leave. In comparison, 31 percent (12 of 39) of committee staff reported they were likely to leave and 15 percent (6 of 39) very likely to leave. Among House staff, 50 percent (84 of 167) reported they were likely or very likely to leave, while 57 percent (33 of 58) of Senate staff reported likely or very likely. Taken together, exit intention appears to be different according to the type of staffer (personal versus committee) and by chamber.

To help make sense of the multitude of variables that have been shown to influence turnover among staff and civil servants, I group them into three broad categories: human capital, work environment, and "burnout." Additionally, I control for several demographic characteristics. These categories are informed by both the public administration literature on bureaucratic turnover and previous research on staff turnover and are intended to be descriptive, not dispositive. Within the supply and demand framework, factors fitting within work environment constitute the demand-side, while factors within human capital and burnout constitute the supply-side. I discuss each category and the corresponding variables in turn below. To be sure, variables may fit into multiple categories, however, to help the reader make sense of staffer turnover intention I elected to create the categories as such.

Human Capital

Broadly, human capital accounts for the skills, knowledge, and experience of an institution (Bertelli and Lewis 2012). Recall, human capital accounts for the supply-side of the staff economic labor market and can be manipulated at the office, committee, or institutional level. Within this framework, relationships with coworkers and satisfaction with quality of co-workers' work has been shown to impact turnover intention among civil servants (Bertelli 2006; Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Brehm and Gates 1997). Frustration with co-workers' abilities is exemplified by a committee staff director in the House when asked about institutional memory, "[It] impacts interactions with coworkers because the staff[er] doesn't necessarily understand because they haven't lived it… and so you go back to square one of how things work."

To account for the impact on turnover intention, I include responses to questions related to staffers' perception of their coworkers' abilities and the amount of expertise that can only be gained by working in Congress. Using a 5-point Likert scale with response options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree respondents were asked the following series of questions: "An inadequately skilled workforce is a significant obstacle to my office [committee] fulfilling its core mission," "My office [committee] is unable to recruit the best staff," "My office [committee] is unable to retain the best staff," and "I am confident in my office's [committee's] ability to fulfill its core mission." It could be the case that the more staffers agree that their office has an inadequately skilled staff and that their office is unable to recruit or retain the best staff the greater likelihood that they are to report turnover intention. Conversely, the more

confident they are in their office's ability to fulfill its core mission the less likely they are to intend to turnover.

Within the category of human capital, I also account for responses to, "What percentage of expertise that you have gained in your committee [office] can only be learned on the Hill?" The acquisition of knowledge and skills not transferable to employers outside of Congress presents a paradox: if expertise gained while working on the Hill is not marketable outside Congress then staff may not make the investment (Gailmard and Patty 2007), however, working on the Hill may make staff more marketable in the private sector (e.g., McCrain 2018; Cain and Drutman 2014). Therefore, I expect responses to this question to impact turnover intention, but it is unclear in which direction given the public administration and revolving door literature.

Work Environment

As the anecdotal evidence presented at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates (i.e., Senator Klobuchar's treatment of staff), work environment influences turnover. Recall, the demand-side of the staff economic labor market accounts for the number of qualified individuals willing to take positions, and also the allocation and use of resources. Within this framework, promotion and opportunities for advancement, within or outside the organization, influence turnover intention. Staffing as a profession has become more professionalized over time (Fox and Hammond 1977) which has enabled individuals to make a career as a staff member in Congress (Romzek and Utter 1996; 1997).

To be sure, employees are rewarded with promotions based on performance. Employers can signal to employees how to obtain promotion by setting clear work

expectations and evaluating performance to send signals to employees about their current

performance. Opportunities for advancement helps attract and retain employees (Ito

2003). The importance of opportunities for advancement is echoed in a comment from a

chief of staff in the House when asked about turnover within their office: "I tell people

when I hire them, my goal is to give you opportunities to make a path forward within the

office."

At the same time, clear work expectations impact job satisfaction and may lower

tensions among employees, which in turn, influence exit intention (Bertelli 2006; Wright

and Davis 2003; Ito 2003; Johnston et al. 1993). Respondents were asked what

percentage of the time performance and ability and factors other than performance and

ability (e.g., tenure or political connections) influence the way staffers are promoted in

their office [committee]. Responses could range from 0 to 100 percent. The more staff

perceive promotion to be based on performance the less likely they may be to report

turnover intention, and conversely, the more they perceive promotion to be based on

other factors (tenure or political connections) the more likely they may be to report

turnover intention. Within this rationale, staff were also asked whether or not they

received a performance review (yes or no). Taken together, the factors that influence

promotion and evaluation of job performance create clear work expectations for

employees.

Additionally, respondents were asked, "Have you been approached about a job

outside your office [committee] since July 1, 2015?" Often times, individuals are

operating with imperfect information about outside market opportunities, and most

people are risk-averse in that they do not want to put themselves in a position where they

are unemployed for long periods of time (Holmlund and Lang 1985). Given this, if an individual feels they have a viable option to leave their current position they are more likely to report higher intention to leave (Bertelli and Lewis 2012; Teodoro 2011; Gerhart 1990). Yet, one factor in Congress's favor to help combat staff accepting outside offers is simply the awe of working in Congress. For example, a committee staff director in the House suggests individuals get, "to see the inside of Congress working, so that's not the most common of opportunities. I think that's what keeps people around."

Lastly, LegiStorm calculates a turnover index for individual congressional offices that weights the turnover of higher-ranked staff (e.g., chief of staff) greater than the exit of lower-ranked staff from an office.[18] LegiStorm's index has been called an indicator for the "worst bosses" in Congress, and for my purposes, serves as an important indicator for the workplace environment of an office. The more turnover happening around a staffer the more likely they may be to leave their current position as well. Fit within an organization, both in terms of qualifications, mission attachment, and with coworkers, impacts job satisfaction, which in turn, impacts turnover intention (Lee and Whitford 2007; Brown and Yoshida 2003; Currivan 1999). The turnover index is only included for personal offices.

Burnout

"Burnout" is conceptualized as a decrease in personal accomplishment and professional efficacy (Huang et al. 2003; Milgrom and Roberts 1988). As a whole, burnout impacts job satisfaction and productivity, which in turn, impact turnover

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[18] For more information on LegiStorm's turnover index see:
https://www.legistorm.com/turnover/about.html

intention. I elect to measure "burnout" in several ways. Using a 5-point Likert scale with response options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree respondents were asked the following series of questions: "I am able to influence policy in important ways," "My commitment to public service led me to seek a job in Congress," and, "I feel my salary accurately compensates me for the amount of time and energy I devote to my job." The more respondents disagree with these statements the more likely they may be to report turnover intention (Doherty, Lewis, and Limbocker 2018; Bertelli and Lewis 2013; Pitts, Marvel, and Fernandez 2011; Moynihan, Wright, and Pandey 2008; Gailmard and Patty 2007; Perry and Wise 1990). In addition to these measures to capture burnout, I account for responses to, "How much does polarization affect your job satisfaction?" Response options range from none at all, a little, some, a good bit, or a great deal. Even in arguably the most political environment, the more a staffer perceives political polarization and animosity between political parties to impact their job satisfaction, the more likely they may be to turnover (Ferris et al. 1989).

Demographics

Demographic characteristics have been found to influence career trajectories of civil servants and congressional staff (Grissom and Keiser 2011; Jensen 2011; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012). The impact of age on turnover is u-shaped, with younger and older employees being more likely to turnover (Hanushek et al. 2004). Older employees have learned whether they fit well within the organization and have solidified their decision to remain, so older employees' turnover is often due to retirement. In contrast, younger employees are still figuring whether the position is a good fit for them or not and may use the position as a stepping stone to another position. Respondents were

asked, "What is your age in years?" with options ranging from 25 or younger, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 55 or older.[19]

Congress is a gendered institution, meaning, "that gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power" (Acker 1992, 567). It is unsurprising then, to find that female staff comprise a greater proportion of lower-level positions in the staff hierarchy (Burgat 2017) and that female staff are promoted at slower rates and receive less compensation compared to male staff (Ritchie and You 2018). In regard to partisanship, Wilson and Carlos (2014) find that Democratic congressional offices have a slight impact on the presence of women congressional staff. Republicans are less likely to have a female chief of staff, legislative director, and legislative counsel than Democrats. However, Republicans are more likely to hire female deputy chiefs of staff (Burgat 2017). In both chambers, female staffers employed by Democratic members are promoted at faster rates than female staffers employed by Republicans (Ritchie and You 2018).

Results are mixed on the impact of gender on exit intention among civil servants. For example, traditionally, female employees were more likely to turnover but changes in labor force participation have made females less likely to turnover (Moynihan and Landuyt 2008), while gender congruence between an employee and supervisor influences employee turnover, particularly for males (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012). Yet, the impact of gender may be mediated by factors such as pay and opportunities for advancement (Kellough and Osuna 1995; Lewis and Park 1989). To capture this

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[19] One of the next steps for this project is to better measure respondents' age by coding staffers' exact age at the time of the survey. This will enable me to account for the non-linear impact of age on turnover as well.

relationship among congressional staff, I include an indicator variable for a male (1) or female (0) respondent.

In addition, respondents were asked to report the highest level of education they have completed, with options ranging from lowest (high school degree or less) to highest (graduate degree). Education serves as an indicator for qualifications and a signal in investment to the profession while simultaneously making an employee more marketable to outside offers (Borman and Dowling 2008; Guarino et al. 2006). Respondents were also asked to describe their political views, or ideology, with higher values indicating more conservative views. In addition, respondents were asked how long (in years) they have worked in Congress. More experience decreases the likelihood of exit because employees have more job-specific capital and have gone through a learning period to help determine whether they will remain or exit (Buchinsky et al. 2010). Lastly, I include indicator variables for whether or not the respondent worked in the majority party (Republican), the House, or as a committee staffer.

Table 1A in Appendix A depicts the summary statistics of the independent variables discussed above. Recall, the dependent variable asks respondents, "How likely is it that you will leave your office [committee] in the next 12 months?" with response options ranging from very unlikely, unlikely, likely, to very likely. Because the dependent variable is ordered and categorical, distances between categories may not be equal. Given this, I estimate ordered logit models of responses to turnover intention. Observations are not independent because staff often work in the same offices [committees]. To account for this, I report robust standard errors clustered by office

[committee]. Table 3.1 reports the ordered logit estimates of congressional staff turnover intention by all staff, personal staff, House staff, and House personal staff.[20]

Table 3.1: Ordered Logit Estimates of Congressional Staff Turnover Intention

	All Staff	Personal	House	House Personal
Human Capital				
Inadequate Skills an Obstacle	0.051	0.017	0.046	-0.010
	(0.158)	(0.182)	(0.221)	(0.270)
Unable to Recruit Best Staff	0.174	0.296	0.119	0.190
	(0.202)	(0.304)	(0.287)	(0.403)
Unable to Retain Best Staff	0.292	0.284	0.769**	0.611
	(0.190)	(0.246)	(0.331)	(0.495)
Able to Fulfill Core Mission	0.483	0.358	0.786*	0.506
	(0.313)	(0.421)	(0.454)	(0.635)
Expertise Learned on the Hill	-0.009	0.001	-0.019**	-0.005
	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.012)
Work Environment				
Promotion: Performance Based	-0.044***	-0.037***	-0.039***	-0.036**
	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.015)
Promotion: Tenure/Political	0.010	0.010	0.024**	0.019
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.014)
Receives Performance Review	0.305	0.274	0.170	-0.140
	(0.367)	(0.449)	(0.467)	(0.691)
Turnover Index		0.460		0.643
		(0.677)		(0.826)
Burnout				
Policy Influence	-0.093	-4.421**	-0.337	-0.144
	(0.256)	(0.284)	(0.266)	(0.344)
Commitment to Public Service	-0.127	-0.217	-0.473	-0.577
	(0.329)	(0.375)	(0.386)	(0.446)
Polarization Impacts Job Satisf.	0.562***	0.443**	0.904***	0.741**
	(0.184)	(0.201)	(0.283)	(0.333)
Salary Accurately Compensates	0.300	0.516*	0.311	0.512*
	(0.186)	(0.269)	(0.197)	(0.282)
Outside Offer	0.481	0.318	0.836	0.714
	(0.404)	(0.532)	(0.550)	(0.567)

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[20] Models are estimated in this manner because subsetting by committee and Senate staff resulted in too few observations to make empirical analysis feasible.

Demographics				
Age	-0.406*	-0.294	-0.417*	-0.480*
	(0.230)	(0.228)	(0.249)	(0.265)
Male	0.510	0.136	0.824	0.597
	(0.435)	(0.606)	(0.532)	(0.683)
Education	-0.352*	-0.219	-0.590**	-0.217
	(0.212)	(0.249)	(0.280)	(0.303)
Ideology	-0.124	-0.162	-0.315*	-0.312
	(0.175)	(0.204)	(0.185)	(0.232)
Years in Congress	0.040	-0.011	0.023	-0.047
	(0.043)	(0.057)	(0.039)	(0.058)
Majority Party	0.630	0.005	1.084*	0.311
	(0.574)	(0.767)	(0.648)	(0.991)
House Staffer	0.131	-0.443		
	(0.514)	(0.671)		
Committee Staffer	0.646		1.448**	
	(0.503)		(0.627)	
τ_1	-4.434**	-4.421**	-4.143*	-3.816
	(1.921)	(2.167)	(2.138)	(2.493)
τ_2	-2.858	-2.953	-2.320	-1.993
	(1.885)	(2.095)	(2.032)	(2.293)
τ_3	-1.115	-1.401	-0.457	-0.631
	(1.913)	(2.125)	(2.000)	(2.288)
Number of Clusters	106	88	78	67
Number of Observations	128	98	94	73

Note: Robust standard errors adjusted for clustering on office/committee in parentheses. Dependent variable constitutes responses from the following question, "How likely is it that you will leave your office [committee] in the next 12 months?" Responses ranged from very unlikely (26.2%), unlikely (21.8%), likely (22.7%), to very likely (29.33%), with "don't know" dropped. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Findings: Turnover Intention

The results in Table 3.1 predicting exit intention present mixed findings in comparison to the determinants of turnover intention among civil servants. Focusing first on human capital variables, the only statistically significant findings are for House staff. The more House staff strongly agree that their office [committee] is unable to retain the best staff ($p<.05$) and is unable to fulfill its core mission ($p<.1$) they are more likely to report turnover intention. Taken together, that is similar to civil servants, staffers'

perception of their coworkers' performance and skills influences exit intention. In addition, as House staff report higher percentages of expertise that can only be learned on the Hill (p<.05), they are less likely to report turnover intention. This suggests that providing staff with opportunities to build expertise may in fact be a way to retain staff (Gailmard and Patty 2007).

Focusing next on work environment factors, for all models, the more staff feel that promotion is based on performance the less likely they are to report turnover intention (at the 95 percent confidence level or higher). Conversely, for House staff only, the more staff feel that promotion is based on factors other than performance, such as tenure/political factors, the more likely they are to report exit intention (p<.05). Taken together, how members of Congress and their chiefs of staff decide how to promote individuals in their offices [committees] impacts turnover intention in their office. In short, management style does matter.

Turning next to "burnout" factors, the more personal staff agree that they are able to influence policy in important ways the less likely they are to report turnover intention (p<.05). Across all models, the more staff feel polarization impacts job satisfaction the more likely they are to report exit intention (at the 95 percent confidence level or higher). Unsurprisingly, the more personal staff and House personal staff agree that their salary accurately compensates them the less likely they are to report turnover intention. This finding supports the anecdotal evidence depicted in the media: paying staff better wages will help retain staff.

Focusing on demographics, older staff and staff with higher levels of education are less likely to report turnover intention (at the 90 percent confidence level or higher).

For House staff only, those working for the majority party are more likely to report exit intention (p<.1) while more conservative staff are less likely to (p<.1). Taken together, this finding might suggest that Republican staff had the foresight as early as January 2018 that their party would lose the House, but that more ideologically conservative staff anticipated remaining in their position. Lastly, House committee staff were more likely to report exit intention (p<.05).

Taken together, determinants of congressional staff turnover intention include factors such as perception of coworkers' skills, the impact of polarization on job satisfaction, and if they feel salary accurately compensates their work. However, using turnover intention as a proxy for actual turnover may be problematic because different factors may drive intention versus actual, or observable, exit (Cohen, Blake, and Goodman 2016; Doherty, Lewis, and Limbocker 2018). The public administration literature on bureaucratic turnover finds that intention is a predictor a behavior and that there is a positive relationship between exit intention and actual exit (e.g., Lee and Whitford 2007; Cho and Lewis 2012), but discrepancies are present (Cohen, Blake, and Goodman 2016). Within an economic labor market framework, turnover intention is at best speculative because employees must operate with imperfect information about outside market opportunities (Holmlund and Lang 1985). However, understanding the determinants of turnover intention remain important because employees' grumblings about exit intention can have adverse impacts on work environment.

Distinguishing between intention and actual turnover is important for organizations' efforts to recruit and retain employees by helping organizations determine where to focus efforts. Particularly for legislatures, the type of turnover occurring matters

and is an overlooked point in extant studies on staff turnover. When a staffer exits

completely from the legislature, they take with them their institutional memory. When,

however, a staffer advances in the career ladder within the legislature their institutionally

memory remains. The former type of turnover is more harmful to the institution than the

latter.

A unique contribution of this research is that I am able to examine both intention

and actual turnover of congressional staff using my survey. One concern for survey

research of political elites is that they may not be truthful when responding. By tracking

actual turnover among survey respondents, I am able to help mitigate such a concern.

Given this, I tracked whether or not the respondents who answered how likely they are to

leave their current position in the next 12 months actually left their position according to

LegiStorm's online database of staff employment histories. The next section details the

findings on actual turnover among staff in my survey.

Findings: Actual Turnover

Of the 257 staff who answered how likely they are to leave their current position,

119 actually did (46 percent). However, as mentioned above, the type of turnover

occurring matters. Not all staff who turnover exit to the revolving door. Forty-six staff

who actually turned over remained in Congress- either by advancing in their current

office or to another office or committee. Thirty-eight staff who actually turned did so

because the member of Congress they worked for left office. Table 3.2 separates turnover

intention by whether or not the staffer actually left their current position.

Table 3.2: Turnover Intention versus Actual Turnover

Actual	Turnover Intention				
Turnover	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely	Total
No	48	40	21	12	121
Yes	11	9	30	54	104
Total	59	49	51	66	225

As Table 3.2 indicates, 82 percent (54 of 66) of staff who said they were very

likely to leave their current position in the next 12 months actually did so. This is in

contrast to the 19 percent (48 of 59) of staff who said they were very unlikely to turnover

and actually did. As these results suggest, an overwhelming majority of staff who

indicate they will leave their position actually do so. To further understand the

determinants of actual turnover, in Table 3.3 I estimate logit models predicting whether

the staff actually turned over (1) or not (0). The models in Table 3.3 account for the same

factors included in the models in the turnover intention models in Table 3.1.

Table 3.3: Logit Results of Actual Turnover among Congressional Staff

	All Staff	Personal	House	House Personal
Human Capital				
Inadequate Skills an Obstacle	-0.116	-0.171	0.129	-0.232
	(0.180)	(0.213)	(0.247)	(0.341)
Unable to Recruit Best Staff	-0.007	0.254	0.093	0.697
	(0.273)	(0.346)	(0.355)	(0.458)
Unable to Retain Best Staff	-0.179	-0.373	-0.292	-0.917**
	(0.221)	(0.265)	(0.324)	(0.362)
Able to Fulfill Core Mission	-0.143	-0.287	-0.088	-0.554
	(0.288)	(0.396)	(0.437)	(0.510)
Expertise Learned on the Hill	-0.017**	-0.011	-0.015	0.002
	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.014)
Work Environment				
Promotion: Performance Based	-0.011	-0.008	-0.018	-0.030*
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.015)
Promotion: Tenure/Political	0.012	0.009	0.014	0.003
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.016)
Receives Performance Review	-0.111	-0.278	-0.201	-0.811
	(0.468)	(0.529)	(0.592)	(0.844)
Turnover Index		1.635*		2.216
		(0.963)		(1.575)
Burnout				
Policy Influence	0.134	0.007	0.401*	0.364
	(0.197)	(0.239)	(0.240)	(0.281)
Commitment to Public Service	-0.286	-0.461	-0.322	-0.779
	(0.320)	(0.369)	(0.360)	(0.501)
Polarization Impacts Job Satisf.	0.378**	0.310*	0.637***	0.735***
	(0.167)	(0.181)	(0.219)	(0.280)
Salary Accurately Compensates	0.115	0.246	0.178	0.238
	(0.175)	(0.216)	(0.250)	(0.304)
Outside Offer	0.327	0.136	0.674	0.718
	(0.483)	(0.614)	(0.645)	(0.879)
Demographics				
Age	-0.643***	-0.561**	-0.758**	-0.764**
	(0.225)	(0.248)	(0.320)	(0.381)
Male	0.131	-0.296	0.016	-0.427
	(0.484)	(0.599)	(0.626)	(0.918)
Education	-0.289	-0.116	-0.290	0.299
	(0.236)	(0.258)	(0.313)	(0.370)
Ideology	0.102	0.089	0.028	0.207
	(0.191)	(0.224)	(0.253)	(0.355)
Years in Congress	0.006	-0.046	-0.035	-0.248**

	(0.043)	(0.060)	(0.058)	(0.105)
Majority Party	1.016	0.313	1.590	-0.109
	(0.747)	(0.892)	(0.994)	(1.512)
House Staffer	0.406	-0.115		
	(0.539)	(0.596)		
Committee Staffer	1.056**		1.603**	
	(0.501)		(0.730)	
Intercept	2.363	2.833	2.504	3.345
	(1.921)	(2.200)	(2.330)	(2.934)
AIC	187.332	160.222	137.106	105.844
Number of Observations	146	111	105	81

Note: Robust standard errors adjusted for clustering on office/committee in parentheses. Dependent variable = 1 if actually left current position at time of taking survey within 12 months (1) or not (0). *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Focusing first on human capital factors, as House personal staff strongly agree that their office [committee] is unable to retain the best staff the more likely they are to actually turnover ($p<.05$). For all staff, as staff report higher percentages of expertise that can only be learned on the Hill the less likely they are to actually turnover ($p<.05$). Interestingly, for both turnover intention and actual turnover, staffers' perception of their offices' ability to retain the best staff and the percentage of expertise learned only on the Hill are the only statistically significant variables, again, suggesting that perception of coworkers' skills and the opportunity to build expertise matter for turnover among staff members.

Turning next to work environment, the more House personal staff feel that promotion is based on performance the less likely they are to turnover ($p<.1$). In addition, as more staff turnover within an office, the more likely the staffer is to actually turnover ($p<.1$). Taken together, these findings again suggest that work place environment and office management impact both turnover intention and actual exit among staff.

Focusing on "burnout" factors, similar to turnover intention, staff across all models who report polarization impacts job satisfaction are more likely to actually turnover (at the 90 percent confidence level or higher). Surprisingly, House staff who report they can influence policy in important ways are more likely to turnover (p<.1). This finding is curious given that studies on turnover among civil servants suggest the more policy motivated employees are the less likely they are to turnover (Bertelli and Lewis 2013). However, at the same time, this finding may suggest that staff view policy influence as a marketable skill and are therefore more likely to turnover. Yet, it demonstrates the importance of distinguishing between intention and actual turnover.

Turning to demographics, older staff are less likely to actually turnover (at the 95 percent confidence level or higher). House personal staff who have worked in Congress for more years are less likely to turnover (p<.05), while committee staff are more likely to actually turnover (p<.05). In contrast to the findings on turnover intention, the level of education, working for the majority party, and ideology are not statistically significant predictors of actual turnover.

Taken together, it does appear that different factors influence turnover intention and actual turnover, demonstrating the importance of distinguishing between intention and actual exit. However, even grumbling among staff about their intention to exit has important consequences for the work place environment and Congress more broadly. If staff are dissatisfied and are considering exiting, then Congress' efforts to attract and retain the most qualified individuals it can to work in government is hindered.

Discussion and Next Steps

"Staff recruitment, diversity, retention and compensation and benefits," is one of seven areas of jurisdiction the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress can investigate, study, hold hearings, and make recommendations to modernize Congress.[21] The findings presented in this paper should be a considered an important first step to help understand the best practices Congress can implement to achieve the goal of modernizing Congress by incorporating responses from staff themselves. While paying staff a living wage is one way to help recruit and retain qualified individuals to work in Congress, it is not the only way. My findings suggest that factors like work place environment, such as office management, and burnout impact turnover among staff. These findings should not be considered entirely surprising, however, this study is, to the best of my knowledge, one of two studies to survey staff about their turnover intention (Jensen 2011) but also the first to actually track staffers' next employment in a systematic way.

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[21] For the full list see: https://modernizecongress.house.gov/about/jurisdiction-and-rules

Table 3A: Summary Statistics of Independent Variables

	Mode	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Human Capital					
Inadequate Skills an Obstacle	Disagree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
Unable to Recruit Best Staff	Disagree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
Unable to Retain Best Staff	Disagree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
Able to Fulfill Core Mission	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
Expertise Learned on the Hill		54.2	28.2	0	100
Work Environment					
Promotion: Performance Based		70.8	24.9	5	100
Promotion: Tenure/Political		35.6	26.7	1	100
Receives Performance Review	Yes			No (62)	Yes (66)
Turnover Index		.360	.294	0	1.57
Burnout					
Policy Influence	Agree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
Commitment to Public Service	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
Polarization Impacts Job Satisf.	A Good Bit			None at all	A great deal
Salary Accurately Compensates	Disagree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
Outside Offer	Yes			No (49)	Yes (79)
Demographics					
Age	35-45			25 or	55 or older

				younger	
Male	Male			Female (46)	Male (82)
Education	Graduate			High school or less	Graduate
Ideology	Degree Moderate			Very Liberal	Degree Very
					Conservative
Years in Congress		7.2	7.6	0	33
Majority Party	Minority			Minority (70)	Majority (58)
House Staffer	House			House (94)	Senate (34)
Committee Staffer	Personal			Personal (98)	Committee (30)

Note: Summary statistics derived from All Staff model in Table 1. Number of observations = 128.

4. Congressional Staff Turnover: Beyond the Revolving Door

Introduction

"I tell people when I hire them, my goal is to give you opportunities to make a path forward within the office."

-Personal interview with a Chief of Staff for a Member of the House

The above quote captures an important, but overlooked, career path for congressional staff: opting to remain in the institution. Previous studies emphasize congressional staff turnover through the lens of the revolving door to K Street (e.g., McCrain 2018; LaPira and Thomas 2014; Cain and Drutman 2014). Missing from this literature is an analysis of intra-institutional advancement. How, how often, and why do congressional staffers move up within a personal office or committee? Although largely overlooked, this type of turnover is important. Among other reasons, unlike the revolving door, this sort of career advancement keeps valuable institutional memory and experience within the institution. In this chapter, I offer an initial analysis of contemporary intra-institutional career paths using personal interviews with congressional staff and data from a comprehensive database of congressional staff.

I begin by positioning this study in previous work on congressional staff turnover. Next, I advance the argument that not all turnover of staff has adverse impacts on the legislature. Here, I make the case that intra-institutional movement of staff can be a positive force in the legislature. I then transition into an explanation of my data and methods to examine intra-institutional movement of staff in Congress. I conclude by suggesting proposals that Congress could implement to improve staff retention within the institution, and in turn, aid institutional capacity.

Staff Careers: Turnover and the Revolving Door to K Street

Like turnover among members, turnover among staff can speak to the "standing" of the institution (Hibbing 1986). Members of Congress have structured the institution in such a manner to aid their legislative and career goals. For example, the institutionalization of the House of Representatives helped organize and structure members' career opportunities (Polsby 1968). At the same time, as "single-minded seekers of reelection" (Mayhew 1974) members will structure Congress in such a way to reduce electoral uncertainty to aid their reelection efforts. One way that members do this is by cultivating a "home style" to gain constituents' trust in order to get reelected, and in turn, make good public policy and obtain power in Congress (Fenno 1973; 1978). While the institutionalization of Congress has had implications for members' careers, it has also influenced the careers of legislative staff. Legislative staff were a key component of the institutional structure members have created to aid their career goals (Perkins 1944; Rogers 1941; Patterson 1970; Kofmehl 1977). Increases in staff numbers and positions through actions by members such as the Legislative Reorganization Acts of 1946 and 1970 helped professionalize and legitimize the careers of staff in Congress (Fox and Hammond 1977; Romzek and Utter 1996; 1997).

Those who study staff tend to focus on how legislators manage their scarce staff resources. A staffers' career prospects are closely tied to the member they are employed by (Jensen 2011; Salisbury and Shepsle 1981). When members are elected to office they must "set up shop" and decide how to best hire and manage staff to fit their electoral and legislative goals (Leal and Hess 2004; Weatherford 1985; Loomis 1979; Fenno 1978). Within broad statutory limits, members are given great flexibility over how to allocate,

pay, promote, and fire staff (see Brudnick 2016, 2017). One way to conceptualize the allocation and use of staff is through the lens of members serving as the head of an enterprise (Salisbury and Shepsle 1981a; Whiteman 1995) or small business (Loomis 1979). For example, members allocate staff to maintain a presence in both Washington, D.C. and their home district (Parker and Goodman 2009; Bond 1985; Fenno 1978; Mann 1978), across legislative issue areas and constituent service (Burgat et al. 2018; Burgat 2017; Brant and Keiser n.d.; Schiff and Smith 1983; Fox and Hammond 1977), and according to their own career ambitions (Herrick and Moore 1993; Fenno 1978). Staffer career ties to members can have positive and negative implications for the staffer. On the one hand, if a member seeks higher office or holds a prestigious position in Congress the staffer is afforded prestige as well. For example, staff who work for high-ranking members report receiving faster responses from other offices (Romzek and Utter 1996, 1997). On the other hand, if a member loses re-election or retires the staffer becomes unemployed and must quickly find a new position, either within or outside of Congress.

Member characteristics and demographics have also been found to influence staff allocation, and in turn staff careers, with female members of Congress hiring more female staff compared to male members and Democratic congressional offices employing more female staff (Burgat 2017; Wilson and Carlos 2014; Romzek 2000). A consequence of this is that female staff experience different work environments compared to male colleagues by being over-represented in secretarial roles and lower-level positions (Dittmar 2018; Wilson and Carlos 2014) while simultaneously experiencing lower pay and slower promotion rates compared to male staff (Ritchie and You 2018).

The type of turnover occurring in legislatures matters and is an overlooked point in extant studies on staff turnover. When a staffer or member exits completely from the legislature, they take with them their institutional memory. When a staffer or member advances in the career ladder within the legislature, however, their institutional memory is retained (Fox and Hammond 1977; Whiteman 1995). The former type of turnover is more harmful to the institution than the latter. For example, previous work on House members who seek higher office in the Senate finds that ambitious House members have larger staffs in Washington D.C. (Herrick and Moore 1993), and increase their introduction and co-sponsorship activity (Victor 2011; Schmitt and Brant 2019). Certainly, staff turnover can also pose issues for democratic legitimacy when staff use their skills and connections gained while working in the legislature to become lobbyists (e.g., McCrain 2018). However, an alternative way to view this type of turnover is provided by a chief of staff in the Senate when they note, ". . . people come back, too. If you create the right work culture, people go do big things and then they come back and are more helpful to you. . . . You can build an empire in Washington. In a way, a public service empire."[22]

Legislative staff help members obtain policy-relevant information to draft legislation, conduct oversight of the executive branch, and serve as an important representative linkage by assisting legislators with constituency service (see, more recently, Sheperd and You 2020; Hertel-Fernandez 2019). Because of the role staff fill, they gain valuable connections, information, and skills while serving members, which may make them more marketable in the private sector as lobbyists. As "unelected

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[22] Personal interview. March 2019.

representatives" (Malbin 1980), coupled with the autonomy afforded to them by members of Congress, their expertise, and the low visibility, staff are afforded ample opportunities to influence policy within the legislature (Romzek and Utter 1996; Romzek 2000).

Additional work on staff focuses on the rate of turnover (Henschen and Sidlow 1986) or when and why staff turnover (Fox and Hammond 1977; Salisbury and Shepsle 1981b). Studies on the House and Senate between 1978-1979 found that turnover followed partisan turnover in the executive branch, the Senate has a higher turnover rate than House, some staff used work on the Hill as a credentialing experience, staffers followed members (when they leave or sought higher office in the Senate), and committee staff stayed in Congress longer than personal staff (Salisbury and Shepsle 1981b). While turnover varies by chamber, it also varies by type of committee. In the House, constituency committee staffers (i.e. Armed Services, Interior, Merchant Marine, Public Works) were more likely to say they would remain on the Hill, while staff on policy/prestige committees (i.e., Appropriations, Budget, Government Operations, and Ways and Means) were more likely to say they would seek other government service (48 percent versus 27 percent, respectively) and work in the private sector (62 percent versus 49 percent respectively) (Henschen and Sidlow 1986).

Excessive turnover among staff inhibits legislators' ability to effectively conduct the duties of their office and can pose issues for democratic legitimacy if staff use previous connections to influence policy outcomes. Here, studies ask "where do staff go" after employment in Congress. For example, some ex-staffers turned lobbyists market their connections in Congress rather than their issue or technical experience (LaPira and Thomas 2014) and previous staffers who have more connections to current staffers are

paid more in their new lobbying positions (McCrain 2018). There may be ways to mitigate staff exit to K Street. The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act (HLOGA) of 2007 attempts to curtail the revolving door by placing one-year bans on contacts between former and current staff (Cain and Drutman 2014). HLOGA impacted Senate staffers to a greater extent than it did House staffers, meaning that the number of staffers becoming lobbyists within a year declined after the Act took effect. An individual staffer's career is closely tied to the member they serve (Jensen 2011; Fox and Hammond 1977). For example, the number of staffers entering lobbying increases after midterm elections, when a greater proportion of members often lose their seats (Cain and Drutman 2014). This suggests that staffers may not enter lobbying because it is their first choice, but rather because it is their only option to be able to stay on Capitol Hill and influence policy they care about (Jensen 2011). This sentiment is echoed by a legislative director for a House member when they note, "DC is Hollywood for ugly people."[23] If an individual wants to continue to influence public policy and "be where the action is", they have to be on Capitol Hill, similar to if an individual wants to pursue an acting career, they must be in Hollywood.

A key component missing from the literature on congressional staff turnover is what about the staff who do not go into lobbying, but rather, advance within an office or committee? Relatedly, what variables influence staff movement intra-institutionally? While a growing body of work has begun to position staff as the unit of analysis, there remains to be a comprehensive understanding of staff turnover (Sheperd and You 2020; Hertel-Fernandez et al. 2019). This is important because not all staff turnover has adverse

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[23] Personal interview. July 2019.

impacts on the institution. The *type* of turnover occurring in Congress matters and it is an overlooked point in extant studies on staff turnover. Recent work suggests the best way to increase institutional capacity is not to increase the number or the amount of money for members' representational allowances for staff, but rather, to retain the most experienced staff (Crossoen et al. 2018). The findings of my research may help legislators identify and implement policies to retain staff, and in turn, increase institutional capacity.

Staff Turnover: Intra-Institutional Movement

This gap in the literature, a lack of understanding of intra-institutional movement, is important because it may bias our understanding of staff turnover more generally. Our concerns about turnover may be overblown or we are ignoring important implications to the legislature. If turnover is happening within Congress, then there is less of a concern with loss of institutional memory and skill. Instead of focusing solely on turnover to lobbying, we need to be more concerned with patterns among individual offices or certain types of staffers.

It is important to understand patterns of staff turnover in offices because who members decide to hire has been found to impact the member's legislative behavior (Canon 1999; Wolman and Wolman 1977). For example, the presence of Latino staffers has a positive impact on members' bill introductions related to symbolic Latino interests (Wilson 2013). In addition, the more experienced staff (or, the more time employed in Congress) employed within a members' office (Crossen et al. 2018; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017; Price 1971), and employing staff who later become lobbyists (Sheperd and You 2020) impacts members' productivity and effectiveness in seeing their legislative priorities through Congress.

To be sure, turnover, when not excessive, can have positive implications for legislatures. Staff turnover can introduce new policy viewpoints and ideas (Whiteman 1995) and creates the possibility that the new employee is higher-performing (Meier and Hicklin 2008). However, turnover imposes costs on both legislators' offices and the institution. When a position becomes open, time and energy must be devoted to fill the position, resources must be devoted to training the new employee, and there is a loss of human capital (Kellough and Osuna 1995; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser 2012). However, not all individuals view the time and energy needed to train a new employee as negative. For example, a chief of staff for a senator reported training a new staffer as an opportunity to "socialize them [from your vantage-point]".[24]

Furthermore, if a staffer is promoted either within an office or the institution, their institutional memory is retained and they have prior knowledge and experience in the broader work-environment that may decrease the start-up costs to training an employee without such prior experience. For example, if an intern, an entry-level position, is promoted to legislative assistant either in the same office or a different office within Congress, that individual takes with them their prior experience and knowledge about navigating the broader institutional environment of the legislature that makes training that individual likely less time-consuming and costly for the new office. A chief of staff for a senator describes institutional memory as, "muscle memory… of how [Congress] actually works."[25]

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[24] Personal interview. March 2019.
[25] Personal interview. March 2019.

This "on the job training" is one way to help retain employees (Gailmard and Patty 2007) and may open opportunities to influence policy in meaningful ways, which has been found to decrease turnover among civil servants (Downs 1967; Perry and Wise 1990; Bertelli 2006; Gailmard and Patty 2007, 2012). Additionally, opportunities for advancement within a workplace also decreases turnover among employees because they can envision a path forward for themselves within the institution (Ito 2003), along with promotions and salary increases (Pitts et al. 2011; Moynihan and Landuyt 2008). Relatedly, intra-institutional movement signals satisfaction with an organization more broadly (Lee and Whitford 2008; Hirschman 1970) which has been found to impact civil servants' turnover intention. In short, the ability of Congress to attract and retain staff has important consequences for institutional capacity more broadly (Crosson et al. 2018).

It is important to understand patterns in staff turnover because staff serve an important link to the constituency and a representative role. For example, the hiring of African American district staff may empower the African American community within that district to communicate more with the member (Grose, Magnum, and Martin 2007), and, if given the opportunity, female committee staff will actively represent women's interests (Rosenthal and Bell 2003). Furthermore, women and minorities are under-represented among members of Congress. Employment as a staffer has been found to be a key pipeline to serving in elective office in the future (Herrnson 1994). Given the representational role staff fill, a more holistic understanding of patterns in staff turnover is necessary to understand the human resources available to the legislature and the invisible workforce serving the public (Fox and Hammond 1977).

As can be seen, staff serve an important policy and representative role in Congress (Hertel-Fernandez et al. 2019; Romzek and Utter 1996, 1997; Malbin 1980). The great latitude members have over office management and the close ties of staff careers to members' presents staff in Congress with unique working environments. To provide a more holistic understanding of staff careers in Congress, in the proceeding analysis I provide a descriptive overview of intra-intuitional turnover among staff. While this analysis is not dispositive, it is an important first step in filling the gap in the literature on staff careers.

*Evaluation of the Frequency of Staff Turnover Within Congress*

I rely on two sources to analyze staff careers within Congress. The first source is LegiStorm's comprehensive database of staff employment histories within Congress from 2000-2019. LegiStorm obtains and compiles employment histories from the official record books of the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House and allows access to the information for either a monthly subscription or download.

While LegiStorm provides the most comprehensive datasets on staff employment histories, I conducted personal interviews with legislative directors and chiefs of staff during the spring and summer of 2019 as a second data source to analyze staff careers in Congress. I targeted legislative directors and chiefs of staff because they assist the member in the management and organization of the office. Given their leadership positions and my interest in staff employment, legislative directors and chiefs of staff were the appropriate staff to interview.

As noted above, LegiStorm's employment histories cover 2000-2019. Because I am interested in intra-intuitional movement within Congress my unit of analysis is the

individual staffer. As will be discussed below, the model I estimate has over 6,500

observations and includes 1,861 unique individuals. My dependent variable is a count of

the number of positions an individual staffer has had within the time period under

investigation. Within my sample of staff employment histories, the number of positions

ranges from a low of one position to a high of 14 positions. Because I am advancing a

more descriptive understanding of staff careers in Congress, Figure 4.1 depicts the mean

number of positions held by staff during this time period.

Figure 4.1: Mean Number of Positions Held by Staff, 2000-2019
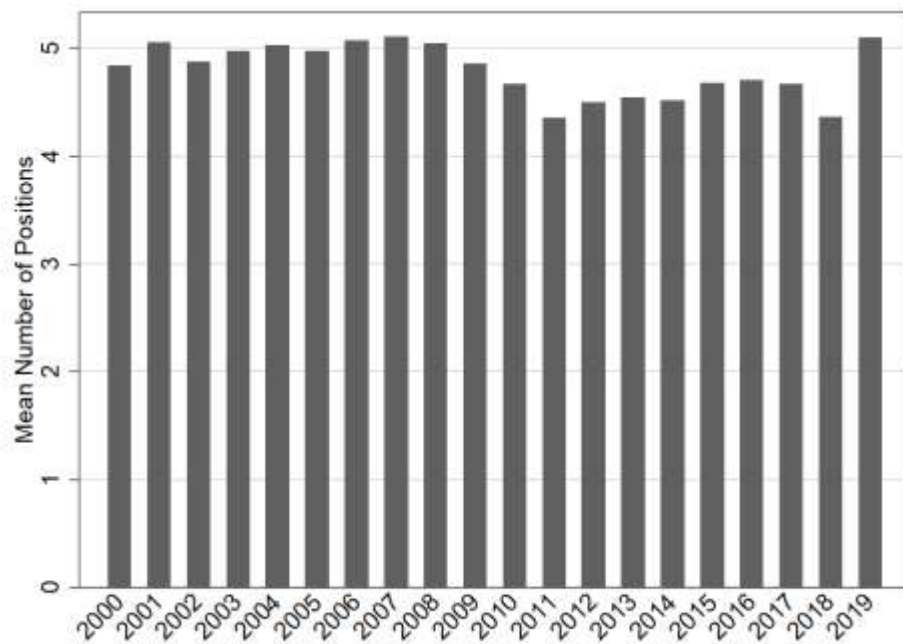
Overall, the mean number of positions held by staff ranges from a low of just

above 4 and a high of just above 5. To further understand the number of positions held by

staff in Congress, Figure 4.2 depicts the mean number of positions by committee and

personal staff.

Figure 4.2: Mean Number of Positions by Type of Staff, 2000-2019
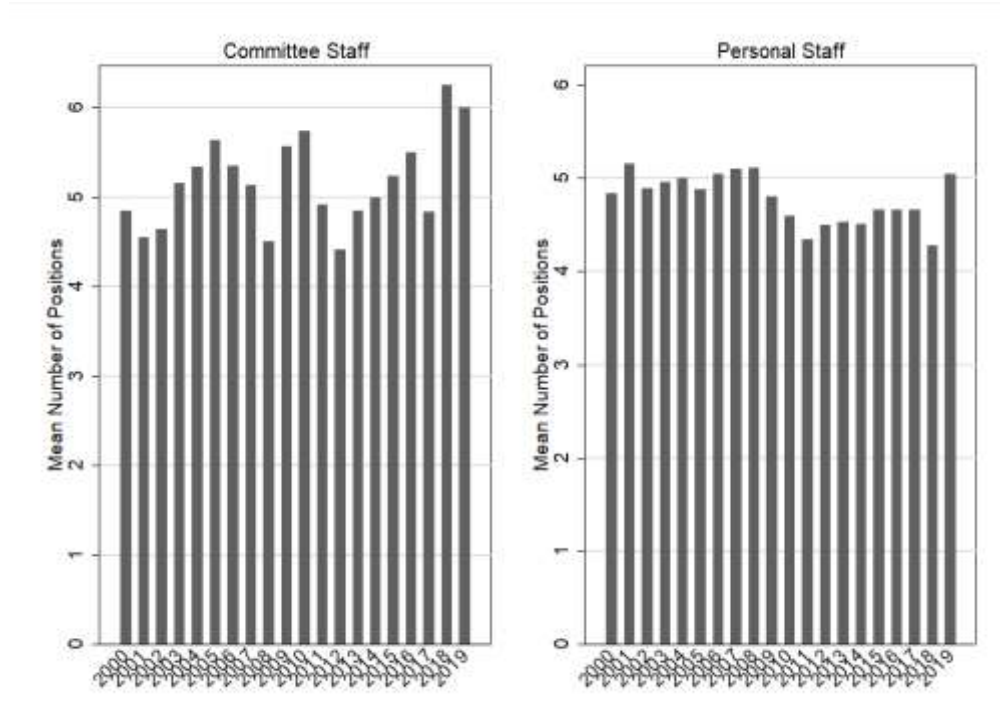
Across time, the mean number of positions held fluctuates more for committee staff compared to personal staff. Compared to personal staff, committee staff have a higher average number of positions. The average number of positions held by personal staff is 4.9 and 5.3 positions for committee staff. While these descriptive results provide more information on staff careers, I go a step further by estimating a model that predicts the number of positions held by staff. Before explaining the variables in the model that I estimate, I first put forth my expectations.

I put forth two specific expectations: First, I expect *female* to have a negative relationship with the *number of positions* a staffer has held in Congress. Because previous work finds that female staff are paid less and promoted at slower rates compared to male staff (Ritchie and You 2018), I expect female staff to hold fewer positions during their employment in Congress. Second, I expect staffers' age to impact the number of

positions held. Older staff should be able to hold more positions during their employment period in Congress simply by having more time present to do so. However, I expect a non-linear effect of age: the impact of age on the number of positions held will begin positive, as the staffer ages they will likely have more promotions, however, the impact of age will become negative as older staff are more likely to be promoted less and retire more because they have reached the end of their career.

I account for several variables that might influence the number of positions a staffer may hold. *Female* is an indicator variable for whether the staff is female (1) or male (0) (Ritchie and You 2018; Wilson and Carlos 2014).[26] There are almost twice as many male staff (4,228, or 64 percent) compared to female staff (2,359, or 36 percent) in the sample. *White* is an indicator variable for whether the staff is Caucasian (1) or not (0).[27] White staffers make up a majority at 5,807 (88 percent) compared to other races at 780 (12 percent). *Age* is a staffer's age in years when they start a position. I also include *age-squared* to account for the non-linear relationship of the impact of age on the number of positions a staffer may hold during their time employed in Congress. The average age for staff is 32 years old and ranges from a low of 16 years to a high of 80 years old. *Democrat* is an indicator variable for whether the staffer is employed by the Democratic member (1) or a Republican member (0).[28] There are fewer Democratic staffers compared to Republican staffers, 2,973 (45 percent) and 3,614 (55 percent), respectively.

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[26] LegiStorm did not identify the sex of five individuals during this time period. These five individuals are dropped from the analysis.

[27] LegiStorm categorizes staffers' race within the following groups: Caucasian, American-Indian/Alaska Native, Arab/Persian, Asian-American/Pacific Islander, biracial, black, and Hispanic.

[28] LegiStorm assigns partisanship according to the partisanship of the member the staffer is employed by.

Lastly, personal staff is an indicator variable for whether the staffer is employed by an individual member (1) or by a committee (0). There are more personal staff (6,077 or 92 percent) compared to committee staff (510 or 8 percent). Table 4.1 lists the summary statistics for the model I estimate to understand the number of positions a staffer has held in Congress.

Table 4.1: Summary Statistics

Variable	Mode	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
No. Positions	5	4.9	2.4	1	14
Female	Female				
White	White				
Age		32.2	10.1	16	80
Age-Squared		1137.6	801.8	256	6400
Democrat	Republican				
Personal Staff	Personal Staff				

Note: summary statistics are derived from model estimated in Table 2.

Results

Because my dependent variable is a count of the number of positions a staffer has held, I estimate a negative binomial regression with robust standard errors. Recall, the number of positions held ranges from a minimum of one to a maximum of 14 positions. A likelihood-ratio test indicated the data are over-dispersed so a negative binomial model is preferable to a Poisson regression model. Table 4.2 depicts the negative binomial regression results.

Table 4.2: Negative Binomial Regression Results of Number of Positions Held in Congress

	β (Robust S.E.)
Female	-0.027**
	(0.012)
White	0.010
	(0.021)
Age	0.045***
	(0.004)
Age-Squared	-0.001***
	(0.001)
Democrat	-0.069***
	(0.012)
Personal Staff	-0.064***
	(0.021)
Intercept	0.855***
	(0.078)
N	6,587

Note: Dependent variable is the number of positions a staffer has held during their employment in Congress (range: 1-14). ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

The coefficients in a negative binomial regression model (Table 4.2) can be interpreted for sign and significance and indicate the effect on the dependent variable with the other independent variables are held constant. However, a better method to understand the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is to estimate expected counts and holding the other independent variables at different points of interest, as opposed to constant. As such, I estimated expected counts of the number of positions for the model in Table 4.2 by holding the independent variables either at the mode (binary variables) or means (continuous variables) in the sample. I then changed the independent variable of interest from 0 to 1 for indicator variables (*female*, *white, Democrat*, and *personal staff*) and from the mean to two standard deviations above the

mean for continuous variables (*age* and *age-squared*). While I discuss the substantive

impact below, Table 4.3 depicts the results of the expected counts of the number of

positions at different points of interest for each independent variable with 95 percent

confidence intervals.

**Table 4.3: Expected Counts of the Number of Positions Held in Congress, 2000-2019**

Independent Variable	Expected Count
Female	-.134
0 → 1	[-.257, -.011]
White	.050
0 → 1	[-.166, .262]
Age	8.604
33.1 → 54.5	[6.526, 10.990]
Age-Squared	-4.895
1210.7 → 29626.1	[-4.989, -4.801]
Democrat	-.335
0 → 1	[-.447, -.215]
Personal Staff	-.342
0 → 1	[-.557, -.121]

Note: 95 percent confidence intervals are given in brackets. The dependent
variable is the number of positions a staffer has held during their
employment in Congress (range: 1 to 14). The expected counts are
estimated using the model in Table 2 and holding other independent
variables at either the mode (binary) or mean (continuous) and changing
indicator variables from 0 to 1 and continuous variables from the mean to
two standard deviations above the mean. All results except *white* are
statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level or higher because
the confidence intervals do not overlap zero.

Overall, *white* is the only variable in the model that does not have a statistically

significant ($p < .05$) impact on the number of positions. Compared to males, female staff

experience .134 fewer positions, supporting my first expectation that female staff will

hold fewer positions during their employment in Congress (see also, Ritchie and You

2018). The average number of positions held by female staff is 4.7 and 5.0 for male staff.

When separated by the number of positions held by female and male staff, the gender

difference becomes starker. Figure 4.3 displays the frequency of female and male staff per number of positions held within the sample.

Figure 4.3: Frequency of the Number of Positions Held by Gender
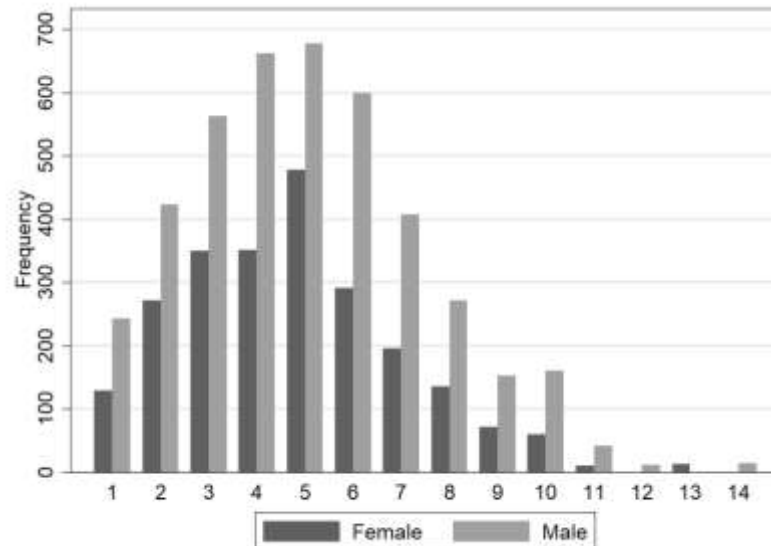
Across the range of the number of positions (1 to 14), male staff comprise a greater frequency of individuals within the group than female staff. As the number of positions held increases, this difference becomes more pronounced. These findings are consistent with Ritchie and You (2018) and suggests that female staff face a distinct work environment and fewer opportunities for advancement within Congress.

Recall, I expect a non-linear impact of age on the number of positions. Changing from the mean of age to two standard deviations above the mean of age (33.1 to 54.5 years) results in an increase of 8.6 positions. However, changing from the mean of age-squared to two standard deviations above the mean of age-squared (1,210.7 to 29,626.1 years) results in a decrease of 4.9 positions (see Table 3). These results support my expectation; the impact of age on the number of positions held begins positive, as the staffer ages they will likely have more promotions, however, the impact of age will

become negative as older staff are more likely to be promoted less and retire more because they have reached the end of their career or the apex of the office.

In addition, compared to Republican staff, Democratic staff experience .3 fewer positions during their employment in Congress. The average number of positions held by Democratic staff is 4.7 and 5.1 for Republican staff. This difference in partisanship may be due in part to changes in partisan control of Congress. Lastly, compared to committee staff, personal staff experience .34 fewer positions during their employment in Congress. This result is unsurprising given the descriptive differences between personal and committee staff depicted in Figure 4.2 above.

Discussion and Implications

The *type* of turnover occurring in Congress is an important distinction to recognize. Staff turnover through the revolving door to K Street should not be categorized the same as staff turnover *within* the legislature. The former can pose issues to democratic legitimacy if the ex-staffer uses their connections to influence policy (e.g., McCrain 2018), while the latter type of turnover is less harmful to legislature because valuable institutional knowledge, or "muscle memory," remains.

My analysis of intra-institutional movement of staff is an important first step to fill this gap in the literature on staff careers. While these results may appear substantively small at first glance, I argue that these findings are important to position within the lens of individuals' careers: a promotion, or even holding one more position during your employment tenure, has important consequences for the individual financially (as promotion often means increase in pay) and future employment opportunities. The

differences in the number of positions held for male and female staff epitomizes this point (see Figure 4.3).

While this study is a first step in understanding staff movement within Congress, it generates some possible ideas that Congress could implement to improve staff recruitment and retention. First, staffing as a career should continue to be professionalized. Congress has recently taken note of this by forming the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress during the 116th (2019-2020) session.[29] Among other topics, the Select Committee is investigating ways to improve the retention and diversity of staff in Congress. By professionalizing, and in turn, legitimizing staffing as a career, more qualified and talented individuals will seek employment within the legislature. Second, and relatedly, members of Congress ought to provide staff clear opportunities for advancement, or a career ladder, within offices and the legislature more broadly. If an individual can envision a path forward in the institution, they are less likely to seek outside employment (Ito 2003), thanks in part to the additional perks that come along with promotion, like increases in salary (Pitts et al. 2011; Moynihan and Landuyt 2008).

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[29] For more information on the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress see: https://modernizecongress.house.gov/

5. Staff Turnover in State Legislatures

Introduction

      Legislative staff serve an important, but often overlooked, and under-studied role in the fifty American state legislatures. As "unelected representatives," staff aid legislators' fulfillment of constitutional duties, such as drafting legislation, constituent service, and oversight of the bureaucracy. While a growing body of work has begun to position staff in Congress as the unit of analysis (McCrain 2019; Crosson et. al 2018; Cain and Drutman 2014; Wilson 2013; Romzek and Utter 1997, 1996; DeGregorio 1995; Salisbury and Shepsle 1981), few studies do so at the state-level (Aldridge and Lee 2019; Provins 2018; Squire 2017, 1992; Lattimer 1985).

      To fill this gap in the literature, I examine staff in state legislatures (e.g., California, Missouri, and South Dakota), with a specific emphasis on career histories and turnover. I use an original dataset on staff turnover in state legislatures derived from state legislative manuals, or "Blue Books," to track individuals' employment history across time. In my analysis, I investigate how career trajectories for staff are distinct for men and women. Importantly, this dataset allows me to leverage the variation across state legislatures to understand how different institutional structures impact staff turnover, and in turn, staff retention in lower-resource legislatures. Additionally, the variation in state legislatures will shed light on how pecuniary and nonpecuniary compensation, such as salary and working conditions, impact staff recruitment and turnover.

      I begin with a brief history of staff development before highlighting the important role staff serve in state legislatures. I then turn my focus to the few studies that examine staff turnover, before turning to the variation of staffing resources and allocation across

the states. Next, I transition into describing my original dataset on staff in California, Missouri and South Dakota, focusing on turnover and gender.

A Brief History of Staff Development

Staff development in state legislatures is a function of institutional development. Thus, it has occurred at varying speeds across states. The historical trend across states can be best characterized as a change from small legislative libraries to specialized, technical staff (Lattimer 1985). To be sure, state legislatures experienced continuity in the foundation built by territorial assemblies and did not begin as "primitive start-ups" (Squire 2012, 216). At the congressional level, this change is marked from "Mom and Pop" operations to highly specialized enterprises (Loomis 1979; Salisbury and Shepsle 1981). Prior to the 1930s, legislative staff were non-partisan and mostly served as clerks and secretaries. The 1940s and 1950s saw a slight increase in legislative staff through the establishment of legislative libraries, but staff during this time continued to serve a non-partisan role (Lattimer 1985) and personal staff for individual members was rare (Squire 2012). From the 1930s to 1950s state legislatures began to lose the gains made in prior decades resulting in increased pressure from the public and calls for reform in the 1950s (Squire 2012).

In the 1960s, state legislatures experienced a series of reforms focused on improvement (Squire 2012; Huwa and Rosenthal 1977; Unruh 1964). At the state level, this included extending sessions, updating facilities, conducting more oversight, and adding more staff (Squire 1992). Similar to Congress, state legislatures needed to respond to changing economic and technological situations, and staff were directly influenced as a result (Lattimer 1985). This era saw a new type of legislator who was better educated and

no longer content relying on the governor for knowledge and support. Wisconsin, for example, implemented a series of reforms with an emphasis of increasing staff during the 1960s and 1970s partly as a partisan response to compete with the governor (Rosenthal 1973). Furthermore, Speaker of the California Assembly, Jesse Unruh, led the charge during this era through reform efforts focused on elevating the role of the legislature (Squire 2012). Among these reforms, Unruh increased the number of staff for members and committees and also provided training opportunities to increase the quality and effectiveness of staff (Unruh 1964, 1965). Other states shortly followed suit, due in part, to Unruh visiting several legislatures across the United States to speak on how they can professionalize their legislature, too (Squire 2012).

In addition to the internal efforts of members to reform the legislatures, the economic forces at play at both the national and state level shaped state legislative staff in the late 1970s and early 1980s (e.g., inflation and "Reaganomics") to be much more professional and partisan as the public looked to the government to respond to the crises (Lattimer 1985). Taken as a whole, the increasing expectations placed on state governments has resulted in legislative staff that are more professional, skilled, and serve an increasingly important role in institutional memory of state legislatures. Next, I turn my focus to this evolving and important role staff serve.

The Role of Staff in State Legislatures

While staff help Congress increase policy influence relative to the president, staff in state legislatures increase influence relative to the governor. This results in part because of the benefits staff provide to legislators: equipping them to be more informed regarding policy, increasing their ability to focus on lawmaking, and in turn, generating

greater job satisfaction and enhanced re-election prospects (Rosenthal 1974; Squire 2007).

For example, legislators in Virginia and Michigan (in 1974 and 1970, respectively) reported that the most difficult part of their job included obtaining adequate information, becoming knowledgeable on proposals, and understanding effects of legislation (Porter 1975; see Whiteman 1995 and Curry 2015 regarding information and staff at the congressional level). In addition, in a case study of the Illinois legislature in the mid-1990s, legislative staff were critical in helping legislators understand public opinion (Herbst 1998).

Interviews with staff and other policy actors in the California Legislature in 1977 revealed that staff are legislators' primary source of policy information (Sabatier and Whiteman 1985). Similarly, a survey of Minnesota legislators and staff conducted in 1997 found that while most policy ideas derive from legislators and their constituents, staff are heavily relied upon by lawmakers during policy formulation (Gray and Lowery 1977). In addition, staff report gathering additional policy information from executive agency officials, other states, and legislative study commissions (Gray and Lowery 2000). However, variations in these relationships exist across both time and space. For example, interviews with members of the Virginia House in 1974 suggested that legislators found information from other members and personnel in administrative agencies to be more helpful than information from personal legislative or committee staff (Porter 1975).

A case study of five state legislatures (Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Jersey) conducted in 1976 sought to understand interactions between

committee members and staff by interviewing both legislators and staff (Huwa and Rosenthal 1977). From a sample of 69 committee members and 26 staffers, staff were more likely to have completed graduate work in a social science field, while legislators were more likely to have law degrees. In addition, legislators reported focusing more on legislation, while staff were more concerned with research and transmitting information to legislators. However, for committee staff at least, staff provided more procedural knowledge than policy knowledge to legislators. Taken as a whole, the divergence of staff and lawmakers' roles in legislatures indicates that both serve important and distinct roles in the policymaking process.

In a more recent analysis, Provins (2018) examines the impact of control over informational resources, which she operationalizes as control over staff allocation, and party cohesion on floor voting. Provins finds that the centralization of staff, or when leadership controls staff allocation in the chamber, there is greater party cohesion. Importantly, Provins work builds on previous work on the impact of staff on policy (i.e. Sabatier and Whiteman 1985; Gray and Lowery 2000), in that it is not simply that staff help legislators be informed on policy, but that who controls the allocation of staff also matters. Next, I turn my focus to the limited research on staff turnover.

Staff Turnover in State Legislatures

Importantly, the rules governing staff allocation has also been found to influence staff turnover. Using Nebraska and Ohio as case studies, Anderson (1990) examined personal and committee staff turnover biennially from 1979-1989. He found that personal staff turned over at a similar rate in both legislative bodies, but that personal staff turned over at a higher rate compared to committee staff in both bodies. For example, in Ohio

committee staff assignments were centralized and the director of the Legislative Service

Commission assigned staff, while in Nebraska the committee chairman hired staff

directly. Committee staff turnover was significantly lower in Ohio than Nebraska, which

was due in part to how staff are assigned to positions. In an analysis of 20 standing

committees and legislators, committee staff report little desire to remain in the legislature

long-term and do not have clear career patterns or expectations compared to legislators

(Huwa and Rosenthal 1977). With the introduction of term-limits on state legislators,

some discussion was given to the impact on and influence of staff. However, there is not

a clear causal connection between staff size and term limits in state legislatures (Weberg

and Kurtz 2010), and legislators and staff alike do not report staff in term-limited

legislatures are more influential than staff in non-term limited legislatures (Carey et al.

2006).

Recall, because individual states experience distinct economic and political

circumstances that impact institutional development differently, legislative staff vary

across states and are a function of the unique institutional development of a legislature

(Lattimer 1985). Given this, next I turn my focus to the variation of staff across the 99

chambers in the 50 state legislatures before turning to my analysis of how this variation

impacts staff turnover in three legislatures.

Variation in Staff Across States

It is difficult to make generalizations about staff across the 50 states. Because

each state has experienced its own unique economic, social, and political circumstances,

the impact on legislative development varies. Given this, not all state legislatures are

created equal. The National Conference of State Legislatures conducts a survey of

legislative staff in state legislatures approximately every six to seven years.[30] States vary

in the size and type of type of staff employed (e.g., personal versus committee and

permanent versus session-only staff). Taking into account the variation across states and

using Congress as a baseline, Squire's professionalization index accounts for legislator

pay, days in session, and of most important for my purposes, the number of staff per

legislator (Squire 1992, 2007). More staff per legislator increases state legislatures'

professionalization. In 2015, the 50 state legislatures employed 31,678 permanent and

session staff (NCSL 2018). At the high end, the New York legislature employed 2,865

staff, followed by Texas (2,359), Pennsylvania (2,358). At the low end, Vermont

employed only 92 staff, followed closely by Wyoming (109) and South Dakota (114).

In addition, states vary in how staff are hired, paid, and in the benefits they

receive. In 37 chambers, legislative leaders or an administrative committee give final

approval for staff hires (e.g., Connecticut and Pennsylvania), while in 24 chambers

individual members have final say (e.g., Alaska and Iowa). In contrast to Congress,

individual members in most state legislatures have less authority in determining staff

salaries. Presiding officers or legislative leaders determine personal staff salaries in 26

chambers, while 17 chambers allow the member to determine pay. Of the 17 chambers

that allow the member to determine pay, the Alaska legislature and the Wisconsin Senate

require staff salary to follow a pre-determined pay-scale (NCSL 2010). Of the 99

chambers, 55 chambers allow personal staff to be eligible to receive employee benefits

and 49 chambers have paid sick leave benefits available for staff (NCSL 2010).

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[30] See: http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/staff-change-chart-1979-1988-1996-2003-2009.aspx

In short, the type of staff and the benefits staff receive varies greatly across legislatures. However, it remains unclear how this variation impacts staff turnover in the modern era. Understanding the variables that influence staff turnover is important because excessive turnover among staff inhibits legislators from fulfilling their legislative and representational duties, and also imperils institutional memory. To be sure, the more appealing a legislature can make working as a staffer, the more individuals will be attracted to the legislature and and the more they will likely want to remain once hired. However, few studies examine staff turnover in state legislatures as the main focus of analysis (with the exception of Arnold 1990). To fill this gap, I examine staff turnover in five chambers across California, Missouri, and South Dakota.

Data and Methods

These states in my analysis were selected for three reasons. The first reason is their legislative professionalization scores, which compares the institutional capacity of a state legislature to that of the U.S. Congress (Squire 1992). I sought to examine staff at different rankings of professionalization. In the 2015 professionalization scores, California ranked first among the 50 states, while Missouri ranked 16th, and South Dakota 48th (Squire 2017). Recall from the previous section, that professionalization scores have three components, with the number of staff in the legislature being one component. Table 5.1 depicts the number of staff in California, Missouri, and South Dakota at three recent time periods: 2003, 2009, and 2015. Because California is the most professionalized, its legislature employed a total of 2,101 staff, while Missouri employed 426, and South Dakota employed 114.

Table 5.1: Size of Legislative Staff in California, Missouri, and South Dakota in 2003, 2009, and 2015

	Permanent Staff			Session-Only Staff			Total Staff During Session (permanent + session)		
	2003	2009	2015	2003	2009	2015	2003	2009	2015
California	2,334	2,067	2,098	25	39	3	2,359	2,106	2,101
Missouri	321	474	403	28	35	23	349	509	426
South Dakota	56	55	58	19	51	56	75	106	114

Source: "Size of State Legislative Staff" by the National Conference of State Legislatures (October 8, 2018). https://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/staff-change-chart-1979-1988-1996-2003-2009.aspx. Date of access: February 10, 2020.

The second reason these three states are analyzed is data availability. I used state legislative manuals published available online to create an original dataset of staff in state legislatures. States vary in the availability of public information on their legislative staff. For example, Alabama and Alaska no longer publish manuals, while states like New York charge a fee for obtaining hard copies of manuals.[31] In addition, to the extent possible, I tried to analyze staff over the same time period. My dataset of staff in the California Assembly spans from 2014 to 2019, from 2009 to 2018 in both chambers of the Missouri General Assembly, and 2014 to 2019 in both chambers of the South Dakota Legislature. It is important to note that during these time periods none of these chambers experienced a change in party control.

Lastly, the third reason these legislatures are analyzed is because they all impose term limits on legislators. While there is not a clear causal connection between staff size and term limits in state legislatures (Weberg and Kurtz 2010), and legislators and staff

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[31] See *Ballotpedia*'s page of State Blue Books for more information: https://ballotpedia.org/State_Blue_Books.

alike do not report staff in term-limited legislatures are more influential than staff in non-term limited legislatures (Carey et al. 2006), term limits do impact the institutional structure of the legislature. As such, I opted to analyze only term-limited legislatures to make contrasts and comparisons simpler, with a goal of expanding the analysis in the future. It is important to note that the time periods under investigation occur after the year of term limits impact, or the first election cycle that impacted incumbent legislators', in each legislature.[32]

I am particularly interested in the relationship between gender and legislative staffing careers. While the legislative manuals do not identify individual staffer's gender, I was able to use the *gender* package in R to code staff gender (Mullen 2018). The *gender* package in R statistical software codes gender (male or female) according to an individual's first-name. The package uses historical sources (e.g., the U.S. Social Security Administration and the U.S. Census Bureau) to predict gender for first names. This method is not without faults, but it remains the best way to incorporate the analysis of gender into my project.[33]

While a growing body of work examines female state legislators (see, for example, Sanbonmatsu 2010; Bratton 2005; Arceneaux 2001; Squire 1992), to the best of

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[32] California enacted term limits in 1990, while the year of impact for House members occurred in 1996 and 1998 for Senate members. South Dakota enacted term limits in 1992 and legislators in both chambers were first impacted in 2000. Missouri also enacted term limits in 1992, but legislators were not impacted until 2002. For more information on term-limited states see: https://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/chart-of-term-limits-states.aspx

[33] To obtain a more accurate prediction of staff gender I would need individuals' date of birth to account for the change in gender associated with a first name over time. However, I do not have access to birth dates for staff in my dataset. Additionally, the gender package treats gender as binary (male or female) and is better described as sex-assigned-at-birth.

my knowledge, only one other study examines female staff. Aldridge and Lee (2019) present a novel dataset on female elected and unelected officials across all three levels of government in 2016. The authors' find a gender gap among staff in state legislatures, with females holding a greater percentage of staff positions (63 percent, or 7,631 positions) compared to male staff. Yet, while Aldridge and Lee (2019) make an important contribution by depicting raw counts of the number of female staff for one year (2016) they do not provide further analysis of gender and career dynamics for staff in state legislatures. However, studies on female legislators and most recently female staff in Congress, suggest distinct career dynamics for males and females (see, for example, Lawless and Theriault 2005; Rosenthal 2002; Swers 2002). For example, female staff in Congress are paid less and promoted at slower rates compared to male staff (Ritchie and You 2018).

In addition to gender, I created several variables to further analyze the dynamics of staff careers. The type of turnover occurring is important to distinguish. To be sure, turnover, when not excessive, can have positive implications for legislatures. Staff turnover can introduce new policy viewpoints and ideas (Whiteman 1995) and it allows for the possibility that a new employee is higher-performing (Meier and Hicklin 2008). However, turnover imposes costs on both legislators' offices and the larger institution. When a position becomes open, time and energy must be devoted to fill the position, resources must be devoted to training the new employee, and there is a potential loss of human capital (Kellough and Osuna 1995; Grissom, Viano, and Selin 2015). Given this, I created two variables to capture this distinction. The first variable, *turnover*, is an indicator variable coded as 1 if the staff left their position, either for another position in

the legislature or left the institution completely, and 0 if the staffer remained in their current position. The second variable, *promotion*, is an indicator variable that accounts for turnover within the institution, and is coded as 1 if the staffer left their position for a new position within the legislature, and 0 otherwise.

Sometimes, individuals exit the legislature but return at a later date. To account for this, I created a *returned* variable coded as 1 if an individual exited the legislature but returned one or more years/sessions later, and 0 otherwise. Lastly, *switched chambers* is an indicator variable coded as 1 if a staffer changed chambers (upper to lower, or vice versa) when they either turned over, were promoted, or returned to the legislature. However, *switched chambers* is only included in the analysis for staff in South Dakota and Missouri because data availability issues resulted in only the staffing information to be available for the California Assembly, the lower chamber of the legislature.

Taken together, this approach resulted in California, Missouri, and South Dakota being the best cases to study. To be sure, a more desirable dataset would account for all 50 state legislatures and 99 chambers, but the analysis below is an important first step in understanding staff turnover in state legislatures. I examine each state separately, because as I will discuss in greater detail, each varies greatly in regard to staff hiring, allocation, type, and data availability that makes aggregating the staffing datasets useless.

I put forward two hypotheses. The first is that the less professionalized a legislature, the lower the rate of promotion for staff compared to a more professionalized legislature (e.g., South Dakota and California, respectively). A more professionalized legislature can provide staff with a better work environment which, in turn, should reduce turnover and increase promotions. Furthermore, more professional legislatures have more

staffing positions creating more intra-institutional advancement opportunities, which should decrease turnover and increase advancement. Along these lines, research on civil servants in the federal bureaucracy find that opportunities for advancements helps attract and retain employees (Ito 2003).

My second hypothesis relates to gender and career dynamics. American institutions, particularly the U.S. Congress, are gendered institutions, meaning, "that gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power" (Acker 1992, 567). As noted above, at the congressional level, female staff are promoted at slower rates and receive lower compensation compared to male staff (Ritchie and You 2018). However, at the same time, studies on civil servants find that the impact of gender may be mediated by variables such as pay and opportunities for advancement (Kellough and Osuna 1995; Lewis and Park 1989). Given this, my expectation is female staff will have a higher rate of promotion in more professional legislatures (e.g., California and Missouri) compared to the least professional legislature in my study, South Dakota.

I present my results from the least professionalized to most professionalized legislatures: South Dakota, Missouri, and California. I conclude by discussing the results in a comparative context to understand if my hypotheses are supported.

Staff in the South Dakota State Legislature

The time period under investigation for staff in the upper and lower chambers of the South Dakota legislature covers 2014 to 2019 (the 89th to 94th sessions). South Dakota does not employ personal staff for individual legislators, however, the legislature does have committee staff and clerks. During this time period, 67 unique individuals were

employed. Of these 67 individuals, 19 were male and 48 were female. Recall, I am specifically interested in exploring in greater detail the relationship between gender and staffing. Given this, table 5.2 depicts staff turnover by gender and chamber in the South Dakota Legislature from 2014-2019, while figure 5.1 depicts these results graphically.

Table 5.2: Staff Turnover by Gender in the South Dakota Legislature, 2014-2019

Year	Total (House + Senate)		House		Senate	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
2014	3 (11)	8 (29)	1 (7)	3 (21)	2 (14)	5 (36)
2015	2 (7)	7 (25)	1 (8)	3 (23)	1 (7)	4 (27)
2016	2 (7)	8 (27)	1 (7)	4 (29)	1 (6)	4 (25)
2017	3 (10)	5 (17)	2 (14)	3 (21)	1 (6)	2 (13)
2018	2 (7)	7 (24)	1 (7)	3 (21)	1 (7)	4 (27)
2019	1 (3)	5 (17)	1 (8)	1 (8)	0	4 (24)

Note: Turnover rate for respective sample (in parentheses) = (total number of staff who turned over that year / total staff that year)*100 (rounded to the nearest whole number).

Figure 5.1: Staff Turnover by Gender and Chamber in the South Dakota Legislature, 2014-2019
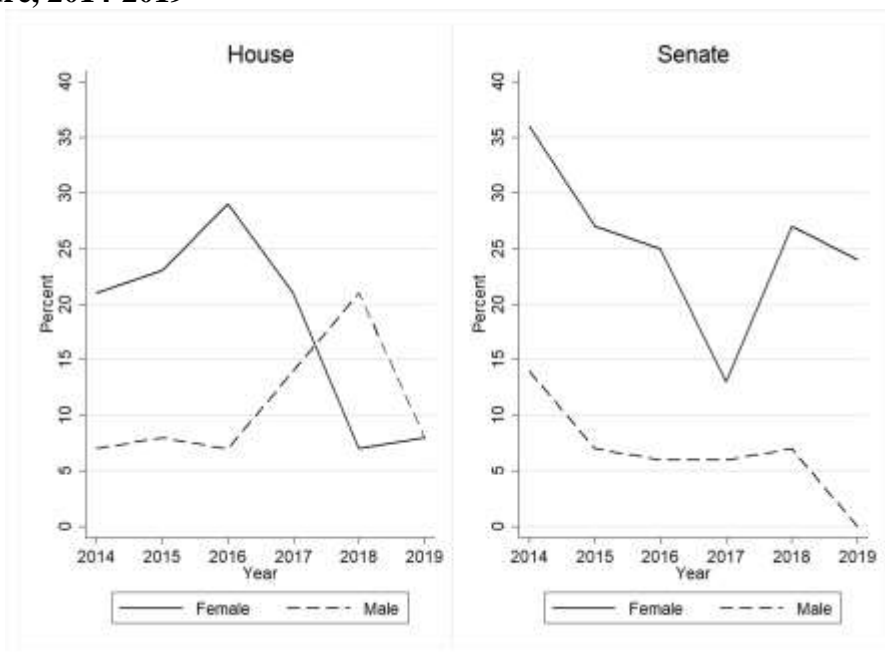
With the exception of the lower chamber in 2018, female staff exhibited higher

rates of turnover compared to male staff in both the South Dakota House and Senate, but

this difference is not statistically significant ($p = 0.902$). The average turnover rate for

females was greater in the Senate compared to the House, 25 percent and 21 percent,

respectively. In contrast, the average turnover rate for males was greater in the House

compared to the Senate, 9 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Table 5.3: Staff Promotion by Gender in the South Dakota Legislature, 2014-2019

	Total (House + Senate)		House		Senate	
Year	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
2014	0	1 (4)	0	0	0	1 (7)
2015	0	3 (11)	0	2 (15)	0	1 (7)
2016	0	1 (3)	0	0	0	1 (6)
2017	1 (3)	2 (7)	1 (7)	0	0	2 (13)
2018	0	2 (7)	0	1 (7)	0	1 (7)
2019	0	4 (13)	0	1 (8)	0	3 (18)

Note: Promotion rate for respective sample (in parentheses) = (total number of staff promoted that year / total staff that year)*100 (rounded to the nearest whole number).

During the time period under investigation, no males were promoted in the Senate

while one male was promoted in the House in 2017 (Table 5.3). This is in stark contrast

to the relatively stable promotions of females in the Senate, with at least one female being

promoted each year. Two females were promoted in 2015 and one female was promoted

in both 2018 and 2019. These data suggest working in the South Dakota Senate affords

females better promotion opportunities compared to males. To further explore the career

dynamics across chamber and gender, next I turn my focus to staff who switched

chambers when they were promoted and staff who exited but later returned to the

legislature.

Six staff switched chambers during this time period. Of these six staffers, five were female. Interestingly, all five female staff moved from the House to the Senate, while the sole male staffer to switch chambers went from the Senate to the House. Female staff exited and returned at a greater frequency compared to male staff. In total, 13 staff exited but returned to the legislature, 10 of which were female.

Staff in the Missouri State Legislature

My analysis of staff in the Missouri Legislature covers 2009 to 2018. During this time period, 859 unique individuals were employed. Of these 859 individuals, 519 were female and 340 were male. In contrast to the South Dakota legislature, Missouri allows legislators to employ personal staff. In the House, members are allowed one personal staff per member, while in the Senate the number of personal staff is limited by an annual dollar allowance. In both chambers, the member has the primary responsibility for hiring personal staff. Both chambers employ year-round staff and personal staff only conduct their work in capitol offices. The House uses a classification/pay scale system for personal staff but the Senate does not. Furthermore, the salary of personal staff in the Senate is based on an annual dollar allowance while a Human Resource Officer determines the salary of personal staff in the House. In both chambers of the Missouri legislature, staff receive the same benefit package as other legislative employees and are eligible for annual leave and paid sick leave.

Taken together, the benefits and employment opportunities afforded to staff in the Missouri legislature make it a much more appealing place to work compared to the South Dakota legislature. I begin my analysis of Missouri with an emphasis on turnover, then promotion, and end with staff who switch chambers or returned during this time period.

Table 5.4: Staff Turnover by Gender in the Missouri Legislature, 2009-2018

Year	Total (House + Senate)		House		Senate	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
2009-2010	39 (9)	73 (17)	15 (6)	50 (20)	24 (13)	23 (12)
2011-2012	57 (13)	92 (21)	33 (13)	55 (21)	24 (13)	37 (21)
2013-2014	64 (15)	85 (20)	39 (16)	49 (20)	25 (15)	36 (21)
2015-2016	68 (16)	78 (18)	41 (16)	46 (18)	27 (16)	32 (19)
2017-2018	24 (6)	46 (11)	16 (6)	28 (11)	8 (5)	18 (10)

Note: Turnover rate for respective sample (in parentheses) = (total number of staff who turned over that year / total staff that year)*100 (rounded to the nearest whole number).

Figure 5.2: Staff Turnover by Gender and Chamber in the Missouri Legislature, 2009-2018
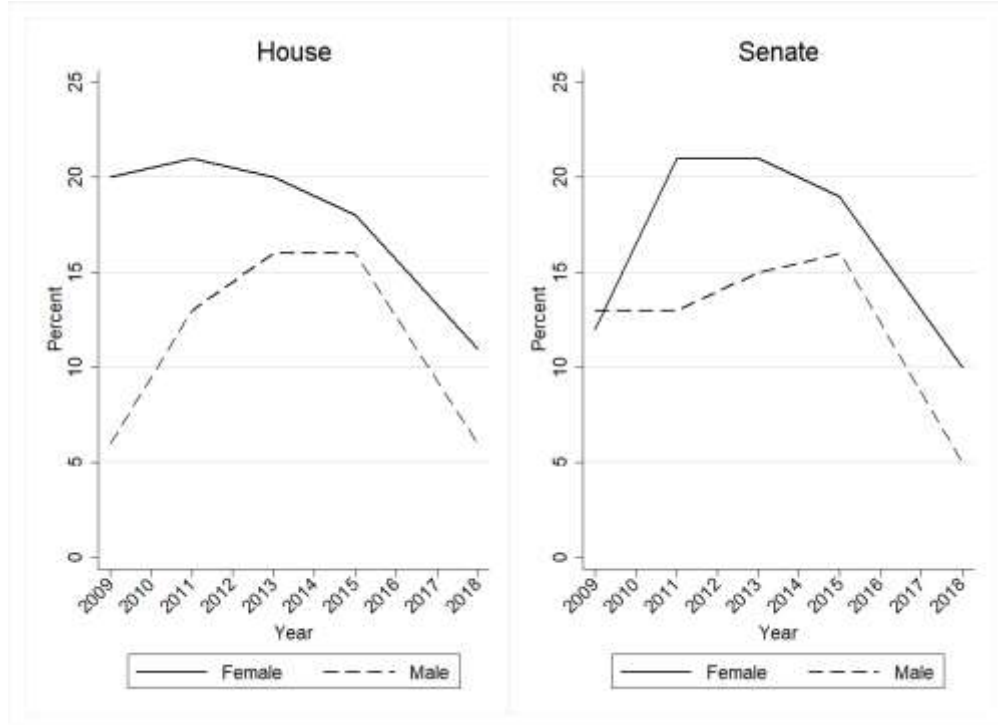
Female staff had higher turnover rates compared to male staff, with the exception

of the Senate in 2009 (*p*<.1). In total, male staff had an average turnover rate of 12

percent compared to females' 17 percent average turnover. In the House, female staff had

the highest rate of turnover in 2011 (21 percent) and the lowest rate in 2017 (11 percent).

In contrast, the highest turnover rate for male House staff was 16 percent (in 2013 and

2015) and lowest in 2009 and 2018 at 6 percent. Turnover in the Senate follows similar

patterns, with the turnover rate for female staff not exceeding 21 percent or 16 percent for

male staff.

Next, I turn my focus to staff promotion in Missouri, depicted in Table 5.5 and

Figure 5.3. With the exception of the House in 2013, female staff had higher promotion

rates compared to male staff in both chambers, but this difference is not statistically

significant ($p = 0.581$). In the House, males had an average promotion rate of 4 percent,

while females had a slightly higher rate of promotion at 5 percent. However, in the

Senate, the promotion rate for female staff was double that compared to male staff, 7

percent and 3 percent, respectively. Taken together, this suggests that working in the

Senate affords more opportunities for promotion, particularly for female staff.

Table 5.5: Staff Promotion by Gender in the Missouri Legislature, 2009-2018

	Total (House + Senate)		House		Senate	
Year	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
2009-2010	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011-2012	10 (2)	23 (5)	7 (3)	10 (4)	3 (2)	13 (7)
2013-2014	26 (6)	24 (5)	18 (7)	11 (4)	8 (5)	13 (8)
2015-2016	23 (5)	35 (8)	12 (5)	20 (8)	11 (6)	15 (9)
2017-2018	21 (5)	43 (10)	14 (5)	25 (10)	7 (4)	18 (10)

Note: Promotion rate for respective sample (in parentheses) = (total number of staff promoted that year / total staff that year)*100 (rounded to the nearest whole number).

Figure 5.3: Staff Promotion by Gender in the Missouri Legislature, 2009-2018
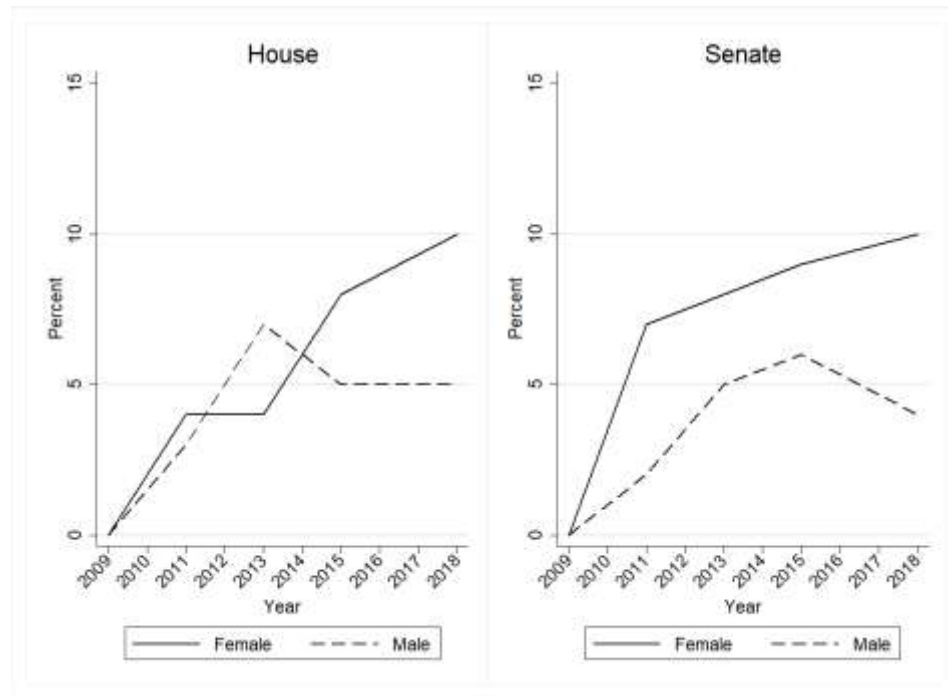
To further explore these chamber dynamics, I next focus on staff who switched chambers. During the time period under investigation in the Missouri State Legislature, 59 staff members switched chambers. Of these, 46 moved from the Senate to the House and 13 moved from the House to the Senate. More female staff switched chambers compared to male staff, 37 and 22, respectively. Of the 37 female staff, 31 moved from the Senate to the House, while six moved from the House to the Senate. Of the 22 male staff, 15 moved from the Senate to the House, while seven moved from the House to the Senate. These results are interesting in light of the higher promotion rates in the Senate discussed above. It is surprising that more staff would switch from the House to the Senate when it appears the Senate offers better promotion opportunities. It could be the case that staff are following a lawmaker. In term-limited states, lawmakers are routinely switch chambers to circumvent term-limits to remain in office (Butcher 2020). However, my data do not allow me to explore this because staff titles do not include the name of the

lawmaker. Yet, employment in the Missouri legislature remains attractive to at least 14 individuals who exited but returned to the legislature at a later date in the time period. Of the staff who returned, the gender difference is evenly split between male and female staff (seven and seven).

The California General Assembly

Because of limited data availability, I only analyze staff career dynamics in the California Assembly, the lower chamber of the legislature. However, I am able to distinguish between personal and committee staff. Furthermore, I was only able to obtain six snapshots of staff employment histories between 2014 and 2019.[34] I could not access a publicly available staff employment histories for 2018, however, as a next-best-alternative I rely on two histories published in 2019 (February 28 and November 30). The resulting dataset consists of 2,563 unique staffers. Similar to South Dakota and Missouri, there were more female staff than to male staff, 1,396 and 1,167, respectively.

The California employs year-round staff who work in either capitol or district offices. Individual Assembly members are allocated a personnel budget to hire staff and recommend salaries, but the Assembly Rules Committee approves the recommended salary. It is important to note the Assembly uses a classification/pay scale system for personal staff. Additionally, personal staff receive the same benefit package as other legislative employees and are eligible for annual leave and paid sick leave.

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[34] Staff employment histories were obtained from the California State Assembly website: https://www.assembly.ca.gov/salariesandexpenditures. The following employment documents published by the Assembly make up the dataset: November 30, 2014; November 30, 2015; November 30, 2016; August 28, 2017; February 28, 2019; and November 30, 2019.

As a whole, the California Assembly is similar to the Missouri legislature regarding staff benefits. However, I would expect employment in California to be more appealing than Missouri given how highly professionalized the California legislature is (recall, California ranked first and Missouri sixteenth according to Squire 2017). Because California has a larger staff compared to other legislatures (see Table 1), there are more opportunities for employment, and in turn, promotion in the legislature. In fact, 22 staff exited but returned to the legislature at a later date in the time period under investigation (11 females and 10 males).

I first examine staff turnover by gender and type of staff (personal versus committee) and then turn my focus to promotion by gender and type of staff.

Table 5.6: Staff Turnover by Gender in the California General Assembly, 2014-2019

	Total (Personal + Committee)		Personal		Committee	
Date	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
11/30/2014	162 (13)	191 (16)	124 (16)	127 (16)	38 (9)	64 (14)
11/30/2015	263 (22)	293 (24)	154 (19)	159 (20)	109 (26)	134 (32)
11/30/2016	253 (21)	311 (26)	173 (22)	192 (24)	80 (20)	119 (30)
08/28/2017	272 (23)	316 (27)	170 (22)	175 (23)	102 (24)	141 (33)
02/28/2019	174 (15)	241 (21)	103 (14)	132 (18)	71 (17)	109 (25)
11/30/2019	53 (5)	67 (6)	30 (4)	33 (5)	23 (5)	34 (8)

Note: Turnover rate for respective sample (in parentheses) = (total number of staff who turned over that year / total staff that year)*100 (rounded to the nearest whole number).

Figure 5.4: Staff Turnover by Gender in the California General Assembly, 2014-2019
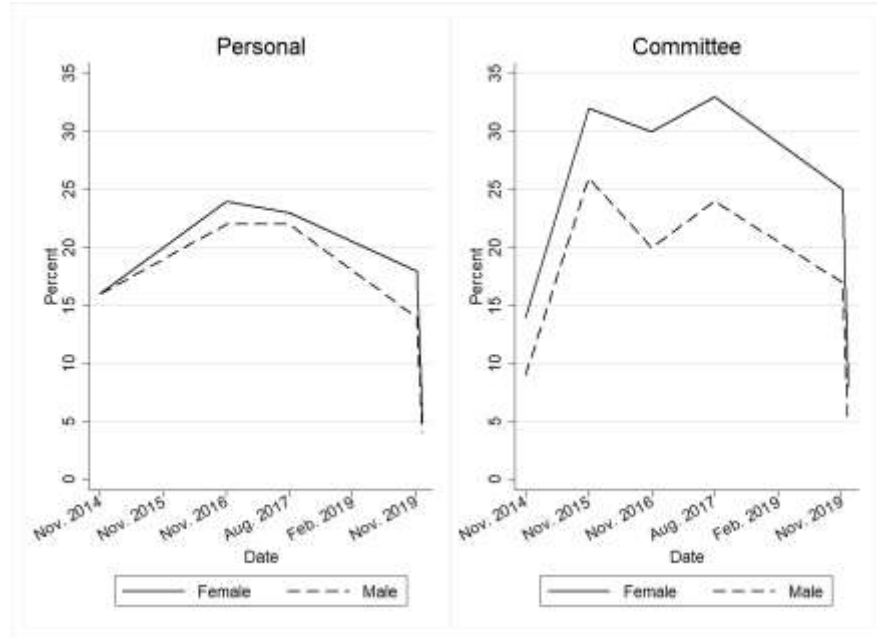
Overall, both female personal and committee staff had higher rates of turnover compared to male staff, but this difference is not statistically significant ($p = 0.173$). Male personal staff had their highest rate of turnover at 22 percent (in 2016 and 2017) and the lowest rate in 2019 (4 percent) and an average turnover rate of 16 percent. Female personal staff had an average turnover rate of 18 percent, with the highest turnover rate at 24 percent (in 2016) while the lowest was 5 percent (in 2019). Among males, the average turnover rate for committee staff is comparable to the average for personal staff, 17 and 16 percent, respectively. However, among females the difference between the average turnover rate for committee and personal staff is much greater, at 24 and 18 percent, respectively.

Table 5.7 and Figure 5.5 depict staff promotion by gender and type of staff. For both males and females, committee staff had higher rates of promotion compared to personal staff. Among male staff, the average promotion rate was 12 percent for

committee staff and 7 percent for personal staff. Among female staff, the average

promotion rate was 18 percent for committee staff and 8 percent for personal staff. Again,

female staff exhibit higher rates of promotion compared to male staff ($p<.01$)

Table 5.7: Staff Promotion by Gender in the California General Assembly, 2014-2019

Date	Total (Personal + Committee)		Personal		Committee	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
11/30/2014	4 (0.3)	7 (0.5)	2 (0.2)	6 (0.7)	2 (0.4)	1 (0.2)
11/30/2015	176 (15)	207 (17)	89 (11)	98 (12)	87 (21)	109 (26)
11/30/2016	136 (11)	194 (16)	80 (10)	97 (12)	56 (14)	97 (25)
08/28/2017	141 (12)	183 (15)	68 (8)	72 (9)	73 (17)	111 (26)
02/28/2019	117 (10)	167 (15)	63 (9)	78 (11)	54 (13)	89 (21)
11/30/2019	52 (5)	64 (6)	29 (4)	31 (4)	23 (5)	33 (8)

Note: Promotion rate for respective sample (in parentheses) = (total number of staff promoted that year / total staff that year)*100 (rounded to the nearest whole number).

Figure 5.5: Staff Promotion by Gender in the California General Assembly, 2014-2019

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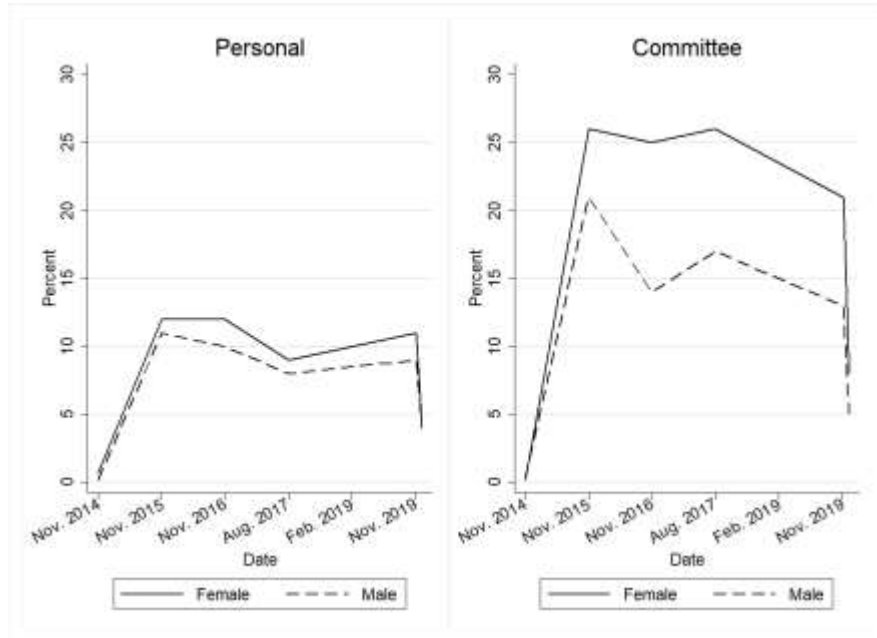
Discussion and Implications

Recall, I put forth two expectations for staff career dynamics. The first expectation was the less professionalized a legislature, the lower rate of promotion for staff compared to a more professionalized legislature (e.g., South Dakota and California, respectively). A more professionalized legislature can provide staff with a better work environment and more opportunities for advancement, which reduce turnover and increase promotion.

My first expectation is supported: the lower the rank in professionalization, the lower rate of promotion. South Dakota, ranked 48th in professionalization (Squire 2017) and had the lowest rate of promotion, 21 percent (14 of 67 staff). Missouri, which ranks 16th in professionalization, had a slightly higher rate at 24 percent (205 of 859 staff). The California General Assembly, which ranks first, had more than double the rate of promotion at 41 percent (1,054 of 2,563 staff) compared to South Dakota.

My second expectation was female staff will have a higher rate of promotion in more professional legislatures (e.g. California and Missouri) compared to the least professional legislature in my study, South Dakota. My second expectation is influenced by two bodies of work: female staff in Congress are promoted at slower rates and receive less compensation compared to male staff (Ritchie and You 2018), however, studies on civil servants find that the impact of gender may be mediated by factors such as pay and opportunities for advancement (Kellough and Osuna 1995; Lewis and Park 1989).

I find that my second expectation is supported: female staff have higher rates of promotion in more professional legislatures. However, while similar to Aldridge and Lee (2019), I find that female staff comprise a greater proportion of staffing positions

compared to males, but in contrast to Ritchie and You's (2018) analysis of congressional staff, female staff enjoy higher promotion rates compared to males. In South Dakota, no males were promoted in the Senate, one male was promoted in the House, and female staff exhibited a stable promotion rate of at least one female staff being promoted each year. In Missouri, with the exception of the House in 2013, female staff had higher promotion rates compared to male staff in both chambers. In the House, males had an average promotion rate of 4 percent, while females had a slightly higher rate of promotion at 5 percent. However, in the Senate, the promotion rate for female staff was double that compared to male staff, 7 percent and 3 percent, respectively. The results from South Dakota and Missouri suggest that working in the Senate affords more opportunities for promotion, particularly for female staff.

In comparison, staff in the California Assembly had much higher promotion rates. Among male staff, the average promotion rate was 12 percent for committee staff and 7 percent for personal staff. Among female staff, the average promotion rate was 18 percent for committee staff and 8 percent for personal staff. Again, female staff exhibit higher rates of promotion compared to male staff.

Staff in state legislatures are an understudied, albeit important, component to our understanding of the working environment and human capital in legislatures. Staff serve a vital role in aiding legislators' fulfillment of legislative and representational duties. In addition, excessive turnover among staff is an important loss of institutional memory. The results from my analysis suggest that more professional legislatures afford not only better work environments for legislators themselves, but their staff as well. I argue, this is due in part to opportunities for advancement provided by the larger number of positions

available for prospective and current staff. At the same time, my results contribute to the

study of gender and legislatures. Females comprise a majority of staffing positions in

state legislatures (Aldridge and Lee 2019) and are also promoted at higher rates

compared to their male colleagues, in contrast to staff working in the U.S. Congress

(Ritchie and You 2018). This suggests that working in state legislatures may be a

desirable career opportunity for females interested in public service.

6. Conclusion

Legislative staff have been referred to as the "invisible force" (Fox and Hammond 1977), the "third House" (Hill 1986), and "unelected representatives" (Malbin 1980). As "unelected representatives," staff aid legislators' fulfillment of constitutional duties, such as drafting legislation, constituent service, and oversight of the bureaucracy. As the "invisible force," legislative staff help foster institutional memory and policy knowledge in legislatures. Yet, a dearth of literature positions staff as the unit of analysis, instead, extant research is predominately focused on legislators. To be sure, legislators do not pursue electoral, legislative, and oversight goals and duties unaided.

Excessive turnover of staff inhibits legislators' fulfillment of their constitutional duties. Extant studies on turnover among public officials focuses on bureaucrats (Lewis 1991; Bertelli 2006; Lee and Whitford 2007; Grissom and Keiser 2011; Teodoro 2011; Bertelli and Lewis 2012; Grissom, Viano, and Selin 2015) and legislators (e.g., Polsby 1968; Price 1971; Fiorina et al. 1975; Squire 1988; Overby and Masthay 2017). Of the studies that examine turnover among staff, the focus is predominately on explaining why staff leave Congress (Fox and Hammond 1977; Salisbury and Shepsle 1981b; Henschen and Sidlow 1986; Jensen 2011), or when and why staff leave for the revolving door (LaPira and Thomas 2014; Cain and Drutman 2014; McCrain 2018). In this dissertation, I coupled the literature on staff with studies on bureaucratic turnover to understand what factors impact staff turnover intra-institutionally and exit from the legislature. Given this, I defined turnover as exit from the staffing profession completely and as exit from a current position to a new staffing position either within the same office/committee or to another office/committee within the legislature.

To be sure, turnover, when not excessive, can have positive implications for legislatures. Staff turnover can introduce new policy viewpoints and ideas (Whiteman 1995) and creates the possibility that the new employee is higher-performing (Meier and Hicklin 2008). However, turnover imposes costs on both legislators' offices and the institution. When a position becomes open, time and energy must be devoted to fill the position, resources must be devoted to training the new employee, and there is a loss of human capital (Kellough and Osuna 1995; Grissom et al. 2012). Staff help legislators obtain policy-relevant information to draft legislation, conduct oversight of the executive branch, and serve as an important representative linkage by assisting legislators with constituency service. Given this, excessive turnover among staff inhibits legislators' ability to effectively conduct the duties of their office.

The type of turnover occurring in legislatures matters and is an overlooked point in extant studies on staff turnover. When a staffer exits completely from a legislature they take with them their institutional memory, however, when a staffer advances in the career ladder within the legislature their institutionally memory remains. The former type of turnover is more harmful to the institution than the latter. Certainly, staff turnover can also pose issues for democratic legitimacy when staff use their skills and connections gained while working in the legislature to become lobbyists. A growing body of work has begun to position staff as the unit of analysis, but there remains to be a comprehensive understanding of staff turnover.

My dissertation builds upon the growing body of literature on legislative staff (Shepard and You 2020; Hertel-Fernandez 2019; Mills and Selin 2017). First, I explore the factors that make congressional staff want to leave Congress by conducting personal

interviews with congressional staff and utilizing an original survey of staff to examine staffer intention to leave and observable turnover. While paying staff a living wage is one way to help recruit and retain qualified individuals to work in Congress, it is not the only way. My findings suggest that factors like work place environment, such as office management, and burnout impact turnover among staff. These findings should not be considered entirely surprising, however, this study is, to the best of my knowledge, one of two studies to survey staff about their turnover intention (Jensen 2011) but also the first to actually track staffers' next employment in a systematic way.

In my second analysis, I explore the factors that make staff continue to work in Congress by extending the analysis of staffer turnover and the revolving door to employment histories within Congress. I argue that by professionalizing, and in turn, legitimizing staffing as a career, more qualified and talented individuals will seek employment within the legislature. Relatedly, members of Congress ought to provide staff clear opportunities for advancement, or a career ladder, within offices and the legislature more broadly. If an individual can envision a path forward in the institution, they are less likely to seek outside employment (Ito 2003), due in part to the additional perks that come along with promotion, like increases in salary (Pitts et al. 2011; Moynihan and Landuyt 2008). I also find evidence of gender differences in career patterns for male and female staff. Compared to males, female staff experience fewer positions during their employment in Congress (see also, Ritchie and You 2018).

In my third analysis, I turn my focus to staff in three state legislatures (South Dakota, Missouri, and California) by leveraging the variation across states' hiring practices, salary, and benefits for staff to understand the impact on turnover. I find the

lower the rank in professionalization of the legislature (Squire 2017), the lower rate of promotion among staff. I also find that female staff have a higher rate of promotion in more professional legislatures (e.g. California and Missouri) compared to the least professional legislature in my study, South Dakota. However, while similar to Aldridge and Lee (2019), I find that female staff comprise a greater proportion of staffing positions compared to males, but in contrast to Ritchie and You's (2018) analysis of congressional staff, female staff enjoy higher promotion rates compared to males. The results from my analysis suggest that more professional legislatures afford not only better work environments for legislators themselves (Squire 1992), but their staff as well. I argue, this is due in part to opportunities for advancement provided by the larger number of positions available for prospective and current staff. At the same time, my results contribute to the study of gender and legislatures. Females comprise a majority of staffing positions in state legislatures (Aldridge and Lee 2019) and are also promoted at higher rates compared to their male colleagues, in contrast to staff working in the U.S. Congress (Ritchie and You 2018). This suggests that working in state legislatures may be a desirable career opportunity for females interested in public service.

While my dissertation makes important contributions noted above, it also opens up several possible avenues for future research. Among others, the ripest area for future research is to explore in greater detail the career differences for male and female staff in legislatures. While studies are beginning to examine this at the congressional level (e.g., Ritchie and You 2018), more ought to be done at the state-level (e.g., Aldridge and Lee 2019). In the future, I intend to pursue this avenue of by expanding my dataset on staff in

three state legislatures (South Dakota, Missouri, and California) to comprise more

legislatures.

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