The Effectiveness of Interest Group Strategies to Influence Health Care Reform in The United States
Jacquelyn Hannan  •  Political Science  •  Dr. Moskowitz

HYPOTHESES
With all other things being equal...
1) Interest groups who are more active with the reform movement are more likely to be successful
2) Interest groups who are aligned with the president’s reform plan are more likely to be successful
3) Interest groups who are aligned with the ideological majority in Congress are more likely to be successful

This is represented in this arrow diagram.

Interest Group Preferences → Interest Group Strategy: Activity Level → Ideological Alignment with Congress ⇒ Policy Success → Presidential Alignment

RESULTS
✧ The model was able to explain policy outcomes for:
  ✧ 14/18 interest groups for Obama’s reform
  ✧ 13/17 interest groups for Bush’s reform
  ✧ 5/12 interest groups for Clinton’s reform
    ➢ Here there was a strong opposition movement against the president’s reform plan.
  ✧ I expected to see interest groups who had more uniform variables and success levels
  ✧ Groups tended to have fewer patterns to their variables

CONCLUSIONS
✧ Presidential Alignment was the most significant
  ✧ Only when the president’s efforts win
  ✧ Congressional Alignment was also important
  ✧ There was a lot more at play for interest groups than these relationships
  ✧ Bandwagoning and coalition formation were frequent and had an effect on outcomes
  ✧ This model would work better for reform movements where an interest group could have preferences for only key provisions of a bill, but be for or against the reform as a whole

ABSTRACT
This independent study explores the effectiveness of interest group strategies to influence health care reform in the United States. This looks at interest groups’ activity level, ideological alignment with Congress, and presidential alignment to see which variable has a larger impact on the success of an interest group’s policy outcome. An empirical case study approach was used and the health care reform attempts of Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama were analyzed. Overall conclusions were drawn regarding the importance of interest group activity, Ideological Alignment with Congress, and Presidential Alignment to see which variables would lead to significant policy outcomes.

INTEREST GROUP BEHAVIOR*
✧ Usually, groups seek to preserve the status quo
✧ It is easier to protect the status quo than to initiate change
✧ Smaller groups can benefit from the actions of larger groups
✧ Money competes against money


METHODS
✧ Analyzed the mentions of interest groups in newspapers during times of the reform efforts
✧ Looked at the public stances of interest groups and the presidential administrations on health care reform
✧ Analyzed political spending by interest groups to both Members of Congress and political parties
✧ Analyzed provisions in the legislation and compared that to the objectives of both the administration and interest groups