

**When To Go It Alone:  
The Determinants and Effects of Interest-Group Coalition Membership<sup>1</sup>**

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## **When To Go It Alone: The Determinants and Effects of Interest-Group Coalition Membership**

**Abstract:** We analyze who participates in lobbying coalitions, on what types of issues, and to what effect. Our analysis is based on a random sample of 98 issues that were the object of lobbying activity in the federal government and on information concerning each actor that played a major role in them. We analyze both organizational and contextual variables and demonstrate conclusively that groups of all kinds participate in coalitions; organizational characteristics are far less important than the issue-specific context in determining who participates. We also show that coalitions are not linked to policy success in most cases; rather the effect is contingent on policy goals. Policy success is unrelated to organizational characteristics including resources but strongly related to issue-context.

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## **Introduction**

Interest-group coalitions abound in the Washington lobbying process. From high-profile cases such as the massive struggles in the Clinton administration relating to Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China to more prosaic issues such as Amending the Windfall Elimination Provisions and Government Pension Offsets for certain federal workers, we find formal and informal coalitions of policy advocates active across the board, in all types of issues. What groups join these coalitions, and why do they do so rather than work on their own? How does participation in a coalition affect the likelihood of policy success? Do certain types of groups have a tendency to work through coalitions, or is coalition involvement driven by factors specific to the issue at hand?

We show here that issue-specific contextual factors are far more important than organizational characteristics in determining coalition involvement. Further, we demonstrate that coalition action is not necessarily an ideal tactical choice. The benefit of participation in a coalition is contingent on the policy aims of the actor. The intent of the organization—whether it seeks to protect or change the status quo—has a major impact on coalition involvement as well as on coalition effectiveness.

We report analysis here from a massive study of lobbying and public advocacy conducted with several colleagues over the past five years. Our large study, based on a random sample of policy issues across the full range of areas of governmental activity and on over 300 interviews and five years of systematic data collection about both the issues and the other organizations involved, allows us to answer a number of questions about who participates in coalitions, why, and to what effect. In contrast to previous studies that have been based on a small number of issues, a small number of actors, or on general surveys of what groups typically do, we have

collected data on organizational characteristics such as budgets, lobbying staff, revenues, affiliated PACs, and many other relevant factors on over 2,000 Washington policy advocates on a large random sample of issues covering the full range of policy activities of the federal government. We also collected information as to whether each of these actors was a participant of any of the coalitions active on their issue. Further, we know the degree of conflict, salience and scope of each issue, among other things. Our research design and multi-year data collection activities allow us to generalize across issues and also to compare the impact of organizational characteristics with issue-specific variables. Coalition participation and success are more strongly related to context—what the group is attempting to achieve, and in what type of policy environment—than to any general characteristics of the organizations such as membership size, group type, staff size, or anything else which differs from group to group. Our findings answer some questions about coalition involvement definitively and also raise a number of issues for further research. They also demonstrate the importance of a research approach combining attention to individual and contextual variables.

## **The Causes and Consequences of Coalition Participation**

In this section we briefly review some expectations about organizations' decisions to join a coalition, the types of issues on which coalitions should be expected, and finally about the value of coalition participation in terms of achieving one's policy goals.

### ***Why Participate?***

Why would an organization join a coalition rather than only lobby on its own? A surprising variety of perspectives is apparent in reviewing the literature on why organizations participate in lobbying coalitions.

There are many attractive features of allying with organizations that share the same policy goal. First, the creation of a large and diverse coalition demonstrates to policymakers the breadth of support for a policy position. Scholars from Mayhew (1974) to Kingdon (1981) to Esterling (forthcoming) have suggested that policymakers look for signs that a policy proposal has broad support among affected constituencies. This may be because it signals that technical research has been done and the policy is likely to work as advertised, according to those with specialized knowledge (see Esterling, forthcoming) or because Members of Congress simply want to know whether a vote in favor of this provision will later be used against them in the next election by some organization (see Mayhew 1974; Kingdon 1981). In any case, a broad coalition with the right members signals a lot to policymakers; this can be invaluable in building support (see Hula 1995).

Moreover, organizations may become involved in coalitions as an instrument to broaden the appeal of their issue. While organizations do not control the nature of the issues with which they deal single-handedly, groups seeking a particular policy change from government may sometimes benefit from expanding the definition of the issue to include other similarly situated potential allies. Expanding the issue (say) from being one that affects your company's ability to gain a favorable regulation affecting one factory's emissions to one affecting the nation's overall emissions regulation policy may improve a corporation's chances for success. (Another possibility is that groups are more effective if they avoid these "broadening" strategies and "go it alone" in the policy process, keeping the issue defined as narrowly as possible.)

Second, economies of scale and benefits from tight coordination can come only with a formal coalition or organizational structure of some sort. Regular coalition meetings, for example, might provide access to inside, up-to-date information to which an organization might

otherwise not be privy (Hula 1999). Similarly, economies of scale in a coalition allow the lobbying workload to be divided so that each member can do those things for which it has comparative advantage, such as lobbying those Members of Congress where it has the most members or the greatest access or credibility.

Third, organizations that lead coalitions can benefit from long-term reputational gains by demonstrating to others their commitment and effectiveness (Hojnacki 1998, Heaney 2004).

Fourth, groups may join coalitions because they may falsely believe it will be useful. Folklore abounds in Washington and there are many examples of impressive policy successes that came about at least partly because of the efforts of organized coalitions. (The large number of equally impressive policy failures may not be remembered as well, or may be attributed to more powerful coalitions on the other side.) Coalition entrepreneurs may be effective salespersons, convincing many potential members that they should join a coalition and contribute resources to it because doing so will increase the likelihood of policy success.

A final reason to join a coalition is simple: it is relatively low-cost and a rational lobbyist may try out many lobbying techniques knowing that they cannot always know ahead of time which particular technique will be useful. This type of “all directional” lobbying simply involves using a greater number of tactics rather than fewer, without necessarily targeting the choice of tactics so carefully (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Coen 1997; Pijnenburg 1998; Beyers 2002). In this scenario, relatively low-cost tactics such as joining a coalition make good sense even if the precise pay-off to this one tactic may be uncertain.

However, while potential benefits may be reaped, there are reasons why coalition participation would not be pursued by organizations. Coalition-building involves leadership and start-up costs, and poses the risk of free-riding by members once the coalition is established

(Hojnacki 1998). In addition, building a coalition may lead to a dilution of an organization's original position, rendering its arguments less effective. In order to recruit a broad membership to a coalition (essential to success according to the first perspective), goals must be broad enough to appeal to all. Groups or coalitions with extremely broad memberships simply cannot reach a consensus on many issues, rendering their lobbying capacities nil (see Truman's discussion on quasi-unanimity, 1951 or Smith's discussion of the issues on which the US Chamber of Commerce is able to take a position, 2000). A wide variety of scholars have discussed similar points, including in the context of the European Union where broad "Euro" groups have been seen to be less effective than national-level ones because their goals are typically less specific (McLaughlin, Jordan and Maloney 1993; Greenwood 1997; Coen 1997). Similarly Snow et al. (1986) describe the process of "frame extension" by which social movements broaden their goals to attract wider support and in doing so move further and further from their original positions, alienating their base. Broadening the base can also increase the visibility of the issue to potential opponents. Considering all these possible pitfalls, and the fact that like-minded policy advocates can informally coordinate their efforts relatively easily, establishing a formal coalition may not be worth the effort, according to this body of research.

### ***Who Participates?***

A great diversity of hypotheses, some directly contradictory, abound in the scholarly literature on who participates in lobbying coalitions. Many of the contradictions stem from considering behaviors that are expected in different types of issues; clearly participation in coalitions would depend on the issue and the goals of the organization, but many hypotheses are purely at the organization level and ignore these issue-specific factors. In reviewing the literature on coalition membership among lobbying organizations, we can see at least the following expectations.

First, coalitions are the weapons of the weak. They present a relatively low-cost mechanism either to participate in the policy process by lending one's name to a pre-existing coalition, or (for those organizing the coalition) to share the burden of a lobbying campaign with others as each member contributes some resources to the fight. As Whitford puts it, coalitions are a low-cost means for assembling minority interests into more powerful blocks (2003, 45). Thus it should be expected among citizen groups, nonprofits, unions, and especially consumer and environmental organizations. According to this logic, we should not expect to see lobbying in coalitions as much among the resource-rich or among trade associations, large corporations, and the like.

Second, coalitions are the weapons of the rich and powerful. It costs money to hire a coalition coordinator (or a PR firm to do this work), to assemble the membership list, to assess dues, design and print letterhead, and to coordinate activities. In addition, the coalition leadership will need to be well financed if numerous members free-ride, taking the benefits of coalition membership but contributing little to its activities. According to this logic, it is more likely that the best endowed organizations would be the most likely participants in coalitions. Certainly anecdotally we see impressive lists of high-profile corporations, trade groups, and major Washington players active in large coalitions on the most visible debates. A number of scholars have addressed the organizational resource question as it relates to participating in coalitions (Bacheller 1977; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Walker 1991; Hula 1995, 1999; Hojnacki 1998).

Thus we see contradictory expectations of coalitions being a tool of the poor or a tool of the rich. Heaney (2004) suggests that a more appropriate model would be that the poor organizations may be free-riding members of the coalition not contributing to its leadership



while the wealthy groups may become coalition leaders; his statistical analysis showed no significant relation between resource levels and leadership position within coalitions, however. Rather, groups became active on those coalitions that were central to the group's core missions (see also Wilson 1973).

Third, some authors have suggested some types of organizations simply are less likely to engage in coalition activity relative to other actor types. Clark and Wilson (1961) suggest that cooperation is more likely among utilitarian groups and less likely among purposive groups which are more restricted in their activities due to incentive systems (1961, 162). Caldeira and Wright in their study of *amici curiae* activity suggest public firms and peak associations are less likely to cooperate (1990, 799). Thus perhaps actor type may predict coalition membership.

### ***When Do Coalitions Emerge?***

On what types of issues would coalitions be expected to emerge? Here again we see diverse and contradictory expectations emerging from the literature. First, the scope of the issue may be a determining factor. On the one hand, narrow issues may have clear and relatively homogeneous sets of groups that can easily be assembled into coalitions. Similarly, on narrow issues in a relatively restricted issue-niche, policymakers might expect to see coalitions and the absence of one might be taken as a sign of serious conflict. When there is consensus among regular participants in a well defined issue-niche, it should be straightforward to create a coalition (Browne 1990). On the other hand, on such niche issues a permanent sectoral association may already exist, rendering a coalition unnecessary. Many organizations have the option of lobbying as part of a trade or industry organization for issues that affect them and other similarly situated organizations (e.g., Ford Motor Company can rely on the Automobile Manufacturers Association in some cases when this trade group can promote a consensus view among all its members).

After all, why work through an ad-hoc coalition when so many trade and professional groups already exist whose very purpose is to lobby in those cases where membership interests are relatively consensual? Therefore we might expect a high occurrence of coalitions on niche issues unless an industry association exists to play that role.

For broad issues, pre-existing standing associations are unlikely. Therefore, large issues cutting across previously established policy boundaries and including a wide range of types of interests may render temporary coalitions an effective strategy if some subset of participants shares a common policy goal (Salisbury et al., 1987). Further, broad issues may be the type of issue on which so-called “Baptist and bootlegger” coalitions have a better chance to form. For example, a broad coalition encompassing both energy producers and environmental groups may be possible on an issue that goes beyond their core concentrations. Such a coalition can signal to policymakers that an unusual consensus is possible at least in a particular issue. So we might expect coalitions on those issues that span traditional policy domains, or where heterogeneous combinations of actors can be brought together.

The second critical issue-level factor determining coalition formation is conflict. It seems clear from the literature that scholars expect coalitions to arise on highly conflictual issues. Highly conflictual issues will attract coalitions because conflict gives groups an incentive to band together to face a common threat (Gais and Walker 1991; Hojnacki 1997; Whitford 2003). In addition, if there are actively opposing sides of a debate and a coalition forms on one side; the literature suggests establishment of a coalition on the other side will follow.

Third, highly salient issues in terms of media attention may attract coalitions because of the higher resource needs in this type of lobbying and because of the greater value of asserting a broad base of support. On a topic that is receiving intense media coverage, effective lobbying

will likely require press conferences, media campaigns, and publicity, all activities that require extra resources which can be gathered by pooling resources in a coalition.

Finally, coalitions may be ad hoc or long-standing. Once a coalition has been created it may be relatively inexpensive to keep it going. Whether this means simply maintaining a mailing list and monthly meeting date after one lobbying campaign ends and a similar one appears on the horizon, or if it extends to a more formal stage of creating a staff, a headquarters, and a budget, some coalitions are pre-made and others have to be made from scratch. This is largely stochastic or unrelated to the nature of the issue today, as it relates more to the history of action on the issue in previous years. In sum, one reason for the presence of coalitions may be policy history.

So we can see a number of expectations about when coalitions will emerge. In fact, the literature provides little clear guidance on when to expect coalitions to emerge.

### ***Do Coalitions Help Groups Achieve Success?***

There are many examples where groups working together in a coalition have accomplished notable policy successes that any one of them could not have expected to accomplish if working alone. For example, Table A-1 lists three major coalitions active in the successful effort to establish Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China under the Clinton administration.

Washington lobbyists invest tremendous resources hiring staff, renting offices, and investing in the organizational infrastructure to make coalitions work, and many of these are successful.

Clearly, many believe that coalitions increase the chance of policy success; otherwise why would there be so many and why would groups invest so much in them?

While it would seem obvious that groups would join coalitions because they believe these will help them achieve the policy outcomes they desire, few have actually studied whether in fact

they do. Rather, it seems more common to assume that rational lobbyists simply would not be investing resources in something that is unsuccessful. We move beyond assumption to systematic assessment in this paper and present some provocative results suggesting that coalitions are in fact more often related to failure than to success, even controlling for other relevant variables. There are many possible outcomes of the creation of a coalition, and there are many reasons for an organization to create or participate in a coalition that are unrelated to ultimate policy success.

Coalitions may be a sign of trouble. Their presence could be more commonly associated with efforts to mitigate disasters rather than attempts to achieve new policy victories. After all, for each organization attempting to push public policy in some new direction, other groups may need to mobilize to protect the status quo or their own interests. Some coalitions may be proactive; others, reactive, the result of a coalitional arms-race, so to speak. Many reactive coalitions may get created after organizations with similar stakes in the issue recognize that major changes adversely affecting their interests are either possible, likely, or inevitable. A defensive mobilization attempting to limit the degree of policy change, or stop it altogether, may be a very common lobbying situation. These reactive coalitions may emerge either in reaction to formal coalitions on the other side, or simply in response to threats that may not necessarily involve a rival coalition.

Coalitions can be “successful” if the outcome of their activities is to limit the degree of policy change its members suffer. However, this type of policy success (e.g., limiting one’s losses) is quite different from achieving a new policy victory. In our project we assess both an organization’s intent—that is, whether it seeks to protect the status quo or promote a new policy—and its success at achieving its goals. For each organization involved, we assess

whether it achieved all of its desired policy outcomes, some of them, or none at all. We can therefore systematically assess whether coalitions are related to outcome success and also whether this depends on the pro-active or reactive nature of the goals in the first place.

Coalitions have dramatically different effects on success depending on intent.

Are coalitions more common among status-quo protectors or among those proactively seeking a new policy goal? The literature provides no guidance on this issue, but we will show it to be particularly important.

From the perspective of a coalitional entrepreneur attempting to recruit members (or even a rational organization deciding whether to join), mitigating a disaster can be just as valuable as gaining a new success. From the perspective of a policy analyst, however, it seems worth separating out proactive use of coalitions by those seeking new policy gains from the reactive use of the same strategy by those seeking to protect the status quo. Our analysis does exactly this. We can therefore assess the degree to which coalitions are associated with policy success as defined as new policy gains. Of course, the simplest hypothesis remains the most straightforward: Groups join coalitions because they expect them to be successful.

### ***A Contradictory Set of Expectations in a Literature that Overlooks the Issue-Context***

As in many areas of the literature on lobbying, contradictory and confusing expectations abound concerning when one would expect to see an organization lobby through a coalition as opposed to working only on its own. The reasons for these different expectations are largely similar to those that affect the field of lobbying studies in general: Lobbyists are active in a variety of ways on many issues and adjust their tactics both in relation to their own particular resources as well as to the characteristics of the issue at hand. The same organization will follow different tactics on different issues, as the situation demands. This is easy enough for all to recognize, but

surprisingly difficult to study in a systematic manner because general surveys of groups have tended to ask organizations to generalize about what they *usually* do, and issue-specific studies have typically been based on such a small number of issues (often just one; typically fewer than five; see Baumgartner and Leech 1998, chapters 7 and 9; see Kollman 1998 for a counter-example). Our study is based on a large number of randomly selected issues and on information regarding a complete set of major participants in that sample of issues. As such, we are able to address a number of hypotheses conclusively.

Many hypotheses stemming from the literature make good sense for certain groups in certain circumstances, but may not hold across the board. Creating a coalition may well be a good idea, other things being equal. However, other things in Washington are not equal; groups differ, issues differ, contexts differ. This may help explain why lobbying through coalitions is less often associated with policy success than the literature would lead one to expect. We turn now to our evidence after explaining our analytic approach.

## **Our Approach and Evidence**

We make use of the data collected as part of the Advocacy and Public Policymaking Project.

This project involves interviews with over 300 policymakers and advocates on a random sample of 98 issues that were the object of federal government lobbying between 1999 and 2003.

Appendix Table 1 lists each of the issues and the coalitions present on each one.<sup>2</sup>

Our project defines a “major actor” as a policymaker or advocate identified by others as playing a significant role in the policy process. We and our colleagues interviewed a large number of these major actors, generally one from the leadership of each of the major

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<sup>2</sup> Table A-1 lists all 98 issues. We have not completed coding of all the actors for two issues and therefore have coalition data only on 96 issues. Some tables have slightly fewer than 96 cases because of missing data on one or more of the independent variables.

perspectives on the issue. Our data are not limited to those whom we interviewed, however. As part of our large project, we and our colleagues gathered systematic information about every major actor, whether we interviewed them or not. Using publicly available sources such as web sites, government directories, IRS reports (form 990s for nonprofit organizations), lobby disclosure reports, FEC records, the *Associations Unlimited* web site, *Washington Representatives*, and business directories such as Fortune.com and Hoovers.com, we gathered a range of information about each of the major participants in every issue. This includes such things as organizational type, membership size, staff size, affiliated PACs, the use of outside lobbyists, the presence of a Washington DC based lobbying office, total sales for corporations, assets, and other indicators of material resources. Our large-scale effort to identify all major participants on each of our issues and then to gather systematic information about the material resources available to them allows us to assess these factors in a systematic fashion. In all, we identified a total of 2,160 major actors (including government officials acting as advocates themselves) across our sample of issues. Further, in addition to the publicly available information, we can assess whether they and their allied organizations were successful in gaining the policy outcomes they sought from our interviews, as well as whether they were seeking new policy changes or to maintain the status quo.

For every policy advocate active in each of our issues, we know whether they were a member of a coalition or not. We gathered membership lists of all 91 coalitions that were active across our 98 cases and coded whether our major actors were members of the coalitions. These lists were drawn from our interview materials, organizational websites, or the websites of the coalitions or the coalition leadership. Note that organizations could well be allied with other

advocates sharing the same goals without participating in a formal coalition. Our analysis here focuses on formal coalitions, not simple alliances based on shared goals.

(Insert Table 1 about here)

Table 1 shows the distribution of coalitions across our issues. Coalitions were active in just over half of our cases. About one-third of the cases involved only a single coalition, and about one-quarter of the issues involved two or more coalitions. (Note that our analysis includes only coalitions identified by others as playing an important role; there could have been other, relatively invisible coalitions on these issues as well; these are omitted from our study.) Among the 1,050 participants who were not Members of Congress, Congressional staff, or executive branch officials, 429 were involved as active members of coalitions, or 41 percent.

Just as we gathered significant information about each participant, we also know a great deal about each of our 98 issues, including the level of news coverage, the level of inside-the-beltway attention, the number of participants, and the level of conflict. We can systematically address variables at both the individual- and issue-level using these combined data sources, and we have significant variation on our key variables. We turn to this analysis now.

### **Analyzing Coalition Behavior**

Coalitions were present in 55 of our issues, absent 43 times. What distinguishes these issues? In general, issue-level factors alone, analyzed at the issue-level, do not explain the differences, as we will show. We then move to the individual-level where we can assess not only the effect of issue-characteristics but also of the individual characteristics of the organizations on joining lobbying coalitions. In fact, in the actor-level analysis the character of the issues at hand has a strong impact on the decision to participate in a coalition, much stronger than organizational



resources alone. First we present the issue-level analysis and second we move to an individual-level analysis.

### ***When Do Coalitions Emerge?***

In Table 2 we present a simple probit model that predicts the presence of a coalition on the basis of two measures of issue-salience (inside and outside of the beltway<sup>3</sup>), the types of conflict present, and the size of this issue measured by the total number of participants on the issue. This corresponds to the emphasis in the literature on conflict, salience, and scope.

(Insert Table 2 about here)

Table 2 shows that the total number of participants active on the issue is barely a significant predictor of the presence of a coalition. Moving from the mean value of that variable to one standard-deviation above the mean (with all other variables held at their means) increases the odds of a coalition being active by seven percent. No other variables have any significant impact, including the amount of newspaper and TV coverage (*Outside Salience Index*), the volume of congressional testimony and other inside-Washington activity (*Inside Salience Index*), whether there exist directly opposing positions (*Direct Opposition*) or more than one perspective active on the issue (*Alternative Perspective*). Overall, the model performs poorly, explaining little of the variation in coalition activity across the issues. In fact, the entire model barely achieves statistical significance. These findings are surprising given the literature that would lead one to expect some significant relations, especially between conflict and coalition behavior.

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<sup>3</sup> The Inside Salience Index is created from data on the number of floor statements made on the issue in Congress; the number of web articles on the issue on the House of Representatives website; the number of witnesses presenting testimony on the issue in Congressional hearings; and the number of National Journal articles on the issue. The Outside Salience Index is created from data on the number of news articles on the issue in major national newspapers and the number of network television news reports on the issue.

Further, our large data collection effort reassures us that if there were a systematic relationship across the board between issue-characteristics and coalition activities, we would have found it.

Table 2 showed that virtually none of our issue-level predictors of coalitions has a strong impact on the likelihood that a coalition will be present in a given issue. It included two dummy variables for the types of conflict that may be present in a given issue. Table 3 shows the bivariate relation between conflict and coalition activity.

(Insert Table 3 about here)

The table shows that 14 of our issues had no conflict whatsoever. This includes situations where advocates were seeking a policy goal that was not opposed by any other actor in the system (though many advocates faced serious impediments to favorable action, such as being able to get the attention of prominent government officials or generalized concerns about budget scarcity; these issues however were characterized by the absence of any form of organized conflict or even different perspectives on the issue). In these 14 cases, coalitions were present six times, absent eight times. (This absence of conflict is the baseline model for the dummy-variable analysis in Table 2.)

The next level of conflict, affecting nine of our cases, concerns differing but not directly opposing perspectives on the issue. This would be for example when one side is seeking a revision to a given bill and another set of actors seek a different, but not directly opposing, policy approach. Actors seeking these two different goals may compete for the attention of policymakers but the outcomes they seek are not directly opposed. Coalitions might be expected here on the grounds that groups need to gain greater attention and support for their perspective, given the alternative perspective also being pushed in the policy process by rivals. However, here as well the evidence is split, with six cases showing coalitions and three showing no

coalitions. (In fact, this 67% rate is the strongest among the three categories of conflict, but Table 2 shows this to be a statistically insignificant difference in the multivariate context, and given the small number of cases we think it unwise to interpret too strongly that difference.)

The bulk of our cases, 73 of 96 in fact, involve the direct competition of opposing sides. Here is where one might expect the greatest level of coalition activity, since these are the cases where opposing sides are competing for the attention and support of government officials. In fact, however, there is no greater likelihood of coalitions emerging in these cases than in the others; 56% of these cases have a coalition present as compared to 55% in the dataset overall. The insignificant tau-*b* and Chi-sq. statistics shown make clear that conflict is not what drives coalition activity, and the multivariate results also show conflict to be unrelated to coalitions.

The lack of any significant relations between conflict or other issue-level variables and the presence of a coalition may at first seem surprising. Surely conflict, the sheer size of the issue (that is, the total number of major advocates involved), media or inside-Washington salience should matter, at least based on the literature. In spite of these reasonable expectations, our data show that a model at the issue level will not work. After all, for a coalition to be present, some lobbyist or other advocate must take the initiative to create it. Some coalitions we know are standing ones; others are ad-hoc. So it may not be so surprising after all that we cannot predict the presence of coalitions by looking at issue-level characteristics alone.

In the next section therefore we turn our attention to similar questions, but we use a lower level of aggregation. Rather than looking at our 98 issues, asking which ones will see coalitions emerge, we look at our 1,000+ policy advocates, asking which ones will participate in coalitions on which issues. We find much more success in isolating the determinants of coalition participation when we combine both individual-level factors with issue-level characteristics.

Paradoxically, given the lack of any relationship between issue and coalitions in this section, we find very strong effects of the issue-context in the next section. Lobbyists participate in coalitions only on certain types of issues. But not every organization has the capacity to participate in a coalition, or to create one. Now we turn to this analysis that combines individual actor characteristics and issue-specific contextual factors.

### ***Who Participates in Coalitions?***

Table 4 presents a combined model of participation in a coalition. We first include a series of group-type dummy variables designed to test whether certain types of organizations are more likely to be involved in coalitions. Then we include a number of measures of material resources: membership size; having a Washington, DC office; having a hired outside PR/lobbying firm; number of professional staff in the government relations department; the number of affiliated PACs; and finally an overall budget resources index made up of several highly correlated measures of staff and monetary resources.<sup>4</sup> Third, we present a series of issue-level variables. For each organization we include measures of how many other actors were involved in the issue (*Issue Size*); two measures of salience (inside and outside Washington DC, introduced in Table 2); and two measures of conflict (Alternative Perspective and Direct Opposition, also explained above). Finally, we include two variables related to the particular context in which the organization finds itself on this particular issue: whether a coalition exists on the opposite side of the same issue; and the *Intent* of the organization—this is coded 1 for groups seeking to

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<sup>4</sup> We created this index using Stata's "factor" and "score" commands from information on the organization's 1) income and 2) assets from either the IRS databases on non-profits or the IRS database maintained by *Associations Unlimited* as well as information on 3) staff size and 4) budget size from *Washington Representatives*. If an actor was missing data on any of the four items, we used the available variables, adjusting their weights to account for the number of missing variables and using regression coefficients from a model predicting the index only for those cases with all valid data. In this way we were able to estimate the budget resources index for virtually all the relevant cases.

change the status quo; 0 for groups seeking to preserve it. Because our measures of organizational resources are different for corporations and membership organizations, we present models for each separately. Table 4 focuses on membership organizations, not corporations.

(Insert Table 4 about here)

Looking first at the organizational type variables, it is apparent that there is little systematic pattern. Organizations of government units and citizens groups are relatively unlikely to participate in coalitions, though these values are barely above statistical significance. None of the other group-type variables is statistically significant: Unions, trade associations, and professional associations are all equally likely to participate in coalitions, depending on other factors. We also see only modest and mostly insignificant results for organizational characteristics including budget resources, affiliated PACs, and even the size of an organization's Washington lobbying office; only two organizational characteristics are significant even at a reduced .10 level of significance. Having a large membership reduces coalition involvement, and having a Washington, DC office increases it. Neither variable is particularly strong, however; indeed neither passes the .05 threshold.<sup>5</sup>

What factors tend to matter? The data point to issue-specific characteristics, especially conflict, salience, and intent. Factors leading to greater involvement in coalitions include attempting to change the status-quo and inside-Washington salience. Factors reducing coalition involvement include any type of conflict and outside-Washington salience. The presence of a coalition on the other side of the issue has no significant impact.

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<sup>5</sup> We also conducted a similar analysis restricted only to corporations. This could not be presented in the same model as Table 4 because our measures of corporate resources are different than those for organizations. Results (see WEB table W-1) are generally similar to those shown in Table 4. However, for corporations, virtually none of the variables included, even issue-characteristics, has a significant impact, and the entire regression is statistically insignificant. Therefore we do not present it but make it available for those who are interested.

The most powerful signals coming from the results laid out in Table 4 are two-fold: First, individual-level factors including comprehensive measures of material resources and organizational characteristics have little effect across the board on coalition behavior. Organizational type similarly has little to no impact, other things held constant. Second, issue-context seems to play the most important role. Groups react to the level of salience and to the level of conflict. They are systematically more involved in coalitions on those issues with higher Washington salience and lower levels of conflict. And, intent matters. Groups join coalitions much more when they are in a position of seeking new policy outcomes than when they are acting to protect the status quo.

A great number of hypothesized variables play little to no systematic role, especially organizational characteristics. The strong impact, on the other hand, of issue-specific variables is striking, especially considering our finding on Table 2 that we could explain little about the likely presence of a coalition by looking *only* at the nature of the issues. In a combined analysis, Table 4 shows in fact that issue-characteristics predominate, but only when included in a model also incorporating individual resources and characteristics. Table 4 makes clear that organizations respond to the context in which they find themselves and there are clear and systematic patterns in coalition involvement. Context matters.

Table 4 showed that our series of organizational-type dummy variables generally were not significant in the multivariate context. These negative findings, given the expectations from the literature, are surprising enough to merit some further investigation. Here we look at this question in more detail. Table 5 shows the simple bivariate relation between coalition participation and organizational type.

(Insert Table 5 about here)

Table 5 lays out the types of organizations in our study roughly in order of their proclivities to participate in coalitions: Those with the highest percentage participation are listed at the top, with only some miscellaneous categories with few cases listed out of order towards the bottom. (Government officials themselves were not typically coalition members, but we include them in the table for the sake of completeness.) There is some tendency for corporations, trade groups, and business associations to participate in coalitions more than other types of groups. However, the differences are not very strong. Business associations, unions, foundations, and professional groups are also quite likely to participate, at least among those types of organizations where we have a significant number of cases in our study. The table does show that citizen groups and associations of government units are among the least likely to participate in coalitions, and these differences were indeed significant in Table 4. In general, however, the relatively modest differences apparent in Table 5 do not withstand a multivariate analysis and therefore are probably accounted for by other factors, such as the types of issues on which these organizations are involved. No particular type of lobbying organization avoids or craves coalition participation absolutely. It all depends on the issue.

We can see more strongly that there are few absolute organizational predispositions by looking at the organizations which appeared in our study multiple times. Recall that our sample is one of issues on which lobbyists are active, and for each issue we include those actors that are considered by others to be the major participants. The same organization can be a major participant on more than one of our cases. When this happens, we can assess whether it always, sometimes, or never participates in a coalition. We can also compare these “repeat players” (many of whom are Washington heavyweights) with those who appear only once; if the repeat

players are more likely to participate in coalitions it may suggest this is a tactic reserved for the particularly well connected or most active. Table 6 presents this analysis.

(Insert Table 6 about here)

If coalition participation is learned behavior or reserved only for the best connected Washington lobbyists, evidence for this is completely absent in Table 6. Among organizations (that is, membership groups of all types), there are literally no differences in the likelihood of participating in coalitions among those which appear just once in our dataset and those which are active on more than one of our issues. Thirty-six percent of the one-time actors are in coalitions, and 36 percent of the repeat players are as well. Among corporations, 42 percent of the one-time actors are in coalitions, and 43 percent of the repeat players are. Clearly, repeat player status has nothing to do with coalition participation.

Looking more closely at the actors active in several of our issues shows that the vast majority of them adopt a mixed strategy, sometimes participating through coalitions, sometimes not. Twenty organizations appeared in five or more of our issues. If coalition participation were a result of organizational characteristics alone, as some of the literature might lead one to expect, then we should expect to see predominant patterns of behavior, with groups either (almost) always or (almost) never participating in coalitions, no matter what the issue. We do not see this. Rather, 18 of the 20 organizations sometimes did but sometimes did not participate in a coalition across the different issues on which they were involved. The five most active organizations across our sample of issues, for example, were the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (active on 12 issues; a coalition member four times); the Sierra Club (11 issues; one coalition); the AFL-CIO (10 issues; one coalition); the American Medical Association (nine issues; three times in a coalition); and the Consumer Federation of America (nine issues; two coalitions). Two groups



never participated in any coalitions in spite of appearing in more than five issues: AARP (six issues), and US Public Interest Research Group (US PIRG) (five issues). No groups always participated in coalitions, although two groups did so in a majority of cases: The National Association of Manufacturers (eight issues; five coalitions) and the American Federation of Teachers (six issues; four coalitions).<sup>6</sup>

Corporations display a similar pattern of mixed behavior. We have fewer repeat players among corporations than we do among membership organizations and therefore the evidence here is less conclusive. Sixteen corporations were active participants in two or more of our cases; ten of these followed a mixed strategy. General Motors and Merck were the two most active corporations, each appearing in four different issues. GM was never involved in a coalition; Merck was involved in two of its four issues. The typical multiply active corporation sometimes does, but sometimes does not, participate in a coalition. Clearly, organizational factors alone cannot account for coalition behavior.

Organizational capacity is not very strongly related to participation in coalitions, a fact that could possibly be related to some censoring within the set of organizations included in our study (including only those recognized by others involved as major participants in the policy process). Certainly there are groups out there that simply do not have the resources or connections to participate in a major policy making coalition in Washington such as those we have analyzed here. After all, to be included in our dataset a group or coalition must be recognized by others as playing a significant role. However, among important players, we find little organizational effect. Rather, groups pick and choose when to go it alone and when to

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<sup>6</sup> For a full list of organizations and corporations active on multiple issues, see Table W-2.

work through a coalition on the basis of the issue and depending on the outcome they are seeking.

Contextual variables rather than organization-specific ones are so strong in our findings that it is difficult to avoid a point of methodological irony: Our analysis of the 98 issues alone showed virtually no significant relationships between the characteristics of issues and the likelihood that coalitions would be present, but our analysis of over 1,000 organizations and corporations active on these same issues shows clearly that organizations systematically decide when to become involved in coalitions. Also striking in these analyses are the results of our massive efforts to gather systematic information concerning organizational resources. A great number of organizational variables, which the literature would lead one to expect coalition involvement to be higher or lower for given types of groups, are conclusively shown to be insignificant. The reasons for these findings are clear; groups pick and choose when to be involved in coalitions, doing so on the basis not only of their own skills and resources, but also on the basis of the context in which they find themselves. Contradictory expectations from the literature make sense then when we recognize that behavior depends so greatly on the context. We will return to these issues in the conclusion. For now, we turn to the question of whether joining a coalition helps a group achieve its goals.

### ***Do Coalitions Help Lobbyists Achieve Their Preferred Policy Outcomes?***

For every organization active in each of our 98 issues, we can assess the degree to which they achieved their policy goals. We constructed a summary variable assessing the level of success that each group had across six possible goals that an organization might have, such as changing or maintaining federal spending, changing or maintaining policies within an established program, creating a new program, affecting or protecting state and local budgets, etc. For each of these

separate and clearly defined goals, a group may have achieved no success (scored 0); partial success (1); or it may have fully achieved its goal (2).<sup>7</sup> Summing each of these leads to an overall index of policy success; the variable has a hypothetical maximum score of 12. Note that an actor's goals could be status quo protection or aimed at policy change; either way we assess whether they achieved that goal.

There is considerable variation in this summary indicator: about 42 percent of our advocates achieved absolutely nothing that they were seeking, with the remaining 58 percent accomplishing some of their policy goals, at least partially. Since different groups may have been seeking different types of things (or a different number of things), we control for the number of different goals a group sought simply by dividing the scores described above by the number of goals that the advocate in fact did seek; this success proportion variable has a minimum of zero and a maximum score of two.<sup>8</sup> With the proportion configuration we have a wide range of policy successes present among our advocates; about equal proportions (40 to 45 percent) achieved none of their goals and all of their goals. Roughly 14 percent of our advocates fell in the middle, achieving some but not all that they wanted. We can use this measure of success in achieving policy goals as a dependent variable then in the analysis below. We prefer it to the raw scores because each of the six types of goals was not relevant or applicable to all advocates. Regressing coalition membership and other control variables on this dependent variable then gives us a straightforward way to assess whether coalition membership is helpful in achieving policy goals, other things equal.

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<sup>7</sup> The six items are: Did the organization succeed in achieving their goal regarding: 1) federal budget 2) state and local budgets 3) private actors 4) established programs 5) new programs and 6) government authority or jurisdiction. For a frequency distribution of the summary variable please see: PAPERWEBSITE.EDU.

<sup>8</sup> For a frequency distribution of the proportion variable please see: PAPERWEBSITE.EDU.

We are now in a position to estimate the determinants of success and to show whether being a member of a coalition helps a lobbying organization achieve the policy goals that it seeks. In addition to the individual- and issue-level variables included in our model predicting coalition membership, we introduce some additional independent variables here. First, of course, we have a simple measure of whether the actor was a member of a coalition; this is the variable of primary interest. Second, since the literature suggests that the composition a coalition may be determinative, we construct a measure of its heterogeneity. The variable assesses the proportion of business in a coalition (*Business Strength of Coalition*) and has a score of 1.0 if all the members of a coalition are business firms; 0.0 if none are corporations.<sup>9</sup>

Third, as in the analysis of determinants of coalition membership we include the dichotomous variable assessing the intent of an actor: whether they are seeking to preserve the status quo policy or working for policy change. In addition to the dichotomous variable, we also include an interaction term between *Coalition Membership* and *Intent*—to test whether the effect of coalition membership on outcome success differs for actors seeking to maintain the status quo and those seeking to change it. The other variables in our model have been previously introduced. Table 7 presents our model.

(Insert Table 7 about here)

Coalition membership is highly significant in our model of lobbying success; however, the effect is not straightforward. In fact, the effect of coalition membership differs depending on the intent of the actor—whether they are seeking to maintain or change the status quo. The dichotomous Intent variable, as well as the interaction between Coalition Membership and Intent

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<sup>9</sup> We also tested an alternative specification measuring coalition heterogeneity which has a maximum value when half the members of a coalition are businesses and half are other types and a value of zero when the members of the coalition are either all businesses or exclude businesses. Neither is significant.

are both highly significant; both are negative, however. The model shows that a group seeking to maintain the status quo (Intent = 0) and which joins a coalition (Coalition Membership = 1), increases its predicted success score by .302, a net positive. However, if a group seeking to alter the status quo, and joins a coalition, it sees its predicted success score decrease by a value of 1.12.<sup>10</sup> Simply put, joining a coalition is good for an advocate that seeks to maintain the status quo, and bad for one that seeks to change it.

The significant negative coefficient for our dichotomous Intent variable provides further empirical evidence of the “stickiness” of institutions and the tendency for system inertia to limit policy change. Considering the literature which demonstrates how limited cognition and institutional friction work to hinder policy change (see Jones and Baumgartner forthcoming) it is not surprising that those actors seeking to maintain that status quo are more successful. Here we demonstrate just how powerful a factor this is.

It is important to note though, in our model controlling for intent and we find that coalitions organized to protect of the status quo are successful over and above the general bias in favor of the status quo. Similarly, any advocates seeking change are less likely to be successful than those protecting the status quo, but those which combine seeking change with coalitional involvement score even more poorly on our measure of success.

Regarding the other variables in the model, it becomes clear that organizational type does not determine whether an actor is successful; none of the dichotomous type variables are significant. Further, consistent with our model of coalition membership, but surprising given much of the literature on the topic, none of our exhaustive measures of material resources are significantly related to policy success. It seems, as in the model predicting coalition

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<sup>10</sup> This is the combined value of the coefficients for coalition membership (+0.302), intent (-0.764), and the coalition\*intent interaction term (-0.656).

participation, actor-level variables do not constitute the key explanatory factors. Policy success simply cannot be ascribed to individual-level factors, across the board.

What is predictive? In addition to the highly significant effects of coalition membership and intent, the other significant contextual variables include issue-size, the presence of direct conflict among the major perspectives on the debate, issue salience outside the beltway, and the presence of an opposition coalition. Regarding the first, the effect of issue size (that is, the total number of advocates involved in the debate) is positive—the larger the size of an issue on which an actor is lobbying, the higher their level of success. Similarly, the more conflictual the issue, with directly opposing views on a policy debate, the higher the level of success. Third, when an issue is more salient to the public an actor engaged in the policy debate achieves lower levels of policy success.

Fourth, the presence of an opposition coalition is significant and negative. That is, if an advocate is opposed by a rival coalition on the other side, their level of success decreases by .246, on average. We ran an alternative specification of the model presented in Table 7, testing for an interaction between the presence of an opposition coalition and Intent, and found no significant effects. This means that an opposing coalition is always bad news—it decreases a group's level of success regardless of whether the group is for or against the status quo. These findings regarding an opposition coalition are interesting when one considers the possibility that coalition activity might be used as a way to hinder the opposition. Again the benefit of a tactical strategy is contingent on the context: On the one hand, for status quo supporters, there are direct benefits from joining a coalition—increasing predicted success by .30—and in addition to this there is an indirect effect, decreasing the predicted success of one's opponent by .25, on average. Further, referring back to the analysis of coalition membership (Table 4), which showed the

presence of an opposition coalition to be insignificant, coalition activity has no impact on the likelihood of driving opposing advocates to create a coalition themselves. Coalition action for those protecting the status quo therefore appears to be a strong tactical strategy.

Things work out differently for those seeking policy changes. For these groups, the direct effect of coalition membership on predicted success is  $-.35$ , and this is only partially mitigated by the negative effect of  $.25$  on opposition success. In all, this means that coalition behavior for advocates of policy change is probably insignificant overall, a weak strategy in any case. Actors seeking to change the status quo would be better off going it alone.

Given the strongly differential effects of coalition behavior on groups seeking to protect and to change the status quo, it is somewhat surprising that our dataset shows that there were 251 proactive actors active within coalitions, but only 74 status quo protectors in coalitions. We will return to this in the conclusion.

Our analysis of the determinants of policy success shows that joining a coalition, for most actors, reduces the chances of success, even controlling for a wide range of other factors. Further, success is almost completely unrelated to a host of material benefits that we have measured for over 1,000 non-governmental actors active across our random sample of issues. The determinants of policy success, like the determinants of participation in a coalition, are complex and much more closely related to the nature of the issue at hand rather than to any simple set of organizational characteristics including type, monetary resources, having a PAC, having a large DC-based government relations department, having a large membership, or any other set of resources. Clearly, studies of lobbying and its effectiveness must incorporate serious attention both to individual characteristics and to the specific issue context. This requires much more complex research designs than have been typical in the past.

## **Conclusion**

We have shown through a comprehensive review of the activities of over 1,000 lobbying organizations playing major roles on a random sample of 98 issues affecting the US federal government that groups of all types join coalitions but that for most of them this reduces rather than enhances their likelihood of policy success. Our model of who joins coalitions made clear that organizational characteristics have little to do with that choice. Rather, groups behave differently depending on their goals and the issue-context in which they find themselves. Concerning the impact of coalition action on success, this also depends on the context. For groups protecting the status quo, coalitions are related to greater success, even above the general bias in favor of the status quo in Washington. For groups seeking change, coalitions reduce the already lower probabilities of achieving new policy benefits; in this case it seems better to go it alone.

Why would groups be more likely to join coalitions in exactly those settings where we find them to be the least helpful? There are several possible explanations. Many have suggested groups join coalitions because they seek informational benefits (e.g., sharing political intelligence), for a division of the lobbying labor, or other economies of scale related to having many allies, but if this is the case these benefits must be more than outweighed by other negative effects. There has been an implicit assumption in the literature that inside information and economies of scale are important assets gained from coalition participation. However, if this were the case they would act as intervening variables (between coalition membership and policy success) and should result in a positive relationship between coalition membership and policy success on the issue at hand. However, we find that coalitions are related to reduced effectiveness for most groups.



More likely, coalition participation is due to factors other than immediate policy success. Groups may become involved in coalitions for reasons related to their long-term reputations where even fighting a losing battle, but being recognized as having “led the fight” may be helpful in the next round of policy making. Another possibility is that coalition activity provides the opportunity for morale-building. Meeting with like-minded allies, sharing small victories (swinging one more member of Congress in the right direction) and commiserating about the number of lobbyists on the Hill from the other side might be cathartic and strengthening exercises. And, as the vast literature on group membership has taught us, we should not underestimate the power of purposive or solidary benefits.

How can coalitions be harmful? Coalitions may be subject on average to larger collective action problems than some have speculated (Hula 1999); members may simply not carry their lobbying weight, expecting that others will do the work. Coalitions may cause a group to broaden its policy goals to such an extent that diluted position papers are largely unconvincing, bland, or the resulting proposals too expensive. Similarly, the goal-broadening necessary to build a coalition may be counter-productive as it may enhance the visibility of the issue and mobilize more opponents than allies. There are many reasons why forming a formal coalition, as opposed to simply working on one’s own and with informal allies, may be counter-productive. Sometimes, it is better to work on one’s own.

Our study has tremendous implications for the ways in which we study interest groups and the tactics that they choose. For one, we have created a straightforward measure of outcome success that allows us to move beyond disputes about how to measure influence and simply to note whether groups achieved their goals or not. Such a focus is more compelling than one centering on membership questions alone or using tactic choice as the object of explanation; after

all we want to know whether groups win. More importantly, our study highlights the limits of any study that has the hallmarks of what Baumgartner and Leech (1998) highlighted as the dual problems in the study of lobbying: generalizations through surveys about what groups “usually” do, or case studies of small numbers of issues that may not generalize. In fact, we found that organizational characteristics alone were virtually powerless to explain what groups do in various contexts, and they explained virtually nothing about success; indeed the exact same groups reappeared several times in our study and behaved in different ways in different issues (see also Kollman 1998 for similar findings). Our findings make clear the value of more complex research designs.

The lessons of our study are even more powerful in substantive terms. Politics is said to be about who gets what in government. We have shown that the choice of lobbying tactics and the ability to get what one wants in the policy process are much more strongly related to the nature of the issue than to any fixed organizational characteristics. Our conclusive demonstration that group type and material resources do not predetermine the outcome of the policy debate should be seen as a major corrective, and an encouraging one, to assessments of American democracy, Congressional activity, and interest-group studies that focus on the power of business, the impact of money in the policy process, or any other single fixed organizational characteristic. The negative results between virtually all of our measures of organizational type and resources and policy success are telling. Further, the strong links between issue-characteristics and success make clear that we can model policy success. If material resources determined success, no matter what the context, we would have found that, but the causes of policy success are much more complex. Certainly, interest groups with greater resources are better off in some ways than groups without those resources. But the most important lesson of

this massive study of lobbying is that material resources alone do not explain success; in fact there are virtually no organizational characteristics that lead consistently to policy success. We have moved some distance in this paper in developing a greater understanding of the determinants of policy success in Washington. As far as coalitions are concerned, they can be helpful, but for those seeking change it is better to go it alone.

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Table 1. Number of Coalitions per Issue

Number of Coalitions	None	One	Two	Three	More Than Three	Total
Number of Issues	43	32	13	6	2	96

Table 2. Issue-Level Determinants of the Presence of a Coalition

	B (SE)	Prob	Predicted Probabilities				
			(min)	(-1sd)	(mean)	(+1sd)	(max)
Issue Size	0.020 0.012	0.091 *	0.680	0.726	0.808	0.872	0.973
Alternative Perspective	-0.195 0.641	0.761	0.808				0.584
Direct Opposition	-0.076 0.402	0.85	0.808				0.786
Inside Salience Index	0.247 0.176	0.161	0.726	0.704	0.808	0.885	0.996
Outside Salience Index	0.233 0.228	0.306	0.774	0.726	0.808	0.872	0.997
Constant	-0.171 0.430	0.69					
N	91		LR chi2(5): 14.05				
Log likelihood	-55.6034		Prob > chi2: 0.0153				
Pseudo R2	0.1122						

Note: Entries are Probit estimates. \* indicates significant at 0.10 level.

Table 3. Level of Conflict and Coalition Activity

	Level of Conflict			Total
	No Conflict	Multiple Perspectives, Not Directly Opposing	Direct Conflict Among Perspectives	
Coalition	6 43%	6 67%	41 56%	53 55%
No Coalition	8 57%	3 33%	32 44%	43 43%
Total	14 100%	9 100%	73 100%	96 100%

Note: Tau-b = 0.0478; Chi-sq. (2 d.f.) = 1.3685 (prob. = .504)

Table 4. The Determinants of Coalition Participation

	B	S.E.	P>z	Predicted Probabilities				
				p(min)	p(-1sd)	p(mean)	p(+1sd)	p(max)
<i>Actor Types</i>								
Citizen	-0.430	0.248	0.083*	0.149				0.071
Foundation	-0.750	0.663	0.258	0.149				0.037
Union	0.477	0.350	0.173	0.149				0.287
Professional Association	-0.121	0.268	0.651	0.149				0.123
Trade	0.116	0.240	0.627	0.149				0.178
Governmental Unit	-1.153	0.595	0.053*	0.149				0.014
<i>Organizational Characteristics</i>								
Membership Size	0.000	0.000	0.066*	0.185	0.368	0.149	0.041	0.000
DC Office	0.843	0.436	0.053*	0.990				0.422
Number of Professional Staff	0.004	0.008	0.673	0.142	0.141	0.149	0.157	0.185
Hired Outside Counsel	-0.037	0.023	0.112	0.165	0.182	0.149	0.120	0.019
Number of PACs	-0.035	0.155	0.820	0.152	0.153	0.149	0.145	0.136
Budget Resources Index	-0.038	0.055	0.485	0.153	0.169	0.149	0.131	0.062
Organizational Age	-0.003	0.002	0.208	0.189	0.175	0.149	0.126	0.054
<i>Issue-Context</i>								
Issue Size	-0.007	0.005	0.136	0.201	0.174	0.149	0.126	0.085
Outside Salience Index	-0.160	0.063	0.011**	0.152	0.202	0.149	0.106	0.010
Inside Salience Index	0.176	0.075	0.019**	0.122	0.096	0.149	0.219	0.583
Conflict 1	-0.726	0.299	0.015**	0.001				0.039
Conflict 2	-0.627	0.242	0.010***	0.149				0.048
<i>Intent and Opposition Faced</i>								
Facing an opposition coalition	-0.050	0.200	0.803	0.149				0.138
Seeking to change status quo	0.369	0.158	0.020*	0.149				0.251
Constant	-0.492	0.535	0.358					
N = 435				LR chi2(20) = 54.61				
Log likelihood = -232.68				Prob > chi2 = 0.000				
Pseudo R2 = 0.105				*** < .01				
				* < .10 ** < .05				

Table 5. Coalition Participation by Organizational Type

Type	Number of Major Actors	Percent in Coalition
Corporations—Non Fortune 500	67	46
Corporations—Fortune 500 or Global 500	106	41
Trade Associations	235	37
Business Associations	33	36
Professional Associations	155	34
Unions	71	34
Foundations, non-profit providers	44	34
Citizen ideological or cause oriented group	338	26
Association of Governmental Units	40	10
Think Tank or Research Institute	37	3
Coalition	91	99
Institutions (Hospitals, Universities)	5	40
Lobbying or Consulting Firm	6	33
State and Local Government official	4	25
Governmental Unit	5	20
Miscellaneous	22	18
Association of Institutions	21	10
Religious groups	10	0
Congressional Caucuses	1	100
Members of Congress	753	0
Members of the Executive	174	0
	1,977	22

Table 6. Coalition Participation by Repeat Player Status

Part A. Organizations	One-Time Actors		Repeat Players	
	N	%	N	%
Does not Participate in a Coalition	352	64.23	318	64.37
Coalition Member	196	35.77	176	35.63
Total	548	100.00	494	100.00
Part B. Corporations	One-Time Actors		Repeat Players	
	N	%	N	%
Does not Participate in a Coalition	83	58.04	21	56.76
Coalition Member	60	41.96	16	43.24
Total	143	100.00	37	100.00



Table 7. Determinants of Success in Achieving Policy Outcomes

	B	S. E.	P>t
<i>Coalition and Intent Variables</i>			
Coalition member	0.302	0.181	0.095*
Intent	-0.764	0.103	0.000***
Coalition member*intent	-0.656	0.199	0.001***
Business strength of coalition	0.243	0.463	0.599
Facing an opposition coalition	-0.246	0.111	0.028**
<i>Actor Types</i>			
Coalition	-0.002	0.347	0.995
Citizen	0.008	0.212	0.969
Foundation	-0.560	0.391	0.153
Religious	0.248	0.827	0.764
Union	-0.038	0.246	0.878
Professional Association	0.104	0.222	0.639
Trade	-0.086	0.202	0.669
Think Tank	0.265	0.367	0.472
Institution	-0.326	0.317	0.305
Governmental Unit	-0.065	0.299	0.827
<i>Material Resources</i>			
Membership Size	0.000	0.000	0.942
DC Office	-0.228	0.219	0.298
Number of Professional Staff	-0.004	0.005	0.375
Hired Outside Counsel	-0.003	0.012	0.777
Number of PACs	-0.116	0.091	0.202
Budget Resources Index	0.023	0.028	0.411
Organizational Age	0.000	0.001	0.908
<i>Issue Characteristics</i>			
Issue Size	0.016	0.003	0.000***
Outside Salience Index	-0.096	0.035	0.006**
Inside Salience Index	0.009	0.043	0.834
Alternative Perspective	0.205	0.184	0.267
Direct Opposition	0.452	0.149	0.003***
Constant	1.092	0.331	0.001***
N	434		* <.1
R-squared	0.349		** <.05
Adj R-squared	0.306		*** <.01

Table A1. List of Coalitions by Issue

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Issue Name</b> Coalition Name (if any)
1	<b>Managed Care Reform / Patients' Bill of Rights</b> Patient Activist Coalition Advocates for Practitioner Equity Coalition for Health Care Choice and Accountability Patients' Rights Coalition Access to Specialty Care Coalition Patient Access for Responsible Care Alliance Cancer Leadership Council Health Benefits Coalition
2	<b>Extending the Patent Term for Drugs Undergoing FDA Review During the Enactment of Hatch-Waxman</b> Patients and Consumers Coalition
3	<b>Hearing Screening for Infants</b>
4	<b>Revising the Risk Adjustment Methodology for Medicare+Choice</b> Capitated Payment Coalition for the Frail Elderly
5	<b>Medicare Payment Rate for Pap Screenings</b> People for Annual PAP Smears (PAPS)
6	<b>Parity in Health Insurance Coverage for Mental Illness</b> Mental Health Liaison Group Coalition for the Fairness in Treatment of Mental Illness
7	<b>Medicare Payment for Clinical Social Workers</b>
8	<b>Appropriations for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program</b> ADAP Working Group (Part 2, Pharmaceutical Industry Director)
9	<b>Providing Health Insurance for the Uninsured</b> National Coalition on Health Care
10	<b>Medicare Funding of Graduate Medical Education</b>
11	<b>Coverage of Chiropractic Services Under Medicare+Choice Program</b>
12	<b>Prescription Insurance Coverage of Contraceptives</b>
13	<b>Revising the Criteria and Process Used by HCFA to Determine the Coverage of Medical Devices Under Medicare</b>
14	<b>Regulating Disinfection Byproducts in Drinking Water</b> Campaign for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water
15	<b>Authorization and Funding for Upgrades to the CH-47 Chinook Helicopter</b>
16	<b>Limiting Mine Waste Disposal at Mill Sites</b>
17	<b>Legislation and Regulations Affecting the Deployment of Broadband Technology / Long Distance Data Services</b> Competitive Broadband Coalition

- 18 **Compulsory Licensing for AIDS-related Pharmaceuticals in Africa / Tax Credit for AIDS Vaccine Research and Development**
- 19 **Postal Service Modernization / Reform**  
 Main Street Coalition for Postal Fairness (or Main Street Association)  
 Coalition for Postal Reform  
 Coalition Against Unfair USPS Competition
- 20 **Modifications to the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996**  
 Implementation Working Group  
 Campaign for Pesticide Reform
- 21 **Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards**  
 Coalition organized by AAM (not named)  
 Coalition for Vehicle Choice
- 22 **Standards for Low-sulfur Gasoline**
- 23 **Distribution of Low Power FM Radio Licenses**
- 24 **Repeal of the Federal Estate and Gift Tax**  
 Family Business Estate Tax Coalition  
 Americans Against Unfair Family Taxation
- 25 **Amending the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset of the Social Security Act**  
 Coalition to Assure Retirement Equity (CARE)
- 26 **Providing Permanent and Mandatory Funding for Conservation Programs Through the Conservation and Reinvestment Act and Related Legislation**  
 Land Trust Alliance
- 27 **Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China**  
 Business Coalition for U.S.-China Trade  
 U.S. High-Tech Coalition on China  
 Agriculture Coalition for U.S.-China Trade
- 28 **Defense Budget Line Item**
- 29 **Eliminating Budgetary Support for USDA's Predator Control**
- 30 **Elimination of the 3% Excise Tax on Phone Bills**  
 Excise Tax Repeal Coalition organized by Quinn, Gillespie & Asso  
 E-Freedom Coalition
- 31 **Regulation of Internet Prescriptions**  
 National Council for Patient Education and Information
- 32 **Credit Union Regulation - Field of Membership Issues**
- 33 **Bankruptcy Reform**  
 Carlton Bankruptcy Group  
 National Consumer Bankruptcy Coalition
- 34 **Preventing Needlestick Injuries**
- 35 **Requiring Commercial Railroads to Grant Unpaid Concessions to Commuter Rail Services**

- New Starts Working Group
- Surface Transportation Policy Project
- 36 **Criminal Justice Reforms**
  - Coalition for Criminal Justice Reform Working Group
  - Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
- 37 **Tax Concessions Related to Electric Utility Restructuring that must be Agreed to by both Public Power and Electric Companies**
  - Campaign for Local Control
- 38 **Appropriations for Funding of National Nuclear Waste Disposal Site**
- 39 **Aviation Trust Fund (Air 21)**
- 40 **Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I**
  - ESEA group
- 41 **OSHA's Proposed Ergonomics Standards**
  - National Coalition on Ergonomics
- 42 **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**
- 43 **Funding for Legal Services**
- 44 **FCC Licenses for Religious Broadcasters**
- 45 **Repository for Spent Nuclear Fuel**
- 46 **Rise in Gasoline Prices**
- 47 **Roads in National Forests**
- 48 **Membership in the World Trade Organization**
- 49 **Proposed United Airlines-US Airways Merger**
  - Global Aviation Improvement Network
- 50 **Applying and Collecting Taxes on the Internet and Remote Commerce**
  - Internet Tax Fairness Coalition
  - E-Freedom Coalition (anti-tax groups)
  - E-Fairness Coalition (malls, developers, retailers, and realtors)
- 51 **Exempting Physicians and Pharmacists from Antitrust Laws**
  - Antitrust Coalition for Consumer Choice in Health Care
- 52 **Change How Companies Treat Foreign Earnings and Interest Expenses for U.S. Tax Purposes**
- 53 **Changing Class Action Law so that More Cases are Heard in Federal Court**
  - Tort Reform Coalition organized by Quinn, Gillespie & Associates
  - American Tort Reform Association
- 54 **Prevailing Wage Rules for Building Trade Workers in the Davis-Bacon Act**
  - Coalition to Repeal the Davis-Bacon Act
- 55 **Tax Code Depreciation Schedule for Computers and Peripheral Equipment**
- 56 **Legislation Allowing Off-duty and Retired Police Officers to Carry Firearms Across State Lines**
- 57 **Late-term Abortions**
  - Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

- 58     **Export Controls on Computers**  
Computer Coalition for Responsible Exports
- 59     **Airline Age 60 Rule**
- 60     **C-130 Procurement**
- 61     **On-Board Diagnostic Service Info Rule**  
Coalition for Auto Repair Equality
- 62     **Parents' Right to Know**
- 63     **Cuban Sanctions Reform**  
Emergency Committee of the Advancement of Trade
- 64     **Newspaper Crossownership**
- 65     **Global Steel Safeguard Investigation**  
Stand up for Steel Coalition  
Consuming Industries Trade Action Coalition
- 66     **International Property Takings Amendment to the Fast Track Trade Authority Bill**
- 67     **Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage**  
[www.fairdrugprices.org](http://www.fairdrugprices.org) Coalition  
Citizens for Better Medicare  
Business for Affordable Medicine
- 68     **Terrorism Re-insurance**  
American Tort Reform Association
- 69     **Government Outsourcing Reform (TRAC Act)**  
CARE—Coalition to Assure Retirement Equity
- 70     **Department of Defense Personal Property Movement and Storage Program**  
MMC-Military Mobility Coalition
- 71     **Proposal to Change the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act to Reduce Costs for Borrowers**  
National Community Reinvestment Coalition
- 72     **Legislation and Regulations Affecting the Deployment of Broadband Technology / Long Distance Data Services**  
Open-Net Coalition
- 73     **Maritime Security Act Reauthorization**
- 74     **FDA Food Allergen Labeling**
- 75     **Bear Protection Act**
- 76     **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Employment Training Services**  
Coalition on Human Needs  
National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support  
Workforce Alliance
- 77     **Amendment for Commodity Futures Trading Commission Regulation of Over-the-counter derivatives**
- 78     **Reauthorizing Federal Funding for the State Revolving Fund Loan Programs**

- H2O Coalition  
Water Infrastructure Network (47 member organizations)
- 79 **EPA Transportation Equipment Cleaning Effluent Limitation Guidelines**
- 80 **Medicare Funding for Optometric Clinical Education Training**
- 81 **Student Visas and Laboratory Security**  
USA (United to Secure America)
- 82 **Disabled Recipients under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Reauthorization**  
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities
- 83 **Human Cloning Prohibition Act**  
Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research
- 84 **Funding for an Alternative to the EA-6B Prowler**
- 85 **U.S. Farm Bill**
- 86 **Wind Energy Tax Credit**  
Sustainable Energy Coalition
- 87 **SMART Growth and the Transportation Bill Reauthorization**  
Transportation Construction Coalition  
Coalition for Smarter Growth  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign  
National Coalition to Defend NEPA  
Smart Growth America  
Americans for Transportation Mobility  
Surface Transportation Policy Project
- 88 **Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (107th Congress)**  
Coalition for Vehicle Choice  
Alliance to Save Energy
- 89 **Basic Education Funding for Developing Countries**  
Basic Education Coalition
- 90 **PURPA Repeal within Energy Bill**  
Energy Alliance
- 91 **Recreation Marine Employment Act**  
Recreational Marine Employment Coalition
- 92 **Federal Public Safety Officers Amendment to the Affordable Housing for Americans**
- 93 **Regulations on Relationships among Affiliated Gas and Electric Producers, Pipelines,  
and Distributors**
- 94 **Math and Science Education Funding for K-12**  
Business Coalition for Excellence in Education  
Science, Math, Engineering and Technology Coalition (SMET)
- 95 **NIH Funding for the Cystic Fibrosis Clinical Research Network**
- 96 **Stock Option Expensing**

97 **Efforts to Weaken the Provisions and Enforcement of Title IX**

College Sports Council

National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

98 **Aviation Security and Stabilization**

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## Web Site Materials

This section includes materials that we propose to make available not in the paper but on the web.

1. Replication dataset and codebook, when article is published.
2. Stata do-file for analysis in article, when article is published.
3. Additional tables providing greater detail than in the text, as follows.

**Table W1. The Determinants of Coalition Participation – Corporations**

	B	S.E.	P>z	Predicted Probabilities				
				p(min)	p(-1sd)	p(mean)	p(+1sd)	p(max)
Fortune 500	0.0771	0.35	0.83	0.849				0.83
DC Office	-1.191	0.68	0.08	0.849				0.436
Number of Professional Staff	0.0051	0.03	0.86	0.84	0.839	0.848	0.857	0.878
Hired Outside Counsel	0.0013	0.03	0.97	0.847	0.847	0.849	0.85	0.857
Number of PACs	0.1962	0.34	0.56	0.829	0.821	0.844	0.865	0.875
Issue Size	0.0096	0.01	0.48	0.788	0.817	0.848	0.875	0.927
Outside Salience Index	0.2675	0.22	0.22	0.879	0.895	0.846	0.785	0.621
Inside Salience Index	0.195	0.21	0.36	0.796	0.801	0.853	0.895	0.993
Conflict 1	1.0809	0.8	0.17	0.849				0.983
Conflict 2	0.2431	0.73	0.74	0.849				0.899
Facing an opposition coalition	0.4735	0.44	0.28	0.849				0.711
Seeking to change status quo	0.1746	0.39	0.65	0.849				0.804
Constant	0.6169	1.07	0.56					
N = 88				LR chi2(12) = 17.75				
Log likelihood = -52.1				Prob > chi2 = .124				
Pseudo R2 = .146								

This table corresponds to the organizational analysis in Table 4 in the paper. As the entire regression is insignificant, we do not present it in the main body of the paper.



**Table W2. Coalition Participation among the Most Active Repeat Participants**

	Number of Issues Active	Number of Issues in a Coalition	Pattern of Coalition Behavior
<b>Part A. Organizations Involved in 5+ Issues</b>			
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	12	4	Mixed
Sierra Club	11	1	Mixed
AFL-CIO	10	1	Mixed
American Medical Association	9	3	Mixed
Consumer Federation of America	9	2	Mixed
Consumers Union	8	1	Mixed
National Association of Manufacturers	8	5	Mixed
Natural Resources Defense Council	7	3	Mixed
AARP	6	0	Never
AFSCME	6	3	Mixed
American Farm Bureau Federation	6	1	Mixed
American Federation of Teachers	6	4	Mixed
Business Roundtable	6	2	Mixed
National Education Association	6	3	Mixed
Public Citizen	6	1	Mixed
United Auto Workers	6	1	Mixed
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers	5	1	Mixed
Friends of the Earth	5	1	Mixed
Health Insurance Association of America	5	2	Mixed
US PIRG, Public Interest Research Groups	5	0	Never

Number of Groups Sometimes and Sometimes Not in a Coalition: 18 of 20

**Part B. Corporations Involved in 2+ Issues**

General Motors	4	0	Never
Merck & Co.	4	2	Mixed
Procter & Gamble	3	1	Mixed
AOL Time Warner	2	0	Never
AT&T	2	2	Always
Bell Atlantic	2	1	Mixed
Boeing Corporation	2	0	Never
Bristol-Meyer Squibb	2	1	Mixed
CIGNA Corporation	2	1	Mixed
Ford Corporation	2	0	Never
Glaxo-Wellcome, Inc.	2	1	Mixed
Hewlett-Packard	2	1	Mixed
Intel	2	1	Mixed
MasterCard International	2	2	Always
Pfizer	2	1	Mixed
Visa International	2	1	Mixed

Number of Businesses Sometimes and Sometimes Not in a Coalition: 10 of 16

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Note: The table lists coalition participation by issue; some groups were also active on more than one coalition in a single issue. See text for details.

In the text we discuss these trends in general, providing some examples. This table lists the full set of repeat players, as indicated.

**Table W3. A Raw Measure of Outcome Success**

Level of Success	0	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	Total
No. Achieving this Level of Success	694	206	76	169	12	195	173	48	1,573
Percent	44.12	13.1	4.83	10.74	0.76	12.4	11	3.05	100

Note: Zero means an advocate achieved none of its goals; the theoretical maximum is 12 for an actor which achieved each of six possible goals. Not all groups sought all six goals. See text for details.

This table simply provides more detail than in the text.

**Table W4. A Proportionate Measure of Outcome Success**

Level of Success	0	0.4	0.667	0.8	1	1.5	1.6	2	Total
No. Achieving This Level of Success	688	32	9	5	127	29	1	676	1,567
Percent	43.91	2.04	0.57	0.32	8.1	1.85	0.06	43.14	100

Note: Scores range from zero (no success) to 2 (achieved each of its goals). See text for details.

This table simply provides more detail than in the text.

**Table W5. Table of Summary Statistics**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Individual-Level Variables</b>					
Membership Size	741	726,489	3.549M	4	40.0 M
DC Office	924	0.951	0.215	0	1
Number of Professional Staff	907	8.977	9.673	0	50
Hired Outside Counsel	907	2.470	4.330	0	36
Number of PACs	907	0.387	0.503	0	2
Organizational Age	858	56.759	38.436	0	261
Income	832	\$56.9M	\$133.0 M	0	\$1,220.0M
Assets	833	\$46.3M	\$114.0 M	0	\$1,050.0M
Budget Resources Index	890	0.429	2.161	-0.5341	13.432
Coalition	2160	0.040	0.197	0	1
Citizen	2160	0.154	0.361	0	1
Foundation	2160	0.020	0.141	0	1
Religious	2160	0.005	0.068	0	1
Union	2160	0.030	0.171	0	1
Professional Association	2160	0.059	0.235	0	1
Trade	2160	0.106	0.307	0	1
Think Tank	2160	0.017	0.130	0	1
Institution	2160	0.002	0.048	0	1
Governmental Unit	2160	0.002	0.048	0	1
Ass'n of Government Units	2160	0.019	0.135	0	1
Corporation	2160	0.081	0.273	0	1
Coalition Member	2160	0.201	0.401	0	1
Facing an Opposition Coalition	1872	0.232	0.422	0	1
<b>Issue-Level Variables</b>					
Issue Size	2148	30.433	15.926	3	89
Outside Salience Index	2087	0.095	1.210	-0.545	8.113
Inside Salience Index	2041	0.194	1.454	-1.150	7.301
Number of Coalitions	2148	1.149	1.317	0	8
<b>Conflict Levels</b>					
No conflict	2150	0.089	0.285	0	1
Alternative Perspective	2150	0.131	0.338	0	1
Direct Conflict	2150	0.780	0.415	0	1
<b>Coalition-Level Variables</b>					
Size of Actor's Coalition	2163	1.833	5.536	0	36
Business Strength of Coalition	2163	0.031	0.116	0	0.875