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Lobbying on Behalf of the Faithful: Three Mainline Protestant Denominations and their Advocacy Efforts on Capitol Hill during the 110th Congress

Julia Ann Summers

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

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Three Mainline Protestant Denominations and Their Advocacy Efforts on Capitol Hill
During the 110th Congress

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Three Mainline Protestant Denominations and Their Advocacy Efforts on Capitol Hill
During the 110th Congress

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy

by

Julia A. Summers
Oklahoma State University
Bachelor of Arts in Geography, 1986
University of Oklahoma
Master of Social Work, 1989
Phillips Theological Seminary
Master of Divinity, 2001

May 2014
University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council

Dr. J. Brinck Kerr
Dissertation Director

Dr. Lori Holyfield
Committee Member

Dr. William Miller
Committee Member

ABSTRACT

A number of mainline Protestant denominations engage in direct lobbying and grassroots advocacy efforts with Congress on behalf of the poor and other marginalized groups. This study explores the work of three specific denominations the Presbyterian Church [PC(USA)], the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the United Methodist Church (UMC), as religious special interests. Specifically, the study explores how they facilitated their policy agendas on Capitol Hill during the 110th Congress (2007-2008). This question is answered primarily through interviews with and surveys of the professional staff engaged in this work during that session. Results indicate that each denomination works extensively through denominational and coalition groups, together with grassroots constituencies, to further the policy agenda of each. Drawing on the prophetic strand of the Christian tradition and speaking with its moral authority are unique elements of mainline Protestant denominations as interest groups. Though each has its particular history, theology and polity, all three struggle with common concerns including strained financial resources, constraints imposed by denominational bureaucracy and factionalism, and a lack of visibility and leveraging power in the midst of other more powerful and well-financed interest groups. The study concludes with possibilities for strengthening the effectiveness of denominational lobbying efforts and recommendations for further research.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation research is dedicated to the women and men who do the work of social justice on Capitol Hill as representatives of progressive religious organizations, and particularly to those whose work is centered in the United Methodist Building. There are numerous progressive ecumenical and mainline Protestant organizations whose Washington, D.C. presence is headquartered in this building, among them, the three whose staff gave generously of their time and wisdom for this study: the United Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ staff. To the staff of these three denominations and all of their ecumenical partners, I dedicate this study.

At the 2012 re-consecration of the Simpson Memorial Chapel at the heart of this historic building, Jim Winkler, General Secretary of GBCS, led the congregation prayer with these words:

*Bless us and make sacred what we do here,
that this place may be holy for us and a house of prayer for all people ...
save us from the failure of vision
which would confine our worship, study, and advocacy within these walls,
but send us out from here to be your servants in the world.¹*

**For the men and women who do the hard work of policy advocacy on Capitol Hill, seeking
to “speak truth to power” as people of faith, may it be so.²**

¹ Rudolph, K. (February 17, 2012). “D.C. Building Renovated as a ‘Light on the Hill,’” *The Institute on Religious Democracy News*.

² This expression, “speaking truth to power,” often used by progressive religious voices as they advocate for marginalized groups on Capitol Hill, comes from a Quaker (Religious Society of Friends) pamphlet of the same name published in 1955 to address Cold War concerns about nuclear disarmament. See American Friends Service Committee. (1955). *Speak truth to power: A Quaker search for an alternative to violence*. Philadelphia, PA: Religious Society of Friends.

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Preface

In Washington, D. C., on a triangular tract of land, sandwiched between the Capitol, the Supreme Court, and one of the Senate office buildings, sits the United Methodist Building. Completed in 1923, this five-story Italian Renaissance landmark has stood for 80 years as an ecumenical sentinel for social justice. Some call it the “God Box.” A 2011 *Washington Post* article describes the activity on this corner as “a meeting of prayer and politics”:

A view of the Supreme Court and the U.S. Capitol from the chapel window. A constant stream of clergy members who started out in poli sci. Lunchtime ‘federal budget prayer vigils.’ Such are the rhythms of life in and around the “God Box,” a five-story building that embodies the way faith and politics mix in Washington....

The average denizens of the God Box tend to be politically liberal, but their perspective on their work is similar to what you’d hear from their conservative counterparts, plenty of whom are in the same little Capitol Hill neighborhood, praying for the exact opposite outcome in the budget talks. They tell themselves: Remember who you are serving. Listen for the word of God. Resist believing God prefers your political party.

“When you work this beat, you’d *better* be centered in prayer,” said the Rev. Mari Castellanos, an advocate with the United Church of Christ, who pastored a church in Florida before coming to the United Methodist Building eight years ago. As is life on this corner, Castellanos was deep in prayer at the vigil one minute, deep in policy talk the next.³

During a brief internship experience in 2004, I became fascinated with the work underway in this beehive of progressive religious voices, working together for social change. What follows is an exploration of some of the people and policy work that comprise this ecumenical “God Box.”

³ Boorstein, N. (July 22, 2011) “At United Methodist Building, a meeting of prayer and politics,” *The Washington Post*.

Chapter One

Introduction to the Questions and the Need for the Study

Interest groups have worked to influence government decisions in the United States for as long as officials have been making them. One of our Founding Fathers, James Madison acknowledged in *The Federalist Papers* in 1788 the tendency of citizens to unite around a common interest or apprehension and address their concern to government (Rosenthal, 2001). Our First Amendment right “to petition the government for the redress of grievances,” together with its protection of free speech, created an environment ripe for lobbying. The term, “lobbying” was coined in the British House of Commons where citizens would come to speak to elected officials in the lobbies of that building, and it made its way into the lexicon of American politics early in the 19th century (Rosenthal, 2001).

The voices of interest groups seeking to influence policy decisions have grown more numerous and varied over time. The role of faith in public life and the influence of religion on government were among the issues debated by the framers of the Constitution, and the debate continues, as vociferously as ever, more than two centuries later (Dionne & DiIulio, 2000). What follows are two contemporary observations on the relationship between religion and politics in the United States. “Two hundred years after the brilliant writings of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson on the topic, Americans cannot make up their minds whether religion is primarily public, private, or some uneasy combination of the two,” quipped Alan Wolfe in an essay for a collection on “God and the American Experiment” commissioned by the Brookings Institution (2000, p. 90). “The fact that God’s political intentions are not easily discerned does not stop mere mortals from speaking with great certainty about the meaning of religion in politics—and holding a great many prejudices on the subject,” Dionne and Drogosz noted in a

similar collection commissioned by the Pew Forum Dialogues on Religion and Public Life (2004, p. 1).

A Brief Overview of Lobbying by Religious Groups in the U. S. Congress

Though interest groups have worked to shape government decisions since the beginning of the Republic, the earliest efforts at lobbying the U. S. Congress and swaying electoral politics came from business and industry. By the middle decades of the 19th century, the voices of religious groups were becoming more prominent, weighing in on debates about the removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands and the abolition of slavery (Rozell, Wilcox, & Madland, 2006). Religious groups began lobbying on Capitol Hill at least as early as the antebellum period (Rozell, Wilcox & Madland, 2006) noted. Beyond the 19th century efforts to intervene in the removal of Indian tribes and support the abolition of slavery, however, the first focused efforts of religious groups to develop a consistent presence on Capitol Hill came in the early part of the 20th century. This phenomenon surfaced as an element of the Social Gospel movement among many Protestant denominations and interest groups. Emerging largely as a response to injustices related to industrialism and capitalism, this movement sought to bring about “the Kingdom of God on earth” through political activism focused on re-shaping the social, economic, and moral order of the nation (Dunn, 1984). With respect to the advocacy efforts of mainline Protestant denominations in particular, the Methodist Social Creed of 1908 was an important statement of liberal theology in the tradition of the Social Gospel movement (Dunn, 1989). Leaders in this movement, together with many other religious interests, including the historically black church and Jewish, Roman Catholic, Quaker, and Unitarian groups, were advocating for social change. The efforts of various religious contingents on behalf of these causes were part of a larger interfaith and populist civic movement that found its secular voice in

the rhetoric of the Progressive Era. In the 1930s, the Great Depression and widespread poverty and unemployment mobilized the Social Gospel movement and other religious interests toward support for passage of the New Deal (Theusen, 2002).

From the New Deal era forward, Hertzke (1988) argues, “Protestants tended to be theologically and politically liberal, and they were the dominant religious voices in the nation’s capitol until the late 1970s” (p. 29). Further, the advocacy work during the New Deal era that established a social safety net for the poor also facilitated the formation of a liberal religious alliance, not only among mainline Protestant denominations, but also among a broader array of religious activists, including black Christians, Roman Catholics, and Jews (Dunn, 1984).

Progressive Religious Interests and the Struggle to be Heard

While progressive religious organizations can point to a long history of lobbying Congress to bring about social reform, in recent decades conservative, evangelical Christians have risen to prominence as the “New Christian Right.” It seems that the public debate about many policy decisions—especially those involving “hot button” issues—engages political factions and interest groups who frame their political arguments in terms of their religious beliefs. While this is not a new phenomenon by any means, the considerable growth in the influence of Evangelical Christians, or the New Christian Right, on both elections and policy decisions has resulted in a significant shift toward conservatism, and in many instances, toward Christian fundamentalism as grounding for public life (Corbett & Corbett, 1999; Dionne & DiIulio, 2000; Dionne, Elshain & Drogosz, 2004; Hertzke, 2009; Kohut, Green, Keeter, & Toth, 2000).

The interests of the white evangelical Christian community may seem, to policymakers and political pundits, to represent the voices of *all* people of faith, since leaders in more

progressive religious circles, including liberal Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Unitarians, and black church leaders are not as well organized, nor as consistently vociferous, as those in the New Christian Right (Wuthnow, 2002). In a policy environment dominated by the conservative ideology and political power of the Christian Right, the voices of progressive religious interests have become a minority contingent—less often noticed, less frequently sought—thus requiring more diligent effort to advocate for their positions in the agenda setting process (Lerner, 2006). Still yet as minority voices, and in the face of declining financial resources requiring that they do more with less, progressive religious groups continue to lobby Congress, advocating for an agenda of peace, justice, and social reform, utilizing both moral authority and grassroots constituencies to promote their policy priorities. In particular, six mainline Protestant denominations—the American Baptist Church, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church—have a collective reputation and a distinctive voice speaking to civic-minded social action. A noted presence during the civil rights era, they are quieter and less prominent in the current era. In part, their ongoing struggle to carve out a clear identity as religious voices for social justice stems from the fact that some regard their policy positions as too progressive or liberal to be truly representative of the religious community (Wuthnow & Evans, 2002). Collectively, these mainline Protestant denominations represent more than 20 million members. With policy offices near Capitol Hill, they have been a consistent presence in lobbying Congress since the early- to mid-20th century on issues ranging from poverty alleviation and environmental concerns to health care and world peace (Wuthnow & Evans, 2002).

While there are several existing studies concerning the work of these denominational policy offices (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995; Olson, 2002; Wuthnow & Evans, 2002), there

is room for further exploration, especially the facilitation of their policy agenda on Capitol Hill with respect to social justice issues. For purposes of this study, “social justice” will be defined as “the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities” (National Association of Social Workers, 2006). Exploration of the unique perspective of mainline Protestant lobbying groups in the current policymaking environment may reveal new insights about how progressive religious interests address social justice issues in an era dominated by the interests of a conservative religious ideology. Further, an in-depth exploration of three particular mainline Protestant denominations will elicit a richer, more detailed understanding of their work. For these reasons, this study proposed to explore the work of three of the six Protestant denominations that maintain offices on Capitol Hill: the Presbyterian Church [PC(USA)], the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the United Methodist Church (UMC). Specifically, this study provides a moment-in-time snapshot of policy advocacy by these special interest groups during the summer of 2007, in the early months of the 110th United States Congress.

Research Question and Sub-questions

In an effort to address the need for additional knowledge about the advocacy work of the various Protestant denominations on Capitol Hill, this exploratory study focuses on the following research question:

How did three progressive Protestant denominations, the Presbyterian Church [PC(USA)], the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the United Methodist Church (UMC), as special interest lobbying groups, facilitate their policy agendas on Capitol Hill during the 110th Congress?

The sub-questions that will frame this study include the following:

1. How did each of these denominations determine its priorities and work plan for the 110th Congress?
2. What were the direct lobbying strategies utilized by each of these denominations to advocate for their positions with the 110th Congress?
3. What were the indirect lobbying strategies utilized by each of these denominations to advocate for their positions with the 110th Congress?
4. How did each of these denominations adapt their priorities and work plan to changes in the policy environment (political landscape) in their work with the 110th Congress?
5. How did each of these denominations determine their perceived effectiveness with the 110th Congress?
6. What are the similarities and differences among these three denominations with respect to their priorities, work plans, direct and indirect lobbying strategies, and their level of perceived effectiveness by lawmakers and their staff members?

Justification for the Study

Why undertake an exploration of the question of how progressive religious voices facilitate their policy agendas on Capitol Hill with respect to social justice issues in a policy environment dominated by a conservative religious ideology? The case for such a study may be made on several grounds, both theoretical and practical. To begin with, the enterprise of exploring the theoretical question of how religious vision finds voice in the public square is an important one:

...Religiously inflected arguments and perspectives bring critical and prophetic insight and energy to politics and public affairs...there is something woefully lacking in any view that excludes religion entirely from the public sphere...It remains difficult, however, to draw the line between respecting the religious commitments of voters and politicians that help animate their arguments and their work...and elevating one or more

religious views in politics in ways that risk excluding, devaluing, or coercing people who do not share those views. (Minow, 2004, p. 147).

Dionne and Drogosz (2004) are even blunter when they note:

...religious voices are not confined to the Right—or to the Left or the Center. Worries about improper entanglements between religion and government are not confined to liberals. More passion footed in faith is not limited to the ranks of religious conservatives...Indeed, it can be argued that religious faith, properly understood—yes, that is a dangerous phrase—is usually a sign of contradiction, an invitation to paradox, a reminder of the ironies of the human condition. (p. 2)

That said, the enterprise of exploring *which* religious visions find voice in the public square is an important one. Greenberg (2004) with an eye to the 2004 election cycle, noted:

...religion has been associated more strongly with Republicans than Democrats for a number of election cycles. To be clear, most Americans are religious if the term is defined broadly enough...what matters is the intensity of religious commitment (measured by such behavior as attending church or reading the Bible) and denomination affiliation. People with a high level of religious commitment or a conservative religious worldview identify with the Republicans...while Democrats have an advantage with everyone else. (p. 116)

Further, Greenberg (2004) notes that the movement of voters who identify themselves as holding a conservative religious worldview began in the late 1970s, persisted through the Reagan years, and accelerated during the Clinton years. A considerable body of polling research through these eras and extending into the Bush years pointed to a growing division between the Republicans and Democrats, often expressed in terms of conservative versus liberal positions. Republicans often expressed their arguments couched in religious ideology. By contrast, the Democratic Party, associated with a more socially progressive agenda, has been plagued by a “religion problem,” meaning that its leadership seems to have great difficulty speaking authentically about their own religious or moral grounding in political arenas. Greenberg argues:

[While] most Democratic candidates and Democratic voters have a genuine religious commitment that they value and that informs their commitment to pursue social change...it is a complex situation, tied up in the evolution of the parties since the 1960s and the organizational structures of the Left and the Right. And it is not static: patterns of

religious commitment and values in politics will change as our society itself very profoundly changes (2004, p. 120).

Therefore, the roles of both the Religious Right and the Religious Left in shaping both the course of electoral politics and by extension, the course of policy agendas and decisions have proven themselves worthy topics for policy research.

As Greenberg and others have noted, the impact of the Religious Right on electoral politics and policy outcomes has been considerable. However, the impact of religious voices from the other end of the politico-religious continuum, including the voices of mainline Protestants, liberal Roman Catholics, Jews, Unitarians, and others, have received far less attention from political pundits and media outlets in the last several decades.

Researchers, also, have paid limited attention to the Religious Left. In the face of the strong political power of the New Christian Right, progressive religious groups have continued to lobby Congress, advocating for an agenda of peace, justice, and social reform, utilizing both moral authority and grassroots constituencies to promote their policy priorities (Olson, 2002). Specifically, what is not known—what has not been explored in great depth in recent years—is the influence of the Religious Left on policymaking during the early decades of the 21st century as the political winds seemed to shift in a more moderate-to-liberal direction in the run up to the 2008 election cycle.

Clearly, the exploration of this territory would have important theoretical implications with respect to the place of minority religious interests in policy debates, but the practical implications are perhaps more compelling for practitioners of policy work “on the front lines” of legislative advocacy in the U.S. Congress. Shifts in the congressional landscape in the 2006 election cycle hinted that the 110th Congress (2007-2009) might prove the bellwether of a shift toward a more politically moderate milieu (Lerner, 2006). Perhaps the interests of the Religious

Left, Lerner suggested, were witnessing the opening of what Kingdon would call “a policy window,” which would afford them greater opportunity to place policy issues on the congressional agenda and influence decisions about them (Kingdon, 2003).

The proposed study promises a rich qualitative analysis of three denominational religious lobbies. The use of a combination of process-oriented research questions points to the use of qualitative research methods and offers the potential for a fertile, multilayered evaluation of current denominational lobbying efforts. Further, the three denominations selected, the Presbyterians [PC(USA)], the Methodists (UMC) and the Congregationalists (UCC), because they have distinctive histories and approaches to governance, provide interesting fodder for comparing and contrasting the system of polity, or governance, and the denominational authority conferred by the governance of each, works in practice on Capitol Hill. Collectively, these unique aspects of the proposed dissertation project suggest that it would be interesting and worthwhile research. Also, the final sub-question of this study asks invites comparison and contrast among the policy work of the three denominations, and findings related to this question may prove beneficial to the future lobbying efforts each and perhaps those of other progressive religious special interests as well. (Please see Appendix A for a graphic overview of this project.)

The Lobbying Efforts of Mainline Protestant Denominations: A Brief Review of Literature

Several researchers have forged paths of exploration in this direction already. In particular, the work regarded by most scholars as seminal in this area is by Hertzke (1988). While his study encompasses the work of thirty religious lobbies, including the mainline Protestant denominations, it is now 25 years old. A somewhat more recent work by Hofrenning (1995) looks at Christian religious lobbying as an expression of the prophetic tradition expressed in the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Because of the breadth of his thesis, he gives little focused

attention to mainline Protestant denominations. Also, he conducted this research almost 20 years ago. A more current work in this area, a study of the political lives of mainline Protestant clergy and their awareness of or involvement with the Washington offices of their respective denominations, is a collection of essays by Wuthnow and Evans (2002). One of the essays, detailing a study conducted by Laura Olson (2002), discusses the structure and functioning of these denominational policy offices on Capitol Hill, but this discussion is secondary to the focus of her research. Additionally, Hertzke (2009) revisited the involvement of mainline denominations in lobbying on Capitol Hill, and observed that, in general, scholarship focused on political interest groups “largely ignores religious organizations,” (p. 303). All of this is to say that most of the previous work done in this area is dated and/or has a different or broader focus than that of the proposed study.

With respect to surveying the existing public policy theory and empirical research in this area, there are several different arenas of thought and discourse worth exploring. The work of Wolpe and Levine (1996) and Rosenthal (2001) on lobbying and the work of Ciglar and Loomis (2002); Herrnson, Shaiko, and Wilcox (2005); and Rozell, Wilcox, and Madland (2006) on interest groups is pertinent as well. Also, historical material concerning the activities of Protestants and other religious interests on Capitol Hill over time provides a context for my dissertation research. For purposes of this overview of the study, the content will include a brief survey of historical material, along with a concise discussion of recent and current material.

A brief historical overview of lobbying on Capitol Hill by Protestants

Religious groups emerged as a more vociferous force during the antebellum period (Rozell, et al., 2006). Nineteenth century efforts focused on preventing the removal of Indian tribes from their ancestral lands and later, support for the abolition of slavery. The early decades

of the 20th century saw the first focused efforts of religious groups—Protestant groups in particular—to develop a consistent presence on Capitol Hill, emerging as an element of the Social Gospel movement (Dunn, 1984). As noted previously, the Methodist Social Creed of 1908 was an important statement of liberal theology in the tradition of the Social Gospel movement for mainline Protestant denominations in particular (Dunn, 1989). Progressive Era reforms included Prohibition and woman suffrage. As the prosperity of the 1920s gave way to the Great Depression, the populist civic movement that found its voice in the rhetoric of the Progressive Era and mobilized to support passage of the New Deal. Progressive religious groups—including many Protestants—were among those who mobilized for this effort (Theusen, 2002). The loose alliances among religious groups that were forged through work to establish a social safety net through the New Deal facilitated the formation of an informal liberal religious network, not only among mainline Protestant denominations, but also among a broader array of religious activists, including Jews, Roman Catholics, and the Black Church (Dunn, 1984).

Hertzke (1988) offers this overview of the activity of mainline Protestant denominations from the 1950s and 60s through the late 20th century

...By the early 1950s many individual denominations, as well as the National Council of Churches, had established offices (in Washington, DC)...[but] the activist 1960s galvanized the liberal religious community and set the pattern for future “political witness.” The spark was the civil rights movement, which (due to the efforts of black ministers) was viewed as a profound moral issue, a matter of fundamental justice...With their aggressive lobbying on behalf of the Civil Rights Act of 1964...religious lobbyists argued persuasively that as religious leaders it was their moral duty to fight for “justice,” an argument that serves as an underpinning for much of their work today. Moreover, the tactics employed, quite successfully, also set the pattern for future efforts...If one were to summarize how these lobbyists view their work today it would be as champions of “peace and justice,”...their mission, quite simply, is to fight for justice, especially for the poor...and to work for peace. (pp. 30-31)

Olson (2002) offers the following concise description of the Washington offices of the mainline Protestant denominations and their political agenda as they exist today:

Each major mainline Protestant denomination in the United States supports an office in Washington, D. C. These offices function as interest groups by representing the political interests of the denominations and coordinating their national advocacy efforts...The Washington offices pursue a “peace and justice” agenda by advocating human rights at home and abroad, working to preserve the environment, questioning U.S. use of military force, and above all else, fighting for the disadvantaged. The offices lobby members of Congress and executive branch staff, often working in coalition with religious and secular interest groups alike. They also file *amicus curiae* (“friend of the court”) briefs in key federal cases. To connect with local congregations, the offices support “action networks” of interested laity and clergy with whom they communicate about policy. These action networks are designed to stimulate grassroots discussion of politics and involvement in lobbying activities. (pp. 55-56)

Since the focus of this dissertation research will be the policy offices of the United Methodist Church (UMC), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)], and the United Church of Christ (UCC), specifically, it may be helpful to explore the role of each of these policy offices in more detail.

A brief history of lobbying Congress by Methodists, Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ

The United Methodist Church

The first of the mainline denominations to develop a permanent presence in Washington, the Methodist Church opened its Washington office in 1923 (Hertzke, 1988). The leadership of the Methodist Church had determined that its desire to promote Prohibition would require establishing a major presence in Washington, D.C., and it was through this initiative that the United Methodist Building was built in 1923 (Hertzke, 1988). Today, this building is headquarters for the denomination’s General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), and its function is to enact the UMC Social Principles and other policy statements. Its objectives include analyzing the issues “that confront persons, communities, nations, and the world,” and developing action plans to “assist humankind to move toward a world where peace with justice are achieved,” (*United Methodist Book of Discipline*, 1996, Section IV, 1003). Its responsibilities

include exploring “systemic strategies for social change and alternative futures...(and working to) “inform, motivate, train, organize, and build networks for action toward social justice throughout society...” (and) “respond to critical social issues at community, regional, national, and international levels,” (*United Methodist Book of Discipline*, 1996, Section IV, 1004).

The Presbyterian Church (USA)

The PC(USA) has maintained an office in Washington, D.C. since 1946. The denomination offers this description of the purpose of its Washington office:

The Presbyterian Washington Office is the public policy information and advocacy office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Its task is to advocate, and help the church to advocate, the social witness perspectives and policies of the Presbyterian General Assembly. The Washington Office has three major responsibilities:

1. to advocate with U.S. policymakers to public policy recommendations of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church;
2. to encourage and enable the governing bodies and members of the church to advocate those recommendations; and
3. to alert the church to emerging public policy issues not yet addressed by the General Assembly. (Presbyterian Church (USA), 2006).

The United Church of Christ

The UCC has maintained an office in Washington, D.C. since the inception of the denomination in 1957. Formed by the merger of two denominations in that year, the UCC began operations in Washington as a continuation of the work of one of its predecessor denominations, the Congregational Christian Church (CCC), which had developed its Washington office in 1936 (Wilhelm, 2003). Specifically, the purpose of the UCC’s Public Life and Social Policy Office is as follows:

To coordinate the public policy advocacy work of the church in collaboration with all settings of the UCC...(and) to give life and voice to the resolutions and pronouncements of the General Synod on social policy. (United Church of Christ, 2005)

The work of the PC(USA), UCC, and UMC policy offices

Each of the three denominations to be studied finds itself in the position of developing work plans to implement the policy directives of its respective authorizing bodies with two constituencies in mind: each must work with both local churches—the clergy and people in the pews who have developed and authorized these policy positions (and who fund their work)—and also with the policymakers whose decision-making power they hope to influence. That is to say, they work to influence policymakers *directly* through face-to-face meetings, testimony before committee hearings, phone calls, and other similar strategies, while at the same time working to influence them *indirectly* through the development grassroots networks of advocates who, in turn, seek to influence lawmakers directly through phone calls, e-mails, and letters (Davidson & Oleszek, 2004). This dual focus on direct lobbying efforts and the building of grassroots support involves a balancing of resources—staff time and communication materials—between what will be spent inwardly on church members and what will be spent outside the organization in efforts on the Hill. Much of their work is done in coalitions and other efforts to maximize the use of their limited resources.

Methodology and the Data Collection Process

The theoretical paradigm to be utilized in addressing the research questions posed is naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the approach is drawn from grounded theory, a qualitative approach (Charmaz, 2002). Specifically, the existing literature discussing the activities of the denominational policy offices on Capitol Hill indicates that qualitative research, utilizing interviews and observations particularly, has proven the most salient approach to exploring questions such as the ones at hand (Hertzke, 1988; Olson, 2002; Wilhelm, 2003).

Addressing the research questions within the framework of the naturalistic paradigm suggests that the results will be unique to the time and place from which they were drawn, and that they cannot be generalized to other research contexts as is the case with quantitative findings.

Rationale for utilizing grounded theory as an approach to qualitative research

Building on the work of Lincoln & Guba (1985), Charmaz argues that grounded theory provides a systematic procedure for handling and shaping rich qualitative materials. She has refined these ideas into a constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000).

With respect to this study, grounded theory provides a strong methodological approach for my work as it provides a means for exploring and analyzing the rich body of data drawn from interviews and observations. The data analysis process, done in layers or stages, invites the researcher to continually engage and re-engage the data on new levels, revising and building upon preliminary findings as new categories and patterns emerge. Through this process, the researcher constructs a model for interpreting the data, which is made manifest and continues to evolve through the ongoing analysis of various layers of meaning in the data. Additionally, themes may emerge from the data that could suggest new and additional directions to explore in the literature before data analysis is complete.

Data collection

The primary research methods utilized in this study, as noted previously, are interviews and observations. These are augmented by documentary evidence detailing the history, polity, and policy positions of the denominations under study. Table One describes the plan for addressing my research question by detailing the specific data collection and analysis plan for addressing each of the research sub-questions. Following this table is a brief discussion my research plan, giving particular attention to the specific data collection methods to be utilized.

Interviews with the professional staff in each denominational office

Within the context of each denominational office, this researcher met with the respective directors and staff members responsible for direct advocacy on Capitol Hill for in-depth interviews, exploring their perspectives on the purpose, goals, and strategies of the office, the current political landscape, and work plans for advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill. Each interview was preceded by a survey detailing specific lobbying strategies and the frequency with which they are utilized. This effort facilitates comparison of these data across denominations. (Please see Appendix B for the survey.) The interview data was tape recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. (Please see Appendix C for the interview guide.)

Observations of the professional staff in each denominational office

In addition to the interview and survey data, this researcher spent some time observing the work of the professional staff in each of the three denominational offices (shadowing them) and documenting the observations.

Table One: Data collection and analysis plan by research sub-question

Research sub-question:	Data collection plan for addressing each question:	Data analysis plan for addressing each:
How did <<name of denomination>> determine its priorities and work plan for its work with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with denominational staff • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Analyze documents collected
What were the direct lobbying strategies utilized by <<name of denomination>> to advocate for its position with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of denominational staff (just before interview) • Interviews with denominational staff • Observations of denominational staff • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabulate and analyze surveys • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Make field notes about observations • Analyze documents collected
What were the indirect lobbying strategies utilized by <<name of denomination>> to advocate for its position with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of denominational staff (just before interview) • Interviews with denominational staff • Observations of denominational staff • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabulate and analyze surveys • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Make field notes about observations • Analyze documents collected
How did <<name of denomination>> adapt its priorities and work plan to changes in the policy environment in its work with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with denominational staff • Observations of denominational staff • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Make field notes about observations • Analyze documents collected
How did <<name of denomination>> perceive its effectiveness with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with denominational staff • Observations of denominational staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Make field notes about observations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze documents collected
What were the similarities and differences among these three denominations with respect to their work with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis and analysis of all data collected 	Develop comparative analysis among the three denominations with respect to findings from sub-questions 1-6

This included observations within each office and observations of the three denominations in their work together in policy coalitions.

Collection and analysis of documents pertaining to each denominational office

A supplementary source of evidence for this study comprises documents detailing the history, polity, and policy positions of the denominations under study. This information is drawn from publications by each intended for their constituencies (church members) explaining their work and their policy priorities and positions on various issues.

Triangulation and considerations related to the trustworthiness of the study

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation were concerns in this study, as the researcher was able to be in the research context (Capitol Hill) for only four weeks. For this reason, triangulation, the use of multiple sources and multiple methods of data collection become particularly important. Member checks and peer debriefing were important components of the research process. I was in contact with the dissertation chair, Dr. Brinck Kerr, and another committee member, Dr. Lori Holyfield, by phone and e-mail as needed throughout the term of the field work.

Field Research

The field work, or primary data collection phase, of this study took place over a four-week period in May and June of 2007 in Washington, D. C. The timing of the field work for the study, then, was after the 2006 midterm elections and early in the session of the 110th Congress.

It was during this period that the interviews with the professional staff, surveys, and observations were completed.

During the field research phase of the study, in the course of a typical week, the researcher spent the equivalent of one to two days per week interviewing and two to three days observing (shadowing) the professional staff in each office. The researcher interviewed 11 denominational staff (four each from two of the denominations and three from the one that had only three professional staff).

During the field work phase of the study, the researcher encountered several problems that confounded the data collection process, among them the crash of a computer that created subsequent difficulties with digital storage of recorded data. Cassette (analog) recordings were utilized where digital recordings were not possible. However, without a working computer, the data collected could not be immediately downloaded and perused, making some elements of the grounded theory process impossible (e.g., simultaneous data collection and analysis and theoretical sampling). Additionally, in an effort to seek external validation of the perceptions of denominational staff, efforts were made to conduct parallel interviews with staff in other denominational and faith-based offices or Congressional staff members, but the researcher was unable to locate interviewees willing to participate in the study. This difficulty is attributable primarily to the fact that Congress was in recess during this period, thus the staffers in many offices, both on the Hill and nearby, were unavailable because of the Memorial Day recess.

This study, then, serves as an exploration of the work of the policy offices of each denomination and a “snapshot” of their work at that moment in time. Some of the difficulties encountered in the course of data collection weakened the study’s reliability and validity, though they served to strengthen the researcher’s understanding of the importance flexibility and

contingency planning in the field. A small research grant from the Faculty Research Grant fund at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, underwrote most of the expenses associated with the study.

Data analysis

The data analysis phase of the study was to be augmented and simplified significantly through the use of technology, including use of a digital audio recorder and transcription of interview data with the most recent version of *Dragon Naturally Speaking* software. The data collection difficulties previously noted, along with difficulties using the *Dragon* software efficiently, led the researcher to rely on more traditional means of transcribing interviews and analyzing data. Where state-of-the-art digital tools and technical supports were utilized, they were understood as just that: *tools*. They did not replace the hard work of data analysis, but rather served to enhance the process and reduce the time involved in such painstaking tasks as transcription, coding, and model-building. The following section provides an overview of the dissertation project by chapter.

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

Having described the rationale for this study, the research questions to be addressed, and the general process of engagement, this researcher will now discuss the proposed documentation of the study: an overview of the dissertation itself. The preliminary chapters of the dissertation serve as foundational material for the study, including a thorough review of the extant scholarly and denominational literature and a detailed discussion of the proposed methodology for data collection and analysis. Specifically, this chapter—Chapter One—provides an introduction to the dissertation topic, the lobbying techniques of Protestant denominations, by placing that

phenomenon within the larger context of lobbying by religious groups and other special interests and providing an overview of the study.

Chapter Two has two large sections. The first reviews the scholarly literature related to public policy with a focus on the particular policymaking strategies of religious lobbies in the United States Congress. Specifically, this chapter explores what the literature has to say about the lobbying work of interest groups in general and about the work of the religious lobby in particular, and more specifically, how it addresses the work of the three Protestant denominations that are the focus of this study. The aim of this review of literature is to explore what has already been written about special interest lobby groups—particularly Protestant denominations—and how they manage their policy agendas and perceived effectiveness on Capitol Hill. This first section of the chapter concludes with a synthesis and summary of what the literature has to say about the research question at hand.

The second large section of Chapter Two explores more specifically the literature related to the history and polity (structure of governance) of each denomination, looking particularly at the documentary evidence gathered from each. Specifically, this chapter explores briefly the history and polity for each denomination with a focus the adoption of particular position statements on various social justice issues at their biennial or quadrennial national conferences and the authorization each denomination's polity gives to its Washington, D.C. office to set its policy agenda and develop advocacy strategies to implement that agenda on Capitol Hill in the form of setting priorities, developing work plans and lobbying strategies, and assessing effectiveness.

Chapter Three discusses in greater detail the methodology to be utilized in this study. Specifically, this chapter explores the epistemology of the research methodology, the

background and setting for the research, the sampling methodology, and the data collection and analysis procedures to be utilized.

Subsequently, Chapter Four discusses the findings of the study. As the researcher has indicated, the practices of member checks, peer debriefing, and memo writing invited the formation of a working theory as the data analysis process unfolded. A deeper analysis of the interviews and observations formed the building blocks of a theory—like pieces of a puzzle—in order to explain “what’s going on here,” and eventually, resulted in a working discussion of the three Protestant denominations that took shape as the data were analyzed.

Chapter Five attempts to draw conclusions from the findings and suggests implications for further research. Specifically, it contributes to both the theoretical understanding of how some minority religious interests—mainline Protestant interests, specifically—seek to be heard in policy arenas, and the particular understanding of how these three Protestant denominations manage their policy agendas in the present policymaking environment. Having explored the course of this study, we turn now to a review of work that has been done already in this area and lays the foundation for the study at hand.

Chapter Two

Religious Voices Lobbying the United States Congress:

An Overview of Policy Theory and Previous Research

Part One: The Process of Lobbying the United States Congress and Religious Voices as Special Interests

In this study of the United Church of Christ (UCC), the Presbyterian Church [PC(USA)], and the United Methodist Church (UMC) as special interest lobbying groups and how they facilitate their policy agendas on Capitol Hill, this second chapter consists of two large segments. The first reviews the scholarly literature related to public policy with a focus on the particular policymaking context of lobbying by these three Protestant denominations in the United States Congress. Specifically, this section explores policy theory concerning the work of interest groups broadly, the work of the religious lobby, and finally, the work of these mainline Protestant denominations as a subgroup of the religious lobby. The first section concludes with a synthesis of how the literature relates to the research question at hand. Subsequently, the second large section of this chapter explores the history of lobbying by the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Methodist Church, including a discussion of the history, polity, and advocacy efforts of these three denominations.

Lobbying in the national arena: The United States Congress

With regard to the resources utilized to set the stage for this study, most of the material in this first section could be most aptly described as “policy theory” rather than “professional literature,” as most of the material derives from books focused on particular aspects of the legislative arena, particularly those regarding lobbying. Resources in the way of journal articles, conference proceedings, or current research were few and far between. This first discussion,

then, explores theoretical works related to lobbying and interest groups generally, while the second segment of this chapter looks at previous research in this area, which provides the backdrop for the study at hand.

The policymaking process

As a precursor to exploring the policymaking arena in which the participants in this study do their advocacy work—the United States Congress—it may be helpful to review briefly the process of policymaking and the particular aspects of it which fall to lawmakers and their staff. Peters (1999) describes the policymaking process as a series of five stages that link together in a circular manner, briefly described below.

1. Agenda setting—defining a public issue or problem as “amenable to policy action and worthy of the attention of policymakers” (Peters, 1999, p. 45).
2. Policy formulation—developing (policy) “mechanisms for solving the public problem” (p. 60).
3. Legitimizing policy choices—adopting a particular policy option by giving it legal or administrative sanction; specifically, “all policies must be within the powers granted to the federal government by the Constitution” (p. 73).
4. Policy implementation—executing legislation and/or monitoring policy execution (p. 103); needless to say, implementation involves not only the development of institutional structures (organizations) to execute and monitor policies, but also the allocation and budgeting of financial resources to maintain them (p. 124).
5. Evaluation and policy change—assessing the efficacy of a public policy, and as needed, making changes to render the policy more efficient and effective (p. 162).

These five stages can best be understood as a connected and continuous process which ideally work together to perpetually improve the efficacy of existing public policy.

In terms of the policymaking context for this research, the United States Congress, we will be looking at the phases of this cycle that focus most particularly on the actions of the legislative branch of government, those being the first three stages: agenda setting, policy formulation, and legitimating policy choices. We will look more closely at these three stages in our discussion of interest groups.

Lobbying in the U. S. Congress

As previously noted, interest groups have worked to influence government decisions since the earliest days of the Republic. Lobbying, “the practice of attempting to influence the decisions of government” (Rosenthal, 2001, p. 1), has a long and colorful history in American politics. The primary task of the lobbyist, according to Wolpe and Levine (1996), is to garner “maximum political gain for the minimum expenditure of political capital” (p. 10).

Lobbying is a complex and multifaceted enterprise, and may involve many arenas. For example, Holyoke (2003) notes that lobbying may involve strategies that involve approaching the executive branch directly, such as filing public comments related to pending regulations or guidelines, or perhaps serving on advisory committees to government agencies. In the judicial branch, lobbying may entail filing *amicus curiae* (“friend of the court”) briefs in an effort to influence Supreme Court decisions, or it may involve sponsoring particular cases. Even within the legislative branch, the particular focus of this discussion, there are multiple venues; for example, there are hundreds of lawmakers, the work of the two chambers in their many committees and subcommittees, and actions on the floor of each chamber. Thus, revisiting Peters’ (1999) model of policymaking, lobbyists work particularly to influence the first three

phases of the policymaking cycle: agenda setting, policy formulation, and legitimating policy choices (i.e., lawmaking).

Holyoke (2003) observes that the prevailing model of how lobbyists make decisions as to which venue and which strategy to choose in the legislative context assumes an exchange between the resources a lobbyist has to offer (information, technical assistance, or more tangible financial resources) and the influence a lawmaker has to wield in the legislative process. He argues, however, that the process is much more complex than a mere exchange of resources for influence. Noting the alliances that often form among lobbyists working on a common issue and the countervailing influences of those on the other side of the issue, he characterizes the lobbying enterprise as a strategic effort among loose alliances or coalitions working together to influence lawmakers rather than working as multiple, relatively isolated, individual efforts. Even if collaborating in loose alliances, Holyoke suggests that some lobbying entities likely will take a more intense leadership role while others will give less effort to one issue or venue in order to focus more resources on another.

What lobbyists do

What is it, exactly, that lobbyists do? What is involved in this process of attempting to wield influence over the decisions of government? In their classic handbook on lobbying Congress, Wolpe and Levine (1996) identify a number of fundamental tenets for those involved in this process. They include the following:

- define the issues you are lobbying for and determine at the outset what you want;
- know the players;
- know the committees;
- know the public policy rationale on the issue;

- prepare materials explaining your position;
- make the client part of the lobbying team;
- go “outside” (of the lobbying relationship) for additional expertise when required;
- anticipate the opposition;
- be solicitous of your political allies;
- understand the process—the rules of procedure and the rules of compromise;
- enlist the support of your allies;
- become cross-partisan in observing and listening for nuances in the process;
- observe basic courtesies; and
- avoid being obnoxious or demanding.

With these tenets in mind, Wolpe and Levine (1996) outline some of the specific strategies employed by lobbyists. Likewise, Davidson and Oleszek (2004) reiterated essential lobbying strategies in their book, *Congress & Its Members, Ninth Edition*. What follows is a listing of the most common of these strategies:

- engaging in face-to-face meetings with members of Congress or their staff members;
- providing verbal or written information or data about an issue to a lawmaker or staff member or assisting with language for a bill or debate about a bill;
- contributing testimony at a congressional hearing or committee meeting, or monitoring a hearing or meeting;
- hosting or attending a reception or other social gathering for members of Congress and/or their staff members;
- leveraging support (personal or financial) for an issue from prominent or influential individuals or entities;

- engaging constituents and grassroots groups in letter writing, calling, faxing, or e-mailing members of Congress about a particular issue; and/or
- assisting members with re-election by providing and leveraging financial contributions and endorsements to their campaigns (Wolpe and Levine, 1996; Davidson and Oleszek, 2004).

These basic tenets and strategies apply whether the lobbyist represents a corporate giant or a small, grassroots organization. Nevertheless, corporate giants likely will rely heavily on leveraging campaign contributions and hosting social events to wield influence, while grassroots organizations will rely more heavily on engaging constituents in contacting lawmakers and on educating the lawmakers about the potential impact of their decisions on individual lives and communities. Thus, the *specific* lobbying strategies selected depend not only upon the venue and the issue but also upon the strengths and resources of the lobbyist and the organization he or she represents (Wolpe & Levine, 1996).

Lobbying by public interest groups

Lobbying by public interest groups—also called “special interests” or “pressure groups”—is disparaged by lawmakers and citizens alike. Yet anyone who lobbies, anyone who seeks to influence policy decisions, is in fact, representing an “interest group” (Ciglar & Loomis, 2002). More precisely, the public mistrusts—and lawmakers purport to dislike—any interest group that is able to wield an unfair advantage over others by leveraging financial support for election campaigns, particularly through Political Action Committees (PACs), and other types of contributions. The competition among many interests for access to government decision-making, however, does not necessarily take place on a level playing field, and some players may be able to leverage greater access than others by leaping through loopholes in campaign finance

laws (Ciglar & Loomis, 2002). Nevertheless, the focus of this study is not such interest groups generally, but a particular category of lobbying entities known as “public interest groups.”

Wolpe and Levine (1996), citing Scholzman and Tierney (1986), define public interest groups as those “organizations seeking policy objectives that do not ‘benefit selectively either the membership or activists of the organization’” (Wolpe & Levine, 1996, p. 3). The practice of lobbying by public interest groups is different in many ways from that of other lobbying ventures (corporate lobbying, for example). Typically, in the world of public interest lobbying, efforts to garner political support do not involve the offering of significant financial contributions. Instead, they call upon political leaders to take the moral high ground. In so doing, lawmakers support policy decisions that are (presumably) in the best interest of the public (as defined by the stance of the interest group, of course). Sometimes a groundswell of grassroots opinion on an issue can convince lawmakers to support a position they might not otherwise favor, knowing that their constituencies will watch how they vote on a particular issue (Arnold, 1990). Thus, Wolpe and Levine (1996) describe public interest groups as those seeking policy objectives that do not benefit themselves directly. They contend:

[Public interest groups] have become the recognized masters at coordinating legislative objectives with supportive press coverage, direct mail campaigns, and grassroots lobbying. Their political strength is in the perceived selflessness of their commitments, the appeal of their positions, and in many instances, the numbers of people they can claim to represent. This is strong political stuff. They know it and use it well. (Wolpe & Levine, 1996, p. 3).

During the 1970s and after, such public interest groups began to emerge in large numbers, typically representing nonprofit organizations and funded by donations from members, subscriptions to publications, and foundation grants. These citizens’ groups and nonprofit organizations ranged in advocacy skill from “ragtag” to eloquent. Their causes ranged from environmental to human rights to civic concerns. In political ideology, they ranged across the

spectrum from left to right and from highly contentious to relatively unremarkable (Wolpe & Levine, 1996). Currently, there are hundreds of nonprofit organizations and other similar groups that lobby on Capitol Hill. Wolpe and Levine (1996) note that “the sophistication with which these groups pursue their goals has grown immensely since their emergence in the 1970s. Today they are far from ragtag, though they can present that image when it is useful” (p. 3).

Lobbying by religious groups: A brief history

Though the earliest efforts at lobbying the U. S. Congress and influencing electoral politics came particularly from business and industry, by the middle decades of the 19th century, the interests of religious groups were emerging in the debates about the removal of Native Americans from their ancestral land and about whether or not to abolish slavery (Rozell, Wilcox, & Madland, 2006). Likewise, other (secular) interest groups emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century, particularly groups concerned with woman suffrage, Prohibition, and child labor (Corbett & Corbett, 1999).

The first focused efforts of religious groups to develop a consistent presence on Capitol Hill came in the early part of the 20th century. Among many Protestant denominations and interest groups, this phenomenon surfaced as an element of the Social Gospel movement. Emerging largely as a response to injustices wrought by industrialism and capitalism, this movement sought to bring about “the Kingdom of God on earth” through political activism focused on reshaping the social, economic, and moral order of the nation (Dunn, 1984). Among the theological claims concerning public policies in need of reform asserted by the Social Gospel movement were these:

Since love is the supreme law of Christ, the Kingdom of God implies a progressive reign of love in human affairs. We can see its advance wherever the free will of love supersedes the use of force and legal coercion as a regulative of the social order. This involves the redemption of society from political autocracies and political oligarchies; the

substitution of redemptive for vindictive penology; the abolition of constraint through hunger as part of the industrial system; and the abolition of war as the supreme expression of hate and the completest cessation of freedom...No social group or organization can claim to be clearly within the Kingdom of God which drains others for its own ease, and resists the effort to abate this fundamental evil. This involves the redemption of society from private property in the natural resources of the earth, and from any condition in industry which makes monopoly profits possible. (Rauschenbusch, 1917, as cited in Dunn, 1984, pp. 60-61)

The sweeping change efforts of the Social Gospel movement ranged from advocacy to establish Prohibition at the politically conservative end of the spectrum to strong support for child labor laws and anti-trust legislation at the politically liberal end (Thuesen, 2002).

With respect to the advocacy efforts of mainline Protestant denominations in particular, the Methodist Social Creed of 1908 was an important statement of liberal theology in the tradition of the Social Gospel movement (Dunn, 1989). Thereafter the Methodist Church, with a theology that was more conservative and pietistic than that of the contemporary United Methodist Church, funneled significant resources into the effort to promote Prohibition. The leadership of the Methodist Church determined that such an effort would require establishing a major presence in Washington, D.C., and it was through this initiative that the United Methodist Building was built in 1923. Dubbed by some “the house that Prohibition built,” the United Methodist building served as the “nerve center for Prohibition forces” (Hertzke, 1988, p. 28). Located adjacent to Capitol Hill between the Supreme Court building and the Senate office buildings, this historic structure continues to serve as the nerve center for religious activism on Capitol Hill, but today its occupants are focused on contemporary peace and justice issues and it “is associated with the most liberal and militantly anti-pietist political witness” (Hertzke, 1988, p. 28).

Though this discussion gives particular attention to the advocacy efforts of mainline Protestant denominations, many other religious interests were advocating for social change as

well, including the historically black church and Jewish, Roman Catholic, Quaker, and Unitarian groups. The efforts of various groups engaged in theology in the public square on behalf of social change were part of a larger interfaith and populist civic movement that found its secular voice in the rhetoric of the Progressive Era. The presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson were particularly amenable to the political agenda of the Social Gospel movement and that of other progressive political groups (Theusen, 2002).

While Protestants engaged with the Social Gospel movement tended to embrace modernism and to look for ways to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth through collective human and technological progress, other strands of Protestantism eschewed modernity, emphasizing instead individual conversion, pietism, and moral rectitude (Hertzke, 1988). Eventually, these differences made visible a deep theological schism among Protestants which manifested itself in the 1920s in the debate over Darwinism. The more conservative, evangelical strand of Protestantism called for a return to Christian “fundamentals” including literal understandings of the biblical accounts of creation, and this movement came to be called Fundamentalism (Corbett & Corbett, 1999).

Many of the conservative Protestant interests that had supported Prohibition also opposed the teaching of Darwinism in public school classrooms. The trial of Tennessee school teacher John Scopes in 1925, in which he was found guilty of teaching evolutionary theory, grew larger than life in the retelling of it, and the “Scopes Monkey Trial” painted Fundamentalists as the enemies of free inquiry and scientific progress (Noll, 2002). This, plus the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, caused Fundamentalism as a political movement to recede as conservative evangelicals “responded by retreating into separatist institutions, concerning themselves with personal

salvation” (Fowler & Hertzke, 1995, pp. 22-23). The conservative evangelicals did not re-emerge as a coherent movement again until the 1970s.

As Fundamentalism was retreating, liberal theology (i.e., theology grounded in reason and experience as interpretive lenses for biblical texts) became foundational to such mainline denominations as the Methodists and Presbyterians (Dunn, 1984). Liberal theology found its voice primarily in the works of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. Niebuhr was a particularly enthusiastic supporter of both Roosevelt and the New Deal. Alley (1972) observes:

During [Roosevelt’s] long term in office the churches began the upsurge in theology which came to flower in ‘Neo-orthodoxy’ under the brilliant leadership of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich...[Niebuhr’s] realism tempered with the ethic of Jesus undercut the Gospel of Wealth and established the standard of social justice for theologians of the forties and fifties. He became the theologian of the New Deal. (Alley, 1972, p. 21)

Hertzke (1988) argues that, from the New Deal era forward, “Protestants tended to be theologically and politically liberal, and they were the dominant Protestant voices in the nation’s capitol until the late 1970s” (p. 29). Further, the advocacy work during the New Deal era that established a social safety net for the poor also facilitated the formation of a liberal religious alliance, not only among mainline Protestant denominations, but also among a broader array of religious activists, including black Christians, Roman Catholics, and Jews (Dunn, 1984).

Hertzke (1988) offers this overview of the activity of mainline Protestant denominations from the 1950s and 60s through the late 20th century:

By the early 1950s many individual denominations, as well as the National Council of Churches, had established offices (in Washington, DC)...[but] the activist 1960s galvanized the liberal religious community and set the pattern for future ‘political witness.’ The spark was the civil rights movement, which (due to the efforts of black ministers) was viewed as a profound moral issue, a matter of fundamental justice... With their aggressive lobbying on behalf of the Civil Rights Act of 1964...religious lobbyists argued persuasively that as religious leaders it was their moral duty to fight for ‘justice,’ an argument that serves as an underpinning for much of their work today. Moreover, the tactics employed, quite successfully, also set the pattern for future efforts... If one were to summarize how these lobbyists view their work today it would be as champions of ‘peace

and justice,' ...their mission, quite simply, is to fight for justice, especially for the poor...and to work for peace. (Hertzke, 1988, pp. 30-31)

Following on his earlier work, and with the perspective of two decades of political history to observe, Hertzke (2009) observes that scholarship focused on political interest groups "largely ignores religious organizations," (p. 303). While he acknowledges Schattschneider's (1960) argument that the influence of interest groups is shaped by the agenda of elitists, since populist groups are less likely to have the means to represent their interests in the policymaking process, Hertzke notes that religious organizations are "the very groups that may have the motives and means of articulating the needs and aspirations of less elite Americans," (p. 303).

He makes these observations about the work of religious interest groups:

...unique features enable religious groups to enhance the genuine pluralism and representativeness of the lobby system. Religious interest groups, for example, can help represent less advantaged members of society by overcoming the free-rider problem through transcendent appeals....Moreover, the social capital generated in churches can uniquely aid in the formation of groups and social movements that represent less elite Americans (p.303).

The Christian Right

No discussion of the influence of religious interest groups on policymaking would be complete without mention of the Christian Right, known variously as the Moral Majority, the Religious Right, and the Christian Right (Hertzke, 2009). Moen (1989) notes that the origins of the movement in the late 1970s and its impact on policymaking in the 1980s significantly shaped the policy agendas of both Reagan administrations. Moen argues that leaders of the Christian Right tapped into the general discomfort of many conservatives about such social concerns as teen pregnancy, abortion, homosexuality, and pornography and coalesced this discontent into a formidable political movement engaged in wide-ranging political strategies from voter registration and school board elections to shaping the Congressional agenda. The resulting

movement was fueled by the grassroots activities of Fundamentalist and Evangelical Christians, citizens who were generally less prosperous, less educated and more conservative than many political interest groups. Nevertheless, the leadership of the movement was able to mobilize considerable political power and wealth to undergird their efforts. By the end of the 1980s, Moen (1989) concluded that the Christian Right had shaped the congressional agenda in ways that kept their own concerns at the forefront, kept liberal forces on the defensive, and deflected initiative contrary to their interests.

Subsequent research into the Christian Right suggests that its influence has become institutionalized, grounded in a stable core constituency comprising 10-15% of the population and drawing a wider swath of supporters to particularly contentious issues such as abortion or gay marriage (Wilcox and Larson, 2006). The influence of the Christian Right, they note, has been considerable with respect to influencing elections and party politics, but in the end, far less successful in shaping policy outcomes. Deckman (2004) notes that in terms of shaping social policy to their agenda, the Christian Right is most successful with campaigns that enjoy general public support (a solid academic preparation primary and secondary students, for example) than with those that promote more extreme or controversial positions (teaching creationism in public schools, for example). Wilcox and Fortenly (2009) characterize the policy influence of the movement in this way:

The Christian Right has enjoyed the greatest success when its appeals have echoed traditional social movement themes of fair treatment and equality. The movement has managed to reverse laws and policies that it saw either as limiting religious freedom or creating an unequal field between religious and secular organizations (p. 277).

In general, however, they characterize the movement's success in enacting its policy agenda as "relatively unimpressive," citing the tremendous amount of energy and resources invested in

such issues as blocking access to abortion or legal protections for same-sex couples laid alongside the relatively stable abortion rate and the advance of protections for same-sex couples, including legalization of gay marriage in several states (Wilcox and Fortenly, 2009).

The Religious Left

In the wake of three decades of a very visible Christian Right, some researchers have imagined a “God gap” in which religious leaders on the liberal end of the political spectrum are relatively invisible, inviting the assumption that political activists drawing on a religious world view are inevitably conservatives (Wilcox and Fortenly, 2009). In contrast to the Christian Right, the Religious Left is less visible, less vocal, and more diverse, with respect to both its policy agenda and its array of participants. Olson (2007) argues that “to the extent that it exists at all, (the Religious Left is) a loosely knit coalition of religious people who approach politics from a liberal/progressive vantage point” (p. 279).

The Religious Left, if it could be characterized as a political countermovement to the Christian Right, is more likely to embrace the moniker of “progressive” rather than “leftist,” and it comprises a broader constituency than progressive Christians, including Jews, Buddhists and other religious minorities (Wilcox and Fortenly, 2009). Far from mirroring the opposite of the Christian Right, “religiopolitical progressives,” as they are sometimes called, do not embrace a cohesive world view, nor even a well-formed political agenda. Thus, as Wilcox and Fortenly note, those political scholars give a head nod to a Religious Left refer to it as “an unformed, but potential movement,” (p. 279).

Nevertheless, Olson (2006) identifies mainline Protestants as a long-standing and rich influence on congressional politics, grounded in the principles of the Social Gospel Movement, focused on progressive social and economic policies, and consistently able to mobilize networks

of both religious leaders and grassroots constituencies to wield influence. Beginning with a theological undergirding focus not on personal morality, but instead on social justice, equality and peace, the Protestant Left concerns itself with income redistribution, health care for the poor, living wages, and environmental justice issues (Wilcox and Fortenly, 2009). The Protestant Left can take credit, then, for a long-standing presence in Washington, a firm grounding in the theological tenets of the Social Gospel Movement, and a growing capacity to inform and mobilize both clergy and congregants, yet its influence is significantly constrained in comparison with that of the Christian Right (Wilcox and Fortenly, 2009). Olson (2011) argues that the potential for re-emergence of a Religious Left is certainly there, but challenges with coordination and mobilization make prominence a struggle. Further, Wuthnow (2012) contends that the polarization often evident in policy discussions where religious faith is a factor obscures the possibility of reasonable political debate. The three mainline Protestant denominations whose work is the focus of this study are among those characterized as the Protestant Left.

The policy offices of mainline Protestant denominations

Olson (2002) offers the following concise description of the Washington offices of the mainline Protestant denominations and their political agenda as they exist today:

Each major mainline Protestant denomination in the United States supports an office in Washington, D. C. These offices function as interest groups by representing the political interests of the denominations and coordinating their national advocacy efforts...The Washington offices pursue a “peace and justice” agenda by advocating human rights at home and abroad, working to preserve the environment, questioning U.S. use of military force, and above all else, fighting for the disadvantaged. The offices lobby members of Congress and executive branch staff, often working in coalition with religious and secular interest groups alike. They also file *amicus curiae* (“friend of the court”) briefs in key federal cases. To connect with local congregations, the offices support “action networks” of interested laity and clergy with whom they communicate about policy. These action networks are designed to stimulate grassroots discussion of politics and involvement in lobbying activities. (pp. 55-56)

While scholars and pundits alike may describe the work of these religious leaders on Capitol Hill as “lobbying,” they may not use the term to describe themselves. Hertzke (2009) notes:

From the start, leaders of religious interest groups have generally eschewed the term *lobbying* (with its unsavory connotations) and to this day, often speak of themselves as *advocates*. On the issue of nomenclature, however, scholars continue to use the terms *lobbyists* or *lobbying*—without implying anything untoward about the enterprise—to depict the efforts by groups to shape legislative and executive decisions (pp. 300-301).

Legal limitations on the political activities of religious organizations

One way in which the lobbying efforts of nonprofit [501(c)3] organizations, specifically, differ from those of other groups is that there are legal limitations placed by the Internal Revenue Code on the amount of resources that tax exempt organizations may invest in direct and grassroots lobbying. Also, tax exempt organizations may not legally engage in partisan politics and are prohibited from endorsing candidates for political office. With respect to the rules concerning lobbying by *religious organizations* in particular, a guide on such matters produced by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life describes the parameters as follows:

If a religious organization engages in lobbying, its lobbying activities (as measured by time, effort, expenditures, and other relevant factors) may not constitute more than an insubstantial part of the organization’s total activities during a particular year. Lobbying includes both direct lobbying, which refers to the organization contacting legislators, (whether federal, state, or local), and grass-roots lobbying, which refers to the organization asking members of the public to contact legislators, to support or oppose particular legislation. Neither the Code nor the IRS Regulations define what “insubstantial” means in terms of any specific percentage, although there are a few older court cases that suggest that insubstantial lobbying would be something between 5 and 15 percent of the organization’s total activities. (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2002, p. 6)

Thus, religious organizations (and other nonprofits) are free to engage in a full range of lobbying activities so long as such activities comprise only a small portion of each organization’s overall focus and budget. Nevertheless, as noted, they are strictly prohibited from engaging in political

campaign activity or other partisan politics. Any religious organization that violates these regulations faces potential revocation of its tax exempt status (Pew Forum, 2002).

Summary of salient findings from policy theory and previous research

In Part One of this chapter we have explored current theory concerning the process of lobbying the United States Congress, giving particular attention to religious voices as special interests. Specifically, we have reviewed policy theory concerning the role of lobbying in the legislative process, the lobbying work of interest groups in general, the work of the religious lobby in particular, and finally, a brief overview of the work of the mainline Protestant denominations that are the focus of this study.

Synthesizing this material, we recognize that with regard to Congress, successful lobbying—success in wielding influence in that policymaking arena—requires a solid understanding of the relevant phases of the policymaking process: agenda setting, policy formulation, and legitimizing the desired policy choice (Peters, 1999). Further, lobbyists are called upon to master a range of skills and strategies related to Capitol Hill advocacy from leveraging support through influential or moneyed constituencies to large-scale grassroots mobilization to deliver a particular message in a timely fashion (Wolpe & Levine, 1996).

When the interest group for which a lobbyist speaks happens to be a nonprofit organization or a religious interest group, the strategic focus tends to shift from advocating for the client's self-interest to seeking after the "moral high ground" or "common good" (Wolpe & Levine, 1996). In the early years of the last century, religious voices—including those of Jews, Unitarians and many sects of Christianity—took up the causes of the Progressive Era on Capitol Hill, advocating for child labor laws, Prohibition and worker protections, among other things (Dunn, 1984). Mainline Protestant denominations, including the predecessors to the three which

are the focus of this study, first established a presence on Capitol Hill during this period, and they were deeply involved in advocating for the New Deal in the 1940s, for civil rights in the 1950s and 60s, and in myriad human rights and antipoverty efforts throughout the 20th century (Hertzke, 1988). While they have many strategies at their disposal, those engaging in lobbying on behalf of a particular denomination must limit their reach to nonpartisan efforts (Pew Forum, 2002).

Since the focus of this dissertation research is the policy offices of the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Methodist Church specifically, it is important to explore the role of each of these denominations and their policy offices in more detail. The following section of this chapter explores previous research related to the history, polity, and public policy activity of the three denominations that are the focus of this study.

Part Two: An Overview of Previous Research Concerning the Public Policy Work of the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterians and the Methodists

The second large section of this chapter explores the history of lobbying by mainline Protestant denominations, particularly the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Methodist Church. In terms of the role of denominational policy offices in lobbying Capitol Hill, there are several seminal studies worth noting. The most comprehensive and oft-cited of these is *Representing God in Washington* (Hertzke, 1988). Hertzke cites two earlier works, a book entitled *Church Lobbying in the Nation's Capitol* (Ebersole, 1951) and another, *The Growing Church Lobby in Washington* (Adams, 1970). Additionally, Nash (1967) wrote a dissertation entitled *Church Lobbying in the Federal Government: A Comparative Study of Four Church Agencies in Washington*. A search of the

literature identifies several other available dissertations that focus on specific denominations and the history of their involvement on Capitol Hill, including one by Wilhelm (2003) focused on the history of the Congregational Christian Churches (CCC) on Capitol Hill; the CCC was a predecessor to United Church of Christ. Each study offers a detailed snapshot of the work of particular denominational entities on Capitol Hill in the eras in which they were written, though their content is relevant to the current study primarily for the historical perspective offered.

Beyond these historical and largely dated studies, most of the research in this area has been published in the form of essays in broad-reaching volumes which focus on some aspect of religion and politics. Little material is available in the way of journal articles or conference proceedings. However, the Pew Center on Religion and Public Life and the Brookings Institution have published several helpful resources of the topical, multi-essay variety. For purposes of this study, the research discussed is related to the Washington offices of the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Methodist Church.

The United Church of Christ (UCC)

The United Church of Christ (UCC) was formed in 1957 through the merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and each of these two bodies had been formed by mergers of two predecessor denominations, meaning that four entities within the Christian tradition had converged to form the subsequent denomination (Gunneman, 1977). This “flowing together” of four strands of the Christian tradition was touted as a momentous accomplishment, “a landmark in American religious history... a particularly vivid example of the kind of mutual invigoration which is proceeding in the whole range of American Protestant pluralism” (Neibuhr, 1957).

A Brief History of the United Church of Christ (UCC)

The oldest and perhaps most well-known among the United Church of Christ's predecessor denominations were the Congregationalists. Tracing their roots through the English Puritan Reformation, the Plymouth Separatists—the Pilgrims—are the most well-known spiritual ancestors of the Congregationalists, having come to this continent to build a “City on a Hill.” They and the many subsequent waves of Congregationalist immigrants to New England evolved into a movement which valued both congregational autonomy and the benefits accrued through affiliation with similar churches in a geographic region. Because they remained rooted primarily in New England and northern states, “the Congregationalists were free of the severe strands of sectional division caused by the slavery issue and the Civil War... (freeing) the direction of their energies toward constructive service in the voluntary societies (Gunneman, 1977).

Another predecessor denomination of the UCC, the Christian Church was a broad, loosely affiliated group of congregations, grounded in a common passion for unity within the Christian tradition. Their affinity for unity was held in tension with rugged individualism and a suspiciousness of creedal traditions. The Christian Church movement represented the “flowing together” of three diverse sects that agreed on their desire to simplify and strengthen Christian practice, particularly in frontier communities, while also promoting unity among the various strands of Christian community (Gunneman, 1977). Like the Congregationalists, the Christian Church was able, by and large, to avoid the divisiveness that Presbyterians, Methodists and other connectional denominations experienced around slavery and civil war. This was because the autonomy of individual congregations and individual members prevailed over the institutionalization of statements of theology or structures of governance (Nordbeck, 1987). In 1931, this strand of the Christian Church converged with the Congregationalists to form the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches (CCC) (Gunneman, 1977).

The Evangelical and Reformed (E & R) tradition comprises the remaining strand of predecessor denominations to the UCC. Formed by the 1934 merger of the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) with the Evangelical Synod of North America (ESNA), the spiritual ancestors of this strand of the UCC were predominantly German. E & R churches were generally more conservative, more rural, and fewer in number than the CCCs. Their theology and polity were closer in many ways to that of Lutherans and Presbyterian than that of Congregationalists (Gunneman, 1977).

The German Reformed strand of the Evangelical and Reformed Church traces its roots to the waves of German immigrants who came to this continent in the early 1700s, not primarily for religious reasons as the Puritans had, but in search of greater opportunities for individual initiative and economic stability (Gunneman, 1977). They settled in Pennsylvania, particularly. Theologically, they embraced the Heidelberg Catechism and their polity resembled that of the Presbyterians, with elders and deacons sharing responsibility of congregational life with the minister.

The Evangelical Synod of North America, also formed by German immigrants, emerged later—in the early 1800s—and with stronger ties to their European and German identities than those held by its German Reformed kindred with longer standing ties to this continent. The largest concentration of churches in the Evangelical Synod of North America (ESNA) was in Missouri and Southern Illinois. More recent German roots produced a theology and polity with a Lutheran flavor. ESNA congregations held a particular concern for the disadvantaged and had a proud history of establishing hospitals and other institutions to care for people marginalized by health concerns, poverty, or social conditions (Gunneman, 1977). When the Evangelical and Reformed Church merged with the Congregational Christian Churches to form the United

Church of Christ in 1957, the subsequent denomination claimed just over two million members (Gunneman, 1977).

A brief overview of the theology of the United Church of Christ (UCC)

The United Church of Christ (UCC) traces both its historical and theological heritage to the Pilgrims—English Separatists who immigrated to the North American continent early in the 17th Century seeking religious freedom—and to the Mayflower Compact, which delineated their founding principles in 1620. The Mayflower Compact served as a social contract through which colonists committed themselves to cooperative community in order to increase the likelihood of mutual survival (Gunneman, 1977). This preliminary experiment in democracy and interdependence foreshadowed the principle of covenant community, a hallmark of Congregational theology and polity. A generation later, the Cambridge Platform (1648) articulated the concept of *covenant* as foundational not only to individual communities of faith, but to the relationship among a group of equal congregations, an *Association* (Walker, 2005). These two principles, the autonomy of individual congregations as covenant communities and the affiliation of multiple similar congregations in a geographic region as a larger covenant communities (Associations and Synods), remain cornerstones of the theology and polity of the United Church of Christ, inherited from its Congregationalist forbearers (Walker, 2005).

While the theological identity of the UCC involves many more nuances than the theological concept of covenant laid alongside a commitment to congregational autonomy, describing these nuances is complex. Johnson and Hambrick-Stowe (1990) State that in the United Church of Christ, “the process of theological self-identification is dynamic and dialectic, not fixed in the past or in any static symbols.” The denomination seeks to “embody sensitivity for heritage as well as for the present context...(grounded in) the foundation of the ancient covenants as they witnessed to God’s righteousness and voice God’s promise/warning concerning the future,” (Johnson and Hambrick-Stowe, 1990). That said, the

same authors comment that the theology of the UCC is “more of a process than a product,” having been heavily influenced by a number of late 20th century theological movements, including liberation, process, feminist, and gay and lesbian thinkers (Johnson and Hambrick-Stowe, 1990).

A brief overview of the polity of the United Church of Christ (UCC)

The polity or governance structure of the United Church of Christ (UCC), as noted in the previous section, is both congregational, giving priority to the autonomy of the local church in most matters of governance, and covenantal, linking local congregations to regional and national iterations of through both formal and informal agreements to work toward common goals (Sheares, 1990). With respect, specifically, to the UCC’s public policy work, the denomination describes its authorization through the General Synod (its biennial national gathering for policymaking purposes) in this way:

General Synod is the most widely representative body in the life of the denomination. It sets policy for the Covenanted Ministries and provides direction for Conferences, Associations, and congregations, for all who hear the word of God speaking... It is a faithful gathering that speaks *to* the church, not *for* the church. It does not speak for the whole church...no one entity speaks for every setting of the church. Individual members and congregations are free to disagree and to state their convictions on their own terms (UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, 2003, p. 6).

The United Church of Christ (UCC) in Washington, D. C.

The United Church of Christ (UCC) has maintained an office in Washington, D.C. since the genesis of the denomination in 1957. Formed by the merger of two denominations in that year, the UCC began operations in Washington as a continuation of the work of one of its predecessor denominations, the Congregational Christian Church (CCC), which had developed its Washington office in 1936 (Wilhelm, 2003). The UCC, while congregational in its polity, is guided in terms of policy advocacy by the decisions articulated in its biennial General Synod.

The Washington office is home to the denomination's Public Life and Social Policy Ministry, an element of its Justice and Witness Ministries. The focus of Justice and Witness Ministries is as follows:

[T]o enable and encourage Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, and national expressions of the United Church of Christ to engage in God's mission globally by direct action for the integrity of creation, justice, and peace (UCC, 2006).

Specifically, the purpose of the UCC's Public Life and Social Policy Office is as follows:

To coordinate the public policy advocacy work of the church in collaboration with all settings of the UCC...(and) to give life and voice to the resolutions and pronouncements of General Synod on social policy (UCC, 2005).

Beyond direct advocacy on Capitol Hill, a key vehicle for this work is the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network, a grassroots advocacy network composed of individual members and local congregations working with the Public Life and Social Policy Office in "shaping public policy and advocating for systemic change in keeping with God's vision of a just and loving society," (UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, 2003). This work is accomplished through distribution of annual briefings on critical issues, weekly action alerts about pending issues and other electronic alerts as needed (UCC 2003).

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America [PC(USA)]

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America [PC(USA)] was formed in 1983 through the merger of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS)—the Southern Presbyterians—and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA)—the Northern Presbyterians. The two denominations had been separated since 1859, and had been developing and refining a Plan for Reunion—for healing the long rift between the historic Northern and Southern branches of the denomination—since the late 1960s (Smylie, 1996). The resulting denomination, the PC(USA), claimed more than three million members. Through an “Articles of Agreement” document, the Presbyterian family subsequently established its headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky, and set about the work of merging its governance, church structures, theology, and liturgy (Smylie, 1996). What follows is a brief overview of the history, theology, and polity of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as it relates to this study.

A Brief History of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

As with all of the mainline Protestant sects of the Christian faith, the Presbyterians trace their roots to the Reformed tradition, which emerged in 16th Century Europe. Martin Luther (1483-1546), a German monk, was the original catalyst of the Protestant Reformation (or Revolt). Through the posting and distribution of his *Ninety-Five Theses* (1517), a reaction to perceived widespread corruption and scandal in the Roman Catholic Church of his time, and his subsequent speaking, writing, and teaching that the Christian tenet of unmerited and unmediated grace from God had been neglected, Luther set in motion a widespread reform movement (Gaustad, 1993).

While Lutheranism is the sect of the Protestant movement which traces its roots to his insights, Luther’s ideas influenced many thinkers, including John Calvin (1509-64), a French

reformer, whose works, including particularly *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536) are foundational to Presbyterian theology. Smylie, a Presbyterian historian, characterizes Calvin's *Institutes* as drawing on Scripture to promote "a biblical vision of a God who grasped and controlled all life" and with this perception of God's action in the world, Calvin "shaped Reformed worship, theology, governance, and the Christian life" (Smylie, 1996, p. 20). Calvin eventually fled to Geneva and is closely associated with the Reformation movement in Switzerland as well.

Another leading figure in the Protestant movement, through whom Presbyterians trace their spiritual ancestry was John Knox (1505-72), a Scottish reformer who studied with Calvin in Geneva and whose *Formes of Prayer* (1560) and *The First Book of Discipline* (1560) outline a biblical basis for worship, prayer, and church governance (Smylie, 1996; Gaustad, 1996). The Presbyterian Church is a confessional church, meaning that it affirms a many of the historic creeds of the Church as testaments to faith and representative expressions of its history and theological grounding in the Bible and the Reformed Tradition (*Book of Confessions*, 1996; Foote & Thornburg, 2000). One of the earliest of these, the Scots Confession (1560), was written, in part, by John Knox (*Book of Confessions*, 1996).

Many Presbyterians were among the early immigrants to this continent, settling throughout New England in the 1640s-90s and establishing the first presbytery (regional governing body) in Philadelphia in 1706 (Smylie, 1996). From these beginnings, Smylie notes that Presbyterians "sank roots deep in American soil, experienced spiritual awakening, built institutions, developed institutions, and mended their first division," (1996, p. 47). By the time of the Revolutionary War, Presbyterians were well-established as a Protestant denomination that

spoke to the political and social conditions of the day, and that tradition has continued to the present day through involvement of Presbyterians in myriad social justice issues (Smylie, 1996).

A Brief Overview of the theology of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Presbyterian Church (USA), grounded in the Reformed tradition of the Christian faith, articulates its structure and belief system in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA)*, a two-volume document consisting of *The Book of Confessions (Part I)* and *The Book of Order (Part II)*. Together, these two volumes serve as the denomination's authoritative statement of its theology, governance, worship, and discipline. While *The Book of Confessions (Part I)* rarely changes, *The Book of Order (Part II)* is revised every two years by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), its governing body.

Specifically, the theology and doctrine of the Presbyterian Church (USA), is expressed in the eleven confessional statements that comprise *The Book of Confessions (The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I)*. The oldest of these, the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, are two historic confessions embraced by many sects of Christianity. The remaining nine are specific to the Presbyterian Church (USA) or its predecessor iterations. These include the Scots Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Westminster Confession, the Shorter Catechism, the Larger Catechism, the Theological Declaration of Barmen, the Confession of 1967, and the Brief Statement of Faith (Presbyterian Church (USA), 1996, *Book of Confessions, Study Edition*, Foreword). The importance of these creeds and confessions of faith in articulating the theology of the Church is expressed in the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* as follows:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith...in the creeds and confession in the Book of Confessions. In these confessional statements the church declares to its members and to the world who it is and what it is, what it believes, what it resolves to do.

These statements identify the church as a community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions. They guide the church in its study and interpretation of Scriptures...summarize the essence of Christian tradition...direct the church in maintaining sound doctrines...equip the church for its work of proclamation (*Book of Order*, G-2.0100).

A brief overview of the polity of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Deeply rooted in the Reformed tradition, Presbyterians emphasize “the priesthood of all believers,” (in contrast to the priesthood and papacy of the Roman Catholic Church) and the importance of individual moral judgment (“God alone is Lord of the conscience”) in matters of leadership and corporate decision-making (Smylie, 1996). A 1983 report to the General Assembly (national church governance structure) explains its perspective on polity in this way:

The polity of Presbyterianism—with its strong insistence on the rule of the majority and the rights of the minority—is indeed the way in which Presbyterians affirm their unity amid their diversity. This polity not only organizes dissent and diversity, it is itself a product of dissent, diversity, compromise, and the creative resolution of bitter conflict, (Presbyterian Church (USA), 1983, *Historic Principles, Conscience and Governance*, p. 1).

In the theological tradition of John Calvin, the Presbyterian Church (USA) recognizes the following church offices: pastor, teacher, elder, and deacon (Smylie, 1996). While the General Assembly, the biennial national gathering of the Church, makes pronouncements about the stance of the Church of various issues, it is the regional gathering of local churches—the presbytery—which is the fundamental unit of governance among Presbyterians (Presbyterian Church (USA), 1983).

The current *Book of Order* (2011-13) stands as Part Two of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The *Book of Order* provides this overview of church polity or governance:

This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders. Ruling elders are so named not because they “lord it over” the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its

fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Teaching elders shall be committed in all their work to equipping the people of God for their ministry and witness (*Book of Order* 2011-12, F-3.0202).

The book goes on to say:

These presbyters shall come together in councils in regular gradation. These councils are sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. All councils of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The councils are distinct, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate council. The larger part of the church, or a representation thereof, shall govern the smaller (*Book of Order* 2011-13, F-3.0203).

Therefore, for purposes of this study, the biennial General Assembly serves as the ruling body which makes pronouncements on social and public policy issues, and these become the guidance by which the denomination's Washington office sets its policy agenda.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) in Washington, D. C.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)], through its predecessor denominations, has maintained an office in Washington, D.C. since 1946. A denomination governed by presbyteries, or groups of elders comprised of equal numbers of clergy and laity, the PC(USA) forms its policy positions in its biennial General Assembly, and these proposals are ratified or defeated by a simple majority of regional presbyteries in the months following each Assembly.

The denomination offers this description of the purpose of its Washington office:

The Presbyterian Washington Office is the public policy information and advocacy office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Its task is to advocate, and help the church to advocate, the social witness perspectives and policies of the Presbyterian General Assembly. (PC(USA), 2006)

The Washington Office has three major responsibilities:

1. to advocate with U.S. policymakers the public policy recommendations of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church;
2. to encourage and enable the governing bodies and member of the church to advocate those recommendations; and
3. to alert the church to emerging public policy issues not yet addressed by the General Assembly (PC(USA), 2006).

The United Methodist Church (UMC)

The United Methodist Church (UMC) was formed in 1968 with the merger of the Methodist and the Evangelical United Brethren Churches; at that time, the newly created denomination had approximately 11 million members, making it one of the largest Protestant Churches in the world (Historical Statement, p. 19). What follows is a brief overview of the history, theology, and polity of the United Methodist Church as it relates to this study. Most of the material contained in this discussion was drawn from the 2004 edition of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, which includes the denomination's Constitution and authoritative statements of its history, doctrine, and administrative order. The 2004 *Book of Discipline* was the extant authority on United Methodist polity (governance) during the course of the 110th Congress (2007-2008). Also critical to preparation of this section was the 2004 *Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church*, the extant authority on United Methodist policy during the course of the 110th Congress (2007-2008).

A Brief History of the United Methodist Church

The Methodist tradition emerged in England, initially through the work of John and Charles Wesley, who were later sent as missionaries from the Church of England to the colony of Georgia in 1736 (*Book of Discipline*, 2004). The rapid growth of the Methodist movement in the American colonies and the victory of the colonists over England in the American Revolution ultimately led to the formation of an independent Methodist Episcopal Church in America in 1784 (*Book of Discipline*, 2004).

The Methodist movement experienced much growth and also many conflicts and divisions in the course of the intervening 175 years between its establishment as an independent denomination on this continent and the subsequent formation of the United Methodist Church in

1968. Among the conflicts that produced significant divisions in the church were clashes over slavery and abolition, the roles of women and laity in the leadership of the church, and U. S. involvement in foreign wars (*Book of Discipline*, 2004).

Eventually, some of the more significant differences were resolved and the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) combined with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church in 1939 to form the Methodist Church (*Book of Discipline*, 2004). Similarly, in 1946, the Evangelical Church and the United Brethren Church merged to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church (*Book of Discipline*, 2004). Subsequently, these two strands of Methodism, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church, formed the United Methodist Church in 1968 (*Book of Discipline*, 2004). For purposes of this study, the term “Methodist Church,” when used to describe current and recent activities, refers to the United Methodist Church (UMC). However, when used to describe the social justice and policy work of its historical antecedent in Washington, D.C., the term “Methodist Church” refers to the Methodist Episcopal Church (North), for it was this predecessor to the UMC that developed and maintained a denominational presence on Capitol Hill beginning in the 1920s (*Book of Discipline*, 2004).

A Brief Overview of United Methodist theology

The theology of the United Methodist Church is grounded in the biblical and theological heritage of the Christian tradition as interpreted in the teachings of John Wesley. The doctrinal heritage and standards of the denomination are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, which is updated and published quadrennially. The Wesleyan theological heritage places a distinctive emphasis on grace, which is understood as “the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit”

(*Book of Discipline*, 2004, p. 45). Specifically, Methodists understand the historical Christian doctrines of grace, justification, assurance, and sanctification in terms of the ever-present and continuous grace of God, which is understood to precede any conscious awareness of God (prevenient grace), to reach out to believers with forgiveness and comfort (justifying grace), and to continually guide and direct believers toward perfection (sanctifying grace) (*Book of Discipline*, 2004).

Also central to Methodist theology and doctrine is the “Wesley quadrilateral”; this is the idea that there are four primary sources for understanding and reflecting on Christian faith: the Bible (Scripture), the Christian tradition, our own individual and collective experiences, and thoughtful reflection on human knowledge—also known as “reason.” The *Book of Discipline* describes Wesley’s quadrilateral in this way: “Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason” (*Book of Discipline*, 2004, p.77).

United Methodists understand theology as “our effort to reflect upon God’s gracious action in our lives” (*Book of Discipline*, 2004, p.74). Specifically, they understand the task of theological reflection in this way:

As United Methodists, we are called to identify the need both of individuals and of society and to address those needs out of the resources of Christian faith in a way that is clear, convincing, and effective. Theology serves the Church by interpreting the world’s needs and challenges to the Church and by interpreting the gospel to the world (*The Book of Discipline*, 2004, ¶104, § 4, p.75).

Thus, the United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations have a long history of speaking to social concerns on behalf of the Church. The central expression of Methodist concern for social justice is the Social Creed, adopted in 1908 by the Methodist Episcopal

Church (North); it remains a foundational element of the denomination's theology. The Social Creed, in its most current iteration, is as follows:

We believe in God, Creator of the world; and in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of creation. We believe in the Holy Spirit, through whom we acknowledge God's gifts, and we repent of our sin in misusing these gifts to idolatrous ends.

We affirm the natural world as God's handiwork and dedicate ourselves to its preservation, enhancement, and faithful use by humankind.

We joyfully receive for ourselves and others the blessings of community, sexuality, marriage, and the family.

We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women, children, youth, young adults, the aging, and people with disabilities; to improvement of the quality of life; and to the rights and dignity of all persons.

We believe in the right and duty of persons to work for the glory of God and the good of themselves and others in the protection of their welfare in so doing; in the rights to property as a trust from God, collective bargaining, and responsible consumption; and in the elimination of economic and social distress.

We dedicate ourselves to peace throughout the world, to the rule of justice and law among nations, and to individual freedom for all people of the world.

We believe in the present and final triumph of God's Word in human affairs and gladly accept our commission to manifest the life of the gospel in the world. Amen.
(*Social Principles*, 2004, pp. 124-125).

Beginning with the Social Creed as a foundational theological statement, the United Methodist Church, through its General Conference (ruling body), has developed Social Principles which speak to social issues from the biblical and theological perspective of the United Methodist tradition. These Social Principles address the responsibilities of believers to these six realms: the natural world, the nurturing community, the social community, the economic community, the political community, and the world community. Specifically, with respect to this study, the Social Principles serve as guidelines for those acting on behalf of the United Methodist Church in policy arenas.

A Brief Overview of United Methodist Polity

The United Methodist Church is a connectional denomination, meaning that a member of any United Methodist congregation is also a member of the entire denomination. *The Book of Discipline* (2004) describes this phenomenon as follows:

Connectionalism in the United Methodist tradition is multi-level, global in scope, and local in thrust...a vital web of interactive relationships. We are connected by sharing a common tradition of faith...a constitutional polity...a common mission...(and) a common ethos that characterizes our distinctive way of doing things. (*The Book of Discipline*, 2004, p. 90)

This “distinctive way of doing things,” if it could be typified in a single word, might be termed “methodical”—as the name of the denomination itself suggests.

The plan for governance and administration of the United Methodist Church is embodied in its Constitution, *The Book of Discipline*. The denomination has three branches of government: the executive branch, embodied by the Council of Bishops; the legislative branch, embodied by the General Conference; and the judicial branch, embodied by the Judicial Council (*Book of Discipline*, 2004).

The polity of the United Methodist Church is episcopal in nature, meaning that it is led by bishops. Bishops are elected from among United Methodist clergy, comprised of both men and women who are ordained to the office of elder; they are elected to the office of bishop by regional Jurisdictional Conferences. These Jurisdictional Conferences are comprised of equal numbers of clergy and laity, elected at the regional level for the purpose of selecting leadership for both the episcopacy and the ecclesial boards that oversee the evangelistic, educational, missionary, and benevolent interests of the Church (*Book of Discipline*, 2004).

Bishops serve as the ecclesial administrators of assigned geographic regions, generally for two four-year terms (eight years) in a given jurisdiction, after which they are assigned to

another region and this process continues until their retirement (*Book of Discipline*, 2004).

Bishops have the authority of “residential and presidential supervision” within their jurisdiction or region (*Book of Discipline*, year, pp. 27-31). All bishops, both active and retired, are members of the Council of Bishops, which meets at least once each year. The Council of Bishops provides executive-level administrative leadership to the denomination, with the authority to “plan for the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire Church and for carrying into effect the rules, regulations, and responsibilities prescribed and enjoined by the General Conference,” (*Book of Discipline*, 2004, p. 35).

The judiciary of the United Methodist Church is the Judicial Council, comprised of nine members who are elected by the General Conference to serve eight year terms. The composition of the Judicial Council is half clergy and half laity, with the five-to-four ratio of clergy-to-laity or laity-to-clergy membership alternating by eight-year term (United Methodist Church, 2006).

The responsibility of the Judicial Council is to serve as final arbiter of questions of constitutionality; the legality of actions taken or decisions made by any ruling entity within the Church; or conflicts between ruling entities, including the bishops, conferences, and ecclesial boards. The authority of the Judicial Council in interpreting the policies and procedures described in or stemming from the *Book of Discipline* (the Constitution of the United Methodist Church) is considered final (as with a decision by the United States Supreme Court).

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church is its worldwide ruling body, or legislative branch. The General Conference is comprised of at least 600 but not more than 1,000 delegates and meets quadrennially in April or May of years divisible by four, e.g., 2004, 2008, etc. (*Book of Discipline*, 2004). On this, the largest body of United Methodist decision-makers, is conferred the authority to exercise “full legislative power over all matters distinctively

connectional” (*Book of Discipline*, pp. 25-27), including defining the responsibilities of church membership, leadership, organization, and administration, and including defining the authority and responsibility of both the episcopacy (the bishops) and the judiciary (the Judicial Council). Thus, the United Methodist Constitution provides a system of checks and balances, somewhat similar to the United States Constitution, such that power does not become too concentrated in any one decision-making body.

In particular, with respect to this study, the General Conference sets policy for the United Methodist Church in all its iterations and is the only entity authorized to speak on behalf of the denomination. Specifically, the General Conference adopts resolutions on a variety of social issues and concerns and these are compiled in *The Book of Resolutions*, the official compendium of policy statements by the denomination. The resolutions contained in this compendium are considered official for a period of eight years following their adoption, after which time they expire unless readopted. *The Book of Resolutions* is published every four years (quadrennium) and stands as the official articulation of the most current position statements of the General Conference (*The Book of Resolutions*, 2004).

With respect to the administrative order of the United Methodist Church, the General Conference authorizes the General Board of Church and Society to serve as the entity of the church responsible for implementation of the Social Principles of the Church, the statements arising from the Social Creed which provide the biblical and theological foundation for the position statements articulated in *The Book of Resolutions*. Specifically, the General Board of Church and Society is responsible for seeking “the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference... (through) forthright witness and action on issues of human well-being, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation” (*Book of Discipline*,

2004, ¶ 1001-1004, pp. 512-513). The offices of the General Board of Church and Society are located in Washington, D.C. This ecclesial entity is charged with a number of responsibilities, spanning five areas of ministry, among them Public Witness and Advocacy, the ministry entity that serves as a liaison between federal lawmakers and church members. *The Book of Discipline* (2004) states specifically that the General Board of Church and Society “shall facilitate and coordinate the legislative advocacy activities in the United States Congress of...the United Methodist Church” (¶ 1005, p. 513). Within the United Methodist Church, it is the work of the Public Witness and Advocacy ministry on which this study is focused.

The United Methodist Church in Washington, D. C.

The United Methodist Church (UMC) is the denomination with the longest standing presence in Washington. Hertzke (2009) makes this observation about the institutionalization of their presence:

...the Methodists...established a Washington office in 1916 and then erected the stately United Methodist Building across the street from the capitol in 1923. Initially established to serve as the nerve center for prohibition forces, it has become the hub of liberal Protestant lobbying today (p. 300).

Currently, all three of the denominations addressed in this study, as well as many other denominational and ecumenical groups, have offices in this building, adjacent to Capitol Hill.

The UMC is governed by bishops and articulates its policy positions in its quadrennial General Conference meetings, where equal numbers of clergy and laity serve as voting delegates.

The UMC Washington office is headquarters for the denomination’s General Board of Church and Society, and its function is to enact the UMC Social Principles and other policy statements.

The Board’s purpose is described as follows:

...to relate the gospel of Jesus Christ to the members of the Church and to the persons and structures of the communities and world in which they live. It shall seek to bring the whole of human life, activities, possessions, use of resources, and community and world

relationships into conformity with the will of God. It shall show...that the reconciliation that God effected through Christ involves personal, social, and civic righteousness. (*United Methodist Book of Discipline*, 1996, Section IV, p. 1002)

The Board's objectives include analyzing the issues "that confront persons, communities, nations, and the world," and developing action plans to "assist humankind to move toward a world where peace with justice are achieved" (*United Methodist Book of Discipline*, 1996, Section IV, 1003). Its responsibilities include exploring "systemic strategies for social change and alternative futures...(and working to) inform, motivate, train, organize, and build networks for action toward social justice throughout society... (and to) respond to critical social issues at community, regional, national, and international levels" (*United Methodist Book of Discipline*, 1996, Section IV, 1004). Thus, the General Conference articulates policy positions at its quadrennial meetings, the Board sets policy priorities on a quadrennial basis, then the professional policy staff develop priorities based on the legislative landscape they face in a given congressional session.

The policy work of the three denominations: Summary and conclusion

In the second half of this chapter, we explored in broad strokes the history, theology, and polity of the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Methodist Church, along with a brief overview of the Washington, D. C. office of each and its authorization to advocate on behalf of the denomination for policy change. Each of the three denominations which are part of this study receive authority to act in policy arenas, as well as the particulars of policy positions from gatherings of their national bodies in General Synods, General Assemblies, and General Conferences, respectively. With respect to developing policy priorities, this responsibility is the shared responsibility of a decision-making body and the professional staff who will be advocating for these priorities on the ground.

While each of these three denominations brings its agenda for policy advocacy from a national gathering, with priorities from a national decision-making body, each has a bit different type of authority to act in policy arenas on behalf of the Church because the polity of each is different. Thus, the UCC with its congregational polity, speaks to lawmakers on behalf of the General Synod, whose position may or may not concur with that of individuals or local churches within the denomination. The Presbyterians, with their governance by elders, does speak on behalf of the Church, though individual members may not concur with a given policy position taken by the General Assembly. The Methodists, likewise, speak on behalf of the General Conference, which represents the voice of the denomination, but may or may not represent the voices of individuals or local Methodist congregations. What follows is a discussion of the methodology utilized to explore the shades of difference among the three denominations in this study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

In the quest to learn how these three Protestant denominations, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the United Church of Christ, facilitate their policy agenda on Capitol Hill, the attention now turns to research methodology. The existing literature discussing the activities of the denominational policy offices on Capitol Hill indicates that the most salient methods for developing a depth of understanding about their intended impact and their strategies are observations and interviews (Hertzke, 1988; Olson, 2002; Wilhelm, 2003).

Given the extant research in this area and the variability of the political landscape “inside the beltway,” it makes sense to apply a research methodology that is flexible and amenable to subtle nuances. The variable terrain and shifting sands of Washington politics suggest an inductive, constructivist approach to describing the phenomena under study—in short, a naturalistic inquiry. The theoretical paradigm utilized in addressing the research questions posed by this study is naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the approach is drawn from grounded theory (Charmaz, 2002).

The first section of this chapter discusses the rationale for the use of naturalistic inquiry, specifically a grounded theory approach. Subsequent sections describe the setting and background for this study and the methodology utilized for sampling, data collection, and data analysis. The final portion discusses the procedures for addressing issues of reliability and validity to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

An Epistemology of the Method: Rationale for a Grounded Theory Approach

In their work, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that the process of inquiry is not static, but dynamic and continually evolving. For this reason, they offer a critique

of the conventional paradigm, positivism, which assumes that scientific objectivity is possible. Instead, they embrace postmodernism, arguing that “objective reality has become very relative indeed!” (p. 30), and offer a set of assumptions or axioms for the postpositive era—specifically for the naturalistic paradigm for research—which parallel those of the positivist paradigm.

These axioms are as follows:

1. The nature of reality (ontology) is that there are multiple, constructed realities that can only be studied holistically, though some understanding can be achieved without prediction and control of outcomes of a study.
2. The relationship of the knower to the known (epistemology) is that they are inseparable.
3. The possibility of generalization is limited in that only time- and context-bound working hypotheses (idiographic statements) are possible.
4. The possibility of causal linkages does not exist as all entities are in a state of mutual, simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.
5. The role of values in inquiry (axiology) is that naturalistic inquiry is value-laden because inquiries are influenced by the researcher, the choice of paradigm and substantive theory, the values inherent in the context, and the result is either congruent (the desired outcome) or in conflict with the values of the inquirer, the paradigm, the theory, and the context. (pp. 36-38).

It should be noted that these ideas which Lincoln and Guba set to paper in 1985 were a canonization of research methods that were already well-established and widely utilized.

With respect to the research questions at hand, naturalistic inquiry facilitates the study of, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe it, “multiple, constructed realities that can only be studied holistically” (p. 36-38). The exploration of these three Protestant denominations and their work on Capitol Hill utilizing the framework of the naturalistic paradigm is an appropriate application of this methodology. While the results are unique to the time and place from which they were drawn, and they cannot be generalized to other research contexts, nevertheless, the results of such a study can provide rich and valuable insights not only to advocates in the context at hand,

but they can also provide insights into political strategies in one policy context that are useful to advocates other, similar contexts. This is the value of naturalistic inquiry.

The specific form of naturalistic inquiry to be applied in this study is grounded theory. In their book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) contended:

[T]here is no fundamental clash between the purposes and capacities of qualitative and quantitative methods or data... We believe that *each form of data is useful for both verification and generation of theory*, whatever the primacy of emphasis. Primacy depends only on the circumstances of research, on the interests and training of the researcher, and on the kinds of material he [*sic*] needs for his [*sic*] theory (pp. 17-18).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) contrast the conventional paradigm, which they term “logico-deductive theory” with the identified need for an inductive methodology for social research, one in which the theory is intimately connected with the data generated. As a response, they articulated an inductive approach which they describe in this way, “grounded theory is derived from data and then illustrated by characteristic examples of data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 5). In subsequent years, Glaser and Strauss were heralded for this groundbreaking work, as it was the first to provide “written guidelines for systematic qualitative data analysis with explicit analytic procedures and research strategies” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 512).

Constructing Grounded Theory: Six Identifying Characteristics

Building on the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), Charmaz (2001), a contemporary sociologist, argued that a grounded theory methodological approach provides a systematic procedure for handling and shaping rich qualitative materials. She refined these ideas into a constructivist approach to grounded theory, consisting of six specific characteristics that distinguish grounded theory from other approaches to research. These six characteristics of grounded theory are as follows:

1. simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis phases of research;
2. creation of analytic codes and categories developed from data, not from preconceived hypotheses;
3. the development of middle-range theories to explain behavior and processes;
4. memo-making or writing analytic notes to explicate and fill out categories (the crucial intermediate step between coding data and writing first drafts of findings);
5. theoretical sampling, or sampling for theory construction, not for representativeness of a given population, to check and refine the analyst's emerging conceptual categories; and
6. delay of the literature review. (Charmaz, 2001, p. 336)

What follows is a discussion of these characteristics and their application to qualitative inquiry.

Simultaneous data collection and analysis

In traditional research methodologies, data collection precedes data analysis, reinforcing the arbitrary division between theory and research noted by Glaser and Strauss. Utilizing grounded theory, the researcher engages in data analysis continuously through the process of data collection. As the researcher codes and analyzes the rich descriptions gathered from interviews and observations, the analytic process directs the researcher's efforts to collect additional data to flesh out emerging themes through development of additional lines of questioning. In this way, meanings that may be implicit to the interviewees can be made explicit and clear to the interviewer through further exploration of some of the key ideas or themes that emerged in initial interviews. Charmaz assumes that "the interaction between the researcher and the researched produces the data, and therefore the meaning that the research observes and defines" (2001, p. 339). This continual process of data analysis refining data collection assures the collection of a rich, detailed and more focused body of material with which to work.

Analytic codes and categories developed from the data

Charmaz (2001) notes that this process of deriving the analytic categories directly from the data (rather than from preconceived hypotheses) is one of the hallmarks of grounded theory. She explains that “coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data” (p. 341). This process begins with line-by-line coding of the data, (i.e., the transcript from an interview), noting the topics that emerge. As the researcher continues this process through multiple interviews, these themes begin to form patterns that suggest categories into which the data may be sorted. As this process progresses, line-by-line coding gives way to a second level of analysis, a more focused coding process, and so it continues as the researcher seeks to develop categories with which to discuss the data. Charmaz notes that when the researcher moves to describing data in terms of categories, he or she begins to explain the properties of the category, the conditions under which it arises, its consequences, and its relationship to other categories. In recognizing emerging categories and their relationships to one another, the patterns that emerge begin to assist the researcher in generating not only a broader analysis of the data, but also, eventually, fresh theory.

Developing middle-range theories.

Drawing on Glaser (1978), Charmaz (2001) argues that “each idea should earn its way into your analysis,” and “if you apply concepts from your discipline, you must be self-critical to ensure that these concepts work” (p. 342). Through the process of continually analyzing and refining the data, following themes into further data collection, and moving from line-by-line coding to more focused coding, the researcher is able to develop middle-range theories to explain the behavior and processes observed. These middle-range theories can help the researcher to see the relationships within and among the categories of data.

Memo-writing as an intermediate step in analysis

Another critical element of grounded theory is memo-writing. Charmaz (2001) explains that memo writing “is the intermediate step between coding and the first draft of your completed analysis” (p. 347). This process “consists of taking your categories apart by breaking them into their components...[to] identify [a category’s] properties or characteristics, look for its underlying assumptions, and show how and when the category develops and changes” (p. 347). Memo-writing spurs the researcher to “start digging into implicit, unstated and condensed meanings” (p. 347). The researcher may begin writing memos as soon as there are interesting ideas to pursue and should keep refining these ideas by developing them further in subsequent memos. Examples of emerging patterns in the data are delineated in a codebook in Appendix D.

Sampling for theory construction and refinement

The process of memo-writing, Charmaz notes, “leads directly to theoretical sampling, that is, collecting more data to clarify your ideas and to plan how to fit them together,” (p. 349). Theoretical sampling, she explains, “helps you to fill out your categories, to discover variation within them and to define gaps between them... Theoretical sampling relies on comparative methods” (p. 349).

Delay of the literature review

While traditional research methodologies require completion of a literature review early in the research process in order that it may point to appropriate methodologies and guide planning for data collection, Charmaz (2001) suggests that this element of the process be delayed. She explains the process in this way:

After you have developed your conceptual analysis of the data, then go to the literature in your field and compare how and where you work fits in with it. At this point, you must cover the literature thoroughly and weave it into your work explicitly (p. 351).

With respect to the study at hand, grounded theory provides a strong methodological approach as this process of data collection and analysis allows patterns and themes to emerge with continuous exploration and refinement of the implicit, unstated and condensed meaning. The discipline of memo-writing provides opportunities for discovering and exploring themes and patterns as well as for developing middle range theories about what the data may mean. Therefore, application of grounded theory as a methodological approach offers a rich means of exploring the qualitative data gathered and analyzed in the course of this naturalistic inquiry. What follows is a discussion of the specific context for the study, including the setting, timing, researcher role, and plan utilized for gaining access to interviewees.

An Overview of the Field Work for This Study

The policy research setting: The United Methodist Building in Washington, D. C.

Clearly, exploring the work of three Protestant denominations, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the United Church of Christ, on Capitol Hill utilizing a naturalistic paradigm and grounded theory approach could best be accomplished in their natural setting: Washington, D. C. As previously noted, each of these denominations maintains an office in the United Methodist Building near Capitol Hill for the purpose of engaging in policy advocacy. The United Methodist Building, located at 100 Maryland Avenue Northeast, is situated on a triangular parcel of land adjacent to the Capitol, the Supreme Court, and the Russell Building which houses Senate offices.

The three denominations and their Washington offices

The first floor of the United Methodist Building houses the denomination's General Board of Church and Society. All of the staff working on policy advocacy are housed in one section of the first floor. Office space on the remaining floors is leased to compatible ecumenical and interfaith organizations, creating a confluence of faith-based organizations with advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill all housed under a single roof. The Washington offices of both the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ are among those leasing space on the upper floors. Each has a suite of offices large enough to accommodate their respective staff members.

A sampling of other faith-based organizations which are tenants of the building include the following: the Washington offices for the National Council of Churches of Christ, Presbyterian Church (USA), Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, Catholic Relief Services, Mennonite Central Committee, Church World Service, Muslim Public Affairs Council, Faith and Politics Institute, Interreligious Coalition on Smoking and Health, Churches for Middle East Peace, and a number of other boards and agencies (United Methodist Church, 2006).

Timing of the study: The 110th Congress, Summer 2007

The interviews which comprise this study were completed during May and June of 2007, about six months into the 110th United States Congress. The window of time in which this researcher was available for field work overlapped, in part, with a Congressional recess. While most lawmakers were at home in their districts during the Memorial Day holiday break, the staff in the three denominational offices were readily available, as Congressional recesses offer them opportunities to catch up on paperwork and other details.

Data Collection Plan

The primary research techniques utilized in this study, as noted previously, were interviews and observations. These were augmented by documentary evidence detailing the history, polity, and policy positions of the denominations under study. Within the context of each denominational office, I met with the respective directors and professional staff members for in-depth interviews, exploring their perspectives on the purpose, goals, work plans and current strategies of the office, given the current political landscape. This interview data was audio recorded and transcribed. The transcripts from each interview were the primary source for material for analysis. In addition, the surveys administered to each participant just prior to their interview were tabulated and analyzed. Observations and field notes provided additional primary sources of data. Table Two details the specific data collection and analysis plan for addressing each of the research questions.

Table Two: Data collection and analysis plan by research sub-question

Research sub-question:	Data collection plan for addressing each question:	Data analysis plan for addressing each:
How did << <i>name of denomination</i> >> determine its priorities and work plan for its work with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with denominational staff • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Analyze documents collected
What were the indirect lobbying strategies utilized by << <i>name of denomination</i> >> to advocate for its position with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of denominational staff (just before interview) • Interviews with denominational staff • Observations of denominational staff • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabulate and analyze surveys • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Make field notes about observations • Analyze documents collected
What were the direct lobbying strategies utilized by << <i>name of denomination</i> >> to advocate for its position with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of denominational staff (just before interview) • Interviews with denominational staff • Observations of denominational staff • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabulate and analyze surveys • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Make field notes about observations • Analyze documents collected
How did << <i>name of denomination</i> >> adapt its priorities and work plan to changes in the policy environment in its work with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with denominational staff • Observations of denominational staff • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Make field notes about observations • Analyze documents collected
How did << <i>name of denomination</i> >> perceive its effectiveness with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with denominational staff • Observations of denominational staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribe and analyze interviews • Make field notes about observations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary evidence from denominational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze documents collected
What were the similarities and differences among these three denominations with respect to their work with the 110 th Congress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis and analysis of all data collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop comparative analysis among the three denominations with respect to findings from sub-questions 1-6

Gaining access to research participants

Gaining access to the interviewees was not difficult, as I had established relationships with some of them on previous visits to Washington, D.C. In the case of the United Church of Christ offices, I had completed a one-month internship there during the summer of 2004, and it was during this period that I had become acquainted with the staff not only in that office, but in those of the other denominations as well. Reintroducing myself by e-mail or telephone elicited willingness from them to participate in this study.

The role of the researcher

With respect to the role of this researcher relative to the research setting and participants, my previous relationships with some of the staff in each denominational office, together with the distance of several years between making those acquaintances and conducting this study enabled me to function as an “insider/outsider.” That is to say, my familiarity with each denomination and its work on Capitol Hill gave me enough of an insider’s perspective to undertake the study of their work in a sensitive and responsive manner. On the other hand, my acquaintance with the setting, the staff and the work they were undertaking was neither extensive enough nor intimate enough to create the kind of inherent bias in my observations and analysis which might plague a true insider. Drawing on the ideas of Bishop (2005), I was able to function as a researcher in a

participant-observer role that was neither indigenous to the culture (insider), nor wholly external to the culture (outsider), hence an “insider/outsider.”

Completing field observations, surveys, and interviews

Specifically, during the four-week period from May 15 to June 12, 2007, I completed twelve interviews with staff in the Washington, D.C. offices of the three denominations as follows:

- United Church of Christ—Interviewed four of the five professional policy staff, including the interim director, who worked in the Washington office;
- Presbyterian Church (USA)—Interviewed all three of the professional policy staff, including the director, who worked in the Washington office; and
- United Methodist Church—Interviewed four of the six professional policy staff, including the director, who worked in the Washington office.

In addition to these eleven interviews with those staffing the Washington offices of each of the three denominations under study, I sought interviews with sources external to the three offices who could speak as outside observers about their work and its impact. I made contact with the offices of several members of Congress who were regarded as progressive in their stances on issues of concern to the religious lobby, seeking the staff that would be most familiar with the advocacy work of the three denominations in question, but was unable to locate anyone familiar with their work and willing to be interviewed. Within ecumenical and interfaith advocacy circles, I was able to locate one individual who works with policy advocates from the three denominational offices in question, as he staffed an ecumenical conference in which all three participated on an annual basis. Unfortunately, the data

from this interview was corrupted before it could be transcribed, so this data was unavailable for analysis.

In addition to interviews with the staff of each denominational office, I made observations at eleven events at which various staff from the three denominational offices were involved in policy advocacy. These included the following events:

- a meeting of the One Campaign Coalition: Thursday, May 24, 2007, 3:00-4:00pm at the One Campaign office, 1400 Eye Street, Suite 600 in Washington, D. C.;
- two meetings of the Religious Working Group on Agriculture: May 21, 2007, 3:30-5:00pm at Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) office and May 29, 2007, 3:30-5:00pm at ELCA office, 122 C. Street NW, Suite 125, Washington, D. C.;
- a conference call of the Religious Working Group on Agriculture: May 29, 2007, 7:00-8:00pm at ELCA office, 122 C. Street NW, Suite 125, Washington, D. C.;
- a panel presentation by Sojourners on Faith and Politics: June 4, 2007, 7:00-8:30pm at George Washington University; and
- a training for grassroots visitors to Capitol Hill in the JustFaith curriculum, which teaches social action strategies to Christian groups: Friday, June 1, 2007, 11:30-1:00pm in the United Methodist Building, First Floor Conference Room, 100 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, D. C.

These interviews and observations, together with the surveys and supplemental documents provided a rich array of data with which to address the research questions.

Complications Encountered in the Data Collection Phase

Rich as these various sources of information proved to be, several complications, primarily related to technology, created difficulties not only for this researcher, but for the

enactment of the proposed methodology. On Day Three of my field experience, my computer became inoperable, and I was unable to arrange for the warranted repair work to be accomplished while I was in the field. While I was able to access other computers to utilize the Internet and access documents through a portable memory device, I was unable to download data from digital recordings, as the software that could “read” and process the recordings was on my computer. When my digital recorder’s memory was full, I purchased a small cassette recorder and utilized this device for capturing most of the interviews. Needless to say, these difficulties precluded the original plan of downloading the digital data and reviewing it while in the field.

Beyond the inconvenience of having to shift my research plan midstream, these technical difficulties posed some serious challenges methodologically. As noted in the introductory portion of this chapter, a significant component of grounded theory is building one’s theory from the ground up through simultaneous data collection and analysis. Though preliminary analysis began in the field, there were limits to the level of analysis which could take place without transcripts of each interview. Since the process of reviewing the data while in the field, theoretical sampling and member checking preliminary results are important components of the inductive, constructivist process of theory building, some important methodological processes were sacrificed because of difficulties with technology.

Managing Complications Encountered in the Data Collection Phase

Because the time available for field work was only four weeks, prolonged engagement and persistent observation were potential methodological concerns at the outset. While ongoing analysis of transcribed data was not possible, some member checking was possible as I could check out preliminary findings from one office to and see if they held true in another, as I moved from one denominational leader to another. Additionally, the surveys administered to each

interviewee, together with the supplementary documents gathered from each denomination's offices augmented my understanding of the particularities of the three contexts under study. Thus, triangulation, the use of multiple sources and multiple methods of data collection was particularly important to my study.

Peer debriefing was an important component of my research process as well. Support, encouragement, and troubleshooting from my dissertation committee while I was in the field helped me to cope with the technological challenges and strategize alternative approaches to data collection. Additionally, weekly peer debriefing sessions by phone with a professional colleague, Dr. Laura Dempsey-Polan, and periodic debriefing sessions with a fellow student, Joshua Barnett, provided feedback and direction as I completed my field work.⁴ Additional approaches to managing the complications encountered in the data collection process and for dealing with challenges to reliability and validity are discussed in the following portion of this chapter which deals with the methodological approach to data analysis.

Data Analysis Plan

Upon completion of my field work (and repair of my computer), data from the interviews was downloaded and cassette recordings were converted to digital files. *Dragon Naturally Speaking* software proved cumbersome to utilize efficiently, which led me to rely on more traditional means of transcribing interviews and analyzing data. Once the data was transcribed and in text form, the process of coding could begin.

Coding the data

⁴ Laura Dempsey-Polan holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy from Cornell University and in 2007 was serving as a Senior Planner and Policy Analyst at Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa, Inc., a social planning agency. Joshua Barnett holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Arkansas and in 2007 was a fellow student.

In grounded theory, initial coding is “provisional, comparative, and grounded in data,” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48). Beginning with this assumption, I reviewed the transcribed interviews line by line, circling significant words and noting key ideas or themes in the margins. As Charmaz notes, this process helps the researcher to look for tacit assumptions, implicit actions and meanings, and gaps in the data. Next, I engaged in a second perusal of each interview, this time with focused coding, Charmaz describes this process as “directed, selective, and conceptual,” (2006, p. 57), such that ideas that seem significant or frequently recurring are grouped into categories.

Memo writing

Having sorted through the interview data first for significant words and themes, then for categories of data, I was prepared to begin the process of memo-writing. Charmaz (2006) calls this “the pivotal intermediate step between data collection and writing drafts of papers,” (p.72). As I completed coding an interview, I wrote a memo about the content of that particular encounter, noting the key phrases, themes and ideas that emerged and the general categories that seemed to characterize it. This first memo served as an initial analysis of my interaction with each interviewee.

More coding and more memo writing

When I had completed both coding and memo writing for all interviews with staff from a denominational group—the Presbyterians, for example—I reviewed the data again utilizing the process of axial coding—relating the categories to subcategories—such that “a dense texture of relationships (emerges) around the ‘axis’ of a category,” as Strauss (1987, p. 64) explains it. This enabled me to explore all the interviews related to a particular denomination in a consistent manner, noting similarities and differences in the perspectives of various staff members within

the same office. Alongside this collection of data, I reviewed the data from the surveys, tabulated by denomination, the supplemental documents and observations. Collectively, these sources provided rich material for a second memo-writing process, this time with a focus on all the data related to a particular denomination and its policy office. These advanced memos, one for each denomination, helped me to explore categories of themes (i.e., work on Capitol Hill, work with grassroots constituencies, etc.) from several perspectives, making comparisons among various categories and subcategories, and from these, building a theory about “what’s going on here.” Eventually, this deep analysis of the interviews, surveys, observations and supplemental documents formed the building blocks of a theory—like pieces of a puzzle—and a working discussion of the three Protestant denominations took shape. The result of this theory-building process is discussed at length in Chapter Four. First, though, I will give consideration to the issues of reliability and validity in this study.

The Reliability and Validity of This Study

Clearly, in studies utilizing qualitative methodologies, the reliability and validity of research cannot be determined by instruments or statistical metrics as with quantitative studies. A constructivist paradigm assumes both multiple realities and a subjective epistemology. Denizen and Lincoln (2005) note that “terms such as *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability* replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity” in a constructivist research paradigm (p. 24). Whether one uses the terms *reliability* and *validity* or variations on them, Guba and Lincoln (2005) note that evaluating the trustworthiness or authenticity of a qualitative study is critical.

Giving consideration to the study at hand, one measure of validity in a qualitative study is the rigor of the methodology. With regard to sampling, all the staff members in one

denomination (the Presbyterians) were interviewed, and all but one in another (the United Church of Christ). Only in the case of the Methodists was the sample less than all available participants. A total of eleven interviews, three or more for each denomination, provided a rich array of material for analysis. A weakness of this study is that only one individual outside of the denominational policy offices—a staff member in an ecumenical organization—was willing to be interviewed as an external source about the data collected. In the end, the data from this interview became corrupted and not readily retrievable. As a result, comments offered by denominational staffers about their perceived effectiveness in their work on Capitol Hill have far less credibility than they would were they validated by external sources. Nevertheless, the triangulation of multiple sources of data, including surveys, observations and documentary evidence, along with interviews strengthens the internal consistency of the study considerably.

Another important component in determining the trustworthiness of a qualitative study is the rigor of the interpretation. While interpretive lenses in such a study are, by nature, subjective, Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggest that in qualitative studies the “human phenomena” is of critical importance: “the single experience, the individual crisis, the epiphany or moment of discovery, with that most powerful of all threats to conventional objectivity, feeling and emotion,” (p. 205). In the case of this study, as people were discussing the work they do on Capitol Hill on behalf of the denominations they represent, the thorough process of coding and memo writing and comparative analysis across denominations helped to surface the passion they described for their work which motivates them to continue to do the work they do, sometimes in the face of great frustration.

The numerous difficulties with technology and equipment described earlier in this chapter resulted in some significant lost opportunities for simultaneous involvement in data

collection and analysis. Likewise, theoretical sampling, or sampling as a component of checking and refining emerging categories, along with member checking, the process of clarifying emerging themes by reviewing them with interviewees, were not possible without simultaneous field analysis of the data as it was collected. As previously noted, the brief period of time available for field research—four weeks—made saturation in the research context impossible.

While these difficulties pose obstacles to the interpretive rigor of this study, they served, also, as important learning experiences which will serve this researcher well in future endeavors. I am reminded of an aphorism a seminary professor of mine shared with students who were struggling with theses or large research projects: “the most important outcome of this project is not the scholarship, but the scholar.” Certainly, that sentiment could apply to my experience with this study as well. Having discussed the methodological shortcomings of this dissertation project, I set in place several controls to offset the impact of the shortcomings. Among them were consultation and some auditing of sample coding and memo writing by the methodologist on my dissertation committee, Dr. Lori Holyfield, and periodic peer debriefing with several experienced mentors and researchers in my local community. Collectively, these additional measures, together with those already discussed helped to strengthen the study with regard to its trustworthiness.

This discussion of research methodology sets the stage for Chapter Four, which details the findings of this study. The interpretive process discussed in this chapter provided the process for addressing the question of how three Protestant denominations facilitated their policy agenda on Capitol Hill during the 110th United States Congress.

Chapter Four

Exploring the Results, Both Individually and Collectively

There is no “typical day” in the policy arena when it comes to the United States Congress. Every participant in this study offered some variant on that sentiment with regard to their work. The bureaucracy associated with congressional operation may be complicated, even esoteric at times. However, *church bureaucracy*—the inner workings of *that* enterprise, both procedurally and emotionally, were even more stressful for participants than their work on Capitol Hill. Beyond these shared sentiments, the experiences of participants differed both by denomination and by position.

In this chapter, I draw from the interviews, surveys, and observations to explore what the staff in each denomination experience in their work. The approach this discussion will take is to provide an introduction to each denomination’s staff—the interviewees—by role, then address the five research questions sequentially, exploring the policy work of all three denominations relative to each question. Finally, I explore similarities and differences among these three denominations with respect to their work with the 110th Congress?

The Interviewees: United Church of Christ

The oldest of three denominations under study, the United Church of Christ (UCC) has maintained an office in Washington, D.C. since the inception of the denomination in 1957. As Wilhelm (2003) noted, one of its predecessor denominations, the Congregational Christian Church (CCC) developed a Washington office in 1936. The UCC’s Washington office is home to the denomination’s Public Life and Social Policy Ministry, a component of its Justice and Witness Ministries unit.

Housed in the United Methodist Building, alongside the Capitol and under the same roof as a plethora of denominational, ecumenical, and interfaith advocacy offices, the UCC policy office is staffed by four professionals. Three of the four were interviewed. The acting director of the office had served on the staff for many years, had retired, and had agreed to come out of retirement on a part-time, interim basis when the previous director left to take another position. Because he was a very seasoned member of the UCC policy team, his history with both the denomination and the leadership role likely provided stability to the office during this time of transition.

The fourth member of the professional policy staff had been temporarily reassigned to denomination headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio to work on some special projects related to the upcoming General Synod meeting. She was unavailable to participate in the study. One additional professional staff member, who was accountable to another ministry unit within the denomination and whose role involved significant policy advocacy work, was also interviewed. Thus, results reported about the policy efforts of the United Church of Christ comprise analysis of four interviews and concurrent surveys about lobbying strategies, together with observations.

The Interviewees: Presbyterian Church (USA)

In 1983, the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS)—the Southern Presbyterians—merged with the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA)—the Northern Presbyterians—to form the largest Calvinist denomination in the United States. The Washington Office of the PC(USA), called the Office of Public Witness, is housed in the United Methodist Building as well. Established in 1946 by the UPCUSA as the first consistent Presbyterian witness in Washington, D.C., this office is staffed by three policy professionals: a director and two associates, one of whom focused on international policy issues

and the other on domestic issues. Each of these three staff members participated interviews for this project.

The Interviewees: United Methodist Church (UMC)

The United Methodist Church has existed in its present iteration since 1968, with the merger of the Methodist Church with the Evangelical United Brethren Church. Its predecessor denomination, the Methodist-Episcopal Church, was the denomination with the earliest vision for developing a permanent presence in Washington, D.C. Drawing on widespread denominational support for the Temperance and Social Gospel Movements of the early 20th century, the United Methodist Building was constructed in 1923, largely with money raised by Methodist women. The only non-governmental building on Capitol Hill, it serves as headquarters for the General Board of Church and Society, the social justice arm of the denomination, and leases office space to an array of other denominational, ecumenical and interfaith ministry entities which do similar work on Capitol Hill (Hertzke, 1988).

Among the administrative ministry functions that comprise the UMC General Board of Church and Society is its policy advocacy work. The General Secretary of the denomination's Church and Society office provides oversight to its public policy work, and four policy professionals did the work of legislative advocacy on Capitol Hill and among grassroots constituencies. Data for this study includes interviews with the General Secretary and three of the professional staff working on legislative issues. What follows is a discussion of the results of interviews with the staff of this and the other two denominations.

Determining Priorities and Setting a Work Plan: An Overview

In the course of each interview, participants were asked how their priorities were determined and their work plans developed. Most mentioned a national meeting of the

denomination—a General Synod, General Assembly or General Conference—at which policy positions were articulated and approved. These national gatherings occur biennially in the case of the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church (USA), and quadrennially in the case of the United Methodist Church. The position papers on policy issues adopted at each of these national meetings provided the parameters within which each denominational office works, but the process of determining particular policy priorities and developing strategies for addressing them varied from one office to another. What follows is a summary of responses to this research question, denomination by denomination.

Determining priorities and setting a work plan: The United Church of Christ

As with each of the three denominations under study, the United Church of Christ Public Life and Social Policy office worked from policy positions and priorities articulated in the resolutions and pronouncements of its biennial national gathering, the General Synod. Beginning with these position statements, the staff member who was directing the office (hereafter, “UCC Director”) described the process of setting priorities in this way:

We certainly take quite seriously the actions of the most recent Synod...also, we are responsive to the numerous organized constituencies in the United Church of Christ and we're responsive to world situations, and we're responsive to what the folks are doing in Congress...our United Church of Christ theology gives us a lot of concern for the issues of poverty, for the issues of racism, for the issues of peace.

This description of the process, while both sincere and accurate, might also represent the socially desirable or “official” response. Another seasoned staff member (hereafter, “UCC Staff Two”) described process of setting priorities and developing a work plan like this:

...I think it depends on funding. You know, we used to have a lot more people that followed specific areas (of policy) and with few ministers ...we have to be more selective as to what we're going to follow....That, of course, is going to be the decision of the Executive Minister and Team Leaders....At some point, you have to decide, 'Okay, we cannot do everything.'...The staff will present things to the board and there will be some really good discussions about it, and that is where priorities are set.

Another, much younger and less experienced staff member (hereafter, UCC Staff Three) indicated that she did not have a clear understanding of how priorities were set and work plans developed. She expressed frustration that during this time of transition, the infrastructure was unstable. She explained that she looked less frequently to her UCC colleagues for direction and support than to her coalition partners—those involved in the issue-specific coalitions to which she was assigned as a representative of the denomination—drawing on their collective wisdom to guide her work. For example, she indicated that she might assist a coalition with preparation of an issue-specific letter or informational document to distribute to lawmaker.

When asked to describe the two or three key policy issues which were the primary focus of each staff member's attention, the head of staff indicated that he worked on only one issue—a very large one: the Farm Bill. The denomination was working closely with a coalition of faith-based and secular organizations to assure continued support for such agriculturally-related programs as school breakfast and lunch programs and the Food Stamp Program (now called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Another staff member was assigned to a focus on immigration, along with environmental issues and the war in Iraq. Still another was assigned to trade issues and international debt relief. A fourth staff member focused exclusively on media issues and the regulatory power of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). This latter role was unique among the denominations studied, and this particular individual reported directly to denominational headquarters in Cleveland, rather than to the head of staff in the policy office. The issues of particular concern to her were the concentration of media in the hands of relative few owners, the impact of media on children, and the maintenance of net neutrality, or freedom of information for Internet users. In summary, the response from the UCC policy staff about how priorities are determined and work plans developed varied widely, and seemed to be based

not only on recent activity on the Hill, but also, on the depth of professional experience with policy advocacy of the person answering the question and the denominational entity to which each was responsible.

Determining priorities and setting a work plan: The Presbyterians

The Presbyterians determined their priorities and developed work plans for each congressional session by weaving together two strands of information: the overtures (policy position statements) passed by the PC(USA) General Assembly and ratified by the denomination, together with the priorities on the agenda of the Congress. The director of the office (hereafter, “Presbyterian Director”) described the process in this way:

In this office, we look at what the General Assembly has approved, and what the General Assembly has instructed us to do, and we look at what the Congress is actually dealing with, and then we work accordingly, because we can only do so many things.

As to their specific process for setting the office’s priorities and allocating the work to be done, the PCUSA policy office generally assigns each staffer a portfolio of issues based on their domestic or international focus. The office’s director, in addition to her administrative and managerial responsibilities, follows issues in both arenas as the need arises.

To extend the discussion of priorities and planning, each interviewee was asked to identify the two or three key issues on which he or she was spending the most effort. In the Presbyterian office, the staff member who focused on the domestic issues portfolio (hereafter, Presbyterian Staff Two) described her priorities as follows:

This year, my time is really focused on the Farm Bill...it includes a nutrition title, which funds Food Stamps and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program...and school lunches...and then, of course, the Farm Bill also has the conservation title and the energy title and the world development title...all of that.

...Under the health piece of my portfolio, I’ve been focusing on children’s health care a lot this year—the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP), which is up for reauthorization.

...The largest focus I have in labor and employment justice right now is living wage...working on increasing minimum wage in hopes of eventually getting a living wage.

The staff member focused on a portfolio of international issues (hereafter, Presbyterian Staff Three) at the same time emphasized the importance of working in coalition on the policy priorities which are her responsibility. She indicated that her focus was on trade agreements, concerns about torture and human rights violations, along with Middle East relations. She illustrated the importance of coalition work on international issues like this:

Say Israel-Palestine is the priority. Church and Middle East Peace is the coalition where I do most of that work, and they have the time to be the experts on whatever is happening in Congress on that specific issue. So we get our information from them, and they have staff that will make hill visits.

...(There are) other working groups that aren't staffed...we don't always agree...it's very hard for us to go on our own because our voice isn't as strong or powerful...For example, the Iraq issue has been really hard, because the churches can't agree.

This system of assigning each issue to a domestic or international portfolio and following both denominational and congressional priorities in determining staff priorities seems an efficient means of organizing the office's work. Nevertheless, Presbyterian Staff Three, one of the younger staffers, who had experienced the tightening of budgets and reduction of staff resources, seemed to feel a bit overwhelmed by the existing system in comparison with previous configurations. She reflected,

What we used to have was a Public Policy Advocacy Team, and it was (comprised of) representatives of the different programs and divisions, and we would meet quarterly in Louisville (denominational headquarters)...We would work together...and I would get my guidance from that...It's difficult because we don't have a *team* in our office working on international issues. I'm *the person* doing international issues, so the team that I find is in the coalitions. How I determined what I do is a lot determined by the coalitions.

Her sentiment about the importance of work with issue-focused coalitions was echoed by staffers in other denominations. Clearly, such coalitions provide not only structure and collegial

support for the work of denominations and ecumenical partners, but sometimes, appear to influence both the ordering of priorities and the direction of work plans, perhaps unwittingly.

Determining priorities and setting a work plan: The Methodists

Like the UCC and the Presbyterians, the Methodists develop their policy priorities based, in part, on the pronouncements of denominational leadership. The head of the United Methodist policy office, the General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society (hereafter, Methodist Director), had this to say about how policy priorities and work plans are developed:

...Our first line of direction, if you will, comes from the United Methodist General Conference, which adopts resolutions and stances on social concerns. Then every four years, a Board of Directors is elected, so we have 63 bishops, clergy, and laity from Africa, Europe, the Philippines and the United States, who are our board, and of course, they set our priorities in consultation with staff. So we will look at: what are the major issues that are taking place in those regions of the world, and try to begin to hone down a set of achievable objectives. Then on an annual basis...we'll have some legislative priorities.

The Methodist process for developing priorities, then, begins with a national gathering of the United Methodist Church, which pronounces specific theological and political positions on particular issues. Then a national board sets broad policy priorities, which enable the professional staff to develop strategic objectives based on the legislative landscape.

Beyond this broad determination of direction and priorities, the United Methodists allocate work on their policy priorities into portfolios which are a bit broader than those of the Presbyterians. The Methodists sort responsibility for their policy work into the following four portfolios: Civil and Human Rights; Economic and Environmental Justice; Alcohol, Other Addictions and Health Care; and Peace with Justice. Key issues on which they focus their energy, in the words of Methodist Director, are these:

...The Iraq War has been a major, major focus for us...We are very involved in the struggle for just immigration reform...We're very involved in anti-alcohol, tobacco, and drug efforts...and anti-gambling efforts—it's something that's always been very

important to the United Methodist Church. We're involved in efforts to fight diseases, like malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS. We're very involved in efforts around the United National...really, we're involved in a great many social justice and public policy advocacy issues.

Thus, the Methodists have a bit broader staffing pattern than that of the other two denominations, and a bit more intensive focus on the United Nations and global issues.

As to the process of developing work plans to address policy priorities, one of the most experienced staffers in the Methodist office (hereafter, Methodist Staff Two) described their course of action as follows:

None of the legislative priorities are chosen unless we think there is going to be some action on the Hill, and quite frankly, given the small staff size and pressures, unless there is ecumenical and coalition work ongoing....There are times when I think we may have different needs or hopes or ideas than our ecumenical colleagues...but most of the work that we do really is only effective...if we are part of the broader coalition.

Again, this staff member emphasizes the importance of working with ecumenical, interfaith and secular partners in coalition to accomplish common objectives.

Determining priorities and setting a work plan: General strategy

Though each denomination has a bit different process for determining its priorities, all three take into consideration both the latest pronouncements from their national body and the general direction of activity in Congress. Having determined their priorities, each develops a work plan that employs similar strategies for attaining policy objectives, much of which is accomplished through the work of ecumenical and interfaith coalitions. The acting head of the UCC policy office, UCC Director, explained how he goes about developing strategies and deploying resources for high priority projects—developing a campaign to attain a particular policy objective. Since his process is very similar to that of the other two denominations, his description serves to explain how any of them would approach this process, describing the basic

elements of any policy campaign developed to move forward on an issue that has very high priority. This description is a direct quote, though the boldface emphasis is my own:

- The first is developing an understanding of the issue. Basically, doing your homework. And we do that individually by reading about it in the papers, reading about it in studies, reading about it in various bills, and going to various meetings and so forth. But we also do it collectively, because those we are working with who are also developing an understanding of this, we talk to each other. We share our insights and concerns, and we try to determine what the prominent questions are.
- (Next) I like to take some time in building coalitions. Almost everything we do in the United Church of Christ—not everything, but almost everything—is done in coalitions of one kind or another. We participate in ecumenical—that is, other Christian—coalitions, we participate in interfaith coalitions, and then we participate in larger coalitions that have both interfaith and secular partners in them. Sometimes we participate in two or three layers of those kinds of coalitions at the same time.

So for example, with the Farm Bill, I am part of a coalition of five denominations that are working together quite tightly. We also work within the context of a larger religious or faith-based coalition—a dozen or so groups—and that group, in turn, works with a larger coalition of secular partners that have interests in the Farm Bill that are similar to ours. I'm not sure how many are in that group, but it's a considerable number.

So coalition-building and changing coalitions and spending time in coalition meetings and setting the priorities and developing the talking points and principles of these coalitions, that's often a very important way that the United Church of Christ influences other groups, and the way that we work on Capitol Hill and with grassroots. So to some degree, that goes under the heading of what is called "cross-lobbying"—on those matters where we are taking leadership, or otherwise assuming an important role, helping to shape and direct and organize a strong coalition is very basic work.

- And with that going on, we usually spend time working on the Hill, going to members' offices, talking with staff, sometimes with members, working with the various Congressional committees and study groups. We call that, generally, "Hill work."
- And we, also, are doing the grassroots, and that means sending out information to help them be informed. It means helping to provide them with avenues for their own advocacy. Recently, for example, we brought some delegations from Vermont and from Iowa to testify on the Farm Bill on the Hill....
- The next area is media work. Media work is sometimes skipped over or done lightly, but in a full campaign, media work can be a very important dimension of our work, and sometimes there are things that we only do media work on, and skip all the other parts. That can be doing op-eds and otherwise writing for the media. It could be producing media art. We have several DVDs or shows that have been shown on national television

networks. It can mean buying an ad together in the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*. It can mean sending out press releases... (and) we do radio talk show sometimes....

- (Also,) the electronic work (e-mailed alerts) could be thought of as being with the grassroots, but it could also be thought of as work with media. For the most part, the electronic work of Justice & Witness Ministries is pretty much aimed at the UCC constituencies.

Until recently, I would say that the great focus of our electronic work has been sending out e-mails that very largely go to our own grassroots, but we also do a monthly media piece that goes out to a long list of African American newspapers and similar groups, and we certainly do some other things that are aimed at other particular constituencies. In the future, I think that the United Church of Christ is going to find that it is doing more and more work through the World Wide Web, and that will change some of the ways that I was just talking about (of doing a campaign).

- There's one more thing that comes into campaigns, and it's part of most of our campaigns and that's large rallies. And that can be—sometimes a substitute for that is a special push in taking a road show around the country and doing rallies in many cities across the country. Commonly, that (conducting a rally) means bringing tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of people to D.C. to participate in very large rallies on the (National) Mall. When to do that, who to do that with... all those things matter a lot. And sometimes, participation in those kinds of rallies can include non-violent demonstrations and intentionally breaking the law and accepting the consequences as an act of protest. (For example,) we might have a pray-in at the Capitol.

Each denomination's staff, when asked about strategy toward meeting policy objectives, offered some variation on the formula described above: research, coalition-building, Hill work, grassroots organizing, a media campaign, and when it would be effective, a rally or demonstration of some kind. What follows is a more specific, denomination-by-denomination discussion of strategy and frequency of implementation, as indicated by a survey completed by each interviewee ahead of our discussion.

Direct and Indirect Lobbying Strategies: An Overview

In the course of their work on Capitol Hill during the 110th Congress, UCC policy staff utilized a variety of direct and indirect lobbying strategies, seeking to influence lawmakers to support or oppose particular positions on key issues. *Direct lobbying strategies*, according to

Davidson and Olsezek (2004), include such techniques as face-to-face meetings with lawmakers or their staffers, testifying before or monitoring Congressional hearings or committee meetings, and providing verbal or written information about legislative issues. Also included are social lobbying strategies, such as sponsoring or attending receptions, dinners, or social gatherings for the purpose of influencing a lawmaker or staffer about a key issue. *Indirect lobbying strategies* involve educating grassroots constituencies through direct or electronic means, and engaging them in visiting or contacting lawmakers or staffers for the purpose of influencing their positions on a key issue. Also included are media campaigns designed to educate the public and sway public opinion toward a particular policy position. Data concerning direct and indirect lobbying strategies was obtained through a survey, based on the work of Davidson and Olsezek (2004), and administered just prior to each interview. What follows is a discussion of the direct and indirect lobbying strategies utilized by each denomination's policy staff to influence lawmakers or their staffers to support or oppose a particular position on an issue at hand based on the results of this survey.

Direct and indirect lobbying strategies: United Church of Christ

Direct lobbying of Congress by the policy professionals of the United Church of Christ office involved frequent visits to Capitol Hill, with three of the four interviewed reporting that they made face-to-face visits several times a month. Frequently, this included providing data and/or other written materials to lawmakers or their staff. Also, most monitored committee meeting or hearing on a routine basis. Very often, face-to-face meetings and attendance at committee meetings is done with or on behalf of a larger coalition.

As to providing testimony at such meetings, two of the four UCC staffers interviewed indicated that they are called upon to testify before a congressional committee or hearing several

times a year as well. Assisting a lawmaker with development of legislation, or the content of a speech or presentation occurred rarely. Other methods of direct lobbying—particularly those that may involve some expense, such a sponsorship of nonpartisan reception or social gathering—were rare as well.

The UCC, together with the other mainline denominations, sponsors “Ecumenical Advocacy Days” each spring, an event to educate and brief participants about key issues and teach them how to make hill visits. This event, along with others involving visits by grassroots constituencies from around the country, comprise the critical mass of direct lobbying by the denomination. One staff member explained, “recently, for example, we brought some delegations from Vermont and from Iowa to testify on the Farm Bill on the Hill.”

The UCC Director described a more private, focused direct lobbying campaign undertaken for a specialized purpose:

We hosted a delegation of Marshall Islanders who had been victims of testing on nuclear bombs, and we spent several weeks with this delegation, taking them to the State Department, taking them to Congress, spending time with the embassy and so forth. There were a few small, public activities, but basically, this was classic ‘inside lobbying’ where we weren’t trying to rally mass public opinion, but we were making an appeal to conscience.

There’s a treaty relationship between the United States and the Marshall Islands. That treaty includes language about helping the Marshall Islanders cope with the problems they have because of the bombing we did—they...have a long history of cancer, in particular, and need a lot of medical care...

Time had run out on some provisions (of the treaty) and Congress was moving toward reaching a new agreement...The United Church of Christ, through its Congregational missionaries, has had a significant presence in the Marshall Islands, so it’s not surprising, given that history that they (Marshallese advocates) would turn to the UCC as one path for trying to get Congress to move on this issue.

With regard to *indirect lobbying*, the UCC relies heavily on electronic means, including the distribution of weekly advocacy alerts to grassroots constituents. While this has proven an

inexpensive and effective means of communicating directly with UCC members who are interested in policy issues, the denomination was in the process of a website and database upgrade, crippling the availability of this important communication tool at times because database migration was underway. One staffer, UCC Staff Two, observed that this poorly-timed upgrade in technology, initiated by the denomination's national offices in Cleveland, "has left us without an advocacy tool during the most critical and intense part of the legislative session."

Technology upgrades notwithstanding, another UCC staff member (hereafter, UCC Staff Three)—the one primarily responsible for electronic lobbying—indicated that even with existing technology, the denomination was capable not only of issuing blanket calls to action to its entire grassroots constituency, but also of issuing target alerts to particular state or regional constituencies. During the denomination's "Our Faith, Our Vote" voter education campaign in 2004, this staffer indicated that the UCC had initiated targeted activities in some states more than others. In general, though, limited staff resources made the capacity for targeted alerts very limited, even where the technical potential may exist.

Direct and indirect lobbying strategies: Presbyterian Church (USA)

Among the staff in the Presbyterian policy offices, with a bit smaller staff than the other two denominations, the types and frequency of lobbying activities undertaken varied with role and responsibilities. For example, the director of the office was less frequently involved in face-to-face visits on Capitol Hill than were the two other staffers. They reported one- to two Hill visits per month on average, while the director made face-to-face visits several times a year. On the other hand, the director was much more involved in preparing educational material or content for speeches or legislation than were her staff. In her interview, the director mentioned, as well, reviewing the content of any letter to lawmakers to be endorsed by the denomination.

The Presbyterians, like those in the UCC offices, rarely find themselves engaging in social lobbying by sponsoring or attending a reception or dinner for members of Congress or leveraging support for an issue through engagement of prominent or influential denominational leaders. Likewise direct lobbying is most often done in the context of a coalition consisting of multiple denominations and/or ecumenical and interfaith organizations with similar values and concerns (i.e., organizations like Bread for the World, National Council of Churches, etc.).

Regarding indirect lobbying efforts rely heavily on grassroots organizing and electronic activism, as was the case with the UCC. Public information and media campaigns, including paid advertisements, billboards, distribution of large quantities of printed material, or other public education strategies are rare among mainline Protestant denominational groups, even in coalition, presumably because such strategies are cost prohibitive. Nevertheless, the process of educating grassroots constituencies—whether through electronic media, or directly through regional conferences and meetings—is one of the more rewarding aspects of denominational policy work, according to Presbyterian Staff Two. She explains it this way:

I don't get energized by direct advocacy...I really enjoy doing the education that empowers other people to do direct advocacy....Walking into a member's office and, you know, making the pitch—especially if its argumentative—something about the process of doing that does not grab me, so I tend to find a day of Hill lobbying about as draining as it gets.

There is a greater net effect, she explains, in grassroots empowerment than in direct lobbying.

She notes,

If I can educate a whole congregation, or a whole social action committee, that then will educate their congregation about X issue, and really get them excited about it, a legislator is much more likely to respond to the delegation of 30 people from So-and-so Presbyterian Church in his district than they are if I go and visit with two or three others in my position....so I enjoy teaching...more than I enjoy doing the direct advocacy.

Thus, indirect lobbying strategies that move beyond weekly electronic action alerts—those which involve preparing grassroots constituencies to advocate for a particular policy position on behalf of the denomination—are more fulfilling than direct lobbying to some denominational leaders.

Direct and indirect lobbying strategies: United Methodist Church

The Methodist policy offices had more robust staffing than the other two denominations: four full-time policy professionals plus a director, by comparison with three for UCC and two for the Presbyterians, respectively. As with the Presbyterian policy office, the involvement of Methodist staffers in direct and indirect lobbying efforts varied by individual role. Nevertheless, the more vigorous staffing pattern in the UMC offices contributed significantly to their capacity for direct lobbying. Most UMC staffers, save for the director, reported engaging in face-to-face meetings with members of Congress or their staff more than eight times per month, or twice a week on average. Further, their capacity to attend and monitor congressional committees or hearings and to produce data and written material for members was greatly enhanced—that is, significantly more frequent—than that of the other two offices, with both occurring once a week, on average. Likewise, one additional staff member greatly enhanced the capacity of Methodist staffers to participate in coalition meetings and activities as well, with participation reported to be twice a week, on average. Their involvement with social lobbying—attending dinners or receptions on behalf of the denomination or a coalition—was comparable to the other two offices.

With respect to indirect lobbying—education of grassroots constituencies and electronic lobbying—the United Methodists engage in electronic activism at least once a week, on average. Typically, this involved sending policy alerts to members of the denomination, educating them

about a particular issue and encouraging them to contact lawmakers via phone or e-mail in support of or opposition to the denomination's position on the issue. With respect to public education or media campaigns on a large scale, Methodists reported "very rarely or never" utilizing broadcast or print media, billboards or paid advertising regarding a policy issue. Like their counterparts in the other denominations under study, staff in this office were relegated to low-cost social marketing strategies. They did report occasionally utilizing public service announcements in media outlets and also, websites to provide public information about some issues.

Direct and indirect lobbying strategies: Some generalizations across denominations

As reported by the denominational advocates "in the trenches," their lobbying efforts are limited to strategies that elicit the highest possible impact for the lowest possible cost. That is to say, each denomination seemed to make the most effective and efficient use possible of a limited budget to achieve their policy goals, as each faced financial constraints that would render more expensive strategies cost-prohibitive.

Another common characteristic worth noting was the seeming universal absence among the denominational policy offices of the kinds of close, collegial relationships with lawmakers that enabled them to create a sort of "home base" or "Hill Office" within the office suites of particularly sympathetic legislators as is often observable among lobbyists for corporate interests.

We recall that direct lobbying strategies include such techniques as face-to-face meetings with lawmakers or their staffers, testifying before or monitoring Congressional hearings or committee meetings, and providing verbal or written information about legislative issues, together with such social lobbying strategies as sponsoring or attending receptions, dinners, or

social gatherings for the purpose of influencing a lawmaker or staffer about a key issue (Davidson and Olsezek, 2004). Taken together, the two observations from the survey of interviewees—that denominational policy offices seem relegated to low-cost or no-cost lobbying strategies and that they seem to lack “hang outs” on the Hill—both hindrances to the typical strategies involved in direct lobbying, may offer some insight into the struggle for identity and recognition among lawmakers that many interviewed identified as a source of frustration.

Adapting to Changes in the Policy Environment: An Overview

While each denomination develops its policy agenda, in part, from the priorities of its leaders and also from those of the current Congress, the policy landscape is constantly shifting. We recall that Kingdon (2003) describes these shifts in the policymaking environment as metaphorical “streams” of political will which advocates can use to their advantage. When an opportunity presents itself to draw attention to a particular issue or to push forward a particular solution to a policy problem, Kingdon terms that opportunity a “policy window”—a window of opportunity for achieving a desired policy outcome by taking advantage of the shifts in political climate and landscape. Denominational policy advocates, like all others, must be prepared to take advantage of policy windows by reordering priorities and change course as opportunities present themselves.

For example, knowing that the Farm Bill (the measure defining and authorizing the work of the United States Department of Agriculture) was up for re-authorization during the 110th Congress, many faith-based advocacy organizations had come together in a coalition focused on the content of this bill, giving particular focus to the poverty alleviation programs embedded in the bill, including the Food Stamp Program (subsequently called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP), the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program, and

the school lunch program. The Farm Bill rose to the top of their longer term policy agenda, and became a particular focus of their work. Additionally, knowing that the United States was engaged in military actions in both Afghanistan and Iraq, defense spending was understood to be a high federal priority, and that paying for two wars would likely take precedence over some other discretionary spending possibilities. What follows is a discussion of how each denomination went about reading the policy landscape before them and adapting priorities and work plan to changes in the policy environment through the course of their work with the 110th Congress.

Adapting to changes in the policy environment: United Church of Christ

With respect to adapting to changes in the policy environment, United Church of Christ staff responses were typical of those expressed by their counterparts. The UCC Director responded in this way:

Washington is a climate where there's a constant adjustment being made, and that is part of the role of the Washington offices, not just to be monitoring eyes, but to keep a close watch on the issues for possible maneuvering.

Another colleague, UCC Staff Three, expressed a similar sentiment:

On the Hill, if you're not reactive to changing circumstances, you become irrelevant pretty darn quick. But I also think that (being reactive) sort of cedes the field...cedes the leadership to your opponents or to others, rather than for you, taking your own initiative.

While monitoring the issues, maneuvering as needed, and taking initiative may move an issue forward, UCC Staff Two, spoke more bluntly about changing course midstream:

I think you need to be very pragmatic and to really realize the climate you're dealing with. For the past several years, we realized that with a lot of peace and justice issues, we were not going to be very successful. I mean, we knew who we were dealing with and a lot of the time, I think that all we were doing was trying to avoid disaster...working with all of our partners, trying to hold back the dam.

As with other responses, UCC Staff Three, the junior member of that UCC policy team was less decisive in her response. She said, in part:

I feel like we move pretty fast. We usually send out an action alert if something comes up....Sometimes things are just too fast, you just get hit over the head, and then it's done. And then the next day, you wake up and there's something else going on.

As the staff member who forwarded weekly electronic action alerts to grassroots constituencies within the denomination, perhaps she perceived the desire to shift grassroots attention from one issue to another as waking up each week to find that there is something else on the horizon. Or perhaps she was merely less accustomed than her more experienced colleagues to taking a longer, more incremental view of policy change.

Adapting to changes in the policy environment: Presbyterian Church USA

As with their counterparts in the UCC policy office, the responses of Presbyterian staffers to questions about adapting to shifting political winds varied with the level of experience and confidence of the respondent. Presbyterian Staff Two explained it this way: "It's sort of an intuitive thing: you just go where the energy is...what's changing and where we can actually make a difference."

She used as an example the issue of torture: the concern about the alleged use of torture in interrogation of those held at Guantanamo Bay. As rumors of torture became more widespread, the leadership of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Conference developed a National Religious Coalition Against Torture, and began to raise awareness among people of faith about allegations of torture and strategies for engaging lawmakers in investigating this concern.

Adapting to Changes in the Policy Environment: United Methodist Church

Like their counterparts, staff in the United Methodist policy office were clear about the importance of being prepared to adapt to changes in the policy landscape as they present

themselves. As Methodist Staff Three expressed it, “You have to reorder your priorities and quite frankly, you have to be able to say, ‘No, I’m going to have to put this one on the back burner, because this is more important.’”

Another, Methodist Staff Two said, “You have to be ready to respond—there’s no doubt about it—and we want to do it in a way that’s...that doesn’t set aside other priorities of ours.”

Yet another member of the United Methodist staff remarked on the importance of identifying the most pivotal “go to” people (lawmakers and Hill staffers) on both sides of an issue and developing relationships with leadership on both sides of the aisle, and call upon the most helpful of these as the political landscape shifts.

Perceived Effectiveness: An Overview

At the end of the day, how does each denomination determine its effectiveness? While each makes a considerable investment of resources in doing the work of peace and justice in policy arenas, how do denominational leaders hold their staff accountable for demonstrating effectiveness in their work on Capitol Hill? While some at the grassroots level might like to hold denominational leaders to a narrow definition of policy effectiveness (i.e., did we achieve the policy outcomes listed on our agenda?), clearly the relationship between agenda and outcomes is broader and more complex than checkmarks alongside a list of issues. Success in lobbying lawmakers is difficult to measure and correlative at best. Nownes (2006) in his overview of the role of lobbying in American politics noted that defining is an ongoing difficulty: “As for lobbying techniques that are most effective, we are far from having a definitive answer. However, studies suggest that meeting personally with government officials is a singularly effective lobbying technique (p. 26).”

If those who do research in this arena have only vague notions of what constitutes success, perhaps we can understand why those involved in the process also have difficulty answering the question of how they measure effectiveness. Nevertheless, when asked how they perceive their effectiveness, most of those interviewed had wrestled with this conundrum before and offered thoughtful responses. What follows is a discussion of how each denomination responded to the question of how effective it perceived itself to be in accomplishing policy objectives in the 110th Congress.

Perceived effectiveness: United Church of Christ

Interestingly, UCC Staff Three, the junior member of the United Church of Christ team, who had difficulty articulating her role and that of her office in response to several questions was clear in her response to this one:

We have certain measurable things in our electronic advocacy. How many people clicked on this e-mail? That tells us what people are really excited about, and we get more movement when people are excited...and sometimes we get some (Congressional) staff feedback like, 'Thanks a lot, this is really helpful. We need to have input from faith communities here.'...(but) it's just a hard type of work to measure.

This decisive response likely stemmed from the fact that sending the office's electronic alerts and tracking their impact was part of her responsibility, so she understood its ramifications clearly.

Another member of the UCC staff responded with a series of very specific list of process measures she captures on the way to determining what seemed to work and what did not. Among these were the number of contacts with grassroots constituents, the number of responses to policy alerts, the number of speaking engagements or public presentations made, and other similar measures. In spite of these and a number of other concrete strategies for measuring effectiveness, she concluded, "You don't ever really know."

Pointing to the volume of work done in coalitions, and the difficulty in sorting out the effectiveness of one's own denomination within that context, one UCC staffer commented, "we help our coalition to succeed."

Perceived effectiveness: Presbyterian Church USA

The Presbyterian Director was less dubious than her UCC counterparts. She gave this example:

We got a call about stem cell legislation. People on Capitol Hill wanted to be sure we knew, if we were interested, that it would be helpful to have a letter on Presbyterian letterhead that says how we feel about stem cell research—that it's for health reasons and not for harm—so we did that. I think that shows our effectiveness and it's a sense of accomplishment.

She offered a second example as well:

...the bill that's going through now in Congress about gangs and youth—juvenile justice—when it was first introduced about eight years ago, it was as the "Juvenile Predator Act." We said it would not be good to call our children 'predators,' no matter what they have done. So in the next Congress when it was introduced, it was called the "Juvenile Offender Act." So we do have an impact.

Another, Presbyterian Staff Two, perceived effectiveness in terms of "small victories" when it comes to activities on the Hill: "I think small victories are important...you have to take the little things."

With regard to grassroots education and organizing, results are a bit easier to measure.

The same staff member noted:

I wrote a series of articles explaining how the federal budget conference worked back in February and got like fifty readers who indicated that I explained things in a way that was comfortable for people...You know, it's hearing that someone liked my article and used it in their newsletter...it's a smaller impact, but personally fulfilling.

Perceived effectiveness: United Methodist Church

In terms of measuring the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts, the director of the United Methodist policy office had this to say:

There's a multiplicity of ways...we monitor effectiveness. It's not as scientific, I think, as one might like it to be...but there's evaluation going on, if you will....
...Obviously, if there's legislative victory, that's one way of kind of measuring effectiveness. Those aren't...as frequent as we'd like to see.

He continued by detailing a number of other measures that could point to effective accomplishment of the desired policy outcomes. Among them were these examples:

- How many people are we talking to?
- In our action networks (e-mail lists)...how many people do we have coming to our training events and our organizing workshops around the country and here in Washington?
- The Peace with Justice Sunday offering—a special offering of the United Methodist Church—is that going up or going down?
- What kind of feedback are we getting from people? Is it uniformly negative, or are we also getting a lot of positive feedback?

Another, Methodist Staff Three, responded to the questions of how one measures effectiveness a bit more philosophically: “Sometimes the effectiveness of your work may be (seen) *after you're gone*. I mean, the person who preceded me in this portfolio didn't see the fruition of *their* work.” When pressed for more detail, she identified the following as criteria she utilizes to consider the success of their work on Capitol Hill:

- Are we accomplishing some progress on the goals, strategies, and objectives?
- Are we helping local church people to understand what it means to be a social justice witness?
- Are we making a difference in Congress in terms of their understanding that the Church has a prophetic call?

By way of answering her own questions, she had this to say:

...our effectiveness has changed...we have become less of a force...less of an influence on Congress...we're not a dogmatic church. We can't say to our members, 'This is what you're going to think and if you don't think this way, you're gone.' So in one way, we *have* the influence of the Church...In another way, when it comes to feet on the ground...it takes an *enormous* amount of time and effort to get those feet on the ground, and a *lot* of education.

Still another, Methodist Staff Four, emphasized the importance of qualitative measures over numbers. He had this to say about measuring the effectiveness of one's advocacy efforts:

It's a hard thing to measure...we try to measure it qualitatively by looking at how some of the key leaders used strategy—among faith groups, but also, among all the groups that work in coalition...how is the coalition comprised? What direction is it going to go? What are the messages?

Clearly, this United Methodist staff member captured the general sentiment of his own colleagues, those of other denominational offices, and lobbyists for all kinds of interest groups: effectiveness is hard to measure.

Perceived effectiveness: Some generalizations across denominations

If the consensus of those in all of the denominational policy offices seems to be that effectiveness is difficult to measure, interviewees were equally clear that the best strategy seems to be to select a number of qualitative and quantitative measures, rather than relying too heavily on any single intervention as a yardstick of effectiveness. Since denominational offices work most frequently in coalitions, effectiveness stems from their collective efforts, particularly with respect to qualitative strategies. For example, a particularly effective letter sent to a congressional committee carries more weight if it bears the signatures of a number of denominational leaders, including grassroots leaders from across the nation. Similarly, testimony before a Congressional committee may fall to the particular denominational staff member who can most effectively speak to the issue at hand, but may represent the views and efforts of several denominational offices. The effectiveness of quantitative measures, such as the

number of lawmakers contacted or visited, or the number of electronic alerts sent and viewed can be readily measured denomination by denomination.

Additionally, as the UCC Director lamented, very little media attention is paid to the work of mainline Protestant denominations, or to progressive religious voices in general, to underscore policy victories. He offered this perspective on media coverage:

...The press is very unwilling, in general, to attribute political effectiveness to religious organizations...(and) when they do look to religious organizations for impact, there's been a tendency to look to the work of the Evangelicals and Religious Right. The mainlines (mainline denominations) have been here for a long time...(and) we have some very good relationship on the Hill, and we believe that we do effective work relative to our size.

Media attention notwithstanding, the staff in each denominational office would likely agree that the answer to the question of “what worked?” is complex, and cannot be answered merely in terms of the effectiveness of one strategy over another. At the same time, most would likely note that the average grassroots constituent—the person in the pew whose donations support the work of each office—may not recognize that effective policy outcomes typically stem not from a solid Presbyterian or Methodist or UCC effort, but from the shared efforts of an array of ecumenical and interfaith partners. At the end of the day, movement in a positive direction—*progress* toward achievement of the objectives on one's policy agenda—seemed the most viable measure of success and the most consistent response to the question of perceived effectiveness.

Similarities and Differences Among the Denominations and Their Work on Capitol Hill

What follows is a comparison of the similarities and differences among these three denominations with respect to their work with the 110th Congress. This exploration will look across the three denominations with an eye to the *resources* each was able to deploy in service to their policy agenda, the *authorization and discretion* available for each to exercise within

denominational constraints, along with the *distinctions* which separate one denomination from another in policy arenas.

Looking across denominations: Human and financial resources for policy work

Ahead of this discussion, it might be helpful to note that all three denominations, when asked about their *funding streams*, responded in a similar fashion: members of local congregations give to the work of their local churches and a portion of this funding is forwarded to regional and national denominational offices. Local church support of regional and national denominational entities, while strongly encouraged and expectation, is both voluntary and discretionary on the part of Presbyterian and United Church of Christ congregations. In the case of the United Methodist Church, congregations are required to pay an apportionment to the denomination, a percentage of their local church income based a formula connected to the size of the congregation.

Also, each of the three denominations has a series of “special offerings” designated by the national body for regional and national projects, including mission work, support of retired clergy, and other broad denominational needs. In each case, a portion of the funds gathered in one of these special offerings helps to fund the policy work each undertakes on Capitol Hill. In the case of the United Church of Christ, a portion of the “Neighbors in Need” offering, designated for the work of social justice, comprises a funding stream passed from local churches to their regional and national bodies. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Offering, similarly, assists with their work. Likewise, United Methodists utilize a portion of the “Peace with Justice” special offering for this purpose. Thus, financial support for each denomination’s policy work on Capitol Hill is derived primarily from offerings to local churches, earmarked for the work of the regional and national bodies. Also, small amounts of funding are derived from direct gifts to

their offices, or from grants or other sources, according to the staff members in denominational offices.

As to the financial resources available to fund human resources necessary to undertake policy advocacy efforts, they are limited—and declining. The head of the Presbyterian policy office said this about their fundraising efforts:

On everything we've done, every e-mail that goes out, we invite people to give to this work, over and above the general funding (provided by the denomination's Peacemaking Offering). And I have a pile of applications that I've been trying to get to, to send out requests for grants to foundations that don't seem to get done, so our money comes from the general giving dollars.

A bit later in the interview, she expressed concern about the future of funding for the work of the Washington office:

I'm really concerned about the future of our social witness. I didn't go into a discussion of fundraising very deeply but I'm concerned about that for the future with the fact that giving to the national church is declining. How much longer can we sustain what we're doing?

Though she was direct and succinct in noting this concern, the head of the UCC office painted this picture of the church's ongoing decline in membership and giving:

In the United Church of Christ, of roughly 6,000 congregations, a great many are in small towns—in the Midwest and in other parts of the country—in small towns that have been declining for decades, in part because of the changing world of agriculture, and the resulting change in rural vitality in general. A great many public schools have been closed in rural areas across the states, which are in the same towns with churches declining or closed for the same reasons. In some of those (communities)... what you have is a situation where young people have moved away to cities. You have older congregations in tiny towns with little hope of growth. That is a recipe for decline. So that's just true, independent of what the Church is doing.

(That said,) there are many churches in the United Church of Christ which would look conservative in contrast with some of the positions taken by the national level of the Church. Nonetheless, those same congregations might well be the most progressive congregation in their own town—the most leading, the most challenging, the most alert (to social justice issues)...

Thus, the heads of all three offices noted that the human and financial resources available to each denomination to fund their Washington offices have declined in recent years, in part because of declines in membership and giving on the part of local congregations.

Only the Methodists have maintained a contingent of staff that allows for issue specialization. According to the director of the UMC office, that difference stems from the larger segment of denominational infrastructures headquartered in Washington in contrast with the offices of other Protestant partners. The UMC Washington offices house the General Board of Global Ministries, encompassing a number of mission and ministry functions beyond policy advocacy. The resulting administrative infrastructure, together with the denomination's ownership of the office space, enables the UMC to support a larger number of policy-related staff than do the other two denominations. Still, all three denomination, reportedly, have reduced the size of their staff in recent years because of financial constraints.

United Methodist infrastructure notwithstanding, all three denominations rely heavily on pooled resources to accomplish the work of policy advocacy. Each works extensively through coalitions—most issue-centered (i.e., poverty issues)—engaging them in shared efforts not only with one another, but also with other Progressive religious denominations and entities including Lutherans, Episcopalians, Quakers and liberal Catholics, Unitarians, and Jews. Sometimes, various denominational and interfaith voices work closely with topic faith-based advocacy organizations, such as Bread for the World, and at other times, with secular advocacy groups like Families USA, an advocacy organization focused on access to affordable health care.

Combined efforts such as these broader coalitions bring to bear a broader base of human and material resources for the work of policy advocacy, but at the same time, cloud the distinctions among the various organizations involved. When staff members in each of the three

denominational offices in this study were asked if they believed that lawmakers could distinguish among the messages of Presbyterian, Methodist and UCC advocates with regard to their position on a given issue, most staffers conceded that they could not. Presbyterian Staff Two said, “I think they just have a general sense of us a middle ground (between more conservative and more liberal positions).”

Presbyterian Staff Three said, “I think that they can differentiate *between* Progressive and non-Progressive messages. I don’t think that they know the difference *within* the Progressive religious community.”

Methodist Staff Four had this to say about whether lawmakers can differentiate among the messages of various denominations with regard to their positions on specific issues:

Almost all members of Congress claim some religious affiliation and I think many of them—most of them—mean it. Others know that politically it’s advantageous to have some sort of faith affiliation. So I think the ones who are United Methodists know they’re United Methodists... (same with) Presbyterians and so forth. I suspect, though, that... Roman Catholics and Jews and Muslims have a hard time distinguishing between individual denominations... I think staffers... being young and less experienced... have an incredibly difficult time distinguishing (among denominations). And some have a hard time distinguishing between the Religious Right and other religious denominations.

UCC Staff Two noted that the fluid membership in issue coalitions adds another layer of complexity in sorting out denominational voices, as various players may work together on some issues and oppose one another on other issues. She put it this way:

...The very conservative (Religious Right) churches have had access—tremendous access—to the information venues and also, to the Congress, and they have been very effective in using those (opportunities). But you know, it depends on which issues we are speaking of. For instance, the churches that are part of the National Council of Churches, we work together with Conference of Catholic Bishops, which is very powerful, and with some of the more progressive Evangelicals on issues like the environment... There’s a saying in Washington: ‘No permanent friends or permanent enemies.’

The UCC Director indicated that teaching lawmakers or Hill staff to sort out one denomination’s position and message from another’s is not typically a goal when the work is

done in coalition. The goal is passage of the bill. He gave this example with respect to work underway at the time on re-authorization of the Farm Bill:

I took a UCC delegation from Vermont and Iowa around by themselves (without representatives of other denominational offices), but when we spoke, I was clear, and helped the members (of Congress) to know that UCC wasn't just—even though we were an all UCC delegation—that we saw ourselves as working in coalition with what we call the “Religious Working Group on the Farm Bill.”

Staff Two in the Presbyterian policy office also noted that the ecumenical and interfaith work on the Farm Bill was proving fruitful, strengthened in part by grant funding that supported a staff member to develop a very targeted approach to their work. She observed:

The Farm Bill work is kind of new for us. We (the working group) got a grant from OxFam to do it, and so we're doing a very targeted effort. You know, bringing *this* bishop from *this* district to talk to *this* senator (as a constituent)...I think that probably, individually, some churches (denominations) have done that (in the past) because some of the (faith-related) offices are more lobby-conscious than others. And it's easier to do that when you're not in the polity family that the UCC and the Presbyterians are in! You know, it's easier to pull a bishop out of X state than it is to try to find a Presbytery Exec or a Conference Minister (who is available to come to Washington)!

Working in ecumenical and interfaith coalitions with other faith-based groups—and at times with secular organizations as well—helps to stretch limited resources in the service of common policy goals, and also, affords each denominational entity to leverage the influence of the larger group, especially where church polity constrains one group while empowering another. What follows is a deeper exploration of the influence of church polity (governance structure) on policy leadership.

Looking across denominations: Authorization and discretion in policy leadership

Each of the three denominations under study has a different church polity or governance structure, and each of these authorizes the work of its Washington office to respond to legislative and other policy concerns a bit differently. As noted in Chapter Two, the Public Life and Social

Policy Office of the United Church of Christ exists to “give life and voice to the resolutions and pronouncements of the General Synod on social policy” (UCC 2005).

What this means is that the policy positions adopted by each biennial General Synod both empower and direct the staff in the UCC office to take action on behalf of the denomination. Since the UCC has a congregationally-based polity, the General Synod is understood to be the largest possible iteration of a “congregation,” comprised of lay and clergy delegates from across the denomination. As such, it is authorized to subscribe to policy positions which represent the normative position of the denomination on a given issue. Nevertheless, church leaders are careful to note that the General Synod speaks *to* the Church, not *for* the Church, meaning that local church congregations and individual members are not bound by the positions embraced by this national body. This distinction, reportedly, is lost on those congregations and individuals who withdraw their financial giving and/or their membership when the national body embraces a controversial stance on an issue such as gay marriage or reproductive rights. The UCC Director reflected on the consequences the denomination has experienced in the wake of controversial stances taken in policy arenas and the benefits, as well:

It is certainly true that on any number of stands that the United Church of Christ has taken over the years—issues of race and class, issues of leadership by women, and currently, with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues—there have been individuals and there have been congregations in the UCC that have not been happy with the direction of the General Synod and the direction of the United Church staff and have, indeed, withdrawn (from church membership). In many cases, that withdrawal was not all that much of an injury to the national level of the Church because they were commonly withdrawals of individuals and congregations that had not been present, had not been supportive, had not been contributing financially to the national church anyhow... (Further,) I think it’s overlooked that the United Church of Christ has picked up individuals and congregations because of our courageous stance. That certainly the case in terms of LGBT issues: we have drawn in some very large congregations.

Further, the UCC Director cited church polity as the distinction that matters most, in his view, toward setting one denomination apart from another. He explains the particularity of the United Church of Christ's polity on its policy work in this way:

I think the most distinctive thing about the United Church of Christ goes to our polity. We have a policy that allows the United Church of Christ to take initiative quickly. We don't have to go through any procedural steps to develop a point of view. We can step out into the arena and take action. It might take us a year, where it would take other denominations two years or five years. It's commonly been the case that on a number of quite controversial issues over the years, the UCC has been first online, the first one out there among the mainlines (mainline denominations). So we have a certain flexibility. We also have a culture of risk-taking, and we have had some excellent individual leaders who have modeled a courageous, prophetic stance. As a result, we are sometimes punished in the sense of being seen as the most controversial and most radical of the denominations. It is probably true on some matters and not-so-true on others. Being quick isn't the same, necessarily, as having a more radical position.

In the case of the United Church of Christ, with its congregational polity, then, the authorization imbued by the General Synod, while it might not please all members, provides its denominational policy office with the direction and discretion to move forward with advocacy efforts, and do so expediently, placing them ahead of other religious voices in some cases.

As noted in Chapter Two, the Presbyterian Church (USA) is governed by elders—both clergy (teaching elders) and laity (ruling elders) who gather in equal proportion at the denomination's biennial General Assembly and in this gathering, make pronouncements on social and public policy issues. The role of the denomination's Washington office then is to advocate with lawmakers for the positions taken by General Assembly and to educate grassroots church members as to how to do likewise. Thus, the position taken by the Presbyterian General Assembly, once ratified by regional presbyteries, becomes the normative position of the Church. A staffer in the United Methodist policy offices noted with envy this distinction between Presbyterian and Methodist polity with respect to speaking to lawmakers about the Church's social policy positions:

(The) Presbyterian Church USA, when they take positions can say, ‘The Presbyterian Church USA says *this*...’ We can’t say, ‘The United Methodist Church says *this*...’ We can only say, ‘The General Board of Church and Society says...’ We can’t say ‘the United Methodist Church’ even though it’s *interpreted* that way.

Where a policy position doesn’t exist, the denomination cannot act. Nevertheless, part of their role is to scan the landscape and raise the awareness of the wider church to a level that authorization is forthcoming.

Presbyterian Staff Two explained how this happened with regard to concern about the alleged torture of detainees at Guantanamo Bay:

“...The whole torture issue—it was interesting how it started. I was following it, slowly. I was reading about it in *The New Yorker* and the churches weren’t saying much about it...I was thinking, ‘This is *crazy*! Why aren’t we *saying* anything about this?’

She went on to explain that she did further research on the topic and wrote several articles for Presbyterian publications about what was happening.

The next General Assembly did, indeed, pass a resolution condemning torture. She believes that her work in raising consciousness about the issue helped drive the effort to pass a resolution condemning it. Shortly thereafter, at the next Presbyterian Peacemaking Conference, her articles were there and people were reading them with an eye to developing a plan to respond to the General Assembly resolution. Here is her description of what happened next:

So a group of people got together at lunch at the Peacemaking Conference—about fifty people—and now we have this huge grassroots (movement)...a (seminary) professor was the leader—and now we have this huge grassroots Presbyterian organization called “No To Torture.” It’s had three conferences across the country...(and) a National Religious Coalition Against Torture (an ecumenical and interfaith group) came out of that, and how we’ve had ads in the newspapers with Jimmy Carter signing on to them....That was a new issue that came up that we adapted to (and took action).

In the case of the Presbyterian Church USA, with its governance by equal numbers of lay and clergy elders, then, the Washington office utilizes the authorization imbued by its General Assembly to speak both *to* the Church and *for* the Church on Capitol Hill.

The United Methodist Church, unlike the other two denominations, is not only a *national* body, but an international, or *global* body of believers. As noted in Chapter Two, the General Conference of the UMC meets quadriennially to conduct the business of the Church, including adopting resolutions on a variety of social issues. The resulting *Book of Resolutions* is the official compendium of policy positions for the denomination for a period of eight years following their adoption, after which time they expire unless readopted. These position statements, together with broader Social Principles, arising from the UMC Social Creed, authorize the General Board of Church and Society to take action through the Church's Public Witness and Advocacy Ministry, which undertakes the denomination's work on Capitol Hill. The policy positions outlined in the *Book of Resolutions*, while they are the normative positions of the denomination on policy issues, are represented through the work of the Office of Public Witness and Advocacy, do not necessarily represent the views of individual members or local churches. Thus, the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society, when it speaks to a policy issue on Capitol Hill speaks for itself and for the General Conference, but not necessarily for individual members or local congregations.

The job of educating grassroots constituencies—local church members and regional denominational leaders—is critical not only to mobilizing advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill, but to preparing the men and women who will serve as delegates to the regional Annual Conference meetings and the quadrennial General Conference as they ponder and authorize the denomination's stances on policy issues. The head of the United Methodist policy effort explained it this way:

(The) connection to Annual Conferences and local churches—it's really a combination of the two—and the trick is to make sure that when you are out and about, you're doing a combination of 'here's *why* and *how* the church is concerned about social justice/public policy issues,' because there's still a great many folks who are like,

‘I can see why we would have a soup kitchen, but I can’t see why we would be concerned about livable wage and health care as public policy,’ which is stunning to me, but there’s such a focus on mercy, rather than justice.

Variations on this sentiment, together with emphasis on the importance of educating grassroots constituencies—church members—about the biblical and theological underpinnings of denominational policy statements was echoed by staff in each of the policy offices.

To summarize, authorization and discretion in policy leadership, regardless of denominational affiliation, requires extensive education of grassroots constituencies, preparing them to participate meaningfully as delegates to regional and national meetings. This is equally true in preparing them to respond quickly to action alerts sent from denominational policy offices or when possible, to send delegations to Washington to speak to lawmakers personally about issues of concern to them. While each denomination’s governance structure authorizes it to act in policy arenas with a bit differently, the nuances in authorization are much more apparent to denominational policy staff members than they are either to lawmakers and hill staff or to local and regional church members. One could conclude that whether a given denomination’s policy position is intended to speak *to* the church, *for* the church, or *both*, the nuances inherent in that authority are lost on most audiences other than those charged with adhering closely to the strictures of church polity. This brings us to the problem of sorting out one denomination’s efforts from another: the subject of the following discussion.

Looking across denominations: Distinguishing one from another

While lawmakers may have difficulty distinguishing a Presbyterian policy position from that of a Methodist or a UCC policy positions, the leadership in each of the three offices articulated the differences that set one apart from another. While the position of each denomination on a given issue may be similar, a variety of factors determine which entity will

step forward and take the lead on a given initiative. Clearly, a practical concern is *availability of resources*. The head of the United Methodist office offered this perspective:

I think that the main difference (among the denominational policy offices) is that our public policy office here in Washington is also a major program board of our denomination (UMC General Board of Global Ministries). As I understand it, the Episcopalians, Presbyterians and United Church of Christ and the Lutherans—the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)—their Washington offices are outposts of the their headquarters in Cleveland, Chicago and so forth.... We have the two wrapped into one here, and from what I can tell from conversations with my colleagues—of course, obviously I am looking at it from my point of view—but it seems like that gives us (UMC) an advantage.

Beyond the human and financial resources that can be mobilized to move forward with a particular initiative, decisions about whether a Methodist staffer takes the lead on a given issue or a UCC or Presbyterian counterpart steps up may grow out of *denominational history* with particular issues. The head of the Presbyterian policy office offered this reflection on denominational distinctions:

Which issue would you fall on your sword for?...The Methodists, they are going to sit on the front burner all day (with) what a former boss called the ‘sin issues’...booze, drugs and bingo...drinking and gambling and so forth—reliance on a bottle—and I respect them for that because I know that if I have to do (advocacy work on) that I can go to them and they will be right on top of that issue.

With the Lutherans...they are going to do the social service (issues). They have a strong interest and they’re always going to take those issues forward...foster care, health care, social services....we all work on these, but Lutherans lead.

The UCC...along with the Episcopalians...(take) the lead position with economic justice...labor from the grassroots...support for the right to vote.

Presbyterians are interested in educating people enough to vote, but more interested in educating people about how to vote. Presbyterians want (people) to go vote.... Methodists and Episcopalians are interested in the international agenda...also, race and gender and religious liberty...so we respect that sense of history that each denomination brings to the table.

The head of United Methodist policy work offered an even more detailed appeal to *denominational history* as the antecedent of public policy efforts—both their own and those of other churches:

To look at the United Methodists in particular, I think if trace our involvement in American history—of course, we're actually rooted in the Wesleyan movement, obviously—and Wesley's concern in Great Britain was for the slave trade, for alcohol abuse, for criminals, for the poor, for health care. That translated over into this country, as United Methodists were, certainly, and have been involved, in both personal holiness and social holiness; we see the two as very linked. Nonetheless, I think in some ways, we became, especially in the 1800s, an Establishment Church, increasingly, especially as the Church grew very, very rapidly. This is not unlike some of the other Protestant denominations.

Then came the Social Gospel Movement in the late 1800s as the country began industrializing and urbanizing, and concern began to grow about the plight of the poor...about the rights of workers...and many others—but a lot of economic causes, in particular—as well as concerns about...alcohol abuse is a huge concern for United Methodists...gambling...pornography—we call it “salacious literature”—and then after the slaughter of World War I, a great concern about world peace.

Then came, of course, you know the 1950s and 60s were HUGE. You had the Civil Rights movement grow in the 1950s, the—it was called the “Ban the Bomb” movement—started in the 1950s—a lot of people think it was in the 60s when everything started, but of course that's not the case...the women's movement...the environmental justice movement...these social justice movements often are portrayed as secular, but they're really all moral and spiritual movements.

I think that the churches usually had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to the table, but because of our scriptural basis, it wasn't—well, it *was* difficult—but it wasn't...there was an openness, gradually, to understanding that this is really what the message of Christ calls us to: freedom and equality and justice for all, great American ideals as well, but they are closely intertwined with scriptural values.

And so I've learned as General Secretary that the leaders of these secular movements often see the churches as incredibly important allies in those struggles—sometimes more than others—but, of course, the civil rights movement is just almost explicitly a religious struggle. Although, of course, you know, now we have organizations that carry out public policy advocacy on a daily basis and through the courts, that don't have, perhaps, as overt a religious involvement as in the past, but are moral and spiritual movements.

He noted, as well, the foresight of his denominational predecessors in buying the property and building the structure in which we were meeting, the United Methodist Building, which serves as

headquarters not only for that denomination's policy work, but for that of many ecumenical and interfaith organizations. He reflected:

this building would not have been built without the work of the whole Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals. But if you look at the old literature, even then they were saying that 'We know it's Prohibition and temperance that we're passionate about at the moment, but we're also working on gambling' and on...oh, a wide variety of other concerns at the time...child labor...and what they called Public Morals...they were very serious about understanding that as the years went on, the Church would need this space because there would be other matters to be addressed.

In addition to access to resources and denominational history, as noted in the previous section, denominational polity shapes the authority and responsiveness of each to the issues at hand.

Looking across denominations: Comparing and contrasting

The preceding discussion has explored the similarities and differences among three denominations—the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church—with respect to their work with the 110th Congress. This exploration looked across the three denominations with an eye to the *resources* each was able to deploy in service to their policy agenda, the *authorization and discretion* available for each to exercise within denominational polity constraints, and the *distinctions* which separate one denomination from another in policy arenas.

With regard to *resources*, each denomination faces a shrinking base, due to declines in both membership and individual giving among local churches. The Presbyterians and the United Church of Christ have experienced this more keenly than the United Methodists primarily because they are smaller denominations with less infrastructure to support their efforts—particularly in Washington, D.C., since the former two have outpost offices in the nation's capital, while the latter has a larger, broader operation there. Beyond these differences access to resources, each denomination differs with regard to the level of *authorization and discretion*

available to staff to take action in policy arenas and the *distinctions* in history and governance which shape their various approaches to policy advocacy.

To a casual observer, these distinctions in authority and approach are not readily apparent, though to those staff accountable to denominational decision-making bodies, they are important. From the outside looking in, the differences among the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the UCC with regard to their work on Capitol Hill, then, are more closely linked to insider concerns such as denominational theology, history and polity than to any functional characteristic that an outsider might observe. Given that most of the policy work of these three denominations—along with that of other mainline Protestant denominations—is done through issue-focused coalitions, the distinctions among them are less visible than would be the case if each was working independently of the others. In summary, the contrasts that distinguish the policy work of the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the UCC from one another are much more apparent to the executives who head each office and to the denominational leaders to whom they are accountable than they are to either those on the Hill or those in the pew.

Having explored the policy work of the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the United Church of Christ on Capitol Hill, we turn our attention now to interpreting these findings, pulling together all that was learned into a working theory. This is the task of Chapter Five, together with suggesting the implications these findings may hold for each policy office, reallocation of resources, and/or possible strategies for future advocacy efforts. Finally, the next chapter will discuss what all of this may suggest for future research in this area.

Chapter Five

Advocacy on Capitol Hill Through the Lens of Three Progressive

Protestant Denominations: Some Conclusions

What does it all mean, this exploration of the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the United Church of Christ and their policy work in Washington? How does this study add to existing knowledge about the advocacy work of religious special interests on Capitol Hill? This chapter attempts to pull together all that was learned into a working theory to express “what’s going on here.”

Exploring the Results: A Summary

As is readily apparent in the preceding pages, interviews conducted with four staff members from the United Church of Christ’s policy offices, three from the Presbyterian Church (USA) and four from the United Methodist Church, together with surveys, observations and documentary evidence, elicited rich, complex responses to the research questions under consideration. What follows is an attempt to summarize the findings of this study on the way to drawing conclusions as to their meaning.

Determining priorities and developing work plans

Looking to the agenda-setting process of each denomination, efforts to establish priorities and develop work plans begin with policy positions articulated in the national meetings of each denomination. These resolutions or pronouncements set the parameters within which each will work. Also, each denomination’s professional policy staff looks to Congress to determine which issues will likely receive considerable attention in the near future, including which significant programs are due for reauthorization and how defense spending or other budgetary concerns may impact congressional priorities.

Two of the three denominations, the United Methodists and the United Church of Christ, are accountable to boards of directors which aid them in setting policy priorities. The Presbyterians do this at the administrative level with the executive leadership of the denomination. Out of this process, whether through board or administrative action, comes a series of policy priorities that will comprise the work plan of each denomination's efforts on each issue.

Within the Presbyterian office, work on each issue is assigned, typically, to one of two staff members—the associate who staffs the domestic issues portfolio or the associate who staffs the international issues portfolio—the few exceptions being those issues on which the director of the office works directly. The United Church of Christ, with three staff members beyond the director assigns responsibilities aligned both with administrative function and portfolio of issues. With regard to function, one staff member focuses more on grassroots organizing, while another focuses on electronic communication, and another on monitoring congressional committees and hearings, though all share responsibility for participating in various issue-related coalitions. Work with particular issues is divided somewhat along international versus domestic lines, as in the Presbyterian office, though not as precisely so. The United Methodist policy office, like that of the Presbyterians and the United Church of Christ, assigns responsibilities to staff members based on issue-related portfolios, though four staff members share this responsibility, rather than two or three. The four portfolios of issues are these: Alcohol, Other Addictions and Health; Civil and Human Rights; Environmental and Economic Justice; and Peace with Justice.

Direct and indirect lobbying strategies

Having set priorities and developed a work plan—typically one that relies heavily on accomplishing policy objectives through the shared work of issue-focused coalitions—each of

the three denominations under study employs a very similar set of direct and indirect lobbying strategies. Each spends considerable time in direct efforts to influence lawmakers through Hill visits, testimony at or monitoring of public hearings or committee meetings, providing fact sheets or other data to members of Congress and their staff, and signing on to pastoral letters sent to lawmakers. Likewise, each spends a great deal of time on indirect lobbying strategies, particularly the task of educating grassroots constituents—church members—about advocacy efforts. This is accomplished through a variety of means including weekly electronic alerts, together with periodic advocacy conferences and training sessions at regional denominational meetings. Though each denomination has a bit different rhythm to their work, each of them participates in this array of strategies on a consistent basis.

A primary factor in strategic planning for each denomination is cost, thus low-cost and no-cost efforts trump those which are more expensive. Social lobbying initiatives such as sponsoring a reception or dinner, leveraging financial support or influence from prominent figures, paying honoraria for to members or staffers for speaking engagements, or providing tickets to sporting events or other gifts to members or staffers are not among the options typically available to any of them. The most significant difference between the work of the staff in these denominational policy offices and that of other lobbyists is financial constraint. Without the financial resources to make donations to campaigns, leverage the support of powerful corporations or individuals, or provide perks to lawmakers and their staff members, the lobbying efforts of the denominational policy offices is limited to low-cost and no cost advocacy strategies. Their influence is based on largely on the moral authority of the denomination they represent and also, on their ability to mobilize a groundswell of grassroots concern about an

issue. This is why most prefer to refer to themselves as “advocates for social justice” rather than “lobbyists.”

Adapting to changes in the policy environment

With regard to capacity to adapt to changes in the policy environment, all three of the denominations involved in this study acknowledged that it was critical to the work they do. One spoke of “constant adjustment and maneuvering,” while another spoke of an intuitive effort to “go where the (legislative) energy is” and still another commented that “without the capacity to react quickly, one becomes irrelevant quickly.” As to the specific strategies involved in adapting to the shifting sands of the policymaking terrain, each noted the importance of electronic advocacy tools, expediting the process of notifying grassroots constituencies when communication with lawmakers is needed. The Presbyterians, particularly, noted the importance of cultivating relationships with “go to” people on both sides of the aisle, so that when it’s time to make Hill visits about an issue, conversations can begin from a place of familiarity and trust.

Perceived effectiveness

How do these three denominations, the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the United Church of Christ, determine the impact of their work? There is consensus on the proposition that there is no definitive answer to that question. Further, they agree that the relationship between agenda and outcomes is complex. Each has a different array of benchmarks for accountability and they comprise a mix of process measures like number of Hill visits made and number of electronic alerts opened, along with outcome measures like invitations to testify before a committee, positive responses from Congressional staffers to pastoral letters, and ideally, bills passed with desired content. In the end, most denominational staff members say they are pleased

to celebrate “small victories” along the way, and consider general movement in a positive direction toward policy objectives to be the best available measure of their effectiveness.

Similarities and Differences Across Denomination With Regard to Policy Work

At the end of the day, how do lawmakers distinguish the position of the Presbyterians from that of the Methodists from that of the United Church of Christ? In general, most do not. Denominational policy staff members do much of their work through faith-based coalitions that include all three denominations along with others. For the most part, they are not particularly concerned that lawmakers distinguish among mainline denominations regarding their positions on issues, given the minimal difference between them on most issues. Rather, they are pleased with the lawmaker or Hill staffer who can sort out a Progressive religious stance from a conservative religious stance.

That said, the leadership of each policy office is *very clear* about the differences among them, as each is grounded in a theology, history and polity associated with its denominational heritage that shapes and drives its policy agenda. *Distinctions in history and polity* point to differences in approach to policy advocacy, depending on the issue at stake. Specific details involving the identity and policy process of each denomination differ based on the level of *authorization and discretion* available to the staff of each to take action in policy arenas. One common thread, of course, is that all three offices struggle with concerns regarding a shrinking base of *financial and human resources*.

Having reviewed key elements of what was learned from the interviews, observations and documentary evidence explored with regard to these three denominations and their policy offices on Capitol Hill, the next segment utilizes grounded theory to explore “what’s going on here.”

If these three denominations, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the United Church of Christ, and the policy work they do on Capitol Hill matters, both to vulnerable populations and to the grassroots constituencies—local churches—in whose name they serve, then how does this study help to inform policy theory and practice, particularly with regard to agenda setting? I will respond to this question first with regard to each of the three denominations individually, then with regard to the three collectively, and by extension, what light their experience might shed on the work of other, similar groups.

A snapshot of “what’s going on here”: United Church of Christ

How did the United Church of Christ, as a special interest lobbying group, working through its Public Life and Social Policy Office in Washington, facilitate its policy agenda on Capitol Hill during the 110th Congress? Working from policy positions articulated in resolutions generated by its biennial national gathering, General Synod, and identified as priorities by its Justice and Witness Ministries board, UCC policy staff labored to engage both lawmakers and grassroots constituencies in attaining desired policy outcomes. They worked through coalitions to stay abreast of key issues. They sent out weekly action alerts to grassroots constituencies. They took calls from local pastors about policy concerns, trained grassroots leaders at regional denominational meetings. Like those in the offices of the other two denominations under study, they worked many long hours to promote social justice through such efforts as continued support for Farm Bill programs that alleviate poverty, like the school breakfast and lunch programs and the Food Stamp Program (now called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

The snapshot of their activity made visible through this research found them in a period of transition. The director of several years had taken another position and a long-time staff member who had recently retired was pressed into service as interim director and head of staff. He, along

with another experience staffer and a junior staff member were “holding down the fort” while denominational executives prepared to search for a new director. At the same time, staff at denomination headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio were intently focused on preparing for the upcoming General Synod meeting, an effort which included migrating the entire content of the website and database to a new platform. This effort required that a key Washington staff member work in Cleveland for several weeks, taking her away from Hill work, and also rendered the grassroots advocacy alert system inoperable for a week or so at a very critical time.

Though none of these transitional difficulties was enormous by itself, and collectively, they were predictable for an organization preparing for a large event and coping with typical leadership changes, they did add an extra measure of stress to the workload of the Washington office staff. One seasoned staff member lamented:

...a lot of times you feel very disconnected from your national church (headquarters)... that which determines the pace of your life and the intensity of your work and your priorities is (in Cleveland). For instance, we’re going to be gone for a substantial amount of time for Synod. Also, we’ve had this Synod-driven decision to do this database migration, which has left us without an advocacy tool during the most critical and intense part of the legislative session. It used to be that we in this office were the keepers and the gate keepers of the action alert center, but all of that has been transferred to Cleveland and now you have a committee of staff that is going to determine what goes out.

Clearly, these transitions impacted staff morale. There is some evidence that they impacted the capacity of the entire office to efficiently and effectively perform their jobs.

Beyond coping with change, observations suggest that the capacity of each staff member to effectively perform their job responsibilities and priorities was influenced significantly by the level of experience of each. The acting director and other senior members of the staff seemed to be able to keep moving forward in spite of several inconveniences and uncertainties. A junior staff member, however, an intern who was just learning her job, seemed overwhelmed by all the change, overwhelmed to the point of ineffectiveness. At the same time, she did not seem able,

for whatever reason, to ask for help. Therefore, her colleagues, to include her supervisor, were largely unaware of her distress. While one individual's experience of professional distress in the midst of transition may seem relatively insignificant in the grand scheme of things, if one staff member of four is incapacitated, this renders 25% of the staff incapacitated. That this season of policy office difficulties transpired at a critical time in the policymaking cycle undoubtedly impacted the effectiveness not only of this one individual, but that of the entire team, though the more experienced staff members were better able to adapt to the changes they faced and continue to do their jobs.

The answer to my research question with regard to the UCC, then, is that a hard-working, dedicated team of policy professionals facilitated the implementation of the UCC policy agenda on Capitol Hill diligently and with dedication in the face of a number of seasonal and transitional difficulties. Those with the most experience were able to keep moving toward their objectives, even in the face of change, and to take the long view, recognizing that progress toward policy objectives is often incremental. Looking back over the course of a number of years of this work, one staff member noted:

(One has) to be very pragmatic and to really realize the climate that you're dealing with...that in a lot of peace and justice issues, we were not going to be very successful...all we were doing was trying to avoid disaster...working with all of our partners, trying to hold back the dam.

This seems an apt metaphor for the efforts I saw enacted by United Church of Christ policy staff, together with their coalition partners, in their work on Capitol Hill: they were trying to hold back the dam—to avert disaster—particularly with regard to limiting damage to poverty alleviation programs such as those in the Farm Bill.

A snapshot of “what’s going on here”: Presbyterian Church (USA)

How did the Presbyterian Church (USA), as a special interest lobbying group, working through its Washington Office, facilitate its policy agenda on Capitol Hill during the 110th Congress? Beginning with the policy positions articulated through overtures approved by its biennial national gathering, General Assembly, the staff of the Presbyterian Washington Office set its priorities in collaboration with leadership at the denominational headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky and aligned with the general direction of congressional activity at that time. Like their counterparts in other mainline Protestant denominations, Presbyterian policy advocates worked through coalitions to take action on key issues, sent out weekly electronic alerts to grassroots constituencies and worked hard for programs that would “feed the hungry and clothe the naked,” in the words of their director.

The snapshot of their activity that came into focus through this research found the staff of the Presbyterian Washington Office—the smallest of the denominations studied, with only three staff members—leveraging denominational influence whenever possible through Presbyterian members of Congress. Unlike their counterparts in the UCC, who had very few members among lawmakers, the Presbyterians had many. The director of that office observed:

It’s amazing to think about how many Presbyterians we have in Congress over against how many we have in the (general) population.... There’s something about the way that Presbyterians understand our polity and the civil magistrate that says we should challenge the civil magistrate if the United States can’t follow God’s law. So Presbyterians have no hesitancy in challenging a government official who is not following God’s commandments.

Making Hill visits to Presbyterian lawmakers *as Presbyterians*, then, provided this staff with a particular advantage at times. Not so at other times. Not every lawmaker was interested in embracing the normative Presbyterian position on a given issue. The director of the office related a story about a phone call she had received recently from a Presbyterian House member

who had received a letter from her office—on Presbyterian Church letterhead—expressing support for reproductive rights for women. This lawmaker was unaware of the pro-choice position of the denomination—a position more liberal than his own—and was outraged to receive such a letter from the leadership of his denomination supporting a position contradictory to his own, which he indicated he held in light of his religious convictions. She was in the unenviable position of explaining to this lawmaker that the position of his denomination on this issue was grounded in sound biblical and theological understanding of the Christian tradition as well, albeit seen through different (more liberal) interpretive lens.

Another staff member indicated that she found it much more effective to equip a group of people to contact their own legislators, or to go with a delegation to the Hill to speak directly to their lawmakers, than to make a Hill visit on their behalf. While it is both efficient and effective to train and support grassroots constituents in contacting lawmakers, one staffer noted that Presbyterians believe that “God alone is Lord of the conscience.” She understood that “Presbyterians can express their opinions as they see fit” when they contact lawmakers, while the denomination’s Washington office is limited to articulating the positions of the General Assembly. Thus, at the grassroots level as well, the message delivered may not always be the message the denomination intended to send.

Another interesting note: the Presbyterian policy office was experiencing a change similar to that of the UCC with regard to the vetting of the weekly action alert. While the Washington staff created the alert each week, one staffer explained, “there was a controversy...so this is a new process in the past couple of weeks that we send it to Louisville (denominational headquarters) and they read it over (before it goes out).” While this is a small

adjustment to make, it illustrates the same kind of struggle UCC staff expressed about working as a satellite office, at the center of policymaking, but distant from denominational headquarters.

With regard to the Presbyterian Church (USA), then, the answer to my research question seems to be that an equally hard-working, dedicated team of policy professionals facilitate the implementation of the Presbyterian policy agenda on Capitol Hill diligently and with dedication. While the Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA) appeared to be very efficient in the allocation of the resources they had at their disposal and to work effectively with lawmakers, coalition partners and grassroots constituencies, they had experienced some staff reductions of their own in recent years. All three of the staff in the Presbyterian office—the director, particularly—expressed cognizance about the extent to which their resources were stretched. The director expressed concern about the future of the office, asking “how much longer can we sustain what we’re doing?” Perhaps this is the most poignant touchstone through which to characterize the work of this office: is their effort sustainable?

A snapshot of “what’s going on here”: United Methodist Church

How did the United Methodist Church, as a special interest lobbying group, working through its General Board of Global Ministries in Washington, facilitate its policy agenda on Capitol Hill during the 110th Congress? Like their counterparts in the Presbyterian and UCC offices, United Methodist staffers begin with the resolutions and stances adopted by the quadrennial General Conference. From these policy positions, the General Board of Church and Society, the unit’s board of directors, sets the general direction of policy work and establishes priorities for the staff. This process differs in two important ways from that of the other two denominations: since General Conference happens quadrennially, these priorities have longer duration than those of the others, and also, the denomination’s global membership privileges

concern about international issues to a greater degree than do the two. With these priorities established, and with an eye to what was happening in Congress, United Methodist staffers developed work plans focused on organizing, educating, training, and advocacy.

Like the other two denominations, the United Methodists had experienced a reduction in forces several years back, leaving each remaining staff member with a more sizeable workload than in the past. Also, the director of the UMC policy efforts was the General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society—that is to say, the executive of a rather large, global ministry unit. One of the positions lost in the reduction in forces was that of the administrator of policy advocacy. Thus, the person responsible for supervising the UMC policy advocacy staff was an individual with many other responsibilities. Likewise, the staff of policy professionals each carried a portfolio of issues that was more substantial than had been the case previously. That said, the UMC policy office had four policy professionals, plus a director albeit one with other responsibilities. Theirs was the most generously staffed office of the three studied. Beyond the broader staffing pattern, the UMC policy office, as part of a larger ministry unit, had the advantage of significantly more infrastructure than did the other denominations, including more support staff, office equipment, printed materials and conference rooms, to name a few key amenities.

The infrastructure and amenities that UMC staff enjoyed were the attributable not only to the location of the policy office within a larger ministry unit, but also to the denomination's much larger membership, with more than 7,000,000 members worldwide of the study. This was compared with 2,200,000 Presbyterians and a little more than 1,000,000 UCC members during the same period. However, those 7,000,000 Methodists—specifically, the 63 bishops, clergy, and laity that comprise the Board of Directors of General Board of Church and Society—were

far from unified in their theological vision for policy priorities. As the director of the Presbyterian policy office had indicated regarding misunderstandings of denominational positions and priorities, so United Methodists staffers expressed frustration about conflicts Board members sometimes generated when the policy positions endorsed by the General Conference vary from those held by the individual board members called upon to embrace them. Thus, larger membership made for larger infrastructure, more amenities, and at times, greater numbers of leaders in conflict over which course of action to take.

Like the other two denominations under study, the UMC policy staff invested considerable time and effort in educating its grassroots constituencies. As one staffer put it, “When it comes to feet on the ground...it takes an *enormous* amount of time and effort to get those feet on the ground, and a *lot* of education. Much of this work is done through workshops presented at regional Annual Conference meetings and other denominational gatherings. Also, the Methodists, along with the other two denominations and several other faith-based groups, bring people to Washington every March for Ecumenical Advocacy Days, and this includes advocacy training and Hill visits. With a large grassroots constituency, the UMC had a more extensive network of advocates prepared to participate in conference calls, Hill visits, and other targeted efforts than did the UCC or PCUSA.

One Methodist staff member told me this story about a lawmaker who had attended a meeting on a particular initiative. This lawmaker, he said, was “a yellow dog Democrat from Indiana.” He described the lawmaker’s willingness to engage him because of the outcome of a recent election. The representative told him this: “Oh, man, I *love* the Methodists. I’ve talked in *so many* Methodist churches.” Since he credited his progressive stance on social issues and

support he had received from people of faith for his recent victory, he was pleased to engage a member of the United Methodist policy staff in dialogue about policy issues.

The answer to the primary research question, then, with regard to the United Methodist Church, is that, like the Presbyterians and UCC, the UMC fields a strong, hard-working, team of dedicated policy professionals to facilitate its policy agenda on Capitol Hill. One additional advantage of the United Methodists in facilitating its policy agenda is the longevity in Washington. Its predecessor denomination, the Methodist Episcopal Church, developed its Social Creed in 1908, built the Methodist Building in 1921 and has had a continuous presence in Washington since that time. Nevertheless, as one UMC staff noted,

I think I am being a realist here. In the political realm, it wasn't until the religious community was seen as a new voice of a demographic—or voters—that we were courted by folks in power...I mean, we've been doing this work for *decades*. There's been a resurgence of interest in religious groups and their advocacy...I think they (members of Congress) are looking for new groups of folks to woo.

Thus, both the strength and longevity of the United Methodist presence in Washington proved advantageous to them, even as they worked to raise awareness of their presence among each new class of lawmakers elected to Congress.

A snapshot of “what’s going on here”: Looking across denominations

The short answer to the question of how three progressive Protestant denominations, as special interest lobbying groups, facilitated their policy agendas on Capitol Hill during the 110th Congress is this: through a lot of hard work, both as collectively through coalitions and respectively through denominational advocacy efforts. Beyond their hard work and dedication, there is wisdom to be gleaned about the collective work of mainline Protestant denominations from comments and stories shared in the course of the interviews. What follows are some

observations and comments about the work of these three denominational policy offices that serve to illustrate “what’s going on here” in a collective sense.

People of faith, working and speaking as people of faith

If one wanted to work as a lobbyist on Capitol Hill, there are numerous special interests for which to work. Even if one wanted to focus particularly on social justice issues such as poverty alleviation or human rights, there are many organizations from which to choose. It was striking that the individuals interviewed for this study made a *choice* to work for faith-based organizations *as* people of faith. Specifically, they chose to work for *mainline Protestant denominations* as people of faith. In most cases, *they chose to work for the denomination of which they were a member*. Most of those interviewed had theological educations and several had worked in ministry positions previously; most understood their work to be a calling to ministry, and a means of expressing the prophetic voice of the Church to lawmakers.

One of those interviewed described his understanding of the connection between his theological grounding and his work in this way:

I feel like we're involved in a ministry that is changing the world for the better...that we're working to—that what happens on earth, as in heaven, as we say in the Lord's Prayer...I view our denomination and a number of other major Protestant denominations as one of the key pillars of crucial social justice movements in the country. I believe this is pivotal and spiritual work. It's very interesting and very exciting...and very difficult.

Another was clear that the grounding of her work was in prophetic tradition in scripture that calls believers to work for social justice. She expressed frustration at having to explain the biblical grounding of her work repeatedly to lawmakers who are religiously and politically conservative. She explained:

I dislike having to rationalize why we are doing what we're doing. There are so many people that don't understand the biblical mandate to love God with all your heart and all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. How do you express that? One way of expressing it is to fulfill the mandate for justice in the Bible. 'Justice' appears lots of times throughout the Bible—God's justice and righteousness—and I like least having to explain that to...political conservatives who say what we're doing is political liberalism when it's coming out of the Bible.

Those working on Capitol Hill on behalf of the Church typically speak from positions grounded in the biblical tradition of social justice, as the previous comment notes. They speak not for themselves, but for those in the margins. One interviewee described the distinctiveness of policy work on behalf of the Church in this way:

We need the Church here—not just the United Methodist Church—we need the faith groups here because you are not seeking tax breaks for yourselves, you’re not seeking special favors, you’re not seeking legislation to benefit yourselves. You are here on behalf of the last, the least and the lost, and we have to be reminded of that because Washington and Capitol Hill are arenas of deal-making, and we get caught up in it, and someone has to bring us back to that focus...we came here to do good, and the Church serves to focus us on that.

Another interviewee spoke of the importance to her work of regularly attending the ecumenical worship service held each Wednesday at noon in the chapel of the United Methodist Building, open to all of the denominational and ecumenical organizations in the building. This midweek service, she said, helped her to remain spiritually grounded. She commented:

(Attending chapel) is a priority because I feel like it really re-energizes me for the week. It’s in the middle of the week, right where it needs to be, and it gets you through the week in that regard and provokes thought. Last week we had one (a sermon) on the moral ambiguity of God’s grace and it was a fantastic way of causing us to think about how there’s not a neat answer to everything and how do we translate that in our daily lives, so that was very helpful.

While doing my field research, I attended these services several times, and did note that most of those interviewed attended them on a regular basis. This practice set these policy professionals apart from other who do similar work for secular organizations.

One of the staffers interviewed had worked as a lobbyist for a corporate entity. He described some of the differences he observed—beyond taking a significant cut in pay to work

for his denomination—between lobbying for a corporation and working as an advocate for social justice on behalf of the Church on Capitol Hill. He observed:

Our goals and objectives are a little more nebulous. It is more difficult to figure out how to be in coalition with one another, and I think we are determined it's a good thing to *stay* in coalition with each other, even when we may not agree 100% on every detail of an issue....In the corporate world, when I worked on trade issues, there would be a business coalition, and there would be *hundreds* of businesses as a part of that coalition. If a few dropped off, it was no big deal, and folks didn't mourn or grieve...In the religious community, we want to always keep our allies' needs in perspective—to make sure that all our needs are being attended to—so it's much more, I think, a true sense of community in coalition.

A desire to find a sense of community as a support for their work seemed to be a common theme among the staff in the three denominational policy offices, another aspect which may be more common for those in faith-based policy work than those lobbying for secular interests.

Feeling a connection to denominational history and heritage was another characteristic of several of the staff who were working for the church in which they were also a member. One interviewee described the continuity of her own work with the historic vision of the United Methodist Church regarding temperance and moral concerns. Her policy portfolio was “Alcohol, Other Addictions and Health Care,” and she spoke about the historic concern of the denomination about these issues, along with the continuity of her work with this history. She reflected:

Those (temperance and gambling) are historic issues for the Church. They come out of the work of the United Methodist Church on issues related to morals. Those come from John Wesley who had a style of holding members accountable for living a life that is Christ-like. Of course, this building was *built* with Temperance and Public Morals money, and part of my portfolio is that work....They worked on prostitution. They worked on child labor—and prize fighting—they were opposed to prize fighting—but definitely, alcohol was a *huge* one...When this building was built, Prohibition was a *huge* issue in our country during that time...bootlegging and all the problems with alcohol...Almost everything you look on goes right back to poverty and inequities...almost all our work is that.

These examples serve to illustrate the grounding that most of those interviewed expressed not only in Christian theology and spirituality, but also in their denominational heritage. An important aspect of “what’s going on here,” then, is that all of those interviewed expressed, in one way or another, their sense that the work they were doing as policy professionals for these three mainline Protestant denominations was work done *by* people of faith *as* people of faith.

Equipping the faithful to advocate for social justice

Another common thread which tied together all of those interviewed was the meaning and pleasure they derived from working with church members, teaching them how to advocate for social justice. Sometimes this took the form of receiving calls from local church pastors and helping them understand an issue that was of concern to them. At other times, it took the form of receiving delegations of church members in their Washington offices and equipping them to make Hill visits. One particularly large and well-organized iteration of this effort is the Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference which takes place each year in March. All three denominations, together with several other denominations and progressive faith-based organizations host a conference through which participants from all over the country come to Washington to learn about faith-based advocacy efforts in such areas as poverty alleviation, environmental justice, and international development. After participants learn about key issues and current activity on those issues, they make Hill visits, supported by denominational staff, and practice using the advocacy skills they have learned. Several of those interviewed mentioned how much they enjoyed planning and hosting this conference.

Beyond preparing people from local churches to make face-to-face visits in Washington, all of those interviewed spent time training their grassroots constituencies in advocacy skills at regional denominational meetings. These trainings took the form of a

workshop offered within a weekend conference in which staff members would explain to those in the hinterlands about the denominational presence in Washington, the weekly action alerts and how to respond to them with phone calls or e-mails. Also, these meetings helped denominational staff identify key individuals within various regions who might be interested in providing a targeted response to a key lawmaker on a particular issue—for example, meeting with a lawmaker when he or she is back home in the district about the Farm Bill.

Still another venue for educating grassroots constituencies is through writing articles or editorials for publication in denominational magazines or newsletters. Also, preparation of learning materials for distribution to local churches in connection with a special offering or other special focus Sunday was another means of equipping local church members to learn and practice advocacy skills. Additionally, each denomination's website offered a number of resources prepared by staff members about key issues, and electronic alerts drew attention to their availability.

Most who lobby on Capitol Hill, whether for a faith-based organization, a corporation or some other entity, understand the importance to lawmakers of hearing from their constituents. The men and women who worked in the policy offices of these three denominations had more than a passing interest in connecting constituents with their representatives and senators. One staff member described her passion for working with grassroots constituent groups in this way:

I've always been a 'people person' and I've always been an educator...I think I have a gift for explaining things in a way that people understand. So I love being in a position that lets me use that gift—visit whole churches, have folks come here and talk with us...the people interaction and the issue interaction are what I like best.

Another spoke to the importance of developing a network of local church leaders to take action at key moments in the policy process:

A lot of what we do is pretty strategic...if every piece of legislation there are key players, and if you happen to have a key player that is a representative from an area where you have some pretty good-sized churches, then you've definitely got to work with it...When you don't have all the resources in the world, then you use what you have with a great deal of thought.

This passion for teaching, combined with efforts to develop a strategic network of grassroots leaders seemed a noteworthy theme that characterized the work of the Presbyterians, Methodists, and United Church of Christ in their work on Capitol Hill.

Bureaucracy in God's name: Tribulations of working for the Church

One theme that resonated through every interview was the dread associated with church bureaucracy. Several lamented, as one described it, "all the denominational things you have to do: the meetings you have to attend, going to headquarters to attend functions, things like that." Several commented on the trials of dealing with the complex financial infrastructure of denominations. One said, "the way we go about building our budgets...is worse than making sausage."

Several staff with experience in denominational policy work commented on the decline in financial and human resources available to support their work. One commented:

I think it's challenging these days to do work on the Hill from a religious point of view. Our offices are not as strong as they were. Having been in this context for 20 years, I am quite aware of the loss of resources, the loss of staff that we've endured over that time. On the other hand, I'm pleased with what we have and what we're able to do.

Another reflected:

This office (has)...a long history, and our ability to maintain staff...has been up and down over the course of the years. There were times when lots and lots of staff were dedicated to toward this...

Since all three offices had experienced reductions in staffing over the course of the last several years, each had some staff that had lived through that experience and in most cases, had taken on a larger workload as a result. Thus, declining financial support for the work of the church at

the regional and national levels had taken its toll in terms of both the workload and morale of staff in each office to some extent.

Beyond these administrative and financial struggles was a deeper ambiguity: the mean-spiritedness and mistrust that often pervades church politics. One denominational staffer commented:

Internal bureaucratic politics consumes a lot of my time. I have to show up at a significant number of (denominational) meetings because if I don't, I have no idea what will be done to our agency. I think there is a lot of support for the social justice ministry of the Church, but the denominational politics are sometimes very ruthless.

Another echoed this sentiment:

There can be a meanness within the religious community when there are differences of opinion that is just not tolerable to me—that I might expect in the cut-throat business world, and I can accept it there.... Within this faith tradition, no matter what our political, or even really, theological perspective, we are all called to be like Christ. How can anyone use divisive language and hateful rhetoric in the name of Christ? It's really frustrating.

Meetings of denominational leaders—particularly those of the boards responsible for setting policy priorities for denominational staff—tend to bring out unattractive behavior in some, according to those compelled to participate in them. One staffer reflected:

There's a phenomenal lack of trust. Many people—even grassroots leaders—if they have not personally signed off on something, then they don't believe it has validity. If some ministry is underway that they're not personally familiar with, then they feel that some conspiracy has happened, instead of understanding that there's different levels of the Church (and) different areas of responsibility...it's incredibly inefficient.

In spite of time-consuming, and sometimes emotionally draining meetings, financial constraints, and the inefficiencies posed by church bureaucracy, those who choose to work for the Church recognize that the truly difficult, mean-spirited folks are relatively few in number, and that dealing with all of these dynamics is simply part of the job.

Giving consideration to both church-related and Hill-related factors that influence the work of denominational policy staff, one long-time staff member in one of the offices offered this perspective:

(This) is extremely stressful work. I've seen a lot of colleagues...who've really paid a personal price in the stress and strain that they carry: the constant pressure, the rapid transition from issue to issue, the long periods of feeling like you're just losing, losing, losing and needing to be faithful just the same. It shows up in health; it shows up in relationships; it shows up in other ways. So I have a lot of respect for the people that do this work and the sacrifices they make.

Implications for Practice

Three mainline Protestant denominations, each with an advocacy office in Washington, D.C. focused on influencing the policy decisions of the U. S. Congress, all housed in the same building, sandwiched between the Capitol and the Supreme Court building...a handful of special interest lobbyists—advocates for social justice, as they would prefer to think of themselves...decades of work on behalf of the vulnerable, grounding efforts ranging from raising the minimum wage to marriage equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered couples in the theology of progressive strands of the Christian tradition...why does this matter and to whom? Specifically, it matters to the vulnerable populations—“the least of these” to draw on biblical language—who have no one to lobby for their cause on Capitol Hill other than individuals and organizations who stand to gain no personal or collective advantage from this work, people like the denominational policy advocates interviewed for this study. It matters to such people because they have few voices speaking on their behalf in a decision-making process that profoundly impacts their well-being, regardless of whether they know anything about the process or the people who speak for them. It matters, as well, to church members and church leaders, who know that the prophetic tradition of caring for “the least of these” continues in their

name on Capitol Hill, and offers opportunities for them to engage as well through grassroots advocacy efforts that shed light on local examples of larger concerns.

Three mainline Protestant denominations, each with an advocacy office in Washington, D.C. focused on influencing the policy decisions of the U. S. Congress, do work that matters to those who have no other voice to be sure. But what implications might these findings have for policy practice? What has this study—a moment in time snapshot of these three offices and their work—added to the body of research on policy practice? What follows is an effort to address these two questions with regard to two specific concerns: practice strategies and practice effectiveness.

Practice strategies

If the policy offices of the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the United Church of Christ have anything to teach us about lobbying as religious special interest groups, perhaps the most valuable lesson is that a few people can serve as a powerful witness if they come together in coalitions to work for change and empower their grassroots constituencies to do likewise. They know how to stretch very limited resources to represent their organization on a large array of issues. They know when to call on grassroots leaders and when to make Hill visits themselves.

What these denominational offices have to offer to the practice of policy advocacy is the assurance that constancy and hard work can bring about incremental change, even if the strategies employed are low-cost or no cost efforts. Sometimes the *constancy* of long-standing relationships of trust can be more effective than the peddling of favors and perks. Sometimes a few phone calls or e-mails from *grassroots constituents* to well-placed representatives or senators can turn a vote around more effectively than can wooing votes through expensive receptions or other soirees. Sometimes the *moral authority* of speaking for the Church can trump

the pomp and glamour of speaking for the corporate world. These, then, are the primary strategies at the disposal of Church-related special interests such as these three denominations: moral authority, constancy, and a national network of grassroots constituents in the form of local church members.

This latter strategy—speaking with the moral authority of the Church—speaking as people of faith from their faith—is perhaps the most powerful of their tools. In speaking for the marginalized, the disenfranchised, the poor, this particular special interest could play the “God card”: they could claim the authority of scripture—“God’s preferential option for the poor” as one theologian describes it⁵—and the authority of the Christian tradition as sources of their agency. While “doing the right thing” does not always motivate lawmakers—one could argue it *rarely* motivates lawmakers—when the Church speaks to morally complex issues such as stem cell research or torture for the purpose of gaining intelligence information, their concern is heard differently than that of lobbyists for science or national defense. Sometimes, the reasoned and considered position of the Church is exactly the voice lawmakers *want* to hear to help them clarify their position. In those instances, the work of these denominational policy offices and their coalition partners is particularly effective. Unfortunately such instances are somewhat rare.

While commending the hard work of these policy advocates, typically grounded by their own faith and working on behalf of the faithful, there is a critique to be leveled at their work as well: perhaps they are limited enough by denominational constraints that they are not able to face off effectively against other lobbyists. Regardless of denomination, each of those interviewed speaks both *from* the tradition they represent (with lawmakers) and *to* the tradition they represent (with church members). In this dual role, they serve as ambassadors of sorts

⁵ Gustavo Gutierrez. (1971). *A theology of liberation: History, politics, salvation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis. Trans. By Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson.

when representing the denomination on Capitol Hill, yet they are mediators of sorts when training grassroots constituencies in advocacy strategies. Negotiating the sometimes polarized positions of factions within a denomination—some of which are mean-spirited—may require significant diplomacy, causing policy staff to tread cautiously among the denominational leaders whose contributions and budget decisions fund their work.

As previously noted, some of the lobbying strategies, both direct and indirect, typically employed by other special interests seem either unappealing or unviable to denominationally-related special interests. For example, none of the denominational lobbyists seemed to have a “home base” on Capitol Hill—a lawmaker’s office from which they could operate when in the Capitol. Only rarely did denominational policy advocates leverage the influence, financial or otherwise, of grassroots members who might sway a lawmaker in one direction or another. They did not seem to pursue legal means to impact legislation through Political Action Committees (PACs) or other financial vehicles for delivering effective political influence. They did indicate that they made personal contributions to political campaigns nor did they seem to attend fundraisers or gatherings where those with significant influence could wield it. While such political maneuvering requires financial resources, those who have such resources are often willing to allow organizations to which they have personal loyalty ride their coattails, denominational leaders seem unaware or disinterested in such maneuvers.

All of this to say that though the hearts and energies of all of the denominational policy advocates interviewed seems to be directed toward social justice for the marginalized, their ideological fervor, their zeal for waging war on the opposition for the sake of the cause was all but absent. Though most had personal zeal for their work, denominational constraints seemed to limit the professional zeal available to them in the name of ecclesial authority.

Unfortunately, denominational constraints may serve to disempower and limit their effectiveness.

Implications of this study: Possibilities for enhancing practice effectiveness

How might the results of this study enhance the effectiveness of the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the United Church of Christ in their work on Capitol Hill? And by extension, how might what was learned through this research be useful to other denominational and progressive faith-based special interests in their work on Capitol Hill? What follows are some possibilities for enhancing practice effectiveness based on the results of this study.

Increased access to Capitol Hill

Access to lawmakers and their staff members is critical to influencing policy decisions. Where strong relationships with key lawmakers exist, special interests wield considerable power and influence. Often successful lobbyists have a “Hill office”—a spot in the office of a supportive lawmaker from which they can operate within the Capitol complex. As previously noted, the three denominations that comprise the focus of this study lacked such access. They did not seem to enjoy the “insider” status that more powerful and influential lobbyists take for granted. This poses an obvious disadvantage. While the United Methodist Building, where all three denominational offices are located, is wedged between two senate office buildings and the Supreme Court building. The only non-governmental building in the area, the United Methodist Building could not enjoy a more strategic location with regard to access to Capitol Hill. Nevertheless, connecting with lawmakers and Hill staffers from a location *near* the Hill is not the same as having access from a location *on* the Hill. Undoubtedly, the legal requirement of nonpartisan advocacy required of religiously affiliated groups is a critical explanatory factor in this difference. Nevertheless, closer working relationships and access to insider communication from staffers on *both* sides of the aisle would certainly prove advantageous to the work of these three offices.

Consolidation of resources

One of the greatest strengths of these three denominational policy offices is the network of relationships they have with one another and with other progressive, faith-based policy efforts, many of which office in the United Methodist Building. They work closely with the American Baptist Churches USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Episcopal Church, Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers), National Conference of Churches, and Bread for the World to name a few. Since they spend a significant amount of time working together in coalitions, sharing such resources as knowledge, experience, and creativity, it would seem logical that some of these entities might be able to share some infrastructure. For example, could two or more denominations or organizations share an office suite which utilizes common administrative and support resources? Would the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society subcontract some of its internal resources to other denominations through Memoranda of Agreement? Sharing of administrative and support staff and other office resources is a common practice among small nonprofits, and might prove a possibility worth exploring for these three denominations.

More extensive use of technology

At the time the field work for this study was completed, social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were not utilized as marketing tools for organizations to the extent they are today. A current perusal of the websites of the three denominations finds these social networking platforms displayed on the home page of each. These and other evolving communication tools offer additional low-cost or no-cost options for visibility, as well as for tracking participant interest in increasingly sophisticated ways. Giving high priority to the use

of emerging technology to enhance visibility and communication both with Hill staffers and with grassroots constituencies would be a wise move for each denomination.

Future Research

The study has provided a moment-in-time snapshot of the policy work of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ on Capitol Hill in 2007, early in the course of the 110th Congress. While this exploratory study serves to revisit some of the territory covered in the late 1980s by Hertzke (1988) and other, subsequent researchers about the advocacy work of mainline Protestant and other progressive mainline faith-based groups, there are many more possibilities for extending what is known in this area through future studies. Revisiting the same three denominations which were the subject of this study during the current congressional session, the 113th Congress, doubtless would reveal different configurations of people, different issues and different strategies for addressing them. The mere passage of time and changing of the guard with respect to both congressional staff and denominational staff warrants additional exploration of this policy arena from this particular perspective.

Beyond the updating of existing work through revisiting what was learned in light of today's Congress, there are numerous options for deeper exploration of progressive, faith-based advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill. For example, comparing the self-perceptions about effectiveness of advocacy efforts, alongside observations of the researcher, with interviews and other data sources external to the lobbying offices themselves would greatly strengthen the reliability and validity of such a study. If the perceptions of the interviewees, for example, were validated by similar evidence from Hill staffers or advocates from other organizations, this would strengthen the argument of the denominational advocates themselves that their work is

solid and effective. Likewise, documentary evidence citing pastoral letters, committee testimony or other data from denominational sources cited in floor debate on a measure would lend credence to the self-perception of denominational staffers that their work is recognized by lawmakers as helpful and persuasive in attaining policy outcomes.

To pursue such research in other directions, a follow-up study might look more closely at the polity, or governance structure of each denomination and the type of authorization each gives to its leadership to engage in policy advocacy on Capitol Hill or in other arenas. We have seen that the UCC, with its congregational polity, and the UMC with its governance by bishops, other clergy and laity, along with the PC(USA) with its governance by elders, each comes to the work of policy advocacy with a bit different structure and authorization. A deeper study of the impact of denominational polity—not only that of these three sects, but that of others—on the type of authorization and strategy that each brings with them to policy arenas, including Capitol Hill, would prove interesting and insightful.

Further, a deeper exploration of the connection between denominational history and the particular policy issues would prove interesting and fruitful as well. For example, one could undertake deeper study of the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, rooted in the Social Gospel movement of the early 20th century, and the ways in which this doctrine and its historical antecedents shape the current efforts of UMC leaders to alleviate poverty through policy advocacy in the current political environment. Or again, one could delve further into the long-standing concern of Presbyterians for quality public education and its ongoing focus on educational concerns as antecedents for its current concerns with respect to its current concern with strengthening public funding for school and education programs. Likewise, the historic concern of the United Church of Christ for voting rights and access of marginalized groups to

decision-making arenas could translate to further research into this denomination's focus in recent years on marriage equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender couples. Similarly, one could delve into the history of Lutheran or Episcopal or other denominational histories and explore the links between the historical concerns of these traditions and their current policy advocacy efforts.

The current policy landscape for this kind of research—the 113th Congress with its deep partisan divide, unprecedented debt load and precarious economic recovery—poses to denominational policy advocates and any who work the Hill with different challenges, and in many ways, more profound consequences than those faced in the 110th Congress. Indeed, any Congress, together with any presidential administration and Supreme Court session will offer its unique cast of characters, set of challenges and array of key issues for lobbyists of every stripe. The men and women doing the work of policy advocacy on behalf of Progressive religious entities—those working on behalf of the progressive Protestant denominations, in particular—could offer rich fodder for continued research in this vein on an ongoing basis.

Conclusion

Many of the men and women interviewed for this study noted the prophetic role of people of faith in “speaking truth to power”—a phrase originally attributed to Quaker (Religious Society of Friends) efforts in the mid-1950s to speak with conscience to the alternatives to violence with regard to growing Cold War concerns about foreign aggression.⁶

Indeed, religious special interest groups of every stripe, when they come to Capitol Hill to give voice to their concerns, looking to their foundational teachings and historical precedents of their traditions to provide grounding for their work. With regard to mainline Protestant

⁶ American Friends Service Committee. (1955). *Speak truth to power: A Quaker search for an alternative to violence*. Philadelphia, PA: American Friends Service Committee. Available at https://afsc.org/sites/afsc.civicaactions.net/files/documents/Speak_Truth_to_Power.pdf

special interests—and the three progressive denominational voices that were the focus of this study in particular—each spoke to the 110th Congress with deep passion and commitment to the work they were doing and continue to do so.

As I write these concluding words in 2013, six years after the interviews and observations that were the basis for this study were gathered, some of the faces have changed. Some of the staff in the Presbyterian, Methodist and United Church of Christ Washington offices have moved on to other positions and some have retired. That said, of the ten individuals interviewed for this study, seven are still in their positions, still doing the work of social justice on Capitol Hill on behalf of the faithful.

The prophetic call to speak truth to power persists from generation to generation. Those who respond by taking the concerns of Progressive Protestant voices to Capitol Hill—indeed any people of faith who undertake this work—will never suffer from a lack of work to do. From the Progressive Era through the New Deal and the Civil Rights Movement, from the Reagan and Clinton and Bush years and up to the present time—the second Obama administration—such efforts have persisted. As long as there is a need to speak truth to power on behalf of the vulnerable, Progressive Protestant voices will be there —“from Seneca Falls to Selma to Stonewall,” as President Obama said in his second inaugural address—standing alongside other people of faith and secular allies, doing the work of social justice on Capitol Hill—recognizing that “Our journey is not complete until all our children, from the streets of Detroit to the hills of Appalachia, to the quiet lanes of Newtown, know that they are cared for and cherished and always safe from harm.”⁷

⁷ Barak Obama. (2013.) Inaugural Address. Washington, D.C.: The White House. Available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/21/inaugural-address-president-barack-obama>

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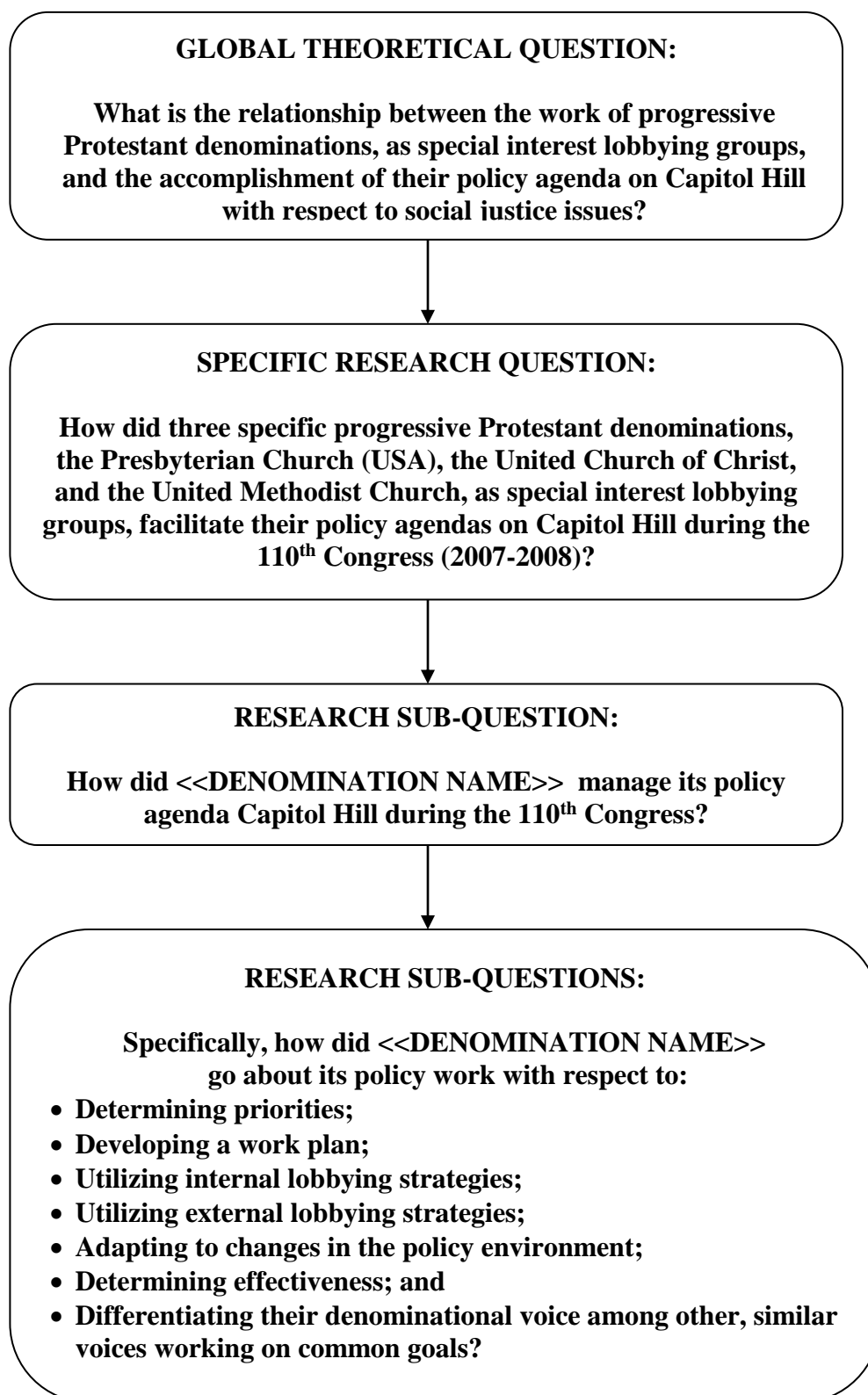
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Appendix A: Overview of Research Questions



Appendix B: Pre-Interview Survey Concerning Denominationally-Related Lobbying Activities⁸

This survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. It is intended to coincide with and augment a face-to-face interview with you, conducted by Julie Summers, a student at the University of Arkansas, as a part of her dissertation research. The survey poses specific questions about your denomination's lobbying activities, questions that are more easily answered in written form than through an oral interview. Thank you for completing this survey as a precursor to your interview.

Instructions: Please complete the following survey concerning your office's efforts to influence members of Congress and/or their staffers to support or oppose particular policy positions. Consider the following lobbying activities and **estimate the frequency with which you and your colleagues in your own denomination's office have engaged in these activities in the course of the past 12 months.**

DIRECT LOBBYING:

***DEFINITION:** Direct lobbying involves presenting a case for a particular action or vote directly to a member of Congress or one of their staff through one-to-one or small group discussions, providing testimony at hearings, monitoring committee meetings, or providing written information to lawmakers such as current data on an issue or content for speeches or legislation.⁹*

Please estimate the extent to which you and your colleagues in your own denomination's office engage in direct lobbying activities.

Engaging in face-to-face meetings with members of Congress or their staff:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Providing testimony at congressional hearings or committee meetings:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Monitoring meetings of congressional committees, sub-committees, or hearings:

⁸ NOTE: This survey is based on the five categories of lobbying activities developed by Roger H. Davidson and Walter J. Oleszek and discussed in their book, *Congress & Its Members, Ninth Edition*, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2004), pp. 370-376.

⁹ Also included in the direct lobbying category is work by lobbyists on behalf of politicians in their re-election campaigns, but it is understood that such activity by denominations is prohibited, since they are nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations, which are not able to endorse candidates or participate in partisan activities.

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Providing verbal or written information or data about a particular issue to a lawmaker or staffer:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Assisting with developing proposed content for a speech on a particular issue for a lawmaker or staffer:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Assisting with proposed language for a piece of legislation for a lawmaker or staffer:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

SOCIAL LOBBYING:

DEFINITION: *Social lobbying involves the process of influencing members or their staff in settings other than the offices and hallways of Capitol Hill. This may include gaining access to members at dinner parties, receptions, and other social gatherings. It may include, as well, providing meals, trips, or gifts to lawmakers or paying them honorariums for speaking engagements.*¹⁰

Please estimate the extent to which you and your colleagues in your own denomination's office engage in social lobbying activities.

Attending (as a representative of your denomination) a nonpartisan reception, dinner, or other social gathering for members of Congress and/or their staff members:

- several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Sponsoring (as a denomination) a nonpartisan reception, dinner, or other social gathering for members of Congress and/or their staff members:

- several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Engaging in conversations with members of Congress or their staff at a nonpartisan reception, dinner, or social gathering for the purpose of advocating a particular position on an issue:

- several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Leveraging support (personal influence or financial support) from prominent or influential members of your denomination by engaging them in conversations with members of Congress or their staff at a nonpartisan reception, dinner, or social gathering for the purpose of advocating a particular position on an issue:

- several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

¹⁰ Also included in the social lobbying category is fundraising by lobbyists for politicians in their re-election campaigns, but it is understood that such activity by denominations is prohibited, since they are nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations, which are not able to endorse candidates or participate in partisan activities.

On a nonpartisan basis, paying honorariums for speaking engagements to members of Congress or their staff:

- several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

On a nonpartisan basis, providing meals, tickets to sporting or entertainment events, or other gifts to individuals or groups of members of Congress or their staff:

- several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

COALITION LOBBYING:

DEFINITION: *Coalition lobbying involves mobilizing an array of organizations or entities with similar interests and concerns to engage in a shared effort to attain common policy goals by sharing material and human resources such as contacts, grassroots networks, and expenses.*

Please estimate the extent to which you and your colleagues in your own denomination's office engage in coalition lobbying activities (Include ecumenical, interfaith, and non-religious coalitions).

Participating (as a representative of your denomination) in a meeting focused on mobilizing a coalition—an array of organizations or entities with similar interests and concerns—to engage in a shared effort to attain common policy goals:

- several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Developing, organizing or facilitating (as a representative of your denomination) a meeting focused on mobilizing a coalition—an array of organizations or entities with similar interests and concerns—to engage in a shared effort to attain common policy goals:

- several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Producing or participating in producing (as a coalition) educational materials such as written or electronic resource materials (reports, brochures, posters, fact sheets, a web page, etc.) for members of Congress and/or their staff members as part of a shared effort to attain common policy goals:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Sponsoring (as a coalition) an educational event such as a nonpartisan speaker, workshop, conference, or other similar event for members of Congress and/or their staff members as part of a shared effort to attain common policy goals:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Sponsoring (as a coalition) a nonpartisan social gathering (reception, luncheon, dinner, etc.) for members of Congress and/or their staff members:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Leveraging support (personal influence or financial support) from prominent or influential members of a coalition in which your denomination participates by engaging them in conversations with members of Congress or their staff at a nonpartisan reception, dinner, or social gathering for the purpose of advocating a particular position on an issue:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

GRASSROOTS AND ELECTRONIC LOBBYING (continued):

DEFINITION: *Grassroots lobbying* involves large-scale mobilization of citizens—in the case of denominations, church members—engaging them in contacting their legislators to advocate for or oppose a particular policy position. This approach involves creating an outpouring of letters (or postcards), phone calls, faxes, and/ or e-mails, letting the members of Congress and/or their staff members know how the people in their home district or state view a particular issue.

Please estimate the extent to which you and your colleagues in your own denomination's office engage in grassroots lobbying activities.

Educating the members of your denomination (your grassroots constituency) about the denomination's position on a particular issue and encouraging them to engage in a **letter writing** (or postcard) campaign to let members of Congress know how they view a particular issue:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Educating the members of your denomination (your grassroots constituency) about the denomination's position on a particular issue and encouraging them to engage in a **phone calling** campaign to let members of Congress know how they view a particular issue:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Educating the members of your denomination (your grassroots constituency) about the denomination's position on a particular issue and encouraging them to engage in a **fax** campaign to let members of Congress know how they view a particular issue:

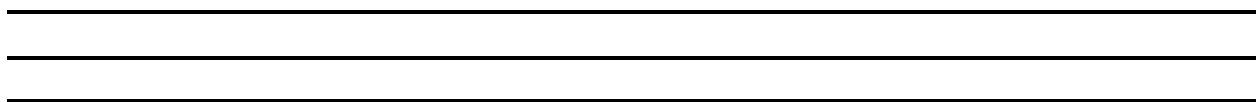
several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

Educating the members of your denomination (your grassroots constituency) about the denomination's position on a particular issue and encouraging them to engage in an **e-mail** campaign to let members of Congress know how they view a particular issue:

several times/week about once a week several times/month several times/year
 rarely or never

OTHER LOBBYING ACTIVITIES:

Are there other lobbying activities that your office utilizes which have not been discussed in this survey? (Please describe them and note how often they have been utilized in the past 12 months.)



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Appendix C: Interview Guide

1. Tell me about your particular area of responsibility (policy emphasis) in your office.
2. Walk me through a typical day of work for you (i.e., tell me what you might do in your job).
3. Tell me what you like best about your job. Tell me what you like least about your job.
4. How did you and your colleagues go about developing a work plan for your denomination's work with this session of Congress?
5. Once it is developed, how do you and your colleagues adapt your office's priorities and work plan to changes in the policy environment in the denomination's work with Congress? For example, Hurricane Katrina hit in the middle of the budget debates—did this natural disaster change your approach to advocating for the needs of vulnerable people in your work to influence the federal budget?
6. Your work involves both advocating with policymakers for particular policy positions and also, equipping your constituency—church members—to serve as grassroots advocates. How do you and your colleagues manage the demands of motivating your constituency while at the same time working on Capitol Hill?
7. How do you and your colleagues determine your office's effectiveness in terms of its priorities and work plan for the denomination's work with Congress?
8. How do you think that lawmakers and/or their staff members perceive the progressive religious voices in Washington as they work to influence policy decisions?
9. Do you think that lawmakers and/or their staff members differentiate among the stances and strategies of various progressive Protestant voices working to influence policy decisions—for example, differentiating among the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the UCCers?

10. If you had to describe the two main differences between your denomination's approach to policy work and that of the (other two denominations) what would those differences be?

11. If you could change anything about your experience here, what would that be?

Appendix D: Sample Codebooks Detailing Analysis of Interviews
Codebook for Interview with UCC Staff Two

Code: Specific word or phrase from interview	Type: Inductive Deductive	Description: Relevant terms/sentiments	Example from transcript: Context/explanation
Sample from initial coding (NOTE: This is an example of looking for theoretical possibilities from word-by-word and line-by-line coding.)			
legislative advocacy	inductive	description of role as “advocate” versus lobbyist	I work in advocacy— <i>legislative advocacy</i> —in Washington.
General Synod pronouncements	deductive	explanation of relationship of interviewee’s work to church polity (describes ecclesial authorization for work)	...supporting all the mandates of the UCC through <i>General Synod pronouncements</i>
advocacy capacity...at the local church level	inductive, deductive	description of grassroots organizing role with local and regional constituencies	..to help them (conferences and congregations) to develop their own <i>advocacy capacity</i> , you know, <i>at the local church level</i>
Washington interfaith staff community	deductive	explains professional role in relationship to legislative advocates from other faith-based groups working on similar issues	I work with the <i>Washington interfaith staff community</i> on several issues...
Sample from focused coding (NOTE: This is an example of exploring more deeply emerging themes and beginning to categorize them.)			
‘no permanent friends, no permanent enemies.’	inductive	brief and transient nature of alliances among interest groups with common concerns seems important	...there’s a saying in Washington: ‘ <i>no permanent friends, no permanent enemies.</i> ’
...left us without an advocacy tool during the most critical and intense part of the legislative session.	inductive	poor coordination between denominational headquarters in Cleveland and work on the ground in the Washington office creates additional stress for Washington staff	...we’ve had this Synod-driven decision to do all of this database migration, which has <i>left us without an advocacy tool during the most critical and intense part of the legislative session.</i>
...all we were trying to do was avoid disaster.,,	inductive	an organization with a progressive voice in a climate dominated by a conservative ethos changes the goal to “avoiding disaster”	...we knew who were dealing with and a lot of times I recall thinking that <i>all we were trying to do was avoid disaster.,,</i>

Sample from axial coding (NOTE: This is an example of connecting various subcategories into broader categories as emerging theories about “what’s going on here” begin to coalesce.)			
...if we had anybody saying, ‘I speak for the United Church of Christ,’ we’d have a revolution	deductive	role of UCC policy office in speaking to lawmakers about denominational policy stances endorsed by General Synod (limits of authority) seems to be a theme	Now, <i>if we had anybody saying, ‘I speak for the United Church of Christ,’ we’d have a revolution.</i>
...with a lot of peace and justice issues, we were not going to be very successful.	inductive	difficulty finding support for some issues (especially “peace and justice” issues) in the existing political climate seems to be a theme	For the past several years, we realized that <i>with a lot of peace and justice issues, we were not going to be very successful.</i>
...there needs to be this decision-making process at the JW (Justice & Witness Ministries) level.	deductive	setting priorities that comport with denominational expectations and Congressional climate is an ongoing concern for staff	At some point you have to decide, “Okay, we cannot do everything,” ... <i>there needs to be this decision-making process at the JW (Justice & Witness Ministries) level.</i>
Sample from theoretical coding (NOTE: This is an example of expanding emerging theories about “what’s going on here” by exploring relationships among various identified categories.)			
<p>These three comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At some point you have to decide, “Okay, we cannot do everything,” ...<i>there needs to be this decision-making process at the JW (Justice & Witness Ministries) level;</i> • For the past several years, we realized that <i>with a lot of peace and justice issues, we were not going to be very successful;</i> and • ...we knew who were dealing with and a lot of times I recall thinking that <i>all we were trying to do was avoid disaster;</i> <p>point to a category concerning setting priorities combining subcategories related to setting realistic priorities given a particular political climate on the Hill and attending to denominational expectations expressed by the national decision-making body, General Synod.</p>			
<p>These two comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...the UCC is, for the most part, pretty progressive on issues of choice...pretty progressive on issue of concern to the GLBT community...on issues related to women. <i>We are able to sometimes be the most outspoken religious voice. We may be surrounded by our colleagues of other denominations, but we will be the spokesperson; and</i> • ...(some) other denominations...that don’t have a congregational policy like we do, can have a bishop speak for the church. Now, <i>if we had anybody saying, ‘I speak for the United Church of Christ,’ we’d have a revolution.</i> <p>point to the particularities of denominational polity, versus the governance models of other denominations, and the role polity may play in speaking to lawmakers as well as speaking to local and regional denominational gatherings. The particular authorization of denominational polity shapes the work of denominational policy offices in significant ways.</p>			
Sample from memo writing. (NOTE: This is an example of analysis of ideas about connections			

and disconnects in an emerging theory about “what’s going on here”.)

Denominational authorization and discretion: The authorization imbued by the General Synod, while it might not please all members, provides its denominational policy office with the direction and discretion to move forward with advocacy efforts, and do so expediently, placing them ahead of other religious voices in some cases.

A document discussing the authority of General Synod is quite relevant to this theme:

General Synod is the most widely representative body in the life of the denomination. It sets policy for the Covenanted Ministries and provides direction for Conferences, Associations, and congregations, for all who hear the word of God speaking...

It is a faithful gathering that speaks *to* the church, not *for* the church. It does not speak for the whole church...no one entity speaks for every setting of the church. Individual members and congregations are free to disagree and to state their convictions on their own terms (UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, 2003, p. 6).

Moral authority/agency: When denomination staff speak with the moral authority of the Church—speaking for the marginalized, the disenfranchised, the poor, they play the “God card” claiming the authority of scripture—in the words theologian Gustavo Gutierrez, “God’s preferential option for the poor”—and the authority of the Christian tradition as sources of their agency.

Two UCC Justice and Witness Ministries documents speak to this topic:

- (The purpose of the UCC’s Public Life and Social Policy Office) is to coordinate the public policy advocacy work of the church in collaboration with all settings of the UCC...(and) to give life and voice to the resolutions and pronouncements of General Synod on social policy (UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, 2005); and
- UCC Justice and Peace Action Network, a grassroots advocacy network composed of individual members and local congregations working with the Public Life and Social Policy Office in “shaping public policy and advocating for systemic change in keeping with God’s vision of a just and loving society,” (UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, 2003).

Speaking with the moral authority of the denomination and how it is brought to bear on Capitol Hill is an important theme in both denominational literature and interviews.

Codebook for Interview with Methodist Director

Code: Specific word or phrase from interview	Type: Inductive Deductive	Description: Relevant terms/sentiments	Example from transcript: Context/explanation
Sample from initial coding (NOTE: This is an example of looking for theoretical possibilities from word-by-word and line-by-line coding.)			
direct advocacy	deductive	description of professional role as both advocate and administrator	Sometimes, there <i>direct advocacy</i> and sometimes there's <i>staff management</i> involved...
staff management	deductive		
meeting of Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders	deductive	description of interviewees peers in advocacy	Next week, there'll be a <i>meeting of Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders</i> here in the building to <i>design a campaign on ending the war in Iraq</i>
to design a campaign on ending the war in Iraq	inductive	intended outcome of upcoming planning meeting	
"grasstop" leaders... leaders from local churches and from the District (D.C.) area.	deductive	definition of "grasstops" (versus "grassroots") leaders	...I'll be meeting with what you would call " <i>grasstop</i> " leaders. These would be <i>leaders from local churches and from the District (D.C.) area.</i>
Sample from focused coding (NOTE: This is an example of exploring more deeply emerging themes and beginning to categorize them.)			
changing the world for the better	inductive	Director of UMC policy office describes his vision for the work, noting theological underpinnings of the work	I feel like we're involved in a ministry that is <i>changing the world for the better...</i> that what happens <i>on earth, as in heaven</i> , as we say in the Lord's Prayer.
on earth, as in heaven	inductive		
key pillars of crucial social justice movements	inductive	Notes advocacy partners share faith-based approach to advocacy for social justice	I view our denomination and a number of other major Protestant denominations as <i>key pillars of crucial social justice movements</i> in the country.
churches as incredibly important allies	inductive		...leaders of these secular movements (human rights, social justice) often see the <i>churches as incredibly important allies</i> in those struggles...

Sample from axial coding (NOTE: This is an example of connecting various subcategories into broader categories as emerging theories about “what’s going on here” begin to coalesce.)			
...internal United Methodist bureaucratic politics...consumes a lot of my time	inductive	denominational bureaucracy impacts policy work	<i>...internal United Methodist bureaucratic politics...consumes a lot of my time</i>
support for the social justice ministry of the Church denominational politics are sometimes very ruthless.	inductive	complex relationships among denominational factions impact policy work	<i>...there is a lot of support for the social justice ministry of the Church, but the denominational politics are sometimes very ruthless.</i>
building our budgets...is worse than making sausage...	inductive	financial issues are particularly difficult	<i>...the way we (UMC leadership) go about building our budgets...is worse than making sausage...</i>
Sample from theoretical coding (NOTE: This is an example of expanding emerging theories about “what’s going on here” by exploring relationships among various identified categories.)			
<p>These comments about the role of the UMC policy office and its work on Capitol Hill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changing the world for the better • on earth, as in heaven • key pillars of crucial social justice movements • churches as incredibly important allies <p>point to the vision the UMC director has for the office in its interfaces with internal and external constituencies.</p>			
<p>These comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...internal United Methodist bureaucratic politics...consumes a lot of my time • denominational politics are sometimes very ruthless • building our budgets...is worse than making sausage... <p>point to an emerging theme concerning the impact of internal United Methodist politics on the policy work of the denomination.</p>			
Sample from memo writing (NOTE: This is an example of analysis of ideas about connections and disconnects in an emerging theory about “what’s going on here”.)			
<p><i>Educating internal constituencies/local churches:</i> This interviewee emphasizes the importance of educating grassroots constituencies—church members—about the biblical and theological underpinnings of denominational policy statements. This vision links policy work with understanding of the role of denominational authority particularly that represented in the <i>UMC Book of Resolutions</i>, the official compendium of policy positions for the denomination for a period of eight years following their adoption. These position statements, together with broader Social Principles, arising from the UMC Social Creed, authorize the General Board of Church and Society to take action through the denomination’s work on Capitol Hill.</p>			

Codebook for Interview with Presbyterian Staff Two

Code: Specific word or phrase from interview	Type: Inductive Deductive	Description: Relevant terms/sentiments	Example from transcript: Context/explanation
Sample from initial coding (NOTE: This is an example of looking for theoretical possibilities from word-by-word and line-by-line coding.)			
portfolio of issues of domestic poverty, health and the environment	inductive, deductive	Staff member describes the portfolio of issues she follows	What I do in this office is advocacy for the <i>portfolio of issues of domestic poverty, health and the environment.</i>
domestic poverty portfolio nutrition and housing and general poverty support	deductive	Staff member describes the “domestic poverty portfolio”	The <i>domestic poverty portfolio</i> includes issues of <i>nutrition and housing and general poverty support</i> (TANF, Social Security)
access to adequate health care, parity in health care provider services, Medicare Medicaid children’s programs.	deductive	Staff member describes the health policy issues involved in the “poverty portfolio”	The health piece in the poverty portfolio includes adequate health care: access to adequate health care, parity in health care provider services, Medicare and Medicaid, children’s programs.
Sample from focused coding (NOTE: This is an example of exploring more deeply emerging themes and beginning to categorize them.)			
Farm Bill a nutrition title which funds Food Stamps... and school lunches	deductive	work on the Farm Bill and related poverty programs seems to be a theme	This year, my time is really focused on the <i>Farm Bill</i> ...it includes <i>a nutrition title which funds Food Stamps...and school lunches...</i>
State Children’s Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP) reauthorization	deductive	health care access for low-income families seems to be a theme as well	I’ve been working on children’s health care a lot this year—the <i>State Children’s Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP)</i> which is up for <i>reauthorization</i>
that kind of tragedy—daily tragedy—(people don’t want to see) on their televisions every night.	inductive	poverty issues do not get consistent media attention	(Media attention to poverty issues) is very short-lived... that kind of tragedy—daily tragedy—(people don’t want to see) on their televisions every night.

Sample from axial coding (NOTE: This is an example of connecting various subcategories into broader categories as emerging theories about “what’s going on here” begin to coalesce.)			
ecumenical coalition meetings	deductive	notes the importance of ecumenical coalitions in developing strategy	What I do is go to our <i>ecumenical coalition meetings</i> , I usually <i>work on strategy</i> .
work on strategy	inductive		
(we have) our own strategy as religious groups	inductive	discusses strategy development among denominational partners	We work within the religious community and sometimes I’m informed by the secular community, but usually, we have <i>our own strategy as religious groups</i> .
develop our own faith-group strategy	inductive	differentiates denominational strategy from coalition strategy	We tend to <i>develop our own faith-group strategy</i> together, and of course, you <i>go to that strategy meeting armed with your own (denominational) policy position</i> .
go to that strategy meeting armed with your own (denominational) policy position			
Sample from theoretical coding (NOTE: This is an example of expanding emerging theories about “what’s going on here” by exploring relationships among various identified categories.)			
These three comments:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What I do is go to our ecumenical coalition meetings, I usually work on strategy; • We work within the religious community and sometimes I’m informed by the secular community, but usually, we have our own strategy as religious groups; and • We tend to develop our own faith-group strategy together, and of course, you go to that strategy meeting armed with your own (denominational) policy position; 			
point to the importance of strategy both to denominational offices and coalition work.			
These three comments:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What I do in this office is advocacy for the portfolio of issues of domestic poverty, health and the environment; • my time is really focused on the Farm Bill...it includes a nutrition title which funds Food Stamps...and school lunches; and • I’ve been working on children’s health care a lot this year—the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP) which is up for reauthorization; 			
point out the ways in which the Presbyterian policy office allocates its staff time and expertise to address its priorities.			
Sample from memo writing. (NOTE: This is an example of analysis of ideas about connections and disconnects in an emerging theory about “what’s going on here”.)			
<i>Allocation of resources:</i> The Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA) appeared to be very efficient in the allocation of the resources they had at their disposal and to work effectively with lawmakers, coalition partners and grassroots constituencies, yet staff expressed cognizance about the extent to which their resources were stretched.			

Moral authority: Staff notes that progressive faith-based group working on Capitol Hill on behalf of the Church typically speak from positions grounded in the biblical tradition of social justice, meaning that they speak not for themselves, but for those in the margins.

Appendix E: Institutional Review Board Protocol Approval

March 15, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Julie Summers
Primary Investigator
J. Brinck Kerr
Faculty Advisor

FROM: Rosemary Ruff
IRB Administrator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 07-03-423

Protocol Title: *The Advocacy Efforts of Three Denominational Policy Offices on Capitol Hill*

Review Type: EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 3/13/07 Expiration Date: 3/12/08

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Administrator or on the Compliance website (<http://www.uark.edu/admin/rsspinfo/compliance/human-subjects/index.html>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact IRB Coordinator, 120 Ozark Hall, 5-2208.