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## Congressional Committees, Legislative Influence, and the Hegemony of Chairs

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### Abstract

Congressional committees play a central role in policymaking, and the members of the most important committees are thought to be particularly powerful, but committee chairs have received less scholarly attention. We study the effects of congressional committee positions on legislative influence—analyzing legislative effectiveness, campaign contributions, and the implied value of being lobbied—and utilizing a within-member design that allows us to distinguish the effects of committee positions from selection into committee positions. We find little evidence that a seat on an important committee makes a member of Congress more powerful, but members do experience a significant increase in power when they become chair of a committee. Our results suggest that much of the power associated with committee positions in Congress is concentrated among a small set of chairs that play a disproportionate role in policymaking.

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