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Abstract

While there is an oft-noted "bias" toward upper income groups in the U.S. organized interest system, it is debatable whether this bias matters very much since many studies find that lobbying and campaign contributions have a limited effect on policy outcomes. How bias may shape which economic problems are addressed or neglected in the first place has seldom been studied, however. We argue that in order to receive resources from organized interests members of Congress must "signal" their support for these interests by discussing the economic problems that they prioritize. Because there is upper class bias in the interest system this process produces disproportionate congressional attention to the economic problems of greatest concern to upper income interests and a relative neglect of economic problems that concern other groups. To examine this argument we develop measures of attention to various economic problems using congressional speech in the *Congressional Record* from 1995-2012. We find that during this period of relatively high upper class bias in the interest system there was a great deal of attention to the concerns of the wealthy, and far less attention to some of the concerns of lower income groups. At the micro-level, using a difference-in-differences analysis we observe that when individual MCs become more reliant on the resources of upper income interests they subsequently discuss the problems prioritized by these interests more.

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Introduction

In the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis there were widespread public concerns about foreclosures, unemployment, slow economic growth, the growing deficit, and economic inequality. Yet, even while unemployment remained high and growth remained sluggish, the focus in Congress turned quickly to the deficit, resulting in large spending cuts to many domestic programs, which arguably slowed the pace of economic recovery. What can explain such shifting patterns of attention? More generally, why does Congress prioritize addressing certain economic problems over others? We think that organized interests play a key role in this process, and that influencing which economic problems Congress focuses on in the first place is a critical way that wealthy organized interests use their resources to influence policy outcomes.

Because there are an almost infinite number of problems that might be addressed at any one time, which ones Congress addresses and neglects are among the most consequential policy choices the institution makes(Baumgartner & Jones 1993, Baumgartner & Jones 2005). Nevertheless, we understand very little about how political actors, and organized interests particularly, get the Congress and other political institutions to focus on the problems that they prioritize. Numerous studies have shown that the U.S. interest system is heavily biased toward upper income groups, and that this bias has been growing in recent decades (Schattschneider 1975, Schlozman 1984, Schlozman, Verba & Brady 2012). In recent years number of scholars have argued that this growing upper class bias is likely to distort policy toward the interests of the wealthy (Gilens & Page 2014, Hacker & Pierson 2010, Hacker & Pierson 2014, Witko 2013). Yet, on balance, studies of how the lobbying conducted and campaign contributions donated by organized interests influences the actions of members of Congress and policy outcomes demonstrate surprisingly modest and highly inconsistent effects (Ansolabehere, De Figueiredo & Snyder 2003, Baumgartner, Berry, Hojnacki, Kimball & Leech 2012, Wawro 2001, Witko 2006), raising the question of whether bias in the organized interest system undermines the representation of lower income groups very much at all.

Most studies of interest group influence, however, take the composition of the policy agenda as a given which causes us to overlook one of the most important ways that organized interests may influence policy outcomes - by shaping which problems Congress addresses in the first place. Scholars have long recognized that influencing which issues are neglected and which are addressed, i.e. exercising agenda control, is one of the most effective ways for actors to shape public policy outcomes (Dahl 1961, Bachrach & Baratz 1963, Schattschneider 1975). Shaping which issues are debated is important because discussing certain problems makes certain policies and economic outcomes more likely. For instance, once the deficit is defined as *the* problem that must be addressed, certain policies (like budget cuts) and economic outcomes (perhaps lower deficits with higher unemployment) are much more likely. In contrast, defining poverty or inequality as critical economic problem places education and welfare policies at the center of political debates and arguably makes deficits much more likely through the expansion of government programs. Thus, the ability to influence which problems are addressed in the first place has a profound effect on policy and socio-economic outcomes. Yet, this route of influence has been almost completely neglected in the agenda-setting, interest group influence and money in politics literatures.

This neglect is surprising when we consider that the defining feature of different organized interests are the problems that they prioritize. We argue that organized interests can shape the congressional agenda because members of Congress (MCs) are reliant on the support of economic interests to achieve their goals and, further, that in order to receive their resources MCs must "signal" their support for well-resourced interests. They do this, in part, by discussing the problems that most concern them. This means that MCs will be likely to discuss the priorities of groups whose resources they wish to receive and thus, in aggregate, organized interests that have more resources - in the contemporary U.S., upper income interests - will see that "their" problems are discussed more often in Congress. Because of the upper class bias in the U.S. interest system we examine economic issues, but the logic of our argument extends to other types of issues.

To investigate our arguments we identify important economic problems of the last few decades and then measure whether they are prioritized more by upper or lower income interests and then measure congressional attention to these economic problems using speech from the *Congressional Record*. Until recently it has been prohibitively resource-intensive to systematically examine congressional speech in this manner, but recent innovations in text mining have made it feasible. Substantively, speech is important to examine because it is the broadest indicator of the congressional agenda and relatively less-constrained by institutional gatekeepers than most other forms of congressional behavior that are usually examined, as we explain more below. Furthermore, elite debate and rhetoric can shape public opinion about which issues are important and policy preferences about how to address them (Franko, Tolbert & Witko 2013, Broockman & Butler N.d.). Based on our theory we expect to see that the concerns of upper income groups dominate the congressional agenda and that at the micro-level as individual MCs become more (less) reliant on upper income groups for resources they will discuss their issue priorities more (less), which we examine using a difference-in-differences analysis.

Our study sheds light on the mechanics of how organized interests shape the issue agenda and helps explain why congress focuses on certain economic problems more than others. In addition, we help to answer the puzzle of why organized interests and the wealthy spend so much money on activities like lobbying and supporting campaigns even though these expenditures only occasionally influence the most frequently observed behaviors like roll call votes, bill introductions, and other frequently studied policy actions (Ansolabehere, De Figueiredo & Snyder 2003, Baumgartner et al. 2012, Witko 2006). Our data and analysis indicates that organized interests are able to use their resources to exercise control over which problems the Congress prioritizes, and this has important implications for public policy outcomes, media coverage of the economy, and ultimately, public opinion, which we discuss in the conclusion.

How Groups Shape the Congressional Economic Agenda

At any one time the potential number of problems that policy making institutions could be focused on is more or less infinite, but attention is finite and very limited (Baumgartner & Jones 2005). Therefore, most problems will be neglected at any one time. Certain problems, like war or very severe economic crises, are inherently very likely to attract the attention of policy makers due to the rapid changes in the normal indicators of a peaceful and prosperous society (Baumgartner & Jones 2005). But even within these crises there are choices about which aspect of the crisis deserves focus. In an economic crisis, like that experienced in 2008, should the primary focus be on reducing unemployment, which may suggest large deficits? Or should a concern about deficits be prioritized which suggests unemployment will be higher than would otherwise be the case? And, of course, during times of relative economic calm the government has wider latitude of which longer-term problems to prioritize.

Which economic problems are addressed and which are neglected is important since economic problems affect various groups in different ways. For instance, while unemployment can befall anyone, it is less likely to affect wealthy, well-educated groups, and more likely to affect the poor and working class (Hibbs 1977), and these latter groups lack the resources to easily endure the loss of a job (Hacker, Rehm & Schlesinger 2013). Thus, the choice not to prioritize unemployment affects the poor and working class more. In contrast, inflation tends to be more problematic for creditors, who are wealthier (Hibbs 1977). Because economic problems affect groups differently, different economic groups seek to get policy making institutions to focus on different problems. But we have a limited understanding of how groups do this.

Structural power theorists of different stripes argue that economic interests can shape the agenda by virtue of their structural position in the economy. Marxist scholars have argued that because the capitalist class controls the means of production it is able to disseminate an ideology and political culture that largely prevents the masses from questioning the capitalist status quo (Gramsci 1971). Lindblom (1977) argued that business occupies a "privileged" position in capitalist democracies because politicians rely on private firms to create the economic conditions that ensure their reelection. This makes politicians unlikely to raise issues that could lead to a lack of "business confidence." From either standpoint, in capitalist democracies the issues that these firm managers and capitalists —taken together, what we call upper class interests—would like to see addressed are more likely to receive attention from policy making institutions, while issues that threaten their core interests are less likely to be considered.

It certainly seems that in countries like the U.S. the agenda is often very much in line with the predictions of structural power theorists. There are at least two problems with structural power theories, however. First, if structural power "works," then upper class interests should need to do very little lobbying or donating to politicians but, of course, firms and capitalists invest substantial sums in trying to influence policy outcomes in this manner (Drutman 2015, Hacker & Pierson 2010, Smith 2000, Witko 2013). Second, policy debates about poverty, inequality and other issues that business and the wealthy do not prioritize and may even view as harmful *sometimes* feature prominently in Congress and other institutions. Taken together, then, we see that there are limits to the ability of upper class interests to dominate the economic agenda solely with their structural power. We think, therefore, that the deployment of resources by upper class actors is critical to allowing them to shape the issue agenda.

Interest Group Resources and Congressional Problem Attention

Though usually neglected in the lobbying and campaign finance literatures, a powerful means by which organized interests influence policy and socio-economic outcomes is by influencing which socio-economic problems receive serious attention from Congress and which issues do not. After all, prioritizing certain problems over others and attempting to make the government also prioritize those issues is the *defining feature* of organized interests. Furthermore, because most issues never get serious consideration, let alone advancing all the way to a hearing or roll call vote (Krutz 2005), trying to shape the issue agenda is a cost-effective approach for groups, and it is a necessary first step before other policy actions can be taken in any case. In addition, a lot of what organized interests want to do in the policy process is to prevent unfavorable policy change (Baumgartner et al. 2012), and keeping one's problems on and others' problems off the agenda is a powerful way to do. Finally, even if groups never achieve tangible policy goals merely having their issues on the agenda and discussed prominently in the Congress can help to show that they are effective and powerful to their supporters and backers, which is necessary to acquire the resources needed to survive as an organization (Lowery 2007). Clearly, organized interests value having their preferred problems addressed and thus are likely to use their resources to achieve this goal.

MCs rely on organized interest campaign contributions and lobbying assistance to achieve their electoral, influence and policy goals (Fenno 1973, Hall & Deardorff 2006, Witko 2006). To receive resources from organized interests, MCs must demonstrate that they are placing problems that concern them onto the agenda or keeping them prominently on the agenda and that they are not "shirking", i.e. taking resources but not placing group priorities at the center of the agenda. Hall & Deardorff (2006) shows that once particular bills are well-advanced in the legislative process organized interests can prevent shirking by providing lobbying assistance as a "matching subsidy" for legislator effort. But throughout various stages of the legislative process one important way that MCs keep the problem priorities of certain groups in focus is to discuss these problems, and for problems that are not receiving a lot of attention discussing them is an important way to get them onto the agenda in the first place (Rae 1998).

Indeed, speech about particular issues or problems is perhaps the broadest way to conceive of the Congressional agenda. Existing studies tend to use either bill sponsorships or committee hearings to measure the agenda's composition (Baumgartner & Jones 1993, Baumgartner & Jones 2005, Woon 2008). The advantage of hearings is that they usually measure meaningful policy making activity, but the disadvantage is that hearings occur relatively late in the legislative process and issues that might have been the subject of quite a bit of congressional attention may never actually have an official hearing. The disadvantage of using bill sponsorship is that writing a bill is not always very meaningful for policy since most bills are never going to be seriously considered after they are written (Krutz 2005). In addition, the mere sponsorship of a bill does not indicate that a particular issue received any serious attention beyond that act or even that a MC invested much time in the issue. On the other hand, the advantage is that bill sponsorship is often a necessary first step to meaningful policy action, and it is relatively less constrained by institutional gatekeepers than committee hearings, meaning it is potentially a broader measure of the issue agenda.

While there is nothing necessarily wrong with these existing measures for certain purposes, since much of what elected policy makers do on a daily basis is speak, speech has good face validity as a measure of the priorities of various institutions (Edwards III & Wood 1999, Quinn, Monroe, Colaresi, Crespin & Radev 2010, Wood 2009). Thus, if organized interests can shape the issues that MCs discuss, then they are exerting control over the legislative agenda. Admittedly, the idea that organized interests value MCs discussing their problems may seem unlikely since, going at least back to Mayhew (1974), there has been a view that congressional speech is mostly meaningless, cheap talk. However, speech does shape substantive policy outcomes. For issues that are not yet on the agenda, it is an important way to get them there (Rae 1998). Even within the context of legislative debates on "old" issues like abortion or food stamps, however, MCs can emphasize certain problems rather than others, and this can influence the structure of policies that are enacted (Bessette 1997, Schonhardt-Bailey 2008).

Speech is not the only congressional activity that organized interests care about, of course. However, speech is a useful signal of support to organized interests because it is both informative to organized interests and costly to MCs (Spence 1973). The reason that speech is informative to organized interests is that actions do not speak for themselves. As Grimmer & Stewart (2013) notes, MCs not only communicate what they do, but explain *why* they do the things that they do. This is necessary because many actions have ambiguous meaning. For instance, one might vote against gun control because they oppose it in principle or because they think it is a matter best left to the states. Given scarce resources, gun rights groups would rather support the former MC than the latter, who still supports some forms of gun control. Most of the existing research on congressional speech and communication has focused on how MCs appeal to their constituents and why this matters (Fenno 1978, Grimmer & Stewart 2013, Hill & Hurley 2002, Lipinski 2001), but of course it has long been recognized that MCs are also speaking to organized interests (Mayhew 1974).

Furthermore, speaking about one group's problem priorities is costly for MCs because the amount of time MCs have to speak is limited. When MCs speak about the problems that concern one group or set of groups, they are indicating a willingness to forego the benefits that might accrue from prioritizing the problems that most concern other groups. For example, if a MC takes her time to focus on unemployment in a speech, they are deciding not to discuss inflation or the deficit (at least for as long as they otherwise might have). Because different economic groups prioritize different economic problems, the problems that MCs discuss become important ways for organized interests to determine who their allies are and reward them, and speaking about particular problems becomes an important way for MCs to signal their support for different organized interests. Furthermore, because speech is also less constrained by institutional gatekeepers organized interests can more reasonably view speech as the result of the effort of an individual MC. While party and committee leaders can easily prevent hearings on certain issues from taking place or bills from advancing, it is virtually impossible to completely ban the discussion of particular problems or issues since there are opportunities, like one-minute speeches, when MCs can discuss whatever problems they prefer (Maltzman & Sigelman 1996), and even within the context of debates on particular bills MCs can focus on different problems that policies address to some degree (Schonhardt-Bailey 2008).

It is possible that MCs simply discuss the issues that they care about and organized interests who care about those issues then subsequently provide support to them. However, we think it is likely the case that MCs that rely on certain interests are more likely to discuss the problems that they prioritize as a result of interactions and discussions with them. In addition, we think it is likely that case that MCs determine which problems to discuss or avoid partly on the basis of the implications for support among organized interests (in addition to considering their constituents, personal beliefs, party, etc.). If this is accurate, problems that are prioritized by well-resourced organized interests are more likely to be addressed, which leads to relatively less attention to problems that are of concern to poorly-resourced organized interests, even if well-resourced groups do not actively discourage their discussion. In some cases, however, organized interests do actively discourage the discussion of some problems. For instance, media has reported that at least some business executives have used their campaign contributions to try and change the "tenor" of the political debate after Obama began discussing the issue of economic inequality (Freeland 2012). But it is probably more often the case that a passive process leads to the relative neglect of certain issues. Because they must use their speech to appeal to well-resourced interests and speech is limited, MCs simply have little time to discuss the priorities of poorly-resourced groups. Note that this is true *even if well-resourced groups do not have any specific desire to keep these issues off of the agenda and MCs think these other problems are important.* Because the U.S. interest system is biased toward upper class interests, this has important implications for the types of economic issues addressed by Congress.

In theory any type of organized interest can use its resources to influence the congressional agenda in this manner. If there were numerous competing economic interests that possess abundant resources we would expect that different MCs would advance the agenda of different interests and that, in aggregate, a broad range of economic problems would appear on the agenda. Not all problems would be addressed due to agenda constraints, and some problems would receive more attention than others, but there would not be any systematic bias in the types of issues addressed or neglected. At the other extreme, imagine a single interest that controlled almost all the resources. The problems that concern this interest would dominate the agenda. In practice, while there is not a single dominant interest, there is a well-known "upper class bias" in the U.S. organized interest system. Groups that represent lower income and middle class interests, like anti-poverty groups (Imig 1992) or labor unions (Radcliff & Saiz 1998, Witko & Newmark 2005) are active in politics, but their numbers and resources are simply dwarfed by those of organizations representing firms, business associations and affluent individuals (Drutman 2015, Schattschneider 1975, Schlozman 1984, Schlozman, Verba & Brady 2012).

This bias in the organized interest system is only concerning to the extent that upper class interests prioritize different economic problems than lower and middle class interests. Americans of different economic groups do share a surprising number of policy preferences (Gilens 2012). But, though there is little research into this question, different income groups appear to prioritize different economic problems. In a striking example from recent years, in the aftermath of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression when unemployment and poor economic growth were viewed as the most serious problems for most Americans, very wealthy Americans thought reducing the deficit should be the government's priority (even though critics pointed out that deficit reduction would lead to higher unemployment) (Page, Bartels & Seawright 2013). Furthermore, there are sometimes direct trade-offs in addressing different economic problems, most famously highlighted in studies of the politics of the "Phillips Curve." In this context, focusing more on addressing unemployment not only leads to less of a focus on inflation, it even is likely to make inflation worse under at least some circumstances, and vice versa (Hibbs 1977, Kelly & Witko 2014). Thus, we can expect that in many instances upper and lower/middle class interests prioritize different economic problems.

To the extent that upper and lower/middle class interests prioritize different issues, we should see that in aggregate when there is more upper class bias in the interest system there should be more congressional attention to issues that the wealthy and business prioritize. Though there is not an existing longitudinal measure of "bias," it seems fairly certain based on historical studies that during the more equal New Deal and Great Society eras, though business was very engaged in and active in politics, labor unions were also heavily mobilized in the interest system (Dark 1999, Greenstone 1970). Labor unions lobbied extensively and provided the bulk of campaign contributions to Democratic candidates for Congress, while sometimes having close relationships with moderate and liberal Republicans (Dark 1999, Wright 2000). It is probably not any coincidence that the "War on Poverty" was launched when organized labor was very strong. Since the 1970s, however, labor has declined and business and the wealthy have become more heavily mobilized into politics and members of both parties are more reliant on these actors for resources (Hacker & Pierson 2010, Witko 2013). To some degree this reflects a business counter-mobilization to the liberal policies of the 1930s-1960s (Vogel 1989), but it is probably also the case that growing inequality fuels increasing upper class bias in the interest system by placing more resources in the hands of upper income interests (Winters & Page 2009). The end result is that, if our argument is correct, after controlling for the objective scope of economic problems we should see greater attention to "upper class problems" and decreasing attention to "lower income problems" in recent years. At the MC-level, if our theory is correct, then MCs that are more reliant on the resources of upper income interests will be more likely to address their preferred problems, and less likely to address other economic problems.

Bias, and the Dynamics of Responsiveness to Economic Problems

In order to study how group prioritization of serious economic problems is associated with issue attention it is necessary to identify important economic problems. Because, at this stage, we are interested in the prioritization of different issues rather than directional preferences for different policies, we focus on "valence" issues on which virtually everyone shares the same directional preference. For instance, almost everyone prefers lower unemployment, higher stock prices, lower inflation, more rapid economic growth and less inequality. The question on these types of issues is simply, among these many problems, which ones do groups prioritize?

It is easy to identify several valence economic issues that have been important in the U.S. over the last few decades, but to ensure that we did not omit certain issues we examined the Baumgartner and Jones Policy Agendas Project's New York Times Index database, which provides a systematic random sample of all stories included in the New York Times (see `http://www.policyagendas.org/page/datasets-codebooks#new_york_times_index`). We examined all macroeconomic policy items (topic code 1) from 1990 to 2008 (the last year for which data are available), and using the index key words in the story description we developed a list of the major economic problems that existed over this period.

We then pared the list down to only valence issues, which led to the removal of some important economic issues like taxation and regulation, on which different groups have different directional preferences (for more or less regulation or taxation). On taxation or regulation, simply discussing these issues does not indicate whether someone wants more or less of them. Of the various economic issues uncovered through our analysis of the New York Times Index database, we identified the following valence issues during this time period: economic growth, inflation, stock market performance, inequality, poverty, unemployment, wages/income, productivity, consumer spending/confidence, the deficit/debt, and interest rates/monetary policy.

It is only when upper and lower class groups disagree on a particular problem's prioritization that we expect to see that the balance of resources between the two is associated with congressional problem attention. To determine whether upper and lower income interests prioritize these different problems, we have employed three approaches. First, we considered which groups different economic problems impact the most. For many problems this is fairly obvious. For instance poverty obviously affects lower income groups, while stock prices affect the income of the wealthy more, since less-affluent wage earners earn virtually all of their income from wages and have limited equity investments.

Second, we draw on existing academic literature. For instance, it has long been argued that unemployment disproportionately impacts and concerns lower income actors, while inflation impacts and concerns upper income actors (Hibbs 1977). Academic literature is not clear on all of the problems. Third, we have consulted the websites and published lists of key votes of one group that most prominently represents the lower and middle classes, the AFL-CIO, and a number of groups that represent business and the affluent: the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Club for Growth, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the Business Roundtable.[1] Though each of these approaches has its drawbacks, taken together we can be confident that we have identified important economic problems, and of those important problems, which ones are prioritized differently by upper and lower income actors.

As we can see in Table 1, some issues were of concern to both upper and lower class interests (economic growth and unemployment). It is a bit surprising that unemployment was frequently mentioned by upper class interests, but often times they advocated for or against particular policies on the basis of how they would affect employment. In contrast, it is not particularly surprising that both labor and upper class interests prioritized economic growth, as strong economic growth has universal benefits.

For other issues, neither upper nor lower class interests seemed to care much about them (inflation, stock market performance, and poverty). In the case of inflation, this could simply reflect that the scope of this problem between the late 1990s and 2015 when the scorecards and website were examined was not very severe. But certainly stock market performance was often volatile and poverty remained a serious problem in the U.S. Productivity, consumer spending/confidence and interest rates/monetary policy showed a prioritization by upper class interests, but they received very limited attention overall (in fact, only one key vote justification for each of these issues referred to these problems).

[1] The websites for these groups list key issues or policy concerns and we have examined these for mentions of the different issues discussed above. In addition, for groups that have published key congressional votes over a long period of time (the AFL-CIO, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce) we examined these lists of key votes and the justifications of the group's positions on these issues to determine problem prioritization.

Table 1: Upper and Lower Class Problem Priorities

Problem	Problem Impact	Academic Literature	Organized Interest Documents	Overall Conclusion: Whose Problem?
Economic Growth	Upper Class, Lower Class	n/a	Upper Class, Lower Class	Upper and Lower Class
Inflation	Upper Class	Upper Class	Neither	Prioritized by Upper Class, but limited attention
Stock Market Performance	Upper Class	Upper Class	Neither	Upper Class, but limited attention
Inequality	Lower Class	n/a	Lower Class	Lower Class
Poverty	Lower Class	n/a	Neither	Lower Class, but limited attention
Unemployment	Lower Class	Lower Class	Upper Class, Lower Class	Upper and Lower Class
Wages/Income	Lower Class	Lower Class	Lower Class	Lower Class
Productivity	Upper Class	n/a	Upper Class (limited attention overall)	Upper Class, but limited attention
Consumer Spending/Confidence	Lower Class	n/a	Upper Class (limited attention overall)	Upper class, but limited attention
The Deficit/Debt	Upper Class	Upper Class (Page et al. 2013)	Upper Class	Upper Class
Interest Rates/Monetary Policy	Upper Class	Upper Class	Upper Class (limited attention overall)	Upper Class, but limited attention

The issues that demonstrated different levels of prioritization by upper and lower class interests and which received a lot of attention were: inequality, wages/income, and the deficit. Inequality was mentioned as an important problem on the AFL-CIO website and was highlighted in the group's position on 14 different key votes. In contrast, none of the business groups ever highlighted this issue on their websites or in their justifications for why legislation should be supported or opposed. This is the most polarized economic issue. On the deficit and debt, the AFL-CIO did mention it five times in their justification for their positions on key issues between 1998 and 2015, but did not highlight the issue on their website. In contrast, all of the business/upper income groups highlighted the deficit/debt as a key issue and frequently noted the deficit/debt implications of policies as a reason to support of oppose them. This was especially true of the Club for Growth. Wages and income received some attention from both business/upper class interests and labor, but the attention was fairly lopsided. The AFL-CIO mentioned wages on its website and also mentioned wages and income in more than two-thirds of the years examined for key votes. In contrast, business groups never mentioned wages on their websites. They did mention wages and income several times in their discussion of key votes, but it was usually in the context of discussing opposition to the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act or opposition to minimum wage increases. These interests were not arguing against higher wages per se, but were arguing against these particular laws by usually saying they would be counterproductive or ineffective.

Based on this categorization we expect to see that the deficit received substantial attention, while inequality and wages/income receive less in Congress, and that as the deficit grows attention will also. In contrast, as inequality grows and wages stagnate or decline, we do not expect to see as much attention to these problems. Our theory also has MC-level implications. We expect that at the individual level, MCs that become more reliant on the resources of upper class interests should subsequently discuss the deficit more, but wages/income and inequality less. In contrast, as reliance on middle/lower class interests grows we would expect to see less attention to the deficit and more attention to wages/income and inequality. As a practical matter, groups representing very poor and lower class groups do not have many resources to provide to MCs. Thus, we consider how support from one group representing middle and lower class interests that does have some resources - organized labor - may drive shifting issue attention. As scholars have noted, organized labor is really the only organized interest with substantial resources that has consistently represented middle and lower class interests in the policy process over the last few decades (Hacker & Pierson 2010).

For the remaining issues, we do not expect to see that class bias or individual reliance on the resources of different economic actors shapes attention very much. Some problems, like unemployment and economic growth, are just highly salient for virtually everyone and thus they should receive a great deal of congressional attention when they increase (unemployment) or decline (growth). But the balance of organized interest mobilization and resources should have little influence on their discussion, and reliance on different interests should have little do with individual patterns of discussion. For issues that are favored by upper class interests but do not receive high levels of attention even from these interests, and for issues that are largely neglected by both upper and lower/middle class interests we are not entirely certain of what to expect.

Analysis

As an initial test of our arguments we consider the issues of the deficit and inequality, where we have the clearest expectations for some influence of organized interests mobilization and resources, and the issue of unemployment, where we do not expect to see that bias matters for issue attention and that attention should be driven mostly by the objective scope of the problem. For data availability reasons our analysis focuses on the period of 1995-2012, though we are currently extending the data back to 1980 and forward to 2016. To examine our arguments we analyze aggregate data from 1995-2012 to consider whether it is consistent with our theory. We cannot, of course, definitively test our argument based on this small number of observations at the aggregate level, but we gain a great deal more leverage by coupling the aggregate analysis with an examination of the micro-level implications of our theory. If our argument is correct we should observe that MCs who have closer relationships with labor are more likely to discuss inequality and less likely to discuss the deficit, while MCs who have closer relationships with upper income interests would be less likely to discuss inequality and more likely to discuss the deficit. We begin by discussing how we develop our speech-based measures of congressional attention.

Developing Speech-Based Measures of Congressional Issue Attention

One reason that speech has not typically been used to measure the congressional issue agenda is that until recent innovations in text mining it was virtually impossible to develop systematic agenda measures from speech. But we can now process and analyze large amounts of political speech relatively inexpensively, and we take advantage of these recent advances to examine discussion of particular economic problems in Congress.

In order to test our argument about the link between resources from upper-income interests and discussion among political elites regarding economic inequality, we need a text-based measure of congressional discussion of distributional issues. Since 1995, the Government Printing Office (GPO) has made HTML versions of the *Congressional Record* available to the public. The Sunlight Foundation (SF) provides, via an Application Program Interface (API), a parser that converts the raw HTML files provided by the GPO into XML files that are structured and tagged in a way that makes text analysis a fairly straightforward task. From the XML files it is possible, for example, to read the text into a software package such as R, with the text separated by paragraphs that are each associated with a member of Congress. However, we found some problems with the SF parser and we have made improvements to it to accurately attribute speech to the correct

MC. Most importantly, we found several MCs whose speeches were excluded entirely from the SF database due to name recognition issues. For instance, Alfonse D'Amato and any other MC with a punctuation mark in their name was excluded from the XMLs for 1995-2012. We made modifications to the regular expressions (REGEX) utilized to identify MC speeches/entries in the *CR* in order to capture the text more accurately and link that text to the appropriate MC.

This process allowed us to create a database of all Congressional speech for each year since 1995 that contains a row for each MC for each year. We link this speech database to other databases including campaign contributions and the usual attributes associated with MCs using existing, publicly accessible data about MCs, such as roll-call ideology scores from the NOMINATE project and biographical details like party affiliation, sex, race, state, and district.

We are ultimately concerned about attention to inequality and redistribution, but to account for the possibility that attention to inequality might be shaped primarily by broader agenda-setting processes as opposed to power differentials in the interest system, we compare the discussion of inequality to discussion of two other economic issues: the deficit and unemployment. Analysis of Congressional attention to the deficit offers a useful comparison because this economic concern shares many features with inequality—it is a slow-moving process with few apparent damaging ramifications in the short-term, making it an issue that policymakers might easily ignore. In contrast to inequality, however, the rich see the deficit as an important issue in need of attention, while average citizens are generally unconcerned with this problem (Page, Bartels & Seawright 2013). If Congressional disinterest in inequality is simply the result of the slow-moving, non-urgent nature of the issue, then we would expect a similar absence of rhetoric regarding the deficit, and at the MC-level relationships with different organized interests should not influence discussion of the deficit much. But if our theory is correct, we should observe opposite patterns of Congressional attention to inequality and the deficit, with inequality receiving *less* attention as the rich increasingly dominate the interest system and the deficit receiving *more.* At the MC level, if our theory is correct MCs with closer relationships to upper income interests should discuss economic inequality less and the deficit more, while MCs with stronger relationships and who are more reliant on labor unions for resources should demonstrate the opposite pattern.

Unemployment, on the other hand, is similar to inequality in that declining employment opportunities do not typically produce as large a demand for government action among the rich as the poor and middle class (Page, Bartels & Seawright 2013). However, job declines can occur relatively quickly and generate a great deal of media coverage and commentary. During times of growing unemployment this typically becomes a very salient issue. Given this, it is less likely that organized interests are needed to push this issue onto the agenda, or have the ability to keep it off of the agenda. Thus, we expect in the aggregate a good degree of responsiveness to growing unemployment, and at the MC-level, very little relationship between reliance on resources of different interests and attention to unemployment. Together, these issue comparisons strengthen the precision of the causal identification in our research design by identifying some of the limits of the power of organized interests in the face of salient issues (unemployment), and how organized interests both potentially push issues onto the agenda (the deficit) and keep other issues off of the agenda (inequality).

We generated variables measuring discussion of inequality and the income distribution, the deficit, and unemployment using the tm (text mining) package in R (Feinerer 2014). By the structure of our data set it is very easy to generate both MC-level and aggregate measures of attention to these issues. We simply count the number of terms related to each of these issues uttered by each MC in a given year, which can then be aggregated by year to develop institution-level measures of the discussion of these problems, which serve as the outcome variables in the individual and institution-level analyses discussed below. Details of defining the list of relevant terms and the specific terms themselves for each issue can be found in the Appendix. Though there are number of ways to measure issue attention using Congressional speech, here we focus on this intuitive approach which is used in the literature on Presidential issue attention (Edwards III & Wood 1999).

One might object that we should include the discussion of any policies that affect the income distribution, even if they do not include explicit discussion of economic inequality because all of the participants are aware of the implications. But this entirely misses the point, since the dimensions along which policy proposals are debated is critical to their outcome (Schonhardt-Bailey 2008) and how the public views competing policy positions (Clifford & Jerit 2013). For instance, objecting to tax cuts for the wealthy on the grounds that they will increase the deficit will lead to a different type of debate than one focused on how they will lead to the rich becoming even richer. This may influence the positions that elites take on tax cuts, but will also influence how the public views the policy proposal. It seems that when the unequal income distribution features prominently in debates the public is more likely to connect their own economic interests to positions on tax cuts for the wealthy (Franko, Tolbert & Witko 2013). Of course, many times even in the context of debates that have important implications for the income distribution such dimensions are never discussed, indeed they are actively avoided (Hacker & Pierson 2005, Mettler 2011). This is not to say that it is unimportant to examine the "hidden" ways that the U.S. Congress has addressed growing inequality (and there are many) but it is also important to understand the extent to which inequality is explicitly tackled as a problem, and that is our concern here.

Testing Aggregate Expectations

To generate congressional-level measures of speech-based issue attention we simply aggregate across individual MCs to compute the sum of all terms spoken about each issue in a given year. Because we rely on data covering 1995-2012, upper class bias in the interest system is always relatively high during this time period. Thus, to understand the nature of aggregate responses to growing economic problems we simply plot the relationships between issue attention and the underlying economic indicators rather than do any formal statistical tests with such a small sample size. Because there is not a single widely accepted indicator of inequality we use two indicators of inequality, the top 1% income share excluding capital gains (including it produces a great deal of volatility) and the Gini coefficient. For unemployment we use the unemployment rate, and for the deficit we use the dollar amount of the deficit (constant 2009 $) such that surpluses have negative values. The former two indicators were obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics website, while the latter indicator was obtained from the Office of Management and Budget website.

Given that there is upper class bias in the interest system for the entire time period, if our theory is correct we should not see a large response to inequality even as it increases, but we do expect responsiveness to increases in the deficit. Though unemployment impacts lower class groups more, we expect that given the salience of this issue there will be a high degree of responsiveness to increases in unemployment.

Testing MC-Level Expectations

The fact that speech is less constrained by institutional actors compared to activities like committee hearings and takes place at the individual level provides us with leverage to examine our theoretical arguments. The micro-foundations of our theory suggest that MCs who are closer to and more reliant on upper income interests should discuss inequality less, and discuss issues of concern to the wealthy more (e.g. the deficit), while those reliant on other interests (labor and small donors) will act in the opposite manner. The process that we describe may be prospective or retrospective. That is, it may be the case that MCs "signal" that they are concerned about a group's priorities to gain their support in the future, or it may be that MCs first form relationships with groups and then once reliant on their resources they begin to signal support for them more to maintain the supply of resources. Of course, it may be difficult to distinguish among these mechanisms if these actions take place nearly simultaneously, but we consider both of these possibilities in the analysis.

To test these possibilities, we use a difference-in-differences analysis where we model changes in attention to inequality, the deficit, and unemployment (i.e. the change in the number of terms related to each issue spoken by an MC) as a function of reliance on different interests for resources (and controls). The diff-in-diffs approach is useful because it prevents constant, but unobservable MC-level variables from confounding our inferences, zeroing out the effects of these fixed characteristics on both the variable measuring reliance on upper class interests and speech about certain issues. This is important in studying the effect of campaign contributions because unobserved individual-level factors almost certainly impact the allocation of campaign contributions among different candidates/MCs (Wawro 2001). As with other research, we assume that campaign contributions are indicative of a broader set of interactions between groups and MCs (Witko 2006). Due to the diff-in-diffs approach we omit any MCs serving only one term from the analysis.

To measure MC-level reliance on upper class interests, we use campaign contribution data (in $100,000s) from 1995-2012, comprising nine two-year election cycles and hundreds of cases. Because labor unions are the main organized interest opposing upper class interests in the policy process, we use a variable measuring the amount of campaign contributions from labor political action committees (PACs). In addition, we include a variable measuring the total amount of small contributions (i.e. those less than $200) to measure reliance on contributions from more typical (though generally still affluent) Americans. Finally, we include a variable measuring contributions from all other sources, which represents reliance on upper class interests as these contributions come from firms, industry and trade associations as well as individuals making larger donations.[2] Because campaign contributions could simultaneously be affected by the member's speech, we lag the first-differenced campaign contribution variables to isolate how past changes in campaign support influence current issue attention.

The contribution variables are our main theoretical interest, but we control for the lagged level of issue attention and the lagged change in ideology of the MC (measured using DW-Nominate, 1st dimension). We also control for whether the MC has transi-

[2]We obtained labor PAC contributions from the FEC detailed data files page and the other campaign contribution data from Bonica's DIME database ($http://data.stanford.edu/dime/$).

tioned into party leadership or switched chambers in the current cycle, which can affect how much they speak overall (since Senators typically speak more). We also control for whether the MC's party has assumed the majority or won the presidency. We expect that members of the majority party and members of the President's party are less likely to discuss economic problems overall, and that minority party and out-party members are more likely to highlight the economic problems that exist in the country. To control for the changing economic conditions over time we also include cycle fixed-effects. We do not control for party because our diff-in-diffs analysis makes this a zero for almost all MCs because there are so few party switches for sitting members. Because the decision to discuss one issue affects the amount of discussion of other issues we use a simultaneous estimation approach to estimate these regression models which are estimated using standard errors that are robust to clustering on individual MCs.

Results

MC-level Results

We begin with the MC-level analysis, where we see results generally consistent with our expectations in Table 2. Beginning with labor contributions, we see that an increase in labor contributions is associated with an increase in the discussion of inequality and a decrease in discussion of the deficit in the next two-year cycle/Congress. A standard deviation increase in contributions from labor can be expected to result in an increase of 0.06 inequality terms (0.07 standard deviations in the outcome variable) and a decline of 3.6 deficit terms (0.03 standard deviations, p¡0.05). These are not huge effects, of course, but distributed over hundreds of MCs they aggregate to have a substantial effect on which issues are discussed.

Contributions from small contributors do not seem to affect discussion of any of these issues. Turning to the contributions from the "other" sources, these contributions from wealthy interests do not directly suppress discussion of inequality. They do, however, increase discussion of the deficit, which can "crowd" out attention to other issues, including inequality and even unemployment. Indeed, a standard deviation increase in contributions from these other sources would produce an expected increase of 82.6 deficit terms spoken, which is almost a standard deviation change (sd=106.4). Thus, closer relationships with and a greater reliance on wealthy interests has a significant and substantively large association with discussion of the deficit, consistent with our theory. In contrast, labor contributions are negatively associated with discussion of the deficit (p=0.06). In a world where wealthy interests provided fewer campaign contributions, we could expect substantially less discussion of the deficit, and more discussion of other issues.

Table 2: The Determinants of Economic Issue Attention

Variable	Inequality	Deficit	Unemployment
ΔLabor PAC$\$_{t-1}$	0.009**	-0.511*	0.168
	(0.003)	(0.272)	(0.189)
ΔUpper Class $\$_{t-1}$	0.000	0.283**	0.005
	(0.000)	(0.011)	(0.006)
ΔSmall Contributor$\$_{t-1}$	-0.002	-0.223	-0.497
	(0.006)	(0.633)	(0.316)
ΔDW-Nom1$_{t-1}$	-1.111	18.070	-90.166
	(0.730)	(116.956)	(51.553)
ΔMajority Party$_{t-1}$	-0.011	-14.287***	-3.197**
	(0.019)	(3.312)	(1.163)
ΔPres. Party$_{t-1}$	0.027	-35.995***	-5.374*
	(0.031)	(4.929)	(3.036)
ΔHouse	-0.629	-29.6682**	-28.822*
	(0.368)	(11.437)	(8.882)
ΔLeader	-0.181	-5.313	-9.464*
	(0.226)	(24.016)	(5.641)
Attention$_{t-1}$	-0.672***	-0.059	-0.476***
	(0.087)	(0.137)	(0..077)
Constant	0.131***	15.527***	5.597***
	(0.037)	(3.265)	(0.862)
R^2	0.27	0.07	0.35
n	2721	2721	2721

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Attention to unemployment is not influenced by a reliance on any particular type of interest, which we anticipated to some degree given the salience of this issue. This result probably reflects that on highly salient issues (and jobs and unemployment are certainly highly salient) the ability of organized interests and campaign contributions to shape observable behavior in Congress is more limited (Witko 2006). In contrast, for issues that are less salient with the public, organized interests appear to have at least some ability to shift the attention of individual MC's toward issues of concern. Overall, we see micro-level support for our theory.

Though we are not overly concerned about explaining large amounts of variance, which seems unlikely given the peculiarities of human speech and the analysis of differences, the explanatory and control variables generally explain about one-third of the variation in attention to these issues. The major exception is with the deficit, where the R^2=0.07. This reflects that, unlike other issues, when a member discusses the deficit a lot in a previous cycle, they are no less likely to discuss it more in the future (i.e. the lagged issue attention variable is not significant). This suggests that there are large rewards or at least not diminishing returns for continually discussing the deficit, which are not realized by discussing inequality or unemployment.

Aggregate (Non-)Response to Growing Inequality

How do these micro-level patterns manifest themselves at the Congressional level? During the time period of this analysis upper class bias is consistently fairly high. This leads to the expectation that there would be more discussion of the deficit than inequality and greater responsiveness to the actual deficit in congressional discussion than there is to the actual level of inequality. Overall, if we look at the three figures in this section it is clear that there is more discussion of the deficit. Though it is difficult to make precise comparisons because of differences in the types of words and phrases searched for, we see that the largest amount of terms related to inequality spoken in any year was 80, while the largest for the deficit was over 30,000 and for unemployment around 11,000. More importantly, we see that there is limited responsiveness to increases in inequality, and greater responsiveness to changes in the deficit and unemployment.

We begin by examining the relationship between inequality (dashed line) and Congressional discussion of inequality (solid black line) in 1. In the left panel we present the Gini coefficient as the measure of inequality and in the right panel, the top 1% share. We see that there is very little relationship between the two series in either panel, a visual depiction of the congressional "(non)response" to inequality. It appears that the discussion of inequality is largely cyclical, whereas inequality is generally increasing, as we know. The correlation between the Gini coefficient and discussion of inequality is -0.08, and for the top 1% share the correlation is 0.14. So depending on which measure we use, there is either a very low correlation or a negative correlation.

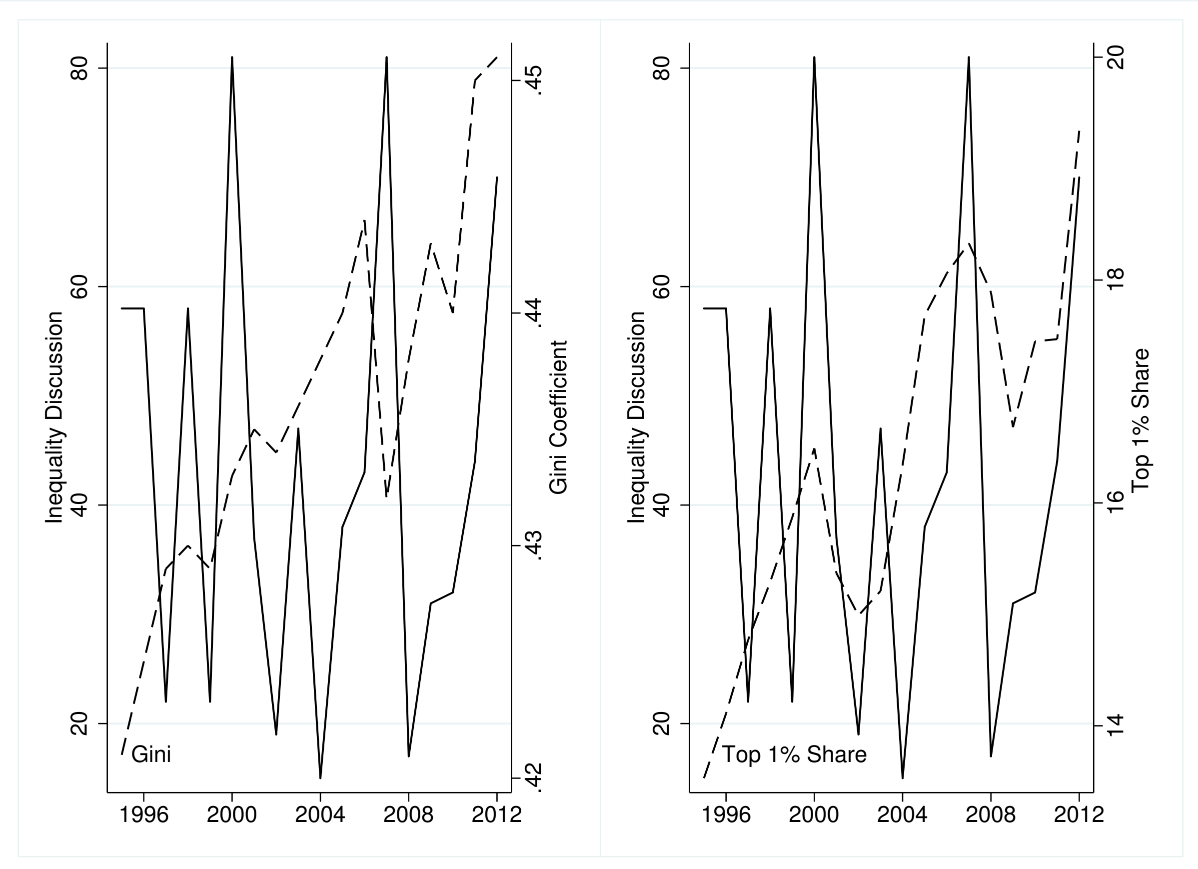

Figure 1: Inequality and Congressional Discussion of Inequality

This finding for inequality stands in contrast with the other series where we see a fairly close correspondence between objective conditions and congressional discussion. Turning to the deficit in 2 we see that as the deficit declined in the late 1990s there was less discussion of this issue and as the deficit increased in the 2000s there is more discussion of this issue. The major decline in discussion of the deficit in the 1990s that actually preceded actual reductions in the deficit reflected that a deficit reduction deal had been reached between President Clinton and the Republican Congress. If we omit the first time point where there was a lot of discussion of the deficit (due to debate about the deficit reduction deal) even with a relatively small deficit, the correlation between the two series is 0.57 (if we include that observation the correlation is 0.31).

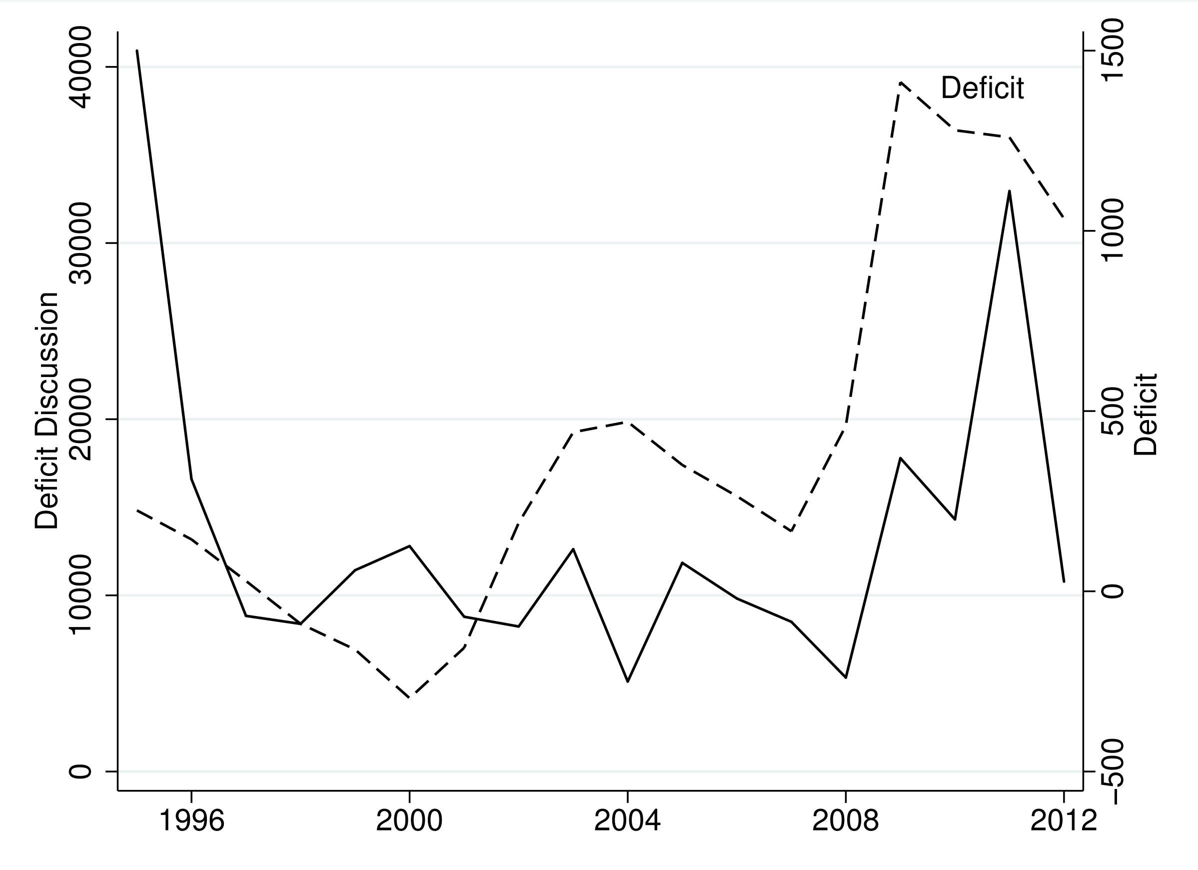

Figure 2: Deficits and the Congressional Discussion of Deficits

With unemployment we also see a high degree of correspondence between the unemployment rate and discussion of unemployment in 3. The correlation is similar to the correlation between the deficit and the discussion of the deficit (excluding the first observation) at 0.54. Unlike the deficit, however, based on the MC-level results it does not appear that this responsiveness to the deficit is driven by the priorities of groups, but rather reflects that this is simply a salient issue that receives a lot of media coverage and is of significant concern to the mass public.

Figure 3: Unemployment and the Congressional Discussion of Unemployment

Overall, we see that the aggregate patterns match our expectations and match how we would expect that MC-level results to manifest themselves when there is a high degree of upper class bias in the interest system. There is a limited responsiveness to growing inequality with greater responsiveness to growth in the deficit and unemployment. What is particularly interesting is that while the public cares a great deal about unemployment and views it as a major problem when it is high, only the wealthy really care very much about the deficit (Page, Bartels & Seawright 2013). This suggests that when the public cares a lot about an issue it is likely to get on the agenda, but that when the public does not care about an issue and it is important to wealthy interest it is also likely to get on the agenda. Though we lack data to investigate this possibility, under conditions of lower bias in the interest system we would anticipate less responsiveness to the deficit, and more responsiveness to inequality.

Conclusion

Which economic issues are addressed, and which are neglected by the Congress is an important question. Economic inequality has been growing rapidly over the last few decades and is at levels unmatched by other affluent nations and not seen in America for several decades. Scholars also increasingly argue that it is associated with numerous social, political and economic ills. Despite this, it has not been a focus of Congressional policy making.

Why? We argued that, in a general sense, organized interests are able to use their resources to spur the discussion of certain issues and suppress the discussion of others because MCs use their speech to "signal" support for groups that provide them with an abundance of resources. Though this option is in theory open to all sorts of groups and interests, in practice, the U.S. interest group system is heavily biased toward upper class interests. And it is this bias, and its growth that accompanies expanding economic inequality, which can explain why inequality and redistribution are seldom discussed, even when the problem is undoubtedly growing in scope and salience. Because MCs are reliant on upper class interests, and this reliance actually increases during periods of growing inequality, it is unlikely that growing inequality will be met with commensurate levels of attention from Congress. Though we have a limited number of time points to examine, this non-response to inequality is certainly apparent in the aggregate data. In contrast to the non-response to inequality we saw a high degree of responsiveness to both the deficit and unemployment. Of course, future research should examine these dynamics over the longer period for which inequality data are available and we plan to do this as we parse and code more speech, but even in this more limited time period that we have we see the contrasting responses to the deficit and income inequality, which is very much consistent with our theory.

One may say that the deficit is simply a more salient issue. But the public cares little about the deficit (Page, Bartels & Seawright 2013) and the short-term consequences of increased deficits under current economic conditions appear to be minimal. Thus it is similar in many respects to inequality in terms of basic issue characteristics. The probable reason that the deficit attracts a lot of attention and inequality does not is that the wealthy care about the former but not the latter, and there is currently a great deal of upper class bias in the interest system. Of course less than 20 years of aggregate data cannot be used to formally test this, but the individual MC-level analysis demonstrated the micro-level processes that can translate growing upper class bias in the interest system into the patterns of issue attention we observe in the aggregate data, which gives us considerable confidence in our inferences.

Beyond explaining the lack of responsiveness to growing inequality and what might be called "hyper responsiveness" to the deficit, our study has important implications for understanding how organized interests and political expenditures influence policy outcomes. While previous studies have only found sporadic influence of campaign contributions on observable Congressional behavior (most typically roll call votes) our analysis finds another mechanism of interest group influence generally and campaign contributions specifically. This is important since if particular issues are never addressed, a solution to them will not be crafted, and addressing certain problems prejudices the government toward certain types of policy solutions. Furthermore, whether and how issues are discussed can importantly shape how the public thinks about issues. If debate focuses on how government consistently spends too much money, it is more likely that the public will adopt this mindset. If the problem of inequality is never discussed in policy debates, there is little chance that a large swath of the public will view it as a major problem, and there is a much greater chance that the public will support policies, like tax cuts for the wealthy, that contribute to growing inequality (Franko, Tolbert & Witko 2013). We plan to explore these other implications of our theory more in future research.

Appendix

Issue Attention Search Procedures and Terms

To generate the initial list of search terms two scholars worked independently to identify sets of terms related to the four issues. The scholars drew from their own knowledge of relevant synonyms, online thesauruses, as well as two online resources for identifying sets of related terms: semantic-link.com and Wordnet. Next we compared the two lists identified by each scholar. Terms initially identified by both scholars were typically retained as were other central terms jointly agreed upon by both scholars. Our goal was to specify a refined set of term stems that would form the basis for developing complete sets of terms of phrases for each topic category. We aimed to keep the core set of terms for each topic equivalent (7-10 stems) in order to achieve comparability across topics and thus promote rough equivalence in the possibility that each topic might appear in a speech (or news article). Based on the refined, time-extend term lists, we then constructed a complete set of search terms and phrases (up to three words) that specifically captured content pertaining to the topic at hand. We elected to use search phrases in an effort to identify speeches (or news stories) that specifically referred to the issue at hand and to avoid unintentionally capturing alternative uses of individual words (e.g. references to "equality" pertaining to gender or race rather than economic differentials; references to "price" as in "the price of fame" as opposed to the prices of goods). The final search lists are not meant to be exhaustive, but are designed to capture a roughly equivalent set of relevant search terms for each topic category.

Inequality Terms: Gini, income quintile, income decile, top incomes, inegalitarian income, inegalitarian wealth, egalitarian income, egalitarian wealth, income disparity, wealth disparity, income disparities, wealth disparities, income stratification, wealth stratification, unequal income, unequal wealth, income inequality, wealth inequality, inequality of income, inequality of incomes, inequality of wealth, income equality, wealth equality, equality of incomes, equality of income, equality of wealth, income distribution, wealth distribution, distribution of income, distribution of incomes, distribution of wealth, redistribution of income, redistribution of incomes, redistribution of wealth, income redistribution, wealth redistribution, equitable income, equitable wealth, equitable distribution, inequitable income, inequitable wealth, inequitable distribution, equity of incomes, equity of income, equity of wealth, equity in incomes, equity in income, equity in wealth, equality of incomes, equality of income, equality of wealth, concentration of income, concentration of wealth, income concentration, wealth concentration, equalize incomes, equalize income, equalize wealth, equalizing incomes, equalizing income, equalizing wealth, income equalization, wealth equalization, unequal income, unequal incomes, unequal wealth, inequity of incomes, inequity of wealth, income inequity, wealth inequity, uneven distribution, income polarization, wealth polarization, distributional, maldistribution

Unemployment Terms: job, jobs, jobless joblessness, unemployment, unemployed, underemployed, employment, employed, employ, employs, employee, employees, laid off, layoff, layoffs, cutbacks, hire, hired, hiring, worker, workforce, work force, labor, livelihood, out of work, without work, idleness, unemployment, dole, unemployment doles, disemploy, disemployed

Deficit Terms: Deficit, deficits, budget shortfall, budget shortfalls, balanced budget, balance the budget, balance a budget, budget reform, budget reforms, budget surplus, unbalanced budget, budget balancing, national debt, public debt, debt limit, debt ceiling, of the debt, indebted, red ink, in the red, spending cuts, spending limits, spending caps, spending reductions, spending cut, spending limit, spending cap, spending reduction, pay as you go, pay-as-you-go, PAYGO, bond issue, issue of bonds, government bonds, Treasury bills, T-bills

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