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Faith-Based Organizations and Legislative Advocacy: A Qualitative Inquiry

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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For Poppy

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Abstract

FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

By Marye Lorelle (Lori) Thomas, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2008

Major Director: F. Ellen Netting, Professor, School of Social Work

Since the early 1990s, religion and matters of faith and spirituality have become a focal point in numerous arenas beyond the individual and traditionally sacred. With President George W. Bush's White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives of 2001, the Charitable Choice provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act that preceded it in 1996, and the myriad of legal challenges that followed, matters of religion have become paramount in political discourse regarding social welfare. The viability of faith-based social service provision and the organizations providing the direct services have been the focus of speculation, debate, and a growing amount of research. Few studies, however, have explored the role of faith-based advocacy or lobbying organizations in shifting the social welfare climate, in proposing or opposing policy changes in the social welfare system, or in defining social welfare. Little is empirically known about the organizational dynamics of religious advocacy groups whose attempts at structural influence are, in part, affected by theological positions and religiously-informed values.

Considering the dearth of research on such organizations, particularly those that operate on the state level, this study explored faith-based advocacy organizations that seek to influence social policy in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Within an interpretive paradigmatic and theoretical framework that allowed for the exploration of meaning associated with advocacy activities, the inquiry asked the following questions, *How do faith-based organizations engage in legislative advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia? What meaning do the organizations assign to their advocacy activities?*

The inquiry's findings, congruent with interpretive research assumptions, are tentative in nature and suggest that while the focal organizations' advocacy activities appear similar to other interest groups, their religious mandates for action distinguish them from their secular counterparts. Interpretations of these mandates significantly influence the organizations' decision-making, their representation of multiple constituencies, and their definitions of success. Unlike previous studies that suggest these organizations distance themselves from insider politics, the religious advocates in the study suggest that fidelity to their mandate means actively participating in the political process while retaining their unique voice as representatives of God and religious traditions.

Chapter 1: Rationale for Study

In the last decade, religion and matters of faith and spirituality have become a focal point in numerous arenas beyond the individual and the traditionally sacred. Factors of historical importance to Americans and the American way of life (Toqueville, 1969; Wuthnow, 1989), faith and religion have seemingly moved beyond a personal sphere and limited public visibility to a highly visible, multi-sector public presence. Public discourse in areas as diverse as entertainment, politics, and academe has broadened to consider the increasing references to religion and religiously derived values in the United States. Discourse regarding religion has exponentially increased in the political sector, where the overt presence of religion was once mitigated by forces of democracy, pluralism, and secularization. Alarming some and comforting others, religion and politics are frequent bedfellows in the opening decade of the 21st century.

With President George W. Bush's Faith-Based and Community Based Initiative (FBCBI) of 2001, the Charitable Choice provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) that preceded it in 1996, and the myriad of legal challenges that have followed, matters of faith and religion have become paramount in political discourse regarding social welfare and social services. Despite documentation that religious organizations have been and are regular participants in social service delivery (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999; Netting, 1982, 1984; Wineburg, 2001), religious references in political discussions infer a fresh relevance. The "new" viability of religiously-affiliated social service provision has

been the focus of speculation, debate, and a growing amount of research. The younger Bush's election to two presidential terms has intensified the focus on faith-based initiatives as diverse stakeholders in the political system seek to promote its potential, question its wisdom, and/or understand its implications. Research in response to the role of religion in social welfare and the provision of social services has primarily focused on the capacity of faith-based organizations and congregations to provide needed services (Anderson, Orr & Silverman, 2000; Bielefeld, Littlepage, & Thelin, 2003; Cnaan, Wineburg & Boddie, 1999; Wineburg, 2001), the effectiveness and efficiency of such organizations (Kennedy & Bielefeld, 2002), and the roles of collaboration (Ammerman, 2001; Campbell, 2002; Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Cnaan & Boddie, 2001; Pipes & Ebaugh, 2002), faith (Chambre, 2001; Netting, O'Connor, & Yancey, 2000; Unruh, 2004), voluntarism (Gronbjerg & Never, 2002; Netting, O'Connor, Thomas & Yancey, 2005; Wineburg, 1990), and funding (Chaves, Stephens, & Galaskiewicz, 2004; Netting, 1982) in these organizations. While additional and ongoing research is needed to develop and refine current understandings of faith-based direct social services, researchers have responded to the call (Johnson, Tompkins & Webb, 2002) to move the area of religiously-affiliated social services beyond anecdotal evidence to theoretical considerations and empirical grounding.

An intricately related area of inquiry, however, has not received such attention. Few studies have explored the role of faith-based advocacy or lobbying organizations in shifting the social welfare political climate, in proposing or opposing policy changes in the social welfare system, or in defining social welfare. Little is known about the

organizational dynamics of religious advocacy groups whose attempts at structural influence are in part, sometimes large part, affected by theological positions and religiously informed values. The content of the often contentious discourse surrounding faith-based initiatives has predominantly been the constitutional relationship between religion and state and the implications of direct service provision by congregations and religiously affiliated non-profits. Theoretical contributions and empirical studies have followed the discourse. While a literature is evolving regarding the local grassroots change efforts of faith-based community organizing and community development (Wood, 2003), little is offered in understanding the relationship of faith-based advocacy organizations to state and federal government bodies. Scant attention has been paid to the structural changes sought by faith-based organizations on social welfare policy and the role faith plays in these proposed changes.

Recognizing the increasing relevance of religion and religious organizations in policy and public discourse, this study explored faith-based organizations that engage in legislative advocacy. The study sought to contribute to the understanding of religious advocacy organizations and other religiously-affiliated organizations that attempt to influence policies at the state level. The primary research questions guiding the study were: *How do faith-based organizations engage in legislative advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia? What meaning do the organizations assign to their advocacy activities?*

Definitional Ambiguity

Faith-based or Religious?

With religion and politics' heightened public presence, one of the most confusing and challenging aspects of understanding faith-based organizations is the definitional complexity surrounding the concepts of religion and faith and religion/faith in relation to organizations. Safire (1999), in his *New York Times* feature "On language," speculates on the evolution of this nomenclature from the use of *religious* to *faith-based*. Citing the separation of church and state as a guiding force in the evolution of this language, Safire notes that "By substituting faith (trust in truths) for religion (organized set of beliefs), the new compound adjective gets around the traditional objection" [of institutional entanglement with government](p.16). The institutional connotations of *religion* are avoided by emphasizing the value-related nature of *faith-based*. In the United States, the influence of religious values in public life finds fewer critics than the potential mutual interference between the institutions of religion and government.

As Safire (1999) suggests, the evolution of these descriptors from religious and sectarian to faith-based is reflective of evolving policy contexts and the then-current understandings of the relationship between church and state. The lack of such an evolution in the area of legislative advocacy or lobbying may be instructive. Lobbying by religiously-affiliated organizations is generally referred to as religious lobbying (Cleary, 2003; Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995a) or religious advocacy (Yamane, 1998), with Christian lobbying or church lobbying often used to describe the efforts of

Christian churches, denominations, and affiliated organizations (Adams, 1970; Foster, 2002b). Religious lobbying is considered by some to be suspect. A congressional aide of Strom Thurmond (R-SC) expressed distaste for the lobbying efforts of the National Council of Churches in support of the Civil Rights Act, “We stand against everything the National Council stands for, except preaching the gospel – and they don’t do much of that.” (Dirks, 1965, p. 148). The “some” that oppose religious lobbying may vary according to the issue taken up by religious groups. Despite who may oppose religious lobbying, the use of “religious” to describe these efforts serves to focus related discourse on the institutional, and thus constitutional issues surrounding the activity. Focus only on the constitutional relationship between church and state obscures other areas that may contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of the dynamics of religious lobbying including the values that are infused in the actions of lobbyists and lobbying organizations.

The slower etymological evolution of *religious lobbying* to *faith-based lobbying* may suggest a collective discomfort in moving related discourse away from its constitutional implications. Should not religious lobbyists and lobbying organizations be kept squarely within this frame of reference to prevent entanglement of church and state? Yes, certainly they should. But a myopic focus on constitutional issues may also indirectly serve as a political tactic to obscure knowledge of current religious lobbying organizations and efforts. It may also work to prevent the growth and public exposure (and thus public support) of organizations working against a political agenda. The peppering of “*faith-based agencies*” in the communications of the Bush Administration

and the language of other political and organizational leaders has paralleled the growth of public discourse and research on religiously-affiliated service agencies. Introducing *faith-based* as a descriptor of lobbying may help point discourse and research in the area beyond constitutional considerations.

The use of *faith-based* is not without its definitional problems, however. The term is rather ambiguous as a descriptor of organizations. Jeavons (2003, 1994, 1998) notes the lack of clarity in determining which organizations are included or omitted when the phrase *faith-based organization* is used. He uses *religious organization* as an overarching categorical term under which both congregations and religious services entities, or faith-based organizations, fall. Noting the differing purposes of a congregation (primary worship orientation) and a religious service entity, Jeavons cautions against using faith-based organizations as a catch-all term for congregations.

Smith & Sosin (2001) distinguish *faith-related* organizations from *faith-based* organizations in order to allow for multiple forms of linkages between the organization and religion. The use of *faith-based* implies organizations that “fully act on faith” (p. 653) and excludes a number of organizations that may link to faith or religious institutions in other ways. They define faith-related social service organizations as agencies that relate to religion or faith in any of the following ways: “a formal funding or administrative arrangement with religious authority or authorities; a historical tie of this kind; a specific commitment to act within the dictates of a particular established faith; or a commitment to work together that stems from a common religion” (p. 652). Smith and Sosin suggest their use of *faith-related* conceptually relates to earlier efforts

to develop a descriptive vocabulary that includes a variety of linkages with religion (Cnaan, Wineburg & Boddie, 1999; Jeavons, 1994, 1998; Netting, 1984; Netting, Thibault, & Ellor, 1990).

Initially, this study employed the term *faith-related* to refer to organizations somehow affiliated with a religious institution, tradition, or philosophy in order to serve as a reminder of the multiple realities that shape inquiry at the intersection of religion and politics. The phrase *faith-related advocacy* or *lobbying organization* was to convey the role of religion in the contemporary political context allowing for multiple forms of relationships with religious bodies, traditions, and/or philosophies. These terms were to contrast *religiously-based* or *faith-based* which suggest, as Smith and Sosin (2001) note, an extensive, if not intensive or exclusive, relationship to religion. After interviewing the research participants, however, *faith-based* was once again used as a descriptor since it was a descriptor used interchangeably with *religious* by the respondents.

Advocacy Organization or Interest Group?

Definitional ambiguity also exists in the use of the term *advocacy* to describe the nature of an organization's efforts to influence policy. Generally, advocacy is understood as action on behalf of a person, a group or class of people, or in general terms, a cause. Ezell (2001) notes the oft used definition, "to defend or promote a cause" (p. 22). The definition is applied regardless of who is advocated for – a case (an individual or small group of individuals) or a class. For some, advocacy is used to accomplish system level change for a group or class of people. For others, advocacy

occurs at a more micro level as social workers and other human services practitioners direct their advocacy efforts toward other agency staff, their organizations, fellow service providers, benefit providers, or local government agencies.

Often, advocacy is defined in terms of radical social change (Reisch & Andrews, 2001). While radical efforts are frequently associated with the term advocacy, Ezell (2001) suggests that a great deal of advocacy occurs on behalf of the status quo. This maintenance advocacy may or may not be conducted with the best interests of clients in mind. However, in social work and other helping professions, such advocacy may be undertaken to prevent the successful passage of punitive policies or policies that would change the status quo for worse. Ezell's definition of advocacy allows for a range of advocacy purposes within the helping professions. He contends that advocacy "consists of those purposive efforts to change specific existing or proposed policies or practices on behalf of or with a specific client or group of clients" (p. 23).

Andrews and Edwards (2004) provide a definition of advocacy organizations drawn from the literature base of political science (interest groups), sociology (social movements) and nonprofit organizations (advocacy organizations). Suggesting that the knowledge base about advocacy organizations suffers because multiple disciplines pursue studies independently with few integrating the work of other disciplines, the authors define advocacy organizations as "organizations that make public interest claims either promoting or resisting social change that, if implemented, would conflict with the social, cultural, political, or economic interests or values of other constituencies and groups" (p. 481). Andrews and Edwards' definition recognizes the

value conflicts inherent in advocacy. Due to the value-laden nature of religious convictions, this element of an advocacy definition is crucial in the examination of faith-based organizations engaged in lobbying.

The current study recognizes the breadth of the term *advocacy*, particularly as it applies in both religious and social work traditions. The terms *advocacy* and *lobbying* are both used to refer to the activities of faith-based organizations. Within the context of this study, however, use of the term *advocacy* assumes a legislative lobbying dimension. Drawing from the definitions of Ezell (2001) and Andrews and Edwards (2004), the study considered faith-based organizations that attempt to influence social policy decisions at the Virginia General Assembly, recognizing that the organizations have conflicting claims and a range of purposes and processes.

Why Study Faith-Based Lobbying?

Historical Relevance

Justification for the study is provided by historical record of both the existence of faith-based groups that worked for policy change and the major shifts in social policy attributed, in part, to the efforts of the groups. As with direct human services, religious groups have played an active, yet often unheralded role in the shaping of social agendas, policies, and realities in the United States. Recognizing the intersection of social policy and morality, segments of the religious community have campaigned for and against formally legislated policies and informally sanctioned social practices that are congruent or incongruent with tenets of faith. In addition to being a part of the political

process across time, faith-based organizations have also contributed to major developments and shifts in social policy. Abolition, prohibition, and civil rights legislation among others (Wuthnow, 1989) were successful in large part, due to both informal and formally organized efforts of religious groups or religiously-affiliated groups. From the late eighteenth century to the current context of faith-based initiatives, political involvement and legislative advocacy have been regular functions of religiously-affiliated organizations and have impacted social policy, practice, and experience in the United States.

Contemporary Relevance

Today, religious organizations continue to participate in the development, support, and opposition of social policy on national, state, and local levels (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995a; Wood, 1999). As part of the interest group “explosion” of the latter part of the twentieth century, the number of religious interest groups in the nation’s capital has increased over 400% since 1950. Hertzke noted that in 1950, 16 major lobbies worked in Washington, by 1985 that number had increased to at least 80 (p. 5) and 100 by the 1990s (Fowler & Hertzke, 1995a, p. 54). States marked a similar increase in general interest groups (Rosenthal, 1993).

While faith-based groups make up only a small percentage of all interest groups on national and state levels, their profile is relevant as religious matters become a more regular part of political discourse and as religious groups become increasingly involved in government decision making. After evolving to a rather secular state with few references to religion (other than a secular civil religion, Bellah 1991), the presence of

religion in political discourse and faith-based groups in the political process increased in the late 1970s and early 1980s with the ascendancy of the Christian Right. While some scholars dismissed the Christian Right as ultimately un-influential after leader Pat Robertson's failed attempt to be the Republican candidate for President in 1988 (Jelen & Wilcox, 1993; Moen, 1994; Wilcox, 1994), the movement and its emphasis on "moral values" has continued to be influential within the Republican party and among voters and has received some credit for George W. Bush's successful bids for president. The movement has spun off a number of interest groups including the Moral Majority (now the Moral Majority Coalition), the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council, and Concerned Women of America, most of which are still active on federal and state levels. While the influence of the Religious Right has been predicted to wane in the future (Moen; Wilcox), the organizations it has spawned will not quickly disappear.

In response to the persistent relationship of the Christian Right and political conservatives, a number of groups have formed that emphasize a more progressive vision of religion and moral values that include protecting the environment and eliminating poverty and injustice. These groups include the Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP) led by Rabbi Michael Lerner of Tikkun and Sojourners/Call to Renewal led by evangelical minister Jim Wallis. The Democratic Party has also begun to co-mingle religious language with politics. In February, 2005, House Minority leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) created the Democratic Faith Working Group chaired by Jim Clyburn (D-SC) to provide a venue for Democrats to "share their values and to

collaborate with other people of faith on issues of mutual concern” and work “with faith communities on common values such as ending poverty, improving schools, protecting Social Security, speaking out against greed and materialism, providing better housing, seeking a clean and livable planet and fighting for social and economic justice for all Americans” (HouseDemocrats.gov, 2006, ¶1).

Democratic candidates for state and national offices have also been using religious rhetoric in stump speeches and platform positions. In 2005, Democratic Lieutenant Governor Tim Kaine was elected governor of Virginia, a traditional red state. Throughout his campaign he cited his personal faith as the motivation for his public service. During the tightly-contested race between incumbent Rick Santorum (R-PA), one of America’s top 25 evangelicals (Fitzgerald, 2006), and Democrat Bob Casey, Casey made frequent references to his faith. Citing religious grounds for the pursuit of justice and “common good,” Casey stated,

The common good must first be based upon a solid foundation of justice. As Saint Augustine taught us: “*Without justice, what are kingdoms but great bands of robbers?*” ...Justice demands our understanding that the hungry, the impoverished, and the uninsured in this country are not statistics, they are children of God. They are our brothers and sisters, our fellow Americans. (Casey, 2006, p. 2)

Casey’s speech, the above examples, and the continuing influence of the Christian Right demonstrate the elevated position of religion in contemporary political discourse. Study of faith-based groups that participate in the political process, however, including groups that engage in legislative advocacy, has not matched the increased public prominence of religion in politics.

Why Study Faith-Based Lobbying in the States?

As in the examples of Governor Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Senate candidate Bob Casey (D-PA), religion has made in-roads in state politics as it has gained prominence in the national arena. With the increase of religious rhetoric in all levels of government, states offer an important context in which to study the efforts of faith-based advocacy organizations. State legislatures are a relevant context for the proposed study since devolution places much responsibility for social welfare in the hands of state legislators.

Devolution, or the shift in responsibility over a number of policies from national to state and/or local levels, became a reality for social policy matters during Ronald Reagan's first presidential term. President Reagan was the face of the neo-conservative political movement designed by conservative political thinkers such as Martin Anderson, George Gilder, Charles Murray, and Marvin Olasky to "cut the knot" (cited in Wineburg, 2001, p. 10), or end the welfare system designed by New Deal and Great Society programs (Trattner, 1999; Wineburg, 2001). Conservative political leaders advocated for a change from an institutional to a residual perspective on social problems (Wilensky & Lebeaux, 1958; Wineburg). The institutional perspective normalizes need throughout the human lifespan and creates a network or system of services to address these needs as they naturally occur, similar to the pre-devolution system of welfare in this country and the more comprehensive social welfare models in Western European countries like Germany and Sweden (Mishra, 1999). The residual perspective, in contrast, purports that human needs should be met by family or the market economy. Instead of a comprehensive system of support, residual or emergency

supports are provided when these structures are not sufficient to meet individual needs. “Because of its residual, temporary, substitute characteristic, [the residual perspective] often carries the stigma of the dole or charity” (Wilensky & Lebeaux, p. 138; as cited in Wineburg, p. 11).

Devolution through Reagan’s legislative and administrative changes were most notably felt in the replacement of over 40 entitlement programs with lesser funded block grants that would be administered by states instead of the federal government (Trattner, 1999). This shift in a federal funding mechanism affected numerous social programs including AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), Medicaid, and subsidized housing among others. Given a set of minimal standards to adhere to, states were given control of sums of money (an overall reduction of previous funding for social programs) with significant latitude over the programs that provided the services and the money that was disseminated. Devolution “has meant that many policies influencing the lives of clients, consumers, and citizens are shaped by state legislatures, county boards of supervisors, and municipal governments” (Jansson, 2003, p. 22). With the shift in mechanisms came a significant reduction in funding and increased rhetoric about the responsibility of individuals, families, and faith communities to provide the social and spiritual safety net for the nation’s troubled populations. Throughout the Reagan presidency, George H.W. Bush’s presidential term, Clinton’s terms, and the current George W. Bush presidency, the trend of devolution has continued and states have retained responsibility for a number of social and other programs and gained

additional responsibilities as what started by Reagan has been either maintained or continued by each successive administration.

This devolution, credited in large part to President Reagan and conservative political pundits, was supported by the work of the Christian Right, a socio-political movement emerging alongside neo-conservative politics. New Deal and Great Society programs, for architects of the political right such as George Gilder and Charles Murray, failed on “pragmatic and moral grounds” as bureaucratic programs transferred income to those who had not earned it and in so doing, engendered dependence (Wineburg, 2001, p. 10).

The message of conservative pundits and scholars fit well with the message of fundamentalist Christian leaders involving themselves in national politics. Leaders such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson argued for national repentance, a return to the country’s Christian roots, and the support of individual morality and responsibility. Their organizations, The Moral Majority and The Christian Coalition, were religious interest groups tasked with achieving the vision of the Christian Right through electoral politics and through legislative and judicial activism. The Christian Right laid a moral foundation for welfare reform and supported the ascendancy of their own positions and those of the political right (and the Republican party) as religious leaders and political pundits cooperated in a mutually beneficial enterprise. Micro and macro aspects of religion quickly became part of political discourse as conservative political leaders, with support from conservative religious leaders, worked to dismantle the welfare state casting responsibility for the welfare of individuals and society on the individual, the

family, and religious bodies. Individuals were now to pull themselves up by their religious bootstraps and congregations, synagogues, and mosques were to provide the services with the faith-factor that enabled them to do so. In a 1992 interview with the *New York Times*, Ralph Reed, then executive director of the Christian Coalition described his organization's efforts to "create the underpinnings of a national political machine" (Mynans, 1992, p. 1). Reed described the organization's new focus away from presidential politics after the organization's failed effort to support Pat Robertson in the 1988 presidential primary campaign. The organization, which at that time claimed over 250,000 members in all 50 states (p.1), redirected its national attention to state and local politics. As Reed stated, "We tried to change Washington when we should have been focusing on the states. The real battles of concern to Christians are in the neighborhoods, school boards, city councils and state legislatures" (p. 1).

With the states adjusting to their ever-growing control of social programs and the dilemma of increased social need and fewer resources, state legislatures have become a locus of a number of decisions affecting social programs throughout the country. As Schneider and Netting (1999) noted regarding PRWORA, "States have now regained authority of eligibility rules and benefit levels previously removed only by statutory enactment and judicial interpretation" (p. 352). In some cases states choose to devolve the responsibility for programs on to local levels with varying degrees of state control (Kelly & Ranson, 2000). In some instances, states retain the responsibility for social programming decisions and pass those decisions on to localities and the non-profit sector for implementation. In other cases, states regain control of social programs

as state governments choose to recentralize some programs that were once administered at a local level to the state level (Adkisson & Peach, 2000). In any of the above scenarios, the state has experienced increased control of social programs since the early 1980s. State legislatures across the country are participating in the shaping of these social programs or they have the potential to do so. Groups intent on changing or maintaining existing social policy attempt to influence state legislatures to those ends.

Not surprisingly, states have had their own interest group explosion in the last two decades of the twentieth century (Rosenthal, 1993) Rosenthal reported a 20% increase of lobbyists at state capitals from 1986 until 1990 (p. 4). While this is due to a number of factors including the professionalization of the interest group field and the deregulation of a number of industries, the devolution of social programs has played a role in this marked increase.

Why Study Virginia?

Variation of Religious Organizations

Of all the states experiencing devolution and evolving interest group populations, particularly pertaining to social policy and programs, the Commonwealth of Virginia offers a rich context for the consideration of religious groups or faith-based groups attempting to influence the legislature on matters of social policy. Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, began operating his Christian Broadcasting Network in 1961. Known for his inflammatory commentary on national and international issues, Robertson's media outlet has grown to include other efforts such as the conservative

Regent University, the international non-profit group Operation Blessing, and the Christian Coalition, now a separate interest group located in Washington, D.C. and operating in multiple government contexts. Since the early 1980s, the state has been the home to Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and its successor, The Moral Majority Coalition (TMMC) created in 2004. The platform of TMMC includes the following,

(1) TMMC will conduct an intensive four-year "Voter Registration Campaign" through America's conservative churches, para-church ministries, pro-life and pro-family organizations; (2) TMMC will conduct well organized "Get-Out-The-Vote Campaigns" in 2006 and 2008; and (3) TMMC will engage in the massive recruitment and mobilization of social conservatives through television, radio, direct mail (U.S.P.S. and Internet) and public rallies. (Falwell, 2004)

TMMC (and Jerry Falwell prior to his death in 2007) is currently trying to mobilize voters in seven states, including Virginia, to support "marriage protection amendments" (Falwell, 2006). While TMMC describe their organization as a lobbying organization, many of their efforts center around voting. Nevertheless, the active presence of conservative groups and their efforts to influence the voting public cannot be without influence in the state legislature.

In addition to a regular presence of conservative Christian groups in the state since the early 1960s, Virginia is also home to a unique interfaith coalition that has been active in the Commonwealth since 1982. Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy claims to be "the oldest faith-based advocacy group" (VICPP, 2006, ¶1) in Virginia. While avoiding hot button issues of abortion and same sex marriage, the VICPP pursues a progressive agenda toward the alleviation of poverty, racism, and related forms of oppression. Its yearly legislative agenda is determined by a board representing 21

judicatory members of varying faiths including the Virginia Council of Churches, the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, and the Richmond Rabbinic Association. The organization seeks to “speak[s] for and with the vulnerable and works for a just and compassionate Commonwealth by uniting and empowering faith communities” (VICPP, ¶4). A number of other religiously affiliated organizations participate in the Virginia state policy process. These groups include the Family Foundation of Virginia (affiliated with Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council), the Virginia Catholic Conference, the Virginia Assembly of Independent Baptists, the Family Policy Network, and the American Jewish Committee (Vegh, 2005).

The Tradition of the Separation of Church and State

While Virginia has a notable history in birthing key organizations of the Christian right, Virginia is also notable in its role as the first state to legislate religious freedom. In 1786, led by the efforts of James Madison, George Mason, and Thomas Jefferson, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was created. It states,

That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish enlarge, or affect their civil capacities. (Virginia, 1823)

Virginia’s statute was copied by several states and became influential in the eventual adoption of the establishment and free exercise clauses in the first amendment of the United State Constitution. The tradition of religious freedom has continued to be influential in state politics as politicians cite its importance and legislative precedence

support its continuation. With the variety of religiously affiliated organizations involved in influencing state policy in Virginia and the respected tradition of the separation of church and state within Virginia politics, the Commonwealth is an appropriate context for exploring the role of faith-based advocacy organizations in the Virginia General Assembly.

Why Social Work?

As chapter two will detail, existing and relevant empirical literature concerning the proposed inquiry has been developed predominantly within the disciplines of political science and sociology. This study builds on the knowledge base from the two disciplines while recognizing that social work is also an appropriate academic field from which to explore faith-based legislative advocacy. The profession and academic discipline of social work are necessarily concerned with such inquiry since legislative decisions concerning social policy effect the vulnerable populations with whom social workers engage. Such concern is related to a long history of legislative advocacy within the field of social work and current interest in the role of religion in shifting social policy.

Vulnerable Populations

The vulnerable populations with whom social workers frequently engage are directly affected by social policy legislation passed by national, state, and local governments, as demonstrated by the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The welfare reform legislation and

subsequent renewals were crafted on federal and state levels with support, input, and protest from a variety of stakeholders. Time-limits placed on the availability of cash assistance directly affected the individuals and families served by social work practitioners. PRWORA required, at most, five year time-limits for individuals and families receiving assistance through TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) in order to encourage families to prepare for and find employment. Virginia enacted legislation that further limited cash assistance to a maximum of two successive years and a lifetime maximum of five years (SPDP, 2002). While national and state leaders, including those in Virginia, touted the success of the legislation in reducing welfare roles and increasing employment, individuals and families struggled with issues not made public in such reports of success. Virginia leaders noted that welfare rolls had decreased, employment had increased, and even income had increased among families who once received assistance. Despite the reported success, however, many families still struggled with the expense of child care and health insurance due to the insufficient wages provided by the jobs that took them off “welfare as we know it” (Clinton, 1995). While employment among those who had previously been on welfare in Virginia increased by 2003, only 20% of those families were above the poverty level (Wemmerus, Kuhns, & Loeffler, 2003, p. xxv). The lived results of welfare reform legislation among social work clients prompted a number of social work groups including national and state chapters of the National Association of Social Work (NASW) to advocate for the reform of welfare reform and for a more effective system wide effort to alleviate poverty (NASW, 2006a, 2006b).

Because social work practice with vulnerable populations is driven in part by social policy, legislative advocacy (Reisch, 2002; Schneider & Lester, 2001) or policy practice (Jansson, 2003) is well within the purview of social work practice and inquiry.

The NASW Code of Ethics states that

Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice. (NASW, 1999, Section 6.04 a)

The ethical standard to engage in political and social activity as required by client needs, programming concerns, and injustice and oppression have historical precedent dating to the earliest days of the social work profession in the late nineteenth century.

Historical Precedent

The importance of legislative activism was underscored by the work and tradition of Jane Addams. Addams, a founder of Hull House and a key figure in the settlement house tradition, was politically active on matters of local, state, and national consequence. Connecting the welfare of the residents living in tenements around Hull House to physical and social conditions facilitated by local policy or a lack thereof, Addams advocated for garbage collection to prevent disease and improve aesthetics. In addition, she lobbied for labor laws, juvenile court, and pension for mothers with small children as solutions to the growing social problems of the industrial age (Jansson, 2003). She also advocated on a state level for laws that guaranteed fair and safe labor practices. Nationally and internationally, she lobbied for women's suffrage and peace.

Addams and others in social work including Grace and Edith Abbott, Frances Perkins, Wilbur Cohen, and Bertha Reynolds anchor a tradition in social work that cannot disconnect individual and family casework from the political contexts that are to some extent determinative of micro situations and crises (Schneider & Netting, 1999).

Improving or fundamentally changing social policy in order to ameliorate human suffering and oppression was then and is now a principal task of the profession. As indicated by its inclusion in social work education accreditation standards, advocacy concerning social policy is a vital part of the profession that social work students must learn prior to entering the profession. According to the standards for baccalaureate and master's education programs, the purposes of social work education include, "preparing social workers to formulate and influence social policies and social work services in diverse political contexts" (CSWE, 2004, p. 5).

Role of Religion in Social Policy

Social work's practice of serving vulnerable populations and its related practice of legislative advocacy suggest that the proposed study fits well within the parameters of social work inquiry. The religious component of the study is particularly relevant because of the current role of religion in shaping social policy. In the past decade, religious and other influences have created substantive changes to the nation's social welfare policy. Section 104 of PRWORA, also known as Charitable Choice, and the White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives (WHOFBCI) implemented policies and administrative rules that changed the landscape of government contracting for social services around the country (Farris, Nathan, &

Wright, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). While a number of larger religious organizations have historically partnered with government agencies on government terms (Netting, 1982), Charitable Choice and the WHOFBCI allowed religious social service organizations, including those housed in congregations, synagogues, and mosques to partner with the federal government on terms that are less exclusive of religion. Charitable Choice allowed religious organizations to hire staff according to religion and display religious signs and iconography, while prohibiting proselytization and the use of government money to support direct religious activities such as prayer and Bible study. The WHOFBCI was developed to identify and reduce the barriers faith-based and community-based organizations face in government grants and contracting.

Critics, including some religious organizations, charged that the policies and administrative actions could put vulnerable persons and families in need of services in the compromised position of feeling the pressure to accept religious beliefs in order to receive services and succeed in social service programs. NASW echoed this concern in a position statement that called for government funded social services to “be available, accessible, and offered in a way that encourages voluntary use” (NASW, 2002).

Religious groups, NASW and other professional groups, think tanks, and academics also raised concerns about the capacity of small religious organizations (including congregations, synagogues, and mosques) to provide effective services and the potential of the WHOFBCI, without added funding, to reduce already limited financial resources for social programs. In the devolution of social welfare, social work has found itself opposed to and aligned with religious organizations on various sides of the argument.

In addition to social welfare policy, religious groups have influenced, or are influencing the constitutional definition of marriage in a number of states, including Virginia. In November, 2006, Virginia and ?? other states voted to define marriage as “only a union between one man and one woman” (HJ41/SJ92, 2006). Twenty states had already passed constitutional amendments banning gay marriage (ACLU of Virginia, ¶1). Such a constitutional amendment is antithetical to the NASW Code of Ethics which states that social workers “should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability” (NASW, 1999, section 4.01). Religious groups in Virginia and across the country have both supported and condemned the passage of such statutes. Be it social welfare policy or social policy determining the rights of minority and marginalized Americans, religious groups are involved in the shaping and promotion of legislation that is both congruent and incongruent with social work values.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Although the legislative advocacy activities of faith-based organizations have not been a focus in the resurgence of religion in politics, a number of scholarly sources provide an instructive, if slight, knowledge base for inquiry. Chapter two will review historical and empirical literature relevant to the proposed study. It will address the historical role of religious organizations in legislative change and the theoretical frames and empirical findings that describe contemporary activity on national, state, and local levels.

Historical Background

In absence of a robust empirical literature, historical documentation and analysis provides a window into the early and ongoing role of religious lobbyists and religious lobbying organizations in the United States. While empirical studies on religious lobbying have been limited, a number of historical resources focus on faith-based lobbyists, lobbying and lobbying organizations' role in politics. Historical accounts ranging from early abolition efforts of the 17th century to the rise of the Religious Right in the 1970s and 1980s provide a significant part of the existing knowledge base for the proposed study.

Abolition

Earliest involvement of religious communities in matters of government and social policy in the U.S. began in the late 17th century as Quakers spoke out to fellow Friends and then to wider society about the evils and injustices of slavery. In 1693,

George Keith exhorted fellow Quakers “Not to buy any negroes, unless it were on purpose to set them free” (See Ebersole, 1951, p. 2). The Quakers were the early religious opponents of slavery in the U.S., but were not the only opponents. Other religious bodies voiced their disapproval of the practice, including groups whose members were slave owners. Ebersole (1951) notes that the Methodist Conference of 1800 “directed the Annual Conference to ‘draw up addresses for the gradual emancipation of the slaves, to the legislatures of those States in which no general laws have been passed for that purpose...LET THIS BE CONTINUED FROM YEAR TO YEAR TILL THE DESIRED END BE ACCOMPLISHED’” (p. 3). Although the efforts of congregations and clergy frequently faced rebuke by government officials and citizens who viewed their efforts as inappropriate attempts to control legislation, religious involvement in the ending of slavery frequently expanded beyond the walls of congregations and their pulpits into the public square. Furthermore, those who were not formally associated with religious leadership used religious arguments to make a case against slavery. William Lloyd Garrison, journalist and famed abolitionist, referred to slavery as “*the* national sin – ‘a gangrene preying upon our vitals’ – that would bring death and destruction if not immediately abolished” (Thuesen, 2002, p. 36).

Despite the visible and vocal presence of religious groups in the fight against slavery, much disagreement existed within and among religious groups regarding the subject of slavery. Slavery and the impending Civil War led to many denominational schisms including that of Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. These differences pointed to variations in the interpretation of sacred texts, primarily the Christian Bible,

and divergent views of morality. For Quakers and other religious abolitionists, opposing the institution of slavery could not be separated from their interpretation of living a moral life. For others, living a moral life did not entail the social matters best left to the state.

Moral Reconstruction & Prohibition

The issue of slavery that occupied religious reformers and activists in the antebellum period shifted in the reconstruction era. Labeled by Foster (2002b) as a period of “moral reconstruction,” a variety of individuals and organizations emerged to wage battle against the “Big Four” (p. 112) evils – intemperance, impurity, Sabbath breaking, and gambling – that were, in their opinion, threatening the godliness of the nation and individuals. Leaders in this multi-decade effort focused on legislatively controlling both the appetite and avarice that led to such sins. These reformers sought to eliminate sin by legislatively controlling both people’s desire to sin and their economic means of doing so. While most attempts to curtail individual behavior failed (with the brief exception of prohibition), their attempts to legislate morality resulted in the passage of a number of interstate commerce laws and the eventual short-lived constitutional amendment banning the creation, sale, and distribution of alcoholic beverages. While prohibition was the era’s most famous outcome, other efforts of the moral reconstructionists are notable.

An early effort of this period, with roots in antebellum efforts, was the push to include God, Christ, and Biblical authority in the Constitution. Championed by The National Association for the Amendment of the Constitution, later named the National

Reform Association (NRA), and other reform organizations of the era, this change in the central national document would purportedly help solidify the country as a Christian nation that conformed to the highest law. The effort was rooted in the theology of the denominations from which most NRA members came, the Reformed and United Presbyterian churches. Elements of these traditions interpreted scripture as attesting to the kingship of Christ over all nations. “Therefore, the state was capable of sin, national sins they termed them, and could expect to be destroyed if it did not repent and conform to God’s law” (Foster, 2002, p. 28). Conforming to God’s law included national recognition of the highest authority and the control of all government and individual actions that might lead to sin or insubordination. The NRA’s efforts for moral reform were joined by a number of allies.

Wilbur Crafts, considered to be the first Christian lobbyist to formally open an office in Washington D.C. (Morone, 2004), formed the National Bureau of Reforms in 1894 and his office in 1895. Later named the International Reform Bureau, the organization under Crafts’ leadership sought to influence federal, state, and local legislation on matters concerning moral reform. For Crafts, these reforms were “parts of one great reform – the reform which is the consummation of religion – namely the Christianizing of society” (Foster, 2002b, p. 110). Crafts spent over 25 years in Washington pressuring Congress to pass laws controlling divorce, polygamy, sexuality, narcotics, alcohol, and gambling.

Emerging two decades prior to the development of the National Bureau of Reforms, the National Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) formed to end

the “evils of drink” (Foster, 2002b, p. 36), particularly the havoc alcohol-induced violence created in the home. Citing the violence and neglect befalling the wives and children of inebriates, the women sought protection from the government since the husband’s role of protection had been abdicated under the influence of alcohol. They also sought protection for men and boys who had not yet succumbed to the seduction of alcohol. WCTU required abstinence for members and leaders traveled widely lecturing about the dangers of all forms of liquor. From their inception, though, they believed that these educational efforts and individual efforts to live morally were not sufficient to stop the use and abuse of alcohol. The organization’s charter resolved,

That whereas, the object of just government is to conserve the best interests of the governed: and whereas the liquor traffic is not only a crime against God, but subversive of every interest of society; therefore, in behalf of humanity, we call for such legislation as shall secure this end; and while we will continue to employ all moral agencies as indispensable, we hold prohibition to be essential to the full triumph of this reform. (See Odegard, 1966, p. 38)

Through the work of Francis Willard, WCTU’s first corresponding secretary and second president, and Mary Dye Ellis, the group’s full-time lobbyist, concerns regarding intemperance and other moral and progressive reforms were regularly brought before Congress and individual legislators for over 40 years. In Washington, Willard and Ellis utilized the knowledge of the WCTU’s growing grassroots membership to gain a hearing for their positions and develop allies among legislators. At its zenith in 1892, the organization had over 154,000 members in over 7,800 local unions in every state (Foster, 2002b, p. 86).

Both the NRA and the WCTU allied with each other and other like-minded individuals and organizations to accomplish their moral reform purposes. One such individual, Anthony Comstock, was a celebrated and hated figure at the end of the 19th century for his crusades against pornography, contraception, abortion, and other “impurities.” Comstock, having witnessed the moral demise of a friend, began a quest to control and stop vice. His failure to stop vice using existing laws prompted him to go to Washington in 1872 to federally strengthen obscenity laws. After some revisions, he and allies in Congress were able to pass an obscenity bill in 1873 that “dramatically expanded federal involvement in sexuality” by outlawing “the sale, and even the possession for sale, of obscene material and information about or articles employed for birth control and abortion” (Foster, 2002b, p. 52) in the areas that Congress controlled (District of Columbia, territories, interstate traffic including mail). It also outlawed importing and mailing pornography and sexually immoral writing or the advertisement of such items. After this first federal legislative victory, Comstock continued to lobby with NRA and the WCTU for other moral reforms. His footprint is still felt though interstate obscenity laws (Morone, 2004).

The Anti-Saloon League, born in Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. in 1865, was the lead organization in the passage of the 18th amendment to the Constitution which abolished the manufacture, sale, and distribution of alcohol. This single-issue organization benefited from the groundwork laid by individuals like Comstock and organizations like the WCTU and the NRA. While the organization never denied its religious nature – it “was begun by Almighty God” (Foster, 2002b, p.

170) – it often chose more secular arguments to push its agenda. These arguments – the slavery of individuals to a dangerous substance, the danger to the social order, and the related increase in crime, the dissolution of families, and poverty – were often scientifically presented with maps and formal presentations from physicians and other experts. League lobbyist James Cannon, Jr, a Methodist minister from Virginia, believed in the creation of “absolute morality” in civil society, but used a variety of tactics and allies to accomplish his purposes (Foster).

Comstock, Ellis, Crafts and their allies, including the Anti-Saloon League, were forbearers of the practices that characterize contemporary interest groups. Utilizing direct pressure tactics including direct appeals to legislatures and testimony at legislative hearings, the early religious lobbyists pressured individual legislators. They used multiple arguments –economic, scientific, social – to support moral legislation. They formed both tightly and loosely coupled coalitions to bring focused pressure to bear on decision-makers in the Washington, D.C. area and in the states. The lobbyists, particularly the WCTU and the Anti-Saloon leagues effectively utilized indirect tactics to accomplish their aims. These organizations created nationwide hierarchical organizational structures to communicate with and mobilize large numbers of supporters. On a regular basis, these organizations produced educational pamphlets and statements concerning the need for policy changes and the deleterious effects of the evils for which they were concerned (principally alcohol). The lobbyists frequently spoke to church and civic groups about the dangers of the “Big Four” and the need to mobilize the masses to create change in Washington and the states. Many contemporary

“best practices” in legislative advocacy were widely employed by the Christian lobbyists of the moral reconstruction era.

The success rate of lobbying efforts during this era was less than overwhelming. Congress, in the moral reconstruction era, never changed the constitution to include God’s dominion, never enacted sweeping Sunday laws, and left most of policing of morals to the states. Between the 27th and 66th Congresses, the most successful moral legislation was purity and prostitution legislation with 16.2% (12) of introduced legislation regarding purity and prostitution actually passed. Fifty-three percent (53%) of moral legislation concerned alcohol, but only 5.5% (45) of alcohol related legislation passed (Foster, 2002, p. 238). Prohibition, the era’s “crowning achievement, became it’s culmination as well” (Foster, p. 221). In an effort to fight avarice, the quest for riches, and appetite, the quest for sin, Christian lobbyists during the moral reconstruction era were slightly more successful in controlling the economics around sin than they were in controlling the sin itself – at least for a time. From the federal ban over the importing and interstate shipment of pornography and fight films to the ban on the manufacturing, sale, and distribution of alcohol, the reformists fought against the business of immorality to protect individuals from becoming immoral.

Despite low success rates and the failure of prohibition, the era’s major accomplishment, the Christian lobbyists either introduced or supported legislation that expanded the power of Congress over moral issues. Lobbyists supported the successful antipolygamist efforts against the Mormons, the Mann Act that prevented the interstate transportation of prostitutes, and measures against the trade of narcotics. Along with

restrictions to contraception and abortion, the lobbyists of this era successfully imposed age limits to the vices of alcohol and tobacco – these restrictions have endured although the details may have changed. The failure of prohibition and the height of the Progressive Era with its emphasis on social programmes, scientific intervention, and the social gospel overshadowed the continuing, but diminished efforts of moral reconstructionists. Legislative efforts of religious organizations would surface again during the Civil Rights era and the Vietnam War, but morality on this stage would not be defined by issues concerned with vice or related immorality.

The Social Gospel Movement

While the lobbyists and reformers associated with moral reconstruction efforts continued their efforts into the twentieth century, another movement was taking hold in Northeastern industrial cities. The social gospel movement, coined by Charles O. Brown in 1886 (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999) and championed most notably by Walter Rauschenbusch in the early 20th century, took hold at the dawn of the Progressive era. Described by contemporary texts as both a “militant” movement that tried to align the church with the working class instead of the lower class (Trattner, 1999) and a movement that alongside Social Darwinism, “called upon the wealthy to guide the poor” (Cnaan, et al., p. 122), the Social Gospel movement represented a range of theological and political positions. It differentiated itself from the moral reconstruction period that preceded it, however, by its focus on structural sin. For some this focus supplanted the emphasis on personal piety and individual sin, for others it became an additional aim in an ongoing quest to improve individuals and society.

Rauschenbusch, the father of the Social Gospel, noted a connection between the demands of the gospel and the desperate living and working conditions of the urban masses. He criticized the free market and the doctrine of supply and demand for its resultant societal inequity and misery of the poor urban masses. He and others sought to translate the concept of the Kingdom of God into social principles that should characterize society. The Social Gospel redefined morality in terms of societal structure. The shift in the movement's definition of morality resulted in both new and continuing legislative foci at the local, state, and national levels. Proponents of the social gospel began to work for the institution of a minimum wage, the end of child labor, compensation for job related injuries and disabilities, and other progressive era reforms. But a number of those who subscribed to the tenets of the Social Gospel movement also continued the legislative fight against alcohol and other evils emphasized in the era of moral reconstruction (Morone, 2005).

Civil Rights

In the middle of the 20th century, establishment of religious lobbies in Washington flourished. By the 1950s many of the liberal Protestants influenced by the Social Gospel had established legislative offices in Washington, D.C. United Methodists established a building on Capitol Hill in 1923 to serve as a center for Prohibition efforts and Progressive reforms. In response to the concerns of their pacifist members regarding the institution of the draft during World War II, the Quakers opened an office in 1943 and became the first registered religious lobby in Washington (Hertzke, 1988). Other liberal Protestants followed suit. After World War I, Catholics

established the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington. Jewish religious groups including the American Jewish Committee, The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations had created offices in Washington for lobbying purposes since the early 1900s. "Call religious lobbying on Capitol Hill 'improper,' or call it 'courageous.' It goes on – and its' growing," reported a special addition of The National Observer's Newsbook in 1965 (Dirks, 1965, p. 142).

The most notable example of religious lobbying during the 20th century was the period that spanned the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. Following the early and consistent efforts of black ministers and congregants, Catholic, Jewish and liberal protestant lobbies joined with African-American leaders and actively engaged in legislative and grassroots efforts to combat segregation in the south. While quick to admit they were slow to take up the cause of racial injustice in the United States, a number of white religious leaders – Christian and Jewish – began to follow the leadership of black leaders like the Rev. Martin Luther King and defined racism as a moral wrong. Led by African-America congregations, interfaith allies joined the groundswell of protest in southern cities. Together religious lobbyists and religious leaders of both races eventually formed the "most intensive interfaith lobby in history" (p. 135) around passage of the Civil Rights Act. This new level of political and social action by the church was met by both support and condemnation by members of Congress and their staff. Senator Hubert Humphrey described the religious activists as "the most important force at work" (Dirk, p. 142) in the passage of the Act. Senator Humphrey also stated that, "Their support of the Civil Rights Bill has been

acknowledged by both friend and foe of this legislation” (Adams, 1970, p. 34).

According to journalist James L. Adams, “The hot summer of 1963 was made even warmer for many Congressman by the incessant activities of church officials pressuring for passage of the [Civil Rights] bill” (Adams, 1970, p. 12). Activities included targeting those members of Congress who were ambiguous about their position on the bill with visits, constituent letters, and phone calls; mobilizing congregations to take part in local and national demonstrations; leading workshops to inform and mobilize church members; and, testifying before Congress and congressional committees regarding the immoral nature of the practice of racial segregation. A number of denominations produced resolutions, position papers, and other written materials designed to inform the public, mobilize congregations, and inform members of Congress. A resolution by the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church was included in the *Congressional Record* in 1962. It resolved,

That the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church urges the Congress of the United States to pass such civil rights legislation as shall fairly and effectively implement both the established rights and needs of all minority groups in education, voting rights, housing employment opportunities and access to places of public accommodation. (Adams, p. 16-17)

Religious leaders became regular fixtures on Capitol Hill as passage of Civil Rights legislation was considered. The efforts of the religious lobby during this time, however, were not always welcomed by members of Congress nor by the members of the congregations who were being represented in Washington. Democratic Senator Richard B. Russell from Georgia voiced his dismay in the participation of religious leaders and disagreed with the classification of civil rights as a moral issue, stating:

I have observed with profound sorrow the role that many religious leaders have played in urging passage of this bill, because I can not make their activities jibe with my concept of the proper place of religious leaders in our national life...During the course of this debate, we have seen cardinals, bishops, elders, stated clerks, common preachers, priests and rabbis come to Washington to press for the passage of this bill. They have sought to make its passage a moral issue...This is not, and cannot be, a moral question. However it may be considered, it is a political question...Day after day men of the cloth have been standing on the mall urging a favorable vote on the bill. They have encouraged and prompted thousands of good citizens to sign petitions supporting the bill – but all without knowledge of the effect of what they are demanding of the house of representatives in the Congress of the United States...This is the second time in my lifetime, that an effort has been made by the clergy to make a moral question of a political issue. The other was Prohibition. We know something of that. (Adams, 1970, p. 2)

Similar concerns regarding the appropriate role of religious leaders were echoed by some members of the congregations that fought for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A group of Presbyterians from West Tennessee sought the censure of Dr. Eugene Blake, the highest administrative official of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., for his inappropriate use of aggressive tactics concerning civil rights legislation during the group's annual General Assembly in 1964 (Adams, 1970).

Despite some concerns about the appropriate role of religious leaders and organizations in politics, a number of politicians recognized the vital contribution the religious lobby made toward the successful passage of the Civil Rights Act. Following the passage of the bill, Senator Hubert Humphrey stated in a speech on the Senate floor, "One of the most refreshing developments in recent years has been the courageous and outspoken position of the religious leaders and laymen of this nation on behalf of racial justice...Their support of the Civil Rights Bill has been acknowledged by both friend and foe of this legislation" (Adams, 1970, p. 34). Regardless of one's position on the

proper place of religious lobbyists and clergy in the legislative arena, recognition was emerging that religious groups played an integral part in the passage of the controversial legislation and the groups had the capacity to continue to exert influence on Congress.

The Vietnam War

As religious groups and organizations engaged in advocacy efforts around civil rights legislation, a number of the groups also became involved in anti-war efforts as tensions escalated in Vietnam. The United Methodist Church, not a traditional peace church, became one of the most active mainline Protestant denominations to commit significant resources and time to peace activities (Adams, 1970). Resolutions and position papers presented by the Bishops of the UMC and the Board of Christian Social Concerns contained both moral principles behind arguments against the war and specific recommendations for action. The UMC was joined at various times by 11 other denominations, the National Council of Churches, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, and other religiously-affiliated groups in efforts to stop the war. As with efforts to support civil rights legislation, these groups engaged in a number of similar strategies and tactics to accomplish their goal of peace. Adams (1970) notes, however, a shift in the focus of advocacy efforts during the period of the Vietnam War. Citing the efforts of the United Methodist Board of Christian Social Concerns, and particularly the director of disarmament education, Rev. Rodney Shaw, James contends that religious lobbyists began using the bureaucrats of the church hierarchy to pressure legislators for change rather than educating the masses and mobilizing them to act for change. Shaw had noted that mobilizing constituents to

contact Washington was a significant departure from the regular tasks of the church and required a level of knowledge about the war that most congregants did not have. At a Conference on Disarmament and World Peace in 1965, Shaw described how Methodist efforts were changing,

So we have discarded the idea that we have to involve massive numbers of people in order to do this task... We have begun to accept the principle Dr. Arnold Toynbee points out in his study of history – that the move from plateau to plateau of civilization has not come because the masses of people were informed, committed, and organized but because a small portion of the people were informed and committed to an idea for which the time was ripe. (Adams, 1970, p. 211)

This change in strategy among some religious lobbyists along with dissenting views among congregants regarding military action in Vietnam and disagreement among lobbyists about the best solution for the Vietnam problem, led to a coalition of lobbyists with less constituent support and internal agreement than had been experienced during the period leading up to the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Religious lobbyists were considered “generals without armies” (Adams, 1970, p. 244) and according to James, their widely differing arguments and resolutions were thus routinely dismissed in the formation of policy concerning Vietnam. For most mainline Protestant churches, this period in the 1960s produced “dividing lines between many mainline clergy and the moderate-to-conservative people in their pews” (Olson, 2002, p. 54).

The Religious Right

After the 1960s, religious lobbyists and activists became less visible on the Washington stage. Many groups maintained Washington offices and in fact by 1985

there were at least 80 religious lobbies in the Washington area (Hertzke, 1988). Their influence, however, was not as strong as it had been during the Civil Rights Movement. A new force, however, was growing in religion and politics. Soon to be labeled the *Religious Right*, this social movement comprised largely of Christian evangelicals and fundamentalists emphasized a return to “family values” and the political and religious values of founding fathers as interpreted by key movement leaders like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell. As noted in chapter 1, the Religious Right participated in the political arena with varying levels of success. The movement failed to elect a President in candidate Pat Robertson, but it began the mobilization of a number of conservative Christian voters. Religious interests used the reality of their large constituencies to limit abortion rights and to begin substantive changes in the social welfare system (Morone, 2004).

Contemporary Studies of Faith-based Lobbying

Historical documents and analysis note the role religious lobbies have played in national legislative politics and demonstrate how these efforts have varied in focus, intensity, and participation. The contemporary empirical knowledge base for the proposed inquiry is drawn from two primary disciplines, the interest group literature of political science and the social movement literature of sociology. Together they offer the most complete understanding of religious lobbying and religious lobbying organizations to date.

The National Legislative Arena

Hertze (1988) and Hofrenning (1995a) use the historical precedent of religious activism in the national legislative arena to introduce their contemporary examinations of religious lobbying organizations on Capitol Hill. The two political scientists are the seminal anchors for studies in religious lobbying. Hertzke's study, a phenomenological inquiry self-likened to the congressional interviews of Fenno (1973), grew from his dissertation. Hertzke sought to explore the subjective "meanings actors attach to their actions" (p. 210) along with objective "observable data on the actions of religious lobbyists" (p. 211). Hertzke conducted 35 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with representatives of 30 religiously-affiliated organizations engaged in legislative advocacy in the national arena (p. 209). The organizations represented a range of theological and political positions and were drawn from the following categories: Roman Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Peace Protestant, Evangelical, Fundamentalist, Jewish, Coalitions such as IMPACT, and other groups including Bread for the World and Unitarian Universalists.

Theoretically, Hertzke's (1988) study takes issue with a simplistic interpretation and application of Truman's (1951) pluralism that assumes any group can organize and mobilize in response to an economic or social disturbance in the system. Hertzke also takes exception, however, to mobilization-of-bias or elite theorists including Olson (1965), Schattschneider (1942), and Berry (1984) who note that the group interest system favors those already represented in the political process, "those organizations that represent few potential members (automobile manufacturers), can compel

membership (unions), or offer some selective benefit to members only (malpractice insurance)” (p. 8). Other groups, including the poor and minorities, succumb to Olson’s free-rider problem. Due to constraints, the least represented non-elite may not have time or financial resources to participate or contribute to group formation or maintenance from which they will benefit regardless of their participation; they become free-riders in a political group system that is “dominated by elite-based organizations for often narrow, particularistic interests” (p. 9). Hertzke contends that while non-elite groups face barriers to mobilization and participation, religious groups are successfully representing the non-elite in the national political process.

Hofrenning’s (1995a) mixed-method study built off of Hertzke’s (1988) study of the field of religious lobbying in Washington, but sought to identify common patterns among religious lobbyists and lobbying organizations and compare them to their secular counterparts. Hofrenning also conducted in-depth, but structured interviews with leaders of religiously affiliated lobbying organizations. In addition, he administered a survey at the conclusion of each interview to obtain information about organizational attributes and the political behavior of religious leaders. Hofrenning conducted his research with leaders of 32 religious organizations representing Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups across multiple theological and political positions.

Hofrenning (1995a), too, criticizes the inadequacies of the pluralist tradition to explain the behavior of faith-based lobbying organizations. He focuses, however, on the inability of the theoretical tradition to explain the strategic and tactical behavior of religious lobbyists and the internal conflicts they may face in entering the political

process. Hofrenning contends that pluralism's tactics of bargaining and compromise in an incremental political system do not account for the radical nature of groups, like religious groups, who by their nature focus on fundamental change. He cites Theodore Lowi (1964) whose concept of issue areas (regulatory, distributive, and redistributive) suggests the tactical direction of groups. Lowi (1988) revised his earlier concept to include radical groups whose presence in the political process polarizes debate. Citing Lowi (1988), Hofrenning(1995) notes that "political behavior is more ideological, more moral, more directly derived from fundamental values, more intense, less utilitarian, more polarized, and less prone to compromise" (p. 56) when these groups are a part of the process. Hofrenning advocates for a more nuanced theory that can incorporate the roles and behavior of religious interest groups who, in quest for fundamental change, alter the political process itself. A substantial portion of Hofrenning's study attempts to substantiate his theoretical position that religious groups, in general, are radical groups in the political process, particularly as they are compared to secular groups.

In an effort to understand the nuances of one aspect of the radical nature of religious groups, Hofrenning (1995a) also proposes a theoretical model that addresses the representation of members based on a revised exchange theory. In proposing his model that allows for both oligarchic and democratic decision-making, he critiques Michel's (1962) iron law of oligarchy that assumes that groups must initially be oligarchical in order for leaders to successfully leverage power with other powerful leaders. Michel's law holds that leaders are unwilling to relinquish this initial power once it has been wielded leading the organization away from democratic decision-

making processes that incorporate member opinion. Hofrenning also challenges Olson's (1965) concept of by-product lobbying that assumes that lobbying, or oligarchic action, is a secondary concern to members most concerned with selective benefits of group membership. Drawing from Salisbury (1969), Wilson (1973), and Clark and Wilson (1961), Hofrenning cites the role of purposive benefits in group decision-making. For organizations that offer primarily selective benefits (solidary or material), decision-making may proceed without inclusion of group input and opinion, but for organizations that primarily or also offer purposive benefits, however, member loyalty can not be "purchased" or exchanged for a material benefit. Fidelity to guiding principles is also important.

Hofrenning's (1995a) theoretical model allows for both democratic decision-making and oligarchical lobbying as it pays attention to member opinion and the prophetic and/or pragmatic motivations of religious lobbyists that, when in conflict, will trump member agreement and buy-in. Hofrenning's model suggests that the salience of the issue at hand can help leaders and lobbyists determine when they can exchange earned political capital and safely speak without jeopardizing their role within an organization. Hofrenning created the model below to explain when oligarchical decision making involved too much risk.

Table 2.1: Hofrenning's Decision-Making Model

	High Salience	Low Salience
Leader-Member Agreement	I – Democratic decision-making	II – Democratic decision-making
Leader-Member Disagreement	III – Risky Oligarchy	IV – Safe Oligarchy

As the model suggests, if there is leader-member agreement on focal issues, the group is engaging in democratic decision-making regardless of how important the issue is to the group. However, if there is leader-member disagreement on focal issues, leaders risk significantly alienating their members if they choose to act on an issue that is highly salient to the membership. The risk is less great, however, if the issue is of less overall importance to the membership.

Along with other political scientists and sociology of religion scholars, Hertzke (1988) and Hofrenning (1995a) offer a foundational but dated general sketch of religious lobbying on a national level. The literature describes the religious lobbying landscape, reviews the strategies and tactics used by national organizations, reviews the effectiveness and perceived effectiveness of religious lobbying, and discusses the concept of representation in religious lobbying and religious lobbying organizations.

The national landscape

A number of political scientists note the exponential increase or “explosion” of national interest groups since the late 1960s (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998, p. 100; Walker, 1991). Baumgartner and Leech cite the rapid growth of national groups in general as reported by the *Encyclopedia of Associations* and the growth of interest

representatives as noted in *Washington Representatives* as indicators of interest group growth. In 1959, there were fewer than 6000 groups, but by 1995, that number had increased to 23,000 (p. 102). The number of interest representatives in Washington increased from 4,000 in 1977 to 14,500 in 1991 (p. 102). Hertzke (1988) notes the increase of religious lobbying alongside the increase of interest groups in general. Of the 74 interest groups Weber (1982) studied, 66% were formed after 1961 and 81% were formed after 1941 (p. 101). This increase includes the liberal groups that formed during the 1960s and among other conservative groups that formed in the 1970s, the 12 groups formed in reaction to the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court Decision (Weber, 1982, p. 101). Despite the increase of religious interest groups and interest groups in general, religious groups represent only a small percentage of overall interest groups.

Baumgartner and Leech, using the *Encyclopedia of Associations*, report that 5% of all national associations are religiously-related (p. 103).

Business and trade interests also dwarf religious interests in terms of staff size and total budgets. Weber (1982) notes that across the political and theological spectra, religious lobbying organizations tend to have smaller staff than their business counterparts. Hofrenning (1995a) reports that no religious organization in Washington had a staff over 30 (p. 72) and of the 32 organizations included in his study, most had a staff size of ten or less (p. 73). Together, the organizations in the study had 273 staff, smaller than that of some corporate interest groups alone (p. 73). Hofrenning reports a similar trend with the budget sizes of religious interest groups in Washington. In total, the groups in his study had a budget of \$27 million. Only five of the groups had budgets

above \$2 million and most had budgets under \$500,000 (p. 73). The National Alliance of Business had an annual budget in 1981 of \$12.5 million (p. 75). Again, the largest religious lobbies are still smaller than most secular lobbies (Fowler, Hertzke & Olson, 1999). The financial support for religious lobbies is greatest among conservative groups, Jewish organizations, and Catholic groups who are able to draw from the support of their vast network of institutions. Mainline Protestant groups, however, have seen the size of their budgets decline with the decline in denominational membership (Fowler, Hertzke, & Olson).

While religious organizations in D.C. may be small in number, budget, and staff size, they are powerful because they potentially represent a large number of Americans. A significant percentage of religious lobbying organizations in Washington are national or lobbying offices of religious denominations, such as the United Methodist Church and the American Jewish Committee (also a representative of secular Jewish culture). Since a majority of Americans claim to be a member of a congregation, religious lobbyists and their organizations represent perhaps the “largest non-elite group in the nation” (Hofrenning, 1995, p. 71). In addition to denominational representation, religious membership groups – largely of conservative ideology and theology – also add significantly to the number of persons represented by religious lobbyists. Furthermore, while conservative religious groups have been less active than religious liberals in legislative matters, they represent a larger number of active members (Hofrenning, 2001).

Religious groups active in the nation's capital tend to be more often liberal than conservative (Hofrenning, 1995a), and represent a wide range of Christian religious traditions and theological positions (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning). Hofrenning noted eight, and possibly nine theological categories of religious lobbying groups in Washington: 1) Fundamentalist, 2) Evangelical, 3) Catholic, 4) Jewish, 5) Mainline Protestants, 6) Peace Protestants, 7) broader coalition, and 8) other including Association for Public Justice, Bread for the World, and Unitarian Universalists. He suggested an alternative category of 9) "nontraditional Evangelicals" to note divergence in the definition of evangelical and perhaps better describe the theological beliefs of some Catholic organizations and Mainline Protestant denominations. Aside from Judeo-Christian groups, other religious traditions are not frequently represented. In addition, most groups active in the nation's capital are not racially diverse. Table 2.1 delineates four categories of major religious groups as described by Fowler, Hertzke, and Olson (1999).

Table 2.2: Major Religious Lobbying Groups

Liberal Protestant Groups	Catholic Groups	Jewish Groups	Evangelical Protestant Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political arm of Mainline denominations ▪ National Council of Churches ▪ Pacifist/Peace Churches ▪ Membership groups such as Bread for the World ▪ Interfaith Alliance ▪ International relief agencies ▪ Church sponsored coalitions such as Washington Office on Africa ▪ Groups allied with major African-American denominations ▪ Church – state groups such as the Baptist Joint Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United States Catholic Conference ▪ NETWORK ▪ Pax Christi – quasi pacifist groups ▪ Jesuit Social Ministries ▪ Catholic Charities ▪ Campaign for Human Development ▪ Catholic League for Religious Civil Rights ▪ National Right to Life ▪ JustLife ▪ Membership groups such as Bread for the World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ American Jewish Committee ▪ Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith ▪ American Jewish Congress ▪ National political offices of major branches of Judaism ▪ America-Israeli Public Affairs Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moral Majority ▪ Organizations like the Christian Legal Society that work mostly through the judicial system but lobby on relevant issues ▪ The National Association of Evangelicals ▪ Political arm of evangelical denominations ▪ Single Issue groups ▪ Broad-based membership organizations

Despite the range of groups represented including some of non-Judeo Christian decent, Hofrenning (2001) notes that more Protestants are on Capitol Hill than any other religious group.

In addition to Judeo-Christian theological diversity, Hofrenning (1995a) noted the representation of liberal, moderate, and conservative political positions ranging from

social and economic liberals to social liberals and economic moderates (or vice-versa) to social and economic conservatives. A majority of the groups, however, are liberal either by self-definition or issue alignment or both. Nevertheless, in 2000, the Religious Right had several major religiously and politically conservative groups in Washington: The Family Research Council and FRC Action associated with James Dobson's Focus on the Family; Liberty Alliance and Christian Action Network associated with the former Moral Majority; Concerned Women of America and an associated lobbying affiliate; and the Traditional Values Coalition (Green & Bigelow, 2005).

The focus of faith-based lobbying groups is as varied as the theological and political positions they represent. Issues of interest range from concerns regarding individual morality to foreign policy, including issues such as abortion, gay marriage, the death penalty, the environment, and poverty. Using the common dichotomy of political and religious positions, Hofrenning (2001) found that conservative groups tended to focus on moral issues, "especially the injections to individual holiness and purity" (p. 124), while liberal groups tended to focus on economic justice at home and abroad and a related "less-militaristic" foreign policy (p. 125). Against empirical evidence among general interest groups, religious lobbies, particularly liberal groups, tend to focus on a number of issues instead of limiting the scope of their action (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995, 2001; Weber, 1982). Conservative religious lobbies are more likely to be found around single issues, such as abortion, than are religious lobbies (Weber). Similarities return, however, as regardless of the focal issue or issues,

religious lobbyists tend to seek fundamental change in legislation rather incremental improvements (Hofrenning, 1995).

Legislative change strategies and tactics

Religious lobbies tend to affect change by employing many of the strategies and tactics used by secular lobbyists and lobbying organizations. Political science typically distinguishes between *insider* and *outsider* strategies to describe interest group efforts to create legislative change (Gais & Walker, 1991). Within this dichotomous typology are a number of tactics. With some variation, religious lobbying organizations use both strategies and multiple tactics to influence Congress (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995a; O'Hara, 1989; Pagnucco, 1996; Weber, 1982) and state legislatures (Yamane 1998; Yamane, 2003).

An insider strategy is the strategy most frequently associated with professional lobbyists (Gais & Walker, 1991; Hertzke, 1988). This strategy entails developing relationships with political elites such as elected officials, congressional or legislative staff, and even White House or gubernatorial staff in order to become an “insider” in discussions pertaining to particular issues and related legislation. Gais & Walker describe an inside strategy as convincing

public officials to take some form of action or to modify an established policy by means of close consultation with political and administrative leaders, relying mainly on financial resources, substantive expertise, and concentration within congressional constituencies as a basis for influence. (p. 103)

Insider tactics traditionally include contributing to or writing the language of legislation, offering amendments, creating coalitions of organizational supporters to multiply

influence, negotiating with opponents, and regularly providing substantive information regarding an issue to legislators and legislative staff (Hertzke; Hofrenning, 2001).

Insider tactics frequently utilized by religious lobbies include meetings with legislators and staff to discuss issue positions (Hertzke 1988; Hofrenning, 1995a; Moody, 2002; O'Hara, 1989; Weber, 1982), providing expert testimony (Hertzke, 1988), and forming coalitions (Green & Bigelow, 2005; Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning).

Another insider tactic, often employed by liberal groups, is the use of elite constituents to contact legislative elites, sometimes called a key contact approach (Fowler, Hertzke, & Olson, 1999; Hertzke, 1988). A key contact is a “highly committed, politically sophisticated” (Fowler, et. al., p. 57) member of the religious lobbying group who either personally knows or is known by a legislator. Quoting Hyman Bookbinder, the former Washington lobbyist for the American Jewish Committee, Hertzke (1988) notes the use of this strategy, “The AJC represents the upper levels of Jewish society. It has people who are established, credible in their communities. They know their congressmen, have a strong sense of political efficacy” (p. 63). Hertzke also finds the use of clergy as key contacts. Regarding the U. S. Catholic Conference, a staff member stated, “Each of us maintains a key contact network... There is a Bishop’s Committee on Human Life Amendment. They will call up other bishops and have them call congressmen” (p. 63).

Coalition building, most often employed by more religiously liberal groups (Green & Bigelow, 2005; Hertzke, 1988) though utilized by all religious groups (Hofrenning 1995a), is an insider tactic combining the efforts of multiple groups to gain

access and affect legislative change. General interest group research shows that coalitions are a temporary alliance “among rational people or groups who are seeking to maximize gain” (Zwier, 1989, p. 172), usually economic gain. Zwier finds, however, that religious groups tend to join or form coalitions for other purposes – either process related or to secure favorable results in the public’s interest. Religious organizations will engage in political alliances even when no material benefits are available for themselves. Zwier suggests that religious groups join coalitions due to a lack of resources, both human and financial, required to create desired legislative change. The resource rationale is reported by a former staff member of NETWORK, “I don’t know that we’ve ever gone alone. The main reason we don’t go alone is that we don’t have the research staff, so we’re always dependent on other people” (Zwier, p. 174). Religious groups also join coalitions because coalition members share common values concerning the issue of legislative focus. Although most groups, regardless of theological or political identity, engage in coalition building at one time or another, some groups choose not to join coalitions on certain issues or begin legislative efforts without first creating or joining coalitions. The U. S. Catholic Conference, for example, is a vehicle for the Bishops’ positions on social, religious, and political issues and sometimes chooses first to be the voice of the Bishops (Zwier).

Green and Bigelow (2005) suggest that groups of the Religious Right were not as effective in coalition building due to their argumentative and sometimes contentious relationships with one another during the height of the movement in the 1980s (see also Moen, 1992). Despite this difficulty, lobbyists of the Religious Right still list the tactic

as a goal for achieving legislative success and some evidence points to the success of the conservative groups in this area since Republicans began dominating congressional politics in 1994. The Values Action Team caucus is a coalition of 36 members of Congress and 42 interest groups that meet weekly to discuss pending legislation. Organized by former House leader Tom Delay and including such religious organizations as the Family Research Council and Concerned Women of America, the coalition works to advance the goals of the Religious Right (Green & Bigelow).

In general, coalitions frequently bring together strange bedfellows as organizations join with other organizations that at first glance may have little in common, yet may actually share common ground on policy objectives. Describing the make-up of political coalitions, a lobbyist for the Religious Right states, “they are often made up of diverse characters – like the bar room scene in *Star Wars*” (p. 203). Or, as the oft-used saying goes, “there are no permanent friends or enemies...just shifting coalitions” (Fowler, Hertzke, & Olson, 1999, p. 60). The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 was supported by an “unusual coalition” where “Concerned Women for America joined the United Methodist Church, Catholics joined Baptists, and Evangelicals joined the American Civil Liberties Union” (Fowler, Hertzke, & Olson, p. 61)

Insider strategies are used by religious groups across the political and theological spectra. As referred to above, however, Hertzke (1988) and Weber’s (1982) studies suggest that insider tactics are most often employed by mainline Protestant lobbying groups (including denomination offices) and more liberal groups. Liberal

groups tend to testify more than conservative groups (Weber, 1982), tend to form more coalitions (Hertzke, 1988) and lobby legislators and legislative staff directly (Hertzke, Hofrenning, 1995). In total, however, religious lobbying organizations tend to use more outsider than insider strategies to meet their legislative objectives (Hofrenning, 1995a, 2001).

An outsider strategy is the strategy most often associated with labor and consumer groups, such as Ralph Nader's consumer rights group (Hofrenning, 1995a). Such a strategy attempts to exert pressure on the legislative process by non-legislative means, particularly by shaping and mobilizing public opinion (Gais & Walker, 1991). In religious lobbies, this strategy often involves the mobilization of group members and constituents to exert pressure on the legislative process. It can, however, also entail mobilizing constituents to affect electoral politics, using litigation to counter or support legislatively-enacted policies, or engaging in protest or "unruly" (Pagnucco, 1996) political activities. Hofrenning found that religious lobbies utilize outsider tactics more than their secular counterparts due to 1) an unwillingness to compromise on issues, and 2) a greater likelihood of criticizing the political establishment.

Outsider tactics require a group of persons, or constituents, outside the activist staff of the lobbying organization as a target of or for use in a range of tactics. Of religious groups lobbying in the nation's capital, different types of group constituents are represented. For the Washington offices of Mainline Protestant denominations, the constituents represented are members of congregations and/or their clergy (Hertzke, 1988). Similarly, Catholic organizations, such as NETWORK and the United States

Catholic Conference seek to mobilize local parish members. Jewish groups also seek to mobilize members of congregations although a number of Jewish organizations in D.C. also represent ethnic Judaism (Hertzke). Groups associated with the Religious Right, however, are largely dues-paying membership organizations (Hertzke; Hofrenning, 1995a). The Moral Majority of the 1980s and the Christian Coalition, along with Concerned Women of America have members throughout the nation who annually support(ed) the work of the organizations. Bread for the World is one of the few liberal religious groups supported by a dues-paying membership (Hertzke). Overall, outsider mobilization tactics tend to be used more effectively by conservative churches because of their large membership bases. While conservative and fundamental Christian churches seem to be succeeding in mass mobilization efforts, such outsider strategies are also the goal of more mainline congregations and progressive religious groups (Hertzke).

Mobilizing group members to contact their legislators routinely involves an educative component. Through letters to members, issue briefs, worship and congregation education guides, media outreach, policy alerts, and newsletters (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995; Moody, 1982; O'Hara, 1989), religious lobbyists and lobbying organizations provide information about issues and proposed or existing policies, proposed positions on issues and policies, and the relationship between religious belief and issues and policies. A number of religious lobbying groups describe education as their primary goal (Hertzke; Hofrenning; Moody) and engage in direct lobbying as a secondary emphasis.

Conservative religious advocacy groups utilized media more often than liberal groups to mobilize members and potential members (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995). Through Christian television and radio, religious activists are able to “multipl[y] their mobilization efforts” and as a lobbyist for Christian Voice stated, “...educate TV ministers, feed them information, legislative alerts to read in sermons” (Hertzke, p. 51). Such usage emerged with the rise of the Religious Right and is often given at least some credit for their ascendancy to political power (Frankl, 1987; Hadden, 1987; Johnson, 1986). Because of its access to a large number of constituents and potential constituents, Christian media has been linked in small part to the success of mobilizing constituents to change the political make-up of Congress in the 1994 mid-term elections (Green & Bigelow, 2005). Conservative religious groups also make use of existing networks to mobilize constituents for electoral purposes. This has included the use of church directories for outreach purposes. Hertzke notes that “the relative weakness of mainline Protestant denominations at the constituent end is illustrated by the small sizes of their own direct-mail lists” (p. 58). National religious groups associated with the Religious Right have made more effective use of media and existing networks (membership and congregational) to mobilize constituents for political action.

Some religious lobbying groups also participate in protest tactics (O’Hara, 1989), or as Pagnucco (1996) classifies them, “unruly” tactics that include boycotts and civil disobedience. Pagnucco found that among groups associated with the peace movement, religious organizations were significantly more like to take part in “unruly” activities to create change in the legislative and other arenas.

Religiously-related strategies

In addition to the outsider strategies and tactics widely considered as tools of interest groups, studies of religious lobbying suggest additional strategies that characterize the subgroup of interest group organizations. Hofrenning (1995a) points to the use of religious language as a symbolic strategy. Using the concepts of condensational and referential symbolism from Murray Edelman (1985), Hofrenning argues that religious lobbyist's use of language is an outsider tactic frequently employed to mobilize members and gain support. Unlike referential symbols that reduce or concretize the meaning of a symbol, condensational symbols "expand the scope of meaning, defining an issue in abstract, ambiguous, emotionally charged terms" (See Hofrenning, p. 138). In defining issues for their constituents and potential membership, religious lobbying organizations frequently use condensational language. Conservative groups refer to their anti-abortion efforts as "pro-life" or to gay marriage as a "threat to family and family values." Liberal groups, without as much success, have also attempted to employ this strategy using phrases such as "peace and justice" and "preferential option for the poor." Supporting his contention that religious lobbying organizations are a radical fringe of the lobbying world, Hofrenning finds that it is condensational symbolism and other outsider tactics that characterize religious lobbying organizations rather than referential symbolism and insider tactics.

Lobbying organizations from all parts of the theological and political spectrum tend to use less religious language in their direct lobbying efforts and conform to the language of the political process (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995a). As a lobbyist for

Concerned Women of America noted, “We are motivated by religious values, but don’t use the Bible to persuade. We guide our truth around their mental roadblocks. We speak to congressmen in terms that give respect to their goals and attitudes” (See Hertzke, p. 89). This representative continues by suggesting that they persuaded proponents of the ERA to vote against the amendment because of its interference in private action, not because of a New Testament passage that directs women to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5 and 6). Despite the use of political nomenclature in varying degrees across the theological spectrum of lobbyists and lobbyist organizations, some lobbyists, particularly in mainline Protestant lobbies wondered aloud if they should include more religious language in their efforts particularly as they considered the overt religiosity of Reagan’s advisors. As one United Methodist lobbyist stated, “...Reagan is being influenced by people who talk God language to him in a way we are not. I don’t want to be viewed as a politician. I don’t want to be viewed as a lobbyist. The church has a broader calling” (See Hertzke, p. 89).

Perhaps counter intuitively, Hofrenning (1995) finds this trend more frequently expressed by conservative lobbying organizations. As one conservative lobbyist stated, “We don’t use religious language because we don’t have to. When people live against the biblical values that God has instilled in his creation, there is a natural consequence that is bad for everyone...Our job is to make those consequences clear” (p. 141). Another conservative lobbyist cited the uncertain impact the use of religious language may have on the broader population they are trying to reach for support and mobilization. The use of religious language varied within liberal groups with some

groups citing caution due to potential alienation, others citing concern that its use may reduce the scope of meaning of their lobbying efforts, and others using some religious language in their efforts. Like Hertzke (1988), however, Hofrenning found that while religious organizations may use religious language in communications with their constituents, their public policy statements and efforts employed its use with caution if at all.

Hertzke (1988) calls this one of the most “dramatic” (p. 89-90) and significant findings of the interviews – the adoption of secular, pragmatic strategies by fundamentalist religious lobbyists and lobbying organizations. Despite the public and media perception and media persona of fundamentalist Christian groups radically opposed to secularism and sin, he found that these groups and their lobbyists often engaged in incremental strategies and some measure of compromise to affect change. Hertzke noted that this frequently was connected to the necessity of relationships with likeminded politicians who were constrained by the political process themselves. In contrast to the mainline lobbying organizations who concentrated their efforts on blocking legislation, fundamentalist organizations sought relationships with congressmen and senators to introduce legislation. In addition, the adoption of pragmatic strategies was due to the need to succeed in some manner in order to maintain financial and political constituent support. As a lobbyist from the Moral Majority stated, “In 1981, the Moral Majority went through a difficult period. We didn’t have victories and we needed victories for our membership” (p. 90). For some constituents, however, the choice to compromise on issues for partial victories did not

sit well. Lobbyists note the presence of tension between religious absolutes and political necessities, but cite the importance of using the pragmatic strategies to get to the victories that the constituents demand. Hertzke's finding is in tension with Hofrenning's conclusion that faith-based organizations avoid compromise because of their radical change nature.

Success and perceived success

Although political science literature considers general interest group influence to be somewhat marginal (Bauer, Poole & Dexter, 1963; Hanson, 1991; Rothenberg, 1992), religious political activist groups can count a number of successes throughout history including ending slavery, prohibiting alcohol, promoting civil rights legislation, changing Central American policy, influencing the outcome of the 1994 elections, and reducing access to abortion (Hofrenning, 1995a, 2001). Success has spanned organizations despite their theological and political differences. In addition to some of the successes listed above, Hertzke (1988) notes that within larger coalitions, moderate to liberal religious groups have successfully mobilized constituents on some peace and hunger issues. The Religious Right has also enjoyed some success in their mobilization efforts, although the right has experienced more electoral success than legislative success (Green & Bigelow, 2005).

Aside from these historical indicators of success, however, few empirical assessments of effectiveness exist. Hertzke (1988) found that while national religious lobbying organizations were "episodically effective in playing the insider game" (p. 70), their employment of insider strategies reveals weakness around the details of

insider politics. Yamane's (1998) state-level inquiry, discussed below, found that state legislators seek the counsel and input of religious lobbying organizations less than they seek that of their secular counterparts. Legislators actually seek the input of their constituents, other legislators, their legislative staff, their spouses/partners, and other lobbyists before seeking advice from religious lobbying groups. The weakness of religious lobbyists in legislative arenas is attributed to a number of factors including resource deficits, the amount of support legislators perceive religious groups have from their members and constituents, and their unwillingness to compromise (Hertzke; Hofrenning, 1995a).

Lobbyists and legislative staff members contend that it is the combination of insider strategies and outsider constituency support that lead to the success of interest group efforts to create legislative change, "Lobby success is based on 1) the clarity of the message, 2) the attractiveness of the message – is it internally cohesive? and 3) is it said with a groundswell of support?" (Hertzke, 1988, p. 47). The "groundswell of support," a potential strength of religious lobbying organizations, can become a weakness when legislators or legislative staff perceive a lack of support from a religious group's constituency or membership. If, as in the case of Mainline churches during the Vietnam War, lobbyists are considered to be acting in an oligarchical manner, the legitimacy of the lobbyists' efforts may be questioned or their arguments dismissed (Adams, 1970; Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995a).

The actions of religious lobbyists are constrained by the political environment in which they work, an environment which fosters "tactical pragmatism" (Hertzke, 1988,

p. 93). This pragmatism has also been noted on the state legislative level. Yamane (1998) notes that, “Religious groups do participate actively in the political system, though they do so very much on the political system’s own terms” (p. 148). The political environment, to a great extent, forces religious lobbying groups to play by the rules of the political game where radical change is rarely achieved and success is marked by compromise and incremental steps toward change. Such decisions, paradoxically may lead Washington insiders to view religious leaders as more politically savvy and effective, but as described by both Hertzke and Hofrenning, may alienate the member and constituent base that also contributes to the success of legislative change efforts.

Religious lobbying groups are caught in the double bind of needing to be effective and being required to successfully play the insider political game to be effective, but in playing the insider game being characterized as one who negotiates with opponents and compromises on the closely-held beliefs of constituents. In response to Jerry Falwell’s increasing involvement in the politics of compromise in the last decades of the 20th century, conservative columnist Cal Thomas and former Moral Majority staffer suggested that because the political costs of participating in the legislative arena were too great, the Religious Right should return its focus on issues of cultural significance and leave politics to the politicians (Green & Bigelow, 2005). As groups of the Religious Right began to demonstrate effectiveness in insider politics, they faced increasing criticism from group members and constituents regarding selling out, compromising their prophetic role (Hofrenning, 1995a).

As the example of the Moral Majority suggests, success for religious lobbyists and religious lobbying organizations is not measured by political standards alone. Success is also measured by faithfulness to religious convictions, “fidelity to their faith is the religious lobbyists measure of success” (Hofrenning, 1995a, p. 145). The religious lobbyists’ self-perceptions of success reveal a similar assessment of weakness on the part of religious lobbies, particularly as they are compared to stronger secular lobbying counterparts. Paralleling research regarding secular organizations that use outsider tactics, Hoffrenning found that an overwhelming majority of the religious lobbyists he interviewed (87%) perceived themselves as weaker than their secular opponents (p. 143). Religious lobbyists admitted the uphill battle they faced to achieve their immediate legislative goals, but overwhelmingly expressed that faithfulness to the larger goal and the principles associated with it was a better measure of effectiveness for their work. As one lobbyist stated, “I measure our performance and our effectiveness on different categories. We ask different questions. We ask how faithful we are to our mission” (p. 145).

Representation

Closely related to the effectiveness of lobbying efforts is the concept of representation. A strength of religious lobbying, as reported by legislators, legislative staff, and religious lobbyists, is the members they potentially represent. Except for the case of the rise of the Religious Right in the 1980s, however, religious lobbyists, particularly those associated with Mainline Protestant denominational offices, have been considered less representative of a large religious base and more representative of

their own convictions and that of religious elites. This charge was first leveled at religious lobbyists through journalist James Adams' (1970) observation that in matters from Civil Rights to the Vietnam War, lobbyists and religious leaders often acted as "generals without armies" (p. 244), disregarding majority member opinions for strongly held convictions.

Hertzke (1988) and Hofrenning (1995a) challenge the "simplistic" characterization that religious lobbyists and church leaders were politically active on issues that were unrepresentative of member opinion. According to Hertzke, representation is "central to questions of organizational identity, purpose, and claims of legitimacy" (p. 99) by religious lobbyists. Drawing from the work of Pitkin (1969) who recognizes the formal, descriptive, and symbolic forms of representation, Hertzke describes four types of representation present in his study among religious lobbying organizations. The first type of representation Hertzke suggests is constituent or member representation, like that in other interest groups. In addition, he proposes three other types of representation unique to religious lobbying including the representation of church institutions, the representation of theological or biblical values, and the representation of world constituencies. These forms of representation necessarily complicate the singular notion of representing member interest.

Hertzke (1988) explores the multiple meanings of representation for religious lobbyists in the nation's capital by examining the issues on which they engage. His qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that representation of religious constituents by their elites both reflect and diverge from the position of their constituents, depending

on the issue at hand. With the exception of Jewish groups who, according to Hertzke's study, display more consistent agreement on the issues, ideological consistencies and inconsistencies between constituents and leaders characterize denominational groups in Washington. Direct-mail or membership groups, however, like Bread for the World and Concerned Women of America, reflect a much higher degree of congruence with member opinion. Hertzke links this congruence with the grassroots nature of these organizations and the dependence on members, not institutions for primary funding. The overall picture of representation of religious constituents, however, is one of complexity within the universe of religious lobbying organizations and the organizations themselves. For Hertzke, the complex representation confirms the assumptions of a less naïve pluralism that suggests that citizens, the non-elite, are represented in Washington by the presence and complexity of these organizations. "What makes it representation is not any single action by any one participant but the overall structure and functioning of the system, the patterns emerging from the multiple activities of many people" (Hertzke, p. 154).

Reflecting Hertzke's (1988) theme of representation, Hofrenning (1995a) finds the common mix of oligarchy and democracy in most religious interest groups; instances where leaders/lobbyists act alone without wide scale member agreement and instances where leader actions reflect the general tenor of constituents. Religious lobbyists state the importance of membership representation and work toward educating constituents on pertinent policy issues, but they also cite a motivation to lobby without the stated consensus of group members. Hofrenning's data draws a "portrait of a

religious lobbyist who may be sensitive to member opinion but is also driven by a number of other goals. These goals include faithfulness to the tradition of faith and theology, political efficacy, and organizational survival” (p. 159). Balancing these goals prevents either absolute oligarchy or democracy in religious lobbying organizations. For example, in Hofrenning’s study, Mainline Protestant groups cited their lobbying priorities for the 100th (1987-1988) Congress as opposition to contra aid, support for South African sanctions, support for the Civil Rights Restoration Act, and opposition to spending cuts on programs for the poor. Leaders and members of Mainline Protestant groups disagreed on welfare reform measures, but members did not consider it highly salient, and leaders proceeded to make it a lobbying priority for the year. In contrast, leader’s opposition to defense policies (excluding contra aid) was not pursued because members disagreed with leader positions and the issues was considered important by the membership. Hofrenning’s findings suggest that on highly-salient issues where there is not leader-member agreement, lobbying is not likely to happen. Hofrenning applied his theoretical model to a number of religious lobbying groups including fundamentalist Christians, Mainline Protestants, and Roman Catholics each of which experience leader-member disagreement on varying issues. Hofrenning found that the above model did not describe the internal relationships within Jewish organizations where there was not extensive leader member disagreement on most issues.

Hofrenning (1995a) also notes, like Hertzke (1988), that lobbyists and lobbying organizations from both ends of the theological spectrum consider themselves as advocates and representatives for morality and critics of elitism. Again, the focus of

morality and elitism differs among the religious lobbying organizations.

Fundamentalist and conservative groups consider the secular elite the primary threat to the traditional family values that guard morality while more liberal organizations fight against the wealthy elite and a moral vision that leaves marginalized groups unrepresented and without care. Religious lobbying organizations are engaged in a “prophetic battle” against elites and “see themselves as representatives of a nonelite constituency” (Hofrenning, p. 98), a constituency with nearly unparalleled growth potential. Religious lobbying organizations also share a “perception that there are elite secular forces, fundamentally antithetical to the religious message that must be challenged” (Hertzke, 1998, p. 205). For conservative groups, the elite are those that promote a secular lifestyle with a permissive morality characterized by the legalization of abortion. For liberal groups, however, the elite are the secular forces of materialism and militarism that frequently create victims among the less fortunate.

According to Hertzke (1988), religious lobbyists share a concern for the moral content of public policy. He notes this shared concern as an important aspect of representation that religious lobbying brings to the American political system. Religious organizations, he contends, bring an “articulation of competing visions of the caring community, which are refreshingly distinct from ideas of interest as commonly understood” (p. 200). The focus of moral concern among the groups, however, varies significantly. Conservative groups believe that public policies should help create a moral society by supporting “traditional values, a phrase which connotes a defense of the traditional family, orthodox religion, patriotism, and Puritan morality” (p. 32).

Liberal groups, in contrast, believe that public policies should protect and enable the less fortunate. Representation of both of these perspectives characterizes faith-based legislative advocacy in Washington.

The Local Legislative Arena

In addition to the literature of faith-based organizations engaged in lobbying in the nation's capital, the proposed study is also informed by the empirical literature on political activism that occurs on local levels through faith-based community organizing (FBCO). FBCO, known also as congregation-based community organizing and broad-based organizing, is a form of grassroots mobilization for local political change (and increasingly regional, state, and national change) based in large part on the organizing principles of Saul Alinsky and the Industrial Areas Foundations (IAF) (Hart, 2001; Warren & Wood, 2001). The principle of self-interest particularly guides FBCO as it situates organizing in a context where those advocating for change are advocating for changes that will directly affect them. The 133 FBCO organizations (Hart, 2001, p. 231) throughout the U.S. generally belong to one of four organizing networks – IAF, Direct Action and Research Training Center (DART), the Gamaliel Foundation, and Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO). FBCO organizations are generally comprised of member institutions and include mainly congregations (87%), although non-sectarian institutions like schools and labor unions are also members of the organizations (Warren & Wood, Executive Summary, ¶ 6).

Like the faith-based groups that engage in legislative advocacy on national and state levels, FBCO organizations tend to be smaller in staff size and have fewer

financial resources than other groups that engage in local advocacy. The number of member institutions within FBCO organizations is significant, however, with 50% of the organizations having 20 to 40 member institutions and 11% having 41 to 69 member institutions (Warren & Wood, 2001, Main Report, Section 3, ¶7). From these members institutions, each FBCO organization engages, on average, 178 leaders (clergy and lay leaders) to participate in organizing efforts (¶8). Nearly 24,000 leaders participate in advocacy actions across the country at any one time. Through the participation of member institutions and leaders within the institutions, FBCO reaches between 1 to 3 million people (Section 3, ¶2). This constituent access and non-elite representation provides organizational strength beyond the number of paid staff and the size of organizational budgets.

Like a number of national faith-based lobbying organizations, FBCO organizations focus on multiple issues, although the focal issues are more specific to the local context, even to a neighborhood. FBCO organizations typically engage in public schooling, economic, safety, and housing issues (Warren & Wood, 2001). Other issues include health care, race relations, the environment, and social services. While FBCO organizations are typically created to address issues on a local level from a neighborhood to a metropolitan area, increasingly FBCO organizations are collaborating to further address issues regionally and at the state level. Such engagement is undertaken to allow for the accomplishment of organizing goals on the local level. A respondent in Warren and Wood's (2001) survey of FBCO organizations cited the "need to develop the ability to act regionally and on a state-wide level in order

to address metropolitan wide issues and to impact policy and legislation which can only be changed on the statewide level” (Executive Summary, Section 12, ¶1). Collaborating to influence policy at higher levels of government is typically accomplished through existing network relationships (i.e., organizations within the IAF network, the DART network, etc.). State level efforts have occurred in Texas, California, Louisiana, Arizona, Maryland, Florida, Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Colorado (Warren & Wood; Wood, 2002). The “PICO California Project” and the Texas IAF are examples of state level collaboration and activism that resulted in increased resources for public schools and healthcare (Warren & Wood; Wood, 2003; Wood, 2002). Warren and Wood suggest a trend within FBCO to engage in more statewide efforts and even develop cross network collaborations to engage in issues on state and national levels.

Relevant to the proposed study, Wood (1999, 2001, 2002) and Hart (2001) explore the political cultures of FBCO organizations and the cultural strategies the organizations use to engage persons in local politics – for the authors, a demonstration of democratic participation. Wood contends that the political culture of organizing groups has been neglected in examinations of political organizing. He found that political/organizational culture, as shaped by religious culture, creates a cultural strategy, or “a more-or-less conscious decision to construct an organizational political culture by drawing cultural elements from a particular segment of their potential participants’ social terrain” (p. 310). Drawing from social movement literature, Wood (1999) notes three challenges that face “challenger groups” trying to sustain their efforts, including the necessity to, “1) maintain stability along two dimensions:

organizational continuity and continuity of individual involvement....2) accurately interpret their complex political environments....3) act effectively in the public realm” (pp. 313-314). Using case studies from three FBCO organizations and a multi-racial organizing group, Wood examined the qualities of the focal organizations that allowed them to meet the challenges before them with varying degrees of success. He found that organizations with the highest political capacity – or the ability to engage successfully – had a political culture consisting of a “high intensity” of shared cultural elements, a high capacity for ambiguity, and sufficient resources for contestation and compromise. Quick to caution the direct correspondence of political culture with political outcomes, Wood contends that “the content of an organization’s culture” – including the content of religious culture – “matters greatly for political action, but in subtle ways” either enabling or constraining forms of political organizing (p. 327). In the FBCO organizations studied by Wood, religious culture mattered “because it is taken seriously by large numbers of people – and thus orients their lives either toward or away from political engagement...” (p. 329).

Hart (2001) observed the political culture of three organizations: The Cincinnati Area Coalition against U.S. Intervention, a local group opposing the Gulf War; Citizens for Community Values (CCV), a local group promoting “Judeo-Christian values”; and, Milwaukee Innercity Congregations Allied for Hope (MICA), a local FBCO organization affiliated with the Gamaliel foundation. He focused on the two progressive organizations – the anti-war group and MICA. Hart recognized that political discourse within each organization could be either *expansive* and full of moral references and

commitment or *constrained* and “cool in tone” and solely focused on goals (or some combination of both). Expansiveness and constraint operated, according to his study, on three dimensions: 1) Temperature, or the tone of debate ranging from “cool” and instrumental to “moral” and universal; 2) Issue Links, or the relationship of issues to one another and the overall vision of the organization or visions in society; and, 3) Civil-Societal Links, or the relationship between political ideas and “the general purpose cultural traditions to which people are attached in their daily lives” (p. 115), such as religion. Hart juxtaposed the anti-war group, which he labeled constrained, and MICAH, which he labeled expansive. He found that the constrained group was unable to use cultural elements such as religious beliefs about war to create a common culture because rationale for opposition to the war was deemed a private matter not to be explored internally or projected externally. The group remained “coolly” focused on their goals and did not make connections among issues and larger visions. In contrast, members of MICAH made connections with their religious culture through organizational meetings with prayer, references to ethical values, and member stories. Group action, however, was “cool and instrumental” rather than “passionate and moralistic” (p. 110). Issues and the linking of issues with larger moral and social visions were routinely explored, although discourse was constrained around topics that would be divisive to the group, such as abortion. Although MICAH incorporated some constraints, in general it engaged in expansive political discourse. The constrained or expansive discourse of an organization is an aspect of its political culture that affects

both internal and external activities including member mobilization, collaboration, and political action.

Wood (1999, 2002) and Hart's (2001) research on FBCO organizations addresses a gap not directly considered by research on faith-based organizations that engage in legislative advocacy in state and national contexts. Hertzke's (1988) findings regarding representation, Hofrenning's connection between the salience of issues and member opinion, and Yamane's (1998, 2003) three solutions to the tensions between prophetic voice and political realities speak to an organization's political culture and the way that culture affects the roles and relationships engaged in by the organization.

The State Legislative Arena

Yamane (1998, 2003) is the principal contributor to the empirical knowledge base of faith-based organizations that engage in legislative advocacy on a state level, the focal organizations of this study. His state-level study of Wisconsin examines the tension between prophetic tendencies and political realities. His studies tested a neo-secularization theory that purports a double movement in secularization: the "decline in the scope of religious authority" (1998, p. 29) due to institutional differentiation and the increased involvement of religious authorities alongside secular authorities. He criticizes simplistic interpretations of secularization theory that assume decline, increasing irrelevance, and eventual supplanting of religion in society, while recognizing the pluralistic affect of modernity on religion. According to Yamane, the second moment of secularization "captures the re-emergence of religious organizations in the political sphere, but under secular conditions established in the first moment"

(1998, p. 38). Yamane tests this second moment of neo-secularization theory by examining the participation of religious lobbying organizations in the Wisconsin state legislature, the effect of their participation on public policy, and the degree to which the secular political context constrains the action of the religious groups. Yamane (1998) uses a mixed methods design to test the second moment of neo-secularization theory. He explores the extent and effect of the participation of religiously-affiliated groups through a survey of 131 Wisconsin legislators (62% response rate) and by analysis of roll-call voting patterns on three issues – abortion, capital punishment, and welfare reform. Yamane studies the constraints of the secular political process on religious lobbying groups by analyzing their testimony on abortion and capital punishment in the 1997-1998 legislature and capital punishment and welfare reform in the 1995-1996 legislature. He further explores the constraints of the political system by conducting semi-structured interviews with 20 religious advocates.

Like Hertzke (1988) and Hofrenning (1995a) on the national level, Yamane (1998) finds that religious groups are active on the state level. In his survey of Wisconsin legislators, Yamane found that on the topic of abortion, two of the four top groups contacting the legislators were religiously affiliated. Two of the five top groups contacting legislators on issues of capital punishment and welfare reform were associated with a religious organization. Further, 40% of the top 15 groups contacting legislators on capital punishment were religious and one-third of the top 15 groups contacting legislators on abortion were religious. Yamane found, however, that religious groups were not sought out as much by legislators for advice or comment as

were secular groups. In abortion, capital punishment, and welfare reform, legislators first sought the input of non-religious groups. In addition, Yamane found that when asked to rank in importance who they would seek for advice, religious leaders were ranked seventh out of seven behind other lobbyists and spouses, partners, or significant others. Religious groups were contacted, however, as legislators indicated that 26% of their top contacts regarding abortion and 13% of their top contacts regarding capital punishment were directed toward religious groups.

Despite high rates of personal religiosity (over 70% of legislators claimed to attend religious services at least several times a month and 61% claim that religion is very important), legislators did not uniformly engage with faith-based advocacy groups. The findings suggest a complex political context. Older legislators reported less contact with religious organizations. Legislators with higher education had more contact with religious organizations, particularly liberal and Catholic organizations. Democrats were less likely to give access to religious groups than Republicans, but Republicans were likely to grant access to conservative religious groups, not liberal or Catholic groups. Yamane concludes, to some extent, that legislator religiosity influences the access granted to religious groups, particularly conservative religious groups.

When Yamane (1998) explored the causal influence of religion, both individual (legislator's religiosity) and organizational (religious organizations), he found an equally complex context. In general, personal religiosity was influential in general roll call voting, but organizational religion (measured by religious organization's contacts with legislators) was less so. A distinct, albeit moderate, influence of personal and

organizational conservatism, however, predicted conservatism in voting. Contacts by conservative religious organizations significantly predicted general voting. On the issue of abortion, the personal religiosity of legislators had no significant influence on legislative voting. And while among personal religious factors and organizational religious factors, the influence of conservative religious organizations significantly affected how legislators voted on abortion, the effect was lost when religious and secular factors were considered in the same model. On the issue of welfare reform, legislator religiosity significantly predicted support for the legislation. Yamane concludes that these findings “empirically document the significant influence of conservative religious organizations on legislative decision-making which others have noted, lamented, or championed” (p. 110).

Yamane’s (1998) study also documents the contention made by both Hertzke (1988) and Hofrenning (1995a) that religious organizations participate in legislative advocacy, but to some extent, must conform to the secular political process in order to succeed. Through examination of testimony by religious groups, Yamane found that religious groups were as likely to use secular “legitimations” to support policy positions as they were to use religious arguments in justifying positions. Again, Yamane found a complex context. Denominationally based religious groups were more likely to use religious arguments than paradenominational groups to support their policy positions. Both liberal and conservative paradenominational groups are less likely to use religious legitimations to support positions than were liberal and conservative denominational groups. Yamane’s data did not support his hypothesis that conservative groups would

more likely use religious arguments to justify their positions than liberal groups, but showed the opposite, supporting Hertzke's (1988) finding that conservative groups were more likely to use secular arguments to support their positions.

Why and when religious groups use secular and/or religious legitimations depends in large part on the manner in which they cope with the tension between their prophetic role that speaks to the morality of a certain policy and the political demands of the legislative context. Drawing from data from his previous study, Yamane (2003) describes three ways organization address the tension between the demands of religion and the realities of politics. First, organizations may adopt a *prophetic solution* choosing to retain their prophetic voice and not engage fully in the political process in order to protect their prophetic voice. In Yamane's study, the Wisconsin Council of Churches took this position as did Coming Out, Coming Together, a coalition of churches affirming lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and opposing a marriage amendment act that would define marriage as between one man and one woman. Rev. Wolfe, a United Church of Christ minister involved in the coalition stated,

I think it is important that my testimony use the perspective from which I come. I'm not a politician. I'm not a sociologist. I'm not a biologist. I'm a clergy person, a Christian clergy person, and that is my area of expertise. And therefore it is from that perspective that I offer a few points on this legislation. (p. 11)

Second, some organizations adopt a *political solution* to cope with tensions between religion and politics. In a political solution, religion is subsumed under politics and religious organizations adopt secular strategies to achieve legislative victories.

Wisconsin Right-To-Life, Pro-Life Wisconsin, and Christian Family Research Institute

each use the prophetic solution. As the director of Christian Family Research Institute stated, “I’m not ashamed of anything in the Bible. I come from a very strong Christian background, but I find that in the public policy arena, that isn’t the argument that is most effective” (p. 13). The third solution Yamane documents in his data is a *negotiated solution*. Finding this tension reflected in the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the solution incorporates both prophetic and political stances to negotiate the tension between religion and politics. In some cases, the WCC chooses to take a prophetic stand, in others, the organization compromises and chooses to make incremental progress toward its goals. With no clear resolution, the WCC always maintains a tension, “an ongoing struggle to balance the competing demands of a prophetic outlook and the realities of the policy-making process...political advocacy is not a matter of choosing to be ‘either/or’ but of being simultaneously ‘both/and’” (p. 20).

Larson, Madland, & Wilcox (2006) emphasize this tension and the particular aspects of the legislative context that combine to limit the amount, intensity, and nature of religious lobbying in Virginia. According to the authors, the potential effectiveness of these advocates is limited by a brief legislative session that keeps legislators too busy for most direct lobbying efforts. In addition, legislative districts whose boundaries were redrawn to protect Republican incumbents lessen the potential electoral impact of the grassroots. As home to the Religious Right and a growing liberal leaning population in the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., the authors note significant cultural cleavages in the Virginia political context that can create religiously motivated contests in the legislature. Nevertheless, “the electoral and governing institutions combine to

quiet that conflict and to provide only limited opportunities for religious groups to exercise their prophetic voice” (p. 70).

Regardless of this scenario, Larson, Madland, & Wilcox (2006) note a few groups that participate in religious lobbying in Virginia. From the Religious Right, the authors note four organizations that participate in legislative advocacy, one coalition that meets throughout session, and several churches that get involved on specific issues. Three of the four groups are affiliated with a national religious body. The agenda of the Religious Right organizations and lobbyists centers around anti-abortion, homosexuality, school choice, and religious liberty issues. The religious left, according to the authors, work primarily through the auspices of one interfaith organization. Some denominations and religious bodies have part-time staff for advocacy purposes, but most rely on the efforts of the interfaith group for their legislative presence. Most groups on the religious left are concerned with issues concerning social and economic justice (including poverty and the abolition of the death penalty) and the separation of church and state. The study also notes the presence of Catholics in the state that coalesce with conservative groups on abortion, homosexuality, and school choice issues and with liberal religious groups on poverty issues. Beyond the religious right, left, and Catholic participation, the authors find that few African American churches take part in lobbying apart from some joint efforts on poverty with the interfaith group. Despite this activity, Larson, Madland, & Wilcox (2006) contend that there is little religious lobbying in Virginia because the political context serves to “quiet prophetic voices” (p. 55).

Despite this bleak appraisal of religious legislative activity in Virginia, den Dulk and Hertzke (2006) suggest that “religious advocacy is alive and active at the statehouses” (p. 225). In their summative commentary on several articles on religious advocacy in the states (including the Larson et al. study), they indicate that, in the states examined, religious advocates operate out of a “sense of sacred mandate,” represent values that transcend professional lobbies, and eschew the tactics of “influence peddling” relying instead on grassroots mobilization, moral arguments, and coalitions for their influence in the state legislatures.

Limitations

From national and local contexts to the focal state context, empirical literature on faith-based organizations engaged in legislative and political advocacy provides a valuable, but limited description of the organizations, their activities and context. Existing literature provides a helpful description of *who* participates in legislative advocacy in the national arena, *what* issues the organizations embrace, and *what* strategies and tactics they use to address the issues. The contemporary research also confirms historical record noting the regular participation of these groups in the political process. Less is known, however, about the *meaning* of these organizations and their activities and how the meaning created and employed by various organizational actors interacts within the political process. Existing studies begin to provide this type of information in the exploration of success and perceptions of success, representation (Hertzke, 1988), decision-making (Hofrenning, 1995a), and the constraints of the

political process on the prophetic actions of religious groups (Yamane, 1998, 2003).

The initial findings and conclusions, while illustrative, are limited.

The limitations of the existing literature are at least three-fold. First, as noted a number of times in this and the previous chapter, the studies are few in number. The three primary studies in the area of religious lobbying (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995a; and Yamane, 1998), along with a few smaller scale projects (Green & Bigelow, 2005; Hofrenning, 2001; Moody, 2002; O'Hara, 1989; Pagnucco, 1996; Weber, 1982), only begin to address the complexity of religious lobbying in any legislative context. Considering the studies of faith-based community organizing (Hart, 2001; Warren and Wood, 2001; Wood, 2003) alongside contributions focused solely on faith-based lobbying may provide a preliminary glimpse into the role of religion in the political culture of religious organizations engaged in politics. Second, the principal contributions to the literature are dated. Meaning is rooted in context and the context of these organizations and the political environments in which their work has changed since the primary studies of Hertzke and Hofrenning. Aside from Green and Bigelow (2005), existing studies occur prior to the recent resurgence of religion in politics as marked by the White House FBCBI and the religious tenor of presidential and mid-term elections. These events have implications for national and state legislative contexts. The third limitation, theoretical constraints, provides direction for the proposed study.

Theoretical Considerations

The studies that comprise the literature base of faith related lobbying organizations are limited by their theoretical perspectives, which have a role in

constraining the number of studies conducted and in determining the direction and findings of the studies attempted. Theoretical and methodological realities within the fields of sociology and political science contribute to the under-exploration of faith-based legislative advocacy. Smith (1996) attributes the lack of attention to religious activism in sociology, particularly social movement scholarship, to a number of factors. First, the prominent role of secularization theory within sociology, especially the sociology of religion, implicitly suggests that scholarship parallels the increasing marginality of religion as a factor in social movements. Simplistic interpretations of secularization, as Yamane (1998) has noted, assume the eventual irrelevance of religion and research in the area of social movements has followed this logic and assumed the relative lack of importance of religious groups and movements. Second, the lasting theoretical prevalence of structural functionalism continues to define religion in terms of its function to provide order and maintain the status quo. Such interpretation implicitly suggests the lack of other religious functions, such as groups, organizations, and movements that challenge the status quo. Third, anticipating the critique of Andrews and Edwards (2004), religion is neglected in social movement literature due to “the fragmented nature of contemporary academic inquiry” (Smith, 1996, p. 3) that creates silos within and among academic disciplines and prevents scientific maturity (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998). Fourth, the shift in social movement theory from an “irrational and emotional” emphasis in classical theories of social movements to a “rational, strategically calculating, politically instrumental” emphasis of more modern social movement theories (p. 3) may unwittingly dismiss religion which is often

associated with irrationality. Finally, aside from the civil rights movement, religious groups and influence are only marginal aspects of the movements on which the newer social movement theory and literature are based (i.e., the environmental movement, the global civil society movement). Smith's (1996) observations illustrate the role of theory in constraining the investigation of religion within sociology and may offer additional insight into other related academic disciplines that have not yet valued the study of religious groups in the political process.

Theoretical and methodological observations by political scientists may further describe the lack of attention on religiously-affiliated groups who engage in legislative advocacy. Cigler (1994) suggests that if interest-group studies are divided into two parts, demand aggregation and group impact, most empirical emphasis has been placed on demand aggregation, or how groups mobilize, relate to their members, and sustain themselves financially. Cigler notes that incentive theory, including the contributions of Olson (1965), Salisbury (1969), and Wilson (1973), "represents some of the most analytically and theoretically elegant scholarly work in all of political science (Cigler, 1994, p. 32; see also Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Lowery & Gray, 2004). Incentive theory expanded from its original emphasis on material benefits to include the examination of solidary and purposive benefits in membership interest organizations (Clark & Wilson, 1961; Salisbury, 1969; Leighley, 1996; Wilson, 1973). This expanded emphasis is more appropriate for religious organizations; however, the overall emphasis on demand aggregation minimizes attention on religious interests in the political process because the groups are such a small percentage of overall interests. Hertzke

(1988) and Hofrenning (1995a) address demand aggregation in their national level studies through their exploration of representation of members and decision-making in relation to member-leader agreement, respectively.

Lowery and Gray (2004) review interest group literature and categorize it in three phases: 1) early pluralist theory; 2) economic theories, or theories that focus on transactions; and, 3) a neopluralist perspective that offers a systems level theoretical structure to guide and cohere inquiry. The neopluralist perspective they champion distinguishes itself from the earlier pluralist perspective that naively assumed that the population of interests groups “validly reflect[ed] the distribution of salient interests in society” (p. 165) and thus supports democratic governance. It also distances itself from the economic theories now, and for some time, prevalent in interest group literature.

These economic perspectives focus on

transactions between interest organizations and their members and public officials. Exchanges of selective incentives for participation and exchanges of political support, or resources that can be translated into political support, for policy lies at the heart of the most recent research on interest representation. (p. 165)

The emphasis on transactions directs scholarly attention to the mobilization of group members through incentives and the difficulty in maintaining memberships that do not succumb to the free-rider problem. Lowery and Gray suggest that these issues of mobilization are a problem for a “small, if shrinking, portion of the interest community” (p. 165) and suggest that neopluralism is a broader perspective that focuses on the overall population of the interests.

Neopluralism, according to Lowery and Gray (2004), draws from population ecology and despite the many models it encompasses, including the energy-stability-area (ESA) model, the punctuated equilibrium model, and the hollow core model, it is characterized by six shared foci. The perspective is 1) concerned with a broader scope of analysis than economic/micro perspectives; 2) is focused more on competition among interests than the earlier form of pluralism; 3) is focused on variation within the interest population; 4) is concerned with the uncertainty within the interest population; 5) is focused on the “*linkages* between the stages of the influence production process” (p. 170), instead of on one aspect of it such as mobilization; and 6), is concerned with the feedback provided during the stages of the production process instead of a simplistic linearity. Lowery and Gray contend that from a neopluralist perspective, information is best gleaned through large *n* studies that are able to capture a large picture of the contextual variables at play in interest group politics and influence. Again, religious interests, dwarfed by their business and trade counterparts, are only a small percentage of the overall interest population and may thus be overlooked in even this newest theoretical trajectory in interest group studies.

As described above through examples in sociology and political science, prominent theoretical frames may prematurely limit inquiry on these legislatively active faith-based organizations. In addition, the theoretical perspectives that dominate the arena also shape the direction and findings of those studies that do attempt to examine religious organizations. This is particularly true within the interest group literature of political science. The research that has been conducted on faith-based organizations is

reflective of the theoretical milieu discussed above. Hertzke (1988) and Hofrenning's (1995a) studies were conducted during a period of increased emphasis on demand aggregation. Although both Hertzke and Hofrenning contend through their studies that a revised pluralism offers explanatory value for religious interests, their studies mainly focus on issues related to members – representation and organizational decision-making – in a market, or a transaction dominated setting. Both scholars, however, seek additional frameworks to explain that which early pluralist theory did not do. Hofrenning focuses on strategies and tactics of political engagement and member engagement with focal issues based on a complex interpretation exchange theory to address the limitations of pluralism in defining why groups choose to use certain strategies and tactics. Hertzke focuses on representation and Pritkin's theory of representation to explain details within the population of religious interests. He uses this interpretive, phenomenological aspect of his study to substantiate, to some degree, a pluralist perspective by contending that religious organizations bring the non-elite into the political process. Each study provides instructive findings and hints at *meaning* within their contexts, but is constrained by theoretical choices.

A primary theoretical constraint shared by most studies in this area is the emphasis on the transaction-oriented nature of an organization and its activities. Individuals engage with religious organizations to gain some material, solidary, or purposive benefit. Organizations, strengthened by their engaged members, act within the political marketplace to gain political capital, defined in various ways (i.e., access to legislators, policy change, policy protection, etc.). While the studies explore the

seemingly non-economic – the meaning of representation (Hertzke, 1988), the complexity of their decision-making (Hofrenning, 1995a), and the constraints of a secular environment on prophetic action (Yamane, 1998) – they nevertheless begin from an assumption of market rationality. This market perspective is not uncommon in the study of organizations in politics. Stone (2002) notes that “electoral voting, the behavior of legislators, political leadership, the size of the welfare rolls, and even marriage have all been explained in terms of the maximization of self-interest through rational calculation” (p. 10).

Stone (2002) proposes an alternative to the use of a market model of society in politics. Drawing from social constructionism, she contends that an understanding of political *community* provides a better starting place than a political *market* for the exploration of politics and policy. Stone defines political community as “a group of people who live under the same political rules and structure of governance and share status as citizens” (p. 19). This community crosses socioeconomic, racial, and cultural (including religious) lines including a variety of perspectives on the commonly held rules. In a community, or *polis*, as Stone names it, “change occurs through the interaction of mutually defining ideas and alliances. Ideas about politics shape political alliances, and strategic considerations of building and maintaining alliances in turn shape the ideas people espouse and seek to implement” (p. 34). Ideas are the realm of meaning, meaning for individuals and shared meaning among individuals and groups. While those involved in politics and analyzing politics may strive toward rationality, in the polis, the process more often is a messy “struggle over ideas” (p. 11).

While existing studies provide helpful descriptions of these organizations and their engagement in the legislative process, they do not explore in depth how the meaning ascribed to religion, policy goals, and the policy process influences their [the organizations'] engagement in the process. Their theoretical presuppositions have prevented exploration of the nuances of religion within, among and emanating from faith-based organizations. Each of the main contributors in the area of inquiry touches on this complexity in discussions of representation (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995a) radical politics and decision-making (Hofrenning), and the constraints of political arena on prophetic actions (Yamane, 1998, 2003). When framed in terms of transactions, however, what is lost in the consideration of faith-based organizations in the legislative arena is the meaning imbued by the organizations on the problems they find, the changes they seek, and the activities they undertake to create change. This study sought to build on that which is only alluded to in previous studies and prematurely truncated due to theoretical constraints. Within a paradigmatic and theoretical framework that allowed for the exploration of activity and context, including the thickness (Geertz, 1973) of meaning, the inquiry explored how faith-based organizations engage in legislative advocacy and the meaning associated with that advocacy. The following chapter will describe the theoretical base for the study and the specific methods that were used to conduct the research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the activities and context of faith-based organizations that engage in lobbying, or legislative advocacy, in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The qualitative inquiry asked the following major research questions: *How do faith-based organizations engage in legislative advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia? What meaning do the organizations assign to their advocacy activities?*

Within these larger questions, the following sensitizing concepts were explored: 1) the goals of legislative action, 2) the issues/problems addressed by legislative action, 3) the solutions proposed through legislative action, 4) the activities undertaken in legislative action, 5) the relationships involved in legislative action, 6) the relationship of religion to the organization and its activities, and 7) the tension between religion and politics.

Research Paradigm and Theoretical Frame

Epistemology

As noted in the previous chapter, the transaction-centered inquiry of existing empirical literature has resulted in limited, but illustrative descriptive findings regarding the legislative advocacy work of faith-based organizations. In addition, previous studies have alluded to some of the thickness (Geertz, 1973) of the organizations and their theological and political contexts by exploring representation, decision-making, and the secular constraints experienced by those with prophetic intentions. These interpretive findings, however, are governed by the assumptions of the theoretical frames of the

studies. With most of the literature concerning faith-based lobbying organizations, objectivist assumptions undergird the research. Such assumptions create a research enterprise that attempts to validate or confirm the propositions of the studies' theoretical frame(s). An objectivist (Crotty, 1998) perspective has ontological and epistemological assumptions. These assumptions have implications for research. For research from an objectivist perspective, reality exists and it exists apart from individuals. This ontological assumption begets an epistemological assumption: discovering and measuring reality are possible apart from the subjectivity of individuals. The knower, or researcher, is separate from the known, or researched. Researchers are able to "discover" the essential elements of phenomena that compose their reality, and when using the appropriate methodology, they are able to do so without bias.

Crotty (1998) suggests that two other epistemological bases can also inform inquiry, subjectivism and social constructionism. Subjectivism ontologically assumes that there is no reality apart from human consciousness. In objectivism, an object and its meaning exist apart from human consciousness. In subjectivism, meaning concerning the object is "imposed on by the subject...the object as such makes no contribution to the generation of meaning" (Crotty, p. 9). Social constructionism, implies the interaction of subject and object in formation of reality. Like subjectivism, "meaning is not discovered, but constructed" (p. 9). But unlike subjectivism, social constructionism holds that meaning is not created by the subject alone, but in the interaction between the subject and object. Crotty notes that subjectivism and social constructionism are often used interchangeably. Both assume constructed reality. Subjectivism assumes, however,

that meaning is imposed only by the subject, or knower of the moment. Constructionism assumes that individuals are born into a world of constructed realities, that they enter into situations or approach phenomena that have conventional meaning (itself a construction). Meaning lies not in the objectified conventional meaning of an object or phenomenon, nor in the subjective impressions of a subject un-tethered to the object. Meaning is made and reality constructed in the interaction of subjective impressions or experience with the meanings of objects that exist outside of them through constructions that have been reified through convention and time. This study considered subjectivism and social constructionism as dimensions of an interpretive paradigm with congruent ontological assumptions. Figure 3.1 depicts the relationship of subjectivism and social constructionism along a continuum of ontological and epistemological assumptions.

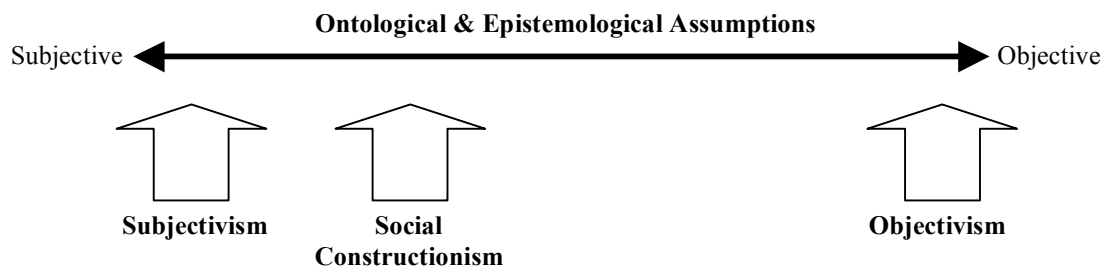


Figure 3.1: Ontological & Epistemological Assumptions

While recognizing the similar ontology of subjectivism and social constructionism, the study distinguished between the two for epistemological purposes. A subjectivist epistemology assumes a theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods that attend to the experience of the researcher as interpreter, such as

autoethnography. A social constructionist epistemology also attends to the role of the researcher as interpreter, but as interpreter in interaction with a constructed phenomenon. It also attends to this interaction within the phenomenon, of individuals making meaning with the constructed objects of their context. It is this emphasis on meaning and interaction that provides an alternative basis to the assumptions of previous studies in the area of faith-based legislative advocacy.¹

Theoretical Perspective

Although social constructionism is often used as a theoretical perspective itself, the proposed study recognizes it as an epistemological frame and uses symbolic interactionism as a theoretical frame for the research. In its simplest form, the approach “rests upon the premise that human action takes place always in a situation that confronts the actor and that the actor acts on the basis of defining this situation that confronts him” (Blumer, 1997 as quoted in Rock, 2001, p. 27). Congruent with a constructionist epistemology, symbolic interactionism draws attention to the role of the interpreter and the interpreted in a mutually constitutive social process. Drawn from the philosopher George Herbert Mead and principally developed by his student, Herbert Blumer, symbolic interactionism has three basic assumptions:

- ‘that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them’;

¹ Important to note, Hertzke (1998) conducted a mixed-paradigm study in his examination of religious lobbying organizations in Washington, D.C. He both tested pluralism and elements of exchange theory *and* phenomenologically explored the meaning of representation for the religious lobbyists. He arrived at both an affirmation of pluralism and the complexity of representation, but in final conclusions regarding the study, he used the findings from the phenomenological portion of the research to confirm the democratic pluralist underpinning.

- ‘that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows’;
- ‘that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters’ (Blumer, 1969, p. 2; Also quoted in Crotty, 1998, p. 72; Patton, 2002, p. 112).

The symbol in symbolic interactionism refers to both the non-material, or ideological, constructions of meaning through interaction and the material constructions, or the meaning assigned to “human, nonhuman, and hybrid” (Clarke, 2005, p. 7) parts of the material world. The theoretical perspective provides a “distinct emphasis on the importance of symbols and the interpretive processes that undergird interactions as fundamental to understanding human behavior” (Patton, 2002, p. 113) and social phenomena. In this study, symbolic interactionism provided rationale to consider not only the faith-based lobbying organization and their activities, but also the meanings and symbolic value constitutive of the involved individuals and the phenomenon itself.

Symbolic interactionism has also been interpreted through objectivist assumptions, particularly in the Iowa School (Crotty, 1998). The perspectives share an inductive approach to understanding reality but have much different conceptions regarding the nature of reality. From this point forward, unless otherwise specified, symbolic interactionism will refer to the theoretical tradition rooted in the assumptions of social constructionism.

Because meaning is located in the interaction between individuals and a symbol or phenomenon, in order to understand the interaction and the meaning constructed one must understand the perspective of the individuals constructing the meaning. Mead’s

perspective is foundational in his conception of human development (one must learn to take the perspective of the ‘generalized other’ in order to succeed in games and personhood) and social interaction and has been instructive in the development of research methodology. To understand human behavior, interaction, and phenomena, one must understand or take the perspective of the interpreting individual. As quoted in Crotty (1998), Psathas notes that

Methodologically, the implication of the symbolic interactionist perspective is that the actor’s view of actions, objects, and society has to be studied seriously. The situation must be seen as the actor sees it, the meanings of objects and acts must be determined in terms of the actor’s meanings, and the organization of a course of action must be understood as the actor organizes it. The role of the actor in the situation would have to be taken by the observer in order to see the social world from his perspective (Quoted in Crotty, p. 75).

The perspective-dominated approach of symbolic interactionism found methodological congruence with anthropology’s ethnography. While ethnography is employed broadly in ways incongruent with the proposed study and its epistemological/theoretical assumptions (Clarke, 2005; Crotty; Denzin, 1997; Fetterman, 1989; Rock, 2001), in general it implies understanding the other from the point of view of the other.

Ethnography as a research methodology suggests particular research techniques to gain a holistic understanding of persons’ context and perspectives of their context(s).

Research Methodology & Methods

Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) suggest that ethnographic research projects hold the following characteristics in common:

- a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena, rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them

- a tendency to work primarily with “unstructured” data, that is, data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories
- investigation of a small number of cases, perhaps just one case, in detail analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions... (p. 248).

Created in anthropology, the methodology “alludes to the situated, empirical description of peoples and races” (Rock, 2001, p. 30) and is also often generically described as fieldwork or participant observation. Ethnographic research from a symbolic interactionist theoretical frame can be structured in a number of ways, including dramaturgy, game theory, negotiated-order theory, grounded theory and labeling theory to employ particular methods and rationale (Crotty, 1998). Ethnography, like symbolic interactionism has been applied from divergent epistemological frames. The current study will attend to the general assumptions of interactionist ethnography from a social constructionist perspective. Because the study was not designed to spend extended time in the field and because a significant portion of the time spent in the field was spent gaining access in addition to observations, the study methodology is referred to as a qualitative inquiry using ethnographic techniques. Such methodology assumes that both the researchers and the persons participating in research are interpreters engaging in mutual constitutive process of the knower and known. It assumes that the researcher “descends...upon a society that is already interpretively at work” (Rock, p. 31). The researcher will enter into that world with methods that allow for a holistic, insider view of the focal phenomenon (Brink & Edgecombe, 2003).

The methods utilized in the study were congruent with the social constructionist assumptions of the study, the symbolic interaction theoretical frame of the study, and ethnography. The methods and process of research are discussed in greater detail below. To summarize, interviews were conducted with organizational stakeholders, organizational documents were gathered and reviewed, and non-participant observation was conducted. The methods comprised an inquiry “package” that was internally attuned and externally concordant with the needs of the inquiry area. The following figure proposed by Crotty (1998, p. 4) with information regarding the study included depicts the relationship of epistemology (which includes ontological assumptions), theory, methodology, and method.

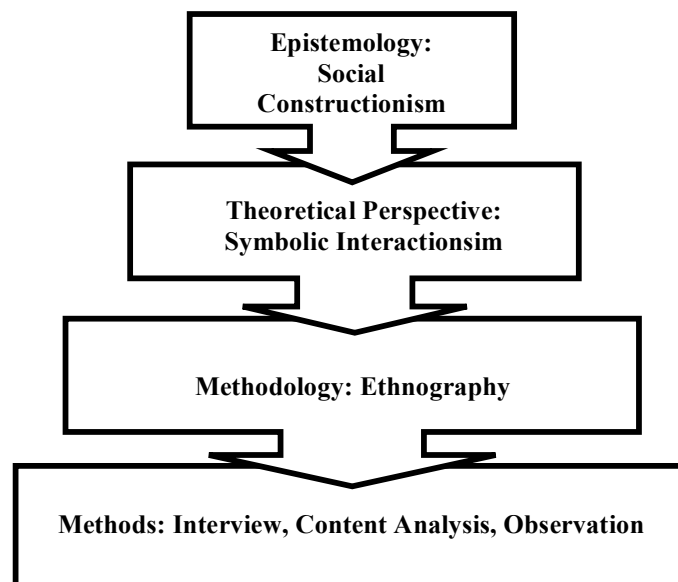


Figure 3.2: Inquiry package

The above “package” was appropriate for the area of inquiry as it assumed and pursued the complexity and construction of meaning in both religion and politics. Unlike the majority of previous studies, the study did not reduce but expanded the multiple, complex meanings in the inquiry arena, allowing for a conceptualization of and greater understanding of the variables at play in and among faith-based legislative advocacy organizations in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Explication of Process and Methods

The study conducted was an inductive inquiry, dependent on the content and context of the research for analytic categories. This section will review the sampling, data collection, data analysis, and data management procedures that were utilized in the study. The concluding section will address research quality for an inductive design with social constructionist assumptions.

Sampling Procedures

The study required a purposive, rather than a representative sample to “achieve the maximum variation of multiple perspectives...” (Rodwell, 1998, p. 56). The initial sampling frame for the study was the list of registered lobbyists created on an annual basis by the Commonwealth of Virginia. In Virginia, a lobbyist is

any individual who is employed in any manner or who is reimbursed for expenses, or who represents an organization, association or other group for the purpose of influencing or attempting to influence executive or legislative action through oral or written communication with an executive or legislative official; this includes anyone who solicits others to influence an executive or legislative official [Retrieved from Secretary of Commonwealth website at <http://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/StateGovernment/Lobbyist/lobbyist.cfm>].

Unless exempted by Virginia statute, all lobbyists are required to register on an annual basis with the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The sample drawn from this frame consisted of religiously-related organizations as identified by 1) the religious nature of the organizational name, or “principal” (lobbyist) listed in the register and 2) religious content in the description in the “principal’s statement” required by the registry. The sample was drawn from the registration for the 2006-2007 legislative session and from the registrations for the previous four legislative sessions (2005-2006; 2004-2005; 2003-2004; 2002-2003). The proposed study sought organizations from a variety of religious, theological, and political perspectives. It also sought variations of organizational type and organizational size.

Because some faith-based organizations that engage in lobbying and the individuals who lobby for them fall into “exempt” categories, an additional sampling procedure was employed. Relevant exempt categories that applied to the focal faith-based organizations include

- An individual who limits lobbying solely to (i) formal testimony before a public meeting of an executive agency or legislative body and registers the appearance in the records of the agency or body and (ii) testimony and information compelled by action of an executive agency or legislative body;
- A person who receives \$500 or less in compensation and reimbursements, excluding personal living and travel expenses, in a calendar year for his lobbying activities;
- A person who receives no compensation or anything of value for lobbying, and does not expend more than \$500, excluding personal living and travel expenses, in lobbying in the calendar year; or
- An employee of a business, other entity, or local government whose job duties do not regularly include influencing or attempting to influence legislative or executive action. [VA Code 2.2-420, 6-9]

In addition, according to state code, lobbying is not

- Requests for appointments, information on the status of pending executive and legislative actions, or other ministerial contacts if there is no attempt to influence executive or legislative actions;
- Responses to published notices soliciting public comment submitted to the public official designated in the notice to receive the responses;
- The solicitation of an association by its members to influence legislative or executive action; or
- Communications between an association and its members and communications between a principal and its lobbyists. [VA Code – 2.2-419]

Conceivably, some faith-based organizations make lobbying a regular part of their advocacy activities without meeting the criteria to register as a principal organization with compensated lobbyists. In order to access these organizations, nominational, or snowball sampling was utilized. In interviews with organizations identified by the list of registered lobbyists and their principals, respondents were asked what other religious groups participate in various aspects of the General Assembly, both groups that they are allied with and those they oppose. Since individuals who participate in legislative activities are participating in public acts (they identify themselves and the organizations they represent if they testify or speak to a legislator or legislative staff), respondents were not violating notions of privacy. The study sample did not include those persons of faith who participate in legislative advocacy on their own without representing an organization nor did it include congregations, mosques, or synagogues. The focal organizations were those organizations or groups whose primary purpose is to affect legislative change at the Virginia General Assembly.

In addition to stakeholders in religious organizations, the sample included legislators and/or legislative staff. Legislators were identified by nominational

sampling. During organizational interviews, each organizational respondent was asked to identify legislators with whom they work to support or oppose legislation. Again, since individuals who participate in legislative activities are participating in public acts, respondents were not violating notions of privacy. From that list, the legislators most often mentioned by respondents were contacted for interviews. Variations in gender, religious affiliation, political party, and geographic location were sought.

Data Collection

Data for the proposed project were collected in 1) semi-structured interviews, 2) organizational documents, and 3) participant and non-participant observation.

Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews conformed to the expectations of symbolic interactionist ethnography. Interviews were as open-ended as possible “to allow as many themes as possible to emerge and...to minimize opportunities for the researcher to impose a personal conceptual framework on subjects” (Gilgun, 1992, p. 121). To prevent premature theoretical closure, the initial interview schedule was based on *sensitizing concepts*. Sensitizing concepts are a part of Blumer’s (1969) symbolic interactionism and convey tentativeness versus certainty regarding theoretical guidance. Clarke (2005), quoting Blumer contends that “[w]hereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look” (In Clarke, p. 77). An interview schedule, located in Appendix A, with nine broad questions and related prompts based on sensitizing concepts was used to guide interviews with organizational stakeholders. An abbreviated interview schedule drawn

from the same sensitizing concepts was used to guide interviews with legislators (also located in Appendix A). The sensitizing concepts for data collection were drawn from the social constructionist political work of Stone (2002) integrated with the existing empirical literature. Stone's broad categories of problems/issues, goals, and solutions were used to allow for the multiple interpretations that may constitute the category. The categories were not overly narrow to risk premature theoretical conclusions and as such were appropriate for the proposed study.

The organizational stakeholders were initially approached through their key stakeholder, typically their executive director or coordinator. The initial approach was made by telephone or email if a telephone number was not available and vice versa. If a telephone call or email was not returned a second, and if necessary, third contact was made. If possible, the research project was described on the initial telephone call and the researcher received permission to proceed with research, and scheduled a time to interview the key stakeholder. "Permission" to conduct research included allowing the researcher to interview the key stakeholder and two to three other organizational stakeholders including another staff member(s) engaged in legislative advocacy activities and a board member(s); allowing the researcher access to pertinent organizational documents; and, allowing the researcher to observe key events related to their legislative advocacy activities (board meetings, staff meetings, presentations to organizational members). If requested, the interview schedule and consent forms were sent to the respondent in advance for review. Recruitment scripts for the research are located in Appendix B.

A list of other organizational stakeholders to interview was formed after the first organizational interview, likely with the executive director. While asking the executive director to describe the organization, the researcher asked the respondent what other staff persons are involved in legislative advocacy. In addition, organizational documents gathered at the first interview were used to identify board members or other stakeholders who may be helpful interpreters of the organizational and legislative context. Interviews with organizational stakeholders ranged from one hour to two hours in length.

Legislators were initially approached through their legislative aides. During this initial contact the research project was described and an interview with the legislator was requested. The legislative aide then discussed the request with the legislator who granted access, declined, or requested additional information. If after the initial contact, the legislative aide did not make contact through phone or email, a second, and if necessary, third contact was made. If requested, the interview schedule and consent forms were sent to the legislator or legislative aide in advance for review.

Prior to each interview, permission was gained to proceed through an informed consent process. During the process the researcher described the purpose of the interview, the risks involved in participation, and the rights of the person to refuse to answer any question or participate in the interview. In addition to a verbal description during this process, the research participant was given a written description and was asked to sign if they agreed that the interview could go forward. The consent forms are located in Appendix C. If allowed by the respondent, all interviews were audio

recorded. In addition to voice recordings, the researcher took field notes that reflexively recorded information and experiences during the interview. Field notes were expanded following the interview when the researcher had adequate time to appropriately expand on the initial notes made during the interview. Two respondents refused to have their interviews tape-recorded. The field notes and expanded field notes became the primary interview transcripts for these respondents. One respondent requested a telephone interview. The interview schedule and consent documents were sent in advance and the informed consent discussion was conducted at the beginning of the telephone interview. The respondent then mailed the signed consent form to the researcher. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher asked if the respondent could be contacted by telephone or email to clarify interpretations based on information gained from the organizational documents and from subsequent interviews and observation.

Organizational documents

At the interview with the organizational gatekeeper, respondents were asked to provide organizational documents that may describe the organization and its legislative emphases. These documents may include legislative agendas; statements of legislative priorities; talking points for legislative testimony; legislative alerts; mission, vision, and value statements; organizational histories; and newsletters. A document request form was provided to respondents. This form is located in Appendix D. The researcher also collected electronic documentation from the organizational website, if applicable.

Participant observation

The proposed study used passive participant observation to collect information regarding the faith-based organizations that engage in legislative advocacy in Virginia. Spradley (1980) defines passive participant observation as observation where the observer is “present at the scene of action but does not participate or interact with other people to any great extent” (p. 59). Originally, the study was designed to conduct observations in two primary settings, the organizational context and the legislative context. During the period of research, however, very few organizational events outside of lobby days were conducted because the organizations were consumed with legislative activities. Key events occurred prior to the legislative session but were not attended because they had not yet been identified through interviews and the study had not yet received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Five organizational events were observed during data collection in addition to observations made while waiting to conduct interviews. This observation occurred informally. Informal observation is not covert, but the observer will not necessarily disclose her role to others (Patton, 2002).

The legislative context was the second setting for participant observation. The original plan for observing key legislative events was as follows: First, stakeholders were to be asked what legislative hearings and committee meetings they would be participating in during the current legislative session. The researcher would then consult the legislative schedule posted online at <http://leg1.state.va.us/lis.htm> and attend meetings as they are scheduled. In addition, respondents were to be asked what bills their organization was following in the legislative session. The researcher would then

enroll in Lobbyist-in-a-Box, a fee-based service that allows the subscriber to track certain bills providing relevant information about the bill and where it is in the legislative process. The service includes e-mail notification of hearings or meetings regarding the bills. The researcher would then attend those meetings and observe. Initial plans to observe formal legislative proceedings were not possible because the observation plan was contingent on simultaneous interviews with organizational stakeholders. All but one interview occurred following the legislative session. Alternatively, the researcher examined the daily floor calendar available at <http://leg1.state.va.us/lis.htm> and attended committee and subcommittee meetings that were, according to existing literature, conceptually related to the issues of religious lobbyists.

Information gained from the observations was recorded both during and after observations. Field notes recorded observations and the subjective experience of the observations as they occurred. These notes are “‘in the moment’ accounting of the events, interactions, thoughts, and feelings of those participating in the...observations as they occur in context” (Rodwell, 1998, p. 105). Expanded field notes were completed following the observation when the researcher has sufficient time to expand the initial notes made in the field.

Data Analysis Procedures

Coding

Data analysis for the study included a number of techniques. First, following the completion of data collection, open coding was conducted to construct categories, or

themes, that adequately describe the information from data collection. In open coding, “data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As similarities among codes emerged, tentative categories were formed. This process is also referred to as constant comparison (Creswell, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998) and lumping and sorting (Rodwell, 1998). Open coding was conducted on interview transcripts using Atlas.ti. The qualitative data analysis software has the capacity to perform coding without pre-defining a list of codes, a capacity congruent with the assumptions of this study. Initially open coding was also to be conducted on organizational documents and field notes from observations. This was modified for two reasons: First, organizational documents were not uniformly provided by every organization. Most documents are from four of the nine organizations that participated in the research. The remaining organizations provided few documents either because of the stage of their organizational development or they did not respond to reminders regarding organizational documents. Second, because of the reasons noted above, observations were not able to proceed as planned. Because respondents were not available to the researcher during the session for interviews and to identify pertinent legislative events, much of the time “in context” was spent acclimating to the Virginia General Assembly which during the 2007 session was only 45 days long. Few substantive observations were conducted as the researcher learned the legislative context. Documents obtained and observations recorded were nevertheless useful forms

of data that helped familiarize the researcher with the organizations and the legislative context in which they work.

The proposed study also utilized axial coding to define the relationships between the categories or themes as they emerged in data analysis. Axial coding began when an understanding of the relationships between and among categories began to emerge. In axial coding, the relationships between categories are defined. Relationships are tentative and context-bound. Memos, described in detail below, were created to describe what emerged during axial coding. Memos were tentative in nature. Relationships were depicted visually and the process of creating these graphic representations of emerging concepts and their relationships became an additional analytic technique to be discussed below. In Atlas.ti, the axial coding process was reflected in coding and memoing functions. The process was also reflected in pen and paper network drawings.

Graphic representation

After initial open coding began and sufficient relationships among codes had emerged, graphic representations were used to depict the data. Diagrams (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were used early in the analytic process to depict relationships among code categories. Diagrams, or networks, were used in the proposed study alongside axial coding to visually depict the relationships in the coded data. These networks, as noted above, were created on paper. The networks were tentative in nature and were used to further the development of the categories and subcategories of the research.

In addition to networks, the study used aspects of additional forms of graphic representation drawn from Clarke (2005) and based on the assumptions of symbolic

interactionism. In addition to coding and networks derived from open and axial coding, Clarke (2005) suggests using graphic representations to open up and analyze the data. Central to her use of maps is her concern that an exploration of context often assumes that the context is “out there” instead of in the situation under study. For Clarke, “*the conditions of the situation are in the situation...* The conditional elements of the situation need to be specified in the analysis of the situation itself as *they are constitutive of it*, not merely surrounding it or framing it or contributing to it.” (p. 71). She suggests three modes of mapping that are attentive to context, aspects of which were utilized in the proposed study: situational maps, social worlds/arenas maps, and positional maps. Maps are not intended to be final products but analytic tools with which to further question data.

Situational maps are graphic representations that “should include all the analytically pertinent human and nonhuman, material, and symbolic/discursive elements of a particular situation *as framed by those in it and by the analyst*” (Clarke, 2005, p. 87). Situational maps are created by questioning the open coded data – Who are human actors in this situation? What nonhuman actors matter? What cultural items or processes matter? Multiple versions of messy/working maps can be created before an ordered/working version is created. As the name suggests, even the ordered version is a work in process to assist in data analysis. Memoing (to be discussed below) becomes a part of every mapping session. Once an ordered/working version of a situational map is created, relational analyses of the map begins as each element on the map is related to every other element.

Social worlds/social arenas mapping is drawn from symbolic interactionism and focuses on “meaning-making social groups – collectivities of various sorts – and collective action – people ‘doing things together’” (Clarke, 2005, p.109) instead of conceptual variables. This is a meso-level social analysis focusing on the collective organization of groups in the focal area and their relationships to one another. The map is a series of circles – some concentric, some overlapping, some not touching – that “specify difference(s) and variation(s) of all kinds within worlds as well as between worlds” (p. 111). The worlds are defined by the actors in the situation or context of analysis. They may be worlds of formal or informal coalitions, alliances, or other collectivities. Arenas are areas of related worlds.

Positional maps depict “the major positions *taken in the data* on major discursive issues therein – topics of focus, concern, and often but not always contestation.” (Clarke, 2005, p. 126) These maps focus on the issues in the area of inquiry and the various positions on issues. According to Clark, the map should also consider the lack or absence of positions that might be expected. The positional maps do not correlate the various positions or issues with specific groups. Instead these maps recognize the multiple meanings these positions have and how the complex implications of those meanings may be lost when simply correlated with a group or organization. For Clarke, this is a political enterprise, creating “space between” to analyze outside oversimplified political categories. Multiple positional maps may need to be created depending on the number of issues suggested by the data. Again, memoing should be used to capture the meaning of the maps.

Clarke's (2005) three maps were intended to supplement the typical coding and networking analytics in the proposed research. While aspects of all three of the maps were utilized, modifications to the initial mapping plan were made. First, because contextual elements figured prominently into the emerging coding structure, the situational maps became duplicative of the networking function. After a few initial pen and paper "messy/working maps" were created, this form of mapping was subsumed under the networking analytic. The social worlds/arena map was utilized to depict the coalitions and alliances among focal organizations. The final map, the positional map, was modified from the format Clarke suggests in order to more specifically explore the multiple issues on which organizations take positions.

Memoing

As referred to a number of times previously, memoing was a key analytic tool of the study. Memos are "the researcher's record of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions, and directions for further data collection" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In other qualitative research texts, this record of analysis is also called journaling (Padgett, 1998; Rodwell, 1998). For this analysis, descriptive and reflexive notes are referred to as memos, the name used by Atlas.ti to describe the journaling function. Two types of memos were used. First, methodological memos were created to record decisions points on research methodology and the rationale behind them. Such decision points included, among others, the composition of initial and subsequent samples, the definition of categories developed through the axial coding and mapping processes, and evidence of theoretical saturation.

Second, reflexive memos were created to record the researcher's interaction with and sense-making of the data. This was essential to analysis and the development of theoretical constructions and began in the first phase of data collection and analysis. Memos included theoretical observations as well as the researcher's reactions to aspects of data collection and analysis. Reflexive memoing is congruent with the assumptions of a social constructionist epistemology. Since the knower and known are inextricably linked, the researcher must recognize her own role in the research, and when necessary, prevent her own interpretations from overshadowing the interpretations of the research participants. Reflexive memos are similar to the reflexive journal of constructivist research (Rodwell, 1998). It is a notation "that investigates possible meanings from what is happening in relation to one's own values and interests" (Rodwell, p. 105). Both memos were used as instruments to assure research quality in accordance with the epistemological assumptions and design of the research. Memos were made in Atlas.ti and on paper.

Data Management Procedures

Data for the proposed study was managed as follows. Interview data were recorded (audio or digital recording) and transcribed into a password protected Microsoft Word Document. Transcripts were de-identified using aliases for individuals and organizations (Recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research project) and then downloaded into Atlas.ti which was also password protected. Any printed transcripts were shredded or stored in a locked file cabinet at the home of the researcher. All organizational documents were stored in a locked file cabinet at the

home of the researcher. Original and expanded field notes were stored in a locked file cabinet at the home of the researcher. Data from the project will be stored in a locked file cabinet and on a password protected Atlas.ti file following the completion of the research project.

Study Limitations

As with any inquiry, the current study has limitations that are inherent to the research design and that developed in the implementation of the research. First, in accordance with the social constructionist assumptions on which the study was based, findings are context bound. This is both a strength and weakness of the inquiry that was considered in the development of the research design. The findings in this study and their subsequent extensions to the literature are tentative and are not generalizable beyond the research sample. The purpose of this research was to create a thick description of the activities and meanings associated with legislative advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia in order to understand a specific context. Applicability of the findings to other legislative contexts is tentative and can only be assigned by consumers of the research.

Second, the research design and sampling plan yielded a sample of only one type of religious presence in Virginia's state legislature – religious organizations or groups for which a principle purpose and activity is to legislatively engage in Virginia. A broader sampling frame would have provided a more comprehensive treatment of religious individuals and entities outside of the Virginia General Assembly that are

involved in legislative advocacy. A broader sampling frame may have included congregations, synagogues, and mosques; national organizations that sometimes act at a state level; and, stakeholders in secular advocacy organizations that frame their arguments from a religious perspective. An unintended consequence of the chosen sampling frame was a sample that was overwhelmingly white and middle to upper class. While it is not clear if a broader sampling frame would have overwhelmingly changed the demographics of the sample, three African-American legislators who were interviewed noted that they tend to hear directly from black pastors and pastoral associations about their legislative concerns instead of through a dedicated religious advocacy organization.

Third, the timing of the implementation of the research was suboptimal. IRB approval was obtained immediately prior to the beginning of the 2007 legislative session. As noted above, religious advocates were consumed by their work at the General Assembly and, save one, were not able to schedule interviews until close of session. It also became clear during the course of the interviews that significant events other than constituent lobby days were not held because, again, organizational stakeholders were consumed by the session itself. In addition, a number of key events were held immediately prior to the session and the winter holidays that were inaccessible because the study had not yet been approved by the IRB. Issues with timing impacted intended data collection and as a result, aspects of the study had to be modified. Ideally, interviews and observations of key pre-session events would have begun in early fall with observations of the legislative session from February to March.

Finally, the confidential nature of the interviews prevented some integration of data. Because interviews were confidential and because there are relatively few such organizations in the Commonwealth compared to other special interests, great care was taken not to indirectly identify a respondent by linking them to an “interfaith” or “Catholic” organization. For this reason, the organizational labels (Groups A-I) initially assigned to describe the organizations in the first section of Chapter 4 were not used in latter sections in order to prevent the linking of specific quotes to specific organizations. This sensitivity, while appreciated by respondents, hindered the integration and display of some findings.

Chapter 4: Study Findings

The study findings are divided into four sections. The first section describes the study's sample and the focal groups. The second section describes the research participants' perceptions of the legislative context in which they work. The third section describes the activities of the religious advocacy organizations and their advocates. This section responds to the first research question, *How do faith-based organizations engage in legislative advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia?* Research participants' responses emerged in two categories, relational lobbying and grassroots education and engagement. The final section describes the themes that emerged during analysis that address the second research question, *What meaning do the organizations assign to their advocacy activities?* Four major themes emerged that suggest "the actor's view of actions, objects, and society" (Psathas, quoted in Crotty, 1998). First, religious beliefs expressed through sacred texts, religious doctrine, and collective experiences provide a *mandate* for the organizations' legislative advocacy activities. Second, the mandate and the legislative context form a framework within which *decision-making* occurs. Third, activities that flow from and inform these decisions constitute acts of *representing*. Finally, religious advocates are *defining success* based multiple indicators.

Sample Selection and Description

Individual Stakeholders

The study's final sample is comprised of 33 individuals, 27 of whom represent nine (9) religious lobbying organizations and six (6) of who are legislators. Within the nine organizations, three stakeholder groups were interviewed: organizational leaders (8), organizational staff (7), and board members (12). Legislators comprise a fourth group of the study sample. As noted in Chapter 3, the religious advocates were initially identified through a state registry of lobbyists created on an annual basis. An examination of the registry for the years 2002-2003 through 2006-2007 was conducted and potential religious advocacy organizations were identified by 1) the religious nature of the organization's ("principal") name, and 2) the religious content of the "principals statement" required by the registry. Initial examination of the registry yielded 17 organizations that met the above criteria. Phone calls or emails were made to 10 organizations to clarify their religious nature because of ambiguity in either their name or principal description. Three (3) organizations were eliminated from the sample because the organizations did not consider themselves faith-based or religiously affiliated lobbying organizations. One (1) organization with a religious name was eliminated because it was concerned primarily with home schooling. Additional conversations via email or telephone were conducted with six (6) organizations that were listed in only one or two of the five years of records maintained by the registry. Of these organizations, five (5) were eliminated from the sample either because they were no longer active in legislative advocacy or because their organization's legislative

efforts were subsumed under the work of another religious lobbying organization. Those that were no longer engaged in legislative advocacy indicated that their limited activity was in regards to a particular bill or a different stage of development for their organization or, in one case, the limited activity of the other organization was attributed to a legislative matter (real estate) that fell outside the policy foci of the religious organization that typically handles their legislative affairs.

Attempts to schedule interviews were made with the remaining eight (8) organizations. Of these organizations, one (1) never responded to contact attempts. One (1) responded but declined to participate because of a leadership vacancy and health problems of the organization's coordinator, a volunteer. Of the remaining six (6), 18 interviews were scheduled and conducted with stakeholders. With the exception of one stakeholder, all respondents delayed their interviews until after the 2007 legislative session concluded. This delay had implications for proposed observation strategies to be discussed below. During the interviews, respondents were asked what other religious organizations they were aware of that had a presence at the General Assembly. This nominational sampling technique yielded an additional four (4) organizations. Interviews were conducted with 10 stakeholders from those organizations. Of the 10 organizations initially considered, one (1) organization was omitted from transcription and analysis because the one respondent that was interviewed by phone neglected to send in the human subjects consent form and the majority of the organization's political activities were local in nature. State level activities consisted only of occasional emails and rare visits. The remaining organizations fit the criteria proposed at the beginning of

the study – faith-related organizations, excluding congregations, for which at least one of their principle activities includes annual state-level legislative advocacy.

The characteristics of organizational stakeholders are summarized in Table 4.1. The four stakeholder groups that were included in the study include the gatekeeper, staff, board members, and legislators. Each organization had one gatekeeper, typically an executive director. The gatekeeper was also referred to by respondents as the coordinator or professional. These various labels are preserved in the report of the findings. In Table 4.1, the stakeholder categories gatekeepers and staff are collapsed and labeled as either registered lobbyists or non-registered. Registered lobbyists are registered with the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Focal organizations did not always have a formal board of directors. Governing members were also referred to as commission or committee members. This variation in language is referenced in Table 4.1 and preserved in the findings.

During these organizational stakeholder interviews, respondent were also asked what legislators they most frequently interacted with, either supporting or opposing their efforts. Legislators named were diverse in party affiliation, race/ethnicity, and religious affiliation. Of those named, fifteen were selected that were named by both conservative and progressive organizational stakeholders and represented diversity in religious and party affiliation. Of the fifteen legislators contacted by telephone, eight (8) responded. Of those who responded, six (6) agreed to interviews. Table 4.1 includes characteristics of the legislators with whom interviews were conducted.

Table 4.1: Sample Characteristics

	Staff - Registered Lobbyist	Staff - Non- Registered	Board or Governing Member	Legislator	Total N=33
Gender					
Male	5	5	8	5	23
Female	6	0	3	1	10
Race/Ethnicity					
Caucasian	11	4	11	3	29
African-American	0	0	0	3	3
Other	0	1	0	0	1
Religious Affiliation					
Christian, Catholic	2	1	3	1	7
Christian, Protestant	5	3	4	4	16
Jewish	3	0	3	1	7
Muslim	0	1	1	0	2
Other	1	0	0	0	1
Geographic Location					
Central	10	3	7	3	23
Eastern	0	0	0	1	1
Northern	1	2	4	2	9
Southwestern	0	0	0	0	0
Party Affiliation					
Democrat	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	4
Republican	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2

Religious Advocacy Organizations

While interviews were conducted with individuals representing four key stakeholder groups, religious advocacy organizations were the units of analysis. Nine organizations were explored in this study representing three religious traditions and varying political, cultural, and religious ideologies. The organizations are described in the subsections that follow. Each subsection is de-identified to protect the identities of those who participated in this study. Organizations are introduced in order of their age

from oldest to youngest. Each section summarizes the group's mission, history, governance, membership, resources, staffing, areas of interest, and successes. After all nine groups are described; Table 4.10 will summarize their characteristics.

Group A

Group A is a community relations committee of a 501(c)3 Jewish umbrella organization that represents the Jewish community in one region of the Commonwealth. The Jewish umbrella organization was founded in 1935 and is a voluntary association of synagogues, social service agencies, and other Jewish organizations in its region. The community relations committee “centralizes, coordinates and carries out a program of communal relations for the organized Jewish community.”² Formed around 1993, the committee has three foci – legislative advocacy, Israel advocacy and education, and social action. It is a part of a network of 125 similar groups throughout the country, of which Group B is also a part.

Within the community relations committee are subcommittees including a steering subcommittee and subcommittees on Holocaust education, Israel advocacy, mentoring, and governmental affairs. Charged with legislative advocacy, the governmental affairs subcommittee focuses on statewide and, when necessary, local advocacy. Legislatively, the subcommittee focuses on issues that fall within four areas – the separation of church and state, anti-semitism and racism, Israel affairs, and matters that concern the organizational members of the larger umbrella organization. These areas, described in greater detail in Table 4.2 were discussed and voted on by the larger

² From the Group A website

community relations committee. Any issue that falls outside of these areas must be approved by the larger committee. According to the staff person assigned to the work of the community relations committee, the legislative work that is carried out by her efforts and the efforts of the governmental affairs committee is related to the idea of Tikkun Olam, the religious and legal dictate to “repair the world.”

Table 4.2: Group A Policy Areas & Exemplars

Policy Area	Description	Issue Exemplars
First Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving the wall of separation between religion and the state • Organizational interest in serving as a watchdog for the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer in government-funded public institutions • School vouchers • Religious curriculum in public schools
Anti-Semitism and Racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing and confronting legislated hate and intolerance • Organizational interest to educate from community experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of religious symbols to advertise for housing • Jewish holidays and public education • Holocaust and tolerance education
Israel Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering a positive relationship between Virginia and Israel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia-Israel Advisory Board
Organizational Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting, if necessary, on legislation that affects member organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) • Counseling services • Holocaust Museum

Group A is governed by the board of the community relations committee. There are 60 members of this larger board, and 12-15 members of the governmental affairs subcommittee. Notable members and former members of the board and subcommittee include a former state Secretary of Commerce and Trade, a senior advisor to a

prominent elected state official, professional lobbyists, and prominent community leaders. The community relations committee is staffed by one full time staff member employed by the larger umbrella organization. Called the “professional,” the role of the staff member is to gather information, “to make sure our lay leaders have their input, are educated on all of that, do not give a position without knowing everything, and to defend their [the lay leaders] position.” As the advocate states, “Personally, I may agree or disagree with it, it doesn’t matter.” The professional general registers as a lobbyist with the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

The umbrella organization is a federation of approximately 60 organizations. A key task of the federation is to raise money to support the functions of its member organizations. It is from these fundraising efforts that the work of the community relations committee is supported. Including personnel, the committee has a annual budget of approximately \$15,000.

Group B

The second group is a state commission within a larger 501(c)3 organization representing Jewish organizations in two states and the District of Columbia. The larger organization was founded in 1938 to address issues that affected Jews in the region, to tackle “communal problems in need of communal solutions.” Like Group A, Group B is one of many such organizations in the United States. Unlike Group A, Group B is a part of a separate agency principally focused on community relations. Group B is comprised of eight lay-led commissions, three that focus on the three jurisdictions (including the commission that focuses on a portion of Virginia and is the subject of the research), one

that focuses on domestic affairs, one that focuses on Israel and international affairs, one that focuses on social justice, and one that focuses on the Holocaust. The larger organization has been participating in the legislative affairs of the region since its inception, although most of those efforts were concentrated in the Greater Washington D.C. and Maryland area until the 1960s. As noted by a historian of the larger organization, “During debate over school integration in Virginia, [the organization] moved beyond its’ geographic zone and brought down to Richmond ‘a good group from the Jewish congregations in Arlington, Fairfax, and Alexandria’ to let the legislators know that the Jewish community stood for integration.”³ Since the sixties, efforts at the Virginia General Assembly continued sporadically until the organization hired a professional in 2005, whose role, among others, was to represent the organization’s interests at the Virginia General Assembly.

The mission of the larger organization that encompasses the Virginia commission is to “advocate for Jewish institutions and values, educate the community about key issues of concern, and reach out to build with our neighbors a better world for us all.”⁴ As the assistant director of the organization and director of Virginia-related efforts stated, “we are the public face of our Jewish community to our non-Jewish neighbors.” The organization works within four areas – government relations, Israel advocacy, social justice, and intergroup advocacy to accomplish its efforts. These areas are described further in Table 4.3. Within the area of government relations, the organization works on state, as well as local and federal levels, “to advance Jewish

³ Group B Historical Document

⁴ Group B website

concerns in the public arena, seeking to impact public policy and foster a society based on freedom, justice and democratic pluralism.”⁵

Table 4.3: Group B Policy Areas & Exemplars

Policy Area	Description	Issue Exemplars
First Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving the wall of separation between religion and the state • Preventing public policy unduly influenced by singular religious viewpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer in government-funded public institutions • School vouchers • Religious curriculum in public schools • Charitable choice
Bias and Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposing legislation that promotes bias and intolerance • Supporting efforts that encourage diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil equality for same sex couples • Immigration • Hate crimes • Capital punishment
Health and Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing those in need in the Jewish and broader community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicaid expansion • Minimum wage • Reproductive choice • Stem cell research

Group B’s legislative efforts are guided by democratically-derived position statements, many that were created in the 1970s and continue to guide policy-related activities. The domestic affairs commission spearheads the process of crafting position statements that tend to relate to a few main areas: the separation of church and state, bias and discrimination, and social justice. When developing the positions, the commission seeks the perspectives of the four faith branches of Judaism – Orthodox, Conservative, Reformed, & Reconstructionist. The overall organization’s board (representative of the faith traditions) then votes on the positions. Any legislative

⁵ Ibid.

advocacy in any of the three states/district must fall within the framework of these position statements or must be deliberated by the board of the overall organization before any advocacy activities can take place.

Group B is governed by the overall organization's board of directors. Of the approximately 50 board members, about 10 of them are from Virginia. These 10, in addition to approximately 30 representatives of synagogues and Jewish agencies, form Group B. The commission provides specific guidance for regional issues but is an arm of the organization's Board of Directors. It is served by one full-time staff member (an assistant director of the overall organization) and part-time administrative support. The full-time professional is also able to utilize the services of the governmental relations associate who provides support to each of the assistant directors serving the three states/district.

Group B's larger organization is a membership organization comprised of constituent organizations rather than individual members. These organizations include 210 synagogues and Jewish agencies from throughout the three states/districts covered by the organization. The efforts of Group B are funded by an annual allocation of approximately \$100,000 from the larger organization. This amount includes the salary of the full-time professional and part-time administrative assistance. Group B is supported, in part, by a larger Jewish body operating in the same regional area. This funding is supplemented by additional fundraising efforts in the Jewish community and targeted grants for special initiatives.

Group C

Organized in the 1970s, Group C is a non-incorporated voluntary association of independent protestant churches. While the churches are identified by a common denominational name and polity, they are not associated with any formal protestant denomination. As such, they consider themselves an assembly rather than an organization. The group's purpose is "to rally the [type of protestant churches] in the Commonwealth of Virginia in strengthening our position on issues for the good of all, and to inform pastors concerning things that are critical in nature that would affect our local churches and their ministries." Group C first met in September 1977, after initial planning by three different ministers. According to the executive director, "these three men were from three different camps. And the fact that they would get together, even work together, had to be a miracle of God." The three initial ministers recruited six additional members from six additional camps who formed the association's first steering committee. The committee rallied themselves and other like-minded ministers and churches around defeating the Equal Rights Amendment, stopping the taxation of churches, and preventing the state licensure of church related ministries.

These and other issues fit within a series of approximately 30 resolutions that guide the legislative work of the assembly. These resolutions roughly fall into three categories: religious liberty, the encroachment of the state into religious issues, and "government as a reflection of the principles of God." Regarding the content of the resolutions the executive director notes,

We believe the Bible is our only rule for faith and practice. So, every resolution that we pass we believe has a biblical foundation... Everything has to be based on what we believe are principles laid down in the word of God.

Table 4.4: Group C Policy Areas & Exemplars

Policy Area	Description	Issue Exemplars
First Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting the free exercise of religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer in government-funded public institutions Posting of the Ten Commandments
Encroachment of State on Religious Domain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventing the unnecessary interference of the government in religious affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxing church properties Licensing church daycares Mandated reporting
Government as a reflection of the principles of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating or preserving a government based on biblical principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abortion Stem-cell research Gambling Pornography Homosexual marriage

Over 500 churches voluntarily associate with Group C. Of these congregations, 200 provide ongoing financial support for the assembly. The total budget of the assembly is less than \$160,000, including the full-time executive director and his wife who provides part-time administrative assistance. The current executive director has been affiliated with the group since 1980, and became its only full-time staff member in 1984. Commenting about the executive director, one board member noted, “He really is the heart and soul of it.” While the steering committee, now comprised of 15 ministers, works with the executive director to determine the agenda and draft resolutions to be voted on at the group’s annual assembly of 300-400 churches, the board member noted, “we just pretty much trust him with a lot of that.” Group C is divided into five regions and each region has three representatives that form the steering committee.

Group D

Formed to “unite the volume” of the faith community in the public square, Group D is one of the larger religious advocacy organizations in the Commonwealth. It is an interfaith organization comprised of individual members and 21 organizational members from the three Abrahamic religions – Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The organization is the official legislative representative of a number of mainline protestant judicatories. Formed in 1982, the organization considers itself “Virginia’s oldest faith-based advocacy group” as well as a unique organization in the country. The mission of Group D is to “speak[s] for and with the vulnerable and work[s] for a just and compassionate Commonwealth by uniting and empowering faith communities.”⁶ It has both 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 designations, however, the (c)4 is not currently active.

Group D is active on six core priorities – poverty and the working poor, health care, at-risk children and youth, criminal justice, care for creation, and housing and homelessness – most of which relate to poor and vulnerable populations. The organization has also been active on issues of tax equity and the separation of church and state. All of the organization’s issue areas are supported by sacred texts from the three Abrahamic traditions. The core priorities are further described in Table 4.5 below.

⁶ Group D website

Table 4.5: Group D Policy Areas & Exemplars

Policy Area	Description	Issue Exemplars
Poverty & the Working Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting those experiencing poverty • Reducing poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay day lending • Minimum wage • TANF payments
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing everyone access to comprehensive, affordable healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicaid expansion to include adults with children • Medicaid expansion to include dentistry • Access to prenatal care
At-risk Children & Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring children develop wholly in loving and safe conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandated reporting • Foster care services and benefits for kinship care • Early childhood education
Criminal Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring fairness and restorative justice in the criminal justice system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death penalty • Waiving fee caps for indigent defense • TANF eligibility
Care for Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation reforms • Green building • Electric deregulation
Housing & Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing affordable housing for working families and the homeless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Trust Fund • Rental Assistance for Homeless

Group D is governed by a board of 41 directors. Twenty of the directors are representative of the judicatory members of the organization. The remaining 21 directors are at-large members serving three-year terms. The board is diverse in religious traditions and roles ranging from community volunteers to business and nonprofit leaders. While the organization represents 20 judicatories and has at least 27 organizational partners, it also has a number of congregational and individual members. The organization relies on its members – judicatories, congregations, and individuals –

to financially support its work as well as grants ranging from local to national foundations. Group D has an annual budget of approximately \$900,000.

In the last five years, the organization's staff and program structure has grown in size and complexity. At the time of the interviews in 2007, Group D employed four full-time and four part-time staff. In 2005, there were only 2 full-time employees. Since the interviews, one additional full-time staff member has been hired. Several of the part-time staff direct programs that fall under either the education or policy foci of the organization including a policy think tank, a state fiscal analysis program, an environment education and awareness program, and a bias education and awareness program. In addition to regular staff, the organization has two to three interns per year from local graduate institutions including seminaries and a school of social work.

Group E

Group E is a voluntary, unincorporated grassroots Catholic network that has supporters from several Christian denominations and non-Christian religions. It is independent of any religious organization or judicatory. Calling itself a "faith-based advocacy network," the group seeks "to bring the social and economic teachings of the church to bear on public policy and legislation, especially at the local and state levels."⁷ The network operates in one region of the state, but considers itself representatives of the marginalized poor throughout Virginia.

Organized in 1983, its founder, a social worker, created the network when he realized that his day job in a federal social service agency and his volunteer work in

⁷ Group E website

local services and advocacy was not enough to address the mounting needs of the poor. As a practicing Catholic, he believed that Catholic social teaching, particularly the notion of God’s “preferential option for the poor” pushed him beyond direct service work into advocacy. Asking others to join him, the founder initially created a network of Catholic parishioners who sought to apply the Church’s social teaching through legislative advocacy on behalf of low-income Virginians. Today, about 40% of the individuals associated with the group are not Catholic and include multiple Christian denominational affiliations, as well as affiliations with Unitarian Universalism and Jewish individuals and organizations.

The network is loosely governed by a leadership committee of approximately 10 individuals, including the founder, who remains the network’s coordinator. The individuals in the committee are mainly Catholic and remain active on the committee for many years. Aside from one new recruit, one of the newer members has been on the committee for eight years. During their monthly meetings, the leadership committee discusses poverty-related needs, determines a priority issue for each legislative session, and then plans a strategy to introduce legislation addressing the priority issue. The group’s policy area is described in Table 4.6. The network employs no staff.

Table 4.6: Group E Policy Area & Exemplars

Policy Area	Description	Issue Exemplars
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating poverty and attending to God’s “preferential option for the poor” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earned Income Tax Credit Rental Assistance for Homeless Minimum Wage Increase in TANF benefits

Approximately 850 households are a part of Group E's email and mail network. The founder estimates that it represents over 1000 individuals from one region in Virginia. The group has a minimal budget with the majority of expenses associated with postage and a couple of yearly events that educate and highlight the work of the network. Occasional requests are made for donations to offset the cost of these expenses. In addition, the founder uses any honoraria he receives for speaking engagements to offset these expenses. No fees or dues are required to be a member of the network. Individual advocates incur any costs associated with travel to the General Assembly (about 100 miles away).

Group F

Group F is a 501(c)3 organization that was founded in 1985 to “cultivate and preserve the God-given values that are a bedrock of our [nation's] liberty.” The organization identifies as Christian, but few of their documents or modes of publicity overtly indicate this affiliation. As the President of the organization stated, “So there is scriptural backing for the principles we do, but you'll see it more in the people than you'll see it in the paper work.” The mission of Group F is “to strengthen the family through accurate research and education, prompting civil activism and affecting public policy outcomes.” The organization is affiliated with a national conservative Christian family organization and think tank with affiliates in 37 states including Virginia.⁸ While much of the work of Group F is conducted within their 501(c)3 designation, they also maintain a 501(c)4 designation “to protect families and promote responsible citizenship

⁸ Group F website

by giving Virginians the tools they need to hold their elected officials accountable.”⁹

This separate, but affiliated organization was developed in 2005 and provides the organization’s supporters and the wider public with information – primarily legislator report cards and voter guides - to assess legislator’s congruence with the organization’s stated values.

Group F is guided by five principles: life, marriage, parents, constitutional government, and religious liberty. Each principle is based in Christian scripture and supported by research on related-issues and public opinion concerning those issues. The activities of the organization are derived from these principles as are the criteria by which legislators are judged as “family-friendly” or not through the affiliated 501(c)4. These five principles and related issues are discussed below in Table 4.7.

⁹ Ibid.

Table 4.7: Group F Policy Areas & Exemplars

Policy Area	Description	Issue Exemplars
Human Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting life from fertilization to natural death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abortion Embryonic stem-cell research Euthanasia
Marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting marriage as a union between one man and one woman as an institution of God and a foundation of society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marriage Amendment Divorce Reform Homosexual Adoption
Parental Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizing parents as those responsible for children and resisting government intrusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School choice/education vouchers Parental consent for contraception and STD treatment Parental notification of school extracurricular activities
Constitutional Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventing the incursion of government into the lives and values of families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited taxation Gambling Alteration of the Pledge of Allegiance
Religious Liberty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting the right to practice faith according to personal beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer in government-funded public institutions Religious Freedom Restoration

Group F is governed by a board of approximately 20 directors. Directors are recruited for their specific skills and for their “grounding in the mission and principles” of the organization. Board members are required to sign a statement of faith which confirms their belief in an infallible Bible, the triune God, the deity and humanity of Christ, the necessity of salvation, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. They also commit to attend four board meetings each year, participate on at least one committee, and contribute approximately \$4,000 per person per year to the organization. As the

president of the organization explained, there is a “time, talent and treasure requirement.” A primary role of the board includes the yearly approval of an agenda to guide legislative advocacy.

Group F does not consider itself a dues-collecting membership organization. Those individuals or organizations that make a contribution, sign up for the email alert list, and attend sponsored events are loosely considered members or those represented by the organization. A large conservative Protestant judicatory in Virginia considers Christian Values its’ official lobbying arm. The organization claims to represent over 20,000 Virginians based on the number of individuals who have contributed or expressed interest in the work of the organization. When those represented by the large judicatory are added, Group F represents approximately 300,000 Virginians. Staff of the organization, however, note that they can not claim to represent every individual member of a church in this judicatory.

The organization relies on those they represent to financially support their activities. Donations are their only source of income. As the President states,

It is all voluntary donations. There are no...we don’t receive grants. It’s a real challenge, but it is basically individuals or businesses that believe in what we’re doing. Typically, they are people who are raising their family and running their business. They have their daily lives. They know what we do is important. They want to be active with their legislature, but they are trusting us in a lot of ways to inform them, give them the resources or to keep their legislator accountable to them.

Their overall budget is approximately \$500,000 per year, although during the campaign for the Marriage amendment in 2006, the budget rose to approximately \$900,000 between the 501(c)3 and the 501(c)4.

Group F is comprised of approximately six full-time staff including a President, a Vice-President of Policy and Communication, a Vice-President of Advancement, a Director of Grassroots Operation, an Advancement Coordinator, a Business Manager, and one part-time staff, an Office Assistant. During the legislative session, the organization contracts with up to 5 additional individuals to participate in and support legislative activities. These contractors include professional lobbyists employed by Richmond firms. In addition to regular and contract staff, Group F uses up to three interns each summer to assist in research activities. These interns include at least one law student who assists in the legal research that supports the organization's legislative positions. Two to three regular staff and the contracted staff register as lobbyists of Group F for each General Assembly session.

Group G

The next group is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization representing Muslim individuals, organizations, and mosques throughout the state. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, key members of a regional Muslim community were regularly recruited for speaking engagements at churches and civic organizations. Recognizing the need to meet these external requests and also the Muslim community's own need to be less "introverted" and more active in the larger community, the organization formed in 2002 "to engage the Muslim community members in the state and in the region into the community at large through civic, social, media, and other activities." The mission is "concerned with communicating the truth about the mercy, peace, and justice of Islam." As organizational materials go on to state, "We are not merely interested in

educating the public but also concerned with voicing solutions to challenges facing our society.”¹⁰

Of the four foci of the organization – civic, social, education, and media – it is through the civic focus that Group G is involved in legislative advocacy both organizationally and interorganizationally. Civic activity, which cannot be easily separated from the other organizational efforts, has the dual purpose of carrying out the teachings of Islam and “demystifying what it means to be a Muslim” to legislators, politicians, and the wider public. Within the area of civic engagement, Group G focuses primarily in three areas – poverty, separation of church and state, and immigration issues. Table 4.8 describes the three areas. Group G joins an interfaith group to work on poverty-related issues and Jewish groups to work on issues concerning the separation of religion and state.

Table 4.8: Group G Policy Areas & Exemplars

Policy Area	Description	Issue Exemplars
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting those experiencing poverty • Reducing poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum wage • Pay day lending • Affordable housing
First Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving the wall of separation between religion and the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of religious symbols to advertise for housing
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting diversity and preventing punitive immigration legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-state tuition for immigrants

Group G is governed by a board of eight directors representing the diversity of Islam. Directors include Muslims who are African-American, Arab-American,

¹⁰ Group G website

Caucasian, and Southeast Asian. It includes men and women and first generation and latter generation immigrants. It also includes representatives from different urban areas of the state. For a small fee, individuals and organizations (including mosques) can become members of the group. The organization has no staff and the board of directors, particularly the president and vice-president, carries out the work of the organization. The group operates on a minimal budget of approximately \$8,000 - \$12,000 annually, much of which is used in its' service activities. Small external grants and fundraising efforts within the Muslim community support the budget.

Group H

Group H is a newer Catholic organization that formalized a lengthy tradition of legislative advocacy on behalf of judicatory offices in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Formed in 2004, the group is a non-profit organization that is currently exploring incorporation and 501(c)3 designation. The purpose of the organization is to represent the leaders of the two judicatory bodies in the state, and sometimes federal public policy matters. The organization “engages in advocacy on respect life, social-justice, and education issues through contacts with state and federal lawmakers, grassroots advocates, and media outlets.” Prior to creation of the organization, each judicatory engaged in less coordinated efforts at the state legislature. The organization is active on issues that fit within the three articulated positions of the judicatory leaders – Respect life, social justice, and education and family life. These positions are described in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Group H Policy Areas & Exemplars

Policy Area	Description	Issue Exemplars
Respect Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting human life and dignity in every stage of development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abortion Embryonic stem cell research Death Penalty Assisted suicide
Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting the poorest and most vulnerable members of the human family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum wage Pay day lending Immigration
Education and Family Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the fundamental family unit and providing basic services for children attending private schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marriage amendment School bus service for private schools

Group H is governed by a board of directors, but decisions regarding positions and issues ultimately rests with the judicatory leaders who formed the organization. The board of directors consists of four individuals, the two judicatory leaders and another representative from each judicatory. These two board members provide the staff with support in accessing and mobilizing congregational members. The group has 2 full-time staff, an executive and associate director, and one part-time administrative assistant. The judicatory leaders jointly provide funding for the organization's annual budget of approximately \$300,000, including personnel. No additional fundraising is conducted to support the organization's efforts.

Group I

Group I, the youngest of the study's focal organizations, began in 2005 and received its 501(c)3 designation in 2006. The interfaith organization has only one legislative focus – the “freedom and equality under the laws of the state and nation” for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) persons and their families. At least 6

religious traditions including Judaism, Christianity, Unitarian Universalism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Wicca, are involved in the organization's efforts.

Envisioned by members and friends of the LGBT community, Group I began with conversations, a shared meal, and the support of a statewide secular LGBT advocacy organization. The organization's handful of organizers launched the new entity with a day-long conference in Richmond featuring a writer/scholar who had crafted an evangelical grounding for equality in marriage. The 100 plus conference participants became an early building block of the organization's mailing list. The conference, which served as an impetus for further development of the organization, was followed closely by involvement in opposing the then-proposed state constitutional amendment defining marriage as a legal union between a man and a woman. Much of the organization's early efforts were consumed in opposition to the marriage amendment, which passed by referendum vote in 2006.

The organization's founding board members crafted the following working mission statement:

We are an interfaith organization of people who all share one thing- a deep commitment to our faith tradition, which kindles our deep commitment to social justice. As rabbis, ministers, priests, and lay people, we are all dedicated to working for equal rights for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community in Virginia. We recognize that LGBT citizens are not faceless and nameless, but are members of our religious communities and our families, friends, neighbors, and people with whom we do business. We also recognize that God loves and sustains all of creation and that we must act when any part of that creation is endangered- physically, emotionally, or spiritually- by misunderstanding, hate, and discrimination.¹¹

¹¹ Group I website

A board member described the mission of the organization as “education, transformation, and witness.” Currently, Group I has 4 board members and no paid staff. Their annual budget is slight, with few expenses other than a website and post-office box until a permanent staff member is hired. Fundraising is conducted primarily through individual appeals.

Overview of Groups

Among the nine organizations described above, there is no standard religious lobbying organization. Groups range in size, structure, polity, budget, staffing, membership, theological beliefs, and focal areas. Some similarities among the groups should be noted, however. First, organizations and their members are overwhelmingly white and middle class. This is reflective of the constituent individuals and organizations that make up the groups. Most are Protestant (Mainline and conservative), Catholic, and Jewish and report a predominantly Caucasian grassroots. Second, groups are geographically concentrated around the Richmond region and in the Northern Virginia, Washington, D.C. suburbs. At least four of the organizations have or are attempting to develop chapters in the other parts of the state, particularly in Southwest Virginia with its more homogeneous population. Finally, with the exception of Group I that focuses on equality issues for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community, all organizations focus on multiple, prioritized issues each session. Table 4.10 summarizes some of the key characteristics of these organizations.

Table 4:10: Overview of Groups

Group	Religious Affiliation	Founding Date	Group Form	IRS Designation	Staff	Budget
A	Jewish	1935	Committee	501(c)3	1 FT	\$15,000
B	Jewish	1938	Commission	501(c)3	1 FT 1 PT	\$100,000
C	Christian, Protestant	1977	Assembly	None	1 FT 1 PT	\$160,000
D	Interfaith	1982	Organization	501(c)3 501(c)4	4 FT 4 PT	\$900,000
E	Christian, Catholic	1983	Network	None	None	\$200
F	Christian	1985	Organization	501(c)3 501(c)4	6 FT 5 PT	\$500,000
G	Muslim	2002	Organization	501(c)3	None	\$10,000
H	Christian, Catholic	2004	Organization	None	2 FT 1 PT	\$300,000
I	Interfaith	2005	Organization	501(c)3	None	\$1,000

Figure 4.1 below depicts the relationships among the above groups included in this study. Drawn from Clarke's (2005) world/arena maps, each group has an individual circle that varies in size based on the organization's staffing and budgets. The intersecting group circles indicate that the smaller circles are membership institutions of Group D. The lines between circles indicate relationships among organizations for specific purposes. The larger coalition circles depict longer-term relationships. The squares in the figures are other organizations or groups that are also members of the broader coalitions. The figure suggests a number of potential relationships available to lobbyists as they decide how to act on legislation. These relationships comprise, in part, the legislative context within which the groups work.

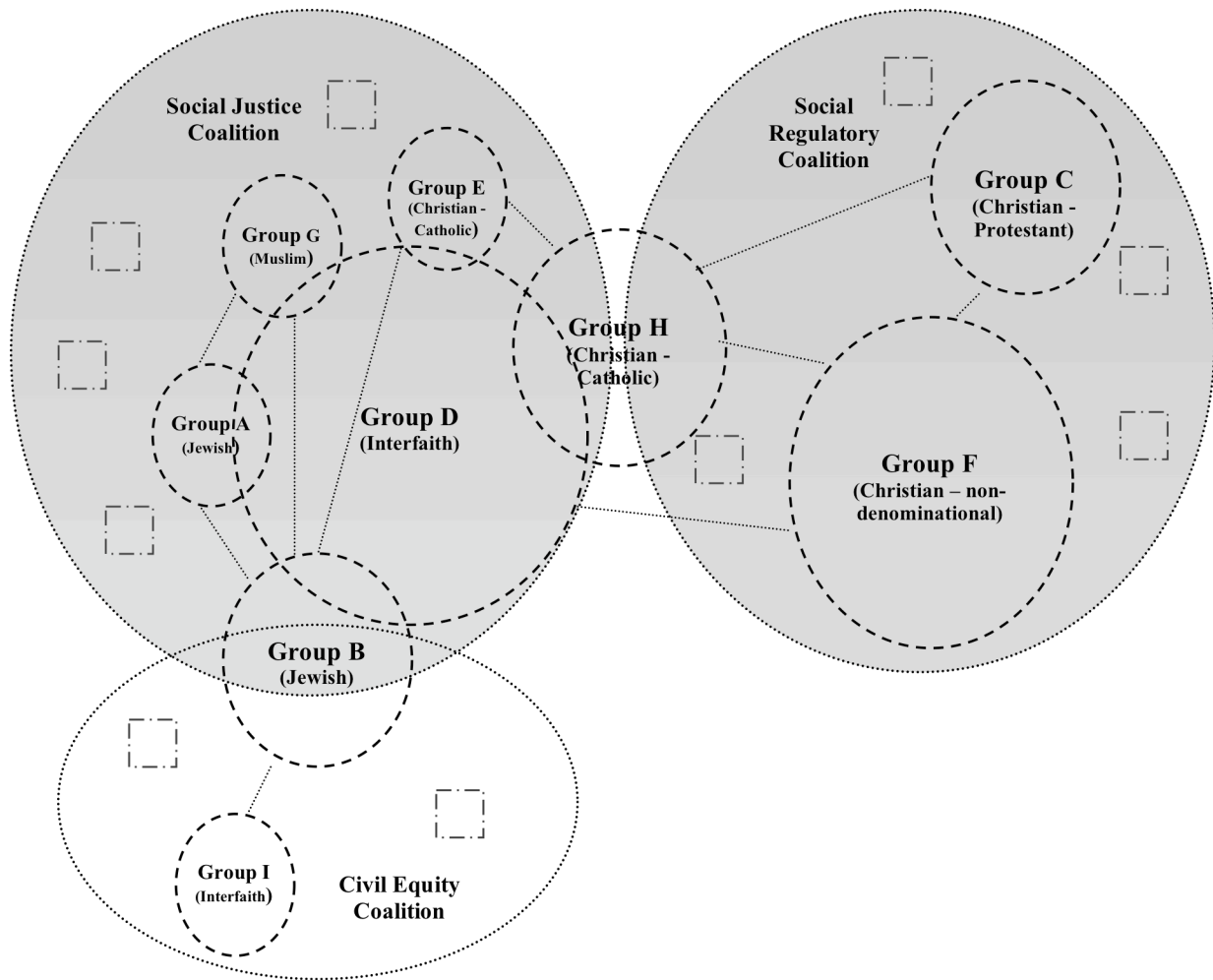


Figure 4.1: Group & Coalition Network

Legislative Context

The varied religious advocacy organizations described above act within a political context that enables and constrains their activities. The legislative context is one in which religious perspectives sometimes resonate and sometimes collide with the business of politics. Several themes emerged that characterize the legislative context in which the respondents work including the nature of a part-time legislature, the role of

special interests, the receptivity of officials to religious advocates, and the role of religion in the legislature.

Part-time Citizen Legislature

Respondents described a number of features that characterize the state legislative context in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Foremost, research participants noted the rapid pace at which the General Assembly sessions occur. As a board member of a Protestant organization described, “It is fast and furious.” With only 45 or 60 day sessions in odd and even years, respectively, little time is available to consider and act upon the approximately 3,000 bills that are introduced. A board member of a Jewish organization noted that, “Virginia has the shortest legislative session of any state in the union and next to California has the largest number of bills go through that session.” A Jewish lobbyist further described the speedy sessions,

Legislation moves much too fast. People have many, too many bills and don’t have a chance to look at any of them, sometimes, so it’s incumbent upon the assistants and the lobbyists to bring those things to people. So many times when we walked in and when we prepared our citizen lobbyists to walk in, people said, “we’re really glad you came in, we didn’t even know anything about this.” Or, “we didn’t know anything about this perspective of this bill.”

With little time to read all the bills, much less consider the multiple perspectives that concern each bill, legislators depend on their aides, lobbyists, advisers, and constituents for assistance in understanding the proposed legislation and its potential effects in the Commonwealth. As an interfaith advocate recalled, “Fortunately, sometimes we get to them before a lobbyist on the other side would, but they desperately need that education and we definitely want to give it to them.” Sometimes, however, other interests have the

ear of the legislators. The religious advocates noted this as one of several implications of the frantic pace.

In addition, because of the brevity of the sessions and the fact that most legislators hold full-time jobs back in their districts, accessing the legislators is difficult for religious lobbyists and their grassroots. During session, difficulty visiting a legislator or attending a committee meeting is exacerbated because of the brief and rapidly changing schedule. A Catholic advocate who previously worked in a state with a longer session described this challenge,

For example, [in his previous state] they'll have a bill hearing scheduled and you'll know two or three weeks in advance when your bill is going to be heard. It's a good day when we have 48 hours notice. It could be less than a day. But in the [other state's] General Assembly, you would have a good amount of advance notice and that would enable you to call somebody from clear at the other end of the state and have them plan to come and testify on that day. It's much harder at a moment's notice to get people from Northern Virginia, Southwest Virginia into Richmond and testify for your bill.

The lobbyist noted, however, that both states get about the same amount of work done. Issues of access particularly affect those for whom much social justice or family-related advocacy is directed. As a board member of an interfaith group stated,

I think it's hard for people who have full-time jobs and families and other commitments, I think it's hard for their voices to be heard simply because there are public policy people who are there all the time and they're there to make sure that their views, whatever they are, get heard and I think they tend to get heard. So it is, it's a bit discouraging.

Regardless of the abbreviated period of time available to legislators and lobbyists alike, a few advocates noted that they prefer a part-time rather than a full-time

legislature. One Protestant Christian advocate described the benefits of the part-time legislature,

A part-time legislature has a tremendous advantage because that means the legislator has to live under the law he passes. One of the biggest problems we face in federal government is we have a full-time legislature. And these people are continually exempting themselves from laws they require you to live under. For instance, Social Security. They should have no retirement, except social security, and what they can buy for themselves. Instead, they vote for themselves fantastic pension plans, fantastic medical plans, etc., etc. That is wrong. It is sinful. It is wicked. It is wrong. So, I wish we would go back to the part-time legislature in Washington, where they paid a dollar-a-day, and that's about what, most many of them are worth, excuse me. And you can quote me on that one.

As other religious lobbyists also suggested, part-time legislators are, by design, more involved in the lives and concerns of their communities since they are in them most of the year.

Role of Special Interests

In addition to the issues of access created by the brief and intense legislative session, most religious advocates noted that much of access acquired in the Virginia General Assembly is through the money of special interest groups. As a committee member of a Catholic organization recalled,

We had a state senator tell us once that if that was a briefcase full of \$20 bills instead of a briefcase full of briefing papers, your legislation would be moving a lot faster. And this is a guy that supports us! This is a guy that votes with us, but this guy is being candid about who they see all day and what it means.

The committee member, who also participates in advocacy activities, went on to say, “These legislators are seeing people with a specific ‘I want this, I want that for me,’ advocacy all day long.” Other advocates and stakeholders described the role of special

interests and partisanship in the Virginia legislature and noted that they expect this and other “political realities.”

Receptivity of Legislators

Despite barriers to access, most respondents reported that legislators are receptive to their efforts. As one interfaith advocate stated, “For the most part, people respond very, very well to us, because they know that we’re kind of the lobbyists for the poor. In fact, they say, ‘Oh, that’s God’s lobbyist.’ So people respond very well...” A Catholic advocate recalled a conversation he had with a Delegate from his district that had received holiday greeting cards from the organization’s grassroots effort,

He pulled me aside and he says, “I got 140 of your green cards! Tell your advocates I’m trying to personalize an individual response to each one. It’s a killer, it’s taking me longer than I thought.” And so he told me, “Tell them to be patient, they will get a response!”

Other lobbyists noted general receptivity and a typical “open door policy.” A Jewish advocate stated that, “most legislators want to hear from us.”

While these advocates described the receptivity of the legislators in positive terms, “that doesn’t mean they vote the way we think they should vote.” The interfaith advocate went on to state that while he’s rarely been “kicked out of an office,” his efforts have been met with a less than enthusiastic response. This most often happens when the priorities of the legislator are different than those of the advocate, particularly when religiously-related priorities differ. As the advocate explained,

I have one particular Senator who says, “well, if you were really working on issues of the faith community, you’d be working on abortion.” Because in his mind, that is the penultimate issue. But of course, we don’t work on that issue, so I’ll never have a great relationship with him.

While religion opens doors to some legislators, a particular interpretation of religion and religious mandates may close them as well.

Religion in the Legislature

The Virginia legislature is also characterized by its explicit religious activities and the religious affiliations of the legislators. As a Jewish advocate noted, “I can’t consider this an a-religious body, a secular body. It’s not. It’s composed of very many religious people.” An interfaith advocate also noted that the body is made up of people who are “religious to some degree.” As suggested above, this religious involvement may or may not facilitate beneficial relationships with legislators.

Every session of the Senate and the House of Delegates is opened with prayer. At least one of the advocates interviewed has offered prayers in the Senate on more than one occasion. A Republican and Protestant Delegate noted the longevity of that practice in the oldest representative body in the United States and the new world, “I’m sure in 1619 when they started, the first thing they did was have a prayer.” A Democratic Delegate of a minority religion described the difficulty he has with the practice,

We have compulsory prayer each day when the House is in session that at least 30% of the time excludes non-Christians by saying it’s in Jesus’ name. I’ve complained to the Clerk and the Speaker, they don’t seem to get it that it’s offensive. In the Senate, I hear they’re a little heavy-handed. The Clerk asks for the prayer in advance and will tell ministers well you can’t...But in the House, they send letters that just kind of mention that they should be ecumenical, but they don’t reinforce it.

The legislator went on to register his dismay at the “religious insensitivity that goes on every day in Richmond.”

In addition to the daily prayers during session, there are four Bible studies that are held during session, three of which are listed on the daily legislative schedule and announced by the Clerk of the House of Delegates. A Republican Delegate commented, “I have a Bible Study that I lead, that I’ve been doing for 15 years now and we meet every Wednesday morning and [a religious lobbyist] has been a faithful member.” The Protestant advocate attends two of the Bible studies and noted that they are well attended. An interfaith advocate attends another Bible study that is also frequented by the Governor. In addition, research participants noted the importance of individual interpretations of religion in forming the legislative context. Individual advocates, organizational board or committee members, and legislators bring what was expressed as “calling” or “conscience” to their legislative work.

The above features that characterize the Virginia legislature are part of a larger context that includes local and federal politics as well as religious events and trends. While respondents did not speak in depth regarding these other political and religious realities, a number of references were made to occurrences that are outside the Virginia legislature but nevertheless affects its activities. From Reagan’s presidency to former United States’ Senator George Allen’s use of the derogatory term “maccaca” to chide his opponent’s campaign worker, national affairs were used to describe the state of party politics and the legislative situations in which religious lobbyists find themselves. In addition, denominational politics and early characterizations of the Religious Right were also used to provide contextual insight into the work of religious advocates

Activities of Religious Advocacy Organizations

The first question guiding the inquiry explores the activities in which religious advocacy organizations engage in Virginia, *How do faith-based organizations engage in legislative advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia?* While the focal organizations engage in a range of issues, the activities that comprise their legislative advocacy efforts are similar. The efforts described by the advocates generally fall into two related categories, two basic strategies that influence change at the Virginia General Assembly. First, advocates engage in activities that could be described as relational lobbying with elected and appointed officials. This is the direct lobbying aspect of the religious advocate's work characterized particularly by its emphasis on relationships. An advocate of a conservative Christian group aptly summarized the categorization,

Lobbying is primarily a relationship more than anything else, it really is. When you sell a property you'll say there's 3 things important, location, location, location and in lobbying, I think the 3 most important things are relationship, relationship, relationship...

The second category of activities is the education and engagement of the grassroots. As one Muslim advocate noted about his organization's efforts,

And it has a main role [which] is to engage the Muslim community members in the state and in the region into the community at large through civic, social, media, and other activities. And it has a role in building bridges, interfaith bridges, by asking people to know each other, understand each other and act together. Knowing and acting. Educating and acting.

Far from dichotomous activities, the two sets of activities mutually inform, strengthen, and legitimize each other.

Relational Lobbying

Like other lobbyists and interests groups, the religious advocates in the study participate in a wide range of activities to influence legislators. All of the advocates noted the relational nature of these activities. In addition to the specific lobbying activities listed below, several themes emerged concerning the nature of relationships in direct lobbying efforts. First, as noted above, the religious advocates interviewed indicate that *relationships are central to their legislative advocacy efforts*. An advocate of a large interfaith organization described legislators as partners not adversaries in their organizational mission,

So this year, I didn't send a letter to all legislators and say, "you mean nasty people, you should take care of the poor." What I did was say, "here are our legislative priorities. We consider ourselves partners with the legislature to build a more just and compassionate Commonwealth. And we are glad that you are able to invite us to help you to do that." I take the story of Zacchaeus where Jesus doesn't yell and scream at Zacchaeus in the tree, he invites himself to dinner. And I take that story very seriously, we constantly are inviting ourselves to dinner with the legislators so that we can have those across the table conversations.

For this and other advocates, it is through the "across the table conversations" that most change occurs.

This does not mean, however, that there are not disagreements in the process. The same advocate quoted above notes a handful of legislators who rarely if ever welcome him into their offices, much less table conversations. All of the religious advocates noted occurrences where legislators disagreed with them, sometimes vehemently. Most had experienced being "stabbed in the back" when a legislator promised to vote one way then voted the opposite. In these and other instances,

religious advocates depended on their grassroots, coalition partners, and “friends” in the legislature to influence legislation. Despite some negative experiences with legislators however, religious advocates never referred to legislators as “adversaries” or “enemies” and they repeatedly emphasized the centrality of relationships in their direct lobbying efforts.

Second, *relationships are issue-based or based on common beliefs or values.*

Respondents indicated that they engage in relationship building predominantly around specific issues regardless of party affiliation or agreement around an entire legislative agenda or set of religious beliefs. As a staff member of an interfaith organization stated, “We’re not there to make it personal at all. We’re there to work on issues. And so, and we truly do work across party lines. And so, it all just depends on the issue and which legislator happens to be working with us on that issue.” Advocates expect to work with legislators on one issue and disagree on others. As an advocate noted, “We had constituents who called [the Senator] and felt strongly on that issue and voiced their displeasure. We work with him on a lot of other issues where we see eye to eye. So, you never know when you’re going to be on different sides of any particular issue.” While advocates explained that their primary intention is to develop relationships on issues regardless of religious or political affiliation, they also indicated that they have natural affinities for some legislators based on commonly held beliefs, perspectives, or even compatible personalities.

Related, *religious advocates do not use money or the courting of financial or electoral favors to develop relationships.* Most advocates drew a contrast between the

nature of their relational activities and the “relationships” developed with legislators by many other lobbyists, particularly corporate lobbyists. As one advocate in a younger organization explained, “...we don’t offer the typical levers of power, money or delivering large number of votes. We don’t necessarily have that to offer them.”

Another advocate noted how he and others advocating the repeal of pay day lending were outnumbered by the money and number of professional lobbyists for the pay day loan industry,

With the pay day lending issue, there are at least 20 lobbyists working against us on that. Anybody who might be willing to take money from the pay day lenders has taken money because they have gone to every lobbyist firm in town. Literally, every one that is any good they have been to and they are contracted with them. And we know quite a few lobbyist firms that have turned them down. We had some come to us and say, “do you have any money that you can give us to not work with this, because they are throwing that much money at it. We need justification.”

Relationships built on non-financial bases and grassroots involvement, then, become particularly important as religious advocates seek to accomplish their missions.

Fourth, *in lieu of financial access, relationships based on issues or common beliefs and values may enable access to legislators*. Several advocates noted very positive relationships with legislators that enabled them to access key committees or individuals in the General Assembly. A Catholic advocate noted the benefits of a relationship his organization had with a prominent Senator until his retirement,

We worked with Senator Gartland who was a leader in the Senate. To say he’s patroning this legislation was just a door opener. Everyone wanted to be on his good side. He had seniority, he was on Senate Finance... It just opened doors for us. It was wonderful, it was just an incredible experience.

A Catholic advocate from another organization noted how legislators will listen to positions on which they do not agree because of the relationship they have forged on issues on which they agree,

And the Republican will be that much more friendly to us because we've already worked with them on an abortion or school choice issue. And likewise, the Democrats on the education and health committee, even though we find ourselves, you know, clearly on opposite sides on abortion or an embryonic stem cell research issue, they'll talk to us about those issues. I mean we get in the door, and we can talk to them about it and at the end of the day we're not going to agree, but they'll listen to what we have to say.

This organization works with Democrats on issues concerning poverty and in some cases, the death penalty and with the Republicans on issues such as abortion.

Fifth, *relationships lend legitimacy to the advocates' legislative efforts*. The consistent efforts of religious advocates to create and maintain relationships that are non-partisan and issue focused lends credibility to their efforts. A board member of a Jewish organization noted the role the "professional" plays in establishing credibility for their overall legislative efforts,

As lay people, we aren't continually involved. [Staff person] is. She has built relationships and substantive credibility. She's a central platform for what we try to achieve. She establishes a factual and policy basis and helps us build credibility. That's very important - to be viewed as serious, practical, and a person of integrity. [She] is good at establishing credibility in those terms.

Legitimacy is also gained, however, when religious advocates are associated with legislators because of common beliefs or values. A Christian advocacy organization chairs the Conservative Caucus during the legislative session. In their estimation, they are credible in the eyes of conservative legislators because of their commonly held values.

Finally, *the relational aspect of direct lobbying is supported by religious traditions*. Just as the interfaith advocate described his goal to have “across the table” conversations with legislators by using a story about the tax collector Zaccheus who Jesus invited to dinner instead of condemning, he and other advocates noted relational aspects of their religious traditions that require them to recognize and approach legislators as fellow human beings not adversaries. An Islamic advocate used a passage from the Koran to describe his organization’s immigration and diversity efforts and the relational nature of his work at the General Assembly,

If God says all you people, we created you from nations and tribe so you know each other. The best among you is the closest to God, the more faithful, the more pious. So we remind people as much as we can that it is about knowing each other. That’s an image, knowing each other... it’s working together, living, building friendships.

Not to be mistaken, advocates also use the imagery of the unpopular prophet, the voice loudly condemning unjust behavior, to characterize their work. But this was frequently juxtaposed with more relational imagery. Relationship was a frequent and common refrain as advocates described their work at the General Assembly. The direct lobbying activities described below note how advocates work to build influential relationships.

Visits

Religious advocates in this study principally develop relationships with legislators by spending time with them. Through a series of formal and informal meetings, legislators and advocates get to know one another and their shared and discordant perspectives. Formal meetings are those that most often take place in the legislator’s office as an advocate comes to Richmond or a district office to make a

request or to share his or her community's legislative positions, concerns about existing public policy, or an agenda for the upcoming legislative session. All of the religious organizations studied participate in these types of visits with legislators who agree with them and with legislators who don't agree with them, with legislators in their districts and with those in other districts, with legislators they know and those they have not yet met. These visits serve to begin new relationships and sustain older ones.

While these formal visits are a staple of direct lobbying and relationship building, less formal visits also contribute to developing a relationship with a legislator. Most of the advocates regularly attend the legislators' scheduled activities like committee and subcommittee meetings, special commissions, and other meetings whether they occur during session or throughout the remainder of the year. As an advocate of an interfaith organization noted,

On the whole, the political reality is that you're dealing with a part time citizen legislature, who even when the Assembly is out, have meetings all the time on commissions and subcommittees and things like that. One thing, I think we've learned is that you have to be present for those meetings. You've got to be there at the commissions, because that's how you're building the relationships...

A number of advocates said that they attend one or more of the three Bible studies listed in the weekly floor calendar. Religious advocates, legislators, and the Governor attend a Bible study for which the meeting time is not announced by legislative services. Others indicated that they speak in a legislator's congregation or attend events in their district that they know legislators will attend. A conservative Christian advocacy organization facilitates the conservative caucus that provides their advocates with the opportunity to share their agenda and further develop relationships with legislators who share similar

convictions. One advocate noted that he and fellow religious lobbyists will join legislators for a beer at a local restaurant that some of the legislators frequent during the legislative session. Regardless of the venue or purpose, religious advocates use a number of less formal meetings to develop and maintain relationships with legislators and other elected officials.

Special events

In addition to visits, most of the religious advocacy organizations orchestrate events that allow them and their grassroots to engage with legislators. Several organizations host a legislator event such as a breakfast or reception that allows the advocacy organization to thank legislators for past support and announce the organization's legislative agenda for the following session. Many hold advocacy days during the legislative session (discussed below). Several also hold wrap-up events that allow legislators to participate in a retrospective discussion of the legislative session. A Catholic advocate described their annual wrap-event that they sponsor with other advocacy organizations,

We have a Richmond Wrap-Up where we allow them to come back and say anything they'd want about all the good they were able to do. So, it's an opportunity to say to all the advocates out there, you know, "I'm a good guy, I'm on your side" and get some recognition and some visibility...

Events tailored for legislators not only attend to the relational aspect of lobbying, they also provide an opportunity for advocates to glean information about the legislators and their priorities, information that may factor into the later decision-making of the organization. The Catholic advocate quoted above spoke of an instance where a

legislator at a wrap-up event introduced them to a policy intervention of which the advocacy organization was not aware. The intervention, the Homelessness Intervention Program (HIP) became the organization's priority legislation for the next several years.

Provide information

Most organizations provide information to legislators and their staff in an effort to explain their perspectives on issues and persuade the legislators to act accordingly. A number of the organizations provide policy briefs, or white papers to legislators analyzing a particular policy and providing an alternative proposal for the legislator to consider. Advocates see the use of the briefs as both necessary for the accomplishment of their legislative goals and as a service to legislators overtaxed by their part-time status and the sheer number of bills that face them each session. As one interfaith advocate noted,

I mean, being part time in the legislature means that they can't have intimate knowledge of every issue. It's very frustrating we've found, we'll go up to a legislator that we thought knew or that we thought that because they were in a certain party that they would be up on this. And they had no idea, they had never heard of it. Fortunately, sometimes we get to them before a lobbyist on the other side would, but they desperately need that education and we definitely want to give it to them.

This advocate's organization also provides "purple papers" to the legislators each week during the legislative session. These papers inform legislators about the different religious traditions that comprise the organization and what these traditions say about the various issues on which the organization engages. A conservative Christian organization annually provides a bill profile to the Conservative Caucus "which is a list of our bills and what our positions are, and where they are in and what committee they

are in.” According to the organization’s president, it “is largely seen as a very powerful document. People very much want to know where we stand, because if they’re going to vote against us, they want to know that that’s what they are doing if they are even remotely on our side.”

The information advocates provide to legislators is not always intended to persuade legislators to vote one way or another on legislation. A Jewish advocate noted that on the occasions that her very diverse community does not agree on legislation that falls within one of their priority areas, she uses the opportunity to inform the legislators about the legislation and the various positions represented in the Jewish community. Noting a religious freedom bill introduced by one of her delegates with whom she did not have a strong relationship, she stated,

...this year, he introduced a bill of religious freedoms, and it was a wonderful opportunity...for us to share with him where our community came down on this. We did not take an opposing or supporting position, because we have actually a very strong plurality of voices on this issue...So we did an information paper that we shared with him, we told him where our concerns were, where we were able to be supportive and then we shared that with the wider Senate.

Testimony

Testimony by religious advocates or by invited experts is also an activity used to inform legislators. Religious advocates regularly attend committee and subcommittee meetings in which legislation they are monitoring is being discussed and considered. The content of the testimony ranges from religious to technical. Whether the testimony is planned in advance or spontaneously delivered, most advocates noted examples of

providing testimony. The executive director of an interfaith group recalled his testimony on a “prophetic bill” concerning the death penalty,

I carried a rock with me and I talked about how a lot of us may want to use that rock and to kill somebody because we were so mad at them, so upset about a crime. But that Jesus stills the stone-filled hands of the mob, and we don’t have to like it, but we have to understand it, and we have to let that kind of justice rest with God.

This advocate went on to discuss the relational dimension of the testimony he provided. Speaking to the chair of the committee, he said, “I’m sorry to have kind of done that kind of theatre in your committee.’ He said, ‘look, that’s why you’re here and we expect from you.’ And he appreciates it. He votes against it, he votes against it all the time.”

In addition to the testimony of the advocates, most organizations noted that they use experts to provide testimony on the nature of problems or on the implications of proposed policy solutions. In fact, a couple of organizations indicated that they used more expert testimonies than they did the testimony of religious leaders. Regarding a bill to penalize those who coerce others into unwanted abortions, a conservative Christian advocate described how her organization utilized the testimony of a post-abortive counselor,

We were advocating for that bill, so we brought in someone who does post-abortive counseling, where she has very specific instances of women who regret their abortion because they were forced, either physically or they weren’t going to be able to keep custody of other children or financial withholding where clearly, the woman did not have a choice. So, we’re trying to use more expert testimony than we do religious testimony.

This organization, like others, utilized knowledgeable individuals from the community who would support the argument being advanced by the advocates.

Contribute to legislation

Religious advocates frequently engage with legislators to propose, contribute to, or amend legislation. As a part of offensive and defensive efforts, lobbyists will suggest changes in the language of bills to make them more congruent with their policy aims.

During the 2007 session, a Catholic advocate described proposed legislation on immigration that

...was really problematic and would have, maybe, ensnared people who are trying to help the poor in an emergency situation. And so we negotiated – and others - with the bill sponsor and it wasn't his intent to do that but he wasn't willing to pull the bill.

This advocate and other religious and non-profit lobbyists were able to work with the legislator and legislative services to get the bill amended. In addition to working with legislators to amend bills, the lobbyists also work closely with legislators, legislative aides, and legislative services to craft legislation that is congruent with their overall advocacy efforts. An advocate from a Christian organization described how her organization contributes to legislation,

Sometimes it is as simple as we give the idea to a legislator. They give it to legislative services. If it comes back around, we're all looking at the draft, fixing it. Sometimes it's much more detailed. Sometimes we actually say well, I want it to look like this, this and this...

For one grassroots Catholic organization, such proactive efforts are the hallmark of their work. Each year the organization chooses what issue it will focus on, seeks a legislator to patron the bill, and then works with the legislator's staff and with legislative services to suggest language for the bill. As the group's coordinator stated,

I guess our criteria is that we have to be involved from the front, because when you advocate with the legislators, if you say well I'm concerned about homelessness, I'm concerned about hunger, I'm concerned about wages, unless you can say who the patron is and what the bill is and the specifics to tell those legislators, you're wasting your time. You'll hear, "oh, yeah, I agree," but if there's no bill it's easy to agree.

The group depends on its relationship with the legislator and their joint involvement from a bill's inception to increase the likelihood of its success.

Coalitions

The direct lobbying activities of religious advocacy organizations are often conducted in coalition with a variety of partners. Whether in ongoing collaboration or discrete issue-related efforts, religious advocates benefit from the collective power of coalitions and the relationships they are able to access through coalitions. As one Jewish advocate noted,

I felt particularly when we joined coalitions that it was pretty spectacular. There were times when we all couldn't speak but we were paraded across, this is our coalition these are the people who are standing together with us on this particular issue and I think that was always really powerful.

A Muslim advocate described how important it is for his organization to act in coalition with others,

For us to define the problems beyond general terms like poverty, children, health care, it takes time. And to define the solutions are even harder because we're barely on the radar. So you've got to work with coalitions and other groups.

One of the most powerful coalitions of the 2007 legislative session was the one formed around ending the practice of payday lending. An interfaith advocacy group was one of the early coalition partners and was joined by other religious groups focused on poverty and social justice issues. The coalition also included the Virginia chapter of the

NAACP, the AFL-CIO and the Legal Aid Justice Center, among others. Reflecting the adage that “politics makes strange bedfellows,” a conservative Christian organization eventually joined the coalition although it fell outside of its stated policy priorities. The organization had been approached by a delegate who patroned a repeal bill and asked them to participate. A board member of the Christian organization recalled that her husband had overheard a man saying in a committee meeting, “Well my goodness, I never thought I would be in the same place with the [organization].” A different delegate noted,

There was also, on the pay day lending in particular, there was a huge and strange coalition of the NAACP, the AFL-CIO, and I the [Christian religious advocacy organization], all together...when you see that, personally it makes [you] give it a little extra thought because wow, all these groups agree...in this particular case I think, gee, they may be right if all these other organizations, or maybe there is something that I’m not catching.

Presence

In addition to the above activities, most religious advocates noted that showing up in the halls of the legislature, in committee meetings during and off session, and at other legislatively-related events is an important activity they use to accomplish their work. As one interfaith advocate explained, “So there are lots of times when I don’t even need to testify as long as I make my presence known to them, then I’m sending a statement.” As a Muslim advocate notes, “Well my presence there speaking a different language, a different terminology, coming from a different community. Mentioning the name of my organization by itself is an acknowledgement of the presence of the Muslim community.” For this advocate, simply participating in the process helps to accomplish

some of his organization's goals for legislative advocacy – to demonstrate his minority religion to an unfamiliar audience. An interfaith advocate for LGBT equality describes this presence as “witness” saying, “We will be there as a witness that the faith community of Virginia stands for equality with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender folks.” Table 4.11 summarizes the study's key themes and activities concerning relational lobbying.

Table 4.11: Overview of Relational Lobbying

Relational Lobbying: Key Themes and Activities	
Key Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Relationships are central to legislative advocacy efforts</i> • <i>Relationships are issue-related or based on common beliefs or values</i> • <i>Religious advocates do not use money or the courtering of financial or electoral favors to develop relationships</i> • <i>Relationships yield legitimacy to the advocates' legislative efforts.</i> • <i>Relationships based on issues or common beliefs or values may enable access to legislators</i> • <i>The relational aspect of direct lobbying is supported by religious traditions.</i>
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits • Special Events • Provide Information • Testimony • Contribute to Legislation • Coalitions • Presence

Education and Engagement

Since Virginia's legislative session only meets 45 to 60 days per year, a significant portion of the calendar year is spent educating the grassroots. These outsider activities, described below, include speaking engagements, provision of pertinent

information, special events, use of the media, and finally the engagement of the grassroots in direct advocacy activities. Within these activities, the specific content of the grassroots efforts differs among organizations. Some common themes, however describe the nature of the educational efforts. First, *religious advocates regularly teach their grassroots about their religious responsibility to participate in legislative efforts that affect policy change*. Emphasizing religious mandates, advocates use common sacred texts, doctrine, and common religious experiences to discuss the necessity of participation. When talking to their grassroots, religious rationale is presented or preached. As a staff member of an interfaith organization noted, “This [is a] faith experience, people really stepping outside of themselves a little bit, regardless if it’s in a temple or a mosque or in a church.” For all of the advocates, “stepping outside of themselves” is grounded in religious beliefs.

Related, *grassroots education and awareness activities use religious references to help individuals understand the nature of legislative efforts*. A number of religious advocates use religious stories and concepts to sensitize individuals to the realities of the legislative context. Stories of struggle and eventual transformation are used to discuss the ongoing efforts that will be necessary to affect change. A board member noted the importance of those stories in his organization’s efforts to mobilize congregations to work on behalf of equality for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) community,

The stories that were important for the Jewish community, and it started with the pogroms and the holocaust, and persecution over centuries. Those that were important to the African-American community in the United States and slavery

and the era of Jim Crow, those that were important to Christians in other parts of the world involved in the struggles against oppression in Latin America or in Apartheid in South Africa or in any number of other places. You know, those stories about God's ultimate hope for the human family, to live as a family, to be a part of a whole community that's in community with people who are in community with one another across lines of race or sexual orientation or ethnicity. I mean, those stories are also incredibly important.

An executive director from a Christian organization described the use of biblical stories to help her grassroots understand the need for incremental steps in their ongoing efforts to end abortion. "There are times where we actually walk into the scripture and show them examples of 'by the way did you realize that this was incremental.' You know, God gave them over the lands not all at once, but here and then here and then here." For this advocate, the use of sacred texts helps prepare "purist" constituents for the incremental work that will need to be done to accomplish their ultimate goal of making Virginia the "most pro-life state in the nation." She went on to say concerning incrementalism, "There's actually a lot that speaks to that."

Third, *educational efforts teach the grassroots about the issues on which the religious advocacy organization is active.* While understanding the religious dimensions of advocacy efforts are important, advocates work equally hard to make sure constituents understand the issues their organization addresses. Explanations of issues range from the history of social problems to the insufficiency of current policy solutions to adequately address the problems to the proposed solutions the organization is making to resolve the problems. Through speaking engagements, events, and specialized curriculum, advocates work to create informed citizens who will work with them to achieve their legislative goals.

Fourth, *educational efforts teach individuals how to engage in the legislative process*. Through activities and events, individuals often learn who their elected officials are, how to contact them, how to visit the Virginia General Assembly, and sometimes even the processes and purposes of state government. One board member of a Catholic organization described how she orients individuals to the General Assembly building,

We will meet you in Richmond. I have done that, to get people to come in and walk through, small groups of people and start at the basement, here's the pressroom, here's where you pick up the bills. This floor is the cafeteria, the restrooms are usually here. I always start on the top floor and have a list of who to see and I work my way down, because the elevators are [crowded] and I can walk down steps, but not up steps as well. Here's the staffroom for the delegates, here's the senate, here's where you come into the desk and ask for such and such, you look at the bulletin board and this and such. All that stuff that nobody told me.

Related, *religious advocates teach their grassroots about citizen rights to participate in the legislative process*. For a number of advocates this means confronting the belief that communities of faith cannot participate in the public process because of various interpretations of the separation of church and state. A staff member of a Christian organization described the concerns he hears,

I think the biggest tension we have is actually with the church that fears political activism or that doesn't understand their call to political activism. There are a lot of Christian churches where there's a fear of the IRS the [501](c)3 status, "I can't really do that can I? I thought that was against the law." And they don't understand it. They can speak out on issues all the time and there's no restriction on that.

An interfaith advocate noted that in addition to teaching members about citizen participation in the political process, his organization also spends time teaching them

the difference between partisanship and participation. “We have to constantly remind people that we’re not working in politics, we’re working in policy change. And, that’s sometimes very difficult, because the trend in society is to boil everything down to the politics.”

Finally, for all of the focal organizations, *education and awareness efforts are not simply conducted for the sake of education and awareness. They are conducted to engage individuals in legislative action.* As one advocate noted,

You know, we want to get people together and find out where people can work together on issues, and we want very practical actions of solidarity. We don't want to sit around, we don't do dialogue. We don't hold hands and sing Kum ba yah. We are very nimble, very action oriented.

The education and awareness activities conducted by the organizations are for the purpose of affecting legislative change on the range of issues embraced by religious advocacy organizations. Advocates seem keenly aware that without their grassroots exerting pressure, their goals would be much more difficult to accomplish. As a board member of an interfaith organization stated,

Ultimately, for [us] to have successes, it’s not going to be because [we] can walk into a legislator and close the door and say, alright, I’m going to tell you how to vote on this. You can do that and get one or two seats, but ultimately, it’s the voice of the people that have to be heard.

For most organizations, the educative work is valuable in and of itself, but is incomplete without eventual and sustained legislative action from the grassroots. The education and awareness activities described below describe how advocates work to engage their grassroots.

Speaking engagements

A principal means of educating the grassroots is through a number of varied speaking engagements throughout the year. Religious advocates are often asked to speak in mosques, synagogues, congregations, and other constituent organizations. One Christian advocate described his typical activity when he's not at the General Assembly,

...I preach in about a hundred churches each year. One service in the morning, one at night, then some Wednesday nights or other times as it would fit in, explaining the work of [the organization] and then, of course, we're trying to raise funds to keep the organization going, and to encourage the people to be involved in the process of government.

Advocates use congregational and other forums including schools, nursing homes, and other community groups to educate the grassroots about their work, their issues, and how individuals and organizations can get involved. As a twist on this typical means of connecting with the grassroots, one organization mounted a "health care listening tour" that provided a forum for individuals to voice their concerns about the current health care system, but also learn more about the organization's efforts on that front. Information gleaned from the tour conversations will be used to shape future policy initiatives and further involve participating constituents in the legislative process.

Provide information

Speaking engagements often involve the distribution of educational materials including, among others, issue briefs, information about the legislative process, and information about constituents' legislators. A staff member of an interfaith organization described some material her organization is currently developing,

Right now we're working on Sunday School curriculum. We have bulletin board information that we're putting together so that each month, churches have bulletin board information to put up. We're calling it our bulletin board series, so each month is a little bit different. Churches can just download the material from our web site and then put up a social justice information board. But it's through products like that that we're able to have in hand and "sell" to people so that they know what we're about and in doing all of that, it mobilizes them.

The information provided and the means of providing it range from high tech to low tech, with some organizations using sophisticated web-based tools and email and others using mail to disseminate information.

At least three organizations, one of which has a separate 501(c)4 designation, provide election related materials or verbal information to their grassroots. As one executive director noted, "What we try to do is expose those who opposed us and in an election year, like this year, urge the citizens to get a new Senator, get a new Delegate." Through voter guides and legislator report cards, these organizations inform their members and interested parties about the voting records of legislators up for re-election and their congruence or incongruence with the aims of the religious advocacy organization.

Special events

All of the focal groups conduct special events to accomplish their educative and action oriented goals. Most groups participate in one or more advocacy days at the General Assembly during session. The religious advocacy organizations make a concerted effort to attract as many members of their grassroots as possible, sometimes busing participants in from various parts of the state. Participants meet in a location near the General Assembly where they hear from the religious advocates, community

leaders, and often, elected officials. A board member of an interfaith group described their lobby day for people of all faith traditions,

When we have lobby day, we divide it into three groups. There's lobbying 101 or, "I've never, never done this before in my life, I don't have the slightest idea of what to do first." So, that's the first one. Then we have intermediate and advanced. And that's good, because then for those who are coming for the first time, they can walk across the street and have some sense of confidence that they're not going to totally look foolish.

Following breakfast and the speakers, constituents spend the remainder of the day listening to committee meetings, meeting with their legislators, and requesting action on the religious advocacy organization's issues. As a board member for a Jewish organization muses, "Here we are in numbers, like doctors showing up in their white coats." Other special events like conferences and the health care listening tour mentioned above are conducted throughout the year, most of which are held in local communities.

Media

Many of the organizations, particularly the larger ones, described "leveraging the media." Media efforts such as newspaper articles, press conferences, letters to the editor, or op-ed pieces are used to inform and mobilize constituents and also communicate to legislative officials. Media is often used strategically to influence legislators who have key committee votes. An executive director of a religious advocacy organization described the use of the media during the legislative fight over pay day lending,

I can walk out of a committee room if I hear Johnny Joannou say, "if the federal government says we should cap pay day lending at 36% for the military, it

should be that way for everybody.” But literally, I have walked out of a committee room to do that, looked at [a staff member] and say, “I need three letters to the editor in this newspaper saying Johnny Joannou is right.”

The grassroots are often used, as are religious leaders, in media-related efforts. A staff member of an interfaith organization described her organization’s efforts,

We definitely mobilize our grassroots to do things like write letters to the editor, sometimes special op-eds. Occasionally we’ll ask those higher ups, the religious executives, to do some of that writing, too. Occasionally, particularly during the general assembly session, we’ll organize press conferences around issues and have those religious leaders come to the press conferences, that way we’re affecting the legislature, indirectly, but it’s still influencing them.

Facilitate direct lobbying

As noted above, the focal organizations in the study provide education and awareness activities to engage their grassroots in direct advocacy with the Virginia legislature. As such, the speaking engagements, educational materials, and events are used to encourage, motivate, and enable the grassroots to email, write, call, or visit their legislator. Some organizations facilitate this process through sophisticated websites that provide necessary contact information and suggested text for emails to legislators and their staff. Others use email alert lists that provide similar information. An advocate in a Christian organization describes his organization’s use of email to engage the grassroots,

We use the internet and email, the electronic age made that a much easier thing to do. Fifteen years ago it was fax alerts and they had to call people and that kind of thing. Email has changed it completely where we can send an email right now and have a hundred emails in legislators’ boxes in a couple of hours. Last year there was time when there was a debate on the floor of the House and it wasn’t going well. We put out an email alert and said email your legislatures right now... Fifteen minutes later a legislator stood up and said “I’m already getting emails on this issue.”

One conservative Christian organization uses a phone tree to pastors of participating churches to alert them on needed actions so they, in turn, can alert their congregations. Since early in the 1980s, one Catholic organization has been using an annual holiday greeting card, typically green, to legislators to draw attention to their primary focus for the upcoming legislative session. The advocacy group uses its annual fall conference and visits to local parishes and congregations to encourage the grassroots to send “holiday greetings” to their legislators. The coordinator of the group noted that on more than one occasion, he’s heard a legislative aide whisper in the ear of a legislator, “These are the people that sent all the green cards.” Through a number of education and awareness activities utilizing various means to contact legislators, the nine religious advocacy organizations in this study encourage their grassroots to participate in the public square. Table 4:12 summarizes their education and awareness activities, as well as their relational lobbying activities.

Table 4.12: Education and Awareness

Education and Awareness: Key Themes and Activities	
Key Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Religious advocates regularly teach their grassroots about religious responsibility to participate in legislative efforts that affect policy change</i> • <i>Grassroots education and awareness activities use religious references to help individuals understand the nature of legislative efforts</i> • <i>Educational efforts teach the grassroots about the issues on which the religious advocacy organization is active</i> • <i>Educational efforts teach individuals how to engage in the legislative process</i> • <i>Religious advocates teach their grassroots about citizen rights to participate in the legislative process</i> • <i>Education and awareness efforts are not simply conducted for the sake of education and awareness, but to engage individuals in legislative action</i>
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking Engagements • Provide Information • Special Events • Media • Facilitate Direct Lobbying

Meaning & Advocacy in Religious Lobbying Organizations

In addition to the activities of relational lobbying and education and engagement with constituents, the responses of the research participants revealed four themes that lent meaning to their advocacy efforts: 1) mandate, 2) decision-making, 3) representing, and 4) defining success. These categories not only further describe the activities in which religious organizations engage, but also begin to capture the meaning associated with these activities, the focus of the study's second research question, *What meaning do faith-related lobbying organizations assign to their activities?* Attention to the common understandings of their work also addresses and is congruent with the

symbolic interactionist framework of the study discussed in Chapter 3. The following themes describe a “common set of symbols and understandings” that emerged that “give meaning to people’s lives” (Patton, 2002, p. 112). It is this common understanding that distinguishes the efforts of these organizations as uniquely religious.

Mandate

Central to the work of these religious advocacy organizations are the religious beliefs that provide the impetus for their initial and continued engagement in the legislative arena. *The act of engaging in legislative advocacy is for the advocates a mandate of their beliefs.* One advocate in a grassroots Christian group expressed the mandate in this way, “...the faith-based driver to my advocacy is a spiritual compass or center or a I don’t know, a grounding, that allows me to live my faith through what I do with elected officials to benefit others.” The “driver” for the advocates is described using sacred texts, religious doctrine, and in some cases, historical and current experiences. Despite differences along theological and political lines, the organizational stakeholders interviewed indicated that engaging in legislative advocacy was fulfilling a personal and collective requirement of their religion.

Respondents drew on a number of concepts and stories from sacred texts to describe this mandate. Among Jewish and interfaith respondents, Tikkun Olam meaning, “repair the world,” was frequently noted as foundational to the work of their organizations. One Jewish lay leader described the concept as illustrated through Kabala, the Jewish mystic tradition,

There is a tradition in Kabala that talks about the fact that God in his infinite wisdom and love created a vessel into which he wanted to pour this perfect love, but his love was too powerful to contain it and it exploded, and this ties into the big bang theory of the creation of the universe. So, what we have are all of these shards that exist within the universe, and specifically within our world and these shards need to be put back together to make us whole again. And this is where we get Tikkun Olam, to repair the world, and this is exactly what informs me as a Jew and what informs many others as a Jew, repairing the world with goodness and altruism and kindness. And it is our responsibility to try to restore that which has been shattered. And that is a very overriding belief that I have as a Jew. It is my responsibility in repairing that world not only for Jews, but obviously for everybody....

A professional from a Jewish organization also cited Rabbi Hillel from the first century who said, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am not for others, what am I? And if not now, when?” For these Jewish advocates, the concept of Tikkun Olam and Rabbi Hillel’s statement, among others requires them to participate in the well-being of the Jewish and the broader community.

Muslim and Christian advocates also used sacred texts and doctrine to describe their religious beliefs that mandate their participation in legislative advocacy. Zakat, or giving to the poor, is one of the five pillars of Islam and requires annual giving to the poor. According to a passage from the Koran noted on an organization’s website,

It is righteousness to believe in God and the Judgment Day, and the Angels, and the Holy Books and the Messengers, to spend your substance, out of love for God, for your kin, for the orphans, for the needy, for the travelers, for those who ask, and the ransom of slaves.

An advocate at an interfaith organization also noted that sacred texts from all three Abrahamic traditions are used “in describing our mandate from God to work on a solution for the problem(s).” She went on to discuss Christian passages that mandate her advocacy,

Love God with all your heart, mind and soul. Love your neighbor as yourself. There's that and the golden rule, do unto others as you'd have done to you. Those two things are what we strive to represent... that's what we really strive to represent in all that we do. That's the angle, is that we'll have policies that in some way represent that, that we're being compassionate to all, that we're loving all.

For a number of advocates, the impetus to act in the public square defines any such action as an expression of faith. A number of Christian advocates for social justice and poverty issues cited a passage in the Christian book of Matthew,

Well, you know it's the...Matthew 25...it says, "when you did it for the least of mine, you did it for me." So I always tell people, when we speak for the least, we are also speaking for Christ, just as if we were giving them food, or if they need clothing or shelter, you do it for them, you do it for Christ. If you speak or you advocate for them, it follows also that you're doing it for Christ... So you know, you say when you do it for the single mother or the person who's homeless on the street or the drug addict, you know, you see in their face, the face of Christ. You're doing it for Christ. I think that's the single most compelling or driving...that drives our compassion or our action. To put action into the Beatitudes.

As an expression, advocacy activities provide individuals with the means to "do it for Christ" and demonstrate their commitment to their religious tradition and indicate their willingness to respond to the mandate described in their sacred texts. Advocates described their participation in the process as a religious calling and that faithfulness to such a calling constituted an act of religious devotion.

While this advocate found a mandate in Christian Scripture for action on issues of poverty and social justice, other Christian lobbyists cited Scripture that emphasized a mandate on different issues. An advocate from a Protestant organization noted that "good government is going to follow the principles of the Word of God." He went on to cite the Ten Commandments as directives to maintain good government,

The Ten Commandments, really the six commandments because the first four deal with man's relationship to God, so, we should say the six commandments are really the basis of our law. And so, thou shall not steal, thou shall not commit adultery, you know, and so on... So, those are the basic core principles and God has given us this government and God has, we need to keep it... we need to keep that government.

For this advocate, the Ten Commandments and other Biblical passages require his organization's action on issues concerning parental rights, the definition of marriage, and the proper role of government in enforcing principles yet refraining from undue interference in churches.

In addition to finding impetus for advocacy in their sacred texts, religious lobbyists, particularly Catholics, also draw from religious doctrinal traditions as further impetus for their actions. Several Catholic advocates noted the "preferential option for the poor" from Catholic social teaching as foundational to their work. A Catholic advocate noted the following quote from the World Synod of Catholic Bishops in 1971 to describe the poor as "neighbor" in Biblical tradition, "For a Christian, love of neighbor and justice cannot be separated. For love implies the absolute demand for justice, recognition of dignity and the rights of one's neighbor." Some Catholics also named the "culture of life," drawn from Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical letter entitled *The Gospel of Life*, as rationale for their efforts to oppose abortion, stem cell research, euthanasia, and the death penalty.

Religious historical experience was described by several advocates as constitutive of the mandate for their advocacy efforts. Conservative Christian advocates noted the historical importance of religious liberty that influences their efforts to protect

the free exercise of religion. Speaking of religious freedom as the foundation of the nation, one advocate stated,

People who came here, that's a big motivation of why they came here, and that is how we're set up and there's an effort to deny, a huge effort to deny that there were...there was prayer in every piece of government. There were in all of the states that have their original charters, if you look. It's just, I mean, it's just replete with religious language.

An advocate in another Christian organization noted the importance of religious liberty because of his denomination's experience of religious persecution in the early years of the United States. He noted, "...out here at the Chesterfield jail...Pastors were jailed for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In Culpepper, I think, about 30 were in jail at one time for preaching and so [we] are very sensitive about that..."

Noting their own history of religious persecution, Jewish advocates used their experiences to emphasize a separation of church and state, particularly the wall of separation that prevents any religious group from establishing their ideology as the dominant ideology of the public square. Most Jewish professionals and lay leaders noted the historical persecution of the Jewish people, particularly at the hands of Nazi Germany, as a catalyst for their advocacy. During the 2007 session, in response to the genocide in Darfur, Jewish advocates worked with legislators to craft legislation requiring the Virginia Retirement System to divest from its holdings that benefit Sudan, even though such action was atypical. An advocate noted that because of their collective experiences, "domestic affairs [committee] developed a draft statement for our board and our board agreed that genocide raises the bar and we have a responsibility to act." The experience of the Holocaust also motivates Jewish activity around issues of bias

and discrimination. Muslim advocates are also active on issues of bias and discrimination in large part because of their current experiences as a religious minority in the United States and because of Islam's frequent association with terrorism.

For these advocates, historical and current experience adds additional impulse to the advocates' religious beliefs that require their activity in the public square. Whether expressed through experiences, doctrine, or sacred texts, religious lobbyists are active in the Commonwealth of Virginia as a response to their religious convictions. Table 4:13 lists the themes of religious concepts discussed by the study respondents that both mandate and shape their work. In reflecting on the rationale for religious advocacy, one Catholic advocate stated,

I think that those that are out there, that is why they're out there. They're not there for the money. They're not there because they're famous people [laughing] and want some recognition. You know, they're not being paid and even the paid people are not paid very much. You know, they're there because you know, their beliefs and their values, it is part of their life.

Or as an interfaith advocate noted emphatically, "I feel called to speak on behalf of the Kingdom of God, period."

Table 4.13: Religious Concepts

Religious Concepts Discussed by Respondents		
Transformation	Judgment	Religious Freedom
Struggle	Charity	Hope
Unlikely Strength	Social Justice	Advocacy
Relationships	Civic Involvement	Personal Responsibility
Principles for Government	Sin	

Decision-Making

The decision to engage in legislative advocacy and what issues to engage around seems to be a function of both the religious mandate and the legislative and issue contexts in which the organization works. The overall priorities of an organization, referred to here as *policy areas*, are established by the organization's interpretation of its mandate to serve. Respondents refer to these policy areas using a variety of terms – guiding principles, policy or position statements, resolutions, priorities – all referring to the positional framework within which they make decisions on individual issues and an agenda for a given year. Decisions made regarding the issues to pursue in any given year must typically fall within the policy areas and are a function of both religious beliefs and legislative and issue contexts. Table 4.14 below reviews the policy areas established by the organizations as reported by research participants and organizational literature.

Table 4.14: Policy Areas

Group	Religious Affiliation	Policy Areas
A	Jewish	First Amendment; Anti-Semitism and Racism; Israel Affairs; Constituent Organization Interests
B	Jewish	First Amendment; Bias and Discrimination; Social Justice
C	Christian, Protestant	Religious Liberty; Encroachment of the State; Principled Government
D	Interfaith	Tax equity; Poverty and the Working Poor; At-Risk Children and Youth; Criminal Justice, Care for Creation; Housing and Homelessness
E	Christian, Catholic	Social and Economic Justice
F	Christian	Life; Marriage; Parents; Religious Liberty; Constitutional Government
G	Muslim	Poverty; First Amendment; Immigration
H	Christian – Catholic	Respect Life; Social Justice; Education and Family Life
I	Interfaith	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Equality

Determination of policy areas

Table 4.14 reveals that the organizations examined focus their advocacy efforts within particular policy areas as determined by their interpretation of their religious mandate for action. Most organizations have multiple policy areas. These areas are determined by the organizations' guiding religious principles but are formed by a range of processes. For two of the focal organizations, their policy areas were formed by the development of the organization itself. One Catholic organization was formed for the purpose of social and economic justice and as such only gets involved in issues pertaining to poverty. Another interfaith organization was formed to advocate for the

freedom and equality of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community. These single issue organizations, with few if any exceptions, only consider legislation that addresses the issues for which they were developed.

One organization's policy areas are formed by the dictates of state judicatory leaders. In its denomination's hierarchy, the leaders determine the areas in which the advocacy organizations will be active. These areas are largely reflective of the national hierarchy. Staff in this organization understands that their job is to actualize the public policy intentions of the religious leaders. Within a well-established policy framework, they are able to engage freely on issues that fall within the policy areas determined by the religious leaders.

The policy areas of the remaining five organizations are determined, with some variation, by the organization's members or constituent bodies (one protestant organization does not have members but "freely assembled" churches and individuals). The organizations' boards of directors determine new policy through consensus and/or democratic process. For one interfaith organization, consensus among the constituent religious bodies and religious denominations is essential. Policy areas are not supported if agreement cannot be reached among the diverse faith perspectives. For two Jewish organizations, if new policy areas emerge, the responsible governing body will debate and conduct a vote, which, in a number of cases will be preceded by public forums. All community perspectives are voiced during the forum. For two Christian groups, governing bodies also use internal democratic processes to determine new policy areas in which to work. The independent Protestant denomination will allow anyone who

assembles with them at their yearly meeting to vote on “resolutions” that support work on new issues. In all of these organizations, staff members are free to work on issues that fall within established priorities but must seek approval from governing bodies prior to addressing issues that may fall outside these areas. One of these organizations, however, is directed by a leader who has a long tenure and generally guides the work of the organization. As a board member of the organization stated, “We just pretty much trust him with a lot of that.”

Policy areas avoided

For most focal organizations, the choice not to engage on certain issues is a strategic one. As briefly mentioned above, one interfaith organization intentionally chooses to avoid policy areas on which their membership and constituent organizations cannot agree in order to remain “on message” to legislators and preserve their collective power on those issues for which there is broad agreement. For this reason, the organization does not engage in “pelvic politics” – or on issues regarding sexuality and sexual orientation – since there is no consensus among members regarding these issues. Other organizations also choose to avoid policy arenas and specific issues where their individual and constituent members are not in agreement. A board member of a Jewish organization noted that the Jewish community is not monolithic and their members have a range of opinions on many issues. When satisfactory consensus cannot be reached on an issue, the board may choose to inform the legislature about the various positions of the local Jewish community on the proposed legislation and discuss all the potential implication of the bill’s passage.

Religious advocacy organizations also avoid some policy areas because they consider involvement as mission drift and because other groups are already advocating in that area. The executive director of an interfaith organization discussed their organization's strategic decision regarding the Marriage Amendment that passed in 2006,

Many of our members would have loved for us to have taken a stand one way or another on the Marriage Amendment. Our board clearly said that we would not take a stand on the Marriage Amendment because doing that, doing so would risk everything else on our priorities. That would risk the way we speak about a lot of our issues to the legislature and it would have just sucked us into a very divisive [fight]...

The advocate went on to say that marriage was already addressed by other members of the faith community. For a Catholic organization that was founded to address poverty, anything outside of the area of social and economic justice suggests a departure from the group's original mission. With consternation from a local legislator and some religious leaders and parishioners, the group avoids issues such as abortion and embryonic stem cell research that are addressed by the Catholic Church's "culture of life." As a member of the organization's steering committee stated, "Abortion... is a hot issue with a lot of Christians but it's just not our issue, there is plenty of other advocacy on that issue."

Agenda setting

Within the parameters of the organizations' policy area(s), a yearly agenda setting process determines the specific bills that will be focused on in the upcoming legislative session. This varies among groups, but there are some common processes.

First, all of the organizations conduct “research” to determine the forecasted tenor of the upcoming legislative session. Much of this research is conducted informally through conversation with legislators, their aides, political officials, and coalition partners. Several organizations conduct more formal research processes on issues, the budget, and trends in other states and federal government. Several organizations hire or utilize graduate school interns for this work. Others contract for such services or conduct more formal inquiries themselves.

Second, several organizations poll their members or mailing lists to determine the issues that are important to their grassroots. Community members are asked to either prioritize a list of supplied issues or to suggest what they feel should be addressed by state government. Third, coalition partners are consulted to gauge their priorities and their perceptions of the legislative context for the next session. All of the organizations note a number of other groups they collaborate with on a regular basis. Fourth, staff or a committee use the information they have gathered and their own discretion to draft an agenda for the upcoming legislative session. And finally, the group’s governing body votes to approve the annual agenda.

Prophetic & pragmatic

Those interviewed suggested that the rationale for including issues on a yearly agenda is prophetic, pragmatic, or both. While all issues were those of religious import, religious advocates view some as prophetic. According to an interfaith advocate,

The prophetic issues are issues like the death penalty. The death penalty is not going to end in Virginia this year or next year. But we're going to advocate for the end of the death penalty both this year and next year, because it's where the

community of faith has to be prophetic. We are expected to be in that space, no one else is in that space on behalf of God. We don't expect to win the prophetic fight, but we have to be there.

A Catholic advocate described his organization's efforts to end abortion in much the same way,

And I guess that's where we would say our role is prophetic. Where we know that we are going to lose, but that it's important for us to be present and to just say that you know from a moral perspective we feel this is fundamentally wrong and that we...know we're going to lose, but that okay. It's important that we be there anyway. And to play that prophetic role in society.

The issues that are considered prophetic are those where there is likely no potential for compromise. Religious organizations opposed to the death penalty or abortion would not support legislation that allowed the expansion of the practices. Some, however, may work to “chip away” at the legality and impact of the practices even though it is not the desired abolishment of the practices. As another Catholic advocate notes, “Well the realistic goal doesn't always match the ideal goal. I mean, we think, you know, that *Roe v. Wade* should be overturned. But until that happens...We're just trying to reduce the number of abortions...”

The pragmatic issues, like the prophetic ones, are grounded in religious beliefs and conviction, but are also prioritized according to “whether there's a prospect of passage.” One advocate calls the pragmatic issues “compelling” since those are the bills on which the faith community might compel efforts toward success. Similarly, this and other religious advocates refer to their role on pragmatic issues as providing a “tipping point.” As an interfaith advocate noted,

It's all about the tipping point on issues. If [we] can really make a difference on an issue, then we should be working it. If [we are] not going to make a damn bit of difference because the General Assembly is not going to budge on it, but we're called to do it because our faith tells us to work the issue, like the death penalty, then we work it, but it becomes less of a priority because its not as likely that it would pass. I guess we prioritize based on where we think we can make the most difference.

Formal and informal research is crucial for the determination and prioritization of all issues, particularly the pragmatic ones. The information gleaned, particularly information from current or potential coalition partners allows religious advocates to assess the ripeness of the political context for the potential success of their efforts. As a board member of a Christian organization described,

Well, you know what we try to do is define ourselves by about five main things [policy areas]. Five things that we think are extremely important. And then...we look at what's going on in the world, look at what's going on in the legislature and then see how we might be able to have a positive impact on whatever is going on.

Although issues typically divide between the prophetic and pragmatic within an organization, there are a number of instances when an issue is defined as prophetic by one organization and pragmatic by another. One advocate commented about a fellow religious advocate that, "Once [the advocate] chooses an issue, it doesn't matter whether that issue would seem in the realm of possibility or not." For the other advocacy organization, however, the issue was not a pragmatic one, but a prophetic one that must be addressed. As an advocate for the group stated,

I mean, often, I am told, "Don't ask for that. This isn't the year...Or don't do that." When I started with the earned income tax credit, [the organization] was the only one that went and the Coalition for the Homeless. And everybody else said, "It will never happen." And I just thought, well, it will never happen if we do not raise it, the issue that poor people should not be paying taxes and if it

takes my lifetime or somebody else's we have to raise the issue...And, so I think well, that's for them to do their work which is something they think they have a better chance that they can do and that is good. But maybe mine is just to keep pressing with what I really feel needs to happen. I'm not there to win. You know, you are there to serve, so, you just keep, you know, you just keep at it.

Strategic use of religion

Despite the fact that issues fall within a framework that is determined by an organization's response to religious beliefs, most advocates either choose not to use religious language or religious rationale or choose to use it sparingly to substantiate their legislative arguments when communicating with legislators. As one conservative Christian advocate stated, "You'll never see [us] walking and talking about the Bible. You just won't see it." Instead, the advocates use a number of non-religious arguments to substantiate their positions. The advocate went on to explain,

We look at it as speaking the language that makes the most sense, meaning people know what we are. We don't hide from what we are. There's no question that they know we're faith based, but if I go into the legislator and talk about something being wrong because the Bible said so, 50% of that room is going to close or shut their ears immediately because they have no idea what you're talking about. They don't care. So, why would I use that in that context? So, we almost never use that in the legislature.

For this and other advocates, the use of religious language may alienate legislators on whom they depend for legislative success. As a Catholic advocate noted about using religious arguments, "once you do that then you either get in to a debate of person A's interpretation of the Bible versus person B's or you have this impression in their mind that what you are trying to do is cram a particular religion down my throat."

The Catholic advocate went on to note that the values they advocate are broader human values that can be applied regardless of religious specificities,

I like to keep it on the level of principle. Human rights and government's most basic responsibility is to protect and safeguard these human rights and people of many different religious faiths should all agree on what these human rights are and how they play out.

A Muslim advocate notes a similar rationale, "Ethics, morals... we think it's a God given right...we use a language that is inclusive of all...to be honest with you, some of these issues are not particularly Muslim or Jewish or Christian. They are issues of faith, issues of humanity." A Jewish advocate stated that it would be inconsistent for her to tell legislators, "the Bible says this, and so you need to do that" since part of her organization's purpose, as a minority religion, is to remind legislators that they represent all Virginians, not just the Christian majority.

Some religious advocates suggest that there is no need to use overtly religious arguments to accomplish their legislative purposes. As the Christian advocate noted above, legislators already know the religious advocates. Whether by relationship, reputation, or the religious nature of their organizational name, legislators and their staff rarely need further introduction to individuals who are regularly a part of the legislative context. For a number of advocates their presence is sufficient to convey their religious purposes. No further explanation is needed. In addition, several advocates note that they do not need to verbalize their religious background or intentions to feel as if they are being true to their calling. As a Catholic advocate states,

Tom Delay and Newt Gingrich want to wear theirs on their sleeve. We don't have to. We live this. I walked in with my spiritual helpers. I've got angels on my shoulder and I've got whatever is going on upstairs. I don't have to verbalize that to have it with me.

Despite the general lack of utilization of religious arguments at the legislature, a couple of exceptions were found. First, while religious advocates generally will not use religious arguments to talk about the problems or justify their policy positions, most will use religious language to describe their rationale for working on a particular issue or describe their mandate for engaging in legislative action. As a staff member of an interfaith organization discussed, “It’s often not used in describing the problem per se, but in describing our mandate from God to work on a solution for the problem.”

Second, a number of advocates will engage in religious dialogue if they know that the legislator shares similar beliefs. As the executive director of a Protestant Christian organization described,

If I know the legislator is one who has strong biblical convictions, then I’m going to approach it from that standpoint. But I understand that many of the legislators don’t have a strong, I shouldn’t say many, but I’ll say some legislators do not have strong background on these areas or have misconceptions of what the bible teaches and so in those cases I will approach it from their perspective. I always approach the legislator, try to approach him from where he is.

Third, there are times in the midst of testimony or in the heat of a committee meeting, that advocates may choose to employ religious arguments. As one interfaith advocate stated,

Our language isn’t dogmatic in a theological way. But then again, I have to admit to you that I don’t hesitate saying Jesus in testimony and things like that. But my perspective is like it’s that compelling and prophetic... In a prophetic way, you find yourself using language that you wouldn’t use on the compelling. On the compelling, you might talk about the moral imperatives. For the prophetic, you might say, as we did at the federal food stamp cut, a couple of years ago that we worked against. They are saving food stamps with one cut. Jesus wouldn’t cut food stamps. So, you don’t want to use faith to demagogue, but at the same time, we shouldn’t shy away from those foundational elements

of our faiths just because we don't want to offend anybody. It is a real hard balance, you just have to make sure you don't dwell in moralisms, because you probably get, you know, two shots a session to be really moralistic and by the third one, everybody turns off, right? You know, they will turn to the 700 Club if they want to know that.

Finally, religious advocates regularly use religion to engage their grassroots. All advocates noted direct and indirect references to religion in their interactions with their constituents.

Strategic use of tactics

In addition to strategically employing religious arguments, advocates indicate that they also strategically employ the specific tactics or activities that were discussed earlier in the chapter. Advocates regularly strategize with coalition partners, legislators, political leaders, and religious leaders, in addition to their staff and constituents to determine the appropriate use of direct lobbying and grassroots engagement activities. As much as possible, advocates try to accomplish their legislative purposes through the relationships they have developed in the legislature, with coalition partners and with elected officials. This is simultaneously done, however, with the mobilization of the grassroots to act on the same legislative issues. Advocates realize that a major source of their power is the use of their grassroots. This mobilization is done strategically, however in concert with their relational efforts. In addition to the strategic use of the activities described above, it is also important to note that “unruly” tactics are off the table for the advocates. An interfaith advocate distinguished between advocacy and activism to describe his organization's avoidance of such activities,

Activist is an old model that comes out of the 60s and what it says is... Let's take to the streets and let's protest. My philosophy is that activists want the whole world to hear what they think. And so that's why they're outsiders, they're outside and they have bull horns to say this is what I think. They're looking for their own voice and in some way, it is only reflective of them. And it's important to have activists sometimes to raise issues and say, "Look, there are people who diverge from your opinion." But where I think the model needs to shift to create change that isn't focused on myself, but its focused on the issues. And so while activists are on the outside saying "look at me", I think it's much better to have advocates working on the inside. We don't want people out on the streets, we want people in the legislature.

The advocate went on to say, "There is a time and place for everything," but re-emphasized that protest and other unruly activities are not a part of their strategic decision making.

Strategic use of relationships

Relationships, however, are a part of strategic decision-making as advocacy organizations coalesce with a number of other organizations for either ongoing or issue-related alliances. The focal organizations choose to ally with other organizations on a long-term basis because of a common faith-mandate or because of the aims of their organizations are congruent regardless of the underlying impetus for action. In addition to ongoing coalitions, the organizations develop short-term relationships to work on particular legislation or on a discrete issue. These are the coalitions that make strange bedfellows. All organizations participate in coalitions and choose, as a part of their regular decision-making, what organizations with which to develop relationships. These decisions are based on both expediency, shared goals, and in some cases common motivations.

In addition to relationships with other organizations, religious advocates strategically engage in relationships with individuals to accomplish their legislative aims. A committee member of an organization noted the access he has to political officials and information because of his affiliation with a local Democratic party. He uses those relationships to support his group's legislative work. He stated,

And so I have confidential access to elected officials from being in the Democratic Party. I am the treasurer of the county Democratic Party. So, all the elected officials always talk to me, okay. I can point to one of them and say "Hey, what happened over here?" Okay or this year we would like to try such and such, what do you think?

Advocates also utilize legislators, some of whom participate in the organization's strategic decision-making around common issues. A legislator described how he has assisted religious lobbyists,

I'll have people in my office and I'll say look, "It will be helpful if you got a couple of pastors in such and such's district to call." Um, on really major issues, I might seek to try and get some pastor's to preach on it on a particular weekend.

Some religious advocates noted that they use clergy and judicatory leaders in their efforts. Most noted, however, that they are cautious with their use of the state's key religious leaders. As such, a couple of organizations describe their strategic employment of the leaders' influence. As an interfaith advocate stated,

So, rather than treating these bishops and religious leaders in a way that kind of always goes to them whenever there comes a need, we try to make sure that we only go to them and ask them to pull the trigger when we need that voice to be the tipping point in the compelling argument. So a small funding issue about prenatal care where we know that we're getting more and more every year, I'm not going to call on the bishops to advocate for that. It's a great issue, it's an issue that they all agree with, but when we want to bring in the big voices, that's when I end up calling them.

Representing

The engagement of religious lobbying organizations in the lobbying and educational activities described earlier in the chapter constitutes an act of representation. As a faithful response to the impetus that drives their action, religious advocates indicate that they represent their God and their religious traditions, their constituent organizations and individuals, minority or alternative worldviews, and in many cases, members of vulnerable populations when they engage in legislative advocacy. This complex representation is detailed below.

God

A number of advocates noted that their work in the public square speaks for God. As noted in the above section on mandate, describing his organization's consistent work on the death penalty, an interfaith advocate stated, "We are expected to be in that space, no one else is in that space on behalf of God." He went on to note how legislators have described him and his staff as "God's lobbyists," working on behalf of God and the poor. As described above, many advocates note that they are acting on behalf of God when they do advocacy activities that attend to "the least of these." As a Catholic advocate states, "when we speak for the least, we are also speaking for Christ." In addition to representing God, these religious advocacy organizations are also representing the content and beliefs of their particular religious tradition or traditions.

Organization members

In addition to representing their God and their religious traditions, they also represent the groups and/or individuals that comprise their organization. One interfaith organization represents faith groups, judicatories, individual congregations, and individual members in their efforts at the General Assembly. A Christian organization notes that it represents approximately 20,000 Virginians consisting of individuals who have donated to them, attended a sponsored event, or have requested to be on their mailing list. In addition, the organization is the official lobbying arm of a conservative protestant judicatory in the state. For a grassroots Catholic organization, their constituents are the 700-1000 households that are on the coordinator's mailing list. A Jewish group is the representative voice of all the Jewish organizations in a region. As the executive director of an interfaith organization reminded his staff,

...even if you're not doing anything, go down to the General Assembly and be present, reminding legislators that there is this huge base out there of faithful people that are concerned about policy and they've kind of elected us, not directly, but they've given their money to us so that we can go advocate on their behalf. So I think our presence has made it okay to talk about faith and then remind folks that there's a huge faith community out there and they're riled up about a lot of things.

Determining the number of individuals an organization represents is not necessarily a straightforward process, particularly for organizations that represent religious leaders and judicatory bodies. Can those organizations legitimately claim to represent all of the individuals who attend a congregation that is a member of a judicatory represented by a religious lobbying organization? Several advocates recognize the quandary of this question. As one advocate noted,

It's about how you define the numbers and who you define them to. So, for instance, I can tell you we have between 700-800 individual donors. I can tell you that we have 7,000 people on our list of potential donors. And I can tell you that we interact with probably all of those at some point during the year. Our membership because it's also [member organizations], we add them in and we probably serve about 2.2 million Virginians. So when someone says how big is your membership? It's not true to say 2.2 million Virginians even though we are serving 2.2 million Virginians. And yet it's also not true that we only have 700 or 800 donors, because the [member organizations] represent a huge number..."

As an advocate in another organization explains, "...people can nitpick that if they want to. We say we represent over 20,000 Virginians...and that is people in our database that have contacted us." She goes on to say, once organizational constituents are included in the count, it is more accurate that they represent almost 300,000 Virginians.

Vulnerable populations

Religious advocates also represent the vulnerable populations for whom many of their policy efforts are conducted. All of the organizations name at least one vulnerable, voiceless, or marginalized population on whose behalf they advocate. Social justice and poverty advocates note the poor, immigrants, and sometimes criminals and ex-offenders as populations they represent in the legislative process. Other advocates work on behalf of the unborn through their efforts to end abortion and prevent government funding of embryonic stem cell research. Several advocacy organizations work on behalf of populations that experience discrimination and bias, such as racial, religious, or sexual minorities. Regardless of the particular population, all of the religious advocacy organizations note their religious calling to speak on behalf of the vulnerable, marginalized, and voiceless. As an interfaith advocate representing the poor stated, "We

are working to make sure that the voices of those that normally wouldn't be heard in the process are heard, and that's pretty key."

Representing vulnerable populations, however, does not necessarily mean the participation of those populations in the legislative activity or the formation of that activity. When queried about the participation of those they represent in legislative advocacy, most advocates for the poor noted that while they would welcome greater participation, the poor rarely participate in advocacy activities conducted on their behalf. As a Catholic advocate notes,

I just think the nature of the issues we work on were definitely taking their interest into concern and we're vigorously advocating on their behalf whether they are even aware of it or not... We look at the interest of everybody and try to push policies in the direction with preferential option for the poor. And so, I think through the nature of the issues that we have chosen to put onto our agenda, I think that we are giving these people voice.

Several religious advocates noted the sheer difficulty the working poor would face to visit a legislator. Another advocate states,

I have known poor mothers [who] did not have time to worry about calling their legislator about anything. They are worried about food today. They're worried about the sick child. They're worried about how I am going to get a ride to the doctor, whatever. And their needs are emergency and immediate and in the moment. And they live that way from crisis to crisis. And I have seen that first hand.

Another religious advocate notes the inaccessibility of the legislative process for many Virginians,

It is very - it's very tough with the system that Virginia has setup. It's very tough for the people who are in the poverty situation themselves to have a way to communicate. You can't even scratch down a letter, put it in an envelope and send it before they have voted on it. If you don't have email or a car, it's almost like forget it, you're not going to be able to participate directly in this process.

In addition to this inaccessibility, however, is an important nuance regarding the nature of this representation. While all the organizations that advocate on behalf of the poor express the desire to better engage those they represent, they also note that they are first called to be responsive to God and their religious beliefs. As one interfaith advocate notes, “We’re not advocating because we care about kids - we do - but it’s about us as faithful people, we’re called to advocate on behalf of that child and the poor and marginalized.”

Alternative & minority perspectives

Representing those voices that are not often heard in the political processes extends beyond vulnerable populations to the alternative or minority perspectives expressed by and through various religious traditions, particularly minority religions. As one Jewish advocate stated,

We remind the legislators that when they are basing their positions exclusively on theological grounding, that they are not representing all of Virginians....It’s trying to say, “We come at this from a different position. And there are probably a lot of other faith groups that come at it from a different faith perspective, so please try to respect and understand that you have a responsibility to represent all of us.”

For this advocate representation includes the non-Christian minorities. A Muslim advocate noted a similar notion,

So, I have a tough job. Because, I would say, the majority of the legislators, a good part of them, have never really talked directly with a Muslim person. I mean, I’m realistic. Half of them come from rural Virginia and I mean, why would they talk to someone like me in their district? So, part of my work is just going there and simply being there, talking to people...

He went on to say, “Well my presence there is speaking a different language, a different terminology, coming from a different community. Mentioning the name of my organization by itself is an acknowledgement of the presence of the Muslim community.”

In addition to minority religious perspectives, several conservative Christian advocates and board members noted that they represent a minority worldview. As a board member of a Christian organization stated, “My worldview is a minority one, so my association with the [organization] allows me to have a spokesperson for a worldview that is more in keeping with my faith.” This and other respondents noted that their worldview was endangered and needed sustained advocacy efforts to protect and ensure a way of life.

Defining Success

Most organizations consider themselves relatively successful at their efforts and cite a number of legislative victories that point to their success. Respondents characterized success in a number of ways. Most indicated that success was difficult to define because of the incremental nature of their work and as discussed below, legislative victories are only one aspect of their successful advocacy. They described success as incremental and more often than not, only expected to achieve legislative victories over a period of time. A Protestant advocate described his organization’s decade long effort to exempt church childcare programs from licensure. Citing the First Amendment clause that the government “shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise” of religion, he described a bill that passed in the 1979 legislature. The bill was

appealed and upheld in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and was then appealed and upheld in United States Supreme Court in 1989. He noted,

...we felt very strongly that these daycares were a part of our ministry, and we would not permit the state to license our Sunday school, we will not permit the state to license our youth ministries, wouldn't permit to license our Sunday morning services, Wednesday services. So why would we allow them to license daycare? So, that was a ten-year battle.

Most advocates also described legislative success as temporary citing initial victories and then reversals or other changes in the legislation. The Protestant advocate went on to describe how his organization had helped defeat the lottery in Virginia for six years in a row before it passed.

Legislative victories measured by bill passage or progress, however, are not the only, or even the most meaningful indicators for these advocates. Quite often, advocates noted their sense of success even though their stated legislative initiatives did not succeed in a given General Assembly session. Other measures noted by respondents included the growth of the organization, the number and quality of relationships developed and maintained, the number of individuals from their members or associated organizations that were engaged, and the education activities conducted. Perhaps most importantly, those interviewed from religious organizations indicated that they were successful because they were present, active, and therefore faithful to their organization and broader religious mission. The various indicators of success are described below.

Presence & activity

Regardless of the results in the tally of roll-call votes at the end of each legislative session, most advocates in religious lobbying organizations consider their

efforts successful because of their presence and activity in the legislative arena. While all indicated that they would like to measure success by positive legislative outcomes, the advocates did not define success so narrowly. Instead, respondents noted that their voice or presence in the public policy process was a success in itself. An advocate from an interreligious organization commented,

I can tell you that we feel successful. It was a hard session and we had really bad legislative outcomes, but we feel like we did a good job. Maybe it really is having that presence and making sure that the faith community is considered in policy decisions.

A former lobbyist for a non-Christian organization made a similar statement,

I think even when we weren't successful with our legislation, with our lobbying efforts, that we affected those bills positively because our voice was heard. I never saw it as defeat - and that's the good news about not lobbying for money. You never feel really totally defeated, because it's like, we've aired our issues, we've brought our concerns out there and we let them know that we were a part of it.

This advocate captures what is discussed above; the mission and religious orientation of the organization expands its definition of success. Advocates engage in this activity because they are “called” to do so, or a religious concept or tradition they hold sacred requires them to participate. Success, then, becomes showing up and participating in activities that allow them to fulfill their religious duty that in many of the organizations was representing a vulnerable and underrepresented population or worldview. As the leader of a non-Christian coalition states, “...for me, it's not about success or failure. Ok? For me, it's about fulfilling a value, a vision in your life which is, going up there and speaking on behalf of voiceless people, speaking on behalf of your community, educating your community...” A board member of a conservative Christian

organization expressed, “My world view is a minority one, so my association with [the organization] allows me to have a spokesperson for a worldview that is more in keeping with my faith.” Whether representing the poor or a worldview, religious advocates felt successful when they were present in the process representing who or what their religious beliefs, traditions, and experience motivated them to represent.

For non-Christian organizations and groups representing politically unpopular positions, presence is particularly important. Not only is it fulfilling a religious mandate and expressing religious commitment, it is also ensuring that minority and alternative voices are heard and considered in policy processes. When asked how he defined success, a Muslim advocate stated, “I think that one of the biggest successes that I see for us is being the voice for the Muslim community...a Muslim voice, which was never there on a constant basis. That’s for myself, I think is a big success.” For the two minority religions represented in this study, Judaism and Islam, presence served as a reminder that Virginia is a diverse state. As a Jewish advocate stated, “we remind the legislators that when they are basing their positions exclusively on theological grounding, that they are not representing all Virginians.”

Legislative success

Religious lobbyists measure their success, in part, by the status of the legislation that they support or oppose. Bills that are proposed and passed, amended or killed are concrete indicators of the achievement of legislative initiatives. As a board member of a [Catholic] organization stated,

The objective measures are what legislation passes or what amendments are adopted, or what doesn't make it to the floor, what we defeat on the floor, like a lot of the anti-immigration legislation. You know we were playing defense trying to keep bad stuff from being adopted. I think that, so we can sort of, in a sense have a scorecard, how did we do on these different pieces.

These "objective measures" are tracked either formally or informally by all but one of the focal organizations.

These legislative assessments are typically more detailed than simple roll-call votes on the passage or failure of a bill. Successful amendments made to bills that make them more congruent with the organization's overall mission are measures of legislative success. Sometimes such amendments also are offered in an effort to prevent negative consequences. An advocate for the same Catholic organization noted his organization's efforts to change the wording of an anti-immigration bill when it became clear that the patron would not withdraw the bill,

...there was an immigration bill this past session where it was really problematic and would have, maybe, ensnared people who are trying to help the poor in an emergency situation. And so we negotiated - we and others - with the bill sponsor and it wasn't his intent to do that, but he wasn't willing to pull the bill, but we are able to get it amended.

Often legislative success is measured incrementally. Lobbyists often noted success when a bill made it further in the process than it did in previous sessions. A number of advocates noted the success of minimum-wage legislation although the bill was ultimately killed on the House floor. As an advocate for a Jewish organization stated, "... even when you have failure in legislation, you see it [success] incrementally; minimum wage went from not getting out of committees [in past sessions] to passing it in the Senate and making it to the House floor." The incremental nature of success and

progress is a theme that was echoed across respondents. An advocate in an ecumenical Christian organization indicated that her organization attempts to capture progress over time,

We do it by steps. So we don't always do by bill passed, but bill moved from committee last year to full house this year. There are a lot of steps in the legislative process, and so we know that, you are not going to get from first base to home in the first year, but if you get from first to second, second to third, you'll get there...

A board member of a conservative Christian organization defined success as “chipping away” at legalized abortion and other policies that were counter to the worldview represented by the organization. A board member of a catholic organization also noted the need to measure success by steps toward a goal while discussing the death penalty and poverty issues

...so what you're going to measure is, are you moving towards more use of the death penalty or less? And similarly with other types of issues are you - are there - are your safety nets or social safety nets are at a proper level? If not, are they getting -- moving more towards the right level where people do have their basic necessities or is it moving away from that so I think on an issue by issue basis, you can see, okay what were the results, what are the best policies that we could have? And where are we, in relation to that and then are we moving toward that or away from that? So that's - kind of the best way you can measure success.

In recognition of the incremental nature of success in the legislative context, respondents indicated that their organizations had been engaged in some issues for many years before a bill they supported finally passed into law. A Catholic grassroots organization lobbied for the passage of an Earned Income Tax Credit for at least eight years before the policy was successfully implemented. A Protestant Christian group was successful in getting a state sales and use tax exemption for congregations passed in

1980, but worked with lawmakers in subsequent years to introduce bills that corrected or improved the bill. He notes,

... we found out that the Hymn Book that was purchased for the church auditorium was tax exempt but the Hymn Book that was purchased for the Sunday School classroom was not tax exempt. The light bulb that was purchased for the church auditorium was tax exempt but the light bulb that was purchased for the bathroom was not tax exempt and there were 4 pages of this. Well, we solved that problem then we found out we have another problem, we found out that a Baptistry was not tax exempt but a Baptismal fount is tax exempt and so we got that problem solved. And then we found out that a newspaper was not tax exempt. If a church reads a newspaper, we got that problem solved, we found out we have another problem. And every time we got a problem solved, we found we had another one. So, here we were, tax exemption for churches was passed in 1980, we passed House Bill 566 which exempts churches from sales and use tax. By [19]82, [19]83, we were revising it, so from 1980 until 2007, 27 years for us to get the tax exemption to what we thought we had 27 years ago. So, we didn't know it was incremental, but every time we found, we had another problem.

Advocates and their board members voiced the expectation that their efforts were long-term in nature. As a board member of the interfaith organization seeking marital equality noted,

It is an absolutely true and absolutely critical understanding that civil rights transformation and social transformation don't happen overnight. Revolutions sometimes happen overnight, but even revolutions are products of long, long battles and this isn't a revolution, this is a long, slow evolution of thinking, and so I see this as a long 15, 20, 25 year process.

For these organizations, legislative measures of their successes and failures focus both on the ultimate legislative goals and on intermediate indicators of accomplishment.

Sometimes advocates find that to succeed in Virginia they have to participate in advocacy at local and federal levels. An interfaith advocate described a coalition of Virginia organizations that participated in the recent reauthorization of food stamps.

These groups engaged their grassroots to put pressure on their federal legislators to support the legislation. One group noted that its earliest and most far-reaching success occurred in 1987 concerning state taxes on food stamps. After becoming aware that Virginia made approximately \$9.5 million dollars each year by taxing food stamps, the group – then a fledgling group of eight – petitioned Virginia legislators unsuccessfully for three years to stop the practice and make that money available for those in the Commonwealth who needed food stamps. Frustrated with the lack of response from state legislators, the group pondered alternative ways to remedy the problem. The founder recalls, “So, one day when I was shaving I remembered that the director of [a Catholic social service agency] is very connected to the Kennedy family...” Through those connections, the advocate contacted Ted Kennedy’s office, informed his aides of the practice, and requested a bill in Congress to stop the practice that Virginia legislators had said was “criminal...awful...immoral” yet had refused to take action. Instead of a bill, the aide was able to write into the reauthorization of food stamps a clause prohibiting such taxes. In addition to stopping the practice in Virginia, the rule change also stopped the practice in 18 other states.

Relationships

Relationships developed and maintained with legislators and coalition partners are important indicators of success for all of the research participants. An advocate in an interfaith organization remarked about the relationships she developed with legislators during the 2007 legislative session,

...I can say personally, from that relational perspective, it was a very successful session for me because I established really good relationships with a handful of legislators. And I expect that, you know, throughout the year, I'll be in frequent contact with them and just nurturing that, and so, I think in that regard it was a successful session.

For this and other advocates, developing a good working relationship with a legislator one year may open doors and invite conversations in the next. Advocates recognize that relationships with legislators are key to influencing public policy.

Most advocates emphasized similar sentiments regarding relationships with other political officials. At least five of the religious groups mentioned their strong ties to the state's democratic and Catholic governor. Some of the same organizations mentioned reaching out to the lieutenant governor, a republican and conservative protestant, for support on key issues. Many of the organizations also mentioned relationships they had developed with appointed officials within the administration. These relationships are also considered a success. One advocate in a grassroots interfaith organization noted as success the relationship they had developed in the governor's office through a key appointed official. This relationship allowed them to shift their legislative strategy:

Now, instead of having to ask a legislator to introduce a bill that's going to spend money and get other legislators to agree to it and spend more money, in a climate where this state does not spend money, we're going to have a governor that lays on the table, things that we want, before the legislators have even seen it.

Relationships with and within coalitions were mentioned by each of the organizations as crucial to their work and therefore indicative of success when developed and strengthened. Most organizations did not mention their successes

without noting the coalition partners that had been involved in the legislative effort. A Muslim advocate described a legislative success it was able to achieve through its' work in coalitions with faith-based and social justice advocates. The organization notes the passage of the halal-kosher bill in the 2006 General Assembly session as a notable example of a success achieved in coalition with the Jewish community. Halal, similar to kosher in the Jewish tradition, are dietary guidelines followed by many Muslims. The bill ensures that food labeled halal or kosher is prepared as such. For the Muslim group, successful passage of the bill and the interfaith coalition involved in supporting the bill "acknowledged the diversity and the presence of Muslims in the state of Virginia." Forming and joining coalitions, then, become indicators of success. Coalition partners may include various types of organizations - advocacy groups, businesses, and groups or individuals representing those toward whom the legislation is directed.

Not only is participating in coalitions an indicator of success, being asked to participate is also a positive consideration. As an advocate for a large Christian organization stated,

...when you have a lot of influence and...you have people coming to you all the time about what they wish you could do for them...You know, 'we'd love to have your name on this coalition list.' You get a sense of, okay, we're doing something right...

This organization was asked to join a coalition trying to end or fundamentally reform the practice of payday lending in Virginia. Although the issue did not fall neatly within the organization's policy areas, supporters of the organization encouraged the effort and the organization joined the coalition. Some legislators interviewed noted their surprise

and interest when this conservative Christian organization joined with non-typical coalition partners to oppose the practice of payday lending. A number of respondents used the “strange bedfellows” adage and noted the usefulness of these unexpected relationships, thus counting it as a positive outcome of their overall efforts.

While the number of relationships developed or sustained is informally tracked by some of the organizations, as noted below, it is the quality and/or functionality of the relationships that make them true markers of success. All the groups examined listed legislators, coalition partners, and others who shared a common religious commitment or common values related to their various religious traditions. In such relationships with legislators, the advocates knew that at the very least, they could count on these individuals to be honest in their interactions with the advocate. In many cases, they could count on some legislators to support some, if not all, of their legislative initiatives. In the cases that a legislative friend chose not to vote with the advocate’s agenda item, there remained a great deal of respect for the legislator based on knowledge of his/her motivations and commitment to the job and a broader set of values.

While each of the focal organizations noted legislators and coalition partners with whom they had ongoing, quality relationships, the organizations also counted the relationships that served a more strategic function as success. Often these relationships were issue-related as in the case of the conservative Christian organization that joined with mainly poverty and minority advocates to oppose the practice of payday lending. An advocate for the conservative religious organization described the coalition,

I mean they're just not groups that we have a whole lot we do with and it was just...there were quotes in the paper that would say, you know, you saw people say the day that the NAACP and the [conservative Christian organization] were on the same page. But it was like two really powerful but distinct groups.

For the advocates, the unexpected coalition drew attention to the importance of payday lending reform and repeal. Strategically, these relationships helped the religious advocacy organization accomplish its goals with or without a more established relationship.

Organizational growth.

A number of respondents indicated that the ongoing growth and development of their organization suggested success. Advocates noted growth in the number of members (or engaged individuals/organizations), of chapters, of staff, and even growth of organizational complexity as indicative of their overall success. Within the last two to three years, one interfaith organization has taken on four new education-related programs that complement its legislative activities. The same organization has also experienced an increase in staff and individual and organizational memberships. One of the organization's advocates noted, "Well we've definitely grown our membership exponentially and the fact that we have expanded our staff, I think is a success and really says that we're kind of on the up and up and going places." While growth in staff or organizational capacity is not a goal of every organization, all of the organizations cited growth in the number of members (individual or organizational) or supporters as indicative of their success as an organization. This success had both financial and functional dimensions. As their list of members/supporters grows, most organizations

count the related financial growth as success. All of the organizations, however, count the growth of their grassroots as a success since there is power in numbers.

Education & engagement.

As noted previously, the religious advocacy organizations consider one of their main activities to be the education of the legislators, their members/supporters, and the wider public. These education efforts are considered successes in themselves, particularly when an education event attracts a large number of people. Participants in the study indicated, however, that education was most successful when it engaged people. As an advocate for an interfaith organization stated,

“I think I define success when we engage more people. When we get more people talking about something. They don’t have to agree with us. When we have engaged, when we have united more people, and we have more people in conversation about building a more just and compassionate Commonwealth, you know we’re fulfilling our mission.”

Successful engagement of individuals ranged from increased conversation about an issue to the number of individuals who responded to calls for action. For a board member of an interfaith organization that promotes marriage equality, increasing the number of individuals and congregations that engage in conversations about equality is pivotal to their mission,

And it will be the transformation of individuals in local communities. You know, moment by moment, steps by step, conversation by conversation. You know, not in... perhaps with these moments of breakthroughs but mostly over just repeated engagement that will gradually move people towards openness and acceptance and eventually support.

According to this respondent, the conversations themselves are indicators of the organization’s overall success.

Most organizations try to keep track of individuals who engage in the legislative process. Depending on the size, resources, and sophistication of the organization, efforts to understand the amount and extent of engagement vary. Most respondents cited the number of individuals that had signed up for legislative alerts as a quantitative indicator of engagement. For some of the larger organizations with more sophisticated websites, their technology allows the organization to understand the engagement of their grassroots. As an advocate in a conservative Christian organization noted,

We actually have a tracking system so we can see. That's another measurable where we track... our system allows us to see 10 responses to this delegate, 15 there, 100 there... And we actually can get the responses so we can know what's being said, who's actually involved, how many are new first time activists... So it's a really good system...

Religious and Political Expression

As can be traced in the focal groups' decision-making, representation, and definitions of success, their religious mandates are central to understanding the meaning the focal groups associate with their activities. All of the organizations examined describe a religious impetus that requires action toward policy change. Such efforts at change are an emanation of their religious identity. Noted in Figure 4.2, the religious mandate informs each of the other major themes. It is the "overriding belief" of the mandate that distinguishes these organizations from other special interests.

While understanding the groups' mandates is crucial to understanding the organizations, it is not the only factor determining their activities and the meaning they make of their activities. The groups that participated in this study indicated their sensitivity to the context around them – primarily the legislative context, but also factor

in the broader social and religious context. The advocates response to their mandate occurs in a multi-faceted milieu creating interrelationships that may compliment, challenge, or contradict interpretations of the mandate.

The intersections of the themes in Figure 4.2 suggest two additional sub-themes that were evident in the data. First, as organizations make decisions regarding the policy areas and specific bills on which they will work and the strategies they will use, they do so cognizant of their accountability to the entities they represent. Organizations voiced accountability to their mandate, but also voiced accountability to their constituent members and others represented by their efforts. Accountability in decision-making is as multifaceted as the organizations' acts of representation. Second, as organizations define the success of their activities and efforts, sources of their legitimacy also vary according to their activities and the entities they represent. Legitimacy is discussed further in Chapter 5.

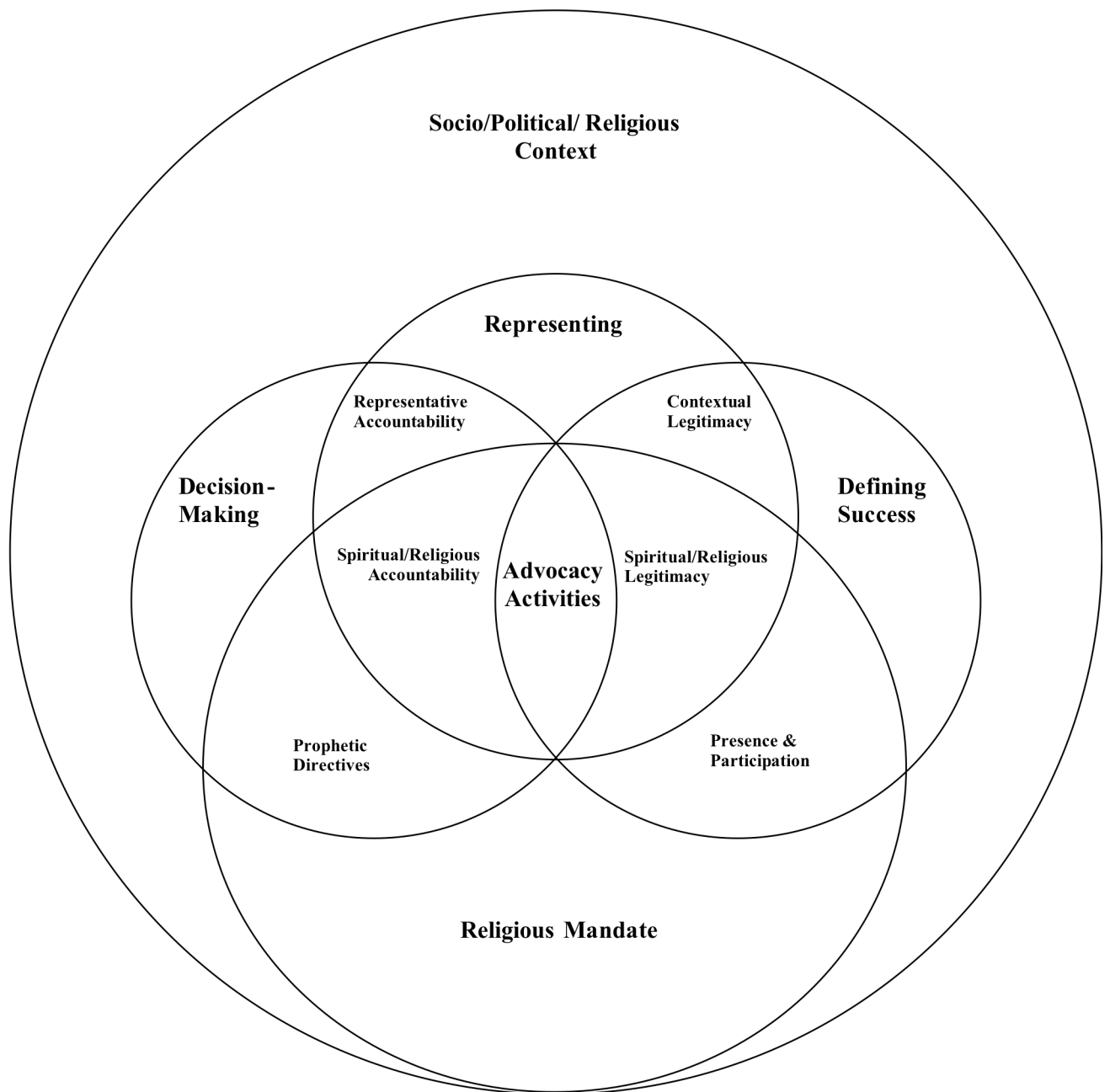


Figure 4.2: Religious and Political Expression of Faith-Based Advocacy Organizations in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Influence

Religious advocates indicate, as noted above, that they have at least some influence in the Virginia legislative arena. Listing a mixture of policy successes and incremental progress in addition to the relationships they have built, the advocates suggested their influence. One advocate of a Christian organization described the legislators' reactions to the Bill Profile they publish during each session that outlines the organization's aims and efforts on focal legislation. She describes a picture of a legislator taken by a local newspaper while the delegate was staring at the Bill Profile.

And it's a picture of him, he is on the house floor and he is staring at our profile...it said contents of the document unknown, but you see people on the floor looking at the profile. And he was not one of, I mean, nobody would say that he was a die hard conservative, but he was enough of a conservative to get the list and I think he wanted to know, am I going to break or am I going to go with what the appropriate...So we feel like we have a lot of influence for better or for worse.

The legislators who participated in the study suggest a somewhat complex picture of the influence religious advocacy organizations exert at the Virginia General Assembly. According to the legislators interviewed, most of the issues on which religious advocates are active are issues where the legislators have already made up their minds. According to a Republican leader in the House of Delegates,

When you're thinking about some of these fundamental issues that the quote "religious lobbyists" tend to cover whether it be the sanctity of life or minimum wage or pay day lending or whatever, I think most people don't need a lot of lobbying on that, they pretty much know where they stand. I know where I stand on the life issues. I know where I stand on a lot of the economic issues, I don't know if I find that as helpful.

A Democratic Senator expressed a similar opinion about the efforts of conservative religious lobbyists to influence his action on particular legislation, “I was already predisposed to vote for pay day lending reform. I can’t think of a time that the religious right convinced me of something I was predisposed to vote against.” For both these and the other legislators interviewed, the arguments of religious lobbyists had little effect on the legislators’ decision-making. While each of the organizations work to craft logical and persuasive arguments supporting or opposing issues, if a legislator has made up his or her mind on the issues, it is unlikely that the religious advocate will be able to convince them through their arguments to vote otherwise.

Persuasive arguments, however, can work against the religious advocate if the advocate, the religious organization, or the argument is not credible in the eyes of the legislator. After describing the Bible Studies that are conducted for legislators, lobbyists, and staff throughout each session, a minority Senator commented on what she perceived as an incongruence in the actions and religious claims of some attendees,

The thing about the influence of religion in the general assembly for me is a bit conflicted because people can come out of one of those Bible studies that they have and vote against the issues that [positively] affect poor people. So for me that’s conflicted. I don’t understand how your religious beliefs lineup with the beliefs in the bible and you come out and do the opposite of what the bible suggests that would be the thing to do. So, it’s a little bit conflicted for me, and so I accept what people tell me they are and what they say they believe, but then I am more action oriented and I, I want to compare what you do with what you say.

Another advocate described how the “pharisaic” arguments of one conservative Christian organization were particularly ineffective with him,

Well, they have an inconsistent application of the Gospel at best. You'll have to check this on LIS [Legislative Information Services], but in 1999, the attorney general offered a bill to limit the amount of TANF benefits if a family had additional children within X amount of time of receiving TANF. We had evidence from Massachusetts that this led to a rise in abortions. The [a Catholic religious lobbying organization] was against it. Other groups were against it. But the [Christian lobbying organization] was for it, regardless. It passed the House. It was tied 50-50. All 48 Democrats were opposed, and almost every Republican was in favor of it. It died in the Senate. I don't know what agenda that advances. They said it advanced responsibility. It was antithetical to the gospel in my opinion.

While the arguments of religious lobbying organizations are not particularly influential on their own, religious advocates are not without means to influence legislators' decision-making. The influence they possess, however, is primarily through their grassroots and the relationships they develop within and beyond the General Assembly. The legislator's constituents or a close personal relationship with a religious advocate may influence a legislator's actions concerning an issue. Both advocates and legislators note the attention of the legislators to their constituents when the constituents make efforts to express their opinions on legislation. A republican Senator describes the difference between the power of persuasive arguments and constituent contacts,

I think that religious-based lobbying is conducted by people who really think the strength of the message alone will often be enough. The [conservative Christian advocacy organization] was a lot more successful in the early 90s when they really had a grassroots component and they could whack legislators who weren't getting into line. And, they don't have that anymore. They're half-heartedly trying to build it back, they're working in that direction. It's a big difference.

A democratic Delegate notes the effectiveness of greeting cards he receives from constituents involved in a grassroots Catholic advocacy organization,

They send these little handwritten cards around the theme of their campaign, which I certainly noticed...They were handwritten from real people in my

district...So you know whenever, personally, for me to hear [a conservative Christian advocacy organization] did this or that, that's fairly meaningless to me, but even if they...a group of people who are actual voters in my district came to me, I'd have to take it more seriously. Thus far, they haven't.

The advocates recognize this and are active in mobilizing their collective influence. As a conservative Christian lobbyist notes, "Legislators really want to hear from home...that's the most persuasive voice. And so, when issues come up, I try to make sure that I have contacted the churches in that area so that they can hear from home."

In addition to the influence of the grassroots, both religious advocates and legislators noted times in which their efforts were influential because of the relationships built between the advocate and elected official. A Catholic advocate described a visit to a legislator that was a member of a committee considering death penalty legislation,

I'm thinking of one member of that committee because we had this good rapport and this good relationship. We spent about a half an hour at his office right before voting on the death penalty override issues and it was like "Oh Yeah, come on in. I'm thinking about how I want to vote on this death penalty issue." I mean he was going through the code with us, "What could I say here?" or "What do you think about this argument?" I mean, so through those personal relationships and through working with where you can agree, then they'll even listen to you in something where you don't agree, they will at least consider what we have to say.

The Christian organization that chairs the Conservative Caucus notes the influence of their efforts due to the relationships they have been able to establish and maintain. The legislators interviewed also named the religious advocates with whom they have close relationships and the work they do together to accomplish common goals. A Republican Senator named two religious advocates with whom he strategized on stem cell research

and a bill that would have made clergy mandated reporters of child abuse. If relationships are developed and if a legislator is not predisposed to an alternative argument, religious advocates may find allies in legislators and their staff.

The themes described above note principal ways the religious advocacy organizations assign meaning to their everyday activities. As described earlier in this chapter, religious advocacy organizations in the Commonwealth of Virginia differ in a variety of ways. It is the common constructions described by the themes, however, that offer valuable insight into these organizations and their efforts.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

This study began with two research questions: *How do faith-based organizations engage in legislative advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia? What meaning do they assign to their activities?* The exploratory study was purposefully grounded in social constructionist assumptions in order to gain an emic understanding of religious advocacy. The findings detailed in Chapter 4 suggest a number of areas in which the research affirms, challenges, or extends the existing literature on religious lobbying organizations, particularly religious lobbying organizations that operate on a state level. This interpretive research cannot purport generalizability, but instead offers a rich, multidimensional situational portrait of the phenomenon of faith-based advocacy in Virginia. The implications are tentatively offered adhering to the epistemological assumptions of the research frame; they are “suggestive rather than conclusive” (Crotty, 2004, p. 13). Rooted in a specific context, interpreted by a particular researcher, occurring in a discrete time, the findings are a unique construction that offers a “thick” description of faith-based advocacy in context. Of note, unique does not suggest inapplicability. Ultimate applicability of the findings is borne by the consumer(s) of the research rather than the researcher. As the consumers consider the research in light of their own context and allow “potential challenges to their own current constructions” (Rodwell, 1998, p. 189), the inquiry may find broader applicability. The consonance or dissonance experienced in such considerations forms questions from which new inquiry can emerge – whether objectivist or constructionist. With requisite tentativeness, then,

this chapter highlights lessons learned in light of the current literature on religious interests. The chapter concludes with implications for research and social work practice.

Lessons Learned

The legislative activities described by the research participants and described in Chapter 4 are broadly reminiscent of previous descriptions of religious advocacy organizations operating on national and state levels. The respondents listed, with little variation, the insider and outsider activities that are also associated with general interest group efforts. Confirming the descriptions in the seminal works of Hertzke (1988), Hofrenning (1995), and Yamane (1998), religious advocates in Virginia engage in efforts similar to their religious counterparts in other state legislatures and predecessors in the nation's capital. The current study suggests however, that those active in the Commonwealth of Virginia conceptualize direct lobbying efforts, the "insider game," differently than reported in previous work.

Lesson 1: Religious advocacy organizations in this study embrace outsider and insider strategies and activities to accomplish their legislative goals. Advocates in Virginia, at least those in the study sample, do not rely mainly on outsider means to accomplish their desired ends but use both outsider and insider activities to influence change. In fact, advocate upon advocate noted how relationship building with legislative officials factors in to their overall strategy for success. Advocates overwhelmingly mentioned the importance of insider relationships for the long-term viability of their efforts and named a number of legislators with whom they have solid

or developing relationships. Advocates also noted the importance of building bridges to legislators who are not natural allies. Despite insider activities being “mundane, technical, and incremental” (Hofrenning, 1995, p. 76), establishing and nurturing relationships is a given for these organizations, as is the strong connection to the organization’s grassroots. The use of specific insider and outsider activities is strategically driven as particular activities are employed at certain times for maximum effect. As noted in Chapter 4, some financial behaviors attributed to the direct lobbying of interest groups, particularly business interests, are off limits for religious advocacy organizations. Aside from “buckets of money,” however, most insider activities are regularly utilized along with efforts to educate and engage the grassroots.

A central premise of Hofrenning’s (1995) work, however, is that national religious advocacy organizations are radical organizations and are more comfortable with outsider strategies that allow them to remain faithful to their prophetic calling and vision. Insider strategies, when employed, are according to Hofrenning, done so with discomfort since entering into relationships with political players means playing politics by using compromise and negotiation. As Hofrenning states, “The distinctiveness of radical groups is their rejection of the politics of compromise and incrementalism. For religious groups, a compromise is often interpreted as a breach of faith” (p. 185). Hofrenning’s findings echo those of Hertzke (1988) who, based on his study of national organizations, stated: “It is this prophetic temptation that can keep the religious mind from focusing on the mundane details of the legislative process...Insider lobbying is mundane, technical, incremental, and does not lend itself to prophetic stands” (pp. 75-

76). The focal organizations share the perspective that something is “profoundly wrong with society” (Hofrenning, 1995, p. 9) but do not shy away from insider strategies to achieve their legislative purposes.

Lesson 2: Religious advocates in Virginia view their religious purposes, their grassroots engagement, and their insider relationships as sources of legitimacy.

Previous inquiry suggests and respondents in this study note that both religious purposes and grassroots activity are sources of legitimacy for religious lobbying organizations. According to respondents, their activities are often considered legitimate because they are not advocating for narrow specialized interest but for the broader public interest. Legitimacy derived from religious purposes, however, is often dependent on common interpretations and understandings of religious requirements for public life. As legislators in Yamane’s (1998) study and this study indicate, their minds are often made up on moral issues long before a religious lobbyist tries to influence them in a particular direction. Advocates recognize that the legitimacy of their organization’s efforts is often tied to these differential understandings of moral issues. Legitimacy is also tied, as in the literature, to the strength and engagement of the organizations’ grassroots. Organizational respondents indicated that because they are representing constituents and constituents can exert electoral pressure and legislators view their responsiveness to their constituents as a responsibility, their efforts are generally viewed as legitimate. While these recognized sources of legitimacy (Hertzke, 1988; Hofrenning, 1995) are evidenced by research participants, they also indicate that their relationships with legislators are sources of legitimacy. The relationships convey

credibility because they are not tied to party politics or financial influence peddling and are instead tied to a larger public interest and transcendent moral values. Again, this positive view on insider relationships contradicts the previous findings that religious advocates avoid and are uncomfortable using insider strategies.

Lesson 3: Religious advocates regard themselves as both prophetic and pragmatic. This study suggests a reconceptualization of the prophetic nature of religious organizations in the legislative arena. As discussed above, Hertzke (1988), Hofrenning (1995), and Yamane (1998, 2003) note the struggle religious lobbyists face because their radical, prophet-like tendencies prevent them from engaging in insider activities that would impugn the purity of their efforts. When they do engage on the inside, they do so tentatively. As such, the researchers suggest, their insider efforts are only occasionally effective. Religious advocacy organizations in Virginia face a political context that is not conducive to wide scale and fundamental change. Like the federal and other state contexts, desired change is filtered through contested terrain. As a testament to James Madison's concerns about the promise and peril of factions in the political process, competing sects, or interests, prevent "tyranny" by a majority but also prevent sweeping changes by any group. The focal groups in this research recognize the "political realities" of the Virginia legislative context, shape their strategies accordingly, and do so believing they retain their distinctively religious and often prophetic role. These organizations do not eschew insider tactics for outsider tactics that keep them at an arms-length distance from the political fray. As an advocate of an interfaith organization states, "We are not activists at all. We think that is an old model, and it

does not work. We are advocates and researchers and wonks and people who want to create incremental change so that it is lasting.” The religious advocates interviewed do not consider themselves as radical religious interests.

The role of the prophet, however, the “voice crying in the wilderness,” is nevertheless a religious image and act embraced by most of the advocates. A board member of a Jewish organization cited the book of the Hebrew prophet Isaiah as a summary of the religious impetus of his and his organization’s legislative activity. A number of other advocates noted the tradition of the prophets as crucial to describing their role in religious bodies and the public square. The apparent paradox, according to the literature, is not atypical for the research participants as suggested by their categorizations of issues. Several advocates noted that specific issues are prophetic while others are “tipping point” or “compelling” issues that fall within their overall mandate but do not necessarily rise to the level of prophetic. Those issues that are not named prophetic are no less mandated than those that are – all issues pursued generally fit within the policy areas crafted in light of a religious mandate for action. A Catholic and interfaith group described the death penalty as one such issue that required a prophetic response. Advocates for these groups indicated that they would not support legislation that would in any way expand the death penalty. Their goal each legislative session is to end the practice. They will however work incrementally to reduce the scope or prevent the expansion of the death penalty. According to the interfaith advocate, his organization must advocate for the end of the death penalty because “no one else is in that space for God.” The Catholic organization and another Christian

organization consider abortion to be a similar issue. A Catholic advocate noted that while publicly funded school busing for private schools is an important issue for them and is grounded in their mandated efforts for the family, it does not rise to the same moral level as does abortion and capital punishment. Other organizations considered their efforts prophetic and did not distinguish among issues, but used a combination of direct and indirect lobbying activities to make their legislative intentions known.

Larson, Madland, and Wilcox (2006) found that the routine machinations of the Virginia legislature discouraged non-incremental change and could “quiet prophetic voices” (p. 55) of religious lobbying organizations. In addition to demanding negotiation and incremental change, Virginia’s legislative districts have been drawn to favor incumbents. As Larson, Madland, & Wilcox note, “When most incumbents do not fear electoral defeat, the mobilization of moderate numbers of religious constituents may not sway their legislative voices” (p. 61). The constraints the organizations face are real, but their impact on the prophetic voice of the advocates is nuanced according to their own understanding of their efforts. “All or nothing” efforts are inherently limited by Virginia’s legislative context, but the focal organizations expect that and are prepared to conduct long-term efforts alongside necessary prophetic stands to accomplish their religious mandates. Religious advocacy organizations seem to conceptualize their prophetic roles both by issue and by their overall efforts and committed presence over time. Far from quieting prophetic voices, the pragmatic lens through which the advocates view their context and their legislative goals requires them to find in their mandates reason to persist on terms that they cannot control. Most find

within their religious traditions stories of struggle and eventual transformation that substantiate their continual involvement in an arena that, by its nature, creates an up hill battle.

While this study is a departure from earlier studies, it finds some familiarity in historical narratives. The historical references in Chapter 2 certainly highlight some prophetic narratives that suggest an “all or nothing” stance with no room for compromise. In popular discourse, abolition, prohibition, and Social Gospel reforms are remembered as prophetic efforts to stop egregious sins with varying degrees of immediate and ultimate success. While these great moral battles are remembered dualistically – good versus evil – historical accounts also suggest that victories were won incrementally involving some degree of incrementalism and sometimes even negotiation and compromise. The fight to end the practice of slavery began in the earliest days of the new world and yet it would be almost two centuries before the practice was outlawed and over another century before African-Americans were afforded equal status by law. Prohibition failed to outlaw the outright use and sale of alcoholic beverages on moral grounds, but managed, in the short-lived 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, to criminalize its sale and distribution.

The literature suggests a bind that religious advocates must live with. Hofrenning (1995) and Hertzke (1988) contend that, with variations, religious lobbying organizations are radical organizations that achieve only “episodic effectiveness on the inside” (Hertzke, p. 79). Larson, Madland, and Wilcox (2006) state that while these organizations are somewhat active in Virginia, religious voices are constrained by the

political context and processes in the state. Not only does the process demand compromise and incrementalism, it also diminishes the potential impact the grassroots may have. Hofrenning describes the bind,

Because religious lobbyists resist compromise, their energy is spent not on bargaining with established players, but on mobilizing the grassroots...the end result is straddled between a marginalized position in Washington politics and the achievement of significant change – and nothing in between. (p. 147)

The current study, however, suggests that religious advocates in the Commonwealth recognize the tension and constraints of the political system, willingly enter into that system, and retain the self-estimation that their efforts are according to religious mandate, their calling, and as such are prophetic in nature. While the prophetic and political are dichotomized in the literature, for these advocates, the categories are less discrete.

Stone's (2002) discussion of political reasoning is instructive here. Her conceptualization of political reasoning is based on the distinction between the market and the polis as a basis for understanding policy analysis and politics and the community, what she refers to as the polis. The market situates political analysis in the interests and rationality of individuals. It explains numerous phenomena, including collective phenomena, in terms of rational self-interested calculation. The polis, however, locates politics in the interests of individuals *and* the public. And Stone states, "The concept of public interest is to the polis what self-interest is to the market" (p. 21). As noted in Chapter 3, in the polis, political reasoning is the messy "struggle over ideas" (p. 11) instead of the rational calculations of the marketplace.

Stone (2002) is able to elucidate the frequent, almost standard dichotomy between the analysis of policy and the messy practice of politics. She sees traditional policy analysis as seeking to impose rational decision-making on non-rational politics frequently describing processes in terms of sequential and logical steps. The politics engulfing the processes is simultaneously distanced as emotional and chaotic. She states, “The enterprise of extricating policy from politics assumes that analysis and politics, can be, and are in some essential way, separate and distinctive activities” (p. 376). She contends that they are not separate spheres and in fact are both political and both emanating from the polis. One can try to impose rational decision-making on political processes, like policy-making, but the competing rationalities of multiple interests repeatedly confound rational self-interest.

Nevertheless, rational, transaction-based conceptualizations of political processes dominate the study of policy and politics. Processes and players are frequently framed within theories that, with good intentions, try to make politics a rational enterprise (Lejano, 2006). Religious advocacy organizations, like other interests, are examined through this theoretical lens, especially through mobilization and incentive theories. In part, Hertzke (1988) and Hofrenning (1995) challenge three predominant theoretical traditions that overestimate the ability of interest groups to form and act using negotiation and bargaining (pluralism), assume that the elite are those principally represented by interest groups (mobilization of bias), and assume that individuals join groups for selective incentives (logic of collective action). While in the end, Hertzke and Hofrenning remain critics of these theories, they also use them as a

basis for their own theoretical discoveries concerning national religious lobbying organizations. Hertzke admits that his study may demonstrate “an underlying acceptance of pluralist assumptions about the nature of American polity” (p. 206). And so, the activities of religious lobbying organizations continue to be described in terms of the dominant theoretical frames of the political process. A false dichotomy between rational analysis and politics begets the dichotomization between incremental politics and prophetic participation in politics.

Within such a climate, it is understandable that prophetic roles are deemed radical and set apart from the bargaining and compromise of an incremental process. The prophetic tradition, as described by Hofrenning (1995) demands “repentance,” a change in direction. The policy process is incremental and requires negotiation and compromise for success. The prophetic is implied to be non-rational and thus inappropriate for the rational practice of politics *if* religious players maintain their prophetic stance. Hofrenning assumes that if they compromise their prophetic stance, they will be able to engage politically but they will lose their prophetic distinction. The prophetic/political dichotomy is a zero sum game. Situated within the market, the distinction between prophetic and political may be appropriate. But situated within the polis, prophetic versus the political is a nonsensical categorization. The very act of prophetic pronouncement is a political act. The prophet has already participated in the political by prophetically framing the issue. Religious advocates do not necessarily lose their prophetic voice by engaging in politics, but they choose to become political by exercising that voice. The current understanding of prophetic in the context of

contemporary political discourse has by and large been framed by the assumptions of market rationality. The participants in this research suggest an alternative conceptualization of prophetic politics, one that is better accounted for in the politics of the polis. In the polis, the dichotomization of the prophetic and political may be dissolved and alternatively constituted as necessary, but different dimensions of their mandate to serve.

Lesson 4: This study suggests that the advocates' notion of mandate is not a simplistic one, but at least a two-dimensional construct that allows and even encourages gradations in self-understanding and in the roles played. This construct includes both a foundational and strategic dimension. Advocates can be both prophetic (foundational) and pragmatic (strategic) and remain rooted in their religious mandate. These dual capacities enable religious advocates to be faithful and function in the immediacy of the fast-paced, daily business of the political arena in which change is ever present. A foundational dimension establishes their overall efforts as responsive to a sacred requirement. The sacred impetus, as discussed in Chapter 4, is found in sacred texts, religious doctrine, and the experiences of religious communities. That they begin and sustain their advocacy work according to their individual and collective interpretations satisfies this dimension. The foundational dimension is ever-present as a guiding vision of why they are doing what they are doing.

The strategic dimension requires the advocates to consider the steps necessary to accomplish the vision the foundational dimension sets before them. The strategic decision-making discussed separately below draws from this dimension of the

advocate's mandate. The strategic dimension recognizes the inherent tensions of the political context as multiple interests vie for their own visions of society often using limited and contested resources. This dimension requires the advocates to consider the demands of their religion and the realities of their political context.

Yamane's (1998, 2003) "solutions" to this tension are instructive in understanding this second dimension. As discussed in Chapter 2, Yamane suggests that religious lobbyists in Wisconsin addressed the tension using three different solutions identified by religious lobbying organizations in his study. Organizations chose a prophetic solution by not fully engaging in the political process, a political solution that virtually integrated secular strategies, or they negotiated a solution that incorporated both the prophetic and the political while maintaining the tension of "both/and" (p. 20).

The focal organizations of the current study tend not to fall neatly into one of the three categories identified by Yamane, but seem to regularly renegotiate the tensions they encounter as they decide how to accomplish their mandate. The strategic dimension of mandate, then, enables advocates to consider and choose approaches and tactics that may tend toward the rational categories of "prophetic" or "political" yet remain within the boundaries of their mandate. Tensions are real, but manageable because their understanding of mandate incorporates the reality of tensions in the quest for change.

Demonstrating the dual dimensions of his mandate, one advocate recalled the time during the 2007 session when it became obvious after several hours in a House committee meeting on pay day lending that the practice the advocate's organization

considered immoral was not going to be substantively challenged. He approached the committee to testify and spoke forcefully about the “absolute moral clarity” of the issue. He went on to condemn their unwillingness to legislate on behalf of the poor. Soon after, he realized that he had jeopardized his effectiveness in the House Labor and Commerce Committee. “What I did in the end,” he said, “is I sent a note to every legislator on that committee...and you know I essentially said that, I just went too far.” In addition, another advocate from his organization appeared in that committee in his place for the remainder of the session. Summing up the event and its repercussions he said,

Well, the relationship is not good with several people, but you know, they hung Jesus on the cross so this not a new thing. In no way do I think that I am Jesus, but [there is] historical precedent for people speaking their voice and losing their head, as John the Baptist.

Recalling prophetic tradition, yet apologizing out of regret and pragmatic necessity, the advocate invoked seemingly paradoxical, yet integrated characteristics of his role.

The ability for the advocates to manage the tensions of this paradox by incorporating them into their understanding of their mandate enables them to engage in the legislative process. What these advocates are doing is not unlike Wood’s (1999, 2002, 2003) discussion of the political culture of “challenger organizations” in faith-based community organizing (FBCO). As discussed in Chapter 2, he found that FBCO organizations that had the greatest political capacity were the ones that shared significant cultural elements, had a high tolerance for ambiguity, and had cultural capacity for contest and compromise. Most of the religious lobbying organizations are

comprised of individuals and organizations that share a sacred mandate, that as interpreted provides for them the necessary capacities discussed by Wood for successful political action.

Lesson 5: Strategic decision-making is mandate and context driven and utilizes religion, relationships, and activities as tactics. As noted in Chapter 4, the overall policy areas in which the religious advocacy organizations work is established by their sacred mandates. Within those areas, however, decisions on how to engage around a specific issue are a mixture of that religious impetus and more pragmatic decisions regarding context. Organizations indicate that they use most at their disposal, including religion, relationship, and activities, to attain their legislative goals. As suggested by Hertzke (1988) and echoed by Hofrenning (1995) and Yamane (1998), religious organizations overall use little religious language in their direct lobbying efforts. These studies indicate that religious lobbyists do this to conform to the national legislative context in which they work. Respondents in this study, however, suggest they choose to use or not to use language strategically. This is a slight nuance, but an important one. They choose to frame their religious mandate in the most persuasive form. While some rarely mention religion in a public setting, they will with a legislator they know behind closed doors. A legislator interviewed described how one conservative organization frequently talks to him in terms of religion because they know of his academic interest in religion. The same organization indicated that they rarely use religious language when speaking with legislators. The use of their religion with legislators is a matter of strategy. Religious organizations in the study do generally follow the pattern suggested

by Hertzke and others, that conservative religious organizations tend to use less religious language than those further left on the spectrum.

As with religion, relationships are tactics available to religious lobbyists as they decide how to best approach their issues. Religious leaders, legislators, and coalition partners are valuable assets to the religious advocacy organizations. As noted in Chapter 4, these relationships are valuable for reasons of access, influence, and information. Relationships with individuals who are like-minded or not can be strategically utilized to meet issues related goals. With legislators and coalition partners, strategic relationships can be ongoing or may be related to a specific bill or issue.

Findings suggest that the activities of the organizations are also used strategically. Notable here are the tactics that are not embraced by most of the religious organizations. Organizations studied do not engage in “unruly” tactics (Pagnucco, 1996) and several respondents specifically mentioned that do not see that as their role in the legislative process. One Christian advocate, however, described the tactics of another religious organization as “throwing bombs into the legislature” just to stir things up. Another advocate described this type of activity as an activist tactic and does not believe it is an effective means to create change. Organizations choose tactics based on their ability to foster success.

Lesson 6: Religious organizations first represent God and the religious beliefs that constitute their mandate for action, but other interests are articulated as well.

Reflecting Hertzke’s (1988) study, representation for religious advocacy organizations in this study is not a simplistic representation of the members of the organization.

Instead, religious advocacy organizations are involved in complex representation that includes members, theological values, and world constituencies. Religious advocacy organizations in Virginia describe representing God, religious traditions, constituent individuals and organizations, vulnerable populations, and alternative and minority perspectives. The organizations indicate, however, that their religious mandate guides their acts of representation.

In some cases, this means that those represented, particularly the poor, are not participants in the organization's representation of them at the General Assembly. As noted previously, over half of the focal organizations in this study deal with poverty issues yet very few people experiencing poverty participate directly in the work of the organization. In addition, issues of poverty disproportionately affect minority populations, yet very few minorities comprise the constituent individual or organizational members of the focal groups. This was a source of discomfort for a few of the groups. Two of the organizations in the sample were working on specific initiatives to better include the populations they represent in the legislative arena. Despite this discomfort, several organizations noted that they are first representing their mandate, and while they want to be more inclusive and are taking steps to become so, they also indicated that even if the poor asked them to stop, they would not. The dictates of their sacred mandate move them to action on behalf of God. There are a couple of important implications to this conceptualization of representation. First, on a positive note, it is perhaps this linkage to a transcendent morality that motivates religious lobbyists to persist in their efforts over long periods of time. On a more cautious note,

however, this may also prevent reflexivity in representative processes and policies. This representation without participation can be placed in historical context. An historical artifact of faith-based advocacy has been the “haves” advocating for the “have nots” as part of their charitable call. Although there are instances like the Civil Rights Movement where those affected most by policy led efforts to change it, most often religious advocates have gone about creating change without the direct involvement of those affected by the original problem or the changes they seek to make.

This does not mean, however, that religious advocates are not in touch with their various constituencies. National religious lobbyists were criticized in the past for representing their own interpretation of theological values before that of their grassroots. During the Vietnam War, Mainline Protestant lobbyists were called “generals without armies” because legislators perceived that they were articulating a position on the war that was not reflective of the individuals in the represented congregations. National religious advocacy groups are criticized because they are often dominated by interests that do not always represent the common congregant. This does not seem to be the same case for religious lobbyists on a state level, at least in Virginia. National organizations are far removed from the politics of local congregations, synagogues, and mosques. The organizations in this study have to constantly balance local congregational and constituent interests with state concerns. In addition, the context will only tolerate incremental change. In several instances, respondents described how they would avoid controversial issues in order to preserve their constituency base. Studying the politics at the state level reveals a different set of

findings than those of researchers who examined religious politics on the national stage. Decisions to maintain contact with, and respect for the opinions of local constituencies, is not a choice for state level religious advocacy groups.

Lesson 7: Self-perceptions of effectiveness are inextricably linked to the religious lobbying organizations' sacred mandates. As such, conceptions of success cannot be one-dimensional. As noted in Chapter 4, legislators measure their legislative successes in a variety of ways including wins and losses and incremental progress toward bill passage or then end of a legislated practice. Such progress is important to advocates and it responds to both the foundational and strategic dimensions of their mandate. Strategically, it indicates to their members, funders, and even legislators and coalition partners that their efforts are making an impact. As one advocate stated, "There's nothing more energizing than success." Foundationally, they are making progress on the issues of concern emanating from their interpretation of their mandate. However, this study demonstrates what previous studies have shown, that in addition to or in spite of legislative outcomes, "fidelity to their faith is religious lobbyists' measure of success" (Hofrenning, 1995, p. 145). Similar to findings in literature on faith-based service organizations, often the most important measure of success is not the outcome of the service, but serving. In their study of belief systems in faith-based organizations, Netting, O'Connor, & Yancey (2006) note, "One has been successful because one has kept the faith, one has ministered, one has served...If one interprets God's word to mean that fathers must be reunited with their families, then this is not a program

imperative; it is a God-given imperative” (pp. 280-281). Being “in that space for God” is an indicator that responds to the foundational dimension of the advocates’ mandate.

Implications

In many ways, religious advocacy organizations in the Commonwealth of Virginia look much like the other interest groups that are active in legislative politics. Like their secular counterparts, most of them engage in the direct lobbying of legislators to achieve their policy aims. Multiple enduring relationships are sought to ensure the success of their efforts over time. Like membership interest groups, religious advocacy organizations depend on the strength of the grassroots – in this case, the “people in the pews” in judicatories, churches, synagogues, mosques and other religiously affiliated organizations – to augment their relational efforts. Like public interests, they are motivated by a cause beyond themselves and their own interests. Considered only by a list of their activities, the religious lobbies would be somewhat difficult to distinguish from the various groups that comprise special interests.

But these religious lobbying organizations are different by their own and others’ estimation. These differences have less to do with impact and effectiveness (although this is part of the story), and more to do with the religious meaning that propels and shapes their interpretation of their efforts and activities. From their mandate to participate in the legislative arena to their multifaceted constructions of representation and success, the religious nature of these organizations differentiate their efforts from those of the interests that surround them even if their activities are often similar. Given

that religious advocates engage in many of the same activities as advocates in general, why then is it important to distinguish this study in design and purpose from the studies that characterize most interest group literature?

Research

Inquiry about religious lobbying organizations has been situated, for the most part, in interest group literature that has spent a good deal of its theory-testing energy on the “demand aggregation” of interest groups or those theories and studies examining the mobilization, involvement, and financial support of members. Much of this literature has been created through an objectivist lens that asks questions of causality and exchange rather than questions of socially constructed meaning. When examined through an objectivist lens, these organizations barely even receive their own category and are typically lumped with other public interests that participate in the legislative exchange for purposive benefits. Through this lens, religious advocacy organizations barely matter. They are labeled “outsider” and their influence on the inside is dismissed and goes unexamined. But through a social constructionist lens, the organizations come alive from the perspective of those within and around them. This perspective suggests alternative means to consider these organizations and points science toward a more representative set of categories with which to build and test knowledge.

To more fully understand the influence and external role of organizational religion in Virginia’s legislature, however, one would have to broaden the types of organizations examined to particularly include congregations, synagogues, and mosques and other organizational forms. While the most legislatively active organizations were

identified from the initial sampling frame and the subsequent nominational sampling technique, other organizations emerged through document research, informal conversations, and observation that were beyond the scope of the current research but important to understand the sometimes overlapping networks of religious influence and activity at the state legislature. Observation of participants on 2007's Pro Choice Lobby Day yielded the identification of Christian and Unitarian congregations and Jewish synagogues that work to preserve reproductive choice. These groups were joined by a national religious coalition on reproductive rights that does not have a Virginia chapter but does have affiliates in 26 other states. Other secular pro-choice groups with religiously-related initiatives were also in attendance. In addition, a number of sources indicated that while predominantly African-American groups are not active at the legislature by means of voluntary association for that purpose, their voices are heard through individual and congregational relationships with their elected African-American officials. As it has been through its history, the black church continues to be a primary voice of social change for African-Americans. Extending the sample beyond the voluntary associations created principally for the purpose of legislative advocacy will include the individuals, congregations, and religious entities within secular organizations that also seek to influence the Virginia General Assembly.

Social Work

As noted in Chapter 1, this study is relevant to social work because faith-based advocacy organizations concern themselves with the vulnerable and marginalized populations served by social work. If these religious groups are dismissed as purist

prophets whose non-rationality is judged irrelevant to the legislative process, practitioners on micro, mezzo, and macro levels may neglect to critically consider those groups active on pertinent social policy issues. If the profession, however, recognizes the relevance and complexity of these organizations, then practitioners can attend to the potential congruencies and incongruencies of the organizations' beliefs with practice modalities and values.

Social work ethics and values are congruent with many of the religious organizations in Virginia that work on issues of social and economic justice as well as the protection of rights for vulnerable and marginalized populations. At the very least this study highlights this congruence and suggests organizations and types of organizations with whom social service agencies could form lasting coalitions or issue-based coalitions to influence public policy. Faith-based advocacy organizations may be useful partners in attempts to modify social policy for the benefit of the vulnerable populations served by the profession of social work.

Critical consideration of the varied values, beliefs, and efforts of faith-based advocacy organizations brings to the forefront the varied perspectives on religion and religion and social policy within the profession of social work. Of historic significance to the founding of social work and of historic and current significance to the delivery of social services, religion is a recurring theme in the profession. Perspectives on religion vary in social work as they do in the broader population. For some in social work, religion represents potential "threat" to the rights, opportunities, and possibilities of those the profession serves. For others, it is a principle component of solutions to

mitigate intractable individual and social problems. For some, religion is greatly relevant to social welfare, for others it is and/or should be irrelevant. For some religion is oppressive, others see its liberatory potential. Varying perspectives on religion rarely align neatly on one side or the other of the profession's practices or its values and Code of Ethics. Instead, religion within the profession is complex and nuanced. When considering potential alliances and coalitions with faith-based advocacy organizations (or *any* organization), practitioners must be aware of potential ethical tensions and values with which she or he can or cannot ally. This awareness presupposes a critical understanding of the way in which religion and the moral dimensions of social services and social policy are at play within any given entity – the practitioner, the organization, or the community. Consideration of faith-based advocacy organizations should be a mirror for critical consideration of our own moral claims.

Beyond the religiously related implications of this study are implications related to the role of advocacy, particularly system-level advocacy, within the social work profession. As discussed in Chapter 1, Jane Addams's legacy in social work is one of activism on local, state, and national levels. According to CSWE curricular standards, all bachelor's and master's students must be taught to "apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice" (CSWE, 2004, p. 7). While Jane Addams is heralded and structural advocacy is emphasized in every accredited program of social work study, Reisch and Andrews (2001) have described the waning role structural advocacy has played in American social work. Citing the McCarthy era and demands of professionalism among others, the social work scholars trace the

domestication of the radical traditions of social work. The discussion earlier in this chapter concerning the dichotomization of the radical (prophetic) and pragmatic and the rational and the political and the ease of subsequently dismissing that which is considered non-rational is instructive for social work. Structural advocacy toward social and economic justice is necessarily political – involving multiple tensions and negotiations along many dimensions of power. This political participation is rarely linear, sequential, or rational. Many other aspects of the profession, however, including professionalization, aspects of knowledge development, and even descriptions of advocacy, are derived from an objectivist, rational paradigm. In response to the varying rationalities and underlying assumptions informing social work, the profession could pit one paradigm against the other for purposes of achieving a dominant guiding perspective. The implications of this study, however, suggest a different construction, one that tentatively syncretizes both the rational and radical elements of social work. Syncretizing does not imply the subsuming of one or more rationalities under another, but suggests heterogeneity. The multiple dimensions of social work heterogeneity – radical, moral, and otherwise – require vigilant critical consciousness for ethical practice on micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Vigilance begins with social work education efforts that must incorporate the implicit and explicit moral dimensions of the profession and the contexts in which it works. It continues through critically reflexive practice and multi-paradigmatic research that interrogates the many constructions that comprise the social work profession.

Conclusion

This study of faith-based advocacy organizations in the Commonwealth of Virginia was introduced by noting the increased presence of religion and religious concepts in political discourse concerning social welfare and social policy. It also noted the differential use of terms describing the religious organizations involved in social welfare. From religious to sectarian to faith-based, faith-affiliated and faith-related, a number of efforts have been made to typologize organizations in response to the increased attention in the discourse (Smith & Sosin, 2001; Sider & Unruh, 2004; Working Groups on Human Needs and Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, 2002). The prevalence of categorization attempts in the literature indicates an empirical responsiveness to the discourse and a growing consensus that *faith-based* is an inadequate description of the role religion may play in many social service organizations.

The findings from this study, however, suggest that *faith-based* is an appropriate moniker for religious advocacy organizations, at least those that participated in the research. The organizations' mandates are foundational to their work and a number of respondents used faith-based to describe their efforts. This singular descriptor does not account for the many variations within and between faith-based advocacy organizations, but it may serve to bring attention to those organizations who unlike faith-related service agencies, function outside of the current empirical fervor surrounding the political discourse yet have a rich and long history of social activism.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guides

Interview Guide – Organization
December 3, 2006

Following informed consent discussion: *Your organization has been identified as a faith-related organization engaged in legislative advocacy, or lobbying. I am interested in understanding how you do what you do.*

1. Could you tell me about your (name) organization?
 - a. Incorporation?
 - b. Staffing?
 - c. Budget?
 - d. Age?
 - e. Funding/resources?
 - f. Governance?
 - g. Mission?
 - h. Members?
 - i. If you register as a lobbyist, why? Do you register every year? Why or why not?
 - j. On what government levels/to what government bodies do you advocate? Why?

2. Can you tell me about the legislative context in which you work?
 - a. Role of a non-professional legislature?
 - b. Political ideology? Partisanship?
 - c. Role of religion?
 - d. How do legislators and legislative staff respond to your efforts?
 - e. With what legislators do you frequently interact and why?
 - f. How do your organization and its efforts affect the legislative context?

3. What are the organization's goals for legislative action?
 - a. Long-term goals?
 - b. Short-term goals?
 - c. Do you have any unarticulated or unpublicized legislative goals as an organization or as an individual?
 - d. How do you publicly describe your goals? Why?
 - e. Relationship of the organization's religious beliefs/values to your goals?
 - f. Relationship of the individual's religious beliefs/values to organizational goals?
 - g. How do you know when you've achieved your goals?
 - h. How do you define success?
 - i. Can you describe key successes and failures?

4. How are the organization's goals determined?
 - a. What are your overall legislative priorities?
 - b. Your priorities/agenda for this year?
 - c. When do you determine your annual agenda?
 - d. How do you determine your agenda?
 - e. How do you prioritize?
 - f. Who has a role in determining and prioritizing your agenda?
 - g. How have your organization's legislative priorities changed over time?
5. What issues/problems does your organization address?
 - a. Who defines the problems you address?
 - b. How does a problem become a part of your legislative agenda?
 - c. How do religious beliefs/values influence problem identification and description?
 - d. How does morality influence problem definition?
 - e. How do you describe the problem to legislators or their staff?
 - f. How do legislative opponents describe the problem?
6. What solutions does your organization seek through legislative action?
 - a. How do you expect the solution you offer to create change?
 - b. How do religious beliefs/values affect the solution your organization offers?
 - c. How does morality influence the solution?
 - d. How does the incremental nature of the legislative change affect the solutions you propose?
 - e. What role does negotiation play in proposing/opposing legislative solutions?
7. What activities does your organization undertake to meet your goals?
 - a. How do you describe the work you and your organization do? What do you name it?
 - b. Strategies and tactics?
 - c. Religious strategies/tactics?
 - d. Use of religious language?
 - e. Non-legislative activities related to your legislative efforts?
 - f. Use of members?
 - g. Mobilization of members?
 - h. When talking to legislators and legislative staff, what do you say and why?
8. What is the relationship of religion to your organization and its activities?
 - a. Relationship with a denominational body? Other religious organizations?
 - b. How do your organization and its activities represent religion?

- c. What religious or non-religious stories, symbols, or metaphors do you use to communicate?
9. What relationships are involved in your legislative activities?
- a. What organizations do you work with to accomplish your legislative goals?
 - b. Why do you work with them?
 - c. What organizations do you work against?
 - d. Why do you work against them?
 - e. Relationships with other religious organizations?
 - f. Relationship with members?
10. What tension, if any, do you experience as a religious organization in a political context?
- a. What tensions do you experience with those you work with?
 - b. What tensions do you experience with those you work against?
 - c. What tensions do you experience with legislators and legislative staff?
 - d. What tensions do you experience with your members?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share with me that I have not asked you?

Interview Guide – Legislator/Legislative Staff
December 3, 2006

Following informed consent discussion: *You have been identified as a legislator/legislative staff member that interacts with religious lobbying organizations. I am interested in understanding what these religious lobbying organizations do.*

1. Can you tell me about Virginia's legislative context?
 - a. Role of a non-professional legislature?
 - b. Political ideology? Partisanship?
 - c. Role of religion?
 - d. How does Virginia's legislative context affect the religious organizations?
 - e. How do religious lobbying organizations affect the legislative context?
2. Could you tell me about the religiously-related organizations that approach you?
 - a. Who are they?
 - b. What do they ask of you? For what purposes?
 - c. Do they provide you with materials? What kind?
3. What are the organizations' goals for legislative action?
 - a. How do you perceive the relationship between their goals and their religious orientation?
 - b. Are the organizations successful in achieving their goals? Why or why not?
4. What issues/problems do the organizations propose to address?
 - a. How do the organizations define the problems they address?
 - b. How do you think religious beliefs/values influence the way the organizations identify and describe programs?
5. What solutions do the organizations seek?
 - a. Are the solutions realistic from your perspective? Why or why not?
 - b. How are the solutions related to religious beliefs/values?
6. How do the organizations approach you?
 - a. What strategies and tactics do they use to get your attention?
 - b. What other groups do they work with or against to get your attention?
 - c. What kind of religious strategies/tactics do they use?
 - d. How do they use religious language?
 - e. Do you ever hear from the organization's members? How do they approach you?

7. How successful are these organizations in influencing you?
 - a. What are some examples of the successes of religious lobbying groups in influencing you?
 - b. What are some examples of the failures of religious lobbying groups in influencing you?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share with me that I have not asked you?

Appendix B: Recruitment Plan

Research participants will be recruited initially by telephone by the student researcher. The following script will be used to recruit executive directors/gatekeepers for the proposed research project:

Your organization has been identified as an organization with religious ties that lobbies or advocates for legislative change in Virginia. I am interested in conducting research to understand what you and your organization do, why you do it, and how you do it. If you are willing, I would appreciate the opportunity to interview you and perhaps a couple of other persons in your organization in order to gain a better understanding of the organization.

Once other staff members and board members are identified by the executive director/gatekeeper, the following script will be used to recruit them for the proposed research project:

Your organization has been identified as an organization with religious ties that lobbies or advocates for legislative change in Virginia. I am interested in conducting research to understand what you and your organization do, why you do it, and how you do it. Your executive director [gatekeeper] has identified you as someone in the organization that participates in or is knowledgeable the organizations and its activities. If you are willing, I would appreciate the opportunity to interview you in order to gain a better understanding of the organization.

The following script will be used to recruit legislators or legislative staff for the proposed research project:

[Administrator name] has been identified by a religious lobbying organization [or legislative research staff] as a legislator who is involved in legislation of interest to religious lobbying organizations. I am interested in conducting research to understand what these religious organizations do and their effectiveness in doing it. If [legislator] and is willing, I would appreciate the opportunity to interview her/him and/or involved staff in order to gain a better understanding of religious organizations that engage in lobbying at the Virginia General Assembly.

Appendix C: Research Subject Information and Consent Forms

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM
Religious/Faith-related Organization Staff, Volunteer, or Member

TITLE: Religious Lobbying in a Faith-Based Era: An Ethnographic Study of Legislative Advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia

VCU IRB NO.: HM10710

You are being asked to participate in a research study concerning the role of religious or faith-related organizations in the legislative process. This information and consent form informs you of your rights concerning the research and seeks your agreement in participating in the research. If you do not understand any portion of this form, please ask the researcher for an explanation.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of religious and faith-related organizations in the legislative process in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are employed by or associated with a religious or faith-related organization that participates in the legislative process in Virginia. Other individuals associated with your organization are also being asked to participate in this study. In addition, legislators/legislative staff members are being asked to participate in the research.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and you understand your role in the research project.

In this study you will be asked to participate in at least one interview. The interview will last approximately one to two hours. With your permission, the interviews will be tape recorded. If the researcher has questions for you after the conclusion of your interview, she may contact you by phone or email or schedule an additional interview.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study. Because of the personal nature of religion for some individuals, some tension between political or organizational action and religious beliefs may be experienced as the religious nature of the organization and its activities are explored in the interviews. You can choose not to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS

You may not get any direct benefit from this study, but the information we learn from people in this study may provide more knowledge of the role of religious or faith-related organizations in the political process.

COSTS

There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in interviews with the researcher.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information you provide to the researcher will remain confidential. Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of interview notes, audiotapes of interviews, and data abstracted from organizational documents. However, data is being collected only for research purposes and your name will not be associated with the information you provide. Your data will be stored under a pseudonym known only to the researcher and her supervising professor. All personal identifying information will be kept in password protected files and these files will be deleted at the conclusion of the research. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. A data monitoring plan is established.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study.

QUESTIONS

In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact:

F. Ellen Netting, Ph.D.
Professor
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School of Social Work
1001 West Franklin Street
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(804) 828-0404 (office)
(804) 828-0716 (fax)
enetting@vcu.edu

M. Lori Thomas, PhD Candidate
Student Researcher
Virginia Commonwealth University
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1001 West Franklin Street
Richmond, VA 23284-2027
804-440-9135
thomasl@vcu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office for Research
Virginia Commonwealth University
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 113
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, VA 23298
Telephone: 804-827-2157

CONSENT

I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study.

Participant name printed	Participant signature	Date

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent
Discussion / Witness
(Printed)

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent	Date
Discussion / Witness	

Investigator signature (if different from above)	Date

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM
Legislator or Legislative Staff

TITLE: Religious Lobbying in a Faith-Based Era: An Ethnographic Study of Legislative Advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia

VCU IRB NO.: HM10710

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of religious and faith-related organizations in the legislative process in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a legislator or a legislative staff member that interacts with religious organizations who participate in the legislative process in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Individuals associated with religious organizations are also being asked to participate in the study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and you understand your role in the research project.

In this study you will be asked to participate in at least one interview. The interview will last approximately one to two hours. With your permission, the interviews will be tape recorded. If the researcher has questions for you after the conclusion of your interview, she may contact you by phone or email or schedule an additional interview.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study. Because of the personal nature of religion for some individuals, some tension between political or organizational action and religious beliefs may be experienced as the religious nature of the organization and its activities are explored in the interviews. You can choose not to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS

You may not get any direct benefit from this study, but the information we learn from people in this study may provide more knowledge of the role of religious or faith-related organizations in the political process.

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The information you provide to the researcher will remain confidential. Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of interview notes, audiotapes of interviews, and data abstracted from organizational documents. However, data is being collected only for research purposes and your name will not be associated with the information you provide. Your data will be stored under a pseudonym known only to the researcher and her supervising professor. All personal identifying information will be kept in password protected files and these files will be deleted at the conclusion of the research. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. A data monitoring plan is established.

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CONSENT

I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study.

Participant name printed	Participant signature	Date

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent
Discussion / Witness
(Printed)

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent Discussion / Witness	Date

Investigator signature (if different from above)	Date

Appendix D: Organizational Document Form

**Religious Lobbying in a Faith-Based Era:
An Ethnographic Study of Legislative Advocacy in the Commonwealth of Virginia**

The purpose of this form is to collect documents concerning your organization and its activities that may help me further understand your work and the work of other religious lobbyists/advocates in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Please use the provided space if you would like to comment on a particular document or guide me toward an electronic source. The list below is a suggested list; feel free to include additional types of documents as appropriate. Thank you.

Suggested Documents for Review:	Comments:
<input type="checkbox"/> Legislative agendas (daily and/or otherwise)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Legislative priorities	
<input type="checkbox"/> Talking points/transcripts of legislative testimony	
<input type="checkbox"/> Legislative Alerts	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational/program/committee agendas, minutes, proceedings, etc.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mission, vision, and value statement(s)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational history, historical documents, previous policy statements or related documents	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational/program/committee budget	
<input type="checkbox"/> Graphic or description of organizational/program/committee structure	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper/magazine articles about organization	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic plan, organizational goals, and other strategic documents	

Suggested Documents for Review:	Comments:
<input type="checkbox"/> Religious documentation – sermons, lectures, statements of religious rationale or basis	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational brochures and communication tools/ marketing tools, fundraising documents/tools	
<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration documents – documents that convey the nature and purpose of your relationships with other organizations/programs/committees	