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Agenda Setting and Presidential Power in the United States

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**Dissertation submitted to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences at West Virginia
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Agenda-Setting and Presidential Power in the United States

Paul E. Rutledge

Richard Neustadt (1960) started a revolution of sorts for future scholars examining the American presidency. It was Neustadt who introduced the notion of a personal president, holding personal power and acting in ways that had implications beyond those powers formally granted to the president in the Constitution. Starting with the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, the public has looked to the president to be assertive, energetic, and solve problems. Roosevelt offered a New Deal with the American people, and was the first president to really reach into the homes of America. Now the presidency is a public presidency, subjected to very high expectations without the benefit of a similar amount of power. Presidents following Roosevelt would not only have the opportunity to advance a policy agenda, but in reality the advancement of a policy agenda would become more of an expectation. As such, the formation of an agenda has become an increasingly important part of the president's job.

The focus of the dissertation will be to gain a better understanding of the construction of the president's agenda, how the president's agenda relates to that of Congress and the media, and finally, whether or not the power to set the agenda has an impact on a broader mobilization of interests in the American political system. The findings demonstrate that presidential attention to American political issue areas both responds to and shapes the political environment, and as such is a critical component of presidential power.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Richard Neustadt (1960) started a revolution of sorts for future scholars examining the American presidency. It was Neustadt who introduced the notion of a personal president, holding personal power and acting in ways that had implications beyond those powers formally granted to the president in the Constitution. Starting with the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, the public has looked to the president to be assertive, energetic, and solve problems. Roosevelt offered a New Deal with the American people, and was the first president to really reach into the homes of America. Now the presidency is a public presidency, subjected to very high expectations without the benefit of a similar amount of power. Presidents following Roosevelt would not only have the opportunity to advance a policy agenda, but in reality the advancement of a policy agenda would become more of an expectation. As such, the formation of an agenda has become an increasingly important part of the president's job.

The focus of the dissertation will be to gain a better understanding of the construction of the president's agenda, how the president's agenda relates to that of Congress and the media, and finally, whether or not the power to set the agenda has an impact on a broader mobilization of interests in the American political system. The remaining chapters of this dissertation will be described briefly here in order to introduce the reader to the questions that are the focus of this project.

The second chapter provides a quite comprehensive review of the literature on the president's agenda. Previous studies have been nearly unanimous in the assertion that the ability to influence the political agenda of other actors within the political system is a critical source of presidential power. Part of the reason that agenda-setting is such an important power for the president is that Congress and the public have invited the president to advance his public policy

priorities. The Constitution provides the opportunity for the president to offer the State of the Union Address, which has turned into an annual event where the president has an uninterrupted opportunity to advance a policy agenda. Congress has also invited the president to introduce a budget, which is consistent with a broader pattern whereby Congress has given the president increased opportunity over time to introduce a legislative package, which Congress will then react to. Finally, the public has increasingly looked to the president to be active and assertive, offering solutions to the problems faced by the nation. This has specifically been the case since the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, for reasons described above. The expectations placed upon the president have grown tremendously over the past seventy-five years. A presidential agenda is not longer simply an opportunity; over time it has increasingly become a matter of expectation.

Focusing on agenda-decisions in this dissertation provides an opportunity to follow the call of so many scholars, most notably King (1993), who argue that the presidential subfield of political science has been plagued by a lack of rigorous quantitative studies. Like those scholars, I recognize the contribution that the so-called “N=1” studies have provided. Without the earlier studies in the presidential subfield, many of which were qualitative in nature, the theory building required for testing quantitative models would not be possible. The three empirical chapters, 3-5 of this dissertation, employ quantitative techniques to gain a better understanding of the size of the president’s agenda, the influence it has on the agenda of both Congress and the media as a bridge to the broader political environment, and the mobilization of organized interests, many of whom represent important constituent groups. Before moving on, the next section provides a brief discussion of the three empirical chapters and the research questions they address.

Chapter three examines the size of the agenda advanced by the president. Paul Light's (1999) book, *The President's Agenda*, is the gold standard against which scholars studying the president's agenda must compete. Light (1999) asserts that presidents are placed in no-win situations, where competing cycles influence the prospects for presidential success throughout his term. First, as presidents advance through their terms, they gain a better understanding of the job and are therefore better able to accomplish their goals. However, at the same time that the individual occupying the oval office learns how to function in the position effectively, he loses the support of both the public and in turn Congress, so it becomes harder at the same time to act upon his goals. Light (1999) provides a list of factors that influence the prospects for presidential success in getting his agenda enacted. Several other factors have been found in the literature as well. Chapter 3 provides a multivariate analysis of the size of the president's agenda as a test of Light's formulation, comparing the factors hypothesized to influence the president's agenda for their independent effects.

First, the liberal-conservative public mood (Stimson, 1992) can impact the president's agenda because aggregate public support levels for government expansion have been demonstrated to effect public policy decisions. Because of this, the president is likely to calculate his chances for success and the composition of his agenda based on the liberal-conservative public mood. Further, whether the president faces unified or divided government (Mayhew, 1993) is likely to impact the president's agenda decisions, with larger amounts of change likely to be proposed during times of unified government. The public approval of the president is one of the key factors, according to Light, that influences the prospects for success in moving his agenda forward. Next, electoral results have an impact on the president's prospects for success, with larger margins of victory providing a short term momentum to the president's

advantage (Grossback et al, 2006). Finally, some presidents are just more active than others, and should be expected to advance larger and more innovative agendas (Barber, 1992). In summary, chapter three will examine each of these explanations for the size of the president's agenda, comparing the magnitude of each and determining the influences each have on the size of the president's legislative agenda.

Chapter four, "Reassessing Who Influences Whom: the President, Congress, and the Media" focuses on the relationship between the agendas of the president, Congress, and the media from 1983-2000 across nineteen comprehensive issue areas. Such a study improves the time span over which scholars have previously investigated agenda influence patterns, and the comprehensive nature of the list of policy areas places no assumed limits on the areas in which the president, or any other branch for that matter, has been able to use attention to issues as a source of political influence. Overall, this investigation is far more comprehensive than previous examinations of the question, and provides a much broader portrait of presidential influence on the American political agenda, without assuming that such influence would be limited to a small number of political issues.

The data for presidential attention to issues will come from Rudalevige (2002), who collects presidential communications with Congress that have policy import from the *Public Papers of the President*. Each message is then topic coded using the Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993) policy topic codebook. The number of messages offered in each policy area is then calculated monthly over the eighteen year period, for a total of 216 observations in each policy area. Congressional attention will be measured by the number days of hearings held by Congress on a given topic, from 1983-2000, with the data again calculated on

a monthly basis. The Policy Agendas Project has coded each congressional hearing held since 1946 into one of nineteen major topic areas similar to the presidential measures discussed above. Congressional hearings offer an especially relevant measure of the priority congress assigns to an issue because committees, where hearings occur, are essentially the venue where the action is (Worsham, 1997). The amount of attention the media devote to an issue area is measured by the number of stories regarding that issue area that have appeared in the *New York Times*.

Baumgartner and Jones have coded, as part of the Policy Agendas Project, *New York Times* stories since 1946 into their topic coding scheme already discussed. Their book *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (1993) demonstrates that coverage of issues in the New York Times is correlated with the amount of coverage seen in other measures, such as the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* (.88 correlation) and television news coverage at sufficient statistical levels to be considered a proxy for media attention as a whole.

The method used to conduct this analysis is vector-auto regression. Vector-auto regression is used as a statistical tool to determine Granger-causality between multiple time-series, essentially evaluating whether a spike in attention in one series has a tendency to precede and result in a spike in the other series occurring simultaneously (Brandt and Williams, 2007). This is an especially appropriate tool, then, for assessing causal patterns among these three long time-series. Vector-auto regression has been used in several of the previous studies similar to this one discussed above. Edwards and Wood (1999) employed this technique to assess causal patterns among the president, congress, and the media across their five specific political issues over a ten year time span. Wood and Peake (1998) have also used vector auto-regression to assess patterns of influence in political attention across three foreign policy events. In this study, vector-auto regression is an appropriate statistical method because it will determine, within each

issue area, whether there is a relationship between the agendas of the president, Congress, and the media, and if so, which institution Granger-caused attention to an issue to increase. The results will provide scholars with a broader view of the landscape of political issues encompassing American politics, nineteen major issue areas in all, and which institutions lead or follow in attending to those issues. Viewing agenda-setting from this comprehensive, rather than piecemeal view, provides scholars with much greater evidence than previous studies regarding the extent to which the president can exert leadership through agenda-setting.

Chapter five, “Congressional and Presidential Effects on the Demand for Lobbying”, extends previous work by Leech et al (2005), suggesting that government attention to issues has a mobilizing effect on the size of interest group populations. Data provided by the Lobby Disclosure database on the size of interest group populations across fifty-six issue areas were coded from 1996-2004, extending by four years the study done by Leech et al (2005), which covered 1996-2000. The replication indicates a stronger relationship between congressional attention and lobbying populations than Leech et al (ibid.) found due to the increase in data points. Moreover, the number of policy statements in the State of the Union Address, as well as the number of executive orders issued by the president in each of the issue areas is added to the model based on the expectation that presidential attention should have a pronounced effect on the demand for lobbying because of the effect the president has on the political agenda in the American political system. Using pooled-cross sectional time-series for panel correlated standard errors and controlling for federal spending and the lagged interest group population of the issue area, the results demonstrate that presidential attention indeed has a significant effect on the demand for lobbying independent of that of Congress. These results demonstrate that the president’s power to set the agenda can indeed lead to mobilization, and provides further

evidence that the explosion of interest group populations since the middle of the twentieth century can be significantly attributed to the government's involvement in an expanded number of issue areas, regulating an increasing number of economic sectors.

Finally, chapter six discusses some of the broad impacts of the findings from each of the empirical chapters and calls for future research. Specifically, the empirical chapters of this dissertation demonstrate that the president's influence over the policy agenda is unparalleled, supporting the findings of several previous scholars (Edwards, 1989; Bond and Fleisher, 1990; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995; Light, 1999; Edwards and Barrett, 2000). The president is strategic in advancing a policy agenda, with attention especially given to the composition of Congress, the margin of electoral victory and the resulting momentum from the victory, and to a lesser extent his public standing. Presidents influence the agenda of Congress and the media on far more issues than previous studies have suggested, and he leads the agenda of others to a much greater extent than he follows. Finally, the president's agenda has an important influence on the mobilization of organized interests, but the effect is to pull lobbying attention away from Congress and presumably toward the executive branch, contrary to expectations.

Scholars reading this dissertation come away with several important areas in need of future study encompassing two broad areas of study. First, scholars have been all over the map in how they measure presidential policy priorities. To some extent, this dissertation admittedly follows that pattern. Scholars need to come up with a better understanding of which measure more accurately reflects presidential priorities, or whether some measures are more appropriate for some research questions over others. Secondly, there has been an insufficient amount of

scholarly attention devoted to the relationship between the executive branch and interest groups. Much of the research on interest group influence and lobbying efforts in general has been focused on influencing or working with Congress, but chapter five demonstrates to the surprise of no one that interest groups are attentive to the policy priorities of the president. There are likely important public policy actions that are missed with so little attention devoted to lobbying the executive.

Chapter 2

Agenda-Setting and Presidential Power

Richard Neustadt, in his now-famous dictum, defined presidential power as the power to persuade. As George C. Edwards (2000) illustrates, Neustadt's vision departed from the normal conceptions of power which focused on the formal institutional powers. Early presidency scholars such as Clinton Rossiter (1956) and Edward Corwin (1957) writing in Neustadt's time conceived of presidential power as being formally defined in the Constitution. Neustadt's departure spurred a great deal of scholarship which focused on the occupant of the oval office, rather than the legal or institutional powers of the office itself. This marked somewhat of a revolution, if you will, in presidential studies because rigid institutional conceptions of power left no room for strategy on the part of individuals, an assertion with which Neustadt was intellectually uncomfortable.

Presidential power is the power to persuade essentially because presidential action is frequently dependent upon other actors within government. The president has to persuade members of Congress, whether members of the president's party or the opposition, to come to some compromise in order to advance his legislative agenda. Similarly, Presidents must persuade leaders of bureaucratic agencies to implement public policies in ways that are consistent with the goals of the administration. Fundamentally, however, the precursor to the power to persuade is the power to set the agenda. As Edwards and Barrett (2000) note, one of the most important powers of the president is the power to set the congressional agenda. It is only after the president has secured agenda space for his initiatives that policy bargaining can take place. To secure a full understanding of presidential power, one must first seek a better understanding of the president's ability to set the agendas of other actors within the political system.

This chapter will proceed as follows. First, I will review the literature on agenda-setting as a form of political power, the literature which forms the fundamental power structure critical to this dissertation. Next, I will review the relevant literature for each of the three empirical chapters that are part of this work, and discuss how those studies demonstrate the importance of the contributions this volume will make to the bodies of literature in question.

Agenda-Setting and Political Power

Agenda-setting is separate from other aspects of the policy process in several important ways. The separation of agenda-setting from the pack can be found even in the earliest, classics on agenda-setting. Schattschneider (1960) characterizes the power players at the agenda-setting stage as those who are able to control the scope of conflict. Interested parties in American politics attempt to control the scope of conflict surrounding a policy area. Those who wish to upset the balance, or change the status quo surrounding a policy debate, have an incentive to expand the scope of conflict. This brings other players into the political system and a variety of different perspectives. Issue monopolies can be created in Congress, for example, because members are able to self-select to some extent their committee membership positions, and thereby introduce bias into the committee. These political subsystems are upset by the expansion of conflict, which is fatal to issue monopolies (Jones, Baumgartner, and Talbert, 1993).

Bachrach and Baratz (1962) discuss the agenda-setting stage at which a second face of power in American politics emerges. Power is typically studied in the literature, at least prior to the work of Bachrach and Baratz, as the influence over decision-making, specifically those decisions that are visible such as congressional roll call votes, or agency implementation decisions, for example. Bachrach and Baratz argue that this conception of power is but one, and

probably the weaker, of two faces of power. An important facet of power that was at best understudied but more likely ignored before Bachrach and Baratz was the concept of defining the issues and alternatives available for debate. That is, power was typically studied as the choice between two alternatives, but prior studies did not attend to how alternatives were chosen, and who had the power to choose them.

The heart of the American political power lies not in voting or cooperation, but in the definition of the issues. Conflict expansion is achieved through changing the nature of the debate (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993), potentially even redefining issues as appropriate for government action which were not previously considered to be. It can be argued, therefore, that the winners and losers in politics often depend on who can control the nature of the debate.

Riker (1986) cites examples of several cases where political actors who determined the nature of the debate achieved a position of power in their political situation. Abraham Lincoln, for example, was cited by Riker as being a master in the art of political manipulation. This talent went a long way in getting Lincoln elected over Stephen Douglas. Before Lincoln and Douglas were opponents in the presidential election of 1860, they faced off in a race for the U.S. Senate seat from Illinois in 1858. Both men were leaders in the northern wing of their respective parties, and both had their eyes on presidential nominations in 1860. During one of a series of debates in the Senate race, Lincoln asked Douglas “Can the people of a United States territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a state constitution?” (Riker, 1986) This question was a trap for Douglas, set masterfully by Lincoln. Douglas had to answer yes or no. By answering yes, Douglas would certainly please the northern state electorate he faced in the Illinois senate race,

but he would surely alienate the southern wing of his party. By answering no, Douglas would lose his senate race, but not hurt himself in the 1860 presidential election. Douglas chose to answer yes, won his senate election over Lincoln, but then lost the presidency when the southern wing of the party walked out as a result of his nomination (Riker, 1986).

The definition of alternatives does not always lend itself to such visible and entertaining stories as Lincoln's, but the power held in controlling the political agenda remains. Changing definitions of issues necessarily expands the scope of conflict. Issue creation is a quite complex political process (Rocheftort and Cobb, 1994). In order for conflict to be expanded, Felstiner, Abel, and Sarat (1980-81) argue that there are three separate steps: naming, blaming, and claiming (Cobb and Ross, 1997). That is, problems have to be given a name that is appropriate for a government response, and solutions have to be available that have advocates claiming those solutions will work. A fine example of this process in motion is the debate over automobile safety in the 1960s. As Cobb and Ross note, the response of the automobile industry was to blame unsafe drivers for the increased number of deaths as a result of automobile collisions. The industry's solution to the public problem was to bring about changes in the behavior of individuals. The issue as originally defined, blaming drivers, produced little government activity. However, the power of issue definition became clear when Ralph Nader produced a study demonstrating that the Chevrolet Corvair was structured in an unsafe way, changing the name of the public problem from safe drivers to automobile safety (Nader, 1965; Cobb and Ross, 1997).

Solutions to the original problem, too many people are being killed in automobile collisions, became a target of much more legislative activity once the automobile industry

instead of individual drivers became the focal point. In fact, this definition of the issue expanded the scope of conflict to an extent that the original people who brought about the new definition of the problem lost control of the debate. Walker (1977) follows the advocates of safety movements and their effort to get their potential solutions onto the agenda. After safety issues reached the agenda, policy entrepreneurs were able to use the successes first achieved as positive feedback for a whole slew of continued safety regulation, some of which the original advocates of the safety movement could never have imagined or intended.

Once a few successes are attained for a given policy position, positive feedback can arise that will drive the solution or similar proposals into other arenas (Kingdon, 1995; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). It is the potential effects of issue definition and policy feedback that are missing from Downs (1972), where he argues that public policy proposals go through an issue attention cycle. The issue attention cycle posits that problems will go through stages of discovery, temporary support for change, and eventual realization of the costs of legislation followed by a fading of attention to the issue. Positive feedback mechanisms can lead to non-incremental policy change, sometimes resulting in the opening of what Kingdon refers to as policy windows and keep solutions on the agenda for a much longer period of time than the Downsian model allows. A policy window, for Kingdon, opens when three streams intersect. These streams, which are contained in a garbage can model he adapted from Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972), are the political stream, the problem stream, and the solution stream. The political stream contains elected officials who have electoral, and to a lesser extent (Mayhew, 1974) public policy goals. The problem stream contains problems that exist in society that are candidates for government action in order to render a solution. The solutions stream contains a series of solutions being advocated by interest groups, citizens, and other interested parties who

are trying to find a problem with which to attach their preferred solution. Advocates are persistent with their solutions and continue trying to push their alternative. Eventually, the streams intersect, and the solution is met with a problem. This is when the political stream determines whether policy will pass or not. In studying the issues of health care and transportation, Kingdon found support for the garbage can model of agenda-setting. In defense of Downs, positive feedback is the exception rather than the rule, and just as many interested parties to a policy area are working to contain the scope of conflict as are trying to expand it, and in some policy areas there may be more groups trying to contain conflict (Baumgartner and Leech, 2001). This clearly was not the case with the environmental movement, however, and Downs was simply wrong.

Kingdon's (1995) case study choices are quite effective because of the variation between the health care and transportation policy communities. First, it should be noted that by choosing two different policy communities, Kingdon can account for idiosyncratic effects that are particular to a policy community. The health care and transportation communities are effective case studies because of their many differences. Most notably, Kingdon discovered that the health care community was much more salient to the public because of its nearly universal effect. The same cannot be said for transportation. Transportation issues rise and fall on the agenda, and unless there is some crisis or disaster that forces the public to pay attention, the issues go largely unnoticed in the public sphere. Another important distinction between the policy areas that is discovered by Kingdon is the nature of the debate among elites. In transportation, there is rarely an agreement among the actors involved as to the defining issues or terms of debate in the community. Health care actors, on the other hand, were much more cohesive in their use of similar terms used to make reference to debates in the policy area. Kingdon's choice of case

studies, in short, was quite effective in that a) he chose two entire policy areas rather than focusing on specific policy debates or only focusing on one area, and b) the two policy areas chosen as cases represented some important distinctions that Kingdon was able to account for as part of the agenda and alternative processes.

Kingdon's findings have been criticized for the part "randomness" plays in the process of issues rising and falling on agendas and in the specification of alternatives (Mucciaroni, 1992). However, as Kingdon notes, despite the part randomness plays in the process, there is also a great deal of structure to the processes. For example, policies do not randomly survive or die in the "primeval soup"; there is structure to who is invited to participate in policy areas, and there is also structure in whether or not an issue is "ready" for action when a critical policy window of opportunity opens. Randomness plays a role, but the discovery of structure in the process of agenda-setting and alternative specification in Kingdon's work are simply too important to ignore.

Baumgartner and Jones (1993) also take a case study approach to the question of how issues rise on the agenda in American politics. The model is an adaptation of Eldridge and Niles (1972) theory of punctuated equilibrium as an alternative to phyletic graduation. They build upon theories of incremental changes, including Wildavsky's (1979) look at the budget. The authors find that incremental change is actually the norm in American politics. However, incrementalism is punctuated by periods of explosive, non-incremental changes in attention, which typically lead to non-incremental policy changes. Baumgartner and Jones build upon Kingdon's work by developing a model that explains different policy areas, and also is more generalizable than Kingdon's garbage can model. They find that punctuations occur when issues

are redefined by political entrepreneurs and successes in the political arena provide positive feedback, which in turn keeps the momentum going towards non-incremental, sweeping policy change.

The problem that the agenda-setting literature faced with Kingdon (1984; 1995) and Baumgartner and Jones (1993), widely considered the classics in the sub-discipline, is that there was still a lack of a generalized theory of how issues come to the agenda, and how that in turn brings about policy change. Kingdon and Baumgartner and Jones both provided the groundwork for rich theories and empirical testing, but the policy process still lacked a comprehensive theory. In an update of *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, Jones and Baumgartner (2005) test the theory of punctuated equilibrium in hopes of making the theory more generalizable. In essence, the study looks at a variety of measures of institutional agendas and policy outcomes, and measures the year-by-year change in each.

Jones and Baumgartner found support for punctuated equilibrium throughout the American political universe. Institutional friction, which is usually attributed to gridlock, actually is associated with larger, more explosive change. In studying congressional attention, media attention, presidential attention, and budget allocations, and several other measures, Jones and Baumgartner found that annual change in American politics follows a leptokurtic distribution. A leptokurtic distribution is named according to its kurtosis, or the tendency for the distribution to resemble the normal distribution except with higher peaks, lower shoulders, and fatter tails. In agenda-setting terminology, this indicates that all of these measures of political attention are frequently incremental (this is indicated by the higher peaks), seldom middle of the road change (shoulders of the distribution), and greater explosive change than is associated with

a normal distribution, which is what incremental theorists have assumed. In fact, budget allocation change on an annual basis follows a power law distribution, which indicates that as changes occur in the budget, they start at incremental levels but grow at a very rapid pace, perhaps as high as 1,000%. The evidence in support of the punctuated equilibrium theory of the policy process is the closest, to date, to providing a comprehensive theory of public policy. Such a theory, though, meshes agenda-setting with other stages of the policy process because it is so comprehensive.

Scholars who focus on the agenda-setting stage of the public policy process have gone far in dispelling long-held notions of stalemate, gridlock, and incrementalism being the dominant models of change in American politics. The work of Kingdon (1984) and Baumgartner and Jones (1993) demonstrate with clarity that broad, sweeping change is possible in American politics, certainly to a greater extent than previous scholars had implied. Further, non-incremental change, or punctuations, come about with much greater regularity than previous studies have demonstrated. What actually turns out to be most unusual is moderate change; the political landscape is formed and reformed almost exclusively by a combination of incremental and explosive change.

Because broad, sweeping change can occur in American politics with little warning, as Baumgartner and Jones (1993; 2005) demonstrate, the power to set the political agenda becomes even more critical to understanding power in American politics. In this dissertation, the role of the President in shaping the political agenda is brought under scrutiny. The next section discusses the presidential agenda-setting literature, and the central place that agenda-setting plays in contemporary conceptions of presidential power. Finally, after discussing previous studies of

presidential power and the ability of the president to influence the political agenda of other institutions, I will preview the three empirical chapters of the dissertation and discuss some of the more important findings.

Presidential Power and Agenda-Setting

Power has been a major focus of study particularly among scholars who study the American presidency. No other office commands so much attention in terms of political power. This is particularly the case because of the stature of the office in the United States. The Office of the President has become the focal point of politics and policy in the American political system (Neustadt, 1991). Lowi (1985) and Light (1999) refer to the office as “the no-win presidency” due to the mounting expectations that citizens place upon the president to solve public policy problems. Lowi argues that the power invested in the president and the accompanying expectations have little prospect of being fulfilled. Despite the expectations gap, however, it is clear that the president does have some power. Scholars of the presidency have expended a great deal of effort defining the powers of the office, a subject which merits some attention here.

Neustadt’s aforementioned conception of presidential power as the power to persuade involved two component parts. The President’s personal power is a reflection of both his professional reputation and public prestige. Neustadt argues that a president with high standing among the public may not be decisively able to exercise power, but it certainly does not hurt his chances. The same can be said for the second component of presidential power, his professional reputation, which can make persuasion “easier, harder, or impossible” (Neustadt, 1991; 54). A

president's reputation basically boils down to a dominant tone among Washington insiders that encapsulates what their expectations are of the individual.

Personal power involves the ability of one individual to influence someone else to abandon their own positions in part or in full and act according to the individual's interests (Ragsdale, 2000). To exercise personal political power, then, is to be able to get strategic politicians to act according to your will, which may or may not be different from their own. This is no small feat. To exercise personal power requires a great deal of bargaining with many people. Neustadt also recognizes the importance of bargaining for presidential power, as he states "the power to persuade is the power to bargain." (Neustadt, 1991; 32) The essence of the presidential task to persuade, then, is to convince strategic politicians that what he is asking them to do is in their best interest, not just his (Neustadt, 1991). The president holds a position in American politics that requires him to bargain with key members of Congress, administrative agencies, leaders of foreign governments, interest groups, and the public. The position of the president as bargainer has important implications for his leadership potential.

Charles Cameron (2000) suggests that working together in the political arena can take one or both of two forms. First, cooperation can involve a coordination game, in which players select focal points that they can rally around in such a way as to coordinate the actions of the players. Cameron notes that one possible example of a coordination game would be a majority party setting a legislative agenda in Congress. Coordination is required because players must have a short list of focal points, "a few priorities, if they are to accomplish much" (Cameron, 2000; 48). Another possibility, however, is that players in politics can play a bargaining game in which players struggle with one another to divide a pie. In such a situation politicians decide

how to allocate the benefits of a policy or political outcome. A prime example of this type of game would be dividing pork among members of Congress, where in order for legislation to pass, a sufficient number of legislators must feel they are getting their fair share of the benefits.

In terms of the presidency, Cameron (2000) argues that the President's position in such political games have changed significantly since the time of Neustadt's writing (1960) because of the increased likelihood that presidents will face divided government. Cameron notes that in 1960, the likelihood of a president facing divided government was .50, whereas in the time that has passed since then presidents have an 80% chance of facing divided government. The increased probability of facing divided government has changed presidential strategies in their efforts to exercise personal power because they are required in such situations of divided government to engage more in bargaining than in cooperation games. Perhaps most interestingly, the presidents who are ranked among the greatest by historians (Schlesinger, 1997) have for the most part served under unified government. Serving under divided government and being forced to engage in bargaining, rather than cooperative games, may have signaled an end to presidential greatness in producing major legislative movements in American politics (Cameron, 2000).

Presidents, with their institutional as well as personal power bases, are ideally situated for such bargaining situations. While making the advantageous position of the president clear, Neustadt (1991) warns that the advantageous position in bargaining relationships held by the president falls far short of guaranteeing success. It is important to recognize, as Neustadt's text so frequently reminds us, that a bargaining relationship is a two-way street. Neustadt's view of bargaining for American presidents certainly is more optimistic about the state of the presidency,

even if success is not a guarantee, than Cameron's argument that the presence of bargaining in lieu of cooperation may have actually signaled a death knell for presidential greatness.

Cameron (2000) is only one of a long list of scholars eulogizing presidential greatness among the modern presidents. Ted Lowi (1985), in his book *The Personal President*, argues that the presidency has become a plebiscitary institution, vested with great power but placed in a no-win situation. Lowi argues that the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, the earliest of personal presidents, elevated the presidency to become the face of a new, big government to the public. Roosevelt, as Lowi recognizes, embodied this conception of the presidency because he was an exceptional individual. However, what was good for the nation also may have damned the institution because future presidents have built in barriers that will prevent them from coming close to bridging the expectations gap. The public turns to the president at every crossroads, and the president has little chance of successfully acting upon these expectations. Perhaps the most important contribution of Neustadt's (1990) conception of presidential power is his argument that presidents themselves cannot exercise control over either of its component parts, frequently placing presidents in situations where they are expected to exert leadership but are handcuffed.

Scholars of the presidency, despite these advances in identifying the power of the president, have been met with disappointment when applying these concepts to statistical research. A vast amount of literature has noted the problems associated with presidential research. Many of the concepts identified as part of the presidential power schema are hard to measure and operationalize; this is especially the case with professional reputation, for example (Edwards, 1980). Public prestige as part of the presidential power picture is easier to measure using Gallup's support scores, but the results of these support scores in quantitative models of

presidential influence, particularly in Congress, have been disappointing. Bond and Fleisher (1990) and Edwards (1989) find that public support for the president has an impact in Congress only at the margins. Other factors such as ideological and partisan congruence with Congress appear to carry much more weight in determining a president's legislative success (Bond and Fleisher, 1990).

The importance of public prestige has been a subject of widespread debate, drawing attention to many of the problems that scholars who have taken quantitative approaches to presidential power encounter. In his earlier work, Edwards (1980) argued that public support, when controlling for the partisan tendency to support same-party presidents, does not contribute a great deal to the portrait of presidential power. Rivers and Rose (1985) are critical of Edwards's findings, however, because he uses only correlation coefficients, which are suggestive but cannot effectively determine causality. Rivers and Rose find that public prestige as a source of presidential influence has to be more carefully specified to account for rising and falling poll numbers throughout a president's term, and the recognition that presidents are strategic politicians. Presidents who have higher public prestige, according to the findings of Rivers and Rose, will have greater success in Congress, but as a result of this success they will increase the size of their legislative programs simultaneously as their approval wanes during the normal course of their term. These tendencies muddy the water of public prestige as a source of presidential power, and illustrate a desperate need for scholars to move beyond standard bivariate correlation or simple regression models that would mask these circumstances.

Neustadt's second component of presidential power, professional reputation, creates greater conceptual problems on its face than the public prestige component. While public

opinion polls rating the president are readily available, we do not have similar surveys of the perceptions of the president from Washington insiders. Several scholars have attempted to operationalize professional reputation, with varying degrees of success. Some have argued that professional reputation and public prestige are not easily separated, contrary to Neustadt's (1990) distinguishing between the two. This is based on an assumption that elite opinions on the president are to some extent formed by their popularity among the mass public (Kernell, 1986), a notion wrapped entirely in the electoral incentive (Mayhew, 1974), or that elite perceptions can actually trickle down in the opposite direction to influence the perceptions of the president among the mass public (Lockerbie and Borrelli, 1989). Further confounding is the fact that congressional evaluations of the president are a significant component of a president's professional reputation, making statistical relationships all the more difficult to correctly specify since influence in Congress is the primary venue for a president to exercise power. Advances have been made in studying the president's professional reputation by relying on media coverage of the president (Lockerbie and Borrelli, 1989), so the state of presidential power research has produced some breakthroughs and the picture is not entirely bad. Focusing on a president's power to persuade members of Congress to vote for his programs, however, has left us with a somewhat confusing and frequently contradictory understanding of the president's influence in the legislature.

Some of the most promising work on presidential power, especially the power to influence Congress, comes not in securing votes, but rather in gaining access to the agenda. Focusing on the power of the president to set the political agenda provides scholars with an opportunity to step back from the confounding relationships, while still examining an important facet of political power. As I noted at the outset, the ability to set the agenda is fundamentally a

precursor to other conceptions of power (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Riker, 1986). However, presidency scholars have recently turned a much greater proportion of their attention away from agenda-setting as a form of the president's power and focused more on his ability to influence votes in Congress. To do so is to miss the fundamental aspect of power, the ability to define alternatives and influence the terms of debate.

The ability to set the political agenda is an important component of presidential power. Bond and Fleisher (1990) argue that in a Congress that is far from guaranteed to vote a president's way, setting the agenda ends up being one of the president's greatest sources of influence. Edwards (1989) identifies the president's ability to set the political agenda as one of his greatest strategic powers. Several scholars who have been critical of the president becoming the focus of the public's aspirations for policy change have still recognized the president's ability to manage the agenda as an important force in American politics (Jones, 1994). Influencing the agenda of Congress is not an especially onerous challenge for presidents. Congress needs an agenda from outside with high status to react against, and there is no better program to fit this criterion than that of the president (Neustadt, 1991). In fact, the president has been invited by congress to take the lead on the budget, the economy, national security, the environment, and other areas of public policy (Edwards and Barrett, 2000). In terms of the bargaining that presidents are forced to undertake in order to survive in the political system, then, simply achieving a spot on the agenda is one area where the costs of the bargaining game are likely to be comparatively low.

Presidents have been able to use the important strategic power of agenda-setting to their advantage. Kingdon (1984), in his study of the transportation and health subsystems, found that

no other actor rivaled the ability of the president to bring attention to issues. Similarly, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) argue that no other actor can so clearly focus attention or change the motivations of other political actors as well as the president.

Members of Congress also have an incentive to invite the president to initiate legislation, so introducing a policy agenda to Congress should not be an onerous task for presidents. Members of Congress, in response to their electoral incentive (Mayhew, 1974), have an incentive to invite presidential initiatives because the president's agenda reflects a high status set of initiatives from outside to react for or against. No actor is in a better position for members of Congress to serve this need than the president (Neustadt, 1991).

Political realities have revealed that Congress acts on this incentive. Congress has invited the president to take greater roles in initiating legislation and policy priorities in the areas of the economy, foreign policy, the environment, and others (Edwards and Barrett, 2000). Perhaps in no area is this clearer than in inviting the president to submit a budget for congressional approval on an annual basis.

Paul Light's (1999) classic work on the president's agenda focuses on the president's domestic policy choices made by presidents from Kennedy to Clinton. Light's work brings to the surface many fundamentally important aspects of a president's agenda. The president's agenda, according to Light, includes defining which of the litany of political issues are appropriate for government activity, proposing solutions to those problems, and prioritizing among the problems and solutions.

Many of the sources of presidential power discussed above have an influence on the president's agenda itself. Light (1999) argues that the size and composition of the president's agenda cannot be divorced from his power base. For Light this includes internal sources, such as time, information, expertise, and energy, as well as external sources such as party support in Congress, public approval, and electoral margin (1999; 15). Taken together, these internal and external resources combine to produce presidential capital, a factor that in turn determines both the size and detail of the president's program. Presidential capital compels presidents to strike while the iron is hot, but according to Light's argument the hot iron is rarely to be found. Capital decreases throughout a president's term, which compels the president to act on his most important agenda items early. However, acting on major programs requires a legislative skill that new presidents take time to learn, which compels restraint. These countervailing pressures provide further evidence of the notion that the president has little hope of overcoming the expectations gap discussed above (Lowi, 1985).

Fett (1994) argues that the president can augment his support in Congress through strategically prioritizing among the political issues being addressed. Studying the Carter and Reagan administrations, Fett found that the priority assigned to an issue in the president's legislative agenda can have an effect on the voting decisions of members of Congress, although Reagan was more successful in his ability to move members of Congress who were not already predisposed to vote with him anyway, an area where Carter struggled mightily. Fett's findings suggest that careful attention should be paid to the process of agenda-building if we are to get a more thorough understanding of presidential power, especially as it relates to Congress.

The size of the president's agenda has important implications for his success in Congress. Presidents are limited by an "attention bottleneck" (Jones, 1995), which only allows the president to vigorously lobby Congress on a few issues at a time. Edwards and Wood (1999) note that the president must exercise great care in both the size and composition of his agenda because of the limited amount of political capital presidents can devote to any one issue if they hope to get anything accomplished. Previous work has evidenced that presidents with more compact legislative agendas tend to have greater success in Congress than those presidents who attempt simply to do too much (Fett, 1994).

Presidential policy agendas, like those of other institutions, are subject to periods of stability punctuated by rapid change and shifting among policy priorities. Jones and Baumgartner (2005) demonstrate that the distribution of presidential attention to public policy areas display significant kurtosis, which suggests that the distribution of attention is characterized dominantly by incremental and large change, with little moderate change (characterized by the "shoulders" of a normal distribution). Further, changes in presidential attention in the post-war period are much more likely to be increases in attention to new issue areas, rather than withdrawal from issues that previously had been attended to by the president. These findings suggest that, consistent with public expectations, the president has expanded his legislative priorities to address a wider range of policy areas. However, the analysis falls short of explaining the timing of such increases or innovations in presidential attention.

While many scholars have agreed on the president's ability to set the political agenda and its stature as an important strategic resource for the president, far too many of the studies of presidential abilities to influence the agenda have been devoid of empirical testing, opting more

for “proof of existence” being sufficient. If we are to understand presidential power comprehensively, however, several steps are necessary. First, scholars have to be willing to focus on the more subtle second face of power, but second and more importantly, move further to understand where presidents are able to exercise power over political agendas and what the implications are of this power. Presidency scholars widely recognize the importance of agenda-setting as a source of presidential power, but to this point it is unclear what determines the extent to which this power can be exercised, and more importantly, what are the implications for the broader political system. Further, scholars have mostly assumed that the relationship between the agendas of the president, Congress, and the media are one-directional, although there are exceptions. This is an assumption that certainly requires testing across a broad range of political issues.

The influence of issue attention does not simply flow from the president to Congress. It is important to note that scholars have acknowledged that presidents can strategically alter their legislative agendas in such a way as to improve their chances in Congress. Such a calculation would be based on those measures that the president thinks Congress would be most willing to act upon, and through his advocacy of those measures most likely to meet success, the president improves his standing (Bond and Fleisher, 1990; Edwards, 1989). The recognition that the interaction between the branches is not likely to be one in which the preferences of either side is likely to be perfectly understood is of critical importance to studies of agenda-setting in both branches (Fett, 1992). That the president would alter his agenda to increase his likelihood of success is quite consistent with Neustadt’s (1990) notion that presidents should make decisions strategically to guard their personal power, portraying presidents as risk-averse actors seeking legislative success in Congress above all else (Covington and Kinney, 1991).

Another possibility is that presidents respond more to other strategic considerations when it comes to their agenda, such as the proper timing of advocating an issue before Congress. Fett (1992) finds little evidence studying the Carter and Reagan administration of either president altering their legislative agenda in ways that would increase their chances of success, or ducking contentious issues that would most certainly be unlikely to have a successful outcome. President Carter, Fett (1994) argues, had too broad of a legislative agenda which greatly dampened his potential for success in Congress. President Reagan's agenda, according to Fett's (1992; 1994) data, was much more focused which could have had some effect on his legislative success.

Congress is certainly capable of setting its own agenda (Taylor, 1998). The congressional agenda has a similar capacity to influence the amount of attention the president will devote to a policy issue, and despite the president's ideally suited position to set the agenda, the direction of the relationship is equally likely to be in the other direction, a situation in which the president is a responder, not an initiator, of policy attention. Paul Light (1999) notes that the president may borrow issues from the congressional agenda. Fleming, Wood, and Bohte (1997) argue that presidents have shown a tendency to respond to the work of policy entrepreneurs in Congress, whether the response is in cooperation or conflict.

The president also invests a lot of energy in attempting to influence the agenda of the media (Edwards and Wayne, 1999; Kumar, 2007). The president can use the media strategically in a number of ways. First, it is to the president's advantage in keeping with his personal power to control to the best of his ability how he is portrayed in the media. Keeping the media informed of presidential activities and priorities is advantageous because what the media reports is what the public hears about the president's activities. Given the importance of public prestige

in the presidential power schema, the media plays a very important role in the success or failure of presidential administrations.

Light (1999) suggests that the president can use the media as a bridge to the broader political environment. This power is especially pronounced because of the nature of the mass public. Page and Shapiro (1992) note that the salience that the mass public affords to a political issue is dependent upon the amount and duration of the coverage that issue receives from the media.

Despite rich anecdotal evidence, and strong theoretical reasons to expect the president to expend effort influencing the agenda of the media, we know very little about the extent to which the president is successful in influencing the agenda of the media (Flemming, Wood, and Bohte, 1999). Moreover, the direction of causality between the agendas of the president and the media is certainly in question. Gilberg et al (1980) find that to the extent there is a relationship between the agendas of the president and the mass media, the State of the Union message appears to be responsive to the media coverage afforded to an issue. Wood and Peake (1998) find that even in the area of foreign policy, where the president should be expected to have the greatest leadership potential, the media coverage of foreign policy events play a greater role in shaping the president's agenda than vice versa. Wanta et al (1989) found that the causal relationship between the agendas of the president and the mass media were reciprocal, with each branch responding to coverage in the other.

If we accept Light's (1991) notion that the media provide a bridge between the president and the broader political environment, then some thought must be devoted to how the president and the public relate directly. As Kernell (1997) notes, the president goes to the public to rally

support for his initiatives and place pressure on Congress. However, his success in using the bully pulpit to do so is in question (Edwards, 1989). When the president reaches the public, however, is the agenda he presents able to influence the agenda of the mass public anyway? Some research suggests that elite opinions can affect the agendas of the mass public, flowing from the top down (Zaller, 1992), while others have asserted that the linkage flows from the mass public up to elites and policymakers, more of a bottom up approach (Page and Shapiro, 1983). Hill and Hinton-Anderson (1995) are probably correct when they find that the pattern of influence between the agendas of the president and the mass public flows in both directions, and causality is reciprocal.

Jeffrey Cohen (1995) studies the linkage between the policy agendas of the mass public and the president, testing only for causality flowing from the presidential level. He finds that presidential attention to foreign policy, civil rights, and economic policy in the State of the Union Address affects the salience assigned to those issues by the mass public, as measured by Gallup's most important problem series. There is reason to question Cohen's analysis, however, because he only tests for causality flowing from the president to the mass media. Jacobs and Shapiro (1994), for example, demonstrate that the policy agendas of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and John Kennedy were both highly responsive to the agendas of the mass public.

Brandice Canes-Wrone (2006) conducts a test from the perspective of formal theory on who leads whom between the president and the media. In general, she finds that the president can increase his legislative success by "going public" (Kernell, 1997), but that public leadership is usually not realistic. The reality of the situation is that the post-World War II presidency is

ideally suited, due to proliferation the ownership of televisions, to call upon the public when public sentiment lines up with a president's legislative priorities.

Presidential attention to issues is often dictated by events, sometimes against the will of the president. A fine example of events playing a dominate role in the composition of the president's agenda is the presidency of Lyndon Johnson. President Johnson had an extensive domestic agenda, wanting to advance his great society program to improve the living situations for citizens. However, Johnson was able to devote little of his energies towards these ends in the second half of his term because the latter half of his presidency became dominated by dealing with the Vietnam War (Bornet, 1984).

Birkland (1997) studies the effect of focusing events on public policy. A focusing event, by Birkland's definition, is "a rare, harmful, and sudden event that becomes known to the mass public and policy elites virtually simultaneously" (Birkland, 1997; 3). Focusing events force the hand of political elites to respond to an issue, no matter what their personal priorities may be. When an event happens, what makes it "focusing" in Birkland's definition is the assignment of a causal story, linking the event to some public policy problem that warrants a governmental response (Stone, 1989), and the attachment of a powerful symbol that will keep the issue fresh and salient in the public eye long enough to sustain policy change (Kingdon, 1984; Rochefort and Cobb, 1994). Frequently, the way in which the media frame an event determines the causal story and symbol that the public attaches to it (Stone, 1989; Druckman, 2001). Media coverage of events, then, can create a demand for action, which leaves the president little room for discretion in how his administration will respond (Baker, 1995).

The effect of events can be especially pronounced on presidential agendas. The public, especially since World War II, has grown accustomed to placing its hope for response to crisis in the hands of the president because the president has become the face of American government (Lowi, 1985). Frequently, this ties the hands of the president whose responsibility can be primarily that of a nation-keeper, as is evident in response to the civil rights movement (Riley, 1999). This is another example of how events can impact a president's agenda. Lyndon Johnson, whose domestic agenda was crippled to some extent by the Vietnam War, also benefitted by being the president in office when the civil rights movement finally came to a boil, demanding a response from government in order to keep the nation together (Riley, 1999).

Kim Quaile Hill (1998) tests for the relationship between public salience and policy events on the president's agenda, with causality examined in both directions. His research reexamines Cohen's (1995) investigation of the areas of foreign, economic, and civil rights policy. Again the president's agenda is measured by the number of sentences devoted to each policy area in the State of the Union Address, and public salience is measured by Gallup's most important problem series. Hill also codes event data, such as civil rights protests, unemployment and inflation rates, and war and military interventions across the three policy areas. He finds a reciprocal pattern of influence between the agendas of the president and the mass public on the issues of foreign and economic policy, and the president having unidirectional influence on the mass public's salience assigned to civil rights. Interestingly, Hill demonstrates that political events only affect the policy agenda of the mass public, not the president. Theoretically, the presidential response to events is conditioned first by the public's response then, in the areas where the president's agenda is responsive to public salience.

Hill's analysis demonstrates two important facts for scholars looking at the influence the president can exert through agenda-setting. First, it is important not to assume that causality is one-directional, but instead to test first for which direction causality flows. Secondly, the relationship between the political agendas of the president, Congress, the media, and the mass public for that matter are issue dependent; the relationship one finds is dependent upon the issues one selects for study. These issues are but a few of the problems found in explorations of the presidential impact on the political agenda. Previous studies of presidential agenda-setting have been plagued by the use of limited case studies. The executive office of the president has grown substantially, especially since the Second World War (Burke, 2000). The increased capacity that a growing office has afforded a president could provide presidents with the opportunity to become actively engaged in issues on which presidential involvement was previously low. The sheer size of the executive branch, coinciding with the increasingly broader range of issues which are considered on the federal level, should prompt scholars to look at an increasingly diverse range of issues for presidential leadership, and responsiveness for that matter. To date, scholars have not followed this call.

The lack of effective quantitative measures has long been a problem for scholars of the American presidency. This is also true of agenda-setting research. The problem lies in the fact that most previous studies (e.g. Light, 1991) of the topic have focused only on the State of the Union Address. But this presents many statistical problems, most notably the small number of observations. The State of the Union address is delivered by the president to Congress every January, leaving presidency scholars with one observation of the president's agenda per year. To gain the necessary statistical leverage with so few observations can be a daunting task. Gary King (1993) has offered a solution to these typical problems of data availability for presidential

scholars, calling on the scholars to focus on smaller units of analysis, such as decisions, which are made all year round and can expand the N.

Scholars of the presidency have also made the implicit assumption that the agendas are presidential, that is personal, rather than institutional. While Neustadt's (1990) work has been groundbreaking, it seems that presidential scholars have had a tendency to ignore the institution. We see that in the assumptions that a president can only be involved in a few issues at a time. While this may be true, it certainly should be tested in light of the size of the president's staff (Burke, 2000). Terry Moe (1993) advocates a return of presidential scholars to the study of the executive institution. He argues that because the size of the executive branch has increased to such a great extent in recent years, Neustadt's work became outdated as it was being written. From Moe's view, it is no longer realistic to view the president as an individual only, because a focus on one actor, even in a leadership role, risks scholars missing a far broader picture.

While in this study, I follow the call made by Moe (1993) to return to a consideration of the presidency as institution, I do not support the argument that personal power studies have been outdated all along. However, when we consider the president's ability to set and manage an agenda, and exert power through that agenda, it is important to recognize that the attention bottleneck (Jones, 1994) may not be as small as scholars originally thought. The expanding size of the executive branch deems it a possibility that the president can be involved in a far broader number of issue areas, perhaps issue areas where presidential involvement has not been historically the norm.

Such a proposed study would not be the first effort of its kind. Several studies of the agenda-setting process have included the role of institutions in setting agendas of other

institutions as well as that of the public. Such a focus is consistent with the top-down model of agenda-setting (Cobb and Elder, 1972). Several authors have investigated the role that the president plays in not only setting but also responding to other institutional agendas, a series of studies that will be briefly discussed in the remainder of this section. Then, a new study of presidential influence and responsiveness on issue attention will be proposed. It is from this proposal that chapter three of the dissertation flows.

Kim Quaile Hill (1998) tests for leadership in policy priorities between the president and the mass public in the areas of foreign policy, economics, and civil rights. He finds that there is a reciprocal pattern of influence between the president and the media in foreign and economic policy, and that the president leads the public's attention to civil rights policy. His results demonstrate that "future research cannot assume a recursive influence process where...the president influences the public but not vice versa. We must test for both possibilities, and we must search for explanations for why different patterns of influence exist for different policy areas." (Hill, 1998; 1333)

Edwards and Wood (1999) have looked at the "who influences whom" question in American politics at the agenda-setting stage, primarily from a top-down approach to agenda-setting where institutional agendas affect the amount of attention devoted to an issue throughout the political system. At the same time Edwards and Wood discuss the possibility that the media could potentially have a causal influence in recognition of the possibilities of a bottom-up approach (Cobb and Elder, 1972). The analysis of causal patterns among the institutional agendas were performed across five areas, including crime, health care, education, U.S.-Soviet relations, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The results indicated that presidential leadership in

agenda-setting is inconsistent. Contrary to expectations, the president's leadership ability in foreign policy was absent; rather the president responded to media coverage of these two issues.

This is consistent with the work of Wood and Peake (1998), who demonstrate that despite the constitutional mandate for the president to take a leadership role in foreign affairs, the president is largely responsive to media coverage of foreign policy events. Theirs was the first analysis of agenda-setting in foreign policy matters, a field mostly dominated previously by studies of the domestic agenda. Wood and Peake argue that agenda-setting scholars have been hesitant to get involved in foreign policy agendas because they do not fit with most contemporary agenda-setting theories, which require subsystems, interest group politics, and venue shopping. However, they argue that foreign policy agendas are certainly prone to other agenda-setting components, most notably issue definitions, problem perceptions, and institutional attention. Wanta et al (1989) also found some evidence that the president is responsive to the media on foreign policy issues, but can also exert leadership on the media's coverage of them.

The president's record of leadership in domestic policy issues was mixed as well, showing leadership on health care, simply reacting to crime coverage, and having reciprocal relationships with the media when it comes to education issues (Edwards and Wood, 1999). Perhaps the most intriguing of Edwards and Wood's set of results, however, comes in their portrayal of Congress as an inert branch, neither effecting nor being affected by the agendas of the president or the media. This result is interesting on the congressional level because the electoral incentive that is so dominant in the minds of individual members of Congress is so tightly associated with the president (Jacobson, 1996) and the media (Fenno, 1974). Members of

Congress seek to align themselves with a popular president who is on top of the ticket during elections, and distance themselves from presidents who are unpopular among their constituents. This would lead one to expect a reaction, regardless of whether it is a positive or negative reaction, to increase the amount of attention an issue receives in Congress as a result of increased presidential attention.

Similar to Congress, the media invite the president to have influence over their agenda. The presidency has become one of the stars of media coverage, especially political coverage. No matter what the president is doing, from the mundane to exciting, the media covers the daily activities of the president. However, there are no guarantees that the media coverage afforded to a president will be shaped by the president. In a study of press coverage of the president's legislative appeals, Andrew Barrett (2007) found that less than forty percent of the appeals are reported by the media. Among legislative appeals, Barrett reports that only those to which the president devotes a substantial portion of his attention receive media coverage.

Presidential strategy then becomes a critical part of presidential leadership. As Canes-Wrone (2006) shows, when the president goes public with a popular proposal, it places added pressure on members of Congress to enact the proposal, thereby increasing the legislative success of the president. However, the president has to be strategic in selecting the issues on which he wants to use the public as a tool to garner legislative success because Canes-Wrone's results also demonstrate that presidents who go public with unpopular legislative appeals actually lower their prospects for legislative success. Essentially, the agenda that the president advocates is just one of a line of decisions that the president must make in such a way as to intensely guard his personal power prospects (Neustadt, 1991). Presidents must exercise caution, then, in

determining which legislative proposals to advocate most to the media, because fewer than half of his legislative appeals will garner the attention of the media, and those few that do could hurt the power prospects of the president if they are unpopular.

Brace and Hinckley (1992) study the presidential use of polling and the subsequent appeal to the media for public, and indirectly, congressional support. Their work is consistent with Canes-Wrone (2006) in that the president has a tendency to avoid the media during times of economic peril, which is directly tied to the president's public standing (Mackuen, Erikson, and Stimson 2002), or only use the media in such a way as to convey the difficulty of choices that he has had to make. On the other hand, the president has a tendency to embrace the media during good economic times, when the chances for success are highest, in order to expand the scope of his supporting coalition and pressure Congress to attend to an issue high on both his and the public agenda. Brace and Hinckley also show that the president's attention to foreign policy issues is higher in times where the economy is bad, in an attempt to misdirect some of the criticism brought about because of the bad domestic conditions. The perception of the president's management of foreign policy is not the only basis on which his public standing is formed, but it certainly is an important component of it (Edwards, Mitchell, and Welch 1995).

Many of the studies discussed above regarding the president's ability to set the agenda, or patterns of influence across institutions, have several strengths and weaknesses in common. Much of the early agenda-setting research focused only on the domestic agenda (Cobb and Elder, 1972; Kingdon, 1984; Light, 1991; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). Several of the studies discussed here have begun the process of viewing agenda-setting as an important component of foreign policy studies as well (Wanta et al, 1989; Wood and Peake, 1998; Edwards and Wood,

1999). Agenda-setting research, especially the president's position in the agenda-setting process, is especially strengthened by the inclusion of foreign policy in the study of institutional agendas.

Qualitative works of agenda-setting have offered scholars several advantages. Paul Light's (1991) work on the president's agenda provides scholars in the field with a great deal of information regarding how the president prioritizes the political issues to which he would like to see government attention devoted. John Kingdon's (1984) work introduced the notion of policy entrepreneurs, including those who are part of political institutions, working to define a problem in such a way that will fit with their pet solution in the garbage can model, bringing about their preferred policy change. Finally, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) have provided scholars with information regarding the rate of change of political attention, showing that some issues garner positive feedback within the political system, a process which can lead to explosive, non-incremental change. Their later work demonstrates that punctuated equilibrium is a theory that applies across institutions in American politics, making their theory much more broadly applicable (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005).

However, many of these same studies also have common weaknesses. The study of agenda-setting has been moving in an increasingly quantitative direction over time. This is because many of the qualitative studies fail to provide scholars with causal theories of agenda-setting. For example, Kingdon (1984) and Baumgartner and Jones (1993) provide interview and anecdotal evidence that no other actors match the power of the president to set the political agenda. While interview data are certainly empirical in nature, the exhaustive nature of the coverage of only a few issue areas has limited the ability to make generalizations about agenda-setting power to more than a few issue areas.

Quantitative studies of influence on the political agenda among institutions have also suffered from the use of short time periods and small samples of issues. Edwards and Wood (1999) study three domestic issues, and two foreign policy issues, and their study is focused only on the period 1984-1994, encompassing three presidential terms spanning three presidencies (two of those presidencies had terms not covered in this time span). Wood and Peake (1998) analyzed three foreign policy events during their time.

The preceding discussion has illustrated that many important strides have been made toward a better understanding of the role of the president on the political agenda. Although scholars have gained a better understanding, there remains much work to be done. Several important theoretical holes exist in the literature, which will be discussed below.

First, studies of the president's ability to set the political agenda have been rather limited in scope. Light's (1999) groundbreaking study of presidential agendas, while contributing a great deal to scholarly knowledge of the president's role in setting the American political agenda, focuses primarily on the president's choice among political issues or the setting of the presidential agenda only. While gaining an understanding of which issues the president views as a priority is an important step to gaining an understanding of presidential power, little is offered in terms of advancing scholarly knowledge on how the presidential agenda is translated into an avenue of political influence.

Further, although Light (1999) offers an understanding of what issues are presidential priorities, there is significant room for improvement in scholarly understanding of why some issues garner greater levels of presidential attention, whereas others go largely ignored. Similarly, Light offers a portrait of the timing of presidential agendas throughout the term, but

we know very little about whether presidents act strategically in their agenda choices through the course of their terms. An important contribution to the scholarly discussion of presidential agenda-setting would determine which factors those issues that the president is frequently involved in have in common. Further, scholars would gain much from understanding presidential innovation, entering into policy debates not typically part of the president's agenda, and what factors influence the president's timing in doing so.

An improved study of agenda-setting as a source of presidential power would accomplish three fundamental goals. First, the agenda of the president across both time and space has to be better understood. To what degree is the agenda of the president stable over time? Are there certain issues that can be deemed "presidential", whereas others that are completely or nearly ignored by the president? If so, why? Are presidents strategic in their timing of issue involvement? When do presidents depart from predecessors' conventional levels of attention devoted to political issues, and why?

Patterns of influence among the president, Congress, and the media would better be studied for longer time spans, and spanning a much broader range of issues. If scholars focus on simply a few issues, there are several problems. First, presidential leadership is likely to be higher in some areas rather than others. So scholars could potentially focus only on those issues where presidential leadership is greatest or least, depending on what one is attempting to argue. Secondly, the president and the national government as a whole has become involved in an increasingly diverse number of regulatory areas of public policy in the post- World War II era than ever before. Limiting studies of influence through attention to only a few sample issues ignores this fact. Finally, focusing on event-related agenda-setting or short time spans is likely

to augment the power of the media in these relationships because the nature of the media is to respond to events with increased coverage in an almost immediate fashion, something that is notably more difficult for political institutions to achieve with such rapidity.

Setting the agenda of Congress or the media, or potentially being influenced by their agendas, is not the only way in which the president's agenda can be an important factor in American politics. Several scholars have demonstrated that the level of attention that the government devotes to political issues can result in an increased demand for lobbying in the associated policy communities, both at the state (Lowery and Gray, 1996) and national (Leech et al, 2005) levels. If the president indeed has a major impact on the level of attention devoted to a political issue at the national level, we should expect a response from interest group communities when the level of presidential attention to an issue changes. Does presidential attention to issues enhance the demand for lobbying in an issue area? How does the impact of presidential attention on the demand for lobbying compare to that of Congress (Leech et al, 2005) or state legislatures (Lowery and Gray, 1996)? In the next section, the literature that connects interest group mobilization and the problems of collective activity to agenda-setting is discussed in order to illustrate how presidential attention to political issue areas is a theoretical hole yet to be filled by earlier work. As part of this dissertation, the effect of presidential attention on lobby demand in comparison to other forms of national political attention will be investigated.

Agenda Setting and Interest Group Mobilization

The growth of the federal government in the United States since World War II has been staggering, as the federal government has become involved in a much more diverse group of policy areas than at any time previously in the history of the nation. This vast expansion of

government at the federal level has been studied extensively. As such, one of the main culprits political scientists have placed blame upon for the vast expansion has been the increased mobilization of organized interests. Tichenour and Harris (2002/2003) have linked the drastic rise of social movements during the progressive era to the growth of the federal government, while other scholars have pointed to rent-seeking interest groups driving the increases in government regulation and spending by creating an increased demand for services (Buchanan and Tullock, 1962). Although interest group mobilization has fostered a response of new government programs which has undoubtedly led to an increase in the sheer size of government, the reverse is also true. The growth of government over time has also had a role in the explosion of interest group populations registered to lobby at the federal level.

The creation of lobby demand by governmental institutions provides an incentive to overcome the problem of collective action. Rent-seeking groups are able to secure patronage from the federal government (Walker, 1983), and the growth of government in policy areas of interest to a group provides a purposive benefit (Salisbury, 1969) for mobilization. Groups will respond to increased government attention in a policy area in order to secure new benefits made available by that attention, or mobilize to defend their interests. The relationship between groups and government may well be reciprocal. A potential pattern could be that a few interest groups will mobilize in order to gain government attention, but then it is the government attention itself once secured that will lead to an increased demand for lobbying activity (Leech et al, 2005). Chapter four of my dissertation will seek to uncover the relationship between institutional attention and the growth of lobbying populations. In this section, I will review the literature that has been focused on the demand side of lobbying, and proceed to propose an extension of these studies which adds the presidency, previously omitted from these studies, to the equation.

Interest group mobilization has long posed an interesting dilemma for political scientists. Early works describing interest group mobilizations were dominated by pluralists, such as Truman (1951), who argued that interest groups actually had the potential to increase representation in a democratic society because latent groups had the potential to be mobilized for any interest if necessary. While the pluralist school of thought painted an encouraging portrait of the expanding interest group landscape in the United States, numerous scholars lined up to attack the prospect of a somewhat utopian pluralist perspective.

One of the most damaging blows to pluralism came from the discipline of economics. Mancur Olson (1965), in his book *The Logic of Collective Action*, employed rational calculus to determine that collective action was in fact an illogical activity: the costs of any individual participating in collective action are almost certain to outweigh the benefits. Collective action for Olson would not occur, then, absent selective benefits provided to those who participate in collective action that cannot be achieved absent one's participation. Despite these formidable barriers built against collective action, however, Olson's work questioned why individuals are increasingly participating in such irrational behavior, as interest group populations explode.

Schattschneider (1960) was one of the earliest scholars to debunk pluralist thought, arguing that their assumptions about latent groups in theory do not come to bare on reality. Schattschneider's now famous dictum "the problem with the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a distinctively upper class accent", was an especially witty method for delivering an important message: some interest groups, especially those representing the wealthiest among society, had a much easier time overcoming the illogic of collective action

than others. Citizen representation was harmed, not helped, by interest group mobilization according to Schattschneider.

It is not hard to imagine higher incentives existing for the wealthy to mobilize for collective action; after all it is their interests most likely to be threatened by government activity. But the incentive system for interest group mobilization is not so simple. Olson's formulation focused primarily on selective incentives, ignoring other possible incentives that could produce an interest group mobilization. Political scientists Peter Clark and James Q. Wilson (1961) argue that purposive and solidary benefits can also produce mobilization for collective activity. Purposive incentives are those incentives that encourage people to join a cause they believe in, in order to secure some public policy desire or public good not materialistic in nature. Solidary benefits are afforded to those who just desire to be a part of something, and join just for the personal benefit of joining based on the belief that man is a social animal who wants to work together with others.

Salisbury (1969) proposes an exchange theory of interest groups based on the contractual exchange between entrepreneurs and new members. The entrepreneur can provide any of a number of benefits, material, solidary, or expressive, to encourage new members to join and sustain their membership. As long as entrepreneurs are able to provide benefits sufficient enough to encourage people to join and overcome the initial problem of collective action, Salisbury argues that individuals are less likely to need continued or at least equal benefit for their continued participation. Hence, entrepreneurs do face some startup costs in overcoming the barriers to collective action, but once the threshold is broken and individuals are participating, it is much less costly to ensure their continued membership.

Jack Walker's (1983, 1991) research which surveys an extensive list of membership interest groups provides evidence in support of Salisbury's (1969) thesis. Walker finds similarly that the startup costs of a membership group are the most formidable barrier to collective action. His data demonstrate that eighty-nine percent of citizen groups surveyed had major contributions from patrons in their initial startup phase. Such major contributions, according to Walker's data, could come from government grants, foundations, corporations, or wealthy individuals. Only thirty-four percent of profit sector groups needed major donations from patrons to overcome startup costs, however. This indicates again some support of Schattschneider's argument: it is much easier for profit sector groups to overcome the problems associated with collective action.

Perhaps the most interesting pattern to come out of Walker's surveys performed in 1980 and 1985 is the explosive increase in citizen groups. Citizen groups, assisted in large part by patronage, have begun to level the playing field with profit sector groups, a development which has implications not only in the interest group field but also in public administration, where the increased presence of citizen watchdog groups has weakened the ability of wealthier profit sector groups to capture implementing agencies (Wilson, 1989). For the purposes of this dissertation, Walker's data are the first to point to the role that government itself can play in the formation and mobilization of interest groups.

The increase in citizen groups as a result of patronage has opened the door to new possible explanations for interest group mobilizations, a development which several scholars have welcomed with open arms. Lowery and Gray (1996) borrow theoretically from population ecology to explain the growth and diversity of interest group populations in the American states. Their analyses are based on a large sample of interest group populations across 50 states. The

model is represented by energy, stability, and area, or ESA. Basically, the ESA model predicts that the size of the government in any given state is a major predictor of both the growth and diversity of interest group populations. These results provide empirical support for some of the theoretical arguments discussed above, namely, that government has a role in patronage (Walker, 1991), that a quite diverse set of incentives can be employed by entrepreneurs to encourage mobilization (Clark and Wilson, 1961; Salisbury, 1969), and finally that much of the growth in lobbying groups overtime is accounted for by a rise in citizen groups.

Boehmke (2005) echoes the findings of Lowery and Gray (1998) in studying the role of direct legislation. Boehmke notes that states in which direct legislation is encouraged or increases, the lobbying populations tend to respond with a growth in the number of interest groups participating in the process.

The ability of government to foster lobby demand has not only been explored on the state level. Baumgartner and Leech (2001) explore the interest group registrations required by the Lobby Disclosure Act of 1995 across 137 issue areas. They find that the interest group populations across their issue areas are quite skewed, with a few areas having a great majority of groups while others only have a few groups operating at any one time. These results confirm the concerns of earlier scholars because business interests are still able to exercise their dominance in those policy areas where only a few groups have been mobilized. Citizen groups tend to be concentrated in the issue areas where many groups are located, while the more powerful economic interests are able to find an issue niche where they can carve out an isolated spot for continued domination over their policy of interest.

The studies discussed thus far have still had a predominant focus on the size of government, indicating an overwhelming exploration of tangible benefits. Leech and her colleagues (2005) move beyond tangible benefits, exploring the specific activities that government can use to foster interest group mobilization. They test specifically for the effects of increased governmental attention, as measured by the number of Congressional hearings, across fifty-six policy areas. They find that increased attention to a policy area, even absent increased legislative output, leads to a responsive increase in the number of lobbyists registered to participate in that issue area. Interest groups respond to the potential of new legislation or new benefits available at the agenda-stage. The mobilization of organized interests at both the state and national levels, then, is a result not only of the social and economic “supply” factors, but also of demand factors such as increased government attention. Baumgartner, Gray, and Lowery (2009, forthcoming) find evidence that policy attention on the federal level also has an impact on the state level, increasing the number of organized interests lobbying in a given policy area at the state level.

Despite the gains made by studies showing the impact of government on fostering demand for lobbying, a significant part of the political attention picture has yet to be examined. Leech et al (2005) and Baumgartner et al (forthcoming) focus only on Congressional attention and federal spending as a signal to interest groups of increased government attention to their policy area of interest. What is troubling about these studies is the omission of the attention devoted to an issue by the President. As I discussed extensively above, previous scholars of agenda-setting have noted the importance of the president in setting the governmental agenda (Kingdon, 1984; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, Light, 1999; Edwards and Barrett, 2000). If the president has such a significant role in setting the public policy agenda of the nation, and

political attention has a significant impact on the population of interest group communities, we should expect to see some relationship between presidential attention to public policy issues and the number of registered lobbyists operating in that policy community. It is this inquiry that is the focus of Chapter four of this volume.

Plan of the Dissertation

In the third chapter of this dissertation, I examine the president's agenda decision, with specific attention focused on how timing and political capital effect the size of the president's agenda. The purpose of the chapter is to reexamine the construction of the president's agenda, testing the explanations offered as part of Paul Light's (1999) political capital construct for their independent influence on the size of the president's legislative agenda. The findings demonstrate that unified government, margin of electoral victory, and public approval all influence the total size of the president's agenda. When it comes to proposing new issues, however, unified government is the only factor Light (1999) discussed that has a significant influence. More of the variation in the number of new programs offered is explained by differences between presidents than the other component parts of the political capital formulation put forth by Light.

Chapter four examines the relationship between the agendas of the president, Congress, and the media. Specifically, I examine spikes in the attention to each of the three actors across nineteen major issue areas in American politics, using vector autoregression to determine Granger causality among the institutions. In doing so, chapter three provides the patterns of influence through agenda-setting that exist across the universe of American political issues, and leads to the conclusion that patterns of influence are highly issue dependent. Most importantly, however, the results demonstrate that the president does indeed have a significant amount of

influence over the political agendas of Congress and the media. The president exerts the most leadership over the political attention devoted to issues out of the three agenda-series, and Congress has the agenda series that is most responsive to the agendas of the president and the media.

Chapter five examines the impact that political institutions have on the demand for lobbying. Previous scholars have posited that institutions can foster lobby demand simply by attending to issues on the agenda (Lowery and Gray, 1996; Leech et al, 2005). However, none of the previous studies has included the president as potentially fostering demand by attending to issues, despite the litany of scholarship that discusses the key role of the president setting the political agenda. Chapter four compares the ability of the president, Congress, and federal spending to influence lobbying communities, adding the president to the lobby demand picture.

Finally, in chapter six I discuss the main findings and conclusions of the dissertation. While significant findings arise from this volume, perhaps the most significant contribution this work adds to the literature is by pointing out several avenues for continued research that would add valuable contributions to the study of the presidency and agenda-setting.

Chapter 3

Political Capital and the President's Agenda: A Multivariate Test of Competing Explanations

Introduction

Richard Neustadt's (1991) now famous dictum that presidential power is the power to persuade has become second nature not only to scholars of the presidency, but to others. Presidents are placed into positions constitutionally where their ability to exert influence in the political arena is dependent upon the ability of the individual occupying the oval office to bargain with others. This is especially true of presidential relations with Congress, which the president is forced to work with in order to bring about desired policy change. Although arm-twisting and negotiations over votes constitute an important part of presidential power, the power to persuade also involves persuading members of Congress to attend to the policy agenda of the president. Certainly, persuading members of Congress to merely devote attention to issues is a much simpler task than bringing Congress around to enact the desired policy changes of the president (Edwards and Barrett, 2000). The ability to influence the political agenda is an important component of presidential power, perhaps even the most important avenue through which presidents can pursue influence (Bond and Fleisher, 1990). Presidents recognize this and use their persuasive power at the agenda-setting stage quite well. As previous scholars have noted, no other actor rivals the ability of the president to raise the levels of attention devoted to an issue throughout the political system (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995). But how does the president construct an agenda for presentation to Congress? What factors influence the construction of the president's agenda? These are the questions that will be the focus of this paper.

Paul Light (1999) has provided a great deal of insight into how presidents make agenda choices, and how the concept of political capital influences the agenda that the president puts

forth. Presidential capital is a concept which includes several measurable component parts, however. Which of these component parts exert influence over the size of the president's agenda? Which factors advanced in the previous studies of the president's agenda significantly influence the nature of the programs the president puts forth: is the agenda filled with new programs or just the tweaking of existing programs? Finally, how does the president respond to the changing political realities in the composition of his agenda? These questions will be investigated using multivariate pooled cross sectional time-series analysis.

Briefly, the findings provide confirming evidence for Light's model of presidential capital. Even after being disaggregated into its component parts, it is clear that Light's interview data captured the appropriate variables that are part of the broader political capital concept. However, it is clear that certain components of political capital have a much larger influence over the size of the president's agenda. Specifically, the margin of the electoral victory of the president has a very large influence on the size of the president's agenda, an influence that is a far more powerful than public approval. Finally, the most important factor influencing the size of the president's agenda as well as the number of new programs advanced by the president is the composition of Congress. None of the component parts of the political capital concept advanced by Paul Light rival the influence that unified government has on the size of the president's agenda or the amount of innovation offered in the agenda.

Presidential Power and the President's Agenda

Richard Neustadt (1991) redefined presidential power as personal, rather than institutional power. Neustadt's conception of Presidential power as the power to persuade involved two component parts. First, the President's personal power is a reflection of his public

prestige. Neustadt argues that a president with high standing among the public may not be decisively able to exercise power, but it certainly does not hurt his chances. The same can be said for the second component of presidential power, his professional reputation, which can make persuasion “easier, harder, or impossible” (Neustadt, 1990; 54). A president’s reputation basically boils down to a dominant tone among Washington insiders that encapsulates what their expectations are from the individual.

Personal power involves the ability of one individual to influence someone else to abandon their own positions in part or in full and act according to the individual’s interests (Ragsdale, 2000). To exercise personal political power, then, is to be able to get strategic politicians to act according to your will, which may or may not be different from their own. This is no small feat. To exercise personal power requires a great deal of bargaining with a great deal of people. Neustadt also recognizes the importance of bargaining for Presidential power, as he states “the power to persuade is the power to bargain.” (Neustadt, 1990; 32) The essence of the Presidential task to persuade, then, is to convince strategic politicians that what he is asking them to do is in their best interest, not just his (Neustadt, 1990). The President holds a position in American politics that requires them to bargain with key members of Congress, administrative agencies, leaders of foreign governments, interest groups, and the public. The position of the President as bargainer has important implications for his leadership potential.

A great majority of work on the President’s influence in Congress has been focused on presidential popularity as a source of influence. While such studies add to the literature, one critical weakness of popularity, which is measured on the aggregate, is that such a measure does not include any information that is specific to individual Congressional votes (Fett, 1994). While

presidents who have greater popularity can have an effect on Congress, that influence has been shown to be limited to the margins (Bond and Fleisher, 1990; Edwards, 1989). The omission of information that is specific to individual Congressional votes greatly mutes the effects of many vote-specific measures a president can take to augment his influence in Congress.

Some of the most promising work on presidential power comes not in obtaining vote support, but rather in obtaining attention to the president's program in the first place. Focusing on the power of the president to set the political agenda provides scholars with an opportunity to step back from the confounding relationships, while still examining an important facet of political power. As I noted in the outset, the ability to set the agenda is fundamentally a precursor to other conceptions of power (Schattschneider, 1960; Riker, 1986). However, presidency scholars have recently turned a much greater proportion of their attention away from agenda-setting as a form of the president's power and focused more on his ability to influence votes in Congress.

The ability to set the political agenda is an important component of presidential power. Persuading Congress to vote with the president has proven quite difficult, which makes the power to influence the Congressional agenda critical to the president (Edwards, 1989; Bond and Fleisher, 1990). Members of Congress also have an incentive to invite the president to initiate legislation, so introducing a policy agenda to Congress should not be an onerous task for presidents. The public has also placed a great deal of hope in the presidency to solve public policy problems, leading scholars to conclude that no single actor can better influence the policy agendas of others than the president (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995).

Paul Light's (1999) classic work on the president's agenda focuses on the president's domestic policy choices made by presidents from Kennedy to Clinton. Light's work brings to the surface many fundamentally important aspects of a president's agenda. He argues that the president's agenda includes the defining of issues that are appropriate for government activity, proposing solutions to those problems, and finally prioritizing among the many problems government could address those issues that are most important to the president's program.

Many of the sources of presidential power discussed above have an influence on the president's agenda itself. Light (1999) argues that the size and composition of the president's agenda cannot be divorced from his power base. For Light this includes internal sources, such as time, information, expertise, and energy, as well as external sources such as party support in Congress, public approval, and electoral margin (1999; 15). Taken together, these internal and external resources combine to produce presidential capital, a factor that in turn determines both the size and detail of the president's program. Presidential capital compels presidents to strike while the iron is hot, but according to Light's argument the hot iron is rarely to be found. Capital decreases throughout a president's term, which compels the president to act on his most important agenda items early. However, acting on major programs requires a legislative skill that new presidents take time to learn, which compels restraint.

The size of the president's agenda has important implications for his success in Congress, however. Presidents are limited by an "attention bottleneck" (Jones, 1994), which only allows the president to vigorously lobby Congress on a few issues at a time. Edwards and Wood (1999) note that the president must exercise great care in both the size and composition of his agenda because of the limited amount of political capital presidents can devote to any one issue if they

hope to get anything accomplished. Previous work has evidenced that presidents with legislative agendas that are more compact tend to have greater success in Congress than those presidents who attempt simply to do too much (Fett, 1994).

To summarize, the literature suggests that the president's ability to influence the political agenda, especially that of Congress, is one of the most important sources of presidential influence. Presidents have been quite successful at influencing the amount of attention devoted to issues in the political arena. The president's agenda has important implications for his power prospects, and the size, composition, and timing of the agenda have important implications for presidential success in producing policy changes. Focusing on the construction of the agenda, Paul Light (1999) advances both internal and external variables that combine to form a level of presidential capital, which then influences the president's agenda decisions. The purpose of this paper is to disaggregate the concept of political capital, comparing the influence that its component parts have on the president's agenda. Specifically, this paper examines the influence of several indicators of political capital on two different characteristics of the president's agenda: the size of the agenda and the number of new policies advanced by the president in his agenda. The next section provides a discussion of the variables used in the models and discusses the data before moving onto a multivariate comparison of several factors influencing the president's agenda decisions.

Measuring the Size of the President's Agenda as a Dependent Variable

Paul Light (1999) asserts that several factors influence the construction of the president's agenda. These influences come from both internal and external sources. In this paper, the focus will be entirely on the external sources that Light asserts will influence the president's agenda.

This section will provide a discussion of the external sources that influence the president's agenda and construct a quantitative model to discover the extent of their independent influence on the president's agenda.

This paper seeks to explain the size of the president's agenda. As such, the dependent variable for this study is the size of the president's legislative agenda. There are many ways in which previous scholars have measured the president's policy priorities. Several scholars have relied upon the policy content of the State of the Union Address as the best indicator of the president's policy priorities (Cohen, 1995). The policy content of the State of the Union Address has been argued to be equivalent to the president's shopping list (Light, 1999). However, others have argued that studying the State of the Union is an exercise in futility because the address only represents but one of many opportunities for the president to go public (Campbell and Hall Jameson, 1990; Kernell, 1997), and that the president's legislative priorities are better represented by other measures (Rudalevige, 2002). The dependent variable in this paper has a central focus on the president's legislative priorities. Although undoubtedly the president goes public to gain support for many of his legislative proposals (Kernell, 1997), the legislation on which the president actually takes formal action represents a much clearer picture of presidential priorities because the president is taking political action to bring about policy changes desired (Rudalevige, 2002).

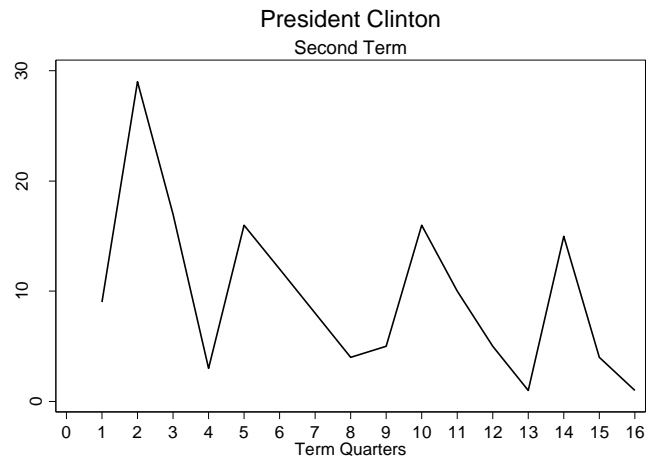
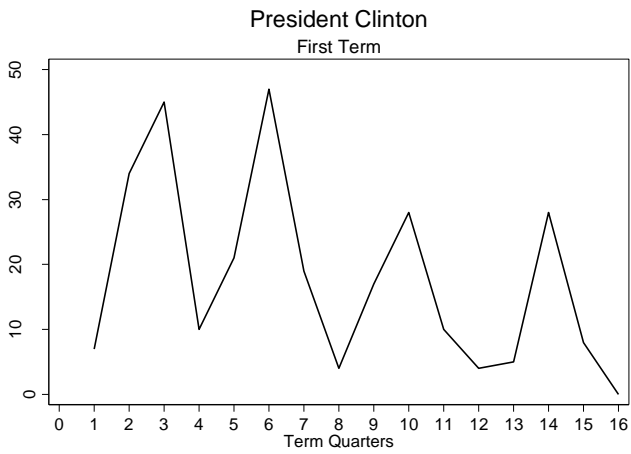
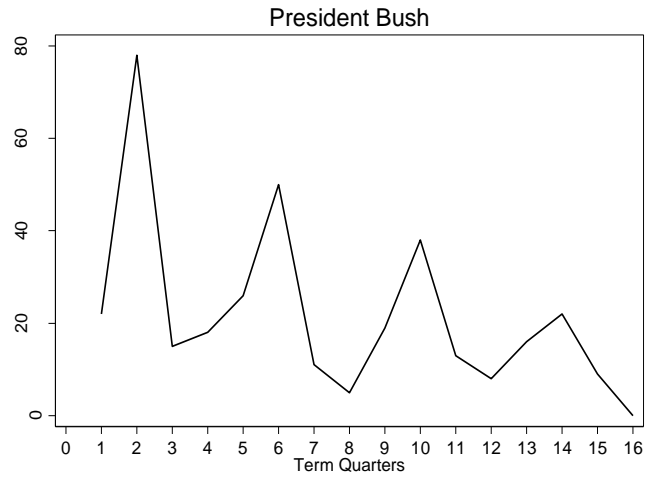
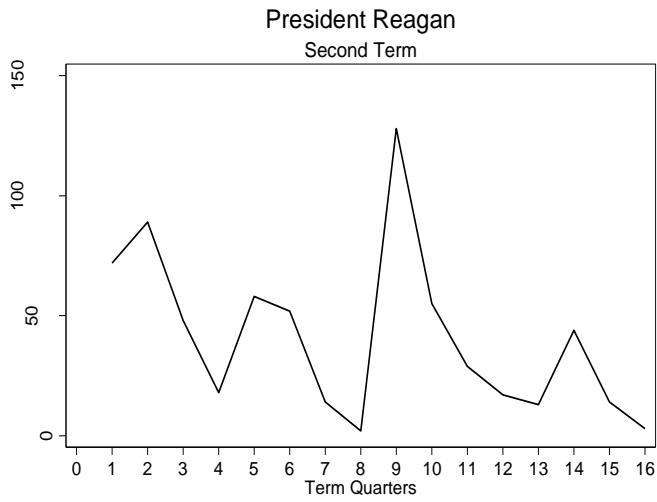
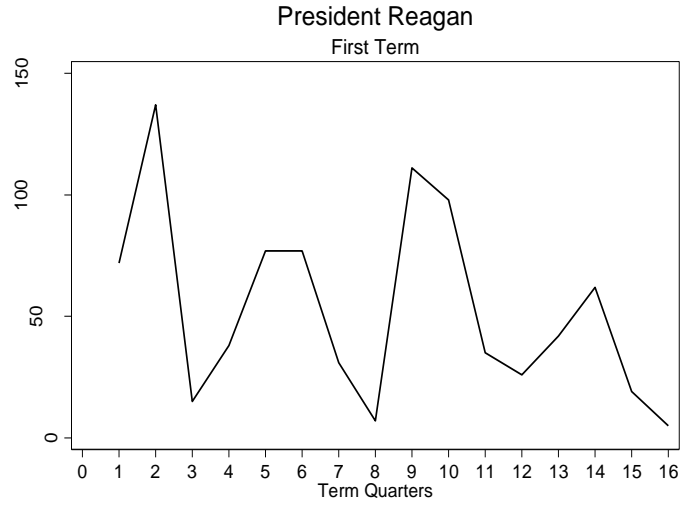
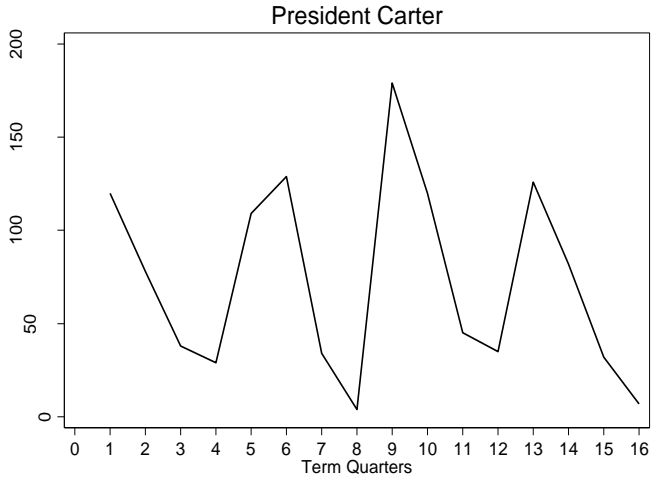
The dependent variables in the analyses below are constructed based on the bills introduced to Congress by request. Oleszek (2007) notes that bills designated as being introduced by request in the *Congressional Record* are introduced at the request of the president or his administration. The Congressional Bills Project (Adler and Wilkerson, 2004) topic codes

thousands of bills introduced to Congress from 1973-2000, also providing information about the sponsor of the legislation including those introduced by request. Each of the bills introduced by the president is then coded based on whether or not the bill introduced is proposing a new program. Data for these purposes comes from the Policy Agendas Project, which provides a list of the Congressional hearings held on new administration proposals. Essentially, the hearings serve as a proxy for new administration proposals. Because multiple hearings can be held on any given proposal, especially a new one, I have limited the count of hearings held on any individual proposal to one so as not to be double counted. These data are described in more detail below.

In the first set of models presented in the analysis section, the size of the president's legislative agenda is approximated by the number of bills introduced by the president quarterly from 1977-2000, covering four presidencies and six presidential terms. Figure 3-1 displays the number of bills introduced by each president throughout their terms, with each term consisting of sixteen total quarters. Figure 3-1 demonstrates that the number of bills introduced at the request of the president varies significantly both throughout each individual president's term, as well as across presidencies. President Carter clearly has the largest number of bill introductions, followed by President Reagan who introduced far less than Carter throughout both of his terms, but more than Presidents Bush or Clinton. Figure 3-1 also suggests that the president's legislative agenda does not follow a linear progression as capital declines throughout the term.

For example, the size of President Carter's legislative agenda increases drastically following the midterm elections in 1978. In fact, the first quarter of 1979 following the midterm 1978 elections represents the high point in the series, with a whopping 180 bill introductions by

Figure 3-1: Bills Introduced by Request per Term Quarter 1977-2000

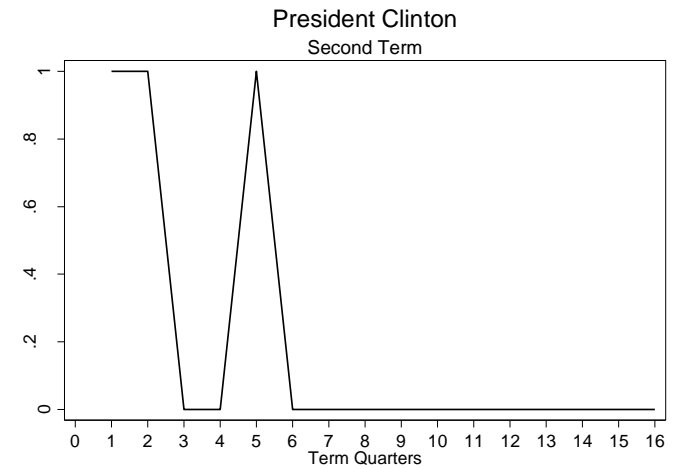
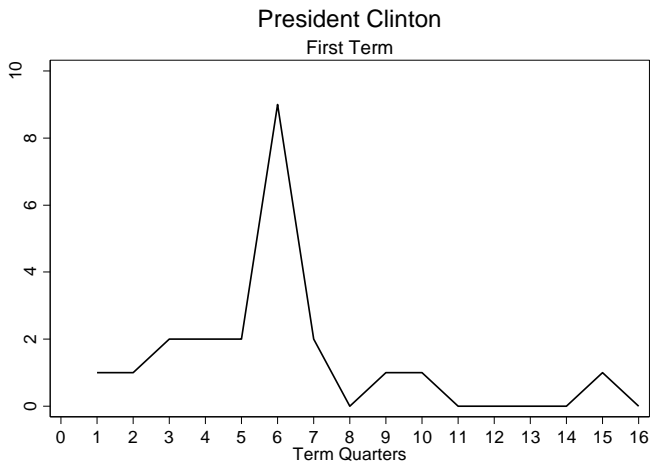
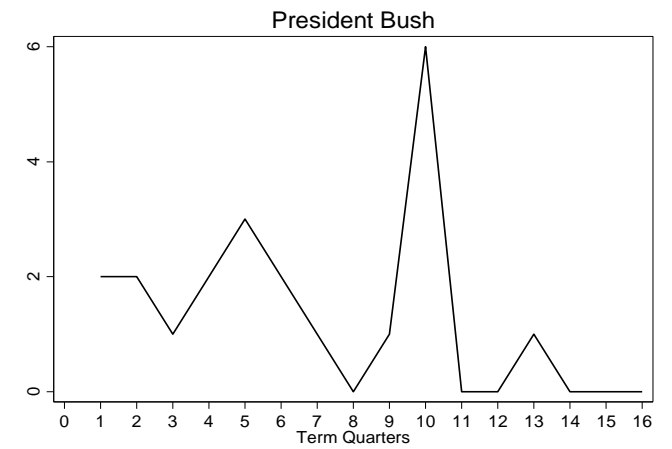
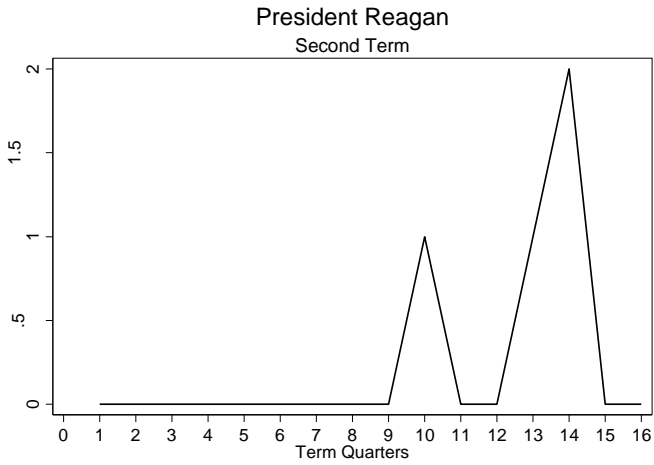
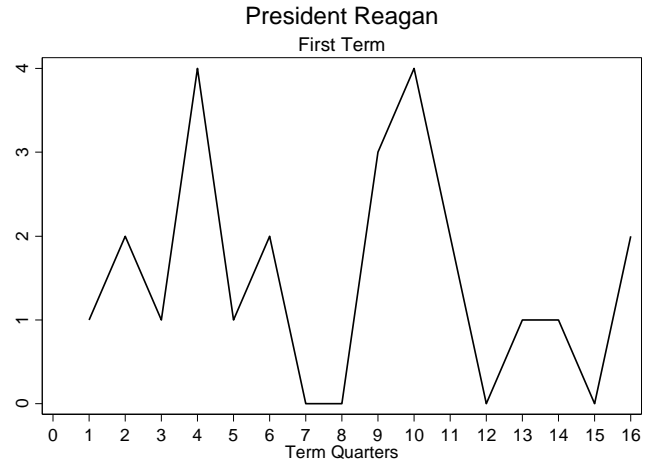
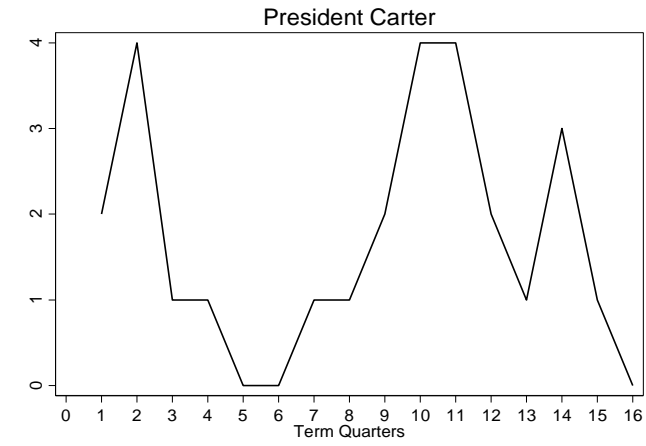


request. The size of President Reagan's legislative agenda also increases following the midterm elections in each of his terms in office¹. The number of bills introduced by request during the Carter administration is significantly greater across the board. At least 120 bills were introduced by request during four different quarters during the Carter years, a number only reached by Ronald Reagan in the second quarter of 1981 and the first quarter of 1987 and never even approached by Presidents Bush or Clinton.

A second set of models examines the number of new proposals offered by the president quarterly during the same time period. As Light (1999) notes, the introduction of a new program has a higher cost in terms of political capital, and presidents take their capital resources into account when deciding whether to advance new programs or simply tweak old ones. New proposals require much more energy and focus as well, so the number of new proposals is almost certainly limited to a greater extent than general bill introductions. This reflects the attention bottleneck (Jones, 1994); the executive or any other institution can only devote attention to a limited number of issues at a time. New proposals should be expected to require a great deal more attention. It is important when modeling the size of the president's agenda, then, not only to model the actual number of proposals but also the extent to which the president is being innovative.

¹ The data for the Reagan administration, especially in his second term, are significantly different from Light's (1999) data. Light has zeroes across the board for Reagan's second term as far as introducing legislation to Congress. But even Light himself admits that the data from the OMB regarding legislative priorities became less reliable over time. I expect that the information from the Congressional Record is more reliable based on Light's own admission, coupled with the unlikelihood that a president will not introduce legislation to Congress for any significant portion of his term, let alone the whole.

Figure 3-2: New Agency/Legislative Proposals by Term Quarter
1977-2000



Data on new proposals are obtained from the Policy Agendas Project. As part of the coding process for Congressional hearings, the project codes every hearing with a dummy variable, coded 1 for an administration proposal and 0 otherwise; the same goes for whether or not the proposal is new. Using these two columns in the hearings dataset I was able to construct a list of 104 new proposals, whether involving new programs or the creation of new agencies, from 1977-2000. One can question whether this measure captures all of the new programs advanced by the president, because there is no guarantee that Congress will hold a hearing on every new proposal offered by the president. However, it is very unlikely that a bill introduction made at the request of the administration is not going to get a hearing in Congress, let alone a proposal for a new program. In a study of how successful the president is in obtaining agenda space, measured by Congressional hearings, for his legislative initiatives, Edwards and Barrett (2000) found that the president rarely did not get at least a hearing on his legislative proposals. In fact, as Edwards and Barrett (2000) demonstrate, “from 1935-1996 the president obtained agenda-status for 97.6% of his legislative initiatives” (Edwards and Barrett, 2000; 120)! Because the president has such a successful track record in garnering Congressional attention, an indicator based on hearings should be accepted as a valid proxy. Figure 3-2 above displays a time-series graph of new administration proposals for each administration, presented quarterly. Again it is clear from figure 3-2 that new proposals vary extensively across administrations and throughout the individual terms of each individual president. The data presented in figure 3-2 seem substantively accurate given what scholars know about the individual presidencies. President Clinton starts off with very little innovation because of a poor transition (Jones, 1998; Light, 1999), recovering to actually offer more innovations during one quarter in his second year than any other president in any quarters during the time span of this study. Similarly, there is a

noticeable difference between the first and second term of both Presidents Reagan and Clinton, with a far greater number of new proposals coming during the first term and very few in the second.

Explanations for Agenda-Size: Independent Variables and Measurement

There are many different reasons why a president's agenda will expand in size, or shrink for that matter, at any given time throughout the presidential term. Paul Light (1999) provides a great theoretical starting point for constructing a multivariate model to explain agenda size. Light suggests several considerations mentioned by his interview respondents that are taken into account when the president is packaging his program. In this section, I will describe the independent variables described by Light that are then used to model the size of the president's agenda. Each of these measures becomes part of Light's (1999) political capital concept, which will be disaggregated and tested separately in this paper to compare the influence of its component parts.

The first component of political capital is presidential approval. Light (1999) notes that presidential approval is relatively high at the beginning of the term, but then decreases throughout the remainder of the term. The importance of public approval has been a point of debate in the literature. However, the majority of evidence suggests that higher public approval can help a president in his power to persuade Congress at the margins (Edwards, 1990), but low approval ratings are quite harmful (Light, 1999). It is also important to note that the pattern of public approval of the president is not quite the linear cycle that Light (1999) suggests. As Edwards and Gallup (1990) note, there are several instances in the public approval series where presidents experience a bounce in public approval. This is especially true during rallying events, where the

public's approval of the president increases substantially (Edwards and Swenson, 1997). Even during normal times, however, the pattern ebbs and flows to a much greater extent than Light (1999) suggests. Absent rallying events, during normal circumstances, public approval should be expected to decrease throughout the president's term.

Another factor that could affect the agenda of the president is the public mood. James Stimson (1991) created a macro-level measure of the public support for government regulation based on a series of public opinion surveys asking respondents whether or not they supported regulation in various policy sectors. The policy mood, then, is a general measure of the political winds, portraying the level of public support or lack thereof for expanded government regulatory activity, with higher scores representing a more liberal (regulatory) mood among the citizenry on a scale of 0-100. One potential problem that arises when using the mood variable, especially for our purposes, is that the public policy mood is consistently above fifty, suggesting that conservatives, usually represented by the Republican party, never have a majority of citizen support against expanded regulation, much less for deregulation. Similarly, because the mood is a general measure of the political wind among citizens, it may not be the wind itself but rather the direction and magnitude in which it is blowing. This variable is modeled for each observation as the change in policy mood from the previous to the present year. Because increases in public mood would generally only be beneficial to Democratic presidents, mood is modeled as changes in the liberal direction positively for Democrats, negatively for Republicans, and vice versa. When the mood swings in favor of a president from either party, it is expected the size of the president's agenda will increase.

Presidents should be expected to also construct their agendas with their prospects for success in the front of their minds. As Neustadt (1991) suggests, presidents must make decisions carefully so as not to damage themselves politically. A president who proposes a large agenda to Congress but fails miserably will certainly hurt his future power prospects. Because of this, a dummy variable is included coded 1 for a year in which the president is facing unified government; and 0 otherwise. Presidents are likely to introduce more bills to a Congress which has more fellow partisans based on an increased expectation for success, just as presidents are more likely to veto and block legislation when government is divided (Edwards, Barrett, and Peake, 1997). It is expected that presidents will have larger policy agendas when facing a Congress that is composed by a majority of his fellow partisans.

Light (1999) also suggests that the size of the president's electoral victory will have an effect on the construction of a legislative agenda. Presidents are expected to increase the size of their policy agendas when they are coming off of decisive victories. Again, such a decision is based on the increased prospects for success. Larger electoral victories increase the amount of capital the president has available (Light, 1999), and constitute part of the acceptance of a mandate perception (Grossback, Peterson, and Stimson, 2006). For this reason, the margin of the president's popular vote victory is included in the model as an explanatory variable. I expect that larger margins of victory will lead to a larger presidential agenda. However, I do not expect that the momentum from a decisive victory will exert influence for long. As Grossback, Peterson, and Stimson (2006) suggest, even the largest electoral victories only produce altered behavior for a period of about 180 days, or two quarters. For this reason, I model the margin of electoral victory only in the first two quarters of a president's term, and the variable is coded as zero for all other terms. I assume that the margin of electoral victory will have no impact beyond

the second quarter of any presidential term. It is also possible that presidents will respond to the success of their party in the midterm elections. Presidents typically lose some of their fellow partisans in Congress during midterm elections. In this case, I expect that the magnitude of the loss will depress the size of the president's agenda.

Finally, there are several other potential factors influencing the size of the president's agenda that are important to control. First, I include a dummy variable for each president, coded one for Reagan, Bush, and Clinton, with Carter serving as the omitted baseline. This variable is included to control for the differences between presidents themselves, such as the tendency for President Carter to have a larger agenda than any of the other presidents examined in this paper. I expect that each president will have a significantly smaller agenda than that of President Carter, represented by significant negative coefficients for each of the presidential dummies. I also include a dummy variable for each year following an election. The first is coded 1 for the first year in office, and zero otherwise, based on the expectation that presidents will offer their largest agenda in the year immediately following their election (Light, 1999). A second dummy variable is coded 1 for the year following the midterm elections, and zero otherwise, based on the possibility that presidents increase the size of their legislative agenda to begin the new Congressional session.

Methods

One of Light's (1999) most important contributions to the presidential literature is his emphasis on time. Light argues that the president has a limited amount of time at the beginning of his first term where his public approval and the momentum from his electoral victory will be highest. Throughout the rest of the term, there is a cycle of decreasing influence as the memory

of the electoral victory fades and the newness of a president wears off on the public. Generally, public approval of the president declines throughout the term. By the time the president is fully prepared to take the lead, the opportunity for leadership is frequently passed. It is because of these cycles that the dependent variables will be modeled using pooled-cross sectional time series analysis. The cross section for this study is each individual presidential term, with the time component being the sixteen quarters (4 years) that encompass a presidential term.

Fitting a model over a long period of “discontinuous” administrations will present issues that may be problematic. When testing for serial correlation, the correlation between the end of one administration and the start of the next will be problematic or at least suspect, especially to the degree that the source of the serial correlation is inherent in internal administration issues, rather than external factors exogenous to the presidential tenure. While a large number of dummies and interaction terms could be included to try to handle this, the large number of parameters relative to the number of cases will be problematic, and multicollinearity will be a problem.

Alternatively the panel design provides a flexible alternative. It will remove the last year/first year autocorrelation for the estimate of the residuals. In addition, the use of panel corrected standard errors should have the same effect as correcting for heteroskedasticity with weighted least squares. In fact it ensures that the correction is by administration rather than more artificial statistically determined segments. The important part of a panel design is that the cases, in this paper presidential terms, are treated independently with respect to error structure at the boundary time points.

Analysis

Table 3-1 below presents the results of the pooled cross sectional time series model for the total number of bills introduced by the president throughout the sixteen quarters of his term, with each term treated separately. For the most part the model conforms to the expectations described above. Public approval is positive and significantly influences the number of bills introduced by request. For each two point increase in presidential approval, there is expected to be an increase of about one bill introduced by the request of the administration. Second, as expected, President Carter has a larger agenda than the other presidents analyzed in this paper. An average of about twenty-nine fewer bills per quarter are introduced at the request of the Bush administration, and nearly forty-three fewer bills per quarter were introduced at the request of the Clinton administration. The dummy variable for President Reagan has a negative coefficient, as expected, but fails to achieve statistical significance. While Reagan requested fewer bill introductions per quarter than President Carter, the difference is not statistically different from zero when all other factors are held constant.

While this finding seems somewhat surprising, a great part of the explanation may be found in looking at the effect of unified government. President Carter faced a unified Congress throughout his presidency, whereas President Reagan never faced unified government. A president facing unified government is expected to request nearly twenty-seven more bill introductions than those facing divided government per quarter, a result that is significant at the .01 level. When the effect of unified government is taken into account, the results suggest that President Carter's agenda was not significantly larger than that of Ronald Reagan.

Table 3-1: Presidential Capital and Bills Introduced by Request, 1977-2000

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error
Public Approval	0.52*	0.31
Change in Policy Mood	-0.93	1.71
Unified Government	26.63***	9.10
Margin of Victory	3.69***	1.23
Midterm Loss	0.92***	0.29
Reagan	-5.44	11.09
Bush	-29.04*	15.12
Clinton	-42.97***	14.72
Term Year 1	-6.12	11.88
Term Year 3	9.45	10.71
Intercept	15.60	22.40
R Square	0.47	

Election results also have an impact on the size of the president's legislative agenda. For each two point increase in a president's margin of victory, the results suggest that over seven more bills will be introduced on average in the first two quarters of the term, holding other things equal. These results support the findings of Light (1999) and Grossback et al (2006). However, the midterm election variable does not significantly decrease the size of the president's legislative agenda, contrary to expectations. Instead, the results suggest that for each additional seat in Congress lost at the midterm, there is an increase of one bill introduced at the request of the administration. This could perhaps be a result of the president tending to introduce more bills at the beginning of a Congressional session, regardless of the composition of Congress. Also, it could reflect the president "not backing down" from a Congress expected present a greater cooperative challenge. A president may be more active following midterm losses as a way to demonstrate that he is not going to let a less partisan friendly Congress stop him from pursuing his legislative goals. The public policy mood does not significantly influence the size of the president's legislative agenda. The coefficient for the change in public policy mood is

wrongly signed and does not achieve statistical significance. Finally, the dummy variables for term year one and term year three do not significantly influence the size of the president's agenda after accounting for the other explanations. The model explains 47 percent of the variation in the size of the president's legislative agenda. The results provide statistical evidence in support of Light's (1999) model explaining the size of the president's agenda.

Table 3-2 below provides the results with new programs as the dependent variable, rather than the simple count of bills introduced by request. Again a list of new programs constructed using the coding scheme discussed above is included in the appendix. In general, the model does not perform as well in explaining the introduction of new proposals, with an R-square of only .27. Also, several of the independent variables do not conform to expectations. Public approval does not significantly affect the number of new proposals made by a president. The coefficient is signed in the appropriate direction but does not come close to achieving statistical significance. Public mood again does not significantly influence the president's agenda. Contrary to expectations and the results presented in table 3-1, the margin of victory also does not significantly influence the number of new programs proposed by the president, and the results of the midterm elections do not either. Similar to the results presented in table 3-1, presidents are no more likely to introduce new proposals in the first year of a Congressional session, whether following their electoral victory or the midterm elections.

There are two consistencies that carry over from the results presented in table 3-1. First, there are significant differences between presidents. Holding all other things equal, President Bush introduced the most new programs per quarter, introducing on average two additional new

Table 3-2: Presidential Capital and the Proposal of New Programs by the President, 1977-2000

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error
Public Approval	0.02	0.02
Change in Policy Mood	-0.05	0.07
Unified Government	2.66***	0.80
Margin of Victory	-0.01	0.04
Midterm Loss	0.03	0.02
Reagan	1.73*	0.88
Bush	2.00**	0.94
Clinton	0.95	0.86
Term Year 1	0.23	0.42
Term Year 3	0.46	0.37
Intercept	-2.18*	1.23
R Square	0.27	

programs per quarter than President Carter, the omitted category. The results also indicate that President Reagan introduced more new programs, nearly two per quarter, than President Carter with other variables held constant. There is not a significant difference between the tendencies of Presidents Clinton and Carter to propose new programs when other factors are held constant.

The other consistency is in the affect of unified government. When presidents face unified as opposed to divided government, the results suggest that there will be just over 2.5 new programs proposed per quarter. Unified government has the strongest impact of any variable on both the size of the president’s legislative agenda, and the extent to which the agenda is innovative.

Conclusion

Paul Light (1999) set the standard for scholars who examine the president’s agenda. The president’s ability to influence the political agenda is an absolutely critical component of his

power, one of the few areas where presidents actually have an unrivaled ability to exercise the power of persuasion (Edwards and Barrett, 2000). As Neustadt (1991) suggests, presidents must make each of their decisions with their power prospects in mind. This is especially true when it comes to the agenda decision. This paper has developed a multivariate model of the president's legislative agenda, disaggregating the concept of political capital into its component parts in order to test which of the factors put forth by Light (1999) exert the most influence over the size of the president's legislative agenda.

The findings suggest that the most important factor influencing the size of the president's legislative agenda is the composition of Congress. When a president is benefitted by the existence of unified government, the size of the legislative agenda he puts forth is significantly larger. It is with power prospects foremost in mind, as Neustadt (1991) would suggest, that presidents would make such a decision. Presidents have a much greater likelihood of succeeding in Congress when the legislature is dominated by his political party. Success breeds success, so presidents prefer to strike early and often while the iron is hot.

The size of the president's agenda is also significantly influenced by the margin of electoral victory for the first six months of a presidential term. It is the margin of victory that is second only to unified government in its effect on the president's agenda. Electoral results do not always matter however, as midterm losses do not work to depress the size of the president's agenda. Rather, the opposite occurs. The more seats the president's party loses in Congress, the greater the size of the legislative agenda put forth. This is likely to be the case for two reasons. First, part of the explanation behind this rather peculiar finding is that presidents tend to advance a large agenda at the beginning of a Congressional session. This possibility was controlled for in

the model, but the two variables are correlated so some of the variation of one may have been picked up by the other. Secondly, presidents also may advance a slightly larger agenda after midterm losses because of his desire to show the new Congress that he still will work with them, and also will not be intimidated by the extent of the midterm losses for his party.

Public approval also has an impact on the size of the president's agenda, but consistent with the findings of others public approval does not seem to help a president much (Edwards, 1990). Only after picking up two points in approval will the president request one more bill introduced to Congress on average, a small substantive effect especially when compared to the importance of unified government or the margin of electoral victory.

Finally, one of the most consistent findings presented in this paper is that the size of the president's agenda varies across administrations. The legislative agendas of Presidents Bush and Clinton were significantly smaller than that of Presidents Carter, who had the largest, and Reagan. President Carter is widely known to have advanced an agenda that was quite large, perhaps too large. The data presented in this paper bring that into question. The models suggest that holding other things equal, both Presidents Reagan and Bush were more innovative as presidents offering new legislative programs. Further, President Carter's overall agenda is not statistically larger than that of President Reagan when the full model of the dependent variable is presented. Rather, the model suggests that Carter had a larger legislative agenda because of the political situation in which he served, namely unified government. The greatest difference between Carter and Reagan when it comes to agenda size is not found in their presidential styles or personalities, but rather in their political realities.

Unified government emerges as the most important factor explaining both the size and the new proposals offered in the president's agenda. At the same time, unified government offers the greatest likelihood of presidential success. While divided government has come to be the norm in American politics (Jones, 1994) and significant legislation is still passed, these findings suggest that periods of unified government are still likely to lead to much larger political agendas, many more new programs offered, and as a result, an opportunity for important policy change.

Presidents do indeed strike when the iron is hot, which should come as no surprise to scholars of the strategic institution. However, the evidence presented above suggests that perhaps scholars have looked too much into the effects of public approval at the expense of other factors when analyzing the president's agenda.

Chapter 4

Reassessing the Who Influences Whom Relationship: The Agendas of the President, Congress, and the Media

Introduction

Scholars of American politics have rigorously investigated the links between governmental institutions and public opinion. These studies have included predominantly conceptualizations of representation, linking public opinion to policy outcomes (Stimson, Mackuen, and Erickson, 1995; Erickson, Wright, McIver, 1993). Other scholars have focused on the similarity of policy priorities placed on issues by the public and governmental institutions. The public prioritizes issues according to those issues which are deemed most important, issues that reach the systemic agenda (Cobb and Elder, 1972). Not all issues on the systemic agenda are attended to by the government. However, individuals within government often can use the public as a weapon in order to gain attention for their issues; those in government who find themselves and their policy priorities on the outside of a stable policy subsystem can expand the scope of conflict (Schattschneider, 1960), often leading to shifts in attention that disrupt policy subsystems and result in broadened participation in a policy debate (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). Not all issues can be attended to at the same time, however. Despite the size of governmental institutions which allow for increased opportunity to multi-task, policy making bodies still face “attention bottlenecks”; increased attention to one issue necessarily will result in decreased attention to some other issue. This perspective of agenda-setting focuses on “shifts in collective attention in policy-making bodies from one constellation of policy issues to another” (Jones, 1994), because attention is finite and increases in attention to something necessitate decreases to some other policy area. The question remains, however, which institutions take the lead in the shifting of collective attention?

Scant attention has been given to the “Who influences whom?” question. Previous studies have provided some mixed evidence, revealing that the role of the President, Congress, and the media as leaders or followers in the shifting of attention are issue-dependent (Edwards and Wood, 1999). Similar findings were reached regarding the attention shifts among the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court (Flemming, Wood, and Bohte 1999). Each of these studies suffers from limited ability to generalize, however, due to a focus on a limited number of issues. The purpose of this chapter is to reinvigorate the search for leaders and followers in the shifting of political attention, focusing on the interactions of attention among the President, Congress, and the media. Using the Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993), attention shifts among these three venues can be traced across nineteen major policy areas, providing much more generalizable results than a focus only on a few specific policies. Using these data will provide several improvements over previous studies.

First, previous studies of leadership patterns have covered much shorter time periods. In this chapter, the relationships will be tested over the period 1983-2000. Second, previous studies have been limited to less than five cases, several of which were specific issues rather than broader, more comprehensive issue areas with sustained viability on the political agenda. This chapter will provide a more comprehensive view of American political attention, nineteen issue areas, that cover a broader scope of issue areas rather than a limited number of specific issues. Doing so will provide an enhanced ability to generalize from the findings, especially considering that the Policy Agendas Project data include the full range of government activity over the eighteen years examined in this study.

Finally, the shift to longer time periods in this study provides an important advantage over previous studies. Previous studies, since they have been based on limited time samples, have been forced to use weekly measures of government activity in order to have a sufficient number of observations to use Vector Auto-regressive methods. In this study, time periods will be aggregated to one month, picking up sufficient variation in governmental attention to avoid overstating the stability of attention, while still having a sufficient number of observations over time to have the necessary leverage to produce efficient estimates using vector-autoregressive techniques. Edwards and Wood (1999), for example, use vector autoregression to examine causal patterns in attention shifts among the President, Congress, and the media over a ten year period from 1984-1994. While this study was an important addition to the literature introducing an appropriate technique to gain a better understanding of agenda influence, the study encompasses only a small subset of the specific issues the president is involved in for a very small time period. In contrast, this study will expand from ten to eighteen years, examine nineteen comprehensive issue areas on which the president has been active from 1983-2000, and provide a more realistic time interval of one month instead of one week.

The paper will proceed in the following way. First, the relationship between institutional attention and that of the media will be discussed, a literature which illustrates the importance of a study that encompasses a much longer time period as well as a more comprehensive examination of more than a few political issues. Next, I will describe the indicators of governmental attention to issues that will be used in this paper, and the methods that will be used to model the patterns of influence existing between them. Finally, the results will be presented for the VAR models, investigating who leads whom among the President, Congress, and the media, extending the previous work of Edwards and Wood (1999) across nineteen issue areas from 1983-2000. An

extensive discussion will be included for several of the key issue areas in which findings warrant further discussion due to their implications for future research. After presenting the results, the discussion section will review the most important findings and their implications, and make suggestions for continued research in this area.

Briefly, the results of this paper indicate that patterns of influence are quite inconsistent across issue areas, and broad generalizations cannot be drawn from a sample of only a few issues. The findings of this paper are preliminary to some extent, suggesting a need for a much larger research undertaking, adding a more precise measure for presidential attention that can better be used in time-series models, while still providing a much more generalizable, long range view of the patterns of influence that exist among these actors and their attention to political issue areas.

Presidential Agenda Setting and Influence in Congress

The President has long been considered to have the most significant role in setting the policymaking agenda. Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 241) argue that “no other single actor can focus attention as clearly, or change the motivations of such a great number of other actors, as the president”. Similarly, Kingdon (1995, 23) finds in his interviews with policymakers in the health and transportation subsystems that “no other single actor in the political system has quite the capability of the president to set agendas.” Indeed, the president’s role in setting the agenda may be his greatest source of influence (Bond and Fleischer, 1990) and the most important of his strategic powers (Edwards, 1989). Although several scholars of the presidency are skeptical of a presidency-centered view of policymaking, even those skeptics have recognized the importance of the president in setting the agenda (Moe and Teel, 1970; Edwards, 1989; Jones, 1994).

Richard Neustadt (1991), in his now famous dictum, argues that presidential power is the power to persuade. Presidents have to master persuasion in order to succeed in office because their ability to act on their goals are always contingent on the compliance of other political actors. The power to persuade always involves the power to bargain (Neustadt, 1991; Cameron, 2000). The essence of Presidential persuasion is to convince strategic politicians that what he is asking them to do is in their best interest, not just his (Neustadt, 1991).

One of the key components of presidential success in the policy process, then, is the ability to set the agenda not only of his administration, but of others. Influencing the agenda of Congress is not an onerous task for presidents. Congress needs an agenda from outside with high status to react against, and there is no better program to fit these criteria than that of the President (Neustadt, 1991). In fact, the president has been invited by Congress to take the lead on the budget, the economy, national security, the environment, and other areas of public policy (Edwards and Barrett, 2000). The president needs only to convince members of Congress that his agenda items are worthy of attention and consideration. The burdens of leadership are higher on the floor, for example, when the president must try to defend the political and substantive merits of the policy (ibid).

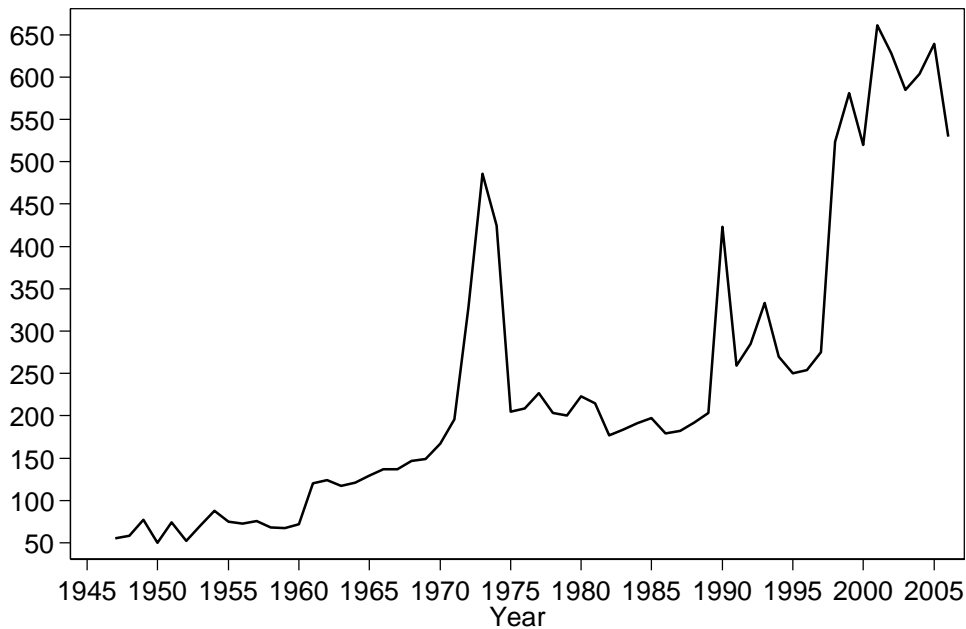
While most scholars agree on the importance of the president's role in agenda-setting, the literature has been largely devoid of empirical studies that test the influence. Most of the evidence presented in the literature regarding presidential influence through agenda-setting has been anecdotal rather than rigorous tests that provide information as to the strength and consistency of presidential influence. Light (1991) provides rich information about the president's ability to set his own agenda, while not really attending to the role of the president in

influencing the agendas of others. This ignores the importance that the president places on obtaining especially agenda-space in Congress, which is necessary for building momentum and attaining Congressional support (Edwards and Barrett, 2000).

Scholars have noted several constraints on the ability of the president to set the agenda of Congress, however. One limitation is the “attention bottleneck” (Jones, 1994) referred to above. Presidents are only able to attend and lobby vigorously on a few bills at a time, and there are limitations on the capital that presidents can devote to issues (Edwards and Wood, 1999). Scholars have posited a no-win presidency (Lowi, 1986; Light, 1999), then, in which the constraints placed on the president by conflicting demands limit the ability to attend to more than a few policy areas at a time. Further, Congress has the ability to set its own agenda (Taylor, 1998). The Congressional agenda can also influence the presidential agenda. Presidents may borrow issues that Congress is tending to for their agenda (Light, 1991). Presidents respond to entrepreneurs at work within Congress (Flemming, Wood, and Bohte, 1999), acting either as cooperators (Kingdon, 1995) or competitors (Jones, 1975).

This view of presidential attention is overly pessimistic. The Executive Office of the Presidency has grown substantially alongside the increased expectations of the presidency, at least in part offsetting the attention allocation problem noted by several authors above. Figure 4-1 displays the Executive Direction and Management Budget from 1947-2005, in millions of inflation-adjusted real dollars. The figure clearly demonstrates substantial increases in the resources available for the president over time. These resources correspond with an explosion of individuals working in the Executive Office of the President (Burke, 2000), many of whom can be delegated by the president to attend to issues.

Figure 1: Executive Direction and Management
in Fiscal Year 2006 Dollars

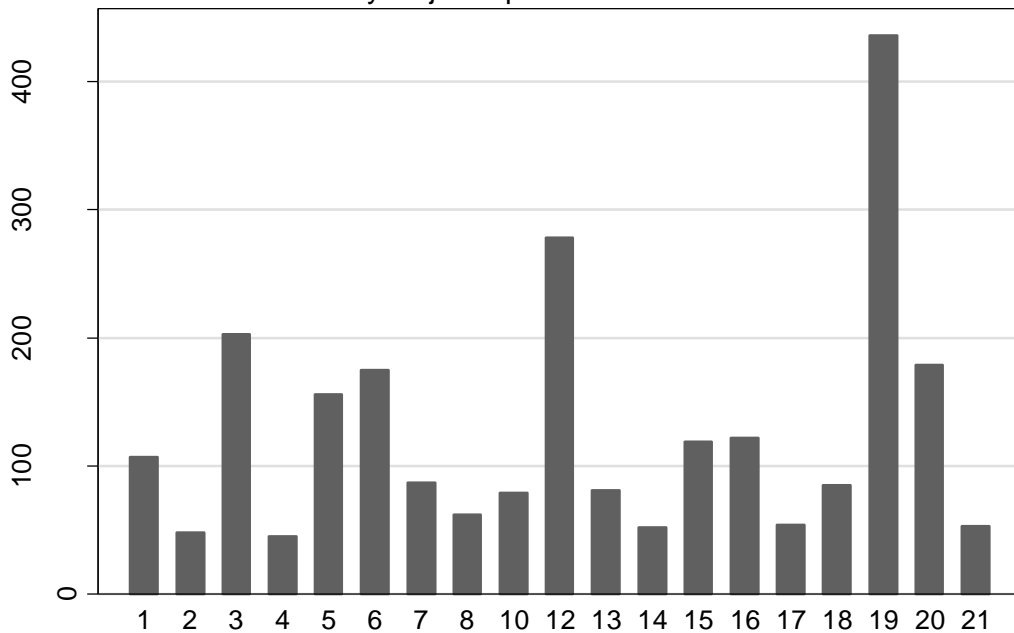


Previous scholars may have overestimated the institutional constraints placed upon the president by treating the presidency as a unitary branch, or by using measures of the president's policy priorities that are only indicative of presidential priorities in the most salient areas.

Studies of presidential agenda-setting have frequently relied on the State of the Union Address or other public speeches to measure issue attention (e.g. Cohen, 1995; Hill, 1998; Edwards and Wood, 1999; Flemming, Wood, and Bohte, 1999; Edwards and Barrett, 2000). The State of the Union and other public speeches certainly capture some of the President's most important policy priorities, and capture the important Presidential strategy of going public to gain public support for his programs (Kernell, 1993).

Presidents also are active in areas which are not usually as salient to the public. In order to draw attention to these issues, the President can make use of the bully pulpit, attempting to

Figure 2: Presidential Policy Messages
by Major Topic Area: 1983-2000



manipulate the public agenda sufficiently to call Congress to action, as Kernell (1993) or Edwards (2003) suggest. As Baumgartner and Jones (1993) demonstrate, many issue areas in American politics are quite insulated from public attention. However, there are few reasons to believe that the President will not have policy priorities in these areas, and devote increased attention to them. Figure 4-2 above demonstrates that although the president is active in some areas more than others, from 1983-2000 the president was at least active in each of the nineteen major policy areas encompassed by the policy agendas project. While the president certainly devotes higher levels of attention to some issues over others, as figure 4-2 clearly demonstrates, it is important for scholars who are trying to understand the role of the president in setting the political agenda or influencing public policies not to ignore those areas where presidential involvement may be less frequent but still have important implications for policy areas. In sum,

there is no justifiable reason to limit presidential influence to a limited number of policy areas where the president is most active. In doing so, scholars may miss many important policy changes that presidential initiatives bring about in less salient policy areas. None of the policy areas has been the subject of less than forty-five policy mentions (Rudalavige, 2002) by the president from 1983-2000. There is little reason to expect that presidential attention in these areas will not have an effect in the policy area. In fact, the opposite may be true. When presidents get involved in policy areas where presidential involvement is not the norm, presidential activity might actually produce a more substantial response because the activity is unusual rather than expected.

The President and the Media

The President invests a lot of effort in attempting to shape the attention of the media. The president can use the media strategically, providing briefings and press conferences with the President himself or other officials high within the administration. Keeping the media informed can be to the advantage of the President, because doing so influences the nature and content of what the media reports about presidential activity. Not doing so can be dangerous, as the media may misinterpret presidential priorities, portraying presidential attention where it is not intended.

This gives Presidents an added incentive to spend intense energies in coordinating the administration messages to the media, using the media as a bridge to the political environment (Light, 1991). This is especially true of the mass public, whose familiarity with political issues is closely correlated with the amount and duration of attention devoted to those issues by the mass media (Page and Shapiro, 1992). As Flemming, Wood, and Bohte (1999) note, despite rich descriptions of the efforts of the President to influence the media's agenda, very little is known

about the President's success in doing so, and results are mixed. Gilberg et al (1980), using the State of the Union message as a measure of presidential attention, concluded that the media actually set the agenda of the President. Wood and Peake (1998) find that even in foreign policy, where the President has a constitutional mandate to take a leadership role, the media leads the President. Baker (1995) echoes the assertion of Wood and Peake with evidence that media coverage creates a demand for action, making it more difficult for Presidents to exercise discretion in their attention to world affairs. Wanta et al (1989) found evidence that the president's relationship with the media is reciprocal, with each branch sometimes exerting influence over the other.

Edwards and Wood (1999) have attempted to answer the "Who Influences Whom?" question with respect to the President, Congress, and the media. Primarily they focus on the ability of the President to direct the attention of others. The focus of the article is on five issues, three domestic and two foreign policy areas. These include crime, health care, education, U.S.-Soviet relations, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Using Vector Auto-Regression, the authors find mixed results. Surprisingly, the President does not have an influence on the media or Congress in terms of their attention to foreign policy issues. The President, rather, was highly reactive to the media on these two foreign policy matters. In domestic policy, the authors show that the President is reactive on crime, entrepreneurial on health care, and has a reciprocal causal relationship with the media on attention to education. Congress has a highly inert issue agenda, with outside influences only occurring on the issue of education. Congress does not Granger cause attention by the President or the media on any of the issues studied. The picture the findings paint of Congress is that of an institution that acts largely in isolation. The evidence presented by Edwards and Wood (1999), then, is mixed, and calls into question the litany of

literature portraying the President as the supreme force in the setting of policy agendas, and the responsiveness of Congress to any outside influences.

Reassessing the Agenda Relationships of the President, Congress, and the Media

This study will follow Wood and his colleagues in the use of vector auto-regressive techniques to assess causal relationships that exist in agenda series of the President, Congress, and the media over time. Vector auto-regression is a technique that can be used to evaluate the direction of causality between two or more time-series (Freeman, Williams, and Lin 1989; Brandt and Williams, 2007). Using VAR, “is an extension of the Granger (1969) approach to causal inference...each dependent variable is regressed on lagged values of itself as well as lagged values of the other dependent variables in the system.” (Edwards and Wood, 1999; 334) VAR is particularly useful in the investigation of causal patterns between two series where theories are ambiguous in terms of what causal direction to expect. Regression coefficients cannot be interpreted, but the method provides scholars with an interpretable sign and significance between two series. As a result, displaying coefficients would be tedious and bog the reader down in needless detail. However, because there is little theoretical justification for positing causal directions, VAR is an appropriate method of investigation to determine directions of causality and statistical magnitude of relationships in attention to issues between the President, Congress, and the media.

As Edwards and Wood (1999) note, there is little reason to impose any set of parameter restrictions in either direction of the relationships that exist among these actors. Structural equations would be inappropriate when we have little theoretical reason to impose restrictions on the direction of causality. Because of this, vector autoregression is an appropriate technique

because, rather than being either devoid of theory or placing inappropriate parameter restrictions that would be necessary for more standard statistical techniques, VAR will simply provide evidence across each issue area about which, if any, parameter restrictions would be appropriate among the agendas of these political actors (Edwards and Wood, 1999).

Measures of attention devoted to issues by government have been quite variegated in the literature. In this study, I will rely on the Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993) for each of the series of interest. The Policy Agendas Project includes measures of attention for the President, Congress, and the media since World War II. Using these data is advantageous because it encompasses the entire scope of governmental activity, which is broken down into nineteen major topic codes that are comparable across institutions and the media. Issue areas that are more or less salient, or more or less typically an issue that a given branch attends to can all be included in the analyses of these data. As figure 4-2 demonstrates, the inclusion of each of these issue areas is critical to understanding the influence the president exerts over the political agendas of Congress and the media, or vice versa, because the president has been active in each of the policy areas over the time period of this study. If the president devotes some attention to each issue area, limiting the study to only five specific issues risks missing many of the patterns of agenda influence that exist among the three series.

Edwards and Wood (1999), for example, used weekly measures of attention to issues. Using such a small time period for each observation is likely to overestimate the stability of attention to issues in each institution, and may have resulted directly in one of their most troubling findings: that Congress as an institution acts primarily in isolation from the political priorities of the President or the media. The finding that Congress has an agenda which is devoid

of influences from outside leads to a great deal of skepticism because it runs counter to scholars who have found that the President's policy priorities have a significant influence upon the agenda of Congress (Kingdon, 1984; Bond and Fleisher, 1990; Edwards and Barrett, 2000), and also does not comport well with the electoral incentive so vital to every member of Congress (Mayhew, 1974) because of the affect of the media on the public's issue attention (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). Similarly, using short time periods can drastically increase the number of zeroes present in the series, whereas monthly data will have far less zeroes for any time period, institution, or issue area. The presence of a large number of zeroes in any of the series will present numerous methodological problems with using vector autoregressive techniques, making reliable causal patterns more difficult to discern (Brandt and Williams, 2007). In order to increase the variation in the dependent variables, I employ monthly time periods in this study. Monthly time periods seem to provide the best balance between the lack of variation in weekly data and the missed responses that would be characteristic of using longer time periods, such as would be the case if annual data were to be employed in a similar study.

The analyses will proceed as follows. First, I will discuss the indicators of political attention that will be used to measure the agendas of the President, Congress, and the media. Then, the patterns of leadership will be investigated across each of the nineteen Policy Agendas Project major topic codes between the President, Congress, and the media from 1983-2000, and the results will be discussed. In this section, some attention will be devoted to some of the most important findings across the issue areas, comparing these results with those reported in previous studies of those issue areas. Finally, the discussion section will revisit some of the most important findings of this paper, how these findings fit into the literature on presidential agenda setting, and suggest an important research agenda that arises from these findings.

Indicators of Attention

Presidential attention will be measured as the monthly number of policy messages issued by the president across nineteen issue areas from 1983-2000. Rudalevige (2002) compiled a list of policy messages from the *Public Papers of the Presidents*, and it is from this list that the data for presidential attention from 1983-2000 are obtained. Each policy message collected by Rudalevige (2002) from the *Public Papers* is topic-coded using the codebook provided in the Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). The *Public Papers* are regarded as providing a comprehensive portrait of presidential attention because it includes public speeches, messages to Congress, and many other documents (Edwards and Wood, 1999). Using data from the *Public Papers* is more advantageous, then, in providing a comprehensive collection of presidential activities, which when coded for policy content, provide the most comprehensive distribution of presidential priorities.

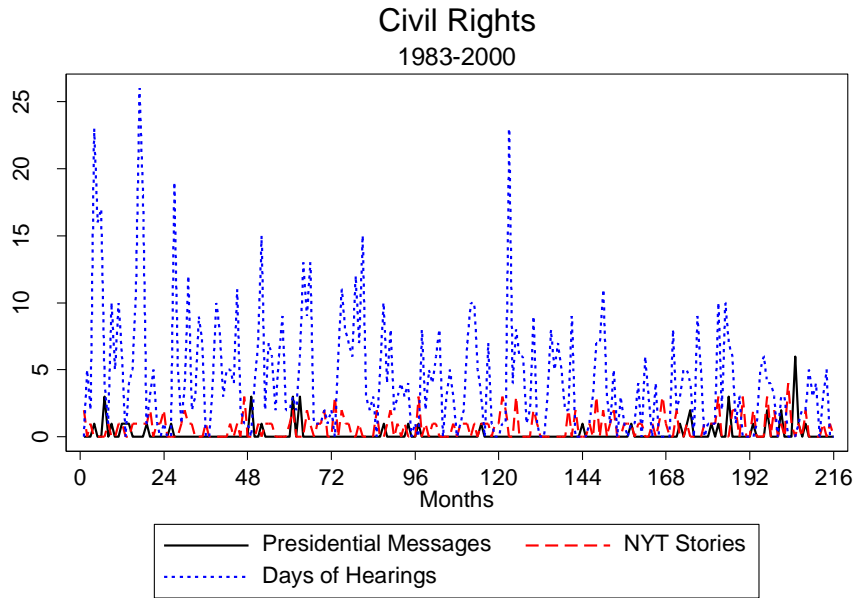
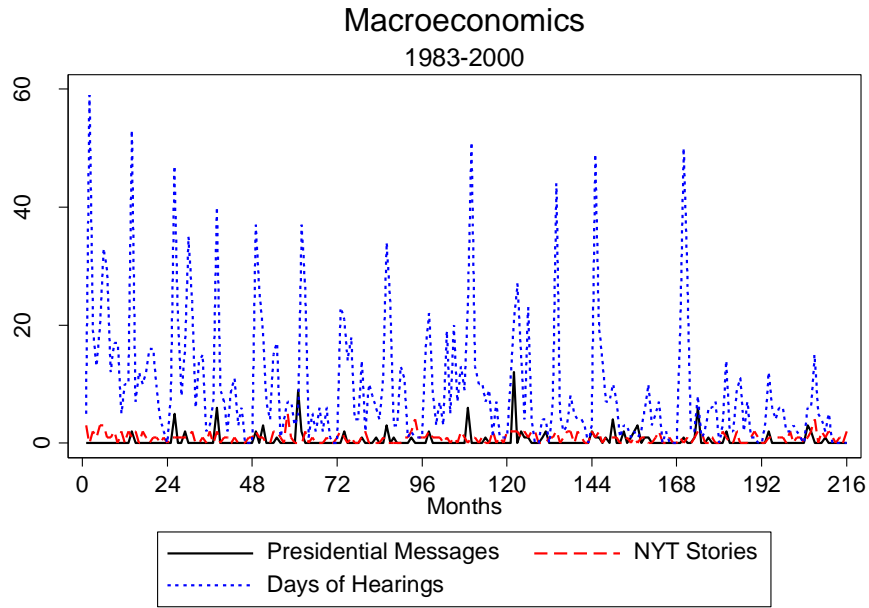
Congressional attention will be measured as the number of days of hearings held in each topic area per month from 1983-2000². While one could use a simple count of hearings, as many others have (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993), the number of days of hearings held more approximately appropriates the efforts of Edwards and Wood (1999), who used this measure of Congressional attention. Because this paper is intended to extend the Edwards and Wood piece both theoretically and in time, it is important to use similar measures. All three of the variables, including the media measure discussed below, come from the same source for this paper.

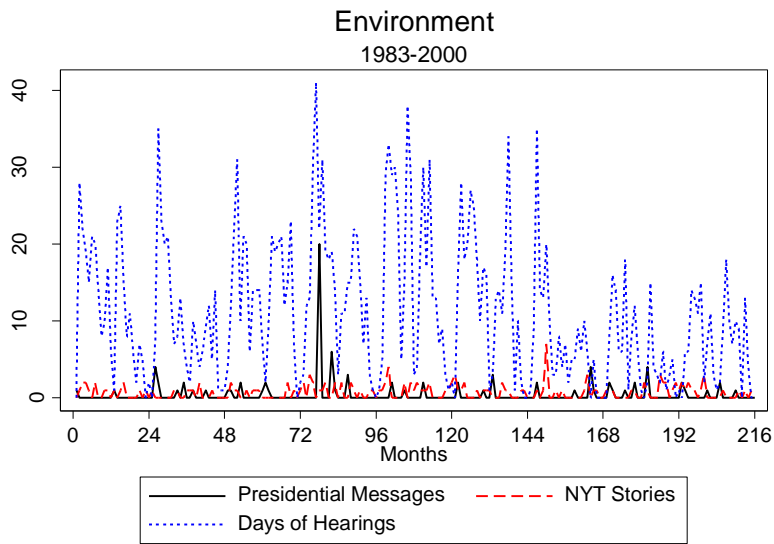
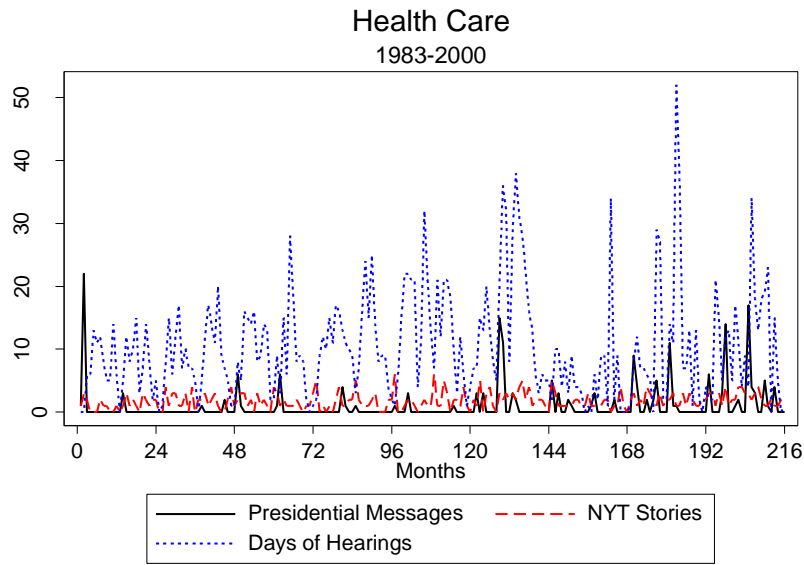
² While one could argue that House and Senate hearings could be modeled separately in this investigation, Congressional hearings are modeled together for two reasons. First, it is important for this paper to approximate as closely as possible the methods used by Edwards and Wood. Secondly, and more importantly, House and Senate hearings have a correlation of .87, which does not signify enough difference to necessitate their being modeled separately.

Finally, attention to issue areas by the media will be measured by the number of stories devoted to each issue area by the *New York Times*, aggregated monthly from 1983-2000. Flemming, Bohte, and Wood (1997) rely on monthly counts of stories found in *The Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* across a sample of issues. The authors are critical of the use of specific prominent newspapers such as the *New York Times* because the *Reader's Guide* surveys a wider assortment of specialized publications with a far greater combined readership than any one selected publication. Although their assertion is certainly correct, using the *New York Times* as a measure of media attention to issues is an effective proxy. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) report that there is a high correlation (.88) between *New York Times* stories and those in *The Reader's Guide*, and also find a high correlation between NYT coverage and coverage of issues in television news. For these reasons, the NYT counts should be expected to perform quite similarly to any other indicator of media attention. According to Flemming, Bohte, and Wood (1997), media coverage of issues can serve as a surrogate indicator of what issues are being considered on the systemic agenda (Kingdon, 1995) at any point in time. The degree of importance that the public accords to issues does vary in part with the amount of media coverage devoted to the issue (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Flemming, Wood, and Bohte, 1997). Because of this, we should expect both the President and members of Congress to devote considerable attention to the policy content of the media's coverage of politics, as well as attempting to shape that coverage to comport more with their policy priorities.

Figures 4-3 and 4-4 are a series of figures that graphically provide a picture of the relationships between the president, Congress, and the media. The first set of graphs provides a visual sample of domestic policy relationships. The following provides a sample to provide scholars with some idea of what the time varying relationships look like. Figure 4-3 provides

Figure 4-3: Political Attention to Domestic Policy Issues



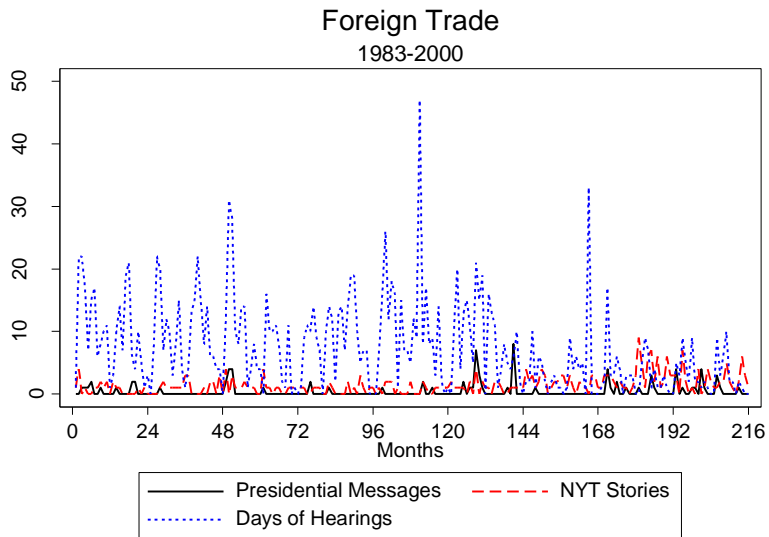
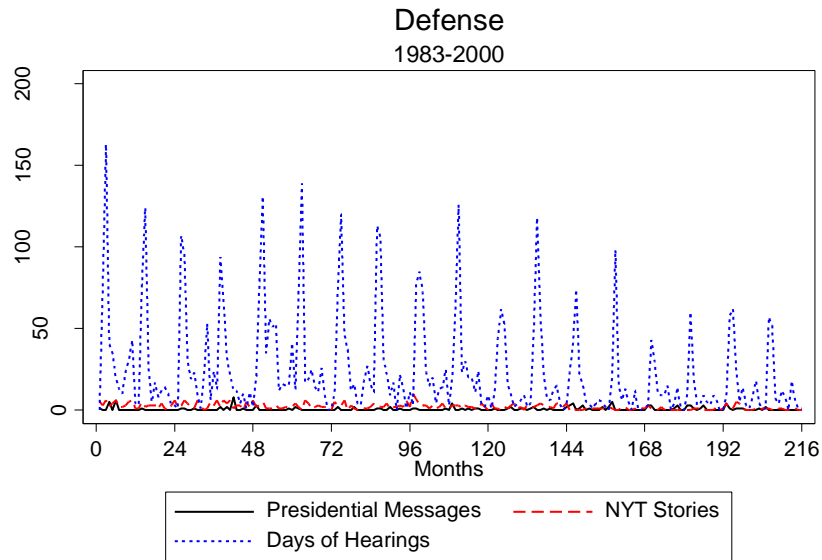


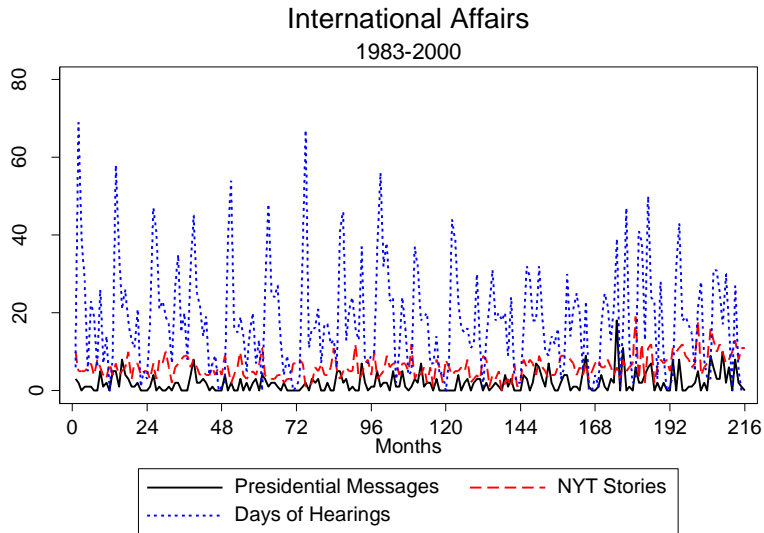
time-series line graphs of political attention for four domestic policy issue areas: macroeconomics, civil rights, health care, and environmental policy. Figure 4-4 displays the time-series relationships among the president, Congress, and the media in three foreign policy areas.

The series of graphs demonstrate visually the difficulty that arises in structuring equations because the series track together very closely. These graphs provide supporting evidence relating to the necessity of VAR techniques to determine the causal patterns that exist among the three series for each policy area. The graphs also demonstrate the importance of looking at issue areas separately because clearly each issue area has differing levels of attention for each of the three actors. For example, presidential attention is much more consistent and has higher peaks in the area of macroeconomics. At the same time, however, presidential attention does have high peaks in each of the other areas, and clearly ebbs and flows with the attention of other institutions. The same can be said for foreign policy areas displayed in figure 4-4. The president is most active in the area of international affairs, and much less so in the areas of defense and foreign trade. Similarly, the visual evidence suggests that presidential attention seems to precede spikes in attention by Congress and the media in the area of international affairs, whereas in defense the president does not appear to exert leadership. Graphically it is difficult to discern which actor leads and which follows, but what can be discerned from these visual glimpses is that attention among the three actors does seem to be related for each of these issue areas. While causal patterns may seem apparent in some areas more than others, it is important to test for their presence before accepting the visual evidence.

Finally, I also add an exogenous control variable to account for differences in the causal patterns that exist between the three series during unified vs. divided government. From 1983-2000, only President Clinton in 1993-1994 presided over unified government. Although one should be careful about making generalizations based on this finding to longer time periods, these two years of unified government are not statistically different from the other years in the

Figure 4-4: Political Attention to Foreign Policy Issues





series, providing evidence that at least in 1993 and 1994, unified government did not alter the causal patterns observed between the president, Congress, and the media across the nineteen issue areas examined in this paper.

Results

In this section, the results of the VAR Granger models are displayed across nineteen major issue areas from the Policy Agendas Project. Using vector autoregression presents some unique considerations for researchers, despite its utility for answering this research question. Using VAR is appropriate to test for causality between multiple time-series; however, the inability to include a cross section makes it necessary for researchers to run the models separately for each issue area.

The results of the VAR Granger causality tests are reported in table one below. First, a general discussion of what is in the table is appropriate. The first column specifies which issue area in which the relationship reported occurs. Using VAR does not permit for cross-sectional

analysis, so models have to be run and reported separately for each issue area. Column two provides the causal relationships and their direction observed among the president, Congress, and the media. Many of the issue areas have multiple causal patterns, all of which are reported in the table. Column three provides the P-value of the observed relationship. Only the P-value is reported because VAR does not provide coefficients that are interpretable, instead it is a method intended only to determine causality among three series among which there is ambiguity over the theoretically causal direction (Granger, 1969; Freeman Williams and Lin, 1989; Edwards and Wood, 1999; Brandt and Williams, 2007).

Column four provides the number of significant lags between the series in each issue area. One of the critical benefits of VAR is that it controls for lagged values of each dependent variable in the series. As a part of the results, then, the number of significant lags that influence time t is provided by VAR. The results are reported here because, whereas Edwards and Wood (1999) made the broad assumption to control for a four week time lag in their previous work, this paper demonstrates that the amount of stickiness observed in the multiple time-series is dependent upon the issue area. What this indicates is, basically, that shocks to the system will have a longer affect in some issue areas as opposed to others. For example, the stickiest series resides in the area of international affairs and foreign aid, where shocks to the system have significant effects on attention for up to eight months. In the areas of health care, social welfare, foreign trade, and several other shocks to the system significantly influence the levels of political attention for only one month. The appropriate lag structure is a methodological issue that was not given sufficient

Table 4-1: Patterns of Agenda Influence: The President, Congress, and the Media in Nineteen Issue Areas

<i>Issue Area</i>	<i>Causal Relationship</i>	<i>P:Value</i>	<i>Significant month lag</i>
Macroeconomics	Media → Congress***	.01	1
	President → Congress*	.08	
Civil Rights	Congress → President***	.01	1,2
Health Care	Media → President*	.08	1
	Media → Congress***		
Agriculture	None		1,2
Labor and Immigration	Media → President*	.08	1
	Congress → President*	.09	
Education	Media → Congress***	.00	1,2
	Congress → Media*	.08	
	President → Media**	.04	
Environment	Media → Congress***	.01	1,2,3,4
	President → Congress*	.06	
Energy	Media → Congress***	.00	1,2
	President → Media***	.01	
	President → Congress***	.01	
Transportation	President → Congress**	.02	1,2
	President → Media*	.07	
Law, Crime, and Family	Media → Congress*	.06	1,2,3

Social Welfare	None		1
Housing and Community Development	None		1
Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce	Media → President***	.01	1
	President → Media**	.04	
	Media → Congress**	.05	
	President → Congress***	.01	
Defense	Media → President***	.00	1,2,3,4,5
	Media → Congress***	.00	
	President → Congress***	.00	
	Congress → President***	.00	
Space, Science, Technology, and Communications	Media → President**	.05	1,2
	Media → Congress***	.00	
	President → Congress**	.02	
	Congress → President***	.01	
Foreign Trade	President → Congress***	.01	1
	President → Media**	.05	
International Affairs and Foreign Aid	President → Congress**	.03	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
	Congress → President***	.00	
	President → Media**	.02	
	Congress → Media***	.00	
Government Op.	President → Media***	.00	1,2,3

Public Lands and Water Management	President → Media*	.07	1,2
	Media → President*	.10	
	Media → Congress***	.01	

Note: P: Values are reported to indicate the percentage likelihood that the observed relationships between each series occur by chance. Lagged structures reported in column four indicate the number of significant lags, or the length of time which a shock to the system remains in the system before decaying out. *=.10, **=.05, ***=.01

attention by Edwards and Wood³. This issue will be discussed further in the conclusion of this paper.

Table 4-2 demonstrates that not only the lag structure differs across issue areas, but also a variety of causal patterns are observed. First, in the areas of agriculture, social welfare, and housing and community development there are no significant relationships between the president, Congress and the media. This indicates that shifts in attention to these issues do not follow a consistent pattern where one or the other series exerts leadership. This finding may indicate that shifts in attention are distributed randomly and that such shifts do not necessarily produce a response from other actors, or it could indicate that events such as agricultural emergencies, rising poverty, or increases in the number of homeless individuals produces a virtually simultaneous reaction from each of the three actors.

³ While this may seem like a tedious point, it does matter. When one assumes a broad reaching significant lag structure without specifying which lags actually matter, the results will be different because VAR is controlling for lags that do not matter.

There is strong evidence of presidential leadership in setting the agenda of Congress and the media. Presidential leadership is most evident in the areas of energy, transportation, foreign trade, and government operations. The amount of attention the president devotes to the issues of energy, transportation, and foreign trade each significantly influence the attention levels of both Congress and the media. The president's attention to government operations significantly influences the level of attention the media devotes to government operations, but does not influence Congressional attention to government operations. The president can be seen as the prominent actor setting the agenda in four of nineteen policy areas, just over twenty percent. How does this compare to other actors? Next the remainder of the findings will be discussed. The president's role as agenda-setter will be reevaluated in the conclusion.

Congressional leadership over the president and the media in attending to issues is limited to the areas of civil rights and labor and immigration. When it comes to civil rights and labor and immigration, the level of attention Congress is devoting to the issue as measured by the number of days of hearings held on the topic significantly influences the amount of attention the president will devote to the issues. The results demonstrate that Congress is much more of a responsive institution than it is a leader in setting the agenda. That said, it certainly is not the institution acting in isolation as Edwards and Wood demonstrate. Congress is responsive to the president's attention levels in the areas of energy, energy, transportation, and international affairs and foreign aid. Congress is responsive to both the president and the media in the four areas of macroeconomics, environment, banking, finance, and domestic commerce, and defense.

One of the most important findings that is consistent throughout the table is the extent to which media attention influences the attention levels of the political institutions. The amount of

attention the media is devoting to an issue significantly influences both the president and Congress in the four areas of health care, space, science, technology, and communications, defense, and land use and water management. The media's attention leads that of Congress only in the areas of macroeconomics and law, crime, and family issues, and that of the president only in labor and immigration. In seven of the nineteen issue areas, then, the political institutions significantly respond to the systemic agenda as reflected by the amount of media coverage devoted to the issue.

Many of the issues also have reciprocal patterns of influence between actors. In these areas, issues hit the agendas of the president, Congress, and the media virtually simultaneously, and there is no consistent causal pattern between the series. Rather, when the issue reaches the agendas of multiple actors the attention levels continue to move together. The attention levels of the president and Congress respond to each other, moving together in the areas of defense, space, science, technology, and communications, and international affairs and foreign aid. The president and the media have a reciprocal pattern of influence in the area of banking, finance, and domestic commerce. The media and Congress have a reciprocal pattern of influence in the areas of education and international affairs and foreign aid.

Finally, table 4-1 demonstrates that institutions do have an effect on the systemic agenda as represented by the media. The media is responsive to each of the political branches but does not significantly influence the attention levels of policymakers in the area of international affairs and foreign aid. The media is responsive to the president only, but does not significantly influence the attention levels of the president in the areas education, energy, transportation, foreign trade, and government operations.

Table 4-2: Patterns of Agenda Influence Scorecard

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Number of Issues</i>
President → Congress	Macroeconomics	6
	Environment	
	Energy	
	Transportation	
	Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce	
	Foreign Trade	
Congress → President	Civil Rights	2
	Labor and Immigration	
Reciprocal (President and Congress)	Defense	3
	Space, Science, Technology, and Communications	
	International Affairs and Foreign Aid	
President → Media	Education	6
	Environment	
	Transportation	
	Foreign Trade	
	International Affairs and Foreign Aid	
	Government Operations	
Media → President	Health Care	4
	Labor and Immigration	
	Defense	
	Space, Science, Technology,	

	and Communications	
Reciprocal (President and Media)	Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce	2
	Public Lands and Water Management	
Congress → Media	International Affairs and Foreign Aid	1
Media → Congress	Macroeconomics	9
	Health Care	
	Environment	
	Energy	
	Law, Crime, and Family	
	Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce	
	Defense	
	Space, Science, Technology, and Communications	
	Public Lands and Water Management	
Reciprocal (Congress and Media)	Education	1

So what do all of these findings mean? Because there are nineteen issue areas and assorted causal patterns exist in each area, a matter which is only further complicated by reciprocal influence, sorting through these results is difficult. To make this task easier, table 4-2 below provides an agenda influence scorecard for the president, Congress, and the media. As the table demonstrates, the president has much greater influence over the agenda of Congress than

vice versa, by a count of 6 issues to 2. The issues in which there are reciprocal patterns of influence are considered a wash. Congress also is influenced by the media much more frequently than it exerts influence, by a resounding count of 9 to 1. Interestingly, while the president is responsive to the systemic agenda of the media on four areas, the president is able to shape the level of media attention on six issues. Table 4-2 makes clear, then, that of the three actors the president seems to exert the most influence on the political agendas of the others.

The systemic agenda has considerable influence over the political agendas of the elected institutions as well. Finally, the scorecard makes even clearer than the findings in table 4-1 that Congress is much more of a follower when it comes to agenda-setting than it is a leader. However, the strongest finding presented from these tables is that Edwards and Wood's (1999) findings that Congress largely sets its agenda in isolation of the president and the media could not be more wrong. Conversely, the agenda of Congress is quite susceptible to outside influence.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter, I have set out to extend the work of Edwards and Wood (1999), who tested for causal patterns in political attention between the president, Congress, and the media across five political issues from 1984-1994. While their work was certainly groundbreaking in providing scholars an effective method for answering this important question, there were several questions that remained. This chapter represents a first effort to investigate these queries.

The work of Edwards and Wood left open several questions that required further investigation. First, their article only examined causal patterns in five specific issue areas which were salient during the period 1984-1994. Scholars were left with little reason to make

generalizations beyond these salient issues because the authors did not examine less salient issues, which this chapter demonstrates were also the subject of political attention during the period under study. There is no reason to believe that patterns of influence are only going to exist on the most salient issues, and this chapter demonstrates that causal patterns exist in nearly every issue area; including those which are not especially salient on the political agenda.

Further, the Edwards and Wood study only encapsulated the administration of George H.W. Bush in its entirety, with the addition of the second term of the Reagan presidency and the first two years of the Clinton administration. This seems a strange time selection, and is certainly a difficult one to justify. It is entirely possible that different presidents are entrepreneurial or responsive on different issues, so it is problematic to take a piecemeal approach. A critical extension of Edwards and Wood and this chapter would be to continue coding data from the *Public Papers of the Presidents* to extend this research project further in time, beginning to understand not only longer term patterns of influence that exist between the three actors but also whether or not the patterns that are discovered are presidency specific or generalizable to all presidents. Although this question could not be taken up in this chapter, a step in the right direction is offered by adding the remainder of the Clinton administration to the picture.

Finally, several of the findings offered by Edwards and Wood were somewhat dubious theoretically. Primarily, the idea that Congress acts as an institution in isolation from outside pressure on their agenda does not sit well with the rest of the literature. This paper debunks the myth of an isolated Congress. Congress is quite responsive to the agenda of the president on a number of issues, and even more responsive to those issues that the media devotes the most

attention to, reflecting their heightened status on the systemic agenda. Congress does not exert a great deal of agenda influence, but the evidence presented in this chapter most certainly suggests that it is responsive. In fact, among the three actors, it is by far the most responsive.

One possible explanation for Edwards and Wood's findings regarding Congress could be the limited number of issues included in their study. But the evidence presented in this paper makes it far more likely that those findings which I have argued are dubious are more a result of setting an improper time component for impulse responses. Edwards and Wood examine the relationships between the president, Congress, and the media in one week intervals over their ten year period. While the actors certainly can respond to each other in as short as a week, it is much more likely that responses will take longer than one week simply because of the attention bottleneck (Jones, 1994); serial processing is limited to only a few issues at any one time (Jones, 2003). While the constraints that serial processing place on institutions can be overcome by a large presidential staff, and decentralization of Congress plus increases amounts of staffers in the legislative branch, one week still seems too quick to expect a response on any but the most salient issues. Further, one of the statistical problems that can present itself when using VAR Granger is the presence of a large number of zeroes in the series under examination. It is much less likely to see zeroes in monthly time intervals, such as were used in this chapter, than there are in weekly intervals. Employing weekly time intervals, in short, presents dangers statistically in the use of VAR Granger, but also on a more substantive basis is likely to overestimate the stability of political attention to issues.

While this paper is a first effort to address some of these problems and move closer to more concrete evidence regarding the relationship between the president, Congress, and the

media, there certainly is much more work to be done. The best approach to this question would be to employ the methods used in both this chapter and the Edwards and Wood articles, using monthly time intervals, across a diverse set of issue areas, and over a long period of time. One of the most important avenues for future research that arises from this chapter is the potential that resides in collecting more data on presidential priorities over a longer time period. In doing so, scholars will have a greater amount of evidence in support of those patterns that do exist between the president, Congress, and the media, but also gain a greater understanding of whether the patterns that do exist are specific to each president or generalizable to all presidents. It seems likely that the influence a president can exert in an issue area depends upon the extent to which it is a priority of his administration, but this question is only answerable with a much larger amount of data.

Chapter Five

Reexamining the role of Agenda Setting in Creating a Demand for Lobbying*

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Introduction

The growth of the federal government during the twentieth century, entering into a burgeoning area of policy areas and economic sectors over time has been staggering. At the same time that the government has grown, the size of interest group populations lobbying the federal government has also undergone on an explosive period of growth. Tichenour and Harris (2002/2003) associate progressive era explosions in social movements with federal government growth, while other scholars have argued that interest groups engaged in rent-seeking drive the increased government spending as well as regulation increasing demand for services (Buchanon and Tullock, 1962). While interest group mobilization has fostered a response of new government programs and a larger government in general, the reverse is also true. The growth of government over time has also had a role in the explosion of interest group populations registered to lobby at the federal level.

Several recent studies have demonstrated that the increase of government activity in a policy sector also has an influence on the size of lobbying communities, based on the premise that increased activity on the part of government institutions will foster a demand for lobbying (Lowery et al, 2004; Gray et al, 2005; Leech et al, 2005). The relationship between the growth of government and the growth of interest group communities, then, should be seen as reciprocal, with the size of each growing in response to one another. Such findings are consistent with the work of Jack Walker (1983, 1991), who argued that the government can compel groups to organize to secure patronage from the government. This paper will continue the work of these scholars in arguing that government patronage plays a significant role in the expansion of interest group communities, the reverse of which is also true.

The creation of lobby demand by governmental institutions is theoretically satisfying because it provides an incentive for collective action. Rent-seeking groups are able to secure patronage from the federal government (Walker, 1983), and the growth of government in policy areas of interest to a group provides a purposive benefit (Salisbury, 1984) for mobilization. Groups will respond to increased government attention in a policy area in order to secure new benefits made available by that attention, or mobilize to defend their interests. A potential pattern could be that a few interest groups will mobilize in order to gain government attention, but then it is the government attention itself once secured that will lead to an increased demand for lobbying activity (Leech et al, 2005).

This chapter will explore the relationship between institutional attention to public policy issues and the demand for lobbying in those policy communities. Specifically, this chapter will update the work of Leech and her colleagues (2005), who found that Congressional attention to political issues had a significant effect on the size of the corresponding lobbying communities. The first portion of this paper will be devoted to replicating their work, which covered the time period 1996-2000 across fifty-six issues, and then extending their models to 2004 to show how the relationship has been strengthened with an increased number of data points and provide further confirmation of the findings. The addition of increased data points, from four to fourteen six-month time periods, demonstrates that an even stronger relationship exists between Congressional attention to issues and lobbying registrations in the corresponding issue area than was posited in the original work.

Theoretically, however, the most important contribution this chapter will make to the literature is the addition of a measure of presidential attention to each issue area. Leech et al

(2005) only consider Congressional attention as a potential source on the federal level where agenda setting can foster a demand for lobbying. However, previous studies have shown consistently that it is the president, not Congress, who has the biggest affect in setting the political agenda, a critical component part of the president's power (Kingdon, 1984; Bond and Fleisher, 1990; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). In fact, the president has been invited by Congress to take the lead on the budget, the economy, national security, the environment, and other areas of public policy (Edwards and Barrett, 2000). If the president has power over the political agenda, it should follow that interest groups will respond at least as much, and probably more, to presidential attention to issues than any other actor. Adding presidential attention to the list of potential factors influencing the demand for lobbying activity will result in a better specified model and an improved substantive understanding of the growth of interest group populations.

This chapter follows the work of Leech et al (2005) in linking data from the federal lobby disclosure database to indicators of Congressional and presidential activities in the corresponding policy areas from the Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). The Lobby Disclosure Act of 1995 requires that lobbyists who spend greater than \$10,000 to report their activities in each of seventy-four policy areas. Of the seventy-four areas, fifty-six can be linked to the data from the Policy Agendas Project, covering about eighty-five percent of the total lobby registration reports. Since the publication of the Leech et al (2005) article, new indicators of presidential attention have been made available through the Policy Agendas Project, which are coded using the identical system of Congressional hearings. These new data provide the opportunity in this paper to explore more fully the affect on lobbying populations that policy attention at the federal level has, as well as explore the inter-branch dynamics in fostering lobby

demand. Further detail about the indicators of government attention, as well as the lobby populations are discussed below.

Briefly, the findings of this chapter demonstrate that the president does have a strong mobilizing effect on interest groups when measured alone. However, in full models including Congressional attention and other control variables, several important findings emerge. First, the effect of the president's attention on lobby mobilization is issue-specific, with the largest effect coming in policy domains where the president is frequently involved. In policy-areas where the president is active, presidential attention actually depresses Congressional lobbying, contrary to expectations. Presidential attention has a much weaker effect in domains where Congress is dominant or powers are more equally shared between the branches. Lobbying populations are consistently lower in those areas where the president is a frequent actor, especially during time periods in which presidential activity is increased. These findings are likely a result of the Lobby Disclosure data being a measure of Congressional lobbying. A likely explanation is that presidential attention in presidential domains draws lobbyists away from Congress, leading them to focus more of their lobbying efforts on the executive branch. This possibility demonstrates a need for better measures of lobbying in the executive branch, and perhaps modification to the Lobby Disclosure Act that would require lobbyists to report their activities to a broader number of executive branch officials. This will be discussed further below.

Congressional Attention and the Demand for Lobbying

Interest group scholars have wrestled for decades with Mancur Olson's (1965) bombshell from the field of economics, demonstrating that the collective action calculus renders non-participation on the part of citizens to be rational. Despite the irrational nature of collective

action, America has been a leader among nations in its tendency to be joiners dating as far back as the first half of the nineteenth century (de Tocqueville, 1838). The tendency to engage in collective action among American citizens was certainly not something that was lost on Olson; however, he demonstrated that simple rational calculus of costs and benefits could not suffice in explaining participation in collective action. Rather, there had to be other non-material incentives which led individuals to overcome the costs associated with collective activity.

Scholars writing at nearly the same time as Olson were beginning to take on the challenge of explaining collective action, and the literature has vastly expanded since the time of Olson's writing. Clark and Wilson (1961), for example, argue that purposive and solidary benefits can also produce mobilization for collective activity. Purposive incentives are those incentives that encourage people to join a cause they believe in, in order to secure some public policy desire or public good not materialistic in nature. Solidary benefits are afforded to those who just desire to be a part of something, and join just for the personal benefit of joining based on the belief that man is a social animal who wants to be a part of something with other people.

Salisbury (1969) proposes an exchange theory of interest groups based on the contractual exchange between entrepreneurs and new members. The key to collective action according to Salisbury is the ability of entrepreneurs to provide incentives for individuals to participate, including material or tangible benefits, solidary benefits similar to those discussed by Clark and Wilson, or expressive benefits in which the individual is part of a group because the group is expressing an argument which the individual wants to be heard. Interestingly, Salisbury argues that the main hurdle for interest group entrepreneurs is getting individuals to join, not to maintain their membership. The important contribution entrepreneurs make to overcoming the problem of

collective action is providing incentives to join and individuals require fewer incentives to continue their membership once they have already joined.

Walker (1983), in his survey of an extensive list of membership interest groups, finds that startup costs are the most significant barrier to collective action, supporting the argument made earlier by Salisbury. His data demonstrate that eighty-nine percent of citizen groups and thirty-four percent of profit-sector groups surveyed had major contributions from patrons in their initial startup phase. Such major contributions, according to Walker's data, could come from government grants, foundations, corporations, or wealthy individuals. Perhaps the most interesting pattern to come out of Walker's surveys performed in 1980 and 1985 is the explosive increase in citizen groups. Citizen groups, assisted in a large part by patronage, have begun to level the playing field with profit sector groups (Walker, 1991).

Government stimulates the growth and mobilization of interest groups not only by direct subsidy and contracts, as Walker demonstrated, but also and on a much larger scale simply by expanding its activities within and across policy and economic sectors. This includes federal spending, which groups see as an opportunity to secure government contracts or other similar financial benefits toward achieving the goals of the membership. Campbell (2005), for example, showed that the Social Security significantly increased senior citizens' level of engagement in politics because of the profound effect the program has upon their income. It is clear that federal spending has an effect on social mobilization, which is not surprising because frequently federal spending offers the opportunity to secure tangible benefits.

Government effects on the demand for lobbying go far beyond federal spending only, however. Regulatory activities of various kinds also foster a demand for lobbying activity

among organized interests. Government regulation in economic or policy sectors in which an organization is active can offer opportunities to secure a desired new policy direction, or may lead to group mobilization among organizations which have an interest in protecting their turf. Regardless which motivation leads to increased mobilization among groups, it is expected that regulatory activity of various kinds should have an effect on the demand for lobbying activity. Increases in government activity across a broader range of policy or economic sectors over time have certainly played a major role in the explosion of interest group populations, as recent scholars have suggested (Lowery and Gray, 1996, 1998; Boehmke, 2005; Leech et al, 2005), which is discussed below.

Lowery and Gray (1996; 1998) borrow theoretically from population ecology to explain the growth and diversity of interest group populations in the American states. Their analyses are based on a large sample of interest group populations across 50 states. The model is represented by energy, stability, and area, or ESA. Basically, the ESA model predicts that the size of the government in any given state is a major predictor of both the growth and diversity of interest group populations. Boehmke (2005) echoes the findings of Lowery and Gray (1998) in studying the role of direct legislation. Boehmke notes that states in which direct legislation is encouraged or increases, the lobbying populations tend to respond with a growth in the number of interest groups participating in the process.

The ability of government to foster lobby demand has not only been explored on the state level. Baumgartner and Leech (2001) explore the interest group registrations required by the Lobby Disclosure Act of 1995 across 137 issue areas. They find that the interest group populations across their issue areas are quite skewed, with a few areas having a great majority of

groups while others only have a few groups operating at any one time. These results confirm the concerns of earlier scholars because business interests are still able to exercise their dominance in those policy areas where only a few groups have been mobilized. Citizen groups tend to be concentrated in the issue areas where many groups are located, while the more powerful economic interests are able to find an issue niche where they can carve out an isolated spot for continued domination over their policy of interest.

The studies discussed thus far have had a predominant focus on the size of government, indicating an overwhelming exploration of tangible benefits. Leech and her colleagues (2005) move beyond tangible benefits, exploring other activities that government can use to foster interest group mobilization. They test specifically for the effects of increased governmental attention, as measured by the number of Congressional hearings, across fifty-six policy areas. They find that increased attention to a policy area, even absent increased legislative output, leads to a responsive increase in the number of lobbyists registered to participate in that issue area. Interest groups respond to the potential of new legislation or new benefits available at the agenda-stage. The mobilization of organized interests at both the state and national levels, then, is a result not only of the social and economic “supply” factors, but also of demand factors such as increased government attention. Baumgartner, Gray, and Lowery (2009, forthcoming) find evidence that policy attention on the federal level also has an effect on the state level, increasing the number of organized interests lobbying in a given policy area at the state level.

While scholars have been successful demonstrating that political attention has an effect on the growth of lobbying populations, each of the studies discussed above omits the possibility that presidential attention will influence the size of lobbying populations. Leech et al (2005)

and Baumgartner, Gray, and Lowery (forthcoming) focus only on Congressional attention and federal spending as a signal to interest groups of increased government attention to their policy area of interest. What is troubling about these studies is the omission of the attention devoted to an issue by the president, who has a significant role in directing the policy attention of the federal government.

Agenda-setting is an especially important component of presidential power in American politics. Presidents have been able to use the important strategic power of agenda-setting to their advantage. Kingdon (1984), in his study of the transportation and health subsystems, found that no other actor rivaled the ability of the president to bring attention to issues. Similarly, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) argue that no other actor can so clearly focus attention or change the motivations of other political actors as well as the president. Bond and Fleisher (1990) argue that setting the agenda of Congress is one of the president's greatest sources of influence. Edwards (1989) identifies the president's ability to set the political agenda as one of his greatest strategic powers. Charles O. Jones (1994), who has been critical of the president becoming the focus of the public's aspirations for policy change, still recognizes the president's ability to manage the agenda as an important force in American politics (Jones, 1994).

Influencing the Congressional agenda is not an especially difficult task for presidents, especially when compared with influencing Congressional actions at later stages in the policy process, such as actual voting on the floor. The president has been invited by Congress to take the lead on the budget, the economy, national security, the environment, and other areas of public policy (Edwards and Barrett, 2000). Presidents are forced into bargaining games in order

to exert influence in the political system, and simply achieving a spot on the agenda is one of the few areas where the costs of bargaining are low.

Richard Neustadt (1991) argues that Congress welcomes a high-status agenda from outside to which they can react, and the agenda of the president fits these criteria quite well. Members of Congress also have an electoral incentive to invite the president to initiate legislation to which members can react. Political realities have revealed that Congress acts upon this incentive. Congress has invited the president to take greater roles in initiating legislation and policy priorities in the areas of the economy, foreign policy, the environment, and others (Edwards and Barrett, 2000). Perhaps in no area is this clearer than in Congress inviting the president to submit a budget for their approval on an annual basis.

Due to the influence that the president has on the political agenda, it should be expected that the President will have an effect on the demand for lobbying activity as well. One measure of the policy priorities of the president is the content of his annual State of the Union message. In the State of the Union, the president has an uninterrupted opportunity to provide Congress with his legislative priorities that he would like to see the legislative branch act upon in the coming year. Rudalevige (2002) makes the argument that the address should not be seen as an exhaustive list of the policy priorities of the president; however, the address still is generally viewed as a good indicator of the president's priorities (Light, 1999).

The ability of the president to use the State of the Union message as a tool to set the political agenda has been thoroughly investigated. Jeffrey Cohen (1995), for example, studies the linkage between the policy agendas of the mass public and the content of the president's State of the Union message, testing only for causality flowing from the presidential level. He

finds that presidential attention to foreign policy, civil rights, and economic policy in the State of the Union Address affects the salience assigned to those issues by the mass public, as measured by Gallup's most important problem series.

Kim Quaile Hill (1998) tests for the relationship between public salience and policy events on the president's agenda, with causality examined in both directions. His research examines, similarly to Cohen (1995), the areas of foreign, economic, and civil rights policy. Again the president's agenda is measured by the number of sentences devoted to each policy area in the State of the Union Address, and public salience is measured by Gallup's most important problem series. He finds a reciprocal pattern of influence between the agendas of the president and the mass public on the issues of foreign and economic policy, and the president having unidirectional influence on the mass public's salience assigned to civil rights. Together, these studies demonstrate that the president is able to influence the domestic agenda in the short term through his State of the Union message, and the foreign policy agenda in the long term (Cohen, 1995; Hill, 1998).

Further, the content of the State of the Union message as an indicator of presidential priorities has been tied to interest group activity. Presidents invite interest groups to serve on advisory committees which help presidents to gain information regarding their policy proposals and provide increased legitimacy for a president's policy positions (Chin and Lundquist, 2004). Presidents also ask for help from organized interests in advancing policy priorities, especially calling upon groups to lobby Congress on the behalf of the administration (Peterson, 1992).

Data, Methods, and Hypotheses

Congressional attention, as measured by the number of hearings, is shown to have a significant effect on social mobilization, both to lobby at the federal and state government levels. Hearings represent an overall indicator of Congressional interest in a given policy area, whether the hearing relates to the creation of new legislative programs, oversight, or general fact-finding ventures in Congressional committees. Whether the intention of a Congressional hearing is to debate new legislative programs, propose changes in the direction of the implementation of some policy on the federal level, or simply to hear from citizens, interest groups, or experts regarding some policy matter the number of hearings held by Congress still is an accurate reflection of the overall Congressional interest in a policy area (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). It should be expected then that the number of hearings held in a given policy area reflecting Congressional interest should foster a demand for social mobilization within that issue area, an expectation confirmed by Leech et al (2005).

The State of the Union message, discussed thoroughly above, is not the only indicator of a president's policy priorities. Additionally, recent research has suggested that executive orders have evolved over time from a tool presidents employ primarily to effect the administration of a policy, to a method which allows presidents to take control of a policy debate by striking first, before Congress is either willing or able to mobilize to address an issue (Mayer, 2001). The fragmentation of Congress leaves the legislative branch slower to mobilize, and over time presidents have taken advantage of this fragmentation to engage in more direct action through the use of executive orders (Howell, 2003). Over time, the president has relied more on the executive order to exert political influence. As such, it is important to include executive orders

as an indicator of presidential priorities. In this paper, a presidential index variable is created combining the levels of presidential involvement in each issue area through policy statements in the State of the Union Address and the number of executive orders⁴. Both of these measures have been recent additions to the Policy Agendas Project database.

One caveat to the analysis of presidential activities is that the greatest emphasis in the Lobbying Disclosure Act is on Congressional activities. Virtually all Congressional lobbying activity must be reported, whereas the definition of “covered officials” within the executive branch includes only more senior members. As a result, much of the routine contact between lobbyists and staff members in executive agencies need not be reported in the LDA reports. Nonetheless, executive orders requiring agency action would virtually always include actions by agency officials in top policymaking positions. Interest-group activities and their lobbying reports should reflect that tendency.

Table 5-1 provides annual averages of Congressional and presidential attention across the fifty-six issue areas examined in this paper from 1996-2004. Notice that in the table, there is a distinction between “presidential domains”, and domains in which the president is not frequently active. A presidential domain is considered to be any domain in which the indicator of presidential activity has an index score of greater than 1.0, with any domain area scoring less

⁴ The index was created using Stata’s factor command with unrotated principal components; each variable loaded on the principal factor with a value of .8156. The index then had a mean of zero and a minimum value of -.4981271. For ease of interpretation, I added this number to all values so that the index of presidential activity would have a minimum value of zero corresponding to no presidential activities. The index equals $.5507736 \times \text{executive orders} + .0473831 \times \text{statements in the State of the Union}$.

than 1.0 in the presidential activity index designated as a non-presidential domain. The distinction is made between presidential and non-presidential domains because of the expectation that there will be a much stronger relationship between presidential attention and lobby registrations in presidential domains. Presidential activity tends to be focused on just a few areas: defense, health care, foreign affairs, as well as civil rights, welfare, and the other issues listed at the top of the table. Presidential activity is expected to have the greatest affect in those areas where the president is typically active. Therefore, the analysis that follows tests for the effects of the presidential activity index on lobbying populations both in presidential and non-presidential issue domains. Congressional actions are widely dispersed throughout the 56 areas, as one would expect because of the committee structure. However, there is considerably more attention in Congress to many of those areas also of concern to the president. Of course, both presidential and Congressional actions vary not only by issue-area, but also over time.

Tables 5-2 and 5-3 below provide the annual average numbers of groups (table 5-2) and lobbyists (table 5-3) across each of the fifty-six policy areas under examination in this chapter. One of the most notable characteristics of the lobbying populations is the extent to which the sizes of the communities vary by issue area. For example, whereas in the area of taxation and IRS code there is an annual average of over 600 organizations lobbying on their own behalf and over 1,100 hired lobbying firms, only an average of 8 groups lobbying on their own behalf and 14 hired lobbyists are active in the area of District of Columbia Affairs. One should expect to see significant variation across issue areas simply because each of the issue areas has an effect on a different subset of the population. Several of the issue areas affect a large subset of the population, while an area such as District of Columbia affairs has an effect on a rather small

Table 5-1. Congressional and Presidential Activities by Issue-Area

Issue Area	Hearings	Executive Orders	State of the Union	Presidential Activity Index
Part A: Presidential Domains				
Foreign Relations	81.2	2.9	61.6	4.5
Government Issues	86.9	4.0	8.4	2.6
Defense	44.5	2.6	19.0	2.3
Health Care	49.1	1.3	27.4	2.0
Labor Issues	30.8	0.9	16.9	1.3
Law Enforcement	39.4	0.8	18.5	1.3
Welfare	14.9	0.6	19.4	1.3
Civil Rights/Liberties	11.6	1.1	10.4	1.1
Education	22.8	0.5	33.2	1.8
Environment	28.9	1.1	7.7	1.0
Part B: Non-Presidential Domains				
Trade	12.6	0.9	8.1	0.9
Natural Resources	36.6	1.1	4.4	0.8
Taxation/IRS Code	8.6	0.6	11.1	0.6
Transportation	29.8	1.1	0.4	0.6
Medical Research	10.4	0.6	3.4	0.5
Science/Technology	11.9	0.4	4.1	0.4
Computer Industry	10.5	0.5	2.8	0.4
Veterans	14.7	0.2	5.9	0.4
Energy/Nuclear	22.8	0.4	2.6	0.3
Indian Affairs	16.6	0.5	0.1	0.3
Alcohol	11.3	0.3	3.5	0.3
Family Issues	3.9	0.1	6.3	0.3
Medicare/ Medicaid	9.9	0.0	3.9	0.2
Housing	8.7	0.2	1.6	0.2
Immigration	8.2	0.2	3.1	0.2
Urban Development	6.1	0.2	2.7	0.2
Retirement	5.7	0.0	3.4	0.2
Small Business	15.3	0.2	1.2	0.2
Agriculture	19.4	0.1	1.8	0.1
Aviation	11.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Clean Air/ Water	7.7	0.0	2.5	0.1
Communications	4.9	0.2	0.0	0.1
Waste	4.4	0.1	1.4	0.1

Tobacco	0.9	0.1	0.6	0.1
Gaming/ Gambling	1.9	0.2	0.0	0.1
Pharmacy	2.6	0.0	1.8	0.1
Railroads	3.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Aerospace	5.9	0.1	1.1	0.1
Disaster Management	3.3	0.1	0.0	0.1
Trucking/Shipping	6.4	0.2	0.0	0.1
District of Columbia	6.9	0.1	0.4	0.1
Unemployment	2.3	0.0	1.5	0.1
Telecommunications	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Finance/ Investments	11.1	0.0	0.5	0.0
Banking	8.2	0.0	0.2	0.0
Copyright/ Patent	4.8	0.1	0.0	0.0
Insurance	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Consumer Issues	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Food Industry	1.8	0.1	0.2	0.0
Fuel/Gas/Oil	6.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Roads/ Highways	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bankruptcy	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Postal	2.6	0.1	0.0	0.0
Travel/ Tourism	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Minting/Money	4.5	0.1	0.1	0.0
Commodities	4.9	0.0	0.2	0.0

subset of the population, and should not be expected to produce a large social mobilization.

Tables 5-2 and 5-3 also include the standard deviation over time for each of the issue areas, as well as the coefficient of variation, which is basically the mean divided by the standard deviation. These statistics are included in the tables to demonstrate both the opportunity and the challenge presented by the dependent variables. There is significant variation across issue areas in terms of the number of groups or lobbyists registered, which represents the differences among

Table 5-2: The Distribution of Registered Interest Groups in Each Issue-Area

Issue Area	Mean Group Registration	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation	Minimum	Maximum
Taxation/IRS Code	603.6	54	11.18	512	687
Health Care	475.5	60.3	7.89	339	541
Trade	356.8	27.5	12.97	319	407
Environment	291.8	36.7	7.95	223	377
Labor Issues	283.4	33.2	8.54	240	381
Medicare/Medicaid	255.3	48.8	5.23	181	347
Energy/Nuclear	234.1	73.1	3.20	146	333
Transportation	225.4	39.2	5.75	168	311
Education	214.8	46.1	4.66	147	278
Defense	192.3	30.9	6.22	150	254
Government Issues	175.3	19.6	8.94	135	223
Agriculture	158.2	23	6.88	120	197
Clean Air/Water	148.7	19.7	7.55	125	199
Telecommunications	145.1	15.2	9.55	117	178
Finance/Investments	135.4	15.8	8.57	107	161
Copyright/Patent	133.5	13.4	9.56	117	160
Immigration	131.9	31.2	4.23	69	177
Science/Technology	124.6	18.2	6.85	88	153
Banking	121.5	8	15.19	107	135
Insurance	121.4	24.2	5.02	86	171
Foreign Relations	109.3	14.3	7.64	92	132
Retirement	107.1	34.4	3.11	53	164
Consumer Issues	100.9	8.9	11.34	84	119
Natural Resources	92.9	11.2	8.29	70	121
Law Enforcement	91.6	15.1	6.07	67	114
Medical Research	84.4	12.6	6.70	62	104
Bankruptcy	79.8	24	3.33	17	110
Communications	74.1	12.3	6.02	53	97
Food Industry	74	9.4	7.87	53	89
Aviation	73.1	10.1	7.24	59	101
Housing	66.4	3.2	20.75	62	71
Waste	61.9	24.6	2.52	31	126
Civil Rights/Liberties	61.6	8.3	7.42	47	77
Computer Industry	60.6	10.8	5.61	40	81
Small Business	58.8	10	5.88	45	79
Fuel/Gas/Oil	50.7	6.1	8.31	40	62
Welfare	50.6	18.6	2.72	30	95
Railroads	48.9	8.2	5.96	32	58

Pharmacy	48	11.1	4.32	31	68
Veterans	47	12.3	3.82	32	73
Family Issues	45.1	4.3	10.49	37	52
Tobacco	39.4	16.5	2.39	24	85
Postal	38.1	10.2	3.74	23	62
Aerospace	32.6	7.8	4.18	20	45
Disaster Management	32.3	10.3	3.14	17	57
Trucking/Shipping	31.9	4.1	7.78	23	39
Roads/Highways	30.9	6.6	4.68	20	41
Alcohol	24.9	4	6.23	17	32
Indian Affairs	23.3	5.5	4.24	15	31
Gaming/Gambling	14.8	5.1	2.90	4	22
Travel/Tourism	9.9	2.4	4.13	6	15
Unemployment	9.3	3.8	2.45	3	17
Urban Development	8.3	1.6	5.19	6	12
District of Columbia	7.9	1.9	4.16	5	11
Commodities	7.4	1.9	3.89	4	11
Minting/Money	3.6	1.7	2.12	2	7
Total	113	117.4	6.48	2	687

issue areas in the social mobilization that surrounds policy activity, basically a correlation with issue salience. While the differences across issue areas are of substantive interest, the challenge is that the social mobilization that occurs as a result of issue areas being salient is unlikely to change much over time. Because the models explain the variation across issue areas and over time, the specification of the time component of the models will require careful attention. This is something especially demonstrated by tables 5-2 and 5-3. The coefficients of variation demonstrate that there is a substantially greater degree of variation across issue areas than there will be in any one issue area over time. The correct model specification will therefore require that the lagged value of the organization and lobbyist population be included as an independent variable. The level of inertia over time is remarkable. In fact, in results not reported below, a

Table 5-3: The Distribution of Registered Lobbying Firms Across Issue-Areas

Issue Area Abbreviation	Mean Lobbyist Registration	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation	Minimum	Maximum
Taxation/IRS Code	1114.6	173.8	6.41	844	1551
Defense	1036.3	383.5	2.70	563	1611
Health Care	937.4	297.2	3.15	540	1593
Transportation	811.2	291.3	2.78	469	1277
Environment	630.3	214.6	2.94	520	923
Trade	616.8	199.6	3.09	441	1093
Energy/Nuclear	526.8	197.5	2.67	296	904
Medicare/Medicaid	521.9	168.5	3.10	270	842
Education	505.5	241.8	2.09	238	1007
Telecommunications	442.4	139.8	3.16	255	874
Government Issues	344.9	153.2	2.25	209	801
Agriculture	331.1	91.2	3.63	212	578
Natural Resources	311.1	79.5	3.91	214	515
Aviation	280.9	139.3	2.02	154	747
Finance/Investments	269.4	115.9	2.32	139	580
Banking	257.8	46.9	5.50	208	410
Indian Affairs	245.1	89	2.75	148	467
Labor Issues	224	63.3	3.54	164	421
Clean Air/Water	218.8	43.7	5.01	166	324
Housing	204.4	69.6	2.94	123	405
Science/Technology	195.9	78.4	2.50	106	405
Copyright/Patent	191.9	50.6	3.79	161	362
Law Enforcement	187.4	84.7	2.21	102	450
Communications	169.3	43.5	3.89	112	243
Medical Research	166.9	56	2.98	106	330
Foreign Relations	158.9	67.2	2.36	96	371
Insurance	152.9	71	2.15	86	329
Computer Industry	133.1	58.2	2.29	52	288
Consumer Issues	121.8	30.9	3.94	90	221
Food Industry	117.7	41	2.87	78	249
Urban Development	114.6	41.5	2.76	61	213
Fuel/Gas/Oil	108.9	44.2	2.46	56	235
Immigration	105.2	27.7	3.80	69	172
Waste	96.7	26.4	3.66	67	159
Tobacco	93.7	36.8	2.55	51	192
Roads/Highways	93.3	45	2.07	49	226
Gaming/Gambling	92.2	38.8	2.38	49	208
Pharmacy	89.3	32.6	2.74	58	186

Railroads	88.8	32.7	2.72	64	185
Retirement	85.3	41.8	2.04	32	196
Bankruptcy	84.9	32.6	2.60	17	129
Aerospace	81.4	41.2	1.98	45	194
Disaster Management	81	47	1.72	38	226
Postal	67.4	36	1.87	35	193
Small Business	64.7	18	3.59	42	109
Welfare	61.1	22	2.78	39	112
Alcohol	43.1	12.4	3.48	27	78
Travel/Tourism	43	18.5	2.32	26	106
Veterans	38.5	16.8	2.29	12	70
Trucking/Shipping	34.6	17.2	2.01	22	95
Civil Rights/Liberties	27.6	10.3	2.68	14	50
Minting/Money	22.6	14.2	1.59	12	66
Family Issues	15.7	6.2	2.53	8	30
District of Columbia	14	11.8	1.19	6	54
Commodities	6.7	3.1	2.16	2	13
Unemployment	2.8	2	1.40	0	8
Total	233.6	279.6	2.83	0	1611

simple regression of the number of organizations lobbying on their own behalf on the number of organizations lobbying on their own behalf in the previous time period produces an R-squared value of 0.98. In the case of hired lobbying firms, the lagged value for each issue area alone produces an R-squared value of 0.84. The challenge, then, will be to find significant effects of government attention that are independent of the inertial nature of the data. The data fall on a nearly straight line, with very small amounts of variation around the mean. There is, of course, more explanatory room afforded in the hired lobbyist models, as the tables above demonstrate. The average issue area in table 5-2, the organizations lobbying on their own behalf, has 113 groups lobbying over time, with a standard deviation of only 13. Table 5-3 shows, however, that hired lobbyist populations have an average annual value across the issue areas of 234 and a standard deviation of 80. The differences between the two types of lobbying entities are likely

because organizations lobbying on their own behalf are much more likely to get in and stay involved in issue areas, whereas the hiring of lobbying firms is much more of a temporary strategy. The inertial nature of each series, especially those of organizations lobbying on their own behalf, leave little room for the achievement of statistically significant coefficients, making significant results all the more impressive.

This chapter replicates and extends the work of Leech et al (2005), who found that Congressional attention to an issue area had a significant influence on the lobbying populations registered to lobby in the corresponding issue area. Leech et al used pooled-cross sectional time series methods, which account for auto-correlation over time as well as panel correlated standard errors across the issue areas from 1996-2000. This paper extends the time period under study from 1996-2003, which because of the inclusion of lagged values actually extends the time-periods analyzed from four to fourteen, across the same fifty-six issue areas. The methods employed here are the same, appropriately controlling for autocorrelation across both time and space. Further, this chapter will include variables for the effects of federal spending associated with each issue area and the lagged value of each organizational or hired lobbyist population. Finally, this chapter also adds a variable measuring presidential activity to the model, testing for the inter-branch dynamics that exist in explaining the demand for changes in lobbying populations.

One caveat that should be mentioned is that the inclusion of the federal spending variable for each issue area does drop the number of observations from fifty-six issue areas to only twenty-six, because only twenty-six of the issue areas could be linked to the budget codes used

in the Policy Agendas Project. Testing the models in these ways, I expect to find the following relationships.

Hypothesis 1: Congressional hearings will have a significant positive effect on both organizational and lobbying populations. The substantive strength of the relationship will be improved by the inclusion of more time periods.

Hypothesis one is related to the work of Leech et al (2005), but I expect that the increased number of time periods included in this chapter will demonstrably improve the relationship between Congressional attention and lobbying populations, regardless of their specification.

Hypothesis 2: Federal spending in each issue area will also mobilize both organizations and hired lobbyists in a significant and positive way, but the substantive affect of federal spending will be much smaller than that of Congressional or presidential attention.

Hypothesis two states the expectation that the relationship between federal spending and lobbying populations will remain significant, as should be expected following the work of Leech et al. Consistent with the findings of Leech et al, however, it is expected that the affect of federal spending will be quite small compared to institutional activity in each policy area.

Hypothesis 3: Presidential attention will have a significant positive effect on both the number of organizations registering to lobby on their own behalf as well as the number of hired lobbyists in presidential domains.

Hypothesis 4: Presidential attention will have substantially higher affects in those areas deemed as presidential domains, areas in which presidential attention is the norm rather than the exception.

Hypothesis three and four pertain to the theoretical extension of the Leech et al (2005), adding a variable for presidential activity. It is expected that presidential attention will have a significant positive effect, increasing the number of lobbyists registered on their own behalf or as hired firms. The positive effect is expected to be especially pronounced in presidential domains, those policy areas in which presidential attention is the rule rather than the exception.

Hypothesis 5: Congressional attention will have a larger substantive affect in domains not deemed to be “presidential”, but will have significant positive results regardless of the level of presidential activity.

Finally, the last hypothesis states that while presidential attention’s addition to the model will contribute significantly to scholarly understandings of lobby demand, the addition of presidential attention will not change the substantive and significant effect observed by previous studies that Congress has on lobbying populations. Congressional hearings have a profound effect on lobbying populations, a finding consistent with previous studies and expected to be reinforced in this paper. It is expected that the affect of Congressional hearings will be higher in non-presidential domains, but still significant regardless of the role of the president in each policy domain.

Analysis

The first step in analyzing the relationship between institutional attention and lobbying communities is to confirm and extend the models presented by Leech and her colleagues. Tables 4 and 5 perform this task. Part A of each table confirms the findings of Leech and her colleagues. These models are included in this work in order to demonstrate how the inclusion of more time periods affects the findings. Table 5-4a shows these results for lobbying organizations (e.g., organizations lobbying on their own behalf in Washington), and Table 5-5a shows the results for lobbying firms (e.g., hired lobbyists working on behalf of clients). Models 1 through 4 in each table replicate the original findings nearly exactly.⁵ Model 5 then drops the variable for firms from the original model. The number of firms active in the same area of the

⁵ The Policy Agendas Project released updated budgetary figures since the original Leech et al. article was published. Using the new Agendas Project budget data, figures are reported in 2003

Table 5-4: The Effects of Congressional Activity on Lobbying Activity by Organizations

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Hearings	1.67*** (0.43)	1.652*** (0.58)	2.64** (1.07)	0.25* (0.15)	0.29* (0.17)
Federal Spending (in Billions)		0.004 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Firms			3.32e ⁻⁰⁴ *** (5.03e ⁻⁰⁵)	3.33e ⁻⁰⁵ (2.84e ⁻⁰⁵)	
Organizations, t-1				0.98*** (0.05)	1.00*** (0.04)
Intercept	83.41*** (5.10)	98.951*** (8.58)	49.19*** (13.55)	-1.70 (1.16)	-1.28 (1.26)
R-square	0.07	0.07	0.42	0.98	0.98
N, T	N=56, T=4	N=26, T=4	N=21, T=2	N=21, T=2	N=26, T=3
Observations	224	104	42	42	78

Notes: Coefficients computed using OLS with panel-corrected standard errors, which appear in parentheses. ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10, two-tailed tests

Part B: Extending the Original Model, 1996-2004

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Hearings	1.88*** (0.21)	2.00*** (0.04)	0.18*** (0.062)
Federal Spending (in Billions)		0.05*** (0.01)	0.01* (0.004)
Organizations, t-1			0.98*** (0.015)
Intercept	86.80*** (3.02)	96.82*** (4.87)	-0.21 (1.103)
R-square	0.10	0.14	0.98
N, T	N=56, T=16	N=26, T=16	N=26, T=14
Observations	896	416	364

Notes: Coefficients computed using OLS with panel-corrected standard errors, which appear in parentheses. ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10, two-tailed test.

dollars rather than 2000 dollars as in the original. In addition, a small number of budgetary categories were adjusted in the new dataset. None of this affects the replication of the original results in any significant manner. Just one coefficient shifts by even one tenth of one decimal place: In model 3 of Table 3a, the coefficient for hearings is 2.64; it was 2.63 in the original.

Table 5-5: The Effects of Congressional Activity on Lobbying Activity by Firms

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Hearings	2.90*** (0.59)	3.25*** (0.66)	6.80*** (2.07)	1.96** (0.80)	3.59*** (1.04)
Federal Spending (in Billions)		0.21*** (0.02)	0.11** (0.05)	0.03** (0.01)	0.16*** (0.02)
Firms			4.15e ⁻⁰⁴ *** (8.66e ⁻⁰⁵)	-2.54e ⁻⁰⁵ (2.40e ⁻⁰⁵)	
Organizations, t-1				0.92*** (0.06)	1.33*** (0.09)
Intercept	132.34** (6.38)	147.67*** (11.00)	57.34** (25.55)	-15.15*** (5.72)	-11.32 (7.80)
R-square	0.07	0.10	0.43	0.98	0.69
N, T	N=56, T=4	N=26, T=4	N=21, T=2	N=21, T=2	N=26, T=3
Observations	224	104	42	42	78

Notes: Coefficients computed using OLS with panel-corrected standard errors, which appear in parentheses. ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10, two-tailed tests

Part B: Extending the Original Model, 1996-2004

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Hearings	5.27*** (0.67)	5.79*** (0.78)	2.05*** (0.67)
Federal Spending (in Billions)		0.31*** (0.04)	0.05** (0.02)
Organizations, t-1			0.91*** (0.07)
Intercept	160.26*** (12.90)	171.73*** (19.61)	-6.40 (12.22)
R-square	0.14	0.19	0.86
N, T	N=56, T=16	N=26, T=16	N=26, T=14
Observations	896	416	364

Notes: Coefficients computed using OLS with panel-corrected standard errors, which appear in parentheses. ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10, two-tailed tests

economy was included in the original analysis as a measure of social or economic supply, since sectors with greater economic activity might generate more lobbying activity. The original analysis showed that this variable was insignificant in its affect when previous lobbying activity

was included, as Model 4 indicates in both tables. As inclusion of the firms variable caused a significant loss of data because the data were not available for all 56 issue areas and cannot be collected for each of the 14 six-month time periods included in the extended analysis, this variable is omitted in the extension of the original work. As Model 5 shows, there is no substantively important difference in the results between Model 4 and Model 5, so I proceed without the firms variable.

Part B of Table 5-4 presents the full analysis of the extended time-series now available. The first model shows that 20 additional hearings in any issue area (that is, about one standard deviation) can be expected to result in about 36 more groups registering to lobby in that area. Controlling for the level of federal spending in the issue area causes the number of observations to drop substantially (because I do not have spending data for each of the 56 issue areas where I have hearings and lobby registration information), but the substantive affect remains virtually the same: 40 more groups for every 20 hearings, and a small effect for spending. For each *one hundred billion* dollars in spending, one could expect to see an increase of about five registered interest groups. This effect is statistically significant now that it is based on many more observations than in the earlier published analysis. However, overall federal spending across the entire budget was less than \$2.5 trillion in 2003, so this effect within any given issue area would substantively be related to at most only a few more group registrations. Finally, Model 3 is the most appropriate and accurate model, controlling as it does for the number of groups registered to lobby in the previous time period. Here there are significant coefficients both for hearings and for spending. Comparing the results from Parts A and B of Table 5-4 shows that the extended time coverage confirms the earlier analysis. Some of the coefficients change in size but all the effects are now significant and the analysis is based on a much larger empirical base.

Considering the discussion above about the high levels of inertia in the lobbying patterns, the significant effects in Model 3 are very strong. Controlling for how many lobbyists were active in the previous period, there is a significant effect for increased or decreased numbers of hearings on the number of lobbyists registered in that time period.

Table 5-5 shows an identical series of results for hired contract lobbyists rather than for organizations lobbying on their own behalf, as in Table 5-4. These results are stronger than those for the groups analyzed in Table 5-4 because there are greater numbers of contract lobbyists, with more variation from area to area and from time period to time period. In any case, the results largely reconfirm the original analysis but put these findings on a much more substantial empirical footing.⁶

Tables 5-6 and 5-7 extend the models by adding variables for presidential attention to test for their affect on the number of organizations lobbying on their own behalf, as well as the number of hired lobbyists operating in each policy area. Table 5-6 presents the effects of presidential attention on the number of organizations lobbying on their own behalf. Model 1 provides the relationship between hearings and organized interests in the fully specified model,

⁶ I do not replicate the analyses presented in Table 4 in the original publication. These used the number of hearings in the previous ten years rather than only in the contemporaneous six-month period. Replication of these results showed that the models were largely confirmed. However, with 14 time points rather than only 4 as in the earlier paper, the results were not significant in the model with a lagged dependent variable. This is because the number of hearings in the previous ten years is almost the same for each successive six-month period. (If one thinks of a ten-year period consisting of 20 six-month windows, moving forward in time, the data are identical for 18 of the 20 windows, changing only by replacing one old window with one new one in each period. These differences are never very substantial.) The redundancy of including both this variable as well as the lagged dependent variable makes little sense. Findings were highly significant, as in the original, without the lagged dependent variable.

Table 5-6: The Effect of Executive Activity on Lobbying by Organizations

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Presidential Attention		-1.27 (2.46)	-2.70** (1.33)
Hearings	0.18*** (0.06)	0.38*** (0.13)	0.25** (0.10)
Federal Spending (in Billions)	0.01* (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)
Organizations, t-1	0.98*** (0.02)	0.97*** (0.02)	0.99*** (0.02)
Intercept	-0.21 (1.10)	-0.57 (0.93)	-0.98 (3.65)
R-square	0.98	0.98	0.98
Observations	364	266	98

Notes: Coefficients computed using OLS with panel-corrected standard errors, which appear in parentheses. ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10, two-tailed tests

Table 5-7: The Effect of Executive Activity on Lobbying by Firms

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Presidential Attention		-3.27 (20.06)	-23.25** (11.89)
Hearings	2.05*** (0.67)	4.14*** (1.27)	3.01*** (0.90)
Federal Spending (in Billions)	0.05** (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.54*** (0.15)
Organizations, t-1	0.91*** (0.07)	0.84*** (0.07)	0.83*** (0.08)
Intercept	-6.40 (12.22)	-3.57 (10.77)	-54.01** (26.30)
R-square	.86	.85	.89
Observations	364	266	98

without the presidential attention variable, in order for the reader to be able to observe the changes in the hearings variable when presidential attention is added. Model 1 of table six is, therefore, identical to the findings presented in model 3 of table 5-4b above.

Model 2 adds the presidential index to the model, examining the effects of presidential attention in non-presidential domains. The model demonstrates, consistent with expectations, that presidential attention does not significantly affect the number of registrations among organized interests in non-presidential domains. Interestingly, the explanatory strength of both the Congressional hearings and federal spending variables are increased when presidential attention is added to the model, indicating that the inclusion of the presidential attention variable is the more appropriate specification. This is likely to be the case because the omission of presidential attention left the Congressional hearings and federal spending variables responsible to pick up a small portion of the depressive effect of presidential attention, a frequent result of omitted variable bias.

Model 3 of table 5-6 demonstrates that presidential attention, consistent with expectations, has a significant effect on the number of organized interests registering to lobby Congress in domains where the president is typically active. However, contrary to expectations, the effect of presidential attention is depressive in presidential domains, decreasing the number of interest groups registering to lobby Congress. Both the Congressional hearings and federal spending variables again perform better with presidential attention included in the model. Model three also demonstrates that the effects of Congressional hearings are especially pronounced in those areas where the president is not typically involved, as demonstrated by the larger coefficient in model 2 than in model 3.

Table 5-7 presents similar models for the number of hired professional lobbyists. Model 1 again is copied from table 5-5, model 3, to allow the reader to trace changes in the Congressional hearings variable across the different model specifications as presidential attention

is added to complete the models. Model 2 of table seven again demonstrates that presidential attention does not have a significant effect on the number of registered lobbyists in non-presidential domains. Similar to the models presented in table 5-6, the performance of Congressional hearings is improved when presidential attention is added to the model, suggesting again that Congress is especially dominant in fostering lobby demand in non-presidential domains.

Finally, in presidential domains, presidential attention is again has a significant effect on the number of registered lobbyists. Once again, however, the relationship is negative. This suggests that presidential attention in presidential domains actually draws lobbyists away from Congress. Model 3 also demonstrates that Congressional hearings are again significant across all policy domains, but the effect is greater in model 2 than model 3, demonstrating that Congressional hearings are more important in areas where Congress is the dominant actor consistent with the findings in table 5-6.

The significant negative findings for the presidential attention index in presidential domains are quite surprising, and are in fact the opposite of what should be expected based on a litany of previous literature. Many previous studies discussed above suggest that the president has a great deal of power over the political agenda of Congress, the media, and the mass public. Despite this, the findings in this chapter suggest that presidential attention actually produces a counter mobilization in those areas where presidents are typically active, and has no effect in issue areas where the president is not usually involved.

One possible explanation for this which was discussed above is that the lobby disclosure reports are a Congress-dominant measure of lobbying activity. The Lobby Disclosure Act of

1995 (LDA) requires those spending over ten thousand dollars on lobbying activity to report their activities, but the key factor here is where the activities are occurring. The LDA requires reporting of those lobbying Congress and only a small percentage of executive branch officials. The findings in this paper suggest it is more likely that the lobby disclosure data cannot account for much of the lobbying activity that is occurring in the executive branch. If this is true, then the relationship observed in this paper could be a result of lobbyists leaving Congress when the executive branch begins attending to an issue, focusing their efforts on the executive branch instead. Two aspects of the model make this especially likely. First, the LDA only covers a few executive branch officials and is more focused on Congressional lobbying. Secondly, the presidential index was partially constructed by the number of executive orders issued in a policy area. The nature of executive orders, which carry the full force of the law without Congressional activity, make it especially likely that interested lobbyists would focus greater attention on the executive branch responsible for implementing the changes resulting from an executive order. Ultimately the debate over these findings require further investigation, including increased scholarly attention to executive branch lobbying.

Discussion and Conclusion

Leech et al. (2005) argued that group mobilization is often in response to, rather than the cause of, government activities. While social and economic mobilization affect the development of the interest-group universe, so too does government activity itself. Recent work has confirmed and extended these findings. Baumgartner, Gray, and Lowery (2006) found that Congressional hearings stimulated subsequent interest group mobilization in the state capitals. That is, even controlling for state legislative activities, actions in Congress caused groups to

mobilize in those same issue areas in the 50 states. Clearly, federal government activities send strong cues to interested constituencies. In response to increased levels of federal activities, affected interests mobilize to fight off the new federal incursions, move to encourage the activity, or attempt to modify the proposals before they are completed. In any case, I see that state action affects group mobilization, not only the reverse.

This chapter confirms and extends the original findings by Leech et al. in three ways. One is simply by adding additional time points and more observations, showing more robust and stronger findings than in the original. With a substantial number of additional observations now available, the results demonstrate that the first findings are clearly robust. Second, this chapter clarifies the earlier model by dropping the long-term hearings variable where a lagged dependent variable was also used. Third, this paper explored the affect of presidential involvement. The treatment here is certainly not the last word on this topic. The measure of lobbying activity is more accurate for Congressional lobbying activities than it is for presidential or executive branch lobbying. I have not presented a full model of presidential–legislative relations. But there are some intriguing results suggesting that presidential activities affect interest-group mobilization only to the extent to which they are filtered through the affect of the president on Congress. Interest groups clearly respond differently to Congressional and presidential actions depending on the policy domain. Presidential actions such as attention in the State of the Union address on a policy domain where Congress has clear and widely understood autonomy have no effect on lobbying actions. Presidential actions in those domains traditionally reserved for greater executive branch authority, on the other hand, depress Congressional lobbying because they divert lobbying energy away from Congress and toward the executive. Congressional actions in areas within traditional Congressional control stimulate substantially more lobbying mobilization

by both groups and hired lobbyists than Leech and colleagues had previously estimated. By including an additional measure of presidential actions, I improve the model of Congressional lobbying. The substantive affect of the model including presidential actions in the model on Congressional mobilization of lobbying is that Congressional actions have an even stronger affect on mobilizing lobbyists than I had previously estimated, but only in those areas where Congress dominates. Where the president is an important player, his actions actually decrease Congressional lobbying.

Almost 70 years ago Ernest Griffith (1939) noted the importance of communities of professionals in and around government dealing with the many details of public policy. His idea of “policy whirlpools” became part of the standard understanding of the policymaking process, and remains relevant today. Over 50 years ago, David Truman’s (1951) view of the mobilization of interests through social disruptions generated a new view of the dynamics of social mobilization and interest-group activity in America. Since this time scholars from Olson (1965) to Salisbury (1984 and Heinz et al. 1993), to Walker (1983, 1991) have made this story more complete. More recently a number of scholars have addressed the affect of large new government programs on the development of citizen mobilization surrounding those issues. These studies have focused on war-related pensions (Skocpol, 1992), the social security program (Campbell, 2005), and the GI Bill (Mettler, 2005). This chapter, like those that have preceded it (Leech et al. 2005 and Baumgartner, Gray, and Lowery 2006), adds to this growing perspective. Group mobilization affects government growth, to be sure. Government activities affect groups as well. Further, presidential and Congressional actions have diverse effects, depending on the policy domain.

The fact that presidential actions have a substantial depressive effect on Congressional lobbying also suggests that the goals of government transparency so commonly addressed in public speeches by public officials would be greatly enhanced by a revision of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 to expand greatly the number of “covered officials” in the executive branch. The evidence strongly suggests that much is happening there which is uncovered by the limited public disclosure of executive branch contacts now required by the law.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and an Agenda for Research

This project has provided a lot of information regarding the president's agenda. As with most projects that have any value, the results have posed as many or more questions for future projects as they have answered. The project has emerged from a literature which suggests that the president's power to influence the political agenda is unparalleled (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995), and that the influence that the president has over the political agenda in the United States is one of the most critical sources of presidential influence (Bond and Fleisher, 1990; Edwards, 1990; Edwards and Wood, 1999; Edwards and Barrett, 2000). Because agenda-setting is such a critical part of presidential power and success, this dissertation has examined three important questions regarding presidential agenda-setting.

First, chapter three focused on the actual construction of the presidential agenda. Presidents are expected by the public and encouraged by Congress to construct a legislative program and work to advance those policy proposals deemed most important by the president. Chapter three modeled two aspects of the president's agenda choice: the size of the legislative agenda advanced by the president and the extent to which the president's agenda advances new programs. Paul Light (1999) provides scholars with several explanatory variables that influence the size and content of the president's agenda. Chapter three introduced an effort to understand which of these factors so eloquently put forth by Light ten years ago had the greatest influence on the president's agenda, and pair actual numbers with theory to understand the magnitude of political capital's impact.

The results suggest that presidents are much more attentive to the party in control of the legislature, whether government is unified or divided, than any other factor. Unified government's influence on both the size and innovation offered in the president's legislative

agenda is unrivaled by other factors. Electoral results also influence the size of the president's agenda, with larger margins of victory leading the president to request more bill introductions to Congress. A variable was also included modeling midterm loss with the expectation that greater loss at the midterm in Congress would decrease the size of the president's agenda. Surprisingly, the results demonstrate that greater midterm losses actually increase the size of the president's agenda, suggesting perhaps that presidents want to be assertive with a new Congress despite the losses suffered in order to show resolve in the face of political adversity. Public approval also has a significant influence on the size of the president's agenda, but approval levels influence the size of the agenda far less than unified government and do not significantly influence the number of new programs offered in the president's program. These findings are consistent with the work of previous scholars, who suggest that the influence of public approval on a president's prospects for success in Congress is limited to the margins (Edwards, 1990). The results of the quantitative models in chapter three demonstrate that in order for public approval to exert as much influence on the size of the president's legislative agenda, a president would have to see increased public approval numbers of greater than 53 points, which would be a remarkable leap. This would require a president who has a public approval rating of 37%, for example, to jump to 90%. Although such an increase is theoretically possible, the likelihood of such an unpopular president suddenly becoming so popular is unlikely, even in those flag-rallying moments that have become part of our political universe (Edwards and Swenson, 1997).

The findings demonstrate that although public approval will lead presidents to increase the size of their agenda, other considerations are much more important. The cycle of decreasing influence in presidential capital that Light (1999) hypothesizes will progress throughout a president's term may be overestimated then, for two reasons. First, factors aside from the

president's declining approval throughout his term play a more critical role in determining agenda size. Secondly, approval in and of itself does not follow a straight, linear, downward progression. Rather, presidents receive several opportunities to act with public approval increases throughout their terms, despite the fact that these opportunities are far less predictable than the downward progression of approval (Edwards and Gallup, 1990).

Finally, the results demonstrate that even when controlling for factors occurring within the political environment that are largely beyond a president's control, a significant portion of the variation in agenda size and the number of new programs a president advances is explained simply by the different individuals occupying the office. The agendas of Presidents Carter and Reagan were much larger than that of either President Bush or President Clinton, and Presidents Bush and Reagan introduced many more new programs than Presidents Carter or Clinton when controlling for other factors.

These results bring into question some of the long held assumptions about these four presidencies, especially the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter. President Carter has long been assumed to have had an especially large, in fact many would argue too large, legislative agenda. President Reagan, on the other hand, has been criticized for not being especially interested in getting bogged down in the mundane details of legislation (Light, 1999). Chapter three suggests, however, that many of the differences between these two individual presidents were not in their personality or approach to the job of being president. Rather, many of the differences in their legislative agendas are explained by the different political circumstances faced by each of them during their administrations. Jimmy Carter was benefitted by serving during a time of unified government, which led to a vast increase in the size of his

legislative agenda. Ronald Reagan, on the other hand, never had a Republican House and had a Republican Senate for only a short time. Reagan also took office with very low approval because he was such a polarizing figure. In short, these factors contribute much more to the differing agenda sizes than any personality traits. An important step forward in scholarship regarding presidential agendas would be to construct a similar model that better investigates the possible influence of presidential personality or approach to the job of being president. It is critical for scholars to compare the importance of personality vs. environment in order to better understand several important governing activities. Chapter three certainly suggests that the construction of agenda is among them.

Chapter four examines the extent to which the president's agenda influences that of Congress and the media. One of the primary goals of any modern president is to advance an agenda for policy change in Congress. At the same time, the media provides a critical bridge to the broader political environment, especially to the public. Presidential ability to influence either of these agendas is therefore a critical component of presidential success. However, as chapter three suggests, presidents do not construct an agenda in a bubble. Rather, it is likely that the president will not be a leader, but rather will act as a follower in distributing the scarce resource of attention to any one political issue. As such, chapter four uses vector auto-regression to determine causality among the attention series of the president, Congress, and the media in nineteen public policy issue areas. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold; first to determine who leads whom among three series that are difficult to theoretically separate for structured equations, and secondly to gain a better understanding of what issue areas each actor leads or follows in attending to political issues.

The results in chapter four suggest that the president is much more entrepreneurial in constructing a political agenda than Congress, and also has a tendency to lead the media's attention more than following the media as a proxy of public issue priorities. The findings confirm assertions made by several previous scholars who suggest that the president's ability to bring about attention to political issues is unrivaled by other actors (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995). The findings also provide some confirmatory evidence that the media does behave similarly to what should be expected as a bridge to the political environment, exerting much greater influence over the agenda of an electoral minded Congress (Mayhew, 1974). At the same time the actions of the president are almost all news worthy in modern times, and the media is much more likely to follow the president than Congress in selecting which public policy issues will receive attention.

Several interesting questions arise from the findings in chapter four, two of which will be briefly discussed here. First, future studies should build upon the information provided in chapter four at the policy area level to determine what factors unique to each policy area make an issue more or less likely for any of the actors examined in the chapter to lead or follow. Such a study would be a valuable addition to the presidency, Congress, agenda setting, and public policy literatures and has been largely unexamined in previous works. Secondly, once the patterns of influence unique to a policy area are uncovered, which is accomplished in chapter four, the next step is to construct quantitative models with parameter restrictions that arise out of these findings in order to determine the extent of influence that any actor has over the others in each specific policy area. Chapter four simply discovered the patterns of influence for each individual policy area. It is up to future studies to examine the extent of those influence patterns in a quantitative

model. To some extent, chapter four represents an important first step towards the investigation of a far broader research question.

Finally, chapter five investigates the influence of presidential and Congressional issue attention on the interest group populations active in each issue area. Previous studies demonstrate that Congressional attention to issues has a positive impact on the size of lobbying communities, suggesting that the long posited relationship between groups and government flows in both directions. Because the president has an unrivaled ability to increase the attention devoted to a public policy issue in the political environment, it is expected that presidential attention should have a similar positive impact that should presumably exceed that of Congress. The findings in chapter five suggest otherwise, however, as an increase in the attention the president devotes to an issue area actually depresses the size of the interest group population registered to lobby Congress. While these findings appear to be counterintuitive, there is a plausible explanation behind this seemingly strange finding.

The findings should not be taken as evidence that the president depresses the lobbying energy surrounding a policy area. Rather, because the data are pulled from the Lobby Disclosure Database, a Congress-dominated measure of lobby populations, it is likely that the result is picking up a tendency on the part of interest groups to devote lobbying efforts to the executive branch instead of Congress when the executive begins attending to the issue. Either way, presidential attention does significantly influence the size of lobbying populations, just not in the expected direction. It is because of these confounding results that important questions remain open to investigation.

Two future areas of study would represent a promising follow-up to the evidence presented in chapter five. First, scholars should devote a much greater amount of care to examining the relationship between the president and interest groups. It is clear that presidential attention should evoke an interest group response, but we cannot gain a full understanding of that relationship without a much larger research project that is focused specifically on lobbying in the executive branch. Second, an investigation of presidential attention's influence on the size of state lobbying communities may provide the evidence of the hypothesized relationship that was not found in chapter five, contrary to expectations. The president devoting attention to issues should send a signal to the broader political environment that the policy train is leaving the station, and the groups would best serve themselves by getting on board. Previous studies have linked political attention on the national level to the lobbying population active in a given policy area on the state level, but again the national government's attention was only examined using Congressional measures (Baumgartner, Gray, and Lowery, 2009). If the president shifting attention sends shockwaves throughout the political system, especially if the response is expected to be greater for presidential rather than Congressional attention, then there should be a response in state level lobbying communities. If this hypothesis is tested and the evidence supports it, there will be further evidence pointing to the need to examine executive branch lobbying much more carefully.

Broadly speaking, this dissertation has followed in a long line of studies that have examined presidential agendas using a variety of measures. In chapter three, the president's agenda was modeled by specifically focusing on the president's legislative agenda, as measured by the number of bills introduced by request in Congress from 1977-2000. In chapter four, the president's agenda was measured using the number of policy messages in any given policy area

that the president transmitted to Congress through letters, speeches, or any other form of communication. Finally, in chapter five, presidential priorities were measured using an index variable which combined the number of policy mentions in the State of the Union Address and the number of executive orders issued in a given policy area. Three different measures are employed in three different empirical chapters, which makes me guilty of the same problem for which I am about to criticize the presidency subfield. Scholars of the presidency have to gain a fuller understanding of how to best measure presidential priorities, or at least gain a better understanding of which measures are appropriate for some specific purposes. Largely the literature has progressed with different measures of presidential priorities with no one taking time out to ask why. Is the president's agenda such a complicated concept that several measures are required to serve as a proxy? Or do we simply have a litany of less than ideal measures we continue to recycle because we do not have a good option? It seems that the latter is much more likely. This is a very critical question that scholars of the American presidency have to confront moving forward if we are to better understand the president's power to set the agenda or its influence in the political system more broadly.

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