Advocacy Behavior and Conflict Expansion in Policy Debates

Marie Hojnacki
Penn State University
marieh@psu.edu

Frank R. Baumgartner
Penn State University
frankb@psu.edu

Jeffrey M. Berry
Tufts University
jeffrey.berry@tufts.edu

David C. Kimball
University of Missouri, St. Louis
dkimball@umsl.edu

Beth L. Leech
Rutgers University
BethL@rci.rutgers.edu

In a forthcoming manuscript (Baumgartner, et al. , forthcoming), my collaborators and I examine how advocates work to protect or advance their policy goals in an effort to explain who is most often successful, who is not, and why. One of the central observations that we make is that status quo supporters behave very differently from those who challenge the status quo. Challengers perceive different opposition and impediments to their success, they make different arguments, and they tend to be more active than supporters of the status quo. In general, status quo defenders have an advantage over challengers because policy change is difficult to accomplish and at any one time there is unlikely to be sufficient momentum and governmental support for change. Thus, defenders act to keep the conflict contained and to minimize attention to the issue, whereas challengers seek to expand the conflict and to gather support from important government allies.

But given that our understanding of how advocates behave is rooted in our expectations about how conflict expansion facilitates or impedes their abilities to achieve their goals, it is reasonable to ask whether the advocacy process is different when conflict has expanded. In other words, if the level of conflict surrounding an issue shapes both defenders' and challengers' prospects for success in the ways that Schattschneider and other scholars have described, we have reason to expect that advocates would behave differently once conflict had expanded and the context was more favorable to challenging the status quo. Our goal in this paper is to examine the patterns of behavior among status quo defenders and challengers when conflict has expanded, and to compare these patterns to both groups' behavior on issues with less expansive conflict. First, though, we offer a brief description of our project and data, and an overview of our findings regarding the advocacy behavior of status quo defenders and challengers.

Our Project and Data

In order to investigate how the policy process works and who prevails and why, we conducted more than 300 interviews with Washington, DC-based policy advocates (e.g., representatives of organized interests, congressional staff, agency personnel) active on 98 randomly selected policy issues. We identified our issues and conducted our interviews over the last two years of the Clinton administration (1999-2000) and the first two years of the George W. Bush administration (2001-2002). Through these interviews and by searching systematically through publicly available documents we were able to map out the constellation of government officials and organized interests mobilized on a given issue, and, through follow-up telephone interviews and by monitoring news and official web sites for four years after our initial interviews, we were able to find out who got what they wanted and who did not.

The issues included in the study were identified by a set of organizational advocates who we call *issue identifiers*. These issue identifiers were selected at random from the list of organized interests that registered to lobby Congress in 1996, the last year for which these registration data were compiled in a usable format at the time we began the data collection (see Baumgartner and Leech 1999). During the interviews, the issue identifier was asked to select the most recent issue he or she had spent time on, and to describe what he or she had done and what the organization was trying to accomplish on the issue. Interviewees also were asked to narrate the appeals and arguments they make when they speak with others about the issue, to specify with whom they are talking about the issue, to describe the type of opposition they face, and to provide a variety of other information about their organizations.

During our interviews we asked our respondents to identify the major players on each side of the debate. This typically elicited a list of government officials and other outside advocates who shared the goals of the advocate we interviewed, and a set of actors in opposition. Sometimes there were others mentioned as well, sets of actors who were not necessarily opposed to what the advocate was trying to accomplish, but were seeking another outcome nonetheless. A "side" is defined as a set of actors who share a policy goal. Note that these actors may or may not be working together; we call them a side if they seek the same outcome even if they do not coordinate their activities.

We identified 214 "sides" over our 98 issues. We attempted to interview a leading representative from each side on the issue, and in each interview we continued to ask the same questions about who was involved. After two or three interviews and after perusing documents related to the case, we usually had a full understanding of the issue and further interviews typically added no new actors to our list. The number of sides per issue ranges from just one to seven but typically is just two: one side seeking some particular type of change to the existing policy and another side seeking to protect the status quo. The number of advocates on each side is determined by our count of "major players." We defined a major player as an advocate mentioned by others (or, occasionally, who was revealed through our subsequent documentary searches) as playing a prominent and important role in the debate. The number of major players per side ranges from just one to over fifty, but is typically in the single-digits. Overall, we identified 2,221 advocates across our 98 cases, for an average of 23 actors per case. Note that to be included in a side a major actor must be actively supporting the goals of that side; that is, they must be actively advocating either the retention of the status quo or some policy change. Government decision-makers who play a neutral role but who may be the object of considerable lobbying by others are not included even though they may have come up many times in our interviews.

For every issue side that we identified, we determined whether it was supportive of or opposed to the status quo policy. The status quo was defined in one of two ways, depending on whether the policy issue in question was legislative or regulatory. The status quo for legislative matters was defined as the policy in existence prior to the start of the session of Congress in which the issue was identified. For regulatory issues, the status quo was represented by the policy in place at the start of the calendar year in which the issue was identified. Sides that sought to change the status quo policy – regardless of whether or not they proposed a clear alternative to it – were classified as status quo challengers. Overall, 81 (37.9%) of our 214 perspectives are status quo supporters and 133 (62.2%) are challengers.

The Advocacy Behavior of Status Quo Supporters and Challengers

These data allow us to investigate systematically across a random sample of issues how variables such as advocates' resources, their goals, elections, and the nature of the issues themselves (e.g., their salience, their impact on the federal budget) affect advocates' behavior and their efforts to affect public policy, as well as the extent of their success in getting what they want. Here, we offer an overview of our findings regarding the advocacy behavior of status quo defenders and challengers, and their perceptions of the context in which they actively pursue their goals. One important element of that context involves the difficulties or hurdles advocates encounter in achieving their objectives. Advocates' responses to our inquiries about these difficulties included references to organizational adversaries and members of Congress who had taken opposing public positions on the issue; the financial cost of achieving an objective; difficulties convincing

organizations to devote time and effort to an issue; and a lack of a suitable vehicle to translate a measure into law. We categorized these responses in terms of whether they referenced active opposition (realized or expected) from various sources; indifference or inattention from those same set of sources; or one of eight obstacles (cost or budgetary concerns; insufficient or inappropriate data; divisiveness among allies; a stigmatized target population; disputes about the appropriate venue or jurisdiction for an issue; legislative logistics; electoral politics; and partisan or ideological concerns). Figure 1 aggregates the responses we received to show the proportion of sides across our 98 issues that cite active opposition or a lack of interest from at least one of the following sources: members of Congress, members of the congressional leadership, executive branch officials or agency personnel, and/or organized interests. Figure 1 also presents the proportion of sides that mentioned at least one obstacle.

(Insert Figure 1 about here)

Most broadly, the ubiquitous reports of organizational opposition combined with the lack of attention and presence of obstacles noted by many status quo challengers underscore just how different the process of advocacy is for those who seek to change and those who defend current policy. Although sides supporting the status quo are almost certain to experience active opposition -- over 90 percent of these sides cite active opponents as impeding their ability to achieve their policy goals -- only 17 percent mention a lack of support or attention from government decision makers or groups as posing difficulties and fewer than a third report obstacles of any kind. Status quo challengers also are quite likely to mention active opposition as a hurdle to achieving their policy goals but unlike status quo supporters, a sizable proportion of those sides seeking change (26 percent) encounter no active opposition to their policy goals. Moreover, more than a third of the sides challenging current policy note that inattention or a lack of support from organized interests and government decision makers have adversely affected their chances for policy success, and more than half cite other obstacles.

As shown in Table 1, sides that are engaged in challenging the status quo appear to respond to the organized opposition and lack of attention they encounter by being more active than those sides who are defending the status quo. In the course of our interviews we asked each respondent about the various lobbying tactics they used in the case at hand, probing to elicit a complete list of their actions, which we later coded into categories so that we could compare across interviews. Table 1 shows the distribution of responses regarding the tactics that were used by the sides we interviewed.[1]

(Insert Table 1 about here)

For each tactic, we show the percentage of sides using it, separately for those defending and challenging the status quo. The last column shows the percentage use of the tactic across all sides. Most notable are the wide range of tactics used and the high frequency with which advocates on all

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[1]The 155 sides we present here exclude any sides whose membership was made up solely of government officials as well as those sides for which we have no interviews with non-government actors. Analyses of tactics is limited to outside organizations because, with few exceptions (e.g., coalition participation), the tactics used by government officials were different from those used by outside organizations. For example, among congressional advocates, the use of "Dear Colleague" letters is quite common. Here we present only those tactics that were mentioned by at least 30 percent of all sides.

sides work with congressional staff, members, and legislative allies in general. Over three-quarters work through personal contacts with rank-and-file members of Congress and their staffs. More than two-thirds work with legislative allies, over sixty percent report disseminating policy research, and over fifty percent make contact with committee or subcommittee members from both parties, as well as with committee or subcommittee leaders from the majority. In sum, lobbyists place a priority on working closely with their legislative allies and nurturing contacts with those in gatekeeping positions. They also keep in close contact with their own membership, with just under half of all advocates mentioning mobilizing their own mass membership.

Although personal contact with rank-and-file members of Congress and their staffs is the most common means of advocacy for both status quo defenders and challengers alike, the relative use of this tactic is quite different for these two sets of advocates. Indeed, the data show that it is unusual for a side challenging the status quo *not* to contact members of Congress and/or their staff—85.3 percent of challengers reported working in this way on the particular issue of concern. For status quo defenders, personal contact of rank-and-file members/staff is common but 27 percent do not bother even with this. (This difference, 85.3 to 73.3 percent, is statistically significant.)[2] A similar story can be told about work with the entire range of legislative allies. Over three-fourths of the sides challenging the status quo engage in this form of activity whereas just under 60 percent of the sides defending the status quo do so (a statistically significant difference). Defenders of the status quo do not usually need to engage in explicit campaigns to build support for their preferences. Their basic preference is current policy and they are well aware of the hurdles that must be overcome by others to bring a shift to that center of political gravity. These distinctions between status quo challengers and defenders are apparent through other patterns of tactic usage that are presented in Table 1. For example, status quo challengers are much more likely than defenders to work with committee and subcommittee members from the minority party in Congress (a statistically significant difference between 60.0 versus 43.3 percent, respectively); and challengers are more than twice as likely as defenders of the status quo to draft legislative language (a statistically significant difference between 48.4 versus 23.3 percent, respectively).

In fact, the overall message that emerges from Table 1 is that defenders of the status quo are less likely than challengers to report activity. The only specific activities that status quo defenders engage in more often than challengers are disseminating research, testifying before congressional committees , and contacting agency officials. Status quo defenders may use research reports to sow doubt about policy proposals, thereby augmenting the arguments they make about the unintended consequences, cost, and/or feasibility of proposed policy changes (see below). Similarly, the distribution of research on a given topic, where the advocate is not proposing any change to current policy, may be a useful mechanism for lobbyists to maintain regular contact with government policymakers with whom they generally agree and with whom they want to maintain close ties. The research need not be offered in conjunction with a specific issue debate. A new report offers an excuse to stop by a key congressional office, and spend time with a top aide exchanging intelligence and gossip about the issue. Similarly, these status quo defenders are active in working with agency officials, presumably discussing pending regulatory action, possible legislative changes, or new research.

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[2] The difference we observe is certainly underestimated. Our research approach excluded any status quo defenders who felt there was so little threat to their interests that they never even mobilized. If we were to include those "potential sides" we would find that activity defending the status quo was even lower.

This pattern of activity illustrates one of the advantages accruing to advocates of the status quo—they can husband their resources, allocating them to those issues on the front burner. More often than not, they need not respond to the activities undertaken by challengers. To be sure, they must be attentive to efforts to change policies they support. But this requires only that they monitor the activity of other advocates and gauge whether the climate appears ripe for change. Unless there is a sense that some idea or proposal is gaining momentum, the defenders of the status quo need not act. These findings for status quo defenders are consistent with Heinz and colleagues' (1993) emphasis on the importance to lobbyists generally of "monitoring." It seems clear that those protecting the status quo remain prepared to act without necessarily having to do anything.

In Tables 2 and 3, we turn from advocacy tactics to the arguments the sides use to justify and promote the policies they prefer. In Table 2, we aggregate the arguments that were mentioned during our interviews with advocates into categories that reflect some of the major themes we uncovered in a more detailed analysis of advocates' use of argumentation: doubt and uncertainty; optimism; increased costs; decreased costs; and prudence.[3]

(Insert Table 2 about here)

From one vantage point, there is a good deal of similarity between challengers and defenders of the status quo that is evident in Table 2. Namely, both the relative use of arguments that underscore the costs that will result if their opponents' policy preferences are adopted and the arguments that raise doubts or uncertainty about the preferred policy of the opposing side are similar for both supporters of and challengers to the status quo. But there are far more substantial differences between status quo challengers and defenders in the use of the remaining categories of arguments. Claims about the cost reductions that would result from the preferred policy options are more than three times more likely to be made by challengers, a difference that is statistically significant. Other significant differences between status quo challengers and defenders are observed in terms of the level of optimism that pervades their claims and their tendencies to emphasize the relative prudence of the policy they support. As Table 2 indicates, status quo challengers are much more likely than status quo defenders to emphasize what is positive about their policy preferences, and challengers are also more likely to emphasize the prudent or incremental nature of the policy changes they seek.

Taken together, the similarities and differences observed between the two sets of advocates help to illustrate yet another way in which defenders have a relative advantage. Defending sides have it a bit easier than challengers in that they can raise doubts and cost concerns about the policy alternatives proposed and not necessarily have to justify what is positive about the status quo. The status quo, even if somewhat unpopular, is a known commodity with relatively well known effects and implications. So while challengers may mimic defenders in attempting to cast doubt on the workability of the status quo and its expense, challengers also have the burden of making a positive

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[3]See Baumgartner, et al. (forthcoming). Chapter 7 offers an analysis of argument use, and the appendix provides a complete list of the arguments that were coded. For the information in Tables 2 and 3, we examined the arguments made by actors associated with each side. If one or more of the actors associated with a side makes a particular type of argument, we consider the side as having made that type of argument. We do not have arguments for all 214 sides because we did not seek or could not obtain interviews with representatives of 42 perspectives, many of which were very small. The analysis reported here is based on a total of 315 interviews across 172 sides.

case for their preferred policy as something that should replace the status quo. Thus, challengers offer optimistic assessments of the policy alternatives they prefer, they talk about cost savings, and they underscore the relative shrewdness of forgoing the status quo for what they have on offer. A tall task relative to that faced by the status quo defenders.

Table 3 reinforces this view of defenders relative advantage by looking at the tone of the arguments used. In this table, arguments are categorized according to whether they are positive or negative in tone. Positive arguments include: Policy promotes a shared goal, policy is equitable, policy reduces costs to government or to private actors, and policy has some secondary beneficial consequences. Negative arguments include: Policy inhibits shared goals, policy is not equitable, policy imposes costs on government or private actors, policy has some secondary negative consequences, and policy does not work.

(Insert Table 3 about here)

Particularly striking in Table 3 is the tendency of both status quo defenders and challengers to "go negative." At least four-fifths of the sides make use of negative claims. Where there is a disparity between challengers and defenders is in terms of their use of positive arguments. Fewer than half of the sides defending the status quo make any positive claim, whereas over 70 percent of the challengers use that type of argument (a statistically significant difference). The bottom rows of Table 3 bring these differences into sharper relief. For status quo defenders, there is a tendency not only to use arguments that are negative in tone but also to use negative arguments exclusively (45.3 percent of all sides defending the status quo). And while few sides of any type rely solely on positive arguments, a majority (61.1 percent) of the status quo challengers mix it up, as it were. These results add to our understanding of the basis of the status quo advantage. Affirming Kahneman and Tversky (1984), losses loom larger than gains in Washington, and defenders of the status quo benefit greatly from raising the prospect of a negative consequence, or otherwise portraying any alternative to the status quo as a risky choice. Students of framing know that a given option or alternative can be portrayed in different ways, so the savvy status quo defender need not explicitly engage in outlining the virtues of the status quo policy. Rather, it is sufficient (and not too terribly difficult) to suggest that certain costs and negative consequences *might* result from a policy option being proposed. Indeed, "… the status quo defines the reference level for all attributes. The advantages of alternative options will then be evaluated as gains and their disadvantages as losses … [and] the decision maker will be biased in terms of retaining the status quo" (Kahneman and Tversky 1984, 348). In short, it is typically not sufficient for challengers to the status quo to say positive things about their new policy; they must also point out the flaws in alternative approaches including the status quo. Status quo defenders, on the other hand, can dwell on their opponents' flaws and may not have to worry about defending the status quo.

Table 4 examines the evidence pertaining to what might be considered the ultimate status quo advantage – policy success. Specifically, Table 4 shows the distribution of policy success achieved by advocates associated with each of 214 sides across our 98 issues.[4] The table shows the overall percentage of sides achieving complete success, partial success or failure within a two-year period; the percentages for those who are defending the status quo; and the percentages challenging the status quo.

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[4] We collected the outcome data reported here for all 214 sides identified on our issues. This includes the 42 sides for which no representative was interviewed.

As the table indicates, the status quo enjoys a decided advantage. Seven out of ten sides that supported the status quo enjoyed complete success after two years. If those achieving partial success are included, over 75 percent of the defending sides can be deemed successful. These levels of success are vastly different from the success rates of status quo challengers. Table 4 shows that fewer than one in five challengers are completely successful in two years, while one in ten achieve some measure of success. Importantly, these differences are not reflective of resource imbalances between challengers and defenders. We found that sides challenging and opposing the status quo were relatively evenly matched in terms of the resources – like staff, money, members – they could bring to an advocacy effort (Baumgartner, et al. forthcoming). Thus, despite the similarities in resources, and the fact that sides challenging the status quo are much more active in promoting their objectives (see Table 1), they typically fail to achieve their goals.[5]

The resilience of the status quo can be attributed to a number of forces. For one, it is quite difficult for those seeking change to attract and maintain the attention of relevant actors in and out of government. Thus, before officials or rival interest groups actively opposing one's goals become a potential problem, the initial hurdle is often just motivating relevant others to pay attention. Parties and partisans have differing priorities, government officials have limited amounts of time, and organizations outside of government cannot attend equally to every matter that potentially touches on their interests. Moreover, shared information is pervasive in diffuse policy communities surrounding each of the issues we investigated. In our interviews, no matter the particular angle that an advocate may have been pushing, all those to whom we spoke recognized certain common facts about the background and justification of the policy in place. While they may have disagreed about the value of various possible changes to the policy, there were few secrets. That is, they were commonly aware, as a group, of the facts and figures associated with the justification for the current policy, various proposals to change it, and research or experiences in states, communities, or foreign countries, suggesting how any policy changes might be implemented. We call this an "information-induced equilibrium." In addition, of course, there are many institutional hurdles in Congress and in government more generally that are intended to slow the process of change. (See Baumgartner, et al. forthcoming, for a much more detailed explanation of the status quo advantage.)

A Changed Context? Advocacy Behavior under Conditions of Expanded Conflict

Given these results, it is difficult to overstate how different the advocacy process is for those who seek to change the status quo, and for those who oppose it. Indeed, because advocates' goals play a critical role in affecting their behavior, it is important to understand precisely the nature of these differences, and to consider their broader implications for our understanding of advocacy. As mentioned above, these differences between challengers to and defenders of the status quo can be understood through the lens of conflict expansion. In particular, defenders cast doubt and lay low because they do not want to attract further attention to an issue that they believe should remain off the public agenda. According to Schattschneider (1960), activity could draw the attention of newly

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[5] If we expand the time horizon to four years, the status quo advantage remains in slightly weakened form (73 percent of defenders enjoy at least some success after four years, as do 38 percent of sides challenging the status quo.

interested individuals or groups who potentially could introduce new dimensions of debate or discussion, and also alter the numerical strength of different sides in a conflict. Importantly, the engagement of these new participants is thought to increase the possibility that the status quo definition of an issue becomes open to alternative definitions or understandings, thereby making it possible for others to engage with the issue that previously had escaped their attention. Increased attention, new participants, and alternative understandings introduce uncertainty about the issue and its outcome, precisely the situation a status quo supporter seeks to avoid.

Challengers, of course, are held to have quite the opposite view. Based on both Lipsky's (1968) and Schattschneider's (1960) notions of conflict expansion, advocates who challenge the status quo are hopeful that increased attention will alter the likely outcome of an issue debate, an outcome which would typically favor the status quo. Challengers, then, take action that is directed toward changing the situation in which they find themselves presumably because they expect that a changed context – albeit a more uncertain one -- gives them a better chance of defeating the status quo, or at least of increasing its vulnerability.

Because our understanding of how advocates behave is rooted in our expectations about how conflict expansion facilitates or impedes their abilities to achieve their goals, it is reasonable to ask whether the advocacy process is different once conflict has expanded. In other words, if the level of conflict surrounding an issue shapes both defenders' and challengers' prospects for success in the ways that Schattschneider and other scholars have described, we have reason to expect that advocates would behave differently once conflict had expanded and the context was more favorable to challenging the status quo. Is it the case that the different behaviors we observe among challengers and defenders (as illustrated in the tables above) remain when conflict has expanded? Do we observe the same differences in obstacles and arguments that are shown in Figure 1 and Tables 2 and 3? Are defenders more active on issues that attract more attention than they are when they are attempting to keep conflict private? Given the expectation that conflict expansion is linked to greater uncertainty, we might expect that the observed differences between these groups are less pronounced in situations of more expansive conflict relative to the differences that exist when conflict is less broad. Also, because conflict expansion is presumed to bring a relatively greater diversity of views and voices into the debate, we can ask whether the arguments that are presented by challengers and supporters of the status quo on more conflictual issues are more varied than those offered on less conflcitual issues. If the process of advocacy is indeed different when conflict has expanded, we should see the use of a broader array of arguments in the case of high conflict issues, and less diversity of claims made when conflict is relatively low.

Our goal in this paper is to examine the patterns of behavior among status quo defenders and challengers when conflict has expanded, and to compare these patterns to their behavior on issues with less expansive conflict. By doing so, we will gain some additional leverage on the questions of how conflict expansion shapes the advocacy process, and also of how the changing context surrounding an issue can affect the behavior of advocates with different policy goals.

What Constitutes Conflict Expansion?

One difficulty in studying empirically how advocates behave when conflict has expanded lies in defining what constitutes an issue debate that has a broadened scope of conflict. Indeed, although the scope of conflict is a ubiquitous concept in a broad array of literature, there has been little effort to explicitly define and measure it (for an exception see Salisbury, et al. 1987). Yet from Schattschneider forward, the literature offers a number of different possibilities for defining the

scope of a conflict.   We focus here on two of the most common indicators that scholars have identified for gauging the scope of a conflict -- the number of participants active on an issue; and an issue's salience.

The mechanism by which participation is linked to the scope of a conflict is fairly straightforward. When the number of participants in a policy debate increases, the level of conflict is presumed to be high, whereas conflict and opposition are presumed to be lower when participants are fewer in number (Baumgartner 1989; Baumgartner and Leech 2001; Browne 1990; Gray and Lowery 1996; West and Loomis 1999). This linkage of participation with conflict has its roots in Schattschneider's (1960) contention about conflict expansion, as well as Lipsky's (1968) claims about the successful use of protest by "powerless" groups.   According to both Schattschneider and Lipsky, interests that are on the losing side of a debate could benefit by attracting additional participants, thus expanding conflict and altering the stakes in the debate. If new participants join the debate or begin to pay attention to it, advocates engaged in that debate are relatively more likely to encounter opposition to their preferences, thereby increasing uncertainty about the outcome of the debate. High levels of participation also are assumed (at least implicitly) to produce policy debates in which more voices are heard and more diverse issue perspectives are offered for consideration. In contrast, when few advocates are actively engaged on an issue and new participants are not attracted to it, conflict is contained or "privatized" so that participants face minimal opposition to their policy preferences. [6]

Scholars have examined the number and type of participants active in policy areas or on different policy issues; they have found evidence both of issue areas and issues characterized by conflict (as measured by high/ "broad" participation), and of issues and issue areas where conflict is presumed to be low (because of low/ "niche" participation) (Browne, 1990; Gray and Lowery, 1996; Heinz, et al., 1993; Smith 2000). More recent research has considered how common both niche and broad participation are (Baumgartner and Leech, 2001).

As with participation, the means by which issue salience relates to conflict expansion is fairly simple. As issues become more salient to the public, to actors in government, and to members of the media, they are presumed to be characterized by more expansive conflict. Although conceptually distinct from participation, salience is often linked with participation in scholarly explanations of conflict expansion. Indeed, the lack of a clear distinction between these concepts is apparent in Schattschneider's original explanation of conflict expansion. As explained above, narrow participation is presumed to privatize conflict, whereas broad participation socializes the conflict. In this way, increased participation is presumed to attract more attention to an issue, making it more salient. Thus, when Kollman (1998) describes how outside lobbying is used to expand conflict by influencing salience, he offers as examples cases where group leaders reduce the costs for individuals to engage in collective action. Similarly, others have described how increased participation in an issue debate – especially from a broad array of interests – serves to attract

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[6] Empirical studies that attempt to examine how the advocacy efforts of groups or sets of groups are affected by the "strength" of their opponents also rely (at least implicitly) on these ideas about participation and conflict. Organizational opposition is typically measured by the number of opposing groups (Austen-Smith and Wright 1994), dollars of contributions made by opposing groups (Hall and Wayman 1990), or some combination of groups and contributions (Wright 1990).

further attention from government actors and the media, thereby increasing the salience of the relevant issue (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Smith 2000).[7]

It would seem, then, that if we want to understand how the advocacy process and advocates' behavior are affected by the expansion of conflict, we could compare advocates behavior on issues with different levels of participation, or compare behavior on issues characterized by different degrees of salience. As just described, the literature strongly supports both concepts as indicators of levels of conflict. But there are reasons as well to raise questions about whether participation and salience are indeed valid indicators of the scope of conflict. Most simply, is it the case that issues attracting a large number of interested participants are characterized by high levels of conflict? Similarly, are issues attracting few participants typically devoid of much conflict? On the first point it is quite possible that a large number of participants might be engaged by an issue because of its broad scope but those participants might not disagree very much about the outcome or the content of the policy. One case in point from our project involves the securing of funding for screening the hearing of newborns. This issue attracted 29 major participants, a large number relative to other issues in our study. Yet there was no active opposition to this issue. To be sure, there were obstacles to the issue moving forward, including cost and the challenges of securing sufficient congressional support to move the issue forward. However, it seems unlikely that this issue is what most scholars have in mind when they think about an issue with a broad scope of conflict. The issue was not partisan, nor was it one in which the public was divided (indeed, most of the public had no idea anyone in or out of government was thinking about this issue). Moreover, the relatively large number of participants came to the issue not through a process whereby a small set of actors who were trying to build momentum for the issue sought to define it in a way that attracted a diverse set of other participants. Rather, when a member of Congress decided (with the help of a few of his constituents) to look into funding for these screenings, he brought together most of the group of 29 major participants in order to talk about how to craft the policy that would provide for such screenings. These participants included various medical and other professional associations who take an interest in hearing issues, as well as groups of advocates for children's issues and policies related to deafness and hearing.

 Two other issues from our study illustrate similar limitations in using participation as a proxy for the scope of a conflict. Both issues involve a fairly small number of major participants but relatively high levels of conflict. The first of these relates to whether a repository for spent nuclear fuel would be created at Yucca Mountain and the second pertains to the establishment of federal ergonomics standards. There were only eight major participants working on the nuclear repository issue, and 13 who were dealing with the ergonomics standards. But irrespective of the small number of participants, these issues could be characterized by fairly high levels of conflict. The situation involving Yucca mountain was an issue during both the 2000 and 2004 presidential campaigns; the media devoted considerable attention to the issue; the issue attracted public attention (especially in Nevada); and the fate of nuclear waste at Yucca mountain touched off a regional battle in the Senate, with then minority leader Harry Reid (D-NV) asserting that the repository would never become a reality. Similarly, the issue of ergonomic standards offered a classic battle between

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[7]Participation and salience are not necessarily the only ways of tapping the scope of a conflict. In a recent paper, Miller (2007) examines conflict expansion in terms of the number of venues where policy debate is occurring on a single issue.

business and labor, as well as Republicans and Democrats. Although dealing with repetitive motion injuries may not be as controversial or engaging to most members of the public as is the issue of nuclear waste, the development of ergonomic standards became an issue in the 2000 presidential campaign, thereby attracting some public attention. In short, these low participation issues are hardly low conflict. Thus, the case for using participation as a valid indicator of the scope of a conflict is not terribly strong.

Salience may be more reflective of the scope of a conflict than is participation. To some extent, this is evident in the research mentioned above in which salience is the link between increased participation and conflict. More generally, regardless of how an issue becomes salient (e.g., through events and crises, the priorities of partisans within government), the co-occurrence of high levels of attention and high levels of conflict is probably more common than is the co-occurrence of participation and conflict. Conflict, of some type, is a key variable for determining whether an issue is covered by the media (Gans 1979). In addition, although there are important exceptions, government actors typically accord attention to issues that are characterized by some level of disagreement between the parties, between branches of government, or between other groups of actors with different preferences and priorities. Given the difficulty of securing a spot on the public agenda, it is hard to imagine any issue that could attract a considerable amount of attention and not engender some disagreement about its place on the agenda (relative to other "worthy" problems) or its resolution. Importantly, this tendency to observe issues that can be characterized as both high salience and high conflict may reflect the fact that greater conflict grew out of the increased attention to the issue, or that greater attention was spurred by conflict about the issue and its outcome. We cannot determine what comes first, only that the two concepts are closely inter-related.[8]

The discussion here about the linkage between salience and conflict is not intended to suggest that low salience issues are conflict free. Instead, when issues attract less attention, conflict may be more contained or privatized. For some of our study issues, low levels of conflict simply reflect the fact that opposition to those challenging the status quo has not yet been mobilized. More generally, the conflict-salience association described here and in the literature refers to a very tangible conflict of opposing interests mobilized to participate actively in an issue debate. But conflict need not be as explicit as this. When Salisbury and his collaborators (1987) investigated the conflict structures in four policy domains -- health, energy, labor, and agriculture – they considered the number of active participants and the level of attention to issues in the policy domains. However, they also sought to characterize domain participants' perceptions of the stability of issues and coalitions, and the intensity of partisanship and conflict on domain issues. Although this multi-dimensional indicator of conflict may have greater validity than salience alone, it is, by its nature, difficult to use when one's objective is simply to classify issues for analysis.

As we describe in more detail below, we can categorize the issues in our study according to the level of attention they were accorded by the media and by government. When we do so, the most salient involve relatively high levels of conflict, and the least salient involve far less. For instance, both the ergonomics and nuclear waste issues mentioned above are classified as high salience according to our measure, and the issue involving hearing screenings for infants was less salient.

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[8] This point is not clear in the literature. In fact, in much of the work cited here, conflict expands in response to broader participation and attention. We see no evidence of this particular causal chain of events, nor will our data allow us to test this claim.

Observing Status Quo Challengers and Defenders on High Conflict and Low Conflict Issues

We divided our study issues into three categories, low, medium, and high salience according to whether they were in the lowest, middle, or upper third of the distribution for our measure of salience. That measure is a continuous index based on congressional and media coverage of the issue, with higher values reflecting more public visibility. Consistent with the literature, low levels of salience are understood to reflect situations of minimal, privatized conflict whereas high levels of salience are understood to reflect situations of high conflict.

In order to investigate whether and how status quo challengers and those who support the status quo differ in terms of their perception of obstacles, their use of arguments, and their use of advocacy tactics on both high and low conflict issues, we examine the behavior of those sides that are active on issues that fall into the highest and lowest categories of salience. We ignore, at least for now, sides active on issues characterized by moderate salience. The exclusion of sides active on issues in the middle category is motivated both by an interest in simplifying the data we present below (each table or figure replicates the information shown above for low and for high salience issues), and by less than clear expectations about how challengers and defenders of the status quo will behave on these "middle type" issues. Table 5 lists the issues in our study that are categorized as either low or high salience.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

Before proceeding with our analysis, two points merit mention. First, we recognize that our effort to understand how advocates behave in circumstances of less expansive and more expansive conflict is complicated by the fact that we are categorizing issues as having experienced conflict expansion or not when in fact, conflict expansion is an evolving process. We observe only whether an issue has reached a particular level of salience/conflict or not. A second point, related to the first, is that salience and conflict are, of course, endogenous. We mentioned earlier that we cannot determine when salience drives conflict and when conflict affects salience. More broadly, salience and levels of conflict may be affected by other forces such as the actions of policymakers and partisans in government, external events, and advocates' perceptions of the momentum associated with issues. Because of the endogeneity that exists, and our collapsing of what is a process into a single point in time, we must be careful about the inferences we draw from our analysis. Specifically, if we observe advocates behaving differently on low and high salience issues, we cannot know whether the differences are due to the different contexts or whether the behavior that we see is affecting the salience levels we observe. Moreover, there may be other differences between low and high salience issues that are responsible for any differences or similarities we see. We return to these points as relevant in the discussion that follows.

We begin as we did in the first section of the paper with a consideration of how the sides active on our study issues perceive the obstacles that impede their success. Figures 2a and 2b replicate the information we presented in Figure 1 above for, respectively, sides active on low salience issues, and sides active on high salience issues; they show the proportion of sides that cite active opposition or a lack of interest from government or non-government actors, as well as those who cite obstacles to achieving their goals.

Overall, the figures reveal fewer differences between supporters and opponents of the status quo on low and high salience issues than we might expect from the literature on the expansion of conflict. On the one hand, there is a smaller difference between status quo defenders and challengers in terms of the active opposition they encounter on high salience (conflict) rather than low salience (conflict) issues. But for both challengers and defenders, on both types of issues, the level of active opposition is quite high. In this way, the 15 percentage point difference between defenders (94 percent reporting active opposition) and challengers (81 percent) on high salience issues does not seem any more reflective of a substantively different context for opposition than does the 24 percentage point difference between defenders and challengers that we observe on low salience issues (94 percent of defenders and 70 percent of challengers report active opposition on low salience issues). Similarly, the relative frequency with which sides challenging the status quo as well as those defending it report obstacles to achieving their objectives is quite similar on low and high salience issues. The biggest difference in opposition that we observe is the extent to which both challengers and defenders cite a lack of attention as an obstacle to their success. For sides challenging the status quo, we see a pattern that we would expect as conflict expands: on high salience issues about a quarter of the sides report insufficient attention from advocates in and out of government as an obstacle to success, whereas about a third of challenging sides on low salience issues report the same difficulty. For sides supportive of the status quo, a lack of attention from relevant organizations and policymakers is a more common problem on issues of greater salience. Although the latter result may seem surprising, it likely reflects the fact that for most defenders active on low salience issues, a lack of attention is not an obstacle. Rather, defenders of the status quo aim to keep the conflict "privatized." On issues of greater salience, it may be the case that defenders – while still preferring to keep conflict in check – realize that they need attention from relevant others in order to stem any momentum that challengers are beginning to generate.

Overall, then, there is some indication that high salience issues do make the situation more difficult for defenders. But, perhaps more important, the data for challengers make plain that while high salience issues put them on somewhat more equal footing with defenders, the challenges they encounter certainly do not disappear. Namely, relative to challengers on low salience issues, challenging sides on high salience issues experience more active opposition (70 versus 81 percent reporting active opposition, respectively). In addition, roughly the same proportions of challenging sides cite obstacles – namely cost and logistics – to achieving their objectives regardless of the salience of an issue (52 percent report obstacles on low salience issues and 48 percent cite mention obstacles on high salience issues). Moreover, while fewer cite a lack of attention as a source of difficulty on high salience issues, it is the case as mentioned above that a quarter of the challenging sides active on high salience issues still have difficulty attracting support from organized interests and members of Congress. Because greater salience alters rather than removes the array of obstacles and opposition that challengers face, there is greater parity between sides with different policy goals on high salience issues but not greater ease or less uncertainty for those challenging the status quo.

In Table 6 we present advocates' tactical responses to issues that engender lesser and greater conflict. Like Table 1, Table 6 shows the percentage of sides using various tactics of advocacy, separately for those defending and challenging the status quo both on low salience and high salience issues. As Table 6 illustrates, on low salience issues, sides defending the status quo are almost always engaged in contacting members of Congress, and in presenting research to members

and their staff. As noted above, these activities make it possible for status quo defenders to keep track of what is happening on an issue, and to make sure that they are raising questions and concerns in case there ever appears to be real movement toward change. Taking such action allows them to be involved without fully engaging those who are pushing for change. This is in sharp contrast to the sides challenging the status quo. As Table 6 illustrates, at least half of all sides challenging the status quo report making personal contact with members and congressional staff; working with congressional allies; contacting relevant committee members and leaders; disseminating research; and , drafting legislative language. The relatively greater effort of the challenging sides is consistent with the logic of conflict expansion, wherein efforts are made to attract broader attention to their concerns in the hope of building some momentum for change. In fact, as evidence of challengers' awareness of the obstacles they face on these low conflict issues, more than half of the challenging sides engage their membership to take action on these issues. Given that most organizational advocates are aware that the effectiveness of these mobilization efforts may be reduced if they try to activate their supporters on too many issues, this is a fairly high cost means of trying to expand conflict.[9]

(Insert Table 6 about here)

When we turn to issues that attract greater governmental and media attention, the pattern of activity for sides challenging the status quo is quite similar to what we see on low salience issues. Challengers engage in a broad array of different activities as they move beyond drawing attention to trying to push their alternatives to the status quo. But for those advocates who are trying to prevent any change from occurring on issues that attract more attention, there is a substantial increase in their level of activity. In fact, when salience on an issue is high, there are only six activities that status quo defenders are much less likely to engage in relative to those challenging the status quo: working with congressional allies; contacting committee and subcommittee members from the minority party; drafting legislative language; hiring consultants to lobby; issuing press releases and holding press conferences; and, mobilizing their membership. On the one hand, it is reasonable that defenders would not attempt to further expand attention to an issue by engaging the press or their members. But on the other hand, it is interesting that as the terrain shifts to one that produces greater uncertainty for those attempting to prevent change, the defenders of the status quo do not completely mimic the actions of those seeking change. Rather, they rely most on the same set of tactics that defenders use on low salience issues, albeit to a greater degree than was the observed on issues attracting less attention. In short, it appears to be the case that even as salience increases, there is an effort by defenders to restrict the extent of attention an issue receives.

The shifting patterns of behavior on low and high salience issues observed among sides that support the status quo also are apparent when we examine the arguments the sides use to promote and protect their interests. For instance, in Table 7, which presents the relative frequency with which both status quo defenders and challengers use different types of arguments on low and high salience issues, we see that on low salience issues status quo defenders primarily make claims that raise doubts about changes to current policy. Some attention is also given to cost increases that will result from change but the emphasis on low salience issues is to cast any policy change as a risky

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[9] More puzzling is that over two-fifths of the status quo defenders active on low salience issues report mobilizing their membership. Perhaps this is evidence of evolving conflict on some low salience issues. That is, status quo defenders may be activating their membership in response to a perception of expanding conflct.

prospect. On high salience issues, doubt about and the costs associated with change remain important. But it is also the case that defenders offer optimistic assessments of the status quo. Although defenders are never as optimistic as challengers, they are almost twice as likely to make such claims on high salience issues as they are on issues that attract far less attention.

(Insert Table 7 about here)

The differences in status quo supporters' optimism on low and high salience issues is consistent with the changes in context that we would expect as an issue becomes more salient. In the case of sides active on low salience issues, the emphasis is clearly on sowing doubt about policy options being proposed by those seeking change. Presumably, little else is needed so long as there is little sense that a credible alternative to the status quo has emerged. But when salience on an issue is relatively high, challengers are likely to have surpassed the credibility hurdle – there might be one or (less likely) more options that are seen as credible alternatives to current policy. Presumably this is one reason for the greater uncertainty surrounding high salience issues, and the heightened concern of status quo defenders that change of some sort is more likely than it might seem when very little attention was being given to an issue. On high salience issues, then, defenders of the status quo may need to make a stronger case for the positive merits of no change. On issues that attract a fair amount of public attention and about which the outcome is more uncertain, they must justify the benefits of the status quo. Raising doubts about change is still important but it is no longer sufficient.

In contrast to the different behavior we observe for status quo defenders on low and high salience issues, we see some but not much change in the relative frequency with which challengers tend to emphasize different types of arguments. Except for the use of arguments about cost decreases that could result if the status quo was replaced with the challenger's preferred alternative, challengers rely on a fairly similar set of arguments on both low and high salience issues. Overall, they are most often optimistic, yet they also raise doubts about the status quo.

Not surprisingly, then, when we examine the tone of the arguments made by advocates we see that differences between challengers and defenders are most apparent on low salience issues. As Table 8 shows, challengers are much more positive, and they are much more likely than defenders to make use of both positive and negative arguments. On low salience issues defenders are much more likely than challengers to make only negative claims (53 versus 18 percent using only negative arguments, respectively). On high salience issues, that difference diminishes (50 versus 29 percent using only negative arguments, respectively) and, as described above, defenders show a marked increase in positive claims, either on their own or in conjunction with negative arguments. Challengers, conversely, are less likely to employ a mixed strategy.

(Insert Table 8 about here)

The differences in behavior that we see for both status quo challengers and those supporting the status quo on low and high salience issues are consistent with the logic of conflict expansion; they also confirm that logic's view of how the context in which issues are debated and discussed shape advocates' behavior. Of course, our analyses examine the activities and behavior of different sets of advocates with different goals who are engaged in issue debates that attract different levels of attention. Ideally, we would have information about the behavior of status quo challengers and defenders over time, as an issue of interest evolved from one attracting little public attention to one characterized by expanded conflict involving considerable attention from the media and

government. Absent these dynamic data, it is possible that advocates' responses to the different levels of uncertainty that characterize low and high salience issues do not fully explain the different patterns of argumentation and tactics that we observe for challengers and defenders. There may be characteristics of high and low salience issues or of the advocates with different goals who are engaged by them that affect the different patterns of activity on each type of issue. In fact, one key assumption about conflict expansion is that high conflict issues are expected to attract a larger and more diverse set of actors than are low conflict issues. On "bigger" issues, a greater heterogeneity is expected because, according to the logic of conflict expansion, additional participants are attracted as the terms of debate are expanded, thereby broadening the array of interests who come to see the issue as relevant to their concerns. Moreover, recall that Salisbury and his colleagues (1987) argued that the types of interests participating in a policy area affected the nature of the conflict in that area, and Baumgartner and Leech (2001) showed that citizen groups were often absent from those issues that attracted few participants and were seen as less conflictual. It is possible, then, that the differences in behavior that we observe for status quo defenders and those seeking change on low and high salience issues reflect not simply a response to the changes in uncertainty that each type of advocate experiences on these different issues but differences in the array of advocates who tend to be engaged by different types of issues. With this in mind, Table 9 presents for each type of issue the types of interests that comprise the overall distribution of sides as well as the separate distributions of sides supporting and opposing the status quo. To keep things relatively simple, we distinguish between citizen or issue-based interests, business or corporate interests, and government actors. The latter category is a very diverse lot, including both Democrats and Republicans in Congress, agency officials, and members of the Executive Office of the President.

(Insert Table 9 about here)

Overall, Table 9 shows that the sides active on both low and high salience issues are relatively diverse, with business interests having a bit of an edge over other interests on both types of issues. Certainly there may be greater or lesser diversity within particular types of sides (e.g., groups with liberal agendas and those with conservative agendas are counted in the "citizen" category) active on high and low salience issues but there is little evidence of greater diversity of types of interests on high salience issues. In fact, business interests – acting with one another or with a set of government actors – comprise about two-fifths of all the sides on both low and high salience issues, and their edge over citizen/issue-based interests is somewhat larger on high salience issues (citizen interests working alone or with government actors comprise 30.5 and 23.8 percent of sides active on low and high participation issues, respectively). Sides made up of a mix of different interests – shown in the bottom two rows of Table 9 – represent about one quarter of all the sides active on both high and low salience issues. The fairly sizable business presence on high salience issues and the respectable presence of citizen interests on low salience issues are surprising. As others have noted, privatized conflict is not the primary staging area for citizen groups (Baumgartner and Leech 2001). Moreover, business interests are expected to favor narrow issues that attract little attention from others (Browne 1990). Our data show that business interests are quite well-represented on both types of issues.

Differences in interest representation are much more apparent when we consider the types of interests that comprise both the sides that defend and those that oppose the status quo on low and high salience issues. On low salience issues, business interests are the dominant players among defenders of the status quo, with half of all active sides comprised of business interests. In contrast, sides reflecting citizen interests constitute 29 percent of all sides on low salience issues, and diverse sides – those including not only citizens' interests but business and perhaps government as

well – represent a mere eight percent of sides supporting current policy. The distribution of change-seeking advocates on low conflict issues is far more diverse, with no one type of interest likely to be advocating for change. Recall from Figure 2a and Tables 6 through 8 that on low salience issues, the defenders of change encountered few obstacles to their goals, were only minimally active, and were adept at casting doubt about proposed policy changes and raising concerns about cost while maintaining a fairly negative tone.

On the high salience issues, the distributions of interests comprising both the sides challenging and those supporting the status quo look fairly similar to the distribution of sides challenging the status quo on low salience issues, albeit with a greater proportion of sides primarily reflecting the concerns of business on high salience issues. On high salience issues, business-focused sides make up just under two-fifths of the sides both challenging and supporting the status quo. Heterogeneous sides and those primarily representing citizen interests each make up about a quarter of the challengers to and defenders of current policy.   These data offer an important refinement to current expectations about the implications of conflict expansion. Specifically, while the overall distributions of participating sides on low and high salience issues are fairly diverse and quite similar, there are marked differences in the interests that are reflected by the opponents of change and those challenging the status quo on low salience but not high salience issues. As Table 9 illustrates, on low salience issues, those sides who seek change are quite likely to face opposition from business interests acting alone, or business interests working with government actors. Business interests are dominant among those supporting current policy on issues that command minimal attention. In contrast, on high salience issues, the interests reflected by the sides are fairly diverse so that the higher conflict that is associated with these issues is characterized by various interests in opposition rather than citizen groups contesting the claims of business interests. Thus, it would seem that the relatively greater levels of activity we observed among both defenders and challengers on high salience issues (Table 6), and the relatively greater use of positive claims in conjunction with negative arguments (Table 8) by those advocates trying to prevent change on issues that attract relatively more attention, are not the result of the presence of an overwhelming proportion of citizen interests.

Of course, regardless of the source of the differences in behavior that we see for both status quo challengers and those supporting the status quo on low and high salience issues, a key concern is whether what we observed in Table 4 – a healthy status quo advantage when it came to policy outcomes -- is evident when we examine separately sides' rates of success on low and high salience issues. Table 10 presents the relevant data. As Table 10 illustrates, defenders are less likely to be successful on high salience as opposed to low salience issues (79.2 percent versus 65.6 percent, respectively). Challengers' rates of success are nearly identical, regardless of the level of salience. But, where a difference is especially apparent is in the degree of success status quo supporters and challengers realize on low and high salience issues. On those issues where conflict is relatively private, three-quarters of the sides defending the status quo realize fully their objectives. On high salience issues, the rate of total success drops to 62 percent. The patterns are quite different for challengers to the status quo. Only slightly more than one in ten of the sides challenging the status quo achieve fully their goals on low salience issues. On high salience issues, the rate of success nearly doubles to 24 percent. Thus, while the status quo advantage remains somewhat intact regardless of the level of attention an issue commands, those seeking change do somewhat better when issues they care about reach center stage.[10]

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[10] As was the case in Table 4, when we expand the time horizon to four years, the status quo advantage remains in slightly weakened form. On low participation issues, 75 percent of defenders enjoy at least some

(Insert Table 10 about here)

The status quo, while clearly very resilient even where conflict is high, does yield somewhat when challengers have some momentum. To be sure, for change to happen, advocates outside of government must convince those inside government to focus on the particular issue and undertake enough effort to make a positive case for the challenging policy alternative. Moreover, a case needs to be made for why a particular issue should be one of the few that move and become part of the public dialogue. Change does not get easy when issues command more attention, but high conflict – as well as the high salience, momentum, and other forces that co-occur with it – increase the likelihood that change will happen.

Implications and Conclusions

The logic of conflict expansion suggests that interests who are on the losing side of a policy debate benefit when they successfully attract additional participants, thus expanding conflict and creating more uncertainty about the stakes in and outcome of the debate. Thus, there is reason to expect that advocates would behave differently once conflict had expanded and the context was more favorable to challenging those who are advantaged in the debate, namely those who support current policy. In order to assess whether the advocacy process is different when conflict has expanded, we have examined the patterns of behavior among status quo defenders and challengers when conflict has expanded, and compared these patterns to both groups' behavior on issues with less expansive conflict. Overall, our analysis provides evidence to support the idea that the expansion of conflict does shape the behavior of defenders (and to a lesser extent challengers) of the status quo. When an issue is more visible and characterized by relatively high conflict, status quo supporters expend greater effort to justify and protect current policy from change. These efforts may indeed be important as our data reveal that challenges to the status quo are somewhat more successful when conflict is high relative to when conflict is low.

Importantly, on low conflict issues, business interests are much more likely to be among the status quo defenders than they are to be challenging the status quo. In contrast, the interests involved in challenging the status quo are quite diverse. Thus, on these low conflict issues, it appears that the opponents of change are successful despite the diversity of voices who challenge their claims. Indeed, there is evidence that defenders also are more successful at defining the terms of the policy debate. Specifically, when we examine the extent to which opposing sides on these issues engage one another's arguments, we find that the rate of engagement is relatively higher on low salience issues.[11] While we cannot be sure that the defenders are defining how an issue is discussed, their relative success in preventing change would suggest that the debate is being contested on their terms. On high conflict issues – where there is a somewhat greater

success after four years as do 32 percent of sides challenging the status quo. On high participation issues, 62 percent of defenders enjoy some success whereas 42 percent of challengers do so. The same patterns, as noted above, exist regarding complete and partial success.

[11] Of the six most commonly used types of arguments, the rate of engagement on low salience issues ranges from 29 to 75 percent. On high salience issues, opponents' rates of engagement range between 20 and 54 percent. The rate of engagement on low salience issues is higher than the rate on high salience issues for four of the six argument types.

diversity of interests among both defenders and challengers and a lower level of engagement by opposing sides – it is possible that the greater vulnerability of the status quo may result from the inability of any one interest to set the terms of debate and assert greater control over the eventual outcome. That being said, even on high conflict issues, defenders of the status quo enjoy considerable success. Thus, despite the multiplicity of voices and the efforts of advocates to use arguments that are best suited to their objectives regardless of the claims of their opponents, the terms of debate associated with the status quo are likely to prevail.

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Table 1. Tactics of Advocacy

Tactic	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total
Personal contact of rank & file MC/staff*	73.3	85.3	80.6
Work with legislative allies***	56.7	76.8	69.0
Disseminate in-house research to policymakers	65.0	59.0	61.3
Personal contact of majority committee/subcommittee member/staff	56.7	63.2	60.7
Personal contact of majority committee or subcommittee leadership/staff	48.3	57.9	54.2
Personal contact of minority committee/subcommittee member/staff**	43.3	60.0	53.6
Send letter/fax to MC/staff	51.7	53.7	52.9
Mobilize mass membership	40.0	52.6	47.7
Personal contact of minority committee or subcommittee leadership/staff	45.0	46.3	45.8
Disseminate external research to policymakers	53.3	41.1	45.8
Personal contact of agency official	45.0	40.0	41.9
Outreach/coalition building	36.7	41.1	39.4
Draft legislative language***	23.3	48.4	38.7
Testify at congressional hearing	40.0	31.6	34.8
Hire consultants to help with lobbying	28.3	36.8	33.6
Press conferences/press releases	35.0	34.7	34.8
Number of sides	60	95	155

Notes: Entries show the percentage of sides using each type of tactic. Tactics were coded solely for the organizational advocates who were interviewed (e.g., government officials were not included in our enumeration of tactics).

*** Difference between Defenders and Challengers is statistically significant at $p < .01$.
 ** Difference between Defenders and Challengers is statistically significant at $p < .05$.
  * Difference between Defenders and Challengers is statistically significant at $p < .10$.

Table 2. Categories of Arguments Used, by Intent

Argument Category/Tone	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total
Raising doubts/uncertainty	67.2	63.9	65.1
Optimism about alternatives***	42.2	63.0	55.2
Costs will increase	54.7	48.2	50.6
Costs will decrease***	14.1	43.5	32.6
Preferred policy is prudent*	6.3	15.7	12.2
Number of sides:	64	108	172

Note: Entries show the percentage of sides making use of each type of argument.

*** Difference between Defenders and Challengers is statistically significant at *p* < .01.
  . * Difference between Defenders and Challengers is statistically significant at *p* < .10.

Table 3. Positive and Negative Arguments, by Intent

Argument Tone	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total
Positive***	45.3	73.2	62.8
Negative	79.7	85.2	83.1
Strategy			
Positive only	10.9	12.0	11.6
Mix of positive and negative***	34.4	61.1	51.2
Negative only***	45.3	24.1	32.0
Neither*	9.4	2.8	5.2
Number of sides:	64	108	172

Notes: Entries show the percentage of sides making use of each type of argument or strategy. The strategy "neither" means that the side used arguments that could not be classified as positive or negative in tone. Positive arguments are defined as: policy promotes a shared goal, policy is equitable, policy reduces costs to government or to private actors, and policy has some secondary beneficial consequences. Negative arguments are defined as: policy inhibits shared goals, policy is not equitable, policy imposes costs on government or private actors, policy has some secondary negative consequences, and policy does not work. The unclassified arguments were things such as "needs more study."

*** Difference between Defenders and Challengers is statistically significant at $p < .01$.
  * Difference between Defenders and Challengers is statistically significant at $p < .10$.

Table 4. Policy Outcomes After Two Years by Intent

Policy Success?	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total
Yes, achieved policy goals	70.4	18.8	38.3
Yes, partially achieved policy goals	6.2	10.5	8.9
No, did not achieve policy goals	23.5	70.7	52.8
Number of sides:	81	133	214

Table 5. Issue Salience and Participation

Issue Number	Issue	Major Participants
Low Salience:		
3	Infant Hearing Screening	29
7	Medicare Reimbursement for Services of Clinical Social Workers	5
12	Chiropractic Coverage under Medicare	9
15	Disinfectant Byproducts in Drinking Water	16
16	Funding for CH-47 Helicopters for the Army	11
28	Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision	21
41	Defense Line Item	7
42	Predator Control on Private Lands	40
45	Credit Union Membership	6
48	Commuter Rail Subsidies	13
49	Criminal Justice Reform	7
81	Physician Anti-trust Waivers	21
85	Computer Depreciation	10
86	Right to Carry	19
91	Mandatory Retirement at Age 60 for Airline Pilots	18
92	C-130 Procurement	15
93	Regulation of On-Board Diagnostic Systems Services	21
94	Parental Consent for Non-Emergency Health Services in Schools	40
96	Rules Governing Newspaper Cross-ownership	17
100	NAFTA Foreign Investment Reform	13
104	Military Property Movement	15
107	Maritime Security Act	12
108	Food Allergen Labeling	11
109	Bear Protection	18
115	Regulation of Over-the- Counter Derivatives	28
117	Effluent Limitation	7
118	Optometric Funding	2
122	EA-6B Prowler	11
129	Recreational Marine Employment Act	10
130	Housing Aid Eligibility for Federal Public Safety Officers	3
131	FERC Regulation of Affiliate Relationships	15
133	Cystic Fibrosis Research	4
135	Title IX	24
High Salience:		
1	Managed Care Reform	73
10	Providing Health Insurance for the Uninsured	21
11	Funding of Graduate Medical Education	21
19	Broadband Deployment	40
20	Compulsory Licensing of Drugs to Treat AIDS/Tax Credit for AIDS	

	Vaccine Research and Development	42
27	Estate Tax	24
29	Conservation and Reinvestment Act	24
40	China Trade (Permanent Normalized Trade Relations)	31
43	Excise Tax on Telecommunications	16
46	Bankruptcy Reform	21
51	Nuclear Waste Disposal Appropriations	8
60	Aviation Trust Fund	10
61	Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I	13
62	Ergonomics Standards	13
63	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	19
64	Legal Services Corporation	11
66	Creating a Repository for Spent Nuclear Fuel	8
67	Rise in Gasoline Prices	7
68	Roads in National Forests	19
83	Class Action Reform	30
87	Late-term Abortions	19
90	Export Controls	20
97	Steel Safeguard	14
101	Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage	65
102	Terrorism Re-insurance	15
106	Open Access to Broadband, Part II	16
110	TANF Employment Training Services	30
119	Student Visas/Lab Security	40
121	Human Cloning	36
123	Farm Bill	66
125	Smart Growth & Transportation	33
126	CAFE Standards, 2	39
132	Math/Science Funding	49

Table 6. Tactics of Advocacy by Issue Salience

Tactic	Low Salience			High Salience		
	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total
Personal contact of rank & file MC/staff	56.3	70.0	65.2	83.3	85.7	84.8
Work with legislative allies	37.5	73.3	60.9	62.5	85.7	76.3
In-house research to policymakers	56.3	53.3	54.4	66.7	71.4	69.5
Personal contact of majority comm/subcomm member/staff	43.8	66.7	58.7	58.3	57.1	57.6
Personal contact of majority comm or subcomm leader/staff	25.0	60.0	47.8	50.0	51.4	50.9
Personal contact of minority comm/subcomm member/staff	31.3	53.3	50.9	41.7	65.7	55.9
Send letter/fax to MC/staff	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	57.1	54.2
Mobilize mass membership	43.8	53.3	50.0	33.3	65.7	52.5
Personal contact of minority comm. or subcomm leader/staff	25.0	43.3	37.0	41.7	45.7	44.1
External research to policymakers	50.0	40.0	43.5	54.2	40.0	45.8
Personal contact of agency official	56.3	46.7	50.0	37.5	37.1	37.3
Outreach/coalition building	37.5	40.0	39.1	37.5	34.3	35.6
Draft legislative language	6.3	63.3	43.5	16.7	28.6	23.7
Testify at congressional hearing	31.3	23.3	26.1	33.3	22.9	27.1
Hire consultants to help with Lobbying	43.8	36.7	39.1	16.7	34.3	27.1
Press conferences/press releases	6.3	16.7	13.0	12.5	25.7	20.3
Number of sides	16	30	46	24	35	59

Notes: Entries show the percentage of sides using each type of tactic. Tactics were coded solely for the organizational advocates who were interviewed (e.g., government officials were not included in our enumeration of tactics).

Table 7. Categories of Arguments Used, by Intent and Issue Salience

	Low Salience			High Salience		
Argument Category/Tone	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total
Doubts/uncertainty	68.4	66.7	67.3	58.3	54.8	56.1
Optimism about policy	26.3	66.7	51.9	45.8	64.3	57.6
Costs will increase	47.4	48.5	48.1	66.7	40.5	50.0
Costs will decrease	5.3	54.6	36.5	16.7	28.6	24.2
Policy is prudent	5.3	12.1	9.6	4.2	14.3	10.6
Number of sides:	19	33	52	24	42	66

Table 8. Positive and Negative Arguments, by Intent and Issue Salience

	Low Salience			High Salience		
Argument Tone	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total
Positive	31.6	81.8	63.5	45.8	66.7	59.1
Negative	79.0	84.8	82.7	83.3	81.0	81.8
Strategy						
Positive only	5.3	15.2	11.5	12.5	14.3	13.6
Mix of positive and negative	26.3	66.7	51.9	33.3	52.4	45.4
Negative only	52.6	18.2	30.8	50.0	28.6	36.4
Neither	15.8	0.0	5.8	4.2	4.8	4.6
Number of sides:	19	33	52	24	42	66

Notes: Entries show the percentage of sides making use of each type of argument or strategy. The strategy "neither" means that the side used arguments that could not be classified as positive or negative in tone. Positive arguments are defined as: policy promotes a shared goal, policy is equitable, policy reduces costs to government or to private actors, and policy has some secondary beneficial consequences. Negative arguments are defined as: policy inhibits shared goals, policy is not equitable, policy imposes costs on government or private actors, policy has some secondary negative consequences, and policy does not work. The unclassified arguments were things such as "needs more study."

Table 9. Interest Composition of Active Sides, by Intent and Level of Salience

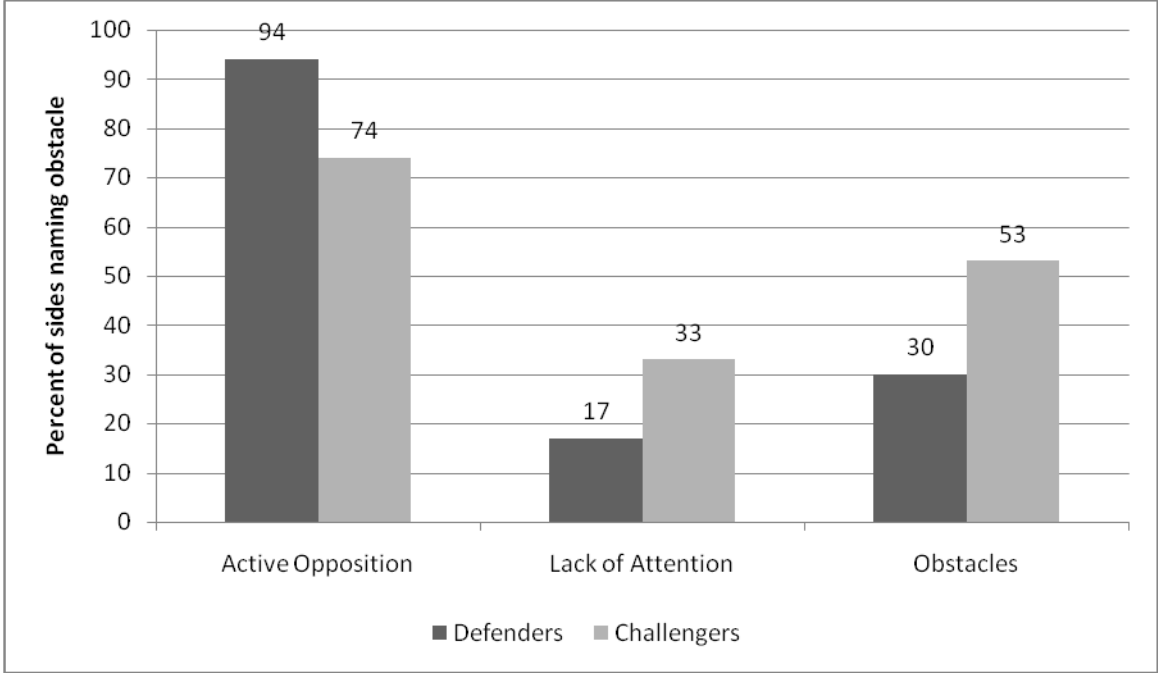| Composition of Side	Low Salience			High Salience		
	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total
Homogeneous: citizen/issue-based interest	25.0	20.0	22.0	20.7	14.5	16.7
Homogeneous: business/corporate interest	45.8	14.3	27.1	20.7	27.3	25.0
Homogeneous: all government actors	12.5	2.9	6.8	6.9	16.4	13.1
Mostly government plus citizen interests	4.2	11.4	8.5	6.9	7.3	7.1
Mostly government actors plus business	4.2	20.0	13.6	17.2	10.9	13.1
Mostly government actors plus mix of citizens & business	0.0	17.1	10.2	17.2	9.0	11.9
Heterogeneous: citizen and business interests	8.3	14.3	11.9	10.3	14.5	13.1
Number of Sides	24	35	59	29	55	84

Notes: Homogeneous citizen or business sides are those in which the absolute value of the difference between the proportion of citizen interests and the proportion of business interests is greater than 30, and government actors are absent or few in number. Heterogeneous sides are those in which the absolute value of the difference between the proportion of citizen interests and the proportion of business interests is less than 30, and government actors are absent or few in number. The sides characterized as "mostly government actors" have more government actors than they do any other type of interest.

Table 10. Policy Outcomes After Two Years by Intent and Level of Salience

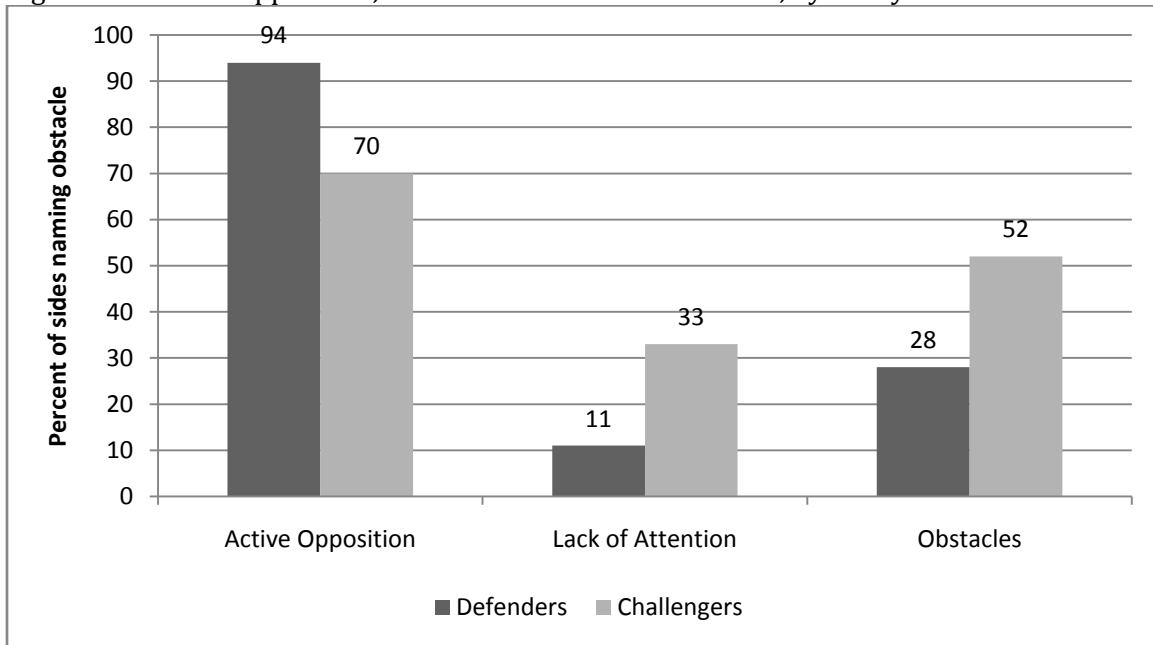| Policy Success?	Low Salience			High Salience		
	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total	Status Quo Defenders	Status Quo Challengers	Total
Yes, achieved policy goals	75.0	14.3	39.0	62.1	23.6	36.9
Yes, partially achieved policy goals	4.2	11.4	8.5	3.5	3.6	3.6
No, did not achieve policy goals	20.8	74.3	52.5	34.5	72.7	59.5
Number of sides:	24	35	59	29	55	84

Figure 1. Active Opposition, Lack of Attention, and Other Obstacles, by Policy Intent
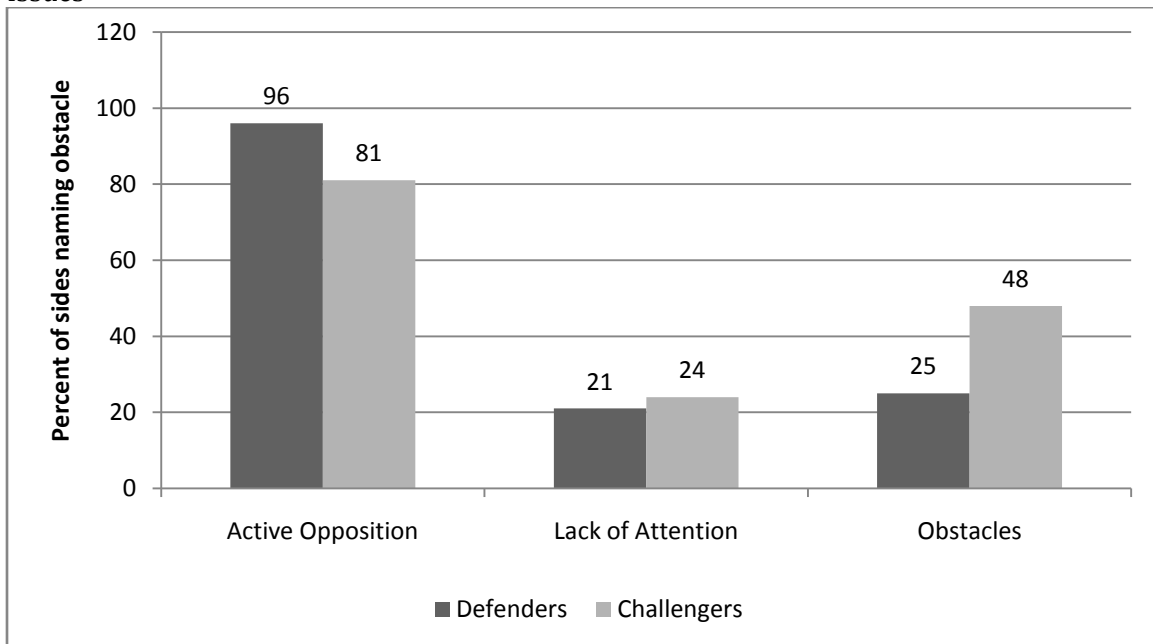

N = 171 sides.

Figure 2.a. Active Opposition, Lack of Attention and Obstacles, by Policy Intent: Low Salience Issues

N = 51 sides.

Figure 2.b. Active Opposition, Lack of Attention, and Obstacles, by Policy Intent: High Salience Issues

N = 66 sides.