

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND POLICY CHANGE: THE USE OF ISSUE  
SALIENCE AS SUBSIDY

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## **ABSTRACT**

John L. Lovett Jr.: Individual Members of Congress and Policy Change: The Use of Issue Salience as Subsidy.

(Under the direction of Frank R. Baumgartner)

How do individual members of Congress change public policy? While some members use the standard practice of climbing to the top of a committee to change policy, this avenue can only be used by a select number of members on any given policy. Yet, members of Congress outside of the normal committee control system have in the past shift public policy by taking power away from committee leaders. How has this happened? I argue that members of Congress use changes in issue salience as a subsidy, a cheap form of information that helps members make policy decisions. Members use increased salience on an issue area to engage in that issue in media, pushing policy leaders who would normally avoid media involvement on owned issues. Using an original dataset of articles in *The Washington Post* on 10 issues between the years 1977 and 2012, I explore the question of member engagement and issue salience. I find that when average salience is generally low, members of Congress use increases in issue salience to push for policy change, and that these increases can lead to shifts in public policy. At a high average level of salience, members must instead bring the media to them by cultivating interest, as all members already have a sense of the importance of the issue. The work here further explores the larger question of how individual members of Congress change public policy and also highlights the back and forth relationship between the Congress and the political media.

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So you have a dragon to read. Enjoy!

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# **Chapter 1: A Theory of Issue Salience as Member Subsidy**

## **Introduction**

How does an individual member of Congress change public policy, and when do they try to change policy? We know that some members succeed through being what multiple scholars have called “work horses” (Cook 1986; Ornstein 1983; Ranney 1979), working tirelessly through the system, climbing up until finally holding the committee chair or subcommittee chair position that will allow a member to begin working on reshaping public policy on their issue of choice. While a path for some, committee control is only open to a select few individuals. While some members may eventually expect to obtain a leadership post, members will have preferences in other issue areas that cannot be realized from their leadership positions. Even when a member succeeds at getting their desired chair, policy change is still not a certainty, as party leaders, other committee chairs, and other members of Congress may intrude on their turf in the name of wanting to protect the status quo policy or reshape policy in a direction contrary to the chair’s desire. In general, the work horse path is a long, hard slog toward probable, but not guaranteed, results.

At the same time, members of Congress do succeed at changing public policy from outside of the committee system. In 1982, a coalition of lawmakers led by Congressman Edward Markey of Massachusetts used legislation to attempt to enact a nuclear freeze, a measure that would call for the United States to negotiate a freeze on the production of nuclear weapons with the Soviet Union. Markey and his coalition had no policy leadership credentials on the question

of nuclear weapons, yet their bill eventually passed the House and negotiations for a nuclear freeze would eventually be built into United States/Soviet relations. Members of Congress can influence issues that they may not necessarily control. The question I ask then is: when do we see members act, and under what conditions do members without policy control actually change public policy?

Keeping all of these issues in mind, to understand when individual members of Congress change public policy we need to understand how members of Congress use attention to issues. I argue that members of Congress use changes in salience on specific issues as a subsidy (Hall and Deardorff 2006), acting on increases in media interest in an issue in order to maximize the possibility of policy change. The effect of salience varies by the average coverage an issue receives: when salience increases on issues with normally lower average salience (an article a day or less), members of Congress will react to the increase by engaging in the issue. When salience is on average high (on average more than an article a day), members will instead have to carve out their own niche in salience in order to cut through the large amount of coverage already present on an issue. Regardless of the level of salience, the final goal of members is to change public policy by weakening the power of policy leaders. Policy leaders (those members of Congress who hold formal control over an issue area) find their control of policy weakened when more members of Congress are involved, giving non-leaders an opportunity to potentially change public policy or block leaders from making major shifts in public policy, depending on the desire of non-leader members.

My goals in this dissertation are threefold: first, to explore the role issue salience plays in the considerations of members of Congress in terms of issue engagement, second expand upon our understanding of the relationship between members of Congress and the political media, and

third to show how the relationship between members of Congress and the media contributes to the changing of American public policy. Each of my goals relate to the larger question of how members of Congress use the media in attempting to change public policy. The relationship between the two groups will guide much of the rest of this work, as members of Congress use changes in media to maximize engagement.

In the rest of this chapter, I outline my theory of the use of issue salience as a subsidy, looking at how increases in salience lead to more member involvement in an issue and the potential creation of public policy. I start by exploring what we already know about members of Congress and their use of subsidies, offering a series of assumptions I make on how members of Congress do their job and their relationship with the political media. After this, I outline my larger theory of subsidies, differentiating my theory from Hall and Deardorff (2006), as political lobbying and issue salience are based on different constructions that will differentiate how the two will work on members of Congress. I then offer a series of expectations based on the previous discussion, focusing both on the role of non-leader and policy leader members of Congress and their potential for policy change. I end the chapter by outlining the rest of the dissertation, giving focus to each of my subsequent chapters.

## **Background on the Relationship between Members and Salience**

In order to understand how changes in issue salience can have an effect on member engagement, it is important to understand the various goals members of Congress have and how those may relate to their duties in regards to public policy. In addition, it is important to understand the media's role in this process, as they are the group central to creating the issue salience that drives its use as a subsidy.

## ***Members of Congress and Issue Involvement***

First, we should understand what motivates Congressional behavior in general. The classic assumption about members of Congress is that they are primarily geared toward re-election (Mayhew 1974), and that their actions should guide them toward policies and plans that will ensure re-election. That said, there are other motivations for members as well, including the desire to create “good public policy” (Burgin 1991, 1995; Fenno 1978; Hall 1996), the desire for power within Congress or outside of the body through attaining a more powerful political office (Hibbing 1989; Fenno 1978; Rohde 1979; Schlesinger 1966), and potential district concerns (Arnold 1990; Browne and Paik 1997; Hall 1996; Harward and Moffett 2010).

The varying motivations that guide members of Congress also guide their involvement in issue areas. For those interested in creating good policy or district-related issues, engagement into an issue area is paramount to success, since members must be involved in order to ensure that their preferred outcome on policy is either achieved or protected. For those interested in upward mobility or re-election, policy is less about winning on the issue and more about exposure. By engaging in an issue, an ambitious member can market both the issue and themselves, with a particular eye toward moving up politically.

While issue involvement may be based on these goals, this is not to say that members are strictly motivated by one goal or another. In fact, the goals of good public policy and political ambition are not mutually exclusive. Members of Congress may be guided by both the desire to create good public policy and the desire to reach higher political office, and see a specific issue area as a way to reach a member’s personal goals. In addition, the motivation of members will vary from issue to issue: an individual member will likely choose involvement in one issue over another for a variety of reasons, from the lack of space on their own personal agenda to district concerns. Furthermore, good public policy involvement can also be good for an ambitious



politician, as issue involvement is part of the legislative activity members focus on when considering upward movement in Congress (Herrick 2001; Herrick and Moore 1993; Herrick, Moore, and Hibbing 1994; Victor 2011).

We know then that members of Congress want to become involved in issues based on their goals, but what might motivate members to become involved? Issue salience provides an answer, cueing members of Congress to the importance of a single issue and motivating members to become involved in a highly salient issue.

### ***Issue Salience***

What role does salience play in the promotion and discussion of issues? We know that there is limited space within both the media and political agendas. As Jones and Baumgartner (2005) point out, information is processed disproportionately, as there is simply not enough room on the agenda to deal with every issue at the same time. In addition, the media agenda tends to move in more fitful bursts because of the lack of agenda space (Boydston 2013). These attention-based conditions then lead to variance of attention to specific issues at different times. Therefore, any issue could become highly salient, given the right time and circumstances.

Why does salience matter? Increases in issue attention mean that more people know about the issue, in turn making the general public more informed on that specific issue. Page and Shapiro (1992, 11) argue that familiarity with issue information increases when that issue receives more coverage. Further, issues that receive more coverage in the national media (and in particular national TV news) are considered more salient to the public, while those that receive little coverage are in general ignored by the public (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). From a public perspective, individuals are more likely to use political information when thinking about highly salient issues versus party cues (Ciuk and Yost 2016). Highly salient issues also have an effect

on the evaluation of presidents (Edwards, Mitchell, and Welch 1995) and media coverage of issues can affect the evaluation of policymakers in general (Iyengar 1991). Salience also affects the responsiveness of committee members to their non-committee brethren when it comes to issues (Fenno 1966; Maltzman 1995). In addition, salience, when interacted with the complexity of an issue, can determine whether politicians get involved in policy (Eshbaugh-Soha 2006; Gormley 1986). It is apparent then that salience has many different effects on the political process.

Salience can also alert individuals to an issue area they may have otherwise ignored. Central to this conception is E. E. Schattschneider's (1975) conflict expansion theory. Schattschneider conceives of conflict expansion theory in terms of a fight: there are two sides, and one side is at an advantage. The side that does not have an advantage will under normal circumstances be the losing side. In order to increase their odds of victory, losers must find a way to take the advantage from winners. Therefore, losers expand the conflict out to new people in an attempt to find people who may be sympathetic to their position, and who can then help them take away the advantage winners normally have in the conflict.

We can apply conflict expansion to issue salience. Increases in story coverage mean that more individuals know about the issue in general. As a result, interested parties will know the stakes and the players, and having that information can help their side gain an advantage. This may mean that the currently winning side still wins, but it does give hope to the losers that there is a chance to usurp the winners through the recruitment of newly interested individuals. Losers then have incentive to expand conflict, in an attempt to defeat winners. Winners, on the other hand, should work to avoid expanding the conflict, as their power rests on a minimal number of people being involved.

While members who want to change the system should desire to increase salience, members of the policy leadership, as the current status quo on a subject, should attempt to minimize salience as much as possible. Glazier and Boydston (2013) find that as large-scale events (such as the Iraq War) persist over time, leadership framing on an issue begins to give way to other frames, decreasing leadership message control. It is due to the loss of message control that salience is generally a negative proposition for leaders. While the potential for what Baumgartner and Jones call “waves of enthusiasm” (2009, 84) (wherein the desire to create new systems drives increased attention), the potential for “waves of criticism,” and their destructive nature, will make leaders generally reticent about seeking media attention. Therefore, challengers find increased salience of an issue helpful to their goals. Salience increases on an issue, which in turn brings more political elites into a discussion. The presence of more elites decreases the leadership message control. Therefore, challengers should seek to find or create an increase in issue salience in an attempt to lessen the control policy leaders have over issues.

### ***Member Involvement in Issues and Cost of Engagement***

Issue salience can help us understand general involvement, however we know that all members of Congress are not involved in all issues at the same time. So when do members of Congress actually become involved in a given issue? From a general standpoint, we know that individual members of Congress become involved in issues when their individual interest in that issue is high and when the costs to get in are low (Hall 1996; Wawro 2000). We know that members of Congress have limited resources to work with both formally between the combinations of the work they and their staffs can do (Salisbury and Shepsle 1981) and the limitations of the size of an individual policy agenda space (Jones and Baumgartner 2005). While members of Congress want to generally be involved in as many issues as possible, both

formal and informal constraints should cause members to focus on those areas with the lowest personal costs.

The cost of involvement varies from both issue to issue and member to member. In general, many of these can be offset through the use of what Richard Hall and Alan Deardorff (2006) call legislative subsidies. The legislative subsidy, according to Hall and Deardorff, is a “matching grant of costly policy information, political intelligence, and labor to the enterprises of strategically selected legislators” (69). The subsidy is not meant to change minds, but rather help supplement the work already being done on issues by members of Congress by decreasing the costs of engagement. Therefore, lobbying is directed primarily at those individuals who are most likely to support the issue position the interest group holds. By doing this, members are alerted to issues, and in turn, lead supportive members of Congress to lobby their peers and work toward the goals of the interest group.

### ***The Media versus Political Elites***

While we understand the roles the individual political actors play in issue policy, we also need to understand the role played by the group actually writing the stories that move members into the limelight. The media in general, and the political media in particular, are guided by what James Hamilton (2004) refers to as the profit motive. Simply put, journalists’ stories are an economic good, and the goal is to maximize the use by the general public of that economic good. Hamilton shows that coverage of issues and events can be directed at specific groups in an attempt to get occasional consumers of the product to consume the product more (2004, 91-102). As a result, the media is attempting to increase its base, and will use coverage to do so.

Relatedly, there is the question of who actually gets “in” when it comes to coverage from newspapers and media. The answer here is multifaceted. Most studies have shown a

relationship between leadership and media engagement in the United States (Arnold 2004, Cook 1986, Kuklinski and Sigelman 1992, Schaffner and Sellers 2003, Sellers and Schaffner 2007, Squire 1988, Waismel-Manor and Tsfaty 2011). Other studies have shown effects when members of Congress attempt to engage in what Vos (2014) calls “media work”, activities designed to attract journalists (Fogarty 2012). However, the effects of other variables beyond leadership and “media work” are more muddled. Conducting a literature review of the state of member engagement in media, Vos (2014) finds general support in the literature for the leadership-based hypothesis and general support for the “media work” hypothesis, but varied support in other areas, such as gender, seniority, and party. Therefore, we can assume that members of Congress could take one of two pathways to get themselves into media: either climb the leadership ladder and reach the top, or do things that will lead the media to notice their activity.

To become involved in issue areas in the media, members must have some relationship with the journalists who construct the stories in media. While some view the news media as a distinctive institution with general independence from the pressures of political actors (Sparrow 1999), others view Congress’ relationship with journalists more as a relationship between two groups seeking goods. Politicians seek publicity and journalists seek stories (Cook 1989; 2006), with politicians becoming, in the words of Timothy Cook, “coauthors of the news” (Cook 2006, 162). Cook in particular connects the concepts of newsmaking and policy making, using the example of Senate press conferences and endorsements as not only newsmaking endeavors, but also cueing endeavors to construct policy (Cook 2006, see also Cook 1989). Further, others have found a relationship between journalists and House press secretaries, one that shapes the portrayal of members of Congress within the media (Gershon 2012).

If members of Congress can be co-authors of the news, then members have the potential to influence not only the discussion of policy in the media, but when that policy discussion occurs. Members interested in creating issue salience should be regularly involved in an issue, in an attempt to increase discussion of that issue. For members interested in a more powerful office, engagement would be timed with the appearance of the issue in question at the front of the political agenda. Recalling the earlier discussion of salience, leadership then will wait to become significantly involved until after an issue has achieved increased salience as leadership does not want to draw attention to an issue unless leadership engagement is required to keep control of the issue's discussion in the media.

### **Constructing a Theory of Issue Salience as Subsidy**

Keeping previous work in mind, I will now walk through my adaption of Hall and Deardorff's subsidy theory, applying it to issue salience. To do this, I offer a series of assumptions about how members of Congress act and their relationship with the political media.

First, I assume that **members of Congress are goal-seeking**. Simply, members of Congress want to get something out of their service in the United States Congress. What this may be is varied from more immediate goals such as re-election and best serving their districts to broader goals such as the enactment of "good public policy" or the seeking of more power either within or outside of the body of Congress they serve in. These goals themselves are not mutually exclusive, as members of Congress may seek policy change not only because they see the policy change as good, however they may be using that policy change as a way to promote themselves in anticipation of running for higher office. In general, members of Congress are focused on goals that they look to achieve through their work in their elected position.

Second, I assume that **the goals of members of Congress vary from member to member**. Following Schlesinger's (1966) discussion of the types of ambition, different members of Congress want different things out of their work in Congress: some members want to serve their districts and retire, others seek to move up and become committee chairs or reach a higher political office, and others want to change public policy. Each member of Congress will have a different set of goals that will guide how they become involved in issues: some members may stick to specific issues while others will focus on a litany of issues, engaging to help their own personal political aims.

The third assumption I make is that **the goals of members of Congress also vary from issue to issue**. A member of Congress simply does not have the capacity to focus on all issues at any one time. Therefore, members need to pick and choose what issues receive the most focus. A member of Congress from Kansas who wants to focus on district issues will devote significant amounts of time to agricultural issues, while a member in New York City in the same situation will focus on financial issues. It is due to this that members of Congress then will not engage in all issues equally, and will need to be strategic about the types of issues they do and do not engage.

Fourth, I assume that **member behavior will vary depending on their status on a specific issue area**. In particular, members of Congress who are already policy leaders on an issue do not need to further promote discussion of an issue area. A Banking Committee chair does not need to engage on banking issues because they already have formal power over the committee in question. Their needs and desires can be achieved through the inner workings of the congressional committee, making the need for engagement moot. Members who do not have

policy control on the other hand will be more likely to engage, in order to move policy closer to their desired policy on a specific issue.

Finally, I assume that **members of Congress have at least some control over the coverage that they receive related to issues**. When I refer here to coverage, it is coverage related to engagement in specific issue areas. Following Cook's (2006) discussion of members of Congress as "co-authors of the news," I assume that members of Congress have the capacity to engage in a specific issue when it fits both their needs and the needs of the media itself. Members of Congress can either control their own coverage by becoming the media, whether through commentaries or opinion pieces to newspapers, but also through their decision to comment on issues, introduce legislation related to specific issues, and through contacts with reporters. While members of Congress do not have total control over coverage, members do have the ability to decide whether or not to become involved in an issue in media.

Based on these assumptions, I will now construct the concept of issue salience as a subsidy that members of Congress use to determine when to engage in a specific issue area. It is important in particular to establish how the subsidy of issue salience differs from that of the subsidy of lobbying as outlined by Hall and Deardorff (2006), as the differences between the two will lead to different behavior from members of Congress.

### ***Issue Salience as a Subsidy***

As we know based on Hall and Deardorff's work, a subsidy is "matching grant of costly policy information, political intelligence, and labor to the enterprises of strategically selected legislators" (69), and is something that is used by members of Congress not to change their mind, but rather to supplement the member's ability to work on a specific issue area. Immediately, we can see that there are two main differences between issue salience and lobbying when thinking in



terms of a subsidy. The first of these is that issue salience (and changes to issue salience) do not change the amount of labor a member of Congress devotes to a specific issue area. Second, unlike lobbying, every member of Congress has similar access to issue attention. We can assume that members of Congress and their staffs are monitoring media regularly, seeing what issues are receiving more coverage than other issues.

As a result, the subsidy of issue salience has three factors that make it different than the subsidy of lobbying. First, all members of Congress should have equal access to the subsidy, in that every member of Congress has equal access to media coverage of an issue. Therefore, unlike Hall and Deardorff's subsidy, we should expect that all members of Congress could use the subsidy to their advantage. Next, the subsidy only comes with new political information. Unlike Hall and Deardorff's lobbying subsidy, there are no extra bodies added to the equation as there are with lobbyist work. Journalists, unlike lobbyists, profit on the dissemination of their trade, not the successful use of their trade in Congress. Therefore, the journalistic role here is one of an information provider rather than manpower provider, with the information being the change in issue salience. Finally, salience, unlike lobbying, does not necessarily come with a specific viewpoint. It is up to the member of Congress to implant their viewpoint upon the issue once they know it is important.

What type of political information and intelligence are we working with when we discuss issue salience as a subsidy? In addition to discussion of the problem at hand, the changes in issue coverage shed light on the importance of the issue to the general public. Simply, members of Congress see that increased coverage on an issue from the media means that an issue is important to the political media, and more importantly, the public at large. By drawing attention to specific problems and issues, the media sheds light on specific events and processes that a

member of Congress can offer a political solution to, depending on their own personal goals and issue goals. Members of Congress then can offer those solutions, promoting both their policy and themselves to the larger media. Knowing that the media is acting on an issue, members now know that this is the perfect time to join in with their political solution. Therefore, the information in play is the increase in salience. When attention to an issue increases in the public, members of Congress see this increase and act, engaging in the issue in an attempt to be the policy winner.

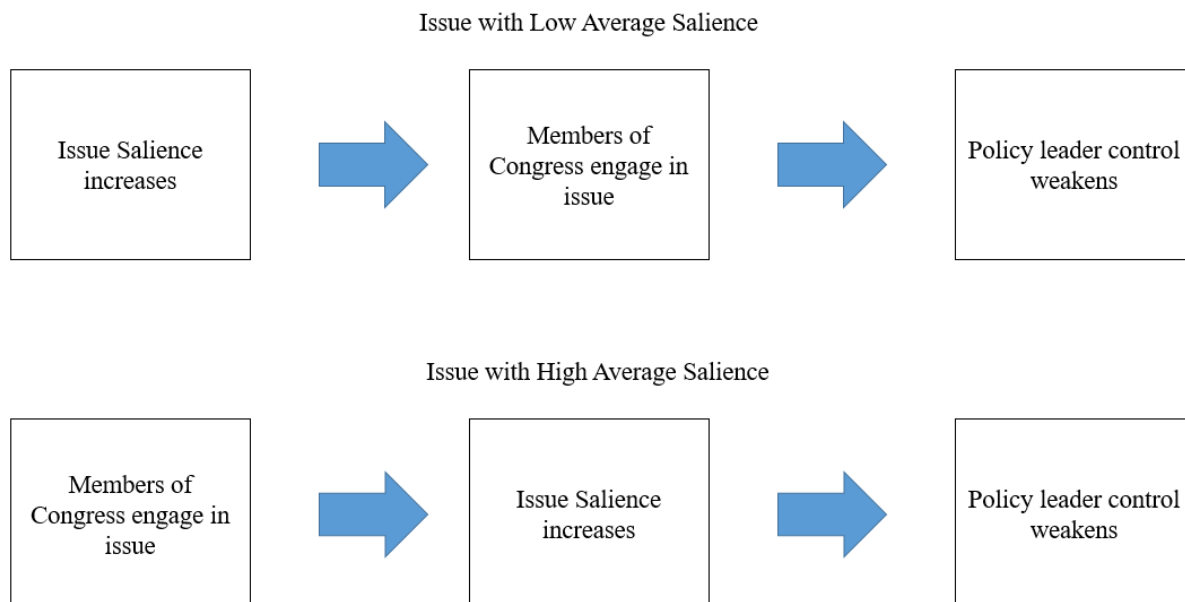
The use of the issue salience subsidy will differ depending on the amount of salience already present in an issue area. As the effect of the issue salience subsidy is based on the increase of salience in an issue area, the power of an increase will change depending on the average level of salience. Simply put, an increase from 1 to 10 articles on an issue per month (an increase of 900%) is different than an increase of 50 to 60 articles per month (an increase of only 20%). An issue with on average high coverage will already have a litany of policy actors engaging in the media on the issue on a daily basis. As a result, an individual member of Congress will have a harder time making a name for themselves on that issue versus an issue with little coverage, where there are fewer actors involved. It is because of this that members of Congress who wish to change these high average issue areas need to be more strategic, creating their own salience and carving out their own niche within the coverage. Members use the subsidy not to react to the news, but to create the news through their policy niche.

What does this all mean for public policy? By either acting on the increase in salience (as in cases of low average salience) or acting to create one's own salience (as in the case of generally high average salience), the potential increases to either change public policy or prevent leaders from creating new public policy. Extending from Schattschneider's conflict expansion

theory, the increase of salience results in more individuals knowing about a policy issue. When salience is at its constant state, policy leaders control the issue through both formal (committee) and informal (deferential) means. When salience increases, policy solutions outside of the leader's solution are now available for other members of Congress and the general public to peruse, giving other solutions potential allies. As a result, policy leaders may lose control over their issue to other members of Congress.

In Figure 1.1, I contrast the different movements of members of Congress depending on the level of issue salience. I differentiate between issues that on average receive low or middling coverage with those that on average receive high amounts of coverage.

**Figure 1.1: Direction of Member Activity and Issue Salience by Level of Average Salience**



As we can see from Figure 1.1, the expectations for salience differ depending on levels of salience. On issues with on average low levels of salience, the subsidy acts as a signal, telling members of Congress that an issue is important and that they should become involved in the issue. At high average levels of salience, on the other hand, members of Congress need to act in

order to increase salience, and will have to carve out a niche that contrasts their own view with the view of leadership. Only then will members have a chance of changing public policy.

## **Exploring the Salience Subsidy**

### ***Hypotheses for the Relationship between Salience and Members of Congress***

By using salience as a subsidy, members of Congress are cued to when they should engage in discussion. Simply, if salience increases on an issue, then members are more likely to engage in that issue area. Based on the above discussion, I now move into the expectations that will drive the rest of this dissertation, from which I will derive hypotheses in each of three empirical chapters. I will first focus on member activity itself before moving into the questions of leadership response and policy change.

In general, my primary hypothesis guiding the rest of this work is that **as the number of articles on a subject increases, the number of members of Congress who engage in that issue area also increases**. Members of Congress see increases in issue salience, and use that as a reason to become involved in an issue area. Increases in issue salience will not move all members, but the change of interest will move some members, increasing the number of members who engage on a specific subject.

My second hypothesis derives from the first, looking at the role the level of average salience plays in the process from a temporal standpoint. Primarily, I expect that **on issues of low average salience, articles will lead members of Congress to become involved, while on issues of high average salience, members of Congress will lead to more articles being written on a subject**. At low levels, members wait and anticipate changes in issue salience to become involved in an issue, acting on the increased salience to attempt to move public policy. This period of anticipation is not possible in very high levels of salience due to the ever-presence

of the issue in regular discussion. Instead, members must create the news on the discussion if they wish to move policy.

Moving on to the question of leadership response, my third hypothesis is that **as members of Congress engage in policy that they do not control, leaders will be more likely to engage in the issue in the media**, in order to maintain their policy control and the current status quo on an issue area. Leaders will normally avoid media coverage of their issues, hoping to maintain control through the committee process. However, if other members of Congress are attempting to take control of their turf, then a leader will be more likely to engage to protect their piece of the status quo.

Finally, on the question of policy change, I hypothesize that **increases in issue salience improve the possibility of non-leader policy change, and decrease the possibility of policy leader-backed policy change**. With the presence and engagement of more members of Congress, non-leaders have a greater (albeit small) opportunity to push public policy on an issue closer to a non-leader's ideal point. The possibility of success is rare, but the potential does exist to enact significant policy change on an issue. In addition, leader-backed change is less likely to happen during times of higher salience. There will be times that leaders want to enact policy change, through what Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones call "waves of enthusiasm" (2009, 84). When fewer people know about the policy change, leaders should be able to enact the change, even with some opposition. However, increases in issue salience will bring more people into the issue, making it much harder for policy leaders to control and change an issue area.

### ***An Overview of this Dissertation***

The four expectations outlined above guide the rest of this dissertation, exploring the question of how an individual member of Congress can go about changing public policy without

going through the normal processes of Congressional policy leadership development. To test my expectations, I employ an original dataset of article and member of Congress mentions on 10 issues in *The Washington Post*, nine issues with generally lower levels of issue salience over a 36 year period (1977-2012) and 1 issue with very high salience over a 10 year period (1977-1986). I use the *Post* for two reasons: the *Post* is a newspaper with a national presence and a close proximity to members of Congress. As it is the primary paper of record for the United States Congress, it offers members of Congress an opportunity to extend themselves outside of their local range into national coverage. In addition, the paper also has the longest continuous coverage in Lexis-Nexis, allowing for a more comprehensive time series for analysis.

I employ 10 issues in my analysis, drawn from using either one or two subject search terms within the Lexis-Nexis subject category database. The 9 issues used over a 36 year period are: agricultural subsidies, climate change/global warming, drug policy, energy policy, gays & lesbians, immigration, income assistance/social welfare, NASA/space policy, and nuclear weapons. I use these 9 issues to allow for a wide amount of variation in terms of content area and coverage by the *Washington Post*, as well as coverage both within and outside of the context of Congress. Some of these issues, like immigration and nuclear weapons, receive regular coverage in the *Washington Post*, while others, such as agricultural subsidies, receive far less coverage. The goal is to create an expansive study of the nature of how members of Congress engage in issues, and to look at how this engagement relates to issue salience.

In addition to the 9 issues studied over a 36 year period, I employ a dataset on one issue over a shorter time period, looking at taxation from 1977-1986. Taxation, unlike the other 9 issues, is an issue that is constantly in the news, with on average nearly 2 articles per day written on the subject during the period under study. Members of Congress are inundated with

discussion of taxation, and as a result their behavior on the question of taxation should differ from their behavior when looking at issues with less coverage.

In Chapter 2, I outline the larger research design of the dissertation, discussing the temporal questions that come with looking at a relationship between two concepts over time as well as an overview of each of the 10 issues that will be explored in the subsequent three chapters of the dissertation, both in terms of the collection of data in general as well as the potential nuances that exist in each issue area and the policy leadership I identified in each case.

In Chapter 3, I explore the question of member engagement in issues, looking at the role issue salience plays in members engaging issues and how leaders respond to the involvement of other members of Congress. For this chapter, I focus on the 9 issues with 36 years of data, exploring at the monthly article level how members of Congress use issue salience to determine when to become involved in issue areas, and how leaders respond to the movements made by other members of Congress. I look at the first and third primary hypotheses here, exploring periods when changes in issue salience are large relative to general coverage of a specific issue area to see whether more members of Congress engage in these issues, and the ramifications that come from this engagement for policy leadership.

In Chapter 4, I explore the question of policy change, focusing on the final hypothesis by looking at four potential types of policy change derived from two variables: leadership-induced change versus non-leadership induced change during times of either lower or increased salience. Here, I use three issues to explore how individuals attempt to change public policy under different conditions, focusing on agricultural subsidies (leadership and non-leadership induced change during times of lower salience), immigration (leadership-induced change during

increased salience), and nuclear weapons policy (non-leadership induced change during increased salience).

In Chapter 5, I explore the question of constant high salience, focusing on the issue of taxation. Here, my focus is on the second hypothesis that high average levels of salience will lead to member-induced action versus newspaper-induced action on issue areas. I use a weekly level of analysis because of the large amount of data on taxation over the period of 1977-1986. I focus in particular on the period 1977-1981, and the work of Congressman Jack Kemp of New York. Kemp, a Republican in the minority with no tax-writing committee experience, becomes one of the central actors behind taxation in the United States Congress, culminating in the passage of a version of his tax cut bill, the Economic Recovery Tax Act (ERTA), in 1981. Kemp's story is one combining perseverance with opportunity: Kemp creates his own salience on the issue of taxation through constant bill introductions and appeals to Republican Party leaders, eventually getting the support of former California governor Ronald Reagan for his tax cut. Kemp's story signifies the process by which a member can even succeed at policy change when issue salience is on average high.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I explore the ramifications of my work, looking at the question of what all of the discussion of media tells us about how members of Congress use salience to their advantage. If we can think of both lobbying and issue salience as subsidies, what other forms of outside information could also be helpful to members of Congress? I will recall my three primary goals here, looking at my work related to the role of issue salience in member considerations, the relationship between members of Congress and the media, and the role these processes play in policy change.



## **Chapter 2: Research Design and Case Structure**

### **Introduction**

In this dissertation, I use a series of original datasets on 9 issues discussed in *The Washington Post* between the years 1977-2012 and a 10<sup>th</sup> issue between 1977 and 1986, looking at both the number of articles written and the number of members of Congress who discuss issues in *The Washington Post* during this period. In this chapter, I outline the research design, focusing on the creation of my datasets as well as the process of data creation and general testing. In addition, I walk through the nine series that will be used for testing in Chapters 3 and 4, looking at the major events under analysis during the period tested and the nature of the data for each case (in Chapter 5, I will give similar treatment to my tenth case, taxation). My goal here is to link back theory to data. In this case, I use media data to look at how members of Congress become involved in issue areas over time. Members see the discussion in media of a subject, and then become involved in the issue, in turn weakening the control policy leaders have over the process.

### **Data Exploration and Creation**

#### ***The Washington Post between 1977 and 2012***

My primary data for this dissertation is a series of original datasets on issues written about in *The Washington Post* between the period 1977 and 2012. I collected both the total number of articles and articles that contained members of Congress as identified from a series of search term identifiers for members of Congress.

I use only *The Washington Post* because of its proximity to Congress and the equal effect publicity will have on members of Congress themselves. *The Washington Post* is the primary newspaper of the United States capital. *The Washington Post* covers the activities of Washington, D.C. regularly, including activities in the United States Congress. As a result, members of Congress will receive general coverage here for their activities on bills and proposals. In addition, the wide variation in coverage of local members of Congress among local newspapers (see Arnold 2004) makes *The Washington Post* an ideal stop for members to push for issues, as one of the *Post*'s primary foci is the activities occurring within Washington D.C, including Congress.

In addition, following Cook's notion of "coauthors of the news" (Cook 2006), every member of Congress will want coverage in *The Washington Post*. *The Washington Post* is a newspaper read by policymakers and people in the United States Congress. If a member of Congress wants to appeal to other members in the House or Senate, the *Post* is a good place to do this, with the appeal getting from paper to staffers of members who may share interest with the appellant.

In addition, every member will want to compete here. While other newspapers, such as *The New York Times*, may be larger in terms of circulation, some members will have less need for coverage in non-Washington papers. The ability to appeal to policymakers gives the *Post* an advantage over other papers: while some members may be particularly competing to get in (such as members from Virginia and Maryland), all members will likely have some desire for coverage from *The Washington Post*. While some issues may not be fully representative of national coverage due to the lack of reporting over the period, other issues with regular amounts of coverage, such as immigration and nuclear weapons, are in line with expectations on the level of

coverage required by researchers to be considered nationally representative (Atkinson, Lovett, and Baumgartner 2014).

For nine of my ten cases, I use the time period of 1977-2012 in order to maximize the amount of data I have available to analyze. I began my collection period in 1977 due to data availability, as the data was collected from Lexis-Nexis Academic, which has data for *The Washington Post* back to January 1, 1977. The data ends in 2012 as I began data collection in 2014 and wanted my data to encompass the entirety of sessions of Congress. The result is that I have data from the period between the beginning of the 95<sup>th</sup> Congress and the end of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. The time period also gives a specific picture of the United States Congress, namely one in the aftermath of major institutional changes in the United States Congress resulting from both the Subcommittee Bill of Rights and the 1974 Budget and Impoundment Control Act, both of which reshuffled the House committee and subcommittee structures. This era also includes time periods of total Democratic control of the executive and legislative branches of government (1977-1980, 1993-1994, 2009-2010), total Republican control (2001- May 2002, 2003-2006) and divided control between the two parties, resulting in extensive variation in terms of who has power within Congress.

I collected all articles in *The Washington Post* that reference an issue area, using only newspaper articles. To collect these, I searched Lexis-Nexis using issues and an 85% threshold according to Lexis-Nexis' algorithm-assigned issue structure. Simply, if an article receives a score of 85% or greater on that issue according to Lexis-Nexis, then the article appears in the dataset. In Appendix 1, I include search terms for all ten issue areas for both the large searches for all articles and the smaller general searches for articles including members of Congress. I use an 85% threshold in order to maximize article collection while minimizing the inclusion of

articles only tangentially related to the issue in question. In addition the 85% threshold allows me to capture articles about multiple subjects that focus only one blurb on the issue. In general, the goal here is to maximize collection coverage of issues while minimizing the presence of articles that have nothing to do with the subject. In addition, after 2003, I used the Newspaper only identifier on Lexis-Nexis, as Lexis-Nexis includes internet-only articles, internet versions of articles, and blogs in their counts, especially during the period 2011-2012, where the counts given by Lexis-Nexis on first search are double the actual newspaper counts because the system counts the internet version of an article along with the non-internet version of an article.

### ***Members of Congress***

I have two main dependent variables in my analysis. The first is the number of articles written on an issue in a given time period, as discussed above. The second is the number of members of Congress who are mentioned in *The Washington Post* on a specific issue area. To maximize collection of members, I use a second set of search terms that, like the search terms for all articles, can be found in Appendix 1. The second search is simply the first search for all articles on a subject combined with a series of identifiers *The Washington Post* uses for Democratic and Republican members of Congress. I used preliminary searches to determine the style used by *The Washington Post* on member of Congress identification. From these searches, I found that for the most part members of Congress were identified using their names and positions along with an abbreviated party and state. With this in mind, I constructed my identifiers. These identifiers include searching for versions of the words Congressman/woman, Senator, and Representative, as well as leadership terms such as Chair, Speaker, Majority/Minority Leader, and Whip, combined with a party identifier nearby. My search would then find such things as “Congressman Edward Markey (D-MA)” or “Speaker Thomas P. “Tip”

O'Neill (D-MA)". The goal in this collection was to find as many members of Congress involved as possible.

After running the searches and compiling the data, I (with the help of a research assistant) hand-coded every member of Congress involved in an issue area. I used hand-coding here rather than machine coding because my searches were designed to maximize the number of members collected, and the searches themselves allowed for more articles to be identified than the number of articles including members of Congress. Those identified included state legislators (especially those in Maryland and Virginia) as well as people who may chair some group who happen to have a middle initial of D or R. In addition, some members of Congress also did not get directly identified through my coding system, usually because they were either part of a series of members being identified, the identifier appeared too far away from the member's name, or potential transcription errors between printing and transferring the printing to Lexis-Nexis. In addition, I learned afterwards that *The Washington Post* occasionally used the terms Democratic and Republican rather than simply always using D and R. There is then the potential that I missed some members of Congress and some articles in the member searches. I assume that the misses do not lead to systematic errors because of the randomness of use of the words Democratic and Republican by *Washington Post* writers over time.

After running the searches, I collected every member of Congress mentioned on an issue area in *The Washington Post* (regardless of whether or not the search was able to directly identify them), in order to achieve my primary goal to collect as many members as possible. While they may not be directly identified by my search, these are still members of Congress who are involved in the issue. I identify members of Congress as being involved on an issue if I determined that a member was actively involved in the issue. I define active involvement as

being any type of involvement mentioned by *The Washington Post* about a specific member of Congress that is not simply about that member voting on an issue. These activities include, but are not limited to, comments from members, introductions of bills mentioned by the *Post*, floor activity, committee activity outside of voting on an issue, opinion pieces written by members of Congress, and discussions of member activity in editorials and commentary pieces. If a member of Congress' vote is noted and the member offers a reason for that vote to the *Post*, then that is considered active involvement, as the member wishes to go on the record about why they made the decision they made.

I use active involvement rather than all involvement because active involvement assumes members seek out publicity when they receive coverage on non-voting matters. When members take on any of the above actions, there is an expectation that members wish these activities to be covered by newspapers. Members engaging in active involvement are doing something that most of the rest of Congress is not doing on that issue at a given time. A vote, on the other hand, is an activity being taken on by all 535 members of Congress at any given time. To borrow from work on urban communities, a more passive action, one that is within the minimum of activity on an issue area (Lyons and Lowery 1986). The regularity of voting makes it a less direct action for media coverage than other potential activities.

One final note on members is an issue with independent members of Congress. The search terms do not include independents. Independents are significantly harder to search for in the *Washington Post* because the primary term identified with them, Ind., happens to also be used as an abbreviation for the state of Indiana. In addition, there are only 7 independents who served in Congress as independents during my time period: Dean Barkley, Henry F. Byrd Jr., Virgil Goode (2001-2002), Jim Jeffords (after May 2001), Joe Lieberman (after 2007), Bernie

Sanders, and Bob Smith (2000). Of these, only Byrd (Finance Subcommittee on Taxation) and Jeffords (Senate Environment and Public Works Committee) serve as chairs or ranking members on relevant issues in my data while independents (Smith became chair of Environment and Public Works after returning to the Republican Party). To deal with this, I conducted individual searches for Byrd and Jeffords in their respective issue areas (taxation and climate change), in order to most directly capture issue leadership.

The two main variables I focus on are the number of members of Congress mentioned on issues and the number of articles on a specific issue. I am working with a variety of different issues, each with differences in member involvement, general salience, and coverage over time. In the next section, I explore those differences by giving brief treatment to each of the issue areas.

## **Case Structure**

I will now walk through each of the 9 cases under discussion in Chapters 3 and 4. The first nine issue areas include discussion between the years 1977-2012. In Chapter 5, I give similar treatment to taxation during the period 1977-1986. I begin by exploring the case selection process before getting into the nuances in each case. I present three particular pieces of information: the general trend of coverage over time, the major events encompassed in that period, and finally my identification of policy leadership on the issue. To identify policy leadership, I used both *CQ Almanac* and *The Almanac of American Politics* to identify relevant political committees for each issue, and then used the same two sources to identify policy leaders (chairs and ranking members for each Congress, from the 97<sup>th</sup> Congress (1977-1978) to the 112<sup>th</sup> (2011-2012)).

### ***Case Selection Process***

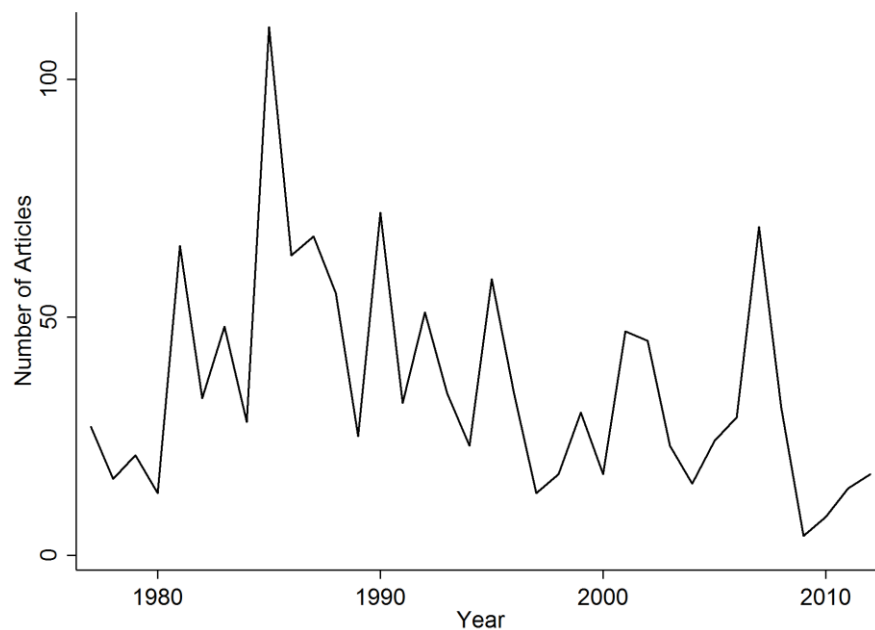
I selected cases based on a variety of factors. Importantly, I wanted a range in both the number of articles written on a subject as well as the number of members of Congress who were regularly involved in the subject. In addition, I wanted issues that varied in terms of content and potential population of members that would qualify as leadership. There are a few cases where overlap exists, including Climate Change and Gas & Oil Policy, which both include the House and Senate Energy Committees. In general, each issue area has different combinations of policy leaders based on the committees that deal with the issue in question.

### ***Agricultural Subsidies***

Agricultural subsidies have existed in the United States budget since the 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act, which gave farmers money to not grow on certain lands.. Since then, the subsidy program has expanded into supplementing farmer incomes in a variety of agricultural goods, from wheat and corn to mohair and peanuts. Agricultural subsidies themselves are not highly talked about in American politics. In Figure 2.1, I present a yearly graph for the number of articles written on agricultural subsidies in *The Washington Post*. In my search, I use the search term “agricultural subsidies” to find articles and members.



**Figure 2.1: Articles on Agricultural Subsidies in *The Washington Post*, 1977-2012**



As we can see from Figure 2.1, the issue of agricultural subsidies is not highly salient at any point in the period 1977-2012. At its peak, 1985 (during the Farm Aid Movement), there are 111 articles on the subject, or about 2 a week. At its lowest points, there may be at most an article every 3 months, as seen in 2009, when only 4 articles were written about agricultural subsidies.

For the most part, most of the upward spikes related to subsidies are linked to years when the United States Congress passed the Farm Bill, an omnibus piece of legislation around agriculture that includes subsidies. In Chapter 4, I will further explore one of these farm bills, the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1995, and the road members of Congress took to pass it.

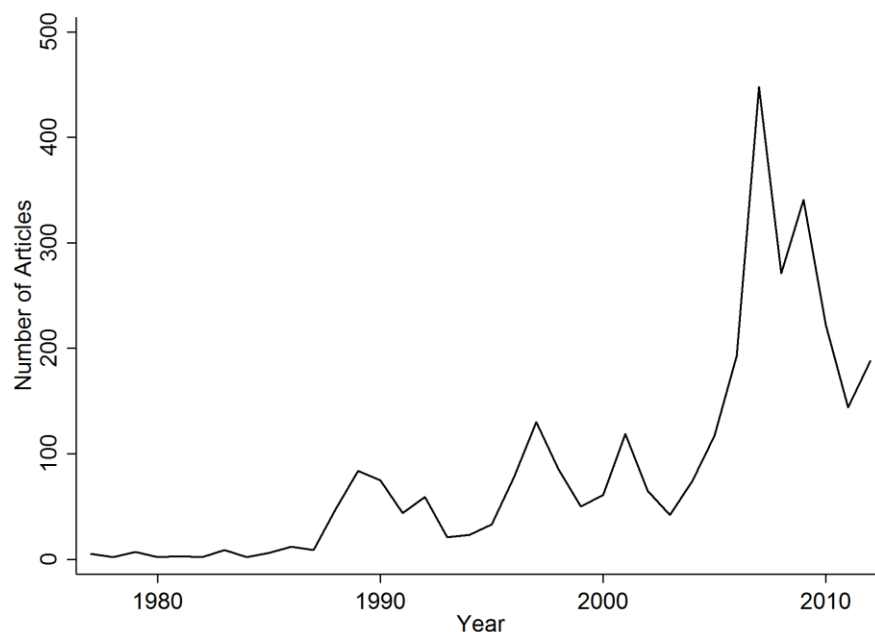
For leadership, I identified two full committees and three subcommittees that hold policy leadership on agricultural subsidies. These are the House Agriculture Committee, the Senate Agriculture Committee, and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, the Senate

Agriculture Subcommittee on Agricultural Production, and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture.

### ***Climate Change & Global Warming***

Since the passage of the Clean Air Act in 1970, questions of global warming and climate change have been a part of American political life. However, until the late 1980s the issue received little coverage in *The Washington Post*. In Figure 2.2, I present a yearly graph for the number of articles written on climate change and global warming in *The Washington Post*. I use both search terms due to their interchangeability both in use by the general public and by Lexis-Nexis when identifying articles.

**Figure 2.2: Articles on Climate Change in *The Washington Post*, 1977-2012**



As we can see from Figure 2.2, from about 1977 to 2006, coverage never tops 130 articles, as the issue was relegated to the sidelines. After 2007, when the Democrats took control of the House, coverage greatly intensified, driven by an increased focus on the climate change issue due to changes in the Earth's temperature and the work of former Vice President Al Gore,

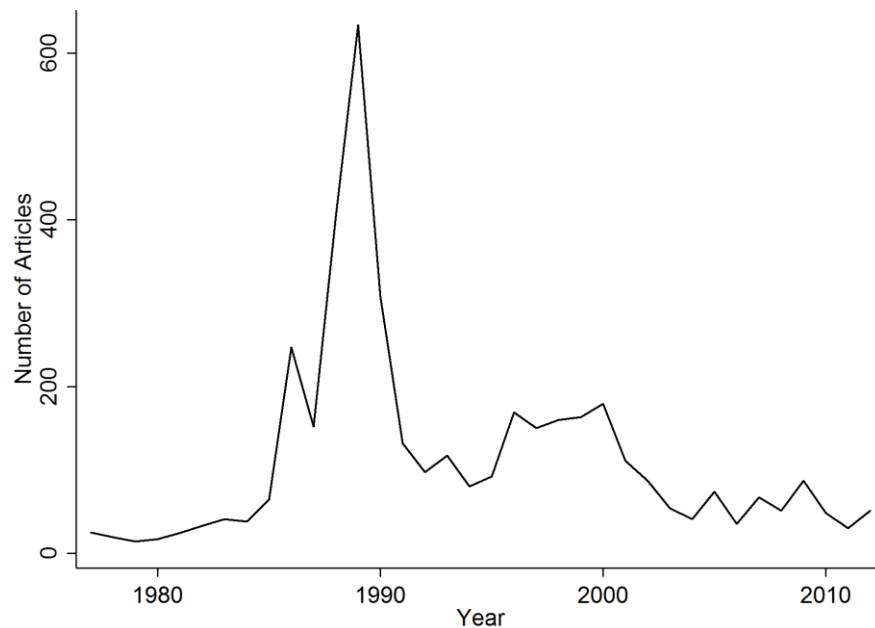
whose documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, put direct focus on the issue leading up to the 2008 election.

For policy leadership, I use 9 committees and subcommittees that have some jurisdiction over environmental issues. These committees are the House Interior Committee, the House Energy Committee, the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming (2007-2011), the Senate Energy Committee, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, the House Energy Subcommittee on Energy and Environment, the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Environment, the Senate Environment Subcommittee on Environmental Pollution, and the Senate Environment Subcommittee on Clean Air.

### ***Drug Policy***

While the war on drugs in the United States began in the 1970s, it would take until the mid-1980s to see significant interest in the subject from the media. In Figure 2.3, I present a yearly graph for the number of articles written on drug policy in *The Washington Post*. I designed the search term for drug policy to include all articles with drug policy subjects, but take out articles with only subject terms for prescription drug policy, an issue identifier used for such things as Medicare Part D and other regulations related to prescription drugs.

**Figure 2.3: Articles on Drug Policy in *The Washington Post*, 1977-2012**



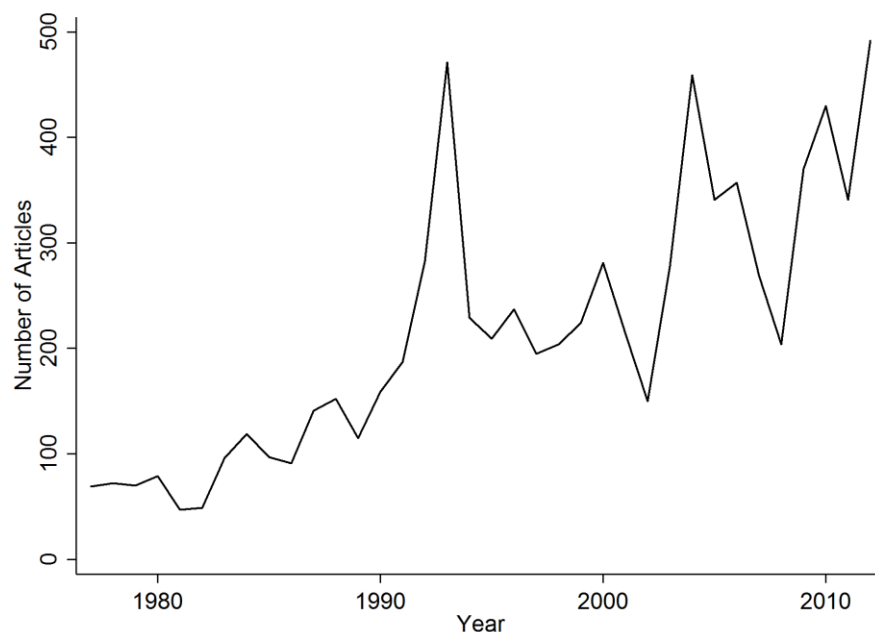
Coverage of drugs peaks in the late 1980s, with 634 articles on drug policy in *The Washington Post* in 1989 (or about 2 articles per day). The upward movement on drug policy begins in 1986, following the cocaine overdose death of University of Maryland basketball player and #2 overall NBA draft pick Len Bias. In the period 1986-1990, there were on average 349 articles written per year in *The Washington Post* on drug policy, nearly one article per day. This five year period accounts for 42.6% (1,795 of 4,095) of the total coverage of drug policy over the 36 years in my study.

I use 5 committees and subcommittees to track policy leadership. These are the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, the House Government Reform Subcommittee related to Drugs, the Senate Labor Subcommittee related to drugs, and the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Drugs and Crime.

## ***Gays & Lesbians***

The rights of gay and lesbian Americans changed markedly between 1977 and 2012. At the beginning of the time period, only a few city council members and other legislators were openly homosexual, and the issue of homosexuality was not at the forefront of American politics, a far cry from the end of the series, when major events reshaped American policy on gays and lesbians. In Figure 2.4, I present a yearly graph for the number of articles written on gays & lesbians in *The Washington Post* between 1977 and 2012.

**Figure 2.4: Articles on Gays & Lesbians in *The Washington Post*, 1977-2012**



As we can see, the amount of coverage gay & lesbian issues received increased throughout the 1980s and 1990s, with coverage of the issue on an upward spike by the end of the series. The coverage of gay and lesbian issues involves a multitude of topics during the period 1977-2012, starting with the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and moving into the enactment of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” following the election of Bill Clinton and passage of the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996. In the 2000s, the movement to allow same-sex marriage and the movement to end “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” brought added discussion from *The Washington Post*,

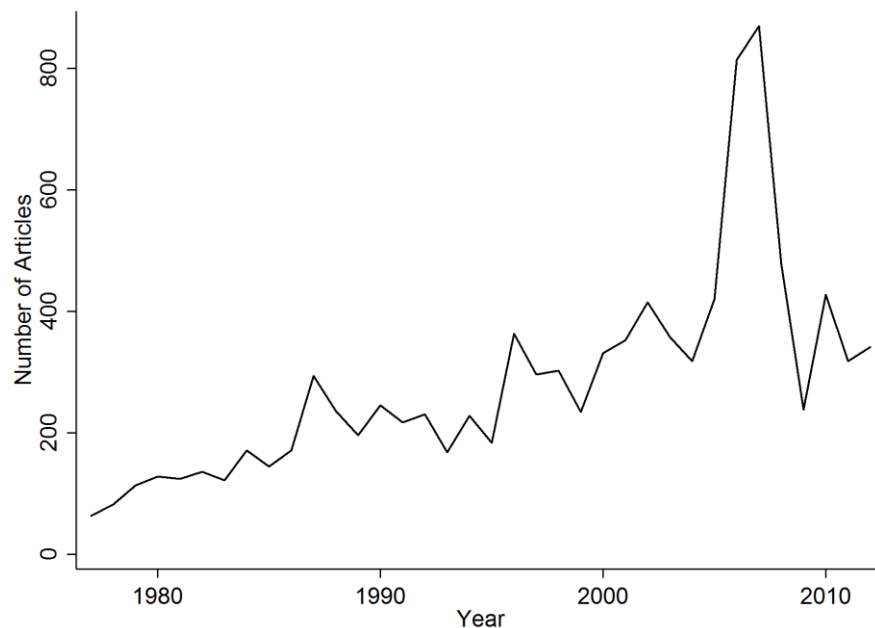
culminating in President Obama's decision to support same-sex marriage just before the 2012 presidential election.

As a result of the broadness of this issue, and the number of issue areas that the issue reaches into, this is the one issue where I was unable to assign policy leadership. There are no committees or subcommittees designed directly for gay and lesbian issues, and the number of issues (from legal issues such as equal rights and marriage to military issues to health issues) made assigning a leader problematic. As a result, rather than try to assign a specific leader, I instead leave the gays and lesbians issue out of my leader-based analysis.

### ***Immigration***

Immigration has long been a central part of American life. In the period 1977-2012, the controversy over illegal immigration intensified, culminating in a combination of legislation and protests in 2005-2006. In Figure 2.5, I present a graph of the yearly number of articles on immigration in *The Washington Post*.

**Figure 2.5: Articles on Immigration in *The Washington Post*, 1977-2012**



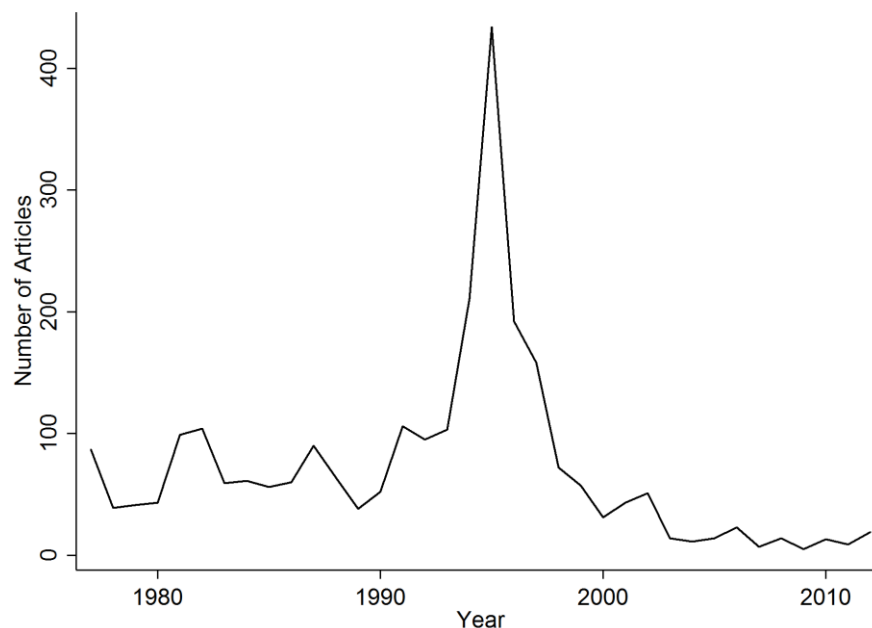
As we can see from Figure 2.5, immigration received general coverage from *The Washington Post*, though this coverage began to inch up throughout the 1980s and 1990s as questions over illegal immigration from Mexico began to overwhelm other parts of the discussion. The trend culminates in 2006-2007, with over 800 articles appearing in the *Post* on immigration each year, nearly 3 a day. This period marks the end of Republican leadership's attempts to pass immigration legislation in 2006 in the midst of massive protests by Latino groups and the beginning of Democratic leadership's attempt to also pass legislation after taking control of Congress in 2007.

For policy leadership, I identify two full committees and two subcommittees: the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, and the House and Senate Judiciary Subcommittees on Immigration. These two committees and two subcommittees are the primary leaders on this issue. As we will see in Chapter 4, these leaders were a major part of immigration policy in the 1980s, but lost significant power over time.

### ***Income Assistance & Social Welfare***

Income assistance and social welfare in the United States reached its peak discussion apex in 1995 and 1996 when the United States Congress, in the hands of Republicans for the first time since 1954, worked toward reshaping the welfare laws of the United States. In Figure 2.6, I present a graph of the yearly number of articles on income assistance and social welfare in *The Washington Post*. I use two codes due to their interchangeability in Lexis-Nexis issue generation.

**Figure 2.6: Articles on Income Assistance in *The Washington Post*, 1977-2012**



As we can see from Figure 2.6, income assistance and social welfare in general does not receive much coverage from *The Washington Post*. In most years, the average number of stories is about 1 a week. In 1995 and 1996, during the debates on welfare reform, the article counts skyrocketed, as Congress worked to change the Aid to Dependent Families with Children (AFDC) plan into the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) plan.

For policy leadership, I identify two full committees and one subcommittee. These are the House Ways & Means Committee, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and the House Ways & Means Subcommittee on Human Resources.

### ***NASA & Space Exploration***

The United States last went to the moon in 1975, though the space program has remained active and a major part of the United States government. In Figure 2.7, I present a yearly graph of articles on NASA and Space Exploration in *The Washington Post*. I use two search terms here to find articles related to NASA: space exploration, and space & aeronautics agencies. I use the two terms due to the lack of a specific term for NASA: as a result, these two terms capture the



activity of NASA both in terms of general government activity and the mission of the space program.

**Figure 2.7: Articles on NASA in *The Washington Post*, 1977-2012**

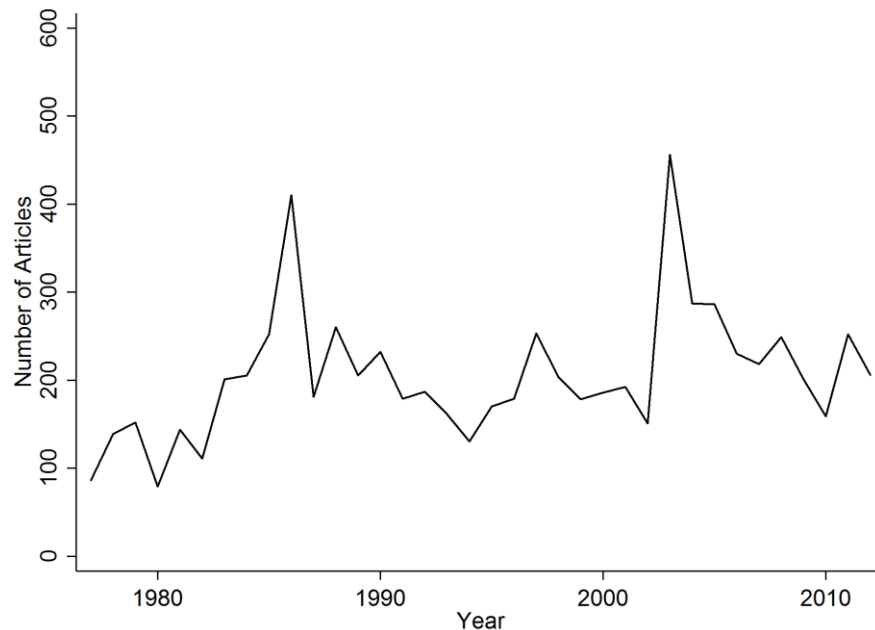


Figure 2.7 shows two major spikes in attention to NASA, in 1986 and 2003. These two spikes correspond with the two spaceship tragedies in the modern era, the explosion of the Challenger spacecraft on liftoff in January 1986 and the disintegration of the Columbia spacecraft during reentry in February 2003. Both events led to months of investigations and continued coverage, leading to questions about whether the United States should continue to invest in its space program. That being said, in general NASA receives coverage from *The Washington Post*, with at least on average 1-2 articles a week during the years with the lowest coverage.

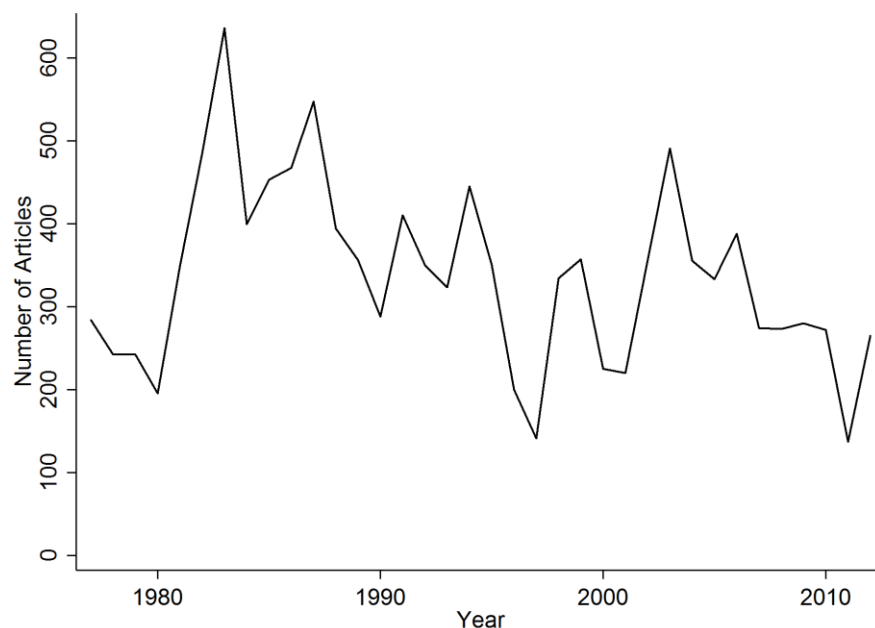
I rely on two committees and four subcommittees when determining policy leadership on NASA. These are the House and Senate Space, Science, and Technology Committees, the specific subcommittees related to space on each Space, Science, and Technology Committee,

and the specific subcommittee in the respective Appropriations committees related to space exploration and NASA's budget. The names of these committees change from time to time during the series, so I ensured that I had found the correct subcommittee in each Congress.

### ***Nuclear Weapons***

The United States had been the first nation to develop a nuclear bomb and remains the only nation to ever use an atomic weapon in wartime. During the period 1977-2012, the United States watched as the nature of war changed from a détente with the Soviet Union to a fight against global terrorism. In Figure 2.8, I present yearly data on the number of articles on nuclear weapons in *The Washington Post*.

**Figure 2.8: Articles on Nuclear Weapons in *The Washington Post*, 1977-2012**



As we can see from Figure 2.8, in general coverage of nuclear weapons is always high, with at least on average 2-3 articles a week on the subject in *The Washington Post* during the years with the lowest coverage. The primary peak in coverage occurred in the early 1980s as

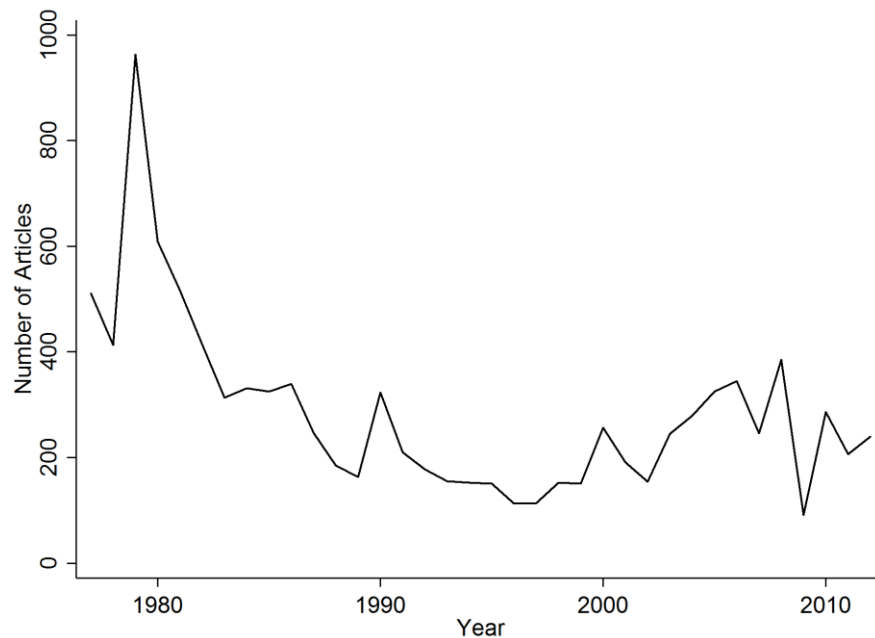
Congress debated a nuclear freeze motion offered by a bipartisan group of members and Reagan considered making changes to the nuclear arsenal.

I identify four committees and nine subcommittees to for policy leadership on nuclear weapons. These are the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, the House Foreign Relations/International Relations Committee, the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Nuclear Weapons/Strategic Forces, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, the House Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism and Nonproliferation, the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Nuclear Weapons/Strategic Forces, the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Nuclear Stockpiles, the Senate Government Operations Subcommittee on Nuclear Weapons, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, the Senate Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on European Affairs, and the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces

### ***Oil & Gas Policy***

Oil and gas policy in the United States is an issue that, while still important in American life, received particularly high coverage early in my time period, during the gas shortages of the 1970s. In Figure 2.9, I present yearly data on the number of articles in *The Washington Post* on oil and gas policy.

**Figure 2.9: Articles on Oil & Gas Policy in *The Washington Post*, 1977-2012**



In 1979, *The Washington Post* printed 963 articles on oil & gas policy, as the Carter administration and Congress attempted to deal with the oil shortages caused by the OPEC oil embargo. Coverage in the rest of the period never reaches the heights of coverage in 1979, though oil and gas policy is on average getting about an article a day from the *Post* throughout the rest of the series.

For policy leadership, I track four committees and four subcommittees to identify leaders on oil & gas policy. These are the House Interior/Natural Resources Committee, the House Commerce and Energy Committee (after creation of the Department of Energy), the House Select Committee on Energy, the Senate Energy Committee, the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Energy, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy, the House Commerce Subcommittee on Energy, and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy.

### ***The Issues in General***

Each of the nine issues has characteristics that contrast it with the other eight. Some show little movement over time (such as agricultural subsidies), others have generally high

coverage (such as NASA and Nuclear Weapons). Some, such as NASA and drug policy see movement due to the appearance of a spike in coverage, while others, such as nuclear weapons, do not show large spikes in the way other issues exhibit. The issues are all unique, with their own nuances and temporal constructions that lead to massive variation from issue to issue. In the next section, I explore the data analysis, focusing in particular on this temporal aspect through my use of time series to test how members of Congress use the media to bring about policy change.

## **Data Analysis**

I use two forms of analysis in my testing, time series cross-sectional modeling and case studies. I use two methods in order to explore the two primary mechanisms involved in my process, first the process of engaging in issue areas through the media and second the process of using that engagement to bring about changes in public policy. Chapter 3 employs the time series modeling while Chapter 4 focuses on case studies. In Chapter 5, I use both strategies to explore the large-scale salience case of taxation, focusing both on the role individual members play in the process and the role members in general play through the time series modeling.

## ***Time Series Cross-Sectional Modeling***

I use time series cross-sectional modeling in order to capture both the temporal and issue characteristics of my data. I employ a panel setup to test each of my individual models together rather than test each one individually. I test all together because all of the data comes from the same source: *The Washington Post*, during the same time period: 1977-2012. Each of the 9 issue areas, as noted above, has nuances that need to be controlled for when testing the general effects in modeling. As a result, I use fixed effects regression in all of my models.

In Chapter 3, I fit two types of models: first a cross-lag model (Selig and Little 2012) and second a fixed panel logistic regression. I use the cross-lag model to assess the relationship between member engagement and articles, in order to tease out the potential endogenous and exogenous relationships between member of Congress engagement with issue areas and the number of articles written about a subject. A cross-lag model uses two dependent variables: in this case I use the number of articles written on a subject at month  $t$  and the number of members of Congress engaged in an issue at month  $t$ . Then each dependent variable is regressed using independent variables for the previous month ( $t-1$ ) values of the two dependent variables. For example:

$$\text{Articles}_t = B0_1 + B1 * \text{Articles}_{t-1} + B2 * \text{Members}_{t-1} + e$$

$$\text{Members}_t = B0_2 + B3 * \text{Articles}_{t-1} + B4 * \text{Members}_{t-1} + e$$

The coefficients  $B1$  and  $B4$  represent the lagged dependent variable for each model, in order to see whether previous values of the dependent value predict current values. The coefficients  $B2$  and  $B3$  represent the cross-lags. Does a variable's previous value have an effect on the dependent variable at the current time? My focus then is on  $B2$  and  $B3$  in this setup, as my question focuses on how members use the media, and how members are cued by the media to become interested in an issue area. Because I work with a month level on the unit of analysis for the work in Chapter 3, I only fit the model on the previous month. In Chapter 5, I employ a weekly model using lags for the previous four weeks to see how previous weeks can have an effect on the current week. I do this because I have the data capability and a short enough time span that there should be meaningful results in looking at multiple weeks versus multiple months.

My second type of model is a fixed effects logistic regression with policy leadership involvement as the dependent variable. Here, I combine regression results with logistic curves and interaction curves to best represent and present the data and improve my general analysis of the relationship between policy leadership and involvement in issues from other members of Congress.

### **Temporal Questions**

In an ideal world, a daily or weekly level of analysis would be most appropriate for my analysis here. My focus is on the connection between members of Congress and articles, and the reaction by members of Congress to articles (and vice versa) is a crucial part of the testing process. However, for most of my issues under study the number of articles never reaches more than 3-4 articles per week. For example, in income assistance, with the exception of the period 1995-1997, the series never reaches above 200 articles, or 4 articles per week. As a result, analyzing at the week level would result in a multitude of zeroes, with those zeroes giving too much power to non-zero entries. Therefore, for the nine issues under study in Chapter 3, I use a monthly series. While the monthly series is more resistant to fluctuations due to the longer time period, all nine issues can be analyzed without the constant presence of zeroes. In Chapter 5, I use a weekly analysis because of the large amount of data I have available in taxation, an issue consistently discussed by *The Washington Post*.

### ***Case Studies***

In Chapters 4 and 5, I employ multiple case studies in an attempt to look at how individual members of Congress either change public policy or stop others from changing public policy. I use case studies here because a specific model-based analysis does not lend itself well to the public policy change process. In order to best understand how these issues are changing

(or not changing), I need to go down into the weeds of the issues to see how individual members either move legislation through Congress or stop others from moving legislation through Congress.

In particular, I explore member engagement in terms of individual members of Congress, looking at the major players in the process. Some of these individuals, such as Richard Lugar and James Sensenbrenner, are policy leaders in their respective areas who are attempting to change public policy on an issue. Others, like Edward Markey and Jack Kemp, are attempting to reshape public policy. Each member attempts to change public policy through their actions, and depending on the level of issue salience, the members either succeed (whether through moving leadership on an issue or seeing their bill become law) or preventing others from succeeding in the policy process.

In general, my focus here is on public policy: namely how does it change and what happens when individuals try to change public policy? By using case studies to explore individual change processes, I can see the cogs of the larger engagement analysis at work, attempting to move policy through the use of the media as a subsidy.

## **Discussion**

The primary purpose of this chapter is to set up the general research design and cases under analysis. A central part of my theory is that members are using salience to their advantage. By using a newspaper that receives equal competition from all members for coverage, I can see how members of Congress both view and react to the media to determine whether or not to become involved in an issue area from month to month. In addition, I can then use my case studies to explore the individual aspect of the process, in how members of Congress translate engagement into attempts at reshaping public policy.



## **Chapter 3: Issue Engagement and Leadership Response**

### **Introduction**

In the spring of 1982, as the United States and the Soviet Union continued a back-and-forth game of nuclear brinkmanship, Congress began to consider the possibility that a continually increasing nuclear arsenal would not lead to American safety from conflict. Members of Congress, led by Republican Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon and Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, introduced a bill designed to move the United States and Soviet Union toward a bilateral freeze of nuclear weapons production. While Hatfield and Kennedy had both spoken against nuclear weapons in the past, neither could be considered the primary policy leaders on nuclear weapons. As of 1982, neither Hatfield nor Kennedy had served on the Senate Armed Services Committee, the committee that would normally hear matters related to nuclear weapons production. In addition, Hatfield and Kennedy were opposing the policy leadership in their respective parties; Republican John Warner and Democrat Henry Jackson, acting as the chair and the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces, immediately came out against the Hatfield-Kennedy proposal. Hatfield and Kennedy had, in fact, engaged in a policy area where they had no jurisdictional control with the intention to usurp power from those who normally held jurisdiction over the specific policy area. While the Hatfield-Kennedy proposal itself was eventually halted by pro-Reagan forces in the House, the proposal did move policy leaders to act: within weeks, Jackson and Warner had

come up with their own freeze proposal, while President Ronald Reagan began to consider decreasing the nuclear stockpile and moving resources toward more defensive weaponry.

The Hatfield-Kennedy nuclear weapons story is one of attempted policy takeover: neither senator was a leader when it came to the issue of nuclear weapons, yet both wanted to change Congress' view of the nuclear weapons arsenal from one of production to one of a weapons freeze. By wanting to shift the issue paradigm, both were attempting to usurp control of nuclear weapons from policy leadership, and those members of Congress who held control over an issue area due to their status as the heads of committees of jurisdiction. The story of Hatfield and Kennedy is also not unique: members of Congress may not agree with how an issue is dealt with in Congress, and may not agree with the policy supported by the chairs and ranking members of the committees who hold jurisdiction on specific issues. Other members of Congress will want to become challengers, those members who wish to take on policy leadership on specific issue areas. To that end, I ask: when do individual members of Congress, who are not the leaders on a specific issue area, engage in issue discussion in the media, and how does leadership respond to movements from challengers?

I argue that members of Congress use attention to issues as a subsidy, either creating attention to a specific issue or capitalizing on increases in issue attention to engage in issues. Members do this in order to either protect an issue's status quo or to take issue power away from policy leadership, those members of Congress who hold formal committee jurisdictional control over the issue area. The result is that as attention to an issue increases in the media, more members of Congress engage in that issue area in the media in order to promote their individual policy position on the issue. A consequence of this movement is that issue policy leadership,

which would normally minimize its involvement in the issue in media, reacts in the media to movement by non-leadership.

The rest of this chapter breaks down as follows: I first outline the larger argument and the primary hypotheses at work, before focusing on data analysis. My data analysis takes on two forms: one focused on the number of members involved in discussion in issue areas and the other on the presence of leadership in the media on issues.

### **Issue Salience and Members of Congress**

With previous scholarship in mind, I argue that to best understand why members engage in new issue areas, we need to understand how members of Congress view salience. We know members of Congress want to minimize costs of engagement when becoming involved in an issue. One way to do this is through the use of subsidies. Recalling Hall and Deardoff's (2006) lobbying subsidy, we can think of issue salience (or the amount of attention an issue receives in the media) acting as a subsidy for members of Congress. The subsidy here is not the salience itself, but the movement in the salience. Increases in issue salience are cheap information that cue members that an issue in question is important to the media and the public, and that as a result members of Congress should now want to become involved in this issue.

Recalling discussion in Chapter 1, we can assume that members of Congress have equal access to the subsidy, and that the subsidy will work differently on different members of Congress from issue to issue, depending on the personal goals of an individual member. An individual member may decide to engage in an issue because costs have decreased through increases in issue salience. Similarly, another member may attempt to bring about increases in issue salience in order to lower the costs for others to become involved in an issue. Other members may be experts who are generally involved in an issue regardless of the level of

salience. Finally, some members may avoid the issue altogether, instead focusing on other issues based on their personal goals. As issue salience increases then, we should expect to see more members of Congress involved in an issue area, as the costs of involvement decrease for members and individual members reach their cost threshold for involvement.

Leaders, on the other hand, will minimize discussion until they need to become publicly involved in issues. Policy leadership controls the policy at the status quo, and has already achieved the primary goal of issue control. Leadership then should have little incentive to want to promote an issue further, as promotion of an issue means that more individuals would know about the issue, leading to potential challenger engagement and efforts to change an issue's present circumstances. As a result, leaders then should only engage with the media when necessary, most likely to counteract the machinations of issue challengers.

Now that we understand how salience works as a subsidy, we now turn to the question of which group is the first actor. What does the relationship between issue salience and member of Congress engagement look like? As discussed in Chapter 1 (and recalling Figure 1.1), there are two potential models to consider when thinking about the direction between changes in issue salience and member engagement in issue areas. The first is that the changes in the subsidy influence engagement by members of Congress. Members of Congress are acting on increases in issue salience to engage in issue areas, using the salience subsidy to cue them in to the importance of the issue. The result is that as the amount of attention on an issue increases, more members of Congress become involved in an issue.

A second potential argument is that the relationship between member engagement and issue salience is reversed relative to the first model, that member of Congress involvement leads to more articles to be written on a subject area. This explanation can be derived from Cook's

(2006) notion of “Co-authors of the news”. If members of Congress can influence the news, then they should be able to influence increases in discussion of issue areas in the media.

There is the possibility as well that both of these cases are happening, that media discussion leads to member interest in a subject, and in turn member interest in a subject leads to media discussion. The cyclical nature of stories could potentially be at play here, with both groups simultaneously pushing the other and in turn increasing interest in an issue area.

In all cases, the result is that policy leaders engage in the issue to offset these increases in member involvement and issue salience: policy leaders want to protect their turf, and the appearance of members is a threat to their turf, whether the member created the salience themselves or if the salience came before member engagement.

Following this discussion, we can derive a set of hypotheses for testing. First, members of Congress will see changes in issue salience and decide to become involved in an issue area depending on the level of those changes. As the number of articles increases on the issue, more members of Congress will see the total and decide to become involved in the issue. To that end, I offer Hypothesis 1a.

*Hypothesis 1a: As the number of articles written on an issue area increases, the number of members of Congress engaging in the issue in the media will increase.*

In addition, there is also the possibility that members of Congress are the driving cog of issue attention as “co-authors of the news” as members of Congress cue the media to issues that they should care about. Members have interests in issues, and want to push those to the general public. In return the media responds to engagement with more discussion of these specific issues. Therefore, I offer Hypothesis 1b.

*Hypothesis 1b: As the number of members of Congress engaging in an issue area in media increases, the number of articles written on an issue increases.*

Second, I move from focusing on general involvement to the involvement of leadership. At low levels of salience, leadership involvement should be limited as policy leaders want to minimize attention to their issue area in an attempt to prevent increased salience on the issue area. If salience increases, then leadership needs to become involved in an issue, in order to represent and protect the status quo. As a result, I offer Hypothesis 2.

*Hypothesis 2: As the number of articles on an issue increases, policy leaders will be more likely to engage with the media on an issue area.*

Finally, I focus on the relationship between policy leadership involvement and non-leadership involvement. This relationship is conditional as leadership is more likely to become involved when salience increases if challengers become involved in an issue. If salience increases but challengers do not engage in an issue, then there is less incentive for leadership engagement, as challengers are not using increased salience to shift the dominant issue position. If challengers are engaging, on the other hand, then leaders must engage the media to attempt to keep control over the issue. I offer Hypothesis 3.

*Hypothesis 3: If a challenger has engaged in policy discussion in the media, a leader will be more likely to engage in media discussion regardless of the number of articles written on an issue.*

## **Data and Methods**

### ***Newspaper Data***

Recalling Chapter 2, my primary data source here is newspaper data from *The Washington Post* on nine issue areas between 1977 and 2012. I employ two pieces of data here: the number of articles written on a subject and the number of members of Congress who engage in an issue, by month. In Table 3.1, I present summary data for the total number of articles and members captured for each issue. As we can see, the involvement of members relative to issue salience varies: some issues, like agricultural subsidies and income assistance, have large

amounts of member involvement relative to issue salience, while other issues, like gays & lesbians and NASA exhibit lower levels of member involvement relative to salience.

**Table 3.1: Summary of Articles and Member of Congress mentions in *The Washington Post* by Issue**

<b>Issue Area</b>	<b>Total Number of Articles</b>	<b>Total Member of Congress Mentions</b>
Agricultural Subsidies	1,279	1,476
Climate Change/Global Warming	3,074	986
Drug Policy	4,095	1,014
Gays & Lesbians	7,781	1,289
Immigration	10,126	3,374
Income Assistance	2,575	1,360
NASA& Space Exploration	7,370	892
Nuclear Weapons	12,116	3,839
Oil & Gas Industry	9,893	3,002

## ***Variables***

My unit of analysis for the time series is month, with the period January 1977 to December 2012 encompassing a total of 432 months. I use a monthly series rather than a yearly series to allow for extensive analysis of change at a level where more nuanced changes in salience and involvement will be generally evident. In addition, the small amount of data in some cases makes analysis at the weekly level far more problematic due to the lack of both articles and member mentions. Therefore, given my data, the month is the most appropriate unit for analysis. With 432 months in my series, and 9 total issues, the total N for the entire dataset is 3,879 (3,888 less 9, due to the use of a lagged dependent variable in the model for the first hypothesis).

### **Measuring Member of Congress Involvement**

I use two primary variables in this analysis. The first refers to the number of members of Congress mentioned on an issue in *The Washington Post* in a specific month. If a member is mentioned in a month, then I code them as having been in the discussion that month, regardless of whether they were only mentioned once in that month by *The Washington Post* or 20-30 times in that month. I then analyze the total number of members mentioned in a given month. In addition, I employ dependent variables using the total number of Democrats and Republicans involved in a month, in order to ensure that increases are not simply the result of the two parties behaving differently when it comes to member involvement.

In Table 3.2, I present frequency data for the mean number of articles and total number of members mentioned per month for each of the 9 issue areas. Both coverage and total number of members involved range greatly, with issues like nuclear weapons and immigration receiving far more coverage than agricultural subsidies and income assistance. In addition, the number of members involved varies as well. For example, NASA, an issue that in the series has at least one story every other day on average, typically has fewer members involved than agricultural subsidies, a issue that on average is written about only once every 10 days. This has much to do with the nature of the issues themselves, in that NASA and space exploration have a multitude of involved actors – from presidents to astronauts. The issue of agricultural subsidies, on the other hand, is normally confined to committee hearings on such issues as peanuts and milk.



**Table 3.2: Summary Statistics for Total Articles and Members of Congress per Month in *The Washington Post***

Issue Area	Articles			Members		
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Agricultural Subsidies	2.96	3.15	0 – 22	2.70	4.30	0 - 22
Climate Change	7.12	9.74	0 – 67	1.58	3.72	0 – 22
Drug Policy	9.48	11.77	0 – 96	1.81	4.25	0 – 44
Gays & Lesbians	18.01	13.46	0 - 96	2.26	3.94	0 – 23
Immigration	23.44	17.70	1 – 156	5.17	6.68	0 – 63
Income Assistance	5.96	7.54	0 – 72	2.05	5.48	0 – 73
NASA & Space Exploration	17.06	12.20	1 – 174	1.55	2.69	0 – 21
Nuclear Weapons	28.05	15.24	2 - 101	6.58	6.51	0 – 43
Oil & Gas Industry	23.79	16.96	3 – 124	5.35	7.08	0 – 46

### **Measuring Issue Salience**

The second major variable, and the primary independent variable under analysis, is issue salience. To measure this I use the number of articles about an issue in a given month in *The Washington Post* regardless of whether or not a member of Congress is mentioned in the article itself. Recalling Table 3.2, the amount of coverage on an issue varies greatly from issue to issue. Nuclear weapons and immigration, for example, receive regular coverage with about a story per day. The issue of agricultural subsidies, on the other hand, receives at most a story every 10 days. The amount of variation from issue to issue in terms of both the average level of salience for an issue as well as what makes an issue highly salient informs my modeling choices, in particular the need to use panel time series with fixed unit effects.

### **Measuring Leadership Involvement**

For Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3, I focus on policy leadership and the role leadership plays in the engagement process. To determine which members would fit under policy

leadership, I compiled a list of the chairs and ranking members of committees that would hold some form of jurisdiction over the issue in question, using the Almanac of American Politics as my guide. I was able to determine issue jurisdiction for 8 of the 9 issues in this study. I was unable to determine policy leadership on the issue of gays & lesbians due to the wide-ranging issue areas that have been a part of gay & lesbian issue discussions (from armed services and military issues to Washington, D.C. issues to equal rights issues). As a result, I do not test gays & lesbians in Hypothesis 2 or Hypothesis 3. Some issues, such as immigration, only have one committee and one subcommittee, while others, such as nuclear weapons, have multiple committees claiming some form of jurisdiction over the issue. For a breakdown of the committees and subcommittees used to determine policy leadership, see Appendix 2.

My dependent variable for Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 is a dichotomous variable for whether or not a leader becomes involved in a given month. I use a dichotomous variable rather than a count variable here because my concern is less about the number of leaders who become involved in a month more about whether leadership feels the need to become involved in a specific issue area.

### **Measuring Non-Leader Involvement**

In Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 (the hypotheses focused on the question of leadership involvement), I employ a dichotomous variable for whether or not a non-leader engages in the previous month to test the effect the presence of non-leaders in policy discussion has on leadership involvement. The logic here is that leadership is reacting to previous involvement by becoming more involved in the following month. One potential problem is that my unit of analysis is at the monthly level, which can lead to high amounts of decay from one speaker to the next. For example, there is the chance that a non-leader in a previous month spoke on January 1,

and the leader in the following month spoke on February 28<sup>th</sup>. I concede this and have fit the model with a non-leader dichotomous variable for both time  $t$  and time  $t-1$ . In Table 3.5 and Figures 3.1 and 3.2, I use the lagged measure to be consistent with what I present in Tables 3.4 and 3.5. In Appendix 3, I present results when the non-leader engages in the same month the leader engages in discussion. The results are similar for both hypotheses, though the results for Hypothesis 3 are stronger when the non-leader variable is not lagged.

In Hypothesis 2, I primarily use the non-leader variable as a control for the effect salience has on leadership engagement. In Hypothesis 3, I use both the dichotomous variable as well as an interaction between salience and non-leader engagement to view the effect non-leadership engagement has on the probability of leader engagement across levels of salience.

### **Control Variables**

For the party models in Hypotheses 1a and 1b I use a control for when the party controls both chambers of Congress. For the Democratic and Republican models, control of neither the House nor Senate or only one body is coded as a zero, while control of both the House and Senate is coded as 1. While I do not present results using month and year-based dummies, I have tested the models in both hypotheses using controls for each month (using January as a baseline) and with a control for an election year. The logic on both of these is based around the behavior of both members of Congress and the media. For Congress, we would expect members of Congress to be more likely to seek national exposure in months when Congress is in session, while for the media we would expect media would be more likely to seek out members when members of Congress are actually in Washington, D.C. and not back in their home districts. In particular, the months of August and December are months when Congress is not in session for an extended period of time, however, neither model changes the coefficient nor the standard error results significantly. In addition, checks on explained variance showed that their additions did not improve the  $R^2$  more than 0.01 (in the case

of the monthly variable). Therefore, I do not include controls on month or year in the model. In addition, in the models testing Hypothesis 2 and 3, I use a lagged dependent variable in order to assess how changes in one month affect the subsequent month.

## ***Methods***

For analysis of the first hypothesis, I employ a cross-lag paneled OLS time series with fixed effects for each of my 9 issue areas. I use a cross-lag model in order to test variation both coming due to increases in issue salience (exogenous creation) and member movement (endogenous issue expansion). In addition, I fit the model as a fixed effects model due to the amount of variation expected from issue to issue, in order to account for the variation between issues and ensure that one issue's variation does not dominate the results. I have fit the model in a variety of ways, including a negative binomial count model with panel fixed effects, as a standard OLS panel fixed effects regression, an OLS random effects regression, and a fixed effects regression with standardized coefficients, and found similar results to what I find in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 below. I fit three sets of models: one for all members of Congress, one for just Democratic members, and one for just Republican members.

Cross-lag models require two dependent variables for study (the two variables being tested under the cross-lag). For my purposes, I use the number of articles written in *The Washington Post* on a subject by month at time  $t$  (exogenous) and the number of members of Congress mentioned at time  $t$  (endogenous). The independent variables in each model are the lagged ( $t-1$ ) number of articles in *The Washington Post* and the lagged ( $t-1$ ) number of members of Congress mentioned. For example:

$$\text{Articles}_t = B0_1 + B1 * \text{Articles}_{t-1} + B2 * \text{Members}_{t-1} + e$$

$$\text{Members}_t = B0_2 + B3 * \text{Articles}_{t-1} + B4 * \text{Members}_{t-1} + e$$

In the party models, I also control for the number of members who engaged in a previous month, as well as controls for whether the Democrats or Republicans controlled both houses of Congress in the party models. For the Democrats, complete control occurs between 1977-1980, 1987-1994, and 2009-2010, while Republicans control both bodies between 1995 and May of 2001, and 2003-2006. My expectations in terms of the controls is that a political party having complete control of Congress will lead to more members of Congress from that party discussing an issue. Knowing that profit drives much of the decision-making processes of news creation (Hamilton 2004), journalists will want to talk to people who are most directly connected to the policy processes under discussion, namely people who can change these (the majority party). In addition, there should be no relationship between control of Congress and the number of articles written on a subject, as the media in general will not take party control into consideration when determining what issues to focus on. Finally in terms of diagnostics I use robust standard errors to deal with potential issues with serial autocorrelation.

For the second and third hypotheses, I use fixed effects logistic regression using issue dummies to deal with the potential variation from issue to issue. The dependent variable here is whether or not a leader engaged in a given month. I use two models here: one that consists of salience in that month, lagged presence of leadership, presence of non-leadership, and issue dummies, as well as another model that in addition to the covariates in the first model includes an interaction between salience and the presence of non-leadership to view how the engagement of non-leadership affects leaders across salience.

## Results

### *Member Involvement*

In Table 3, I present results from the paneled time series looking at the number of members of Congress involved in an issue area by month. As noted above, the cross-lag produces two models, one with a dependent variable of the total number of articles on the subject in *The Washington Post*, and one with the dependent variable of the total number of members mentioned in *The Washington Post*. In Table 3.3, I only present the results for all members of Congress, while Table 3.4 contains the results for both Democrats and Republicans.

**Table 3.3: Results, Cross-Lag Analysis of Members of Congress Involvement and Number of Articles**

	Number of Members	Number of Articles
Articles <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.09 (0.02)*	0.65 (0.07)*
Members <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.36 (0.03)*	0.17 (0.08)
Constant	0.64 (0.23)*	4.82 (0.83)*
N	3,879	3,879
R <sup>2</sup> overall	0.35	0.62
F	119.90 (0.00)	154.28 (0.00)

Note: Fixed effects panel regression. Robust standard errors used. Significance \* =  $p < 0.05$

In general, we see support for Hypothesis 1a: when more articles are written on a subject in a previous month, more members of Congress become involved in that issue area in the following month. As the number of articles on a subject increases, the number of members of Congress who engage in the issue also increases. On the other hand, we see less evidence for Hypothesis 1b: an increase in the number of members of Congress involved in the previous month does not translate into an increase in the number of articles written on a subject in *The Washington Post*. While the coefficient is two times greater than the standard error, the p-value for the measure is 0.072, outside of the 0.05 range used here.

In Table 3.4, I present results on issue engagement by separating out Democrats and Republicans, in order to see whether there are party-related differences. In addition, I employ a control for whether the Democratic or Republican Party controls both houses of Congress during the month in question, assuming that total control of Congress will mean that party is more likely to be mentioned in *The Washington Post* (both due to the existence of more members than the other party and deference given to political leadership).

**Table 3.4: Results, Cross-Lag Analysis of Members of Congress Involvement and Number of Articles, Democrats and Republicans**

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Number of Members	Number of Articles	Number of Members	Number of Articles
Articles <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.05 (0.01)*	0.64 (0.07)*	0.04 (0.01)*	0.67 (0.07)*
Members <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.39 (0.04)*	0.33 (0.15)	0.34 (0.04)*	0.12 (0.11)
Democratic Congress	0.54 (0.10)*	-0.32 (0.37)	-	-
Republican Congress	-	-	0.62 (0.17)*	0.33 (0.54)
Constant	0.11 (0.18)	4.95 (0.97)*	0.12 (0.17)	4.65 (0.84)*
N	3,879	3,879	3,879	3,879
R <sup>2</sup> overall	0.36	0.62	0.30	0.62
F	42.85 (0.00)	181.52 (0.00)	36.41 (0.00)	129.73 (0.00)

Note: Fixed effects panel regression. Robust standard errors used. Significance \* =  $p < 0.05$

We see similar effects in Table 3.4 to the ones seen in Table 3.3. The number of articles in a previous month has a positive effect on member engagement in the following month, while the number of members involved in one month is in the correct direction for both Democrats and Republicans, but is not significant at 0.05. In addition, the party control variables for the two parties act as expected above: while members of Congress involved in issues is greater when their party is in power, the presence of a specific political party does not lead to the writing of more articles on a subject area.

## ***The Role of Leadership***

For testing Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3, I turn to a fixed effects logistic regression, testing both the effect issue salience and the presence non-leaders have on leader engagement using all members. I fitted two regressions: the first testing only the effects of salience, lagged leader presence, the presence of non-leaders on leader presence and a series of issue dummies to isolate effects, and the second testing on leader presence using an interaction between salience and the engagement of non-leaders to view the effect of non-leader appearance across salience. I fit the model on all months of all 8 issues. This includes months when no articles were written on a specific issue in *The Washington Post*. I find similar results to what I find in Table 3.5 when I run the model without these months with no articles. These results can be found in Appendix 4.

In Table 3.5, I present logistic regression results for the probability a policy leader will engage an issue area, by month. I use two models here. Model 1 is a model without the interaction between the number of articles per month and the non-leadership engagement variable. Model 2 includes the interaction. The reason I use two separate models is to see the effects of articles both independent and dependent upon non-leadership engagement.



**Table 3.5: Leadership Engagement in Issue Areas**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>
Articles <sub>(t)</sub>	0.08 (0.01)*	0.10 (0.01)*
Leadership Engagement <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.60 (0.10)*	0.60 (0.10)*
Non-Leadership Engagement <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.39 (0.10)*	0.61 (0.15)*
Articles <sub>(t)</sub> x Non-Leadership Engagement	-	-0.02 (0.01)*
Climate Change & Global Warming	-1.20 (0.18)*	-1.19 (0.18)*
Drug Policy	-1.98 (0.21)*	-1.98 (0.21)*
Immigration	-0.77 (0.17)*	-0.79 (0.18)*
Income Assistance & Social Welfare	-0.75 (0.16)*	-0.75 (0.17)*
NASA & Space Exploration	-0.89 (0.17)*	-0.96 (0.17)*
Nuclear Weapons	-0.84 (0.18)*	-0.86 (0.18)*
Oil & Gas Industry	-1.09 (0.18)*	-1.11 (0.18)*
Constant	-1.37 (0.12)*	-1.48 (0.13)*
N	3,448	3,448
LL	-1702.10	-1699.97

Note: Fixed effects logistic regression generated by fitting random effects logistic regression and employing dummy variables for individual issues, with agricultural subsidies acting as the baseline case. Issue significance is in terms of the difference between agricultural subsidies and the issue in question. Significance \* =  $p < 0.05$

I present the models with the unit effects for each model present, in order to use these later in creating Figures 3.1 and 3.2. I use agricultural subsidies as my baseline in the regression. For interpretive purposes, the coefficients then represent the difference between agricultural subsidies and the other issues, with only NASA being similar to agricultural subsidies. Returning to the main independent variables, we see general support for Hypothesis 2, based on the results in Model 1 and Model 2. The coefficient for articles is both positive and significant at 0.05 in both models. As logistic regression parameters may be challenging to interpret, I will instead present logistic regression curves predicting probability of leadership engagement across levels of salience for each of the 8 issue areas with assessable leadership. To better represent the effects, I present probability curves for each of the two models. In Figure 3.1, I present probability curves for the probability of leadership engagement across levels of issue salience, using Model 1's results.

### **Figure 3.1: Predicted Effect of Salience on Leadership Engagement**

Figure 3.1a. Agricultural Subsidies

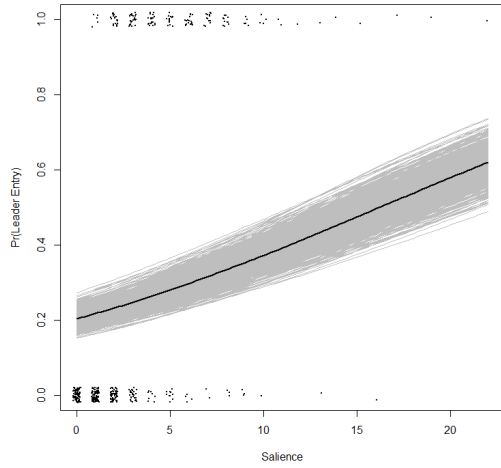


Figure 3.1b. Climate Change

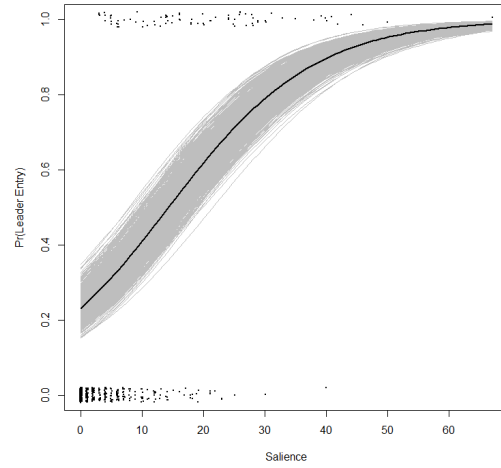


Figure 3.1c. Drug Policy

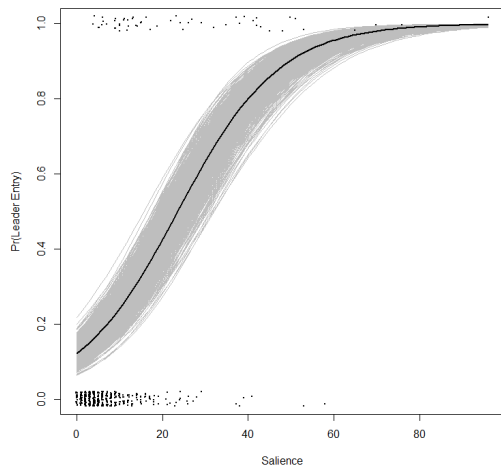


Figure 3.1d. Immigration

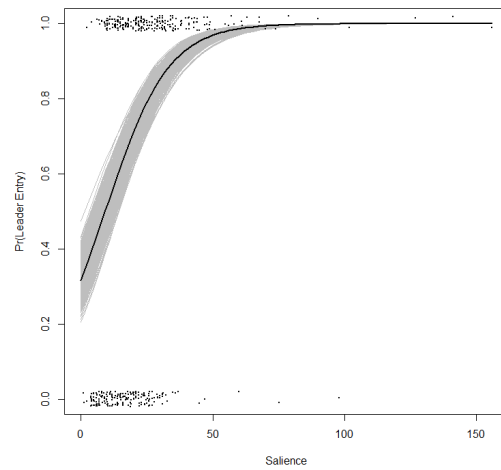


Figure 3.1e. Income Assistance

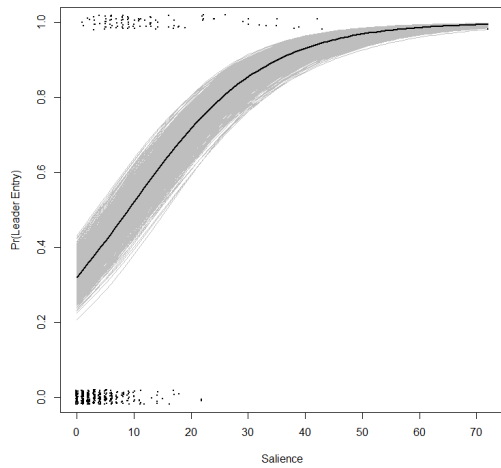


Figure 3.1f. NASA & Space Exploration

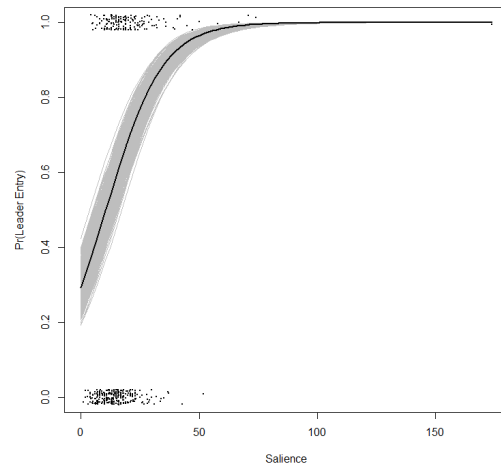


Figure 3.1g. Nuclear Weapons

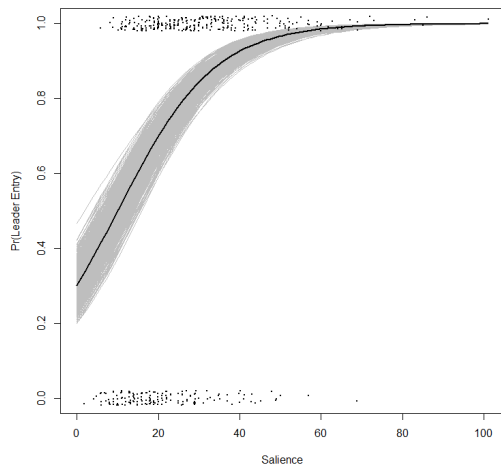
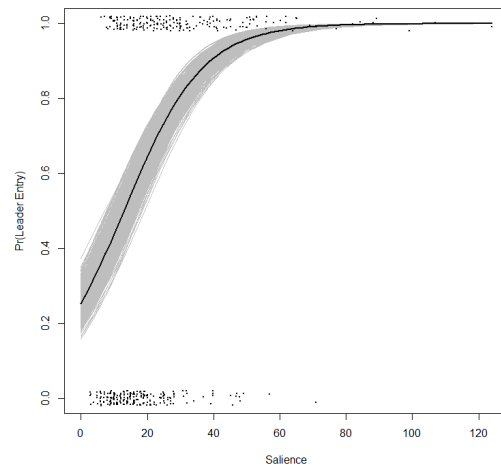


Figure 3.1h. Oil & Gas Industry



To create the curves, I use the first model, the regression without an interaction between salience and non-leader involvement. I allow salience to vary between each issue's minimum salience and maximum salience, and set all other variables at zero. I am only working with two

control variables here: the presence of a leader in the previous month and the presence of a non-leader in the previous month. I code both as zero in order to see what the graphs look like in the most extreme case, when members have not been previously involved. My goal in Figure 3.1 is to first see how leaders react even when non-leaders have previously been present. The results do not change when I create the graphs coding for non-leaders being present in the previous month.

Returning to Figure 3.1, the result is that the x-axes covering salience for each issue area are different, ranging from 0-20 when it comes to agricultural subsidies up to 0 to 150 in the case of NASA & Space Exploration. I allow the axes to range in order to assess the effects at the real minimum and maximum of each issue area. To test the potential variability of results, I simulate the results 1,000 times based on the original model for each issue, which are presented in grey in each graph. Finally, I also include points in each model showing the number of leader entries and non-entries for each issue distributed across salience.

The probability curves show strong evidence for Hypothesis 2 - as salience increases on all issues, the probability of policy leadership engagement into the issue area increases. While the curve for Figure 3.1a (agricultural subsidies) does not reach a probability close to 1, it does show an upward trend in line with the trends seen in the other graphs. In addition, the agricultural subsidies graph ends at its observed maximum of 22 stories per month. When extended out to 50 stories a month, the general trend on the data is similar to the other issue areas, with the probability greatly increasing as salience increases.

Finally, I look at the interaction between salience and the presence of non-leaders, to see how the presence of non-leaders affects policy leadership across levels of salience. In Figure 3.2, I present the result of the interaction for each issue area, observing the probability of

leadership engagement across levels of salience for both non-leader engagement and lack of non-leader engagement. I use the regression in Model 2 from Table 3.5 to create the curves.

**Figure 3.2: Predicted Effect of Salience on Leadership Engagement, by Non-Leader Engagement**

Figure 3.2a. Agricultural Subsidies

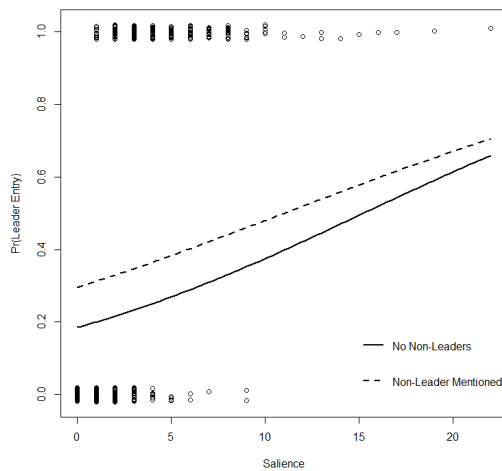


Figure 3.2b. Climate Change

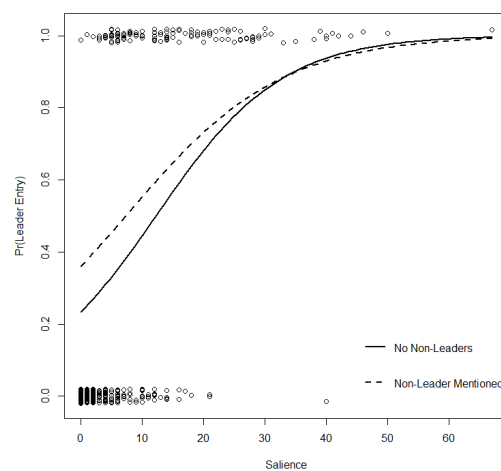


Figure 3.2c. Drug Policy

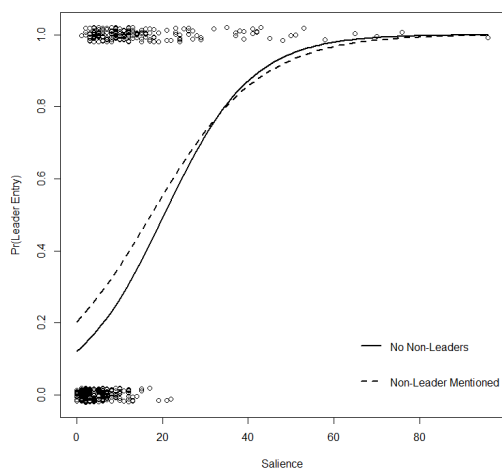


Figure 3.2d. Immigration

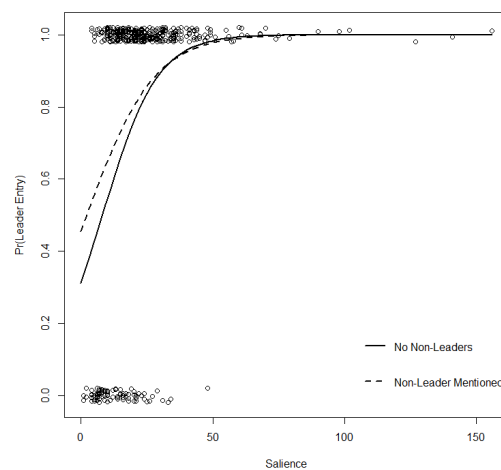


Figure 3.2e. Income Assistance

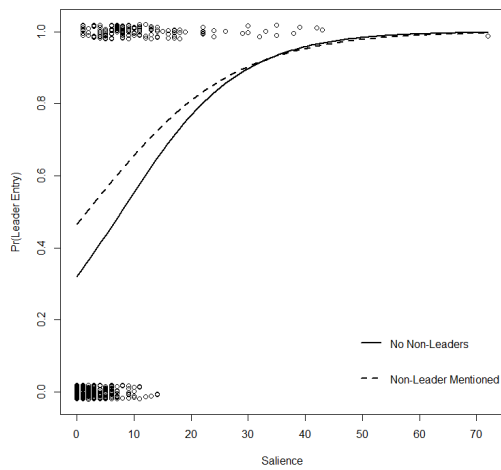


Figure 3.2f. NASA and Space Exploration

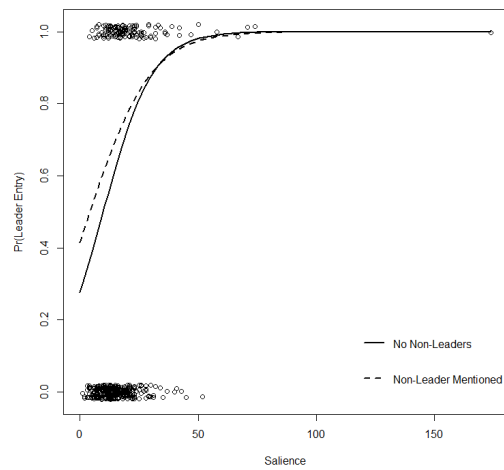


Figure 3.2g. Nuclear Weapons

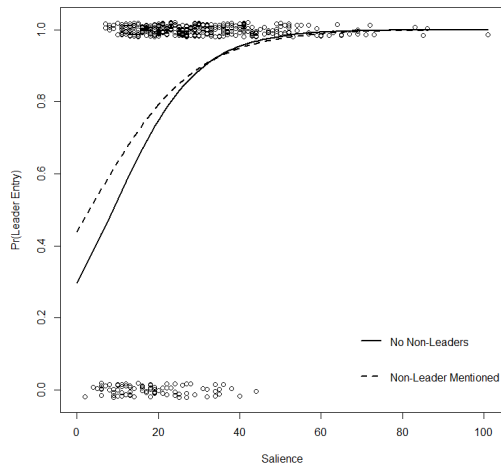
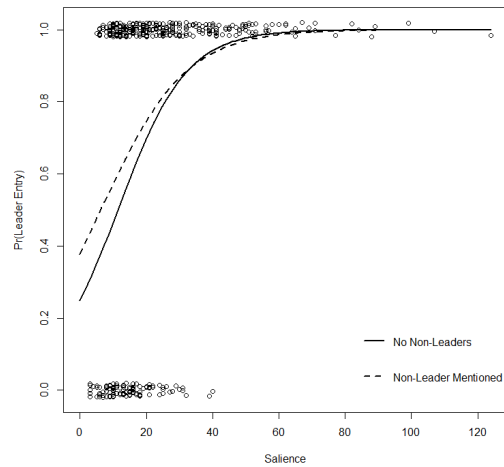


Figure 3.2h. Oil & Gas Industry



As in Figure 3.1, I use the observed minimums and maximums to cap the range of salience for each issue area, and present the observed levels of engagement for leaders across salience on the top and bottom of each graph in the figure. As we can see from each graph in Figure 3.2, the line representing non-leadership engagement both starts at a higher level than the

line representing no engagement. Leaders are generally more likely to engage when a non-leader is present in the previous month until around 30 articles a month, when the difference between the two cases is both very close to a probability of 1. There is about a 10% difference in the probability in leader engagement when non-leaders have engaged in the previous month at the lowest levels of salience, though this effect diminishes as salience increases until we reach high levels of salience, implying that leaders are generally involved when discussion of issues is generally higher in a month. Therefore, leaders are more likely to engage when non-leaders have become involved in the previous month, though the effects diminish as salience increases and more individuals become involved. Simply put, the appearance of non-leaders makes leaders more likely to engage in issue areas even at times of lower salience, in order to offset any effects non-leaders may try to have on public policy.

## **Discussion**

Overall, I have found support for Hypothesis 1a, 2, and 3, and less support for Hypothesis 1b. As we see from the first hypothesis, as an issue becomes more salient, more members of Congress become involved in the issue area, whether to help maintain or shift public policy or to help promote themselves for upcoming elections. We can see this both in issues with low general levels of salience, such as agricultural subsidies, as well as issues with more coverage, such as nuclear weapons. With regards to the second and third hypotheses, we also see evidence of leadership reaction to these movements by non-leadership members, with leadership reacting to both the increase in issue salience and the presence of non-leaders attempting to change policy. We see less evidence that members are acting as co-authors of the news, attempting to influence public policy by engaging in issues more in an attempt to influence media. When salience is lower, members of Congress act on increases in discussion to move on issue areas. In

Chapter 5, I will explore what happens when an issue area is ever-present, and members no longer have the power of the subsidy to work with.

These trends are just part of a larger story on control of public policy. With the increase of member involvement, there is the potential that individuals can attempt to take control of policy issues away from policy leadership. However, in terms of message control, we see confusion: while non-leaders may be using increases in salience to engage in issue areas, leadership is responding by getting in as well. The result is a back and forth between the two groups, and confusion over who controls the message on policy. Non-leaders may be advantaged by getting in first, but leaders have institutional advantages to help protect their policy positions from immediate change by non-leaders.

In addition, one important ramification from this work is that we have a better sense of how members of Congress use the media. Members of Congress view the media as they do any other tool, in that it provides a way for them to reach any number of varied member goals. For members of Congress, media provides a tool to all members to determine what issues members should engage in at a given time. With increases in issue salience, members of Congress have more information on a subject and can engage in that subject while the public has its eyes on the issue. The result is that members of Congress can work toward achieving their goals both in terms of public policy and ambition, depending on the primary goal of the member of Congress in question.

What we know here is that members of Congress are reacting to increases in issue salience and discussing issues that may be outside of their normal purview. Members of Congress are cognizant of media and wish to capitalize on it as best they can to maximize their own personal goals, whether these goals relate to re-election and concerns within their district or



goals related to upward mobility in political life. Regardless of the motivations, members of Congress use media as a subsidy to help determine when it is appropriate to engage an issue area, and through the use of the subsidy, attempt to either protect or change current public policy on an issue that seems to be of importance to the political media.

## **Chapter 4: Individual Members of Congress and Policy Change**

### **Introduction**

Having looked at how and when we should expect member of Congress engagement in issue areas, we now turn to the question of public policy. Simply put, how do individual members of Congress change public policy? Clearly there are many factors at work to inhibit members from making policy change, from institutional rules to problems of collective action with other members of Congress. The normal condition for Congress should then be no policy change; however, policies do change, as members of Congress successfully get policy initiatives passed, which, in turn, changes a policy within Congress.

How do members succeed in making these changes, and under what conditions should we expect success? In this chapter, I explore policy change in the United States Congress, focusing on a series of cases to assess how individual members of Congress either use lower salience (in the case of policy leaders) or higher salience (in the case of non-leaders) to bring about or prevent policy change. Two factors interact in whether individuals are successful at enacting policy change: the level of salience on the policy in question and whether the policy change is advocated by policy leadership or pushed by individual insurgent members of Congress. Depending on these factors, policy change can either be enacted or blocked by specific parties, with leaders having more power at lower levels of salience, and other members able to wield power at higher levels of salience. I argue that policy leaders have control over policy during

times of low salience, and lose control as salience increases on an issue. As a result, policy leaders who want to change public policy need to do so when the issue is not being discussed by the media. When attention to the issue increases, the chance leaders have to change policy decreases and the chance non-leaders can reshape policy increases.

I start the chapter by looking at what may bring about policy change, with particular focus on both the role Congress and policy leadership play in the process. I then focus on 3 case studies related to policy change and individual foci on policy change. The first, agricultural subsidies, focuses on the movement to end subsidies entirely, and in particular on how Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana, a long term proponent of cutting subsidies, went from being on the outside of power to the very representation of power. Second, I focus on immigration, and look at how increases in attention to immigration shifted power on the issue away from policy leadership and led to the lack of new policy in the mid-2000s. Finally, I look at the nuclear freeze movement of the early 1980s, focusing on how insurgent members of Congress used attention to refocus American policy on nuclear weapons and disarmament.

My goals in this chapter are two-fold. First, to explore policy change in the context of members either using the lack of salience (as in policy leadership) or the presence of salience (as with non-leaders) to bring about policy change. The second is to identify and provide examples of the relationship between salience and members of Congress. If members of Congress are using salience as a subsidy to maximize effectiveness, then we should be able to see how individual activity plays out in the media as salience increases. Individual members should be strategic about engagement, attempting to find the right time to engage in an issue in the media.

## **Policy Change in the United States Congress**

The United States Congress conducts policy change through the legislative process, starting at the bill introduction phase and ending (if successful) with the signing of the bill by the president. In particular, the body is designed to maximize member goals through the use of the committee system. The institutional body depends on the committee system, which works through a trade-off of influence to maximize member goals through committee assignment (Weingast and Marshall 1988). Central to the organizational process is the notion of majority rule: a majority of the membership must support a change to policy for the change to actually happen. Therefore the committee process is central to understanding policy change in Congress, and its leaders, the chairs and ranking members of relevant committees, are the primary actors in the process on a given issue.

How do policy leaders control the policy process? Policy leaders use committee power to their advantage. Most notably, at any stage in that process the bill can be killed, making the passage of bills and the changing of public policy a rare event. The control leaders hold spans across the theoretical understandings of Congressional organization. For the responsible party government theory espoused by Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins (1993, 2005), the agenda control by leadership through the committee process works as a cartel: if the leadership wants something to not reach the floor, it will not reach the floor. The conditional party government model (Rohde 1991) gives control to the caucus to determine what reaches the floor, which inhibits individual engagement through the presence of collective action problems that individual members must overcome to succeed. Therefore, policy change is hard to do as an individual member pushing for an issue area, simply because policy leaders control the agenda on issues they hold formal authority over.

In addition, control goes beyond the simple existence of committee chairs holding an agenda veto. The chair's status as a gatekeeper for issue jurisdictions, both formal and informal, allows leaders to control specific issue areas (Shepsle and Weingast 1987) and can shape their jurisdiction not only in the committee stage, but also at the conference stage (Shepsle and Weingast 1987). Even outside of institutional control, leadership holds power, as seen in the media, where leaders are generally those most likely to be Congressional newsmakers (Cook 1986). Finally, while committee control of members through punishment has diminished in the postreform Congress (Rohde 1991, 22), the potential does exist for party leadership to take negative actions against members, whether in terms of committee assignment (Baker 1983) or electoral support (Snowberg 2008).

### **Salience and Policy Change: Leader versus Non-Leader Change**

Which members of Congress will attempt to change public policy? Policy leaders, in general, should be supportive of current policy. However, at the same time, policy leaders too may find opportunities to change public policy. When parties gain control of a body of Congress, a policy leader that may have been in the minority prior to the election may now have the ability to actually reshape public policy in their issue area. These moments for leaders are what Baumgartner and Jones (2009, 5) call "waves of enthusiasm," when leaders see an opportunity to attempt to shift public policy on an issue closer to the leader's ideal policy. Success will depend on issue salience. For low levels of salience, leaders will be more likely to see change due to the lack of competition from other members and leaders' institutional abilities to block non-leaders from attempting to stop change. At high levels of salience, leader power diminishes as more members become involved in discussion and leaders' institutional abilities to block non-leaders diminish.

In Figure 4.1, I outline the four possible scenarios related to my theory of salience and policy change dependent upon member involvement. I focus on two potential factors: the inducer of policy change (policy leader-supported change attempts versus non-leader change attempts) and the level of salience (high versus low).

**Figure 4.1: Relationship between Policy Change Inducer and Issue Salience**

		Who induces policy change?	
		Policy Leader-Supported Attempt	Non-Leader Attempt
Level of Coverage	High Salience	<p>Leaders attempt to change policy, but non-leaders use increased salience to hinder these attempts.</p> <p><b>Change less likely</b></p>	<p>Non-leaders use increased salience to appeal to other members and overcome collective action problems.</p> <p><b>Change more likely</b></p>
	Low Salience	<p>Leaders control process and discussion, non-leaders have no recourse.</p> <p><b>Change more likely</b></p>	<p>Non-leaders unable to overcome institutional control from policy leaders.</p> <p><b>Change less likely</b></p>

There are four expected scenarios. In the top left of Figure 4.1, we see situations involving policy leaders attempting to make policy changes when an issue's coverage is high. In these situations, leaders are less likely to be able to enact change: their normal control of the issue diminishes, leaving other members the opportunity to prevent leaders from gaining the majority needed for change and in turn blocking leader attempts at policy change. In the bottom left box we again have policy leaders attempting change, but this time during times when an issue has low levels of salience. Here, unlike at high levels of salience, the normal controls

policy leaders have hold, allowing policy leaders to change policy without having to deal with potential usurpers stopping them.

We now turn to change as attempted by non-leaders. Here, the effects of salience are flipped: for high salience, policy change is more likely as increases in salience open the possibility that a policy leader's control of an issue has diminished and non-leaders can effectively act to shift and change public policy. Low salience, on the other hand, is less likely to lead to change: leadership control of an issue holds and non-leaders have no recourse to offset the power held by policy leaders.

Over the course of the rest of this chapter, I will illustrate these scenarios using three case studies. I will start by looking at agricultural subsidies, a case of lower issue salience. Here, the “workhorses” in Congress come into play, with members using the body to move up and eventually become the policy leader on the issue. In particular, I will focus on one U.S. Senator, Richard Lugar of Indiana, who found his early attempts to change subsidies stymied by policy leadership only for him to later take on the reins of policy leadership and finally have the opportunity to shift policy. After the focus on low salience, I move to two cases of higher salience: immigration reform in the mid-2000s and the nuclear freeze. These two cases contrast in terms of who attempted to shift public policy. In the case of immigration reform, policy leaders attempted to shift policy on the issue only to have a multitude of actors engage in an attempt to reshape immigration in terms of each individual members' desire, with the result being the lack of created policy. On the nuclear freeze, members of Congress opposed to the continued creation of nuclear weapons and used increased attention to the nuclear freeze movement to attempt to stop production of weapons, leading policy leadership to shift their own policy closer to the desires of the non-leaders.

## **Agricultural Subsidies: Leadership Control during Low Salience**

### ***Background***

The United States Congress has a long history of involvement in the area of agriculture. The House Agriculture Committee was established in 1820 (“Committee History”), and the Senate followed suit in 1825 (“History”). Congress created both committees in order to separate agricultural issues from other economic issues, including trade and tariffs. However by the 1920s and 1930s American agriculture had stagnated. A combination of environmental issues that culminated in the Dust Bowl of the 1930s as well as economic issues due to the Great Depression had left farming as a profession on the brink of collapse. The United States Congress, in response to these issues, created the first agricultural subsidy programs in the 1920s, culminating with the 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act, which included provisions paying farmers to not grow on certain land to help improve crop prices for all farmers. The subsidy program has shifted and changed since then, culminating in the focus on crop insurance in the Agriculture Act of 2014 (Plumer 2014).

While subsidies for farmers have persisted through the postwar period, there have been attempts to end the subsidization of agriculture, with arguments that subsidies lead to overabundance of specific crops (Urry 2015) and weaken the American economy (Edwards 2007). Most attempts prior to the Republican victories in the 1994 midterm elections were stopped by both Democrats and Republicans from farm states, as both groups viewed the continued protection of subsidies as central to the continual electoral success of their parties in those states. While urban Democrats like Charles Schumer and Barney Frank attempted to make changes on subsidies in the 1980s by attacking specific subsidies like milk and tobacco, major reform was always pushed back or left out of the large omnibus farm bills.



The Republican victories of 1994 and the emergence of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress offered new possibility for changing agricultural policy and shifting away from subsidies for two primary reasons. First, the Farm Bill, the large omnibus agricultural policy bill that set farm policy in the United States and includes agricultural subsidies as a major component, was up for 5-year reauthorization, having last been authorized in 1990 by the Democratically-controlled 101<sup>st</sup> Congress. The Republican Party was perfectly positioned to reshape policy, given that there was now need to reauthorize how the United States dealt with agricultural policy.

Second, changes in the policy leadership on agriculture made the potential to end or at least drastically modify subsidies more likely to occur. Democratic agricultural stalwarts such as Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Patrick Leahy of Vermont and House Agriculture Committee Chair Eligio “Kika” de la Garza of Texas both lost their chairmanships as power shifted from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. At the same time, the Republican policy leadership on agriculture had changed from the last time the Republicans held the Senate. Senator Jesse Helms, the North Carolina Republican whose support of tobacco and peanut subsidies had kept them from significant tampering in previous farm bills, was no longer the chair of the Agriculture Committee as he had been at the end of the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, having moved over to Foreign Affairs. In his place was Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana, a long-time force against high agricultural spending. However Lugar would have to face opposition from a long-time champion of subsidies on the Republican side, Congressman Pat Roberts of Kansas, a long-time champion of the wheat industry who now held the chairmanship of the House Agriculture Committee.

Lugar, the new chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee in the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, had long been a vocal proponent against high levels of agricultural spending. During the

negotiations that led to the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, Lugar noted of his fellow Agriculture Committee members spending habits that “The only compromise is among the members of the committee sitting around a table trying to protect separate commodities... There still are uncontrollable expenditures in every direction in this package” (Sinclair 1981a). In addition, Lugar had made previous attempts to shift agricultural policy away from subsidy programs, failing to overhaul both the peanut subsidy program in 1981 (Sinclair 1981b) and the water subsidy program in 1982 (Sinclair 1982). Lugar’s moves during the period of Republican majority in the Senate led to fears from pro-subsidy Republicans that a Lugar-led Agriculture Committee would cut subsidy programs dramatically, a charge that Agriculture Chair Jesse Helms made explicitly during his 1984 re-election campaign (Sinclair 1984). While Lugar would eventually become the senior Republican on the Agriculture Committee at the end of the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress (as Helms began to focus more on foreign affairs), he would find himself as ranking member following the Democrats’ successful capture of the Senate in the 1986 midterm elections. With the committee now in the hands of Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, a Senator in a state dependent on dairy subsidies, Lugar would have to wait on shifting policy until the Republicans could retake the Senate.

Unlike Senator Lugar, Congressman Pat Roberts did not have a history of fighting against subsidies. Roberts was in fact a major proponent of subsidies, in particular wheat subsidies due to the nature of his district, the heavily wheat-dependent 1<sup>st</sup> district of Kansas. As Ward Sinclair of *The Washington Post* noted on Roberts in 1981,

Scratch his skin just a bit and Rep. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) oozes wheat. He talks wheat, breathes wheat, lives wheat all day long. Then, as he leaves for home each evening, Roberts checks a big signboard on his office wall, the baleful reminder that he is the Congressman from Wheat. The board shows the daily wheat closing prices (always too low) at the Dodge City market. Wheat is that important. (Sinclair 1981c).

For Roberts, protection of the wheat industry and the cultivation of wheat was paramount to his continued electoral success and his House career. Roberts' hard work protecting wheat led him to his position at the top of the House Agriculture Committee at the start of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, giving the perfect opportunity to protect subsidies from Lugar's desire to end the subsidy program entirely.

### ***Low Salience and Leadership Policy Change: Lugar, Roberts, and Agricultural Subsidies***

Richard Lugar entered the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress wanting to change the subsidy system, even telling incoming Senate Budget Chairman Pete Domenici "I would not rule out any options, including the abolition of the programs" (LaFraniere 1994). Meanwhile, Pat Roberts entered the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress looking to protect agricultural subsidies, even as members of his own party in the House such as House Majority Leader Richard Armey were advocating for the end of subsidies (LaFraniere 1994).

Lugar would strike first, proposing a \$15 billion dollar cut in agricultural spending ("Mr. Lugar's Surprising Allies" 1995) and advocating for the eventual abolition of agricultural subsidies ("Lugar's Principled Stand" 1995). At the same time, Lugar also announced a run for the presidency, focusing on agriculture by noting,

As an Indiana farmer, I have advocated cutting farm subsidies by \$15 billion. Farmers want to and should plant for the market, and not for the government. The government should not dictate the economy, the market and individual goals should. (Lugar 1995).

Roberts, on the other hand, waited. While Lugar and the Senate began proposing major changes, Roberts instead watched as both Lugar and the Clinton Administration proposed programs. The opportunity for compromise between the two could potentially be the saving

grace for subsidies. The Clinton plan, proposed in May 1995, would result in more modest cuts to agricultural spending than the cuts Lugar and the Senate Agriculture Committee wanted, and also called for the end of requiring “program crops” to be planted on lands by allowing farmers to plant any crops on subsidized lands, a provision Roberts supported (Gugliotta 1995a). With both Clinton and Lugar’s plans laid out, and both calling for cuts to agriculture, Roberts would get involved in the process later in the year, calling for the creation of a fixed payment system to replace subsidies, with payments decreasing from year to year. The payment plan would end subsidies by 2002.

The Roberts plan, called “Freedom to Farm”, would not be immediately successful in the House of Representatives. When Freedom to Farm reached the House Agriculture Committee in September of 1995, Roberts faced immediate opposition from members whose future electoral prospects would depend upon the continuation of subsidies. The culmination of this opposition would come when four Republican House Agriculture committee members: Congressmen Richard Baker of Louisiana, Saxby Chambliss of Georgia, Larry Combest of Texas, and Bill Emerson of Missouri, defeated Roberts’ bill in committee (Gugliotta 1995b). While the insurgent members were able to temporarily derail Roberts’ plan, Roberts bypassed the Agriculture Committee, instead sending the bill to become part of the failed omnibus spending bill that was a central component of the 1995-1996 government shutdowns.

Roberts and Lugar were not done though: Roberts would reintroduce Freedom to Farm as the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act, and the Senate would pass a version of Freedom to Farm in February 1996 following compromises with committee Democrats (Gugliotta 1996). The Senate version of the bill would be incorporated into Roberts’ House bill in conference, and would pass both the House and Senate, finally being signed by President Bill

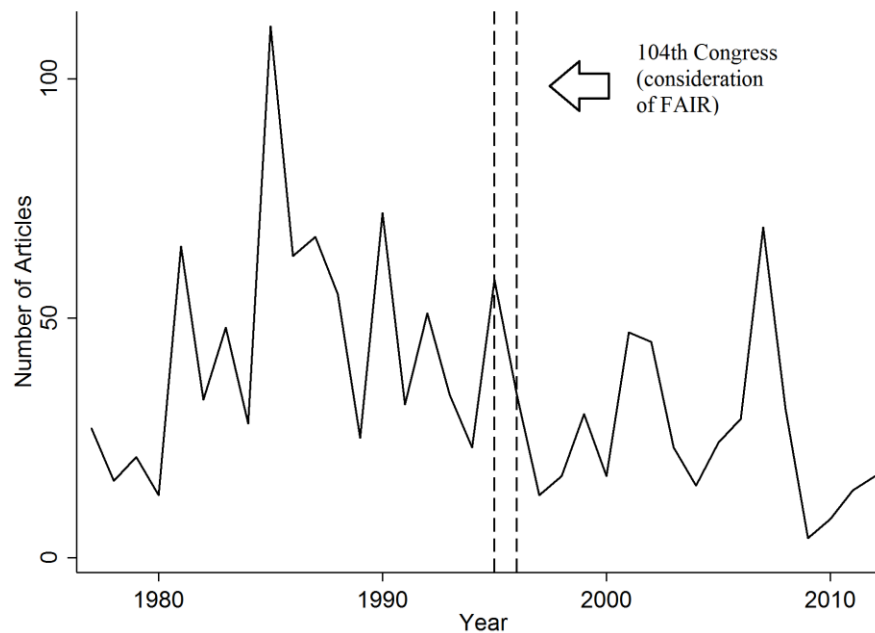
Clinton on April 4, 1996. Despite opposition from both Democrats and Republicans who could be greatly hurt by changes to the subsidy system, Lugar and Roberts were able to reshape the agricultural subsidy program. While many of the changes made by the two were eventually dismantled by future farm bills, the two had, at least in 1996, changed public policy on agricultural subsidies.

### ***Setting the Stage: Media and Congressional Involvement on Agricultural Subsidies***

So how did leadership win, even though faced with opposition from other members?

When the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress began debating changes to agriculture policy, the issue of agricultural subsidies had received little coverage from the media. The lack of coverage is unsurprising, as agricultural issues have rarely received general coverage from media, even during times of major agricultural strife. In Figure 4.2, I graph the total number of articles on agricultural subsidies by year in *The Washington Post* from the year 1977 until 2012. In addition, I include lines denoting the years 1995 and 1996, the two years encompassing the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress and the period the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform (hereafter FAIR) Act of 1996 was considered.

**Figure 4.2: Total Number of Articles on Agricultural Subsidies in *The Washington Post* by Year**

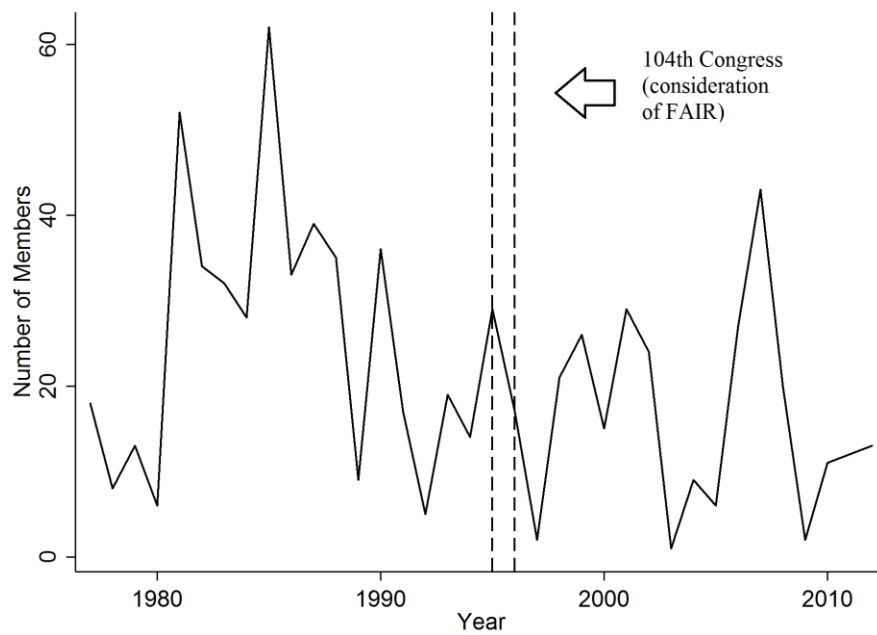


As we can see from the graph, the most articles on Agricultural Subsidies were written not during the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, but in 1985, when major debt issues threatened to cripple family farms and the Farm Aid movement attempted to shed light on issues facing small family farms in the United States. Even then, the total number of articles related to agricultural subsidies is only 111, about an article every three days. Meanwhile, the period encompassing the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress sees only 92 articles on agricultural subsidies, or under an article a week. In general, the issue of agricultural subsidies receives very little coverage in the media relative to other issue areas, even during times when major changes on the issue may be about to occur.

With that small amount of coverage, we should expect that the number of members of Congress involved will also be relatively small. In Figure 4.3, I graph the total number of members of Congress mentioned with regards to agricultural subsidies in *The Washington Post* by year, again using dashed lines to denote the period of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress (1995-1996). Again, we see similar results to what we see in Figure 4.2, with a peak in 1985 and only 20-30 members

involved in the years 1995-1996. Of particular note is that only 17 members are involved in 1996, the year of FAIR's passage. In general, despite the major changes in FAIR, only a few members are quoted on the bill in the year it is passed, and a smaller number of members are quoted in the previous year (the first year of a Republican majority) than in 1985.

**Figure 4.3: Total Number of Members of Congress discussing Agricultural Subsidies in *The Washington Post* by Year**



We know that coverage is low and that individual involvement is low. But what members of Congress become involved on agriculture? In Figure 4.4, I present the number of mentions members of Congress received on agricultural subsidies in *The Washington Post* in the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress. For purposes of space and to allow for easy reading, I only present the top 10 members by total number of mentions. The result of this paring is that I present the totals for 7 Republican members and three Democratic members. I identify members who qualify as policy

leaders by capitalization. Appendix 2 contains the list of relevant committees on agricultural subsidies.

**Figure 4.4: Number of Mentions on Agriculture Subsidies by Member, 104<sup>th</sup> Congress**

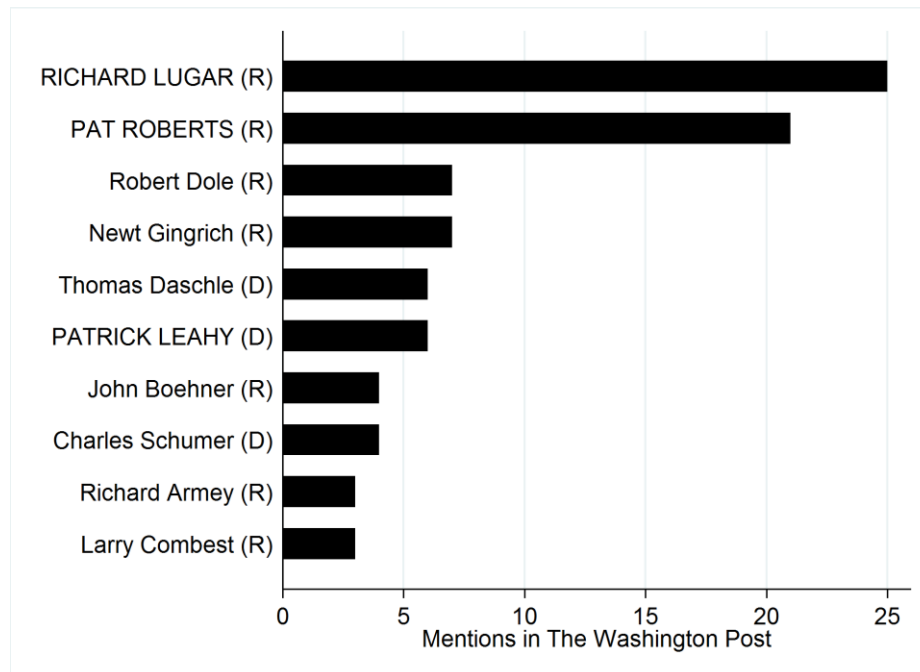


Figure 4.4 shows that the discussion of agricultural subsidies in *The Washington Post* is dominated by the two Agriculture committee chairs, Richard Lugar and Pat Roberts. Lugar and Roberts together account for 46 of the 117 total mentions of members of Congress in the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, or 39% of the mentions. After Lugar and Roberts, many of the mentions come from either party leadership, such as House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (who by the end of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress had become the 1996 Republican presidential nominee), and Senate Minority Leader Thomas Daschle, or from minority policy leadership such as Senate Agriculture Committee ranking member Patrick Leahy. The non-leadership members with the most mentions are both future leaders themselves: Congressman Charles Schumer of New York and Congressman John Boehner of Ohio. Simply, when the United States Congress



took up farming reform, the primary actors involved in the process were leadership, and in particular, policy-related leadership. More importantly, only one of the insurgents against Freedom to Farm among House Republicans makes an appearance, as Larry Combest has three mentions in the Congress. Had the salience of subsidies been higher, Combest and his compatriots may have been more successful at stopping the large changes to the subsidy system. Instead, they were unable to turn their committee revolt into anything more than some changes once the bill was sent to conference.

The combination of a lack of coverage and lack of membership involvement gives policy leadership in agriculture large amounts of power to both make change when they see fit or stop change from gaining traction if they believe that the changes would be harmful. What we see in Figure 4.4 is the culmination of individual power in the leadership in times of low salience. When there is only limited discussion on an issue, policy leadership controls the agenda. Richard Lugar's ascension to leadership power on agricultural issues at the beginning of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress meant that Lugar now had the means necessary to make changes to the subsidy system in Congress. Pat Roberts in turn had the ability to shape the program, moving away from the Senate's desire for a total end to subsidies to the adoption of payment programs. In times of low salience, leadership dominates, both in terms of protecting status quo policy as well as reshaping policy.

## **Immigration Reform in the mid-2000s: Leadership Loss of Control**

### ***Background***

When the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 was signed by President Ronald Reagan on November 6, 1986, the hard work of two subcommittee chairmen, Republican Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming and Democratic Congressman Romano Mazzoli of

Kentucky, finally came to fruition. The two men, the respective subcommittee chairmen of their respective chambers' Judiciary subcommittee on Immigration, had spent the three previous Congresses answering President Reagan's call to update immigration law by dealing with the questions of both employment and the status of undocumented individuals within American borders. Simpson and Mazzoli had been able to work with only some push from other members, most of the push coming from agricultural interests who worried about migrant labor. The hope was, as Reagan noted in his remarks, that "Future generations of Americans will be thankful for our efforts to humanely regain control of our borders and thereby preserve the value of one of the most sacred possessions of our people: American citizenship" (Reagan 1986).

Within a generation, immigration law would again be challenged. By 2005, new worries over Mexican immigration had led to a series of bills in the House and Senate in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress designed to reshape both legal and illegal immigration. At the same time, a rift began to open within the Republican Party over the nature of how exactly to deal with illegal immigrants already in the United States. For policy leaders like House Judiciary Committee chairman James Sensenbrenner, the need to curtail illegal immigration was paramount to any immigration bill. At the same time, the Senate's bill, championed by Senator John McCain of Arizona, and sponsored by Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, instead focused on comprehensive reform, with the ability for some long-term illegal immigrants to possibly seek citizenship. While both bodies succeeded in passing immigration bills, the differences between the two groups led to no bill in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, and as of 2016, subsequent Congresses have been unable to change policy on immigration.

What happened in that 20 year period that changed immigration from an issue that could be crafted and completed by policy leaders to one where many actors fought and lost over

policy? As we will see, the story of immigration is one about how increases in issue salience brought more members of Congress into the immigration conversation. While Simpson and Mazzoli would be successful at changing public policy, Sensenbrenner would face charges from both his left and his right, eventually leading to the lack of policy change on immigration.

### ***The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986: Leadership Control***

To best understand the changes that discussion of immigration has gone through, it is important to go back and look at the context behind the last major immigration law change: the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. The 1986 passage was the culmination of 6 years of work, started by two members of Congress with little prior personal experience in immigration.

In 1981, at the beginning of the 97<sup>th</sup> Congress, the respective Judiciary subcommittees on Immigration both received new chairs. Romano Mazzoli, a Kentucky Democrat, replaced the outgoing Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzmann as chair of the subcommittee following Holtzmann's defeat in the 1980 United States Senate race in New York. Meanwhile, the Republicans' capture of the Senate meant that Wyoming Senator Alan Simpson was now chairman of the subcommittee on Immigration. Both Romano Mazzoli and Alan Simpson represented areas with few, if any, immigrants, as neither Louisville, Kentucky nor the state of Wyoming was known for having a large non-American population. For Mazzoli in particular, Gimpel and Edwards speculate that "he considered himself free for major immigration reform" (Gimpel and Edwards 1999, 134) once he took control of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration in 1981, because of this lack of immigrant representation.

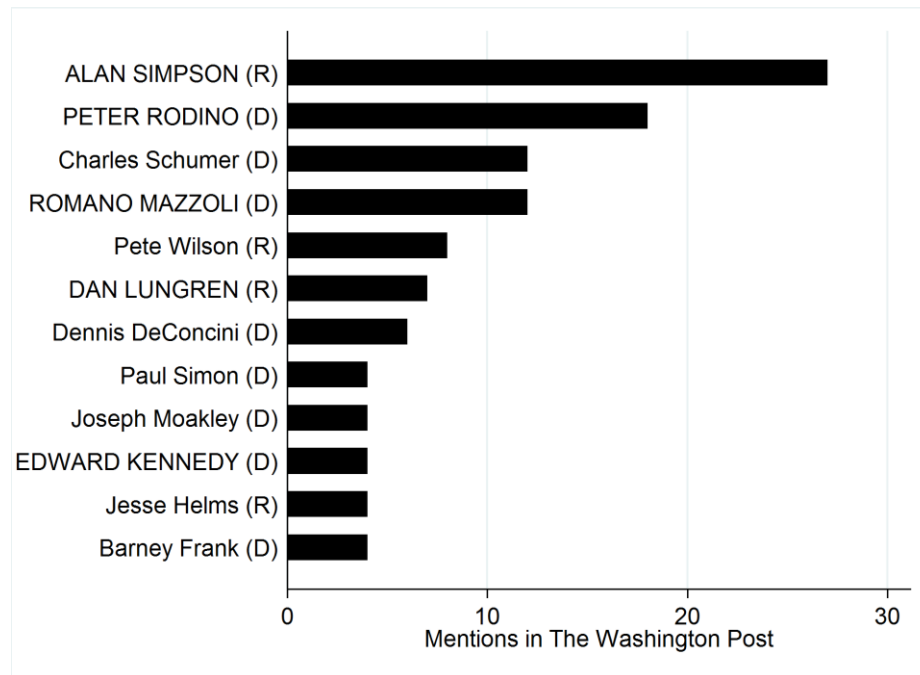
With new leadership unconstrained by past events, the opportunity for change was present. Mazzoli and Simpson set to work, crafting and developing a bill that would both deal

with legal immigration and illegal immigration, focusing in particular in the latter on punishing businesses that employed illegal immigrants while also giving amnesty to illegal immigrants already in the country.

Crafting and passage of the immigration bill would not be an immediate success story: while Simpson generally found success in the Senate during each Congress, Mazzoli ran into multiple road blocks in the House. Prominent Latino members, such as Edward Roybal and Robert Garcia, attempted to derail passage of the bill, arguing that that the legislation would hurt Latinos and employers. As a result, Mazzoli pulled the bill from consideration in the 97<sup>th</sup> Congress, and the bill died in conference following initial passage in both Houses in the 98<sup>th</sup> Congress. However, in the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, House Judiciary Chairman Peter Rodino joined Mazzoli in his efforts in the House, and after some defeats (and the inclusion of an agricultural guest worker plan crafted by Congressman Charles Schumer of New York) they were able to finally get the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 passed.

How did the bill finally pass? A combination of factors came into play. As Gimpel and Edwards (1999) point out, unlike the 97<sup>th</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup> Congresses, the deals necessary to passage finally came to fruition both in terms of guest worker programs and amnesty. Importantly, despite the attacks from Hispanic members of Congress, Mazzoli and Simpson never lost control of the issue, and eventually won out versus their adversaries. In Figure 4.5, I present a graph on the number of member mentions in the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress on immigration, presenting the top 10 members (plus ties) on mentions. As with Figure 4.4, I present policy leaders via capitalization.

**Figure 4.5: Number of Mentions on Immigration by Member, 99<sup>th</sup> Congress**

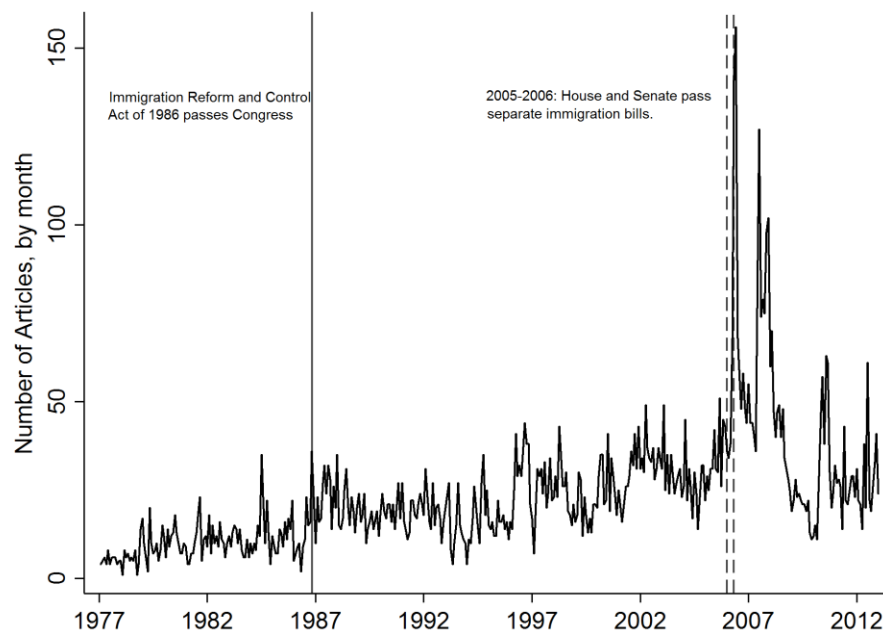


As with agricultural subsidies, leaders dominate discussion during the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, with Alan Simpson, Peter Rodino, and Romano Mazzoli accounting for 27, 18, and 12 mentions on immigration in the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress respectively. The total number of mentions of the three leaders, a total of 57 mentions, accounts for 37% of all mentions by members of Congress during the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress on immigration. The closest member to these three in terms of total mentions is Charles Schumer, who worked with the three to get immigration reform passed. Importantly, potential usurpers receive far fewer mentions in the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, with Edward Roybal and Robert Garcia, the two primary opponents on the side of protecting Latinos and businesses, only receiving one total mention each in the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress. By the time the issues with the bill had begun to be dealt with, the stage was given to leaders.

### ***1986-2006: Leadership Loss of Control***

In the two decades following the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act, attention to immigration generally remained constant, though discussion began to move from legal immigration to illegal immigration. In Figure 4.6, I present data on the total number of articles by month in *The Washington Post* related to immigration, with vertical lines representing the October 1986 passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act in the House and Senate, and respective lines for the House and Senate immigration bills passed in 2005 and 2006.

**Figure 4.6: Total Number of Articles on Immigration in *The Washington Post* by Month**



As we can see from Figure 4.6, the total salience of immigration began to increase slightly in the early 1990s, though not overwhelmingly, with an average of about 20 stories a month on immigration throughout *The Washington Post* during the period 1990 and 1999. However, movement on immigration begins in 2002, and during the period of 2002 to 2004, there is about a story per day on immigration in *The Washington Post*.

By 2005, concerns began to move in Congress toward dealing with questions of immigration, due to a multitude of reasons. Statistically, illegal immigration had been on the rise since at least 1990, moving from about 3 million individuals unauthorized to be in the United States to nearly 11 million in 2005 (Krogstad and Passel 2015). In addition, the Republican Party, fresh off its comprehensive victory in the presidential and Congressional elections of 2004, now had, as President George W. Bush put it, gained “political capital” (Stevenson 2004), and the opportunities for the Republicans to put their own stamp on immigration were ever present. While Bush himself wanted to focus on guest worker visas and capturing primarily illegal immigrants who committed crimes, he found a Republican House that wanted to focus on tougher measures such as border security. As Congressman Ray LaHood argued at the end of 2004, “If the president wants to maintain credibility with House Republicans, he has to be engaged and willing to pass immigration reform that conservatives want.” (VanderHei and Babington 2004).

In 2005, the Republican House began to work on immigration. House Judiciary Chairman James Sensenbrenner introduced border security measures early in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, in an attempt to offset President Bush’s measures on temporary worker visas and push immigration to the right. Sensenbrenner linked border security to homeland security, as part of the larger REAL ID Act of 2005 (Allen 2005). While REAL ID was primarily about standardizing drivers licenses, Sensenbrenner added in multiple provisions related to immigration, including requirements that noncitizens bring their passport to get a license and giving the United States government the ability to ignore environmental laws when considering the building of border barriers. With the ability now to build a border wall without

environmental intrusion, the Republicans could move focus toward public policy based around border security and border walls.

While the House set the stage, the Senate would be where the real activity on immigration reform began. In May of 2005 Republican Senator John McCain, along with Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, introduced an immigration bill designed to ease restrictions on worker visas by giving immigrants more flexibility in terms of entering and leaving the country (Fears 2005). McCain and Kennedy's goal was to ease worker issues while also curbing terrorism. To that, Republican Congressman Tom Tancredo of Colorado replied: "There might be a little more lipstick on this pig than there was before, but it is most certainly the same old pig" (Fears 2005). For Tancredo and others, the Senate bill was a continuation of the status quo, a constant push on regular immigration while ignoring illegal immigration. The battle between the House and Senate over immigration had begun in full force.

Over the next year, the House and Senate would eventually introduce and pass their own measures on immigration: the House would act first, passing the Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 in December, with the Senate passing the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 the following May. The two bills differed primarily in how they dealt with illegal immigrants already in the country, with the Senate bill offering the opportunity for some illegal immigrants to gain legal status. With two very different bills in place, there would need to be some level of compromise and some amount of conference work to make immigration reform viable in 2006.

At the same time, events elsewhere began to increase the salience of immigration issues. On March 10, 2006, at least 100,000 individuals, mostly immigrants, marched through Chicago



protesting the passage of the House bill (Avila and Olivo 2006). At the center of the protests was Congressman Luis Gutierrez, a Chicago congressman who, taking up the mantle of Edward Roybal and Robert Garcia from the 1980s, told protestors “We have brought together the true fabric of what Chicago is, of what our country is” (Avila and Olivo 2006). Protests would continue for the next two months, culminating in a May Day march on May 1, 2006 that drew 400,000 people to Los Angeles to protest the House bill (Gorman et. Al. 2006). While the protests died down after May, the long term significance of the protests could be felt in the Latino community, creating, in the words of Matt Barreto and his coauthors, “the foundation for a broad Latino movement” (Barreto et al. 2009).

Through all of the controversy and increases in issue salience, the policy leadership continued to use its institutional power to be a part of the policy process. The sponsors of both the Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act and the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act were policy leaders, with the two Judiciary chairmen (James Sensenbrenner and Arlen Specter) sponsoring their body’s respective bills. With leadership controlling the debate and the primary bills, one would assume that given time and negotiation, the two bodies would eventually find common ground and report out a successful immigration bill as had happened in 1986 when the two immigration subcommittee chairs worked out their differences and passed a bill through Congress. However, unlike 1981-1986, this did not happen.

There are a few explanations for why the bill did not become law. Part of the story comes from simple electoral change, as unlike the changeover from the 98<sup>th</sup> to the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, the change from the 109<sup>th</sup> to the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress led to both houses of Congress changing hands, with the Democrats retaking control of the House for the first time since 1995 and the Senate for

the first time since 2003. Even Democratic leaders, however, were unable to report out a comprehensive immigration bill while they held power, and subsequent changes in Congress have led to the lack of a new comprehensive immigration law as of 2016.

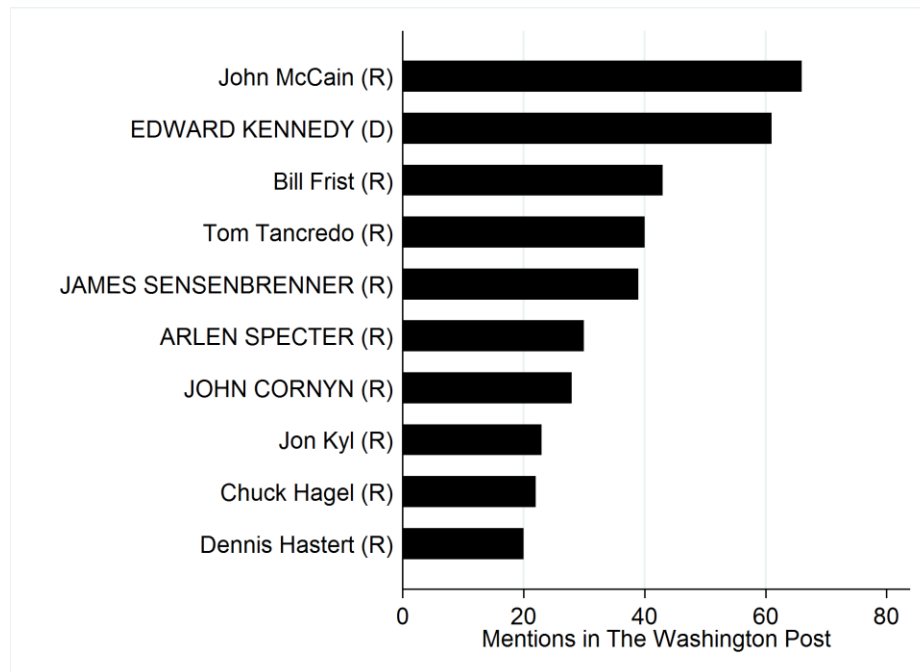
Party change may account for part of the story, but issue salience also plays a role in the process. 2006, unlike 1986, was a time when immigration was highly salient in American life, both due to conservative fears over illegal immigration and the Latino response to Sensenbrenner's House immigration bill. Recalling Figure 4.6, coverage of immigration in *The Washington Post* spiked as Sensenbrenner's bill passed the House in December 2005, and stayed high throughout much of 2006. While the spike did decrease following 2006, shocks to the system were still present throughout the rest of the series.

The increased issue salience can also be seen in the involvement of members of Congress. In particular, member involvement in immigration in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, unlike the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, was high. In the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Congress that passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, there were 44 members of Congress mentioned in relation to immigration in *The Washington Post*, though only 15 of these members were mentioned more than 2 times in the 2 year period. By contrast, 134 members of Congress, about 25% of the total number of members of Congress in office, were mentioned on immigration during the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, and 50 members had more than 2 mentions during the 2 year period, including 14 members who had at least 10 mentions in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. In general, not only were more members of Congress involved in immigration in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, but they were also involved at a much higher rate than members had been in the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress.

The raw numbers tell us that more members are involved, but who are these members and how do these members relate to policy leadership? In Figure 4.7, I graph the number of member

mentions by members for the top 10 mentioned members on immigration (plus ties) for 2005 and 2006. As in other graphs, the names of policy leaders are capitalized.

**Figure 4.7: Number of Mentions on Immigration by Member, 109<sup>th</sup> Congress**



Unlike the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, discussion is dominated by non-leaders, and the amount of discussion is substantially higher. Alan Simpson, the member with the most coverage in the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, would only rank 8<sup>th</sup> in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. The top two members mentioned in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress are the two senators at the center of the Senate immigration bill: John McCain and Edward Kennedy. Kennedy is also the highest ranked policy leader due to his role on the Senate Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on immigration. Yet it is McCain, with no jurisdictional control, who has the most mentions. In addition, Tom Tancredo, a stalwart against illegal immigration who did not serve on the House Judiciary Committee, receives more mentions in the Congress than any policy leader other than Kennedy. Policy then is being tugged in two different directions by two different groups. McCain and Kennedy (who together

make up close to 20% of the total mentions of members of Congress on immigration in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress) pulled policy toward the old position of security and amnesty. At the same time, Tom Tancredo and other hard-liners were attempting to pull policy further than even policy leadership had conceived, moving toward blocking amnesty entirely. That so many members are involved, with such a large amount of attention, as seen in Figure 4.6, means that changing policy in general would be much tougher than it had been in 1986. The room for deal-making and punishment that might be available under periods of low salience are not present. Between protests and confusion in Congress, the result is that leadership's attempt at policy change did not come to pass. Neither the Sensenbrenner bill nor the McCain/Kennedy bill were enacted, leaving the status quo as is to the chagrin of policy leaders.

What we have seen in the story of immigration is how leadership power diminishes under the weight of high salience. Members of Congress, reacting to increases in issue salience, attempt to shift policy toward their preferred issue direction. The giant mass of members involved leads to stagnation, as a hardline House and a moderate Senate are unable to make changes during periods of high salience. The result from this process is the continuation of the status quo, as leaders are unable to make their desired policy change.

We have now seen how policy change can be successfully sought by leadership during times of low salience as well as how higher levels of salience and reaction to media attention can lead to the absence of leadership-induced change during times of high salience. We now turn to how individual members themselves can use salience to their advantage, tapping into issues and increasing salience on issue areas. The nuclear freeze of the early 1980s was not a product of policy leadership. Instead, it is the product of five members of Congress with varying interest

and experience with the issue using nascent levels of salience to try and reshape nuclear weapons policy in the United States.

## **The Nuclear Freeze: Issue Usurpation and Leadership Loss of Control**

### ***Background***

When the United States dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan in August 1945, the American government became the first (and to date only) power to ever use nuclear weapons in combat. In the 35 years that separated the dropping of atomic bombs and the election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States in 1980, the United States continued to develop nuclear weapons, focusing on policy designed to continue to build weapons and increase the nuclear stockpile. There were many reasons for this buildup. Most importantly, the American relationship with the Soviet Union guided nuclear weapons policy, as the United States government built up their weapons in response to potential Soviet buildups. By focusing on a policy of mutually assured destruction, both sides were fixated on creating and modifying weapons to ensure that in the case of a nuclear strike they would be ready to respond. While treaties such as SALT I and SALT II were signed by both the United States and the Soviet Union as an attempt to reign in weapons, both American and Soviet arsenals continued to grow. In addition, SALT II's ratification was eventually stalled and left uncompleted following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

While policy leaders on nuclear weapons focused on buildup, others outside of government began to question America's use of nuclear power both for energy and weaponry. The nuclear power movement had begun to see the fruits of their labor realized in the late 1970s, as the United States government, in response to issues at Three Mile Island, had begun to pull back from focusing on nuclear power plants (for a more thorough discussion, see Chapter 4 of

Baumgartner and Jones 2009). At the same time, many of these activists began to shift their attention toward nuclear weapons.

Central to these efforts were finding a successful policy strategy that would appeal to a wide variety of groups. Activist Randall Forsberg and others in the movement eventually settled on centering policy change around a bilateral freeze of production of nuclear weapons by both the United States and the Soviet Union. The goal, as Forsberg and others argued, was to appeal to the two groups that would be most important in achieving victory: the peace community and their organized networks of individuals, and the middle class and their ability to change American life through strength in numbers (Waller 1987, 29-30). However, as activists began to shift toward the freeze, they found a United States government focused more on building up weapons than decreasing weapons, especially after the 1980 election.

The 1980 presidential election brought with it a new rise in conservatism in American government. The Republican Party's victories were victories for conservatism, and this conservatism extended to the question of nuclear weapons. Newly elected President Ronald Reagan had run explicitly counter to mutually assured destruction, instead focusing on "a credible strategy which will deter a Soviet attack by the clear capability of our forces to survive and ultimately to destroy Soviet military targets" (1980). Reagan then had little incentive to freeze production, especially without guarantees that the Soviet Union would be a faithful partner in the endeavor.

Reagan had not been the only Republican to gain power due to the 1980 elections. The United States Senate, a body held by the Democrats since 1955, was now in the hands of the GOP, the result of a landslide election that had knocked off more dovish senators like former Presidential nominee George McGovern of South Dakota and future Democratic presidential

candidate Mike Gravel. Policy leadership, on the other hand, did not move as drastically from one end to the other. The hawkish John Stennis of Mississippi gave way to the hawkish John Tower of Texas for the Senate Armed Services Committee. At the same time, the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces, the primary subcommittee devoted to nuclear weapons, also changed hands between hawkish members of the Senate. Democrat Henry “Scoop” Jackson of Washington was replaced as chair by John Warner of Virginia, a former Navy captain and Secretary of the Navy under the Nixon administration.

Democrats remained in control of the House of Representatives following the 1980 election, though the members in power on nuclear weapons were by no means supporters of a freeze. House Armed Services Chair, Melvin Price, did give up the chairmanship of the nuclear subcommittee, which was taken on by Congressman Samuel Stratton of New York. In general, the status quo on nuclear weapons remained in place, and policy leadership was structured to continue past policies on nuclear defense.

In addition, the nuclear question was not on the minds of Congress: President Reagan and the Congress had put primary focus on budgetary and tax issues in an attempt to pass an income tax cut in 1981, meaning that issues like nuclear weapons would be on the sideline, relegated to cost discussions and defense committee hearings.

Between hostility from the House and Senate policy leaders and the lack of focus on nuclear issues, anti-nuclear activists then faced a major uphill battle to even potentially think about stopping the buildup and construction of weapons. Yet by the mid-1980s, the House had passed a nuclear freeze and the Reagan administration had begun to consider arms reductions in negotiations with the Soviets. So what happened? How did these efforts succeed and how was policy leadership pushed to make changes on policy? The story in Congress is focused on 5 men

outside of the policy leadership who were involved at varying levels: some, such as Edward Markey, Ted Kennedy, and Mark Hatfield, were central actors, while others like Jonathan Bingham and Silvio Conte played more symbolic roles. Yet it was the work of the five to increase issue salience, which led to the eventual passage of the nuclear freeze in some capacity.

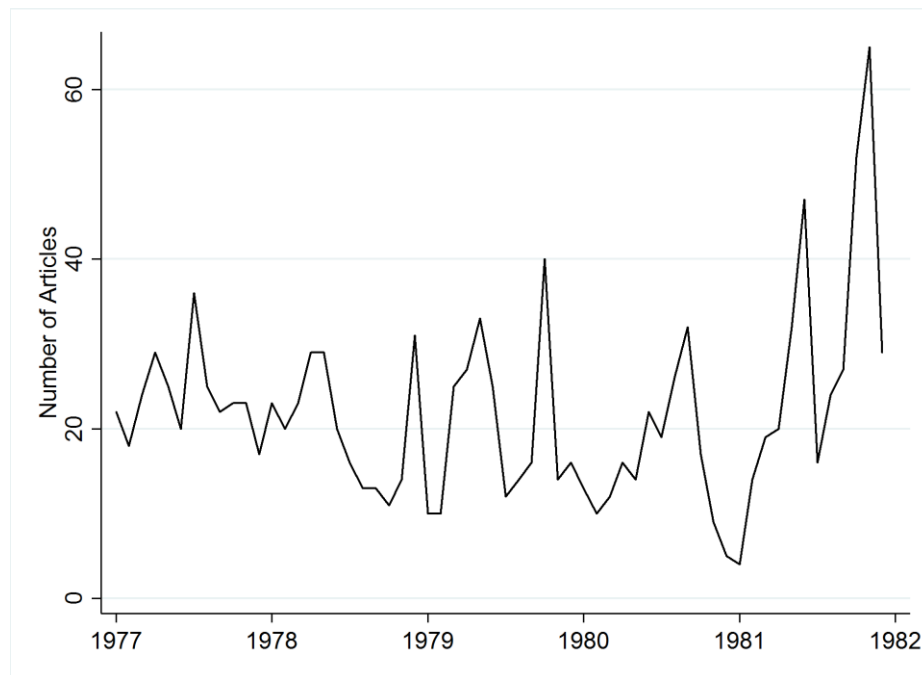
### ***1981: Prelude to the Freeze***

At the start of the 97<sup>th</sup> Congress, the nuclear freeze movement was not on the Congressional agenda. In fact, nuclear power, in general, was not high on the agenda early in 1981, as the Reagan administration put primary focus on budgetary and tax issues, culminating in the passage of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 in July of that year. For the most part, nuclear weapons policy, under the control of policy leadership, should continue to move in the direction of the status quo, increasing weaponry while continuing to maintain a large nuclear arsenal. In general, Congress focused on nuclear nonproliferation, the desire to prevent American arms and other arms from getting into the hands of other countries. The Reagan Defense budget in 1981 decreased funding in some areas, but continued to protect the development and building of the MX intercontinental ballistic missile, as both the House and Senate voted to continue production of the missile (“Defense Bill Makes Most of Reagan's Cuts.”).

At the same time, while Congress was only briefly touching on the question of nuclear weapons, the issue had begun to gain more traction within the media. In Figure 4.8, I outline the total amount of coverage on nuclear weapons by month in *The Washington Post* prior to and at the beginning of the Reagan administration, with focus on the period of 1977 to 1981.

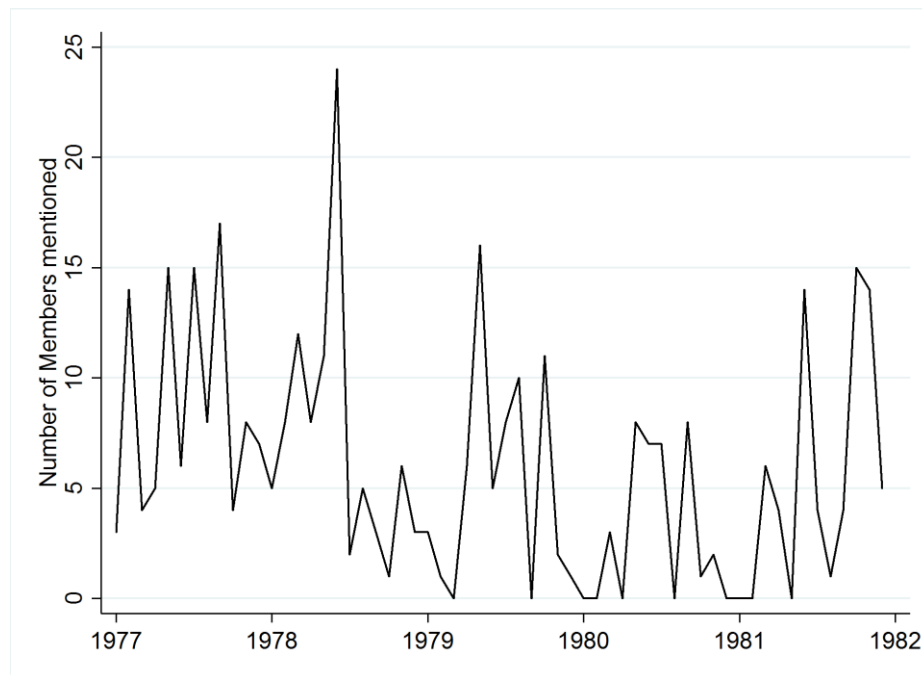


**Figure 4.8: Total Number of Articles on Nuclear Weapons in *The Washington Post* by Month, 1977-1981**



As we can see from Figure 4.8, nuclear weapons received some coverage in *The Washington Post*, but that coverage was not as large as the coverage nuclear weapons would receive in the following decades. The average number of articles by month in *The Washington Post* on nuclear weapons over the 36 year period between 1977 and 2012 was about 28 articles, or about an article a day. During the period 1977 and 1980, the average is about 20 articles a month. Readers of *The Washington Post* were not seeing daily coverage of nuclear weapons, though the coverage is still large relative to other issues. At the same time, members of Congress are not necessarily involved in the coverage of nuclear weapons. In Figure 4.9, I graph the number of members mentioned by month in *The Washington Post* by month from 1977 to 1981.

**Figure 4.9: Total Number of Members discussing Nuclear Weapons in *The Washington Post* by Month, 1977-1981**



As we can see from Figure 4.9, member involvement is generally low throughout the entire period between 1977 and 1981. There is a peak of 24 members in June of 1978, though there are only 20 articles on nuclear weapons in that month. Much of the discussion in June 1978 is over the exportation of uranium to India for use in nuclear power plants - a move some worried would lead to India gaining the capability to create an atomic bomb as well as plans to add other nuclear aircraft to President Jimmy Carter's defense bill. Otherwise, only a handful of members are usually involved in conversation on nuclear weapons, even as coverage of nuclear weapons begins to increase. In 1981, for example, 39 members are mentioned at some point during the year in *The Washington Post* with regards to nuclear weapons. . However, most of these members receive brief coverage, with only 8 members receiving more than 2 mentions in the year. Some of these members are policy leaders such as Senate Armed Services Committee chair John Tower and Senate Government Operations Nuclear Subcommittee chair Charles Percy. Others are former policy leaders like Senator John Glenn of Ohio, or party leaders such as

Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker and Senate Minority Whip Alan Cranston. There is also only one member of the House who gets mentioned more than 2 times in 1981. That member, Edward Markey of Massachusetts, did not have direct jurisdiction over nuclear weapons. In 1982, however, Markey would become central to the question of how an individual member of Congress could create policy change on nuclear weapons.

### ***1982: Introduction of the Freeze and Rise of the Freeze Movement***

While 1981 showed the strength of the status quo, 1982 brought change, and members of Congress began to notice some of the shifts in opinion that had begun to sprout up due to the peace movement. In particular, a young Massachusetts Congressman named Edward Markey began to take notice of some of the protest movements outside of Congress. By 1982, Markey had already developed a reputation in energy policy as someone who wanted to focus on cleaner and safer forms of energy, attempting to move the United States away from power like nuclear energy. In addition, Markey also began to explore nuclear proliferation by having Douglas Waller, one of his staffers, look into the policy despite Markey's lack of personal committee jurisdiction on the issue. Waller's work, coupled with the work of Markey's administrative assistant, Peter Franchot, led Markey to seriously consider going ahead with a freeze proposal in the House. Markey's interest was echoed by his staffers, with Franchot exclaiming on the freeze that "The freeze is going to sweep this country... and there's no reason why we shouldn't be in the middle of it" (Waller 1987, 47). Markey would introduce a public freeze provision in the 97<sup>th</sup> Congress, announcing to the other members in February 5, 1982 that he was going to go ahead with his proposal and that he was looking for cosponsors (Waller 1987, 53).

Markey's introduction of a freeze proposal was initially met with little fanfare. While he had been able to get some cosponsors, he needed more support from people who were not House

of Representatives liberals, both to ensure that the bill would get through both the House and Senate, and to convince Republicans (and in particular Ronald Reagan) that the freeze was both popular and necessary. He found his support from a close source, Edward Kennedy, the senior United States Senator from Massachusetts and liberal lion. Kennedy, fresh off an insurgent run for president of the United States in 1980, was considered (as of 1982) a viable candidate to take on Ronald Reagan in the 1984 presidential election. Kennedy had also begun investigating the viability of the freeze after hearing from constituents about their worries over nuclear war while meeting with constituents in the winter of 1981 (Waller 1987, 59).

Kennedy would also bring in a Republican ally, Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon. While Kennedy's push could be linked to both good public policy and electoral politics, Hatfield's was entirely in the realm of policy change. Mark Hatfield was among the first servicemen to set foot in Hiroshima following the United States' dropping of the atomic bomb on the city in August 1945. As Hatfield later recounted to *Sojourners*,

One month after the bomb, I walked through the streets of Hiroshima and I saw the utter devastation in every direction from nuclear power. All of those experiences were really the fundamental beginnings of my thinking about those specific issues, of Vietnam, war in general, nuclear power, and hunger. (Wallis 1996)

Due to both his personal convictions and the bipartisan flavor the measure would be able to take on, Hatfield then was a natural ally to Kennedy's efforts to put in place a freeze. Kennedy and Hatfield worked out their version of the language, and got in touch with Markey to introduce a joint resolution to Congress calling for President Reagan to seek a bilateral freeze with the Soviet Union, looking to stop production of nuclear weapons. The three would be joined by two more members in their resolution-introducing coalition, Democratic congressman Jonathan Bingham of New York, who had called for a freeze just before Markey's efforts went public

(Waller 1987, 54) and Silvio Conte, a Republican representative from Western Massachusetts who had co-sponsored Markey's original bill, and became the primary sponsor of the House form of the freeze proposal due to his more moderate record versus the more anti-nuclear Markey (Waller 1987, 66). On March 10, 1982, the bilateral freeze was introduced in Congress, complete with a large media event at American University in Washington, DC.

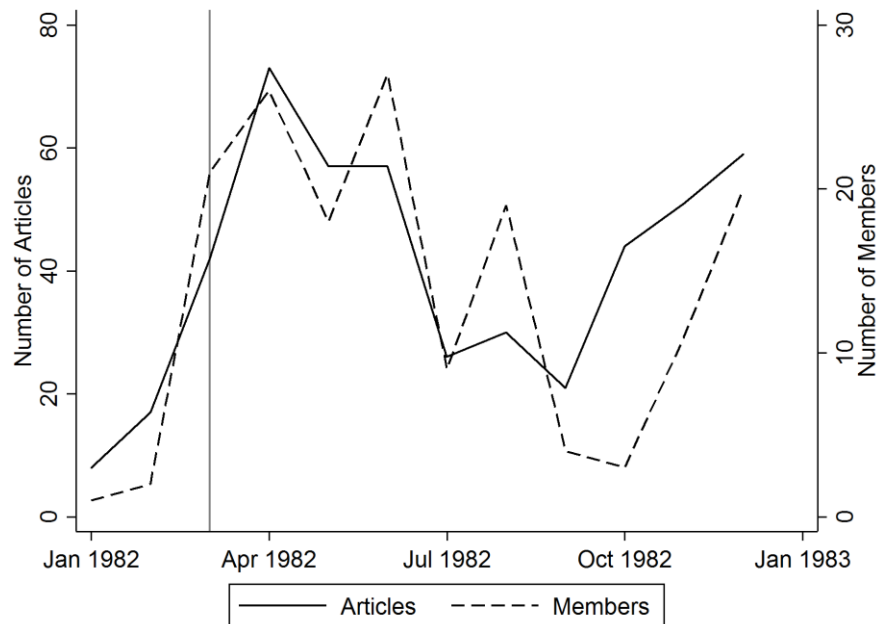
Markey, Kennedy, and their allies made their play in Congress, but how would policymakers and the Reagan administration respond? Reagan's allies attacked almost immediately, with Secretary of State Alexander Haig calling the freeze "bad arms control policy" (Hornblower 1982). Reagan himself soon after claimed that the United States was defensively inferior to the Soviets, and therefore a freeze would be highly problematic for U.S. defense capabilities versus a potential Soviet attack (Waller 1987, 77). The Reagan administration wanted nothing to do with a freeze.

Meanwhile, in Congress, the battle to control the nature of the freeze was on. Within three weeks of the introduction of the freeze, John Warner and Henry "Scoop" Jackson, the chair and ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces, had introduced their own version of the nuclear freeze, which called for looking into the freeze following an American buildup of weapons and a Soviet decrease in weaponry (Waller 1987, 92). Other members of Congress also began to introduce their own versions of the freeze, working to push public policy on nuclear weapons in different directions.

In 1982, the nuclear freeze movement in Congress took control of the issue area, and came in early, before the large jumps in salience occurred. In Figure 4.10, I graph both the total number of articles on nuclear weapons in *The Washington Post* in 1982 as well as the total

number of members involved by month, adding a vertical line to represent March, the month the five members introduced the freeze bill.

**Figure 4.10: Total Number of Articles and Total Members Mentioned on Nuclear Weapons in *The Washington Post*, 1982.**

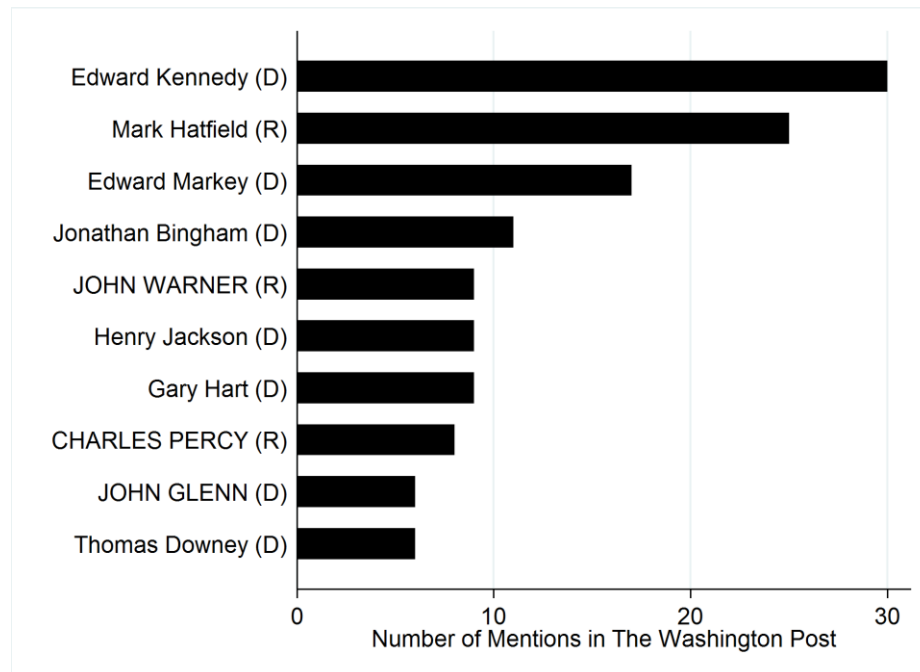


As we can see from Figure 4.10, March 1982 corresponds with a major rise in both the total number of articles on nuclear weapons in *The Washington Post* and the total number of members mentioned on nuclear weapons in *The Washington Post*. Recalling Figures 4.9 and 4.10, the peaks for articles and members are 65 and 24 respectively. Both of these are eclipsed in April 1982, the month following introduction of the freeze proposal, and the upward trajectory in March suggests that members recognized the potential issues with nuclear weapons and their salience, and wanted to become involved. We can see here some evidence that the media blitz by the 5 freeze members moved other members to react.

We know that salience increased and members became involved in the process, but exactly who were the members that were talking about nuclear weapons? In Figure 4.11, I graph the total number of mentions by member in *The Washington Post* in 1982 on nuclear

weapons. As in Figures 4.4, 4.5, and 4.7, I only graph the top 10 members mentioned. In addition, I identify policy leaders through name capitalization.

**Figure 4.11: Number of Mentions of Members of Congress on Nuclear Weapons in *The Washington Post*, 1982**



For reference, in 1982 there are a total of 259 mentions of members of Congress in *The Washington Post* on nuclear weapons. Of these, 86 of them, or 33% of the total mentions of members of Congress on nuclear weapons in 1982, come from the 5 members of Congress sponsoring freeze resolution. In addition, as we can see from Figure 11, the four most-mentioned members are all freeze sponsors (Silvio Conte is mentioned 3 times in 1982). The first leader to make an appearance on the list is John Warner, the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee Chair on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces. It is Warner and Henry Jackson who respond to the freeze proponents with their own freeze bill. Warner and Jackson saw the Kennedy/Hatfield/Markey movement, and in turn tried to make it their own issue. Markey and

his compatriots had succeeded at moving the goalposts of policy from no consideration of a freeze to at least some consideration of the potential for a freeze.

### ***The Freeze: After March 1982***

The freeze proposed by Markey would lose in the House on a procedural amendment in July of 1982, however this was only the beginning of the freeze process. The 98<sup>th</sup> Congress would take up the freeze, this time bringing the ire of conservatives like Jerry Falwell and Phyllis Schlafly, both of whom attacked the freeze as un-American (Waller 1987, 187). The freeze finally passed in the House on May 4, 1983, after weeks of debate and the addition of a sunset provision if stockpiles were not reduced (Waller 1987, 285). While the Senate, due to the control held by Republicans, would not pass a freeze resolution before the 1984 presidential election, the reverberations of the freeze movement had been felt in the White House. By his second term, President Ronald Reagan had returned to the negotiating table with new Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev and had begun to focus on arms control as a part of public policy. The freeze movement may not have directly won the battle and created a nuclear freeze, but by pushing both policy leaders and President Reagan to react to them with resolutions and movements, they had at least pushed public policy away from a focus on the constant buildup of weapons.

### **Discussion**

The primary goal of this chapter is to explore two major parts of my larger argument. The first of these is the role policy leaders can play at times of low salience and how that role diminishes during times of greater salience. As we saw with agricultural subsidies, the normal workhorse model of politics held: Richard Lugar worked his way up from freshman Senator to chair of the Agriculture Committee, and then used that opportunity to change policy. Yet, policy leaders saw diminished roles in both the cases of immigration and nuclear weapons. By losing



control of an issue to usurpers, and having to react to movement by non-leaders, leaders eventually face one of two possibilities: the creation of a new status quo when leaders did not want to change the status quo (as in nuclear weapons) or the continuation of the status quo when leaders wanted to change policy (as in immigration). In both cases, as salience increased, leadership lost power over an issue area.

The second goal here is to explore the endogenous relationship between salience and members of Congress, something that I can only do on a limited basis in statistical modeling. I hold that both types of salience creation are occurring: members of Congress are reacting to exogenous events (as seen in the case of immigration) and members of Congress are also attempting to create salience through their actions (as seen in the case of nuclear weapons with the 5 freeze leaders). Members of Congress are both trying to increase the scope of a conflict (as the renegade House Agriculture Republicans attempted to do in committee hearings over the Freedom to Farm Act) and are also reacting to increases in salience. In general, members of Congress use the limited agenda space available as well as a set of issue policy positions in order to decide when and where to become involved in issue areas, attempting to shift policy in some way.

However, we have explored to this point issues that receive some, but not constant coverage from the media. In the next chapter, I explore the question of what happens in an issue where coverage is constant and ever present. Here, the salience of subsidy cannot be used in the way it is used when an issue has large fluctuations in coverage. Instead, members must be more strategic.

## **Chapter 5: Member Engagement and Policy Change: Jack Kemp and Taxation**

### **Introduction**

We understand now how members of Congress act when salience increases on an issue, and the ramifications issue salience and member engagement have on policy change, given levels of salience. But what happens when attention to an issue is always high? Do members of Congress use salience here in the same way they do when issue salience can make significant increases and decreases? Members of Congress have equal access to the salience subsidy, so they already know that a highly salient issue exists and is something they should be aware of in terms of policy. Members then should not have a need to engage in the issue area because in general, members of Congress are constantly involved in a consistently high salient issue.

In this chapter, I argue that in issues that receive consistently high levels of coverage, members of Congress are not acting on changes to salience, but rather strategically using salience to appeal to specific groups. All members of Congress have access to a large amount of information on highly salient issues, and shifts in issue attention will not determine member involvement, because members should generally be involved in the issue area considering its level of coverage. Instead, members of Congress must be more strategic, focusing on specific aspects of issues or marketing to specific groups of people in order to find groups that can help the member move their idea forward. Recalling E.E. Schattschneider's conflict expansion theory (1975), members of Congress need to expand the conflict beyond knowing that an issue exists,

focusing on the fact that their issue solution exists, in order to bring new, potentially more helpful individuals into the discussion.

I now turn to a specific case to better expand how individual members who do not have policy leadership on issues take control of specific issue areas when issue salience is constantly high. I focus on the specific issue of taxation and income taxes, with particular focus on the time period between 1977 and 1986. This 10 year period includes many major events in the history of taxation in the United States, from Proposition 13 in California in 1978 to the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1986. In the middle of this time period lies the primary focus of my analysis, a tax bill at the dawn of the Reagan Administration that would reshape the level of taxation in the United States: the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (ERTA). This bill is the culmination of 5 years of work from Republicans to move the party and the nation from a focus on tax deductions and one-time fixes to a tax policy based around lowered income tax rates.

I have two reasons for focusing on the case of taxation. First, it is a case of high issue attention, in that unlike many of the other issues under study, taxation is constantly part of everyday American life. While some issues, such as agricultural subsidies, have a maximum of 22 articles a month in *The Washington Post*, there were on average 17 articles per week in *The Washington Post* on taxation. Members, in general, will be talking about taxes regularly.

Second, taxation also offers an opportunity to explore more directly the role individual members, with the right skill sets and ideas, can play in the policy process. During the period of study, members of Congress used changes both within and outside of the body to push for new tax law in the United States. In particular, I focus on one specific member of Congress and one specific series of moments: Republican Jack Kemp of New York between the period 1977 and 1981. Kemp was not a natural tax cutter in terms of policy leadership. He never served on the

House Ways & Means Committee, the primary committee devoted to taxation, and while he did serve on the Budget Committee, Kemp did not receive this committee assignment until he had become a central figure on taxation. While Kemp's initial victory would be brief, the work that he and others (including Senator William Roth of Delaware) had put into tax policy would become a central component of both United States tax policy and the essence of the Republican Party.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore tax policy in the United States Congress during the period of 1977-1986. I begin with an overview of the primary data source used. Unlike the data used in previous chapters, I focus on only tax law and income taxes. In addition, my unit of analysis is at the weekly count level, which will allow me to explore questions of member direction more fully. Following the data discussion, I walk through the history of taxation in the United States before passage of ERTA, putting particular focus on the period between 1977 and 1981, with Jack Kemp as my centerpiece. Finally, I look at the general trends behind the relationship between members of Congress and issue attention, looking at the direction of causality between member of Congress involvement in taxation and articles on taxation. Much of the analysis here mirrors work done in previous chapters. By examining an issue with a large amount of salience in terms of previous work, I am looking to explore the differences between issues with low levels of salience and those that receive large amounts of attention on a daily basis.

## **Data**

### ***Mentions of Taxation and Income Taxes in The Washington Post***

My primary data comes from articles in *The Washington Post* between the period of 1977 and 1986. While the Kemp period I discuss in the case study focuses on the period 1977 and

1981, I use a longer 10 year period to encompass a wider variety of events in the history of American taxation, including the 1986 Tax Reform Act. I use two Lexis-Nexis search terms in my data: “tax law” and “income taxes.” I also use the two search terms to maximize my collection of tax discussion in *The Washington Post*. While “tax law” is the primary search term assigned by Lexis-Nexis to articles related to taxation, Lexis-Nexis also uses “income taxes” to deal with articles directly related to income taxes. The “income taxes” search term is used more sparingly than the “tax law” term to describe taxation, meaning that to best capture discussion of taxation in *The Washington Post*, I need to use both terms. As with my other data, I use an 85% search threshold, allowing for articles that both directly deal with taxation as well as articles that at least mention taxation (or contain taxation as part of a series of smaller stories).

My unit of analysis is weekly number of articles in *The Washington Post* on tax law and income taxes. I use weekly articles (versus monthly articles) here for two reasons, in which first is size. The total number of articles written on taxation between 1977 and 1986 in *The Washington Post* is 8,873. Recalling Table 3.1, the 10 year total for taxation is smaller than only three issues measured over a 36 year period: nuclear weapons (12,116), immigration (10,126), and oil & gas industry (9,984). Simply put, there is simply more data in the 10 year period than in most of my searches over a 36 year period.

The second reason for a weekly analysis is that the presence of more data allows me to test the temporal questions central to my analysis more thoroughly. The advantage of using the weekly level is that members of Congress are reacting to events at a faster pace than from month to month. However, a disadvantage apparent in the lack of data from week to week in my other searches makes testing and analysis far more problematic. As weeks may pass between observations, especially in cases of low salience (such as agricultural subsidies), attempting to

run a week to week analysis on issues with a large number of zeroes will lead to overweighting in favor of the zeroes. While week to week may not perfectly capture members of Congress reacting to other members of Congress engaging in issues, it does get closer to the temporal question, and the large amount of data from week to week allows me to analyze without having to worry about weeks with observations overwhelming the data.

To best understand the sheer amount of data under analysis, it is important to see what the data actually looks like over time. In Figure 5.1, I present yearly statistics on the number of articles written on taxation and income taxes in *The Washington Post* between 1977 and 1986 and the number of mentions of members of Congress on taxation and income taxes during the same period. I use yearly numbers here rather than weekly numbers, in order to give a general picture of what media discussion of taxation looked like during the larger period 1977 to 1986.

**Figure 5.1: Number of Articles and Mentions of Members of Congress on Taxation in *The Washington Post*, by Year**



As we can see from Figure 5.1, taxation has received extensive coverage in *The Washington Post*. There are, on average, about 887 articles per year in *The Washington Post* on taxation

between 1977 and 1986, or about 2.43 articles per day. Even in 1979, the lowest point for articles in the series, there were 621 articles on taxation in *The Washington Post*, or about 1.70 articles per day. In general, taxation is an issue that receives significant coverage from the paper, even during times of considerably lower coverage.

The large number of articles means that members of Congress are also constantly involved in taxation. On average, there are about 556 mentions of a member of Congress per year on taxation in *The Washington Post*. In 1980, the low point of the series, there are 296 mentions of members of Congress. Members of Congress discuss taxation in the media at rates higher than most other issues, and as a result, are constantly aware of both the presence of taxation and know that it is an issue they should be care about and engage in.

To test members of Congress, I again use my standard for active involvement in the issue area, which involves any action on taxation by a member mentioned in *The Washington Post* that is not simply voting. For policy leadership, I identify members as policy leaders on taxation if they are the chairs and ranking members of 5 committees, by Congress: the House Ways & Means Committee, the House Budget Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, the Senate Budget Committee, and the Joint Committee on Taxation (though the Joint Committee on Taxation is chaired in alternate years by the House Ways & Means Chair and the Senate Finance Chair). In addition, I also identify a member as a policy leader if they are the chair or ranking member of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Taxation.

### ***Other Data***

In addition to my original data on tax discussion in *The Washington Post*, I use other data to explore aspects outside of the media's perception of Congress. These datasets come primarily from the Comparative Agendas Project's United States data ([comparativeagendas.net](http://comparativeagendas.net)). The

Comparative Agendas Project collects data on policy in 20 countries, two states, and the European Union. The United States data, administered by Bryan Jones at the University of Texas-Austin, includes policy data on both government and non-government functions in the post-World War II era. In particular, I employ two datasets from this larger data in my analysis. The first is the Congressional Bills Project, administered by Scott E. Adler and John Wilkerson. The Congressional Bills Project is a collection of every bill introduced in the United States Congress between 1947 and 2015. The second dataset I employ is the Political Party Platforms dataset created and administered by Christina Wohlbrecht at the University of Notre Dame. The platforms dataset codes all quasi-sentence (period and semi-colon separated) mentions of policy in the Democratic and Republican Party Platforms between 1948 and 2012. In both datasets, I employ the use of the Policy Agendas Project subtopic code on taxation, 107, to find and analyze bills and platform statements related to taxes and taxation.

### **Taxation before 1977: Whip Inflation Now**

To best understand how the United States went from the tax system of the 1970s to the cut-focused, reform-minded system of the 1980s, it is important to look at the period prior to the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976. The Republican Party of the mid-1970s, reeling from the resignation of President Richard Nixon, turned to Gerald Ford to lead the party and the country toward financial solvency. Ford's solutions would stand in stark contrast to the solutions offered four years later by his successor as presidential nominee, Ronald Reagan.

While the income tax had been codified as part of American life with the passage of the 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the United States government had attempted to implement federal income taxes since the American Civil War, when a tax on individuals was first introduced, prior to being rescinded following the end of the war the end of the war (Terrell 2012). The top



individual tax rate varied greatly in the early years of the implementation of the tax, primarily increasing during times of war (such as World War I and World War II, when the maximum rate hit 94% of income), and dropping during peacetime. By the early 1970s, the maximum tax rate was at 70% of income, with the minimum around 15% of income (Tax Foundation).

The early 1970s were not kind to the Republican Party. Though their fortunes had started out well with the re-election of Richard Nixon in 1972, scandal led to the resignations of first Vice President Spiro Agnew, and finally President Nixon himself, following controversy over Nixon's role in the break-in at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters at the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C. In Nixon's place came new president Gerald Ford, a man thrust into both a political mess within his party and an economic downturn due to the 1973 oil embargo by OPEC nations. To deal with the economic issues, Ford introduced the "Whip Inflation Now" (WIN) plan in an address to Congress on October 8, 1974, just before the 1974 Congressional elections. While Ford focused WIN on a variety of both public and private measures to decrease inflation, one part of this plan was tax increases. Ford recognized the issues that may come from introducing a tax increase just before the 1974 elections, and noted "I think, and I suspect each of you know, this is the acid test of our joint determination to whip inflation in America" (Ford 1974). Weeks after Ford's speech, the Republicans would lose 49 seats in the House of Representatives and 4 seats in the Senate, giving the Democrats even more control of both houses of Congress.

In the aftermath of the 1974 elections, the Republican Party began to explore new avenues in an attempt to take power away from the Democrats. One of these avenues came to light at a dinner meeting at the Hotel Washington's Two Continents restaurant in December 1974, following the election and Ford's WIN speech. In attendance were *Wall Street Journal*

editor Jude Wanniski, White House Chief of Staff (and future Defense Secretary) Donald Rumsfeld, Rumsfeld's deputy (and future Vice President) Richard Cheney, and Arthur Laffer, a University of Chicago economist. On a bar napkin, Laffer sketched out what would become the Laffer Curve, arguing that increased taxation would not lead to increased revenues due to the lack of desire to work (Worstell 2014). Instead, Laffer argued that taxes should be decreased, in order find a tax level that would maximize revenues.

Cheney and Rumsfeld were not the only two to hear Laffer's presentation. In 1976, another politician would not only hear Laffer and Wanniski's argument for tax cuts, but would begin to act on it. Jack Kemp, a former NFL quarterback turned Republican Congressman from New York, had been interested in taxation as part of a larger plan toward helping offset some of the economic issues in his heavily industrial Buffalo district (Kondracke and Barnes 2015). Kemp's tax work in the early 1970s had focused on corporate tax breaks in order to keep businesses afloat, though these early efforts had not been successful in Congress. In 1976, Kemp met with Wanniski for the first time, and by the end of the first meeting (a 14-hour affair that stretched from Capitol Hill to Kemp's home in Bethesda, Maryland), Kemp had decided to champion the Laffer-Wanniski tax cut movement (Kondracke and Barnes 2015, 38). Kemp first proposed a tax cut plan (as part of a larger economic bill) that spring, though the bill would not move through Congress in 1976, as the Democratically-controlled Congress refused to consider the bill.

Meanwhile, events outside of Congress further limited Kemp's ability to move tax cuts forward in the future. After surviving a primary challenge from former California governor Ronald Reagan, President Gerald Ford would lose the presidency to Georgia governor Jimmy Carter in November 1976. The only piece of federal elected power held by the Republicans was

gone, and Democrats had total control of government. The prospects of tax cuts looked bleak going into 1977.

## **1977-1980: Jack Kemp's Emergence**

### ***The Political Landscape of the 95<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> Congresses***

In 1977, at the dawn of the 95<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Democratic Party was in complete control of the elected parts of the federal government. The Democrats had added one seat in the House, giving them 292 seats to the Republicans' 143. In the Senate, the Democrats remained in power, adding a seat to end up with 61 senators

When Jack Kemp began to craft a tax cut bill, he faced daunting odds for his bill receiving consideration, let alone passage. Beyond his status as a member of the Republican Party, Kemp was neither a leader nor was he even a member of a committee that would have any part in taxation. In addition, the members who held policy leadership on taxation, House Ways & Means Committee Chair Al Ullman of Oregon and Senate Finance Committee Chair Russell Long of Louisiana, both wanted no part of decreasing the income tax rate, as the two chairs had extensive experience in taxation and budget policy. While Ullman had only taken control of the Ways & Means Committee on an interim basis in 1973 following the resignation of long-time chairman Wilbur Mills, Ullman had been central to constructing the modern budgetary policy in the United States Congress, and had been the first chairman of the Budget Committee following its creation in 1974. Long had served as the chair of the Senate Finance Committee since 1966, and had a long history in tax policy, having been a central actor behind enactment of the Earned Income Tax Credit in 1975. In general, both Ullman and Long were policy leaders both in terms of their power in their respective bodies of Congress and their histories in tax and budgetary

policy. Neither would be easily defeated by a single United States representative who had no jurisdiction over tax policy.

In addition, members of Kemp's own party were also generally uneasy with the idea of cutting taxes, especially tax-writing members such as Ways & Means ranking member Barber Conable. A New Yorker like Kemp, Conable was more focused on balanced budgets than cutting taxes as a solution to economic woes (Fleming 2004, see also Barone 1990, 621). Other Republicans found tax cuts highly problematic, most notably Republican Senator Bob Dole, who, like Conable, wanted to focus on balancing budgets. While the members remained uneasy with the proposition of lowering taxes, there was still hope to be found within the Republican ranks. The intellectual Republican elite, led by Wanniski and Irving Kristol, had been building an intellectual network that had begun to put focus on the economy and taxation (Smith 2009), and Kemp gladly became the champion of this intellectual movement.

Kemp first proposed a 22% cut in taxation as an alternative to Democratic tax bills, and enlisted the help of Budget Committee member John Rousselot, a conservative Republican, who sponsored the tax cut bill in the House. The Rousselot alternative failed 258-148, though Kemp was able to get all but 10 Republicans (and 25 Democrats) to vote in favor of the 22% cut (Kondracke and Barnes 2015, 44). While he had been unsuccessful, Kemp had now a sense of where Congress was on the question of tax cuts, and had a starting point to work with.

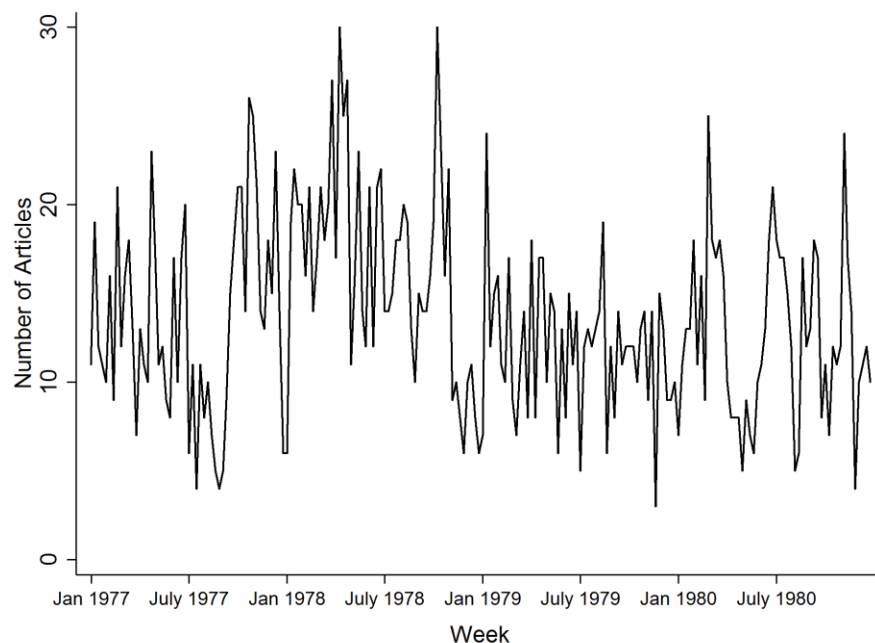
Kemp's next action would be to become the public face of tax cuts, though he would need help in the Senate if there was any hope for passage. Kemp found his help in the form of William Roth, a Republican Senator from Delaware. Roth, a fiscal conservative (who would later become the name behind the Roth IRA) was receptive to Kemp's efforts, and the two began to put together what would become known as Kemp-Roth. Kemp-Roth's goal was simple: cut

the general income tax rate for all Americans by 30% over a three year period. Kemp and Roth introduced their bill in mid-1977, and though it received little consideration in Congress, it mostly failed as an alternative to Democratic tax bills. From the simple perspective of changing policy during 1977 and 1978, Jack Kemp had failed to enact tax cuts and change public policy.

### ***Salience Control and Party Control***

Why had Kemp failed to change public policy in the Carter administration? Two important factors come into play. Two important factors come into play: pre-existing coverage and lack of Republican power within the House or Senate. First, in general, coverage of taxation during the Carter administration remained high and stagnant. In Figure 5.2, I graph the total number of articles by week in *The Washington Post* for the period 1977-1980, encompassing the 95<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> Congresses.

**Figure 5.2: Number of Articles by Week on Taxation in *The Washington Post*, 1977-1980**



As we can see from Figure 5.3, discussion of taxation fluctuated, but did not significantly change, between 1977 and 1980. There were small increases in coverage at times, such as in the summer of 1978 as events outside of Washington moved discussion of taxation from income taxes to property taxes. However, there was no spike of attention that Kemp or Roth could effectively act upon to potentially take control of the issue. The issue had constant amounts of attention already, with about 14 articles per week (or 2 articles per day) during the period 1977 and 1980. At the series' peak, as many as four articles per day in *The Washington Post* discussed taxation in some way. Two effects would emerge of this. First, the lack of a marked increase in coverage means that there is no spike in attention to let individuals know that they should care about this issue. Second, the overwhelming amount of taxation coverage also means that most policymakers would already know a lot about taxation, making acting on a surge of increasing number of articles far less likely. An increase from 15 articles to 20 is less powerful than an increase from 0 to 5. Issue salience then was not working for Kemp and Roth. Riding salience to policy change would not be possible in the case of taxation.

In addition to the lack of fluctuations on issue salience, Republicans did not hold the House or Senate, and had not held these since 1954. Democrats held large majorities in both chambers and control of committees. The control of committees cannot be understated, as committee chair control over hearings gives them negative agenda control (Cox & McCubbins 1993, 2005). Simply, if a bill goes against the party's wishes, then the bill will be blocked. A large scale cutting of the income tax rate was not in the priorities or desires of Democrats in Congress. Tax cuts would therefore not get out of committee, and would have to instead be brought up on the floor, as part of the amendments process.

The domination of the tax-writing chairs in the media during the 95<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> Congresses also contributed to the lack of policy change. In Figure 5.3, I present the yearly figures for member of Congress mentions, for all members of Congress. In addition, I use capitalization to denote members who are policy leaders on the subject of taxation, based on their party roles within relevant Congressional committees. These members are: Democrats Al Ullman (Ways & Means Chair), Robert Giamio (House Budget Chair), Russell Long (Senate Finance Chair), Ed Muskie (Senate Budget Chair); Independent Harry F. Byrd, Jr. (Senate Finance Subcommittee on Taxation Chair); and Republicans Barber Conable (ranking member of the Ways & Means Committee), Delbert Latta (ranking member of the House Budget Committee), Carl Curtis (ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee during the 95<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1977-1978 only), Robert Dole (ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee during the 96<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1979-1980 only), Henry Bellmon (ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee), and Robert Packwood (ranking member of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Taxation). For presentation here, I only present members with at least 10 mentions during the year in question.

**Figure 5.3: Number of Mentions of Members of Congress on Taxation in *The Washington Post*, 1977-1980**

Figure 5.3a. 1977

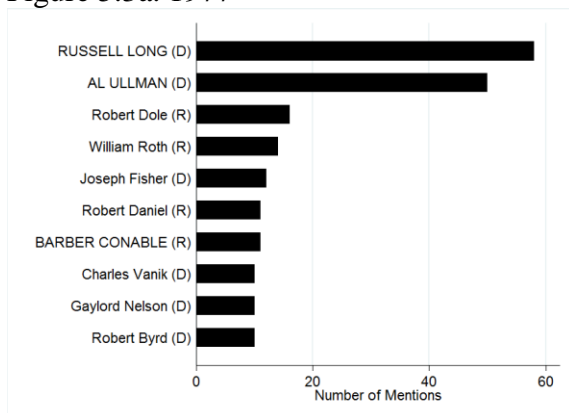


Figure 5.3b. 1978

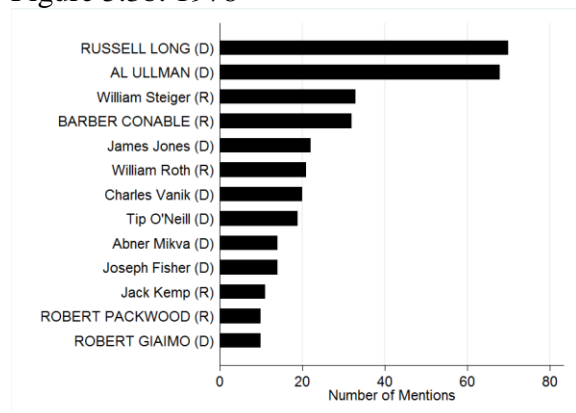


Figure 5.3c. 1979

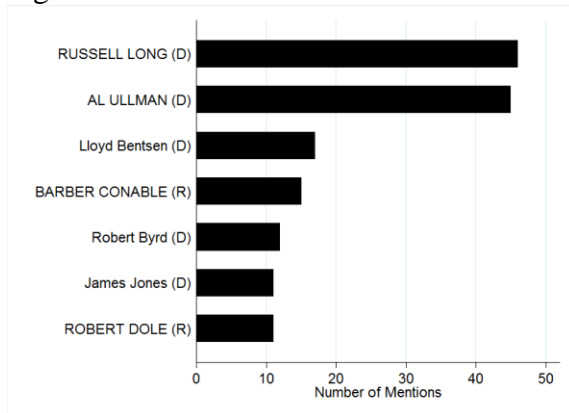
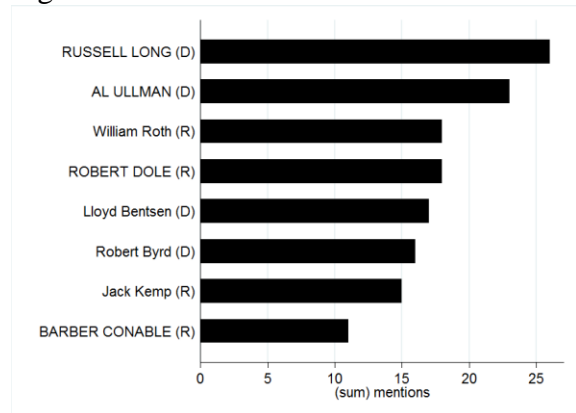


Figure 5.3d. 1980



As we can see from Figure 5.3, discussion of taxation in *The Washington Post* is dominated by Russell Long and Al Ullman, the chairs of the Senate and House tax-writing committees. Long and Ullman together, combined for 24% of member mentions (108 out of 459) in 1977, and 23% of discussion (138 of 596 mentions) in 1978. The two overwhelmingly dominated all other discussion of taxation in that period. Other Democrats appear at various levels, though the most consistent actor involved outside of Long and Ullman is Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd. By 1980, however, the control Long and Ullman had over discussion began to slip. The two together only accounted for 16% (80 of 249) of total discussion, with others, including Kemp and Roth, beginning to take control. There is at least some evidence that the power of Long and Ullman had waned by this point, but how did Kemp and Roth move from being on the outside of discussion to the center, despite the control of Democratic policy leaders? The answer lies in Kemp's focus on creating his own salience on the issue of taxation, through bill introductions and coverage. While the results of Kemp tax cut focus would not move policy before 1980, they would do two important things that would have ramifications in 1981. First, Kemp's focus on tax cuts would make him the Republican face of taxation by the time



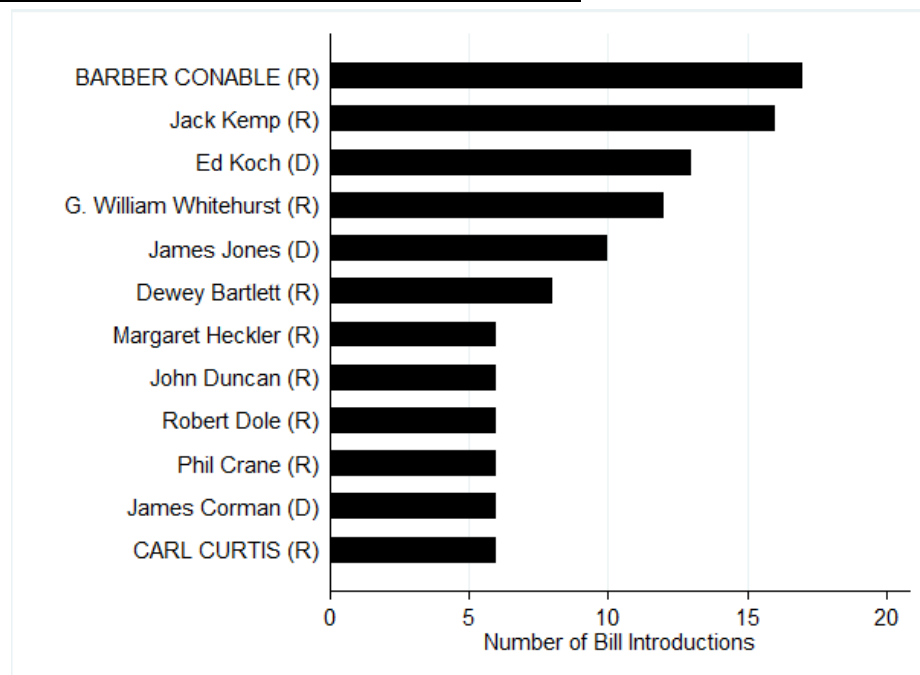
presidential considerations were being made for 1980. Second, and relatedly, the focus on tax cuts would also draw the attention of a former Republican governor looking for an economic focus

### ***Increasing Coverage and Winning the Republican Party***

Despite the long odds against passage of his tax cut, Jack Kemp did not give up on the bill. In fact, he would use the tax cut bill as his way into the conversation on taxation. While this conversation at the top was dominated by Russell Long and Al Ullman, Kemp still carved out an important niche in tax coverage, receiving more coverage from national sources while gaining support from within the Republican Party.

One way that Kemp kept his name near the news was simply persistence on the issue of taxation. He reintroduced the Tax Reduction Act multiple times in the 95<sup>th</sup> Congress, keeping his name involved in taxation while building interest in his plan. In total, Kemp introduced 11 tax reduction bills in the 95<sup>th</sup> Congress, and 16 bills related to taxation. For comparison purposes, in Figure 5.4, I present the total number of tax bills introduced by members in the 95<sup>th</sup> Congress, using data from the Congressional Bills Project administered by Scott E. Adler and John Wilkerson. I identified tax bills by using the Policy Agendas Project topic code for taxation (107). For readability purposes, I only present members who introduced over 5 bills in the Congress. As in Figure 5.3, I present policy leaders using capitalization.

**Figure 5.4: Taxation Bill Introductions, 95<sup>th</sup> Congress**



As we can see from Figure 5.4, Republicans in general were among the top introducers of bills in the 95<sup>th</sup> Congress. The reasons here are twofold: first, Democrats, and in particular Democratic leaders, would not need to introduce a bill more than once, as leaders would be able to guide their bills to the floor with fewer problems than other members because of their agenda control. Second, bill introductions can act as a position-taking measure, letting others know one's position on a specific issue (Mayhew 1974). Republicans, as the minority party, would need to be doing more signaling in an attempt to let policy makers and the public know the available alternatives for future elections. Looking at the totals, at the top, unsurprisingly, is Barber Conable, the Republican ranking member on Ways & Means. The ranking member, as the policy leader for Republicans on the issue of taxation, would be front and center in any discussion of taxation. In second is Jack Kemp, staking a claim for being on the forefront of Republican thoughts on taxation. Kemp's persistence kept him a part of the taxation discussion.

However, bill introductions alone do not explain activity, as members of Congress introduce bills all the time. Would the policy translate into media coverage? While Kemp and Roth's tax bill did not receive large amounts of coverage relative to the coverage of the two policy leaders, Long and Ullman, it did break through in terms of coverage of the Republican Party on taxation. In Figure 5.5, I graph mentions of Republicans on taxation in *The Washington Post* each year between 1977 and 1980, work similar to Figure 5.3. As in other graphs, leaders are denoted with capitalized names. For space, I only include members who have at least 5 mentions in the year in question.

**Figure 5.5: Number of Mentions of Republicans on Taxation in *The Washington Post*, 1977-1980**

Figure 5.5a. 1977

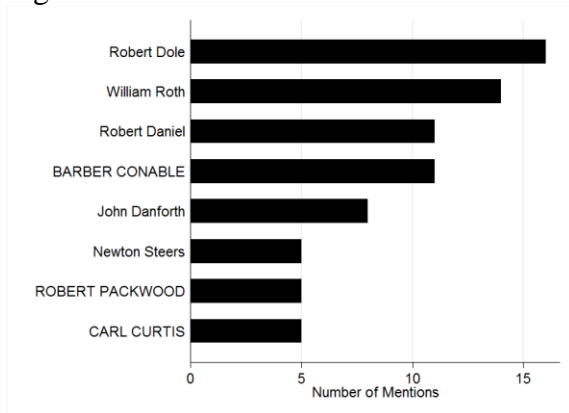


Figure 5.5b. 1978

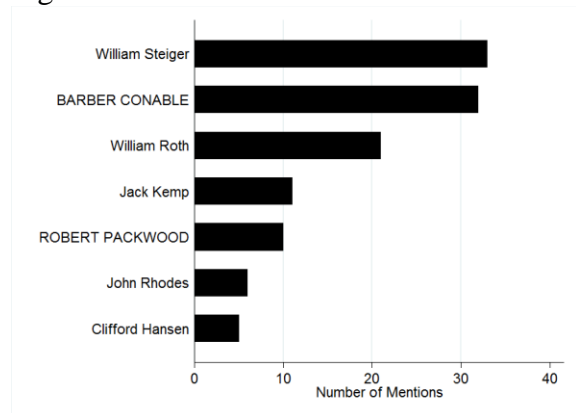


Figure 5.5c. 1979

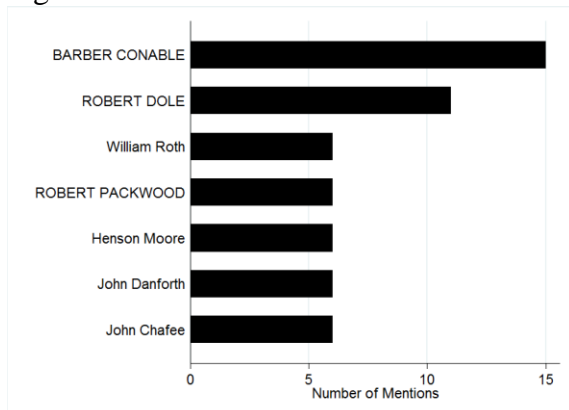
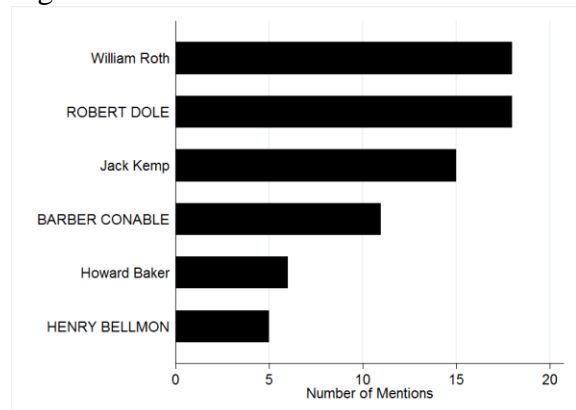


Figure 5.5d. 1980

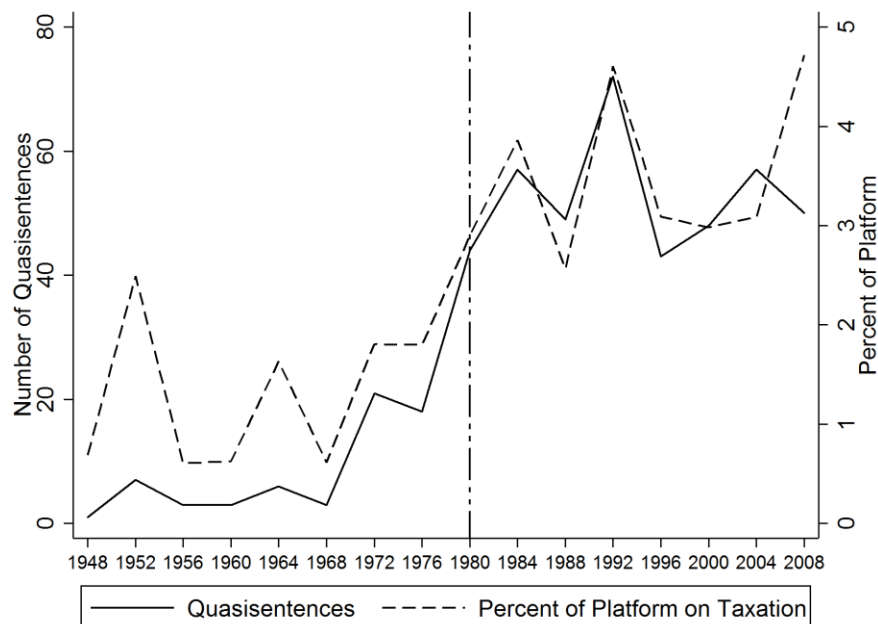


Four members of Congress appear at the top of the mentions lists all four years: policy leaders Barber Conable, Robert Packwood, and Robert Dole, and Senator William Roth. Jack Kemp appears on two, 1978 and 1980. In 1977, the leader on tax discussion is Dole, a future ranking member and chair of the Senate Finance Committee, who had sponsored a bill with Republican Congressman Robert Daniel of Virginia on getting tax refunds for specific individuals following the passage of the 1976 tax bill. Roth is 2<sup>nd</sup>, though most of the discussion here focused on energy and tuition tax breaks versus the Kemp-Roth bill (Kemp himself is mentioned once in 1977, as the sponsor of Kemp-Roth in the House). In 1978, William Steiger takes center stage, pushing for a capital gains tax cut, while Roth and Kemp both make appearances discussing tax cuts and attempts to pass the Kemp-Roth bill. In 1979, as the amount of discussion on taxation decreases following passage of energy taxes, leadership dominates again, with Barber Conable and Robert Dole being the primary actors involved in taxes for the Republicans. However, in 1980, Kemp and Roth again become a primary focal point of tax discussion, with only Dole competing with them on the discussion. By 1980, Kemp and Roth had emerged as a force on taxation in the Republican Party.

Republicans had been won over by the tax cut. Due in part to the push of the intellectual elite, the Republican National Committee had endorsed the plan in September of 1977 (“Rise of Kemp” 1978). In addition, House Minority Leader John Rhodes made the tax cut a centerpiece of Republican attacks on Democrats, noting “Starting here and now, Republicans intend to make sure that the American voter knows which party seeks a real tax cut and which party . . . really wants to continue a policy (of) high taxes” (Russell 1978). The Republican Congress, with some exceptions, united behind the tax cut.

Congressional Republicans were not the only ones noticing the tax cut. Jack Kemp had also attracted the attention of Ronald Reagan, the former governor of California who had nearly defeated President Ford at the 1976 Republican National Convention. Reagan was thinking toward the 1980 presidential election and a matchup with President Jimmy Carter, and having seen the success of tax cuts in Proposition 13, began to warm to Kemp's call for cutting taxes. The Reagan revolution would put taxation front and center at the 1980 Republican National Convention. In Figure 5.6, I present party platform data on the number of quasi-sentences (or phrases) related to taxation within the party platforms of the Republican Party from 1948-2008. The party platform data was compiled and coded by Christina Wohlbrecht at the University of Notre Dame. I used the Comparative Agendas Project code number for taxation (107) to find statements on taxation. I present these in two forms: the raw number of quasi-sentences and the percent of the total platform that discusses taxation. In addition, I include a vertical line for 1980, the year Ronald Reagan embraced Jack Kemp's tax plan.

**Figure 5.6: Discussion of Taxation in Republican Party Platforms, 1948-2008**



One important factor to note here in Figure 5.6 is that the total percent taxation encompasses in any platform is small. This is unsurprising, considering the vast number of issues that a party has to discuss in any platform, from national defense to agriculture. Therefore, devoting even a few percentage points to taxation is devoting a significant amount of time to an issue area. From what we see here, the number of quasi-sentences and the percent of the platform discussing taxation, increased starting in 1972, culminating in a jump of 26 mentions (from 18 to 44) between 1976 and 1980, an increase of 1% of the total platform (from about 2% of the platform to 3%). The Republican Party had been looking for a way to talk about taxation, and Kemp offered the solution to their problem of how to discuss the subject.

By 1980, Reagan had fully embraced Jack Kemp's vision for taxation. Kemp's backers, such as Jude Wanniski, had wanted Kemp himself to run for president primarily focusing on the tax cut plan (Stockman 1985). Rather than run for president, Kemp instead decided to convince a viable presidential candidate that his tax cut idea was the way to go. Reagan came on board as a tax cutter, calling for tax cuts as part of his larger message to the American people. With a faltering economy and a crisis in Iran, the Reagan Revolution steamrolled its way to the White House, bringing along with it the possibility that tax cuts could actually happen in the new 97<sup>th</sup> Congress.

### **1981: Kemp's Victory on ERTA**

The election of Ronald Reagan was not the only event that would reshape the United States government. Two other electoral events had drastically shifted the leadership on the Democratic side of Congress. First, Republicans took control of the Senate for the first time since 1954, as Republicans gained 12 seats and lost none to bring their total to 53 to the Democrats' 46. Russell Long lost the chairmanship of the Senate Finance Committee, as

Republican Robert Dole took control of the tax-writing committee. On the House side, while the Republicans did not gain control of the body, they did pick up 34 seats, including the seat of Ways & Means Chair Al Ullman, who lost his re-election bid. In Ullman's place at Ways & Means came Dan Rostenkowski, an Illinois Democrat who had given up his shot at party leadership to chair the tax-writing committee. Kemp had also gained more allies in the House, with recent elections bringing to the body new members with an interest in supply side economics, including Richard Cheney of Wyoming (he of the original Laffer-Wanniski meeting), Democrat Phil Gramm of Texas, and Georgia Republican Newt Gingrich. All three would be central to the movement of tax cuts in the House of Representatives.

The Republicans had reason to believe tax cuts would happen quickly. The Senate was on board immediately. While Robert Dole had not been as warm at the outset on the economic benefits of cutting taxes, he quickly joined ranks behind the Reagan administration, calling for immediate tax cuts at the start of the 97<sup>th</sup> Congress (Atkinson 1981), and threatened to start working on tax writing in the Finance Committee first, a move that traditionally had been given to the House Ways & Means Committee. The Senate, now in Republican hands, would not be an issue for the tax cutters.

With Republicans now controlling two of the three main electoral bodies of the United States government, Kemp's desired tax cut would now receive more consideration. . However, the Democrats still controlled the House. Would Rostenkowski be as powerful as Ullman and keep tax cuts from reaching the floor? Democratic leaders were not as sold on the need for tax cuts, with Senate Minority Whip Alan Cranston noting that the tax cuts were geared toward people with higher income brackets, and assumed "They must just buy more fur coats and Cadillacs" (Dewar 1981). However, the Democratic rank and file of the House was more

receptive to the possibility of cutting taxes. The Democratic Boll Weevils, a group of conservative Southern Democrats in the House, wanted more control of the party apparatus and started seeing their members get committee assignments, beginning with Texan Kent Hance getting on Ways & Means. While the Boll Weevils were primarily focused on cuts to the budget, they were at least somewhat open to the idea of tax cuts (Pine 1981). The control of the Senate and the presidency, coupled with the dissension in the Democratic ranks, which gave the Republicans an opportunity for movement on taxes in the House.

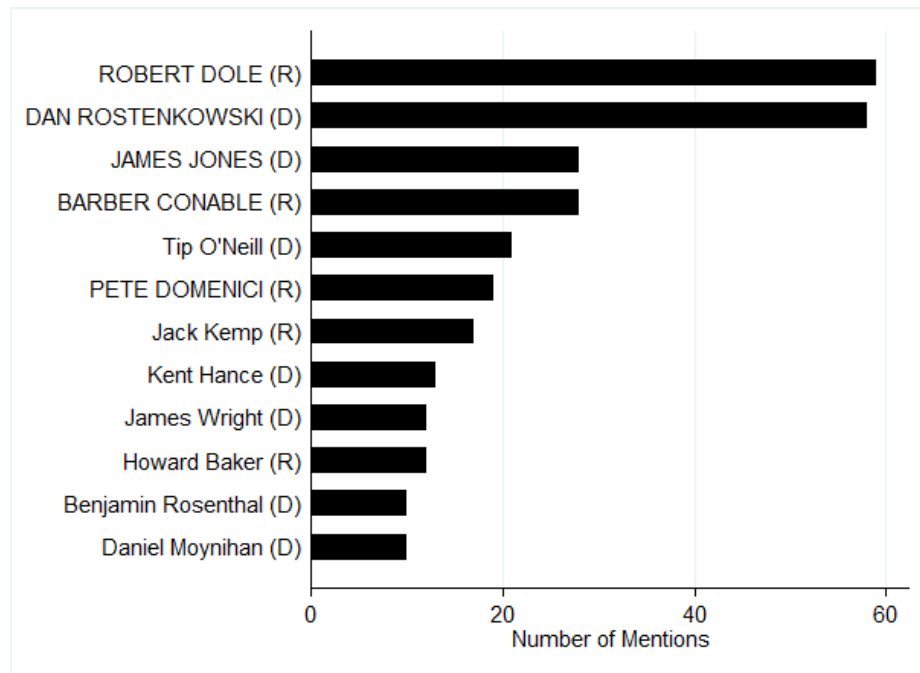
Furthermore, the Reagan election had weakened Democratic resolve to stop tax cuts. *The Washington Post* noted in February of 1981 that the Democratic plan in general was not to stop a tax cut, but to make it a shorter-term tax cut, as Democrats did not want to come off as obstructionists in the aftermath of the Reagan's victory (Atkinson and Lescaze 1981). Therefore, the Democrats were starting their negotiating not from a place of no tax cuts, but rather a place of minimal tax cuts. Jack Kemp, Jude Wanniski, and Arthur Laffer had already won. Their tax cut idea had moved from the fringes of Republican thought on taxes in the mid-1970s to the forefront of a victorious presidential campaign in 1981, all by becoming the primary solution to the problem of taxes within the Republican Party. Policy change would simply be a formality to the mantra that had emanated in the Republican Party. The combination of Kemp's persistence and the opportunity created by appealing to Republican leaders (including Ronald Reagan) had led the Republican Party away from the era of Whip Inflation Now, and into the tax cut era.

Importantly, Kemp led the Republican Party despite never being the primary story on taxation. Even in 1981, Jack Kemp did not dominate national discussion. In Figure 5.7, I present the total number of mentions of members of Congress on taxation in the year 1981, using



the same format as Figures 5.3 and 5.5. For reference, policy leaders are represented in capital letters. For ease in reading I only present members with at least 10 mentions in 1981.

**Figure 5.7: Number of Mentions of Members of Congress on Taxation, 1981**



As in Figure 5.3, leadership dominates. Robert Dole and Dan Rostenkowski are the two most mentioned members of Congress on taxation in 1981, similar to the statuses of Russell Long and Al Ullman between 1977 and 1980. Many of the other individuals involved are also leaders, whether of the policy leader variety (such as Budget Chair James Jones and Ways & Means Ranking Member Barber Conable) or the party variety (such as House Speaker Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill and Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker). Right there in the mix is Jack Kemp, a member of Congress with no formal tax control (though at this point he had received a seat on the House Budget Committee following the 1980 elections). Kemp may not have dominated discussion, but the difference between 1977-1980 and 1981 was that the shifts following the 1980 elections had made his plan more palatable. By working Congress,

connecting to Ronald Reagan, and riding Reagan's coattails to victory, Kemp had linked tax cuts to a winning president, and would now be able to see the fruits of his labor.

Those fruits came to bear on August 13, 1981, when President Ronald Reagan signed the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (ERTA). ERTA, or H.R. 4242, had been introduced by Rostenkowski weeks earlier, after months of committee debate and discussion. Central to the bill was the tax cut, which the Office of Tax Analysis later noted was "by far the biggest tax change (and the biggest tax cut) over the past 35 years" (Tempalski 2006). While the bill only cut taxes by 23% on average (and 20%, from 70% to 50% for the highest earning bracket), Kemp had succeeded in cutting taxes. Kemp's win was short-lived, as some of these cuts were removed and taxes were increased the following year with the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982. However, the ramifications of Kemp's movement would be felt in the Republican Party long after the passage of ERTA. Recalling Figure 5.6, discussion of taxation encompassed 5% of the 2008 Republican Platform. Jack Kemp, using opportunity and persistence, changed Congressional policy on taxation despite not ever serving (let alone chairing) the primary tax-writing committees of Congress.

### **The Era of Tax Cuts: Discussion Control and Leadership Response**

With the story of Kemp in mind, it is important to see how general trends look during the period. I will focus on analysis related to Hypothesis 1 in Chapter 3, looking at the relationship between members of Congress and articles. Considering the high levels of salience already present in taxation, I assume that policy leadership is generally involved in taxation, and would not need to be prodded by other members of Congress to become involved in taxes. Figures 5.3 and 5.7 show support for this notion, as each set of mention totals by year is dominated by policy leadership, in particular the chairs of the primary tax writing committees. Therefore, my analysis

will only focus on the question of the relationship between members of Congress and the number of articles written on taxation.

My general expectations here are different than those in Chapter 3. As salience on taxation is always high, members of Congress should not be using salience as a subsidy in the same way members of Congress use salience with lower attention issues. On the other hand, members should be attempting to create their own salience on the issue, attempting to differentiate themselves from what leadership is doing. Members see activity in Congress, and react by engaging in discussion. This in turn leads to more coverage of the issue and gives individual members the chance to engage with their own specific viewpoints.

From an individual standpoint, we see this throughout the series. Just as Jack Kemp pushed to make a place for tax cuts, so too did others. William Steiger made capital gains tax cuts his issue before his death in 1978. Later in the process, Democrats would become involved, with Richard Gephardt and Bill Bradley pushing for tax reform, a movement that would eventually lead to the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1986. We should expect that member involvement should increase the number of articles, in that if members are doing things outside of normal expectations on taxes, then the media may be more prone to want to pick up on that later.

My level of analysis, as noted before, is at the level of weekly articles on tax law and income taxes in *The Washington Post*. My data encompasses the period 1977-1986, giving a total of 520 weeks (minus 4 due to lag usage in the analysis, for a total N of 516). I use a smaller period here, versus analysis in Chapter 3, due to the sheer number of articles involved. Also, a weekly level is closer to the speed of reaction to news than a monthly level, allowing for more fruitful study of how the back and forth relationship works.

Unlike the work in Chapter 3, I am only working with 10 years of data. While I may lose some period dynamics by not focusing on an entire 36 year period, the large number of articles on taxation from week to week allows me to look more closely at the time-based dynamics at work in the relationship between the number of members of Congress and the number of articles on a subject. I also assume that coverage of taxation is constantly high. Considering the Republican Party would make taxation a central focus of their economic platform (Smith 2009), discussion of taxation should remain relatively high throughout the following 26 years.

As in Chapter 3, I use OLS cross-lag models to account for the chance that articles at past times may be affecting member involvement in the present, and that member involvement may be affecting the number of articles written on a subject. As I am working at the weekly level, I can now employ more cross lags in order to see whether recent past reverberations have an effect on current coverage of taxation. Therefore, I employ 4 cross lags in the model, creating a model of multiple cross-lags, as seen below.

$$Articles_t = B0 + B1 * Articles_{t-1} + B2 * Articles_{t-2} + B3 * Articles_{t-3} + Articles_{t-4} + Members_{t-1} + Members_{t-2} + Members_{t-3} + Members_{t-4} + e$$

$$Members_t = B0 + B1 * Articles_{t-1} + B2 * Articles_{t-2} + B3 * Articles_{t-3} + Articles_{t-4} + Members_{t-1} + Members_{t-2} + Members_{t-3} + Members_{t-4} + e$$

As before, I employ robust standard errors in the model. In Table 5.1, I present results of the regression, using a 0.05 threshold for significance.

**Table 5.1: Results, Cross-Lag Analysis of Members of Congress Involvement and Number of Articles, Taxation**

	Number of Members	Number of Articles
Articles <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.05 (0.05)	0.28 (0.07)*
Articles <sub>(t-2)</sub>	0.05 (0.05)	0.22 (0.05)*
Articles <sub>(t-3)</sub>	-0.08 (0.05)	0.00 (0.01)
Articles <sub>(t-4)</sub>	-0.04 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)
Members <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.44 (0.07)*	0.20 (0.07)*
Members <sub>(t-2)</sub>	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.19 (0.07)*
Members <sub>(t-3)</sub>	0.14 (0.07)*	0.09 (0.07)
Members <sub>(t-4)</sub>	0.11 (0.06)*	-0.03 (0.06)
Constant	3.17 (0.84)*	7.42 (0.93)*
N	516	516
R <sup>2</sup>	0.28	0.24
F	7.90 (0.00)	14.71 (0.00)

Note: Robust standard errors used. Significance \* =  $p < 0.05$

As we can see from Table 5.1, there is support for my expectations on the direction of movement. In both cases, previous activity by a group does explain future activity by a group- past involvement by members of Congress leads to more involvement in the present, and past articles leads to more articles in the present. As for the cross-lags, there is evidence that more member of Congress involvement in an issue in the past leads to more articles in the present, though this effect seems to last only for one week before going in the reverse direction. Members of Congress only have a limited amount of time to impress the media. With such a large amount of coverage already, taxation is an issue where you have to stand out and continue to stand out to succeed. On the other hand, more articles does not lead to more members of Congress becoming involved in an issue. As noted previously, there are already numerous members of Congress involved in taxation. They already know the stakes of taxation, and an increase in the number of articles written in the past on the subject will not move members of Congress to become involved in the present.

## Discussion

We have seen that members of Congress can even move policy on issues that have consistently high amounts of salience. Jack Kemp entered 1977 as part of a House minority fighting for an issue the majority wanted no part of, in an issue people already knew significant amounts about. Kemp focused on creating salience directed toward his bill, found a coalition willing to help him push for his idea, and eventually won out due to perseverance and the opportunity presented by the election of Ronald Reagan. By becoming the Republican standard-bearer for taxation (despite not being a member of the Ways & Means Committee), Jack Kemp changed public policy on an issue area with consistently high salience.

What does this tell us about the larger story of the use of salience as a subsidy? Simply, salience will be used differently depending on the issue area. Taxation is an area that receives extensive coverage from the media, as demonstrated by an average of 2 articles a day in *The Washington Post* on the subject of taxation. All members of Congress know the story and the players, so members of Congress who wish to break into a high-salience area either have to join the system (as with policy leaders), or do all they can to break the system (as with Kemp's continuous introduction of tax bills).

In terms of modern connection, Jack Kemp's push on taxation is similar to the House Republicans' repeated introduction of bills overturning the Affordable Care Act between 2011 and 2016. While Republicans controlled the House in the entire period, there was no hope that the bill would be signed by President Barack Obama, the individual behind the Affordable Care Act, yet they voted time and again to repeal the law. Jack Kemp's continued introduction of bills can be seen in this light: a repeated call to action that signals a desire for change. That being said, persistence is only part of the story - opportunity (and in particular, Kemp's relationship with Ronald Reagan) which brought tax cuts across the finish line.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

Over the course of this dissertation, I have set out to show three things: first, the role issue salience plays in the considerations of members of Congress in terms of issue engagement; second, the relationship between members of Congress and the political media; and finally, how the relationship between members of Congress and the political media influences the reshaping of American public policy. In this final chapter, I will outline how I have explored these three relationships, as well as potential future analysis related to this work. My larger story is one of the relationship between one of the three primary branches of government, the United States Congress, and the political media, and how this relationship influences American public policy. I focus on how members of Congress are using increases in issue attention to attempt to reshape public policy, hoping to use the opportunity created by increased attention to usurp the control policy leadership normally has over public policy. By doing so, I have highlighted an avenue members of Congress can use to reshape public policy without having to go through the long process of gaining committee seniority. It is a method that comes with only a small chance of success when a member competes with the 534 other members of Congress, yet in some cases it can be highly effective in bringing about real policy change.

### **Members of Congress and Issue Salience**

At the beginning of this work, I argued that members of Congress view changes in issue salience as a subsidy, in that changes in salience alert members that an issue may be particularly

important. These changes let members know when involvement in an issue area will best maximize exposure to the general public. As we saw in Chapter 3, the number of articles on a subject led members of Congress to become involved in an issue area, as members acted on previous month interest from the media to engaged at higher rates in the current month. For leadership, this meant engaging in policy debate when, under normal circumstances, leadership would want to avoid involvement. Leadership engages in the issue area in the media in order to protect their control of the issue from other members who may try to shift the policy debate.

Members of Congress may be reacting to issue salience, but the presence of a reaction depends on actual movement in issue attention. When salience is consistently high on an issue, there is no signal alerting members of Congress to an issue's importance. Members already know that an issue is important. Instead, members must carve out their own niche on a subject, in an attempt to alert the political media to the importance of a specific issue. As seen in Chapter 5, a member of Congress, like Jack Kemp, could never expect to immediately enact tax cuts, as most members of Congress already knew of the importance of taxation, and were generally disposed against Kemp's plan. However, Kemp could carve out a niche, alerting the media to the importance of his plan. The cross-lag model in Chapter 5 is a reverse of the model in Chapter 3: large amounts of salience means that members are not acting on increases in articles. Rather, the political media acts on increases in member involvement, moving to see what these members are up to in terms of highly salient issues. Kemp used this to make his policy well known within Republican circles, which in turn led to the support of Reagan and the passage of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981.



## **The Relationship between Congress and the Media**

Related to the question of how issue salience plays a role in member of Congress engagement on issues, is the relationship between members of Congress and the media. Members of Congress alone do not have the power that other political actors have over media. Unlike the other two branches of government, the daily actions of members of Congress cannot always bring about media attention. The singular president and the nine Supreme Court justices can demand attention more easily than the 535 members of Congress. Therefore, members of Congress have a different relationship with the media versus members of the other two branches of government. Journalists will cover the activities of the president and Supreme Court justices without prodding. Members of Congress, unlike the other two groups, need to work harder to gain attention to their efforts.

As we have seen here, members of Congress and journalists can see the benefit in working with each other. The efforts of members of both bodies can be seen throughout, from the relationship between articles and members in Chapters 3 and 5 to the individual stories of involvement in Chapter 4. The very nature of member of Congress coverage suggests that this is happening: members of Congress see journalists acting on issues, and respond by engaging in issues with journalists. The nature of member involvement does not simply involve quotation. The use of commentary by journalists can link an individual member to an issue simply as the result of a comment or a Congressional action. The two groups see the other in action, and look to respond, hoping to maximize each other's benefits for their own gain.

## **Reshaping Public Policy**

Finally, the reasons we see these movements by members are laid out in terms of attempts to change public policy. Some members of Congress do not agree with the current

conception of public policy in a given issue area. Therefore, given the opportunity increases in salience offer in terms of public and media exposure, members of Congress act and engage in issues in an attempt to push their policy solution to the front of the consciousness on that public policy. As we have seen in Chapter 3, there is evidence that members of Congress engage in issues when salience on issues increases, but how does this translate into policy change? For some members, like Richard Lugar of Indiana, policy change came through following the normal pathway of building to the policy leader role, with some early signaling to let others know that policy change would come with ascendancy. For others, such as Edward Markey of Massachusetts, coalition building and acting on increases in issue salience led to policy change, as policy leaders, threatened by the incursion from other members of Congress, attempted to immediately compromise. Finally, even in cases of high salience, the potential for policy change remains possible, especially if members of Congress can attach themselves to the right people at the right time (as Jack Kemp did with Ronald Reagan).

That being said, policy change is not an easy process. Members of Congress do not simply bring about policy change automatically, and as we have seen in agricultural subsidies, a policy change in one time period can be reversed when new leadership crafts their own policy. The reality is that members are constantly competing with one another to maximize attention. The use of salience as a subsidy does not require the time and effort the committee path requires. While the possibility of success is low, the potential for success at a lower cost makes the subsidy path an intriguing possibility for members of Congress who wish to move policy quickly.

## **Moving Forward**

The work here is simply an initial examination into the relationship between members of Congress and the media. There are other avenues that may offer additional insight into how members of Congress use issue salience. A first option is exploring the characteristics that explain what types of members of Congress engage in specific issue areas. Are members of Congress engaging in issues members of committees that have formal policy control over these issue areas? Or are these members considering potential higher office? The second question is significantly more daunting because of the nature of ambition (especially considering members of Congress are generally ambitious), but considering previous work on Congressional activity from ambitious members of Congress (Victor 2013), there is the potential that members use issues to help build a national name. While exploring pure motivation may not be viable, exploring post-hoc motivation can at least give some insight into how members who do eventually seek higher office use increases in issue salience to their advantage.

Second, there is the question of how the relationship between members of Congress and the media works when the media's role is more pronounced. Television news, unlike newspaper-based news, involves decisions made by news producers that may determine the types of individuals that receive interviews (Shoub, Tyner, and Lovett 2016). As a result, the choice to interview a member of Congress is not based on the decision of journalistic connections, but rather what would make for the best possible story. Therefore, we can assume that under normal circumstances, policy leaders should be generally given deference versus other members of Congress, as news producers are likely looking first to the members with the most expertise on an issue area. Under what circumstances would we expect non-leaders to be allowed to engage in these issue areas? This question would also allow a fuller understanding of the role journalists and news producers play in the process, as the creators of the news would be

deciding which individuals to include in the process. Are news producers more likely to pick non-leaders on issues as issue salience increases? Newly produced data, such as that created by the Chapel Hill American Media Project (CHAMP) would allow a more full exploration of how members of Congress can potentially affect television news.

Third, there is the question of easy versus hard issues. Borrowing from the work of Carmines and Stimson (1980) should we expect differences based on the ease in the public offering an opinion on an issue? One would expect that members may want to be more involved in easy issues, in that they will likely lead to the most media coverage easily understood by constituents and individuals whom ambitious members may want to reach, however hard issues also offer their own advantages, especially for members of Congress who regularly deal with more technocratic issues due to the nature of their districts. Does involvement vary significantly between easy and hard issues over time?

Finally, one possible mode of discovery for analysis would be field work, in particular interviews with members of Congress, their staff, and journalists. To what extent are members of Congress truly “co-authors of the news”? How do members of Congress use changes in issue salience when deciding whether or not to engage in issue areas? Field work focusing on how members of Congress use the media to their advantage would enlighten us further on both the relationship between members of Congress and the media, as well as how members of Congress use issue attention when deciding when and how to become involved in public policy.

## **Appendix 1: Search Terms Used to Find Issues in Lexis-Nexis**

### ***Agricultural Subsidies***

#### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 85%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 86%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 87%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 88%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 89%)

#### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 85%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 86%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 87%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 88%) OR SUBJECT(AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES 89%) AND BODY(Rep. w/p R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR BODY(Representative w/p D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p D) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader w/p Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader w/p Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR BODY(Senat! w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1 minority)

### ***Climate Change/Global Warming***

#### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(Global Warming 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 85%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 86%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 87%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 88%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 89%) OR SUBJECT(Climate Change 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 85%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 86%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 87%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 88%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 89%)

### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(Global Warming 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 85%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 86%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 87%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 88%) OR SUBJECT(GLOBAL WARMING 89%) OR SUBJECT(Climate Change 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 85%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 86%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 87%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 88%) OR SUBJECT(CLIMATE CHANGE 89%) AND BODY(Rep. w/p R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR BODY(Representative w/p D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p D) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader w/p Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader w/p Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR BODY(Senat! w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1 minority)

### ***Drug Policy***

#### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(Drug Policy 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 85%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 86%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 87%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 88%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 89%) AND NOT SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 85%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 86%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 87%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 88%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 89%)

### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(Drug Policy 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 85%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 86%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 87%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 88%) OR SUBJECT(DRUG POLICY 89%) AND BODY(Rep. w/p R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR BODY(Representative w/p D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p D) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader w/p Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader w/p Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR BODY(Senat! w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1 minority) AND NOT SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 85%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 86%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 87%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 88%) OR SUBJECT(Prescription Drug Policy 89%)

## ***Gays & Lesbians***

### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(Gays & Lesbians 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 86%) OR SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 88%) OR SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 89%)

### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(Gays & Lesbians 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 86%) OR SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 88%) OR SUBJECT(GAYS & LESBIANS 89%) AND  
BODY(Rep. w/p R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR  
BODY(Representative w/p D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p  
D) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader  
w/p Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader  
w/p Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR  
BODY(Senat! w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p  
R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1  
minority)

## ***Immigration***

### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(Immigration 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 86%) OR SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 88%) OR SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 89%)

### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(Immigration 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 86%) OR SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 88%) OR SUBJECT(IMMIGRATION 89%) AND BODY(Rep.  
w/p R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR BODY(Representative  
w/p D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p D) OR  
BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader w/p  
Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader w/p  
Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR BODY(Senat!  
w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p R) OR  
BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1 minority)

## ***Income Assistance/Social Welfare***

### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 86%) OR SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 87%) OR

SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 88%) OR SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 89%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 86%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 88%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 89%)

#### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 86%) OR SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 88%) OR SUBJECT(SOCIAL WELFARE 89%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 86%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 88%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME ASSISTANCE 89%) AND  
BODY(Rep. w/p R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR  
BODY(Representative w/p D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p  
D) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader  
w/p Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader  
w/p Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR  
BODY(Senat! w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p  
R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1  
minority)

### ***NASA & Space Exploration***

#### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(Space Exploration 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 86%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 88%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 89%) OR  
SUBJECT(Space & Aeronautics Agencies 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE & AERONAUTICS  
AGENCIES 85%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE & AERONAUTICS AGENCIES 86%) OR  
SUBJECT(SPACE & AERONAUTICS AGENCIES 87%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE &  
AERONAUTICS AGENCIES 88%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE & AERONAUTICS AGENCIES  
89%)

#### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(Space Exploration 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 86%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 88%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE EXPLORATION 89%) OR  
SUBJECT(Space & Aeronautics Agencies 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE & AERONAUTICS  
AGENCIES 85%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE & AERONAUTICS AGENCIES 86%) OR  
SUBJECT(SPACE & AERONAUTICS AGENCIES 87%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE &  
AERONAUTICS AGENCIES 88%) OR SUBJECT(SPACE & AERONAUTICS AGENCIES  
89%) AND BODY(Rep. w/p R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR  
BODY(Representative w/p D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p  
D) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader  
w/p Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader  
w/p Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR



BODY(Senat! w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1 minority)

## ***Nuclear Weapons***

### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(Nuclear Weapons 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 85%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 86%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 87%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 88%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 89%)

### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(Nuclear Weapons 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 85%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 86%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 87%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 88%) OR SUBJECT(NUCLEAR WEAPONS 89%) AND BODY(Rep. w/p R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR BODY(Representative w/p D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p D) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader w/p Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader w/p Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR BODY(Senat! w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1 minority)

## ***Oil & Gas Industry***

### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(Oil & Gas Industry 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 85%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 86%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 87%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 88%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 89%)

### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(Oil & Gas Industry 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 85%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 86%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 87%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 88%) OR SUBJECT(OIL & GAS INDUSTRY 89%) AND BODY(Rep. w/p R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR BODY(Representative w/p D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p D) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader w/p Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader w/p Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR BODY(Senat! w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1 minority)

## ***Taxation***

### **All Stories**

SUBJECT(TAX LAW 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW 85%) OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW 86%)  
OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW 87%) OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW 88%) OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW  
89%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 86%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 88%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 89%)

### **Stories Related to Members of Congress**

SUBJECT(TAX LAW 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW 85%) OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW 86%)  
OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW 87%) OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW 88%) OR SUBJECT(TAX LAW  
89%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 9\*%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 85%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 86%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 87%) OR  
SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 88%) OR SUBJECT(INCOME TAX 89%) AND BODY(Rep. w/p  
R) OR BODY(Rep. w/p D) OR BODY(Representative w/p R) OR BODY(Representative w/p  
D) OR BODY(Congressman w/p R) OR BODY(Congressman w/p D) OR  
BODY(Congresswoman w/p R) OR BODY(Congresswoman w/p D) OR BODY(leader w/p  
Majority) OR BODY(leader w/p Minority) OR BODY(leader w/p House) OR BODY(leader w/p  
Senate) OR BODY(speaker w/p House) OR BODY(chair! w/1 committee) OR BODY(Senat!  
w/p R) OR BODY(Senat! w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p D) OR BODY(Sen. w/p R) OR  
BODY(chair! w/5 R) OR BODY(chair! w/5 D) OR (whip w/1 majority) OR (whip w/1  
minority)

## **Appendix 2: Committee Leaders Used to Define Leadership**

Using *The Almanac of American Politics* and CQ Researcher, I compiled a list of relevant committees for each of the eight issues that I felt I could reasonably assign leadership to. In each case, I coded for the chairs and ranking members in each Congress. Below, you can find a list of the committees and subcommittees I used for each of the eight issues.

### ***Agricultural Subsidies***

#### **House**

House Agriculture Committee; House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture

#### **Senate**

Senate Agriculture Committee; Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Agricultural Production; Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture

### ***Climate Change***

#### **House**

House Interior Committee, House Government Operations Subcommittee on Environment, House Energy Committee, House Energy and Environment Subcommittee, House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming

#### **Senate**

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee; Senate Environment Subcommittee on Environmental Pollution; Senate Environment Subcommittee on Clean Air

### ***Drug Policy***

#### **House**

House Select Committee on Narcotics; House Government Reform Subcommittee on Drugs

### **Senate**

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; Senate Labor Subcommittee on Drugs; Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Drugs and Crime

### ***Immigration***

#### **House**

House Judiciary Committee; House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration

#### **Senate**

Senate Judiciary Committee; Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration

### ***Income Assistance***

#### **House**

House Ways & Means Committee; House Ways & Means Subcommittee on Human Resources

#### **Senate**

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

### ***NASA***

#### **House**

House Space, Science and Technology Committee; House Science Subcommittee on Space; House Appropriations Subcommittee related to space.

#### **Senate**

Senate Space, Science and Technology Committee; Senate Science Subcommittee on Space; Senate Appropriations Subcommittee related to space.

### ***Nuclear Weapons***

#### **House**

House Armed Services Committee; House Armed Services Subcommittee on Nuclear Weapons/Strategic Forces; House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense; House Foreign Relations/International Relations Committee; House Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism and Nonproliferation.

#### **Senate**

House Armed Services Committee; House Armed Services Subcommittee on Nuclear Weapons/Strategic Forces; Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Nuclear Stockpiles; Senate Government Operations Subcommittee on Nuclear Weapons; Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense; Senate Foreign Affairs Committee; Senate Foreign Affairs

Subcommittee on European Affairs; Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces

### ***Oil & Gas Industry***

#### **House**

House Interior Committee, House Government Operations Subcommittee on Environment, House Energy Committee (pre-Energy Department), House Energy and Environment Subcommittee, House Commerce and Energy Committee; House Select Committee on Energy (95<sup>th</sup> Congress); House Appropriations Committee on Energy

#### **Senate**

Senate Energy; Senate Appropriations Energy

### ***Taxation***

#### **House**

House Budget, House Ways & Means

#### **Senate**

Senate Budget; Senate Finance

#### **Joint**

Joint Committee on Taxation

## Appendix 3: Leadership Engagement in Issue Areas, Non- Leadership at Time t

**Table A.1: Leadership Engagement in Issue Areas, Non-Leadership at Time t**

	Model 1	Model 2
Articles <sub>(t)</sub>	0.06 (0.01)*	0.09 (0.01)*
Leadership Engagement <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.65 (0.10)*	0.65 (0.10)*
Non-Leadership Engagement	1.99 (0.11)*	2.50 (0.17)*
Articles <sub>(t)</sub> x Non-Leadership Engagement	-	-0.04 (0.01)*
Climate Change & Global Warming	-1.01 (0.20)*	-1.00 (0.21)*
Drug Policy	-2.00 (0.22)*	-2.03 (0.22)*
Immigration	-0.80 (0.19)*	-0.85 (0.19)*
Income Assistance & Social Welfare	-0.63 (0.18)*	-0.64 (0.19)*
NASA & Space Exploration	-0.17 (0.19)	-0.35 (0.19)
Nuclear Weapons	-0.75 (0.20)*	-0.81 (0.20)*
Oil & Gas Industry	-1.06 (0.19)*	-1.12 (0.19)*
Constant	-2.21 (0.14)*	-2.51 (0.17)*
N	3,448	3,448
LL	-1514.92	-1506.95

Note: Fixed effects logistic regression generated by fitting random effects logistic regression and employing dummy variables for individual topics, with agricultural subsidies acting as the baseline case. Topic significance is in terms of the difference between agricultural subsidies and the topic in question. Significance \* =  $p < 0.0$

## **Figure A.1: Predicted Effect of Salience on Leadership Engagement, Non-Leader,**

Figure A.1a. Agricultural Subsidies

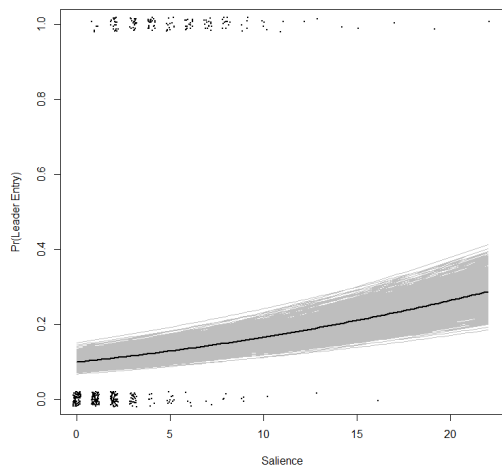


Figure A.1b. Climate Change

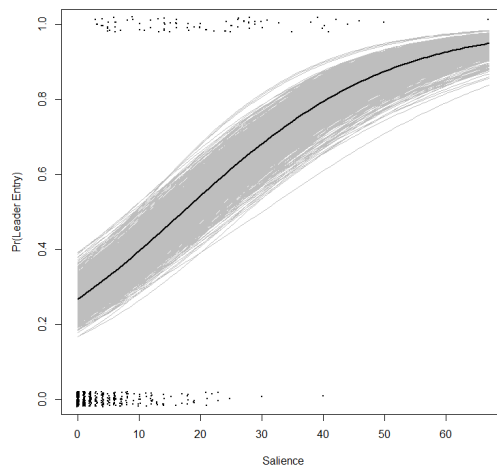


Figure A.1c. Drug Policy

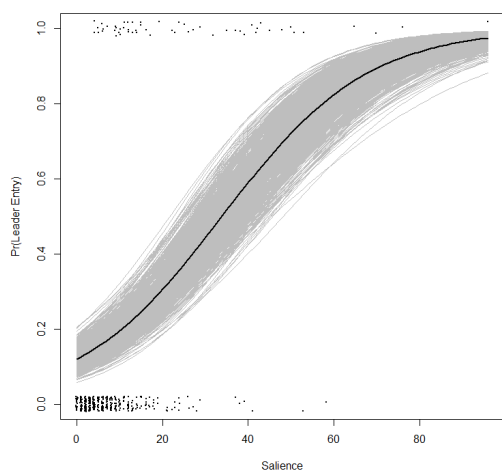


Figure A.1d. Immigration

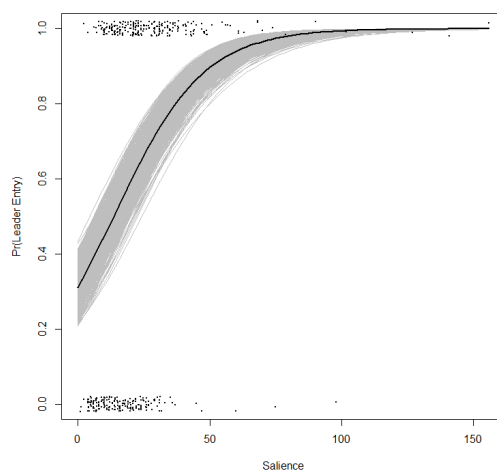


Figure A.1e. Income Assistance

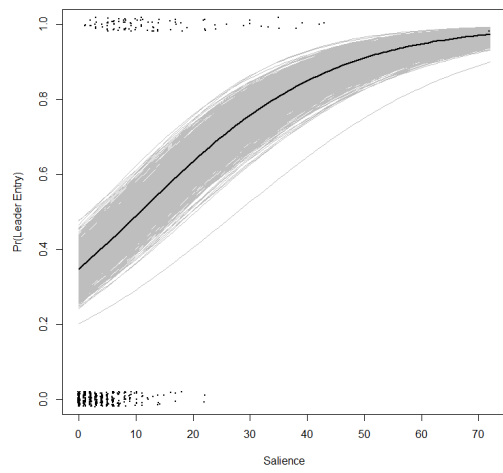


Figure A.1f. NASA & Space Exploration

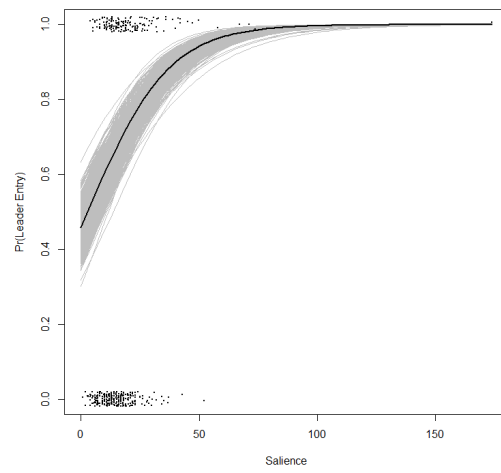


Figure A.1g. Nuclear Weapons

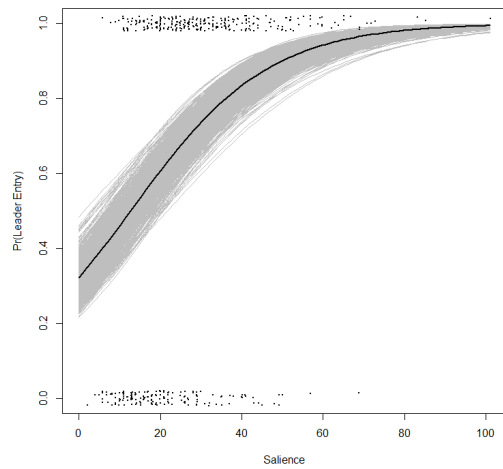
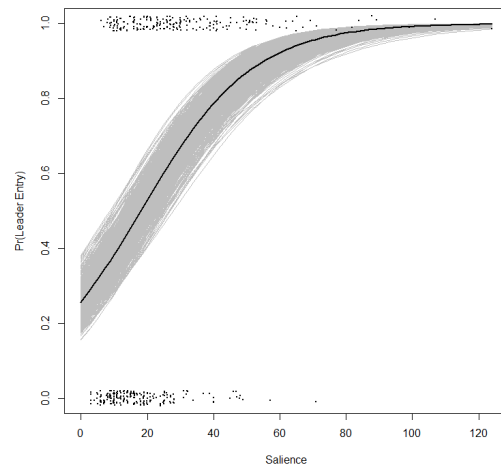


Figure A.1h. Oil & Gas Industry





## **Figure A.2: Predicted Effect of Salience on Leadership Engagement, by Non-Leader Engagement**

Figure A.2a. Agricultural Subsidies

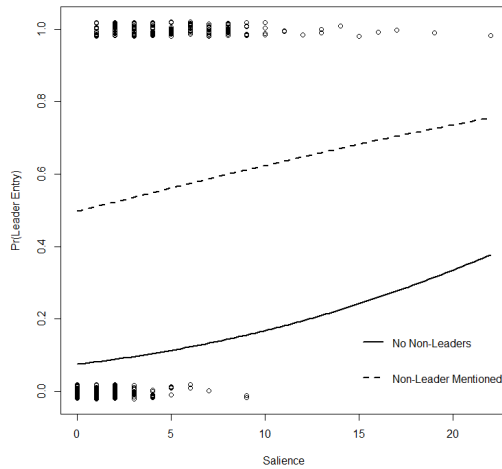


Figure A.2b. Climate Change

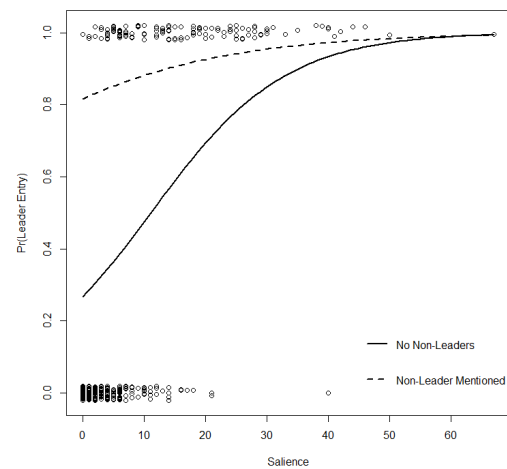


Figure A.2c. Drug Policy

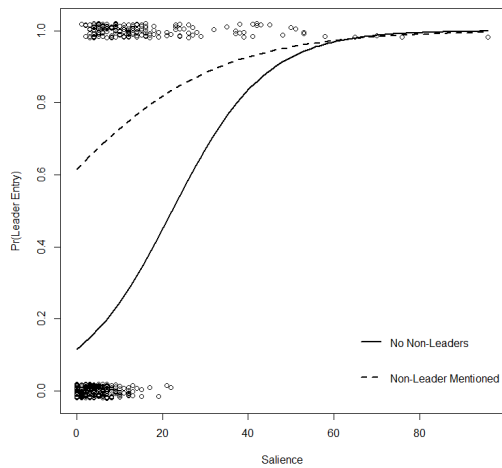


Figure A.2d. Immigration

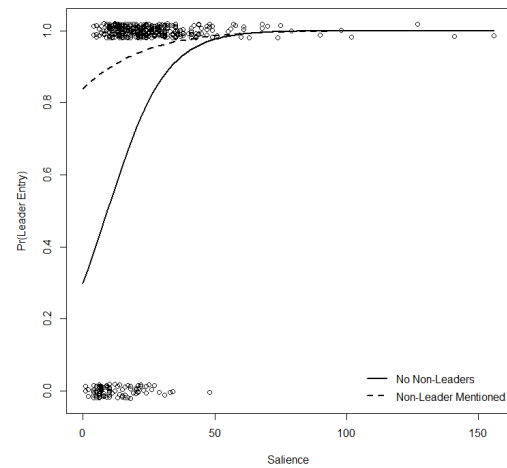


Figure A.2e. Income Assistance

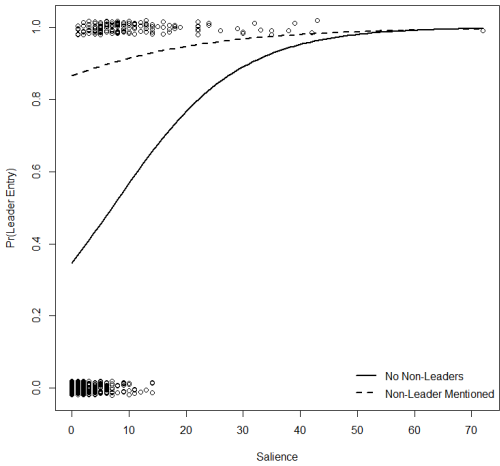


Figure A.2f. NASA and Space Exploration

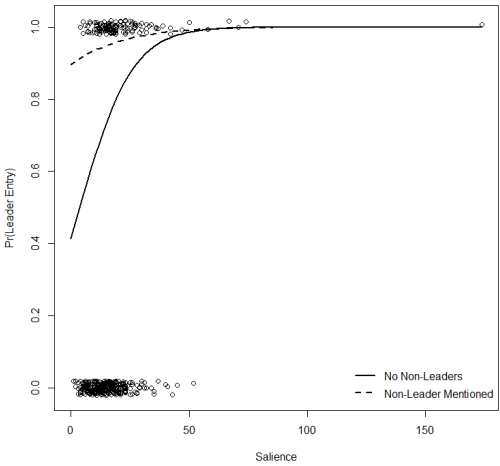


Figure A.2g. Nuclear Weapons

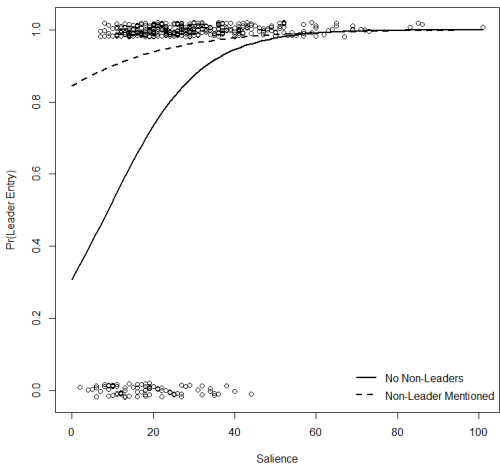
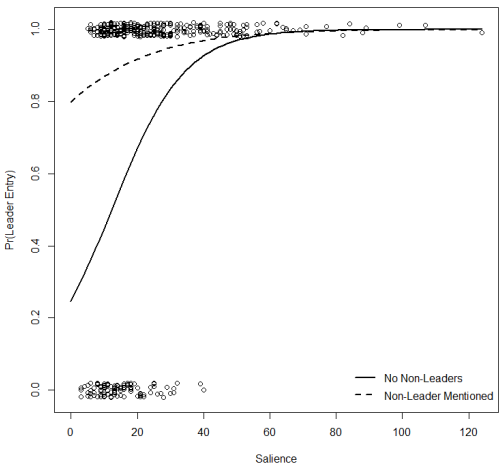


Figure A.2h. Oil & Gas Industry



## Appendix 4: Leadership Engagement in Issue Areas, Saliency>0

**Table A.2: Leadership Engagement in Issue Areas, Saliency>0**

	Model 1	Model 2
Saliency	0.08 (0.00)*	0.09 (0.01)*
Leadership Engagement <sub>(t-1)</sub>	0.58 (0.10)*	0.58 (0.10)*
Non-Leadership Engagement	0.33 (0.10)*	0.44 (0.15)*
Saliency x Non-Leadership Engagement	-	-0.01 (0.01)
Climate Change	-1.26 (0.19)*	-1.26 (0.19)*
Drug Policy	-2.17 (0.21)*	-2.17 (0.21)*
Immigration	-0.95 (0.18)*	-0.96 (0.18)*
Income Assistance	-0.90 (0.17)*	-0.90 (0.17)*
NASA	-1.10 (0.17)*	-1.13 (0.17)*
Nuclear Weapons	-0.99 (0.19)*	-1.00 (0.19)*
Oil & Gas Industry	-1.26 (0.18)*	-1.27 (0.18)*
Constant	-1.05 (0.12)*	-1.11 (0.14)*
N	3,187	3,187
LL	-1659.29	-1658.85

Note: Fixed effects logistic regression generated by fitting random effects logistic regression and employing dummy variables for individual issues, with agricultural subsidies acting as the baseline case. Issue significance is in terms of the difference between agricultural subsidies and the issue in question. Significance \* =  $p < 0.05$ .

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