

Lobbying in Context: New Measures to Understand Lobbying Goals and Success

By

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Efforts to understand who wins and who loses in lobbying contests have not borne clear and consistent results. Widespread public opinion to the contrary, greater amounts of lobbying activity or political action committee (PAC) spending are not always correlated with interest group victory. Although scholars have formed strong theoretical arguments supporting a preferred position for business interests, empirical research has not shown this to be the case. In short, we continue to know surprisingly little about who wins and who loses when groups take action over matters of public policy.

My dissertation addresses this shortcoming by identifying and studying issue-specific lobbying goals and objectives set by groups during a single congressional session. I develop three novel measurements, which I use to compare relative lobbying strength among groups competing during this time period.

To provide a foundation for understanding lobbying, researchers have attempted to develop broad, generalized descriptions of what groups are trying to achieve when they work with policy makers. For example, much research has focused on whether interest groups are trying to persuade legislators, purchase favorable decisions, or subsidize greater effort on behalf of their policy priorities.

While such broad frameworks are important, they necessarily gloss over contextually-relevant factors influencing specific lobbying enterprises. When relying on general descriptions of lobbying goals, researchers may not have enough information about

what an organization is trying to accomplish in a particular case to determine whether or not that organization is truly successful in achieving their individualized goals.

For example, if an organization is trying to defeat a piece of legislation, are they successful or unsuccessful when the language is changed to address some of their most serious concerns? If a group secures time in a committee hearing to bring attention to their issue, have they been successful even when that congressional session ends without a change in current law? If a group spends all of its time successfully enacting or defeating legislation that is relatively unimportant to them and no time working on their major priorities, can we brand their efforts an ultimate success? Success clearly depends on a group's individual and often incremental goals as well as the broader contexts in which they are lobbying. Interest group scholars must therefore develop new outcome measures that consider the contextual elements of individual campaigns.

Without new methods to determine whether a group achieved their particular and often nuanced goals, studies of relative lobbying strength are likely doomed to continue producing inconsistent or even misleading results.

Theoretical discussions about the broad goals of lobbyists aside, organizations are attempting to achieve specific and concrete objectives when working to influence legislative or executive policy making. To understand what types of organizations are successful, I suggest shifting from broader and often cloudy discussions about the theoretical motives of organizations to the identification and measurement of progress toward concrete objectives. I estimate progress toward three objectives that can be adapted to understand the contexts of any lobbying effort:

1. Which organizations are able to work on the policy issues that are most important to them?
2. Which organizations are able to engage in key categories of lobbying activities?
3. Which organizations successfully achieve or block passage of the specific policy changes goals they identified at the beginning of a legislative session?

The results of this research take into consideration the specific goals of individual lobbying campaigns at the same time that they offer answers to fundamental questions about pluralism and representative democracy. Based on this analysis, I am able to determine when and how greater financial resources matter, whether or not business organizations are better positioned to achieve their objectives than their nonbusiness counterparts, and the degree to which partnerships with legislative offices and advocacy coalitions improve the probability of success. Importantly, I also address the impact of the congressional agenda and the range of viable issues moving in Congress on the lobbying efforts of interest groups.

By studying the results of qualitative interviews in conjunction with a quantitative research design, I can also determine why interest group representatives believe their efforts are relatively stronger or weaker than those of groups competing against them. The elite interviews conducted during this research combine with quantitative questions and organizational research to help establish clear and potentially causal relationships regarding the strategic decisions of lobbyists and their ultimate success or failure.

Gun Control 2013: A Case in Point

At first glance, conducting lobbying research appears reasonably simple and clear. Some groups want to pass legislation or enact new executive orders. Others want to defeat those same initiatives. Scholars should be able to gather data, evaluate lobbying activities on both sides of these contests, examine committee or floor votes or executive decisions, and then see which groups win or lose.

The recent battle over gun control demonstrates how difficult it is to measure a specific lobbying campaign along these general lines. While this particular campaign does not take place during the time period of my research, it nevertheless illustrates my major concerns with traditional lobbying research.

In the wake of the shooting deaths of 26 children and adults in Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, the Obama Administration launched a major policy and media campaign in support of a package of gun control initiatives. But the White House could not simply announce its proposal. It first had to enlist and manage the gun control advocates who needed to support the administration's initiatives (Epstein 2013).

In support of stronger gun control laws, organizations like the Brady Campaign, the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, and the new Americans for Responsible Solutions surely wanted to see their priorities reflected in the White House proposal. To be a part of the process, however, White House staff reportedly offered such organizations a deal. Gun control advocates could have access to key planning meetings but they could not disagree with each other outside of these meetings or criticize the administration in the press. In short, they had to toe the administration's final line. In exchange, participating groups earned a seat at weekly meetings with White House and

congressional staff with the added proviso that they never discuss what happened in these closed-door sessions.

As will be discussed in later chapters, the structure of this lobbying venture varies considerably from common conceptions about lobbying. The White House and Congress were not passive actors responding to interest group demands and information. They instead played meaningful roles as the champions and leaders of lobbying campaigns.

Most importantly, this example shows the difficulty in describing who wins and who loses in specific lobbying campaigns. Several significant gun control measures came out of these discussions and made it into the administration's initial package, including universal background checks, tighter regulations on gun ownership for those with mental health disorders, and an assault weapons ban.

Let us imagine an organization that supported a different agenda – a complete ban on handguns for example. In the end, they may agree to toe the administration's line, but in doing so they end up spending time working on issues that were not their highest priority. Their advocacy agenda to support a handgun ban would likely be entirely neglected. Certainly, their subsequent efforts and potential victories are substantively different than an organization that wanted to prioritize a less radical policy of universal background checks from day one. Without talking to representatives of these organizations, however, such differences would be obscured in the aggregate data.

Similarly, what about an organization that supported the White House measures but was not permitted access to these meetings? If we simply calculate their position and results, they would appear to be as successful as any gun control organization on the list of bill supporters. Yet they were simply along for the lobbying ride and likely wielded little or

no influence on the debate. They were undoubtedly not able to work as hard as they wanted on the issue because they were not privy to the most important meetings. While their final policy goals might be realized, they were also unable to engage in many of the important lobbying activities, such as helping to draft legislative language or meeting with high-level policy makers

Other possibilities abound in this scenario.

There are mental health organizations in Washington, for example, that oppose gun access restrictions on people with mental illnesses as a form of discrimination. Such an organization may decide to challenge the Obama Administration on this issue. On the other hand, they may back off entirely because they do not want to offend the White House and jeopardize support for other key priorities such as appropriations for community mental health centers or mental health parity protections in the new health care reform law. It would be easy for a researcher evaluating contributions or lobbying visits to be unaware of this group's opposition to tighter gun regulations since they will not actively lobby on the issue. They may even remove their position statement from their webpage or policy documents so that their opposition is imperceptible to the public. In short, the organization's weakness at the agenda-setting stage would go unnoticed unless researchers offered them confidentiality and talked to them one-on-one.

Perhaps most importantly, if current political assumptions hold, the majority of these gun control measures are unlikely to pass during the current Congress and be signed into law. So how do we calculate the success or failures of groups supporting them? Is it all a wash and should all groups should be considered equally powerless? Or should researches

score the ability of a group to participate in White House briefings and ensure that their priorities were included in the proposed package a partial success?

Clearly, the specific contexts of lobbying campaigns and the organizations working on them need to be taken into consideration in order to evaluate the end winners and losers. Researchers must understand which organizations are able to work on their priorities rather than react to the preferences of others. We need to know which groups are able to access key policy-making bodies and engage in crucial lobbying activities. Finally, scholars must consider the specific process and outcome goals of individual lobbying organizations to determine their degree of real success.

Theoretical Foundations

In their seminal review of interest groups research, Baumgartner and Leech (1998) analyze multiple studies of lobbying influence. Out of the fourteen studies they reviewed, only six found clear evidence of lobbying influence on congressional decision making. More recent research has done little to clear up this confusion (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Andrews and Edwards 2004; Nownes 2006). Lobbying is typically conceptualized as attempts to purchase votes or persuade decision makers, but empirical analysis has not found clear evidence that greater lobbying expenditures or activities consistently result in vote changes.

Alternatively, Hall and Deardorf (2006, p 69) model lobbying as “legislative subsidy” in which lobbying is predominately seen as a “matching grant of policy information, policy intelligence and legislative labor.” Under this framework, the goal of the lobbyist is to affect

how hard members work on an organization's preferred issues rather than to change the members' votes on legislation.

The problem with identifying lobbying winners or losers is that the results depend on our ability to analyze specific lobbying ventures and then fit them into these broad theories about goals. Each of these three goals imposes a distinct perspective about outcomes and colors the way researchers perceive success and failure. If lobbying is about purchasing votes or other types of legislative behavior, we should simply be able count financial contributions and examine the effects on committee and floor vote counts, levels of testimony in hearings, and communications between legislative offices and with constituents. If the underlying goal is actually persuasion, we should be able to examine lobbying contacts and other communications and estimate the effects of interaction on these same outcomes.

Of course, if the goal is to subsidize effort, these models are turned upside down because this type of lobbying is predominately done with allies, and we would therefore not expect to find changes in voting or other types of legislative decision making. Theoretically, differences in resources should still matter because groups with larger "legislative subsidies" in the form of research assistance, grassroots mobilization, and dedicated staff support will be more likely to encourage members of Congress to work on their priorities than groups with less valuable subsidies.

Although Hall (1996) found impressive results in his examination of the effect of lobbying on legislative output, the relationships between lobbyists and lobbying groups have often been going on for many years if not decades, and it is difficult to determine if legislators are responding to these past relationships, lobbying subsidies, or if lobbyists are

simply following the priorities of their congressional leaders. As Baumgartner et al. (2006) demonstrate and Ainsworth (1997) hinted at several years prior, lobbying often takes place through enterprises where teams of lobbyists work in conjunction with legislative offices to oppose teams of other lobbyists working alongside their legislative allies. Determining true causal relationships and the effects of lobbying efforts is therefore fraught with problems of endogeneity.

Even if, as Hall contends, a large proportion of lobbying efforts are about legislative subsidy, there are surely times when lobbyists are working to change votes. When lobbyists develop lists of “undecided” or “lean to” and “lean against” legislators before a vote and then unleash a flood of grassroots correspondence, their goal is certainly not to subsidize the efforts of these offices. In truth, interest groups undoubtedly focus on different goals at different times, and it is necessary to develop measurements that take campaign-specific objectives and contexts into account.

This is not solely a mechanical exercise. Interest group research lies at the heart of classical debates between pluralist and elite theorists. Whether we are talking about lobbying as purchasing, persuading, or subsidizing policy decision making, pluralist theories contend that all organizations are represented and that, although certain groups may be advantaged at particular times, such advantages are not cumulative (Truman 1951; Dahl 1961). Elite theory’s famous heavenly chorus (Shattsneider 1975), on the other hand, argues that groups with greater resources and preferred positions are better able to influence law makers and even control policy agenda setting. Such arguments also extend to interest group organizing where Olsen (1965) argues and Walker (1983) adds evidence showing that wealthier organizations with concentrated benefits are more likely to

overcome the costs of collective action and enter the policy making arena on their members' behalf. Nowhere is this classic debate more relevant than in interest group research where lobbyists compete over specific policy objectives. Developing contextually-specific goals may add the necessary empirical evidence to answer some of political science's most fundamental questions.

On top of arguments about the impact of disparate organizational resources, many theorists have argued that groups representing businesses enjoy a preferred position in policy debates. These arguments have led to a near consensus among interest group scholars that business and industry hold an advantage over their lobbying counterparts. Some have focused on the tools available to these lobbies, such as overlapping boards of directors that help leaders align preferences through group strategies, while others have examined structural advantages such as the ability of firms to punish policy makers for wayward votes by relocating their home offices and manufacturing plants (Hart 2004; Hacker and Pierson 2002; Smith 2000; Domhoff 1996; Block 1987; Linblom 1977; Mills 1956).

Demonstrating that business groups wield relatively greater influence over actual government decisions, however, has proven to be just as difficult as identifying the influence of money in lobbying contests. Here again, we have not developed the right tools to measure lobbying influence. To understand the effects of factors such as organizational revenue and business representation, this dissertation identifies an innovative trio of measurements and controls for multiple organizational and issue-based factors influencing lobbying efforts and opportunities for success. While such measurements may fall short of

identifying moments of true influence, they each represent important precursors to lobbying influence as well as provide new indicators of relative group strength.

Theory

My research evaluates several theories concerning lobbying success and failure but focuses on four primary hypotheses and three measurements of lobbying success. I am interested in measuring which groups are able to: work on the issues that are important to them; best take advantage of lobbying tactics including direct lobbying, indirect lobbying, coalition lobbying, spending, and executive lobbying; and accomplish the goals they set for themselves at the beginning of a policy campaign. In particular, I test how organizations fare when evaluating lobbying efforts in the congressional arena.

Crucially, these measurements are flexible enough to fit the nuanced context of each organization's lobbying campaign. An organization may not be focused on securing a vote in Congress. They may just want to change the language of a particularly troubling amendment, call attention to an issue to set up future debate, or prevent a policy proposal from gaining traction at the committee level. Since goals are typically specific to individual campaigns, measuring votes or even the amount of attention issues receive in Congress or the executive branch misses the underlying intentions of many campaigns.

At the same time, all organizations want to work on the issues that are important to them. After controlling for key variables such as the importance given to the issue, organizations want to be able to utilize key lobbying tactics in order to communicate with policy makers, the media, and their own membership. Perhaps most importantly, every organization seeks to accomplish the specific and concrete goals they establish for their own

lobbying campaigns whether that is to change legislative language, secure a hearing, or prevent an issue from coming up for a vote.

Each of my four major hypotheses are more fully explained in the theory sections of the following chapters. However, I will briefly review the structure of my dissertation and my contributions here.

My first hypothesis focuses on the congressional agenda. In some ways, the congressional agenda could be perceived as a control variable. While organizations may influence the agenda, they are often restricted by what policy makers are willing to discuss during any given period of time (see Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Still, it is important to understand how organizations react when facing the limited number of issues that are receiving attention from policy makers. Organizations may exert greater effort on issues that are active on the congressional agenda. They may also engage in more categories of lobbying activities when issues are being actively debated in Congress and secure victories when congressional windows open for their priorities.

H1: Organizations will be better able to spend time on key issues, utilize a range of lobbying activities, and achieve their specific goals when an issue is already on the congressional agenda.

My second hypothesis addresses the benefits of organizational resources. Organizational resources are likely to be tied to each of the measures of organizational lobbying success that I develop in this dissertation. Organizations with greater resources should be better positioned to spend sufficient time on their priorities and partake of the various lobbying techniques explored in this research. For example, differences in resources are likely to consistently limit an organization's ability to connect members to policy

makers, maintain staff relationships, and conduct a host of other activities. It is also logical to predict that these benefits will extend to actual policy victories.

H2: Organizations with greater revenue will be better able to spend time on key policy issues, utilize a range of lobbying activities, and achieve their specific lobbying goals.

My third hypothesis examines the benefits of working with outside partners. Alliances with legislative champions, defined as members of Congress and offices working with interest groups to support particular issues and coalitions of likeminded organizations, will result in more positive outcomes across all three measures. I hypothesize that legislative champions and strong coalitions will be positively associated with lobbying success because they offer organizations the motivation and technical resources to engage in a wider variety of tactics, obtain access to legislative offices, and connect with partners' with greater access to information or influential grassroots memberships.

H3: Organizations that partner with legislative champions and supportive coalitions will be better able to spend time on key issues, utilize a range of lobbying activities, and achieve their specific lobbying goals.

My fourth hypothesis examines the benefits attributable to organizations with business memberships. As has been discussed earlier, there are many reasons to believe that business organizations and those representing them maintain lobbying advantages even if these results have not been consistently found in prior empirical research.

H4: Groups representing business and industry will be better able to spend time on key issues, utilize a range of lobbying activities, and achieve their specific lobbying goals.

Methods

My analysis is based on two sets of interviews with health care, agriculture, and cultural/religious interest groups conducted during the summers of 2009 and 2010. I randomly sampled 40 nongovernmental interest groups from each of these issue areas from the *Washington Information Directory* (2008-2009), the CQ Press directory of government agencies and nongovernmental groups in the Washington, DC area.

After sending introductory letters and calling each organization up to five times, I successfully interviewed representatives from 81 organizations in the summer 2009 on 224 policy issues and re-interviewed 70 of them on 183 of these same issues in the summer of 2010. Information gained from these interviews was supplemented with data from 2009 annual reports, federal 990 forms, and Federal Election Commission records.

Interviews were held in person at the lobbyists' Washington-area offices or at nearby locations of their choosing. I asked interviewees about the most recent two policy issues they had worked on and a third issue which they had not been able to give as much attention as they would like. Issues sampled through these two types of questions were combined in the analysis so that any single interview covered up to three separate policy issues, depending on whether there was an issue that the group had been unable to adequately address.

During the interviews, I asked individual lobbyists about the importance of the sampled issue to their organization's mission, the level of effort that they had been able to give it during the current year, and the reasons they chose to work on the issue at a given level. The specific wording of these and follow up questions are detailed in the following

chapters along with a description of how I operationalized interviewee's answers for quantitative analysis.

Scholars of interest groups and lobbying do not benefit from the existence of large, pre-existing databases. Instead, we typically must connect directly with our subjects, ask questions about their work, and combine this information with existing data to test hypotheses. Fortunately, such labor-intensive interviews may offer scholars a chance to better understand what is happening behind the data. Interviewees can help establish clear relationships between variables because the lobbyists themselves may be able to explain what factors encouraged or discouraged their efforts and can then go into detail about how specific strategies are tied to concrete outcomes. In many circumstances, there are good reasons for political scientists to be skeptical about explanations offered by elite interviewees. Respondents may not possess clear insights about their own behavior and some interviewees might have reasons to exaggerate or even lie. In the case of this research, however, the interviewees were in a position to explain why they worked at various levels on specific policies, initiated certain tactics, and then describe exactly what happened to specific policy initiatives that may not be covered by other sources. I did not hold general discussions about overall lobbying approaches and instead focused on specific situations that could only be described by the interviewees themselves. Guaranteeing confidentiality reduced any systematic incentives for interviewees to lie in order to gain credit for victories or avoid the consequences of unethical behavior. In short, I talked directly to those can best describe specific strategies and lobbying outcomes and removed potential barriers to honest reporting.

The methods selected for this research are not without limitations. My interviews represent two snapshots taken during a single legislative session. Through my interviews, respondents are able to discuss why they are working on current policies, which activities they have undertaken, and report results up to a certain date. In many cases, the interviewees describe the past work of organizational staff, coalitions, or leaders in Congress as the motivations for their work. But I am not able to discuss events that may precede the interviewees' memory. In addition, efforts undertaken in previous congressional sessions may affect legislative outcomes in this one. Nor am I able to describe policy outcomes that take place after this research concluded even though these lobbying efforts could potentially result in policy changes at a later date. That said, by talking directly to the lobbyists themselves, I believe that this research accurately reflects the motivations, activities, and outcomes involved in these lobbying ventures during the time period studied. Furthermore, any error caused by this point-in-time approach should affect all interviewees equally and not result in systematic bias.

Dissertation Framework and Summary of Findings

This dissertation is divided into three substantive chapters each focusing on one of my three dependent variables. The results show that the accuracy of my four hypotheses varies depending on the circumstances associated with the lobbying campaign studied. Legislative champions, defined as members of Congress and congressional staff working alongside lobbying organizations, are important indicators of what organizations will choose to lobby on. Money matters, but when congressional agendas tighten these differences are relatively less important because all groups are more equally constrained.

My research also demonstrates the strength of groups representing memberships composed of business and industry and adds empirical evidence to the body of research arguing for their theoretical advantages.

Chapter 2 examines how groups make decisions about what issues to prioritize or where to spend their time and effort. This research shows they are driven in part by what can move on the congressional agenda. In this sense, a state-centric perspective has merits in that the political makeup of Congress shapes the range of issues interest groups can spend their time working on.

This line of research also shows that organizational differences matter. Their influence, however, depends on timing. Business and nonbusiness interest groups with greater resources and more sophisticated lobbying and fundraising assets, such as associations with PACs, are able to put more effort behind their issues at the beginning of a legislative session, but such organizational differences are no longer statistically significant as the congressional agenda narrows in the second year of a legislative session.

It also appears that two legislative techniques allow lobbyists to work on their policy issues even as the range of issues being considered by Congress narrows. Organizations that partner with legislative champions and supportive coalitions are able to put greater effort behind their chosen policies.

While these partnerships appear able to mobilize groups to work harder even in the face of a narrowing legislative agenda, Chapter 3 reveals they are not always able to perform this feat when it comes to engaging organizations in more types of lobbying activities. Supportive coalitions were not related to increased use of direct lobbying in any year. It appears these partnerships are able to mobilize groups to work harder but do not

have a similar effect in encouraging additional forms of activity. For example, an organization that predominately engages in grassroots or indirect lobbying, such as mobilizing constituent correspondence to Congress, may engage in greater amounts of such activities when partnering with a larger coalition. At the same time, they are unlikely to engage in whole new forms of lobbying such as meeting directly with congressional staff.

Chapter 3's examination of specific lobbying activities reveals clear advantages for interest groups representing business and industry memberships. Such groups were more likely to engage in more types of direct lobbying, such as visits with congressional offices or testifying before congress, in both years and indirect lobbying in 2010. They were also more likely to engage in more activities involving spending and lobbying executive agencies. If, as I will argue, the ability to engage in more types of lobbying represents one aspect of relative power, interest groups representing business and industry are clearly advantaged.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I turn to the ability of organizations to achieve their stated goals both in terms of movement throughout the legislative process and in concrete policy outcomes. This chapter demonstrates that the advantages of wealthier organizations extend to a higher probability of policy-related victories both in terms of movement along the legislative process and actual policy changes. Partnership with legislative champions are positively correlated with movement in the chosen direction in the legislative process, but not when it comes to actual policy changes.

Perhaps the most interesting findings in Chapter 4 focus on the relative advantages of groups representing business and industry. As I show in Chapter 2, groups representing such memberships are not able to work harder on their preferred issues than other organizations. Instead, their advantages show up in an ability to engage in more categories

of lobbying activities as well as greater probabilities of lobbying success on issues related to legislative process and actual changes in public policy. Importantly, this is true even after controlling for differences in organizational revenue. This research finding provides dramatic support for long-standing and contested arguments about the relative strengths of business-oriented organizations with concentrated benefits.

Chapter 2

Interest Group Agenda Setting:

The Power of Legislative Champions and Supportive Coalitions

Abstract

How do lobbyists decide what to work on and are some organizations better able to choose which policies they want to address? Interest group capacity to invest time and resources on issues they care about represents an important precursor to legislative influence and a measure of relative group strength in its own right. In this chapter, I examine determinants of lobbying effort and demonstrate that organizations that form partnerships with legislative champions and allied coalitions are better able to spend time working on the issues in their policy portfolios. While factors such as internal resources, political ideology, and membership preferences also matter, these effects are conditional on legislative timing.

Through two sets of interviews conducted with lobbyists during the 111th Congress, I show that organizational resources mattered at the beginning of the congressional session, but that influence waned as the congressional agenda narrowed. The influence of legislative champions and strong coalitions remained powerful regardless of congressional timing.

Introduction

Interest group researchers historically focus on two separate spheres of activity: mobilization and lobbying effects (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Insufficient attention has been given to interest group activities that connect these two functions. Once groups form

to represent their members, how do they determine which issues to work on? What internal factors matter, and how do organizations interact with the policy environment to decide when and where to spend time and resources?

In the absence of answers to these questions, we cannot fully understand the practical implications of a well-developed body of research on group mobilization. My research tests implications drawn from group mobilization theories stemming from the work of Olson (1975) and Walker (1983) and connects these implications to questions that have yet to be fully answered regarding lobbying effects.

Interest group scholars have been unable to come to consensus about lobbying effects (Nownes 2006; Baumgartner and Leech 1998) in part because they have not asked lobbyists why they choose to work on some issues but not on others. The existing implication seems to be that lobbyists choose to work on whatever issues or policies they believe are relevant to their memberships, when, in fact, lobbyists' decisions about where to direct their efforts are constrained by a variety of internal and external factors. I address this shortcoming and find that partnerships with legislators and joining together with allied organizations are important determinants in group success.

For this research, lobbying effort is defined as the amount of effort spent by an interest group on a policy issue that involves lobbying the U.S. Congress. I analyze legislative lobbying effort through two sets of interviews conducted with national interests working on agriculture, cultural/religious, and health care issues during the 111th Congress. I argue that groups with greater resources will be less constrained when making strategic decisions about what issues to work on when legislative agendas are wide open such as in the beginning of a legislative session or early in a new presidential term. As the

congressional agenda narrows, however, all groups are more equally constrained because it makes less sense to expend resources on issues that are no longer viable. During both periods of time, groups will be more likely to work on issues that are supported by allied legislative offices or lobbying coalitions because these partnerships offer greater resources and provide a placeholder for future legislative action.

The effects of various factors on the level of effort put behind policy issues vary by political context. At the beginning of the 111th Congress, lobbying effort was related to factors internal to the organization as well as those imposed by the congressional agenda. At the close of the session, internal differences were less important and limits mandated by a narrowing congressional agenda dominated group decision making. At both points of time, legislative champions, defined as supportive members of Congress and their staff, and allied coalitions, held the key to allowing organizations to focus on their policy issues.

As predicted, the effects of organizational factors such as revenue and association with a political action committee (PAC) were significant at the beginning of an emergent policy window in the summer of 2009 when issues such as health care reform and cap and trade environmental protections dominated the congressional agenda and Democrats controlled the White House and both chambers of Congress. In other words, groups with greater resources and PACs were able to put more effort behind their policy issues than other organizations. Such characteristics were less closely associated with an organization's ability to focus on their policy issues as the policy window began to close in the summer of 2010 and less room remained on a shrinking legislative docket. On the other hand, external partnerships such as the presence of a legislative champion or a supportive coalition were statistically significant in both years.

The implications of this research are relevant to both political scientists and practitioners. For scholars, these findings allow us to better understand the goals and priority-making decisions of groups working to affect the policy making process. Interest groups do not simply spring from their memberships and seek to influence public policy. They are motivated by internal factors and considerations which often must be altered to fit within narrow policy windows and changes in the national agenda. For practitioners, my findings illuminate which strategies allow organizations to support their political agendas. They explain when internal resources are most important and how poorly-funded organizations might work with allies in Congress and supportive coalitions to achieve their goals and address their highest priorities.

At its heart, this analysis is also about an understudied precursor to lobbying influence and a measurement of relative group strength in its own right. Organizations that are able to work relatively harder on their chosen issues than other organizations are presumably better positioned to represent their memberships and ultimately affect policy change.

Additional chapters in this dissertation examine the relative ability of interest groups to participate in various lobbying activities or to accomplish specific legislative goals. The first step in my examination of lobbying strength, however, begins with this primary ability of groups to work on the issues in their policy portfolios.

Theoretical Foundations

Are some organizations less constrained than others when setting their lobbying agendas? The literature on interest group mobilization and lobbying effects provides a rich background with which to form hypotheses to examine this question.

Conventional and scholarly wisdom suggest that business groups and professional trade associations dominate the realm of organized interests while fewer groups represent civil rights concerns, the poor, elderly, or disabled (Walker 1983). Arguments about the role of interest groups often focus on the degree to which they balance the voices of all Americans or focus disproportionately on the wealthy. Through disturbance theory, Truman (1951) argued that societal changes result in increased fragmentation of social groups. While groups theoretically begin in a state of equilibrium, balance is disrupted by societal changes. Disequilibrium provokes a response from disadvantaged sectors seeking to restore lost benefits. On the whole, citizens are represented by interests that organize and speak to their concerns. Dahl (1961) expanded pluralist concepts arguing that groups compete in a relatively balanced political world and that government primarily acts as a mediator. While inequalities inevitably arise among groups, such inequalities are not cumulative and competition among groups results in balanced representation over time.

The pluralist view of interest group politics and agenda setting has been widely criticized with many arguing that policy making is systematically dominated by wealthy elites and professional interests. Schattschneider (1975) famously articulated this argument by stating that the problem with the pluralist chorus is that it sings with an upper-class accent. These arguments have led to consensus among interest group scholars that business and industry hold an advantage in a dysfunctional pluralist world. Some have focused on the instruments available to these lobbies, such as overlapping boards of directors that help

leaders align preferences through group strategies, while others have examined structural advantages such as “capital flight” or the ability of firms to punish policy makers by relocating (Hart 2004; Hacker and Pierson 2002; Smith 2000; Domhoff 1996; Block 1987; Linblom 1977; Mills 1956).

Advantages to these organizations are also theorized to begin at the organizing stage where, as Olson (1975) described, concentrated interests such as those typically pursued by business organizations have an easier time organizing because they are better equipped to avoid the collective action problems faced by groups seeking collective benefits. It is logical to assume that these advantages correspond to an interest group’s ability to expend effort on political issues that they want to support or oppose. The question is: do we see these advantages when it comes to the amount of effort groups representing business and industry are able to put forward on selected policy matters? Similarly, do organizations with greater financial resources and more politically sophisticated lobbying techniques such as political action committees (PACs) have an easier time mobilizing on their issues?

It is also possible that groups are for the most part shut out of congressional agenda setting and instead react to issues that are determined by the institution itself. Such a state-centric approach places control over the political agenda within the institution itself (Smith 1993; Freeman 1965). Under such a scenario, interest groups in general would have little say over what issues they work on and would instead react to the policies congressional offices and perhaps federal agencies choose to address.

Research on group mobilization is far more robust and conclusive than research on actual lobbying effects. Determining the effects of lobbying on congressional behavior has proven surprisingly elusive (Nownes 2006; Baumgartner and Leech 1998). In part, our

inability to identify clear lobbying effects may be because groups are likely to support members of Congress who already agree with their positions, meaning lobbying support and contributions often follow votes rather than the other way around. Moreover, the majority of lobbying activity occurs during legislative drafting and the forging of compromise well before votes are cast (Hall and Wayman 2012). Studies focused on the final votes on the chamber floor or even in committee are therefore unlikely to reveal the full magnitude of lobbying effects.

While many other methodological concerns have been noted in studies of lobbying effects, I believe the largest problem may involve a lack of clarity regarding the goals of lobbyists. If scholars cannot accurately identify lobbyists' goals, it is unlikely they will be able to determine whether groups are successful in Congress or any other policy environment. In other words, knowing lobbyists' goals is a necessary condition for determining whether groups are successful in Congress. If researchers don't know groups' goals, how can they know if they are successful?

The lobbying literature envisions at least three different goals (or strategies of influence) when it comes to lobbying: exchange, persuasion, and subsidy (Hall and Deardorf 2006). Lobbying can be thought of as a form of exchange in which money and other favors are traded for votes. When lobbying is conceived of in this way, researchers often quantify the amount of the contribution between lobbyist and member and then determine the effect. For example, many studies measure the effects of campaign contributions on congressional votes.

A second category of lobbying goals focuses on persuasion. In this scenario, legislators are uncertain about how to vote and lobbyists possess either knowledge about

what is most important to constituents or policy expertise. In such a perspective, lobbying is primarily about the flow of information from lobbyist to policy maker with the hope that this information influences congressional decision making (Wright 1990). As an example, recent work by Druhman and Hopkins (2013) showed this type of information has dominated lobbying-related correspondence in their evaluation of a quarter of a million emails from the Enron Corporation between 1999 and 2002. Rather than focus on elections, their communications focused on the daily business of policy making by relaying information related to energy policy and communications. Still, corporations and their national association make financial contributions to political candidates, so policy campaigns where the focus is on the exchange theory of politics should not be entirely overlooked.

Hall and Deardorf (2006) model lobbying as a legislative subsidy rather than an effort to buy votes or change minds. In this third model, lobbying is predominantly a “matching grant of policy information, policy intelligence and legislative labor.” The goal of influence in this model is to affect how hard members work rather than change their opinions or purchase votes.

Traditional studies of lobbying appear mired in an inability to distinguish among these goals. If congressional lobbying is mostly about exchange, we could simply examine PAC contributions and determine whether they influence votes. If lobbying is about persuasion, we should be able to examine legislative interactions with undecided members and find evidence of vote changing. If subsidy is the primary goal, such models are turned upside down. Lobbying and contributions will seldom change votes because they are typically targeted at supporting allies who already intend to vote in the desired manner.

Yet analyzing the ability of lobbyists to reach any of these goals may be premature. In order to exchange contributions for votes, persuade policy makers to change their minds, or subsidize congressional effort, lobbyists must first decide where to spend their time and how much effort to put behind a particular issue. This strategy development phase may be thought of as an interest group's organizational agenda setting process. Our inability to understand how organizations make such decisions represents a fundamental gap in knowledge about congressional lobbying and the relative success of competing interest groups.

More recently, scholars have envisioned interest group actions not as a one-way transaction between lobbyist and policy maker but as the collaborative effort among policy makers and coalitions of aligned lobbyists on one side of an issue versus policy makers and their aligned lobbyists on the other (Baumgartner et al. 2009). While this is a useful description of group behavior within the congressional arena, such a view still does not address whether individual lobbying organizations are able to work on the issues that are important to them. Some groups are likely better able to position their issues for lobbying action within these collaborations.

Lobbyists are likely constrained by a variety of factors when they select where to direct their resources and are not entirely free to make up their own minds about this important decision. To fully understand this line of decision making, we must first analyze the factors affecting how groups allocate their time and resources across policy issues. Understanding how groups make such decisions provides an essential link between research on group mobilization and the unsolved puzzle of interest group effects.

Theory

Interest group priorities are developed in an agenda-setting context marked by long periods of incremental policy making punctuated by shorter time periods during which greater policy change can occur (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Policy makers have limited attention and can only address a finite number of issues on the congressional agenda. Studies of interest group priority setting need to consider differences in how groups are mobilized as well as how they interact with limited space for attention in Congress.

I hypothesize that organizational differences will have their greatest effect at the beginning of a congressional session, especially during times of political change and one-party dominance when groups see policy change as possible across issue areas. During such periods, organizational resources are one of the primary limits on how much effort they can put into various policy issues. A group may be solidly behind inclusion of a public option in health care reform proposals or adamantly opposed to more stringent regulations on carbon emissions, but they can only put as much effort behind these efforts as they have resources to get the work done.

As the congressional session moves forward, many issues drop from the legislative agenda. In the second half of a congressional session, I expect differences in resources will mean less when it comes to the ability of groups to invest time and resources on their legislative priorities. An organization may have vast resources to throw behind support for a public option, but if the issue has lost traction in Congress, there is not much point in directing resources to support it. Similarly, an organization may be prepared to mount a substantial effort to oppose regulations on carbon emissions, but if Congress subsequently

drops plans for such legislation, there is little justification for a defensive lobbying campaign.

This is not to say that groups attempt to influence the congressional agenda early in a congressional session and do not exert such efforts later on. It is simply that the agenda appears wide open in the beginning of a session and advocacy groups must throw their support or opposition behind many issues. As legislation and proposed amendments become less viable, groups are increasingly restricted to those issues which are still active. At these times, differential resources will account for less variation in the level of effort that groups are able to give to particular issues.

At these times, groups seeking policy change will be limited by the congressional agenda and whether or not they can partner with others to keep their priorities under consideration. Under such circumstances, I argue that alliances with legislative champions and coalitions will maintain their importance even as organizational resources are less relevant to differences in group priority setting. Even if an issue has lost traction on the overall congressional agenda, groups will hold out hope for the future if they have the encouragement of a legislative champion or the consensus of a strong coalition.

The idea that legislative champions, or congressional offices that support an organization's lobbying agenda, should influence group agenda setting draws from theories based on lobbying as information flow and legislative subsidy. According to such theories, lobbying is about providing information and additional staff support to policy makers to support their goals where they align with a particular interest group. Hall and Deardorf (2006) theorize that lobbyists can influence congressional effort more effectively than congressional positions and that they subsidize the work of legislative offices in order to

make efforts less expensive when it comes to their favored issues. Moreover, lobbyists cannot work on just any issue they would like and are typically limited to those bills members of Congress will sponsor and prioritize. We should therefore expect lobbyists to work harder on a policy issue when a member of Congress takes up their cause and offers staff time and leadership.

Similar partnerships are often formed across allied interest groups. Coalitions, defined as coordinated efforts by groups to lobby together, are a common strategy among Washington lobbyists (Hall 1969; Loomis 1986; Heinz et al. 1993; Baumgartner and Leech 1999; Hula 1999; Grossman and Dominguez 2009; Baumgartner et al. 2009). Groups engage in coalitions because they see them as an effective tool with which to influence public policy (Hula 1999; Scholzman and Tierney 1986; Heaney 2004; Nownes 2006). We should therefore expect coalition lobbying to be associated with higher levels lobbying effort.

In short, interest groups often work in teams with legislative and coalition allies (Baumgartner et al. 2006). This teamwork involves work on the current legislative session, but it may also focus on a longer timeframe. Through these types of partnerships, groups seek to move legislation closer to passage so that it may pass in a future session. For example, they may seek a hearing to build support for an issue that is not currently on the legislative agenda or head back to the drawing board with their legislative champion to develop new language and strategies. Similarly, groups may work within coalitions to develop compromise language, conduct additional research, or drum up grassroots support for a bill that cannot move this session but may become viable in the future. In this way, partnerships with legislative champions and supportive coalitions provide a venue to work on legislation even when it is shut out of congressional consideration.

This line of thinking yields three testable hypotheses¹:

H1: Greater organizational differences such as revenue and associations with political action committees (PACs) will be associated with higher levels of lobbying effort during the first year of a congressional session, but not in the second.

H2: Partnerships with legislative champions will be associated with higher levels of lobbying effort during both years of a congressional session.

H3: Partnerships with supportive coalitions will be associated with higher levels of lobbying effort during both years of a congressional session.

The literature on interest group lobbying suggests several additional hypotheses. Based on the hypothesized advantages to groups representing business and industry, one might expect such interest groups to be able to put more effort behind the policies for which they advocate even after controlling for differences in group resources.

H4: Groups representing business and industry will be associated with higher levels of lobbying effort during both years of a congressional session.

Interest groups typically represent members either as individuals or as affiliated organizations. One could reasonably expect membership priorities to influence the level of effort given to policy issues. Furthermore, particular types of priorities might hold greater sway independent of broad membership priorities. In particular, when membership organizations or individuals are affected by a policy at a financial level, one might expect an increased level of lobbying effort.

H5: Issues that are a membership priority will be associated with higher levels of lobbying effort during both years of a congressional session.

¹ Chapter 2 tests several hypotheses that go beyond the original four discussed in the introduction. Analyzing a larger number of hypotheses in this first empirical chapter provided the information necessary to focus on the four major hypothesis that form the foundation of this dissertation.

H6: Issues that affect memberships at a financial level will be associated with higher levels of lobbying effort during both years of the congressional session.

One might reasonably believe that political ideology would relate to how much attention an organization gives various issues. For example, during the 111th Congress when the interviews for this study were taken, Democrats held majorities in both chambers of Congress and had just captured the White House. Based on party control of the 111th Congress, I expect liberal organizations in this sample to be better able to prioritize their issues while conservative groups will have difficulty finding traction to work on their policy issues.

H7: Liberal organizations will be associated with higher levels of lobbying effort during both years of this congressional session.

H8: Conservative organizations will be associated with lower levels of lobbying effort during both years of this congressional session.

Finally, organizations will work on issues that are affected by the events of the day. For example, interest groups will respond to food safety scares or other external crises and events and leverage these moments to gain attention in Congress. Ebola outbreaks covered in the media will give advocates for greater regulations optimism and a reason to work for stronger regulations. Similarly, opponents of such regulation will muster their resources to oppose the momentum gained by their adversaries.

H9: External events will be associated with higher levels of lobbying effort during the year the event occurs.

Data and Methods

This study is based on two sets of interviews with health care, agriculture, and cultural/religious interest groups during the summers of 2009 and 2010. I randomly sampled 40 nongovernmental interest groups from each of these issue areas from the *Washington Information Directory* (2008-2009), the CQ Press directory of government agencies and nongovernmental groups in the Washington, DC area. This process resulted in a diverse sample of organizations from all three issue areas with annual revenues ranging from less than one hundred thousand dollars to hundreds of millions of dollars². While I have not conducted an analysis of the different organizational characteristics of sampled and nonsampled organizations, the sample statistics presented on page 36 of this chapter show that they include a broad range of organizations in terms of total organizational revenue, political ideology, and policy focus.

In the absence of existing databases that focus on strategic lobbying decisions and issue selection, the use of elite interviews is one of the few methods available for this line of research. Fortunately, it is also one of the most helpful³. Elite interviews help establish clear and potentially causal relationships because the lobbyists themselves can explain what factors encouraged or discouraged them from working on an issue. In many circumstances, there are good reasons for political scientists to be skeptical about explanations offered by either elite interviewees or survey respondents. Respondents may not possess clear insights about their own behavior and some interviewees might have reasons to exaggerate or even lie. In this case, however, lobbyists were in a position to

² While it would be possible to generate a broader sampling frame by including additional groups found in records of congressional testimony or media reports, such methods would invariably bias the frame toward larger, wealthier, and more prominent organizations.

³ These interviews are modeled after the work of John Kingdon in his analysis of congressional decision making (1989). While Kingdon asked members of Congress about decisions made before voting on legislation, my research examines the field of forces affecting the effort interest groups put behind specific policy issues.

explain why they worked at various levels on specific policies. These were not general discussions about overall lobbying approaches. In these interviews, lobbyists explained why they worked on concrete issues and could point to specific explanations such as encouragement from legislators or external crises covered in the media. Guaranteeing confidentiality reduced any systematic incentives for interviewees to lie in order to gain credit for victories or avoid the consequences of unethical behavior. In short, I talked directly to sources who can best describe the reasons behind specific lobbying decisions and have removed potential barriers to honest reporting.

The nature of the questions asked during the interviews further strengthens evidentiary claims. I asked interviewees to discuss their motivations when making decisions about congressional lobbying efforts. No other source of information is potentially more valuable than discussions with the individuals who made decisions about specific and recent actions rather than general strategic statements.

I define membership groups as those which had affiliated organizations or individuals whom they sought to represent while lobbying Congress. Some of their memberships consisted of the classic model of dues-paying individuals or organizations. In other cases, groups relied on support from those they sought to represent and other third-party benefactors in lieu of formal membership status. Both membership models were permitted in the sampling frame. The sampling frame did not include organizations that represent only themselves such as individual corporations, but national associations of corporations were included.

After sending introductory letters and calling each organization up to five times, I successfully interviewed representatives from 81 organizations in the summer 2009 on 224

policy issues⁴ and re-interviewed 70 of them on 183 of these same issues in the summer of 2010. This represents a 67.5 percent response rate in 2009 with 86.4 percent of these organizations re-interviewed in 2010. Information gained from these interviews was supplemented with data from 2009 annual reports, federal 990 forms, and Federal Election Commission records.

Interviews were held in person at the lobbyists' Washington-area offices or at nearby locations of their choosing. Meetings averaged approximately 45 minutes in length⁵. I conducted the interviews with the highest ranking policy staff available from each organization. In some cases this was the organization's president or executive director, while in most cases it was their vice president or director of public policy or government affairs⁶. I asked interviewees about the most recent two policy issues they had worked on and a third issue which they had not been able to give as much attention as they would like. Issues sampled through these two types of questions were combined in the analysis so that any single interview covered up to three issues.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for this research is the *Lobbying Effort* given to each policy issue. I asked lobbyists "On a scale of 1-100, how would you rate the priority or level of effort your organization has been able to devote to this issue?"

Independent Variables

⁴ Issues may repeat. For example, multiple organizations listed health care reform, food safety, or environmental protections.

⁵ In a few cases, the second round of interviews was held over the phone when respondents were unable to participate when the in-person interviews were scheduled.

⁶ Interviewees were guaranteed confidentiality in accordance with policies set by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Internal Review Board.

I asked interviewees what factors caused them to give the issue this level of effort. After the interviewee finished responding to this question, I inquired if there were any other internal or external factors that made them work harder on this issue and then whether there were any other internal or external factors that made them work less hard on this issue. I did not ask lobbyists about a preset list of particular factors and instead simply followed up on the factors as they raised them.

Organizational factors such as budgets and associations with PACs were identified through research using annual reports, 990 forms, and FEC data after the interviews.

The unit of analysis for this research is the 224 policy issues discussed during the first interview and the 183 issues discussed in the second. My model estimates how various internal and external factors relate to the level of effort given to each issue. Some factors are the same across all issues for each organization while others are specific to the particular issue sampled. For example, an organization's total revenue would be constant across all policy issues discussed in that interview, but particular factors such as the support of a legislative champion would vary for each of the issues. This analysis includes all factors that were mentioned as affecting ten percent or more of the policy issues discussed in the interviews.

Organizational Variables

I interviewed agriculture, health care and religious/cultural organizations. For the model presented in this paper, I include a dichotomous variable indicating whether or not the organization represented *Agriculture* and a dichotomous variable indicating whether

the organization represented *Health Care*. Accordingly, both of these variables are measured in comparison to groups addressing culture or religious issues.

I include a dichotomous variable indicating whether an organization represents a membership comprised of businesses or a particular industry. Information to construct the *Business/Industry Members* variable was readily available during the interviews and was verified through the organizations' annual reports.

Internal resources serve as important independent variables. Using FEC data, I recorded a dichotomous variable indicating whether an organization is associated with a PAC. For *Total Revenue*, I calculated the logged value of each organization's total revenue based on data listed in federal 990 reports.⁷

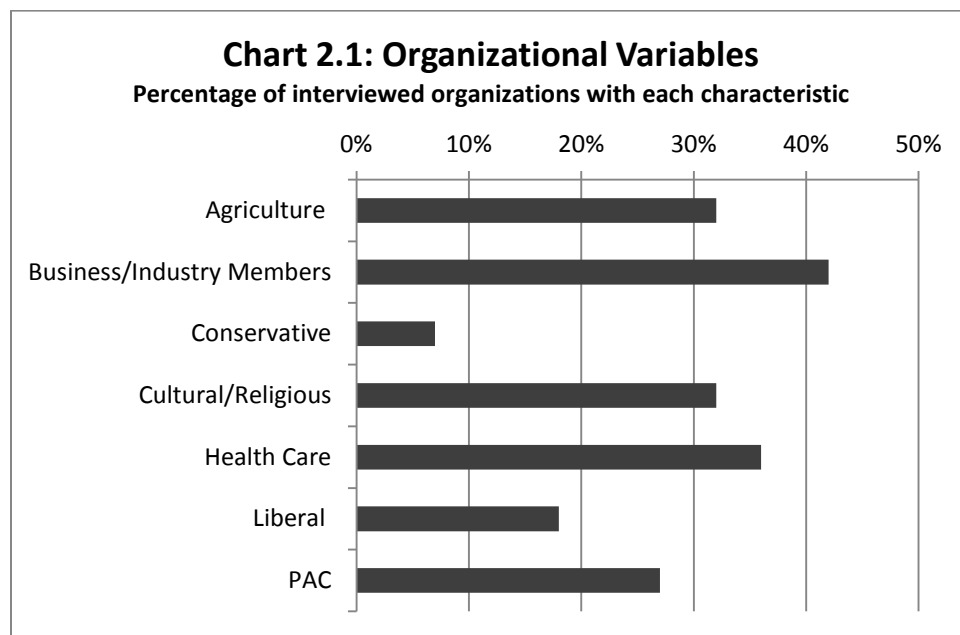
I am interested in whether revenue affects lobbyist agenda setting in different ways for organizations representing businesses than it does for those who do not. At the same time, it is possible that businesses with relatively less revenue could distort the impact of business representation. Discussions of the lobbying power of business and industry typically focus on wealthier organizations, so it is important to control for both revenue and business representation. To create the *Business Money* variable, I multiplied the *Total Revenue* variable times *Business/Industry Members*. Creating this interactive variable changes the interpretation of the *Total Revenue* variable. Results for *Total Revenue* should be interpreted as the effects of revenue for organizations that do not represent business or industry. This variable is therefore renamed *Non Business Revenue*. Similarly, *Business Revenue* should be interpreted as the effects of revenue for organizations that represent business or industry.

⁷ I also recorded the number of policy staff working for each organization, but this value was highly collinear with revenue and was dropped from the models in this analysis.

I also include dichotomous variables indicating whether the organization is conservative or liberal. I classified organizations that used certain key words during their interviews (conservative, limited government, or control, reduce or limit spending) as *Conservative*. Similarly, I classified organizations that used certain key words (social justice, liberal, or progressive) to describe their motivations as *Liberal*. The majority of organizations were not classified as either liberal or conservative. For example, the American Psychiatric Association⁸ represents a particular profession and would not typically be considered part of either political ideology.

Chart 2.1 presents the percentage of organizations falling into each category of organizational variables. Many of these variables are mutually exclusive. An organization could be classified as agriculture, health care, culture but could not be classified as belonging to more than one category. Similarly, an organization could be classified as liberal or conservative but not both. Any of these organizations could be classified as utilizing a PAC.

⁸ The American Psychiatric Association was not interviewed for this research.



Issue Variables

Issue Importance serves as the first independent variable. For each issue, I asked lobbyists, “On a scale of 1-100, how important is this policy issue to your organization?”⁹ I asked this question before I asked the question about the level of effort that it had been given that year.¹⁰ Once the rated importance of the policy issue is held constant, an organization’s capacity to marshal its internal resources to address its issues in Congress represents an important indicator of group strength. Otherwise, erroneous comparisons would be made between high and low valued issues.

While the dependent variable is asking how hard an organization was able to work on a given issue, the importance variable asks how important an issue is to the

⁹I told interviewees that the combined score of all of their issues was not limited to 100. In other words, organizations could list multiple 100 scores. A 100 in importance indicates that an issue is as important as any issue could get. Similarly, a level of effort score of 100 would indicate they are able to devote their highest level of effort to the issue.

organization's mission. An organization may consider a given issue to rank 90 or even 100 in importance, but they may be limited in their ability to work on issue due to limitations such as budgets or a refusal to address the issue in Congress. Many respondents stated that they would like these two variables to match. For example, one health care organization said "I'd like to give medical malpractice all the attention I could, but it simply isn't going to move this year, and I can't waste my time on it."

We would expect issue importance to be correlated with level of effort, but it actually covers a different data piece. An organization that thinks a particular issue is very important would all but surely like to work on it at a high level. But one of the propositions of this research is that organizations are not free to work on every issue at the level they see as ideal. Their primary issue may not have the support of a legislative champion to cosponsor the bill. Predictions of failure at the committee or floor level may make it unwise to bring a bill forward, and lobbyists may be forced to wait for another day. Similarly an organization may lack the financial and staff resources to adequately address an issue, or a different policy issue might distract their attention from a high priority.

In short, there are many factors that would prevent an organization from working on an issue at its ideal level of importance. As evidence of this, the relationship between importance and level of effort was not one-to-one, and simple bivariate ordinary least squares regression reveals that issue importance explains 31 percent of the variance in the dependent variable in 2009 and approximately 40 percent in 2010. While limiting factors are covered by other dependent variables, the importance of the issue remains a crucial control variable because I need to control for selected issues that may be extremely important, trivial to interviewee, or somewhere in between.

As a test of sensitivity, however, the models presented in this chapter are also estimated without the importance variable and discussed in the appendix of this dissertation.

This 1-100 rating for importance also permits the combining of responses from the two sets of sampling questions by controlling for differences in the types of issues these questions might elicit. Differences between these types of issues can be controlled for by including information on issue importance and other independent variables included in the model.

Whether or not an issue is perceived as being on the *Congressional Agenda* is another important control variable. If an organization indicated the issue was not on the congressional agenda, they received a -1. If they did not mention the congressional agenda, they received a 0. If they indicated the issue was on the congressional agenda, they received a 1. Of course, it is possible that organizations affect the congressional agenda through their lobbying efforts. To address subsequent concerns about possible endogeneity, responses to this question focus on whether the issue was already on the congressional agenda before the organization began lobbying during this session. In short, interviewers indicated that the issue being on the congressional agenda is the reason that they are lobbying at an indicated level of effort. Concerns about endogeneity are lessened because the interviewees themselves claimed that the agenda was their motivation for either action or inaction.

If an organization indicated they did not have a *Legislative Champion* or their champion asked them not to work on the issue, they received a -1 for this variable. If they did not mention a legislative champion, they received a 0. If they indicated they had a

legislative champion on this issue, they received a 1. Legislative champions were typically described as members of Congress or their staff who introduce bills, write dear-colleague letters, request and organize hearings, work with groups to develop language or research, and so on.

If an organization indicated that not having a coalition working with them on the issue was a reason for lesser activity or that their coalition was ineffective or too disorganized, they received a -1 for *Strength of Coalition*. If they did not mention a coalition, they received a 0. If they indicated the issue was supported by a coalition, they received a 1.

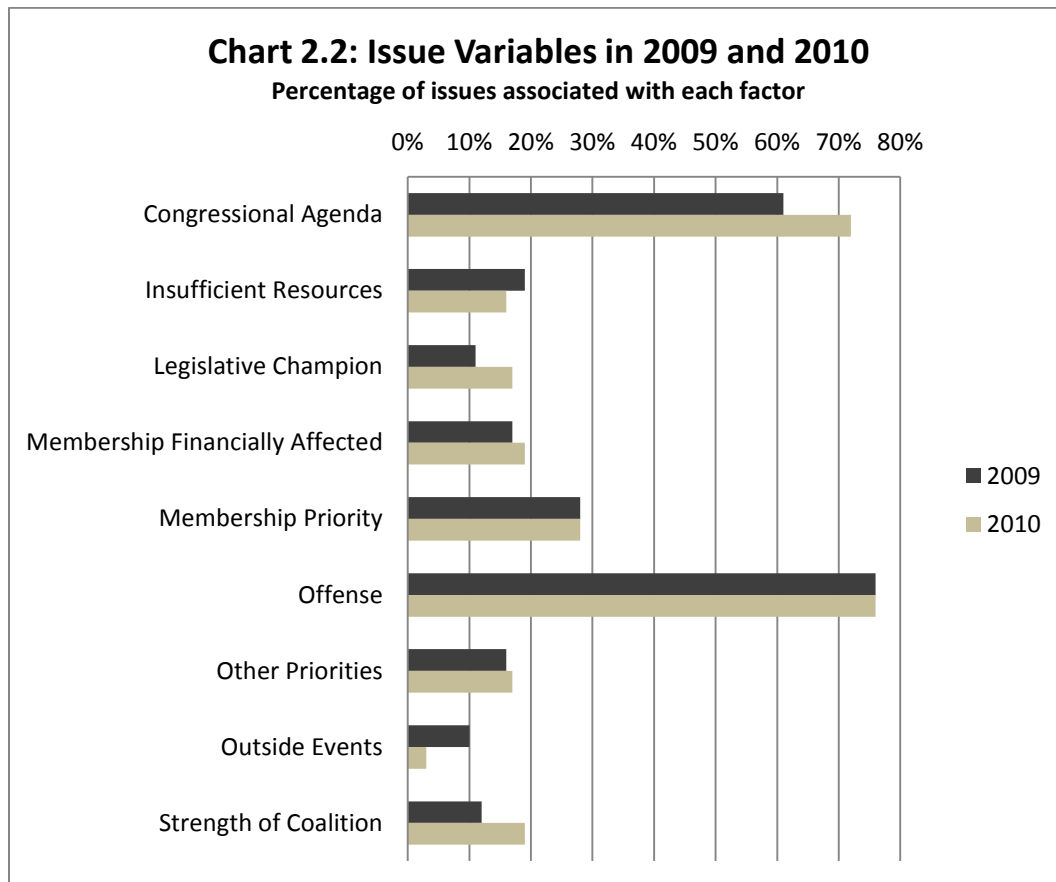
Lobbyists also mentioned membership concerns. If an organization said the issue was not a *Membership Priority* they received a -1 for this variable. If they did not mention membership priorities, they received a 0. If they mentioned that the issue was a membership priority, they received a 1. In some cases, groups mentioned that issues affected the bottom-line finances of their membership. *Membership Finances* is treated as a dichotomous variable.

Lobbyists mentioned issues where they were either working to support a policy change or oppose change. If an organization is trying to make a legislative change to current policy (on “offense” rather than “defense”), this was indicated through a dichotomous variable for *Offense*.

Organizations also listed *Outside Events* as influencing work on particular issues and this was included as a dichotomous variable. If an organization indicated there was an outside event affecting the allocation of attention or lobbying effort, they received a 1. Importantly, this variable was described as their motivation for beginning work in 2009. It

is likely that the influence of outside events on organizational agenda setting will wane by 2010.

Chart 2.2 describes the percentage of issues for which each independent variable was mentioned by the interviewees. Again, my question about the factors that motivated organizations to work on these issues was open ended. For this portion of the research, I did not ask organizations to pick from a specific list and instead recorded and classified the factors that they mentioned.



Findings

In the following models, *Lobbying Effort* is a reported value ranging from 1 to 100. I use a simple ordinary least squares regression and cluster the standard errors around each of the 81 organizations since each group generated two to three policy issues.¹¹ Table 2.1 estimates the effects of each organizational and issue variable.

¹¹ Hierarchical modeling could not be used because only two to three issues are sampled per organization.

Table 2.1 Interest Group Lobbying Effort in the 111th Congress

Dependent Variable = 1-100 Rating of Lobbying Effort Given to Issue

OLS Regressions (Clustered Standard Errors)

	2009	2010
<i>Organizational Variables</i>		
Non Business Revenue	1.141* (0.693)	0.648 (0.693)
PAC	9.603*** (2.064)	1.955 (3.891)
Bus/Industry Members	-46.947** (23.245)	-32.306 (25.356)
Business Revenue	2.777** (1.447)	1.966 (1.648)
Liberal	-8.389* (4.462)	-9.002** (3.896)
Conservative	-15.369** (5.900)	-3.603 (6.130)
Agriculture	-7.362 (5.454)	-11.293** (5.012)
Health	-0.679 (5.035)	-5.183 (4.063)
<i>Issue Variables</i>		
Legislative Champion	7.202** (3.931)	14.714*** (3.666)
Strength of Coalition	11.683*** (3.188)	7.624** (3.340)
Importance ¹²	0.613*** (0.064)	0.683*** (0.054)
Congressional Agenda	12.083*** (2.195)	8.931*** (3.102)
Offense	-7.764* (4.562)	-3.993 (3.889)
Member Finance	16.252*** (3.960)	8.760* (4.459)
Membership Priority	5.646 (3.961)	5.248 (3.590)
Outside Event	7.596* (5.135)	-3.917 (10.994)
Constant	-6.756 (13.625)	-1.144 (13.483)
N	224	183
Prob > F	0.000	0.000
R-Squared	0.557	0.568
* Significant at .1 **Significant at .05 ***Significant at .01		

¹² Models were also estimated without the importance variable without changing the direction or statistical significance of other variables.

Both models explain a substantial amount of the variation in interest groups lobbying efforts across policy issues. The most obvious finding is the difference between what influenced lobbying effort in 2009 and in 2010. In 2009, many group and issue variables were statistically significant. In 2009, business and nonbusiness revenue, whether a group represented business or industry, association with a PAC, and whether the group was ideologically conservative or liberal were all statistically significant. By the summer of 2010, all of those group variables lost statistical significance although representing agricultural concerns became statistically significant and negative. The majority of issue variables, however, retain their relationship with lobbying priorities.

At the onset of a window for policy change such as at the start of the 111th Congress when the President and both chambers of Congress were controlled by the Democratic Party, organizations appear to perceive a wide range of the threats and possibilities. At this time, organizational resources may be a primary limitation. Groups believe they can work on a broad range of issues, but they are nevertheless limited by organizational capacity. As the window prepares to close in the summer of 2010, the congressional agenda narrows. Internal group differences are less important at this point. An organization may have vast resources to throw at a lobbying issue, but if that issue is not going anywhere on the agenda those resources would likely be wasted.

One lobbyist for an agricultural organization described this situation as a learning process. “At the beginning of a session, especially one like this, you have to treat everything seriously. You think you know what is going to move, but you don’t really. As time goes on, bills come and go on the Hill, and you end up knowing where to spend your time.”

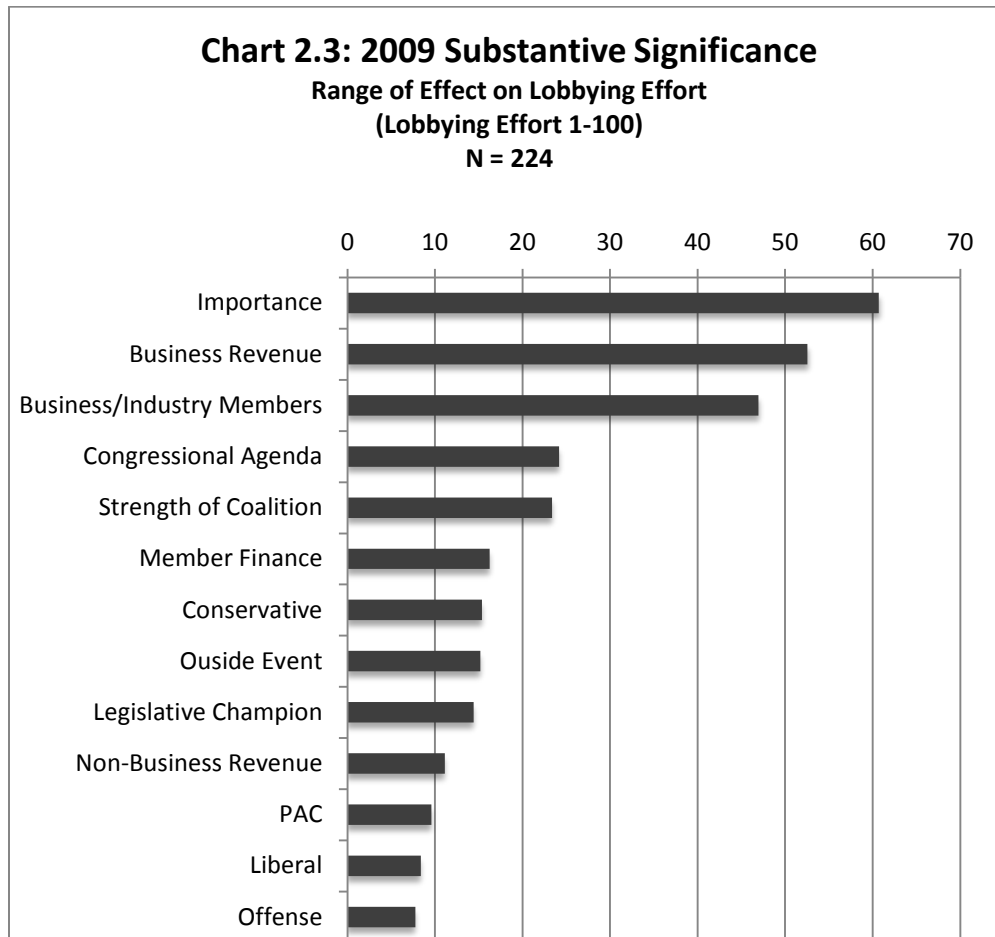
The tightening of the congressional agenda from the first to the second year works much as my theory predicted. In addition, the congressional agenda is positive and statistically significant in both years. As one lobbyist put it, “It’s like if you asked a robber why he robs banks, he’ll tell you that’s where the money is. If you ask a health care lobbyist why they are working on health care reform this year, he’ll tell you because that’s where the action is.”

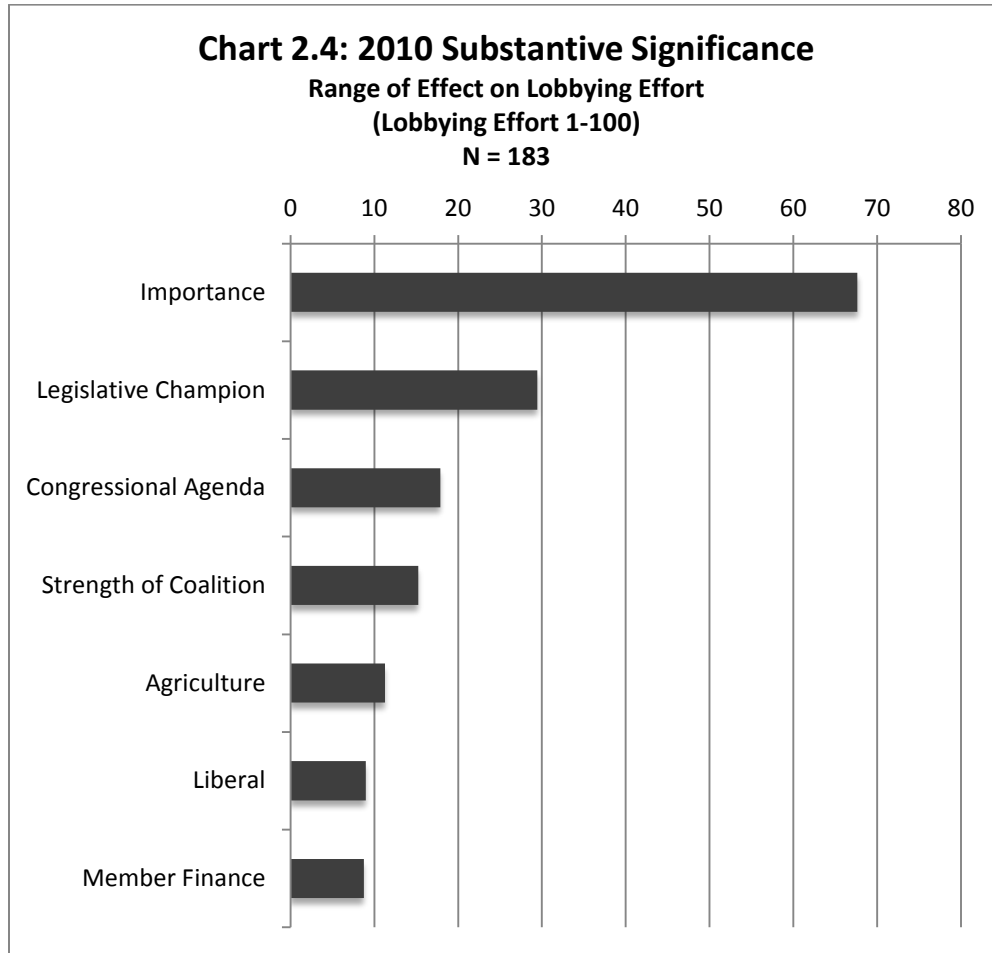
On the other hand, many said they were not able to work on an issue because Congress would not consider it. For the most part, lobbyists can only work on an issue if it has some traction in Congress. Other issues typically must wait until political forces align to make them part of the debate.

This study demonstrates the power of the congressional agenda’s effect on interest group agenda setting in several ways. For one, the importance of various independent variables changes depending on when the interviews take place in the legislative cycle. Groups are more constrained as the agenda narrows just as my theory predicted. Also, interviewees themselves frequently described their decision making in the context of what issues remained viable in Congress. In addition, I can quantify the substantive effects of the congressional agenda (along with my other independent variables) on the level of effort put behind it.

One of the advantages of OLS regression is that allows for direct comparisons of regression coefficients. Charts 2.3 and 2.4 present those coefficients times the range of unit changes possible for each independent variable. In other words, these charts show the full range of effects of movement in the dependent variable associated with movement from the lowest score possible for each independent variable to the highest. In 2009, the

congressional agenda ranked fifth among variables in terms of substantive effect. In 2010, the congressional agenda moved up to third in possible influence.





In short, the congressional agenda has a statistically and substantively significant effect on where lobbyists choose to expend their efforts. But this is not to say that lobbyists only work on those issues that Congress allows them to address. In both 2009 and 2010, the most substantively significant independent variable remains the 1-100 score of importance assigned to it by the interviewee.

Organizational Resources

Business revenue, nonbusiness revenue and association with a PAC are all positive and statistically significant in 2009. In 2009, higher revenue is associated with greater levels of effort dedicated to an issue by organizations representing nonbusiness interests.

The statistical significance of the variable business revenue indicates that higher levels of revenue were also associated with revenue flowing through business organizations. In 2009, groups that operated a PAC were also better able to prioritize their policy issues.

In substantive terms, revenue for groups representing businesses in 2009 is far more important than revenue for nonbusiness interests. Movement from the lowest level of revenue for a business compared to the highest can account for more than 50 points in positive movement along 1-100 lobbying effort dependent variable. In 2009, this was the second most influential variable after the importance of the issue. In other words, business-minded organizations with relatively more financial resources are in a substantially better position to expend effort on their legislative issues than businesses with fewer financial resources. While this is also true of nonbusiness interests, the substantive effects are much lower and can account for just over a ten-point change in the dependent variable.

As stated earlier, at the opening of the 111th Congress, many organizations saw themselves in a position to affect the issues of their choice. While health care reform is the most obvious example, groups advocating on issues ranging from gun control to environmental protections saw many new policies as possible. Other groups perceived multiple threats and believed many of them would come to fruition unless they lobbied against them. While groups were constrained by what could move on the congressional agenda, progress on many policy issues remained a possibility and groups were limited by their ability to muster internal resources either to oppose or support them.

In 2010, revenue and association with a PAC were no longer statistically significant. This is true for groups representing businesses as well as those representing other interests. This is likely because the legislative agenda narrowed. In 2009, groups were

limited by their internal capacity to address the issues that were important to them. In 2010, many of these issues were no longer on the legislative agenda and external restrictions became more important.

As one lobbyist concerned about proposed food safety legislation in 2010 explained, “I don’t want that bill to pass. It’s stalled over there [in Congress]. So why would I go up to anyone and start talking about it?”

Another lobbyist in support of a different bill said, “I could throw everything I have at this, but they don’t want to talk about it right now. Pretty much you can only work on what is moving. These guys focus on what is in front of them that week.”

Both the quantitative and qualitative evidence supports my first hypothesis about the interaction of organizational revenue and the congressional agenda.

Legislative Champions

As predicted, legislative champions are positively correlated with the level of effort given to a policy issue. In other words, lobbyists are typically tied to what their champions will do. As the policy window closed in 2010, lobbyists were able to work on those issues for which they had champions carrying water for them in Congress or, conversely, they worked on issues that members of Congress were telling them to support. In substantive terms, the power of legislative champions moved from ninth place in 2009 to second place in 2010. Changes in this independent variable can account for nearly fifteen points of variation in the dependent variable in 2009 and nearly thirty points in 2010.

While securing legislative champions are clearly associated with greater interest group effort, the relationship is not as one dimensional as it may appear. Lobbyists

frequently discussed the need to balance the demands of key legislative offices with what their members wanted or what could move on the congressional agenda.

A health care lobbyist working on rural access described how complicated these scenarios can become. “This is the bill they [their legislative sponsors] want to pass, but I want this other bill to move instead. I can’t offend [representatives names], so I have to work on it somewhat to satisfy them. I’m not going to give it my full attention unless this other one bogs down, but I can’t stop working on it because I want them to keep supporting us.”

While legislative champions are significantly and substantively related to lobbying effort, the relationship is not one-way. Instead of simply subsidizing congressional effort, the relationship can run in the other direction with interest groups contending with demands for their lobbying output. In several interviews, lobbyists discussed needing to work on certain issues because legislators requested their assistance through activities such as contacting other offices, leveraging grassroots messages, and communicating with the press.

For the most part, however, legislative champions were seen as a valuable asset. One organization working on health care issues said, “We didn’t even have a bill for this until [representative’s name] came into the picture. We did a press event, and he came up to us afterwards and said he’s been thinking about writing a bill on [particular health issue]. We wrote the bill, and it didn’t go anywhere. Then he hired a new health L.A. who really got it. She’s the reason we got a hearing.”

Interviewees described the process of partnerships with legislative champions as one in which they work together to move issues on the legislative agenda in both the short and

long term. As one lobbyist put it, “This year we are only getting a hearing. [Representative’s name] got us that. This keeps the issue alive so that we can address [type of issue] when Congress leans our way again.”

The evidence points to the importance of legislative champions beyond the goal of legislative subsidy. The relationship is not one dimensional with lobbyists supporting the work of legislative offices and encouraging them to work on desired areas. The relationship works both ways with lobbyists asking interest groups to support their issues.

The evidence clearly supports my second hypothesis regarding legislative champions.

Coalition Strength

A strong coalition was positively associated with the level of effort given to policy issues in both years. Lobbyists said they were able to work on issues because they had a consensus in the advocacy community and were able to share resources and information. Many smaller organizations said they relied on better-resourced allies for information and support. One lobbyist working for a conservative organization on cultural policy matters said, “[Our larger partner] provides us with information and technical expertise that we just don’t have. There’s only two of us in this office. In return, we give them grassroots credibility.”

Other lobbyists indicated that issues without a coalition or with a divided coalition were more challenging to work on. Interestingly, coalitions are one of only two factors mentioned by substantially more organizations in 2010 than in 2009, pointing to the tendency to shift attention away from internal factors and focus on those issues maintaining momentum as the policy window closes.

The evidence also supports my third hypothesis about the role of supportive coalitions.

Evidence for hypotheses four through nine, however, are less clear cut.

Business and Industry Members

Scholarly research on the organizing side of interest group activity or group formation has historically been more robust than research linking group activity to effects on congressional decision making (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Olson (1965) argued that groups with smaller memberships and concentrated benefits have an easier time organizing. This could grant groups representing business and industry an advantage in that it would be easier to mobilize and raise dollars from their membership for a greater advocacy effort.

The evidence presented by this analysis paints a more complicated picture. In initial regressions that did not interact the effects of revenue with representation of business, business membership was never statistically significant. Once these variables were interacted, business/industry membership became statically significant and negative in 2009. This makes sense when taken in the context of the stories told by many interviewees who felt that it was hard to give adequate attention to their issues given Democratic majorities in Congress and a Democrat in the White House.

The variable business revenue is also statistically significant in 2009 meaning that businesses with more money were more likely to report being able to give higher levels of attention to their policy issues. As discussed earlier, in 2010, neither representation of businesses nor business having more money were statistically significant.

In 2009, organizations representing businesses were substantively less likely to expend higher levels of effort on their issues. This simple dichotomous variable can account for an almost 50 point change in the dependent variable. Of course, the business revenue variable was even more powerful, indicating the power of these groups with money to work on their policy priorities.

In short, this analysis reveals that wealthier business interests were better positioned to devote attention to their issues. These advantages dwindled when the legislative agenda narrowed in 2010. Holding revenue constant, however, can put organizations at a disadvantage as indicated by the statistically [and substantively] significant business/industry variable in 2009. By 2010, this variable is still negative but is no longer statistically significant, indicating the relative disadvantage of business groups had apparently waned as all groups faced a narrowing congressional agenda. Of course, these disadvantaged are clearly conditioned on the legislative environment. During another congressional session, when deregulation or reduced corporate taxes are in favor with the majority party, the business/industry variable would likely be positively correlated with a greater ability to prioritize policy issues.

Membership Priorities and Finances

Perhaps surprisingly, organizations were not more likely to work on issues they perceive to be important to their members. This is curious because one could argue that these organizations were formed to act upon the interests of their membership. However, lobbying organizations must take these issues into a legislative environment where opportunities are constrained.

Some lobbyists stated that their members or volunteer leaders wanted them to work on an issue but that it wasn't going anywhere. A health care lobbyist working on legislation affecting inpatient hospital care said, "My members don't want me to compromise or give up on this. At board meetings, they'll come to me and say 'you don't understand. We want you to go for the whole maggilah.' But politics is about what is possible, and you have to educate them about that. Sometimes you have to compromise or stop working on an issue."

Issues tied to members' financial concerns, however, were statistically significant in both 2009 and 2010. Lobbyists sometimes referred to policies that affect their members' bottom line as "bread and butter issues." These include matters of appropriations and eligibility for reimbursement in public programs. Members of Congress expected to hear from them on these issues, and groups did not need to check with their own members to see if these issues should be treated as a high priority. Some lobbyists indicated that such issues were easy to deal with because they involved specific and concrete solutions such as changing reimbursement categories or rates rather than developing new policies.

As one health care lobbyist explained, "I love this issue. I know exactly what to ask for and what the solution is. Just add [our members] to the list of reimbursable providers. Members of Congress know what I am talking about, and I don't have to explain anything too complex."

Alternatively, it may be that memberships with financial ties to policy outcomes were easier to motivate and organize although this was not expressly stated in the interviews.

Also, these may be issues in which organizations work on their own rather than in coalition. The importance of their membership finances and the simplicity of the message

may make it easier for them to communicate the issue to Congress. According to one health care lobbyist, “Nobody else is going to make sure we are included, so we have to do it. Everyone works on the big bill or appropriation, and then you got to do what you can to make sure your folks are not left out. This is where it gets competitive.”

Conservatives and Liberals

In 2009, both groups using ideologically conservative or liberal language were less able to put high levels of effort into their policy issues than non-ideological organizations. In 2010, groups using liberal language continued to be at a disadvantage, but conservative groups were no longer disadvantaged.

During the first round of interviews, some conservative groups talked about being shut out of the legislative debate on their most important issues. In 2010, conservative organizations were no longer more likely to feel shut out of the congressional agenda than non-ideological organizations, perhaps because many organizations had seen their policy windows narrow and relative differences between conservative and non-conservative organizations were less apparent. Changes in partisan representation and the pivotal player in the Senate might also explain this result.

Liberal organizations, on the other hand, maintained their disadvantage. In several interviews, such groups discussed their frustrations about not being able to include a public option in the health care law or to enact Cap and Trade legislation.

Agriculture, Health Care and Religion and Culture

In 2010, agriculture groups were less likely to put out as much effort on their selected issues as cultural/religious organizations. In 2009, this variable was negative and almost statistically significant.

Some of the results of this study are likely related to timing affecting the entire legislative session. The Farm Bill was not up for reauthorization in either 2009 or 2010 and many agriculture groups indicated they needed to wait to address their issues at that time. Said one agricultural lobbyist, “For us, there are reauthorization years, implementation years, and planning years. Right now, we are in the planning stage and are developing our requests for the next reauthorization.”

Outside Events

Outside events were statistically significant in 2009 but not in 2010. Some of the issues sampled in 2009 were brought onto the agenda by events such as food safety scares, the H1N1 outbreak, or the economic downturn in the fall of 2008.

Lobbyists discussed leveraging the events of the day to support their policy priorities. As one public health lobbyist said, “Basically, I have to wait until something goes wrong and gets attention. If it’s food safety, I look to increase our funding for those programs. If it’s H1N1, then that’s the priority. The field is underfunded, and we have to use these crises to call attention to our underfunded system.”

A lobbyist working on health issues described the role of events in the following way. “You have a set of policies that you want to work on and you capitalize on events to make your case. The mental health system is weak and can use support for a variety of purposes. So we might respond to terrorist attacks by talking about PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder]) or the lack of school-based services after a school shooting.”

By 2010, the relationship of outside events to lobbying effort was less clear. This is demonstrated by significantly fewer organizations listing outside events as a relevant factor in their decision making on these particular issues. It is likely that if I asked organizations

for new issues in 2010, other issues would spring up that would be related to more recent events. As discussed in the description of the variables, one year out, events mentioned in 2009 have less impact on an organization's priorities, but there are likely other issues for which outside events are still powerful influencers on lobbying priorities.

One might make a similar argument about the differences in statistical significance of other variables in 2009 and 2010. In most cases, however, such differences would be reflected in changes in the importance assigned to the issue. If events had transpired to make a given policy issue less or more important, the interviewed lobbyist would give the issue an appropriate importance score on the 1-100 scale which would be controlled for in the analysis.

Conclusion

How do groups make decisions about where to spend their time and resources? This research shows they are driven in part by what can move on the congressional agenda. In this sense, a state-centric perspective has merits in that the institution of Congress itself shapes the types of issues interest groups can spend their time on. Many interviewees explained that they can only work on issues for which they can gain traction in Congress. That said, the perceived importance of the issue was statistically significant throughout this research and was always the most substantively significant variable affecting where groups spent their time.

Organizational differences also matter, but their influence depends on timing. Business and nonbusiness interest groups with greater resources and sophisticated lobbying and fundraising assets such as associations with PACs are able to put more effort

behind their issues at the beginning of a legislative session, but such resources are no longer statistically significant as the congressional agenda narrows.

Two legislative techniques allow lobbyists to work on these issues even as the session draws to a close in its second year. Organizations that ally with legislative champions and supportive coalitions are able to put greater effort behind their policies. This does not necessarily mean that all an organization has to do is simply procure a legislative champion and supportive coalition. Surely many issues and organizations are unable find traction with either source of support, but this research demonstrates why lobbyists invest so much time courting legislative allies and partnerships among their colleagues.

The 111th Congress represented a significant policy window. As Kingdon (1990) might describe, long-standing policy and problem streams lined up with the political stream. Studying interest groups at this time represents a key opportunity because this is precisely when we might expect lobbying organizations to have the most impact and bring their issues to Congress.

Within this legislative context, other theories bear only mixed results. Interest groups representing business and industry members were negatively associated with higher levels of lobbying effort in 2009 and not statistically significant in 2010. Membership priorities motivated organizations to work harder on particular issues at the beginning of the session, but not in the second year. Issues affecting membership finances, however, were more likely to be prioritized in both years. Both liberal and conservative organizations felt shut out of the legislative process, but only liberal organizations remained in this position in 2010. Organizations representing agricultural interests were less likely to put as

much effort behind their issues, but this is potentially due to idiosyncratic timing issues that affected the entire 111th Congress.

To summarize, the congressional agenda holds powerful sway over interest group agenda setting, and legislative champions and supportive coalitions are two tools groups use to survive a narrowing policy agenda. The qualitative and quantitative evidence presented in this chapter explain both how the distribution of lobbying effort interacts with the congressional agenda and how groups work with legislative champions and coalitions to stay active on their issues. Organizations partner with allies both in and out of Congress to work on their priorities. Holding the congressional agenda constant, groups engaged in these partnerships prioritized their issues at a higher level. When the agenda narrows, such partnerships are used to move policy issues ahead incrementally through the legislative process, gather support, conduct research, and plan for a future time when particular issues become viable again.

Data acquired through these interviews has substantially more fruit to bear. The capacity of an organization to work on its policy issues at higher levels is one key test of relative power or at the very least an important precursor to lobbying influence. The next chapters in this research address equally substantial tests such as the ability of organizations to utilize multiple lobbying techniques as well as actual attainment of lobbying goals.

Chapter 3

Lobbying Tactics – Advantage Business

Abstract

The ability to engage in multiple lobbying activities represents another important precursor to lobbying influence and group power. Organizations that can use many tactics such as grassroots lobbying, meeting with congressional staff, assisting in writing legislation, and testifying at hearings should be more likely to affect public policy outcomes than those who do not. Interviews with interest groups conducted in Washington, DC in 2009 and 2010 provide leverage to understand who engages in which lobbying behaviors across organizations, in multiple policy contexts, and in different legislative environments.

This first-of-its-kind analysis reveals that business organizations maintain clear advantages when it comes to greater use of the majority of lobbying techniques. Even after controlling for relative resources, groups representing memberships composed of business or industry are more likely to engage in direct legislative lobbying, indirect (or grassroots) lobbying, campaign or advertising spending, and executive branch lobbying.

In contrast to the findings in Chapter 2, the presence of legislative champions and supportive coalitions are not as significant a predictor of the use of more lobbying activities as they were for overall lobbying effort. In short, these sorts of partnerships may allow organizations to work harder on particular issues, but they do not always encourage organizations to engage in additional types of lobbying activities.

Introduction

My analysis of lobbying effort reveals that organizations are able to devote more attention to a policy issue when they enjoy the support of legislative offices (legislative champions) and like-minded coalitions. The ability to work on legislative priorities represents one substantive type of lobbying power. A key follow up question is whether these factors are important drivers of other measures of relative group power.

In this chapter, I examine the effects of internal and external factors on an organization's capacity to engage in specific lobbying techniques. In contrast to my earlier findings, legislative champions and supportive coalitions are less correlated with greater participation in most lobbying activities. Organizations representing businesses and industry, however, participate in a greater number of lobbying activities even after controlling for differential resources such as revenue and ownership of a political action committee (PAC).

Analysis of lobbying activities is an important line of study in its own right. Results of past surveys have developed a shared understanding of lobbying activities in general. Based on this survey research, we know that face-to face contacts with policy makers and their staff and testifying at hearings are among the most common tactics used by interest groups (Berry and Wilcox 2007; Walker 1983; Scholzman and Tierney 1986; Heinze et al. 1993; Gray and Lowery 2001; Nownes and Freeman 1998; Hrebner and Thomas 2002; Milbrath 1963). Interest group scholars also understand that coalitions and informal contact with officials are common and that fewer lobbyists engage in protests and campaign activity (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Hall 1969; Loomis 1986; Nownes 2006; Scholzman and Tierney 1986; Heinz et al. 1993).

Despite a strong consensus about lobbying tactics in general, we know much less about how groups choose or are limited to specific tactics or whether some groups are advantaged when it comes to these tactics. Large surveys show that groups use a wide range of lobbying tactics and that those tactics have been consistent over many years. Prior research, however, does not examine differences in organizations as they work in specific congressional environments. Researchers have yet to undertake a systematic analysis of how groups select from a broad list of activities and apply them to specific policy campaigns. Without such an analysis, one cannot examine the influence of factors such as legislative champions, supportive coalitions, group resources, and business representation on lobbying tactics.

This is not simply a descriptive exercise. An organization that is able to meet with legislators, offer advice when drafting legislation, testify at committees, and supplement congressional lobbying with communication with executive agencies ostensibly has more opportunities to influence policy decisions. Alternatively, an organization engaging in a more limited set of activities has fewer chances to influence decisions and is less able to demonstrate value to its membership in terms of lobbying output. An analysis of when organizations are able to initiate these activities therefore not only explains differences in the selection of group tactics but, most important to this dissertation, also suggests differences in the capacity of organizations to influence legislative decisions.

Interviews with interest group leaders conducted in Washington, DC in 2009 and 2010 provide leverage to understand lobbying behavior across organizations, in multiple policy contexts, and during very different legislative environments. Based on these interviews, I explore whether groups representing business or industry possess systematic advantages when it comes to participation in five lobbying categories: direct lobbying,

indirect (or what non-academics typically refer to as grassroots lobbying), coalition lobbying, campaign spending and position advertising, and executive branch lobbying.

The data reveal that business and trade representatives maintain advantages when it comes to several types of lobbying associated with access to policy makers. Such organizations are more likely to engage in every category of lobbying activity except for participation in coalitions. A counter argument might be that organizations engage in such activities because they are weak and not because they are strong. According to this line of thinking, powerful lobbyists may be able to simply pick up the phone and request a particular change while weaker organizations must launch aggressive lobbying assaults from all fronts. My analysis refutes this reading by showing that organizations engaging in more types of lobbying activities are also the ones who are able to tie their efforts to legislative accomplishments either on their own or as part of a coalition.

Evidence presented in Chapter 2 suggests that organizations work harder on policy issues when they have strong coalitions and supportive members of Congress encouraging them. Such partnerships do not appear to affect tactical decisions when it comes to involvement in most categories of lobbying activities. An organization may work harder when partnering with allies, but they are not more likely to engage in other types of lobbying tactics such as providing legislative testimony or assisting the drafting of legislation. For example, an organization that works primarily through its grassroots membership is unlikely to begin testifying at hearings or engaging in meetings with legislative staff because they are partnering with coalitions and congressional offices support their position. Instead, such organizations are more likely to simply increase the intensity of their work through grassroots communication.

Theoretical Foundations

In Frank Baumgartner and Beth Leech's (1998) seminal analysis of interest group research, the authors argue that the tactics lobbyists choose depend on the situation as much as the characteristics of the organization doing the lobbying. Scholars often survey large samples of interest groups and find that lobbyists engage in a wide range of activities, but these surveys have not connected the study of lobbying tactics with the policy and organizational context in which they are undertaken.

Across an impressive history of surveys, we have seen that face-to-face contacts with policy makers and their staff and testifying at hearings are among the most common tactics used by interest groups (Berry and Wilcox 2007; Hrebner and Thomas 2002; Gray and Lowery 2001; Nownes and Freeman 1998; Heinze et al. 1993; Scholzman and Tierney 1986; Walker 1983; Milbrath 1963). Interestingly, results of surveys about lobbying tactics have proven consistent even when utilizing very different sampling methods. Some surveys are conducted with organizations in Washington, DC while others investigate lobbying at the state level. While Scholzman and Tierney and Heinze focused on the most active groups in Washington, DC, Berry looked only at public interest groups. Knoke (1986) included nonpolitical groups outside of Washington DC. In the face of diverse sampling methods and varied survey questions, political scholars have developed a solid handle on the types and frequency of various lobbying activities.

While face-to-face contacts and testimony at hearings are the most common tactics, other common activities include helping with policy formation and leveraging constituent pressure (Nownes 2006). Coalition activity and informal contact with officials have also been commonly reported when they are included as options by surveyors (Heinz et al. 1993;

Scholzman and Tierney 1986; Loomis 1986; Hall 1969). On the other hand, fewer groups rely on protests and electioneering to make their case (Nownes 2006; Baumgartner and Leech 1998).

Building off Baumgartner and Leech (1998), Nownes (2006) compiles a thorough review of what is known about the frequency of lobbying techniques from a long list of interest group scholars (Coopers and Nownes 2003; Kollman 1998; Nownes and Freeman 1998; Rosenthal 1994; Heinze et al. 1993; Knoke and Wood 1990; Schlozman and Tierney 1986) along a continuum from “seldom” to “very often”. Nownes’ results are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Lobbying Activity Overview¹³

Technique	Frequency of Use
Meeting with legislators and their aides	Very often
Testifying at legislative hearings	Very often
Meeting with Chief executive and/or aides	Seldom
Meeting with executive agency personnel	Very often
Serving on executive agency advisory boards	Occasionally
Submitting comments on proposed rules	Very Often
Engaging in litigation	Occasionally
Submitting amicus curia briefs	Occasionally
Engaging in grassroots communications	Very often
Engaging in demonstrations and protests	Seldom
Running advertisements in the media	Seldom
Campaigning	Seldom
Endorsing Candidates	Seldom
Engaging in election issue advocacy	Seldom
Making in-kind contributions to candidates	Seldom
Making monetary contributions to candidates	Occasionally
Issuing voter guides	Seldom
Joining coalitions	Very often

¹³ Nownes, Anthony. *Total Lobbying*. 2006

Despite this impressive consensus, we still know very little about under what circumstances groups choose or are limited to specific tactics (but see Hula 1999 for a discussion of coalition lobbying and Goldstein 1999 regarding indirect lobbying). Large surveys show that groups use a wide range of lobbying tactics and that those tactics have been consistent over many years, but this result may be because we have been surveying groups about what they do in general over a year or entire legislative session. What is missing is an analysis of group activities that examine differences among organizations as they operate on a host of issues that may be on or off the legislative agenda, without or without the a congressional sponsor, or moving as new legislation or part of a cyclical appropriation. Only after controlling for factors such as the policy issue's salience on the congressional agenda, can one effectively evaluate the role of factors such as organizational resources and the type of organization doing the lobbying.

The foundation for this work has been established. Berry (1977) identified four types of interest group strategies: law (which includes litigation and administrative interventions); confrontation (such as protests and demonstration); information exchange (such as legislative visits); and constituency influence or mobilization (including phone calls from constituents and letter writing campaigns). He argues that the selection of these strategies depends on both the characteristics of groups and specific policy contexts (see also Schlozman and Tierney 1986). Organizational characteristics include differences in financial or staff resources, the presence of a PAC, and the characteristics of group memberships. Issue contexts include the support or opposition of government officials, the type of legislation, and whether the issue is on or off the congressional agenda.

Scholars have already found differences among types of organizations. For example, Schlozman and Tierney (1986) show that citizen groups are less likely to make campaign

contributions than union or trade groups. Gais and Walker (1991) divide tactics into inside and outside strategies and argue that the choice of tactics depends on internal resources, membership, and financial support. Additionally, for-profit groups appear to use inside strategies more often than other types of interests (Walker 1983).

Researchers have yet to undertake a systematic analysis of how groups select from a broad list of activities and apply them to specific situations. Groups employ an assortment of tactics, but do they do this for all issues or just their highest priorities? Which activities are most affected by group finances or the type of membership, and which are dependent on support from within the legislature? Unless surveys include information about specific policy contexts across organizations and time, these questions cannot be adequately addressed.

My research on interest group agenda setting informs this discussion. In the second chapter of this dissertation, I show that lobbying effort is often limited by what can move on the congressional agenda. Interviewed organizations described how hard they worked on a given issue on a 1-100 scale with 100 indicating the maximum effort that could be dedicated to any policy campaign. Groups with greater resources and more sophisticated lobbying assets such as associations with political action committees (PACs) are able to put more effort behind their issues at the beginning of a legislative session and during an open political agenda, but such resources are no longer statistically significant as the congressional agenda narrows. Organizations that ally with legislative champions and supportive coalitions are able to put greater effort behind their policies are able to work on these issues even as the session draws to a close and the list of active issues on the agenda diminishes.

In short, overall lobbying effort is related to variables including the congressional agenda, partnerships with legislative offices, supportive coalitions, and financial resources.

While I have explored variables that affect overall work effort, it is plausible that these factors are related to the ability of groups to undertake specific tactics in wholly different ways. Thus, my present analysis provides an additional tool with which to analyze another aspect of relative group power. The capacity to work on priority issues is an important precursor to interest group power, but no more so than the utilization of potentially influential tactics such as meeting with policy makers, testifying at hearings, and providing guidance on proposed legislative language.

Theory

Research conducted in Chapter 2 provides the foundation for several hypotheses related to the effects of the congressional agenda, organizational resources, legislative champions and supportive coalitions, and organizational memberships composed of business and industry on the use of various lobbying tactics.

Just as my prior chapter demonstrated that organizations exert greater effort on issues that are active on the congressional agenda, specific activities will typically be undertaken only when they are useful to the current policy debate. I expect activities that involve close interaction and access to congressional staff to be undertaken when an issue is active on the legislative agenda. I also expect organizations to activate their grassroots networks on issues already on the perceived agenda not because of access to congressional offices but because groups will want to utilize limited internal resources when it is most critical. If used without discretion, grassroots messages could become less meaningful to policy makers and harder to mobilize among an overtaxed membership.

In short, organizations will be more likely to engage in more types of lobbying activities when they perceive the policy issue to be actively in play in Congress.

H1: Direct and indirect lobbying as well as coalitional activities will be positively correlated with the congressional agenda.

Organizational resources are likely to be tied to what tactics organizations choose or are able to use. Poorly resourced organizations may not always have the wherewithal to conduct media outreach, testify at hearings, or provide legislative guidance that wealthier organizations possess.

In my earlier chapter, I demonstrated that organizational differences have their greatest effect on overall effort at the beginning of legislative sessions and during times of political change and one-party dominance. During such periods, organizational resources are one of the primary limits on lobbying activity. A group may be solidly behind or opposed to a particular bill, but they can only put as much effort behind these activities as they have financial and staff resources. As the congressional session moves forward, many issues drop from the legislative agenda and organizations are more equally constrained. An organization may have the internal capacity to focus on an issue, but they are not going to prioritize a particular piece of legislation if it is unlikely to move.

In contrast to overall lobbying effort, I doubt this will be the case when it comes to initiating specific activities. Differences in resources are likely to consistently limit an organization's ability to connect members to policy makers, maintain staff relationships, and conduct a host of other activities. An organization may not be able to work as hard as they would like on a policy issue that is not receiving sufficient congressional attention, but they will still utilize the same types of lobbying tactics such as congressional visits and grassroots correspondence. I therefore expect differences in resources to be positively correlated with most types of policy activities regardless of legislative timing.

H2: Resource intensive activities such as direct or indirect lobbying and spending activities will be positively correlated with organizational resources.

The analysis in my second chapter found partnerships with supportive congressional offices and strong coalitions to be an important predictor of overall group effort. Alliances with legislative champions and coalitions maintain their importance in the second half a legislative session even as organizational resources are less relevant to differences in group priority setting. Even if an issue has lost traction on the overall congressional agenda, groups may hold out hope if they have the encouragement of a legislative champion or a strong coalition.

Therefore, I hypothesize that legislative champions and strong coalitions will be positively associated with a host of activities and offer organizations the motivation and technical resources to engage in additional types of behavior. Groups may be more likely to leverage their grassroots memberships when given information and nudging from legislative staff or coalition partners. They will join in on communication with legislative offices and be better prepared to offer testimony and comments on proposed rules and legislation.

H3: Legislative champions and supportive coalitions will be positively correlated with all types of lobbying activities or tactics.

Business groups and professional trade associations are said to dominate the realm of organized interests while fewer groups represent civil rights concerns, the poor, elderly, or disabled (Walker 1983). In making this argument, some scholars focus on the tools available to these interests, such as influential boards of directors, while others have examined structural advantages such as ability of firms to punish policy makers by relocating their businesses (Hart 2004; Hacker and Pierson 2002; Smith 2000; Domhoff 1996; Block 1987; Linblom 1977; Mills 1956). Advantages to these organizations are also theorized to begin at the organizing stage where, as Olson (1975) described, concentrated

interests such as those typically pursued by business organizations have an easier time organizing since they are better equipped to avoid collective action problems.

The idea that business organizations will be advantaged in lobbying stems from a profit maximizing model where smaller interests with concentrated benefits are in a better position to overcome collective action costs. A broad list of research on corporate political activity, however, has failed to show consistent results in the lobbying arena (Hansen, Mitchel 2000; Roberts 1994; Grier, Munger, Humphries 1991; Grier 1991; Bois 1989; Andres 1985).

Yet, this may not be the case when examining specific types of activities. Walker (1983), for example, found that for-profit groups tend to use inside strategies more often than other types of interests. The professional networks and special negotiating skills of organizations representing business and industry may grant them greater access and the ability to utilize specific tactics when other groups cannot.

H4: Groups representing business and industry will be correlated with greater amounts of direct and indirect lobbying activities.

Data and Methods

This study is based on the same two sets of interviews with interest group representatives conducted during the summers of 2009 and 2010.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this study are composed of counts within broad categories of lobbying activities or tactics. For each issue and in both years, I asked interviewees to choose from a pre-generated list of activities developed from previous lobbying surveys. The following activities were included on the list.

*Direct legislative lobbying*¹⁴: meet with legislators to influence their position; meet with legislators to support their position; provide guidance on legislative language; and testify at legislative hearings.

Indirect lobbying: educate organizational membership; promote policy position online; mobilize grassroots through phone calls, letters, and/or email; arrange meetings between organization's members and policy makers; work with media to promote policy position; and engage in protests or demonstrations.

Lobbying together: attend coalition meetings; and arrange or join sign-on letters.

Interest group spending: participate in electoral campaigns; and advertise policy position in the media.

Executive agency lobbying: testify at executive hearings; meet with executive policy makers; and comment on proposed rules and regulations.

To construct my dependent variables, I tabulated counts of how many types of activities were included in each category. For example, in the model examining direct congressional lobbying, the count includes both types of meetings, guidance on legislative drafting, and testifying at hearings using a poisson model with clustered standard errors around the groups to control for variation among sampled interest groups. I also estimated the model as a negative binomial, and the same independent variables registered as statistically significant in every case.

¹⁴ Direct or inside lobbying refers only to activities focused on Congress. Executive agency lobbying is included as a separate category because the sampling method asked interviewees to discuss policies that specifically involved interactions with Congress.

Independent Variables

For each policy issue, I asked interviewees what factors motivated them to work on the issue at the level of effort that they gave it. After the interviewee finished responding to this question, I inquired if there were any other internal or external factors that encouraged them to either work harder or less hard on the issue.

Following that part of the interview, I presented interviewees with a pre-generated list of lobbying activities developed from previous studies (Nownes 2006) and asked if the organization they represented had conducted any of these activities during the current calendar year on each of the sampled policy issues. My data therefore reflect whether an organization has conducted a particular activity on a given issue, but they do not reflect more detailed levels of intensity (the number of times an activity might have been undertaken or the hours or money spent on each activity.)

Organizational factors such as budgets and associations with PACs were identified through annual reports, 990 forms, and FEC data after the interviews.

The units of analysis for this research are the 224 policy issues discussed during the first interview and the 174 issues¹⁵ discussed in the second. My model estimates how various internal and external factors relate to specific activities undertaken for each issue. Some factors are the same across all issues for each organization while others are specific to the particular issue sampled. For example, an organization's total revenue would be constant across all policy issues discussed in that interview, but particular factors such as the support of a legislative champion would vary for each of the issues.

More detailed descriptions of my independent variables as well as their frequencies are discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. They are explained in brief below. Once

¹⁵ This number is slightly lower than the number of organizations interviewed in 2010 about overall lobbying effort. The lobbying activities questionnaire was not conducted with a small number of organizations that could only be reached via phone in 2010.

again, these answers were given by the respondents when asked what factors influenced their level of work on a specific policy issue. They were not given as answers to specific questions about the role of factors such as the congressional agenda or legislative champions.

Organizational Variables

I include a dichotomous variable indicating whether an organization represents a membership comprised of businesses or a particular industry. Information to construct the *Business/Industry Members* variable was readily available during the interviews and was double checked through the organizations' annual reports.

Internal resources serve as important independent variables. Using FEC data, I recorded a dichotomous variable indicating whether an organization is associated with a PAC. For *Total Revenue*, I calculated the logged value of each organization's total revenue based on data listed in federal 990 reports.

The sample included a broad range of organizations representing charities, nonprofit organizations, business, and entire industries. Poisson distributions were estimated with these variables separately in each model as well as together and showed no difference in statistical significance.

Issue Variables

Issue Importance serves as the first issue-based independent variable. For each issue, I asked lobbyists, "On a scale of 1-100, how important is this policy issue to your organization?" This 1-100 rating for importance also permits the combining of responses from the two sets of sampling questions. Such differences can be controlled for by including information on issue importance and other independent variables included in the model.

Whether or not an issue is perceived as being on the *Congressional Agenda* is another important control variable. If an organization indicated the issue was not on the

congressional agenda, they received a -1. If they did not mention the congressional agenda, they received a 0. If they indicated the issue was on the congressional agenda, they received a 1. An alternative measure would examine whether an issue is on the congressional agenda through committee hearings, votes, or media stories. But this would miss many other ways that an issue can surface on the agenda such as the circulation of “dear colleague” letters, requests for input from legislative offices, or assurances that the issue will be addressed during this congressional session.

If an organization indicated they did not have a *Legislative Champion* or their champion asked them not to work on the issue, they received a -1 for this variable. If they did not mention a legislative champion, they received a 0. If they indicated they had a legislative champion on this issue, they received a 1.

If an organization indicated they did not have a coalition or that their coalition was ineffective or disorganized on this issue, they received a -1 for *Strength of Coalition*. If they did not mention a coalition, they received a 0. If they indicated the issue was supported by a coalition, they received a 1.

Lobbyists also mentioned membership concerns. If an organization said the issue was not a *Membership Priority* they received a -1 for this variable. If they did not mention membership priorities, they received a 0. If they mentioned that the issue was a membership priority, they received a 1.

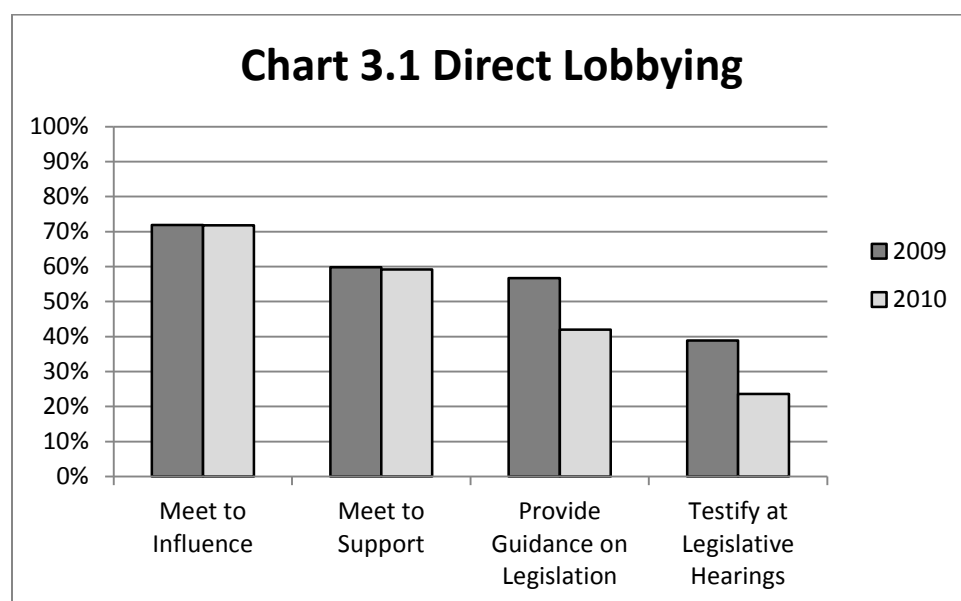
Lobbying strategies may differ based on whether the organization is working to enact policy change or prevent it. When an organization indicated that they were trying to enact change, they received a 1 for the dichotomous variable *Offense*.

With this set of independent variables, I am able to examine the relationship of important organization characteristics as well as policy context to lobbying tactics.

Findings

Even when examining lobbying activities by policy issue rather than by an organization's overall behavior, the consensus established in the literature holds together quite well. Organizations engage in a broad range of lobbying activities.

Charts 3.1 through 3.5 present the percentage of issues for which each type of lobbying was mentioned as an activity.



Past surveys have shown that lobbyists often meet with legislative staff. These meetings are among the most common activities reported during my interviews. As seen in Table 2, more than 70 percent of the issues involved meetings to influence legislators regardless of its level of importance. Legislative visits, however, can include more than persuasive lobbying and often involve meeting with allied offices where lobbyists and supportive legislators work together as teams (see Baumgartner et al. 2009) or lobbyists try to convince legislators or their staff to work harder on particular issues (Hall and Deardorf 2006). Approximately 60 percent of the issues discussed in this study involved meetings to support a legislator's position. Reported behavior for both types of meetings hardly change

from 2009 to 2010, suggesting that such core lobbying activities are done even as the legislative agenda evolves and issues come on or off the agenda, move on to new stages, or stall in committee.

In the beginning of the 111th Congress, a majority of work on sampled issues involved providing guidance on legislative language, although this dropped in the second year. While past surveys indicate that groups testify before committees “very often,” a minority of issues discussed in these interviews included this activity. However, this is likely because the unit of analysis is specific issues. A greater percentage of groups likely offer testimony on the issues of the day, but not on the specific issues discussed in the interviews. In other words, if I asked organizations to list the types of activities they engaged in as an organization rather than by specific issues, more groups would likely include legislative testimony in their second year.

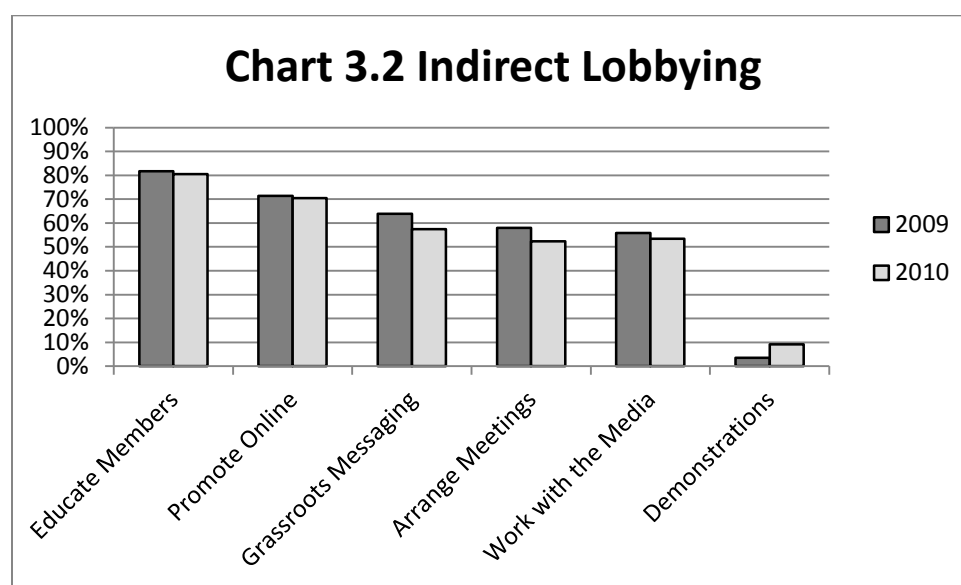
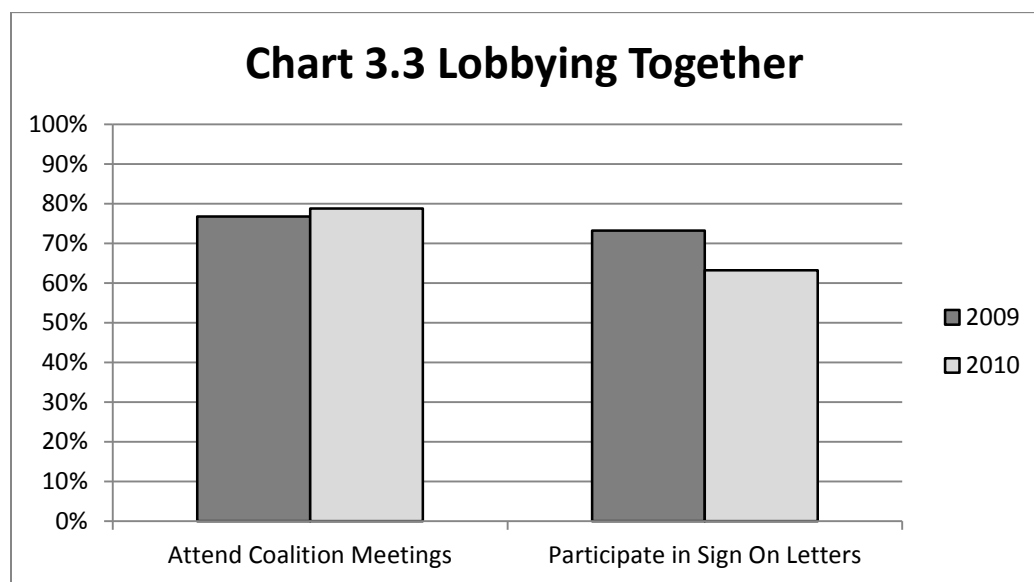


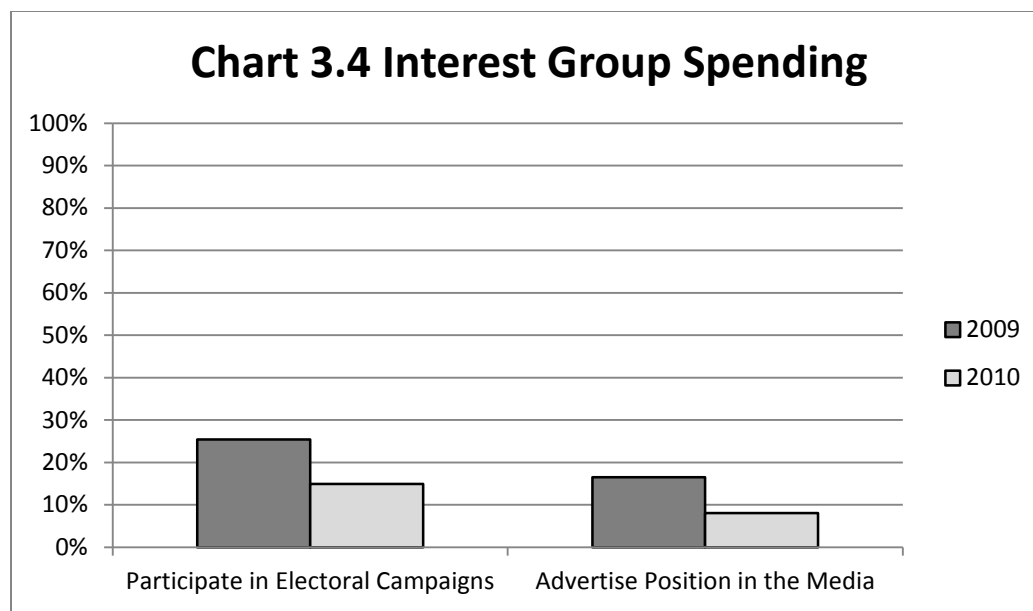
Chart 3.2 reveals that the most common indirect or grassroots activities might not typically be considered indirect lobbying at all. Educating organizational members and promoting issues online may not involve an immediate message to policy makers, but they are clearly a common tactic. Interest groups communicate with their members and the

greater public often and describe them as essential work that must be done generate responses from the groups and individuals they represent.

A majority of the issues discussed involved organizing grassroots messages or meetings between members and legislative offices and working with the media. As past surveys have shown, interest groups seldom protest, but this was the only form of indirect lobbying to increase in frequency between 2009 and 2010.

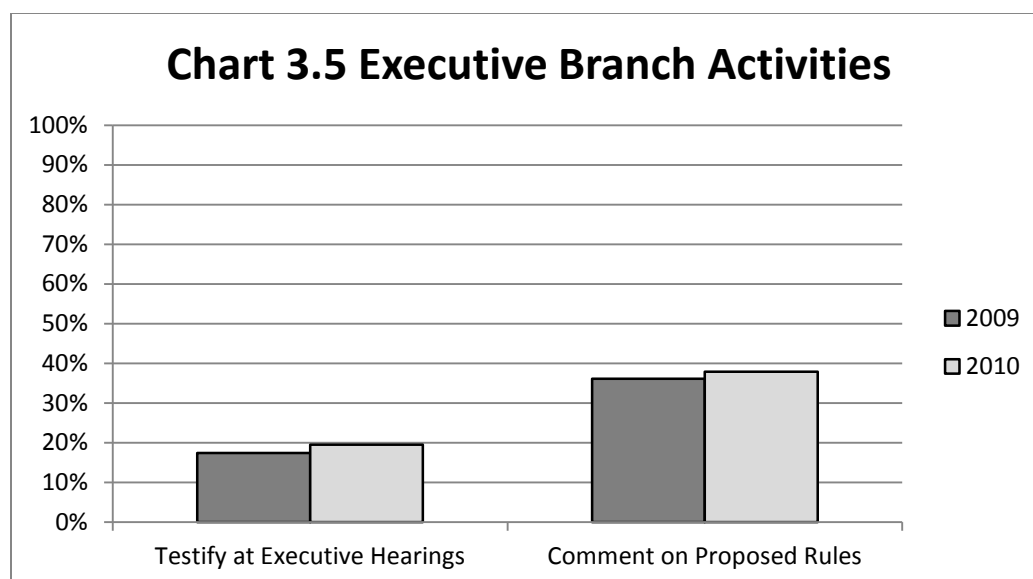


As other research has demonstrated, interest groups often work together. Table 3.3 shows that attending coalition meetings and joining sign-on letters represent two of the core types of “lobbying together.” Both types of activities were heavily reported in 2009 and 2010.



The interest groups surveyed in this study were national organizations representing either individuals or organizations as members or on their behalf in many ways. Many are forbidden by law from engaging in partisan electioneering, although public education through voter guides or other activities are allowed in most circumstances. In this sample, Chart 3.4 shows that very few issues involved work on political campaigns, and this holds true with previous surveys (Nownes 2006). In addition, few issues involved advertising positions in the media, an activity that could be considered either as lobbying or electioneering¹⁶.

¹⁶ For the purposes of this study, “working with the media” involved pitching story ideas, answering reporters’ questions, holding press events, and so forth. “Advertising positions in the media” was limited to purchasing space or time.



The issues discussed during these interviews and presented in Table 6 involved lobbying activities associated with Congress. Had the sampling of issues focused more broadly on policy activities associated with a range of political institutions, it is likely that more issues would involve testifying at executive agency hearings and comments on proposed rules. Nevertheless, nearly 40 percent of all issues involved commenting on proposed rules and less than 20 percent testified at executive hearings.

Tables 3 through 6 estimate counts of lobbying activity in each of this study's five categories.

Direct or Inside Lobbying

The most important models in this chapter examine the relationship of organizational and issue variables to variation in the use of lobbying tactics.

Several organizational and issue variables are significantly correlated with a greater number of types of direct lobbying activities. Organizations with greater revenue and those representing business or industry were more likely to engage in a greater number of types of direct lobbying tactics in both 2009 and 2010. In terms of issue variables, organizations engaged in more types of direct lobbying activities when the issue was important to them in

both years. In 2009, organizations engaged in more types of direct lobbying activities when an issue was on the congressional agenda and when they had a supportive legislative champion in a congressional office.

Table 3.2 Inside/Direct Legislative Lobbying 2009 and 2010

Dependent Variable: Count of lobbying activity (meet to influence, meet to support, provide guidance on legislative drafting, and testify at legislative committees).
Negative Binomial (Clustered Standard Errors)

	2009	2010
<i>Organizational Variables</i>		
Logged Revenue	0.062*** (0.018)	0.042* (0.022)
Business/Industry	0.259*** (0.088)	0.266*** (0.101)
PAC	0.043 (0.086)	-0.077 (0.099)
<i>Issue Variables</i>		
Importance	0.014*** (0.002)	0.014*** (0.002)
Congressional Agenda	0.125** (0.063)	0.023 (0.077)
Legislative Champion	0.323*** (0.099)	0.080 (0.095)
Outside Events	0.115 (0.094)	0.139 (0.214)
Coalition Strength	0.079 (0.121)	-0.058 (0.097)
Membership Priority	0.148** (0.075)	0.163 (0.772)
Offense	-0.043 (0.074)	0.085 (0.148)
Constant	-1.407*** (.370)	-1.226*** (0.423)
N	224	174
Prob > Chi2	0.000	0.000

* Significant at .1 **Significant at .05 ***Significant at .01

My first hypothesis predicts that an organization's perception of what was on the congressional agenda will be correlated with an increase in the types of direct lobbying groups engage in. In this data, however, this was only the case in the first year of the legislative session. As discussed in Chapter 2, this may be because organizations are working to move and plan items that are no longer the focus of the congressional agenda.

My second hypothesis is supported in the analysis of direct lobbying activities. Organizations with greater resources appear more likely to engage in activities such as congressional meetings and testimony regardless of changes in the congressional agenda. This stands in contrast to the findings in my earlier chapter which showed that resources mattered in the first congressional session but not in the second. Groups with greater financial resources may be just as constrained as other organizations as the congressional agendas narrow when it comes to overall effort, but they are still better positioned to engage in activities that involve access to congressional policymakers.

According to my third hypothesis, I expect organizations to conduct more types of activities when they are working with a supportive legislative champion or coalition. This is true during the first session but not in the second. Many interviewees described 2009 as a time of great optimism or pessimism during which they were responding to many opportunities for legislative change or requests for action from policy makers. A Democratic president and a Democratic Congress either gave them either hope or fear that new policies could be enacted. By 2010, hopes and fears had abated and legislative champions apparently could not encourage them to engage in additional activities at a greater level. Chapter 2 revealed that groups kept working on issues during the second legislative session when they had this type of support, but this is not the case when it comes to working on the same range of lobbying activities. In other words, groups may work harder on their issues

when involved with supportive legislative offices or coalitions, but they are not more likely to engage in activities outside of their normal operations.

The most interesting finding in this portion of the analysis supports my fourth hypothesis. Organizations representing business and industry are more likely to engage in a more types of direct lobbying activities even after controlling for differences in resources such as revenue and the existence of a PAC. This is true in both years. Chapter 2 showed that after controlling for financial resources business organizations were actually less able to work on their priorities in the summer of 2009. By 2010, this disadvantage had dissipated. In both years, however, groups representing business or industry are likely to engage in more types of lobbying activities that involve direct access to congressional decision makers and their staff. Business organizations may have been unhappy with much of the congressional agenda in 2009 and 2010, but they appear better suited to utilize direct lobbying tactics regardless of their environment.

As a lobbyist representing large agricultural processing plants described, “I got businesses that employ folks back home for just about every one of the committee members. I get my calls returned, and my members can walk in the door anytime they want. When the Farm Bill comes up, they [congressional offices] know we have to talk.”

Indirect, Outside, or Grassroots Lobbying

As Table 3.3 demonstrates, Indirect lobbying was significantly correlated with many independent variables. Revenue was significant in 2009 but not in 2010. Conversely, organizations with business and industry members were significant in 2010 but not in 2009. The importance of the issue to the organization was significant in both years as was perceptions of whether the policy was on the active legislative agenda. Supportive legislative champions and strong coalitions were never statistically significant with greater amounts on indirect lobbying.

Table 3.3 Indirect, Outside, or Grassroots Lobbying

Dependent Variable: Count of lobbying activities (educate members, promote positions online, grassroots messaging, arrange meetings with members and legislative offices, work with media, engage in demonstrations).

Negative Binomial (Clustered Standard Errors)

	2009	2010
<i>Organizational Variables</i>		
Logged Revenue	0.027* (0.156)	-0.018 (0.020)
Business/Industry Members	0.030 (0.075)	0.152* (0.087)
PAC	0.170** (0.073)	-0.018 (0.111)
<i>Issue Variables</i>		
Importance	0.011*** (0.002)	0.010*** (0.002)
Congressional Agenda	0.122*** (0.044)	0.168*** (0.059)
Legislative Champion	0.025 (0.097)	0.043 (0.097)
Outside Event	-0.102 (0.090)	-0.218 (0.303)
Coalition Strength	0.065 (0.101)	0.093 (0.084)
Membership Priority	0.133** (0.061)	0.037 (0.072)
Offense	0.031 (0.071)	0.077 (0.118)
Constant	-0.237 (0.342)	0.554 (0.337)
N	224	174
Prob > Chi2	0.000	0.000

* Significant at .1 **Significant at .05 ***Significant at .01

As predicted by my first hypothesis, organizations tend to mobilize their grassroots on issues that they perceive to be on the congressional agenda. This was the case in both

2009 and 2010. An alternative hypothesis would be that the congressional agenda responds to grassroots messages. While this may be the case at times, the nature of the question reduces worries of such endogeneity. I asked lobbyists what variables encouraged them to work on these issues and then examined their particular activities. In short, organizations were discussing the factors that led to their behavior rather than the other way around.

Additionally, comments during the interview point to grassroots networks that are responsive to legislative agendas. As one interviewee representing agricultural interests said, “you can keep up a steady beat on an issue, but you really want to get your folks in there right before they are going to bring the issues up either in committee or on the floor. It ain’t like their schedule moves for me.”

The data provide partial support for my second and fourth hypotheses. Organizations with greater revenue and those representing business and trade memberships were more likely to engage in a greater number of indirect lobbying activities in alternating years. For revenue, the data show a similar pattern as they did in chapter 1. Resources mattered in the first congressional session but were not statistically significant in the second. Business representation, however, follows the opposite trend and is insignificant in 2009 but shows a stronger relationship with indirect lobbying activities in 2010.

My third hypothesis is not supported by the indirect lobbying data. Coalitions and supportive legislative offices were not significantly correlated with indirect lobbying activities. At least initially, this is puzzling because one would expect organizations to activate their membership or approach the media when encouraged to do so by supportive legislative offices or strong coalitions. Once again, it appears that while supportive coalitions and legislative champions encourage organizations to work harder on particular issues, they do not change core organizational tactics. Groups do certain things when

lobbying Congress and increase their intensity rather than change their tactics when need for action arises.

Lobbying Together

In this study, lobbying together is operationalized as attending coalition meetings and/or participating in sign-on letters (on a zero to two scale). As one would intuitively expect, groups are more likely to engage in more of these tactics when the issue is important to their organizations and the policy issue is perceived as being on the congressional agenda. There are no other relationships that are significant across both years. Revenue is statistically significant in 2010 but negative, meaning that wealthier organizations were less likely to lobby together in the second half of the legislative session. The same is true among organizations with PACs. Groups were less likely to lobby together when they were trying to defeat a policy change in 2009.

Table 3.4 Lobbying Together

Dependent Variable: Use of lobbying activity (attending coalition meetings and participating in sign-on letters).

Negative Binomial (Clustered Standard Errors)

	2009	2010
<i>Organizational Variables</i>		
Logged Revenue	0.000 (0.018)	-0.043** (0.021)
Business/Industry Members	0.023 (0.065)	0.056 (0.084)
PAC	-.057* (0.076)	-0.200* (0.110)
<i>Issue Variables</i>		
Importance	0.005*** (0.002)	0.001*** (0.002)
Congressional Agenda	0.151*** (0.048)	0.191*** (0.066)
Legislative Champion	-0.051 (0.108)	.005 (0.086)
Outside Event	0.052 (0.094)	-0.239 (.284)
Membership Priority	0.105* (0.063)	0.020 (0.075)
Offense	-.132** (0.056)	-0.001 (0.111)
Constant	0.085 (0.320)	0.605 (0.347)
N	224	174
Prob > Chi2	0.000	0.000

* Significant at .1 **Significant at .05 ***Significant at .01

The data support my first and second hypotheses, but not my third and fourth when it comes to coalitional lobbying. Supportive coalitions were not included as independent variables in this model, but supportive legislative offices had no relationship with organizations lobbying together. Coalition lobbying was the only category in which business

and industry organizations were not likely to engage in more types of relevant activities during either 2009 or 2010.

Across the issues samples, a clear majority of organizations attend coalition meetings and join on sign letters. Since such activities have few barriers to entry (inexpensive, coalitions want more participants, and groups actively seek others to sign-on to their letters), it is not surprising that groups with greater revenue and those representing businesses are not more likely to engage in this behavior. Perhaps explaining the negative correlation in 2010, one well-resourced organization working on health care policy stated “We don’t do sign-on letters very often. The Hill expects to hear from us specifically.” This may have been less true in 2009 when the congressional agenda was perceived as wide open, and groups perceived greater threats or opportunities.

Spending

For indicators of spending, I included participation in electoral campaigns and paying for issue advertising. As one would expect, organizations were more likely to engage in spending-intensive activities when they possessed greater financial resources. Even after controlling for organizational revenue, however, groups representing business and industry were also more likely to utilize these types of tactics. Once again, groups representing business and industry demonstrate advantages that cannot be explained away by financial resources.

PACs were only statistically significant in 2010 as the midterm election approached. It makes intuitive sense that such groups may be more likely to utilize campaign spending tactics during election years.

As one would expect, groups participated in these activities more when an issue was important to them.

Outside events were significant and negative in 2010. These issues were sampled in 2009 when the outside event was more likely to be on the minds of policy makers and lobbyists than one year later. These data should not be taken as evidence that groups do not respond to outside event such as food safety scares with increased lobbying activity. If I had sampled a new list of policy issues in 2010, the relationship between lobbying activity and outside events might more closely resemble 2009.

Table 3.5 Spending

Dependent Variable: Count of lobbying activities (participation in campaigns, and paying for issue advertising).

Negative Binomial (Clustered Standard Errors)

	2009	2010
<i>Organizational Variables</i>		
Logged Revenue	0.140** (0.056)	0.146* (0.082)
Business/Industry Members	0.657** (0.261)	0.931*** (0.361)
PAC	0.285 (0.237)	1.054*** (0.259)
<i>Issue Variables</i>		
Importance	0.026*** (0.006)	0.031*** (0.010)
Congressional Agenda	0.209 (0.137)	0.355 (0.270)
Legislative Champion	0.053 (0.338)	-0.404 (0.247)
Outside Event	0.191 (0.261)	-14.550*** (0.629)
Coalition Strength	0.136 (0.429)	0.307 (0.512)
Membership Priority	0.061 (0.227)	0.380* (0.197)
Offense	-0.102 (0.207)	0.675* (0.391)
Constant	-5.693 (1.126)	-7.779 (1.764)
N	224	174
Prob > Chi2	0.000	0.000
* Significant at .1 **Significant at .05 ***Significant at .01		

In the case of spending-intensive activities, my first hypothesis is not supported. An issue being perceived to be on the congressional agenda is not positively correlated with

participation in campaigns or advertisements. Perhaps organizations utilize these activities more to move issues on to the agenda. For example, an organization might support a candidate when the issue is not on the current agenda but they want to lay the ground work for future activity. Neither the quantitative data nor the qualitative responses given during the interviews, provide sufficient evidence to explore this possibility.

The second hypothesis is clearly supported. Groups with more money are more likely to engage in these activities in both years. On the other hand, legislative champions and strong coalitions appear to have no relationship to these activities. Once again, my fourth hypothesis finds solid support. Groups representing business and industry are more likely to engage in these activities even after controlling for differences in resources and the presence of a PAC.

Executive Lobbying

My data include three types of executive lobbying activities: meeting with executive agency staff, testifying at executive hearings, and commenting on proposed rules. In this model, revenue was statistically significant in 2009, but not in 2010. Business and industry memberships were significant in both years. PACs were significant but negative in 2010. Among issue variables, only the importance of the issue to the lobbying organization was statistically significant.

Table 3.6 Executive Lobbying

Dependent Variable: Count of lobbying activity (meeting with executive staff, testifying at executive hearings, and commenting on proposed rules).

Negative Binomial (Clustered Standard Errors)

	2009	2010
<i>Organizational Variables</i>		
Logged Revenue	0.114*** (0.030)	0.036 (0.044)
Business/Industry Members	0.345** (0.147)	0.615*** (0.174)
PAC	-0.225 (-0.174)	-.439* (0.251)
<i>Issue Variables</i>		
Importance	0.015*** (0.003)	0.017*** (0.004)
Congressional Agenda	0.113 (0.100)	0.086 (0.091)
Legislative Champion	0.003 (0.152)	-0.183 (0.151)
Outside Event	0.316 (0.245)	0.262 (0.236)
Coalition Strength	0.112 (0.167)	0.125 (0.147)
Membership Priority	0.016 (0.144)	0.062 (0.130)
Offense	-0.218* (0.121)	0.159 (0.189)
Constant	-2.866*** (0.548)	-2.200*** (0.834)
N	224	174
Prob > Chi2	0.000	0.000

* Significant at .1 **Significant at .05 ***Significant at .01

One might expect that the perceived congressional agenda would not always be correlated with executive agency lobbying. Executive agencies may be working on regulations after they have already passed the legislature and been signed in to law. Or, as several lobbyists indicated, groups might work with agencies when their issues are not receiving attention in Congress.

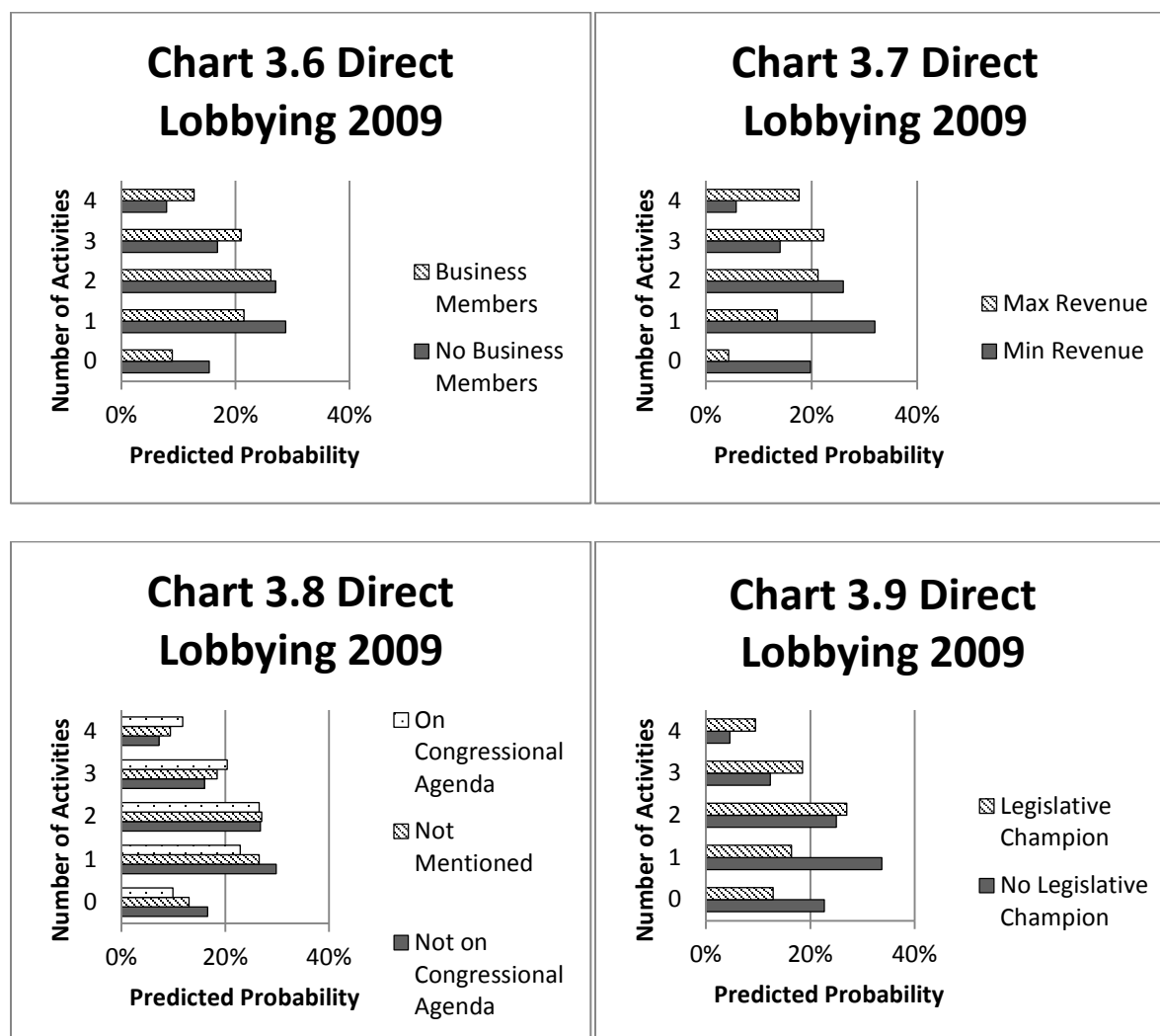
Financial resources matter in the first half of the legislative session but not in the second. Contrary to my third hypothesis, legislative champions and supportive coalitions had no relationship with greater amounts of executive agency lobbying.

Once again, my fourth hypothesis finds ample support. Groups representing business and industry participate in more types of executive lobbying in both years. As one lobbyist for agriculture concerns put it “If they want to enact a regulation that effects [type of agriculture business], they are going to want to talk with us first.”

Measuring Substantive Significance Through Predicted Probabilities

Charts 3.6 to 3.25 present the predicted probabilities of organizations conducting ordinal levels of lobbying activities in each lobbying category. For example, Chart 3.6 shows the predicted probabilities that an organization will engage in more types of direct lobbying depending on whether they represent business organizations in their membership. In each case, all other independent variables are held constant at their appropriate means or medians. Due to the large number of variables involved, I only present data relevant to the four hypotheses explored in this chapter.

Direct Lobbying

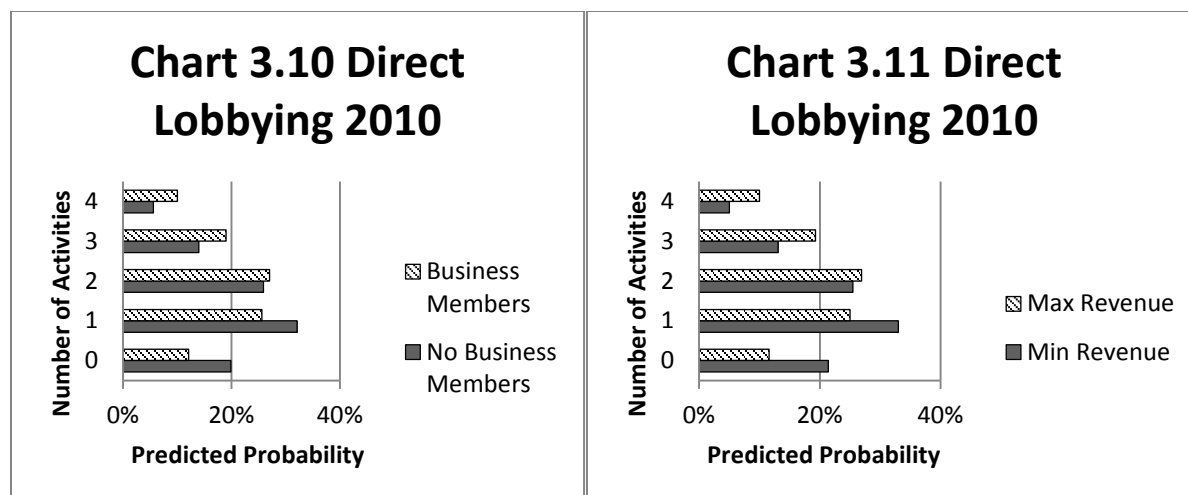


In 2009, all four hypotheses were supported by statistical evidence in the case of direct lobbying. In terms of having a substantive effect on the number of types of direct lobbying activities an organization engages in, however, the amount of financial revenue at an organization's disposal is clearly the most influential factor. Chart 3.7 reveals that the organization with the lowest amount of revenue is predicted to engage in zero direct lobbying activities 19.3 percent of the time while the organization with the highest revenue is predicted to engage in no activities on a given issue only 4.3 percent of the time. Those

same organizations are predicted to engage in all four types of activities 5.7 and 17.6 percent of the time respectively.

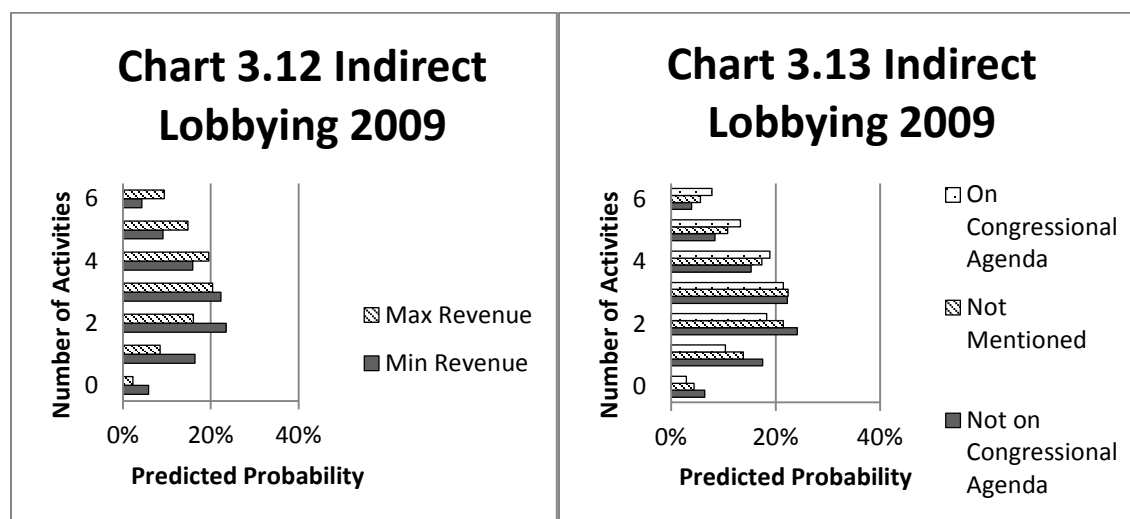
The differences between these probabilities are not reached by any of the independent variables presented in charts 3.6 through 3.9. That said, substantive effects are noticable across independent variables. For example, organizations without a legislative champion are much more likely to engage in only one type of direct lobbying activity. It is not surprising that money allows organizations to engage in more activities. They have more staff and are presumably able to offer a greater array of services to support legislative champions and oppose undesirable legislation.

Even after controlling for differences in financial revenue and the perceived status of an issue on the congressional agenda, however, groups representing business organizations are more likely engage in a greater number of direct lobbying activities. An organization without business members is predicted to engage in no direct lobbying on a given issue 15.4 percent of the time and all four types of activites only 7.9 percent of the time. On the other hand, an organization with business members is predicted to engage in no direct lobbying activity only 8.9 percent of the time and all four activities 12.7 percent of the time.



In 2010, only differences in revenue and representation of business interests maintained statistical significance for predictions of direct lobbying activities. In this case, however, financial differences do not represent as great a relative difference in the number of direct lobbying activities when compared to the difference predicted by knowing whether an organization includes businesses as members. As discussed in earlier chapters, organizational resources may account for fewer differences in organizational behavior when issues are constrained on the congressional agenda as Congress was described by interviewees in 2010.

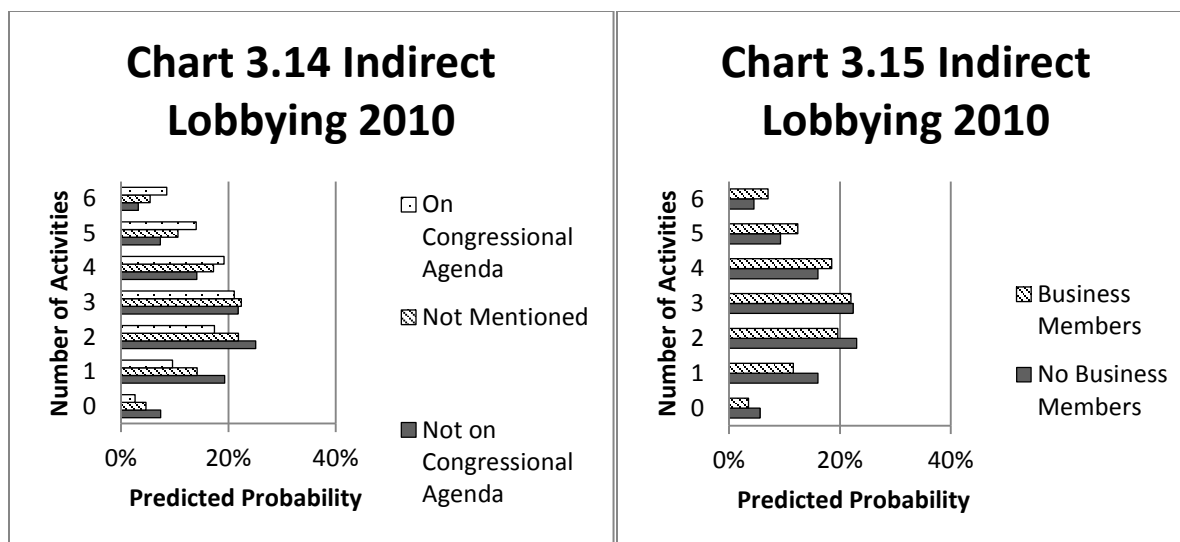
Indirect Lobbying



In 2009, organizational revenue and whether an issue was perceived as being on the congressional agenda were statistically significant. Since very few organizations engaged in demonstrations and protests, I will focus on differences between organizations participating in no indirect lobbying activities and those participating in five activities rather than the full six.

As Chart 3.12 describes, an organization with the least revenue is predicted to engage in none of the indirect lobbying activities 22 percent of the time while an organization with the highest amount of revenue will engage in no indirect lobbying activities only 5.8 percent of the time. An organization with least revenue will engage in five of the types of lobbying activities 9.1 percent of the time while an organization with the highest revenue will do this 14.8 percent of the time. While these differences are statistically significant, their substantive effect of revenue on indirect lobbying in 2009 is not as powerful as it was for direct lobbying.

In 2009, organizations leveraged the membership for indirect lobbying activities when issues were perceived to be on the congressional agenda. In 2009, an organization is predicted to engage in no lobbying activities 6.4 percent of the time when an issue was not on agenda and only did this 2.9 percent of the time when an issue was on the agenda. In contrast, they are predicted to engage in five indirect lobbying activities 8.4 percent of the time and 13.3 percent of the time respectively.

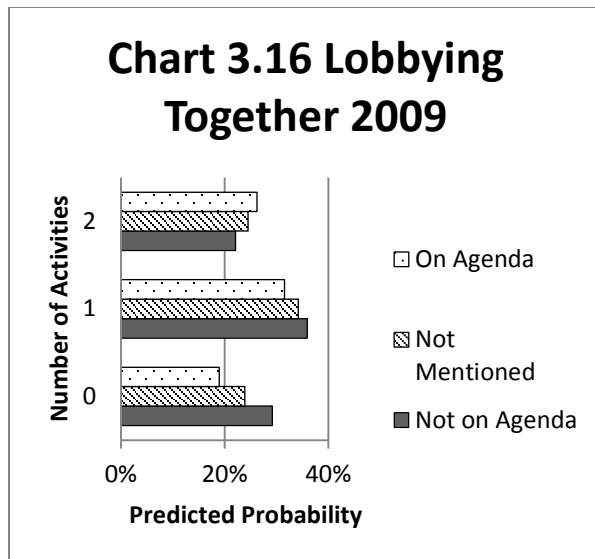


Organizational revenue was not statistically significant in predicted indirect lobbying activities in 2010. Again, this supports the theory that revenue represents less of a significant variable when fewer issues are moving on the congressional agenda.

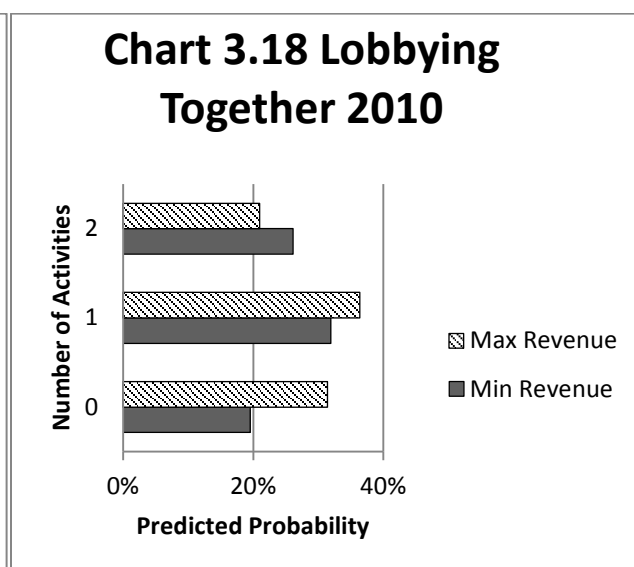
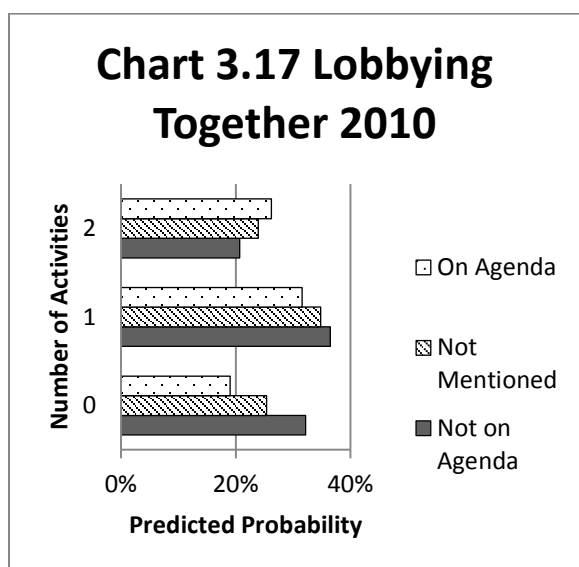
Perceptions about the congressional agenda maintained significance. When an issue is not on the congressional agenda, an organization is predicted to engage in no indirect lobbying activities 7.4 percent of the time and five types of indirect lobbying activities 7.3 percent of the time. When an issue is on the congressional lobbying, an organization will likely participate in no lobbying activities 2.6 percent of the time and five types of activities 14 percent of the time.

Once again, representation of business interests mattered. Organizations that did not represent businesses were predicted to participate in no indirect lobbying activities 5.6 percent of the time and five types of indirect lobbying activities 9.3 percent of the time. Groups representing businesses were predicted to engage in no indirect lobbying only 3.5 percent of the time and five types of indirect lobbying 12.4 percent of the time.

Lobbying Together



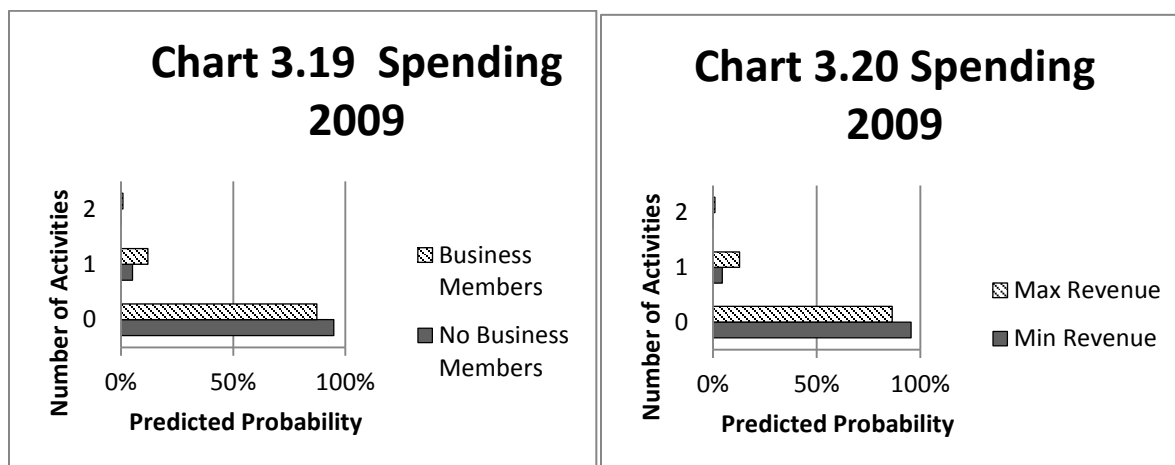
In 2009, whether or not an issue was perceived as being on the congressional agenda was the only statistically significant variable influencing decisions to lobby together. When an issue was not on the congressional agenda, organizations were predicted to not engage in these types of activities 29.3 percent of the time. When an issue was on the agenda, they were predicted to engage in no activities 18.9 percent of the time. When an issue was not on the agenda, they were predicted to engage in none of these activities 22.1 percent of the time and all types of these activities 26.2 percent of the time.



In 2010, both the congressional agenda and organizational revenue were statistically correlated with lobbying together or coalitional lobbying. When an issue is not on the congressional agenda, organizations are predicted to engage in no coalitional lobbying activities 32.2 percent of the time and all types of lobbying together 20.7 percent of the time. When an issue is perceived as being on the congressional agenda, an organization is predicted to engage in no coalitional activities 19 percent of the time and all of these activities 26.2 percent of the time.

In 2010, organizations with greater revenue were less likely to lobby in coalitions. An organization with the lowest revenue is predicted to engage in none of these activities 19.5 percent of the time and all of these types of activities 26.1 percent of the time. An organization with the greatest amount of revenue is predicted to engage in none of these activities 31.4 percent of the time and all of these types of activities 21 percent of the time

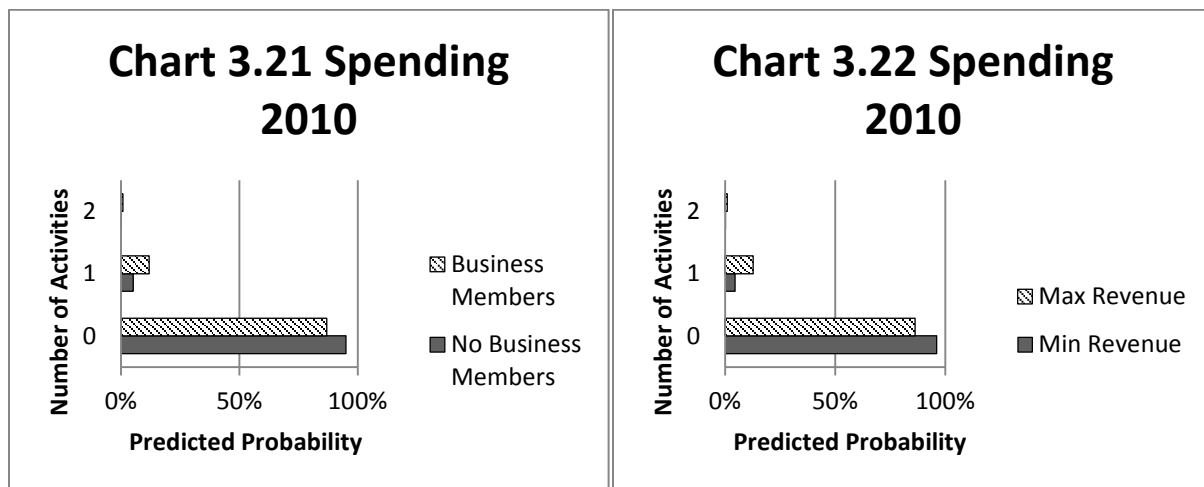
Spending



In 2009, organizations with business members and those with higher amounts of revenue were more likely to undertake lobbying activities related to spending. Once again, the benefit to businesses exists even after controlling for differences in revenue.

An organization without business members was predicted to engage in no spending activities 94.8 percent of the time and all types of spending activities only 0.1 percent of the time. While the amount of spending activities is still small, an organization representing business organizations was predicted to engage in no spending activities 86.4 percent of the time and all types of activities 0.9 percent of the time.

In terms of revenue, the organization with the greatest financial resources was predicted to engage in no lobbying activities 86.4 percent of the time and all types of spending activities 0.9 percent of the time. An organization with the least revenue was predicted to engage in none of these lobbying activities 95.5 percent of the time and all of these activities 0.1 percent of the time.

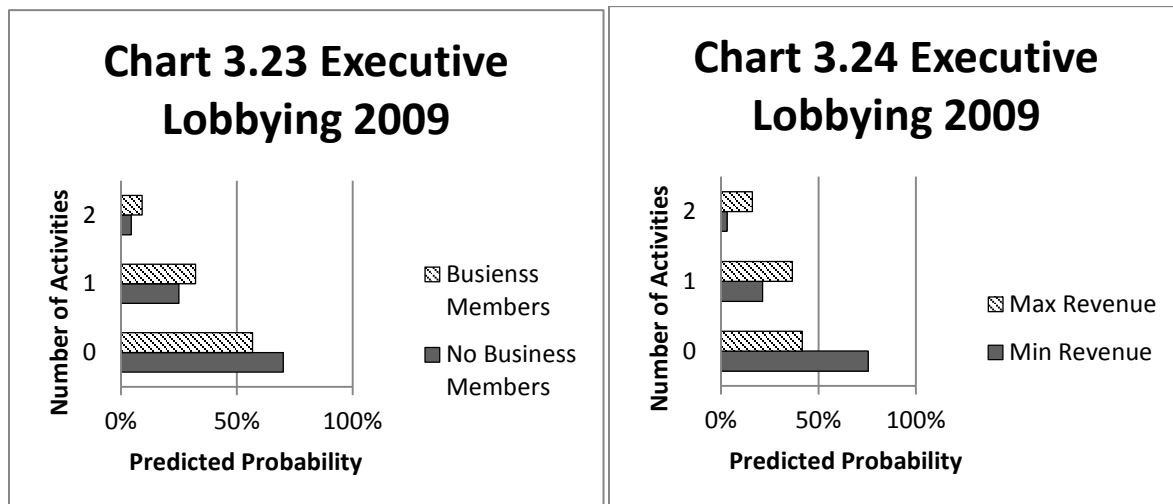


The same variables are significant in 2010, and their substantive effects are virtually unchanged.

An organization without business members was predicted to engage in no spending activities 95 percent of the time and all types of spending activities only 0.1 percent of the time. An organization representing business organizations was predicted to engage in no spending activities 87 percent of the time and all types of activities 0.8 percent of the time.

The organization with the greatest financial resources was predicted to engage in no lobbying activities 86.3 percent of the time and all types of spending activities 0.9 percent of the time. An organization with the least revenue was predicted to engage in none of these lobbying activities 96 percent of the time and all of these activities 0.1 percent of the time.

Executive Lobbying

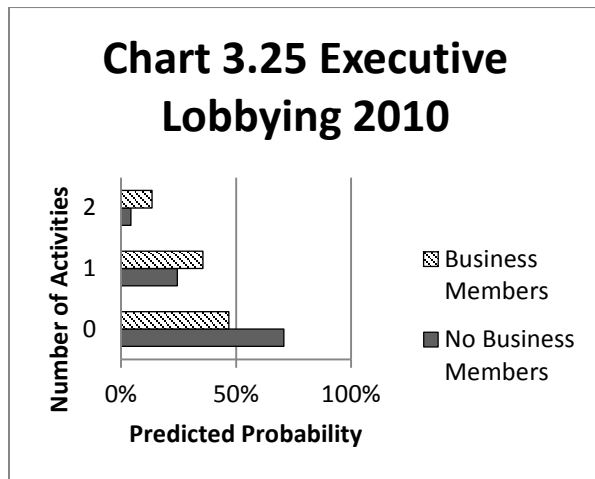


In 2009, groups representing businesses and those with greater financial revenue were more likely to lobby executive agencies. Once again, groups representing businesses maintain an advantage even after controlling for differences in revenue.

An organization without business members was predicted to engage in no executive lobbying activities 70 percent of the time and all types of executive lobbying activities only 4.4 percent of the time. An organization with business members was predicted to engage in no executive lobbying 56.7 percent of the time and all types of executive lobbying 9.1 percent of the time.

The organization with the least revenue was predicted to engage in no executive lobbying 75.5 percent of the time and all types of executive lobbying 3 percent of the time.

An organization with the greatest revenue was predicted to engage in no executive lobbying 41.7 percent of the time and all types of executive lobbying 16 percent of the time.



In 2010, revenue was no longer statistically significant, but organizations representing businesses were still more likely to lobby the executive. An organization that does not represent business was predicted to engage in no executive lobbying 70.8 percent of the time and all types of executive lobbying only 4.2 percent of the time. An organization that represents business was predicted to engage in no executive lobbying 46.9 percent of the time and undertake all types of executive lobbying 13.4 percent of the time.

The results of the analysis of predicted probabilities and substantive effects reveals that differences in revenue often result in the greatest differences in lobbying activities. However, even after controlling for revenue, organizations representing businesses retain statistically and at times substantially significant advantages and are able to engage in a greater number of lobbying activities.

Lobbying Activities as a Sign of Weakness?

One of the underlying premises of my argument is that organizations that engage in multiple types of lobbying activities are advantaged. An alternative theory might posit that

such organizations are actually disadvantaged. What if truly powerful organizations are able to influence congressional policy decisions with fewer types of lobbying activities? The vice president of government affairs for an ultra-powerful lobbying interest might be able to change legislative outcomes simply by placing a phone call to key congressional offices. Lesser organizations, on the other hand, would be forced to scramble together a host of activities to promote favored policies or discourage action on policies they oppose.

If this is the case, my argument would be turned on its head and the multiple activities of lobbyists would actually be associated with relative weakness. The preponderance of evidence, however, suggests that this is not the case and the groups that engage in more tactics have a greater chance to influence congressional policy. For one, the importance of the issue was highly correlated with the number of activities engaged in, meaning that when an issue mattered, groups did more and not less. Moreover, my data allow me to further examine the relationship between number of lobbying activities undertaken and legislative influence.

During my interviews in 2010, I asked organizations about the progress they achieved on each of their goals. I asked interviewees about their success in achieving goals related to moving or stopping legislation throughout the legislative process and whether they achieved the specific policy goals they discussed during their 2009 interviews. There was not a statistically significant relationship between the number of activities engaged in and success either in terms of process or outcomes. This makes sense because we would also expect organizations to work hard on issues where there is a large threat and they are likely to lose. In addition to legislative success, showing membership organizations that their association adequately defended them is also a high priority. If one is going to lose, it is often important to be seen as going down fighting.

I also asked interviewees whether their goal achievement was due to either their work alone or work in partnership with other organizations or if it would have happened without them. In other words, did they impact the final policy outcome or process? If lobbying with multiple activities is a sign of strength as I have argued, I would expect to find a positive relationship between the number of activities undertaken and whether the organization played a meaningful role in the congressional process. Approximately 63 percent of the 174 interviewees responding to this question indicated that they had played a meaningful role in the final outcome related to the policy issue in question.

Table 3.7 shows a simple bivariate estimation of the relationship between lobbying activities and whether the organization believes it played a meaningful role in 2010 outcomes.

Table 3.7 Meaningful Role

Dependent Variable: Whether outcomes were achieved through the organization's efforts on their own or in partnership with others.

Logit (Clustered Standard Errors)

	2010
Direct Lobbying	0.306*** (0.108)
N	174
Prob > Chi2	0.030
Indirect Lobbying	0.237*** (0.079)
N	174
Prob > Chi2	0.030
Lobbying Together	0.391** (0.180)
N	174
Prob > Chi2	0.017
Spending	0.168* (0.105)
N	174
Prob > Chi2	0.108
Executive Lobbying	0.125 (0.213)
N	174
Prob > Chi2	0.555

* Significant at .1 **Significant at .05 ***Significant at .01

In all cases except executive lobbying, greater numbers of activities are positive and statistically correlated with an organization perceiving themselves to be playing a meaningful role in policy outcomes and movement through the legislative process. Once again, it is worth noting that executive lobbying indicates lobbying the executive to address an issue that affected Congress. If this study focused on issues beginning with the executive, results would likely be different than those found in this study.

Undertaking more types of lobbying activities is clearly associated with organizations wielding some level of influence either on their own or in partnership with

other organizations. In short, a greater number of lobbying activities is an indication of interest group strength and not weakness.

Conclusion

While the effects of memberships composed of business organizations are perhaps most striking, Table C shows that many variables are associated with an organization's decision or capacity to engage in more types of lobbying activity.

Table 3.8	Direct	Indirect	Together	Spending	Executive
H1 – Cong. Agenda	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
H2 – Resources	Yes	Partial	Partial	Yes	Partial
H3 – Leg Champ and Coalitions	Partial	No	No	No	No
H4 – Bus & Ind	Yes	Partial	No	Yes	Yes

It is clear that perceptions about what is on the current congressional agenda greatly influence the timing of interactions with that institution and grassroots movements. Resources also matter. Organizations with greater financial resources are able to engage in more types of activities during at least one of the interview years in every category of lobbying.

In my prior analysis of overall lobbying efforts, partnerships with supportive offices in Congress or “legislative champions” and strong coalitions were correlated with higher levels of effort given to policy issues in both 2009 and 2010. Interviewees described relying on partners within the institution for information, connections, and additional tools such as grassroots mobilization. In contrast, supportive legislative offices were correlated with higher levels of direct lobbying only in 2009. While these partnerships appear able to mobilize groups to work harder even in the face of a narrowing legislative agenda, they are

not always able to perform this feat when it comes to engaging organizations in specific activities.

Supportive coalitions were not statistically significant with any form of direct lobbying in any year. It appears that these partnerships are able to mobilize groups to work harder but do not have a similar effect in encouraging additional forms of activity. As one group working on cultural policy issues described, “We are a grassroots movement. We write letters, make phone calls, and connect constituents to policy makers. I can’t be on the Hill all the time. But [their coalition partner] has the information and relationships. [Coalition partner] knows everyone. They let us know when we have to start making contact. That’s the nature of the partnership.”

In other words, groups may be pulled into working harder on policy issues when they have strong champions in Congress or allied organizations cheering them on. But they are not more likely to change their basic organizational tactics. Several respondents said that one of the reasons they were working harder on an issue was because they were asked to by members of Congress or contacted by another organization. It appears that this encouragement may effect issue prioritization but groups that do not typically meet with legislators to work on draft legislation or to testify in committee are not more likely to engage in these activities when supported by congressional offices or likeminded coalition members.

After controlling for financial resources, my prior analysis of overall lobbying effort showed no special advantages for groups representing business and industry. In fact, such groups were disadvantaged in this area in the first year of the 111th Congress. Examining specific activities, however, reveals clear advantages for such interest groups. Groups representing business and industry were more likely to engage in more types of direct

lobbying in both years and indirect lobbying in 2010. They were also more likely to engage in more activities involving spending and lobbying executive agencies.

If, as I have demonstrated, the ability to engage in more types of lobbying represents one indication of, or at least an important precursor to relative group power, interest groups representing business and industry are clearly advantaged. Importantly, these advantages exist even after controlling for variation in organizational revenue, the presence of PACs, and whether organizations perceive the relevant issue to be on the current legislative agenda. In other words, groups representing business and trade organizations are not engaging in more activities only because they are better resourced and able to make campaign contributions. Nor can their success at engaging in more types of activities be solely linked to a preferred position of their issues on the congressional agenda.

The concept of lobbying as a profit maximizing model where smaller interests seeking concentrated benefits are better able to overcome collective action costs and pursue narrow goals at the expense of the public good has seen its share of criticism. Research on corporate political activity has failed to show consistent results in the lobbying market place (Andres 1985; Bois 1989; Grier 1991; Grier, Munger, Roberts 1994; Humphries 1991; Hansen and Mitchel 2000). As Hansen, Mitchel, and Drope (2005) described:

The (exchange) story is simple, plausible and set on a solid theoretical foundation. It is significant and worthy of our attention because of the implications for normative democratic theory, and the detrimental impact on economic efficiency and performance...The only real difficulty is that there is, at best, mixed evidence for such an exchange. Scholars have not been very successful in linking the political participation of business to policy benefits.

Yet this study of interest group activity shows substantial support for sector advantages when it comes to engaging in a range of lobbying activities. What remains to be

seen, and will be the focus of the next stage in this research, is whether these advantages extend to actual lobbying victories. The power to work hard on an issue or engage in a greater number of lobbying activities are both significant, but they pale in comparison to an organization's ability to enact or prevent legislative change. For that, I now turn to Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Legislative Winners and the Further Advantages of Business

Abstract

Who wins and who loses when interest groups compete in the legislative arena? Scholarly consensus holds that groups representing business and industry dominate lobbying contests, but empirical evidence demonstrating such advantages has been inconsistent.

Interviews with interest groups conducted in Washington, DC in 2009 and 2010 unlock new evidence about interest group success. These results show advantages for organizations representing businesses when it comes to policy outcomes even after controlling for differences in resources such as organizational revenue or the presence of political action committees and the issue's position on the congressional agenda. Groups representing business and industry are more likely to achieve their stated goals when it comes to advancing or preventing the movement of policy initiatives in Congress and in changes to federal policy making.

While supportive coalitions were not correlated with goal attainment, organizations working with legislative champions were more likely to report achieving their goals in terms of movement in the legislative process but not final policy change.

Introduction

Interest group scholars often emphasize the advantages business groups enjoy in the policymaking arena (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Schlozman 1984). But empirical data showing greater levels of lobbying success for groups representing these sectors has been less forthcoming. Research presented in this chapter identifies the specific goals of lobbying campaigns and reveals that groups representing business and industry are more likely to perceive that they have found success even during short-term lobbying efforts.

As discussed in earlier chapters, political scientists and other researchers offer various arguments about the theoretical lobbying advantages of business and industry (Hart 2004; Hacker and Pierson 2002; Smith 2000). Not only are business organizations presumed to have advantages when it comes to lobbying policy makers, but their advantages are argued to exist during the organizing stage. As Olson (1975) argued, they are better able to overcome collective action problems due to concentrated benefits and the ability of a few firms to make a substantive difference on the final outcome. In the area of group formation, the scholarly consensus provides both a theoretical and empirical case explaining why groups representing these sectors outnumber other types of organizations (Nownes 2006; Salisbury 1984; Walker 1983).

Demonstrating that business groups have relatively greater influence over actual government decisions, however, has proven more difficult. Identifying successful or unsuccessful lobbying efforts is often challenging because researchers typically have little information about the specific goals of individual lobbying organizations and no easy way to evaluate success beyond blunt instruments such as committee and floor votes which fail to consider many other types of victories or failures. Precise organizational goals which could

be measured for success or failure include: securing sponsors, holding hearings, lining up congressional supporters, drafting compromise language, preventing legislation from moving forward. In short, concrete examples of legislative influence stretch far beyond what is recorded in committee and floor votes.

To address this gap in the literature, I examine the attainment of lobbying goals through interviews conducted with lobbyists in the summers of 2009 and 2010. Specific issues and goals are identified during the first interview and progress is evaluated through interviews with the same organization during the second interview one year later. Since lobbying efforts are typically multi-year campaigns and victories and failures are often tempered with compromise, I ask groups to evaluate their success on a continuum (1 = no goals attained, 2 = some goals attained, 3 = most goals attained, 4 = all goals attained) both in terms of legislative process and actual policy outcomes. For example, an organization might have been in support or opposition to the health care reform law passed in 2010. The organization might conclude that the victory only achieved most of their goals because it did not include a public option. Conversely, failure might not be seen as complete for an opposing organization because they successfully defeated that same public option. In each case, the stated goals of the policy campaign were read back to the organization's representative during the second interview one year later. They were asked to describe the policy outcome to date and to rank their level of goal attainment on the one to four continuum.

My results deliver the empirical evidence needed to support the theoretical advantages of lobbyists representing business and industry. Such organizations are more likely to say that they achieved their goals when it comes to actual changes in public policy as well as the movement of bills through the legislative process. My model controls for differences in organizational revenue, the presence of political action committees, perceived

position on the congressional agenda, and variation in the nature of specific goals. Such findings are noteworthy given that this research covers changes over a single year and during a time when Democratic control of the White House and Congress might theoretically grant representatives of nonbusiness lobbying sectors a window of opportunity for policy change.

Although earlier research presented in this dissertation did not show business and industry lobbying advantages when it came to the ability of organizations to work hard on policy issues (except when benefiting from relatively higher organizational revenue), I have shown that these organizations are able to engage in more types of the lobbying activities, and I now demonstrate that they are more likely to approach and even attain their lobbying goals.

Partnerships with supportive legislative offices (legislative champions) also played a role in goal attainment. For this stage in the research, I asked organizations to describe goal attainment both in terms of process through the legislative arena and actual policy change. Bills often take years to secure passage, so process victories such as attainment of legislative sponsors or hearings can represent substantial victories even when there is no change in law during that year or legislative session. While the presence of legislative champions was not correlated with goal attainment in terms of final policy outcomes, it was positively associated with progress through the legislative process. This supports the argument presented in earlier chapters of this dissertation that lobbyists work with legislative champions to secure progress for their legislation after the legislative agenda has narrowed for a given year or session.

Theoretical Foundations

Research on lobbying effects typically centers on the classic pluralistic versus elitist debate. Do organizations representing certain sectors and those with greater revenue dominate policy makers' decisions? In attempting to answer this question, this dissertation has revealed competing results.

As described in my second chapter, when it comes to the capacity of organizations to work on issues of their choosing, financial resources matter when legislative agendas are wide open, such as in the beginning of a new president's term and while enjoying a supportive congressional leadership. As the agenda narrows, however, groups are more equally constrained and differences in resources matter less. In this area of research, the advantages of groups representing business and industry hinge on their resources. While, overall, such organizations were actually disadvantaged during the first year of the legislative session, those with relatively greater revenue were able to compensate and invest more time and resources into their issues. Organizations allied with supportive legislative offices (legislative champions) and like-minded coalitions were able to put a greater effort into their policy priorities in both years.

My third chapter revealed that when it comes to the ability of organizations to engage in multiple types of lobbying activities, businesses demonstrate significant advantages and report utilizing more types of lobbying tactics in nearly every category. As one might expect, organizations with greater resources also engaged in more types of lobbying activities than their nonbusiness counterparts. In this case, legislative champions and supportive coalitions did not motivate organizations to engage in more types of lobbying activities.

Both of my previous chapters show the powerful role of the congressional agenda as many organizations report working on issues or engaging in lobbying tactics because Congress decided to take up the policy matter. In short, the state-centric view of agenda setting (Smith 1993; Freeman 1965) plays a significant role in determining which issues will be the focus of interest group efforts, but it goes much too far to claim that groups are entirely reactive to public institutions and do not bring forth their own priorities. Organizations respond to the interests and priorities of their membership, coalitional partners, and like-minded legislative allies. Throughout this dissertation, the “congressional agenda” is scored as positive when the organization’s representative said that they are working on the issue at least in part because Congress has taken it up. This is not to say that there are not times when an organization tries to affect the agenda, but for the purposes of this research the organization’s perceptions of what is on the agenda is what is motivating them toward action or inaction.

Placing the results of these two chapters together, it appears that partnerships with legislative champions and coalitions play a fundamental role in determining where groups direct their lobbying energies. Such partnerships, however, have less influence on the types of activities groups engage in. When it comes to lobbying tactics, groups with resources and those representing business and industry have many more arrows in their lobbying quivers. This is particularly true in the case of direct legislative lobbying which, in my research, includes meeting with legislators to support or influence their position, providing guidance of legislative drafting, and testifying at legislative hearings. Importantly, lobbyists themselves report that these sorts of tactics are the most powerful when it comes to influencing policy decisions (Nownes 2006).

To date, there is very little evidence linking these tactics to final policy outcomes. Similarly, interest group scholars have not conclusively demonstrated that, holding other

variables constant, groups representing business and industry are more likely to achieve their lobbying goals.

The basic theoretical explanation for lobbying advantages for businesses is that smaller interests seeking concentrated benefits are better able to overcome collective action costs and pursue narrow goals at the expense of broader and varied public interests. Based on these advantages, business groups are said to dominate the realm of organized interests with fewer groups representing causes such as civil rights or the needs of the poor, elderly, or disabled (Walker 1983). As described earlier in this dissertation, some scholars focus on the tools available to business interests, such as well-connected boards of directors, while others have examined structural advantages such as ability of firms to punish policy makers by relocating their businesses (Hart 2004; Hacker and Pierson 2002; Smith 2000; Domhoff 1996; Block 1987; Linblom 1977; Mills 1956).

As discussed in previous chapters, this theory has received ample criticism. Research on corporate political activity has failed to show consistent advantages (Hansen and Mitchel 2000; Grier, Munger, Roberts 1994; Humphries 1991; Grier 1991; Bois 1989; Andres 1985). Hansen, Mitchel, and Drope (2005) summarize the problems facing the theory of exchange lobbying and benefits for business interests:

The story is simple, plausible and set on a solid theoretical foundation. It is significant and worthy of our attention because of the implications for normative democratic theory, and the detrimental impact on economic efficiency and performance...The only real difficulty is that there is, at best, mixed evidence for such an exchange. Scholars have not been very successful in linking the political participation of business to policy benefits.

In fact, studies relating to lobbying effects in general show mixed results. In their seminal review of interest group literature, Baumgartner and Leech (1998) analyze studies

of lobbying influence. At that time, out of fourteen studies, only six found clear evidence of lobbying influence on congressional decision making. More recent research has not resolved this question (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Andrews and Edwards 2004; Nownes 2006).

I argue that this inability to reach a definitive conclusion is likely because researchers have been unable to focus on the appropriate dependent variables with which to measure lobbying success. Measuring floor and committee votes fails to reveal the effects of lobbying on changes in legislative language, levels of support or opposition, or the position of an issue on the legislative agenda. Moreover, since lobbyists tend to spend the majority of their time with legislative allies (Hall and Deardorf 2006), we are unlikely to find changes in votes as the end result of their efforts.

In short, without a measure of lobbying effects specifically tied to the individual goals of specific lobbying campaigns, we are unlikely to uncover lobbying results in general, let alone successfully analyze the effects of memberships composed of business or industry or partnerships with legislative champions and supportive coalitions on lobbying success. Lobbying research must be contextualized in terms of specific legislative environments, types of organizations, and individual goals. Such is the focus of this chapter.

Theory

Lobbying effects can be best analyzed after researchers understand and develop measurements for the specific goals that are being sought by individual groups. For example, it does not make sense to analyze a group's ability to affect committee or floor votes if their true goal is to change legislative language or simply make sure their membership is included in the definition of eligible recipients for a grant program in the event the bill goes forward.

In past research on interest groups and lobbying, one of the greatest methodological problems has been a lack of clarity regarding goals. As discussed in prior chapters, interest group researchers envision at least three lobbying goals (Hall and Deardorf 2006). Lobbying may be a form of exchange in which money and other favors are traded for votes.

Alternatively, we can think of lobbying as a form of persuasion in which interest group representatives attempt to change policy makers' opinions on relevant policy matters. In the case of persuasion, lobbying is primarily about the flow of information between lobbyist and policy maker with the hope that this information influences congressional decision making (Wright 1990). As a third option, lobbying can be considered as a subsidy in which groups provide information, policy intelligence and staff labor to influence how hard policy makers work on a given issue (Hall and Deardorf 2006; Wright 1990).

As I argue throughout this dissertation, traditional studies of lobbying do not adequately distinguish among these goals or investigate and understand the contexts surrounding specific lobbying efforts. If congressional lobbying is mostly about exchange, we could simply examine campaign contributions and determine whether they influence votes. If lobbying is about persuasion, then we should be able to examine legislative interactions with undecided members and find evidence of vote changing. If subsidy is the primary goal, such models are turned upside down. Lobbying and contributions will seldom change votes because they are typically targeted at supporting allies who already intend to vote in the desired manner. In truth, lobbying is likely focused on all three of these efforts at different times.

Unfortunately, such broad, theoretical definitions of goals may blur the specific intentions of lobbying campaigns. In one lobbying campaign, the goal may be to enact new legislation. In others, the precise objective may be to increase appropriations, oppose new

legislation, change authorizing language, or simply to track and monitor policy changes so organizations can inform members of the ramifications of new or pending federal laws.

Examining goals in terms of the specific objectives sought by each organization in different lobbying campaigns allows researchers to measure whether or not groups are successful in achieving what they said they want to achieve. Theoretical discussions about whether lobbying is about exchange, persuasion, or subsidy are less pertinent here. I simply want to know what types of organizations are able to achieve their concrete goals in a defined amount of time and under different circumstances. Analyzing goals or objectives this way allows me to assess differences across organizations, policy contexts, and types of goals and objectives.

Importantly, my research controls for different goals by asking organizations what they want to achieve during the 2009 interviews and then checking back one year later to see whether these goals are met in 2010. Furthermore, I am able to control for differences in types of goals in case certain organizations are more likely to select more or less attainable objectives.

With organizations' specific goals in mind, I return to test the related versions of the four hypotheses put forward in prior chapters.

H1: Achievement of policy process and outcome goals will be positively associated with the congressional agenda.

H2: Achievement of policy process and outcome goals will be positively associated organizational resources.

H3: Achievement of policy process and outcome goals will be positively associated with the presence of legislative champions and supportive coalitions.

H4: Achievement of policy process and outcome goals will be positively associated with memberships composed of business or industry.

Each of these hypotheses builds on a base of research stemming from debates over the nature of democracy or my own theories about organizational decision making. They have been thoroughly explained in early chapters and do not need to be revisited in their entirety. In short, if elitist theory holds sway we should expect organizational resources and memberships composed of business organizations to be correlated with legislative success. If the state-centric approach holds water, organizations should experience more success when working on issues already on the congressional agenda. Last, my research in Chapter 2 suggests that groups work harder when supported by legislative champions and like-minded coalitions. It makes sense that such allegiances could also result in greater levels of policy success.

Data and Methods

I took a simple and surprisingly novel approach to quantifying the specific goals of lobbying campaigns sampled in this research. I asked interviewees what they wanted to achieve in each campaign and then returned one year later to evaluate their progress.

There are reasons to be concerned about self-reported success or failure. Lobbyists are by their nature credit claimers. They are adept at promoting their services to their own membership and are unlikely to speak openly about failures. To remedy concerns about self-reported success or failure, organizations were promised confidentiality and their names as well as the specific issues they worked on are not mentioned in this research. Additionally, there is little reason to believe that one type of organization would be more likely to exaggerate its accomplishments than any other. Groups interviewed in this research were all membership organizations of some type. There is no theoretical reason to believe that an organization representing nonprofit, science, or health care related

memberships would be less likely to want to claim success than those representing private businesses or industry sectors. Pressure to claim undue success should therefore be equally distributed across respondents.

Once again, I rely on data gathered through two sets of interviews with the same interest group representatives during the summers of 2009 and 2010. As discussed in previous chapters, my sample includes organizations lobbying on agriculture, culture, and health care related policies. During the first interview, I asked organizations to describe specific policy goals for each sampled policy campaign. When I returned to interview respondents one year later, I asked them about progress toward these goals both in terms of their qualitative experience and on a scale assessing their relative success. In addition, I reminded respondents about the specific goals stated during the previous year's interviews and asked them to describe their progress against that framework. As such, my data reflect the status of policies as of the time of the interviews conducted in 2010 roughly one year after the organizations were first interviewed.

Dependent Variables

To develop an individualized measure of success, I asked groups to describe their progress in two ways. I started off by saying that lobbying campaigns often take place over many years and that goals can be measured in terms of the legislative process in addition to actual policy changes or outcomes. For example, an organization may secure a sponsor for their legislation, develop compromise language, or secure a hearing at the committee level. Often times, lobbyists measure success in terms of their ability to move (or block) legislation through the many steps that it must travel before enactment.

I then asked respondents whether they had achieved none of their process goals, some of their process goals, most of their process goals, or all of their process goals. Their responses were coded along a one to four continuum, which can be used as a dependent

variable in an ordered logit regression with clustered standard errors to control for variation across interest groups.

Secondly, I asked groups to evaluate their success over the last year in terms of actual policy outcomes. Did they attain none of their policy goals, some of their policy goals, most of their policy goals, or all of their policy goals? Responses were coded on the same one to four scale. As I will discuss in my explanation of independent variables, I controlled for different types of goals since some legislative outcomes might be easier to achieve than others.

Importantly, I only asked organizations to evaluate progress over a single year. Expectations about achieving complete victories are therefore tempered, but progress toward their goals is measured on the one to four incremental scale.

In some cases, this dependent variable may be subject to endogeneity. Intuitively, this should affect each of my hypotheses in different ways. For example, it is plausible that legislative champions and supportive coalitions will be more likely to support organizations' progress on issues that are likely to be enacted. Endogeneity may play a role in this case and positive correlations between legislative champions and/or supportive coalitions with final success will require additional analysis. On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that organizations representing business or industry or those with more money would be more likely to lobby on issues where they already have a higher probability of success. Endogeneity is theoretically less of a concern in these cases.

Independent Variables¹⁷

I asked interviewees what factors motivated them to work on each issue. After the interviewee finished responding to this question, I inquired if there were any other internal

¹⁷ Independent variables that are unchanged from chapters 2 and 3 are not described comprehensively. Instead, I simply state the variable name and the potential numeric values.

or external factors that encouraged them to either work harder or less hard on the issue. I also asked them about the specific nature of their goals for each lobbying campaign. These questions were used to develop the same issue and organizational variables examined in chapters 2 and 3 along with a new list of variables related to the nature of their legislative goals.

The units of analysis for this component of the research are the 179 policy issues discussed for which I was able to discuss goal attainment during the second round of interviews.

Organizational Variables

Business/Industry Members (0 or 1), PAC (0 or 1), and Total Revenue (logged value).

Issue Variables

Importance (1-100), Congressional Agenda (perceived position) (-1, 0, or 1), Legislative Champion (-1, 0, or 1), Outside Events (-1, 0, or 1), Strength of Coalition (-1, 0, or 1), Membership Priority (-1, 0, or 1).

Types of Goal Variables

Organizations described their goals for each campaign. For example, they might be trying to enact a new law or simply working on a yearly appropriation. Coding was done from respondents' descriptions rather than by asking respondents to choose from a pre-generated list. Descriptions were then coded as dichotomous variables and include whether the campaign focused on: an appropriation; support for a new law; or simply tracking and monitoring proposed changes in federal policy in order to educate the organization's members.

Some goals may be more difficult to attain than others. For example, it is widely understood that supporting new legislation can be a more difficult endeavor than opposing similar legislation or working on a cyclical appropriation or reauthorization. Controlling for

which lobbying efforts aimed to enact new laws, affect appropriations, or simply monitor legislative action should therefore help determine the true effects of our other variables on both process and goal attainment.

Enact New Laws (0 or 1)

Appropriations (0 or 1)

Track/Monitor Legislation (0 or 1)

In a separate model, I estimate the effects of whether or not a bill was an effort to change policy as represented by the dichotomous variable, Offense.

Offense (0 or 1)

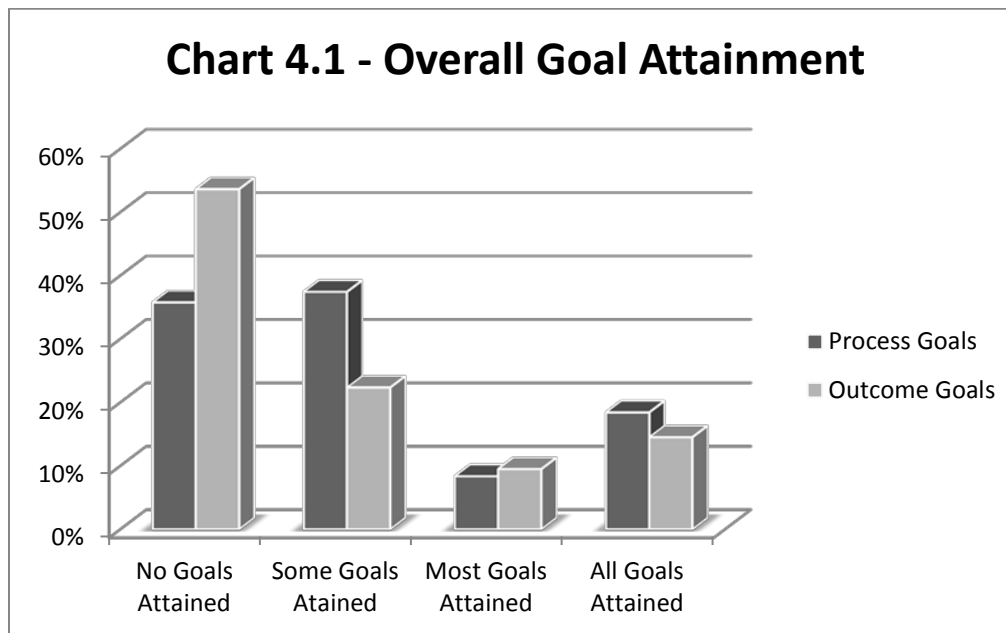
Findings

As one might expect, few organizations achieve all or even most of their goals during a single year. Chart 30 shows that approximately half of the organizations reported attaining no outcome goals whatsoever for the policy issues sampled during the time between the two interviews. Moreover, approximately one third of the respondents reported that they did not achieve any process goals, meaning that the policy issues did not move forward at all through the legislative process or that they were unsuccessful in preventing opposed issues from advancing in any way.

Methodologically, this is encouraging news since it indicates a willingness among respondents to discuss times when their efforts fail in addition to when they succeed. If any exaggerated claims of success remain imbedded in survey responses, there is no apparent reason to believe that this would be more likely to be reported by one type of respondent than another. I also control for differences in types of goals to address a tendency of organizations representing businesses to select goals other than enacting new legislation. Sixty-six percent of lobbying efforts involving nonbusiness lobbies were directed at enacting

new laws while only forty-five percent of lobbying efforts involving business lobbies were focused on enacting new legislation. The sample, however, contains enough variance across these dichotomous cells to control for this tendency.

Chart 4.1 also reveals that lobbying during certain policy windows, such as the one that occurred during unified Democratic Party control of the White House and Both Chambers between the summers of 2009 and 2010, can meet with considerable success. Approximately 15 percent of the policy efforts resulted in the organizations achieving all of their process goals. In terms of actual policy outcomes, roughly 12 percent of the policy campaigns resulted in the attainment of all goals as stated one year prior.



Of course, the most interesting questions involve which types of organizations are more or less likely to report successful goal attainment. Table 4.1 models goal attainment using ordered logits with clustered standards errors to control for variation among responding organizations. Both the model for process goals and outcome goals are statistically significant. In addition, both models explain approximately seven percent of the variance in lobbying goal attainment. Total explanations of variance, however, are not

key to this study since I am primarily interested in relative differences among organizations as they pertain to my four hypotheses.

The results build on the findings of my previous chapters and add weight to the argument that groups representing business and industry enjoy lobbying advantages that cannot be explained away by differences in financial resources alone. I also estimated this model using other variables as a test of robustness. I estimated models with variables indicating whether the organizations were liberal or conservative or addressed cultural, agriculture or health related concerns. None of these variables were statistically significant and the significance of the variables included in the following model were consistent in all models.

I estimate two versions of the model. In the first, I examine three different types of goals (appropriations, supporting new legislation, and tracking and monitoring). In the second version, I exclude these three variables and focus instead on whether or not the issue is an attempt to change policy which is coded as offense. The explanatory text below focuses on the model with the goals broken out into the three categories. In the alternative models, the offense variable was negative and statistically significant in the case of outcome goals, indicating that organizations were less likely to achieve their outcome goals when they were attempting to enact policy change. For the purposes of this chapter, lobbying goals are considered to be important control variables, but I wanted to make it clear that the change in goals included in the model does not alter the fundamental relationships of the other variables.

Table 4.1 Interest Group Factors and Policy Outcomes in 2010¹⁸

Dependent Variable: Lobbying Outcome (1 = No Goals Achieved, 2 = Some Goals Achieved, 3 = Most Goals Achieved, 4 = All Goals Achieved)

Ordered Logit (Clustered Standard Errors)

	Process Goals	With Offense	Outcome Goals	Without Offense
<i>Organizational Variables</i>				
Logged Revenue ¹⁹	0.138*** (0.069)	0.217*** (0.071)	0.140* (0.077)	0.172** (0.071)
Business/Industry	0.918*** (0.334)	0.898*** (0.324)	0.681* * (0.326)	0.861 (0.295)
PAC	-0.155 (0.369)	-0.159 (0.351)	-0.075 (0.417)	-0.195 (0.357)
<i>Issue Variables</i>				
Importance	0.005 (0.007)	0.005 (0.007)	0.002 (0.007)	0.000 (0.007)
Congressional Agenda	0.920*** (0.239)	0.825*** (0.263)	1.054*** (0.268)	0.917*** (0.257)
Legislative Champion	0.774*** (0.294)	0.692** (0.316)	0.215 (0.364)	(0.314) (0.362)
Outside Events	-0.900 (0.571)	-1.308 (0.954)	-0.711 (0.638)	-1.487 (1.318)
Coalition Strength	0.219 (0.300)	0.273 (0.311)	0.316 (0.307)	0.273 (0.312)
Membership Priority	-0.282 (0.322)	-0.117 (0.276)	-0.301 (0.322)	-0.228 (0.296)
Appropriation	0.156 (0.451)	--	0.160 (0.454)	--
Support New Law	-0.339 (0.324)	--	-0.577* (0.331)	--
Track/Monitor	-0.704 (0.682)	--	-0.468 (0.714)	--
Offense	--	-0.496 (0.349)	--	-0.573* (0.316)

¹⁸ Results are virtually identical when estimated in OLS which does not entail the asymptotical properties of logistical regression.

¹⁹ Organizational revenue is also not significant when PACs and business membership are not included in the model.

N	179	179	179	179
Prob > Chi2	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.000
Pseudo R2	0.075	0.080	0.068	0.070

* Significant at .1 **Significant at .05 ***Significant at .01

My first hypothesis is supported by both models. Organizations are more likely to achieve both process and outcome goals when the issue is perceived as being on the congressional agenda. This is hardly surprising. Lobbyists advocating on issues that are off the congressional agenda would obviously have a more difficult time securing legislative support, working their way through the committee process, and finding their issue on the House or Senate floor. While hypotheses about the congressional agenda offer substantive information about where organizations spend their time and the activities they engage in, one could argue that the congressional agenda is more of a control variable when it comes to indicators of legislative success.

As discussed in other chapters, the relationship between the congressional agenda and where lobbyists spend their time was a common comment throughout the interviews. Lobbyists described bills like health care reform as being the focus of congressional attention and a place where they simply had to spend to their time. Other organizations talked about responding to food safety concerns such as contamination breakouts that concerned congressional offices or addressing environmental issues when they believed Congress planned to take up Cap and Trade legislation.

My second hypothesis is consistently supported. Organizations with relatively greater resource are more likely to say that they have successfully achieved their stated goals than those with relatively fewer resources. This is true in terms of both process and outcome goals. In short, money and resources matter.

My third hypothesis finds only limited support. Partnerships with supportive coalitions were not statistically significant in terms of either dependent variable. Legislative champions were linked to greater process outcomes but not to changes in actual policy.

Chapter 2 revealed that such partnerships play a significant role in where groups spend their time. They work harder when there is a supportive legislative office encouraging their participation. They also work harder when they belong to a coalition working on the same issue. Chapter 3, however, showed that these partnerships do not affect the types of lobbying activities groups are involved in. For example, it appears that organizations focused on grassroots messaging may prioritize an issue more when it is supported by these partnerships, but they are unlikely to engage in new behaviors such as meeting with members of Congress, testifying at congressional hearings, or commenting draft legislative language

Based on the quantitative and qualitative evidence presented in Chapter 2, it appears that lobbyist often work with legislative champions to maintain a placeholder for their issues as the legislative agenda narrows. An issue may not be likely to pass in a given legislative session, but partnerships with congressional offices allow organizations to move their issues ahead both to position the issue for success in the following year and possibly so that they can show this progress to their membership. The positive relationship between legislative champions and higher levels of process goal attainment, adds additional support to this theory. These are the partnerships that line up sponsors, send out “dear colleague” letters, schedule committee hearings, and move legislation through the committee process. This effort, however, takes times and does not necessarily equate to actual policy outcomes during any single legislative session.

It is important to keep in mind that the causal arrow in this relationship likely points in both directions. While groups are probably more likely to move or block legislation when they have the support of legislative offices, such offices are also more likely to partner on legislation that is likely to move farther ahead. Controlling for the place of the legislation on the congressional agenda might reduce endogeneity to some degree, but congressional offices are still more likely to reach out to allied lobbying groups when the legislation begins to move.

Just as in my second chapter, the most interesting results involve groups representing business or industry. Such organizations are significantly more likely to achieve success in both models. Importantly, this is true even after controlling for the types of resources such organizations have available to bring to a lobbying fight. I have already discussed many of the reasons such organizations may be seeing disproportionate success. Their organizational memberships may be easier to mobilize or members of Congress could be especially concerned with their capacity to move to other areas. What is clear is that this evidence supports the difficult-to-prove view that business holds distinct advantages over other lobbying groups. Moreover, such advantages extend beyond their ability to raise lobbying funds and contribute to campaigns through PACs.

In addition to providing evidence to test each of my four hypotheses, these models provide interesting information about a range of control variables.

Each respondent scored the importance of the sampled issue to their organization on a scale of 1-100. A score of 100 indicates that this is as important as an issue could get for a lobbying organization. They could have multiple issues that are scored this high. As one might intuitively expect, the importance of the issue to the organization was positively associated with the level of effort devoted to an issue and the number of different types of activities undertaken. Importance to the organization, however, was not statistically

significant when it comes to goal attainment. Of course, it is possible that studies conducted over a longer period of time than a single year would reveal a stronger correlation between issue importance and policy outcomes.

My model also controls for differences in types of goals which may be relatively easier or more difficult to achieve. As one would also expect, efforts to support the enactment of new laws over the course of this single year were less likely to result in progress along the one to four continuum for either process or outcome goals. Efforts to affect appropriation levels, which happen on cyclical basis, were not statistically significant. In a separate model, I estimate the effects of an issue representing change or an organization being on the “offense” rather than defending against legislative changes. The results for that variable mirror those for efforts to enact new legislation.

Substantively speaking, how powerful a role does the presence of business or industry membership play in lobbying goal attainment? Charts 4.2 through 4.5 present predicted probabilities of an organization achieving each level of process goal attainment (none, some, most, or all) depending on organizational revenue, business membership, partnerships with legislative champions, or the position of the issue on the legislative agenda. In each case, all other variables are held constant at appropriate means and medians.

Chart 4.2: Revenue
Predicted Probabilities - Process Goals

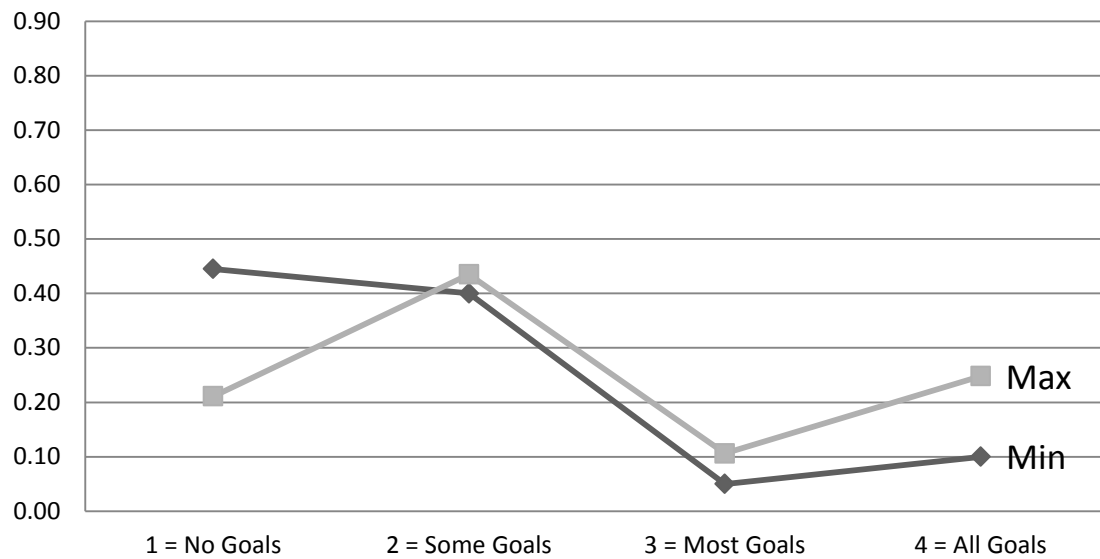
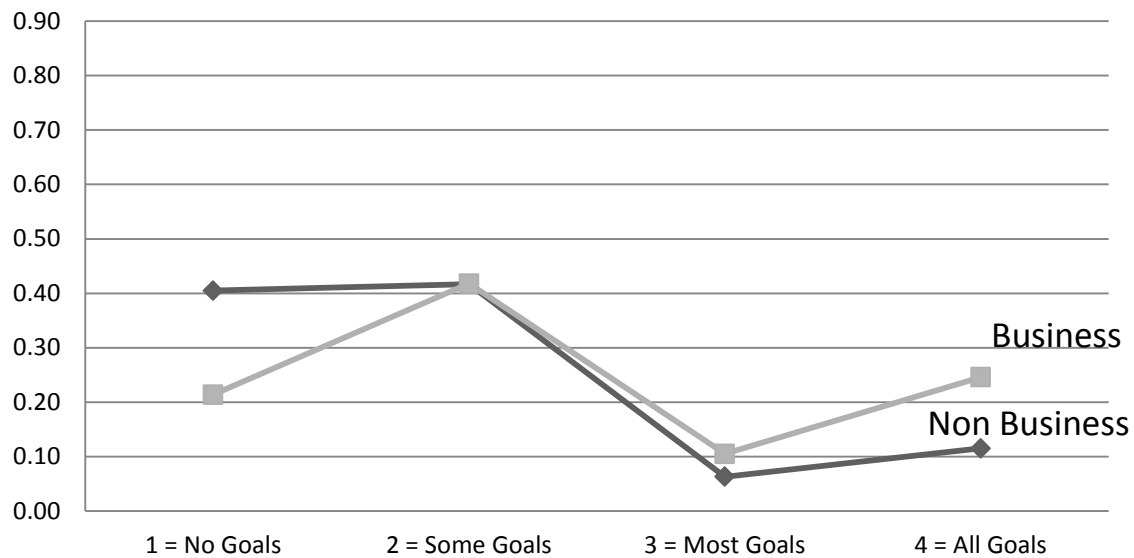
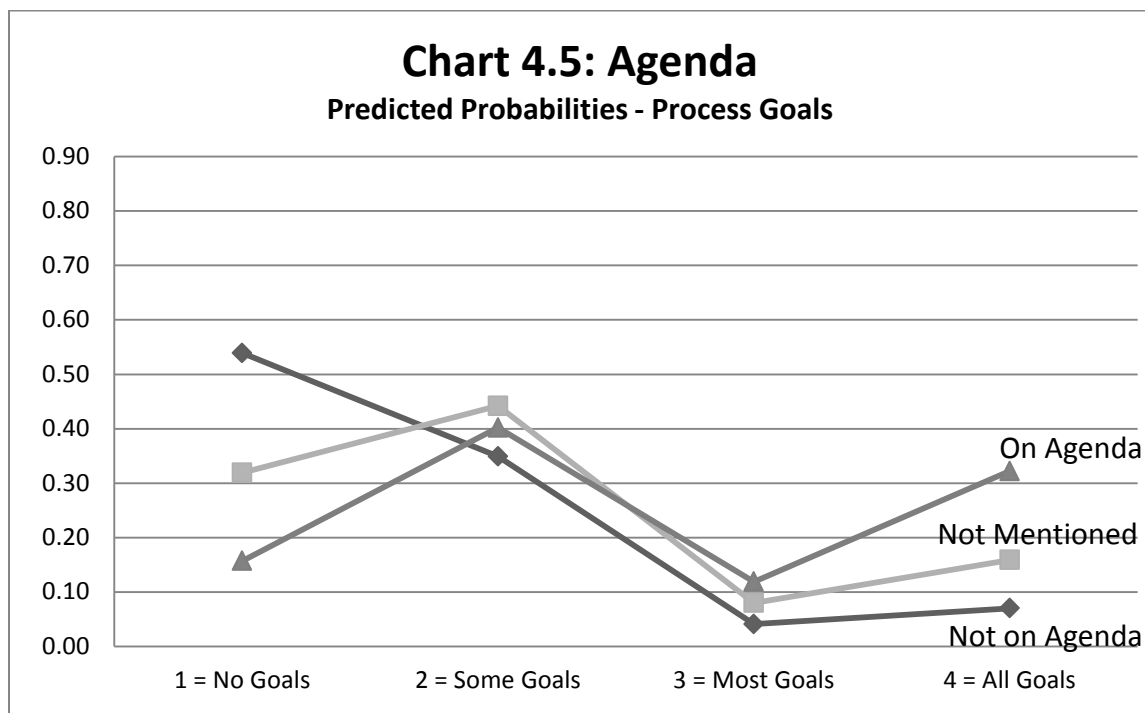
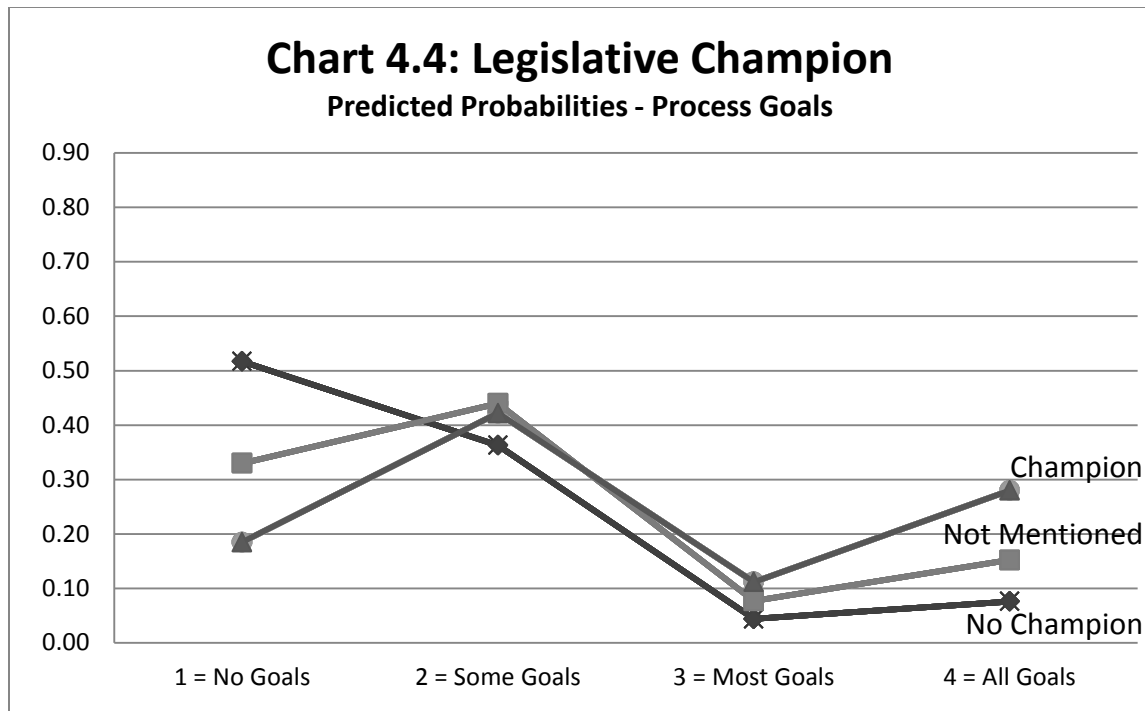


Chart 4.3: Business Members
Predicted Probabilities - Process Goals





For the purposes of this analysis, I will concentrate on the substantive relationships of organizational revenue and business membership. That said, Charts 4.4 and 4.5 show that the probability of organization achieving all of its process goals approximately triples

when an issue is on the congressional agenda or enjoys the support of a legislative champion as opposed to when an issue is off the agenda or has no champion respectively.

It is not surprising that bills move further when they are on the congressional agenda, even if this is mitigated by the inclusion organizations that are trying to oppose legislation. As I have already discussed, the relationship between legislative champions and progress is at least to some degree endogenous. At the same time, including these two variables in these charts provides comparison points with which to measure the strength of revenue and business membership.

The organization with the lowest revenue had approximately a 45 percent chance of achieving none of its process goals and a one percent chance of achieving all of its goals. The organization with the highest revenue had roughly a 20 percent probability of achieving none of its goals and a 25 percent chance of achieving all of its process goals.

The reasons that the organization with the least amount of money would have such a low probability of achieving its goals are clear. This organization lacks the staff and other resources needed to focus on their lobbying issues. Such an organization may be distracted with financial survival while the executive director performs the roles of manager, fund raiser, and chief and only policy staff. Wealthier organizations, in contrast, have fewer of these problems.

Even after controlling for differences in resources, the effects of membership composition are still profound. An organization with nonbusiness members, had roughly a 41 percent chance of achieving none of its process goals and a 12 percent chance of achieving all of its goals. Conversely, an organization with business members had a 21 percent probability of achieving none of its goals and a 25 percent probability of achieving all of its goals. Moreover, the roughly 13 percent difference between the probabilities of nonbusiness organizations and those with business members achieving all of their goals

occurred during a time when Democratic control of both the White House and the House and Senate might have afforded nonbusiness lobbying organizations a window for legislative change.

Charts 4.6 through 4.9 show the predicted probabilities of an organization achieving each level of outcome goal attainment in terms of actual policy change (none, some, most, or all) depending on organizational revenue, business members, whether the bill is new legislation, or the position of the issue on the legislative agenda.

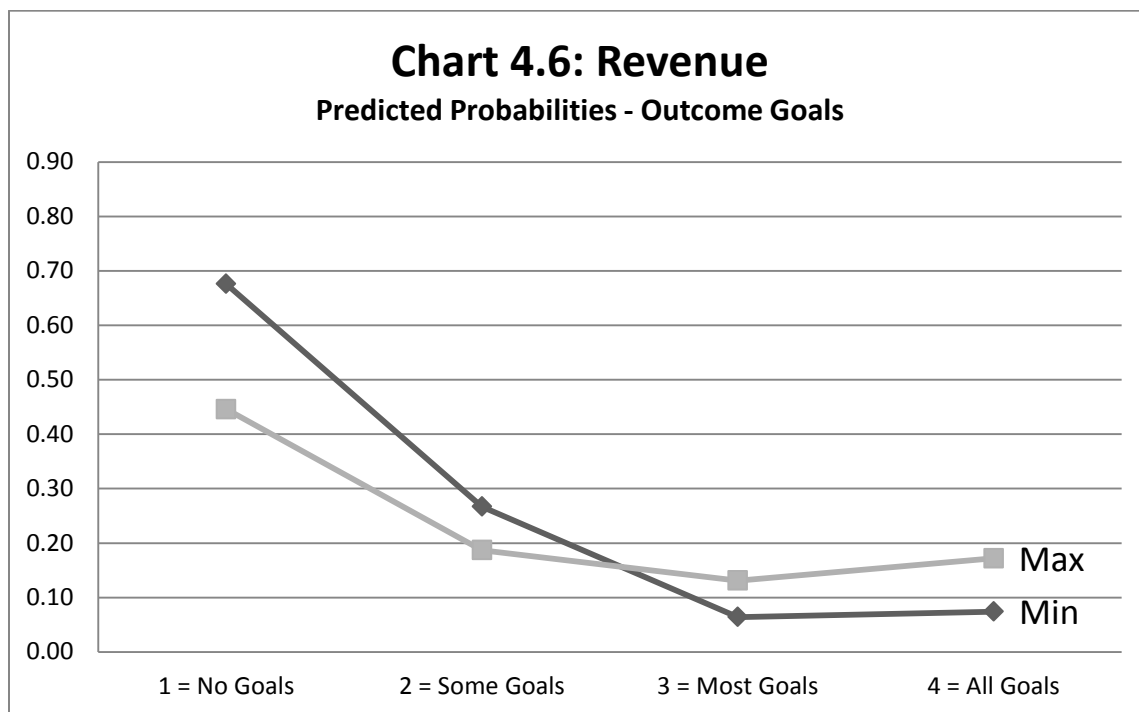
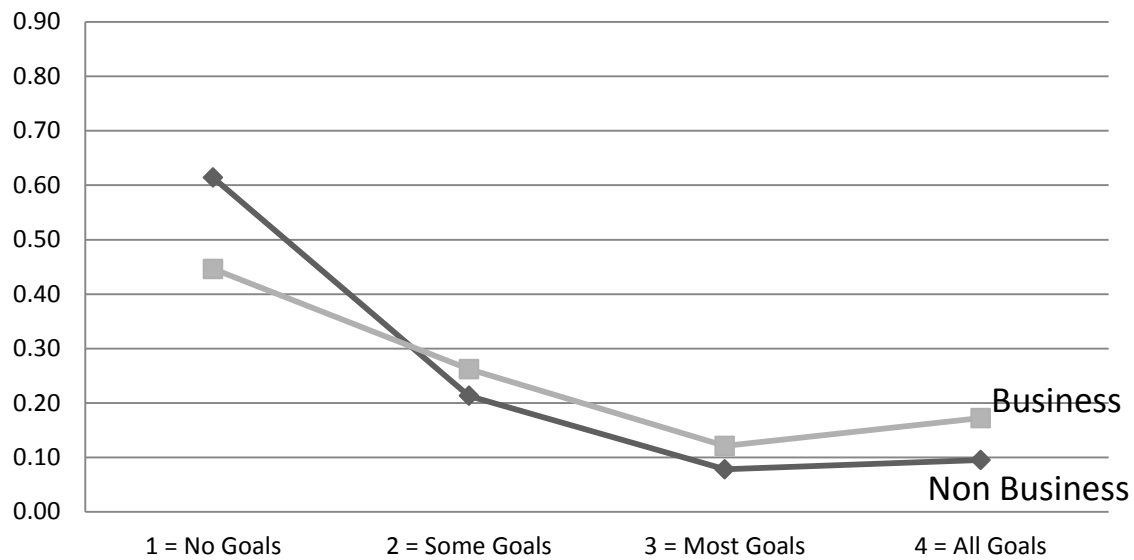
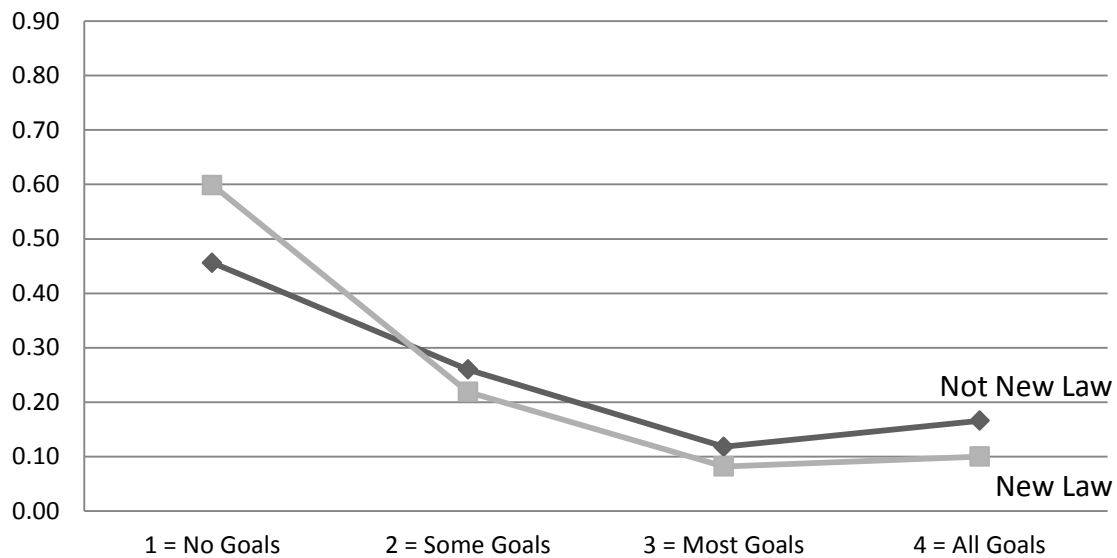
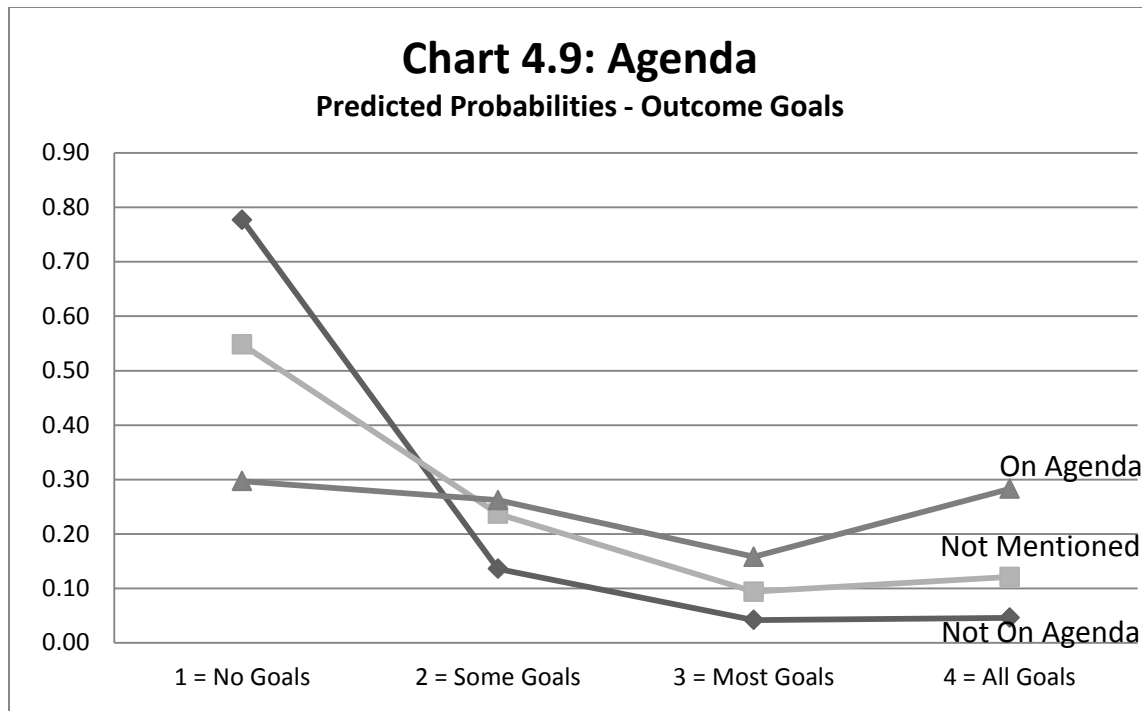


Chart 4.7: Business Members**Predicted Probabilities - Outcome Goals****Chart 4.8: Enact New Law****Predicted Probabilities - Outcome Goals**



Once again, I will focus on the influence of revenue and business membership, although Chart 4.8 shows that new laws are less likely to achieve all or even some desired outcomes. Similarly, Chart 4.9 reveals the benefits of working on an issue that is on the congressional agenda.

The effects of revenue and business representation are not as profound when it comes to actual policy outcomes as they were in the case of movement through the legislative process. These effects, however, relate only to policy changes in a given year. Although it is beyond the scope of this research, it is not hard to imagine tremendous differences in group success if these effects are considered over time.

The organization with the lowest revenue had approximately a 68 percent chance of achieving none of its outcome goals and a seven percent chance of achieving all of its goals. The organization with the highest revenue had roughly a 41 percent probability of achieving none of its outcome goals and a twenty percent chance of achieving all of its

process goals. In other words, the wealthiest organization had a 12 percent greater probability of achieving all of its outcome goals than the poorest.

An organization with nonbusiness members, had approximately a 61 percent chance of achieving none of its outcome goals and a ten percent chance of achieving all of its goals. An organization with business members had a 45 percent probability of achieving none of its outcome goals and a 17 percent probability of achieving all of its goals. Organizations representing business had an approximately eight percent greater probability of achieving all of its outcome goals.

Conclusion

Evidence presented in this chapter rounds out what I have shown about contextual lobbying power from Chapters 2 and 3.

Money matters sometimes and only with some measures. Groups with greater financial resources are better able to take advantage of policy windows and work harder on their prioritized issues when an agenda is perceived as being open, such as during the summer of 2009. Such organizations have fewer advantages as the legislative agenda narrows and there are not as many viable issues behind which they can throw their resources. As one would expect, wealthier organizations are able to engage in more categories of lobbying activity. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates that the advantages of wealthier organizations extend to a higher probability of legislative victories both in terms of movement along the legislative process and actual policy changes.

Partnerships with legislative champions and allied coalitions are important determinants in an organization being able to work on its policy issues, but these partnerships do not translate into an ability to conduct more types of lobbying activities.

That said, partnerships with legislative champions are positively correlated with greater movement in the legislative process.

The most interesting findings center on the relative advantages of groups representing business and industry. Groups representing such memberships do not work harder on their issues than other organizations. Instead, their advantages show up in an ability to engage in more categories of lobbying activities as well as greater probabilities of lobbying success on issues related to legislative process and actual changes in public policy. Importantly, such advantages are apparent even after controlling for differences in financial resources and coordination of a PAC. This research finding provides dramatic support for long-standing and contested arguments about the relative strengths of business-oriented organizations with concentrated benefits.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This dissertation contributes two types of information to the literature on interest group activity and lobbying effects.

First, I have found evidence of several specific lobbying effects and sector advantages that have often eluded political science scholarship. In particular, I find evidence of the effects of legislative allies, which I term “champions”, and of supportive coalitions when it comes to helping organizations focus more effort on their priorities and move legislation in the desired direction through the legislative process. I also demonstrate the conditional advantages of groups with greater financial resources and those representing business and industry.

Second, my research provides a new model for learning about lobbying effects and interest group advantages. The success of my research is primarily due to a focus on the specific contexts of each lobbying campaign and the development of dependent variables that are flexible enough to describe the more specific and nuanced goals of each interest group.

This research project was undertaken during a two-year policy window when the Democratic Party controlled the White House and both chambers of Congress. While findings should be understood within that particular context, this is also an ideal time period to study lobbying effects.

This particular moment represents one of Kingdon’s (1990) famous windows when long-standing policy and problem streams align with the political stream to create typically brief opportunities for non-incremental change. Similarly, Baumgartner and Jones (1993)

describe long periods of incremental policy change punctuated by breaks in that equilibrium when larger change is possible. While incremental proposals may be viable during any Congress, unified government during the 111th Congress represented an opportunity for organizations to also address policy goals (or threats) that were not typically realistic possibilities. To that point, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as either Health Care Reform or Obamacare, was enacted during this congressional session. Studying interest groups at this time represents a key opportunity because this is precisely when we should expect lobbying organizations to have the most impact across the broadest range of congressional issues.

Certainly, these findings should also be tested during different combinations of partisan control of Congress and the White House, but, in a system typically characterized by divided government, chances to study the behavior of interest groups during times of real political threat and opportunity offer rare and important settings for analysis.

My analysis of relative interest group strength departs from traditional studies in that I attempt to forge a compromised path between interpretivist case studies and aggregate data analysis. Based on literature reviews that document the difficulty in finding lobbying results (Baumgartner and Leech 1998), I develop three new dependent variables that can be adapted to specific lobbying campaigns and thereby bypass theoretical and often cloudy debates about interest group lobbying goals. Furthermore, my independent variables are based on careful interviews with interest group leaders with insight into their own organizations' goals, tactics, and specific campaign outcomes. I argue that interest group research needs to be heavily grounded in the contexts of specific campaigns and that attempts to understand lobbying results without taking into consideration their particular contexts are likely to result in unclear or even inaccurate results.

Lobbying Effects

On their own, the discovery of specific lobbying effects represents a significant accomplishment regardless of additional contributions to interest group research methods. As discussed throughout this dissertation, clear and consistent lobbying effects have historically eluded the interest group research community (Nownes 2006; Cooper and Nownes 2003; Rosenthal 2000; Kollman 1998; Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Heinz et al. 1993; Knoke and Wood 1990; Schlozman and Tierney 1986.) By examining the specific circumstances and goals of individual lobbying campaigns, this dissertation demonstrates the effects of the congressional agenda, supportive allies in and outside of Congress, organizational revenue, and business representation on multiple categories of lobbying effects.

The Congressional Agenda

How do groups make decisions about what issues to prioritize or where to spend their time? Under what circumstances are they most likely win or lose and what specific actions do they undertake? This research shows that interest groups are driven in part by what can move on the congressional agenda. Organizations appear to choose from a menu of issues available for discussion within Congress and then work accordingly. This does not mean that interest groups cannot affect the legislative agenda. To the contrary, groups meet with their legislative champions, introduce bills that may not go anywhere that year, and nudge their congressional allies to take up their initiatives. But, when organizations describe why they work on a given issue during a particular period of time, they describe the congressional agenda as a powerful and predominately exogenous factor in their decisions about where to spend their lobbying time and resources.

In this sense, a state-centric perspective has merits in that the institution of Congress itself exerts substantial control over the range of issues interest groups can spend their time on. In such a situation, lobbying organizations would predominately respond to an agenda generated by policy makers rather than propose policy changes on their own. Many interviewees explained that they can only work on issues which have momentum or support in Congress. The perceived importance of the issue was statistically significant throughout this research, however, indicating that organizations do not simply take up what policy makers offer them without deliberation. Instead, they choose to work on the highest priorities available among a limited array of initiatives that have the potential to move forward.

It therefore makes sense that perceptions about what is viable on the congressional agenda greatly influences the timing of lobbying interactions and choice of which lobbying activities groups will undertake. For example, groups are more likely to meet with congressional decision makers when the issue is being worked on or has the potential to be addressed. The congressional agenda was not statistically significant in the case of more spending-related activities, perhaps indicating that this is one way interest groups attempt to influence the agenda-setting process. The congressional agenda was also not significantly correlated with interactions with executive agencies. Some groups explained that they worked with the administration on issues that were stuck in Congress, but a separate analysis of lobbying activities, effort, and the executive branch should be undertaken before such arguments can be made with confidence.

Similarly, it almost goes without saying that perceived congressional attention is a strong predictor of an organization achieving both their process or outcome goals during a single legislative session. Within a given period of time, groups tend to work on issues that

are perceived as being on an exogenous congressional agenda, and they tend to be most successful when focusing on that subset of opportunities.

Legislative Champions and Supportive Coalitions

Partnerships with legislative champions and supportive coalitions were positively correlated with stronger lobbying effort during both the first and second years of this study. Even when greater financial resources became insignificant in the second year, these alliances allowed organizations to keep working on their legislative priorities.

This finding helps explain how organizations work during rare policy windows. In 2009, the legislative agenda appeared wide open. Groups partnered with their champions and coalitions, but it was difficult to know which issues were likely to move or peter out and stall. The list of viable policy issues was large and groups could work on a variety of issues without external limitations. When that agenda was perceived to narrow in 2010, groups did not simply shift to working only on what was on the congressional agenda. Instead, organizations found ways to work on their priorities by partnering with their leaders and peers, perhaps to set the stage for work in future sessions. In some cases, they may have worked on issues that they did not perceive as viable simply because it was being pushed by their champions and coalitions. In other words, they perceived this work as being something they had to do to appease their allies. In both of these cases, partnerships with congressional offices and like-minded coalitions were a powerful indicator of where groups spent their time and energy.

The story of legislative champions and coalitions changes when the analysis shifts from the amount of overall effort exerted by organizations to the specific categories of lobbying activities that they engage in.

Supportive coalitions were not statistically significant with any form of lobbying in any year. It appears that these partnerships are able to mobilize groups to work harder but do not have a similar effect in encouraging additional forms of activity. Groups that predominately work through their grassroots do not become “inside-the-beltway” lobbyists simply because they have the encouragement of coalition members. Instead, they appear to work harder through their basic set of “go-to” lobbying activities. Qualitative interviews describe a partnership in which groups play different roles based on their organizational strengths and rely on each other for other activities.

Partnerships with supportive offices in Congress or “legislative champions” were also correlated with higher levels of effort given to policy issues in both 2009 and 2010. In contrast, supportive legislative offices were correlated with higher levels of direct lobbying only in 2009. Just as the case with coalitions, congressional partnerships appear able to mobilize groups to work harder even in the face of a narrowing legislative agenda, but they are not always able to perform this feat when it comes to engaging organizations in new types of lobbying activities.

On the other hand, partnerships with legislative champions were positively correlated with greater success in moving an issue in the desired legislative direction in terms of process if not the actual attainment of lobbying outcome goals. Organizations appear to rely on their champions to help keep an issue moving in Congress. Legislative champions are the ones who write “Dear Colleague” letters, schedule time in hearings, or stand up on the floor or in committee to speak on behalf of or in opposition to a particular bill. The majority in Congress could be opposed to an issue, but a few legislative champions can help an organization achieve some of their process goals in terms of moving a bill in Congress. The data show, however, that such partnerships do not always translate into real outcome goals or changes in actual public policy. Of course, this analysis only takes place

during a single legislative session. It is plausible and perhaps likely that partnerships with legislative champions translate into actual policy changes over the long-term.

Partnerships with coalitions, on the other hand, were not statistically correlated with either process or outcome goal attainment during the time period of this study.

Financial Resources

Organizational differences matter, but their influence depends on timing and particular political circumstances. Both business and nonbusiness interest groups with greater resources and sophisticated lobbying and fundraising assets such as PACs are able to put more effort behind their issues at the beginning of a legislative session, but such resources are no longer statistically significant as the congressional agenda narrows. As discussed in the Chapter 2, when the range of issues that can be addressed is wide open, there are few external restrictions on how much a group can lobby. An interest group could work on cultural policy matters, three or four health care policy issues, and focus on new appropriations if they have sufficient staff and other resources to address all of these issues at once. When the agenda narrows and all of the cultural policy matters, half of the health care issues, and increased appropriations are no longer a realistic possibility, groups with greater resources are constrained at a level similar to their poorer lobbying associates.

What is the use of throwing resources at an issue that will not move?

In the case of engaging in specific lobbying activities, groups with larger budgetary resources were advantaged in some but not all situations. Such organizations were more likely to participate in direct lobbying and, as one would intuitively expect, activities that necessitate spending. This was also the case for indirect lobbying in 2009 but not in 2010, perhaps reflecting the findings in Chapter 2 and revealing that such groups were simply able to engage their grassroots in more issues in 2009. Resources mattered less in this area

when the range of viable issues narrowed in 2010. Interestingly, groups with greater revenue were less likely to participate in coalitions or “lobby together” in 2010.

Business and Industry

After controlling for financial resources, groups representing business and industry showed no special advantages when it comes to expending effort on their legislative priorities. In fact, such groups were disadvantaged in this area in the first year of the 111th Congress. The story here shows these groups scrambling in the face of a political window in which they perceived their favorite issues as disadvantaged. For example, health care groups representing business and industry may have wanted to focus on medical malpractice reform but instead were forced to expend efforts on other legislative issues which were either less desirable or actually perceived as threats. In 2010, the range of issues on the perceived congressional agenda narrowed and these groups were no longer disadvantaged.

Examining specific activities, however, reveals clear advantages for these types of organizations even during a time when they perceived themselves as being under threat. Groups representing business and industry were more likely to engage in direct lobbying in both years and indirect lobbying in 2010. They were also more likely to engage in activities involving spending and lobbying executive agencies. They may not have always been able to work on the issues at the level of effort that they wanted to, but business groups were positioned to engage in more categories of lobbying than their nonbusiness counterparts.

In Chapter 3, I argue that the ability to engage in more categories of lobbying represents one aspect of relative power. Under this line of reasoning, groups representing business and industry are clearly advantaged. Importantly, these advantages exist even after controlling for variation in organizational revenue, the presence of PACs, and whether

organizations perceive the particular issue to be on the current legislative agenda. In other words, groups representing business and trade organizations are not engaging in more activities only because they are better resourced and able to make campaign contributions. Their success at undertaking more types of activities also cannot be solely linked to a preferred position of their issues on the congressional agenda.

This finding offers substantial evidence to support the theoretical expectation of advantages for business and industry lobbies. When the results of Chapter 4 are added to consideration of the question of business advantages, these findings become even stronger. Interest groups representing these types of memberships were more likely to achieve both their process and outcome goals even after controlling for differences in financial resources and the position of their issues on the congressional agenda.

This research finding provides dramatic and much needed support for long-standing arguments about the strength of business-oriented organizations with relatively concentrated benefits in place (Hansen and Mitchel 2000; Humphries 1991; Grier, Munger, Roberts 1994; Bois 1989; Grier 1991; Andres 1985; Walker 1983).

Contextual Lobbying and Implications for Future Interest Group Research

My arguments about interest group research should be understood as an important step forward for scholarship. Understanding general lobbying dynamics is a valuable effort. Lobbying may be about information, or subsidy, or it might at times focus on persuasion or purchase, and it is important to understand predominate goals and motivations throughout these possible mechanisms of influence. In each of these categories, my findings add texture to what we know about lobbying communication.

In the case of lobbying as a legislative subsidy, the interviews presented here show a dynamic in which the relationship is not one directional. Instead, lobbyists consider the interests of policy makers and are often working at their behest on issues unrelated to the organization's highest priorities. As Baumgartner et al. (2006) and Ainsworth (1997) have previously described, lobbying often happens through teams of like-minded interest groups and legislative champions. At times, this effort is focused on convincing members Congress to prioritize particular issues, but, in other cases, lobbying is happening because it is policy maker requests it.

Similarly, lobbying is at times about persuasion and those with access to policy makers through specific categories of direct or indirect lobbying appear better suited to achieve their goals. My research turns up little evidence of lobbying in terms of purchasing decisions through contributions or other types of influence other than the statistical intermittent significance of PACs. Importantly, PACs can be considered a signal about an array of more sophisticated lobbying techniques rather than simply a vehicle for campaign contributions.

The problem in interest group research arises when scholars attempt to make assumptions about the general group goals or evaluate goal achievement without relating them to the specific circumstances and motivations of each lobbying effort.

Broad theoretical frameworks are necessary for this course of study, but they necessarily gloss over contextually-relevant factors influencing specific lobbying enterprises. When relying on general descriptions of lobbying goals, researchers are unlikely to possess enough information about what a group is trying to accomplish to determine whether or not that organization is truly successful in achieving their specific goals. Moreover, they will likely miss important goals that will come out in interviews with

interest group leaders such as the ability of organizations to work on and prioritize the issues that are important to them.

I argue that investigations into interest group lobbying should ideally begin with in-depth discussions with lobbyists themselves about what they are trying to do and why. From there, political scientists can develop dependent variables that go beyond vote counts or levels of legislative effort. They can record the specific actions taken by lobbyists and perceptions about policy contexts and outcomes. Moreover, information gained from these interviews can be matched with publicly available data about the organization so that researchers are not entirely relying on organizational representatives.

Interest group researchers do not have access to extensive databases recording political behavior the way that those analyzing election or congressional behavior do. Ironically, I believe this represents a potential advantage for scholars in this subfield. The most practical way to study interest groups is therefore to speak with them and then supplement that information with federal reports or other types of publicly available organizational data. This does not mean that the subsequent analysis must be entirely qualitative. To the contrary, my research demonstrates the ability to marry the contextual nuances discovered in qualitative interviews with a largely quantitative analysis.

Future research should build on this enterprise by examining my findings in alternative political contexts and during longer periods of time. As previously mentioned, the years covered in this study represented a time of potential change in the direction of progressive politics. While changes were not realized in policy areas such as environmental regulations or immigration, historical changes were made in the health care arena. Future studies should analyze lobbyist behavior along similar lines during periods of divided government. For example, I demonstrate that resources can matter most at the beginning of a legislative session when the congressional agenda is wide open. Is this also the case at

the beginning of a Congress characterized by higher levels of partisan gridlock? Similarly, future Congresses will likely give us the opportunity to investigate interest group lobbying when Republicans rather than Democrats control the White House and both chambers of Congress.

As it pertains to future methods, the underlying point of my research is that interest group research will bear the most fruit when political scientists look at individual lobbying scenarios and make certain they are understanding the specific goals of these campaigns rather than attempting to fit specific goals into generalized assumptions. In undertaking this effort, I demonstrate several substantive findings including: the power of the congressional agenda in influencing what lobbyists are able to work on; the ways that lobbyists partner with coalitions and legislative champions to work on their priorities and move initiatives through the legislative process; the periods of time when differences in financial resources matter most; and the relative advantages of organizations representing business and industry in terms of greater access to lobbying tactics and actual policy outcomes.

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Appendix

Table 5.1 models legislative effort as an ordinary least squares regression. The model differs from table 2.1 in Chapter 2 in that the 1-100 Importance variable is not included. As such, the model does not control for differences in importance to the organization's mission as perceived by the interviewees. When it comes to the major variables of interest, Legislative Champions, the Congressional Agenda, and Non Business Revenue are unchanged. Business Revenue, however, becomes statistically significant in 2010. On the other hand, the strength of the coalition loses its statistical significance in 2010.

The statistical significance of business revenue implies that business organizations with relatively greater revenue were positioned to work harder on their policy issues even as the congressional agenda narrowed in 2010. Again, this model does not control for differences in importance as defined by the interviewee. However, this result calls for additional research about the differences between business and non-business lobbying organizations when it comes to determining lobbying effort.

Table 5.1 Alternative Interest Group Lobbying Effort in the 111th Congress

Dependent Variable = 1-100 Rating of Lobbying Effort Given to Issue

OLS Regressions (Clustered Standard Errors)

	2009	2010
<i>Organizational Variables</i>		
Non Business Revenue	1.184* (0.728)	-.339 (1.069)
PAC	10.275** (4.153)	-3.051 (5.628)
Bus/Industry Members	-68.512* (34.807)	-64.181* (33.279)
Business Revenue	3.891* (2.208)	3.908* (2.153)
Liberal	-10.967* (6.577)	-16.654*** (5.142)
Conservative	-20.913** (8.584)	-20.221** (8.974)
Agriculture	-11.357 (7.521)	-20.160*** (6.342)
Health	-4.186 (6.659)	-12.178** (4.868)
<i>Issue Variables</i>		
Legislative Champion	9.146** (4.545)	19.329*** (4.990)
Strength of Coalition	12.249** (5.214)	6.814 (4.944)
Congressional Agenda	10.967*** (2.370)	8.899** (3.631)
Offense	-13.861*** (4.680)	-6.197 (5.646)
Member Finance	21.738*** (4.491)	14.561** (5.938)
Membership Priority	10.137** (4.455)	11.149*** (3.782)
Outside Event	9.433* (6.310)	6.664 (14.245)
Constant	46.895 (13.430)	72.439 (18.097)***
N	224	183
Prob > F	0.000	0.000
R-Squared	0.338	0.266

* Significant at .1 **Significant at .05 ***Significant at .01