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Predictors of National Broadcast and Cable Television News Coverage of the Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

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PREDICTORS OF NATIONAL BROADCAST AND CABLE TELEVISION NEWS
COVERAGE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Theanship School of Mass Communication

by
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how institutional, individual, and situational variables work to influence the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives received. Analysis combines public data on House structure, member characteristics, member effort, and member circumstances with original computer-aided content analysis of the 38,430 transcripts in which members spoke and the 243,205 statements members made on ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC between January 3, 2005 and January 3, 2013, the full terms of these four congresses. The results presented in this dissertation yield important information about which House members are most and least successful in garnering news coverage and how the effects of specific institutional, individual, and situational variables vary across different news organizations and across news organizations type. Implications for citizens, Congress, and democracy are discussed.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The members of the U.S. House of Representatives constitute a collective half of the federal government's ability to write the laws that govern the land. Simply put, the members of the U.S. House of Representatives wield a power that affects the lives of everyone in the United States; a power the public can only truly check at the ballot box. Knowledge of the goings on in Congress, then, is integral to the public's ability to hold their representatives accountable – to either reward them with another term in office or replace them with what they hope is a preferable alternative. Given Lippmann's (1922) observation that the media serve as the lens through which the public comes to learn about the world outside of their direct experience – an observation that is especially relevant to the world of politics since few people interact directly with their government – it is clear that news coverage of the members of the House of Representatives serves an important democratic function.

This function, however – accountability – is largely the jurisdiction of local news organizations (cf. Arnold 2004). National news organizations simply lack the resources – time, space, and financing – to cover the individual members of the U.S. House of Representatives at a depth sufficient to enable voters in each district to hold their representatives accountable. Cook (1989), for example, found that network television newscasts featured fewer than half the members of the U.S. House of Representatives even once between 1969 and 1986. And although House members' press secretaries prefer local to national news coverage at least when it comes to securing reelection (Cook 1989), as Cook writes, “national media attention is not beside the point for most members of Congress most of the time” (2005, p. 151).

Indeed, Cook (1989) identified a shift toward increasingly complex media strategies during the last quarter of the twentieth century as House members began to grasp the potential utility of national news coverage – beyond whatever payoff it might have in terms of expanding their power – for fulfilling their official duties (Cook 2005). That is, in place of a once-dominant inside game, House members – faced with the difficult prospect of getting their 534 colleagues to focus on a single legislative agenda long enough to pass coherent legislation –increasingly seek

national news coverage in pursuit of not only placing an issue on the national agenda, but also with the intent of defining the issue in such a way as to make their preferred legislative remedy the only reasonable solution. And while national news organizations continue to lack the resources to fully cover the individual agendas and actions of all House members, data collected for this study reveal the success of these increasingly sophisticated strategies: between 2005 and 2013, more than 75 percent of House members garnered at least some coverage on national broadcast and cable television newscasts.

That House members continue to spend increasing amounts of their time and resources on media strategies reflects their beliefs that such strategies have an effect. Decades of research on media effects corroborate these beliefs. Research on the gatekeeping function of the news explains that members who receive news coverage have the potential to circumvent traditional House norms by informing and influencing a broad spectrum of the public (cf. White 1950). Research on the agenda setting function of the news explains that members whose issues are featured more prominently in the news tend to become more important to the public and other members of Congress (cf. McCombs and Shaw 1972). Research on priming explains that the issues that garner coverage tend to influence the criteria that people use to make related political judgments (cf. Iyengar and Kinder 1987). And research on framing explains that members who garner news coverage have the ability to define an issue in such a way as to make their preferred legislative alternative the only reasonable solution (cf. Iyengar 1991). In other words, members who garner national news coverage are better equipped to raise their profile as a player to be reckoned with, set an issue on the national agenda, and even guide national policy. National news coverage of House members, then, also serves an important democratic function and is therefore deserving of scholarly attention.

Despite its importance, however, few scholars have examined the volume of national news coverage of members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Indeed, Cook's (1986) nearly 30-year-old observation that only a handful of studies have content analyzed national news coverage of House members, remains equally valid today. Instead, most of the literature on

news coverage of members of Congress has focused either on the determinants of local news coverage of Congress (e.g., Arnold 2004; Fogarty 2008; Schaffner and Sellers 2003; Vinson 2003) or on the determinants of news coverage of members of the U.S. Senate (e.g., Hess 1986; Fogarty 2013; Kuklinski and Sigelman 1992; Sellers and Schaffner 2007; Squire 1988; Weaver and Willhoit 1974). Given the importance and scarcity of research on this topic – a review of the literature found only three studies that have examined the national news coverage of House members (Cook 1986; Padgett 2013; Waismel-Manor and Tsfati 2011) – in this dissertation I examine institutional, individual, and situational variables in the form of House structure, demographics, legislative and media activity and effort, and circumstances that influence the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage garnered by the various members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives. The findings produced by the analysis presented in this dissertation yield important information about how institutional, individual, and situational variations work to shape the volume of national news coverage that House members receive.

Chapter 2 reviews several areas of the political communication literature and synthesizes scholarly, professional, and public perceptions about the democratic function of the news media, the effects of political news coverage, the interactive and interdependent process through which national political news is made, the factors that may influence the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members of the U.S. House of Representatives garner, and the theoretical propositions tested here. Chapter 3 presents the research design, describes the data collected for this dissertation and the process of collecting it, and justifies the chosen statistical analysis and model specification. Chapter 4 presents the results of the models estimated to test the hypotheses delineated in Chapter 2. And in Chapter 5 I discuss the key findings, contributions, and implications of the dissertation and offer suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of which members of Congress garner news coverage is important because of the normative role of the news media in a representative democracy and because of the empirical evidence demonstrating the effects of news coverage. In this chapter, I will review several areas of the political communication literature and synthesize scholarly, professional, and public perceptions about the democratic function of the news media, the effects of political news coverage, the interactive and interdependent process through which national political news is made, and the factors that may influence the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members of the U.S. House of Representatives garner.

The Democratic Function of the News Media

The annals of journalism scholarship are flush with discussions about what journalism in a representative democracy should be. Journalism, as the story goes, should inform citizens, scrutinize government, facilitate public debate and the formation of public opinion, and represent the will of the people and the aims of society (Curran 2005). At its core, then, journalism in a representative democracy should provide the people with the information they need to be free and self-governing (Kovach and Rosensteel 2007). The idea that journalism should facilitate democratic self governance, however, is more than the normative conjecture of academics. Indeed, it is also embedded deeply in the identity of journalists and professional journalism organizations.

When asked to define the distinguishing characteristics of their profession, nearly twice as many journalists cite characteristics that facilitate self governance – like informing the public, serving as a watchdog against government malfeasance, and informing public opinion – than any other (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 1999), a sentiment that has remained remarkably stable. In surveys conducted every decade since the 1970s, journalists have prioritized their professional contributions to the public's ability to govern themselves above any other purpose or characteristic (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes & Wilhoit 2007).

Likewise, the codes of ethics of many professional journalism organizations, including the American Society of News Editors, Radio Television Digital News Association, and Society of Professional Journalists, all emphasize journalism's contribution to democratic self governance. The American Society of News Editors' code emphasizes that journalism should serve the public interest not only by informing citizens sufficiently to make informed political judgments, but also by acting as a check against corruption at all levels of government (American Society of News Editors 2014). The Radio Television Digital News Association's code stresses that journalists first obligation is to the public (Radio Television Digital News Association 2014). And the Society of Professional Journalists' code holds that journalists should cultivate a well-informed public capable of self governance (Society of Professional Journalists 2014).

This democratic function of the news – championed by academics, journalists, and professional journalism organizations alike – is particularly important given Lippmann's (1922) observation that people rely on the news as the lens through which they come to understand the world outside of their direct experience, an observation that is especially relevant to the world of politics, since few people interact directly with their government. Indeed, the news media constitute the single most important source of information about government and officials; it is difficult even to imagine how a representative democracy in a large society could function without an independent news media dedicated to reporting the goings on of its government (Arnold 2004).

Government officials, too, have come to understand the necessity of news coverage – beyond whatever payoff it might have for garnering power and electoral security – for fulfilling the duties of their offices (*see e.g.*, Cook 2005). For example, members of Congress, who are faced with the difficult prospect of getting their 534 colleagues to focus on a single legislative agenda long enough to pass coherent legislation, seek news coverage not only in pursuit of placing an issue on the national agenda, but also with the intent of defining the issue in the public's mind in such a way as to define a preferred legislative solution the only reasonable

solution. As members of Congress and others compete through the news for control of the national agenda, they produce an exchange of ideas that serves the public interest and facilitates self governance.

The News and its Effects

Research suggests the public affairs information publicized through the news media has other effects beyond enabling self governance. Indeed, whether and how news media package and transmit information about actors and events can have a substantive impact on how people perceive those, and related, actors and events. At least four areas of mass communication theory – gatekeeping, agenda setting, priming, and framing – explain why.

Countless actors and events compete for attention from news media daily and news organizations haven't the resources to publicize them all. Because of this, news organizations surveil the environment – sending journalists to places where news is expected to happen and seeking official sources in a position to know (cf. Cook 2005) – and publicize only those actors and events they deem most newsworthy. This process of winnowing the population of potentially newsworthy actors and events to those that are actually published is called the gatekeeping function of the news media (White 1950). Given that the news media constitute the single most important source of information about public affairs (Lippmann 1922; Arnold 2004), the gatekeeping function of the news media explains why actors and events that receive news coverage often become broadly known while those that do not receive news coverage are condemned “to oblivion and the waste basket” (Park 1922, p. 328). In other words, gatekeeping explains why members who receive news coverage have the potential to circumvent traditional House norms by informing and influencing a broad spectrum of the public.

Potentially newsworthy actors and events compete not only to be published as news, but also for position and status in the news publication. That is, once an actor or event successfully navigates the gatekeeping process, news organizations must decide how prominently each will be featured. News organizations assign every published story certain prominence cues – a location within the publication or broadcast, a length, contextual cues that indicate whether the

story is self contained or part of an ongoing narrative, etc. (Graber 1988) – that indicate which stories news organizations ostensibly consider most important. These stories – ordered by importance – constitute the media agenda. Research suggests the public not only understands the prominence cues that news organizations use, but also adopts an agenda – the public agenda – that correlates strongly with the media agenda (McCombs and Shaw 1972). In other words, by emphasizing some actors and events as more important than others, news organizations perform what McCombs and Shaw called an agenda-setting function in which they inform and influence public perceptions about which actors and events are more important than others.

Research also suggests the agenda-setting function of the news media may have important policy implications. As political issues become more prominent in the media and public agendas, the costs of inaction on those issues increases for elected political actors. Simply put, elected officials are more likely to address highly visible and popular political issues because they fear that a failure to act on those issues could result in negative electoral consequences (Arnold 2004; Cook 2005). The agenda-setting function of the news media, then, also helps explain what Baumgartner and Jones (2009) describe as the lurching behavior of policy agendas; that is, why important policy issues go ignored for years, only for political actors to address them after they are highlighted by intense media and public attention.

Beyond influencing which issues the public and political actors consider important and therefore which are more likely to be addressed, the simple choice to publicize particular actors and events also influences how people evaluate related those and related objects. That is, the choice to publish a news story about an issue primes people evaluate other objects – actors, events, even other issues – in terms of that issue. For example, a news story about the economy tends to influence the public to evaluate related objects – for example, elected representatives – on how well they believe those representatives have handled the economy (cf. Iyengar and Kinder 1987). This process, which Iyengar and Kinder labeled priming, helps to explain an advantage that elected representatives seek when they pursue news coverage: garnering coverage

for actors and issues that are favorable to the party increases the likelihood that voters will evaluate the party based on those actors and issues (Sellers 2010).

Finally, just as limited resources preclude news organizations from publicizing every actor and event, resource limitations also preclude journalists from writing news stories that consult every conceivable source and include every conceivable perspective. Instead, faced with limited resources and deadlines, journalists include only a limited range of perspectives, thereby endowing those perspectives – sources, values, facts, considerations, etc. – with greater apparent applicability for making related judgments than they would otherwise have been given. This concept, known as framing – is noteworthy not only because frames are the product of those who create the news – the sources who provide their perspectives and the journalists who craft those perspectives into a coherent narrative – but also because they have important consequences for how the public comes to understand the causes of and solutions to social problems (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997; Iyengar 1991). Framing, then, helps to explain an advantage that House members seek when they pursue news coverage: the ability not only to define an issue as worthy of public – and political – consideration, but also the ability to define that issue in such a way as to make their preferred legislative solution the only reasonable solution.

When it comes to news coverage of House members, then, gatekeeping, agenda-setting, priming, and framing explain that members who receive news coverage may be better equipped to raise their profile as a player to be reckoned with, to set an issue on the national agenda, and even guide national policy. To revise Bernard Cohen's (1963) famous statement about media effects, then, House members who garner news coverage may be successful not only in telling people which political issues to think about, but also how they should understand the causes and solutions to those political issues and evaluate related constructs. The study of which House members get news coverage, then, is a topic worthy of attention.¹

¹ Cohen wrote that the news media “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (1963, p. 13).

Making the News

The power of House members in the news, however, is not without important limits. This is because news coverage of House members is not the exclusive product of members but instead is an interactive, interdependent, and continuous negotiation between House members and journalists (cf. Cook 2005). As Gans (1980) explains, members and journalists act like dance partners; members need the publicity that journalists can provide and journalists need the information that members offer (Gans 1980; McManus 1994; Sigal 1973). This dance, which Cook (1989, 2005) labels the negotiation of newsworthiness, occurs because representatives and journalists each control key resources. Members control access to information, define issues as important, and lend legitimacy to stories; journalists, meanwhile, control access to the public, the range of voices included in the story, the perspective and tone of the story, and the prominence the story receives (Cook 2005). In other words, while officials may direct the attention of journalists to particular actors, events, and issues, they can control neither whether journalists will provide them with the publicity they seek nor what that publicity would look like.

The resources that representatives and journalists control are integral to the process of making news because of the duality whereby news must be both important and interesting (Tuchman 1972; Cook 2005). News, according to traditional definitions, is characterized by values like novelty, conflict, balance, impact, and a bias toward authoritative sources (cf. Bender, Davenport, Drager, and Fedler 2012; Groeling 2010). Journalists learn these values early in their careers. Those who seek a formal journalism education learn about news values in introductory writing and reporting courses while those who skip a formal journalism education learn about them on the job (Breed 1955; Tuchman 1972). Journalists don't just learn these news values, however, they also learn to apply them in their work: assignments that fail to exhibit news values earn lower grades and stories that omit them fail to get published. Repeated transgressions result in failing courses or in losing one's job. The message to new journalists, then, is clear: news must exhibit these characteristics and deviations are not acceptable. As a

result, successful journalists tend to develop what Tuchman (1972) labels a common sense or awareness of what news is and who can make it.

Perhaps the most obvious characteristic of news is that it should be new or novel. As Bender et al. (2012) explain, new details, fresh angles, and deviations from the normal clue journalists into potential news stories. The Project for Excellence in Journalism (2002) cites a range of topics that includes coverage of unusual events among its criteria for what constitutes “good” news. True novelty, however, is rare and generally created by unexpected dramatic events (Cook 1989). The vast majority of news, then, is guided by routines. For example, journalists spend the vast majority of their time in places where news is expected to happen. In Tuchman’s (1973) words, journalists routinize the unexpected, meaning that in the absence of truly novel news, the news becomes whatever journalists produce (Boorstin 1992; Cook 2005). That is, without something truly novel to write about, journalists – already in key places like Capitol Hill – must write about whatever they have. Often, then, novelty becomes manufactured by highlighting inconsistencies – As former CBS Chief White House Correspondent noted, “our job ... is to find the inconsistency ... to find the people who aren’t quite agreeing with the script” and to make that the story (Kurtz 2004) – or by finding ways of turning the journalistic lemons of heavily scripted, but regularly provided, news conferences and releases prepared by members and their staffs into journalistic lemonade. As Cook (2005) writes, one hallmark of professionalism in journalism is “the ability to produce a story in a short time under poor conditions” (p. 73). By providing a regular diet of news conferences and news releases, then, members provide the foundation of what journalists need to present novel information.

A second important characteristic of news is that it should exhibit conflict, which, in Bender et al.’s (2012) words, “makes a story dramatic and interesting.” Once again, the Project for Excellence in Journalism (2002) cites the ability to generate interest among its criteria for what constitutes “good” news. Scholars have long noted a preference for conflict and negativity in the news (*see e.g.*, Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Patterson 1996; Robinson and Sheehan 1983). Conflict and negativity not only affects the public’s perceptions of actors and issues, but

also pushes political actors toward strategies that exude conflict as a means of garnering news coverage (Cook 2005). As former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich said, “The number one fact about the news media is they love fights ... When you give them confrontations, you get attention” (Osborne 1984). By expressing combative or extreme views, then, members provide what journalists need to present interesting and dramatic news.

A third important characteristic of news is that it should be balanced. The Project for Excellence in Journalism (2002), for example, cites the balanced portrayal of multiple viewpoints among its criteria for what constitutes “good” newscasts. Because being perceived as a biased news organization can hurt that organization’s credibility (Baum and Groeling 2008), journalists invoke balance as a strategic ritual to avoid accusations of bias and reprimands from their superiors (Tuchman 1972). A reliable voting record, then, can provide journalists with cues about the member’s ideology, which helps them know whom to seek to provide counterbalancing perspectives on the news (Cook 1986). Tuchman (1972, p. 665) explained the process of responding to a Democratic senator’s claim thus:

... since the senator’s claim to truth cannot be verified, the news consumer may accuse both the reporter and the news organization of bias (or of “favoring” the senator) if an opposing view is not presented ... Although the reporter cannot himself confirm the truth of the senator’s charge, he can contact someone who can. For instance, he can ask the Republican secretary of defense whether the senator’s charge is true ... Presenting both truth-claim “A” attributed to the senator and truth-claim “B” attributed to the secretary of defense, the newsman may then claim he is “objective” because he has presented “both sides of the story” without favoring either man or political party.

Impact and a bias toward using authoritative sources are other important news values. Because all members of the U.S. House of Representatives wield a power that affects the lives of everyone in the United States, however, it is a given that they have the authority and potential impact that journalists seek.

Factors Predicting National Broadcast and Cable News Coverage of House Members

Given the interactive, interdependent, and continuous negotiation between officials and journalists concerning which actors and events become news, what are the factors that may influence the outcome of these negotiations? Few scholars have examined the volume of

national news coverage of members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Instead, most of the literature on news coverage of Congress has focused either on the determinants of local news coverage of Congress (e.g., Arnold 2004; Fogarty 2008; Schaffner and Sellers 2003; Vinson 2003) or on the determinants of news coverage of members of the U.S. Senate (e.g., Hess 1986; Fogarty 2013; Kuklinski and Sigelman 1992; Sellers and Schaffner 2007; Squire 1988; Weaver and Willhoit 1974). A review of the literature revealed only three studies that have examined the national news coverage of House members (Cook 1986; Padgett 2013; Waismel-Manor and Tsfati 2011). This is not to suggest, however, that extant literature is insufficient to inform the current study. Indeed, the literature and common sense suggest at least three categories of variables that may explain variations in the volume of news coverage among legislators: structure and demographics, activity and effort, and circumstances.

Structure and Demographics

Because all members of the U.S. House of Representatives wield a power that affects the lives of everyone in the United States, it is easy to understand why they benefit from an inherent news value, which helps explain why they and other government officials receive preferential access to the news media generally (*see*, e.g., Bennett 1990; Bennett 2009; Cook 2005). Structural and demographic characteristics, however, provide journalists with explicit and implicit cues about which members are most powerful, relevant, and suited for coverage.

House, Committee, and Subcommittee Leadership. House members differ in the extent to which structural components of the House endow them with explicit and implicit power. House rules explicitly endow members in leadership positions and those who chair committees or subcommittees with greater power than their rank-and-file counterparts. The Speaker, for example, directs the day to day business of the House and decides which bills get referred to committee and which make it to a vote on the floor. The Speaker, therefore, has the power to guide the agenda of the majority party and limit the agenda of the minority party (Johnson and O'Grady 2012). Committee chairs, meanwhile, manage bills while in committee, schedule hearings, hire staff, and control the flow of information in committees. Given the

norms that compel journalists to simplify the complex legislative process and provide a coherent and compelling narrative, journalists may look more often to House leaders, committee chairs, and subcommittee chairs to speak for the legislative process, thus providing those members more news coverage than their rank-and-file counterparts.

Research corroborates this idea (Arnold 2004; Cook 1986; Sellers and Schaffner 2007; Squire 1988; Waismel-Manor and Tsfaty 2011). Indeed, that journalists tend to provide leaders and members of authority with a disproportionate share of news coverage is perhaps the most consistent finding among previous studies examining the factors predicting news coverage of Congress. Given the consistency of these findings, I, too, predict that leaders and committee and subcommittee chairs will tend to garner more news coverage than rank-and-file members. Thus:

H1: House leadership will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

H2: Chairing a committee will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

H3: Chairing a subcommittee will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

While serving as a leader, committee chair, or subcommittee chair provides journalists with explicit cues about the relative power of the member, other structural and demographic characteristics – committee importance or prestige, political party affiliation, seniority, age, state population, electoral security, gender and race, and voting record – may also provide journalists with explicit or implicit cues about a member's power or relevance, perceptions that may influence the volume of coverage members receive.

Committee Importance. Cook (1986) writes that journalists may view members who serve on more prestigious committees as more important, a perception that may influence the news coverage they receive. Despite Wilbur Mills' – the longtime chairman of the Ways and Means committee whom pundits referred to as "the most powerful man in Washington" (Stolberg 2008) – preeminence, however, measures of committee importance have yet to significantly predict the volume of national news coverage of House members (Cook 1986; Waismel-Manor and Tsfaty 2011).

At least in the case of Waismel-Manor and Tsfatı (2011), model misspecification due to poor operationalization of the variable could have contributed to nonsignificance. As Stewart (2012) explains, while the Democrats' four-decade stronghold on the House of Representatives between 1955 and 1995 held the value of standing committee assignments in relative equilibrium, the institutional reforms of the 104th Congress lead to a considerable reshuffling of the values that members attach to their particular committee assignments. Cook 1986 and Waismel-Manor and Tsfatı (2011), however, both operationalized committee importance using rankings devised by Ray (1982) well before these changes. It is possible, therefore, that an updated operationalization of the relative importance of committee assignments, like that provided by Stewart (2012), might be better suited for explaining the variation in House members' news coverage during the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th congresses. Thus:

H4: Committee importance will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

Political Party Membership. Debate on the effect of political party membership on the volume of news coverage members receive centers on whether majority party membership or out party membership – that is, membership in the party opposite that of the president – should drive journalists' decisions about whom to feature in the news. Proponents of the majority party hypothesis contend members of the majority are more powerful (*see e.g.*, Arnold 2004; Cook 1986; Kuklinski and Sigelman 1992; Padgett 2013; Squire 1988; Waismel-Manor and Tsfatı 2011). They not only exercise greater control over the legislative process through chamber, committee, and subcommittee leadership positions, but also have disproportionate resources in terms of staff and budget. Cox and Magar (1999), for example, estimate majority party members receive, on average, \$36,000 in Political Action Committee contributions than comparable minority party members. Given news organizations' predilection with power and authority, it seems intuitive that news organizations would disproportionately award more news coverage to majority party members.

Proponents of the out party hypothesis, however, contend the majority party hypothesis fails to account for the ways in which congressional news is made (*see e.g.*, Groeling 2012;

Schaffner and Sellers 2003; Sellers 2000; Sellers 2010). First, as Sellers (2000) notes, minority party members may actually have more incentive to seek news coverage than their majority party counterparts. Given that majority party members exercise so much internal control over the policymaking process, minority members may be better served by taking a legislative fight to the public through the news media. Further, while majority party members may be more powerful than their minority party counterparts, when their party label is the same as the president's, they can never be the most important actors in their party. Out party members, however, regardless of whether they constitute the majority or minority, generally represent the most important actors from their party in government. As reporters seek to simplify complex political issues into coherent and compelling narratives, then, the out party hypothesis predicts news organizations will feature the president as a spokesperson for one party and an out party member of Congress as a spokesperson for the other. As Schaffner and Sellers (2003) explain,

The news routine of objectivity leads reporters to present competing sides of any conflictual issue National political issues often simplify into a disagreement between the two major parties. Reporters turn to the president as a spokesperson for his party, thereby excluding the president's fellow partisans in Congress. For the opposing side on the issue, the journalists rely upon legislators from the opposing party. (p. 42)

In this dissertation I will test both the majority party hypothesis and the out party hypothesis to determine which better explains variations in the volume of news coverage members receive. Thus:

H5a: Majority party membership will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

H5b: Out party membership will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

Seniority. Over time, House members develop expertise and relationships that can help them manipulate the levers of the policymaking and newsmaking processes. With regards to the policymaking process, research indicates that more senior members of the House are more adept at building coalitions and navigating the legislative process in general (*see e.g.*, Cox and Terry 2008). And when it comes to the newsmaking process, Gershon's (2012) data reveal that, at

least for local news coverage, members' relationships with journalists are an important component driving both the volume and tone of coverage that members receive. Thus:

H6: Seniority will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

Age. Few scholars have examined the effect of age on congressional news coverage, and the few that have provide inconsistent results. For example, Cook (1986) found that younger House members garnered more news coverage than older House members, while Squire (1988) found no such effect among senators. Still, there may be reason to suspect that age may have an independent effect on the volume of news coverage members receive. First, younger representatives might be more media savvy than older members. Indeed, Cook (1989) writes that the shift toward members' increasingly complex media strategies during the last quarter of the twentieth century was largely driven by newer and younger House members. Second, television news organizations, which transmit video images of members, may prefer younger, more attractive members. Waismel-Manor and Tsfati (2011) had students rate the attractiveness of House members and then used those results to predict the volume of television news coverage each member received; results indicate more attractive House members garnered disproportionate television news coverage. Although their model does not include the member's age, they note that age was omitted from the model due to multicollinearity concerns and that more attractive representatives were disproportionately young. Given this, I predict that younger members will garner disproportionately more news coverage than older members. Thus:

H7: Age will be a negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

State Population. Finally, national broadcast and cable news organizations may focus more on House members from states with larger populations (*see e.g.*, Squire 1988; Waismel-Manor and Tsfati 2011). Although this proposition has been tested only twice, state population had a substantive influence on the volume of news coverage for both senators (Squire 1988) and House members (Waismel-Manor and Tsfati 2011). As Squire (1988) explains, politicians from larger states historically have an easier time becoming national political figures. Although this

may help explain why journalists may find members from more populous states disproportionately newsworthy, an even simpler explanation exists: If more people live in more populous states, then more people who watch national news organizations should tune in from those states. By focusing more on members from those states, then, national news organizations may be tailoring their news product to the interests of their audiences. Thus:

H8: State population will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

Electoral Security. Scholars have documented a dominance of horse race coverage that focuses on who's ahead, who's behind, and the strategies candidates use to maximize their chances of winning an election (Graber 2010). For example, Rosenstiel and Kovach's (2009) analysis of nearly 25,000 news stories from the 2008 U.S. presidential election found that 71 percent of stories focused on the horse race while only 13 percent focused on issues. Experimental evidence suggests a majority of citizens may prefer horse race coverage to other types of coverage. Iyengar, Norpoth, and Hahn (2004), for example, found that when presented with different types of campaign news coverage, citizens consistently sought horse race coverage and avoided issue coverage. Since, as Arnold explains, "Nothing is more boring to the journalistic mind than a campaign for which reporters have already written the final act" (2004, p. 42), members who are in electoral jeopardy may receive more news coverage than members who are electorally secure.

This proposition, however, has been largely advanced in examinations of the determinants of local coverage of House members (*see e.g.*, Arnold 2004; Vinson 2003). Is there reason to suspect that electoral security may also have an effect on the volume of national news coverage? Is it really reasonable to suspect that national broadcast and cable news organizations, which lack the resources to cover individual House members sufficiently to facilitate political accountability and instead focus on relaying the national policy agenda, focus disproportionately on members who face electoral uncertainty? It is, perhaps, telling that no examination of the determinants of national news coverage of Senators has modeled the effect of electoral security and that the only two examinations of the determinants of national news coverage of House

members to have modeled it have not found significant effects (*see, e.g., Padgett 2013; Waismel-Manor and Tsfaty 2011*). Indeed, while it seems likely that national news organizations may seek to award select electorally vulnerable House members with increased news coverage, these motivations are most likely limited to members whose loss would have national implications, like the defeat of a House leader or the defeat of a member that would change the balance of power in the House. Instead, it seems most likely that members in electoral danger are more likely to shift whatever focus and resources they might ordinarily allocate to seeking national news coverage to seeking local news coverage instead, which is more valuable to securing reelection (Cook 1989). Thus:

H9: Electoral security will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

Gender and Race. Scholars examining the volume of House members' news coverage have often theorized that reporters may find female and/or minority members more newsworthy than their white and male counterparts. Cook (1986), for example, suggests reporters may provide more coverage to female and/or minority members to "provide some vague semblance of demographic balance within Congress." Arnold (2004), meanwhile, suggests that female and/or minority members may receive additional news coverage because reporters may seek them to speak not just for their constituents, but also for women and minorities generally. Data, however, have yet to provide any consistent evidence documenting that female and/or minority members enjoy preferential access to news coverage.

Instead, considerable literature documents that female and/or minority politicians tend to receive either less frequent and less positive news coverage (*e.g., Entman 1994; Kahn 1996; Payne 1988*) or, more recently, that much of the coverage that female and/or minority politicians receive has improved and now tends to be roughly on par with the coverage that white and male politicians receive (*Schaffner and Gadson 2004; Gershon 2012*). Gershon's (2012) analysis, in particular, demonstrates that gender and race do not individually influence the volume and tone of news coverage House members receive, although the combined impact of being both female and a minority does reduce the volume of coverage received. Given this, I predict that members

who are both female and minority, but not just female or minority, will receive less news coverage than other members. Thus:

H10: Being both female and minority will be a negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

Voting Record. Every bill that eventually becomes law must be voted on by the members of the House of Representatives. Although members may make ambiguous, byzantine, and even contradictory statements about bills, their roll-call votes provide a clear public record of their actions. Roll call votes are not only an important component of holding House members politically accountable, they also provide journalists with cues about the member's ideology: members who frequently vote with their political party can be considered reliable partisans, whom journalists may seek to provide counterbalancing perspectives on the news (Cook 1986; Padgett 2013; Waismel-Manor and Tsfaty 2011). Therefore, I predict that more ideologically extreme House members will garner disproportionately more news coverage than their more moderate counterparts. Thus:

H11: Ideological extremism will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

Second, national broadcast and cable television news organizations vary in important ways that may influence the decisions they make in how they allocate news coverage among the various House members. For example, cable television networks have never been able to compete with the enormous audiences garnered by the long-established broadcast networks: ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news newscasts attracted an average of 7.5 million viewers each in 2011 compared with an average of only 1.1 million viewers each for CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC (Project for Excellence in Journalism 2012). This inability to compete with the established broadcast networks has driven cable news organizations particularly to seek competitive differentiation through the pursuit of highly valuable niche audiences. One strategy for differentiation has been to target viewers with particular political ideologies. Research suggests media coverage of controversial political issues on Fox News and MSNBC particularly is far from politically neutral. Content analysis demonstrates that Fox News systematically

covers controversial political issues and events – including the Iraq War, global warming, and the race for the U.S. presidency – in ways that are more supportive of conservative and Republican interests, while MSNBC systematically covers the same issues and events in ways that are more supportive of liberal and Democratic interests (Baum and Groeling 2010; Feldman et al. 2012; Project for Excellence in Journalism 2012). Evidence also suggests the market has responded favorably to this ideological differentiation. CNN, the only major cable news network that has yet to stake an ideological claim, now ranks behind both Fox News and MSNBC in both daytime and nighttime viewership (Project for Excellence in Journalism 2013). The business of catering to partisans, I argue, makes cable news organizations disproportionately likely to seek reliable partisans. After all, providing a politically likeminded member with a voice, only for that member to speak against the party line, could be bad for viewer disposition and business. Thus:

H12: Ideological extremism will be a stronger predictor of the volume of cable television news coverage that members receive than the volume of broadcast television news they receive.

Member Activity

Beyond variations in structural and demographic characteristics, variations in member activity and effort – the extents to which members guide bills through the legislative process and seek news coverage - may also influence the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage they receive.

Legislative Activity. Debate on the effect of legislative activity on the volume of news coverage members receives centers on the extent to which making laws and making news are compatible processes. Proponents of the “making news and making laws” hypothesis argue that the two ideas are complementary parts of the same process (*see e.g.*, Cook 1989). Since the bills that members introduce have the potential to become the law of the land and dramatically affect peoples’ lives, it is possible that news organizations view legislative activity as inherently newsworthy and reward more active legislators with increased news coverage. Further, Cook’s (2005) research suggests members increasingly circumvent House norms in pursuit of news

coverage to fulfill their legislative duties, seeking not only to place an issue on the national agenda, but also to define it in such a way as to make their preferred legislative remedy the only reasonable solution. Given the news media's function as the principal communicators of the democratic process, the proposition that national news organizations provide more legislatively active House members with more news coverage is normatively encouraging, and, indeed, Cook's (1986) data demonstrate how national news organizations do just that.

It is also possible, however, that the relationship between legislative activity and news coverage could be negative. House members have limited resources, so time invested in writing and guiding bills through the legislative process necessarily reduces the time they have left for pursuing news coverage. Mayhew (1974), for example, argues the life of a member who focuses on legislation is a lonely one devoid of news conferences. Payne (1980), meanwhile writes that "members are either high in publicity and low in legislative work (show horses) or low in publicity and high in legislative work (work horses), and no member is high on both" (p. 442). More recent research fails to document a positive relationship between legislative activity and the volume of news coverage members receive (Langbein and Sigelman 1989; Waismel-Manor and Tsfaty 2011).

Although the outcomes they predict are antithetical, both the "making laws and making news" and "show horse – work horse" hypotheses propose that the resources members expend on legislation influence the volume of news coverage they garner. I argue the operationalization of legislative activity found in past work, however – the number of bills each member introduced – is flawed. The members of the U.S. House of Representatives introduce many bills. For example, House members introduced 26,964 bills during the 109th (6,436), 110th (7,340), 111th (6,570), and 112th (6,618) congresses. Members do not put equal effort into guiding each of the bills they've introduced through the legislative process; they introduce bills other than those they intend to fight for to satisfy the policy desires of campaign contributors and constituents, to stake out forlorn positions, and for other reasons. (cf. Herrick, Moore, and Hibbing 1994). Nor does every bill require equal effort to navigate through the House; renaming a building in the

legislator's home district may require significantly less effort than overhauling established national policy. Since we have no way of knowing a priori which bills members intend to fight for and the relative resistance those bills are likely to face, a simple count of the number of bills introduced tells us little about the resources members expend on legislation.

A better measure of the resources members expend on legislation accounts for the type – substantive vs. symbolic legislation – and success – whether it is reported from committee and/or passes the chamber – of each bill the member introduced. By accounting for legislative effort in this way, the independent effect of introducing bills – a largely symbolic exercise – captures the influence of “show horse” behavior while the independent effects of having bills reported from committees or passing the chamber – outcomes that require actual effort from the member – captures the influence of “work horse” behavior. Padgett (2013) took one step toward creating this better measure by accounting for the varying success of each bill, measuring the independent effects of introducing bills, having the reported from committee, and having them pass the chamber on the volume of members' coverage; results were clear: the number of bills the member introduced had either positive or no effect on members' news coverage while the number of the member's bills reported from committee consistently and negatively predicted members' news coverage. Given these results, I predict show horse behavior will be positively associated with members' news coverage while work horse behavior will be negatively associated with that coverage. Thus:

H13: Bills introduced will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

H14: Bills reported from committee will be a negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

H15: Bills to pass chamber will be a negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

News Effort. Members also vary in the extent to which they pursue news coverage, something that is likely to influence the amount of news coverage they garner. As Arnold (2004) explains, members with more effective press secretaries, who issue more press releases, and who are more accessible to journalists may receive more news coverage. And, at least on the local

level, this appears to be true: Gershon's (2012) data reveal that the number of press releases members issue positively predicts the volume of news coverage they receive. Given these results, I also predict that press releases will positively correlate with the volume of news coverage House members receive. Thus:

H16: Press releases will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

Circumstances

Finally, common sense suggests circumstances – whether the member served a complete term, was implicated in a scandal, or ran for higher political office – could influence the volume of news coverage members garner. While previous studies have shown that members who run for higher office often garner an increased volume of news coverage, members with other important circumstances are routinely omitted from analysis. For example, Waismel-Manor and Tsfaty (2011) excluded all members from analysis who did not serve a full term, ran for higher office, and even the Speaker of the House “as obvious outliers in the case of news coverage” (p. 447). Because these members are generally excluded from models, predictions must be made by intuition. Thus:

H17: Serving an incomplete term will be a negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

H18: Being implicated in a scandal will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

H19: Running for higher office will be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive.

This chapter has reviewed the literature of several areas of political communication, summarizing and synthesizing scholarly, professional, and public perceptions about the democratic function of the news media, the effects of news coverage, the interactive and interdependent process or negotiation through which political news is made, and the factors – structure and demographics, activity and effort, and circumstances – that may influence the outcome of those negotiations. Based on this review of literature, 19 theoretical propositions

were made. Chapter 3 outlines the method and materials used to test the theoretical predictions made in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3. METHOD AND MATERIALS

Sample and Unit of Analysis

To test these expectations, I collected data about each of the 1778 voting members of the 109th ($n = 440$), 110th ($n = 448$), 111th ($n = 445$), and 112th ($n = 445$) U.S. Houses of Representatives and their presence on national broadcast and cable television news programs between January 3, 2005 and January 3, 2013, the full terms of these four congresses. The individual members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives, then, constitute the unit of analysis for this study.

The choice to analyze all 1778 voting members of these congresses – a body of analysis that Berk, Western, and Weiss (1995) label an apparent population – carries with it a need for a philosophical decision concerning how the data should be analyzed. Inferential statistics are designed to account for error generated through the known processes of random sampling and assignment. With an apparent population, however, neither random sampling nor random assignment is present – at least in the usual sense – making the application of inferential statistics questionable. In such a case, the researcher must decide whether to treat the apparent population as a true population or as a random sample (Berk, Western, and Weiss).

If the apparent population is treated as a true population, the use of inferential statistics is unnecessary; descriptive comparisons are all that are required to describe the differences and relationships observed in the data (Berk, Western, and Weiss 1995). This choice, however, assumes a deterministic view of world. As Berk and colleagues write, “this implies that if the historical processes for the particular period ... could be started again, the data would turn out exactly the same” (p. 425). In the context of this study, the choice to treat the data as a true population would imply acceptance of the assumption that events could not have happened any other way and that nothing could have altered the roster, agenda, or news coverage of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th, U.S. Houses of Representatives.

Alternatively, however, the apparent population can be treated as a sample. In this treatment, the apparent population is conceptualized as a probability sample – a body of analysis

that Berk, Western, and Weiss (1995) label a realization – from some super population. In the case of the present study, the 1778 members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th, U.S. Houses of Representatives comprise a realization from the super population of the 37,893 members of the first through 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives. Indeed, the realization used in this study is simply 1 of 1.135×10^{3114} possible samples of this size that could have been drawn from the super population.² Treating the apparent population as a realization of a super population does not assume a deterministic view of the world – events could have unfolded differently and the roster, agenda, and news coverage of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th, U.S. Houses of Representatives could have been different than it was. Instead, this treatment assumes only that the social processes producing congressional rosters, agendas, and news coverage are stable enough to produce – in hypothetical repetitions – a large number of samples that approximate the sampling distribution (Berk, Western, and Weiss). For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to treat the apparent population as a probability sample, making the use of inferential statistics appropriate for hypothesis testing.

Variables and Procedure

Dependent Variable

Given the focus of this study – to examine factors that predict news coverage of members of the U.S. House of Representatives – the dependent variable, news coverage, had to be operationalized. Researchers have operationalized news coverage of officials in different ways. Cook (1986), for example, operationalized news coverage of House members as the number of times each member was mentioned on national broadcast television newscasts. This operationalization is akin to what Tresch (2009) labeled visibility, defined as a general measure of news coverage that confers publicity on the actor. When news coverage is operationalized as visibility, then, the member need not be present to earn news coverage. Rather, visibility can be

² The total number of samples of sample size k from a population of population size n can be calculated thus (Hayes 2005, p. 133):

$$\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}$$

earned simply as others discuss the member or his or her policies. While visibility can be an important method of earning publicity, I argue that members who lack the opportunity to speak miss what Schattschneider labeled a “supreme instrument of power” (1988 p. 66).

Alternately, news coverage can be operationalized according to what Tresch (2009) labeled standing – coverage that confers the recipient with a voice to explain, address, or justify his or her policies, issues, or actions. When news coverage is operationalized as standing, then, the member must be present – either live or recorded – to receive news coverage. Standing, then, is a measure of highly useful news coverage in which members can, among other things, attempt to set an issue on the agenda and define it in a way that makes their preferred legislative solution the most attractive alternative.

For this study, the dependent variable – news coverage – was operationalized as standing, meaning that the member had to be present and speak – either live or recorded – to receive news coverage. Members earned standing each time they spoke on a national broadcast or cable news program; the value of each member’s standing is equal to the total number of times he or she spoke on those programs. Separate measures of standing were gathered for each member from ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC.

This is an appropriate place to expand on the difference between units of analysis and observation. The unit of observation is the unit on which a variable is measured (Neuendorf 2002). As such, the unit of observation can differ between variables. For the dependent variable – news coverage – the unit of observation is the individual statement. The unit of analysis, however, is the unit on which the data are analyzed and reported (Neuendorf 2002). The unit of analysis for this study, as already indicated, is the individual member. This means that the data collected for the dependent variable – collected at the statement-level – needed to be transformed – to the member level – before being incorporated into the data and analyzed.

Data on members' standing was gathered from ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC transcripts available in LexisNexis using a search string customized for each member.³ The 1,777 searches yielded a total of 91,083 transcripts – 19,749 for the 109th House, 17,640 for the 110th House, 26,209 for the 111th House, and 27,485 for the 112th House – suitable for further analysis. The results for each member were saved in .html format, preparing them for computer aided content analysis using Beautiful Soup, a freely available open source html scraping program. Broadcast and cable television news transcripts are well suited for computer-aided content analysis because they follow reliable formatting procedures. For example, transcripts for CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox news, and MSNBC identify each speaker on first reference by his or her first name, last name, title (if available and/or appropriate), and a colon; second and subsequent identifications of that speaker include only the speaker's last name (accompanied by a first initial if more than one speaker with the same last name is present) and a colon. Further, first and subsequent identifications are presented in all capital letters.⁴ Such formatting consistencies make the use of computer-aided content analysis particularly suitable for analyzing the content of broadcast and cable news transcripts.

Analysis of the 91,083 identified transcripts, automated using a commissioned Python script that provided the html scraper with relevant parameters, proceeded in two stages,. First, the transcripts for each member were examined for speakers with the same last name, and the first names associated with each speaker with that last name were identified. First names that unambiguously referenced the member were recorded and those that were ambiguous were checked by manually opening the transcript and searching for the first name to determine whether it referenced the member or someone else. All first names that were found to reference

³ The search string created for each member followed the following format: ("LN" AND "FN LN") AND (("LN" w/p ("rep." OR "representative" OR "congress!")) where LN represents the member's last name and FN represents the member's first name. An "!" immediately following a word indicates trailing letters are permitted; for example, searching for "congress!" would also yield results for "congressman," "congresswoman," "congressperson," and "congressional" (as in "congressional representative"), etc. For members with commonly known nicknames or with first names that have commonly known variations (e.g., Steven and Steve or Michael and Mike, etc.), all variations were included.

⁴ Although transcripts from ABC did not follow the particular formatting guidelines described here, the formatting used in ABC's transcripts was equally formulaic.

the member were recorded. For example, first stage of analysis for Rahm Emanuel's 109th congressional transcripts returned four first names associated with a speaker with the last name Emanuel: "Rep.," "Rahm," "Michael," and "Mike." Both "Rep." and "Rahm" referenced Rahm Emanuel while "Michael" and "Mike" referenced a Fox News correspondent. In this example, then, the first names "Rep." and "Rahm" were recorded for second-stage analysis. By excluding all transcripts in which no member spoke, this first stage analysis winnowed the total number of transcripts in the analysis to 38,430, including 8,656 for the 109th Congress, 9,908 for the 110th Congress, 13,238 for the 111th Congress, and 14,416 for the 112th Congress.

In the second stage, the relevant first names were included in the script parameters and the transcripts for each member were reexamined, analyzing only the statements made by the actual representative. In this stage, the Python script directed the html scraper to record, for each statement, the speaker's name, the date of the statement, and the network on which the statement appeared. Data corresponding to a total of 243,205 statements (45,545 for the 109th Congress, 47,981 for the 110th Congress, 68,420 for the 111th Congress, and 81,259 for the 112th Congress) were automatically exported and saved to tab delineated files. Once these files were combined, the data were transformed from the unit of observation – the individual statement – to the unit of analysis – the individual member – in preparation for statistical analysis.

Independent Variables

Structure and Demographics. Various measures were used to account for the possible effects of structural and demographic characteristics, activity and effort, and circumstances. Structural and demographic characteristics were operationalized with 16 variables indicating whether a member held a leadership position in the House (*Majority Party Leader* and *Minority Party Leader*), chaired a committee (*Committee Chair*) or subcommittee (*Subcommittee Chair*), sat on an important committee (*Committee Importance*) was a member of a political party (*Majority Party Membership* and *Out Party Membership*), how long the member had served in office (*Seniority*), the age of the member at the beginning of the term (*Age*), the population of the state the member represents (*State Population*), how electorally secure the member was

(*Electoral Security*), the member's gender and race (*White Female*, *Minority Male*, and *Minority Female*), and the member's voting record (*Ideology* and *Ideological Extremism*).

To account for the possibility that Chamber leadership may influence news coverage differently based on whether the leader represents the majority versus minority party, chamber leadership was split into two variables – *Majority Leader* and *Minority Leader*. *Majority Leader* captured whether the member was Speaker of the House, majority leader, or majority whip (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise) while *Minority Leader* captured whether the member was minority leader or minority whip (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise). *Committee Chair* captured whether the member chaired one of the 20 standing committees of the House (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise) while *Subcommittee Chair* captured whether the member chaired one of the standing committees' 92 subcommittees (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise). *Committee Importance* captured the effect of membership of the member's most important standing committee of the House operationalized using Stewart's (2012) ranking of the importance of House committees based on the committee assignments members willingly relinquish to acquire other appointments (coded 0 through 20 where 0 indicates the member did not serve on a standing committee, 1 indicates the member served on the least important standing committee, and 20 indicates the member served on the most important committee). *Majority Party Membership* captured whether the member was a member of, or caucused with, the political party in control of the House (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise) while *Out Party Membership* captured whether the member was a member of, or caucused with the political party opposite of that of the president (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise). *Seniority* was operationalized as the total number of years served in the House prior to the first day of the term in which the dependent variable was measured. *Age* was operationalized the age of the member in years at the beginning of the term in which the dependent variable was measured. *State Population* was measured as the number of people in millions living in the member's state during the first year of the congressional class in which the dependent variable was measured (population data for each congressional class was interpolated linearly using census data for 2000 and 2012). *Electoral Security* was measured as the percentage of the vote a

member won in the general election preceding the term in which the dependent variable was measured (members who ran unopposed were coded as receiving 100 percent of the vote). Gender and race with four categories capturing whether the member was female and minority, female and white, male and minority, or male and white. These variables were broken into a series of dichotomous dummy variables and the first three – *female and minority* (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise), *female and white* (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise), and *male and minority* (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise) – were entered into the model allowing for comparisons with the omitted category. Finally, *Ideology* and *Ideological Extremism* measured the extent to which members votes coincided with their conservative and/or liberal counterparts, and was operationalized using Carroll, Lewis, Lo, McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal's (2001) dynamic, weighted nominal three-step estimation (DW-Nominate) scores, which place members' ideologies on a continuum from -1 (extremely liberal) to +1 (extremely conservative) based on analysis of their roll call votes. *Ideology* was operationalized as the member's DW-Nominate score and *Ideological Extremism* was operationalized as the value of that score squared. And *Electoral Security* was measured as the percentage of the vote a member won in the general election preceding the term in which the dependent variable was measured (members who ran unopposed were coded as receiving 100 percent of the vote).

Member Activity and Effort. Member activity and effort was operationalized with four variables capturing the effects of introducing and guiding legislation through the House and seeking media attention. *Bills Introduced* captures the effect of show horse behavior and is operationalized as the number of substantive bills – that is, the number of bills that were not private, commemorative, or symbolic – the member introduced during the congressional class in which the dependent variable was measured. *Bills Reported from Committee* captures the effect of work horse behavior and is operationalized as the number of substantive bills the member had reported from committee during the congressional class in which the dependent variable was measured. *Bills to Pass House* also captures the effect of work horse behavior and is operationalized as the number of substantive bills the member introduced that passed the House

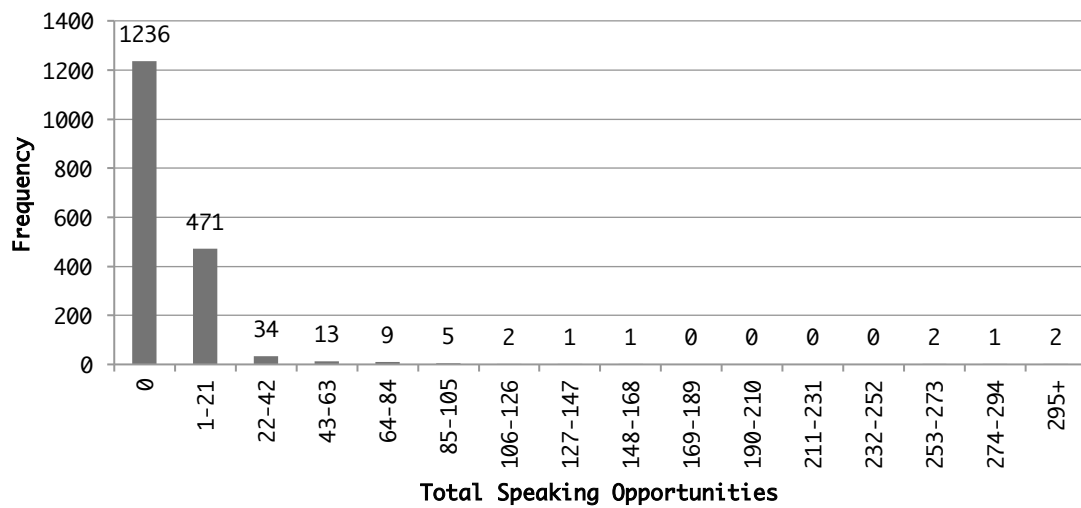
during the congressional class in which the dependent variable was measured. The data for *Bills Introduced*, *Bills Reported from Committee*, and *Bills to Pass House* come from Adler and Wilkerson's (2005-2013) *Congressional Bills Project* for which data were transformed from the unit of observation – the individual bill– to the unit of analysis – the individual member. Media activity and effort was operationalized as the number of news releases authored by the member or the member's staff.

Circumstances. Finally, members' circumstances were operationalized with six variables. *Incomplete term* captures the effect of serving an incomplete term (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise). Being referred for investigation by the House Ethics Committee is operationalized with two variables: *Ethics (complete term)* captures the effect of completing the term after referral (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise) and *Ethics (resigned)* captures the effect of resigning from office after referral (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise). Running for higher office was operationalized with three variables: *Ran for President* (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise), *Ran for Senate* (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise), and *Ran for Governor* (coded 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise) each capture the effect of running for those respective offices.

Statistical Analysis and Model Specification

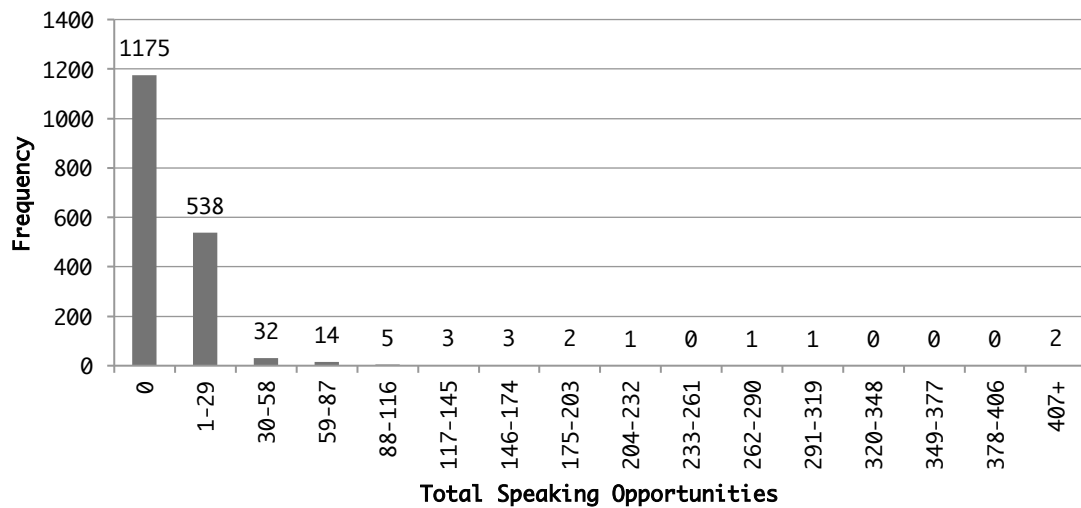
Statistical Analysis

A series of negative binomial regression models are used to test the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2. Negative binomial regression was selected as the appropriate tool because the dependent variable – news coverage – is measured as a count variable that is highly and positively skewed. Histograms illustrating the frequency distributions for news coverage on the various networks are presented in Figure 3.1 (ABC), Figure 3.2 (CBS), Figure 3.3 (NBC), Figure 3.4 (CNN), Figure 3.5 (Fox News), Figure 3.6 (MSNBC), Figure 3.7 (ABC, CBS, and NBC combined), Figure 3.8 (CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC combined), and Figure 3.9 (ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC combined). Given these conditions, linear regression could produce “Inefficient, inconsistent, and biased estimates” (Long and Freese 2006, p. 349). And



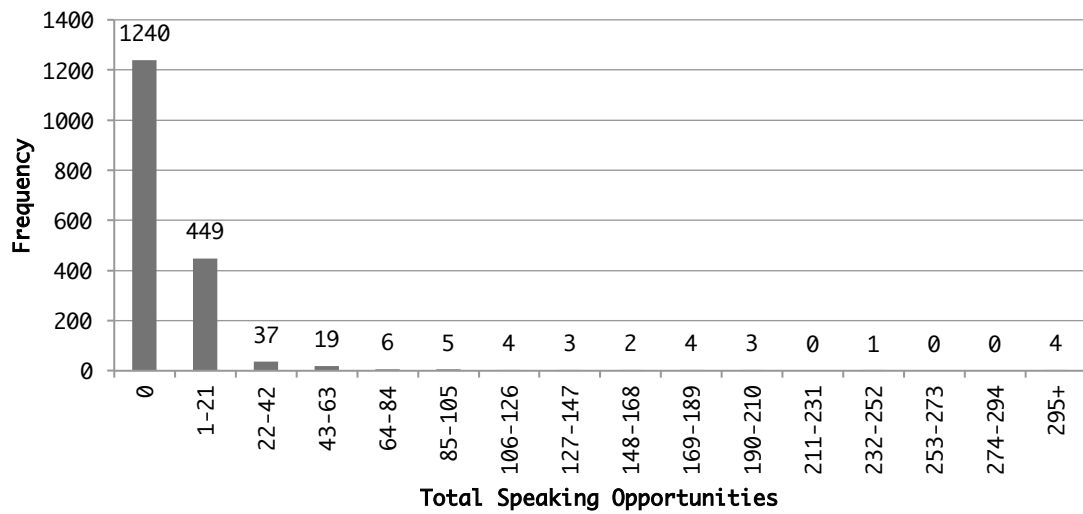
Descriptive statistics	min	max	median	mean	std dev
	0	411	0	3.86	20.06

Figure 3.1: Frequency distribution of members' news coverage on ABC



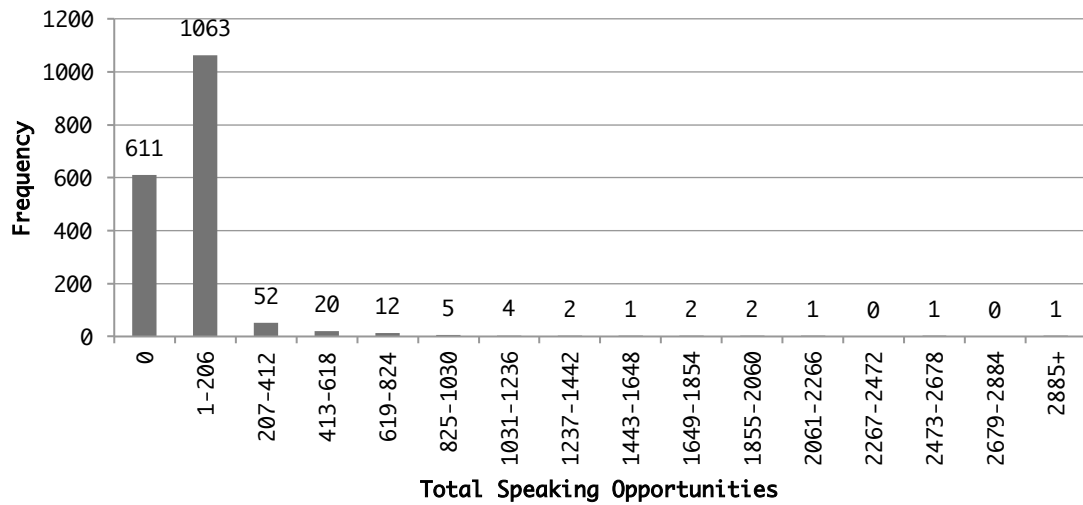
Descriptive statistics	min	max	median	mean	std dev
	0	589	0	4.88	25.40

Figure 3.2: Frequency distribution of members' news coverage on CBS



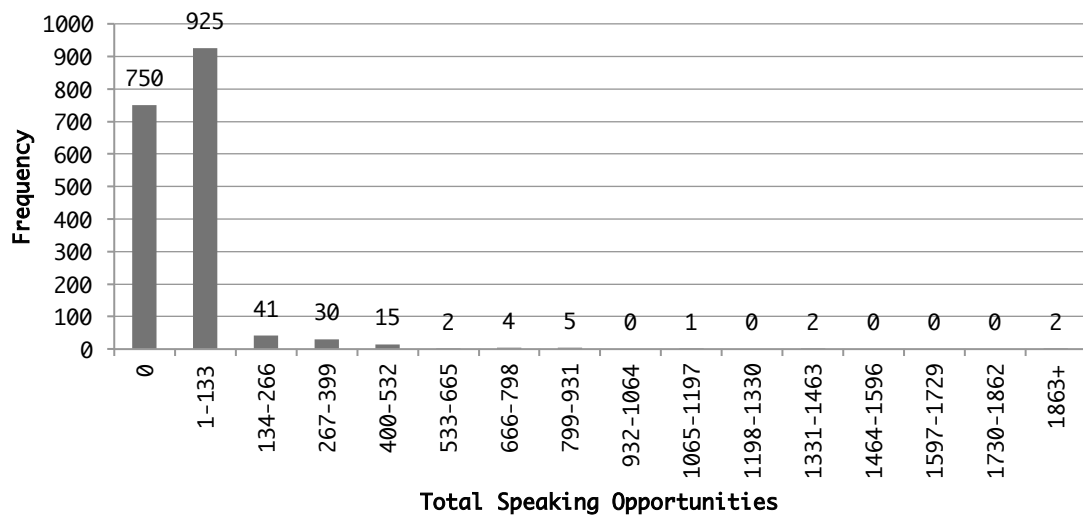
Descriptive statistics	min	max	median	mean	std dev
	0	423	0	5.08	25.52

Figure 3.3: Frequency distribution of members' news coverage on NBC



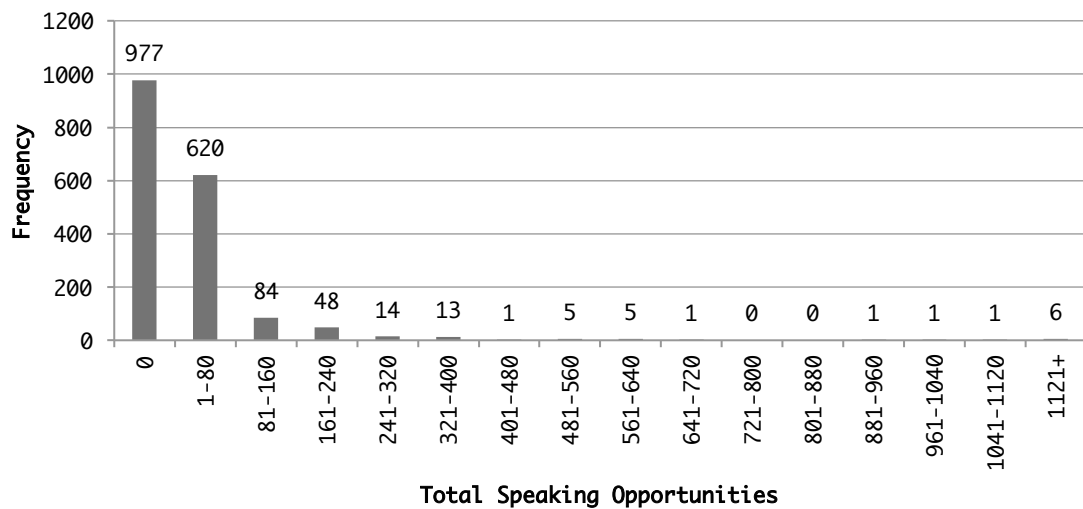
Descriptive statistics	min	max	median	mean	std dev
	0	4126	6	55.12	197.77

Figure 3.4: Frequency distribution of members' news coverage on CNN



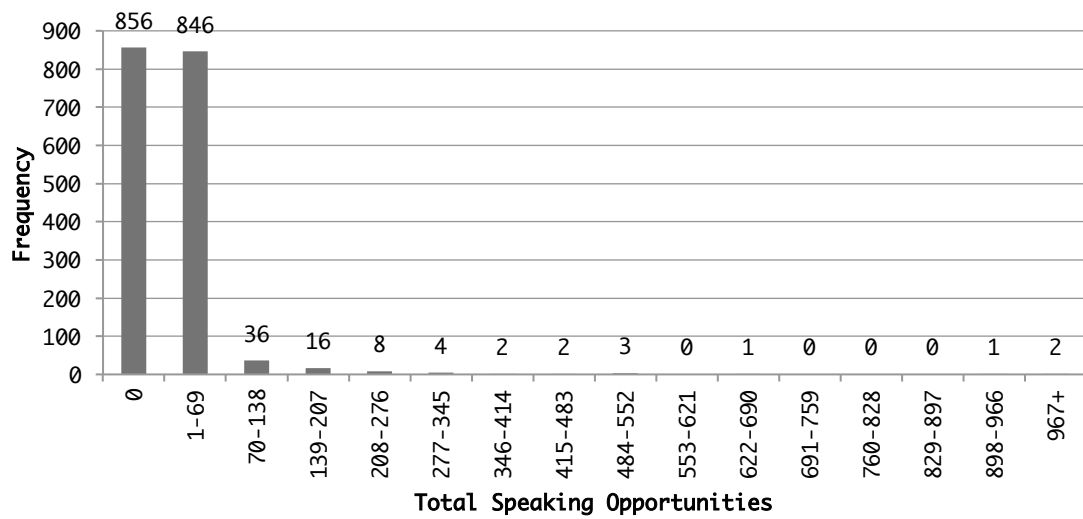
Descriptive statistics	min	max	median	mean	std dev
	0	2661	1	34.61	128.28

Figure 3.5: Frequency distribution of members' news coverage on Fox News



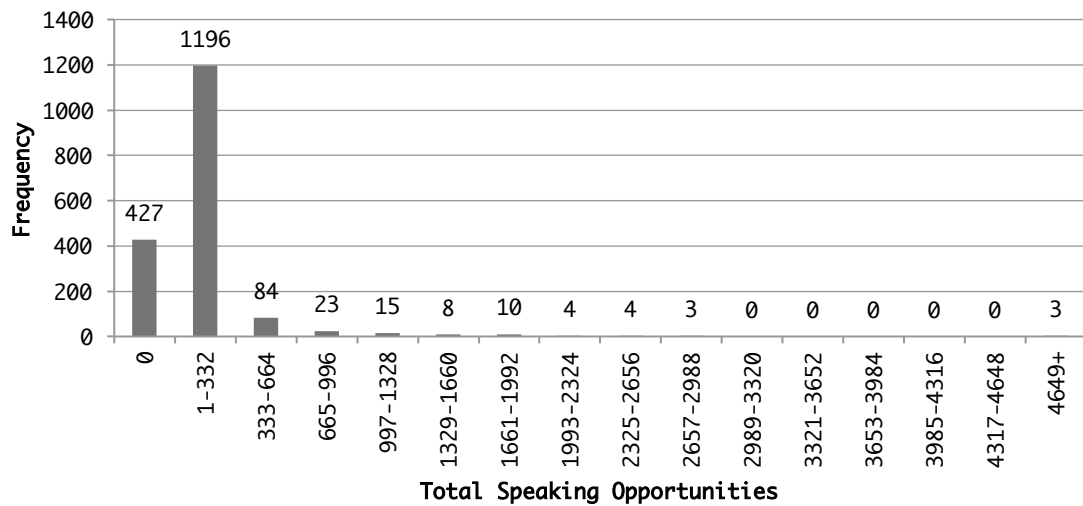
Descriptive statistics	min	max	median	mean	std dev
	0	1603	0	33.19	115.30

Figure 3.6: Frequency distribution of members' news coverage on MSNBC



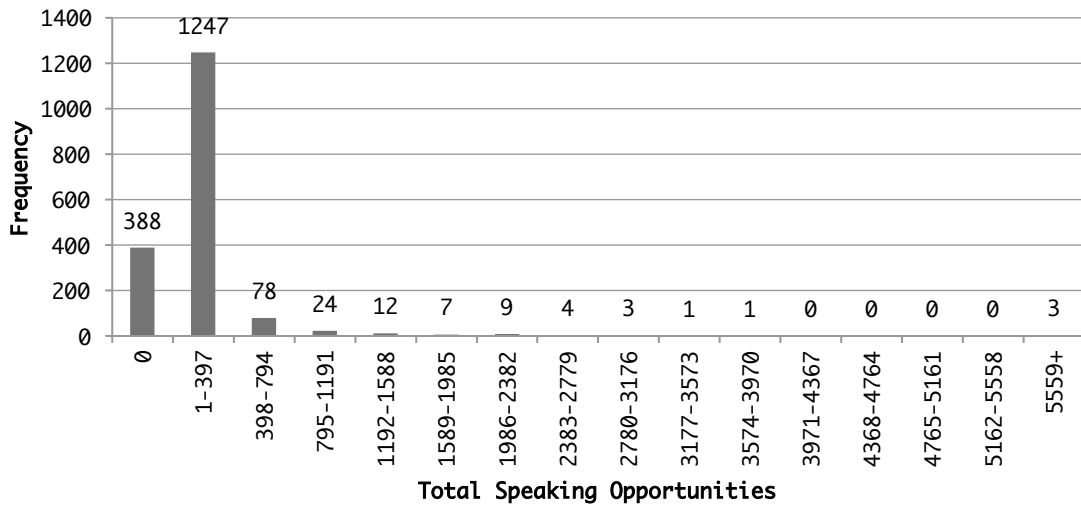
Descriptive statistics	min	max	median	mean	std dev
	0	1378	1	13.83	65.87

Figure 3.7: Frequency distribution of members' news coverage on ABC, CBS, and NBC combined



Descriptive statistics	min	max	median	mean	std dev
	0	6633	17	123.03	388.26

Figure 3.8: Frequency distribution of members' news coverage on CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC combined



Descriptive statistics	min	max	median	mean	std dev
	0	7935	19	136.86	422.86

Figure 3.9: Frequency distribution of members' news coverage on ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC combined.

because the dependent variable for every model estimated exhibits overdispersion, meaning that its conditional variance is greater than its conditional mean, even Poisson regression – designed for estimation of highly-skewed count-level data – could produce inefficient estimates with standard errors that are biased downward, leading to inflated statistical significance (Long and Freese 2006). The negative binomial regression model, however, compensates for overdispersion, making it the most appropriate choice for statistical analysis.

Multilevel data can sometimes cause analytical problems due to serial dependence within clusters and heteroskedasticity across clusters. In these data, some members appear more than once because they serve in multiple congressional classes. To account for this serial dependence, statistical models cluster data by the congressional class using the Huber/White/Sandwich estimation (Huber 1967; White 1980), which adjusts the variance-covariance matrix to correct for serial dependency and heteroskedasticity.

Descriptive statistics for each of the independent variables are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Descriptive statistics for independent variables.

	min	max	median	mean	std dev
Structure and Demographics					
Majority Party Leader	0	1	0	0.01	0.09
Minority Party Leader	0	1	0	0.00	0.07
Committee Chair	0	1	0	0.05	0.21
Subcommittee Chair	0	1	0	0.21	0.41
Committee Importance	0	20	15	14.61	4.63
Majority Party Membership	0	1	1	0.55	0.50
Out Party Membership	0	1	0	0.49	0.50
Seniority	-685	20110	2922	3643.69	3223.81
Age	27	87	56	55.64	10.25
State Population (in millions)	0.53	37.59	9.54	13.34	10.73
Electoral Security	0	100	64.7	65.87	15.97
White Female	0	1	0	0.11	0.31
Minority Male	0	1	0	0.11	0.31
Minority Female	0	1	0	0.05	0.21
Ideology	-0.78	1.29	-0.07	0.12	0.53
Ideological Extremism	0	1.67	0.24	0.29	0.22
Member Activity					
Bills Introduced	0	69	8	10.72	10.85
Bills Reported from Committee	0	20	0	0.91	1.77
Bills to Pass House	0	27	1	1.14	1.95
Press Releases	0	788	0	5.41	36.07
Circumstances					
Incomplete Term	0	1	0	0.05	0.21
Ethics (completed term)	0	1	0	0.02	0.14
Ethics (resigned)	0	1	0	0.00	0.05
Ran for President	0	1	0	0.00	0.03
Ran for Senate	0	1	0	0.02	0.12
Ran for Governor	0	1	0	0.01	0.11

Note: descriptive statistics for the dependent variables are presented in Figures 3.1 through 3.9

Model Specification

Despite relying on shared norms and routines and a tendency to “focus on particular political actors for particular reasons with particular stories in mind” (Cook 2006, p. 163), evidence suggests news coverage is not monolithic (*see e.g.*, Dunaway 2008; Eliasoph 1988; Hamilton 2004, 2005). Indeed, research suggests that each news organizations may, to varying degrees, act dissimilarly when deciding which political actors to cover and how that coverage

should look, differences that extend to coverage of the various House members (Padgett 2013). Attempts to model the volume of news coverage members receive from various news organizations, then, should model that coverage separately for each news organization, something previous studies have largely failed to do. For example, Cook (1986) modeled coverage of House members for the combined national broadcast networks – ABC, CBS, and NBC – while Waismel-Manor and Tsfati (2011) modeled coverage for the combined broadcast and cable networks – ABC, CBS, NBC, PBC, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC. In addition to combined models, then, models for each individual news organization are estimated.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

To test the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2, I estimated a series of 9 negative binominal regression models that model news coverage of the members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on ABC (*see* Table 4.1), CBS (*see* Table 4.2), NBC (*see* Table 4.3), CNN (*see* Table 4.4), Fox News (*see* Table 4.5), MSNBC (*see* Table 4.6), for all broadcast networks combined (*see* Table 4.7), for all cable networks combined (*see* Table 4.8), and for all broadcast and cable networks combined (*see* Table 4.9).

Hypothesis Tests for Structural and Demographic Variables

Leadership Status

Hypothesis 1 predicted that leadership would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of majority party leadership ($b = 2.31$, $rse = 0.41$, $p < .001$) is both statistically significantly and positive. The slope coefficient can be interpreted to mean that majority party leadership corresponds with a 2.31 increase in the log of the expected count of speaking opportunities, controlling for the effects of the other independent variables in the model. Substantively, majority party leaders can expect 817.98 more speaking opportunities than the average rank-and-file member on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. This finding is consistent for each of the broadcast and cable television news networks on an individual level: ABC ($b = 2.77$, $rse = 0.20$, $p < .001$), CBS ($b = 2.99$, $rse = 0.63$, $p < .001$), and NBC ($b = 3.69$, $rse = 0.14$, $p < .001$), CNN ($b = 2.04$, $rse = 0.62$, $p < .001$), Fox News ($b = 2.40$, $rse = 0.46$, $p < .001$), MSNBC ($b = 2.47$, $rse = 0.54$, $p < .001$). Figure 4.1 illustrates the substantive effect of majority party leadership for the individual networks. On average, these models predict majority party leaders garner 9.63 times more speaking opportunities than the average member.

Table 4.1: Negative binomial regression model estimating the volume of news coverage for members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on ABC.

	b (rse)	Predicted Counts		
		Min	Max	Effect
Structural and Demographic Components				
Majority Party Leader	2.77 (0.20)***	2.01	32.05	30.04
Minority Party Leader	2.96 (0.73)***	2.03	39.09	37.07
Committee Chair	0.82 (0.86)			
Subcommittee Chair	0.01 (0.20)			
Committee Importance	0.00 (0.02)			
Majority Party Membership	0.08 (0.24)			
Out Party Membership	0.02 (0.09)			
Seniority	0.07 (0.01)***	0.92	43.27	42.35
Age	-0.06 (0.01)***	15.48	0.33	-15.15
State Population	0.00 (0.01)			
Electoral Security	0.01 (0.01)			
White Female	0.26 (0.17)'	2.00	2.58	0.58
Minority Male	-0.44 (0.13)***	2.16	1.39	-0.76
Minority Female	-0.49 (0.23)*	2.10	1.28	-0.82
Ideology	-0.64 (0.23)**	3.66	0.97	-2.69
Ideological Extremism	2.21 (0.56)***	1.08	43.32	42.24
Member Activity				
Bills Introduced	0.02 (0.01)**	1.68	6.20	4.53
Bills Reported from Committee	-0.19 (0.10)*	2.45	0.05	-2.40
Bills to Pass House	0.17 (0.04)***	1.70	156.05	154.36
Press Releases	0.01 (0.00)*	1.99	234.34	232.36
Circumstances				
Incomplete Term	0.77 (0.47)'	1.98	4.29	2.31
Ethics (completed term)	0.25 (0.54)			
Ethics (resigned)	0.66 (1.07)			
Ran for President	0.41 (0.19)*	2.05	3.10	1.05
Ran for Senate	0.26 (0.55)			
Ran for Governor	-0.08 (0.56)			
N	1777			
Prob.	.000			
McFadden's R2	0.04			
Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors (rse), which are clustered on the Congressional class. 'p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001				

Table 4.2: Negative binomial regression model estimating the volume of news coverage for members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on CBS.

	b (rse)	Predicted Counts		
		Min	Max	Effect
Structural and Demographic Components				
Majority Party Leader	2.99 (0.63)***	2.51	49.79	47.28
Minority Party Leader	2.66 (0.70)***	2.53	36.36	33.83
Committee Chair	1.65 (0.83)*	2.38	12.44	10.06
Subcommittee Chair	0.01 (0.21)			
Committee Importance	-0.01 (0.02)			
Majority Party Membership	0.10 (0.20)			
Out Party Membership	0.10 (0.05)*	2.45	2.69	0.25
Seniority	0.07 (0.02)**	1.18	48.51	47.33
Age	-0.04 (0.01)***	10.71	0.70	-10.01
State Population	0.01 (0.00)'	2.36	3.00	0.64
Electoral Security	0.00 (0.00)			
White Female	0.23 (0.16)'	2.50	3.15	0.65
Minority Male	-0.40 (0.19)*	2.68	1.79	-0.89
Minority Female	-0.99 (0.28)***	2.69	1.00	-1.69
Ideology	-0.43 (0.12)***	3.78	1.55	-2.22
Ideological Extremism	1.50 (0.26)***	1.66	20.42	18.77
Member Activity				
Bills Introduced	0.03 (0.01)**	1.94	11.72	9.79
Bills Reported from Committee	-0.27 (0.07)***	3.27	0.02	-3.25
Bills to Pass House	0.12 (0.05)**	2.24	57.01	54.77
Press Releases	0.00 (0.00)			
Circumstances				
Incomplete Term	-0.07 (0.33)			
Ethics (completed term)	0.23 (0.05)***	2.55	3.21	0.66
Ethics (resigned)	1.31 (1.25)			
Ran for President	2.73 (0.00)***	2.56	39.00	36.44
Ran for Senate	0.19 (0.65)			
Ran for Governor	0.45 (0.40)			

N	1777			
Prob.	.000			
McFadden's R2	0.04			

Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors (rse), which are clustered on the Congressional class. 'p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001				

Table 4.3: Negative binomial regression model estimating the volume of news coverage for members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on NBC.

	b (rse)	Predicted Counts		
		Min	Max	Effect
Structural and Demographic Components				
Majority Party Leader	3.69 (0.14)***	2.52	101.41	98.89
Minority Party Leader	3.13 (0.74)***	2.55	58.37	55.81
Committee Chair	1.56 (0.86)*	2.41	11.51	9.10
Subcommittee Chair	0.44 (0.07)***	2.36	3.65	1.29
Committee Importance	0.01 (0.04)			
Majority Party Membership	-0.40 (0.16)**	3.23	2.17	-1.06
Out Party Membership	0.40 (0.13)***	2.12	3.18	1.06
Seniority	0.04 (0.01)**	1.66	14.05	12.39
Age	-0.05 (0.02)**	13.50	0.5	-12.92
State Population	0.00 (0.01)			
Electoral Security	0.02 (0.00)***	0.79	4.78	3.99
White Female	-0.21 (0.35)			
Minority Male	-0.46 (0.22)*	2.73	1.73	-1.00
Minority Female	-1.75 (0.60)***	2.81	0.49	-2.32
Ideology	-0.92 (0.26)***	5.94	0.88	-5.06
Ideological Extremism	1.77 (0.47)***	1.55	29.65	28.10
Member Activity				
Bills Introduced	0.02 (0.01)'	2.11	7.88	5.76
Bills Reported from Committee	-0.11 (0.07)'	2.86	0.32	-2.55
Bills to Pass House	0.05 (0.04)			
Press Releases	0.01 (0.00)*	2.50	468.32	465.82
Circumstances				
Incomplete Term	0.41 (0.15)**	2.54	3.82	1.28
Ethics (completed term)	0.87 (0.21)***	2.55	6.08	3.54
Ethics (resigned)	1.64 (1.35)			
Ran for President	2.52 (0.29)***	2.58	32.22	29.64
Ran for Senate	1.74 (0.33)***	2.52	14.43	11.91
Ran for Governor	-0.74 (1.13)			
N	1777			
Prob.	.000			
McFadden's R2	0.04			
Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors (rse), which are clustered on the Congressional class. 'p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001				

Table 4.4: Negative binomial regression model estimating the volume of news coverage for members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on CNN.

	b (rse)	Predicted Counts		
		Min	Max	Effect
Structural and Demographic Components				
Majority Party Leader	2.04 (0.33)***	35.26	269.90	234.63
Minority Party Leader	2.03 (0.62)***	35.47	268.73	233.26
Committee Chair	1.00 (0.71)'	34.22	92.59	58.36
Subcommittee Chair	0.18 (0.12)'	34.43	41.28	6.84
Committee Importance	-0.03 (0.01)**	52.48	31.08	-21.40
Majority Party Membership	-0.17 (0.07)**	39.34	33.17	-6.17
Out Party Membership	-0.19 (0.05)***	39.28	32.51	-6.77
Seniority	0.05 (0.02)*	20.76	284.28	263.52
Age	-0.03 (0.01)**	85.15	16.33	-68.82
State Population	0.01 (0.01)*	31.01	46.96	15.95
Electoral Security	0.01 (0.01)'	17.46	51.92	34.47
White Female	-0.17 (0.18)			
Minority Male	0.02 (0.31)			
Minority Female	-0.33 (0.24)'	36.36	26.09	-10.27
Ideology	-0.18 (0.13)'	41.94	29.15	-12.79
Ideological Extremism	1.62 (0.27)***	22.31	337.08	314.77
Member Activity				
Bills Introduced	0.03 (0.01)***	26.22	194.04	167.81
Bills Reported from Committee	-0.15 (0.07)*	41.06	2.00	-39.05
Bills to Pass House	0.07 (0.05)'	32.92	238.88	205.97
Press Releases	0.01 (0.00)'	34.72	2916.16	2881.44
Circumstances				
Incomplete Term	-0.23 (0.17)'	36.18	28.78	-7.40
Ethics (completed term)	0.26 (0.10)**	35.61	46.36	10.75
Ethics (resigned)	1.91 (0.93)*	35.64	241.71	206.07
Ran for President	2.61 (0.13)***	35.69	485.70	450.02
Ran for Senate	0.72 (0.61)*	35.39	72.51	37.13
Ran for Governor	-0.33 (0.38)			
N	1777			
Prob.	.000			
McFadden's R2	0.02			
Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors (rse), which are clustered on the Congressional class. 'p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001				

Table 4.5: Negative binomial regression model estimating the volume of news coverage for members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on Fox News.

	b (rse)	Predicted Counts		
		Min	Max	Effect
Structural and Demographic Components				
Majority Party Leader	2.40 (0.46)***	21.33	234.56	213.24
Minority Party Leader	2.19 (0.50)***	21.49	191.46	169.97
Committee Chair	0.76 (0.90)			
Subcommittee Chair	0.14 (0.14)			
Committee Importance	-0.01 (0.01)			
Majority Party Membership	-0.06 (0.13)			
Out Party Membership	-0.16 (0.03)***	23.52	19.98	-3.54
Seniority	0.02 (0.02)			
Age	-0.02 (0.01)	50.44	10.11	-40.33
State Population	0.01 (0.01)**	18.52	29.30	10.78
Electoral Security	0.01 (0.00)			
White Female	-0.19 (0.09)*	22.17	18.25	-3.92
Minority Male	0.38 (0.29)'	20.81	30.36	9.54
Minority Female	-0.87 (0.25)***	22.62	9.47	-13.15
Ideology	-0.30 (0.12)**	28.46	15.28	-13.19
Ideological Extremism	2.71 (0.45)***	9.87	914.09	904.22
Member Activity				
Bills Introduced	0.02 (0.01)***	17.55	68.90	51.35
Bills Reported from Committee	-0.12 (0.11)			
Bills to Pass House	0.14 (0.08)*	18.55	759.21	740.66
Press Releases	0.01 (0.00)*	20.99	2734.71	2713.71
Circumstances				
Incomplete Term	-0.68 (0.21)***	22.41	11.40	-11.01
Ethics (completed term)	0.53 (0.32)*	21.48	36.40	14.92
Ethics (resigned)	2.75 (1.01)**	21.57	338.02	316.45
Ran for President	2.38 (0.08)***	21.65	233.16	211.52
Ran for Senate	0.68 (0.57)			
Ran for Governor	-0.22 (0.56)			
N	1777			
Prob.	.000			
McFadden's R2	0.02			
Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors (rse), which are clustered on the Congressional class. 'p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001				

Table 4.6: Negative binomial regression model estimating the volume of news coverage for members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on MSNBC.

	b (rse)	Predicted Counts		
		Min	Max	Effect
Structural and Demographic Components				
Majority Party Leader	2.47 (0.54)***	21.70	255.38	233.68
Minority Party Leader	1.81 (0.50)***	21.91	133.50	111.59
Committee Chair	0.85 (0.88)			
Subcommittee Chair	0.02 (0.05)			
Committee Importance	-0.01 (0.01)			
Majority Party Membership	-0.20 (0.11)*	24.69	20.20	-4.48
Out Party Membership	-0.52 (0.05)***	28.59	16.92	-11.67
Seniority	0.04 (0.02)*	14.01	124.82	110.81
Age	-0.04 (0.01)***	97.94	5.74	-92.21
State Population	0.01 (0.01)			
Electoral Security	0.01 (0.00)*	14.91	27.08	12.18
White Female	0.13 (0.28)			
Minority Male	-0.16 (0.10)'	22.48	19.24	-3.24
Minority Female	-0.35 (0.22)'	22.46	15.87	-6.58
Ideology	-0.94 (0.33)**	51.50	7.38	-44.12
Ideological Extremism	2.42 (0.67)***	10.93	623.68	612.76
Member Activity				
Bills Introduced	0.03 (0.01)**	16.44	109.94	93.50
Bills Reported from Committee	-0.19 (0.08)**	26.29	0.57	-25.72
Bills to Pass House	0.10 (0.05)*	19.65	313.04	293.39
Press Releases	0.00 (0.00)'	21.85	108.86	87.01
Circumstances				
Incomplete Term	-0.92 (0.41)*	23.07	9.22	-13.85
Ethics (completed term)	0.27 (0.07)***	21.69	28.69	6.72
Ethics (resigned)	2.57 (0.85)***	21.96	286.41	264.45
Ran for President	1.34 (0.24)***	22.06	84.06	62.01
Ran for Senate	1.12 (0.41)**	21.71	66.35	44.64
Ran for Governor	-0.32 (0.60)			
N	1777			
Prob.	.000			
McFadden's R2	0.02			
Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors (rse), which are clustered on the Congressional class. 'p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001				

Table 4.7: Negative binomial regression model estimating the volume of news coverage for members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on all broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC).

	b (rse)	Predicted Counts		
		Min	Max	Effect
Structural and Demographic Components				
Majority Party Leader	3.24 (0.24)***	7.30	187.08	179.78
Minority Party Leader	2.90 (0.71)***	7.38	133.94	21.45
Committee Chair	1.40 (0.83)*	7.02	28.46	21.45
Subcommittee Chair	0.19 (0.13)'	7.18	8.66	1.48
Committee Importance	0.01 (0.03)			
Majority Party Membership	-0.15 (0.15)			
Out Party Membership	0.21 (0.05)***	6.73	8.33	1.60
Seniority	0.05 (0.02)***	3.95	84.22	80.27
Age	-0.05 (0.01)***	39.48	1.66	-37.83
State Population	0.00 (0.00)			
Electoral Security	0.01 (0.00)*	4.18	10.10	5.92
White Female	0.04 (0.19)			
Minority Male	-0.48 (0.16)***	7.88	4.88	-3.01
Minority Female	-1.06 (0.15)***	7.86	2.73	-5.13
Ideology	-0.74 (0.11)***	14.52	3.16	-11.36
Ideological Extremism	1.86 (0.30)***	4.34	97.95	93.61
Member Activity				
Bills Introduced	0.02 (0.01)*	6.12	22.05	15.92
Bills Reported from Committee	-0.19 (0.07)**	8.86	0.21	-8.65
Bills to Pass House	0.12 (0.04)***	6.54	152.43	145.88
Press Releases	0.01 (0.00)'	7.25	556.05	548.80
Circumstances				
Incomplete Term	0.30 (0.29)			
Ethics (completed term)	0.47 (0.23)*	7.40	11.89	4.48
Ethics (resigned)	1.28 (1.23)			
Ran for President	2.30 (0.20)***	7.45	74.67	67.21
Ran for Senate	1.07 (0.17)***	7.35	21.51	14.17
Ran for Governor	-0.09 (0.54)			
N	1777			
Prob.	.000			
McFadden's R2	0.04			
Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors (rse), which are clustered on the Congressional class. 'p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001				

Table 4.8: Negative binomial regression model estimating the volume of news coverage for members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on all cable networks (CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC).

	b (rse)	Predicted Counts		
		Min	Max	Effect
Structural and Demographic Components				
Majority Party Leader	2.19 (0.44)***	81.48	730.03	648.55
Minority Party Leader	2.00 (0.56)***	82.05	603.33	521.28
Committee Chair	0.93 (0.82)			
Subcommittee Chair	0.08 (0.10)			
Committee Importance	-0.02 (0.01)*	110.74	74.34	-36.38
Majority Party Membership	-0.15 (0.07)*	89.94	77.45	-12.50
Out Party Membership	-0.29 (0.04)***	95.70	71.29	-24.41
Seniority	0.04 (0.02)*	53.83	425.77	371.94
Age	-0.03 (0.01)***	225.47	33.42	-192.05
State Population	0.01 (0.00)**	71.62	108.95	37.34
Electoral Security	0.01 (0.00)**	47.62	110.28	62.66
White Female	-0.05 (0.19)			
Minority Male	0.06 (0.17)			
Minority Female	-0.43 (0.18)**	84.49	54.96	-29.53
Ideology	-0.41 (0.13)***	120.24	51.07	-69.17
Ideological Extremism	2.13 (0.21)***	44.52	1571.90	1527.38
Member Activity				
Bills Introduced	0.03 (0.01)***	61.98	399.47	337.49
Bills Reported from Committee	-0.16 (0.09)*	95.55	4.08	-91.46
Bills to Pass House	0.10 (0.06)*	73.83	1111.20	1037.37
Press Releases	0.00 (0.00)*	80.78	2919.47	2838.69
Circumstances				
Incomplete Term	-0.53 (0.16)***	84.88	50.10	-34.78
Ethics (completed term)	0.32 (0.11)**	82.27	113.36	31.09
Ethics (resigned)	2.31 (0.93)**	82.36	831.05	748.68
Ran for President	2.26 (0.18)***	85.58	792.22	709.64
Ran for Senate	0.85 (0.39)*	81.69	190.97	109.28
Ran for Governor	-0.28 (0.56)			
N	1777			
Prob.	.000			
McFadden's R2	0.02			
Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors (rse), which are clustered on the Congressional class. 'p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001				

Table 4.9: Negative binomial regression model estimating the volume of news coverage for members of the 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th U.S. Houses of Representatives on all broadcast (ABC, CBS, NBC) and cable (CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC) networks.

	b (rse)	Predicted Counts		
		Min	Max	Effect
Structural and Demographic Components				
Majority Party Leader	2.31 (0.41)***	89.65	907.64	817.98
Minority Party Leader	2.08 (0.60)***	90.33	724.21	633.87
Committee Chair	0.99 (0.82)			
Subcommittee Chair	0.10 (0.09)			
Committee Importance	-0.02 (0.01)*	117.85	82.95	-34.90
Majority Party Membership	-0.17 (0.07)**	100.19	84.52	-15.67
Out Party Membership	-0.25 (0.03)***	103.34	80.13	-23.21
Seniority	0.04 (0.02)*	58.88	481.29	422.41
Age	-0.03 (0.01)***	263.53	34.88	-228.65
State Population	0.01 (0.00)**	80.23	116.18	35.95
Electoral Security	0.01 (0.00)**	50.82	123.45	72.63
White Female	-0.06 (0.19)			
Minority Male	0.00 (0.16)			
Minority Female	-0.49 (0.16)***	93.31	57.32	-36.00
Ideology	-0.45 (0.12)***	136.55	54.06	-82.49
Ideological Extremism	2.09 (0.21)***	49.65	1631.52	1581.87
Member Activity				
Bills Introduced	0.03 (0.01)***	68.94	416.66	347.71
Bills Reported from Committee	-0.16 (0.09)*	105.54	4.23	-101.31
Bills to Pass House	0.10 (0.06)*	81.04	1321.12	1240.08
Press Releases	0.00 (0.00)'	88.95	3337.90	3248.96
Circumstances				
Incomplete Term	-0.43 (0.16)**	93.08	60.27	-32.81
Ethics (completed term)	0.30 (0.09)***	90.64	122.78	32.13
Ethics (resigned)	2.19 (0.97)**	90.74	814.06	723.32
Ran for President	2.29 (0.18)***	90.95	895.36	804.41
Ran for Senate	0.87 (0.37)*	89.94	215.62	125.68
Ran for Governor	-0.29 (0.55)			
N	1777			
Prob.	.000			
McFadden's R2	0.02			

Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors (rse), which are clustered on the Congressional class. ' $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

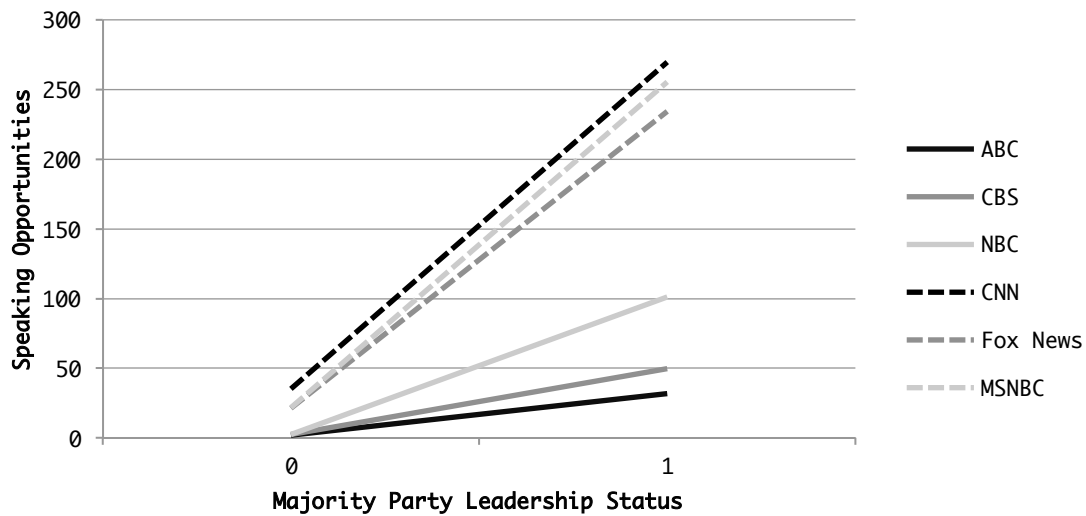


Figure 4.1: Substantive Effect of Majority Party Leadership

Table 4.9 also confirms that the independent effect of minority party leadership ($b = 2.31$, $rse = 0.41$, $p < .001$) is both statistically significant and positive. Substantively, minority party leaders can expect 633.87 more speaking opportunities than the average member on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. As with the effect of majority party leadership, the effect of minority party leadership is consistent for each of the broadcast and cable television news networks on an individual level: ABC ($b = 2.96$, $rse = 0.73$, $p < .001$), CBS ($b = 2.66$, $rse = 0.70$, $p < .001$), and NBC ($b = 3.13$, $rse = 0.74$, $p < .001$), CNN ($b = 2.03$, $rse = 0.62$, $p < .001$), Fox news ($b = 2.19$, $rse = 0.50$, $p < .001$), MSNBC (majority: $b = 1.81$, $rse = 0.50$, $p < .001$). Figure 4.2 illustrates the substantive effect of minority party leadership status for the individual networks. On average, these data predict minority party leaders garner 7.25 times more speaking opportunities than the average member. These data indicate that majority party leadership and minority party leadership are both significant and substantive positive predictors

of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Hypothesis 1, then, receives robust support.

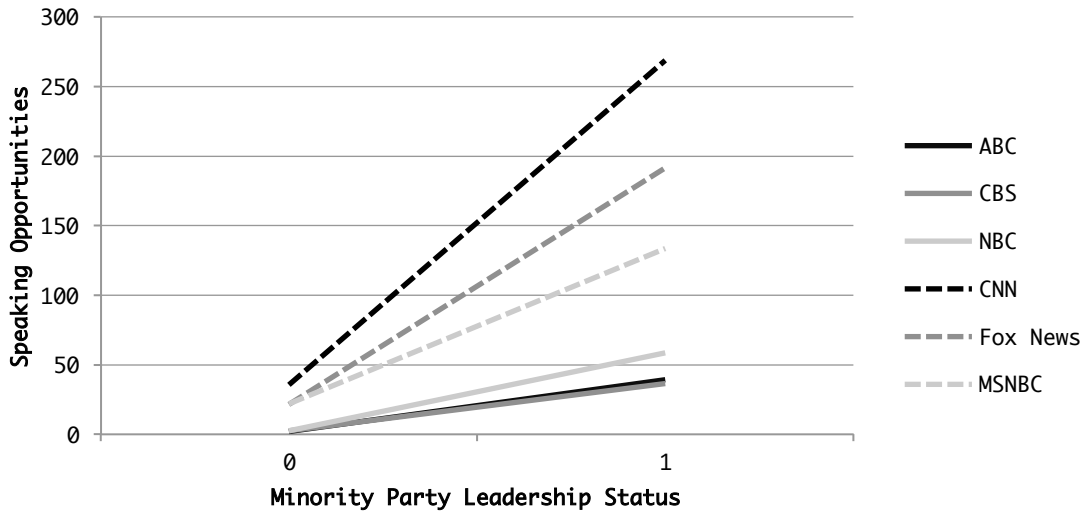
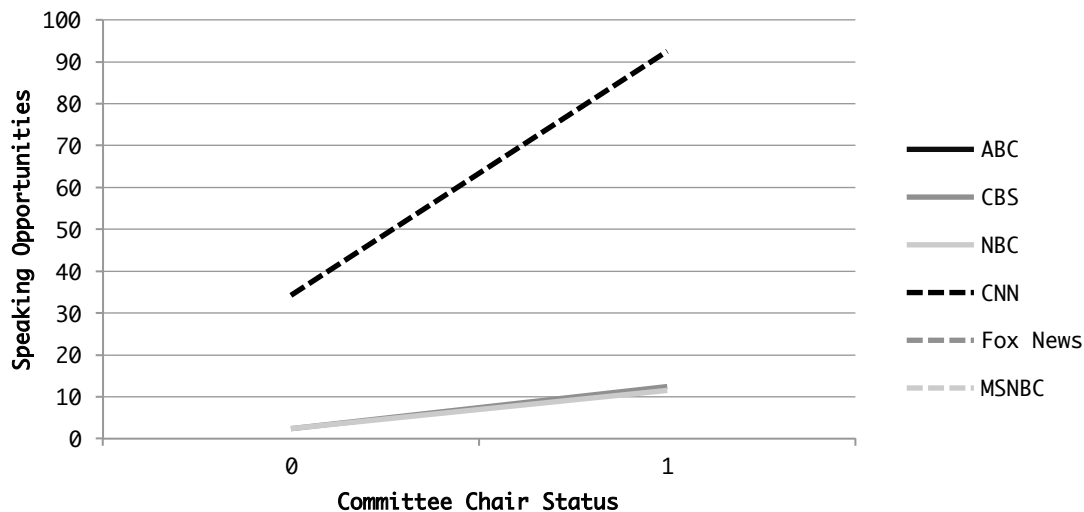


Figure 4.2: Substantive Effect of Minority Party Leadership

Committee Chair Status

Although broadcast and cable news networks consistently and disproportionately feature the voices of the powerful majority and minority party leaders, that same treatment does not extend to committee and subcommittee chairs. Hypothesis 2 predicted that chairing a committee would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. The data presented in Table 4.9, however, do not provide the confidence necessary to infer that the effect of chairing a committee on members' news coverage on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks observed in the realization ($b = 0.99$, rse , 0.82 , $p = 0.23$) is also present in the super population from which the realization was drawn. In other words, the data indicate the substantive effect of chairing one of the 20 standing

committees of the House cannot be differentiated from 0. Even though no consistent effect of chairing a committee can be inferred from these data, Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 reveal chairing a committee is a statistically significant predictor of the number of speaking opportunities given to members on CBS ($b = 1.65, rse = 0.83, p < .05$), NBC ($b = 1.56, rse = 0.86, p < .05$) and CNN ($b = 1.00, rse = 0.71, p < .10$). Figure 4.3 illustrates the substantive effect of chairing a committee for the individual networks. On average, these data predict committee chairs garner 2.17 times more speaking opportunities than the average member on CBS, NBC, and CNN. Although not consistent across all networks, committee chairs do garner substantively more speaking opportunities on select networks. Hypothesis 2, then, receives isolated support.



	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
0	--	2.38	2.41	34.22	--	--
1	--	12.44	11.51	92.59	--	--
Substantive Effect	--	10.06	9.10	58.37	--	--

Figure 4.3: Substantive Effect of Chairing a Standing Committee

Subcommittee Chair Status

Hypothesis 3 predicted that chairing a subcommittee would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Given

the mixed support for Hypothesis 2, it is not surprising to find that the data presented in Table 4.9 do not provide the confidence necessary to reject the null hypothesis ($b = 0.10$, $rse = 0.09$, $p = 0.31$), at least for the number of speaking opportunities on the combined broadcast and cable news television networks. As with Hypothesis 2, however, isolated support exists for some individual networks. As Tables 4.2 and 4.4 reveal, chairing a subcommittee is a statistically significant predictor of the number of speaking opportunities given to members on NBC ($b = 0.44$, $rse = 0.07$, $p < .001$) and CNN ($b = 0.18$, $rse = 0.12$, $p < .10$). Even though chairing a subcommittee significantly predicts the volume of news coverage members receive on NBC and CNN, as Figure 4.4 illustrates, the substantive effect of chairing a subcommittee is slight. Hypothesis 3, then, receives only isolated support.

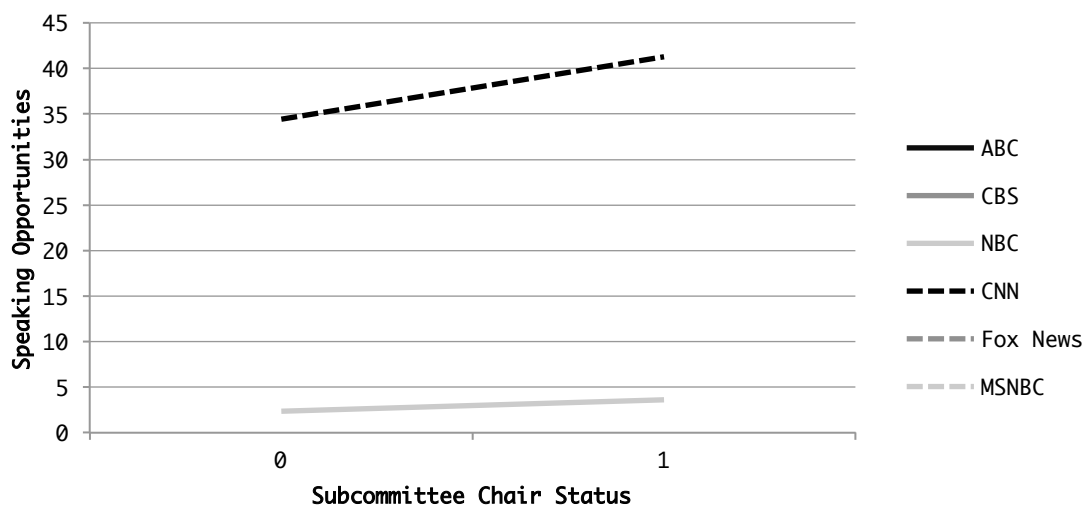


Figure 4.4: Substantive Effect of Chairing a Subcommittee

Committee Importance

Hypothesis 4 predicted that committee importance would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. The data presented in Table 4.9, however, confirms the exact opposite: the independent effect of committee importance ($b = -0.02$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .05$), as operationalized using Stewart's (2012) rankings of the importance of House committees based on the committee assignments members willingly relinquish to acquire other appointments, is actually both statistically significant and *negative*. Further analysis reveals the statistically significant effect of committee importance is exclusive to CNN: ($b = -0.03$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .01$). Figure 4.5 illustrates the substantive effect of committee importance for CNN. This model predicts that members who serve on the most prestigious committee can expect to garner only 56 percent of the speaking opportunities – a substantive decrease of 21.4 fewer speaking opportunities – than the average House member on CNN. Hypothesis 4, then, is not supported by these data.

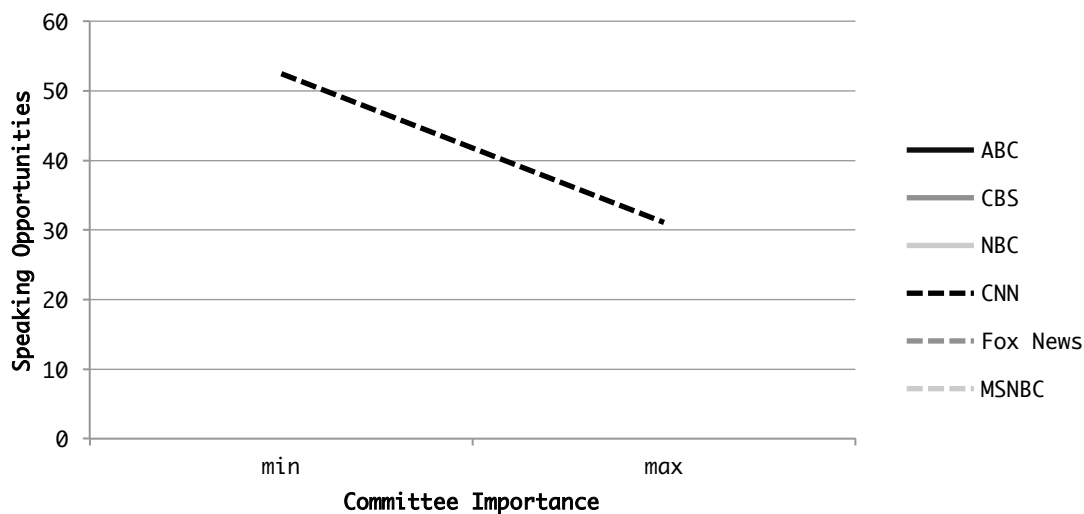
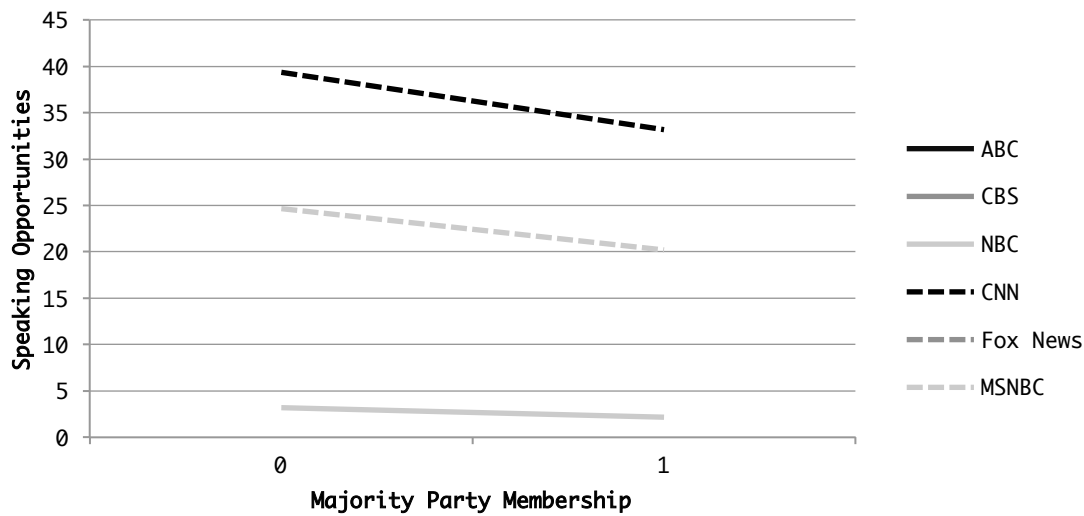


Figure 4.5: Substantive Effect of Committee Importance

Political Party Membership

Hypothesis 5a and 5b tested competing predictions from the literature about the effect of political party membership. Hypothesis 5a predicted that majority party membership would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9, however, confirms the opposite: the independent effect of majority party membership ($b = -0.17$, $rse = 0.07$, $p < .01$) is actually both statistically significant and *negative*. Substantively, majority party members can expect 15.67 fewer speaking opportunities than the average minority party member on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. Further analysis indicates this effect is limited to 3 networks: NBC ($b = -0.40$, $rse = 0.16$, $p < .01$), CNN ($b = -0.17$, $rse = 0.07$, $p < .01$), and MSNBC ($b = -0.20$, $rse = 0.11$, $p < .05$). Figure 4.6 illustrates the substantive effect of majority party membership for the individual networks. On average, these models predict that majority party members can expect to garner 54.6 percent as many speaking opportunities as the average House member on NBC, CNN, and MSNBC. Hypothesis 5a, then – the majority party hypothesis – is not supported by these data.

Hypothesis 5b predicted that out party membership would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. As with hypothesis 5a, however, Table 4.9, however, confirms the exact opposite: the independent effect of out party membership ($b = -0.40$, $rse = 0.16$, $p < .01$) is statistically significant and *negative*. Substantively, out party members can expect 23.21 fewer speaking opportunities than the average in party member on the combined broadcast and cable television networks. Further analysis, however, indicates the effect of out party membership is different for broadcast and cable television news networks. Table 4.8 indicates the effect of out party membership ($b = -0.29$, $rse = 0.04$, $p < .001$) is significant and negative for the combined cable news networks. This effect is not only consistent with the effect of out party membership on the combined broadcast and cable news networks, it is also consistent for each of the cable news networks individually: CNN ($b = -0.19$, $rse = 0.05$, $p < .001$), Fox News ($b = -0.16$, $rse = .03$, $p < .001$),



	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
0	--	--	3.23	39.34	--	24.69
1	--	--	2.17	33.17	--	20.20
Substantive Effect	--	--	-1.06	-6.17	--	-4.49

Figure 4.6: Substantive Effect of Majority Party Membership

and MSNBC ($b = -0.52$, $rse = 0.05$, $p < .001$). Substantively, out party members can expect 24.41 fewer speaking opportunities than the average in party member on the combined cable news networks. Table 4.7, meanwhile, indicates the effect of out party membership ($b = 0.21$, $rse = 0.05$, $p < .001$) is significant and *positive* for the combined broadcast news networks, an effect that holds for both CBS ($b = 0.10$, $rse = 0.05$, $p < .05$) and NBC ($b = 0.40$, $rse = 0.13$, $p < .001$). Substantively, out party members can expect 1.6 more speaking opportunities than the average in party member on the combined broadcast networks. Figure 4.7 illustrates the substantive effects of out party membership for the individual broadcast and cable news networks. Although the substantive effects are small, these results demonstrate an important difference in the ways that broadcast and cable television news networks allocate news coverage among the various members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Hypothesis 5, then, receives mixed support: most broadcast cable news organizations award slightly more news coverage to

out party members, while cable news organizations tend to award slightly less news coverage to those members.⁵

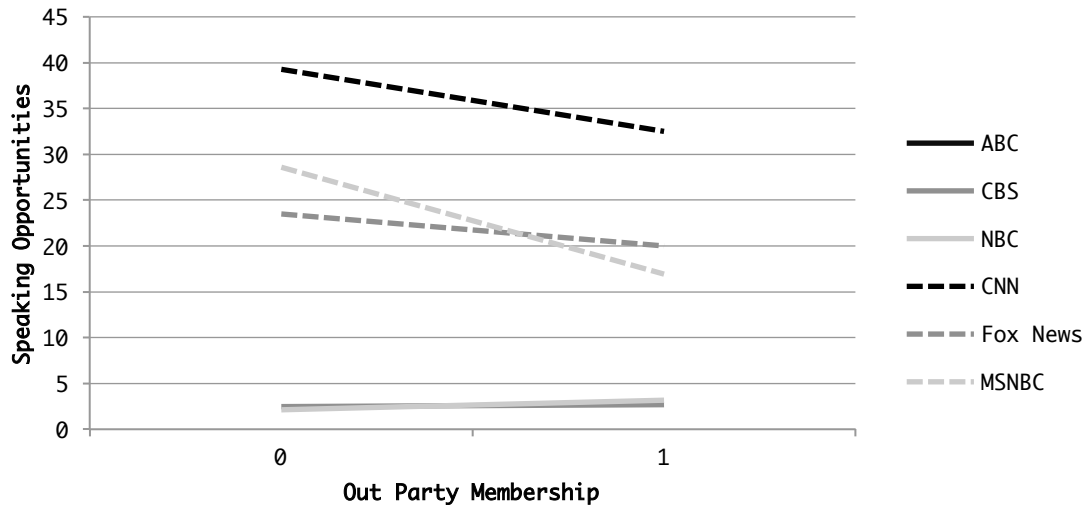


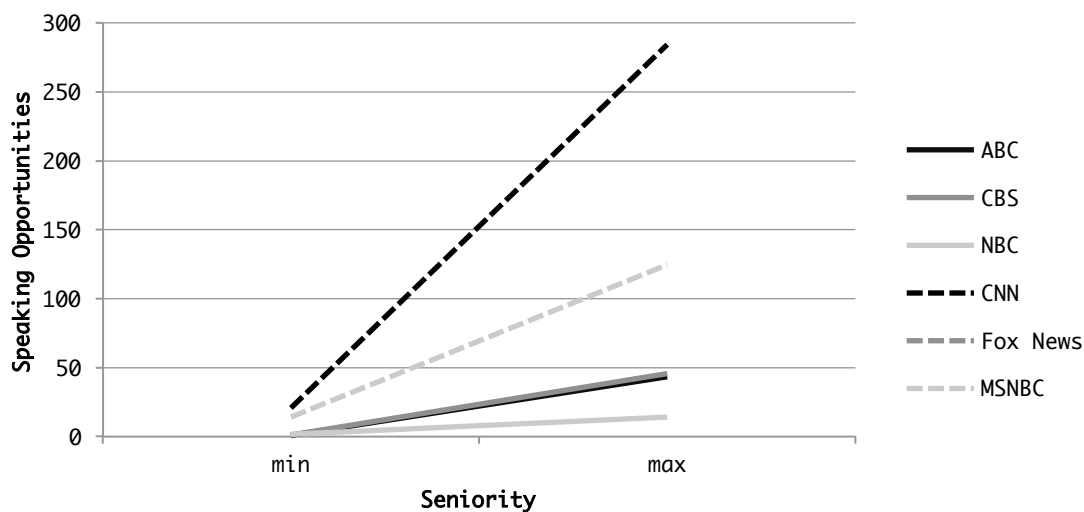
Figure 4.7: Substantive Effect of Out Party Membership

Seniority

Hypothesis 6 predicted that seniority would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of seniority ($b = 0.04$, $rse = 0.02$, $p < .05$) is both statistically significant and positive. Substantively, the most senior members can expect 422.41 more speaking opportunities than the most junior members on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. This effect is consistent for ABC ($b = 0.07$, $se = 0.01$, $p < .001$), CBS ($b = 0.07$, $se = 0.02$, $p < .01$), NBC ($b = 0.04$, $se = 0.01$, $p < .01$), CNN ($b = 0.05$, $se = 0.02$, $p < .05$).

⁵ A third hypothesis about political party membership – that membership in a particular political party explains the volume of coverage members receive on national broadcast and cable news networks – was also tested in a separate series of models. Results from those models indicated that neither affiliation with the democratic nor republican political parties had an effect on the volume of coverage members received. Furthermore, adding political party to the models presented here did not change any of the substantive results.

.05), and MSNBC ($b = 0.04$, $se = 0.02$, $p < .05$). Figure 4.8 illustrates the substantive effect of seniority for the individual networks. On average, these data predict the most junior members receive only 32 percent of the speaking opportunities that the average member receives, while the most senior members receive 6.44 times the coverage of the average member. These data indicate that seniority is a significant and substantive positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Hypothesis 6, then, is broadly supported.



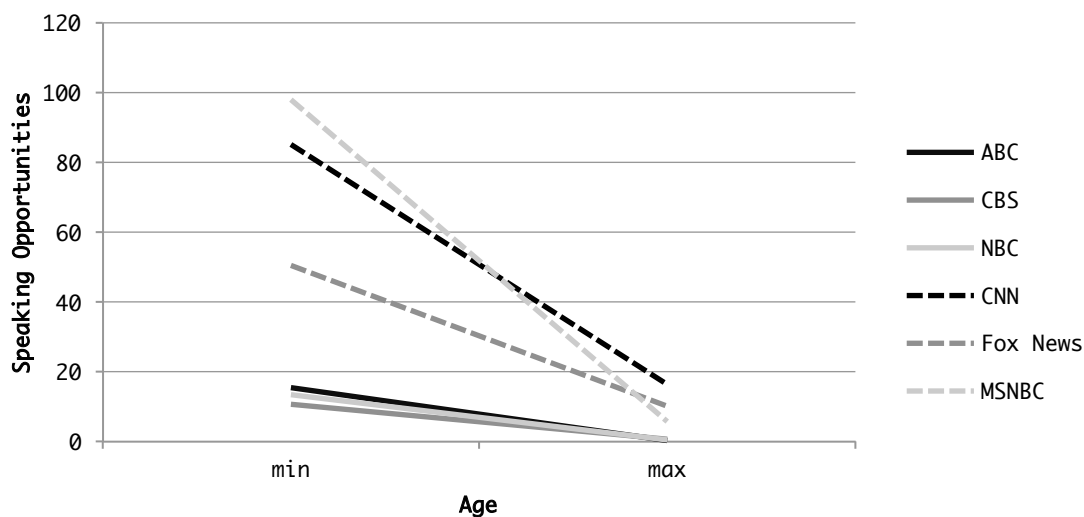
	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
min	0.92	2.45	1.66	20.76	--	14.01
max	43.27	2.69	14.05	284.28	--	124.82
Substantive Effect	42.35	0.25	12.39	263.52	--	110.81

Figure 4.8: Substantive Effect of Seniority

Age

Hypothesis 7 predicted that age would be a negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of age ($b = -0.03$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .001$) is both statistically significant and negative. Substantively, the oldest members can expect 228.65 fewer speaking opportunities

than the youngest members on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. This finding is consistent for each of the broadcast and cable news networks on an individual level: ABC ($b = -0.06$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .001$), CBS ($b = -0.04$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .001$), NBC ($b = -0.05$, $rse = 0.02$, $p < .01$), CNN ($b = -0.03$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .01$), Fox News ($b = -0.02$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .01$), MSNBC ($b = -0.04$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .001$). Figure 4.9 illustrates the substantive effect of age for the individual networks. On average, these data predict the oldest members receive only 18 percent of the speaking opportunities that the average member receives, while the youngest members receive 6.44 times the coverage of the average member. These data indicate that age is a significant and substantive negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Hypothesis 7, then, receives robust support.

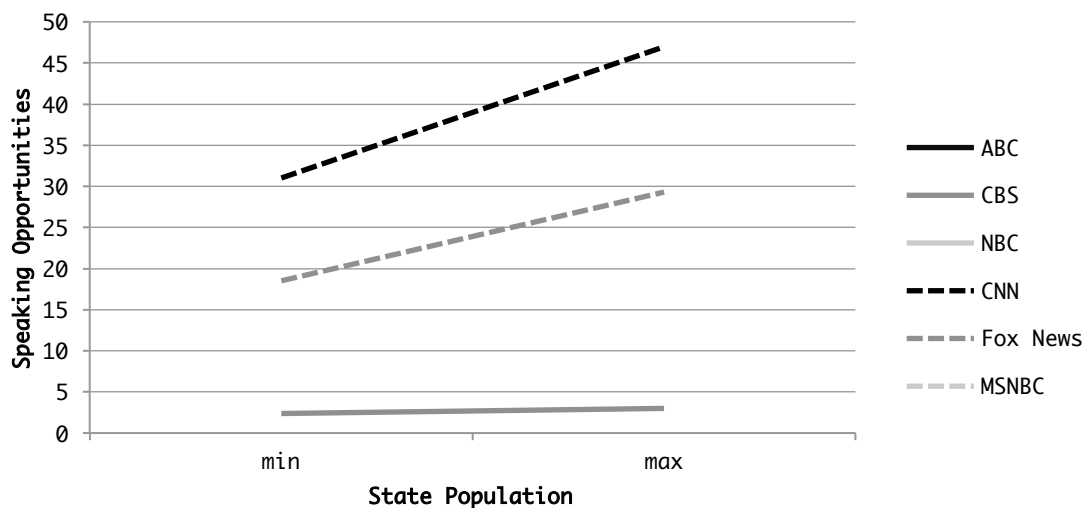


	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
min	15.48	10.71	13.50	85.15	50.44	97.94
max	0.33	0.70	0.50	16.33	10.11	5.74
Substantive Effect	-15.15	-10.01	-13.00	-68.82	-40.33	-92.20

Figure 4.9: Substantive Effect of Age

State Population

Hypothesis 8 predicted that state population would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of state population ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .05$) is both statistically significant and positive. Substantively, members who represent the most populous states can expect 35.95 more speaking opportunities than those who represent the least populous states on the combined broadcast and cable news networks. Further analysis, however, indicates this effect is limited to three networks: CBS ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .10$), CNN ($b = .01$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .05$), and Fox News ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .01$). Figure 4.10 illustrates the substantive effect of state population for the individual networks. On average, these models predict that members who represent the least populous states can expect to garner only 52.7 percent of the coverage as the average House member on CBS, CNN, and Fox News. Hypothesis 8, then, receives isolated support.

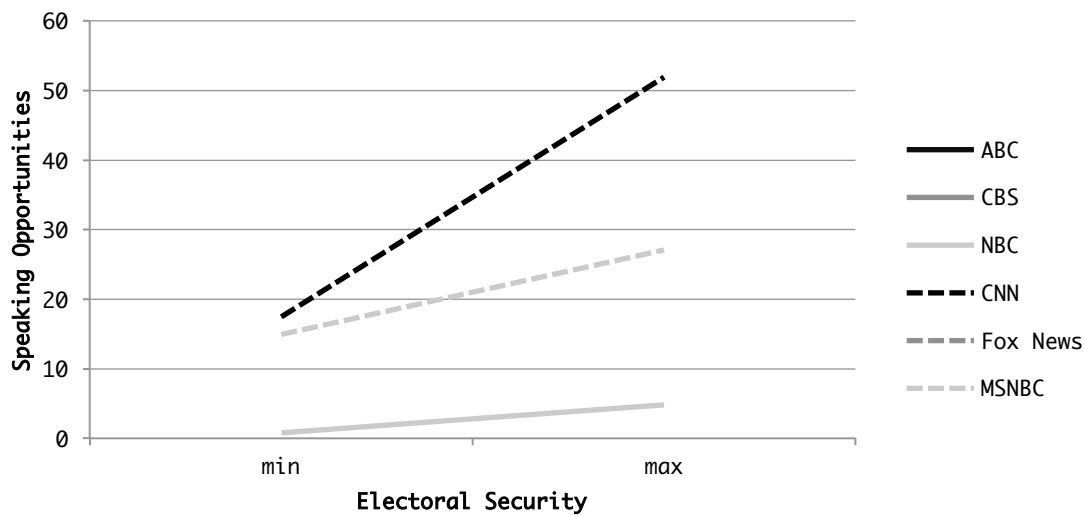


	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
min	--	2.36	--	31.01	18.52	--
max	--	3.00	--	40.96	29.30	--
Substantive Effect	--	0.64	--	15.95	10.78	--

Figure 4.10: Substantive Effect of State Population

Electoral Security

Hypothesis 9 predicted that electoral security would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of electoral security ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .01$) is both significant and positive. Substantively, the most electorally secure members can expect 72.63 more speaking opportunities than the most electorally vulnerable members on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. This effect is isolated to NBC ($b = 0.02$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .001$), CNN ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .10$), and MSNBC ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .05$). Figure 4.11 illustrates the substantive effect of electoral security for the individual networks. On average, these data predict the most electorally vulnerable members receive only 30 percent as much coverage than the average member. Hypothesis 9, then, receives isolated support.

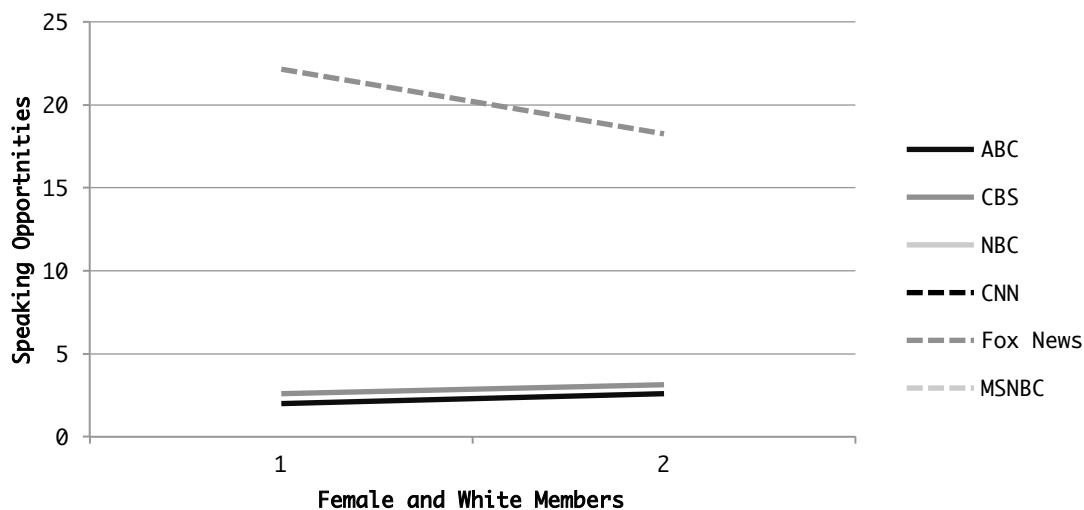


	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
min	--	--	0.79	17.46	--	14.91
max	--	--	4.78	51.92	--	27.08
Substantive Effect	--	--	3.99	34.46	--	12.17

Figure 4.11: Substantive Effect of Electoral Security

Gender and Race

The discussion of recent gender and race literature in Chapter 2 suggested the volume of news coverage of female and minority members – and not that of female and white or male and minority members – should differ from that of male and white members. As expected, Table 4.9 confirms that neither the volume of coverage female and white members receive ($b = -0.06$, $rse = 0.19$, $p = .75$) nor the volume of coverage male and minority members receive ($b = 0.00$, $rse = 0.16$, $p = .99$) differs significantly from the volume of coverage male and white members receive on the combined broadcast and cable news networks. Even though no consistent effect on the volume of coverage white and female members and black and male members receive can be inferred from these data, Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.5 reveal that the independent effect of being female and white is statistically significant on ABC ($b = 0.26$, $rse = 0.17$, $p < .10$), CBS ($b = 0.23$, $rse = 0.18$, $p < .10$) and Fox News ($b = -0.19$, $rse = 0.09$, $p < .05$). Figure 4.12 illustrates

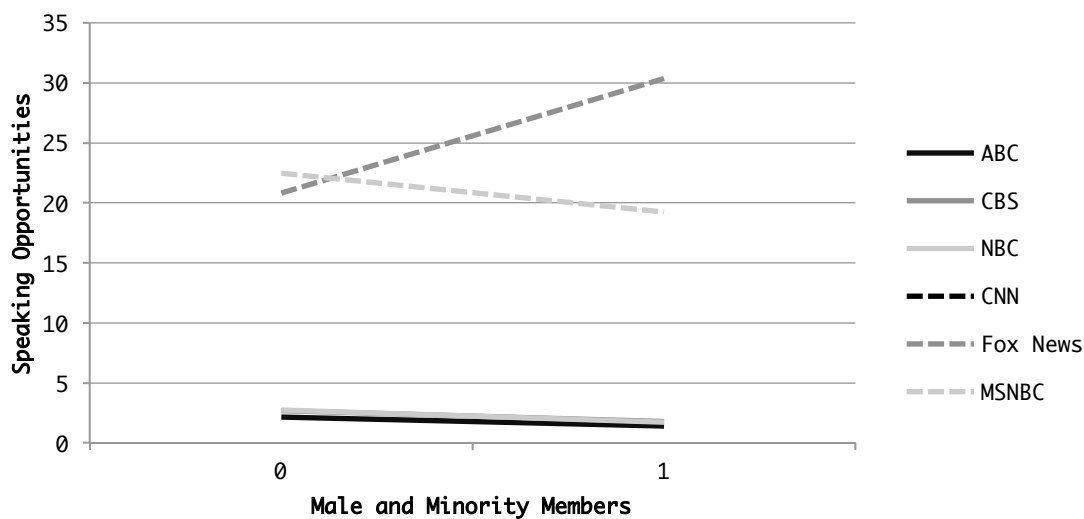


	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
0	2.00	2.58	--	--	22.17	
1	2.58	3.15	--	--	18.25	
Substantive Effect	0.58	0.57	--	--	-3.92	

Figure 4.12: Substantive Effect of being Female and White

the substantive effect of being female and white for the individual networks. Interestingly, while female and white members receive disproportionately more speaking opportunities on ABC and CBS, they receive disproportionately fewer speaking opportunities on Fox News.

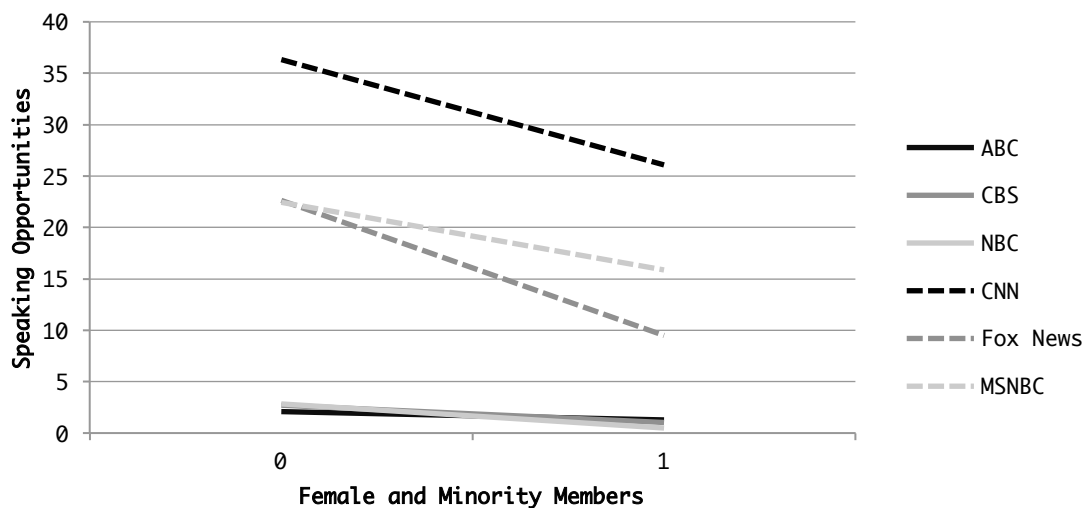
Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, and 4.6, meanwhile, reveal that the independent effect of being male and minority is statistically significant on ABC ($b = -0.44$, $rse = 0.13$, $p < .001$), CBS ($b = -0.40$, $rse = 0.19$, $p < .05$), NBC ($b = -0.46$, $rse = 0.22$, $p < .05$), Fox News ($b = 0.38$, $rse = 0.29$, $p < .10$), and MSNBC ($b = -0.16$, $rse = 0.1$, $p < .10$). Once again, the direction of the relationship is different for Fox News than the other news networks. While male and minority members receive disproportionately fewer speaking opportunities on ABC, CBS, NBC, and MSNBC, they receive disproportionately more speaking opportunities on Fox News. Figure 4.13 illustrates the substantive effect of being male and minority for the individual networks.



	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
0	2.16	2.68	2.73	--	20.81	22.48
1	1.39	1.79	1.73	--	30.36	19.24
Substantive Effect	-0.77	-0.89	-1.00	--	9.55	-3.24

Figure 4.13: Substantive Effect of being Male and Minority

While the effects of being white and female or black and male on the volume of coverage members garner are isolated and inconsistent, the effect of being both female and minority is clear. Hypothesis 10 predicted that being both female and minority would negatively predict news coverage on national broadcast and cable news networks. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of being both female and minority ($b = -0.49$, $rse = 0.16$, $p < .001$) is both statistically significant and negative. Substantively, members who are both female and minority can expect 36 fewer speaking opportunities than the average male and white member on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. This effect is consistent for each of the broadcast and cable television news networks on an individual level: ABC ($b = -0.49$, $rse = 0.13$, $p < .001$), CBS ($b = -0.99$, $rse = 0.28$, $p < .001$), NBC ($b = -1.75$, $rse = 0.60$, $p < .001$), CNN ($b = -0.33$, $rse = 0.24$, $p < .10$), Fox News ($b = -0.87$, $rse = 0.25$, $p < .001$), and MSNBC ($b = -0.35$, $rse = 0.22$, $p < .10$). Figure 4.14 illustrates the substantive effect of being female and minority



	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
0	2.10	2.69	2.81	36.36	22.62	22.46
1	1.26	1.00	0.49	26.09	9.47	15.87
Substantive Effect	-0.82	-1.69	-2.32	-10.27	-13.15	-6.59

Figure 4.14: Substantive Effect of being Female and Minority

on members' speaking opportunities on the individual networks. On average, these data predict that female and minority members receive only 31 percent of the speaking opportunities that the average member receives. Hypothesis 10, then, receives robust support.

Voting Record

Hypothesis 11 predicted that ideological extremism would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of ideological extremism ($b = 2.09$, $rse = 0.21$, $p < .001$) is both statistically significant and positive. Substantively, the most ideologically extreme members can expect 1581.87 more speaking opportunities than the most ideologically moderate members on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. This effect is consistent for all broadcast and cable news networks on an individual level: ABC ($b = 2.21$, $rse = 0.56$, $p < .001$), CBS ($b = 1.50$, $rse = 0.26$, $p < .001$), NBC ($b = 1.77$, $rse = 0.47$, $p < .001$), CNN ($b = 1.62$, $rse = 0.27$, $p < .001$), Fox News ($b = 2.71$, $rse = 0.45$, $p < .001$), and MSNBC ($b = 2.42$, $rse = 0.67$, $p < .001$). Figure 4.15 illustrates the substantive effect of ideological extremism for the individual networks. On average, these data predict the most ideologically moderate members receive only 32 percent of the coverage that the average member receives, while the most ideologically extreme members receive 12 times the coverage that the average member receives. These data indicate that ideological extremism is a significant and substantive positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Hypothesis 11, then, is robustly supported.

Hypothesis 12 predicted that ideological extremism would be a stronger predictor of the volume of cable television news coverage that members receive than the volume of broadcast television news they receive. Table 4.7 provides the independent effect of ideological extremism for broadcast television news networks combined ($b = 1.86$, $rse = 0.3$, $p < .001$) and Table 4.8 provides the that effect for cable television news networks combined ($b = 2.13$, $rse = 0.21$, $p < .001$). Substantively, the model presented in Table 4.7 predicts that the most ideologically

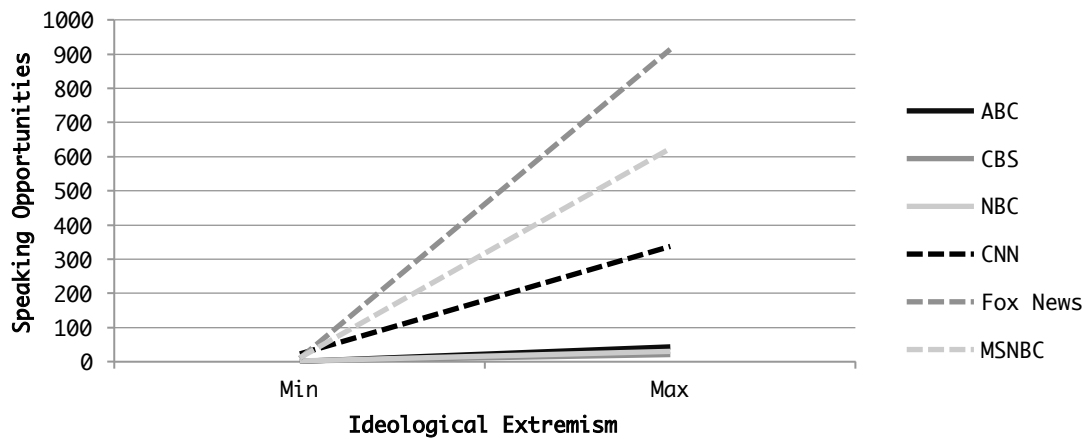


Figure 4.15: Substantive Effect of Ideological Extremism

moderate members can expect 4.34 speaking opportunities while the most ideologically extreme members can expect to receive 97.95 speaking opportunities. On average, then, this model predicts that the most ideologically moderate members receive 31.4 percent of the speaking opportunities that the average member receives, while the most ideologically extreme members receive 7.08 times the coverage of the average member, a 22.56-fold increase in speaking opportunities on the combined national broadcast television news networks. Meanwhile, the model presented in Table 4.8 predicts that the most ideologically moderate members can expect to receive 44.52 speaking opportunities while the most ideologically extreme members can expect to receive 1571.9 speaking opportunities. On average, this model predicts that the most ideologically moderate members receive 36.2 percent of the speaking opportunities that the average member receives, while the most ideologically extreme members receive 12.79 times the coverage of the average member, a 35.31-fold increase in speaking opportunities on the combined national cable television news networks. These data, then, suggested that ideological

extremism is a stronger predictor of the volume of coverage members receive on cable news than the volume of coverage they receive on broadcast news. Hypothesis 12, then, receives tentative support.

Hypothesis Tests for Member Activity and Effort Variables

Legislative Activity and Effort

Bills Introduced. Hypothesis 13 predicted that the number of bills the member introduced would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the effect of introducing bills ($b = 0.03$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .001$) is both statistically significant and positive. Figure 4.16 illustrates the substantive effect of introducing bills for the individual networks. Substantively, members who introduce the most bills can expect 347.11 more speaking opportunities than the average member who introduces the fewest bills on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks.

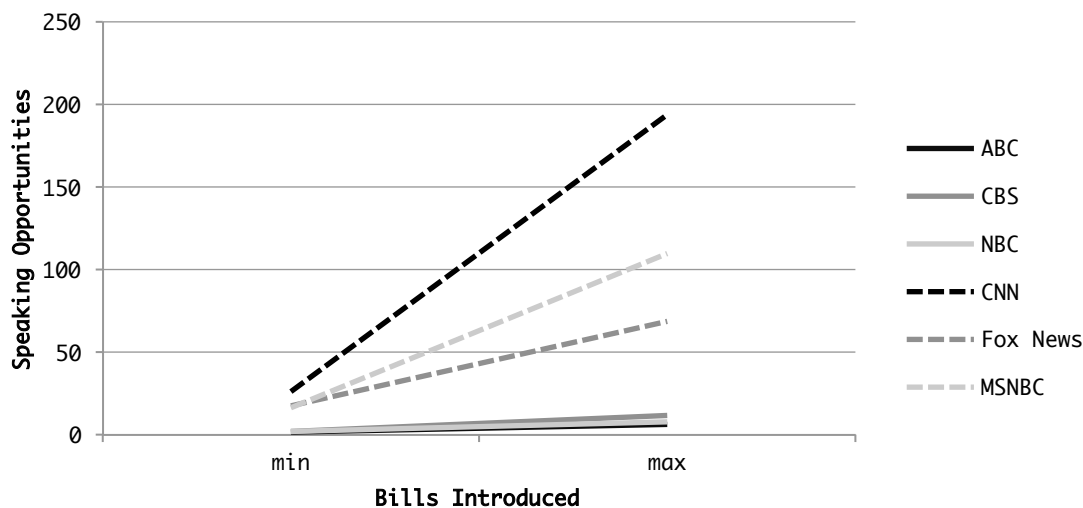
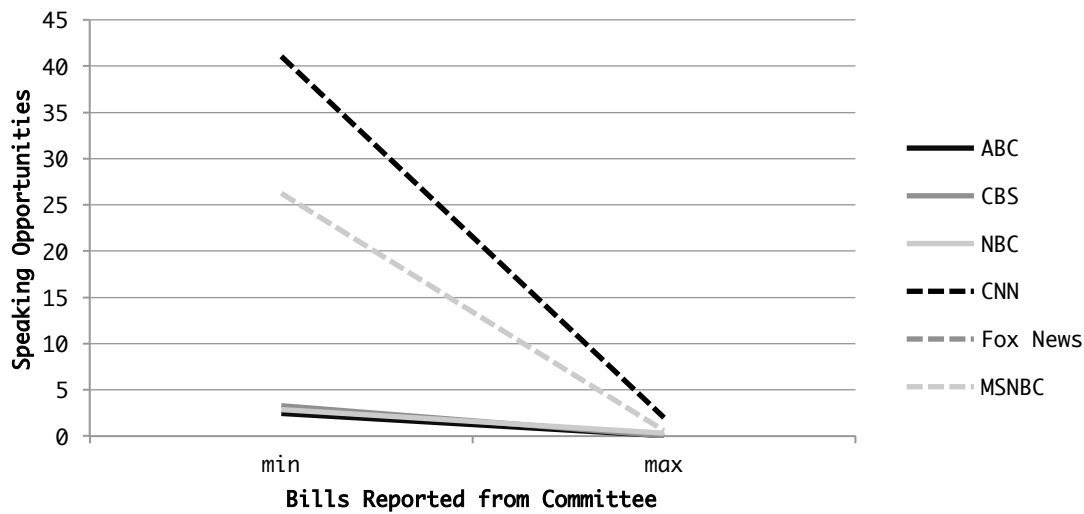


Figure 4.16: Substantive Effect of Introducing Bills

This effect is consistent for each of the broadcast and cable news networks on an individual level: ABC ($b = 0.02$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .01$), CBS ($b = 0.03$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .01$), NBC ($b = 0.02$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .10$), CNN ($b = 0.03$, $rse = 0.03$, $p < .001$), Fox News ($b = 0.02$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .001$), and MSNBC ($b = 0.03$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .01$). On average, these models predict that members who introduce the fewest bills receive only 45 percent of the speaking opportunities that the average member receives, while members who introduce the most bills receive 2.4 times the coverage of the average member. These data indicate that the number of bills the member introduced is a significant and substantive positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Hypothesis 13, then, receives robust support.

Bills Reported. Hypothesis 14 predicted that the number of bills the member had reported from committee would be a negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of having bills reported from committee ($b = 0.03$, $rse = 0.01$, $p < .001$) is both statistically significant and positive. Substantively, members who have the most bills reported from committee can expect 101.31 fewer speaking opportunities than those who have the fewest bills reported from committee. This effect is consistent for ABC ($b = -0.19$, $rse = 0.10$, $p < .05$), CBS ($b = -0.27$, $rse = 0.07$, $p < .001$), NBC ($b = -0.11$, $rse = 0.07$, $p < .10$), CNN ($b = -0.15$, $rse = 0.07$, $p < .05$), and MSNBC ($b = -0.19$, $rse = 0.08$, $p < .01$). Figure 4.17 illustrates the substantive effect of having bills reported from committee for the individual networks. On average, these models predict that members who have the most bills reported from committee receive only 2.7 percent of the speaking opportunities that the average member receives. Indeed, in every case having the maximum number of bills reported from committee reduces the member's predicted speaking opportunities to nearly zero. Even though the effect of introducing bills does not hold for Fox News, Hypothesis 14 still receives strong support.

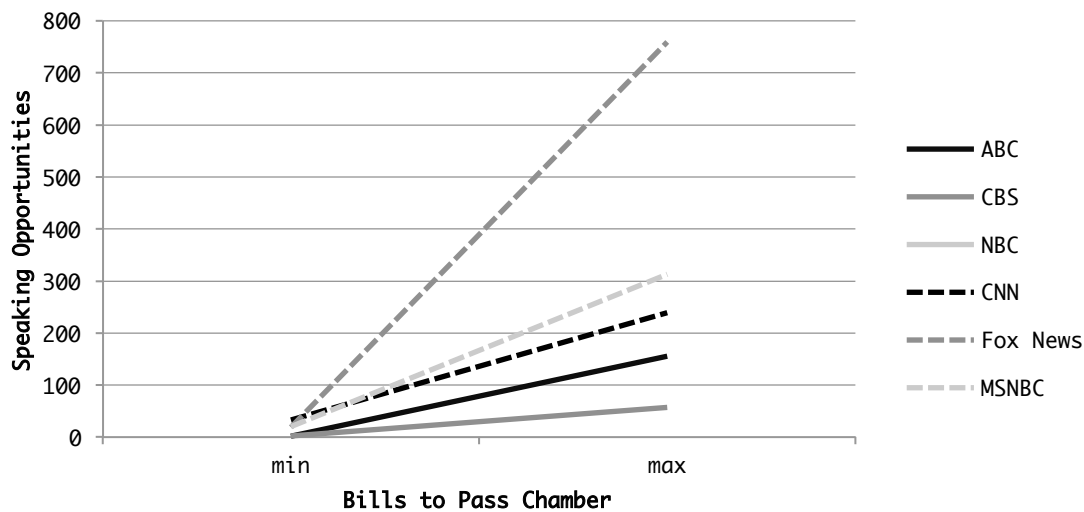


	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
min	2.45	3.27	2.86	41.06	--	26.29
max	0.05	0.02	0.32	2.00	--	0.57
Substantive Effect	-2.40	-3.25	-2.54	-39.06	--	-25.72

Figure 4.17: Substantive Effect of having Bills Reported from Committee

Bills to Pass Chamber. Hypothesis 15 predicted that the number of bills the member had that passed the chamber would be a negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9, however, confirms the opposite: the independent effect of having bills pass the chamber ($b = 0.10$, $rse = 0.06$, $p < .05$) is actually both statistically significant and *positive*. Substantively, members who have the most bills to pass the House can expect 1240.48 more speaking opportunities than those who have the fewest bills to pass the House. Further analysis indicates this effect is consistent for ABC ($b = 0.17$, $rse = 0.04$, $p < .001$), CBS ($b = 0.12$, $rse = 0.05$, $p < .01$), CNN ($b = 0.07$, $rse = 0.05$, $p < .10$), Fox News ($b = 0.14$, $rse = 0.08$, $p < .05$), and MSNBC ($b = 0.10$, $rse = 0.05$, $p < .05$). Figure 4.18 illustrates the substantive effect of having bills pass the House. On average, these data predict the members with the fewest bills to pass the House receive only 52 percent of the speaking opportunities that the average member receives while members with the most bills to

pass the House receive 17.6 times the coverage of the average member. Contrary to expectations, these data indicate the number of bills members introduce that pass the chamber is a significant and substantive positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Hypothesis 15, then, is not supported.



	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
min	1.70	2.24	--	32.92	18.55	19.65
max	156.05	57.01	--	238.88	759.21	313.04
Substantive Effect	154.35	54.77	--	205.96	740.66	293.39

Figure 4.18: Substantive Effect of having Bills Pass the House

Media Activity and Effort

Press Releases. Hypothesis 16 predicted that the number of press releases authored by the member or the member's staff would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of issuing press releases ($b = 0.00$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .10$) is both statistically significant and positive. Substantively, members who issue the most press releases can expect 3248.96 more speaking opportunities than those who issue the fewest press releases on the combined broadcast and cable news television news networks. Further analysis indicates this

effect is consistent for ABC ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .05$), NBC ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .05$), CNN ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .10$), Fox News ($b = 0.01$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .05$), and MSNBC ($b = 0.00$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .10$). Figure 4.19 illustrates the substantive effect of issuing press releases for the individual networks. On average, these models predict that members who issue the fewest press releases receive only 58 percent of the speaking opportunities that the average member receives while member who issue the most press releases receive 57.59 times the coverage of the average member. These data indicate the number of press releases members and their staff issue is a significant and substantive positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Even though the effect of issuing press releases does not hold for NBC, Hypothesis 16 still receives robust support.

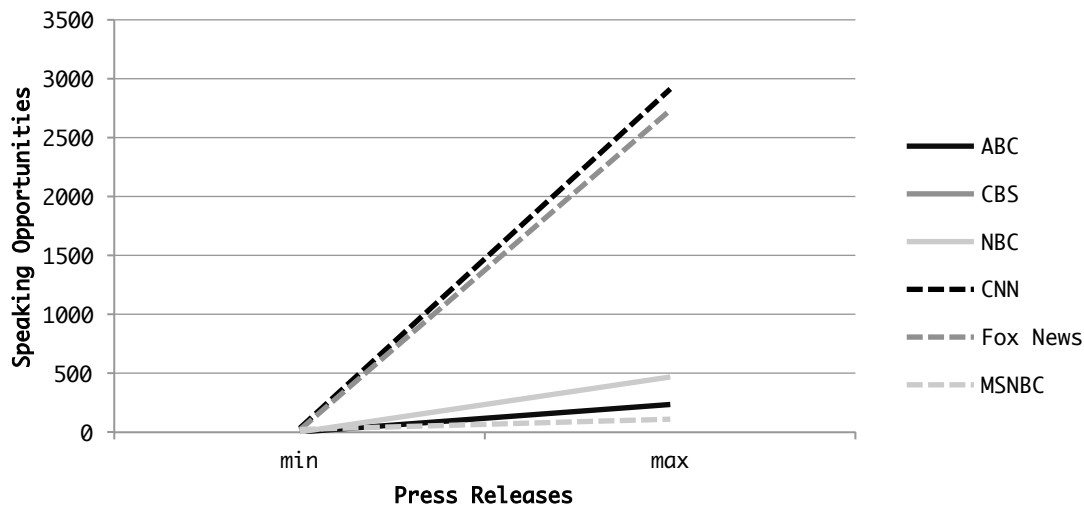
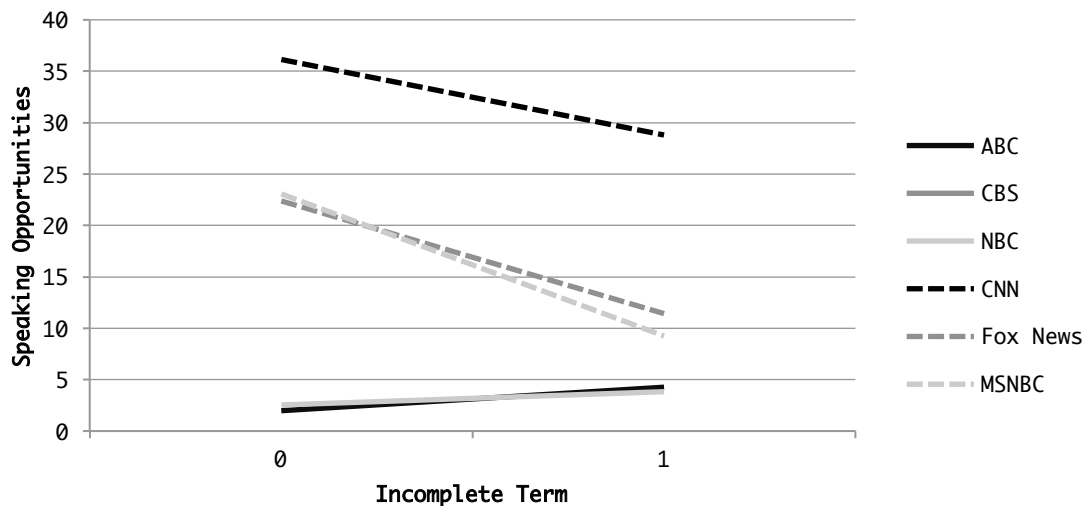


Figure 4.19: Substantive Effect of Issuing Press Releases

Hypothesis Tests for Circumstantial Variables

Incomplete Term

Hypothesis 17 predicted that serving an incomplete term would be a negative predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the effect of serving an incomplete term ($b = -0.43$, $rse = 0.16$, $p < .01$) is both statistically significant and negative. Figure 4.20 illustrates the substantive effect of serving an incomplete term for the individual networks. Substantively, members who serve an incomplete term can expect to receive 32.81 fewer speaking opportunities than the average member who serves a full term. Further analysis, however, indicates the effect of serving an incomplete term is different for broadcast and cable television news networks. Members who serve an incomplete term tend to receive fewer speaking opportunities on CNN ($b = -0.23$, $rse = 0/17$, $p < .10$), Fox News ($b = -0.68$, $rse = 0.21$, $p < .001$), and MSNBC ($b = -0.92$, $rse = 0.41$, p



	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
min	1.99	--	2.54	36.18	22.41	23.07
max	4.29	--	3.82	28.78	11.40	9.22
Substantive Effect	2.31	--	1.28	-7.40	-11.01	-13.85

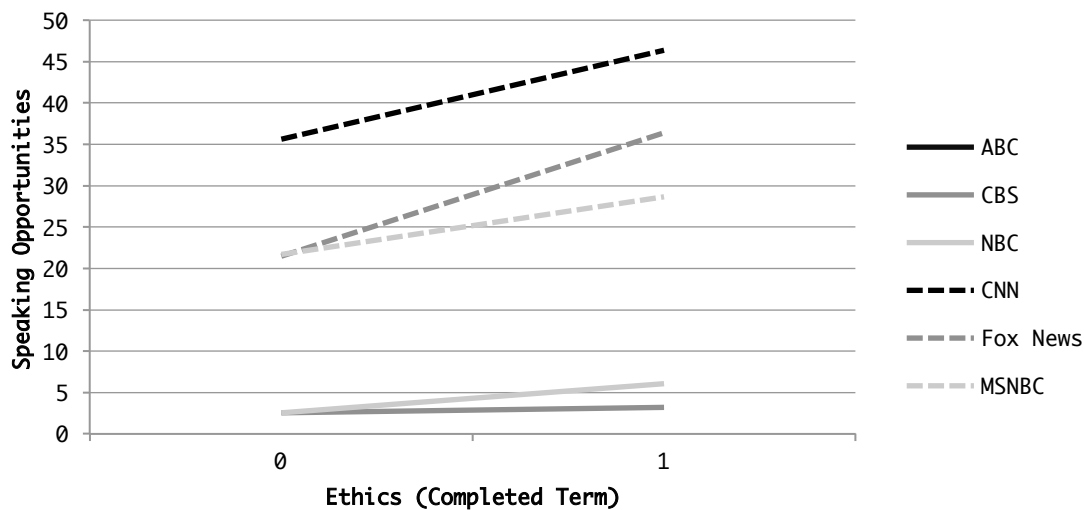
Figure 4.20: Substantive Effect of Serving an Incomplete Term

< .05) and more speaking opportunities on ABC ($b = 0.77$, $rse = 0.47$, $p < .10$) and NBC ($b = 0.41$, $rse = 0.15$, $p < .01$). Although the substantive effects are small, these results demonstrate an important difference in the ways that broadcast and cable television news networks allocate news coverage among the various members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Hypothesis 17, then, receives mixed support: most broadcast award slightly more news coverage to members who serve incomplete terms while cable news organizations tend to award slightly less news coverage to those members.

Referred for Ethics Investigation

Hypothesis 18 predicted that being referred for investigation to the House Ethics Committee would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of being referred for investigation to the House Ethics Committee is both statistically significant and positive for members who complete the term ($b = 0.30$, $rse = 0.09$, $p < .001$) for the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. Substantively, members referred for investigation to the House Ethics Committee who complete their terms can expect 32.13 more speaking opportunities than the average member who is not referred for an ethics investigation. This effect is consistent for CBS ($b = 0.23$, $rse = 0.05$, $p < .001$), NBC ($b = 0.87$, $rse = 0.21$, $p < .001$), CNN ($b = 0.26$, $rse = 0.10$, $p < .01$), Fox News ($b = 0.53$, $rse = 0.32$, $p < .05$), and MSNBC ($b = 0.27$, $rse = 0.07$, $p < .001$). Figure 4.21 illustrates the substantive effect of being referred for investigation to the House Ethics Committee and completing the term.

Table 4.9 also confirms that the independent effect of being referred for investigation to the House Ethics Committee is both statistically significant and positive for members who resign from office ($b = 2.19$, $rse = 0.97$, $p < .01$) for the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. As Tables 4.7 and 4.8 indicate, however, the effect of being referred for investigation to the House Ethics Committee and resigning is statistically significant only for cable television news networks ($b = 2.31$, $rse = 0.93$, $p < .01$). Substantively, members who are referred for investigation to the House Ethics Committee and resign can expect 748.68 more speaking



	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
min	--	2.55	2.55	35.61	21.48	21.69
max	--	3.21	6.08	46.36	36.40	26.69
Substantive Effect	--	0.66	3.53	10.75	14.92	7.00

Figure 4.21: Substantive Effect of Ethics Investigation Referral, Completed Term

opportunities on the combined cable television news networks. Figure 4.22 illustrates the substantive effect of being referred for investigation to the House Ethics Committee and resigning for the individual networks. On average, these models predict members who are referred for investigation to the House Ethics Committee and resign garner 7.59 times more speaking opportunities than the average member. Overall, these data indicate that the effect of being referred to the House Ethics Committee for investigation, regardless of whether they complete their terms or resign from office, is negligible for broadcast television news networks, but substantive and positive for cable television news networks. Hypothesis 18, then, is not supported for broadcast television news networks, but robustly supported for cable television news networks.

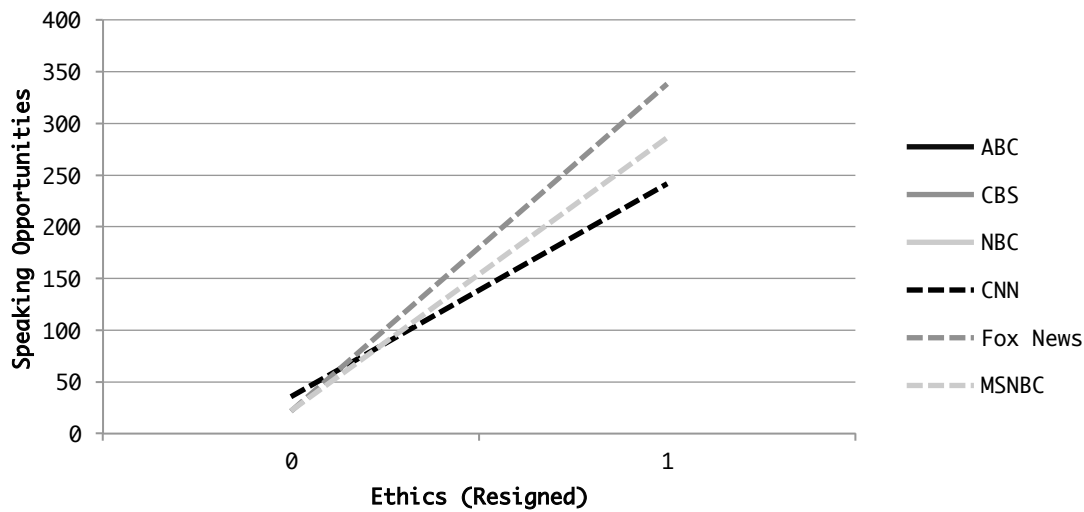
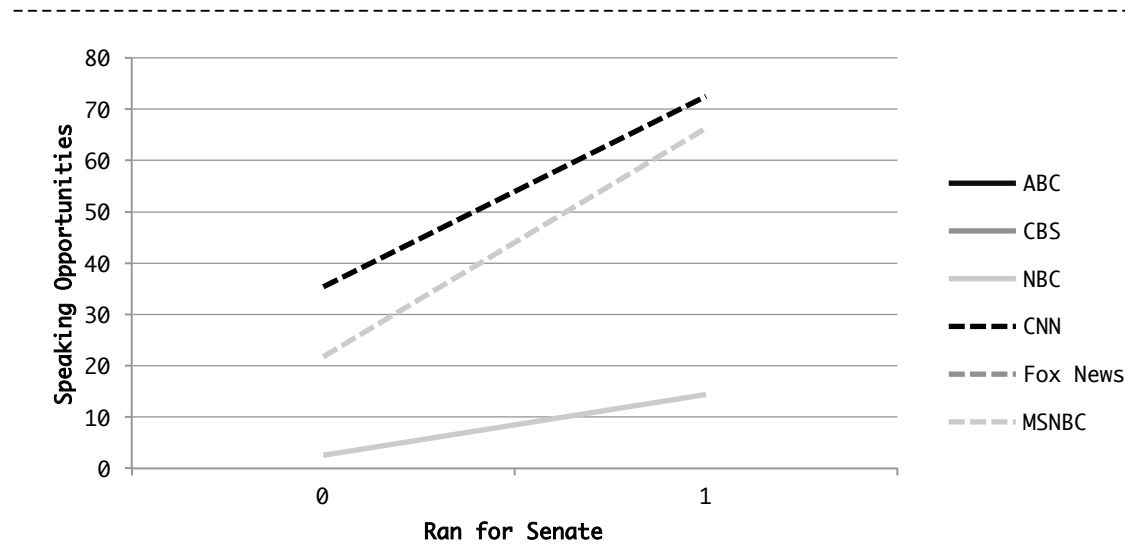


Figure 4.22: Substantive Effect of Ethics Investigation Referral, Resigned

Running for Higher Office

Hypothesis 19 predicted that running for higher office – governor, senator, or president – would be a positive predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage that members receive. The data presented in Table 4.9 do not provide the confidence necessary to infer that the effect of running for governor observed in the realization ($b = -0.29$, $rse = 0.55$, $p = .60$) is also present in the super population. In other words, the data indicate the substantive effect of running for governor cannot be differentiated from zero. This non effect, however, does not extend to running for senator or president. Table 4.9 confirms that the independent effect of running for senator ($b = 0.87$, $rse = 0.37$, $p < .05$) is both statistically significant and positive. Substantively, members who run for senator can expect 125.68 more speaking opportunities on the combined broadcast and cable television news networks. This effect is consistent for NBC ($b = 1.74$, $rse = 0.33$, $p < .001$), CNN ($b = 0.72$, $rse = 0.61$, $p < .05$),

and MSNBC ($b = 1.12$, $rse = 0.41$, $p < .01$). Figure 4.23 illustrates the substantive effect of running for senator for the individual networks. On average, these models predict members who run for senator garner 2.05 times more speaking opportunities than the average member.



	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	Fox	MSNBC
0	--	--	2.52	35.39	--	21.71
1	--	--	11.91	37.12	--	44.64
Substantive Effect	--	--	11.91	37.12	--	44.64

Figure 4.23: Substantive Effect of Running for Senator

Table 4.9 also confirms that the independent effect of running for president ($b = 2.29$, $rse = 0.18$, $p < .001$) is both statistically significant and positive. Substantively, members who run for president can expect 804.41 more speaking opportunities than the average member who does not run for president on the combined broadcast and cable news networks. This finding is consistent for each of the broadcast and cable television news networks on an individual level: ABC ($b = 0.41$, $rse = 0.19$, $p < .05$), CBS ($b = 2.73$, $rse = 0.00$, $p < .001$), NBC ($b = 2.52$, $rse = 0.29$, $p < .001$), CNN ($b = 2.61$, $rse = 0.13$, $p < .001$), Fox News ($b = 2.38$, $rse = 0.08$, $p < .001$), and MSNBC ($b = 1.34$, $rse = 0.24$, $p < .001$). Figure 4.24 illustrates the substantive effect of running for president for the individual networks. On average, these models predict members who run for president garner 5.54 times more speaking opportunities than the average member.

These results reveal a clear hierarchy: national broadcast and cable news organizations do not provide members who run for governor – a state-level position – with more speaking opportunities; some provide members who run for senator – a national-level position elected at the state level – with more speaking opportunities; and all provide members who run for president – a national-level position elected at the nation level – with more speaking opportunities. Taken together, Hypothesis 19 receives moderate support.

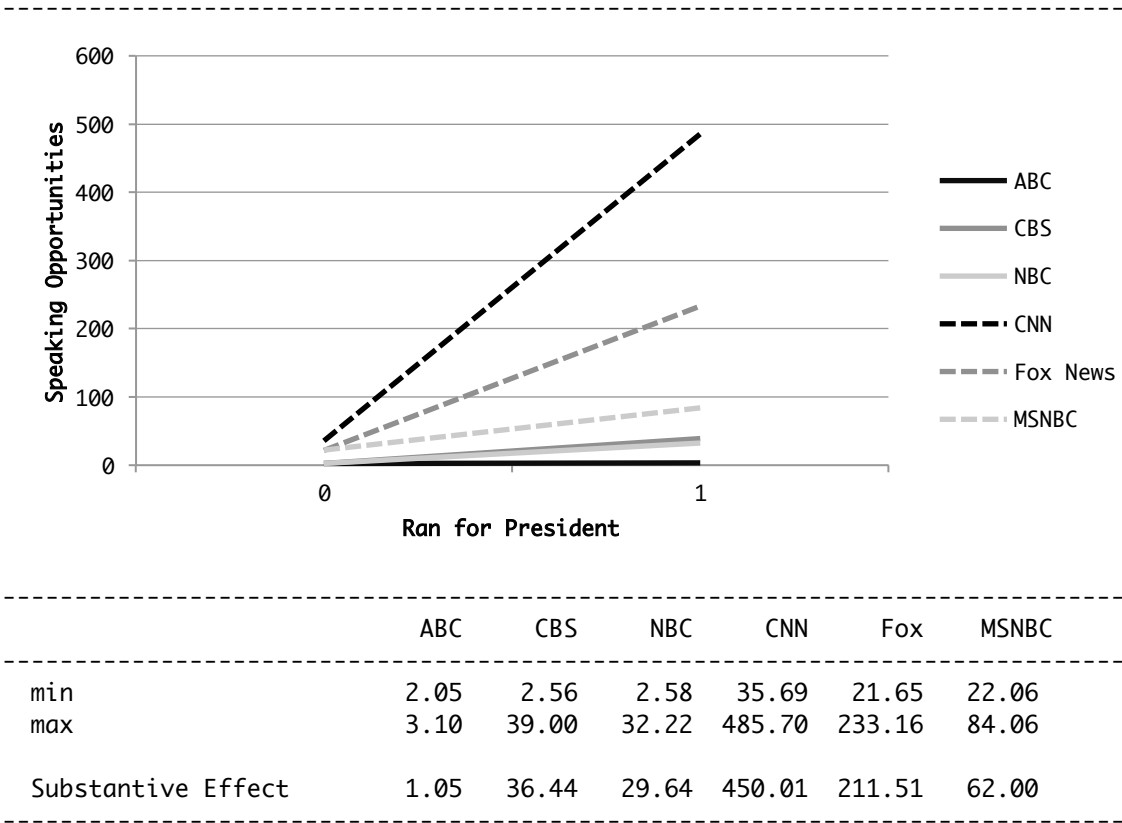


Figure 4.24: Substantive Effect of Running for President

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this dissertation I examined how institutional structure, member demographics, effort, and circumstances shape the volume of news coverage members of the U.S. House of Representatives receive on national broadcast and cable television news networks. This project succeeded in identifying specific institutional, individual, and situational variables as key to obtaining news coverage in the modern and fragmented national television news environment. In this chapter, I discuss the key findings, contributions, and implications of the dissertation and offer suggestions for future research.

Key Findings, Contributions, and Implications

Implications for Citizens, House Members, and Democracy

Journalism in a representative democracy should provide the people with the information they need to be free and self-governing (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007), an idea championed by academics, journalists, and professional journalism organizations. This democratic function is particularly important given Lippmann's (1922) observation that people rely on the news as the lens through which they come to understand the world outside of their direct experience, an observation that is especially relevant to the world of politics, since few people interact directly with their government. For democracy to function properly, citizens need to know not only what their elected officials do in office – a function best served by local news organizations (Arnold 2004) – but also about the pressing issues of the day; that is, the top half-dozen or so public policy issues being considered by Congress – a function best served by the national news organizations. National news coverage not only helps members place an issue on the national agenda where they can frame it in such a way as to define a preferred legislative solution, but also, through its agenda setting function, increases the costs of collective inaction.

Because members who garner national news coverage are better equipped to raise their profile as a player to be reckoned with, set an issue on the national agenda, and even guide national policy, the choices national news organizations make in how they allocate news

coverage among the various members have important implications for the issues that the public comes to understand as important and for which they may hold their elected representatives accountable. Further, because national news organizations extend legitimacy to members and the issues they promote simply by awarding them coverage, doing a poor job of allocating news coverage among the various members could have deleterious effects.

For example, the results of this dissertation suggest the two strongest predictors of who speaks on the national broadcast and cable television news shows are the number of press releases they issue and how ideologically extreme they are. Independent of the other variables in the model, these two variables have substantive impacts of 3248.96 and 1581.87 speaking opportunities respectively. In other words, independent of members' importance, influence, and actual legislative contributions, the best explanations of why members get on the news is that they have effective press operations and hold extreme and uncompromising issue positions.

Beyond whatever impact these preferences may have on citizens directly, news organizations' choices to so disproportionately feature these voices pushes members toward being ideologically extreme as a means to garnering news coverage (Cook 2005). For example, when asked about his extreme rhetoric, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich responded, "the reason I use strong language is because you all will pick it up. Convince your colleagues to cover me being calm, and I'll be calm ... I've simply tried to learn my half of your business" (Lee 1995). In other words, by rewarding members who hold ideologically extreme issue positions with increased news coverage, national broadcast and cable news organizations have created a system of recognition and reward in which members are rewarded for holding those extreme views.

A polarized congress and polarizing portrayals of a polarized congress in national broadcast and cable television news may or may not effect increases in mass polarization. For example, while experimental evidence demonstrates that citizens tend to become more polarized when forced to watch partisan cable news allowing them to self select out of watching partisan cable news, as they would be able and likely to do in an extraexperimental environment, reduces

this effect to nonsignificance (Arceneaux and Johnson 2010). But mass polarization is undoubtedly increasing. According to the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2014), The overall share of politically polarized Americans has doubled during the past two decades; now more than 92 percent of Republicans are to the right of the median Democrat and 94 percent of Democrats are to the left of the median Republican. The most politically polarized Americans are the most politically active and engaged, and are more likely to vote in primaries, write letters to officials, volunteer for or donate to campaigns, and even talk about politics regularly. But perhaps most frighteningly, consistent ideologues tend to believe that the opposing party's views constitute a threat: Fully 66 percent of consistently conservative Republicans and 50 percent of consistently liberal Democrats say they believe the opposing party's policies threaten the nation's well being (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2014).

Regardless of whether a polarized congress and polarizing portrayals of a polarized congress in national broadcast and cable television news effect increases in mass polarization, however, polarization in Congress has other important consequences for citizens, Congress, and democracy. Chief among these is the relationship between congressional polarization and legislative productivity. Mayhew (1991) found that more than 70 percent of landmark bills passed since 1946 passed only because of bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress. As Congress has grown increasingly polarized, then, it has become increasingly difficult to build the coalitions necessary to pass ambitious new policies. Indeed, McCarty's results demonstrate that, between 1946 and 2002, the least polarized congresses produced "a whopping 166 percent more legislation than the most polarized" (2007, p. 238). The result of congressional polarization, legislative gridlock, prevents not only the enactment of new bills, but also hinders the maintenance of existing laws that require periodic congressional attention and adjustments (McCarty 2007). For example, social policy benefits may remain the same in the face of increasing costs, minimum wage may remain the same in the face of inflation, and Congress may be unable to make critical adjustments, as happened during the debt-ceiling crises of 2011

and 2013 that resulted in the first credit rating downgrade of the United States government in history. Beyond producing legislative gridlock, congressional polarization may also weaken the power of Congress as an institution: presidents may find it easier to govern by executive order than attempt to push legislation through a gridlocked Congress; and Congress' inability to address new issues pushes the responsibilities of legislating onto the states and courts as has happened with the legalization of gay marriage.

By rewarding members who hold ideologically extreme issue positions with increased news coverage, then, national broadcast and cable news organizations have created a system incentivizing members to hold the extreme policy views that have made it increasingly difficult for Congress to pass new legislation, maintain current policies, and that have reduced its institutional power relative to that of the presidency and the courts.

Several other key findings that contribute to the literature on congressional news coverage – including the effect of political party membership, gender and race, press activity and effort, and the extent to which making laws and making news are compatible activities – will now be discussed.

Political Party Membership

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the debate on the effect of political party membership on the volume of news coverage members receive centers on whether majority or out party membership drives journalists decisions about whom to feature in the news. This dissertation, however, found little support for either hypothesis. Indeed, for the NBC, CNN, and MSNBC, the three news organizations for which majority party membership had an independent effect, the effect was actually negative, indicating that minority party members actually garnered more speaking opportunities than majority party members on those networks. This observation is consistent with Sellers' (2000) observation that minority party members have greater incentive to go public since they lack control over internal levers of power. But the substantive effect of minority party membership was slight, resulting in only 1, 6, and 4 more speaking opportunities for those

members on NBC, CNN, and MSNBC respectively. Minority party members, in other words, do not dominate national broadcast and cable television news.

These data also provide only isolated support for the out party hypothesis, which received robust support in Groeling's (2010) work. Groeling's (2010) analysis, however, is limited by his data, which include only national broadcast television news transcripts. While the results of this dissertation largely support Groeling's (2010) findings for national broadcast television news – CBS and NBC both provided out party members with slightly more speaking opportunities – I demonstrate that the substantive effect of out party membership is slight – CBS and NBC provided out party members less than one more speaking opportunity on average – and isolated only to national broadcast television news. Indeed, national cable television news organizations consistently provided out party members with *fewer* speaking opportunities, an in party effect that is more than 30 times stronger than broadcast news organizations' out party effect. While national broadcast news organizations may provide a slight boon to out party members, then, national television news networks, on the whole, actually provide disproportionate speaking opportunities to in party members.

Gender and Race

The data presented here contribute to our understanding of how gender and race interact to influence the volume of national broadcast and cable television news coverage members of the U.S. House of Representatives receive. Many studies have focused on the hurdles female (Aday and Devitt 2001; Banwart, Bystrom, and Robertson 2003; Bystrom 2006) or minority (e.g., Terkildsen and Damore 1999; Zilber and Niven 2000) elected officials face in garnering news coverage. While many have documented that female or minority politicians receive less and less favorable news coverage (e.g., Entman 1994; Kahn 1996; Payne 1988), this research suggests the independent effect of being either female or minority is not a consistent predictor of the volume of national broadcast and cable news coverage members receive, a finding that is congruent with more recent research (e.g., Schaffner and Gadson 2004; Gershon 2012b). Indeed, the data presented here predict that both female and white and male and minority members garner slightly

more speaking opportunities on some networks and slightly fewer speaking opportunities on others. This dissertation, then, is the latest to join in the chorus of findings suggesting both female and white and male and minority members have begun to garner news coverage that is more equitable with that garnered by their white and male peers.

These data, however, are not nearly as encouraging concerning the volume of national news coverage that minority congresswomen receive. Even when controlling for variations in power, politics, effort, and circumstances among members, the independent effect of being both female and minority remains statistically significant and negative. Gershon (2012b) identified the same effect in her analysis of local newspaper coverage of 100 members of the U.S. House of Representatives in the month prior to the 2006 midterm elections. When female and minority members fail to garner equitable news coverage on a local level, it may both impede citizens' ability to make informed political decisions and disproportionately hinder the members' ability to obtain reelection. As Gershon (2012b) writes, "voters represented by minority congresswomen may have significantly less information about their member of Congress with which to make their decisions at the polls ... [which] may therefore impact the election prospects of minority women campaigning for public office." (p. 119). And, particularly in low-information races, name recognition – facilitated through mentions and speaking opportunities in the news – has significant and substantive effects on vote choice, affect, and inferences about candidate viability (Kam and Zehmeister 2013). Simply by garnering fewer mentions or speaking opportunities, then, minority congresswomen may be disproportionately hindered in their pursuit of reelection.

In the context of national news coverage, because they consistently garner disproportionately fewer speaking opportunities, minority congresswomen may also be disproportionately hindered in their attempts to set issues on the national agenda and define those issues in such a way as to make their preferred legislative alternatives the best solutions, a form of persuasion that is especially valuable to a legislator. After all, politics – the art of "who gets what, when and how" (Lasswell 1936) – is less a debate about the issues themselves and more

about which issues will be addressed and how they will be defined (Schattshneider 1988). As Cook (2005) writes, “Little wonder, then, that members spend so much time arguing about what a piece of legislation is really all about” (p. 155). Further, this effect may be particularly damaging for minority congresswomen in the minority party given Sellers’ (2000) observation that minority party members – who lack control over internal policymaking levers – rely more heavily on going public to effect policy change.

Finally, considering the hurdles minority congresswomen face in garnering both local and national news coverage, they may be less able to raise their profile as a player to be reckoned with, to gain the notoriety necessary to help them run for higher office, and even to focus on seeking national news coverage. That is, because they garner disproportionately less local news coverage (Gershon 2012b), and because that coverage is required to secure reelection (*see* Cook 1989), minority congresswomen may be forced to allocate disproportionately more of their resources – resources that, for every member, are finite – toward garnering local news coverage to secure reelection, diminishing the resources they have to pursue advancement.

Press Activity and Effort

As Groeling (2010) writes, “[A] common finding of the congressional communication literature concerns the pervasive failure of most members’ publicity efforts.” Cook (1986), for example, found that network television newscasts featured fewer than half the members of the U.S. House of Representatives even once between 1969 and 1986. Likewise, Hess (1986) found that one-third of senators appeared one time or not at all on those same networks. Politicians, however, certainly act as though they believe their presence in the media matters. Cook (1989) found that members’ hires of professional press secretaries grew exponentially during the 1970s and 1980s. Others have documented that members raise and spend record sums on obtaining media coverage every election cycle (Atkinson 2008). And former Sen. Ernest Hollings estimates this process consumed almost one-third of his time in office.

Contrary to previous research, the data presented here suggest active congressional press secretaries earn their pay. Even when controlling for variations in power, politics, effort, and

circumstances among members, the independent effect of issuing press releases is statistically significant and positive. Beyond statistical significance, however, the effect documented here is substantive. Indeed, issuing press releases has a greater substantive impact than any other independent variable included in the model. Indeed, the substantive effect of the number of press releases members and their staff issue is more than twice as large as the effect of ideologically extreme, the second most substantive variable, and four times as valuable as being a majority party leader or running for president. The data presented in this dissertation, then, provide clear support for the idea that congressional publicity efforts succeed in garnering members with an increased volume of national broadcast and cable news coverage.

Making Laws and Making News vs. Show Horse – Work Horse

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the debate on the effect of legislative activity and effort on the volume of news coverage members receive centers on the extent to which making laws and making news are compatible processes. Proponents of the “making news and making laws” hypothesis argue that the two ideas are complementary parts of the same process (*see e.g.*, Cook 1989) while proponents of the “show horse – work horse” hypothesis contend the processes are mutually exclusive, meaning that “members are either high in publicity and low in legislative work (show horses) or low in publicity and high in legislative work (work horses), and no member is high on both” (Payne 1980, p. 442). By operationalizing legislative activity and effort with several variables capturing the independent effects of introducing bills, having those bills reported from committee, and having those bills pass the chamber, and by limiting analysis only to substantive bills, the results presented in this dissertation provide insight into the extent to which making laws and making news are compatible processes.

First, as predicted, the independent effect of introducing bills – a largely symbolic “show horse” behavior – was both statistically significant and positive, indicating that members who engaged in more of this show horse behavior tended to garner disproportionately more speaking opportunities. Second, as predicted, independent effect of having bills reported from committee – an outcome that requires commitment and effort from the member that represents “work horse”

behavior – was both statistically significant and negative, indicating that members who engaged in more of this work horse behavior tended to garner disproportionately fewer speaking opportunities. Finally, the independent effect of having bills pass the House – also a work horse behavior – was both statistically significant and positive, indicating that members who engaged in more of this behavior tended to garner disproportionately more speaking opportunities. These results indicate, then, that both show horse and some work horse behaviors predict the volume of news coverage that House members receive. Because both variables are measured only once per congressional term, however, these data do not allow us to determine whether and the extent to which news coverage helps members get bills through the House versus the alternative explanation that getting bills through the House makes the member more newsworthy, resulting in increased news coverage. What these data do suggest, however, is that the work horse – show horse hypothesis advanced by Payne (1980) may have been replaced instead by a show horse and work horse hypothesis – that is, the results of this dissertation suggest members can be high in both publicity and legislative work.

The contrasting effects of having bills reported from committee and having them pass the House also deserve some discussion. Once again, because the variables are measured only once per congressional term it is not possible to determine whether legislative effort precedes news coverage or the reverse. Given this, two possibilities exist. If news coverage precedes legislative success, this suggests the process of making laws is, at different points in the process, both an internal and a public venture. In other words, since members who have more bills reported from committee garner disproportionately fewer speaking opportunities, this explanation suggests the process of guiding a bill through committee is largely an internal one. Correspondingly, since members who have more bills that pass the House garner disproportionately more speaking opportunities, this explanation suggests the process of guiding a bill to success in the chamber is largely a public one enhanced by the agenda setting and framing functions of national news coverage. Alternatively, if legislative success precedes news coverage, this suggests news organizations place contrasting news value on the different

legislative accomplishments such that they tend to find the accomplishment of having bills reported from committee not newsworthy and the accomplishment of having bills pass the House as very newsworthy. Only time series analysis, however, can disentangle these competing explanations.

Suggestions for Future Research

While this dissertation contributes to our understanding of how institutional, individual, and situational variables work to shape the volume of national news coverage that House members receive, more research is needed. First, it is clear that the value members place on their committee assignments – as modeled by Ray (1982) and Stewart (2012) has little to do with the news coverage members earn. Indeed, retrospectively, it seems obvious that members select committee assignments for a variety of reasons, many of which might have nothing at all to do with visibility in the national media. For example, members in districts with where military bases are integral to the community may value placement on the Armed Services Committee to prevent those bases from receiving funding cuts or closures; members in districts that rely on particular forms of energy product to employ their members – coal mining, off-shore oil drilling, etc. – may value placement on the Energy and Commerce Committee to protect those interests; etc. Instead of measuring the effect of committee importance, then, I propose congressional communication scholars should instead be measuring the effect of committee relevance or newsworthiness. A value of committee relevance or newsworthiness could be operationalized similarly to Anderson, Box-Steffensmeier, and Sinclair-Chapman's (2003) hot bills measure, which quantifies the relevance or newsworthiness of legislation. To determine committee relevance, code the cover stories from issues of Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, into policy topics and assign those topics to the relevant committee. For example, a cover story about domestic terrorism would be assigned to the Homeland Security Committee and a cover story about trade with China would be assigned to the Foreign Affairs committee. The value of the number of cover stories that each committee receives would constitute the relevance or

newsworthiness of that committee. Normatively, it would be reassuring to find that journalists seek members who are qualified to speak about the topics that are actually important in the news.

Second, different statistical approaches – particularly time series analysis – is needed to disentangle whether activity and effort variables are causes of news coverage or effects of news coverage. As explained earlier in this chapter, the statistical models used in this dissertation can not determine the extent to which making news helps members also make laws.

Finally, future research on congressional news coverage should assess the impact of topical focus. These data are aggregate – using all of one member’s actions and efforts, among other things, to predict all of their news coverage. A more interesting and useful task, particularly in the vein of testing the making laws and making news hypothesis, would be to assess the impact of members’ topical focus – that is, whether and how focus on particular topics in the legislation they introduce, the speeches they give on the floor, and the news coverage they receive, impacts their ability to move legislation through the House.

Incorporation of topic analysis – congressional record, press releases, news coverage, bills introduced/reported/passed – to determine whether focus on topic in communication efforts helps legislative efforts.

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