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All the President's Organized Interests

by

David Ryan Miller

A dissertation presented to
The Graduate School
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2020
St. Louis, Missouri

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David Ryan Miller

Washington University in St. Louis

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

All the President's Organized Interests

by

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Andrew Reeves, Chair

My dissertation examines presidents' interactions with organized interests. Despite ample observable evidence that presidents and organized interests frequently interact, many scholarly studies of the presidency argue that these interactions are non-existent, infrequent, or inconsequential. I argue that presidents engage with organized interests as part of their coalition-building efforts, as they seek to secure organized interests' electoral and policy resources to advance their own goals. I further argue that both presidents and organized interests benefit from this engagement. I assess my arguments by evaluating three interrelated questions: with which organized interests do presidents engage?; how do presidents encourage the interests with which they engage to participate in their coalitions?; and how does presidents' engagement with organized interests help presidents achieve their goals?

First, I consider with which organized interests presidents engage. I argue that presidents engage with interests who are most able and willing to contribute to their supportive coalitions: interests with large resource endowments and who are copartisans of the incumbent. To test these expectations, I utilize over 7 million White House visitor logs records from the Clinton, Obama, and Trump presidencies to identify instances in which presidents provided access to organized interests. I find that presidents are more likely to provide access to interests with higher levels of resources and to interests in industries aligned with the their party.

Second, I explore how presidents encourage organized interests to participate in their coalitions. Though interests sometimes cooperate with presidents because of shared goals, presidents can further stimulate interests' effort by drawing on their unilateral powers to provide selective incentives. I argue that presidents are more likely to allocate incentives to organized interests with whom they engage. Focusing on presidents' appointments to advisory committees, I find that presidents are more likely to provide appointments to organized interests to whom they previously provided White House access.

Third, I examine whether presidents' engagement with organized interests advances their goals. In many cases, such as lobbying members of Congress, organized interests' activity with regard to presidents' initiatives is hard to observe. In light of this challenge, I focus on a publicly observable activity in which presidents encourage organized interests to engage—issuing public endorsements presidents' policies. I posit that these endorsements improve support for presidents' policies by serving as source cues and indicators of policies' legitimacy to the general public. Drawing on an original survey experiment, I find that organized interests' endorsements of a trade agreement negotiated by President Trump increases public support for the policy, but that the effects of these endorsements are concentrated among the president's non-copartisans.

This dissertation offers theoretical contributions to several different areas of study in American politics and highlights substantive implications of presidents' interactions with organized interests. I not only help start to bridge the scholarly gap between the presidency and organized interests, but also demonstrate how presidents use their powers to provide representation to select subgroups of the political system, rather than the country as a whole, in a context outside of electoral politics. In addition, whereas most studies of organized interests' influence on the policy process focus on Congress, I highlight the pathways by which organized interests enjoy influence through the executive branch and consider how the president perpetuates inequality of political voice among the universe of interests in society.

Chapter 1

Introduction

During his campaign for president in 2016, one of Donald Trump’s constant refrains was that he would “drain the swamp.” When Trump identified which species of Washington, DC, swamp creatures he would target for extinction, “special interests,” or, more broadly defined, “organized interests,” often appeared on his list.¹ Announcing his candidacy, Trump lamented that the elected officials in Washington “will never make America great again. They don’t even have a chance. They’re controlled fully... by the lobbyists, by the donors, and by the special interests... it’s destroying our country. We have to stop, and it has to stop now.”² After taking office, President Trump’s attacks on organized interests continued. For example, at the 2017 Conservative Political Action Conference, Trump repeated his pledge that his administration “will not answer to donors or lobbyists or special interests, but we will serve

¹I use the phrase “organized interests,” rather than the more common “interest groups,” to be inclusive in my terminology. Whereas the usage of “interest groups” typically implies that all entities are membership-based groups, the more broad “organized interests” accounts for other entities that lack members but pursue collective goals through political action, such as corporations and non-profit institutions (see Schlozman and Tierney 1986, 9-10).

²Donald Trump, “Remarks Announcing Candidacy for President in New York City,” June 16, 2015, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-announcing-candidacy-for-president-new-york-city>.

the citizens of the United States of America, believe me.”³ Again, later in the year at a rally in Phoenix, Arizona, Trump told the crowd, “[I]n Washington, we’re taking power out of the hands of donors and special interests and putting that power back into the hands of the people that voted for us... We don’t need advice from the Washington, DC, swamp. We need right now to drain the swamp.”⁴

While many of Trump’s critics argue that he has not followed through on his promise to “drain the swamp,”⁵ the Trump administration has taken some concrete steps to curtail the influence of organized interests in the federal government. For example, the week after his inauguration, President Trump signed an executive order prohibiting lobbyists who join his administration from working on issues on which they lobbied and barring administration officials from lobbying the agencies they work in after leaving government service.⁶ By the time he kicked off his re-election campaign before supporters in Orlando, Florida, President Trump declared victory over organized interests and other inhabitants of the swamp:

³Donald Trump, “Remarks at the Conservative Political Action Conference in National Harbor, Maryland,” February 24, 2017, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-conservative-political-action-conference-national-harbor-maryland>.

⁴Donald Trump, “Remarks at a ‘Make America Great Again’ Rally in Phoenix, Arizona,” August 22, 2017, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-make-america-great-again-rally-phoenix-arizona>.

⁵Friedersdorf, Conor, “You Can’t Drain the Swamp and Also Defend the President,” *The Atlantic*, October 4, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/10/trump-making-swamp-worse/599344/>; Kravitz, Derek, Shaw, Al, and Arnsdorf, Isaac, “What We Found in Trump’s Drained Swamp: Hundreds of Ex-Lobbyists and D.C. Insiders,” *Pro Publica*, March 7, 2018, <https://www.propublica.org/article/what-we-found-in-trump-administration-drained-swamp-hundreds-of-ex-lobbyists-and-washington-dc-insiders>; Vogel, Kenneth P. and Lipton, Eric, “Recording Shows That the Swamp Has Not Been Drained,” *The New York Times*, January 26, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/26/us/politics/trump-recording-donors.html>.

⁶Donald J. Trump, Executive Order 13770, “Ethics Commitments by Executive Branch Appointees,” January 28, 2017, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-13770-ethics-commitments-executive-branch-appointees>.

We stared down the unholy alliance of lobbyists, and donors, and special interests who made a living bleeding our country dry, that's what we've done. We broke down the doors of Washington back rooms where deals were cut to close our companies, give away your jobs, shut down our factories, and surrender your sovereignty and your very way of life. And we've ended it. We took on a political machine that tried to take away your voice and your vote. They tried to take away your dignity and your destiny. But we will never let them do that, will we? Many times I said we would drain the swamp. That is exactly what we're doing right now. We're draining the swamp.⁷

President Barack Obama shares little common ground with Donald Trump, but one of their few areas of agreement is that organized interests threaten both their own agendas and American democracy writ large. When declaring his candidacy for president, Barack Obama also singled out organized interests as villains he intended to take on:

[A]s people have looked away in disillusionment and frustration, we know what's filled the void. The cynics, and the lobbyists, and the special interests who've turned our government into a game only they can afford to play. They write the checks and you get stuck with the bills, they get the access while you get to write a letter, they think they own this government, but we're here today to take it back. The time for that politics is over. It's time to turn the page.⁸

Addressing his staff on his first full day in office, President Obama reiterated this message, saying, "[W]e are here as public servants, and public service is a privilege. It's not about advantaging yourself. It's not about advancing your friends or your corporate clients. It's not about advancing an ideological agenda or the special interests of any organization. Public service is, simply and absolutely, about advancing the interests of Americans."⁹ Like Trump,

⁷Donald Trump, "Remarks Announcing Candidacy for the Republican Presidential Nomination in 2020," June 18, 2019, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-announcing-candidacy-for-the-republican-presidential-nomination-2020>.

⁸Barack Obama, "Remarks Announcing Candidacy for President in Springfield, Illinois," February 10, 2007, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-announcing-candidacy-for-president-springfield-illinois>.

⁹Barack Obama, "Remarks to White House Senior Staff," January 21, 2009, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-white-house-senior-staff>.

Obama also issued an executive order in the early days of his administration limiting the ability of his appointees to cycle between government service and lobbying.¹⁰

Throughout his presidency, Obama often returned to his refrain of casting organized interests as against the national interest. For instance, in a speech advocating for clean energy, President Obama told workers at a Florida solar plant, “The closer we get to this new energy future, the harder the opposition is going to fight, the more we’re going to hear from special interests and lobbyists in Washington whose interests are contrary to the interests of the American people.”¹¹ Again, soon after signing the Affordable Care Act into law—one of the landmark achievements of his presidency—President Obama said:

[W]hen I took office, one of the questions we needed to answer was whether it was still possible to make Government responsive to the needs of everyday people, middle class Americans, the backbone of this country, or whether the special interests and their lobbyists would continue to hold sway, like they’ve done so many times before. And that’s a test we met one week ago, when health insurance reform became the law of the land in the United States of America.”¹²

Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump are not unique for casting scorn on organized interests. Rather, occupants of the Oval Office have long attacked organized interests as

¹⁰Barack Obama, Executive Order 13490, “Ethics Commitments by Executive Branch Personnel,” January 21, 2009 <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-13490-ethics-commitments-executive-branch-personnel>. Observers deemed the restrictions put in place by President Obama to be stronger than those implemented by President Trump, as Obama’s executive order prohibited former administration officials or new appointees from a wider range of activity for longer periods of time (Arnsdorf, Isaac, “Trump Lobbying Ban Weakens Obama Rules,” *Politico*, January 28, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/01/trump-lobbying-ban-weakens-obama-ethics-rules-234318>).

¹¹Barack Obama, “Remarks at the DeSoto Next Generation Solar Energy Center in Arcadia, Florida,” October 27, 2009, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-desoto-next-generation-solar-energy-center-arcadia-florida>.

¹²Barack Obama, “Remarks on Signing the Health Care and Reconciliation Act of 2010 in Alexandria, Virginia,” March 30, 2010, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-signing-the-health-care-and-reconciliation-act-2010-alexandria-virginia>.

malicious forces in American politics. The day after his “crisis of confidence” speech, Jimmy Carter told attendees of the Annual Convention of the Communications Workers of America:

In the months ahead, I will come to you throughout America with fresh proposals. Some will involve the traditional government, some will not. Above all, I will defend our common national purpose against those narrow special interests who often forget the overriding needs of America. I will persuade, I will speak against, I will fight any selfish interest that undermines our national purpose. . .

footnoteJimmy Carter, “Detroit, Michigan Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at the Annual Convention of the Communications Workers of America,” July 16, 1979, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/detroit-michigan-remarks-and-question-and-answer-session-the-annual-convention-the>.

In a similar vein, when Carter’s successor, Ronald Reagan, called on Americans to pressure the Democratic House to pass the Comprehensive Crime Control Act in 1984, he instructed them to tell their representatives “to stop kowtowing to the special interests and start listening to you, the American people.”¹³ Again, in remarks to the Chamber of Commerce in 2001 promoting his first tax cut proposal, George W. Bush asserted, “My plan does not... give special treatment to special interests. My plan targets only one interest, the public interest. It directs help to individuals and families and small businesses. It is a plan for real people. . .”¹⁴ His father, George H.W. Bush, spoke more broadly about the role of the president vis-à-vis organized interests, arguing that presidents should have a line-item veto because “when Congress bundles up a series of unrelated measures and calls it a single bill, it frustrates the President’s constitutional role in resisting the influence of special interests.”¹⁵

¹³Ronald Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation on Law Enforcement and Crime,” July 7, 1984, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/radio-address-the-nation-law-enforcement-and-crime>.

¹⁴George W. Bush, “Remarks to the United States Chamber of Commerce,” April 16, 2001, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-united-states-chamber-commerce-3>.

¹⁵George H.W. Bush, “Remarks at Dedication Ceremony of the Social Sciences Complex at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey,” May 10,

Observing the antipathy expressed by a succession of presidents for organized interests, scholars of the presidency have largely regarded their institution of study as relatively disconnected from the organized interest universe. For example, Light writes that, among the president and the White House staff, “there is a conscious effort to avoid interaction with most groups” (1999, 94). Many argue that this reticence is, as George H.W. Bush suggested, by constitutional design. For instance, Wechsler (1954) argues that, whereas “Congress... tends to reflect the ‘local spirit,’” the president, with “the unifying power of the highest office, derived from the fixed tenure gained by his election and the sense that the President speaks for and represents the full national constituency... is the prime organ of a compensating ‘national spirit.’” Similarly, Howell and Moe suggest that presidents’ “position of national leadership gives them far more freedom from special interest pressure... than their legislative counterparts” (2016: 102; see also Quirk and Nesmith 2005; Truman 1971; Wilson 1961). Thus, whereas scholars have drawn connections between organized interests and many other political institutions, such as Congress (e.g., Hall and Deardorff 2006; Hansen 1991; Hojnacki and Kimball 1998; Miller n.d.; Wright 1996), the bureaucracy (e.g., McKay and Yackee 2007; Yackee 2012; Yackee and Yackee 2006), the courts (e.g., Box-Steffensmeier, Christenson and Hitt 2013; Caldeira and Wright 1988; 1990; Collins 2007), and state and local governments (e.g., Anzia and Moe 2014; Bergan 2009; Boehmke, Gailmard and Patty 2013; Butler and Miller n.d.; Gray and Lowery 2000), they have largely been content to assume that presidents’ interactions with organized interests are scant and inconsequential.

However, when we look beyond presidents’ public denunciations of and occasional limits on organized interests, we see that presidents’ interactions with organized interests are neither scant nor inconsequential. Many of the more salient examples of these interactions evoked public outcry once they were disclosed. For instance, in early 2013, President Obama

1991, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-dedication-ceremony-the-social-sciences-complex-princeton-university-princeton-new>.

encountered intense backlash when Organizing for Action, a non-profit advocacy organization created from the remnants of his re-election campaign, promised individuals and groups donating more than \$500,000 to the organization access to private meetings with the president and his staff.¹⁶ President Bill Clinton encountered similar public scorn for providing donors with invitations to exclusive “coffee klatches” in the White House Map Room to meet with the president and his senior advisors, overnight stays in the Lincoln Bedroom, and seats on Air Force One.¹⁷ Again, George W. Bush incurred public outcry when his National Energy Policy Development Group held numerous intimate meetings between representatives of energy corporations and senior administration officials, including Vice President Dick Cheney, but afforded environmental groups just a single large meeting at which Cheney was absent.¹⁸ Finally, in the contemporary era, President Trump’s critics have condemned his mingling with businesspersons and activists holding memberships at Mar-a-Lago and his other properties.¹⁹

These sensational anecdotes belie the more routine interactions all presidents have with organized interests throughout their administrations. For example, when President Obama held a day-long White House forum to kick off his healthcare reform campaign, over half

¹⁶Confessore, Nicholas, “Obama’s Backers Seek Big Donors to Press Agenda,” *The New York Times*, February 22, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/23/us/politics/obamas-backers-seek-deep-pockets-to-press-agenda.html?ref=barackobama>

¹⁷Bunting, Glenn F. and Miller, Alan C., “Clinton Coffee Guests Gave DNC \$27 Million,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 28, 1997, http://articles.latimes.com/1997-01-28/news/mn-22891_1_clinton-coffee; Bunting, Glenn F. and Frammolino, Ralph, “Up to 900 Donors Stayed Overnight at the White House,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 1997, http://articles.latimes.com/1997-02-09/news/mn-27120_1_white-house-official.

¹⁸Abramowitz, Michael, and Mufson, Steven, “Papers Detail Industry’s Role in Cheney’s Energy Report,” *Washington Post*, July 18, 2007, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/17/AR2007071701987_pf.html.

¹⁹Lipton, Eric and Karni, Annie, “Checking In at Trump Hotels, for Kinship (and Maybe Some Sway),” *The New York Times*, September 7, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/07/us/politics/trump-hotel.html>; “Presidential Profiteering: Trump’s Conflicts Got Worse in Year Two,” *Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington*, January 17, 2019, <https://www.citizensforethics.org/presidential-profiteering-trumps-conflicts-got-worse/>.

of the nearly 150 invited participants were representatives of organized interests.²⁰ Further, media accounts of the Affordable Care Act’s path through the policymaking process point to the White House’s continued interaction with organized interests as key to the law’s ultimate enactment.²¹ Again, during the first week of his presidency, Donald Trump invited business executives from twelve large American corporations, including Dow Chemical, Ford Motor Company, and Lockheed Martin to a White House meeting to discuss his administration’s economic agenda.²² Beyond these one-off events and policy-specific interactions, presidents have also institutionalized their interactions with organized interests both within and across administrations. For instance, the Obama administration held 134 “Champions of Change” events to “highlight individuals, businesses and organizations whose extraordinary stories and accomplishments positively impact our communities,”²³ and these events often included, and sometimes centered around, organized interest representatives. One such event focusing on champions for working families featured the CEOs of Microsoft and Patagonia, several non-profit executives and small business owners, a labor leader.²⁴ In addition, since the Gerald Ford administration, the White House Office has maintained an Office of Public

²⁰Office of the Press Secretary, “White House Forum on Health Reform Attendees and Breakout Session Participants,” *The White House*, March 5, 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/realitycheck/the-press-office/white-house-forum-health-reform-attendees-and-breakout-session-participants>.

²¹“Obama’s Deal,” *Frontline*, April 13, 2010, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/obamasdeal/>.

²²Johnson, Jenna and Mui, Ylan Q., “Trump to CEOs: I’ll wipe out 75 percent of regulations, fast-track U.S. factories,” *Washington Post*, January 23, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/01/23/trump-to-ceos-ill-wipe-out-75-percent-of-regulations-fast-track-u-s-factories/>.

²³“Celebrating ‘Open Science’ Champions of Change at the White House,” *The White House*, June 21, 2013, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2013/06/21/celebrating-open-science-champions-change-white-house>.

²⁴“Champions of Change: Working Family Champions Of Change,” *The White House*, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/champions/working-family-champions-of-change>.

Liaison (known as the Office of Public Engagement under President Obama), a unit dedicated to cultivating and managing relationships with organized interests (Loomis 2009; Pika 2009; Tenpas 2005). Finally, alongside these public activities and institutions through which the White House interacts with organized interests, presidents and their staffs participate in many more private interactions with organized interests on a daily basis both in-person and through remote methods of communication.

Accounts from former White House staffers and organized interest representatives substantiate not only that presidents and their staffs expend substantial time and resources to interacting with organized interests, but that these interactions are valuable and important to them. Bobbie Greene Kilberg, who served as the Director of the Office of Public Liaison under President George H.W. Bush, recalls that Bush “came in with the very strong feeling that he wanted to listen to what everybody had to say, that if you cared enough to organize yourself as an interest group you probably had something intelligent to say about a topic.”²⁵ Similarly, when asked whether he consulted with organized interests in the policy development process, Stuart Eizenstat, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy in the Carter administration, replied, “You know, one would have to almost look at my schedule to believe the number of meetings I had with outside groups. . . I had regular meetings with the AFL-CIO. . . a coalition of business groups. . . chief executive officers. . . black leaders, Spanish leaders, consumer groups, Jewish groups, you name it.”²⁶ Likewise, David Rubenstein, who also served under President Carter, recounts that the administration “tried to keep up very good relations with all the major interest group players in town. . . We tried to do it by. . . meeting with all of

²⁵“Bobbie Greene Kilberg Oral History,” *The Miller Center*, November 20, 2009, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/bobbie-greene-kilberg-oral-history>.

²⁶“Stuart Eizenstat Oral History,” *The Miller Center*, January 29-30, 1982, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/stuart-eizenstat-oral-history>.

them or as many of them as we could on a regular basis. . . .²⁷ Finally, an aide in the Office of Public Engagement during the Obama administration reports that he “represent[ed] the president and his priorities” to organized interests “all the time, every day.”²⁸

By and large, this dense web of interactions between presidents and organized interests remains unexplored. A few studies acknowledge presidents’ interactions with organized interests but fail to pursue them as an object of study. For example, while Light argues that organized interests play a negligible role in the White House’s policy formulation process, he also notes that this finding may be a consequence of his data source—interviews with former White House officials, who may “consistently underestimate the importance of interest groups to protect the image of presidential immunity. . . . to special interest influence” (1999, 95). As an aide to President John F. Kennedy shares, “If the staff looked hard, they would see a lot more interest-group activity than they could imagine. The interest groups are in the woodwork, under the floors, in the hallways, and in the rose garden” (Light 1999, 95). However, beyond a few sporadic studies with narrow scopes, often focusing on a portion of a single presidency and a subset of the organized interest universe (Brown and Huang 2017; Holyoke 2004; Peterson 1992), presidency scholars have not taken up the archaeological excavation to which this unnamed Kennedy aide alludes. Reflecting on the dearth of attention to this aspect of the presidency, Loomis writes:

Scholars of both the presidency and interest groups have paid some attention to their mutual relations, but in general the relevant studies have been episodic and limited. There is, for example, no book-length study explicitly focused on the linkages between presidents and organized interests. Given the myriad contacts between all modern presidents and a range of organized interests, such a gap is remarkable. . . . (2009, 404-405).

²⁷“Bertram Carp Oral History,” *The Miller Center* March 6, 1982, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/bertram-carp-oral-history-deputy-assistant-domestic>.

²⁸Personal interview with a former White House official, May 3, 2018.

A Theory of Presidential Engagement

This dissertation begins to fill the scholarly gap that Loomis (2009) identifies. To begin, I posit that presidents interact with organized interests as part of their coalition-building efforts.²⁹ Presidents, like members of Congress (Mayhew 1974), judges (Epstein and Knight 2013), and other political elites, are goal-oriented actors, pursuing electoral success for themselves and their copartisans, good public policy, and favorable legacies (Light 1999). While presidents enjoy extensive unilateral powers with which to pursue these goals (Howell 2003), they need supportive coalitions to achieve many of their most important aspirations. For instance, to win elections and enact legislative proposals, presidents need supportive coalitions in the electorate and in Congress, respectively. Further, in light of the myriad responsibilities and demands for action that stretch the limits of their office (Cronin 1980; Lowi 1986; Neustadt 1991), presidents often rely on outside actors, such as congressional leaders and their parties, to provide resources to help subsidize presidents' pursuits (Beckmann 2010; Galvin 2009). Thus, presidents' ultimate success depends on their ability to build and maintain supportive coalitions (Cronin 1980; Edwards 2000; Neustadt 1991; Seligman and Covington 1989).

Organized interests are attractive to presidents as potential coalition members because they possess a diverse set of resources that can aid presidents' goal pursuits. Some of these resources, such as campaign contributions, policy information, and political intelligence, can

²⁹Similar to the notion of the "legislative enterprise" Salisbury and Shepsle (1981), I consider presidents as presiding over an organization of staffers accountable to them who facilitate the performance of their duties. Formally, the executive branch employees who fulfill this function are those employed by the Executive Office of the President (EOP), which includes not only the White House Office—home to familiar staffers such as the Chief of Staff—but also other units such as the Office of Management and Budget. Consistent with the notion of the president as head of an "executive enterprise," I consider interactions between any member of the EOP and representatives of organized interests to constitute "presidential" interaction with organized interests.

directly benefit presidents by subsidizing their own electoral and policy efforts. Others, such as electioneering for presidents' copartisans and lobbying members of Congress and the public, assist presidents indirectly by supplementing their coalition-building efforts among other political actors. Through their interactions with organized interests, presidents seek to recruit them into their supportive coalitions and receive from them resources that will advance presidents' goals. To ensure that their coalition-building entreaties are successful, presidents wield power over a wide assortment of policy tools through which they can provide organized interests selective incentives for their cooperation, such as the appointment of executive and judicial officials and unilateral policymaking authority.

In order to conduct their coalition-building activities with organized interests, presidents need a means by which to engage with interests—that is to say, presidents must be able to purposefully seek out contact with the interests of their choice in ways that allow them to communicate with, coordinate with, and mobilize those interests. Luckily for presidents, because the weight of their obligations makes them less easily accessible to organized interests relative to other institutions, they enjoy broad discretion to choose with which interests they engage. Thus, whereas organized interests' interactions with policymakers in other venues, such as Congress, are characterized by “outside-in” lobbying, whereby interests pursue interactions with policymakers, their interactions with presidents are more commonly characterized by “inside-out” lobbying, wherein presidents reach out to engage with the interests of their choosing (Loomis 2009; Peterson 1992; Shaiko 1998; Tenpas 2005). While presidents can utilize many modes of communication to perform engagement, I focus on their in-person direct contacts with, or the White House access they provide to, organized interests. Not only is this form of engagement deemed most efficient by presidents and organized interest representatives alike, but, because White House access is scarce and costly to provide, it is also a strong indicator of with which interests presidents desire to engage.

With this conceptualization of presidential engagement, I probe three research questions through which I shed light on the character and consequences of this engagement for presidents and organized interests. First, I investigate with which types of organized interests presidents engage. Given the intense demand on presidents' time and resources due to their formal responsibility as head of the executive branch, presidents can only engage with a subset of the tens of thousands of organized interests active in federal policymaking. I argue that presidents maximize the share of organized interest resources they can accrue by focusing their engagement efforts on interests who can make the largest contributions to and are most willing to join their supportive coalitions—interests with large resource endowments and who share their partisan affiliation, respectively. To evaluate this expectation, I draw on over 7 million records from the White House visitor logs of the Clinton, Obama, and Trump administrations to identify instances in which presidents provided access to organized interest representatives. Using this information and data drawn from Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA) and Federal Election Commission (FEC) filings, I find that presidents are more likely to provide access to organized interests with higher levels of campaign contributions and lobbying expenditures, and who are in industries aligned with the incumbent president's party.

Second, I apply empirical data to one of my underlying assumptions—that presidents provide more selective incentives to organized interests with which they engage. Though presidents' request for resources may be self-executing for some organized interests, presidents can use selective incentives to encourage interests who are reticent to comply, or who would otherwise put forth minimal effort, to provide them with the support they need. To evaluate this expectation, I focus on presidents' appointments to federal advisory committees—appointments over which presidents exercise nearly exclusive control and which can provide organized interests with both policy and institutional maintenance benefits. Pairing the White House visitor logs with records on appointments to federal advisory committees, I

find that presidents are more likely to appoint persons affiliated with an organized interest to an advisory committee if they previously engaged with that interest.

Third, I use experimental methods to consider another of my underlying assumptions—that organized interests’ provision of resources to presidents help presidents advance their goals. Most provisions of resources from organized interests to presidents take place behind closed doors, making it difficult to examine whether organized interests with which presidents engage are more likely to provide them resources and whether these resources benefit presidents’ aims. To gain insight into these phenomena, I focus on the effects of a specific type of organized interest resource that is inherently public—organized interests’ public statements of support for presidents’ policies. Using a survey experiment based on Donald Trump’s renegotiation of the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement, I find that organized interests’ public endorsements of presidents’ policies increase public support for those policies. Further, this positive effect is exhibited only by presidents’ non-copartisans, suggesting that organized interests’ public statements help presidents expand, rather than reinforce, their supportive coalitions in the mass public.

A Note on Data Sources

Studying the interactions between presidents and organized interests is difficult for at least two reasons. First, given the lack of attention to this subject by presidency scholars, we lack not only theories with which to explain these interactions and their consequences, but we also lack basic knowledge about the interactions themselves needed for theory-building, such as how the processes by which these interactions manifest, the motivations that presidents and organized interests have for interacting with each other, and the degree to which presidents and organized interests control whether interactions take place. Because these interactions typically take place behind closed doors, little public information about them is available. A few descriptive works provide some background on the nature of these interactions (e.g.,

Kumar and Grossman 1984; Pika 1983), but, given that they were written several decades, the information they provide may not generalize to the more modern presidencies I consider in my analyses given changes in the institutional and political contexts in the intervening period.

In light of the limited extant background information on and theory concerning presidents' interactions with organized interests, I reached out to the subjects of study themselves—former White House officials and organized interest representatives—to get firsthand accounts of their impressions of and experiences with presidents' interactions with organized interests. I performed this outreach in two ways. First, I conducted an original survey with over 600 registered lobbyists. This survey included questions about lobbyists' experiences interacting with the Obama White House on behalf of their clients, such as the frequency with which they interacted with the White House through several modes of communication, the extent to which White House meetings originated with requests from the White House or organized interests, and the motivations of organized interests and the White House to participate in these meetings.³⁰ Second, to gain more detailed knowledge about these and other facets of presidents' interactions with organized interests, I interviewed 15 former White House officials and organized interest representatives. I use my findings from this survey and these interviews

³⁰One common concern about elite surveys is that respondents' answers are subject to forms of response bias (see Miller n.d.). For instance, social desirability bias may lead a lobbyist to make themselves look more influential than they are by over-reporting the frequency with which they interact with the White House. In Appendix A, I assess the degree to which response bias may affect my survey results by comparing respondents' self-reported White House access with that detected in my analysis of the White House visitor logs. For the vast majority of respondents (70.9%), their self-reports align with the instances of access I identify in the White House visitor logs. Further, in the remaining cases in which respondents' self-reports did not match with my observation data, respondents were more likely to understate their White House access (23.2%) than to overstate it (5.9%), which runs contrary to expectations related to social desirability bias. Together, this evidence assuages concerns about response bias in my survey data.

throughout the dissertation to both motivate my theoretical approach and illuminate the data-generating processes underlying my empirical analyses. Details about how I conducted this survey and these interviews are provided in Appendix A.

Second, because little public information exists concerning presidents' interactions with organized interests, no readily available data sources, on their own, can provide insights on presidents' interactions with organized interests and their consequences. Most acutely, we lack information on with which organized interests presidents engage—a common challenge for studies of organized interests' involvement in the policymaking process (see Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012, 295-304; De Figueiredo and Richter 2014), as policymakers are loathe to advertise their relationships with organized interests lest they attract public scorn (e.g. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). Luckily, by leveraging over 7 million White House visitor logs records from three different presidencies and contemporaneous LDA filings, I am able to identify instances in which presidents engage with organized interests through in-person White House meetings, or access. With this measure of presidential engagement in hand, I am then able to draw on several additional “big data” sources, including FEC filings and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Database, to empirically model with which interests presidents engage and the consequences of engagement for both presidents and interests.

My survey and interviews or my “big data” sources, on their own, could not provide satisfactory answers to the research questions I posed previously. However, by pairing practitioners' firsthand perspectives with expansive quantitative data, I am able to explain the dynamics of presidents' interactions with organized interests and provide insights on with which interests presidents engage and how presidents and interests benefit from that engagement.

Extant Related Work

As I noted earlier, while the interactions between presidents and organized interests are under-explored in extant scholarship, this dissertation is not the first empirical research on these interactions. However, this dissertation builds on sporadic empirical studies of these interactions in several ways. First, whereas many studies merely describe the patterns of interaction between presidents and organized interests without exploring the underlying data-generating process (e.g., Brown and Huang 2017; Holyoke 2004), I draw on descriptive scholarly accounts (e.g., Kumar and Grossman 1984; Pika 1999; Tenpas 2005) and my original survey and interviews to explicate a president-centered theory of engagement and inform my empirical analyses (see also Peterson 1992). In addition, while Peterson (1992), the existing study closest to my own, offers a set of potential types of presidential interactions with organized interests without offering an explicit argument for which type presidents most often use, I provide a theoretically-motivated argument for why presidential engagement with well-resourced and copartisan interests—akin to what Peterson (1992) refers to as “liaison as governing party”—is the predominant form of engagement.

Second, whereas some studies focus primarily on organized interests’ behavior in relation to presidents, such as their demand for access or policy change or their response to presidents’ policy priorities (e.g., Baumgartner et al. 2011; Brown 2014; Haeder and Yackee 2015), this dissertation suggests that these “outside-in” approaches overlook the true data-generating processes by which presidents engage with organized interests and organized interests respond to that engagement. For instance, while Brown (2014) examines organized interests’ lobbying of presidential transition teams, he does so only with evidence of interests’ demand for interaction with the incoming administration. Since presidents, not organized interests, exert primary control over their interactions, this focus on interest demand has limited ability to provide insights into the realized interactions that presidents and organized interests have.

Third, the scope of this dissertation surpasses that of extant research in terms of its temporal breadth, the types of organized interests considered, and the range of presidents' and organized interests' activities considered. While most studies incorporate only a single presidency, and often a small window in time within that presidency (e.g., Brown 2014; Brown and Huang 2017; Holyoke 2004; Peterson 1992), this dissertation incorporates empirical insights from over 12 years across three different presidencies. Additionally, though most extant works limit their attention to specific types of organized interests, such as corporations (Brown and Huang 2017) or membership associations (Peterson 1992), or to interests involved in specific policy areas like national security (Levinson 2019), criminal justice, or transportation (Brown 2014), this dissertation accounts for all organized interests active in federal policymaking irrespective of type or policy specialization. Further, whereas most studies only consider a single facet of the interactions between presidents and organized interests, such as in-person or remote communications (Brown 2014; Holyoke 2004; Peterson 1992) or organized interests' receipt of preferred policies or goods (Dusso, Holyoke and Schatzinger 2019; Haeder and Yackee 2015), this dissertation explores both presidents' choices of with which interests to engage and the consequences of that engagement for organized interests and presidents (see also Brown and Huang 2017). With this broad scope, this dissertation can draw more generalizable conclusions about presidents' engagement with organized interests across contexts.

Fourth, this dissertation leverages unique data sources that enable me to better measure and evaluate presidents' engagement with organized interests at the target unit of analysis—the organized interest-level. Because many studies of presidents' interactions with organized interests aggregate information across organized interests (Haeder and Yackee 2015; Levinson 2019), their conclusions cannot help us understand whether presidents' interactions favor certain interests over others—a normative consideration to which I turn shortly. For instance, by aggregating all appointments of organized interest representatives to advisory committees

by year of appointment or interest structure (i.e., institution, membership-based), Levinson (2019) cannot provide insight on whether certain interest characteristics, such as the president’s desire to engage with them, are indicative of the president’s appointment decisions. However, as my data sources allow me to conduct my analyses at the organized interest-level, I can make more fine-grained assessments about the characteristics of organized interests with which presidents engage and the consequences of that engagement for presidents and organized interests. Additionally, whereas several previous studies of presidents’ interactions with organized interests rely on LDA reports (Dusso, Holyoke and Schatzinger 2019; Holyoke 2004), which do not specify the character of these interactions (i.e., whether they occurred in person, whether they were reciprocal communications or one-sided lobbying attempts), my use of the White House visitor logs to identify instances in which presidents provided access to organized interests constitutes a more precise measure of the underlying quantity of interest—presidential engagement.

Broader Implications

Beyond enhancing our understanding of the interactions between presidents and organized interests, this dissertation also contributes to broader positive and normative themes in American politics. First, I advance the ongoing debate concerning presidential representation by considering the representational priorities presidents signal through engaging with organized interests. Though scholars long asserted that presidents represent all interests within their national constituency (e.g., Moe and Howell 1999; Wechsler 1954; Wilson 1961), recent studies suggest that presidents instead provide more representation to subgroups that can best advance their goals, such as copartisans and the upper-class (e.g., Druckman and Jacobs 2015; Kriner and Reeves 2015*a*; *b*; Wood 2009). Whereas these studies consider how presidents represent the mass public, the current study reflects on presidents’ representation of a distinct constituency—organized interests, who are both independent political actors

and manifestations of the interests of members of the mass public. My results lend support for the notion that presidents provide better representation to preferred subgroups in society.

Second, I provide new insights on the means by which organized interests influence outcomes in the American political process. Extant studies argue that organized interests, particularly those associated with the upper-class, exercise outsized influence in American politics (e.g. Gilens and Page 2014; Hojnacki et al. 2015; Schattschneider 1960; Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012). However, some scholars have suggested that presidents, as nationally-elected representatives, might temper the influence of powerful interests by engaging equally with all interests in their constituency (e.g. Bentley 1908; Truman 1971; Quirk and Nesmith 2005; Uslander 1998; Wechsler 1954; Wilson 1961). My findings cast doubt on this notion because, by engaging with more well-resourced organized interests that tend to better represent the upper-class, presidents exacerbate, rather than mitigate, inequalities in political voice present throughout the political system.

Plan of the Dissertation

This book proceeds as follows. In Chapter 2, I detail my theory of presidential engagement. This theory, which emerges from the notion of presidents as coalition-builders, argues that presidents engage with organized interests to enhance their supportive coalitions. To presidents, organized interests constitute valuable coalition members because they can provide presidents with electoral and policy resources that help presidents achieve their goals. Further, I suggest that presidents can expect to receive these resources from organized interests because they can provide selective incentives, such as appointments to executive and judicial offices or distributive goods, to induce compliance. To maximize the amount of organized interest resources at their disposal, I argue that presidents are more likely to engage with organized interests who have large resource endowments and who are aligned with the incumbent president's party.

In Chapter 3, I evaluate my expectations concerning with which types of organized interests presidents engage. I begin by operationalizing engagement as White House access, which policymakers and organized interest representatives alike perceive as the most efficient means of communication and a strong signal of presidents' willingness to engage with specific organized interests. To measure White House access, I draw on the White House visitor logs from the Clinton, Obama, and Trump presidencies and contemporary LDA reports to identify instances in which representatives of organized interests were provided with White House access. Using this measure of engagement, along with information on interests' lobbying expenditures, campaign contributions, and partisan alignment, I find that presidents are more likely to engage with organized interests with higher levels of resources and who are in industries aligned with the incumbent president's party.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I revisit and empirically test two key premises of my theory—that presidents and organized interests benefit from engagement. First, in Chapter 4, I discuss how presidents wield control over a wide range of selective incentives that can help organized interests fulfill their policy and institutional maintenance goals. Then, I use the case of federal advisory committee appointments, which contribute to both of those organized interest goals, to examine whether presidents are more likely to provide these appointments to interests with which they previously engaged. My findings indicate that presidents do allocate appointments of organized interest members as selective incentives. Second, in Chapter 5, I consider whether organized interests' public statements endorsing presidents' policies—a type of organized interest resource valued by presidents—enhance public support for presidents' policies. Drawing on a survey experiment based on Donald Trump's renegotiation of the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement, I find that these endorsements can improve public attitudes towards presidents' policies, but that these positive effects are concentrated among presidents' non-copartisans.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I conclude by summarizing my findings, identifying promising routes for future research, and discussing the broader implications of my results. While political scientists have long overlooked or dismissed as inconsequential presidents' interactions with organized interests, my dissertation suggests that presidents allocate considerable time and effort to engaging with interests, and that this engagement provides benefits for both presidents and organized interests. However, these benefits likely do not pass down to the nation as a whole, as presidents' incentives for engagement lead them to not only provide more tangible assets, such as appointments to advisory committees, but also to provide more intangible goods, such as their attention, to a biased subset of the organized interest universe—interests with large resource endowments and who share the incumbent's partisanship. While this implication may not surprise readers of recent presidency scholarship, which casts doubt on presidents' ability to be truly national representatives, it will likely dishearten observers who counted on presidents to be bulwarks of pluralism in an otherwise biased organized interest universe.

Chapter 2

Presidential Engagement as Coalition Building

Having just freed themselves from rule by the British king, many Americans in late 1787 were concerned to hear that the Founders' new Constitution included a unitary executive—the president. Responding to this apprehension, Alexander Hamilton defended “the necessity of an energetic Executive” (*Federalist 70*) to a wary public over the course of eleven installments in *The Federalist Papers*. While Hamilton's discourse focuses largely on the constitutional powers explicitly granted to the president, as well as the explicit limits on those powers, his contemporary and later writings and decisions envisioned a president who sustains good government through swift, decisive action. While American presidents have wielded unilateral powers throughout the history of the Republic, presidents in the past century have increasingly seized on these powers, such as issuing executive orders, that have brought the office closer to, or perhaps even gone beyond, Hamilton's ideal vision of “an Energetic executive” (e.g., Calabresi and Yoo 2008; Crouch, Rozell and Sollenberger 2013; Edelson and Starr-Deelen 2015; Moe and Howell 1999; Pfiffner 2011).

As presidents have invested in their unilateral powers, presidency scholars have directed their attention to better understanding these powers, how and why presidents use them, and their effects on American government. For example, many studies explore how presidents use executive actions such as executive orders to implement their preferred policies without congressional approval and how presidents' ability to take such actions are limited by Congress and the courts, (Chiou and Rothenberg 2017; Howell 2003), their successors (Thrower 2017), and the public (Christenson and Kriner 2017*a;b*; Reeves and Rogowski 2016; 2018). Other studies focus on presidents' ability to control and politicize the bureaucracy through personnel appointments (Black et al. 2007; Kinane 2019; Lewis 2008; Moore 2018; Nemacheck 2008). Further, studies consider presidents' ability to influence the policy implementation process to direct distributive goods to favored constituencies (Dynes and Huber 2015; Kriner and Reeves 2015*a;b*; Lowande, Jenkins and Clarke 2018; Reeves 2011). Additionally, still other studies consider presidents' ability use the "bully pulpit" to bring attention to and gain support for their policy priorities (Cohen 2010; 2015; Edwards 2003; Eshbaugh-Soha 2018; Kernell 2006). Taken together, this body of scholarship on unilateral power has helped political scientists develop a more complete understanding of the presidency that more appropriately models the scope of presidents' power than did the preceding paradigm, in which presidents primary means of power was the "power to persuade" (e.g., Neustadt 1991).

However, at the same time that Hamilton advocated for "an energetic Executive," he also recognized that the new government needed "ingredients which constitute safety in the republican sense," or institutional features to check and balance presidents' power lest they evolve into monarchs themselves (*Federalist* 70). Hamilton emphasized two such ingredients: "a due dependence on the people, [and] a due responsibility," or accountability to the polity (*Federalist* 77).¹ Hamilton's dual endorsement of an "energetic Executive" and the "ingredients

¹Hamilton explains his use of the word "responsibility" as "of two kinds to censure and to punishment," and argues that such censure or punishment may arise from Congress, the

which constitute safety in the republican sense” underscores a key tension in the constitutional framework with which all presidents must grapple: while presidents can accomplish some of their objectives on their own with the full power of their office and the executive branch behind them, they ultimately need the support or consent of other actors in the political system to achieve many of their most impactful goals, such as electoral success for themselves and their copartisans and the enactment of their legislative proposals (e.g., Beckmann 2010; Cronin 1980; Edwards 2000; Neustadt 1991; Seligman and Covington 1989). In short, building and maintaining supportive coalitions are key to presidents’ success in office, and, while unilateral powers can help presidents build and maintain coalitions (e.g., Kriner and Reeves 2015a; Lowande, Jenkins and Clarke 2018), they cannot replace the importance of these coalitions. Thus, while unilateral powers are increasingly prominent in presidency studies and popular press coverage of presidents, the success of many of presidents’ goals continues to rely on their ability to build coalitions.

Most studies of presidents’ coalition-building focus primarily on their efforts in Congress and in the mass public. In Congress, presidents need sufficiently-sized supportive coalitions to enact policies that they cannot manifest through executive action, confirm executive and judicial nominees, ratify treaties, and uphold vetoes. One common finding across studies of presidential success in Congress is that success is highly contingent on the size of presidents’ supportive coalitions; when presidents have broader bases of support, they are more likely to realize their preferred outcomes (e.g., Bond and Fleisher 1990; Cameron 2000; Barrett and Eshbaugh-Soha 2007; Moraski and Shipan 1999). Presidents can maximize the size of their congressional coalitions at two stages. First, they can bolster the electoral fortunes

Electoral College, the public, or other institutions of government (*Federalist* 70). For example, in closing *Federalist* 77, Hamilton writes, “In the only instances in which the abuse of the executive authority was materially to be feared, the Chief Magistrate of the United States would, by that plan, be subjected to the control of a branch of the legislative body. What more could be desired by an enlightened and reasonable people?” See also Zuckert (1992).

of congressional candidates who will support their proposals, such as copartisans, through tactics such as helping them campaign and fundraise (Jacobson, Kernell and Lazarus 2004; Herrnson and Morris 2007) and providing their constituencies with distributive goods (Berry, Burden and Howell 2010; Christenson, Kriner and Reeves 2017; Kriner and Reeves 2015*a;b*). Through intervening in congressional elections, presidents seek to increase the number of natural supporters in Congress who are likely to endorse their policies (Bond and Fleisher 1990). Second, after the congressional rosters are set, presidents can continue to expand their coalitions on specific proposals or more generally by lobbying and bargaining with members of Congress (Beckmann 2008; 2010; Beckmann, Chaturvedi and Garcia 2017; Covington 1987; 1988*a;b*). At this stage, presidents, looking at the the distribution of preferences among members of Congress, seek to cobble together coalitions that can move preferences closer to their ideal points.

Presidents also seek to build and maintain supportive coalitions in the mass public to both enhance their electoral success and gain influence over other political actors. In the former instance, presidents' electoral fates ultimately hinge on the support of voters, and therefore they strive to build supportive coalitions both while seeking the presidency and once in office to ensure their re-election and the ascension of a like-minded successor (Berry, Burden and Howell 2010; Dynes and Huber 2015; Kriner and Reeves 2015*a;b*; Seligman and Covington 1989). Differently, in the latter case, presidents cultivate support in the mass public because they can use it to pressure other political actors to make policy decisions that accord with presidents' preferences. Since other political actors at the federal level, such as members of Congress, judges, and bureaucrats, rely to varying degrees on public support for their own power and influence, presidents with strong, broad public approval, or "prestige," can leverage that approval to bend others to their wills (Neustadt 1991). For example, when presidents' public approval is high, electorally-minded members of Congress are more responsive to his public appeals, lest they be seen as out-of-step with a popular president

(Barrett and Eshbaugh-Soha 2007; Canes-Wrone 2001; Canes-Wrone and De Marchi 2002; Cohen and Rottinghaus 2018; Rivers and Rose 1985). Again, because the courts rely on diffuse public support to sustain their power (e.g., Caldeira and Gibson 1992), they are reticent to rule against presidents when their public approval is high (Ducat and Dudley 1989; Howell 2003; Yates 2002). Thus, to maximize their influence over other political actors, presidents cultivate support in the mass public using the powers of the office, such as emphasizing the policy positions and priorities of important subconstituencies (Druckman and Jacobs 2015; Eshbaugh-Soha and Rottinghaus 2013; Griffin and Newman 2016; Wood 2009).

That presidents value members of the mass public in their coalitions not only because of the formal powers they possess—mainly, their votes—but also because of their capacity to contribute to presidents’ initiatives in other venues highlights an important concept in presidents’ coalition-building efforts: presidents seek coalition members both for their direct ability to help realize presidents’ goals, such as casting votes in their favor at the ballot box or on the floors of the House and Senate, and also for their ability to indirectly subsidize presidents’ pursuit of their goals (i.e., Hall and Deardorff 2006). Because presidents are confronted with myriad responsibilities and demands for action that stretch the limits of their office (e.g., Cronin 1980; Lowi 1986; Neustadt 1991), such subsidization is valuable. A few recent studies have latched onto this latter motivation for presidents’ coalition-building behavior and consider how presidents incorporate into their coalitions political elites and institutions who can provide indirect subsidies. For instance, Galvin (2009) asserts that presidents utilize their political parties as service organizations to aid their electoral aspirations and those of their copartisans. Additionally, Beckmann (2010) suggests that presidents work to advance their agendas on Capitol Hill not by expending effort on lobbying each member, but instead by working with allied congressional leaders who provide them with political intelligence and push their agendas in Congress on their behalf (see also Beckmann 2008; Beckmann, Chaturvedi and Garcia 2017). These studies encourage scholars to consider as

targets of presidential coalition-building efforts not only political actors who wield formal powers that influence presidents' ability to accomplish their goals, but also the broader population of political actors who can subsidize presidents' pursuits.

Another such class of political actors without formal powers, such as votes, but with considerable resources which they direct to influence policymaking throughout the federal government, is organized interests. Organized interests receive considerable scholarly attention in most venues, from Congress (e.g., Hall and Deardorff 2006; Hansen 1991; Hojnacki and Kimball 1998) to the courts (e.g., Caldeira and Wright 1988; Collins 2007) and the bureaucracy (e.g., McKay and Yackee 2007; Yackee and Yackee 2006; Yackee 2012), but scholars of the presidency and of organized interests seldom examine the interactions between these two actors, and even less often probe the motivations underlying these interactions. In what follows, I explain that presidents engage with organized interests because their ample political resources, such as campaign contributions, policy expertise, and grassroots lobbying capabilities, make them valuable members of presidents' supportive coalitions. Then, I derive empirical expectations for with which types of organized interests presidents engage and how presidents and organized interests benefit from this engagement. In subsequent chapters, I evaluate these empirical expectations in turn.

The Value of Organized Interests in Presidents' Coalitions

Numbering in the tens of thousands and active in every imaginable issue area and policymaking venue, organized interests are omnipresent actors in American politics. The *raison d'être* of organized interests is to accomplish political goals through collective means (Schlozman and Tierney 1986, 10). Organized interests can take many forms, from membership-based groups to memberless institutions and can focus on a wide range of issues, a single issue, or a common identity (Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012; Schlozman et al. 2015). In pursuit of their policy goals, organized interests participate in a wide range of activities, such as

cultivating relationships with policymakers, providing information and expertise, participating in elections and campaign finance, and engaging with their memberships and the public (e.g., Baumgartner et al. 2009; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012). Though detecting evidence of organized interest influence is methodologically challenging (see Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012, 295-304; De Figueiredo and Richter 2014), a consensus of scholars and practitioners argue that, through their activities, organized interests often succeed in shaping policy outcomes (e.g., Ban and You 2019; Baumgartner et al. 2009; Gilens and Page 2014; Haeder and Yackee 2015; McKay 2018; Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012).

In order to carry out their multifarious activities, organized interests muster a wide array of resources. For example, in the 2016 election cycle, political action committees (PACs), the vast majority of which are maintained by organized interests, contributed over \$1.2 billion to candidates for federal office (Magleby and Goodliffe 2019). Again, organized interests making Lobbying Disclosure Act filings in 2019 reported spending a total of \$3.47 billion on lobbying the federal government and employed a total of 11,862 registered lobbyists to communicate with policymakers on their behalf.²³ Further, while most organized interests are institutions without members, such as corporations and colleges and universities (Schlozman et al. 2015), many interests have broad memberships they can mobilize to put pressure on policymakers (e.g., Bergan 2009).

²³“Lobbying Data Summary,” *Center for Responsive Politics*, <https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/summary>, accessed February 27, 2020.

²⁴Under LDA guidelines, lobbying activities for which expenditures must be reported include not only lobbying contacts themselves, but also “any efforts in support of such contacts, including preparation or planning activities, research, and any other background work that is intended, at the time of its preparation, for use in contacts, and coordination with the lobbying activities of others” (“Lobbying Disclosure Act Guidance,” *United States Congress* January 31, 2017, <https://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov/ldaguidance.pdf>). Thus, lobbying expenditures capture a wide range of organized interests’ policy resources, including staff salaries, accrued policy expertise and political information, and expenses incidental to their direct lobbying efforts.

It is these and other resources, and the means with which to deploy them, that make organized interests attractive targets of presidents' coalition-building efforts. By enlisting organized interests into their coalitions, presidents hope to channel these resources in service of their own goals. Organized interest resources can subsidize presidents both by directly contributing to presidents' aspirations, and by indirectly exerting pressure on other political actors, such as members of Congress and the public, to endorse those aspirations.

Organized Interests as Coalition-Building Targets

Before proceeding, it is worth unpacking the assumption that presidents view organized interests as entities they can recruit into their supportive coalitions. This notion may seem foreign to many readers, as policymakers across governmental venues are typically cast as passive targets of organized interests' influence efforts rather than actors with the agency to exert influence over organized interests. While some of this same "outside-in" lobbying also occurs at the White House, such that organized interests target presidents to try to influence their actions, many of the interactions between presidents and organized interests are instead products of "inside-out" lobbying, where presidents take a leading role and reach out to organized interests to bring them into the White House's political and policy activities (Loomis 2009; Peterson 1992; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Shaiko 1998; Tenpas 2005).

The primary reason that the dynamics between organized interests and presidents differ from those interests experience with most other policymakers, such as members of Congress, is that presidents' ability to interact with organized interests is much more limited. As head of the executive branch and the sole nationally elected government official, presidents must contend with an unceasing flow of demands for action heaped upon them that outpaces the expansion in the formal powers, personnel, and resources available to them. Neustadt (1991, 7) asserts that presidents are unreasonably expected to "do something about everything." Similarly, Lowi (1986, 151) posits that presidents are perceived as "the Wizard of Oz," and

that the “the legal powers and responsibilities focused so directly upon the presidency have contributed to myths about the ability of presidents to meet those responsibilities” (see also Cronin 1980; Kane 2016; Miller and Reeves 2017). Because presidents have difficulty allocating their scarce resources to satisfy the demands of the job, they have scant remaining time and effort with which to interact with organized interests.

Consequently, while organized interests recognize the potential value of interactions with presidents, they understand *ex ante* that interactions with the White House will be scarce and respond by focusing their efforts on other venues where they can more easily interact with policymakers. As a former aide to President Lyndon Johnson suggests, “There are 535 opportunities in Congress and only one in the White House. You get an hour to present your case before each representative; you get fifteen minutes once a year with the president. Where would you put your effort?” (Light 1999, 94) The respondents in my survey of organized interest representatives substantiate this president-centered model; while 92.0% and 82.3% reported that Congress and the bureaucracy, respectively, are “very” or “extremely” important lobbying venues, only 37.3% expressed similar sentiments for the White House. Thus, relative to other policymaking venues, organized interests tend to allow presidents to dictate their interactions, responding to overtures more frequently than offering them. Organized interests’ deference to presidents, coupled with presidents’ motivation to gain the support of entities who can subsidize their activities, create an environment in which presidents can use the scant time and effort they have to selectively engage with organized interests to enlist those interests into their coalitions.

Direct Support

One way in which organized interests can provide presidents with direct support is by aiding their campaigns to assume and retain the presidency. Organized interests can not only offer presidents direct contributions, but can also make independent expenditures in support of

their campaigns for activities such as advertisements and voter mobilization drives (Peterson 1992; Pika 1999; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). For example, in the closing days of the 2016 presidential campaign, the Faith & Freedom Coalition announced that its volunteers had visited the homes of over one million faith-based voters in battleground states and launched a last-minute \$1 million advertising campaign to stimulate support and turnout for Donald Trump and other Republican candidates.⁴ In the same vein, in 2012, the AFL-CIO touted its “massive grassroots campaign” to canvass 640,000 homes and send direct mail to many more in order to support Barack Obama and warn voters “about the radical Romney/Ryan agenda.”⁵ As presidential campaigns become increasingly elaborate and expensive, assistance from organized interests becomes all the more valuable.

Organized interests can also support presidents by providing them with information that improves the quality of their proposals and intelligence that makes those proposals more likely to survive the policymaking process (Haeder and Yackee 2015; Kumar and Grossman 1984; Peterson 1992; Pika 1999). First, as presidents’ seek to make good public policy, for both the intrinsic benefit to the polity and to enhance their legacies (Light 1999), they value information that can enhance their proposals and often turn to organized interests with policy-specific expertise for such information. When asked which types of organized interests he prioritized communicating with, one former White House aide emphasized the importance of interests with “some relevant data points” and that “provide consistently

⁴“Faith & Freedom Volunteers Visit One Million Homes,” *Faith & Freedom Coalition*, October 29, 2016, <https://www.ffcoalition.com/faith-freedom-volunteers-visit-one-million-homes/>; “FFC Launches \$1 Million Digital Ad Campaign Directed at Voters of Faith in Closing Days,” November 2, 2016 <https://www.ffcoalition.com/ffc-launches-1-million-digital-ad-campaign-directed-at-voters-of-faith-in-closing-days/>.

⁵“Working Families Kick Off Massive Grassroots Campaign Ahead Of The Republican National Convention,” *Western New York Labor Today*, August 23, 2012, <https://www.wnylabortoday.com/news/2012/08/24/labor-news-from-washington-d.c./working-families-kick-off-massive-grassroots-campaign-ahead-of-the-republican-national-convention/>.

reliable... factually based information.”⁶ Even though presidents, with the full executive branch at their disposal, have access to a wealth of policy information, organized interests are valuable in this regard because they can help presidents arbitrate between contrasting information provided by different agencies and serve as “an independent source to validate something.”⁷ From the other side, an organized interest representative expressed a similar sentiment in saying that “one reason why we’ve been successful is based on the quality and analysis of the information that we share.”⁸

Second, just as presidents value organized interests’ policy expertise, they also prize the intelligence interests can offer them on stakeholders’ preferences to help craft and modify proposals to win needed support. When presidents contemplate new proposals, they anticipate how political elites and the public will respond. If the public reaction to a policy will be negative, or if it will not garner sufficient support to pass in Congress, presidents would prefer to modify those proposals to make them more favorable or abandon them to avoid the sting of defeat (Cameron 2000; Groseclose and McCarty 2001; Reeves and Rogowski 2016; 2018). Organized interests, with their connections to their members, other organized interests, and political elites, can provide presidents with such intelligence that can improve their odds of success. One organized interest representative recalled the White House sometimes contacting her to “get the temperature on something. ‘We’re having a series of meetings about issue X, what is your best and latest information on public opinion? What is the community’s temperature...?’”⁹ Another organized interest representative reported that the White House communicates with organized interests to “get intelligence from us for a policy goal they

⁶Personal interview with a former White House official, August 24, 2019.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Personal interview with a policy advocate for a religious organization, May 3, 2018.

⁹Personal interview with a policy advocate for a reproductive rights organization, March 4, 2018.

may be trying to maneuver on.”¹⁰ Even interactions with organized interests opposed to the White House’s policies can yield valuable intelligence, as they enable the White House to “understand where the interest is and if a bridge can be [made].”¹¹

Indirect Support

Beyond the support organized interests can offer to presidents directly, they can also indirectly aid them in their coalition-building efforts among political actors who wield the formal powers that dictate presidents’ success, such as members of Congress and the public. For example, just as organized interests participate in presidents’ own campaigns, they can marshal the same types of resources, such as campaign contributions and independent expenditures, in support of presidents’ congressional supporters, thus offering presidents a broader supportive coalition in Congress and enhancing their odds of legislative success (e.g., Bond and Fleisher 1990). Organized interests can also bolster presidents’ support in Congress by deploying their lobbying apparatuses to pressure members on presidents’ behalf (e.g., Beckmann 2008; 2010; Holyoke 2004; Loomis 2009; Peterson 1992). While presidents can and do lobby members of Congress on their own (Beckmann 2008; 2010; Beckmann, Chaturvedi and Garcia 2017), assistance from additional, experienced organized interest lobbyists can amplify their efforts and persuade recalcitrant members of Congress to embrace the president’s position or to dial down their opposition. One former official who worked in the Office of Legislative Affairs reported that the White House would often call in representatives of organized interests and divvy up responsibility among them for pushing specific members to cosponsor presidential agenda items.¹² Another official, in discussing the Obama White House’s efforts to confirm Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court, recalled that the administration leaned on organized

¹⁰Interview with a policy advocate for a chemical industry association, September 13, 2019.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Personal interview with a former White House official, August 27, 2019.

interests with “relationships with key senators [to] get them to call or visit” and voice support for Garland.¹³

Presidents also value organized interests for their grassroots lobbying capacity, which enables them to enhance public support for and awareness of presidents and their initiatives (Cohen 2012; Holyoke 2004; Kumar and Grossman 1984; Loomis 2009; Peterson 1992). In one sense, presidents can harness organized interests’ grassroots capabilities as an alternative means of lobbying Congress, similar to how presidents “go public” to mobilize citizens to stimulate congressional action. For instance, Beckmann (2008) shows that Senate staffers report that the White House often “mobilize[d] important interest groups to contact [their] Senator in support of the President.” Grassroots lobbying can also more generally bolster public support for the president, raise the salience of his issue priorities, and stimulate organic advocacy on the president’s behalf. Again speaking about the Merrick Garland nomination, a former White House official reported that the administration not only pressured organized interests to reach out to members of Congress directly, but also worked to “activate groups and constituencies to mobilize their members or to leverage their relationships in Washington in order to sort of try and advance that nomination.”¹⁴ More generally, another former White House official reported that the primary objectives for his engagement with organized interests was to get interests to “amplify the president’s message around a particular policy priority” and motivate members “to undertake action to advocate on behalf of the president.”¹⁵ A different former official echoed that, on a major presidential initiative, “There was a real coordinated effort from within the administration to talk to outside groups about [it], to try to encourage. . . outside groups to do public outreach themselves, to talk to their members,

¹³Personal interview with a former White House official, September 25, 2019.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Personal interview with a former White House official, May 3, 2018.

to mobilize on the issue.”¹⁶ Thus, even though organized interests themselves do not possess formal powers that can advance presidents’ priorities, presidents recognize that they have the ability to motivate political actors who do wield formal powers to support those priorities.

Presidents’ Tools for Building Coalitions of Organized Interests

While presidents see value in incorporating organized interests into their supportive coalitions, they can realize these benefits only if organized interest comply with their preferences and requests for resources. In some cases, mere requests are sufficient to secure organized interests’ cooperation. When asked about his client’s general willingness to comply with White House requests, one organized interest representative reported that “if the White House asks, then you figure out a way to make that work for you... it’s very hard to say no to a White House.”¹⁷ In other cases, small perks to organized interest representatives themselves might induce them to comply with presidents’ wishes. Another organized interest representative recalled accompanying a group of business leaders to the White House for a meeting and watching them excitedly “run around taking selfies” even though the president’s policies would hurt their economic interests.¹⁸ However, in most cases, to sustain long-term cooperative relationships with organized interests, presidents must be able to make organized interests feel that their relationship is mutually beneficial. Luckily for presidents, their office affords them powers and resources that they can offer to organized interests as selective incentives in order to encourage participation in presidents’ supportive coalitions.

One way in which presidents can provide selective incentives is by using their unilateral powers to help organized interests accomplish their policy objectives. As chief executive, presidents can influence the levers of power throughout the bureaucracy to realize preferred

¹⁶Personal interview with a former White House official, September 5, 2019.

¹⁷Personal interview with a chemical industry lobbyist, September 13, 2019.

¹⁸Personal interview with a policy advocate for a telecommunications organization, August 22, 2019.

outcomes (Moe 1985; Moe and Howell 1999). For example, Haeder and Yackee (2015) show that presidents respond to aggregate organized interest activity on measures pending in the regulatory process, modifying final rules to bring them closer to the aggregate preferences of interests making comments. Additionally, presidents can use their appointment power and control over the personnel process (Lewis 2008; Moore 2018; Nemacheck 2008) to place persons favored by organized interests, or members of organized interests themselves, in the executive and judicial branches. Further, presidents can implement organized interests' preferred policies directly through executive action, thus enabling organized interests to circumvent the labyrinthine lawmaking process required to get bills passed in Congress (Howell 2003). Finally, presidents can exercise control over federal spending to allocate funds in ways that promote organized interests' preferences or provide distributive goods directly to organized interests (Kriner and Reeves 2015*a*).

Presidents can also help organized interests advance their policy goals by generating public support for or increasing the salience of their issues and proposals. Given presidents' ability to influence the agenda both in Congress and in the public (Cohen 1995; 2010; Edwards and Wood 1999; Kernell 2006), presidents can use the bully pulpit to highlight organized interests' priorities to those audiences. As Baumgartner et al. find, one of the strongest determinants for organized interest success in achieving or stifling policy change is the support of the president in the form of taking "an advocacy role in a public-policy debate" (2009, 238). When asked how communicating with the White House helps his organization advance their goals, one organized interest representative responded that White House support is most helpful "[w]here there are policy barriers and where we could use support from the White House weighing in with Congress to fix some of those."¹⁹ Another former White House official indicated that organized interests often told the administration that "we really need attention

¹⁹Personal interview with a policy advocate for an education organization, May 11, 2018.

called on this issue... [and] wanted to use the administration’s megaphone to call attention to an issue.”²⁰

Finally, presidents can aid organized interests by helping them perform institutional maintenance. While organized interests’ primary goal is to influence policy, they must also attend to the intermediate goal of managing their political reputations and, for member-based groups, bolstering their membership bases (Drutman 2015; Lowery 2007; Olson 1965; Walker 1983). In order to be operational and effective, organized interests need support, funding, and participation from their members or from the institutions they represent. While accounts of institutional maintenance often focus on organized interests providing selective incentives to members (e.g., Olson 1965), organized interests can also promote their survival by demonstrating their political clout and effectiveness in accomplishing their policy objectives; if an organized interest’s parent institution or members perceive that the interest is influential and effective, then they are more likely to offer continued or increased support (Drutman 2015; Lowery 2007). Interacting with the president, the most powerful government official in the United States, provides organized interests with valuable opportunities to perform institutional maintenance because they can advertise these interactions as manifestations of their political clout. One former White House official suggested that organized interests “want to be seen as having access to the White House... [because] they want it to look like they have influence.”²¹ Another former official offered similar sentiments, saying that the administration in which he served routinely used “signing ceremonies and other small events to help them in their coalition-building efforts,” as these public events enabled organized interests to “market [their] influence.”²² Thus, by helping organized interests accomplish

²⁰Personal interview with a former White House official, May 4, 2018.

²¹Personal interview with a former White House official, August 27, 2019.

²²Personal interview with a former White House official, September 5, 2019.

and promote their policy goals and their political clout, presidents can incentivize their participation in their supportive coalitions.

Presidents' Coalition-Building Strategies

Having established that presidents have both the will and the ways to recruit organized interests as coalition members, we now consider the strategies presidents use to determine which organized interests to recruit into their supportive coalitions. As previously discussed, presidents, burdened by the myriad demands of their office, have limited time and resources with which to engage with the tens of thousands of organized interests active in federal policymaking (Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012). Therefore, presidents must strategically select with which organized interests to engage. As one former White House official explained, “We wanted [to engage with] everybody, but, at the end of the day, there are a million organizations out there and every single organization isn’t going to be a part of everything.”²³ Put differently, presidents face a constrained optimization problem where they must determine with what subset of organized interests to engage in order to maximize the share of organized interest resources in their supportive coalition.

While few extant studies consider with which organized interests presidents engage (but see Brown and Huang 2017; Holyoke 2004; Peterson 1992), scholars have devoted considerable attention to presidents’ coalition-building strategies with other types of political actors. We can draw on those studies of presidential coalition-building, as well as studies in political science more broadly that consider how political actors construct coalitions, to derive empirical expectations for which interests presidents will enlist into their coalitions. Previous studies of presidential coalition-building tend to focus on one of two different types of political actors: the public and members of Congress. First, in the case of the public, presidents build and

²³Personal interview with a former White House official, May 4, 2018.

maintain supportive coalitions both to win elections and to consolidate their approval while in office. Both when running for office and when governing, extant studies suggest that presidents focus their coalition-building efforts on copartisans because presidents expect that this subconstituency will respond more favorably to their entreaties. For instance, Wood (2009) argues that presidents more closely reflect the policy preferences of their copartisans than of the median voter in their public remarks in order to sustain their partisan coalition (see also Druckman and Jacobs 2015; Eshbaugh-Soha and Rottinghaus 2013). Again, Kriner and Reeves (2015*a*) assert that presidents direct distributive goods, such as federal grants and disaster aid, to counties and states with higher concentrations of copartisans, in order to bolster support among copartisans and mobilize them to vote (see also Berry, Burden and Howell 2010; Dynes and Huber 2015; Kriner and Reeves 2015*b*; Lowande, Jenkins and Clarke 2018; Rogowski 2016). Additionally, Griffin and Newman (2016) demonstrate that presidents tailor their budget proposals to mirror the spending preferences of their copartisans.

Extant studies also indicate that presidents target citizens and voters in their coalition-building efforts who possess more political influence. For instance, Kriner and Reeves (2015*a*) demonstrate that presidents channel more distributive goods to swing states in presidential election years because the Electoral College makes the votes of residents in those states more strategically valuable than the votes of residents in other states (see also Kriner and Reeves 2015*b*). Further, Druckman and Jacobs (2015) suggest that presidents put more emphasis on the support of more affluent citizens, as their higher levels of personal resources and political engagement make their support more consequential (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Similarly, Griffin and Newman (2016) show that presidents not only respond to the preferences of copartisans in their budgetary proposals, but also to the sentiments of demographic groups who tend to be more active in politics, such as whites and persons in higher income brackets.

Second, in the case of Congress, presidents work to build supportive coalitions of members to facilitate the adoption of their preferred legislative proposals. As with the mass public, previous studies indicate that presidents prioritize copartisans and members with greater institutional influence. In the former instance, Berry, Burden and Howell (2010) and Christenson, Kriner and Reeves (2017) argue that presidents funnel more federal grants to the constituencies of their congressional copartisans to boost their electoral fortunes (but see Dynes and Huber 2015). Turning to the latter case, Beckmann (2010) indicates that presidents' coalition-building efforts focus on institutional leaders, such as party leaders and committee chairs, who can use their own powers to control the legislative agenda and exert pressure on their members on presidents' behalf (see also Beckmann 2008; Beckmann, Chaturvedi and Garcia 2017). While presidents lobby congressional leaders of both parties, they lean more on their copartisan leaders. Additionally, in contrast to traditional pivotal politics models, Beckmann (2010) asserts that presidents tend not to expend additional effort on moderate rank-and-file members relative to others. Together, these empirical trends lend further evidence that presidents rely on copartisans to form the basis of their congressional coalitions.

These findings from presidents' coalition-building activities in the mass public and Congress highlight two important characteristics that inform presidents' strategies—the partisan alignment of and value of resources possessed by potential coalition members. More general formal models of coalition-building in political science suggest that these characteristics are important to presidents because they signal the return presidents can expect from targeting those interests. For example, Cox and McCubbins (1986) argue that, when candidates for office determine which groups to invest in to build a viable coalition, they invest most heavily in groups with the highest rates of return. In the presidents' context, the returns which they seek are resources that coalition members can provide, such as votes or approval in the case of the public. Thus, presidents should invest more heavily in subconstituencies

whose votes or approval are more valuable—just as described above in the case of voters in swing states and more affluent persons. Further, Cox and McCubbins (1986) assert that, once taking into account subconstituencies’ natural affinity for a coalition-builder, coalition-builders should expect that natural supporters are more “responsive” to their investments than subconstituencies of undecideds or natural opponents. Thus, presidents should invest more heavily in natural supporters, such as copartisans, than in other potential targets—once again, just as posited in previous studies (see also Cox 2009; Dixit and Londregan 1996; Nichter 2008). Both studies of presidential coalition-building, and formal models of coalition-building in more general contexts, posit that presidents should target their coalition-building efforts on entities who are copartisans or otherwise natural supporters and who have larger amounts of resources valuable to presidents.

The organized interest representatives and former White House officials I interviewed further reinforced these empirical expectations. In speaking about engaging more frequently with naturally supportive organized interests, one former White House official bluntly remarked, “We’re going to form our own political coalition here, and we can’t be seen as essentially fraternizing with the enemy.”²⁴ An organized interest representative shared a similar perspective based on her observations from the other side of the table: “All administrations, regardless of party, have a tendency to talk more with their supporters than those who will challenge them, all of them will.”²⁵ When turning to the types of resources which make organized interests attractive targets for presidents’ coalition-building, one organized interest representative suggested that the White House considers interests’ electoral value: “Are they a donor? Have they been recommended by a donor or supporter?”²⁶ A former White

²⁴Personal interview with a former White House official, September 5, 2019.

²⁵Personal interview with a policy advocate for a water policy organization, August 28, 2019.

²⁶Personal interview with a policy advocate for a religious organization, May 3, 2018.

House official also admitted that “certain groups may have been involved in the campaign. Clearly, there’s going to be an expectation that they’re going to have a seat at the table going forward.”²⁷ However, that same official also emphasized that the White House chooses with which interests to engage, in part, by considering if they have resources that help them advance presidents’ policy goals: “If we were trying to get grassroots support or participation in a particular initiative, then we went to the groups that had members and the groups that had members that tended to be supportive.”²⁸ A different former official confirmed this emphasis on organized interests’ policy-relevant resources, recalling that he preferred to engage with organized interests who have knowledge and expertise with the presidents’ policy priorities and the policymaking process because those interests “have a recognition of the type of analysis necessary to make an informed judgment. They have a recognition of the political barriers and what’s realistic in terms of what you can and cannot do.”²⁹

Extant scholarship on coalition-building, both in general contexts and in the specific case of presidents, as well as the perspectives offered by my interviewees, offer two empirical expectations for with which types of organized interests presidents are more likely to engage. First, presidents should be more likely to engage with organized interests with larger endowments of electoral and policy resources which can advance presidents’ goals, such as campaign contributions, policy information, political intelligence, and congressional and grassroots lobbying capabilities. Given that these resources are what make organized interests important members of presidents’ coalitions, presidents should focus their limited coalition-building efforts to engage with interests whose high levels of resources would most efficiently bolster the strength of their coalitions. Second, presidents should be more likely to engage with organized interests who are aligned with their party or are otherwise natural supporters.

²⁷Personal interview with a former White House official, May 3, 2018.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Personal interview with a former White House official, August 24, 2019.

Because copartisan organized interests are more likely to share presidents' preferences, they are more likely to respond favorably to presidents' entreaties and offer up the resources the White House requests. In the next chapter, I leverage a rare measure of presidents' engagement with organized interests—whether representatives of an interest were granted access to the White House—to evaluate these expectations.

What are the Benefits of Presidential Coalition-Building?

Much of this chapter focuses on understanding why and with which organized interests presidents engage. The empirical implications I offer in the previous section correspond with the latter—*with which* organized interests presidents engage—but do not speak directly to the former issue—*why* presidents and organized interests engage in the first place. Throughout the chapter, I have posited that presidents and organized interests engage because they each expect to benefit from engagement. I here briefly revisit these ideas to explicate my expectations concerning how both presidents and organized interests benefit from engagement.

I earlier suggested that organized interests benefit from engaging with presidents through selective incentives they receive from presidents and the broader federal government. Some of these incentives, such as presidents' enactment of interests' preferred policies, help interests achieve their ultimate policy goals. Other incentives, like presidents inviting organized interest representatives to a public ceremony, enable interests to serve their institutional maintenance needs. If presidents use selective incentives to encourage organized interests to participate in their supportive coalitions, then we should expect organized interests with whom presidents engage to receive more of these selective incentives. In Chapter 4, I focus on a selective incentive which serves both organized interests' policy and institutional maintenance goals—appointments of their members to federal advisory committees—to assess this expectation.

For presidents, I posited that the benefits of engaging with organized interests manifest through the accumulation of electoral and policy resources which help presidents achieve their goals. These resources can take many forms, such campaign contributions, policy expertise, and congressional lobbying capabilities. If my proposition is true, then we should expect to see interests with which presidents engage provide more of these resources, and we should expect that these resources help presidents achieve their goals. Because the transfer of many of these intangible resources often occurs out of public view, the former expectation is difficult to evaluate. However, in Chapter 5, I investigate the latter expectation with a survey experiment to examine whether organized interests' grassroots lobbying capabilities help presidents to influence public attitudes on their policy priorities.

Chapter 3

With Which Interests Do Presidents Engage?

In this chapter, I empirically test my argument that presidents seek to maximize their share of organized interest resources by engaging with interests who have large resource endowments and who are aligned with their party. The key challenge in testing this argument is operationalizing presidential engagement with organized interests; given that systematic records of interactions between policymakers and organized interests are rare, how can we measure engagement? I begin by discussing how White House access is a strong signal of presidents' willingness to engage with organized interests and describe a unique data source with which we can determine to which organized interests presidents provide access—the White House visitor logs. Then, I describe the data and empirical models I use to evaluate my expectations concerning with which organized interests presidents engage. Finally, I present my results, which indicate that presidents are more likely to provide White House access to organized interests with larger resource endowments and who are aligned with the party of the incumbent president.

Operationalizing Engagement as White House Access

In order for presidents to enjoy the benefits they seek from organized interests, they need to engage with those interests. Technological advancements in recent decades provide the White House with ample channels to facilitate this engagement, ranging from traditional tools such as mail, phone, and fax to modern innovations such as email, texting, video conferencing, social media. However, despite this proliferation of modes of communication, policymakers across institutions and organized interest representatives alike perceive access, or in-person direct contacts, as the most valuable means of engagement (e.g., Baumgartner et al. 2009; Levine 2009; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). Access provides policymakers and organized interests with each other's attention, enabling them to better transmit resources, such as information and expertise, than they can through other means (Hall and Wayman 1990; Kalla and Broockman 2016). Access also makes each other's preferences more salient, or mentally accessible, such that policymakers and organized interests afford each other preferential treatment in future interactions and are more likely to consider their preferences in their decision-making processes (Miler 2010; Wright 1990). One organized interest representative echoed these two benefits of in-person access to the White House, reporting that, relative to other modes of communication, in-person access "tends to be more effective in terms of sharing knowledge... and just sort of raising our issues."¹ In addition, access encourages the cultivation of interpersonal relationships between policymakers and organized interest representatives that enhance cooperation and trust (Levine 2009; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). Another organized interest representative underscored this point in suggesting that

¹Personal interview with a policy advocate for an education organization, May 11, 2018.

in-person access to a White House official allows her to “get a much better feeling for the person when you can read their body language and interact with them in human form.”²

The White House’s provision of in-person access is a good measure of presidents’ engagement with organized interests not only because it facilitates efficient communication, mobilization, and coordination, but also because, relative to other institutions, presidents exercise high degrees of control over organized interests’ in-person access. As discussed in Chapter 2, whereas interactions between organized interests and policymakers in other institutions are typically the product of “outside-in” lobbying, with organized interests pursuing engagement, interactions between the White House and organized interests more often stem from “inside-out” lobbying, with presidents reaching outside the White House to request engagement with organized interests (Loomis 2009; Peterson 1992; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Tenpas 2005). Consequently, the White House’s provisions of access reflect its preferences over with which interests it wants to engage. Presidents exercise more discretion over the provision of access relative to their colleagues in other institutions, such as Congress, because of their tighter control over the supply of access and interests’ focus on more easily accessible policymaking venues.

First, logistical barriers enhance the White House’s ability to manage organized interests’ in-person access. Unlike Congress and the bureaucracy, whose physical structures are generally open to the public and which encourage public participation in their proceedings (e.g., McKay 2018; Moffitt 2014), the White House is ensconced in some of the densest security in the world and is off-limits to the general public save contained tours and seasonal events. One consequence of this arrangement is that organized interests cannot secure in-person contacts with White House officials without those officials’ advanced approval. While organized interest

²Personal interview with a policy advocate for a reproductive rights organization, May 4, 2018.

representatives can patrol the lobbies on Capitol Hill to catch congresspersons and their staff unawares—the practice from which the term “lobbying” originates (Baumgartner and Leech 1998, 33-34)—they cannot secure an audience with the president or his staff unless someone in the White House provides them access. Another consequence of the White House’s barriers to entry is that access is costly for both presidents and organized interests, as arranging meetings requires conducting security screenings for visitors and coordinating personnel to attend. Because these costs are not incurred when presidents engage with interests through other modes of communication, presidents’ choice to engage with an interest through in-person access suggests that the expected benefits from access compensate for the higher cost associated with this form of engagement. As one former White House official expressed, because the cost of coordinating meetings with organized interests at the White House is “not trivial... the default [mode of communication] was typically email,” even though communicating in-person or by phone “is more effective.”³ The respondents in my survey of lobbyists reinforce the relative scarcity of in-person White House access compared to remote means of communication; while 40.2% of respondents indicated communicating with the Obama White House via phone or email five or more times in an average year, only 20.7% reported visiting the White House at the same frequency.⁴

Second, recognizing that White House access is difficult to obtain, organized interests focus their access-seeking efforts on more permeable institutions and allow the White House to take the lead in determining with which interests it will engage. As mentioned in the previous

³Personal interview with a former White House official, May 3, 2018.

⁴While in-person access to the White House is more rare than remote means of communication, the frequency with which respondents reported experiencing both types of interaction are highly correlated (Pearson’s $r = 0.77$). Therefore, in-person White House access is not afforded to a *different* set of organized interests than is provided with remote communication; rather, in-person access is provided to a subset of interests with which the White House engages through other, less costly means.

chapter, 92.0% and 82.3% of the respondents in my survey of lobbyists reported that Congress and the bureaucracy, respectively, are “very” or “extremely” important lobbying venues, but only 37.3% assigned similar importance to the White House. My survey respondents’ answers to questions about how requests for engagement are initiated and granted further substantiate this president-centered model of access. When asked about their experiences during the Obama presidency, 53% of respondents who reported having in-person White House access indicated that at least half of their visits were initiated by the White House. Further, while 95.1% of these respondents “usually” or “always” accepted invitations to visit the White House, only 56.5% reported that their requests for White House access were similarly “usually” or “always” granted. Additionally, among respondents who reported not experiencing in-person White House access, only one indicated that they received an invitation from the Obama administration but turned it down.

My interviewees further reinforced the notion that presidents wield primary control over which organized interests receive access. One organized interest representative remarked that presidents and their staffs are “the drivers. They determine whether they want to be responsive or not.”⁵ Similarly, another policy advocate reported, “I have not ever turned down a meeting. I always think of meeting as productive. In terms of getting the meetings, yes, it’s very challenging.”⁶ From the perspective of the White House, one former official expressed that while the White House is selective in what meeting requests it fulfills, “by and large, when the White House calls, people take the call. People were generally always willing to meet.”⁷ Thus, through both their ability to control the allocation of access and their primary role in managing contacts with organized interests, presidents manifest their

⁵Personal interview with a policy advocate for a religious organization, May 3, 2018.

⁶Personal interview with a policy advocate for a water policy organization, August 28, 2019.

⁷Personal interview with a former White House official, May 3, 2018.

preferences over with which organized interests they engage through their provision of White House access.

In order to use presidents' provision of access to organized interests as a measure of engagement, we need to be able to observe this provision of access. Traditionally, empirical studies of policymakers' in-person direct contacts with organized interests have been difficult to conduct due to data scarcity (see Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012, 295-304; De Figueiredo and Richter 2014). In most contexts, access is unobservable, and complete records of organized interests' access to policymakers are rarely made available, even after long periods of time have passed. For example, because the records of members of Congress, who are most often the subject of studies of organized interest access, are not publicly available or subject to the Freedom of Information Act, scholars cannot observe which organized interests have access to which members of Congress (but see You n.d.). However, recent releases of over 7 million White House visitor logs records from the presidencies of Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump provide a rare opportunity to directly observe organized interests' access to the White House. Pairing these records with lobbying and campaign finance reports, I am able to identify instances in which presidents provided access to representatives of organized interests and assess with which types of interests presidents engage.

Measuring Access with the White House Visitor Logs

As one of the most secure workplaces in the the United States and the world, the White House closely screens and monitors all individuals entering and exiting the White House complex, which consists of the White House itself and the adjacent Eisenhower Executive Office Building and New Executive Office Building. The comings and goings of individuals without permanent access passes, such as White House staffers and reporters, are recorded in the Worker and Visitor Entry System (WAVES)—more commonly referred to as the White House visitor logs—a database maintained by the Secret Service. Each record in WAVES

contains information such as the name of the visitor, the date and time of the visit, and the name of the visitee (i.e., the person inside the White House that meets with the visitor). While many entries pertain to visitors attending tours or other social events, WAVES also contains the names of individuals visiting the White House on official business, such as organized interest representatives.

Prior to 2009, no sitting president had ever made public the White House’s visitor logs. However, in September of that year, Barack Obama fulfilled a campaign promise by announcing a voluntary disclosure policy under which the White House would release its visitor logs on a quarterly basis.⁸ When President Obama left office, his administration had released nearly 6 million unique visitor records covering the time between September 15, 2009 and September 30, 2016.⁹ Though President Donald Trump ceased voluntary disclosure of the White House visitor logs upon taking office, his administration later agreed to release WAVES records on a monthly basis for visitors to officials in four agencies in the Executive

⁸Norm Eisen, “Opening Up the People’s House,” *The White House*, September 4, 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/09/04/opening-peoplesquos-house>; “White House Voluntary Disclosure Policy Visitor Access Records,” *The White House*, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/VoluntaryDisclosure>. Under the voluntary disclosure policy, the Obama White House reserved the right to withhold visitor records related to “national security interests,” “purely personal guests of the first and second families,” and “a small group of particularly sensitive meetings,” such as the visits of Supreme Court nominees. These exemptions should not impede my analysis because few meetings with organized interest representatives fall into these categories. However, if the Obama White House used these exemptions to conceal engagement with organized interests, they would likely conceal meetings with representatives from well-resourced and copartisan interests, as those meetings would be most likely to spark public backlash. Given that I expect that presidents are more likely to engage with well-resourced and copartisan interests, this concealment would bias downward the effect of resources and copartisanship in my analysis, making it more difficult to detect evidence in support of my expectations.

⁹The visitor logs provided by the Obama administration included a “Description” column, which allowed White House personnel to provide text entries indicating the nature of the visit. Using these text entries, I discard all visits that do not represent meaningful opportunities for engagement with organized interests, such as White House tours. After doing so, approximately 2.3 million unique records remain.

Office of the President housed in the White House complex—the Council on Environmental Quality, the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy.¹⁰ To date, these disclosures have yielded over 80,000 additional White House visitor logs records spanning from January 20, 2017 to September 31, 2018. In addition, starting in 2015, the Clinton Presidential Library began releasing the White House visitor logs for the final five years of the Clinton administration (1996-2001) in response to Freedom of Information Act requests.¹¹ Because the earliest Lobbying Disclosure Act data on which I rely to identify organized interest representatives begins in 1998, I only utilize the 1.3 million visitor logs records from the final three years of the Clinton administration. In total, my analysis utilizes over 7 million White House visitor logs records.¹²

¹⁰Josh Gerstein, “Trump Administration Agrees to Post Visitor Logs for Some White House Offices,” *Politico*, February 15, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/15/trump-visitor-logs-white-house-413016>. The Trump administration agreed to release records for visits to officials in these agencies because, unlike officials in the White House Office (WHO), these agencies have independent statutory authority and are led by Senate-confirmed officials. As a result, these agencies are subject to the Freedom of Information Act rather than the Presidential Records Act, making it easier for the public to secure information about their activities while the president is in office.

¹¹“Worker and Visitor Entry System (WAVES), 1996-1998 - Collection Finding Aid,” *Clinton Digital Library*, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57587>; “White House Worker and Visitor Entry System (WAVES), 1999-2000 - Collection Finding Aid,” *Clinton Digital Library*, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/44133>.

¹²The White House visitor logs from the George W. Bush administration are the subject of a pending FOIA request (2014-0237-F). To date, the George W. Bush Presidential Library has only made available a handful of records from January 20, 2001 (“White House Visitor’s Log Records from January 20, 2001 - January 20, 2009,” *George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum*, https://www.georgewbushlibrary.smu.edu/en/Digital-Library--2/~link.aspx?_id=84B337B067DE460393D2AB6C7DE5132C&_z=z), and has no expected timetable for the release of additional records (Personal correspondence with an archivist at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, January 16, 2020).

The White House visitor logs are valuable because they contain evidence of organized interests' access to the White House. However, because the only information the logs contain about visitors is their names, identifying which records correspond to access granted to which organized interests requires knowledge of the names of the organized interest representatives who could appear in the logs. I construct this roster of names using organized interests' filings under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (LDA), as curated by the Center for Responsive Politics (CRP).¹³ Under the LDA and subsequent amendments,¹⁴ individuals who are classified as lobbyists must submit regular reports for each of their clients detailing their lobbying activities on behalf of the client.^{15,16} While LDA filings do not identify all

¹³*Center for Responsive Politics*, <https://www.opensecrets.org/>.

¹⁴Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. §1601) https://www.senate.gov/legislative/Lobbying/Lobby_Disclosure_Act/TOC.htm; Lobbying Disclosure Act Guidance, January 31, 2017, <https://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov/ldaguidance.pdf>.

¹⁵Under the LDA, a lobbyist is an individual who, in working on behalf of a client, makes a "lobbying contact," or an "oral, written, or electronic communication" regarding public policy, with more than one "covered official," which includes most members of the executive and legislative branches, and spends 20 percent or more of her time working for the client on lobbying activities in a given reporting period. As of January 2017, a lobbyist employed directly by a client spending less than \$13,000, or a lobbyist contracted by a client spending less than \$3,000, on lobbying activities in a given quarter is not required to file a report for that quarter.

¹⁶Because filings contain only the names of a client's lobbyists, and not other employees of the client who might engage in lobbying activity, such as top executives, focusing on organized interests' registered lobbyists might undercount instances of White House access when the organized interest representative visiting the White House is not classified as a lobbyist. To explore the extent to which this measurement error exists, I asked respondents to my survey of lobbyists who reported that their organized interests had meetings at the Obama White House to indicate which of the following types of employees attended these meetings: "executive officers," "registered lobbyists," "government affairs employees who were not registered lobbyists," or "other" persons. 76.4% of respondents indicated that White House meetings were attended by registered lobbyists, and 71.2% reported that meetings were attended by executive officers (who are often listed as lobbyists on LDA reports). These results indicate that measurement error stemming from my focus on organized interests' lobbyists should be minimal, particularly because instances of access are counted on the basis of appointments, rather than individuals gaining access. As a result, I detect instances of

potential lobbying clients who might express interest in lobbying the federal government, they do identify all lobbying clients who are actively engaged in a non-negligible amount of lobbying activity at the federal level, and therefore define the full population of organized interests actively engaged in lobbying activities.¹⁷

To identify instances of presidents' engagement with organized interests, I match the names of organized interests' lobbyists with the names in the White House visitor logs for the period during which those organized interests retained those lobbyists.¹⁸ CRP currently

access by an organized interest so long as at least one member of its contingent to the White House is a registered lobbyist.

¹⁷LDA filings admittedly do not contain every organized interest or lobbyist active in federal policy in a given period (Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012). However, LDA filings provide an inclusive list of all lobbying clients who express more than a transient interest in lobbying the federal government. First, the thresholds for meeting the definition of a lobbyist, and thus requiring the reporting of a lobbyist's reporting of a client's activities, as described in Footnote 15, are fairly low. Second, *Washington Representatives*, the premiere data source for information on federal lobbying used by both practitioners and scholars (e.g. Baumgartner et al. 2009; Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012), relies on the LDA filings as its primary source of lobbyists and lobbying clients, suggesting that LDA filings provide a comprehensive recording of federal lobbying activity. At worst, the LDA Database defines the full population of organized interests as those interests engaged in federal lobbying activity who meet the registration requirements under the LDA, and excludes only interests who are minor participants in federal lobbying.

¹⁸The spelling and punctuation of the name of the same individual in the White House visitor logs and the LDA filings may vary slightly, such that matching on the raw names may induce measurement error. To account for differences in the presentation of lobbyists' names in both data sources, I preprocess the names to remove punctuation and use approximate string matching, which identifies a match when the difference between the strings is below a specified tolerance threshold. Specifically, I use the `fuzzyjoin` package in R and match names using the Damerau-Levenshtein distance metric at four different tolerance levels—zero edits (i.e. perfect matches), one edit, two edits, and three edits. All models presented in the main paper use measures of access based on perfect name matches across the two data sources. To assess the robustness of my results, I present models which use more permissive tolerance levels in Appendix B. These more permissive tolerance levels induce more noise, as increasing the permitted edit distances to identify matches increases the number of matches, some of which will be “true positives” but some of which will be “false positives.” Even with this additional noise, the coefficient estimates and substantive conclusions drawn are generally consistent for up to two edit distances.

provides information from all LDA filings from 1998 to 2018, enabling me to detect instances of White House engagement with organized interests across the over 7 million records described above. To maintain consistency with the timing of LDA filings, I aggregate all instances of access associated with each organized interest for the relevant temporal unit—semestral for the Clinton era, and quarterly for the Obama and Trump eras—to construct binary indicators and counts of organized interests’ White House access in those time periods.¹⁹ This level of

¹⁹Some may question whether this measure adequately captures White House access because the president and his staff may have in-person interactions with organized interest representatives outside of the White House complex, and these interactions are not recorded in the White House visitor logs. For example, Obama officials encountered criticism for meeting with lobbyists at coffee shops and restaurants outside of, by near to, the White House complex because these meetings fell outside of the visitor logs (e.g., Lichtblau, Eric, “Across From White House, Coffee With Lobbyists”, *The New York Times*, June 24, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/25/us/politics/25caribou.html>). While the White House visitor logs do miss some instances of in-person interactions between presidents and their staffs and organized interest representatives, these in-person interactions off of the White House campus do not undermine the validity of my inferences. As noted in Footnote 8, if the White House purposefully met with organized interests outside of the White House to stay out of the visitor logs, then they would likely do so when meeting with well-resourced and copartisan interests, thus biasing downward my results. Further, as Craig Holman, who lobbies on ethics, lobbying, and campaign finance rules for Public Citizen, reports, White House officials’ decision to meet with organized interest representatives off-site is not driven by a desire to conceal the meetings, but instead “because you have to get all this clearance to get into the White House. If I want to meet with someone in the White House this afternoon, I can’t get clearance in time. Lobbyists and White House staff will meet in the coffee shops, but that’s not in an effort to try to get around lobbying restrictions” (Leech 2014). Additionally, the respondents in my survey of lobbyists reported a high correlation between in-person interactions with the White House both inside and outside of the complex (Pearson’s $r = 0.74$), suggesting that interests that experience off-campus access are still detected in the visitor logs (see Table A.4). Finally, unlike Obama and Trump White House officials, Clinton White House officials had no expectation that the visitor logs would ever be made public, and thus were less likely to try to conceal their White House meetings with organized interests. So long as the results using data from the Clinton White House comport with those from more recent White Houses, concern about the White House trying to keep meetings with organized interests off the logs should be minimal.

observation—the organized interest-time period unit—constitutes the unit of analysis for my empirical models.

Measuring Organized Interests’ Resources and Partisanship

To obtain measures of organized interests’ resource endowments and partisan alignments, I draw on quantitative and qualitative data provided by CRP. Because most organized interests specialize in either electoral politics or policymaking (Tripathi, Ansolabehere and Snyder 2002), I incorporate measures of both organized interests’ electoral and policy resources. First, I measure organized interests’ electoral resources as the aggregate amount of campaign contributions they make to candidates for federal office. I focus on aggregate contributions rather than only contributions to the incumbent president because aggregate contributions reflect interests’ overall electoral resources, which presidents can channel in support of themselves and their copartisans. Using CRP’s compilation of the Federal Election Commission’s campaign contribution reports for the election cycles immediately preceding and including the time periods for which I have White House visitor logs records—1995-1996 to 1999-2000 for the Clinton records, and 2007-2008 to 2017-2018 for the Obama and Trump records—I generate a binary indicator for each organized interest-time period observation for whether the interest made any contributions in the preceding two years (i.e., the length of an electoral cycle) and a continuous measure of the amount of money it contributed to candidates for federal office in that period. By including both measures in my empirical models, I can distinguish between the effects of participating in electoral politics and the level of resources devoted to electoral politics. Second, I measure organized interests’ policy resources in a given

time period with their reported amounts of lobbying expenditures in their LDA filings.^{20,21} Given the right-skewedness of both campaign contributions and lobbying expenditures, I apply log transformations to both measures.

Measuring interests' partisan alignment is relatively less straightforward. Few measures of organized interest partisanship or ideology exist, and those that do offer coverage for only a sliver of the interests who file LDA reports. For example, McKay (2008) uses organized interests' evaluations of members of Congress roll call votes to scale their ideology, but can only do so for the 72 interests who offer such evaluations. Again, Bonica (2013) uses campaign contributions to estimate the ideology of donors, such as organized interests, but, because most organized interests do not make campaign contributions (Tripathi, Ansolabehere and Snyder 2002), offers ideology scores for only 1,416 of the 32,421, or 4.4%, of the unique organized interests included in my analysis. In light of this limitation, I classify the partisan alignment of the 92 industries into which CRP categorizes organized interests using CRP's industry summaries and assign each interest the partisan alignment of its industry. For each industry, CRP provides a written summary of its political activity and policy preferences, and these summaries often provide qualitative statements of the partisan leanings of interests in

²⁰Under LDA guidelines, lobbying activities for which expenditures must be reported include not only lobbying contacts themselves, but also “any efforts in support of such contacts, including preparation or planning activities, research, and any other background work that is intended, at the time of its preparation, for use in contacts, and coordination with the lobbying activities of others” (Lobbying Disclosure Act Guidance, January 31, 2017, <https://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov/ldaguidance.pdf>). Thus, lobbying expenditures capture a wide range of organized interests' policy resources, including staff salaries, accrued policy expertise and political information, and expenses incidental to their direct lobbying efforts.

²¹Lobbying Disclosure Act reports require filers to first indicate if their expenditures met a minimum threshold—\$10,000 for reports filed in 2007 or earlier, \$5,000 for reports filed in 2008 or later—and then to report a specific amount if in excess of that threshold. Thus, expenditures are left-censored at the threshold amounts. To account for this left-censoring, I subtract the threshold amount from the expenditures reported for each organized interest in each time period, such that the continuous measure indicates additional expenditures exceeding the threshold.

the industry.²² If an industry’s summary expresses a clear preference for either the Democratic or Republican Party, then that industry is coded as aligned with that party. If the summary does not express a clear preference for either party, then it is instead coded as Independent. While this trichotomous classification scheme may misattribute the partisan alignment of some individual interests within industries, studies using other measures of organized interest ideology find that the distributions of ideology within industries typically exhibit clear central tendencies (e.g., Bonica 2013). Given the dearth of measures of organized interest partisanship or ideology, industry-level partisan alignment is an imprecise but informative measure of individual interests’ partisan leanings that provides coverage for the full data set.²³

Estimation Strategy

The data structure described above poses non-trivial challenges for analysis. One set of challenges stems from inconsistencies in temporal units of measurement and disparities in data availability. While some time-varying components of the data are observed at granular daily levels, such as instances of White House access and campaign contributions, others are observed at less frequent intervals, such as quarterly reports of lobbying expenditures and the names of registered lobbyists. Further still, because amendments to the Lobbying Disclosure Act implemented in 2008 changed the required frequency of filings from semestral (through 2007) to quarterly (2008 and after), the temporal units associated with data drawn

²²“Alphabetical Listing of Industries,” *Center for Responsive Politics*, <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/alphalist.php>.

²³In Appendix B, I present alternative analyses that use the interest-level ideology scores provided by Bonica (2013) rather than my own trichotomous categorization of partisanship. The models exclude over 90% of the observations because they lack ideology scores. Additionally, because the ideology scores are estimated with organized interests’ campaign contributions, these alternative analyses select on interests who are active in electoral politics, which is a distinct subset of the organized interest universe. However, the results from these alternative models are substantively similar to those presented here using industry-level partisan alignment.

from LDA reports vary across the Clinton and Obama and Trump presidencies. Additionally, because the Obama logs only extend to September 31, 2016, I am missing data for my measure of access to the four EOP agencies which have released visitor logs during the Trump administration for the fourth quarter of 2016, creating a gap in the time series extending through the Obama and Trump presidencies for those agencies. Finally, while the visitor logs from the Clinton and Obama presidencies cover the full White House complex, those from the Trump presidency cover only four agencies in the Executive Office of the President over which presidents have relatively less political control.²⁴ Thus, direct comparisons between results drawn from the full visitor logs from the Clinton and Obama presidencies and the partial visitor logs from the Trump presidency may lead to false conclusions.

I address these inconsistencies in three ways. First, given the temporal changes in LDA filings between the Clinton and the Obama and Trump presidencies and the disparity in data availability at the end of the Obama presidency, I estimate models for each presidency separately. Second, to make units of measurement for all variables consistent within presidencies, I aggregate all data up to the temporal unit associated with contemporary LDA filing requirements—semestral for the Clinton presidency, and quarterly for the Obama and

²⁴While presidents exercise high degrees of control over all agencies within the Executive Office of the President relative to other parts of the bureaucracy, the four agencies for which the Trump administration has released visitor logs are distinct from the more visible units typically associated with the White House. First, as explained in Footnote 10, these four agencies have independent statutory authority and Senate-confirmed leaders, making them more subject to congressional oversight and Freedom of Information Act requests than officials from the White House Office, such as the president’s chief of staff or press secretary. Second, whereas nearly all officials in policy or political roles in the White House office are political appointees of the president, civil servants occupy over 80% of the jobs in these four agencies for each of the time periods in my analysis, making them less responsive to presidents’ whims. Together, these differences suggest that presidents may be less able to use these agencies to implement his engagement strategies with organized interests, and therefore any evidence of engagement detected in these agencies may be weaker than that detected across the full White House complex.

Trump presidencies. Third, to make appropriate comparisons across presidencies where the coverage of the visitor logs we observe differs, I separately model presidents' engagement with organized interests using records for the full White House complex during the Clinton and Obama presidencies and using records for the four EOP agencies which are included in both the Obama and Trump records.

A second set of challenges stems from the time-series cross-sectional structure of the data. Each observation corresponds to a unique organized interest in a given time period, and each organized interest is further nested within one of 92 industry groupings as specified by CRP. One clear implication is that observations are not independent, as multiple observations correspond to the same organized interests, industries, and time periods. In order to recover unbiased parameter estimates and associated measures of uncertainty, the analysis requires empirical techniques which account for this non-independence. Another challenge imposed by the data structure is that one of the key covariates—organized interests' partisan alignment—is measured at the industry-level, such that it is repeated across observations nested within the same organized interests and industries. As a result, standard regression models cannot estimate parameters for both organized interest- and industry-level effects and partisan alignment due to collinearity.

To account for the non-independence of observations and collinearity between group-specific effects and partisan alignment, I utilize Bayesian multilevel models (Gelman and Hill 2006). Multilevel models enable the researcher to explicitly account for nesting in data structures by allowing parameter estimates to vary for each grouping in the data. Additionally, multilevel models can feasibly estimate parameters for covariates nested at the group-level. The multilevel models for which I present results in this chapter take the following general form. Each observation i, t is nested within an organized interest j and a time period p . Each interest j is further nested within an industry k . For example, to estimate the independent effects of interests' electoral and political resources and their partisan alignment

on presidents' provision of access to those interests during the Clinton presidency, I fit the following multilevel logistic regression model:^{25,26}

$$\begin{aligned}
Pr(\text{access}_{i,t} = 1) = & \text{logit}^{-1}(\alpha + \beta_1 \cdot \text{access}_{i,t-1} + \beta_2 \cdot \log(\text{lobby_exp})_{i,t-1} + \\
& \beta_3 \cdot \text{any_contribs}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4} + \\
& \beta_4 \cdot \text{any_contribs}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4} \cdot \log(\text{contrib_amt})_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4} + \\
& \xi \mathbf{Z}_{i,t-1} + \alpha_{j[i]} + \gamma_{p[t]}) \text{ for all } i \text{ in } 1, \dots, N \\
\alpha_j \sim & N(\mu_{\alpha,0} + \mu_{\alpha,1,k[j]}, \sigma_{\alpha}^2) \text{ for all } j \text{ in } 1, \dots, J \\
\mu_{\alpha,1,k} \sim & N(\delta_{\mu_{\alpha,1,0}} + \delta_{\mu_{\alpha,1,1}} \cdot \text{pty_align}_k, \sigma_{\mu_{\alpha,1,k}}^2) \text{ for all } k \text{ in } 1, \dots, K \\
\gamma_p \sim & N(\mu_{\gamma_0}, \sigma_{\gamma}^2) \text{ for all } p \text{ in } 1, \dots, P
\end{aligned}$$

The outcome measure, $\text{access}_{i,t}$, is a binary indicator for whether observation i of organized interest j in time period t experienced White House access. The key covariates in the model are $\text{lobby_exp}_{i,t-1}$, the amount of lobbying expenditures reported by interest j in

²⁵In this chapter, I present results from models using binary indicators of presidents' provision of access to organized interests. In Appendix B, I present results from analogous negative binomial models which instead use a count of the number of times each organized interest received White House access as the outcome measure. The coefficient estimates and substantive conclusions are generally consistent across outcome measures.

²⁶The corresponding model for the Obama and Trump presidencies is nearly identical. The only distinction concerns the number of previous time periods for which campaign contributions are considered in the present period, t . Recall that the measures of whether an organized interest made any campaign contributions to candidates for federal office and the amount of those contributions are calculated by looking at the interest's campaign finance activity for the preceding two-year period, or the length of an election cycle. Because observations for the Clinton presidency are semestral, or twice a year, these measures require information from the preceding four periods. However, because observations for the Obama presidency are quarterly, or four times a year, these same measures require information from the preceding eight periods. Thus, the comparable model for the Obama and Trump presidencies subscripts the variables for campaign finance activity to look back over the preceding eight time periods (i.e., $\text{any_contribs}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-8}$ and $\text{contrib_amt}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-8}$).

the preceding period; $\text{any_contribs}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4}$, a binary indicator for whether interest j made campaign contributions to any candidates for federal office in the preceding four periods (i.e., the preceding two years); $\text{contrib_amt}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4}$, the amount of contributions made by interest j to candidates for federal office in the preceding four periods; and pty_align_k , a trichotomous indicator of the partisan alignment of the industry k of which interest j is a member. Other covariates in the model include a lagged measure of the dependent variable, $\text{access}_{i,j,t-1}$, to account for the dynamic nature of presidents' provision of access to interest j across periods, and binary indicators drawn from interests' LDA filings for whether they retained their own in-house lobbyists or relied solely on lobbying firms and for which of 80 possible issue areas they reported lobbying on in the preceding period ($\xi \mathbf{Z}_{i,t-1}$). Finally, the model includes varying intercepts for the unique organized interests ($\alpha_{j[i]}$), industries ($\mu_{\alpha,1,k[j]}$), and time periods ($\gamma_{p[t]}$) in which each observation i is nested.

To estimate these models, I use the R package **brms** (Bürkner 2017), an interface for using the C++ package Stan (Carpenter et al. 2017). All models are fitted using the NUTS (No-U-Turn Sampler) algorithm (Hoffman and Gelman 2014) with 4 chains and 2000 iterations per chain (1000 for warmup, 1000 for sampling). All models presented here report no divergent transitions during the sampling phase and indicate convergence with \hat{R} statistics of ≤ 1.10 for all parameters.

Results

Interpreting results from multilevel models can be difficult because of the large number of parameters they estimate. To ease discussion of the results, I present the predicted probabilities of access for organized interests with fixed values of lobbying expenditures, campaign contributions, and partisan alignment, and vary each covariate independently to demonstrate its marginal effect. Unless otherwise specified, when fixed, lobbying expenditures and campaign contributions take on their median values, and partisan alignment is set as

Independent. This approach provides the added benefit of illustrating how the predicted probability of access changes across levels of the covariates and whether the differences in predictions across levels are distinguishable from each other.²⁷

Access to the White House Complex: Clinton and Obama

I begin by focusing on the Clinton and Obama presidencies, where the visitor logs cover the full White House complex. Subsequently, I turn to an analysis using data from the Obama and Trump presidencies that centers on the four Executive Office of the President agencies for which visitor logs are available from both administrations. In the left panes of Figures 3.1 and 3.2, I plot the predicted probabilities of an organized interest receiving White House access with the levels of resources and partisan alignment specified on the far left during the Clinton and Obama presidencies, respectively.²⁸ In the right panes of those figures, I present the differences in specific pairs of predicted probabilities plotted in the left panes as resource levels and partisan alignment vary, with all other covariates fixed. Looking first at the predicted probabilities associated with varying levels of lobbying expenditures and campaign contributions—my measures of policy and electoral resources,

²⁷To determine whether the predicted probability of access given some fixed set of covariate values is distinguishable from the predicted probability of access given a change in one covariate, I obtain the posterior distributions of the probability of access for both sets of covariate values and difference the distributions. If the 95% credible interval for the distribution of differences does not include zero, I refer to the difference as distinguishable.

²⁸For each set of covariate values in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, the probability of White House access during the Clinton administration is roughly twice as high as during the Obama administration. At least two contextual factors explain this difference. First, the temporal range accounted for by each observation during the Clinton era is half as large as during the Obama era (semestral vs. quarterly), such that each organized interest in the Clinton era has twice as long to obtain White House access and have an outcome value of “1.” Second, the number of organized interests filing LDA reports during the Obama presidency is roughly two and a half times higher than during the Clinton presidency. Given that the White House’s ability to engage with organized interests likely remained constant, the likelihood that any given interest would obtain access is lower during the Obama presidency.

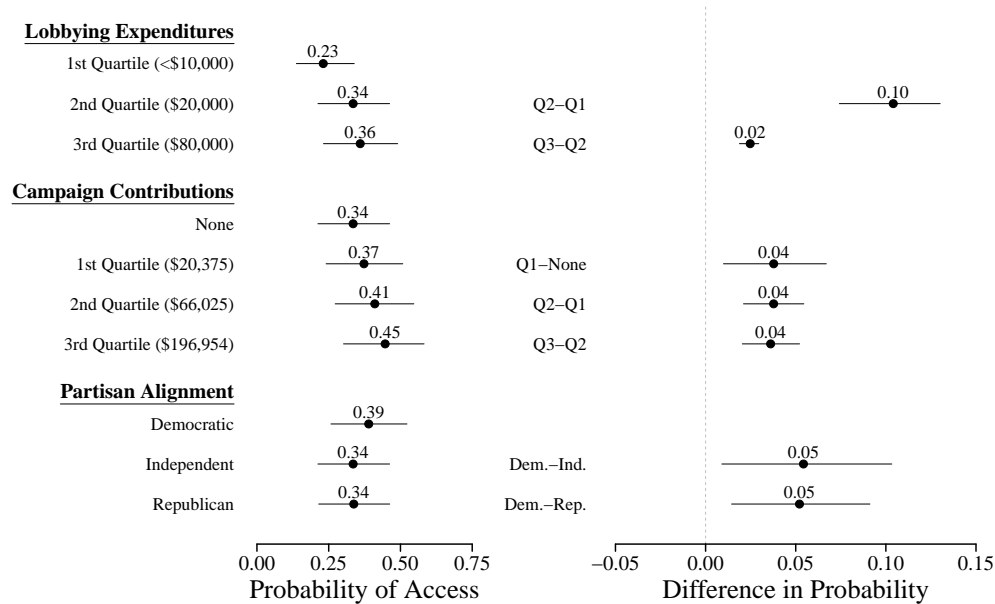


Figure 3.1: Effect of Organized Interests' Resources and Partisan Alignment on Probability of White House Access (Clinton) In the left pane, points and lines represent the posterior means and 95% credible intervals of the predicted probabilities calculated with parameter estimates from the sampling iterations stored from the model using data from the Clinton White House. For each of the three types of organized interest characteristics specified in bold and underlined, I calculate predicted probabilities for each of the specified variable values while fixing other covariates values. In the right pane, I plot the differences in the distributions of predicted probabilities and their 95% credible intervals for pairs of predictions in the left pane, as specified by the labels on the left side of the right pane. For example, looking at the predicted probabilities of access across levels of lobbying expenditures, the three points in the left pane indicate the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to the first, second, and third quartile values, with campaign contributions fixed at None (the median value), partisan alignment fixed as Independent, and other variables fixed at their median values. In the right pane, the two topmost points indicate the differences in the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to their first and second quartile values, and their second and third quartile values, respectively. Taking the predictions associated with lobbying expenditures together, we observe that organized interests with higher levels of lobbying expenditures have a distinguishably higher probability of White House access. Please note that some differences indicated in the right pane may not equal the differences between the corresponding values in the left pane due to rounding.

respectively—we observe consistent increases in the probability of access as organized interests' resource levels increase. For example, turning to the left pane of Figure 3.1, whereas the

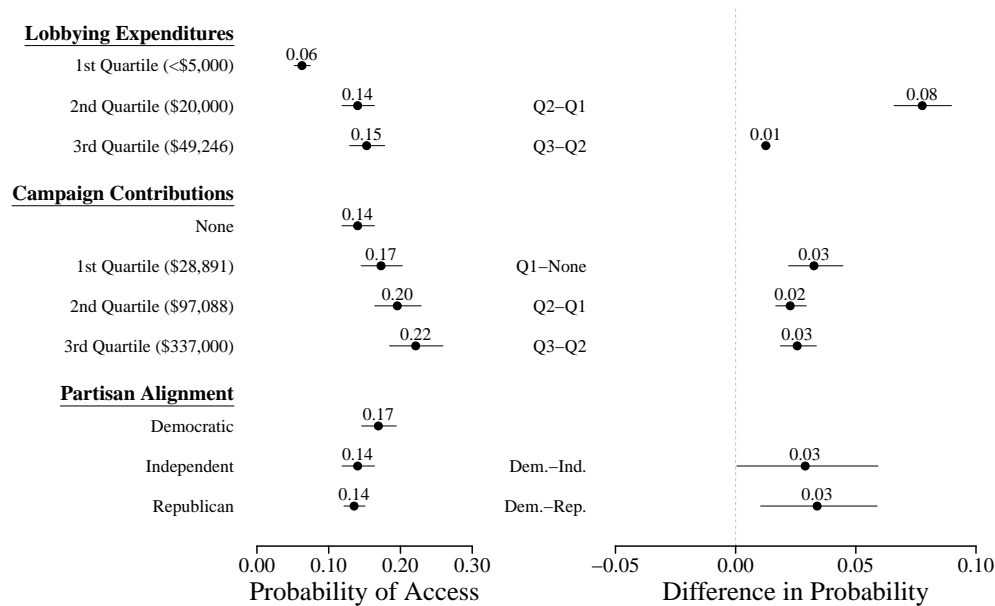


Figure 3.2: **Effect of Organized Interests' Resources and Partisan Alignment on Probability of White House Access (Obama)** In the left pane, points and lines represent the posterior means and 95% credible intervals of the predicted probabilities calculated with parameter estimates from the sampling iterations stored from the model using data from the Obama White House. For each of the three types of organized interest characteristics specified in bold and underlined, I calculate predicted probabilities for each of the specified variable values while fixing other covariates values. In the right pane, I plot the differences in the distributions of predicted probabilities and their 95% credible intervals for pairs of predictions in the left pane, as specified by the labels on the left side of the right pane. For example, looking at the predicted probabilities of access across levels of lobbying expenditures, the three points in the left pane indicate the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to the first, second, and third quartile values, with campaign contributions fixed at None (the median value), partisan alignment fixed as Independent, and other variables fixed at their median values. In the right pane, the two topmost points indicate the differences in the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to their first and second quartile values, and their second and third quartile values, respectively. Taking the predictions associated with lobbying expenditures together, we observe that organized interests with higher levels of lobbying expenditures have a distinguishably higher probability of White House access. Please note that some differences indicated in the right pane may not equal the differences between the corresponding values in the left pane due to rounding.

probability of an organized interest whose lobbying expenditures fell into the first quartile (less than \$10,000) experiencing White House access during the Clinton presidency is 0.23,

this probability increases to 0.34 for an otherwise identical organized interest with the median level of lobbying expenditures (\$20,000)—an increase of over 40%. Further increasing lobbying expenditures from the median value to the third quartile value (\$80,000) is associated with a smaller increase in the probability of access of 0.02—an increase of 6%. Again, in the left pane of Figure 3.2, the probability of an organized interest that did not make campaign contributions to candidates for federal office in the preceding electoral cycle experiencing White House access during the Obama presidency is 0.14, but an otherwise identical interest whose campaign contributions equal the first quartile value (\$28,891) had a probability of receiving access of 0.17—an increase of 21%. Additional increases in campaign contributions to the median and third quartile values (\$97,088 and \$337,000, respectively) are also associated with additional increases in the probability of access. Turning to the right panes of both figures, we see that all of the stepwise increases in lobbying expenditures and campaign contributions for the Clinton and Obama presidencies are statistically distinguishable, as the 95% credible intervals for the differences do not include zero.

The predicted probabilities associated with organized interests' partisan alignment indicate that interests in industries aligned with the Democratic Party, or the party of both Presidents Clinton and Obama, are more likely to experience White House access. For the Clinton presidency, we observe in the left pane of Figure 3.1 that the predicted probability of access for an organized interest in an industry aligned with the Democratic Party and with median levels of lobbying expenditures and campaign contributions is 0.39, but that the predicted probability of access for otherwise identical interests in industries aligned with the Republican Party or with neither party is 0.34—a difference of 15%. Similarly, in the Obama presidency, we observe in the left pane of Figure 3.2 that organized interests aligned with the Democratic Party have a predicted probability of access of 0.17, but that the predicted probability of access for interests in industries aligned with the Republican Party or with neither party is only 0.14—a difference of 21%. In the right panes of both figures, we see that the differences

in the predicted probabilities of access between interests in copartisan and non-copartisan industries are statistically distinguishable in both presidencies. Thus, in line with my empirical expectations, organized interests with higher levels of electoral and policy resources and who were aligned with the incumbent's party were more likely to experience White House access during the Clinton and Obama presidencies.

Access to Four EOP Agencies: Obama and Trump

Next, I turn to an analysis conducted with the visitor logs records from the Obama and Trump administrations which cover access provided to organized interests for four agencies in the Executive Office of the President—the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy.²⁹ This analysis complements the findings obtained by using the visitor logs from the Clinton and Obama administrations for the full White House complex in two ways. First, because these four agencies are less susceptible to presidential control relative to other offices in the EOP,³⁰ focusing on visitor logs records from these agencies constitutes a harder test of the theory that presidents engage with organized interests to build supportive coalitions. Second, whereas the previous analysis included only Democratic presidents, drawing on visitor logs from the Trump presidency allows me to test my expectations in a Republican administration and generalize my findings across parties.

²⁹To subset the visitor logs entries from the Obama presidency, I draw on Office of Personnel Management records which provide the names of all individuals working in the four agencies in each quarter (Singer-Vine, Jeremy, “We’re Sharing a Vast Trove of Federal Payroll Records,” *Buzzfeed News*, May 24, 2017, https://www.buzzfeed.com/jsvine/sharing-hundreds-of-millions-of-federal-payroll-records?utm_term=.oe3w86gYqa#.yi5wM9oY5Q). Because the legal settlement governing the Trump administration’s release of visitor logs records requires only the release of visits entered into WAVES by employees of the four agencies, I mirror that scope with the Obama visitor logs records by retaining only visits scheduled by individuals working in those agencies.

³⁰See Footnotes 10 and 24.

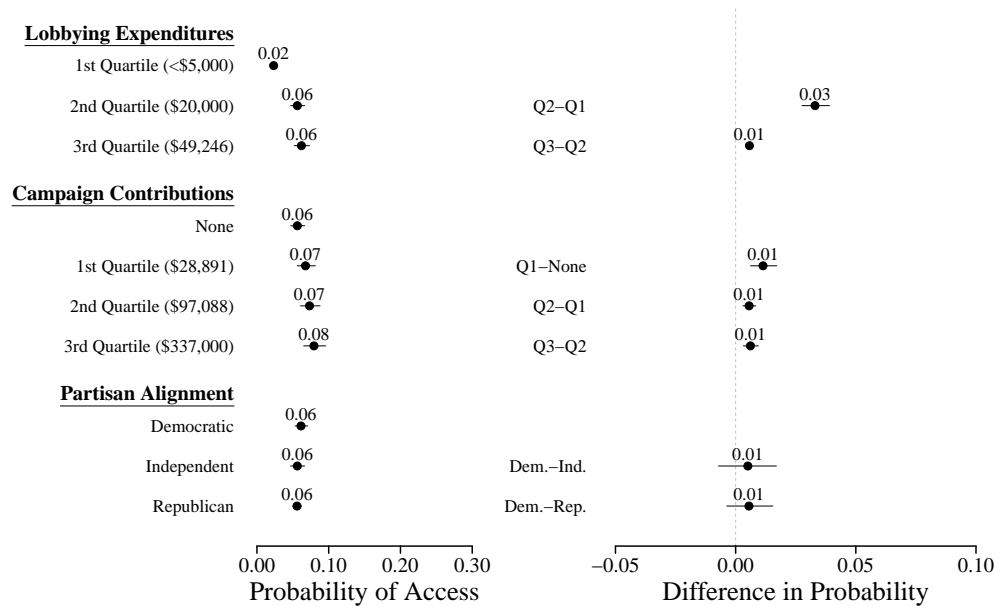


Figure 3.3: **Effect of Organized Interests' Resources and Partisan Alignment on Probability of Access to Four Executive Office of the President Agencies (Obama)**

In the left pane, points and lines represent the posterior means and 95% credible intervals of the predicted probabilities calculated with parameter estimates from the sampling iterations stored from the model using data from the Obama White House for the four Executive Office of the President agencies listed in the text. For each of the three types of organized interest characteristics specified in bold and underlined, I calculate predicted probabilities for each of the specified variable values while fixing other covariates values. In the right pane, I plot the differences in the distributions of predicted probabilities and their 95% credible intervals for pairs of predictions in the left pane, as specified by the labels on the left side of the right pane. For example, looking at the predicted probabilities of access across levels of lobbying expenditures, the three points in the left pane indicate the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to the first, second, and third quartile values, with campaign contributions fixed at None (the median value), partisan alignment fixed as Independent, and other variables fixed at their median values. In the right pane, the two topmost points indicate the differences in the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to their first and second quartile values, and their second and third quartile values, respectively. Taking the predictions associated with lobbying expenditures together, we observe that organized interests with higher levels of lobbying expenditures have a distinguishably higher probability of White House access. Please note that some differences indicated in the right pane may not equal the differences between the corresponding values in the left pane due to rounding.

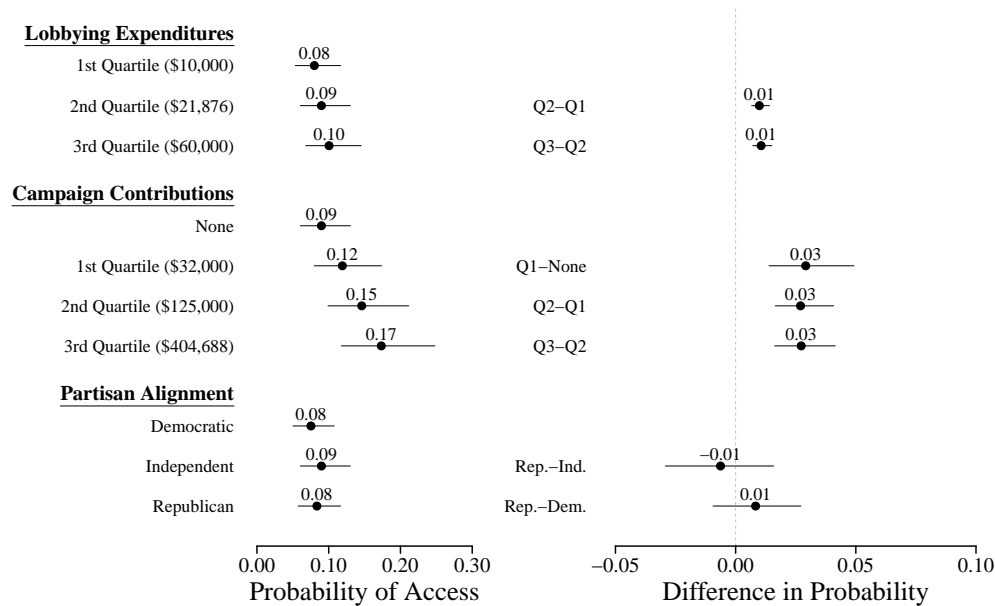


Figure 3.4: **Effect of Organized Interests' Resources and Partisan Alignment on Probability of Access to Four Executive Office of the President Agencies (Trump)**

In the left pane, points and lines represent the posterior means and 95% credible intervals of the predicted probabilities calculated with parameter estimates from the sampling iterations stored from the model using data from the Trump White House for the four Executive Office of the President agencies listed in the text. For each of the three types of organized interest characteristics specified in bold and underlined, I calculate predicted probabilities for each of the specified variable values while fixing other covariates values. In the right pane, I plot the differences in the distributions of predicted probabilities and their 95% credible intervals for pairs of predictions in the left pane, as specified by the labels on the left side of the right pane. For example, looking at the predicted probabilities of access across levels of lobbying expenditures, the three points in the left pane indicate the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to the first, second, and third quartile values, with campaign contributions fixed at None (the median value), partisan alignment fixed as Independent, and other variables fixed at their median values. In the right pane, the two topmost points indicate the differences in the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to their first and second quartile values, and their second and third quartile values, respectively. Taking the predictions associated with lobbying expenditures together, we observe that organized interests with higher levels of lobbying expenditures have a distinguishably higher probability of White House access. Please note that some differences indicated in the right pane may not equal the differences between the corresponding values in the left pane due to rounding.

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 present the predicted probabilities of access to the four Executive Office of the President agencies for organized interests with the levels of resources and partisan alignment specified on the far left, as well as the differences in specific pairs of predicted probabilities, during the Obama and Trump presidencies, respectively. Examining the relationship between organized interests' resources and the probability of experiencing access, we see similar patterns as in Figures 3.1 and 3.2. For example, looking at Figure 3.4 for the Trump presidency, we see that increases in lobbying expenditures from the first quartile value (\$10,000) to the second quartile value (\$21,876), and from the second quartile value to the third quartile value (\$60,000), are each associated with increases in the probability of access of 0.01, and that these increases are statistically distinguishable. Again, looking at Figure 3.3 for the Obama presidency, we observe that each stepwise increase in an organized interest's contributions to candidates for federal office is associated with a 0.01 increase in the probability of access, and that each of these increases are also statistically distinguishable. As for the full White Houses of Presidents Clinton and Obama, the four EOP agencies included in this analysis were more likely to provide access to organized interests with larger resource endowments.

However, when turning to the relationship between organized interests' partisan alignment and their probability of access to these four EOP agencies, we see that the patterns exhibited in Figures 3.3 and 3.4 differ from those in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 using data from the full White House. While organized interests in industries aligned with the party of the incumbent president are more likely to receive access than interests in industries aligned with the opposite party, this difference in probability, 0.01, is not distinguishable for either the Obama or Trump administrations. In addition, while the probability of access for interests in industries that are not aligned with either party is higher (lower) than the probability of access for copartisan interests in the Obama (Trump) presidency, this difference is again not distinguishable for either administration. Thus, whereas presidents are more likely to provide White House

access to interests in copartisan industries, this partisan preference does not carry over to the four EOP agencies included in this analysis.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrated that presidents are more likely to engage with organized interests that have higher levels of electoral and policy resources and whose partisanship aligns with the incumbent president's own. This evidence is consistent with the theory presented in Chapter 2 that presidents engage with organized interests to build supportive coalitions; because the interests who can make the largest contributions to and are most willing to contribute to presidents' coalitions are interests with large resource endowments and who are presidential copartisans, presidents can maximize the amount of resources they can obtain from organized interests by targeting those with large resource endowments and who affiliate with their party.

However, my results also suggest potential limits on presidents' ability to use White House engagement to build and maintain their supportive coalitions. Whereas presidents were more likely to provide access with copartisan organized interests when using visitor logs for the full White House complex, they were no more or less likely to do so when focusing only on visitor logs for the four EOP agencies for which records are available for the Trump administration. One potential reason for this difference is that these four agencies have larger proportions of career civil servants than does the White House Office, which accounts for most of the staff in the White House proper; whereas nearly all officials in the White House Office serve at the pleasure of the president, over 80% of the personnel in these four agencies for each of the quarters in my analysis are career civil servants. While career civil servants are susceptible to presidents' political influence (Moe 1985), they entertain other motivations that extend beyond the life of any given administration, such as career advancement and designing and implementing good public policy (Carpenter 2001; Gailmard and Patty 2007;

Lewis 2008). The null finding when focusing on these four EOP agencies may reflect this difference in personnel distribution between the White House Office and other EOP agencies. Whereas staffers in the White House office are heavily motivated to help their president build a supportive coalition by providing access to copartisan interests and are subject to their president's favor for future employment, civil servants in these EOP agencies have longer time horizons and different sets of incentives that dilute the political considerations of the sitting president in deciding to which organized interests to provide access.

While this analysis sheds light on with which interests presidents engage, it cannot speak to whether engagement yields the expected benefits for both presidents and organized interests. Ostensibly, this engagement enables the White House to communicate about and coordinate the electoral and policy activities of organized interests to support presidents' goals, but the White House visitor logs themselves provide no information with which to discern whether engagement ultimately helps presidents and organized interests in the expected ways. In the next two chapters, I build on this analysis to demonstrate ways in which engagement promotes the aims of both presidents and organized interests.

Chapter 4

Presidents' Incentives to Organized Interests: The Case of FACA Appointments

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that presidents are more likely to engage with organized interests who are valuable potential coalition partners—interests with large resource endowments and who are aligned with the incumbent's party. This finding is consistent with the theory I presented in Chapter 2, as presidents who engage with organized interests in order to maximize their share of organized interest resources focus their engagement on high-resource and copartisan interests. However, my analysis of presidential engagement in Chapter 3 does not shed light on how engagement leads organized interests to provide the resources presidents seek. In this chapter, I consider how presidents use engagement to encourage organized interests to deploy their resources in service of presidents' goals. Specifically, I suggest that presidents promote participation in their supportive coalitions by conferring selective incentives on those organized interests who cooperate with their aims. To evaluate this expectation, I examine whether presidents are more likely to appoint

representatives of an organized interest to federal advisory committees if they have previously engaged with that interest. Drawing on the White House visitor logs and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Database, I find that presidents use appointments to federal advisory committees as selective incentives for organized interests with which they engage that are not in the Education industry.

Selective Incentives as Coalition-Building Tools

In some cases, presidents' engagement with organized interests may be sufficient to convince interests to provide presidents with the resources they seek. If a president's policy proposal aligns with an organized interest's preferences, then that interest may take action to advance that proposal without any additional prodding from the White House. Additionally, if an organized interest senses that subsidizing the president's pursuit of a certain policy objective will yield an outcome sought after by the interest, then it might provide the president with the requisite resources, such as policy information or congressional lobbying capabilities, of its own initiative (Hall and Deardorff 2006). Even if an organized interest is not wholly satisfied with a president's policy proposals, it might nonetheless provide the aid the White House requests because "it's very hard to say no to a White House."¹

However, organized interests, as goal-motivated political entities in their own right, must judiciously allocate their resources. The endowments of even the most well-resourced interests, such as the US Chamber of Commerce, which reported the highest amount of lobbying expenditures in 2019 (\$77 million), are not limitless, and interests incur opportunity costs for allocating any resources to a president. When an organized interest provides resources to a president, it must expect that the benefits it will receive from doing so exceed the value of the resources it expends and the opportunity cost of expending those resources in

¹Personal interview with a policy advocate for a chemical industry association, September 13, 2019.

service of the president rather than another purpose. Should interests' cost-benefit analyses indicate that they should forego fulfilling a president's request, or exert less than maximal effort in fulfilling that request, then presidents need ways to encourage organized interests to nonetheless supply those resources.

One way in which presidents can stimulate cooperation by organized interests is to offer selective incentives (e.g., Olson 1965). Many interests may prefer not to provide the president resources to help enact a given proposal, even if the proposal aligns with their preferences, because it would receive the same policy benefit whether or not it contributes resources to the president's initiative. Conversely, presidents may sometimes need to secure the cooperation or acquiescence of organized interests who oppose their policies, and, short of modifying the underlying policy, may encounter those interests' active opposition. However, presidents can encourage interests to participate in their coalitions when they might otherwise not, or might otherwise do so with less vigor, by offering selective incentives. If those incentives are sufficiently valuable to a given interest, then it would be more likely to support the presidents' aims. In general terms, presidents' use of selective incentives to encourage organized interest cooperation is akin to vote-buying in legislatures; in both contexts, coalition-builders offer goods of sufficient value to induce political actors to provide needed support (Alexander, Berry and Howell 2016; Evans 2004; Groseclose and Snyder 1996; Jenkins and Monroe 2012; Lee 2000).

Previous studies of presidents' coalition-building in other institutional contexts indicate that presidents often use selective incentives to encourage support. For instance, in the case of the public, Kriner and Reeves (2015*a*) demonstrate that presidents are more likely to provide copartisan and swing constituencies with a host of particularistic goods, including federal grants, disaster aid, transportation funding, and trade protections, in expectation that these goods will increase electoral support for themselves and their copartisans (see also Gasper and Reeves 2011; Kriner and Reeves 2012; 2015*b;c*; Lowande, Jenkins and Clarke 2018; Reeves

2011). Again, in the congressional context, Christenson, Kriner and Reeves (2017) show that presidents channel more federal grant spending to copartisan senators (see also Berry, Burden and Howell 2010). Similarly, Beckmann (2008) finds that one of the tactics presidents use when bargaining with members of Congress is to offer or withhold selective incentives, such as support for specific legislative issues, personal favors, and members' re-election campaigns (see also Beckmann 2010; Beckmann and McGann 2008; Beckmann, Chaturvedi and Garcia 2017). Additionally, in a case study of President Clinton's efforts to ratify the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Evans (2004) demonstrates that the Clinton administration tried to "buy votes" with concentrated district benefits, such as trade protections for Florida pepper and tomato growers, and that members whose districts received such benefits were more likely to vote to ratify NAFTA. Further, Evans and Marshall (2016) suggest that presidents reward members of Congress whose support is important for passing legislation, such as copartisans, swing voters, and chamber leaders, by attributing credit to them in signing statements.

As discussed in Chapter 2, presidents possess a wide variety of tools with which they can similarly target selective incentives to organized interests whom participate in their supportive coalitions. These incentives are valuable to organized interests because they help to fulfill two key goals—advancement of policy outcomes and institutional maintenance (Lowery 2007; Olson 1965; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Walker 1983). Sometimes, presidents' provision of White House access to an organized interest is sufficient incentive for the interest to support him, as this engagement allows the interest to advertise their political clout to members and the broader political community. Additionally, presidents' unilateral powers and agenda-setting power enable presidents to advance the policy priorities of organized interests. However, beyond acknowledging that presidents *can* provide organized interests selective incentives as rewards or motivations for participating in their coalitions, and some

sporadic anecdotes consistent with this theory,² we lack systematic evidence that presidents allocate more of these incentives to interests in their supportive coalitions.

I demonstrate that presidents concentrate selective incentives on organized interests with which they engage by focusing on presidents' appointments to federal advisory committees. While I describe federal advisory committees and how presidents can use appointments to them as selective incentives in the next section, I briefly highlight here two reasons why these appointments constitute an appropriate test of my expectation. First, because presidents and their agency heads have wide discretion over both appointing persons to existing advisory committees and creating new advisory committees without the consent of Congress, these appointments are strong signals of presidents' preferences. Second, whereas some selective incentives presidents can provide might only contribute to one of organized interests' goals—advancing preferred policy outcomes or performing institutional maintenance—, appointments to advisory committees can help interests accomplish both of these goals.

The Federal Advisory Committee Act: An Introduction

The origin of federal advisory committees is often attributed to the first president, George Washington, who in 1794 appointed a group of commissioners to investigate and attempt to negotiate an end to the Whiskey Rebellion (Flitner 1986; Stuessy 2016).³ In subsequent years,

²For example, Dark notes that President Trump has tried to generate support among labor unions “both through privileged access to the Oval Office and by providing a set of particularistic benefits—mainly building projects and trade protection” (2018, 144). In addition, several of my interviewees indicated that the White House provided selective benefits to organized interests with which it engaged; some of these examples are presented in Chapter 2.

³Much of the scholarship on advisory committees focuses on “presidential commissions,” a term which lacks a common definition (see Zegart 2004, 367-373). Following (Zegart 2004), I use a broad conceptualization of advisory committees to include those authorized by presidents, agency heads, or Congress, over which presidents exercise ultimate control,

presidents, executive branch agencies, and Congress have routinely convened committees of persons from outside of government to provide policy advice, expertise, and recommendations. Until 1972, advisory committees were largely unregulated, with government officials conjuring disparate committees without common policies to govern them. However, amid rising concern that advisory committees were “inefficient and not accessible to the public,” Congress enacted the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), providing a common framework for creating and operating advisory committees and enabling greater congressional oversight and transparency of these committees (Stuessy 2016, 2-3). According to the FACA Database, which collects information on all advisory committees falling under FACA, 1,082 advisory committees were authorized during the 2017 fiscal year (October 1, 2017-September 30, 2018), comprising 77,614 members and holding 7,885 meetings.⁴

The population of federal advisory committees varies along several dimensions, including the authority by which committees are created, the policy areas in which they operate, and the functions they perform. Under FACA, advisory committees can be authorized in four ways. The majority of committees are created and explicitly required by statute; 55.9% of the committees operating in the 2017 fiscal year fell under this designation. Some committees are authorized by statute, but presidents and agency heads can choose whether to create and continue them (16.7%). The remaining committees are created at the direction of presidents (4.1%) or their agency heads (23.3%). Importantly, even though the majority of committees are required or authorized by Congress, presidents and their subordinates maintain broad discretion over the conduct of these committees; presidents and agency heads can make appointments to existing committees or create new committees without consulting with

particularly with respect to appointment power. However, in contrast to (Zegart 2004), I include not only ad hoc committees, but also continuing committees. I do so because my main interest is in how presidents use the opportunities afforded to them by appointments to advisory committees, irrespective of their continuing or ad hoc nature.

⁴*FACA Database*, <https://www.facadatabase.gov/FACA/FACAPublicPage>.

Congress and decide whether to act on any of the recommendations committees provide (see Stuessy 2016; Zegart 2004).⁵

Advisory committees are active across the federal government. In the 2017 fiscal year, 53 different federal agencies maintained advisory committees. While half of those committees resided in three departments—Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Interior—agencies as disparate as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Peace Corps, and the Small Business Administration also maintained advisory committees. Many scholarly typologies of the functions advisory committees perform exist, but the common themes across these typologies are that committees help the executive branch by providing outside information and expertise, lending credibility and legitimacy to proposed or enacted policies, and promoting consensus among the different stakeholders in a given policy area (e.g., Flitner 1986; Marcy 1945; Moffitt 2014; Wolanin 1975; Zegart 2004). To perform these functions, advisory committees hold meetings and issue reports which, with some exceptions (e.g., national security concerns), are made open and available to the public.

While political scientists have previously considered the role of advisory committees and other similar entities in the policymaking process, little attention has been paid to how presidents and agency heads make appointments to these committees. Most extant work tends to focus on committees as the primary unit of analysis. For example, Zegart (2004) considers the differences in how presidents create and use committees for foreign and domestic

⁵Balla and Wright (2001) argue that Congress sometimes includes requirements for mandatory representation of certain stakeholders on advisory committees in order to guarantee those stakeholders participation and limit the ability of presidents and bureaucrats to bias the committees' composition. In addition, FACA requires that the membership of all committees must be "fairly balanced in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed" (Stuessy 2016, 10). While the statutory language authorizing a specific committee or the language of FACA itself can restrict presidents' ability to appoint whomever they want to a committee, presidents retain latitude over what member(s) of a given stakeholder community they choose to appoint, and thus can choose among the membership of even a hostile stakeholder community to find the least adversarial member to appoint.

policy issues. Focusing on national security committees, Tama (2014) finds committees are more influential when they are formed after crises, created by the president directly, and have a narrow scope (see also Kitts 2006). Again, Moffitt (2014) argues that advisory committees help bureaucrats to implement policy when implementation relies on external actors and to disseminate information to stakeholders and the general public. Further, Lavertu and Weimer (2011) demonstrate that the recommendations offered by FDA advisory committees on new drugs and medical devices affect the likelihood of those drugs and devices' ultimate approval. Finally, Miller and Reeves (2017) show that presidents can use committees to satisfy public demand for action on salient policy problems without expending White House time and effort.

A few studies consider the membership of advisory committees, but they concentrate on the aggregate composition of committees rather than on the appointments made by presidents and agency heads. For instance, Petracca (1986) finds that the high number of appointees from businesses and trade associations enable those types of interests to “dominate” advisory committees (see also Karty 2002; Moore et al. 2002). Levinson (2019) comes closest to considering what individual characteristics inform the appointment decisions made by presidents and agency heads in his study of national security advisory committees. In the study, Levinson (2019) argues that presidents appoint more representatives of membership-based groups, such as labor unions and professional associations, when the presidents' power in Congress is low because these groups will use their appointments to promote presidents' policies to the public. However, in addition to focusing on only a small subset of advisory committees, Levinson (2019) only accounts for the affiliations of advisory committee appointees, rather than the affiliations of all persons who could have been appointed to those committees. As a result, the empirical analysis selects on the outcome of interest—appointments to advisory committees—and the results are subject to selection bias because we do not know how the proportion of possible appointees from membership associations, relative to other

organizations, varies over time with the president's power in Congress and other relevant confounders.

Advisory Committee Appointments as Selective Incentives

When presidents make appointments to government posts, they typically must balance several considerations, including appointing qualified persons who will make good policy, choosing persons who share their preferences and will work to implement those preferences once appointed, and rewarding supporters with patronage positions (Cameron, Kastellec and Mattioli 2019; Hollibaugh, Horton and Lewis 2014; Lewis 2008). Relative to other types of appointments, I argue that presidents are able to place more weight on the third consideration—patronage—when making appointments to advisory committees, such that presidents can use these appointments as selective incentives for organized interests. This is not to say that presidents do not consider other factors when making advisory committee appointments, such as nominees' expertise, but rather that they consider patronage more strongly than for other appointments, such as judgeships and cabinet positions.

Two features of advisory committee appointments make them prime for patronage. First, unlike many other appointments to executive or judicial branch positions, advisory committee appointments are not subject to the advise and consent of the Senate, thus providing presidents and their agency heads more latitude in selecting nominees. For many appointments to executive and judicial branch positions, presidents must consider not only their preferences, but also those of the Senate; if their choice is ideologically extreme or unqualified, they may need to exert extra effort to build a winning coalition, withstand senatorial delay, or risk the embarrassment of a failed nomination (Bond, Fleisher and Krutz 2009; Krutz, Fleisher and Bond 1998; McCarty and Razaghian 1999; Moraski and Shipan 1999; Nemacheck 2008). In addition, presidents' appointment of persons who are seen as ideologically extreme, unqualified, or political cronies provides their political opponents with opportunities to

tarnish their reputations with the public (Hollibaugh 2016). By consequence of the procedural requirements and heightened salience that accompany appointments subject to the advise and consent of the Senate, presidents must typically moderate their own preferences in expectation of how the Senate and the public will interpret their choices, leading them to deemphasize considerations such as ideological congruency and patronage.

However, outside of nominations subject to the advise and consent of the Senate, presidents face scant formal or informal constraints on their selections and are able to place more weight on nominees' policy preferences and political loyalty. For example, presidents tend to use Schedule C appointments, which enable presidents to unilaterally place persons in high-level agency positions, on persons who are more ideologically extreme, more politically loyal, or less qualified, than persons they typically send to the Senate for confirmation (Bonica, Jowei and Tim 2015; Lewis 2008). Presidents' discretion over advisory committee appointments is just as, if not more, broad than as over Schedule C appointments since presidents make these appointments without Senate confirmation they are unlikely to attract the attention of the general public. Thus, advisory committee appointments are opportunities for presidents to provide patronage positions to organized interests with whom they engage without incurring elite or public scorn for empowering political allies and "special interests."

Second, advisory committee appointments are valuable patronage tools because they enable organized interests to service both of their goals—manifestation of policy preferences and institutional maintenance. Though advisory committees may only make policy recommendations, and not enact policies themselves, they are important vehicles by which committee members can influence the policy process. Despite their advisory nature, committee recommendations often impact ultimate outcomes. As mentioned earlier, Lavertu and Weimer (2011) find that the FDA is more likely to approve new drugs and medical devices, and to approve them more quickly, as the proportion of advisory committee members voting in favor of approval increases. In addition, even if committee recommendations are not ultimately

adopted by the parent agency, appointments provide committee members with agenda-setting power, as they can increase the salience of their preferred outcomes while downplaying that of other alternatives. Further, through serving on advisory committees, organized interest representatives can gain access to important information about policy and the policymaking process and build relationships with government officials that can provide their interests with more influence in the future (Petracca 1986).

Appointments to advisory committees can also enable organized interests to perform institutional maintenance. Irrespective of an advisory committee's policy impact, appointments provide organized interests with opportunities to advertise their political clout and connectedness to members, patrons, and the wider political community (Petracca 1986). While advisory committees may not be salient to the general public, they are salient to politically sophisticated executives and advocates, and securing such appointments affords organized interests chances to claim credit for concrete outcomes that justify their existence and continued funding (Drutman 2015; Kersh 2002; Walker 1991). Finally, having members serving on advisory committees can also elevate Washington elites' perceptions of an organized interest.

Taken together, the discretion afforded presidents in their advisory committee appointments and the value of these appointments to organized interests make them an important resource that presidents can allocate as selective incentives. Thus, I expect that presidents are more likely to provide advisory committee appointments to organized interests with whom they engage, as these appointments help to encourage those interests' participation in presidents' supportive coalitions.

Research Design

To evaluate this expectation, we need measures of presidents' engagement with organized interests and presidents' appointment of organized interest representatives to federal advisory

committees. In Chapter 3, we developed and utilized the former measure. The key task in this chapter is to create the latter measure of presidents' appointments to advisory committees. In this section, I first describe how I use the FACA Database to do so, and then turn to a discussion of the empirical models I employ to evaluate this expectation.

Prior to the enactment of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, no public or private entity collected and reported information on the advisory committees active throughout the federal government. As part of FACA's objective to make advisory committees more consistent across agencies, the Office of Management and Budget was tasked with collecting information from all agencies on their advisory committees, including their memberships, records of all meetings held, reports, and expenditures. In 1977, these record-keeping responsibilities were transferred to the General Services Administration (GSA), which hosts the FACA Database, an online portal which shares the information it collects with the general public.⁶ At the time of writing, the FACA Database provides downloadable data for all committees active between the fiscal years 1997 to 2018. Due to limitations in the data available for presidential engagement and advisory committee appointments for the Trump and Clinton presidencies, my analysis uses the data provided for the 1,001,403 appointments made during the George W. Bush and Barack Obama presidencies.⁷

⁶*FACA Database*, <https://www.facadatabase.gov/FACA/FACAPublicPage>.

⁷I exclude the Trump presidency from the analysis because my measure of presidential engagement for that time period only accounts for access provided to the four EOP agencies identified in Chapter 3. In addition, I exclude the Clinton presidency because I lack records on appointments during the preceding presidency of George H.W. Bush; as I explain later, I use organized interests' appointments to advisory committees under the previous president to account for an interests' long-standing presence on one or more advisory committees, and, lacking data from the George H.W. Bush presidency, I cannot control for such previous appointments. Finally, because I lack a measure of presidential engagement in the fourth quarter of 2016 (October 1-December 31), I also drop appointments made during this period of the Obama presidency.

The FACA Database's records on member appointments includes information such as the committee members' names, occupations, affiliations, the dates of appointment, and the length of their appointments. In Chapter 3, I identified instances of presidents' engagement with organized interests by matching the names of organized interests' lobbyists with the names of persons granted access to the White House. To identify instances of presidents' appointment of organized interest representatives to advisory committees, I instead match the names of organized interests with the occupation and affiliation information provided for each committee appointee. I focus on the organizations with which appointees are affiliated rather than the appointees themselves for two reasons. First, whereas an organized interest's registered lobbyists, as a function of their job description, are likely to be involved in any White House meeting to which their interests' members are invited, appointees to advisory committees can be drawn from any segment of an interest's membership.⁸ For instance, if the president wants to appoint a representative from a patient advocacy organization to a FDA advisory committee to recommend the approval of a new drug, she would be more likely to appoint someone from the organization with technical expertise, such as a doctor or policy advocate, rather than a lobbyist. Because presidents' selective incentives are bestowed upon organized interests rather than specific organized interest representatives, identifying appointments at the organized interest-level is more consistent with my theory than would be identifying appointments at the individual-level.

Second, as a practical matter, the Obama administration explicitly limited the participation of registered lobbyists as advisory committee members. In September 2009, Norm Eisen, the president's ethics czar, announced that agency heads were prohibited from appointing

⁸As discussed in Chapter 3, if any members of an organized interest attend a White House meeting, at least one registered lobbyist is likely to accompany the contingent. Because an organized interest's White House access is measured at the meeting-level, the presence of at least one registered lobbyist as a part of a meeting contingent enables me to capture an interest's instance of engagement.

registered lobbyists to advisory committees,⁹ and the Office of Management and Budget issued a final guidance consistent with this policy in October 2011.¹⁰ While this ban was weakened in 2014 following a lawsuit brought by lobbyists barred from serving on advisory committees,¹¹ its earlier enforcement minimized the number of lobbyists appointed for much of the administration and may have led agency heads to limit the number of lobbyists appointed to advisory committees in the final years of the administration.¹² As a result, focusing only on the appointment of an organized interest’s lobbyists to advisory committees, rather than the appointment of anyone affiliated with the interest, would undercount the number of advisory committee appointments conferred upon organized interest representatives.

To identify instances in which persons affiliated with an organized interest were appointed to an advisory committee during the Obama administration, I draw on the same LDA reports used in Chapter 3 and two pieces of information in the FACA Database’s member-level data—the “Occupation/Affiliation” and “Represented Group” fields. Because these are text-entry fields, there is substantial variation in the level of detail across agencies, committees, and members. While some appointees are identified only with generic job titles and industry

⁹Eisen, Norm, “Lobbyists on Agency Boards and Commissions,” *The White House*, September 23, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/09/23/lobbyists-agency-boards-and-commissions>.

¹⁰“Final Guidance of Appointment of Lobbyists to Federal Boards and Commissions,” *Federal Register*, Volume 76, 61756-61757.

¹¹Hirschfeld Davis, Julie, “Obama Administration Loosens Ban on Lobbyists in Government,” *The New York Times*, August 12, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/13/us/politics/obama-administration-loosens-ban-on-lobbyists-in-government.html>; “Revised Guidance on Appointment of Lobbyists to Federal Advisory Committees, Boards, and Commissions,” *Federal Register*, Volume 79, 47482-47483.

¹²For example, (Straus et al. 2015) find that the proportion of members of advisory committees authorized by the Office of the US Trade Representative who were registered lobbyists fell from 24.9% during the fiscal year of 2009 to 1.5% during the calendar year of 2012.

sectors, many include details about the appointees' employer or other professional affiliations.¹³ I use these fields to search for the names of organized interests filing LDA reports during the time period covered by my measure of presidential engagement during the Obama presidency (October 1, 2009-September 30, 2016).¹⁴ To stay consistent with my unit of analysis in Chapter 3, I use information in the FACA Database on the date of each appointment to aggregate all appointments of persons affiliated with organized interests to the organized interest-time period level, coding both a binary indicator and a count of each organized interests' receipt of appointments to advisory committees in a given quarter. In the analyses

¹³Of the 1,001,403 appointments in the FACA Database for the second Bush and Obama presidencies, 315,069 are identified as government officials, which I drop from the data set before searching the text strings. Of the remaining 686,334 appointments, 413,026 contained only common job titles (e.g., "Chief Executive") or industry affiliations (e.g., "Labor") with no indication of the appointees' employers and were also dropped. Thus, the matching procedure described uses the remaining 273,308 appointments of non-government officials whose text entry fields included more information than only their job titles.

¹⁴The procedure I use to detect string matches here differs from that used in Chapter 3. There, I use approximate string matching to compare the names of registered lobbyists to the names of persons appearing in the White House visitor logs. This procedure was suitable because the information contained in the strings across the data sources is consistent—in both CRP's compilation of LDA filings and the White House visitor logs, the strings consisted of persons' first and last names—such that approximate string matching could detect minor differences in spelling. However, in this case, the information contained in the FACA Database fields is more detailed than the organized interests' names provided by CRP; in many cases, FACA Database fields contain ancillary information, such as a person's job title and department/division within their employing organization, in addition to the name of their employer. As a result, the string matching task here focuses on detecting instances of an organized interest's name in strings of variable length and detail instead of comparing full strings which are of approximately the same length and detail. To ease the texting searching procedure, I preprocess the organized interest names and the FACA Database fields, standardizing abbreviations and removing uninformative text. However, because I cannot capture all uninformative text in the FACA Database fields, searching for organized interests' names within those fields is more appropriate than trying to match the strings directly.

I present below, I employ the binary indicator as my outcome measure, but the substantive results remain consistent when using instead the count of appointments.¹⁵

My key explanatory variable is presidential engagement, which I measure as a binary indicator of whether the president provided White House access to a given organized interest in the preceding time period (see Chapter 3). Because presidential engagement is informed by organized interests' resources, such as their lobbying expenditures and campaign contributions, and their partisan alignment with the incumbent, I also include these variables in my analysis to account for interests' likelihood of experiencing presidential engagement.¹⁶ Further, because organized interests with representatives appointed to advisory committees are more likely to experience future appointments, either as reappointments to the same committees or appointments to new committees, and because presidents may be more likely to engage with organized interests with experience on advisory committees, I include a series of covariates to account for prior advisory committee experience. First, I include a lagged binary indicator for whether an organized interest had a representative appointed to an advisory committee in the preceding period. Second, because my analysis excludes the first three quarters in the first year of the Obama presidency, I include a binary indicator for whether an organized interest received an appointment to an advisory committee in that formative stage of the

¹⁵See Appendix C for analyses using the count of advisory committee appointments as the outcome measure.

¹⁶The coefficients on these measures of organized interests' resources and partisanship should not be interpreted directly because they temporally precede and are posited to effect presidents' engagement decisions. In the language of causal inference, if interests' resources and partisanship are "treatments" which "cause" presidential engagement, then including interests' resources, partisanship, and White House access to explain FACA appointments would result in post-treatment bias on the coefficients for interests' resources and partisanship (see Montgomery, Nyhan and Torres 2018). However, including interests' resources and partisanship when investigating the relationship between presidential engagement and FACA appointments helps to control for selection into treatment (i.e., likelihood of experiencing presidential engagement), improving efficiency without biasing the coefficient on presidential engagement.

presidency. Third, to account for persons or organized interests with a long-standing presence on advisory committees that may make them likely targets for both presidential engagement and future appointments by virtue of their experience rather than their attractiveness as coalition members (Drutman, Grossmann and LaPira 2019), I include a binary indicator for whether an organized interest experienced any advisory committee appointments during the George W. Bush administration.¹⁷

Estimation Strategy

The structure of the data for this analysis is similar to that in Chapter 3, as the unit of observation is again the organized interest-time period with repeated observations for each organized interest and time period. Whereas we do not again face inconsistencies in data availability and temporal units because we are focused on only one presidency, the time-series cross-sectional data structure poses the same challenges of non-independence of observations and collinearity of group-specific parameters and group-level predictors. To account for these challenges, I again employ Bayesian multilevel models; besides including a different outcome measure and a few different explanatory variables, the specification below is identical to that used in Chapter 3. To estimate the effect of presidential engagement in time $t - 1$ on an organized interest experiencing a FACA appointment in time t , I fit the following multilevel

¹⁷To construct the binary indicators of organized interests' appointments to advisory committees in the first three quarters of the Obama presidency and the two terms of the second Bush presidency, I repeat the text search procedure described above for appointments occurring from January 20, 2009 to September 30, 2009 and January 20, 2001 to January 19, 2009, respectively.

logistic regression model:

$$\begin{aligned}
Pr(\text{appoint}_{i,t} = 1) = & \text{logit}^{-1}(\alpha + \beta_1 \cdot \text{access}_{i,t-1} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{appoint}_{i,t-1} + \\
& \beta_3 \cdot \log(\text{lobby_exp})_{i,t-1} + \beta_4 \cdot \text{any_contribs}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4} + \\
& \beta_5 \cdot \text{any_contribs}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4} \cdot \log(\text{contrib_amt})_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4} + \\
& \xi \mathbf{Z}_{i,t-1} + \alpha_{j[i]} + \gamma_{p[t]}) \text{ for all } i \text{ in } 1, \dots, N \\
\alpha_j \sim & N(\mu_{\alpha,0} + \mu_{\alpha,1,k[j]} + \mu_{\alpha,2} \cdot \text{GWB_appoint}_j + \\
& \mu_{\alpha,3} \cdot \text{obama_2009_appoint}_j, \sigma_{\alpha}^2) \text{ for all } j \text{ in } 1, \dots, J \\
\mu_{\alpha,1,k} \sim & N(\delta_{\mu_{\alpha,1,0}} + \delta_{\mu_{\alpha,1,1}} \cdot \text{pty_align}_k, \sigma_{\mu_{\alpha,1,k}}^2) \text{ for all } k \text{ in } 1, \dots, K \\
\gamma_p \sim & N(\mu_{\gamma_0}, \sigma_{\gamma}^2) \text{ for all } p \text{ in } 1, \dots, P
\end{aligned}$$

For every observation i of organized interest j in time period t , the outcome measure, $\text{appoint}_{i,t}$, is a binary indicator of whether at least one person affiliated with organized interest j received an appointment to an advisory committee in time period t . The key covariate in the model is $\text{access}_{i,t-1}$, which is a binary indicator for whether organized interest j experienced White House access in time period $t-1$. The other covariates at the observation-level include the same measures of lobbying expenditures ($\text{lobby_exp}_{i,t-1}$) and campaign contributions ($\text{any_contribs}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4}$ and $\text{contrib_amt}_{i,t-1 \rightarrow t-4}$) used in Chapter 3, a lagged binary indicator for whether organized interest j had any persons appointed to advisory committees in the preceding time period, and binary indicators drawn from interests' LDA filings for whether they retained their own in-house lobbyists or relied solely on lobbying firms and for which of 80 possible issue areas they reported lobbying on in the preceding period ($\xi \mathbf{Z}_{i,t-1}$). As in Chapter 3, the partisan alignment of each industry k is included as a trichotomous indicator for whether the industry is Democratic, Republican, or Independent. Unlike the models in Chapter 3, this specification also includes binary indicators for whether

organized interest j had any persons affiliated with it appointed to an advisory committee during the second Bush presidency (GWB_appoint_j) or the first three quarters of the Obama presidency ($\text{obama_2009_appoint}_j$). Finally, the model includes varying intercepts for the unique organized interests ($\alpha_{j[i]}$), industries ($\mu_{\alpha,1,k[j]}$), and time periods ($\gamma_{p[t]}$) in which each observation i is nested.

I again perform my analyses using the R package `brms` (Bürkner 2017), an interface for using the C++ package Stan (Carpenter et al. 2017). All models are fitted using the NUTS (No-U-Turn Sampler) algorithm (Hoffman and Gelman 2014) with 4 chains and 2000 iterations per chain (1000 for warmup, 1000 for sampling). All models presented here report no divergent transitions during the sampling phase and indicate convergence with \hat{R} statistics of ≤ 1.10 for all parameters.

Results

Because this analysis contains only one key explanatory variable that is binary by construction, the results are markedly easier to present and interpret than those in Chapter 3 despite the complexity of the model specification. Specifically, in order to ascertain whether presidents are more likely to appoint representatives of organized interests with which they engage to advisory committees, we need only examine the coefficient on presidential engagement; when exponentiated, this coefficient indicates the change in the odds of an organized interest receiving an appointment if it experienced presidential engagement in the preceding quarter relative to an otherwise identical interest that did not experience engagement.

The first column of Table 4.1 presents the coefficient estimate on presidential engagement when including all 24,009 unique organized interests filing LDA reports for activity taking place between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2016 and appearing in at least two consecutive

Table 4.1: Effect of Presidential Engagement on Advisory Committee Appointments

	All Interests	Education Interests	Non-Education Interests
Any Visits _{<i>t</i>-1}	0.05 [-0.03; 0.13]	-0.13 [-0.29; 0.04]	0.12* [0.02; 0.22]
$\sigma_{organization}$	1.54	1.65	1.49
$\sigma_{industry}$	0.52		0.44
$\sigma_{timeperiod}$	0.31	0.33	0.41
Num. obs.	306766	19531	287235

The models in this table examine the effect of presidential engagement, in the form of White House access, on an organized interest’s likelihood of a person affiliated with it receiving an advisory committee appointment. All models include the set of control variables described in the text. The first model includes all organized interests, while the second and third models include only organized interests in the “Education” industry and in all industries except “Education,” respectively. The cell entry for each covariate presents the posterior mean and 95% credible interval from the Bayesian multilevel logistic regression model indicated by the column heading. Coefficients denoted with * are those whose 95% credible intervals do not include zero. Models fitted with the R package *brms*, which fits the models using the NUTS (No-U-Turn Sampler) algorithm in Stan. Each model is fitted with 4 chains for 2000 iterations per chain (1000 iterations for warm-up, 1000 iterations for sampling).

quarters.¹⁸ The coefficient estimate for presidential engagement is in the expected direction, and, when exponentiated, suggests that the odds of an organized interest experiencing presidential engagement in time $t - 1$ receiving a FACA appointment in time t increases by 5.1% relative to an otherwise identical interest that does not experience engagement. However, the 95% credible interval for this estimate includes zero, indicating that the difference is not distinguishable. Thus, the model does not provide evidence that presidents are more likely to appoint representatives of organized interests with which they engage to advisory committees.

When looking at the distribution of advisory committee appointments across organized interests, we find that the proportion of appointments received by interests is not uniform across the 92 “Industry” categories defined by CRP. Specifically, of the 14,381 appointments made to organized interests in the sample, nearly half of them (6,741, or 46.9%) were to representatives of interests in the “Education” industry, even though only 6.4% of observations

¹⁸Any interests not appearing in at least two consecutive quarters are dropped from the analysis, as they lack the lagged values of interest.

in the sample are nested in that industry. Further, looking back to the raw data in the FACA Database, we see that the vast majority of these appointees from interests in the Education industry are college and university faculty members. This high concentration of appointments made to interests in the Education industry may explain this null finding because presidents' motivations for appointing faculty members to advisory committees and the value colleges and universities derive from faculty members' appointments likely differ from that associated with other types of organized interests.

First, while presidents may use advisory committee appointments as selective incentives for organized interests with which they engage, they also consider other appointee characteristics, as described previously, such as expertise. As many advisory committees make recommendations to the government on technical matters, and college and university faculty members are experts in their respective fields, presidents' appointments of faculty members to advisory committees may be driven by their desire for expertise than by their motivation to provide patronage to the colleges and universities that employ those faculty members. Therefore, appointments of faculty members to advisory committees may emerge from a different theoretical mechanism than the one I posit here.

Second, colleges and universities have fundamentally different relationships with their faculty members than do other types of organized interests with their representatives that may diminish the value that colleges and universities assign to advisory committee appointments. Because organized interests are vehicles by which entities or groups of individuals seek policy outcomes through collective means (Schlozman and Tierney 1986, 6-7), studies of organized interests assume that all persons associated with those interests shares common goals. In most cases, this assumption has face validity. For example, executives for a corporation likely share a set of policy preferences that, if enacted, would improve profitability. Again, in the case of a membership organization, people would likely not join the organization unless its preferences were consonant with their own.

However, the motivations of college and university faculty members are more weakly related to those of their parent institutions. While faculty members support their institutions' continued success in order to continue their employment, their professional incentives depend largely on individual advancement in a dedicated discipline. Further, whereas faculty members may have preferences over the policy matters in which they have expertise, the colleges and universities themselves, as institutions, likely have weak or non-existence preferences on those issues. As a result, whereas most organized interests would appreciate an appointment to an advisory committee as a means to both advance a policy goal and perform institutional maintenance, organizations in the Education industry likely derive only institutional maintenance benefits from appointments to advisory committees, as they can use them to advertise their clout to donors and community members, but cannot use them to advance institutional policy goals. If the White House understands that advisory committee appointments are weaker incentives for interests in the Education industry than for other interests, then it should concentrate the share of advisory committee appointments it makes as selective incentives to organized interests in other industries and use other types of incentives more valued by colleges and universities to encourage and reward their participation in presidents' coalitions.

In light of the differences in presidents' motivations for appointing faculty members to advisory committees and colleges and universities' valuations of such appointments of their faculty members, relative to other types of appointees and organized interests, I re-estimate the model for two different subsets—only organized interests in the Education industry, and organized interests in other industries. The results for these models are presented in the second and third columns of Table 4.1, respectively. In light of the differences in the motivations for and values of appointments for organized interests in these two subsets, I expect that presidential engagement, as measured by White House access, is related to advisory committee appointments among interests not in the Education industry, but not among interests in the Education industry. When including only interests outside of the

Education industry, the coefficient on presidential engagement, -0.13, is negative, but is indistinguishable from zero. However, when examining only interests not in the Education industry, the coefficient on presidential engagement, 0.12, is both positive and statistically distinguishable. Exponentiating this coefficient, we can interpret this effect as a 12.7% increase in the odds of an organized interest receiving an advisory committee appointment after experiencing presidential engagement, as compared to an otherwise identical interest that does not experience presidential engagement. Thus, the model provides evidence that presidents are more likely to provide advisory committee appointments to interests outside of the Education industry with which they engage.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I evaluate one of the assumptions underlying my theory of presidential engagement in Chapter 2—that presidents provide the organized interests with which they engage selective incentives to encourage participation in their supportive coalitions. To do so, I focus on presidents’ appointments to federal advisory committees; these appointments are a good example of presidents’ selective incentives because presidents have broad discretion over these appointments and organized interests value these appointments for their ability to advance their policy and institutional maintenance goals. My results indicate that presidents are more likely to provide advisory committee appointments to organized interests with which they engage outside of the Education industry.

The conditional nature of this finding highlights two important concepts in the study of presidents and organized interests. First, while presidents are motivated to exercise power or allocate resources in ways that provide better representation to some constituencies, their ability to act on these motivations is constrained by other factors, such as the responsibilities of their office and the preferences of other political actors. For example, while Kriner and Reeves (2015*a*) find that presidents direct more federal grant spending to constituencies

that are electorally important, have high concentrations of copartisans, or are represented by copartisans in the House, they do not find that presidents provide grants *only* to such constituencies, but rather that the distribution of grant funding is *biased towards* these constituencies.¹⁹ In a similar vein, my results suggest that presidents' advisory committee appointments are informed by their coalition-building strategies, but that other considerations, such as the need for policy expertise, limit the degree to which presidents can use these appointments as selective incentives to organized interests (e.g., Lewis 2008).

Second, because organized interests differ in the value they place on any specific type of selective incentive, it is important for presidents to utilize a wide array of incentives and that they target the appropriate incentives at interests given those interests' goals. While I find evidence that presidents are more likely to provide organized interests outside of the Education industry with advisory committee appointments, I do not find similar evidence among interests in the Education industry. In describing my results, I suggest that this distinction arises, in part, from the lower value that colleges and universities place on advisory committee appointments relative to other organized interests. However, colleges and universities likely prize other selective incentives at presidents' disposal, such as federal grants or recognition in public events, that presidents can alternatively provide to encourage those institutions' participation in their coalitions. Therefore, just as it is important that presidents have a variety of unilateral powers in their "tool chest" (Howell 2003, 16), as no

¹⁹More concretely, Kriner and Reeves (2015*a*, 122, 132) estimate that counties in swing states receive \$17 million more than counties in states with high concentrations of the president's non-copartisans. However, in 2008, the aggregate amount of federal grant spending was over \$575 billion, and the population-weighted median county received approximately \$428 million in grants. Thus, while counties in swing states receive more grant spending, states where the president's non-copartisans are more plentiful are not wholly deprived of grant funding, as the statutory requirements of grant funding programs, demonstrated community merit and need, and the specter of congressional oversight for showing excessive favoritism for some constituencies over others constrains the degree to which presidents can particularistically allocate grant funding.

single instrument for exercising unilateral power is appropriate for every situation, presidents must be able to provide organized interests with selective incentives that appeal to their specific motivations.

Chapter 5

Presidents' Benefits from Engagement: The Case of Organized Interest Endorsements

When presidents take to the podium to advocate for a preferred policy outcome or to celebrate a policy accomplishment, they are often flanked by supportive dignitaries, most of whom actively support and contribute to presidents' efforts. While these contingents are regularly composed of government officials who help enact or implement these policies, such as federal agency heads and members of Congress, they also often include representatives from organized interests, whose support presidents cite in promoting their policies. For instance, at the signing ceremony for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—one of the landmark achievements of the Obama administration—President Obama remarked that the legislation was “the product of broad consultation and the recipient of broad support, from business leaders, unions, public interest groups, from the Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers, as well as the AFL-CIO; from Democrats and Republicans, mayors as well as Governors. It’s a rare thing in Washington for people with such diverse

and different viewpoints to come together and support the same bill. And on behalf of our Nation, I want to thank all of them for it...¹ More than a decade later, at an event announcing proposed changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Donald Trump cited the attendance of supportive “representatives of the American workers from across the country, including [the] president[s] of the North America’s Building Trades Union... National Cattlemen’s Beef Association... American Trucking Associations... and many other leaders of labor and industry,” and offered several of these representatives to make remarks to the media. For example, when called on by President Trump, North America’s Building Trades Union President Sean McGarvey said that his organization was “fully supportive of the President’s initiative when it comes to NEPA and permitting reform.”²

Given the public’s distaste for organized interests, presidents’ decisions to advertise their cooperative relationships with them may seem counterproductive. As presidents are regarded as national representatives (e.g., Howell and Moe 2016; Truman 1971; Wilson 1961), cavorting with organized interests runs counter to their role expectations and may tarnish their public reputations (Cronin 1980). In this chapter, I explain why, despite this risk, presidents utilize organized interests’ public support of their policies to pursue their goals. I start by considering two broad questions: does engagement enable presidents to obtain the resources they seek from organized interests, and do those resources help presidents advance their goals? Given data limitations, I focus my discussion on the latter question and explore one example of the organized interest resources which presidents seek—grassroots lobbying, or their ability to

¹Barack Obama, “Remarks on Signing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009,” February 17, 2009, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-signing-the-american-recovery-and-reinvestment-act-2009-denver-colorado>.

²Donald Trump, “Remarks on Proposed National Environmental Policy Act Regulations and an Exchange With Reporters,” January 9, 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-proposed-national-environmental-policy-act-regulations-and-exchange-with-reporters>.

promote presidents and their priorities among their members and the general public. Using a survey experiment based on President Trump’s free trade agreement with South Korea, I demonstrate that organized interests’ public endorsements of presidents’ policies increases support for those policies.

Engagement as a Means to Accrue Resources

In Chapter 2, I detailed the types of organized interest resources which presidents seek to gain from organized interests in their supportive coalitions. Some of these resources, including campaign contributions, policy expertise, and political intelligence, aid presidents directly, as they contribute directly to presidents’ own activities and official duties. Others, such as contributions to congressional copartisans and their apparatuses to lobby members of Congress and the public, benefit presidents indirectly by assisting with their coalition-building efforts among other political actors. Through engagement, presidents expect that interests will participate in their supportive coalitions by providing resources that constitute direct and indirect support, and that those resources will promote presidents’ aims. Thus, two empirical expectations emerge—that engagement enables presidents to obtain organized interests’ resources, and that those resources help presidents achieve their goals.

An ideal test of the first expectation would include a measure of whether an organized interest provided the president a given resource and a measure of whether the president previously engaged with that interest to request that resource. However, presidents’ requests for and receipt of organized interest resources are typically difficult to observe. While the White House visitor logs detailed in Chapter 3 enable us to observe with which interests presidents engage, they provide no information concerning the purposes of each instance of engagement, such as whether White House officials requested or received resources from their visitors. Additionally, many of the resources that organized interests can provide, like the provision of policy expertise and political intelligence, are intangible, such that it would be

difficult to create a systematic account of which organized interests provided what expertise or intelligence to the president, even with full access to archival records. Further, presidents and organized interests must sometimes obfuscate their coordination; for example, because the Anti-Lobbying Act³ prohibits federal officials from working with persons outside the federal government to influence members of Congress, the White House takes care not to create the appearance of coordinating with organized interests to lobby members of Congress.⁴ Thus, data scarcity renders an empirical test of this expectation intractable.⁵

Data scarcity also makes it difficult to assess the second empirical expectation—that presidents are able to promote their goals with the resources organized interests provide. For example, while organized interests may provide presidents with policy expertise and political intelligence to improve the quality and viability of their proposals, it is difficult to determine

³18 USC 1913.

⁴According to a guidance from the Office of Legal Counsel, the Anti-Lobbying Act “prohibits substantial ‘grass roots’ lobbying campaigns... designed to encourage members of the public to pressure Members of Congress to support Administration or Department legislative or appropriations proposals,” but it does not prohibit executive branch officials’ direct communications with members of Congress, lobbying of Congress on nominations and treaties, or public speeches or writings which may include appeals to the public to contact their members of Congress (Office of Legal Counsel, “Constraints Imposed by 18 U.S.C. 1913 on Lobbying Efforts,” *Department of Justice*, September 28, 1989, <https://www.justice.gov/file/24326/download>).

⁵One exception to this data limitation is organized interests’ campaign finance reports, which detail their contributions to candidates for federal office and independent expenditures on their behalf. Though it would not be possible to ascertain whether presidents requested campaign resources from organized interests, it would be possible to examine whether organized interests with which presidents engaged were more likely to provide campaign resources to presidents and their copartisans as compared to organized interests with which presidents did not engage. However, because fewer than 20% of organized interests participate in campaign finance (Tripathi, Ansolabehere and Snyder 2002), such an analysis would focus on a narrow slice of the organized interest universe, and disentangling the causal ordering of engagement and campaign activity (i.e., whether organized interests participate in campaigns because of engagement, or whether engagement occurs because organized interests participate in campaigns) would be difficult.

whether a policy's success or failure is attributable to any single such element of expertise or intelligence. Again, because Congress, unlike recent presidential administrations, does not provide any information about the visitors to members' offices (Miller n.d.), it is not possible to evaluate if organized interests' in-person direct contacts with members of Congress on behalf of the president influence those members to support the presidents' legislative initiatives. Further, while some organized interest activity on presidents' behalf is observable, such as grassroots campaigns to encourage members to support presidents' proposals, the lack of individual-level measures of members' attitudes and behaviors, such as their opinions towards presidents and their proposals and political activity they may undertake in response to such appeals, inhibits empirical analysis.

However, as shown through examples in this chapter's introduction, presidents are eager to make visible one type of organized interest resource—interests' public endorsements of their proposals. Through this form of grassroots lobbying, presidents seek to advertise organized interests' endorsements to increase public support for themselves and their policies. These endorsements can enhance public support for presidents' policies by mobilizing members of the interests offering these endorsements to support them. Such endorsements might most directly influence members' policy attitudes (Cohen 2012), but they can also stimulate grassroots political action in support of presidents' policies, including contacting their elected officials to pressure them to support those policies (Bergan 2009; Kollman 1998). In addition, these endorsements can influence attitudes among members of the general public by serving as heuristic cues communicating what segments of society benefit from or support the policy and providing an indication of the legitimacy of the process from which the policy emerged.

Participants in my survey and interviews identified these endorsements and other forms of grassroots lobbying as important resources for the White House. In my survey of lobbyists, I asked all respondents who reported having White House access during the Obama administration to indicate which of a list of five objectives they believed the White House had when

meeting with them. The most common objective selected was that the White House wanted to “work with the organization to lobby the public” (59.9%). When asked what the White House typically sought from the organized interests with which it engaged, one former official focused almost exclusively on these public endorsements, reporting:

[Engagement served to] amplify the president’s message around a particular policy priority... [and] enlist reactions in response to an announcement. It was always very important if there was a large and big announcement made. People were interested in those groups that amplified it by putting out a statement in support of what was being announced. Those statements were of some importance to people and the senior people in the White House wanted to see those statements and wanted to know what groups... have stepped forward and validated us.⁶

Another former official who worked in the White House Press Office said that securing public endorsements from organized interests was “mission critical” from his perspective, as “attaining and amplifying third-party validation was a major part of any announcement, any rollout and any press we were doing.”⁷

The Effect of Organized Interest Endorsements on Public Support

When presidents roll out new policies or celebrate the enactment or success of their policies, they often lean on organized interests to endorse their actions and amplify their message. Though there is a stigma around presidents interacting with organized interests, as it runs up against presidents’ role expectation as a national representative rather than an advocate of special interests (Cronin 1980; Howell and Moe 2016; Truman 1971; Wilson 1961), presidents prioritize securing and advertising public endorsements and statements of support from these interests because they believe that they can influence public support for them and their

⁶Personal interview with a former White House official, May 3, 2018.

⁷Personal interview with a former White House official, September 25, 2019.

proposals.⁸ Among interests which have membership bases, presidents expect that they will communicate presidential messages and endorsements of presidents' policies to their members, which can increase members' support for presidents' policies (Cohen 2012) and stimulate members to participate in grassroots activities, such as contacting the elected officials to urge them to support those policies (Bergan 2009; Kollman 1998). However, in this chapter, I focus on these endorsements' ability to influence the general public, as these endorsements can provide members of the general public two types of signals about the presidents' policies—signals about the constituencies in society who support and stand to benefit from presidents' policies, and signals about the legitimacy and credibility of the policies themselves.

First, organized interests' endorsements of presidents' policies provide the public with cues they can use to determine what segments of society support and stand to benefit from the presidents' policies. Given citizens' chronic inattention to and lack of resources to interpret information about politics, they often draw on cues to inform their opinions about political stimuli (Achen and Bartels 2016; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). One common cue is the source of the information they receive. If citizens know something about the source, such as with which party it tends to affiliate and whether its preferences align with their own, then they can use this information provided by the source cue as an informational "shortcut" to form and express opinions without incurring the cognitive cost associated with distilling opinions on their own (Mondak 1993*a*).

⁸While information about organized interests' endorsements may not reach many members of the public through the White House's own communications, this information is likely transmitted by or influences the communications of the news media and political elites from whom the public learns about presidents' actions (Zaller 1992). Through these other actors, organized interest endorsements can also exert indirect influence on members of the public. One former White House official expressed that these endorsements can "convince sort of the zeitgeist guys in Washington of our arguments. . . [which] helps set the tone for national coverage" (Personal interview with a former White House official, September 25, 2019).

In addition to presidents (Cohen 2017; Mondak 1993*b*), Congress (Christenson and Kriner 2017*b*), the Supreme Court (Mondak 1992), and media outlets (Turner 2007), many studies have demonstrated that organized interests can provide citizens with informative source cues. While many of these studies focus on how organized interests' endorsements influence citizens' attitudes towards candidates for elected office (e.g., Arceneaux and Kolodny 2009; McDermott 2006; Neddenriep and Nownes 2014), others examine how organized interests' endorsements inform opinions regarding discrete policies, such as ballot initiatives. For example, in a study of voters' preferences on insurance reform initiatives in California, Lupia (1994) demonstrates that voters who knew the positions of the insurance industry on these proposals used those positions as cues to inform their votes. Again, Gerber and Phillips (2003) show that the endorsements of community planning boards and environmental groups influenced voters' preferences on development policy initiatives. Additionally, Burnett and Kogan (2015) find that the framing effects induced by ballot initiative language dissipate once voters are made aware of the positions of organized interests on those initiatives. Further, while Nicholson (2011) illustrates that policy information often supersedes source cues, he also finds that source cues can influence public attitudes when they are attached to policies that are not typically associated with the source.

Taken together, this evidence suggests that presidents should expect the public to use organized interest endorsements to form opinions towards their proposals. In some cases, citizens may use these cues to infer what constituencies in society stand to benefit from the presidents' policies. For instance, if oil companies voice support for a president's executive order, then citizens might conclude that the action benefits the oil industry and draw on their affinity for the oil industry to inform their opinion of the president's policy (Lupia 1994). Alternatively, given the increasing salience of partisanship (Iyengar et al. 2019) and the tendency for organizations representing the same general interest to hew to one political party or the other (Karol 2015), citizens might use these endorsements to intuit the

partisan composition of the coalitions supporting presidents' policies. Taking the same oil industry example, Democratic (Republican) citizens might use their knowledge that the oil industry tends to align with the Republican Party to decrease (increase) their support for the president's policy.

Second, organized interests' endorsements of presidents policies can provide citizens with a signal of the policies' legitimacy. While citizens' opinions on discrete policies are typically conceptualized as functions of their own policy preferences, ideological leanings, and partisan persuasions, they are also informed by citizens' process attitudes (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). When the process by which a policy is enacted is deemed legitimate, then citizens' are generally more willing to accept the policy, even if the policy itself differs from that citizens might prefer (Gibson 1989; Lind and Tyler 1988). While much of the work on legitimacy focuses on the Supreme Court, where persons who believe more strongly in the Court's legitimacy are more likely to accept the Court's specific rulings (e.g., Gibson and Nelson 2015; 2016), other studies demonstrate that the moderating effect of procedural legitimacy carries over to more explicitly political contexts such as Congress (Curry 2019; Gibson, Caldeira and Spence 2005; Harbridge-Yong and Paris Forthcoming).

While presidents draw legitimacy from their station as the sole nationally-elected representative (Cronin 1980; Howell and Moe 2016; Wechsler 1954; Wilson 1961), the procedures by which they make policy can invite skepticism from the general public. Relative to other institutions, such as Congress and the Supreme Court, whose procedures make their policymaking processes transparent through hearings and floor debates, the procedures by which presidents make policy are often opaque. Except when presidents send legislative proposals to Capitol Hill or initiate policy change through the rule-making process, their policy deliberations and decisions tend to take place behind closed doors, and this lack of transparency may degrade

the public's perception of the legitimacy of these policies (Dickson, Gordon and Huber 2015).⁹ In addition, many citizens view presidents' exercise of unilateral powers to make policy as in conflict with the rule of law, thus further eroding the perceived legitimacy of the actions presidents take through these means (Reeves and Rogowski 2016; 2018).

As one former White House official put it, organized interest endorsements can mitigate these concerns by "adding legitimacy, credibility, [and] validation to the argument we're making."¹⁰ One way in which these endorsements can bolster public perception of a policy's legitimacy is if presidents can muster endorsements from a broad cross-section of interests in society to create the impression that they were able to build consensus through the policymaking process. For instance, referring back to one of the chapter's opening examples, in highlighting that both business and labor groups supported the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, President Obama may have hoped that citizens would infer that the policy was the product of an inclusive process where relevant interests on all sides of the issue were consulted. This impression enables presidents to draw on their source of legitimacy as the sole nationally-elected representative, demonstrating to citizens that they take this role seriously by looking out for the national interest rather than favoring any one "special interest" (Cronin 1980; Howell and Moe 2016; Wilson 1961; Wechsler 1954). This impression also helps presidents foster the notion that their policies are the product of working with

⁹While Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) argue that policymaking transparency can tarnish the institutional legitimacy of Congress, they suggest that this negative effect of transparency arises from the disagreement and partisan bickering that transparency in that institution reveals. In the context of the White House, greater transparency of the policymaking process, in the form of advertising which organized interests were involved in formulating or subsequently voiced support for promulgated policies, would seldom uncover differences in opinion. Thus, the negative consequence of transparency highlighted by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) is unlikely to manifest here.

¹⁰Personal interview with a former White House official, September 25, 2019.

interests of different political stripes to build consensus, which can enhance public perception of presidents and their policies (Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong 2020; Paris 2017).¹¹

Presidents can also use organized interest endorsements to highlight the support of experts, thus heightening public perceptions of the credibility and legitimacy of the underlying policy. As Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) argue, many Americans would prefer that unelected experts exercise more influence in the policymaking process, as they believe these experts are more likely to make decisions on the basis of policy information and the national interest than to benefit certain constituencies. By securing and advertising the involvement and endorsements of experts, presidents can draw on the public's preference for expertise in policymaking to increase perceptions of the policy's legitimacy and favorability. As a former White House official expressed, "[B]ecause of just pervasive cynicism, reporters and people are going to be generally skeptical of what the White House says. But if you have credentialled experts validating your work, that's going to mean a lot."¹² Druckman (2001) lends support to this belief, finding that the strength of framing effects are conditional on the perceived credibility of the source offering the frame (see also Golby, Feaver and Dropp 2018; Oxley, Vedlitz and Wood 2014). Thus, presidents can also bolster the perceived legitimacy of their policies through expert endorsements that enhance the credibility of the policies and the underlying policymaking process.

Partisan-Conditional Effects of Endorsements

So far, I have considered the effect of organized interest endorsements on support for presidents' policies among all members in the general public. However, in the contemporary era, where

¹¹Though Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong (2020) find that elected officials are most responsive to their primary constituency, which punishes officials who compromise and take part in consensus-building exercise, they also demonstrate that the American public, on the whole, prefers elected leaders who are open to compromise and consensus-building.

¹²Personal interview with a former White House official, September 25, 2019.

citizens of different partisan persuasions interpret both political and apolitical information received from sources with partisan labels differently (e.g. Iyengar et al. 2019), we should expect that the effect of organized interest endorsements on public support for presidents' policies may differ among individuals conditional on their partisan identity.

On the one hand, the effect of endorsements might be larger among the president's copartisans. As party leader, the president is a salient partisan figure, and any mention of her raises partisan considerations. In the paradigm of partisan motivated reasoning, these considerations should make presidential copartisans more receptive to the effects of organized interests' endorsements; whereas copartisans are open to receiving information from the White House and positively updating their evaluations of the presidents' policies, non-copartisans are more likely to resist this information or use it to negatively update their evaluations (e.g., Druckman, Peterson and Slothuus 2013; Taber and Lodge 2006; Zaller 1992). These expected effects coincide with the strategies presidents typically employ in their public communications; for instance, Wood (2009) demonstrates that presidents adopt rhetoric in their public remarks that hews closer to the preferences of the median voter in their party than to the median voter in the public at large (see also Druckman and Jacobs 2015).

On the other hand, we might expect the effect of endorsements to be larger among presidential non-copartisans. One reason is that presidential copartisans may be subject to a ceiling effect. Given strong partisan polarization where support for the president in his own party is typically high, no treatment may be capable of further increasing copartisan support. However, because non-copartisans support the president at lower rates, it typically has room to increase if exposed to the right treatment (Cohen 2017; McDonald, Croco and Turitto 2019). Another reason is that presidential non-copartisans may be persuaded to support a president's policy proposal if an organized interest they identify as consonant with their own preferences or partisan identity endorses the policy. Nicholson (2011) argues that source cues are highly influential when they are unexpected given the information which they accompany,

such as when a political party endorses a policy at odds with its typical preferences. Along those lines, presidential non-copartisans may be more supportive of the president's policy if the president can secure endorsements from organized interests typically aligned with the other party, as this signals that elites associated with the non-copartisans' party support the policy and that the president's policy was developed with the participation of an inclusive set of interests in society. Thus, we have reason to expect that the effect of organized interests' endorsements on public support for presidents' policies may be stronger for either presidential copartisans or presidential non-copartisans.

Research Design

Determining the effect of the actions or statements of political elites on public opinion with observational data is typically difficult. Ideally, we would be able to identify two instances of elite statements or actions where all facets were identical save the specific action or statement. For example, in the present case, we would want to compare public opinion regarding a president's policy when it receives one or more endorsements from organized interests to when it receives a different set of endorsements (or no endorsements at all). However, as each policy and its accompanying endorsements are presented to the public only once, and the coalition of interests endorsing each policy is a non-random function of presidents' coalition-building efforts and interests' endorsement decisions, similar pairs of policies may not exist. Further, even if such similar cases can be identified, the appropriate individual-level public opinion data needed to determine the effect of elite actions or statements is rarely available (see also Miller and Reeves 2017; n.d.; Reeves and Rogowski 2018).

In light of these challenges, I leverage experimental methods to evaluate how organized interests' endorsements of presidents' policies influence public attitudes towards those policies. Specifically, I implement a survey experiment built on President Donald Trump's 2018 renegotiation of the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS). Through a survey

experiment, I am able to reconstruct a real-world event while controlling the number and type of organized interest endorsements to which respondents in each treatment group are exposed. Thus, this design promotes both internal validity through the random assignment of respondents to treatment conditions and the fixed nature of the experimental materials across treatment conditions (save the condition-specific manipulations), as well as external validity by drawing on a real-world event, thus incorporating the contextual details associated with the featured political actors and policy (see Gaines, Kuklinski and Quirk 2007).

Experimental Context: The United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement

Originally negotiated by the George W. Bush administration and ratified by Congress in October 2011, KORUS eliminated tariffs for more than 90% of the categories of goods traded between the United States and South Korea.¹³ From the United States' perspective, aggregate economic effects were projected to be minimal, though American automobile and beef producers were expected to benefit from easier access to the South Korean market while farmers and factory workers feared the loss of sales and jobs. As part of his anti-free trade agenda, Donald Trump criticized KORUS both during the 2016 presidential campaign and his first year in office, and in September 2017 announced that he wanted to withdraw

¹³Appelbaum, Binyamin and Steinhauer, Jennifer, "Congress Ends 5-Year Standoff on Trade Deals in Rare Accord", *The New York Times*, October 11, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/13/business/trade-bills-near-final-chapter.html>; Sang-Hun, Choe, "U.S. and South Korea sign free-trade agreement," April 2, 2007, *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/02/world/asia/02iht-fta.1.5110252.html>; Williams, Brock R., Manyin, Mark E., Jurenas, Remy, and Platzer, Michaela D., "The U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA): Provisions and Implementation," *Congressional Research Service*, September 16, 2014, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34330.pdf>.

from the deal.¹⁴ Soon thereafter, both countries agreed to renegotiate KORUS, agreeing to modifications in March 2018 and signing a formal deal in September 2018.¹⁵

In addition to public statements and appearances by President Trump and his surrogates to promote the new deal, the White House drew on supportive statements from political elites outside of the administration to convince the public and policymakers of the deal's merit. Two days after the deal was announced, the White House published a statement entitled, "What They Are Saying: Support For President Trump Securing Improvements To The U.S.-South Korea Trade Agreement," which included excerpts of supportive statements from 25 federal and state officials and organized interests.¹⁶ "What They Are Saying" statements are common products for the White House to produce alongside major announcements; both Donald Trump and his predecessor, Barack Obama, produced such statements when announcing actions and policies such as Supreme Court nominations,¹⁷ changes to US-Cuba relations,¹⁸

¹⁴Lee, Michelle Ye Hee, "Trump wants to end 'horrible' South Korea-U.S. trade deal. Koreans disagree.," *The Washington Post*, September 14, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/trump-wants-to-end-horrible-south-korea-us-trade-deal-koreans-disagree/2017/09/13/fb528b3e-9627-11e7-a527-3573bd073e02_story.html; Palmer, Doug, Cassella, Megan and Restuccia, Andrew, "Trump mulling withdrawal from Korea trade deal," *Politico*, September 2, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/02/trump-south-korea-trade-withdrawal-242283>.

¹⁵Palmer, Doug, "Trump gets South Korean concessions in first trade deal," *Politico*, March 27, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/03/27/trump-south-korea-trade-deal-488708>; Tankersley, Jim, "Trump Signs Revised Korean Trade Deal," *The New York Times*, September 24, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/24/us/politics/south-korea-trump-trade-deal.html>.

¹⁶"What They Are Saying: Support For President Trump Securing Improvements To The U.S.-South Korea Trade Agreement," *The White House*, March 29, 2018, [urlhttps://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/saying-support-president-trump-securing-improvements-u-s-south-korea-trade-agreement/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/saying-support-president-trump-securing-improvements-u-s-south-korea-trade-agreement/).

¹⁷"What They're Saying About Judge Sotomayor," *The White House*, May 27, 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/what-theyre-saying-about-judge-sotomayor>

¹⁸"What They're Saying: The President's Action on Cuba Policy," *The White House*, December 17, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2014/12/17/what-theyre-saying-presidents-action-cuba-policy-0>

tax reform legislation,¹⁹ and responses to the opioid epidemic.²⁰ While these statements tend to emphasize government officials and organized interests who are presidential copartisans or whose preferences are typically aligned with those of the president, they sometimes include a broader coalition; for example, in the White House’s “What They Are Saying” statement on KORUS, the 17 statements from federal and state officials all came from Republicans, but most of the 8 statements from organized interests came from business organizations and labor unions—organized interests typically associated with Republicans and Democrats, respectively. Because the coalition of organized interests supporting KORUS consisted of interests aligned with both parties, I am able to construct realistic experimental stimuli without deception to assess whether the presence of a consensus coalition influences support for presidents’ policies, as well as whether presidential copartisans and non-copartisans respond differently to endorsements when they emanate from interests traditionally aligned with their parties.

Experimental Protocol

I fielded my survey experiment in a module included on the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), a survey with a national sample conducted by YouGov. The experiment and outcome questions were included on the pre-election wave of the survey, which was conducted between September 27, 2018 and November 5, 2018. Each CCES module

¹⁹“Widespread Praise for President Trump’s Unified Framework for Tax Reform,” *The White House*, September 27, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/widespread-praise-president-trumps-unified-framework-tax-reform/>

²⁰“What They Are Saying: Support for President Trump’s Initiative to Fight the Opioid Epidemic,” *The White House*, March 20, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/saying-support-president-trumps-initiative-fight-opioid-epidemic/>.

included 1,000 respondents, nearly all of whom completed all questions associated with the experiment.²¹

The experimental stimulus is a short vignette telling respondents about Donald Trump's renegotiated free trade agreement with South Korea.²² All respondents are told, "Earlier this year, President Donald Trump reached a trade agreement with South Korea," and provided with a short summary of the agreement. Then, respondents are presented with a final sentence which varies across each of the four conditions to which they are randomly assigned. In the Control condition, respondents are informed that "several interest groups" voiced support for the agreement.²³ In each of the remaining three conditions, respondents are provided with the names of organized interests that offered statements of support quoted in the White House's "What They Are Saying" statement. In the Chamber Only condition, respondents are told that "several business groups, such as the US Chamber of Commerce," voiced support for the agreement. In the Union Only condition, respondents are apprised that "several union groups, such as United Steelworkers," expressed support for the agreement. Finally, in the Chamber and Union condition, respondents are informed that "several business and union groups, such as the US Chamber of Commerce and United Steelworkers," praised the agreement. Business and labor interests have traditionally been depicted as adversarial throughout

²¹Of the 1,000 respondents, 986 provided a response for at least one outcome question.

²²See Appendix D for complete vignette and question wording.

²³An alternative control condition would have provided respondents with no information concerning whether organized interests supported KORUS. However, with such a control condition, the treatment conditions would have manipulated both whether any organized interests supported the president's agreement and the identities of those interests, making it impossible to determine whether observed treatment effects stemmed from organized interest support generally or from the specific type of organized interest support received. By mentioning that some organized interests supported KORUS in the Control condition, I am able to conclude that observed treatment effects are attributable to the types of organized interests to which respondents were exposed rather than to organized interest support in general.

American history and have long been associated with the Republican and Democratic Parties, respectively (Francia et al. 2005; Miller and Schofield 2008). Thus, these treatments are meant to communicate to respondents both what interests in society expect to benefit from KORUS, as well as the partisan leanings of the interests supporting KORUS. Further, the Chamber and Union condition is intended to inform respondents that KORUS was supported by a broad coalition, as President Trump was able to bring together these adversarial interests from both parties to back the deal.

After reading the vignette, respondents are presented with four outcome questions. The first question, which is the main outcome of interest, asked respondents to indicate their level of approval for KORUS on a four-point scale ranging from “Strongly approve” to “Strongly disapprove.” The other three questions ask respondents to express their level of agreement that “the trade agreement represents the interests” of three different groups on a similar four-point scale ranging from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree.” The three groups for which this question is asked are “American businesses,” “American workers,” and “the United States as a whole.” These outcome questions are intended to determine whether respondents use the organized interests mentioned in the vignettes to inform their beliefs about what interests will benefit from the proposal. Further, if presidents’ ability to build consensus coalitions to support their policies enhances the legitimacy of those policies, respondents in the Chamber and Union condition should express higher levels of agreement that KORUS represents the interests of the country as a whole.

Results

Figure 5.1 presents the percentage point differences in approval for KORUS among respondents in the Union Only, Chamber Only, and Union and Chamber conditions relative to respondents

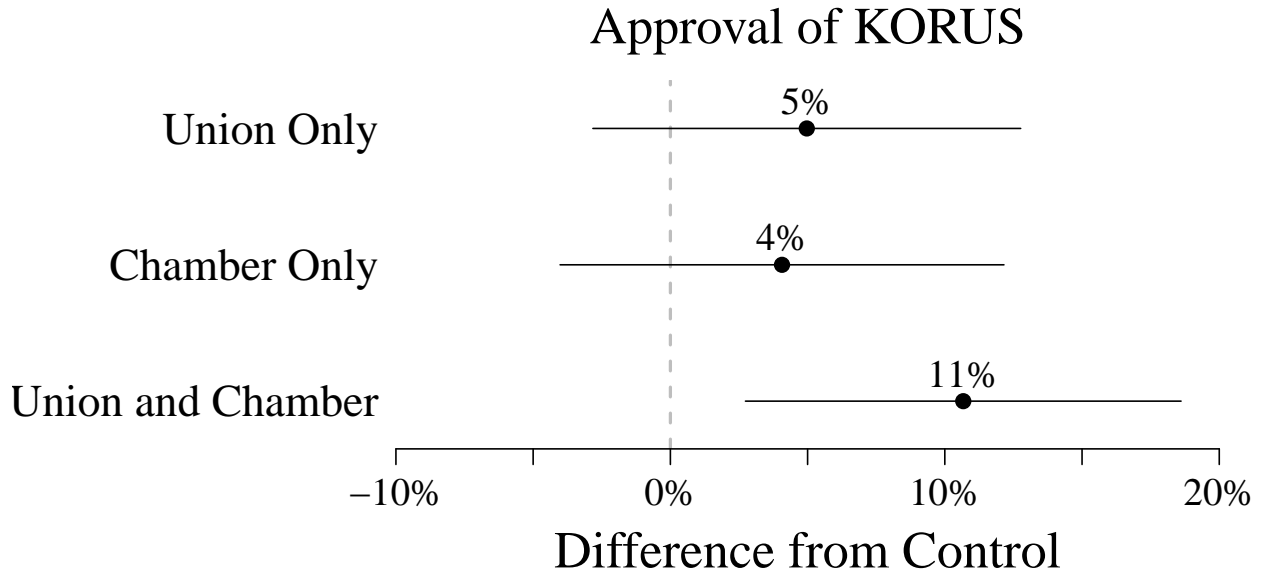


Figure 5.1: **Effect of Organized Interest Endorsements on KORUS Approval** Linear regression coefficients for treatment effects of organized interest endorsements on approval of President Trump’s KORUS renegotiation relative to the Control condition. Positive (negative) values along the x -axis reflect higher (lower) levels of approval for KORUS relative to the Control condition. When respondents are told that United Steelworkers (Union Only condition), the US Chamber of Commerce (Chamber Only condition) or United Steelworkers and the US Chamber of Commerce (Union and Chamber condition) support KORUS, they offer higher levels of approval of the agreement. However, only respondents in the Union and Chamber condition offer distinguishably higher levels of support than do respondents in the Control condition. Bars around point estimates represent 95 percent confidence intervals. Estimates are obtained using survey weights.

in the Control condition.²⁴ Respondents in all three treatment conditions express higher levels of approval for KORUS than do respondents in the Control condition. However, only the 11 percentage point difference in approval between the Control condition and the Union and Chamber condition is statistically distinguishable at the 95% level. These results are

²⁴For ease of exposition, these differences are calculated using a binary form of the dependent variable. Respondents who “Strongly approve” or “Approve” of KORUS are both coded as “Approve,” while respondents who “Strongly disapprove” or “Disapprove” of KORUS are both coded as “Disapprove.” Results presented in the main text are obtained using survey weights.

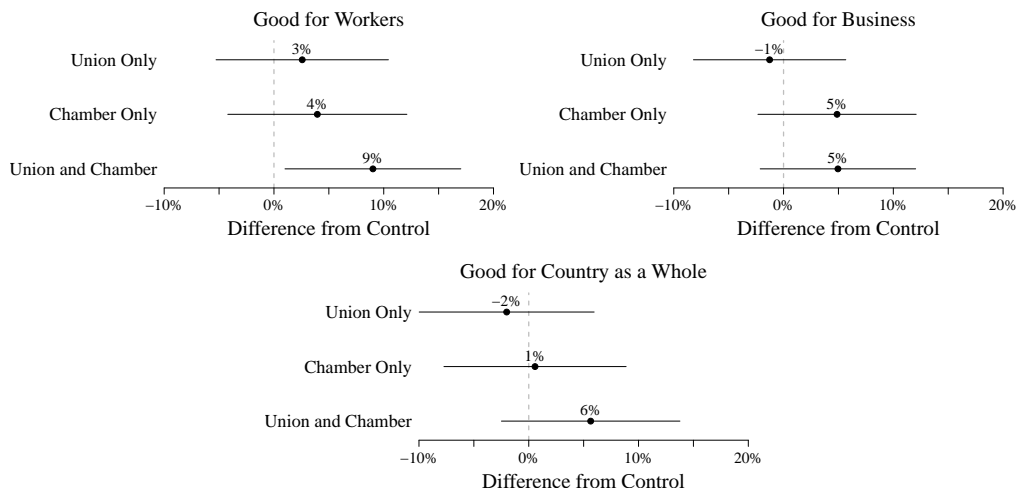


Figure 5.2: **Effect of Organized Interest Endorsements on Perceptions of Who Benefits from KORUS** Linear regression coefficients for treatment effects of organized interest endorsements on perceptions of who benefits from KORUS relative to the Control condition. Positive (negative) values along the x -axis reflect higher (lower) levels of agreement that KORUS benefits American workers (top panel), American businesses (middle panel), and the United States as a whole (bottom panel) relative to the Control condition. When respondents are told that United Steelworkers (Union Only condition), the US Chamber of Commerce (Chamber Only condition) or United Steelworkers and the US Chamber of Commerce (Union and Chamber condition) support KORUS, they generally offer stronger levels of agreement that KORUS benefits each of the three types of interests. However, few of the differences between the Control condition and the treatment conditions, and among the treatment conditions, are distinguishable from each other. Bars around point estimates represent 95 percent confidence intervals. Estimates are obtained using survey weights.

consistent with respondents using organized interest endorsements as signals of a policy's legitimacy; whereas endorsements by only one type of organized interest do not influence approval of a president's policy, endorsements from two types of organized interests that represent opposing interests and are associated with different political parties lead to a distinguishable increase in approval.

In Figure 5.2, I present the percentage point differences in agreement that for KORUS benefits workers (top panel), business (middle panel), and the country as a whole (bottom panel) among respondents in the Union Only, Chamber Only, and Union and Chamber

conditions relative to respondents in the Control condition. If respondents interpreted organized interests' endorsements of KORUS as cues concerning which types of interests stand to benefit from the trade agreement, we would expect respondents in the Union Only and Union and Chamber conditions to express higher levels of agreement that KORUS is good for workers; respondents in the Chamber Only and Union and Chamber conditions to express higher levels of agreement that KORUS is good for business; and respondents in the Union and Chamber conditions to express higher levels of agreement that KORUS is good for the country as a whole. However, while each of these differences are in the expected direction, only one—the difference between respondents in the Union and Chamber and Control conditions concerning whether KORUS is good for workers—is distinguishable. Thus, the mechanisms underlying the posited expectations do not manifest; endorsements from union and business groups, separately, generally do not lead respondents to believe that KORUS will benefit those interests, and endorsements from union and business groups, jointly, do not lead respondents to believe that such a consensus coalition indicates that KORUS will benefit the country as a whole.

Partisanship-Conditional Effects

When examining the treatment effects across all respondents, we only observe a distinguishable difference in approval of KORUS between respondents in the Control and Union and Business conditions, and we observe very few differences in levels of agreement that KORUS would benefit workers, business or the country as a whole across conditions. However, as posited earlier, this lack of distinguishable differences may mask partisanship-conditional effects, where Republicans or Democrats and Independents might react more strongly to organized interests' endorsements of KORUS. To investigate this possibility, I re-estimate the models

from which I extract the treatment effects presented above to include interactions between respondents' treatment assignment and partisan affiliation.²⁵

Figure 5.3 presents the partisanship-conditional treatment effects for respondents' approval of KORUS. Looking across the treatment effects for Independents, Democrats, and Republicans in each of the conditions, we observe clear trends for respondents of each partisan persuasion. Among Republicans, President Trump's copartisans, the point estimates for each of the treatment effects are approximately zero, suggesting that organized interest endorsements do not influence their approval of KORUS. This null effect may be due to ceiling effects, as 96% of Republican respondents in the Control condition approve of KORUS, leaving the organized interest endorsement treatments little room to influence attitudes (Cohen 2017; McDonald, Croco and Turitto 2019).

However, Independent and Democratic respondents are more responsive to organized interests' endorsements. For Independents, approval of KORUS is higher in each endorsement condition relative to the Control condition, though only the 23 percentage point increase in approval associated with the Union and Chamber condition is distinguishable at the 95% level. Among Democrats, all three endorsement conditions are associated with higher levels of approval of KORUS, ranging between 11 and 19 percentage points, and the differences between the Control condition and the Union Only and Union and Chamber conditions are distinguishable at the 95% level. Overall, these results are consistent with organized interest endorsements of presidents' policies helping presidents to increase public support

²⁵Respondents' partisan affiliations are coded using the CCES' seven-point partisan affiliation scale. Respondents who indicate that they are "Strong" or "Not so strong" identifiers with either party, or who "Lean" towards one party more than the other, are coded as Democrats or Republicans. Respondents who indicate that they are Independents and do not lean towards either party are coded as Independents. The 34 respondents who either did not respond to the partisan affiliation question or indicated that they were "Not sure" which party they identified with are dropped from the analysis.

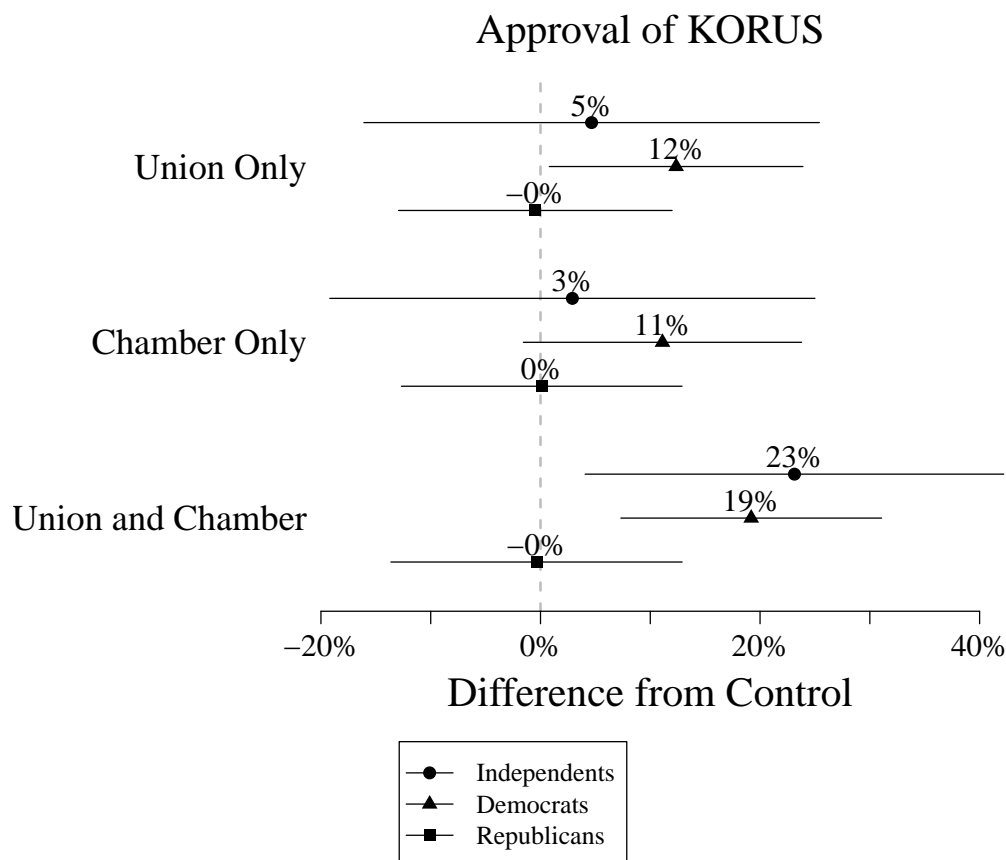


Figure 5.3: Partisanship-Conditional Effect of Organized Interest Endorsements on KORUS Approval Linear regression coefficients for partisanship-conditional treatment effects of organized interest endorsements on approval of President Trump’s KORUS renegotiation relative to the Control condition. Positive (negative) values along the x -axis reflect higher (lower) levels of approval for KORUS relative to the Control condition. When Democratic respondents are told that United Steelworkers (Union Only condition) or United Steelworkers and the US Chamber of Commerce (Union and Chamber condition) support KORUS, they offer distinguishably higher levels of approval of the approval relative to Democrats in the Control condition. While Democrats told that the US Chamber of Commerce supports KORUS (Chamber Only condition) also express higher levels of approval relative to those in the Control condition, this difference is not distinguishable. Differently, among Independents, only those in the Union and Chamber condition express higher levels of approval than those in the Control condition, and Republicans in each of the treatment conditions do not express higher levels of approval than do those in the Control condition. Bars around point estimates represent 95 percent confidence intervals. Estimates are obtained using survey weights.

among non-copartisans, thereby expanding their supportive coalition in the public rather than reinforcing their already strong base.

In Figure 5.4, I consider the partisan-conditional effects of organized interest endorsements on respondents' perceptions of who benefits from KORUS. As with approval of KORUS, we again observe that the differences in perceptions between Republicans in the Control condition and each of the endorsement conditions are small and indistinguishable; ceiling effects are again likely at play, as Republicans' agreement that each of these interests will benefit from KORUS is 95% or more in the Control condition for each outcome measure. We do observe distinguishable treatment effects for Independents and Democrats, though some of these effects run counter to our expectations. If Independents and Democrats used these endorsements as cues to determine which interests benefit from KORUS, then we could expect them to express more agreement that it is good for workers and business if it is endorsed by United Steelworkers and the Chamber of Commerce, respectively. We observe these treatment effects among Democrats, but not among Independents; while Democrats express distinguishably higher levels of agreement that KORUS is good for workers and businesses when in the Union Only and Chamber Only conditions, respectively, Independents are distinguishably less likely to agree that KORUS is good for workers when in the Union Only condition, and no more or less likely to agree that KORUS is good for business when in the Chamber Only condition. Turning to the final outcome, which asks respondents whether KORUS is good for the country as a whole, Democrats and Independents express higher levels of agreement when in the Union and Chamber condition, but neither of these differences are distinguishable at the 95% level. Taken together, these results provide mixed support for the underlying mechanisms positing that the public uses organized interest endorsements as cues providing information about which interests stand to benefit from the presidents' proposals or about the legitimacy of the policy itself.

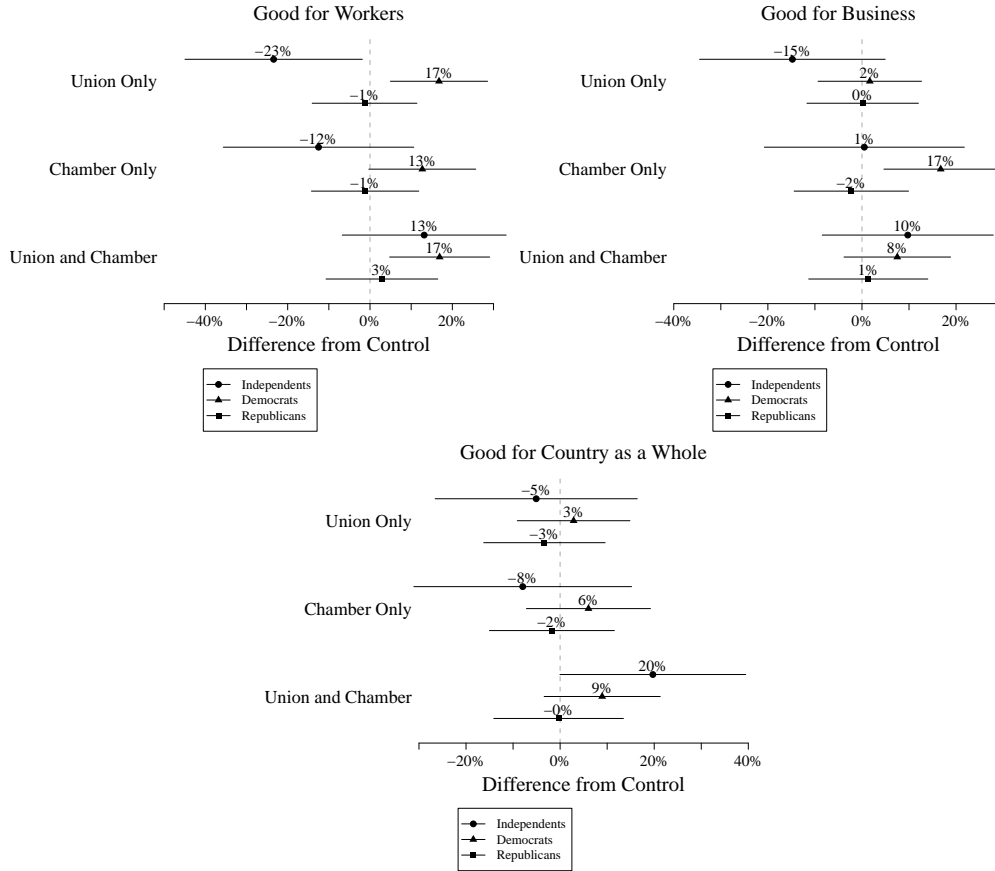


Figure 5.4: **Partisan-Conditional Effect of Organized Interest Endorsements on Perceptions of Who Benefits from KORUS** Linear regression coefficients for partisan-conditional treatment effects of organized interest endorsements on perceptions of who benefits from KORUS relative to the Control condition. Positive (negative) values along the x -axis reflect higher (lower) levels of agreement that KORUS benefits American workers (top left panel), American businesses (top right panel), and the United States as a whole (bottom center panel) relative to the Control condition. While Republican respondents' perceptions of which groups benefit from KORUS are roughly constant across treatment conditions, Democrats and Independents adjust some of their perceptions across some treatment conditions. However, some of the partisan-conditional treatment effects are inconsistent with the theory posited; for example, while Democrats in the Chamber Only condition are distinguishably more likely to agree that KORUS is good for business, Independents in the Union Only condition are distinguishably less likely to agree that KORUS is good for workers. Bars around point estimates represent 95 percent confidence intervals. Estimates are obtained using survey weights.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed how presidents benefit from their engagement with organized interests. While data availability precludes me from investigating whether engagement helps presidents obtain the resources they seek from organized interests, I was able to leverage experimental methods to explore whether organized interests' provision of resources helps presidents advance their goals. Focusing on the example of organized interests' endorsements of presidents policies, a form of grassroots lobbying, I conducted a survey experiment drawing on President Trump's renegotiation of the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement to assess how endorsements of the agreement by organized interests influence public opinion. I find that these endorsements increase approval of KORUS, but that this effect is concentrated among presidential non-copartisans. Further, I find mixed evidence that these endorsements influence public attitudes by providing cues concerning which interests in society stand to benefit from the policy, the partisan leanings of the endorsing interests, or the legitimacy of the process by which the policy was crafted.

These results are an important reminder that, even in times of high partisan polarization where citizens filter both political and apolitical information through partisan lenses (Iyengar et al. 2019), political elites from one party can improve the attitudes that non-copartisans hold regarding those elites and their policies. Democrats consistently offer negative appraisals of President Trump; for example, among respondents participating in the survey experiment presented above, Democrats' approval of President Trump's job performance is only 7.1%.²⁶ However, despite this negative affect for President Trump, endorsements of KORUS by union and business organized interests managed to increase approval of the trade agreement among Democrats by between 11 and 19 percentage points across treatment conditions. Thus,

²⁶Presidential approval was measured pre-treatment as part of the common questions asked in all CCES survey modules.

presidents can use organized interests to expand public support for their policies outside of their core supporters, even in the contemporary atmosphere of high partisan polarization.

The notion that presidents can use the endorsements of organized interests to expand their supportive coalitions in the public runs counter to the common theme in studies of presidential coalition-building that presidents focus their activities on shoring up support among their core supporters, such as their copartisans (e.g., Druckman and Jacobs 2015; Kriner and Reeves 2015*a*; Wood 2009). However, this finding should be interpreted with some caution, as I demonstrate that presidents can use these endorsements to influence the attitudes of non-copartisans, but I do not consider how frequently presidents solicit and secure the types of endorsements that influence non-copartisans. I selected the KORUS case because President Trump was able to secure the support of both Democratic- and Republican-leaning organized interests, and my results suggest that endorsements from Democratic-leaning labor interests, alone or in conjunction with business interests, drove the observed treatment effects. However, given that presidents' coalition-building strategies typically focus on copartisans, these types of consensus organized interest coalitions are likely rare.

Therefore, my results highlight both a limit and an opportunity. First, further research is needed to determine how often and under what conditions presidents construct these types of consensus organized interest coalitions. If cases such as KORUS are rare, then the generalizability of my findings may be limited. However, the scarcity of such cases would also imply that presidents focus on gathering endorsements from copartisan organized interests that do not induce any change in public attitudes towards the underlying policies, encouraging scholars to consider why presidents would seemingly squander their efforts on promoting support where support is already high. Second, my findings suggest to presidents that the uncommon strategy of building consensus coalitions of organized interests may be a more effective way to build public support for their policies. While non-copartisans typically do not support them and their policies, securing endorsements from organized interests outside

of the president's base creates opportunities to widen public support by winning over these non-copartisans, if only on specific policies.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This dissertation opened with a plethora of statements from presidents denouncing the role of organized interests in American politics and declaring themselves and their office as impervious to those interests. To hear it from them, the White House is a “No Organized Interest Zone,” and the notion that presidents and organized interests maintain mutually beneficial relationships is anathema. However, in light of the evidence presented that presidents not only welcome interactions with organized interests, but purposefully engage with those interests to benefit themselves and those interests, a paraphrase of an oft-quoted line from William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* might come to mind: The presidents doth protest too much.

Indeed, one key takeaway from this dissertation is that extant presidency scholarship overlooks an important form of presidential activity: engagement and subsequent interaction with organized interests. Presidents’ protestations notwithstanding, considerable White House time and effort is devoted to recruiting organized interests into presidents’ supportive coalitions, providing selective incentives to cooperative interests, and harnessing those interests’ resources to advance presidents’ goals. For example, the White House visitor logs from the Obama presidency indicate that, of the 24,009 unique organized interests filing at least one

LDA report for activity conducted between October 2009 and September 2016, President Obama and his staff engaged at least once with representatives from 13,838 of these interests, or nearly 58%, and engaged with some interests much more frequently. Again, of the 124,451 advisory committees appointments of private citizens that the Obama administration made during that same time period for which the appointees' professional affiliations were available, 15,199, or 12%, of these appointments—a scarce, valuable good that provides its recipients with policymaking influence and the opportunity to promote their political clout—were provided to organized interests. Further, the White House leans on organized interests to use grassroots lobbying tactics, such as public endorsements of presidents' policies, to influence public attitudes; as one former White House official recounts, the participation of organized interests is “mission critical” for the success of the White House's public outreach efforts.¹ To presidents, organized interests are far from pariahs; rather, they are valuable potential coalition members.

Beyond spotlighting a neglected form of presidential activity, this dissertation also contributes to ongoing positive and normative debates in the study of the presidency, organized interests, and representation. First, while my dissertation accords with a number of studies suggesting that presidents often diverge from their role expectation as a national representative (e.g., Howell and Moe 2016; Wechsler 1954; Wilson 1961), instead using their office to satisfy the preferences of and materially benefit specific subconstituencies (e.g., Druckman and Jacobs 2015; Kriner and Reeves 2015*a*; *b*; Lowande, Jenkins and Clarke 2018; Wood 2009), my findings suggest that presidents emphasize different subconstituency characteristics when deciding how to allocate representational attention across political contexts. Most studies of presidential representation focus on the mass public, where each person possesses roughly equal resources they can provide the president. While some persons may be more willing or

¹Personal interview with a former White House Official, September 25, 2019.

able to participate in politics, each can only provide the president with a single vote at the ballot box or a single nod of approval in a public opinion poll. As a result, presidents do not prefer that any one citizen supports them over any other, but rather than they have a sufficient number of citizens in their supportive coalitions. Given this incentive structure, presidents can most efficiently build winning coalitions by targeting copartisans, as they are more likely to respond to presidents' representational entreaties (Cox and McCubbins 1986; Cox 2009).

However, when interacting with political elites, such as members of Congress, presidents recognize that actors often vary in the degree of influence or power they wield, such that focusing their representational activities on some actors versus others could yield supportive coalitions of varying strength. In the case of organized interests, my results in Chapter 3 indicate that, while presidents give preference to copartisan interests, they also emphasize interests' resource endowments when deciding with whom to engage. This finding bears similarity to that of Beckmann (2010), who demonstrates that presidents' coalition-building efforts in Congress focus on congressional leaders of both parties rather than only on copartisan leaders. While copartisan leaders are more responsive to presidents' entreaties, non-copartisan leaders hold important institutional powers and sway over their members, and presidents often communicate with them to bargain over or demobilize opposition to presidents' proposals (see also Beckmann 2008; Beckmann, Chaturvedi and Garcia 2017). Thus, while reinforcing the broad conclusion in the study of presidential representation that presidents often veer away from representing the national interest, my results also suggest that studies of presidential representation should consider whether characteristics of the population which presidents represent other than partisanship influence how presidents allocate their representational activities (see also Griffin and Newman 2016).

Second, contrary to the hopes expressed by some that presidents dampen the influence interests exercise in other political venues (e.g., Bentley 1908; Truman 1971; Quirk and

Nesmith 2005; Uslander 1998), I find that presidents associate more closely with interests who represent the preferences of their copartisans and the upper-class, and in doing so contribute to the disproportionate voice given to these constituencies in American politics (Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012). By engaging more with interests who represent these preferences, presidents, intentionally or unintentionally, heighten the salience of those preferences within the White House and consequently marginalize the preferences of other constituencies (Miler 2010); as Schlozman, Verba and Brady write, “Public officials cannot consider voices they do not hear... if [the voices officials hear] come from an unrepresentative set of individuals and organizations, government policy is likely to reflect more fully the preferences and needs of the active part of the public” (2012, 6). Further, because engagement is concentrated among well-resourced interests, as I show in Chapter 3, presidents also provide these well-resourced interests more downstream benefits, such as formal opportunities to participate in the policymaking process, as I demonstrate in Chapter 4. Thus, by favoring well-resourced and copartisan organized interests in their coalition-building efforts, presidents perpetuate inequalities in political voice.

Paths for Future Research

While this dissertation brings much-needed attention to presidents’ interactions with organized interests, illuminates with which interests they engage, and sheds light on the consequences of this engagement for presidents and organized interests, it serves as a starting point for, rather than a final word on, research into the intersection between presidents and organized interests. The scope of activities and outcomes which involve interactions between presidents and organized interests far exceeds those explored here, offering fertile ground for additional research. More specifically, future research should further probe variation in how presidents engage with organized interests and consider additional pathways by which engagement benefits presidents and organized interests.

First, future work should investigate how presidents allocate White House personnel to organized interest engagement. While my analysis in Chapter 3 treats all instances of White House access as equivalent, each instance of access is provided to a certain member of the White House staff working in a certain unit of the White House. That is to say, while any access provided to organized interests is scarce and valuable to presidents and organized interests alike, access to senior staff, such as the Chief of Staff or the Director of the National Economic Council, is different than access to a staff assistant or intern. Most critically, who in the White House interfaces with an organized interest is indicative of the quality of that interaction (Kalla and Broockman 2016). For example, if an organized interest receives access to the Chief of Staff, who has prestige and broad policymaking influence, rather than an intern, they likely interpret that the White House places a higher value on their support and are able to directly communicate their preferences to an official with sufficient power to manifest them. As one former White House official communicated, “We might assign as more junior person to take the meeting or we might elevate the meeting to a senior official depending on the significance of the issue and, frankly, the significance of the individual” (Personal interview with a former White House official, May 3, 2018). Similarly, if a policy-minded organized interest receives access to a staffer in the Domestic Policy Council as opposed to one in the Office of Public Liaison, they would again be better able to express their preferences to an official with policymaking influence. Future studies might leverage information in the White House visitor logs concerning each record’s visitee—the person in the White House with whom the visitor meets—to determine to who each visitor receives access, and then use that information to determine whether presidents are more likely to not only provide access, as I show in Chapter 3, but also a higher quality of access, to organized interests with characteristics that make them valuable coalition members.

Second, the benefits that organized interests and presidents can receive from engagement are more varied than advisory committee appointments and public policy endorsements,

respectively, and future work can explore whether engagement provides more of the benefits for both parties that I posited in Chapter 2. For organized interests, because some of the selective incentives which presidents can provide organized interests better fulfill one of organized interests' two goals—manifestation of their policy preferences and institutional maintenance—we would expect different interests in presidents' supportive coalitions to receive different types of incentives. For instance, I suggest in Chapter 4 that organized interests in the Education industry, such as colleges and universities, may be no more or less likely to receive appointments to advisory committees because, given their structure, they care more about institutional maintenance than the ability to manifest policy preferences. By incorporating additional types of selective incentives that provide more institutional maintenance than policy benefits, such as federal grants or mentions in the White House's public communications, we might find that presidents channel those incentives to educational institutions and other organized interests who prioritize institutional maintenance.

Turning to the White House, while I show in Chapter 5 that presidents benefit from one form of organized interests' resources—public statements endorsing their policies—data limitations prevent me from exploring the antecedent question of whether engagement makes organized interests more willing to provide presidents resources. Without being able to observe the White House's requests for and organized interests' provision of most of these resources, such as lobbying of members of Congress, this expectation is difficult to test. While a broad empirical analysis across presidents, organized interests, and policy initiatives may be infeasible, future researchers might examine this expectation through a case study approach using archival data. For instance, if we could uncover White House records for a given policy initiative concerning with which organized interests the White House engaged, from which interests it requested resources, and from which interests it ultimately received resources, then we could empirically test, for that case, whether engagement led to more resource provision from organized interests.

Finally, beyond the study of interactions between presidents and organized interests, this dissertation highlights that the predominant paradigm in the study of organized interests and political institutions—that interactions between organized interests and policymakers are “outside-in” endeavors, where organized interests seek to influence policymakers—does not apply to all contexts. Based on extant descriptive scholarship, responses to my survey of lobbyists, and my interviews with former White House officials and organized interest representatives, this “outside-in” characterization is overshadowed in the context of the White House by an “inside-out” approach, where presidents exert primary control for reaching out to and accepting requests for access from organized interests (Loomis 2009; Peterson 1992; Shaiko 1998; Tenpas 2005). While outside-in lobbying may be more prevalent in other institutional contexts, policymakers likely sometimes turn the tables on organized interests and take an inside-out approach. For instance, Shaiko (1998) describes how the Republican House leadership under Newt Gingrich solicited support from organized interests to fundraise for preferred candidates and conduct supportive grassroots lobbying. Lobbying scholars should reconsider whether policymakers are always passive targets of organized interests’ entreaties, or whether policymakers might sometimes have incentives to lobby the lobbyists themselves.

Final Thoughts

Years before assuming the presidency himself, Woodrow Wilson wrote of the president, “He is the representative of no constituency, but of the whole people. When he speaks in his true character, he speaks for no special interest” (Wilson 1961, 68). This common notion of the president as the sole elected official with both the legitimate claim and the ability to represent the national interest against all special interests has buoyed the role expectations placed upon the presidency for generations. Further, as organized interests associated with the upper-class have claimed a larger and larger foothold in American politics, the nationally

representative presidency has emerged as one of the final aspirational bulwarks of pluralism, showing no favor to any specific interest and standing up for the national interest against privileged parochial concerns.

However, those that hold out hope that presidents stand against organized interests fail to recognize that presidents' goals and their need for resources to achieve them lead them to marshal support from whichever quarters they can—including the organized interest universe. Though presidents may believe the aspersions they cast against organized interests, they need interests' support if they are to succeed in office. Thus, the contemporary White House is but a collapsed bulwark of pluralism—if it ever was one—as it, like the other halls of power in Washington, DC, is open to a favored subset of organized interests.

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Appendix A

Interviews and Survey Information

Because interactions between presidents and organized interests have received scant attention in previous studies, our knowledge of basic facts, such as what these interactions look like, what determines whether they occur, and why presidents and organized interests participate in them, is limited. In light of these limitations, I supplement my work with two additional first-hand data sources that contextualize presidents' engagements with organized interests. In this section, I explain how I conducted these interviews and the survey and present the summary results from the relevant survey questions.

Interviews Description

I interviewed former White House officials and organized interest representatives to better understand how and why presidents' engagement with organized interests occurs. Between May 2018 and September 2019, I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with 15 individuals, seven of whom previously worked in the Clinton, Obama, or Trump administrations, and nearly all of whom worked in lobbying or policy advocacy at the time of the interviews. The interviews lasted for between 30 to 60 minutes. Most were conducted in-person in the Washington, DC area, though a few were conducted via phone due to scheduling conflicts.

Interviewees agreed to speak “on background,” such that I anonymize the information they provided.

In trying to arrange interviews, I strove to speak with individuals who have different perspectives on the relationships between presidents and organized interests. The seven former White House officials I interviewed had experience in a wide array of offices, including the Domestic Policy Council, the National Security Council, the Office of Public Engagement, the Office of Legislative Affairs, the Office of the Press Secretary. My interviewees specialized in a diverse cross-section of policy areas, such as chemical manufacturing, education, the environment, healthcare, reproductive rights, telecommunications, and transportation.

Survey Description

I conducted a survey with a sample of organized interest representatives to collect information about their experiences with and perspectives on interacting with the Obama White House. This survey, fielded in late 2018, asked questions about the Obama White House, but not, the Clinton or Trump White Houses, for two reasons. First, because the Clinton administration had ended nearly 18 years prior to the fielding of the survey, I feared that most respondents would not have been working for their current employers or clients or would not clearly recall their experiences from that time. Second, because the visitor logs data for the Trump administration only covered four agencies in the Executive Office of the President, respondents’ answers about engagement with the Trump White House would not appropriately map onto my quantitative analysis. Because the Obama presidency was still fresh in respondents’ minds and because my visitor logs data from that period covers the full White House complex, I focused my questions on that time period.

Sampling Procedure

The sample for this survey consisted of all persons listed as points of contact for lobbyists or organizations employing lobbyists who filed Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA) reports between the first quarter of 2017 and the third quarter of 2018. While these points of contact can be persons who are not formally recognized as lobbyists under the LDA, nearly two-thirds of points of contact are LDA lobbyists, and those individuals who are not LDA lobbyists often perform government relations or policy advocacy functions and are familiar with their employers' interactions with policymakers. For each unique individual, I selected his or her most recent appearance on a report so as to obtain the most up-to-date contact and employment information. In cases where the same individual was identified as the point of contact for more than one client in a given quarter, I randomly sampled one report on which that individual appeared as the point of contact. To minimize email bounces and improve response rates, the email addresses provided in the selected reports were screened to check for appropriate formatting and to identify duplicates. Some organizations, such as large lobbying firms, provided the same generic email address for all of their filings, such that many individuals were tied to the same generic email address; when such generic email addresses were identified, every effort was made to obtain a unique email address for that individual (searching the organization website, LinkedIn, other social media platforms, etc.). After de-duplicating the list of individuals and screening email addresses, the final sample consisted of 5,938 individuals.

Initial invitations to complete the survey were sent to all 5,938 individuals on November 15, 2018, and reminder emails were sent to all individuals who had not yet completed the survey on November 29, 2018 and December 13, 2018. Data collection ceased on December 31, 2018. Excluding the points of contact whose email addresses were identified as invalid when invitations were sent, the overall response rate for individuals who completed the demographic

and background module of the survey, which asked general questions about their experience working for their current client, is 11.7% ($\frac{639}{5459}$). The response rate for individuals who worked for their current client during the Obama administration and reached the module of the survey which asked about their client's interactions with the Obama White House is 8.1% ($\frac{442}{5459}$).¹

The first question in the module focusing on the Obama administration asked respondents how frequently their current client interacted with the White House during that period in an average year in three ways: 1) by phone, email, or mail; 2) through in-person meetings at the White House; and 3) through in-person meetings outside of the White House. Respondents' answers for the second part of the question—the frequency with which their client had in-person meetings at the White House—determined what additional questions they were provided. If respondents indicated that their client “Never” had in-person meetings at the White House, they were asked three questions about not having meetings with the Obama White House. Other respondents indicating that their client had at least one in-person meeting at the White House (i.e., “Fewer than 5 times”) were asked seven questions about the meetings their client had with the Obama White House. Of the 433 respondents who answered that question, 167 (38.6%) reported that their client never had in-person meetings with the Obama White House, and 266 (61.%) indicated that their client had at least one in-person meeting.

Evaluating Concerns about Response Bias

While this survey allows me to collect information from a large number of organized interest representatives, it is important to consider that the self-reports I solicit, like all survey

¹105 respondents who progressed through the survey far enough to reach this module indicated in the demographic and background module that they did not start working for their current client until 2017. Therefore, they were not shown any of the questions in this module.

responses, are susceptible to response bias, or the possibility that respondents' responses deviate from their realized experiences (see Miller n.d.). For example, in this particular case, we might be concerned that respondents are vulnerable to desirability bias, where they answer the survey questions so as to make themselves and their clients appear more politically influential than they are; this bias could manifest through respondents over-reporting the frequency of their contacts with the White House or the degree to which they benefitted from their relationship with the White House.

While it is difficult to determine the extent of this bias in the survey responses, I am able to get a sense of this bias by comparing respondents' self-reports of the frequency of their clients' in-person meetings at the White House with my observational measure of the frequency of their clients' in-person meetings at the White House. If the bias present for this question is minimal, then we can assume that the bias in responses to other questions are also minimal. Of the 434 responses to that question, I am able to match 406 to organized interests in my observational data.² In order to compare my quarterly measures of access across 7 years and the survey respondents' report of the frequency with which their client attending meetings at the White House, I recode both data sources. For my observational data, I code an organized interest as "1" if my data contains any instances of them having White House access at any time and "0" otherwise. For the survey data, I code an organized interest as a "1" if the respondent reports that their client attended an in-person meeting at the White House at least once (i.e., "Fewer than 5 times") and "0" otherwise. With this coding scheme, 288 of the 406 observations (70.9%) match, such that both my observational data and the survey self-reports indicate that the organized interest did or did not have in-person meetings at the White House. Of the remaining 118 observations, in 94 of the cases (23.2%) the survey

²Observations which do not match occur because the organized interest did not file LDA reports prior to 2017. These organized interests were likely active during the Obama administration, but did not meet the thresholds for filing LDA reports.

self-report indicates that the client did not have in-person meetings at the White House but my observational data detects an instance of access, and in the remaining 24 cases (5.9%) the self-report indicates that the client had in-person meetings at the White House but my observational data does not detect any instances of access. These results should reassure us that response bias is minimal; in addition to matching reports of access in both data sources in the vast majority of cases (70.9%), most of the mismatches are of the opposite character as would be expected if desirability bias is present, as mismatches arose more frequently when organized interest representatives reported that their client did not have in-person meetings at the White House than when they reported that they did.

Descriptive Sample Characteristics

It is difficult to assess the “representativeness” of my survey respondents to the points of contact in the sampling frame because scant information is available regarding the points of contact and the clients for which they work. Four pieces of information about the points of contact and their clients can be gleaned from their LDA filings and the Center for Responsive Politics (CRP), which cleans and aggregates the LDA filings: the client’s quarterly lobbying expenditures with that point of contact’s employer (i.e. the client’s own expenditures if the point of contact is employed directly, or the client’s expenditures with a given firm if the point of contact is a contract employee); whether the filer is the client or a lobbying firm contracted by a client; the client’s sector coding, as assigned by CRP; and whether the point of contact is a registered lobbyist under the LDA.³ Table A.1 compares the distribution of

³The first three of these pieces of information are easily observable from CRP’s aggregated LDA filings, but the fourth can only be determined by comparing the names of the points of contact provided on each LDA filing with the names of the registered lobbyists listed on the same LDA filing. To determine whether the point of contact listed is an registered lobbyist, I used approximate matching techniques to compare the name of the point of contact on each LDA filing to the names of all of the registered lobbyists also appearing on the filing, and

these four characteristics in both the full sampling frame and the subset of 639 respondents who answered at least one of the questions I report here. These comparisons reveal some differences for each of the four characteristics that are substantively small but are statistically distinguishable at the $p < 0.05$ level using difference in means and χ^2 tests (where applicable). Thus, while the sample of respondents differs from the sampling frame, it contains a sizeable number of respondents with each unique level of these characteristics.

Table A.2 provides information on the descriptive characteristics of the respondents. This descriptive information was collected as part of the survey, and thus only provides information about respondents. The high proportions of respondents who report education levels of “post-graduate degree” (67.8%), income levels of “\$200,000 or more” (57.4%), and experience levels of “more than 20 years” (41.8%) suggest that most survey respondents are themselves political elites who play a substantive role in lobbying, rather than low-level employees who may respond to emails but lack significant lobbying experience.

visually inspected the best match for each LDA form to determine if the point of contact was also listed as a registered lobbyist.

Table A.1: Comparison of Respondents with Sampling Frame

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>% of Respondents (N)</u>	<u>% of Sampling Frame (N)</u>
<u>Lobbyist Employer</u>		
Client	61.2% (391)	53.4% (2914)
Firm	38.8% (248)	46.6% (2545)
<u>Lobbying Expenditures</u>		
First Quartile	26.4% (169)	25% (1365)
Second Quartile	30.4% (194)	25% (1365)
Third Quartile	23.4% (150)	25% (1365)
Fourth Quartile	19.7% (126)	25% (1364)
<u>CRP Category</u>		
Agribusiness	4.7% (30)	4.2% (228)
Communications and Electronics	4.1% (26)	6.6% (360)
Construction	1.6% (10)	2.1% (112)
Defense	1.9% (12)	2.1% (117)
Energy and Natural Resources	6.9% (44)	8.1% (444)
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	7.7% (49)	9.6% (526)
Health	18.6% (119)	18.5% (1011)
Ideological and Single-Issue	12.8% (82)	9.2% (500)
Labor	1.9% (12)	2.1% (116)
Lawyers and Lobbyists	1.6% (10)	1.2% (66)
Misc Business	11.3% (72)	11.8% (645)
Other	5.9% (38)	6.2% (339)
Transportation	6.6% (42)	6.1% (332)
Unknown	14.6% (93)	12.1% (663)

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>% of Respondents (N)</u>	<u>% of Sampling Frame (N)</u>
<u>Registered Lobbyist</u>		
Yes	74.7% (478)	62.4% (3409)
No	25.3% (161)	37.6% (2050)

Table A.2: Descriptive Statistics of Sample

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>% of Respondents (N)</u>
<u>Gender</u>	
Female	27.9% (178)
Male	71.8% (459)
NA	0.3% (2)
<u>Age</u>	
18-29	3.8% (24)
30-49	38.3% (245)
50-64	35.5% (227)
65 or over	22.2% (142)
NA	0.2% (2)
<u>Education</u>	
Some college, no 4-year degree	2.0% (13)
College graduate	30.0% (192)
Post-graduate degree	67.8% (433)
NA	0.2% (1)
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	
Asian	1.4% (9)
Black	3.3% (21)
Hispanic	2.0% (13)
White	90.0% (575)
Other	2.0% (13)
NA	1.3% (8)
<u>Income</u>	

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>% of Respondents (N)</u>
Less than \$25,000	0.3% (2)
\$25,000-\$50,000	0.6% (4)
\$50,000-\$75,000	3.4% (22)
\$75,000-\$100,000	6.4% (41)
\$100,000-\$200,000	27.1% (173)
\$200,000 or more	57.4% (367)
NA	4.7% (30)
<u>Ideology</u>	
Very liberal	13.8% (88)
Somewhat liberal	21.6% (138)
Slightly liberal	14.7% (94)
Neither liberal nor conservative	16.7% (107)
Slightly conservative	14.4% (92)
Somewhat conservative	13.3% (85)
Very conservative	4.5% (29)
NA	0.9% (6)
<u>Party Identification</u>	
Strong Democrat	36.9% (236)
Democrat	8.0% (51)
Lean Democrat	8.1% (52)
Independent	11.1% (71)
Lean Republican	7.4% (47)
Republican	10.8% (69)
Strong Republican	13.6% (87)
Other	2.3% (15)

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>% of Respondents (N)</u>
NA	1.7% (11)
<u>Lobbying Experience</u>	
Less than 5 years	10.5% (67)
5-10 years	17.1% (109)
11-15 years	17.4% (111)
16-20 years	13.0% (83)
More than 20 years	41.8% (267)
NA	0.3% (2)
<u>Past Government Experience</u>	
Member of Congress	4.7% (30)
Congressional staffer	42.7% (273)
Presidential appointee	8.1% (52)
EOP staffer	4.7% (30)
Civil servant	13.0% (83)
Other	14.6% (93)
No experience	34.1% (218)
<u>Current Role with Client</u>	
Lobbyist	58.4% (373)
Executive officer responsible for lobbying	30.0% (192)
Executive officer not responsible for lobbying	4.1% (26)
Other	7.4% (47)
NA	0.2% (1)

Table A.3: Self-Reported Importance of Venues

<u>Venue</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>Slightly important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Extremely important</u>
<u>Federal bureaucracy</u>	1.0% (6)	3.2% (20)	12.5% (79)	30.0% (189)	53.4% (337)
<u>Congress</u>	0.3% (2)	1.4% (9)	5.8% (37)	28.3% (180)	64.2% (408)
<u>White House</u>	14.4% (91)	16.6% (105)	31.2% (197)	24.1% (152)	13.6% (86)

This question was presented to all respondents.

Table A.4: Self-Reported Contacts with Obama White House

<u>Type of Contact</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Fewer than 5 times</u>	<u>5 to 10 times</u>	<u>11 to 15 times</u>	<u>16 to 20 times</u>	<u>More than 20 times</u>
<u>Mail, phone, or email</u>	28.9% (128)	30.9% (137)	16.0% (71)	7.0% (31)	5.0% (22)	12.2% (54)
<u>In-person at White House complex</u>	38.5% (167)	40.8% (177)	11.3% (49)	3.2% (14)	1.8% (8)	4.4% (19)
<u>In-person off of White House complex</u>	39.2% (170)	39.4% (171)	12.0% (52)	3.2% (14)	1.2% (5)	5.1% (22)

Respondents were asked how frequently their organized interest had contacts with the Obama White House in a given year in each of the specified forms. This question was presented to all respondents who advanced to this module and who started working for their current client in 2016 or earlier.

Table A.5: Types of Officials Attending White House Meetings

<u>Type of Official</u>	<u>% of Respondents (N)</u>
<u>Registered lobbyists</u>	76.4% (204)
<u>Executives responsible for lobbying</u>	71.2% (190)
<u>Non-lobbyist government affairs employees</u>	19.1% (51)
<u>Other</u>	12.0% (32)

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the listed types of officials with their organized interest attended meetings at the Obama White House. Respondents could select as many options as were applicable. This question was presented to all respondents who indicated that their client had in-person meetings at the Obama White House at least “Fewer than 5 times” in an average year.

Table A.6: Types of Officials Attending White House Meetings

<u>Response Option</u>	<u>% of Respondents (N)</u>
<u>Always the organization</u>	23.3% (58)
<u>Usually the organization, sometimes the White House</u>	23.3% (58)
<u>Sometimes the organization, sometimes the White House</u>	33.3% (25)
<u>Usually the White House, sometimes the organization</u>	10.0% (25)
<u>Always the White House</u>	10.0% (25)

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their in-person meetings at the White House were more often initiated by their organized interest or by the Obama White House. This question was presented to all respondents who indicated that their client had in-person meetings at the Obama White House at least “Fewer than 5 times” in an average year.

Table A.7: Frequency of White House Invitations Accepted and Meeting Requests Fulfilled

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Always</u>
<u>Invitations accepted</u>	2.0% (5)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (7)	23.0% (56)	72.1% (176)
<u>Requests fulfilled</u>	2.1% (5)	9.3% (22)	32.1% (76)	43.0% (102)	13.5% (32)

Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they accepted invitations to the White House when offered and how frequently the White House granted them meetings when they requested them. This question was presented to all respondents who indicated that their client had in-person meetings at the Obama White House at least “Fewer than 5 times” in an average year.

Table A.8: Organized Interests’ Objectives in White House Meetings

<u>Response Option</u>	<u>% of Respondents (N)</u>
<u>Persuade the White House to act on an issue</u>	62.2% (166)
<u>Provide the White House with policy/political information</u>	64.4% (172)
<u>Coordinate political strategy with the White House</u>	12.7% (34)
<u>Advocating for a casework request</u>	3.0% (8)
<u>Other</u>	6.4% (17)

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the listed objectives they had when attending meetings at the White House. Respondents could select all objectives that applied. This question was presented to all respondents who indicated that their client had in-person meetings at the Obama White House at least “Fewer than 5 times” in an average year.

Table A.9: White House’s Objectives in Meetings with Organized Interests

<u>Response Option</u>	<u>% of Respondents (N)</u>
<u>Persuade the group to support a White House policy</u>	3.0% (8)
<u>Seek policy/political information from the organization</u>	16.5% (44)
<u>Coordinate political strategy with the organization</u>	9.4% (25)
<u>Work with the organization to lobby Congress</u>	40.4% (108)
<u>Work with the organization to lobby the public</u>	59.9% (160)
<u>Other</u>	10.9% (29)

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the listed objectives they believed the White House had when hosting them at White House meetings. Respondents could select all objectives that applied. This question was presented to all respondents who indicated that their client had in-person meetings at the Obama White House at least “Fewer than 5 times” in an average year.

Table A.10: Frequency of Invitation Turned Down and Meeting Requests Denied

	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
<u>Invitations turned down</u>	81.5% (123)	6.0% (9)	12.6% (19)
<u>Requests denied</u>	90.1% (136)	0.1% (1)	9.3% (14)

Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they turned down invitations to the White House when offered and how frequently the White House denied them meetings when they requested them. This question was presented to all respondents who indicated that their client “Never” had in-person meetings at the Obama White House at least.

Appendix B

Alternative Model Specifications for Chapter 3

This appendix contains summaries of the models used to generate the figures in Chapter 3, as well as additional models to demonstrate the robustness of the results when using different specifications, more permissive tolerance thresholds for the matching of lobbyists' names, and indicators of access quality rather than treating all instances of access equally. Parameter estimates for key covariates of interest are largely consistent across these alternative models.

Please note that I only present results with more permissive tolerance thresholds for the models using data from the full White House from the Clinton and Obama presidencies, but not for the models using data for the four EOP agencies identified in the chapter for the Obama and Trump presidencies. Due to logistical challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, I lost access to the computing resources I needed to finish running these supplemental models.

Models Presented in Main Text

Table B.1: Main Text Models

	Clinton Full WH	Obama Full WH	Obama EOP	Trump EOP
Intercept	-1.53*	-2.94*	-4.06*	-4.09*
	[-2.12; -0.99]	[-3.11; -2.77]	[-4.22; -3.90]	[-4.50; -3.67]
Any Visits_t-1	1.30*	0.81*		0.53*
	[1.22; 1.38]	[0.79; 0.83]		[0.45; 0.62]
log(Lobbying Expenditures) _{t-1}	0.06*	0.09*	0.10*	0.10*
	[0.05; 0.06]	[0.09; 0.10]	[0.09; 0.10]	[0.09; 0.12]
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-4}	-1.20*			
	[-1.81; -0.57]			
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-4} :	0.14*			
log(Contribution Amount _{t-1 to t-4})	[0.08; 0.19]			
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-8}		-1.04*	-0.52*	-1.49*
		[-1.36; -0.72]	[-0.86; -0.18]	[-2.11; -0.88]
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-8} :		0.12*	0.07*	0.17*
log(Contribution Amount _{t-1 to t-8})		[0.10; 0.15]	[0.04; 0.10]	[0.12; 0.23]
Aligned with Neither Party	-0.24*	-0.22*	-0.09	0.19
	[-0.45; -0.04]	[-0.46; -0.00]	[-0.31; 0.13]	[-0.13; 0.51]
Aligned with Republicans	-0.23*	-0.26*	-0.10	0.12
	[-0.39; -0.06]	[-0.44; -0.09]	[-0.27; 0.07]	[-0.13; 0.37]
$\sigma_{organization}$	1.03	1.47	1.36	1.48
$\sigma_{industry}$	0.21	0.28	0.27	0.36
$\sigma_{timeperiod}$	0.55	0.19	0.12	0.38
Num. obs.	31673	306766	306766	57304

This table includes the model summaries for the four models used to generate the predicted probabilities in the main paper. The two left-most models use the full White House visitor logs for Clinton and Obama, while the two right-most models focus on visitor logs regarding the four Executive Office of the President agencies identified in the main paper. The cell entry for each covariate presents the posterior mean and 95% credible interval from the Bayesian multilevel logistic regression model indicated by the column heading. Coefficients denoted with * are those whose 95% credible intervals do not include zero. Models fitted with the R package *brms*, which fits the models using the NUTS (No-U-Turn Sampler) algorithm in Stan. Each model is fitted with 4 chains for 2000 iterations per chain (1000 iterations for warm-up, 1000 iterations for sampling). This table omits the following observation-level control variables: whether an organized interest employs lobbyists of its own and whether an organized interest indicates lobbying on each of 80 issues on its LDA filing in the previous time period.

Consistency of Results Across Measurement of Access

Table B.2: Clinton Full White House Model with Different Access Measures

	≤ 1 Edit	≤ 2 Edits	≤ 3 Edits
Intercept	-1.27*	-1.00*	-1.38*
	[-1.81; -0.76]	[-1.48; -0.45]	[-2.16; -0.63]
Any Visits_ $t-1$	1.25*	1.78*	2.35*
	[1.16; 1.33]	[1.69; 1.87]	[2.22; 2.48]
$\log(\text{Lobbying Expenditures})_{t-1}$	0.06*	0.05*	0.05*
	[0.05; 0.07]	[0.04; 0.06]	[0.04; 0.06]
Made Natl Contributions $_{t-1}$ to $t-4$	-0.90*	-0.11	0.60
	[-1.53; -0.26]	[-0.81; 0.60]	[-0.42; 1.64]
Made Natl Contributions $_{t-1}$ to $t-4$:	0.11*	0.03	-0.05
$\log(\text{Contribution Amount}_{t-1} \text{ to } t-4)$	[0.05; 0.17]	[-0.04; 0.10]	[-0.15; 0.05]
Aligned with Neither Party	-0.21	-0.21	-0.07
	[-0.43; 0.00]	[-0.42; 0.01]	[-0.37; 0.23]
Aligned with Republicans	-0.23*	-0.24*	-0.12
	[-0.40; -0.07]	[-0.42; -0.05]	[-0.35; 0.12]
$\sigma_{organization}$	1.08	1.05	1.21
$\sigma_{industry}$	0.22	0.23	0.31
$\sigma_{timeperiod}$	0.48	0.47	0.70
Num. obs.	31673	31673	31673

The cell entry for each covariate presents the posterior mean and 95% credible interval from the Bayesian multilevel logistic regression model that uses as the outcome variable a binary indicator of access to the Clinton White House measured with the level of precision indicated by the column heading. These models are the analogues to the model presented in the main paper and summarized Table 3.1 Models fitted with the R package `brms`, which fits the models using the NUTS (No-U-Turn Sampler) algorithm in Stan. Each model is fitted with 4 chains for 2000 iterations per chain (1000 iterations for warm-up, 1000 iterations for sampling).

Table B.3: Obama Full White House Model with Different Access Measures

	≤ 1 Edit	≤ 2 Edits	≤ 3 Edits
Intercept	-2.65*	-2.15*	-1.91*
	[-2.80; -2.49]	[-2.31; -1.99]	[-2.10; -1.72]
Any Visits_ _{t-1}	0.84*	1.15*	1.54*
	[0.81; 0.86]	[1.13; 1.18]	[1.51; 1.58]
log(Lobbying Expenditures) _{t-1}	0.09*	0.09*	0.09*
	[0.09; 0.10]	[0.09; 0.10]	[0.09; 0.10]
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1} to _{t-8}	-1.04*	-1.13*	-0.48
	[-1.35; -0.73]	[-1.50; -0.77]	[-1.02; 0.09]
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1} to _{t-8} :	0.13*	0.14*	0.07*
log(Contribution Amount _{t-1} to _{t-8})	[0.10; 0.16]	[0.10; 0.17]	[0.02; 0.12]
Aligned with Neither Party	-0.19	-0.11	-0.19
	[-0.41; 0.02]	[-0.32; 0.09]	[-0.44; 0.05]
Aligned with Republicans	-0.20*	-0.06	-0.09
	[-0.36; -0.04]	[-0.22; 0.09]	[-0.29; 0.11]
$\sigma_{organization}$	1.46	1.70	2.12
$\sigma_{industry}$	0.26	0.23	0.28
$\sigma_{timeperiod}$	0.21	0.24	0.26
Num. obs.	306766	306766	306766

The cell entry for each covariate presents the posterior mean and 95% credible interval from the Bayesian multilevel logistic regression model that uses as the outcome variable a binary indicator of access to the Obama White House measured with the level of precision indicated by the column heading. These models are the analogues to the model presented in the main paper and summarized Table 3.2 Models fitted with the R package `brms`, which fits the models using the NUTS (No-U-Turn Sampler) algorithm in Stan. Each model is fitted with 4 chains for 2000 iterations per chain (1000 iterations for warm-up, 1000 iterations for sampling).

Alternative Specifications with Count Outcome

Table B.4: Main Paper Models with Count Outcomes

	Clinton Full WH	Obama Full WH	Obama EOP	Trump EOP
Intercept	-0.77*	-2.31*	-3.79*	-3.82*
	[-1.21; -0.36]	[-2.45; -2.16]	[-3.94; -3.63]	[-4.26; -3.38]
Any Visits_t-1	0.01*	0.07*		0.01
	[0.01; 0.01]	[0.07; 0.08]		[-0.01; 0.02]
log(Lobbying Expenditures) _{t-1}	0.05*	0.08*	0.09*	0.10*
	[0.05; 0.06]	[0.07; 0.08]	[0.08; 0.09]	[0.08; 0.11]
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-4}	-1.25*			
	[-1.68; -0.80]			
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-4} :	0.15*			
log(Contribution Amount _{t-1 to t-4})	[0.10; 0.19]			
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-8}		-0.54*	-0.35*	-1.41*
		[-0.74; -0.35]	[-0.63; -0.08]	[-1.96; -0.84]
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-8} :		0.07*	0.05*	0.16*
log(Contribution Amount _{t-1 to t-8})		[0.05; 0.09]	[0.03; 0.08]	[0.11; 0.21]
Aligned with Neither Party	-0.21*	-0.27*	-0.13	0.19
	[-0.42; -0.00]	[-0.47; -0.08]	[-0.35; 0.11]	[-0.12; 0.50]
Aligned with Republicans	-0.20*	-0.30*	-0.12	0.12
	[-0.36; -0.03]	[-0.46; -0.14]	[-0.28; 0.06]	[-0.11; 0.36]
$\sigma_{organization}$	1.38	1.48	1.42	1.57
$\sigma_{industry}$	0.24	0.26	0.29	0.36
$\sigma_{timeperiod}$	0.39	0.15	0.12	0.44
Num. obs.	31673	306766	306766	57304

This table includes the model summaries for the analogs of the four models used to generate the predicted probabilities in the main paper that use the count of White House visits an organized interest had in a given time period as the outcome measure. The two left-most models use the full White House visitor logs for Clinton and Obama, while the two right-most models focus on visitor logs regarding the four Executive Office of the President agencies identified in the main paper. The cell entry for each covariate presents the posterior mean and 95% credible interval from the Bayesian multilevel logistic regression model indicated by the column heading. Coefficients denoted with * are those whose 95% credible intervals do not include zero. Models fitted with the R package *brms*, which fits the models using the NUTS (No-U-Turn Sampler) algorithm in Stan. Each model is fitted with 4 chains for 2000 iterations per chain (1000 iterations for warm-up, 1000 iterations for sampling). This table omits the following observation-level control variables: whether an organized interest employs lobbyists of its own and whether an organized interest indicates lobbying on each of 80 issues on its LDA filing in the previous time period.

Alternative Specifications with Bonica Ideology Measure

Table B.5: Main Paper Models with CFscores

	Clinton Full WH	Obama Full WH	Obama EOP	Trump EOP
Intercept	-1.57*	-3.57*	-4.97*	-6.41*
	[-2.21; -0.91]	[-3.97; -3.18]	[-5.42; -4.54]	[-7.89; -4.98]
Any Visits_t-1	0.96*	0.86*	0.55*	0.11
	[0.65; 1.27]	[0.78; 0.93]	[0.48; 0.63]	[-0.12; 0.33]
log(Lobbying Expenditures) _{t-1}	0.12*	0.20*	0.25*	0.33*
	[0.08; 0.16]	[0.18; 0.23]	[0.21; 0.28]	[0.23; 0.43]
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-4}	-1.19			
	[-2.57; 0.08]			
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-4} :	0.11			
log(Contribution Amount _{t-1 to t-4})	[-0.00; 0.23]			
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-8}		-2.02*	-1.06*	-2.04*
		[-2.60; -1.44]	[-1.65; -0.47]	[-3.62; -0.47]
Made Natl Contributions _{t-1 to t-8} :		0.18*	0.08*	0.21*
log(Contribution Amount _{t-1 to t-8})		[0.13; 0.23]	[0.03; 0.13]	[0.10; 0.32]
CFscore	-0.66*	-0.53*	-0.24*	0.01
	[-1.21; -0.14]	[-0.79; -0.27]	[-0.48; -0.01]	[-0.40; 0.40]
$\sigma_{organization}$	1.66	1.41	1.12	1.44
$\sigma_{industry}$	0.71	0.49	0.39	0.55
$\sigma_{timeperiod}$	0.37	0.22	0.18	0.50
Num. obs.	3697	27636	27636	5470

This table includes the model summaries for the analogs of the four models used to generate the predicted probabilities in the main paper that use Bonica's CFscores as measures of organized interest' ideology rather than the trichotomous indicator of industry partisanship. The two left-most models use the full White House visitor logs for Clinton and Obama, while the two right-most models focus on visitor logs regarding the four Executive Office of the President agencies identified in the main paper. The cell entry for each covariate presents the posterior mean and 95% credible interval from the Bayesian multilevel logistic regression model indicated by the column heading. Coefficients denoted with * are those whose 95% credible intervals do not include zero. Models fitted with the R package *brms*, which fits the models using the NUTS (No-U-Turn Sampler) algorithm in Stan. Each model is fitted with 4 chains for 2000 iterations per chain (1000 iterations for warm-up, 1000 iterations for sampling). This table omits the following observation-level control variables: whether an organized interest employs lobbyists of its own and whether an organized interest indicates lobbying on each of 80 issues on its LDA filing in the previous time period.

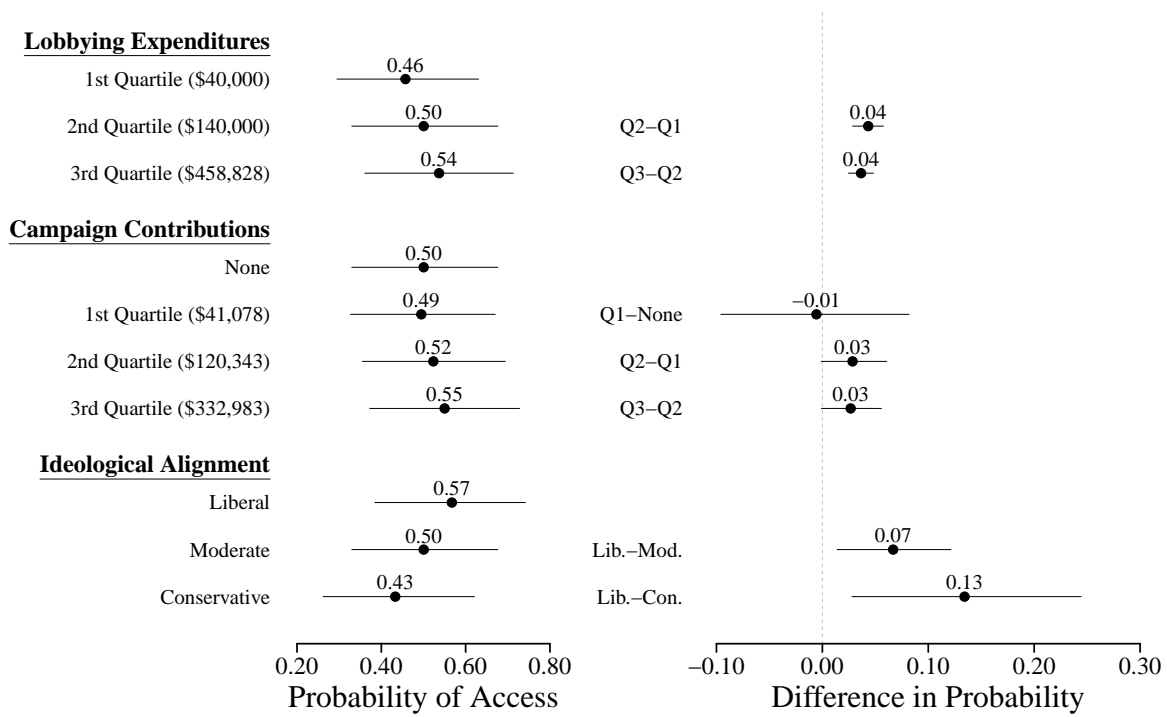


Figure B.1: **Effect of Organized Interests' Resources and Ideological Alignment on Probability of White House Access (Clinton)** In the left pane, points and lines represent the posterior means and 95% credible intervals of the predicted probabilities calculated with parameter estimates from the sampling iterations stored from the model using data from the Clinton White House. For each of the three types of organized interest characteristics specified in bold and underlined, I calculate predicted probabilities for each of the specified variable values while fixing other covariates values. In the right pane, I plot the differences in the distributions of predicted probabilities and their 95% credible intervals for pairs of predictions in the left pane, as specified by the labels on the left side of the right pane. For example, looking at the predicted probabilities of access across levels of lobbying expenditures, the three points in the left pane indicate the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to the first, second, and third quartile values, with campaign contributions fixed at None (the median value), ideological alignment fixed at median CFscore for observations in the model (i.e., Moderate), and other variables fixed at their median values. "Liberal" and "Conservative" ideology scores are set at the first and ninth deciles of the CFscores of observations in the model, respectively. In the right pane, the two topmost points indicate the differences in the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to their first and second quartile values, and their second and third quartile values, respectively. Taking the predictions associated with lobbying expenditures together, we observe that organized interests with higher levels of lobbying expenditures have a distinguishably higher probability of White House access. Please note that some differences indicated in the right pane may not equal the differences between the corresponding values in the left pane due to rounding.

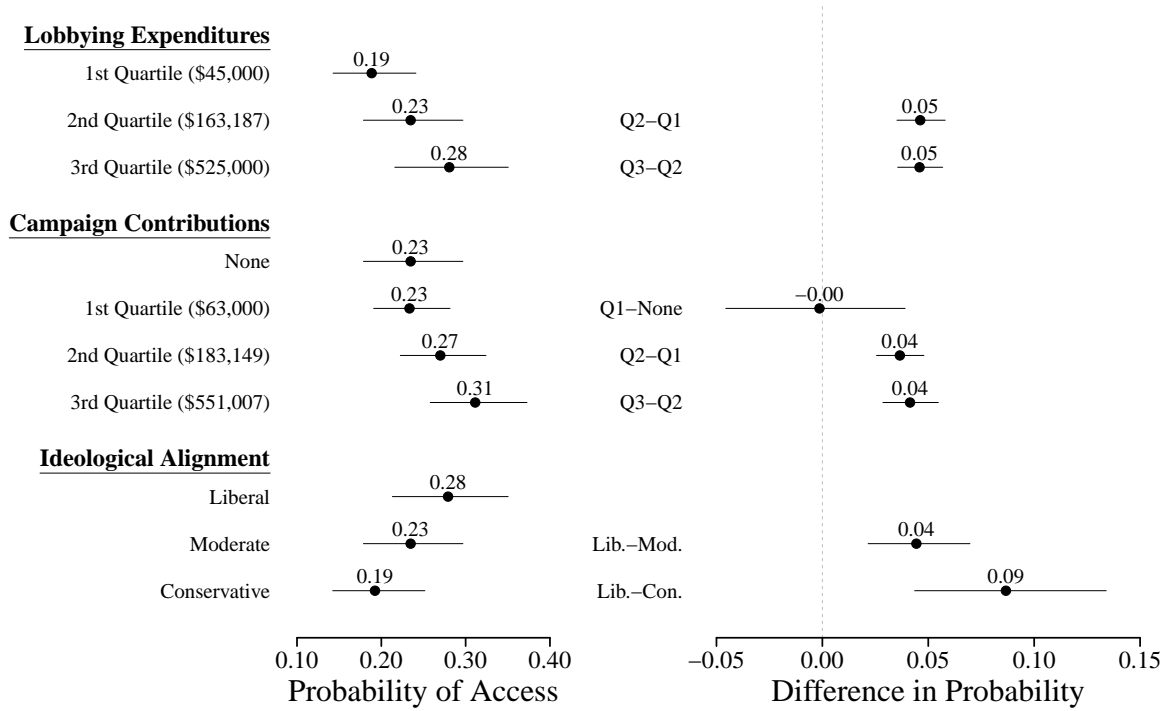


Figure B.2: **Effect of Organized Interests' Resources and Ideological Alignment on Probability of White House Access (Obama)** In the left pane, points and lines represent the posterior means and 95% credible intervals of the predicted probabilities calculated with parameter estimates from the sampling iterations stored from the model using data from the Obama White House. For each of the three types of organized interest characteristics specified in bold and underlined, I calculate predicted probabilities for each of the specified variable values while fixing other covariates values. In the right pane, I plot the differences in the distributions of predicted probabilities and their 95% credible intervals for pairs of predictions in the left pane, as specified by the labels on the left side of the right pane. For example, looking at the predicted probabilities of access across levels of lobbying expenditures, the three points in the left pane indicate the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to the first, second, and third quartile values, with campaign contributions fixed at None (the median value), ideological alignment fixed at median CFscore for observations in the model (i.e., Moderate), and other variables fixed at their median values. "Liberal" and "Conservative" ideology scores are set at the first and ninth deciles of the CFscores of observations in the model, respectively. In the right pane, the two topmost points indicate the differences in the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to their first and second quartile values, and their second and third quartile values, respectively. Taking the predictions associated with lobbying expenditures together, we observe that organized interests with higher levels of lobbying expenditures have a distinguishably higher probability of White House access. Please note that some differences indicated in the right pane may not equal the differences between the corresponding values in the left pane due to rounding.

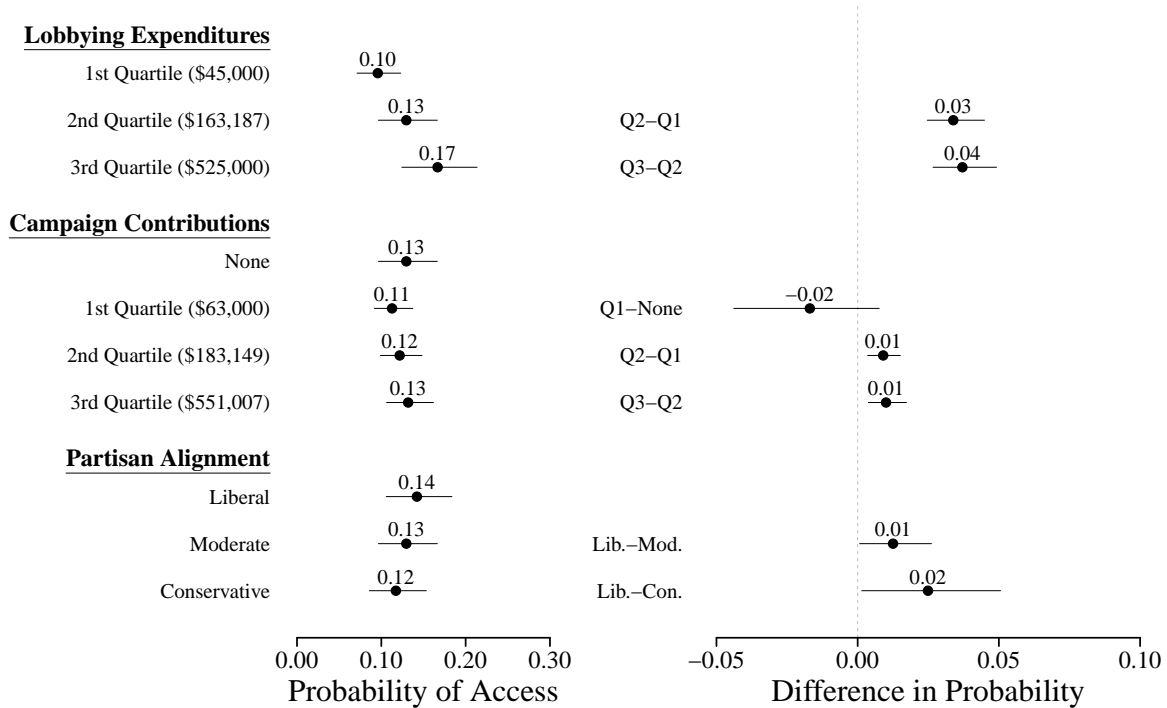


Figure B.3: Effect of Organized Interests' Resources and Ideological Alignment on Probability of Access to Four Executive Office of the President Agencies (Obama) In the left pane, points and lines represent the posterior means and 95% credible intervals of the predicted probabilities calculated with parameter estimates from the sampling iterations stored from the model using data from the Obama White House for the four Executive Office of the President agencies listed in the text. For each of the three types of organized interest characteristics specified in bold and underlined, I calculate predicted probabilities for each of the specified variable values while fixing other covariates values. In the right pane, I plot the differences in the distributions of predicted probabilities and their 95% credible intervals for pairs of predictions in the left pane, as specified by the labels on the left side of the right pane. For example, looking at the predicted probabilities of access across levels of lobbying expenditures, the three points in the left pane indicate the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to the first, second, and third quartile values, with campaign contributions fixed at None (the median value), ideological alignment fixed at median CFscore for observations in the model (i.e., Moderate), and other variables fixed at their median values. "Liberal" and "Conservative" ideology scores are set at the first and ninth deciles of the CFscores of observations in the model, respectively. In the right pane, the two topmost points indicate the differences in the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to their first and second quartile values, and their second and third quartile values, respectively. Taking the predictions associated with lobbying expenditures together, we observe that organized interests with higher levels of lobbying expenditures have a distinguishably higher probability of White House access. Please note that some differences indicated in the right pane may not equal the differences between the corresponding values in the left pane due to rounding.

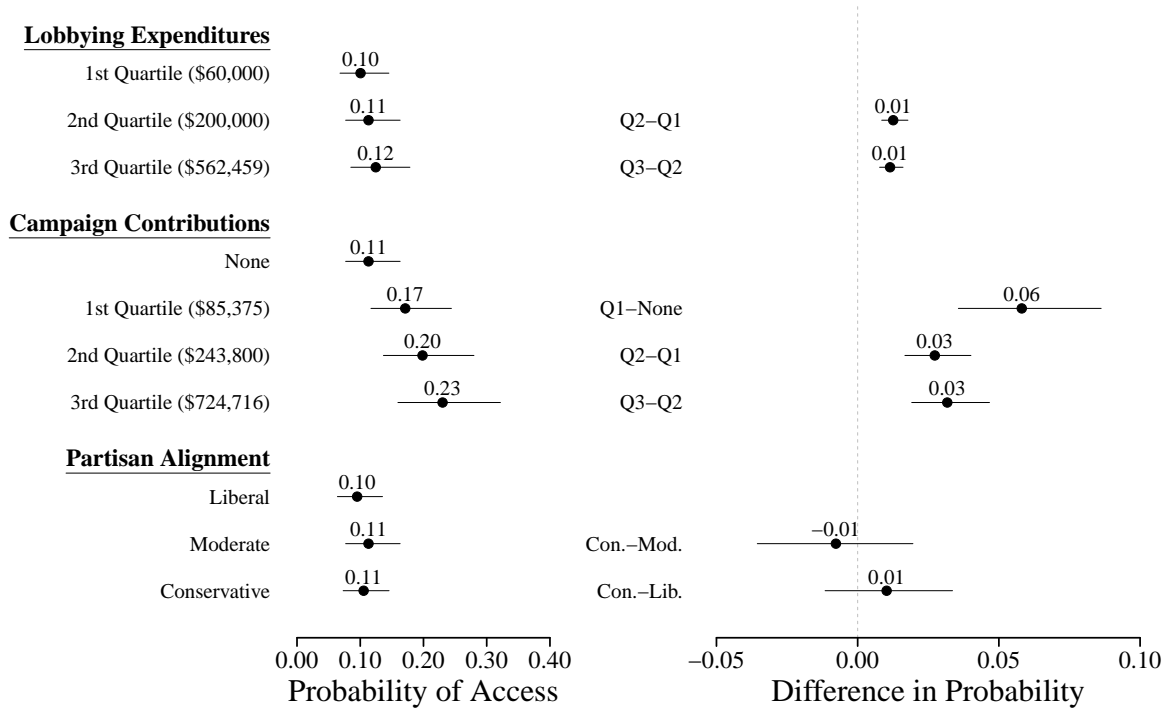


Figure B.4: **Effect of Organized Interests' Resources and Ideological Alignment on Probability of Access to Four Executive Office of the President Agencies (Trump)** In the left pane, points and lines represent the posterior means and 95% credible intervals of the predicted probabilities calculated with parameter estimates from the sampling iterations stored from the model using data from the Trump White House for the four Executive Office of the President agencies listed in the text. For each of the three types of organized interest characteristics specified in bold and underlined, I calculate predicted probabilities for each of the specified variable values while fixing other covariates values. In the right pane, I plot the differences in the distributions of predicted probabilities and their 95% credible intervals for pairs of predictions in the left pane, as specified by the labels on the left side of the right pane. For example, looking at the predicted probabilities of access across levels of lobbying expenditures, the three points in the left pane indicate the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to the first, second, and third quartile values, with campaign contributions fixed at None (the median value), ideological alignment fixed at median CFscore for observations in the model (i.e., Moderate), and other variables fixed at their median values. "Liberal" and "Conservative" ideology scores are set at the first and ninth deciles of the CFscores of observations in the model, respectively. In the right pane, the two topmost points indicate the differences in the predicted probabilities of access when lobbying expenditures are set to their first and second quartile values, and their second and third quartile values, respectively. Taking the predictions associated with lobbying expenditures together, we observe that organized interests with higher levels of lobbying expenditures have a distinguishably higher probability of White House access. Please note that some differences indicated in the right pane may not equal the differences between the corresponding values in the left pane due to rounding.

Appendix C

Alternative Model Specifications for Chapter 4

Whereas the main analysis in Chapter 4 used multilevel logistic regression models with a binary outcome—whether an organized interest had any representatives affiliated with it appointed to an advisory committee in time t —I here estimate the analogous multilevel negative binomial regression models with a count outcome—the number of representatives affiliated with an organized interest appointed to an advisory committee in time t . Across specifications, the results are substantively consistent—organized interests outside of the Education industry experiencing presidential engagement are more likely to have representatives appointed to advisory committees.

Table C.1: Effect of Presidential Engagement on Advisory Committee Appointments

	All Interests	Education Interests	Non-Education Interests
Any Visits _{<i>t</i>-1}	0.07 [-0.00; 0.14]	-0.03 [-0.11; 0.04]	0.15* [0.04; 0.25]
$\sigma_{organization}$	1.95	1.39	1.99
$\sigma_{industry}$	0.57		0.53
$\sigma_{timeperiod}$	0.43	0.29	0.55
Num. obs.	306766	19531	287235

The models in this table examine the effect of presidential engagement, in the form of White House access, on the number of appointments persons affiliated with organized interests receive. All models include the set of control variables described in the text. The first model includes all organized interests, while the second and third models include only organized interests in the “Education” industry and in all industries except “Education,” respectively. The cell entry for each covariate presents the posterior mean and 95% credible interval from the Bayesian multilevel negative binomial regression model indicated by the column heading. Coefficients denoted with * are those whose 95% credible intervals do not include zero. Models fitted with the R package `brms`, which fits the models using the NUTS (No-U-Turn Sampler) algorithm in Stan. Each model is fitted with 4 chains for 2000 iterations per chain (1000 iterations for warm-up, 1000 iterations for sampling).

Appendix D

Survey Experiment Question Wording and Results

Experimental Vignette Wording

All respondents read a short paragraph about Donald Trump’s successful renegotiation of the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement. The first two sentences of the paragraph were identical for respondents in all conditions, while the third sentence varied across conditions:

Earlier this year, President Donald Trump reached a trade agreement with South Korea. Under this agreement, American automobile and pharmaceutical manufacturers will be able to export more of their goods to South Korea and South Korea will reduce the amount of steel it sends to the United States. [*Condition-specific sentence here*].

- **Control**—Several interest groups praised the agreement negotiated by President Trump.
- **Chamber**—Several business groups, such as the US Chamber of Commerce, praised the agreement negotiated by President Trump.
- **Union**—Several union groups, such as United Steelworkers, praised the agreement negotiated by President Trump.

- **Chamber and Union**—Several business and union groups, such as the US Chamber of Commerce and United Steelworkers, praised the agreement negotiated by President Trump.

Outcome Question Wording

- Do you approve or disapprove of the United States' trade agreement with South Korea negotiated by President Trump?
 - Strongly approve
 - Approve
 - Disapprove
 - Strongly disapprove
- Do you agree or disagree that the trade agreement represents the interests of [American businesses/American workers/the United States as a whole]?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

Empirical Results

Table D.1: KORUS Experiment—Main Effects

	Approval of KORUS	Good for Business	Good for Workers	Good for Country
Intercept	0.66* (0.03)	0.77* (0.03)	0.67* (0.03)	0.68* (0.03)
Union Only	0.05 (0.04)	−0.01 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	−0.02 (0.04)
Chamber Only	0.04 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)
Union and Chamber	0.11* (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	0.09* (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)
R ²	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00
Num. obs.	996	989	986	988

* $p < 0.05$. This table presents the the linear regression models we used to construct Figures 5.1 and 5.2. The outcome variables, indicated by the column headings, are coded as dichotomous variables (1 if strongly or somewhat approve/agree, 0 if strongly or somewhat disapprove/disagree otherwise). The control condition is the omitted group. All models include survey weights.

Table D.2: KORUS Experiment—Partisanship-Conditional Effects

	Approval of KORUS	Good for Business	Good for Workers	Good for Country
Intercept	0.96*	0.96*	0.95*	0.96*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Union Only	−0.00	0.00	−0.01	−0.03
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Chamber Only	0.00	−0.02	−0.01	−0.02
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Union and Chamber	−0.00	0.01	0.03	−0.00
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Independent	−0.32*	−0.20*	−0.23*	−0.30*
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Democrat	−0.57*	−0.35*	−0.56*	−0.52*
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Union:Independent	0.05	−0.15	−0.22*	−0.02
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Chamber:Independent	0.03	0.03	−0.11	−0.06
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Both:Independent	0.23*	0.08	0.10	0.20
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Union:Democrat	0.13	0.02	0.18*	0.06
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Chamber:Democrat	0.11	0.19*	0.14	0.08
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Both:Democrat	0.20*	0.06	0.14	0.09
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
R ²	0.24	0.13	0.22	0.22
Num. obs.	962	955	952	954

* $p < 0.05$. This table presents the the linear regression models we used to construct Figures Figures 5.3 and 5.4. The outcome variables, indicated by the column headings, are coded as dichotomous variables (1 if strongly or somewhat approve/agree, 0 if strongly or somewhat disapprove/disagree otherwise). The Republican respondents in the control condition constitute the omitted group. All models include survey weights.