

Interest Group Entry into a New Political Domain: From Lobbying the Supreme Court to Changing It

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Abstract

Interest groups regularly face decisions about whether to enter new political venues. We study one such decision: whether groups that lobby the Supreme Court by filing amicus briefs go on to mobilize for or against Supreme Court nominees. Drawing on a theory in which groups act where citizen support covers the cost of acting, we predict that entry depends on the demand for activism, the cost of entry, and competition from groups that have already entered. We test these predictions on a population of 978 frequent amicus filers, following each across every nomination from 1930 through 2010 and estimating discrete-time hazard models of first entry. We find that groups affiliated with a social movement, groups with recent amicus activity, and ideologically extreme groups are all more likely to enter nomination politics. We find no evidence that surges in movement salience or ideological distance from a nominee increase entry. Our results suggest that the polarization of interest group activity on Supreme Court nominations is partly a product of which groups choose to enter.

*Cameron is also affiliated with the School of Public and International Affairs. **AI disclosure:** We used large language models at several stages of this project. First, as detailed in Appendix A.4, an open-weights model (Qwen2.5-72B-Instruct) classified the social-movement affiliation of each organization in our data; that use is part of the measurement strategy and is documented and validated there. Second, we used AI coding assistants (Anthropic’s Claude Code and OpenAI’s Codex) to write and revise the *R* code that constructs the data, estimates the models, and generates every table and figure; to audit that code against the manuscript; and to implement the wild cluster score bootstrap, which was validated against an independent implementation (Stata’s `boottest`). All analytic decisions—sample construction, specification, and the choice of robustness checks—were made by the authors and are logged with their rationale in a design memo included in the replication materials. Third, Anthropic’s Claude drafted the text of the appendices in full, under the authors’ direction and from the authors’ specifications, and drafted or revised passages of the introduction and conclusion; the authors reviewed, edited, and take responsibility for all text. No AI tool generated or altered data other than as described in Appendix A.4.

1 Introduction

Supreme Court nominations were once sleepy affairs. From the 1930s through the 1960s, a typical nomination drew the attention of a handful of organized groups—two, three, or sometimes even none. Today a nomination is a crowded battlefield. Scores of organizations mobilize for or against each nominee. They come from across the ideological spectrum in a large and sharply polarized ecology of activists (Cameron et al. 2020, Cameron and Kastellec 2023, ch. 5). This organizational world did not come from nowhere. It was assembled, one decision at a time, by the leaders of groups who concluded that fighting over who sits on the Court was worth the effort. What drove those decisions?

A distinctive feature of this world is highly suggestive. Many of the groups that became durable nomination activists did not begin as nomination activists at all. They began as *judicial lobbyists*—specifically, they wrote or joined amicus briefs designed to get the U.S. Supreme Court to adopt their preferred position. At some point, each of these groups decided to add a new venue to its portfolio. In short: they came to lobby the Supreme Court, but they stayed to change it.

This paper studies that venue shift. We ask when and why an established organization that lobbies the Court decides to enter the politics of appointments. The pathway is worth studying for two reasons. First, it is a major route into nomination activism, as we document below. Other routes exist, of course: some mass-membership groups carried their electoral clout directly into confirmation fights, and in recent decades a few organizations were founded expressly to wage them. But the conversion of judicial lobbyists into nomination activists accounts for a large share of the modern ecology. Second, and just as important, this pathway allows a research design that the others do not. Because the universe of frequent amici is observable, we can identify, at every nomination, the full set of groups that *could* have entered nomination politics (the “risk set”)—and study the many that did not alongside the few that did. Studies that begin with the groups that mobilized cannot make this comparison.

Our question sits at an unexplored junction of two broad literatures in the study of

interest groups. The first concerns how groups choose among lobbying venues. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) define policy venues as the “institutional locations where authoritative decisions are made concerning a given issue,” and show that groups losing in one venue seek out another where the rules or the decision makers are more favorable (see also Baumgartner and Jones 2009, Pralle 2003; 2006). Subsequent work has examined the choice among a legislature and an agency, a state government and a federal one, and the elected branches and the courts (Holyoke 2003, Boehmke, Gailmard and Patty 2013, Solberg and Waltenburg 2006, McKay 2011, Holyoke, Brown and Henig 2012, Gause and Lorenz 2024). Three findings from this literature bear directly on our question. First, preference alignment between a venue’s decision makers and a group is a key driver of venue choice (Constantelos 2010, Holyoke, Brown and Henig 2012). Second, groups lobby more in venues where conflict is higher and where allies and opponents are already active (Holyoke 2003, McKay 2011). Third, resources matter: well-resourced groups tend to lobby every relevant venue, while groups with fewer resources lobby selectively (Gause and Lorenz 2024). Venues also differ in what they cost to enter. Filing or joining an amicus brief costs much less than entering a confirmation fight, which requires analyzing a judicial nominee’s record, taking a public stand, and working with the Senate and the press.

The second literature concerns interest groups and the Supreme Court. Organizations have long sought to shape the Court’s output, whether by sponsoring litigation (Vose 1959, Epstein 1985, Olson 1990, Epp 1998) or by filing amicus briefs that press the justices to adopt a preferred outcome (Caldeira and Wright 1990, Collins Jr 2008). Scholars have shown that groups are more likely to file briefs in cases where they can most shape the Court’s opinion and when the group is a repeat player before the Court (Hansford 2004*b*; *a*). Interest group participation both in Supreme Court nominations and lower federal court nominations has also increased dramatically since the 1970s (Maltese 1995, Bell 2002, Scherer 2005, Steigerwalt 2010, Cameron et al. 2020). In addition, the conservative legal movement in recent decades has made judicial selection a central objective (Teles 2012, Hollis-Brusky

2015). In each of these strands, however, a group’s *participation*—filing a brief, mobilizing on a nominee—is the outcome to be explained, and studies of nominations often begin with the groups that mobilized.

Both literatures take an organization’s presence in a set of venues as given and ask how it allocates effort across them. Our question is prior: when does an organization durably add a venue it has never worked in before? That is a question about entry, and entry has been studied mainly in two other traditions. The population-ecology approach tracks organizations’ entry into and exit from lobbying populations (Gray and Lowery 1996), but at the level of aggregate counts rather than individual decisions. The literature on group formation asks why organizations come into existence at all (Truman 1951, Olson 1965, Salisbury 1969, Walker 1991, Nownes and Neeley 1996), a question about entry into existence rather than into a venue by a group that already exists. The nearest precedent for our design lies in sociology: Minkoff (1999) follows a directory-defined population of women’s and racial-minority organizations over three decades with a discrete-time hazard model, measuring the movement environment from newspaper event counts, and asks when organizations change their core strategy. Her outcome is a change in repertoire rather than in venue, and ideology plays no role in her account. We study entry at the level of the individual group decision, with a defined population of potential entrants and an explicit place for ideology.

To make sense of these decisions, we adapt a recent theory of interest group ecologies (Choi and Cameron 2026). In that theory, citizens support a group for the satisfaction of backing a cause near their own position, so the support available to any one organization is local, and a group acts where that support, net of what nearby groups have already claimed, covers the cost of acting. Choi and Cameron (2026) use this logic to study where new groups form; we apply it to established groups deciding whether to enter a new venue. The entry condition points to three classes of factors. On the demand side, a group needs a mobilized constituency, and we argue that social movements are what create one (see McAdam 1982, Meyer and Minkoff 2004). On the supply side, groups differ in the cost of

acting in the new venue, and capacity built for litigation transfers to appointments. Through competition, what matters is not how many supporters surround a group but how many remain unclaimed—which, because the center is claimed first, implies that entry should come disproportionately from ideologically extreme groups.

To test the theory’s predictions, we construct a “risk set” of 978 groups that filed amicus briefs in at least 5 Supreme Court cases between 1917 and 2012, drawing on the Amicus Curiae Networks Project (Abi-Hassan et al. 2023), and follow each from its first brief across every nomination from 1930 through 2010. We combine these data with a census of nomination mobilization, ideal-point estimates for the groups, and measures of the salience of 33 social movements built from 90 years of *New York Times* coverage, with each group’s movement affiliation classified from descriptive information alone. We then estimate discrete-time hazard models of first entry, with nomination fixed effects that compare groups facing the entry decision for the same nominee.

Entry is rare—only 46 groups made the shift—but three underlying patterns emerge robustly in the data. First, groups affiliated with a social movement are far more likely to enter than unaffiliated groups. Second, groups with more legal capacity, as measured by amicus activity in the years before a nomination, are more likely to enter. Finally, as the theory predicts, the relationship between ideology and entry is non-monotonic: all else equal, the more extreme groups among the amici are more likely to enter than moderates.

At the same time, we find that, among affiliated groups, surges in movement salience do not detectably raise the chance of entry. Nor do groups enter more readily against nominees ideologically distant from them, though this test rests on few nominations and is underpowered.

While these results rest on a relatively small number of entrants and nominations, they have implications for understanding strategic interest group choices broadly and nomination politics specifically. With respect to the former, ours is one of the few systematic studies of *entry* into a new venue, as opposed to the allocation of effort across venues a group already

contests. In addition, our results on social movement affiliation and amicus activity point to the importance of situating group incentives within the broader context of what mobilized citizens want from groups and how capable groups are of delivering it. With respect to the latter, our finding that more extreme groups are more likely to enter suggests that the polarization of the modern nomination ecology is partly a product of the entry process itself, and not simply a reaction to increasingly ideological nominees (Devins and Baum 2019, McMahon 2024).

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 develops the theory and derives our hypotheses. To make the mechanisms of the theory more concrete, Section 3 presents a case study in which we examine the entry of a specific group—the National Women’s Law Center—into nomination politics. Section 4 describes the data and the construction of the risk set, while Section 5 presents the results. Section 6 concludes.

2 Theory and Hypotheses

To generate predictions about whether and when interest groups choose to switch venues from lobbying the Supreme Court to fighting over who sits on it, we draw upon the theory developed in Choi and Cameron (2026). That paper models the population of advocacy organizations within a policy domain as the outcome of a free-entry game between engaged citizens and group founders. Our context requires some adaptation. The theoretical focus in Choi and Cameron (2026) is largely on the formation of new groups; as such, the theory allows an entering organization to choose where to locate in ideological space. By contrast, we are interested in well-established groups who are considering whether to shift venues, and so we take their ideological positions as fixed.

This modification removes the stage that generates the model’s partition of the engaged public into niches, and with it the results that depend on that partition, including the number of organizations a domain sustains, how they are spaced across it, and the width of the organized field. Instead of making use of those results, our primary focus is on the entry condition itself: an organization enters a new venue when enough engaged citizens sit

within ideological reach of its position—close enough that supporting it is worth something to them—to cover the cost of the shift.

2.1 Groups and Citizens

We begin by assuming a set of interest groups who are established in one domain but have the capability to enter a different domain. As with most spatial models, we assume a single ideological dimension, ranging from more liberal to more conservative, on which both groups and citizens are located. The groups are the main actors in our theory, but their decisions are shaped by the distribution of preferences among citizens.

What do groups want? Importantly, we do *not* assume that groups are profit maximizers. Instead, the leaders of an organization seek the largest possible membership subject to covering the cost of operating in a domain, and keep nothing as surplus. Note this assumption is well tailored to the reality of advocacy organizations, who are overwhelmingly nonprofits and thus legally barred from paying out profits. Accordingly, we assume group leaders pursue members and influence rather than profit.¹

Next, we make specific assumptions about how costs work for groups. Operating in a domain requires staff, expertise, and attention, and a group that cannot cover what those require will not sustain a presence there. We assume the cost of acting does not depend on how many supporters a group attracts and can vary both across organizations and, for the same organization, over time. A group therefore weighs the support its position can attract against what operating in the domain will cost it.

Turning to citizens, what do they get from supporting an advocacy group? Existing models tend to point to one of two things: selective private goods, like a magazine subscription or a tote bag (see e.g. Olson 1965, Salisbury 1969), or the pure public good the group is fighting for, like the defeat of an objectionable nominee (Moe 1980). Neither of these utility functions serves us well here. The former has little to do with why anyone would support a

¹Nothing substantive turns on this assumption. Choi and Cameron (2026) show that replacing scale maximization subject to break-even with net-surplus maximization leaves the free-entry benchmark, and hence the comparative statics, unchanged.

group working on judicial politics. The latter is subject to the free-riding problem that has long preoccupied the literature on collective action, since a citizen enjoys the benefits of a group’s actions whether or not she contributed.

Instead, following Choi and Cameron (2026), we assume that citizens’ utility is based on the *satisfaction of supporting a group whose mission and activities a citizen favors*. This idea is exactly the “warm glow” familiar from the study of charitable giving: the benefit comes from the act of contributing rather than from the outcome it produces, so a citizen who approves of a cause receives nothing unless she actually supports it (Andreoni 1990). Importantly, because the benefit is private and attaches to the act of support itself rather than to what the group achieves, warm glow is *not* subject to the free-riding problem.

Following the basic logic of spatial theory, we assume that the satisfaction a citizen receives from supporting a group declines in the ideological distance between them. Favoring a group’s activities is a matter of degree: a group pursuing exactly the agenda a citizen would choose gives her more satisfaction than one pursuing something adjacent, which in turn gives more than one pursuing something she finds objectionable.

Citizens also differ in how much they care about a given domain. Some care enough that supporting a group working in it is worth something to them; most do not, and will support no group regardless of its position. Only the former are potential supporters, and it is their number near a group’s position, rather than the size of the public at large, that determines what support that group can attract.

What produces engagement of this kind? We argue that mass opinion is not the answer: most citizens hold views on the questions an advocacy group works on, but holding a view is not the same as caring enough to support an organization over it. Instead, what converts the former into the latter is social movements. A movement draws citizens into a domain who were not previously attending to it and deepens the commitment of those who were, and it does so unevenly across ideological space—a surge in the women’s movement, for example, adds engaged citizens near some positions and not others. Movements therefore

do not merely indicate where engaged citizens are; they are the process that creates them, and the ebb and flow of movement activity is what makes the engaged public near a given position larger at some moments than at others.

Unlike in most spatial theories—in particular, many models of elections—we do *not* assume that a citizen has to choose to join a group. Because supporting a group also costs something—dues, a donation, time—a citizen far enough from every available group is better off keeping her money. We do assume that a citizen supports at most one group.

Together, these assumptions yield the entry condition previewed above: a group enters a new venue when the support it can attract there covers the cost of acting. Three features of this condition drive our hypotheses. First, support is both local and bounded: the citizens a group can draw on are the engaged citizens situated near its position, a distant group is worth nothing to a citizen however vigorously it pursues its mission, and a group in thinly populated ideological territory may find that acting is not worth the cost. Second, while the cost of acting does not depend on how many supporters a group attracts, it can differ across organizations and, for the same organization, over time. Third, because each citizen supports at most one group, nearby groups draw on the same supporters: what matters to a group weighing entry is not how many engaged citizens surround its position but how many of them are not already claimed by groups active there.

2.2 Hypotheses

In this subsection we present six hypotheses that follow from this theoretical setup.

2.2.1 Demand: the engaged constituency

The most basic requirement for entry is a constituency, and the entry condition is specific about what kind. What a group needs is not members as such but *ideologically engaged* supporters: citizens for whom the correspondence between a group’s agenda and their own views is itself worth something.

This distinction helps us to classify different types of organizations. Many groups have members who joined for reasons that have nothing to do with ideological affinity—consider,

e.g., a trade association's members for commercial advantage, or a professional society's for credentialing and collegiality. Such organizations may be large and well-resourced, but their members are not supporting an agenda they favor, and thus they do not generate demand for the kind of activity that entering a contested venue represents. By contrast, other organizations exist because a body of citizens cares intensely about a set of questions and wants someone to act on them. According to our theory, it is only the latter whose constituencies can underwrite the cost of a venue shift.

Because social movements are what produce engaged constituencies, the line between the two kinds of organization is defined by whether or not a group is affiliated with *any* social movement. A group that emerged from, or aligned itself with, a social movement has behind it a body of citizens who came to the domain through that movement and who support the group for what it stands for—while a group with no such affiliation does not. In some sense, movements provide the “fuel” to activate citizens who are interested in what the groups are “selling.” This leads us to our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 *Groups affiliated with a social movement are more likely to enter nomination politics than unaffiliated groups.*

In addition, conditional on affiliation, the current activity of the relevant movement should matter as well. The number of engaged citizens near a position is not a fixed feature of that position; it rises and falls as a movement surges and subsides. When a movement is salient, the same ideological ground supports activity that it cannot support when movements capture less public imagination. A group whose movement has gone quiet faces thin demand, however committed its constituency is in principle, and an increase in movement salience can make acting worthwhile for a group that previously found it was not.

Hypothesis 2 *Entry is more likely when the social movement a group is affiliated with is more salient.*

Social movements are not the only thing that can draw engaged citizens into a domain. We argue that the ideology of the nominee can also play a role. Engaged citizens may perceive a nominee ideologically distant from them as a threat to their beliefs if confirmed, and a threat of this kind draws citizens into the domain in the same way a movement surge does: it adds engaged citizens on the side of the spectrum opposite the nominee, which should mobilize groups that are aligned with such citizens. We thus predict:

Hypothesis 3 *Entry is more likely among groups ideologically distant from the nominee than among groups close to the nominee.*

2.2.2 Supply: the cost of acting

Nothing in our theory requires the cost of acting to be identical across organizations, or constant for a given organization over time; in our setting, it is clearly neither. Rather, greater capacity of a group in one domain should reduce the costs of entry into a new domain. The venue is new, in other words, but much of what it demands is not. Capacity assembled for one kind of judicial advocacy transfers to another, groups differ in how much of it they have at any given moment, and the entry condition says that difference should show up in who enters.

Hypothesis 4 *Groups for which the cost of entering the new venue is lower are more likely to enter.*

With respect to the judicial context, entering appointments politics means analyzing a nominee’s record, taking and defending a public position, joining or assembling a coalition, and building working relationships with Senate offices and the press. A group that already employs lawyers who read judicial opinions for a living, that monitors the Court’s docket as a matter of routine, and that reporters already call faces a far smaller marginal cost in doing these things than one that would have to build the capacity from nothing. (As explained below in Section 4.1, we will use recent amicus activity to operationalize transferable capacity,

with the idea being that brief writing draws on the same legal analysis, docket monitoring, and professional staff that appointments activism draws on.)

2.2.3 Competition: what support remains unclaimed

In deciding whether to enter, a group has to weigh not only the citizen support near its ideological position but also the extent to which similar groups have already entered the fray. What governs that decision is the support that remains *unclaimed* by earlier entry decisions: two groups with identical constituencies face very different prospects if one sits in territory that earlier entrants have staked and the other does not. This yields a straightforward prediction about the nature of competition in the relevant domain.

Hypothesis 5 *Entry becomes less likely as more of the support near a group's position has already been claimed by groups that entered earlier.*

(As it turns out, our data do not allow us to test this prediction directly, for reasons explained below in Section 5.2, but it is still useful to lay out the hypothesis as a theoretical matter.)

Our final prediction is more subtle, and it follows from two features of the theory working together. Both rest on a single assumption about how citizens and groups are arrayed relative to one another. Scholars disagree about whether the attentive public is itself polarized (Abramowitz 2010, Fiorina and Abrams 2008), and there is evidence that those who join advocacy groups are more extreme than others who care about the same issues (Claassen and Nicholson 2013). Without taking a firm side in that debate, we assume only that advocacy organizations, whose leaders are selected for the intensity of their commitments, are on average more extreme than the citizens who support them. It follows that groups nearer the center of the ideological spectrum sit closer to where supporters actually are, and groups at its wings sit further away.

With this assumption in hand, we can examine the first feature of the theory, which is where support gets claimed. Because central positions are nearer the mass of engaged citizens, they have more supporters within reach, and so are the first places where a group

can cover the cost of entry and the places where entrants accumulate. The support available there has largely been claimed as a result. The center of the spectrum, in other words, has been more fully claimed by earlier entrants: whatever supporters surround a moderate group, most of them are already spoken for.

The second feature concerns where entry becomes possible in the first place. As the engaged public grows, the range of positions able to sustain activity widens, and parts of the ideological spectrum that could not previously support a group become viable—particularly the spaces toward the “edges” of where previous groups have located.

Importantly, the two features work in tandem. Saturation toward the center of the ideological spectrum matters only if the edges are viable enough for a group to survive there, and the widening of the viable range matters only if the center has been exhausted. Together, they imply that unclaimed support is scarcer near the center of the spectrum than toward its edges, which leads to our final hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6 *Entry is more likely among ideologically extreme groups than among ideological moderates.*

3 An Illustration: the National Women’s Law Center

Before turning to our empirical tests, we trace the history of a single organization—the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC)—to illustrate the logic of Section 2. The Center’s founders gave extensive oral histories late in their careers, and those interviews let us observe a venue shift from the inside: what the organization had built before it entered nomination politics, why it believed it could add something, and what it chose to say once it did.²

²This section draws on three oral histories: Marcia Greenberger’s and Nancy Duff Campbell’s interviews for the American Bar Association’s Women Trailblazers in the Law Project (Greenberger 2008, Campbell 2009), and Greenberger’s for the Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project at the University of Virginia’s Miller Center, where the questioning turned directly to judicial nominations (Greenberger 2007). The Trailblazers transcripts are paginated by session; we cite them by session date and page (e.g., “Greenberger 2008, Mar. 7, 20”). Where a paragraph rests on several passages, a single note lists them in order.

3.1 Building capacity

The Center’s origins lie in the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), one of the first public interest law firms in the country, which began in 1969 with four young lawyers and with former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg as chair of its board. In 1972, CLASP’s female administrative staff and women law students presented the firm’s male lawyers with four demands: hire women lawyers, work on women’s rights, raise their own pay, and stop expecting them to serve coffee.³

In response, the lawyers agreed to hire someone to write a memorandum on whether there was enough work to occupy one lawyer full time on women’s rights. Marcia Greenberger, then a tax attorney and a protégé of Goldberg’s, took the job in November 1972. Her colleagues told her the memorandum was a waste of time and that she should pick projects and start, and the Women’s Rights Project was born. She chose employment, education, and health. Nancy Duff Campbell, who had gone to Mississippi after college to work on a Head Start program founded in 1965 by civil rights activists and had since taught law at Catholic University and Georgetown, joined in 1978.⁴

In 1981 the Project’s lawyers spun it off as the National Women’s Law Center. The separation was financed out of the Project’s own litigation: the CLASP board agreed that the attorney’s fees the Project had won in a prominent 1974 women’s rights case could travel with it, on the urging of Julius Chambers of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and of Goldberg himself.⁵

The Project, and after 1981 the Center, accumulated a specific kind of capacity over time. The Project sued the Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare and of Labor in

³Greenberger 2008, June 2, 10; Sept. 11, 1. Campbell 2009, Apr. 4, 6 independently credits Charles Halpern with recruiting Goldberg and securing the founding foundation support; the Ford Foundation was CLASP’s first major donor, the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation the second (Greenberger 2008, Mar. 7, 24).

⁴Greenberger 2008, June 2, 9–10; Sept. 11, 1–3; Mar. 7, 1; on Campbell, Campbell 2009, July 11, 2–6; Apr. 4, 7.

⁵Greenberger 2008, Mar. 7, 26. Campbell independently recalls the fees—about \$150,000—as a “cushion,” Goldberg leading the CLASP board to release them, and herself as the one pressing for separation (Campbell 2009, Apr. 4, 11–14; Apr. 25, 1). By then the Project had grown to nearly half the size of CLASP as a whole.

1974—the same case that funded the Project with its attorney’s fees—to force promulgation of the Title IX regulations, winning a court order in 1975; it returned to court in 1979 over non-enforcement in intercollegiate athletics, producing the policy clarification that still governs the area. Alongside that came legislative work: the statutory review procedure for the Title IX regulations pulled the organization onto Capitol Hill early, and it was central to the four-year fight over the Civil Rights Restoration Act and to the Civil Rights Act of 1991. By the mid-1980s the Center employed lawyers who read constitutional and statutory opinions for a living, tracked the Supreme Court’s docket as a matter of routine, and had working relationships with Senate offices and the press.⁶

3.2 Entering nominations

None of the organization’s capacity, however, had been built to apply to the politics of appointments—until 1987, the Center had never taken a position on any nomination, judicial or otherwise. The Center’s board required its approval before the organization could oppose any named individual, for any post, because opposing a person cleared a higher bar than taking a position on an issue. Entering appointments politics therefore required clearing a threshold that the Center’s ordinary issue advocacy did not.⁷

Robert Bork’s nomination in 1987 marked the occasion on which the Center first cleared that threshold. Greenberger’s account identifies two constitutional foundations of women’s legal rights: the privacy line running through *Roe v. Wade*, and the equal protection line running from *Frontiero v. Richardson* (1973) through *Craig v. Boren* (1976), which established intermediate scrutiny for sex-based classifications. Bork had written critically of both. After what Greenberger describes as considerable agonizing and analysis, the staff and board decided to take a position for the first time and publicly opposed Bork.⁸

At a press conference announcing its opposition, the Center released an analysis of what

⁶On litigation, Greenberger 2008, Mar. 7, 1–6; on legislative work, Greenberger 2008, Mar. 7, 4 and Greenberger 2007, 13–22; on docket tracking, Campbell 2009, Apr. 25, 7, 11–12: the Center filed an amicus brief in every Supreme Court sex-discrimination employment case and was involved in nearly all early Title IX litigation.

⁷Greenberger 2008, Mar. 7, 20; Greenberger 2007, 24; on the board rule, Campbell 2009, Oct. 31, 7.

⁸Greenberger 2008, Mar. 7, 19–20; Campbell 2009, Oct. 31, 7.

Bork's writings meant for women. Greenberger recalls the event being packed—among the largest she had taken part in to that point—and says the report drew enormous attention.

What possible effect did this entry into nomination politics have? While Bork's hostility to *Roe* was common knowledge and already the subject of other organizations' work, his dismissal of *Craig v. Boren* was not. Greenberger noted that most people had never heard of *Craig*, and that almost nobody understood what Bork's attack on it meant for women's legal rights until the Center brought it to their attention. Thus, the Center's report put the equal protection argument front and center.⁹

According to Greenberger, this choice paid off. Senator Dennis DeConcini of Arizona was a swing vote on the Judiciary Committee. He was anti-choice and would not oppose Bork over *Roe*; he was also suspicious that privacy arguments were a smokescreen for pro-choice positions. But when the Center showed him that Bork did not believe the Fourteenth Amendment reached sex discrimination at all, he was shocked and challenged the accuracy of the analysis. Greenberger briefed him and his staff personally, showed him Bork's writings, and equal protection became his principal line of questioning at the hearings and a stated reason for his vote against confirmation. Greenberger attributed the Center's ability to do this to the combination it had assembled: legal expertise, command of case law and litigation, and an understanding of the political and confirmation processes.¹⁰

3.3 What the case illustrates

Five features of the Center's entry correspond either directly or indirectly to the hypotheses of Section 2.2.

1. *An engaged constituency.* The Center was a creature of the women's movement, and its supporters backed it for what it stood for rather than for any selective benefit. The founders describe the 1981 separation from CLASP in these terms: the Project's future lay with the women's movement rather than the public interest bar, and its work was already conducted in coalition with women's organizations that were not legal groups.¹¹ This is the constituency Hypothesis 1 identifies as a precondition for

⁹This and the preceding paragraph: Greenberger 2008, Mar. 7, 20.

¹⁰Greenberger 2008, Mar. 7, 20–21. Bork himself made the point before the Committee, arguing the amendment's intent was to reach racial discrimination only (Sitomer 1987).

¹¹Campbell 2009, Apr. 4, 11–12.

entry.

2. *An activated constituency.* The oral histories do not measure constituency attention directly, but they record its traces: a packed press conference and, in Greenberger’s telling, enormous attention to the report. More generally, contemporaneous coverage counted women’s issues among the pivotal ones in the confirmation fight and women’s groups among the most vocal opponents (Sitomer 1987). The founders treated the nomination as an occasion that warranted departing from a longstanding organizational practice to refrain from opposing specific individuals, as Hypothesis 2 anticipates.
3. *A distant nominee.* Along similar lines, Bork’s extremism on the dimension the Center cared about—he had rejected both constitutional foundations of women’s legal rights—was crucial to its decision. Hypothesis 3 holds that entry is most likely for groups far from the nominee, and the Center’s account of why it acted when it did is an account of exactly that distance.
4. *Low cost of acting.* The Center entered appointments politics by doing what it already did—analyzing a legal record and explaining its consequences to senators and the press. Fifteen years of litigation and legislative work transferred directly, which is the mechanism behind Hypothesis 4.
5. *Competition over the same ground.* The Center’s position was fixed, but its account of the entry decision turns on what other organizations had already covered. Bork’s opposition to privacy and to *Roe* was, in Greenberger’s assessment, well known and already the subject of other groups’ reports; his attack on equal protection for women was not. The Center entered where it judged that others had not been. Campbell describes the same test as a standing rule of the Center’s annual planning: an issue already well covered by other organizations, where the Center’s role would be supportive rather than leading, does not warrant its scarce resources.¹² To be clear, this is the *reasoning* behind Hypothesis 5 rather than a literal instance of the mechanism at work—the hypothesis concerns unclaimed citizen support near a group’s position, and what we observe here is an organization assessing what advocacy its neighbors had already supplied.

In sum, the venue shift into nomination politics was both worthwhile and feasible due to an engaged and newly activated constituency, a nominee it judged to be a direct threat, existing capacity that transferred at low cost, and a line of argument no other organization had supplied. The remainder of the paper asks whether the same considerations systematically account for entry across the full population of organizations that could have made the same choice.

¹²Campbell 2009, Oct. 31, 5–6. The rule governs what an organization contributes, not whether it takes a side; Campbell elsewhere treats several groups holding the same position as a source of strength (Campbell 2009, Apr. 25, 3–4).

4 Data: Interest Groups, Mobilizers, and Social Movements

Testing our theoretical predictions about entry into Supreme Court nomination politics requires bringing together many datasets. In this section we detail each data component. (Figure A-1 and Table A-1 in the Appendix summarize how the data for analysis were constructed.)

4.1 Amicus Groups

The main object of our study is the entry of interest groups into the venue of mobilizing on a Supreme Court nomination. We define mobilization in the next subsection, but to understand entry into nomination politics, we first need to define a venue that could plausibly serve as an entry point. We use participation in writing amicus briefs at the merits stage of Supreme Court cases as this venue; one can think of the writing or signing onto a brief as a form of “lobbying the Court,” since most briefs seek to persuade the justices to endorse the outcome favored by one or more groups (Collins 2008). In addition, brief writing is a very systematic and regular activity. The Court provides guidelines and timetables for writing and submitting briefs, and all briefs are available from various reporters and archives. Although judicially oriented groups may undertake other activities, such as pro bono legal work or sponsoring test litigation, we argue that repeated lobbying of the Supreme Court is a reasonable proxy for a serious judicial orientation.

We take advantage of the herculean work of Abi-Hassan et al. (2023) and the resulting “Amicus Curiae Networks Project.” The authors collected every merits-stage amicus brief filed between 1917 and 2012, along with information on every group that signed or cosigned a brief. They also estimated ideal points (called ACNet scores) for nearly all of these groups—specifically, those connected in the cosigning network to at least one organization with an independent (donation-based) ideology score. Like most ideal point estimates in political science, they are one-dimensional, with higher scores indicating more conservative groups.

To study venue shifting, we focus on groups that have demonstrated a commitment to organized activity in the judicial realm; accordingly, we subset the data to include only those

groups that filed or signed a brief in 5 or more cases across the data’s 1917–2012 coverage. There are 15,376 unique groups in the ACNet data, of which 12,549 carry an estimated ACNet score. Of those 15,376, 1,178 groups meet the 5-or-more-cases threshold.

Of these groups, we consolidate 39 groups that are sub-branches of the same organization, such as the American Civil Liberties Union and its state affiliates.¹³ We also exclude 93 government entities: government bodies themselves—states, federal agencies, and tribal and territorial governments—and associations whose members are governments or government officials, such as the National League of Cities. We retain organizations of public employees, whose members are workers rather than governments; a few organizations whose members are public officials but whose function is primarily advocacy are retained. These exclusions leave us with 1,046 groups ($1,178 - 39 - 93 = 1,046$). Of these 1,046 groups, 37 (or 3.5%) do not have ACNet scores. These groups enter our descriptive accounting of the amicus universe, but are dropped via listwise deletion from any regression model that includes ACNet scores as a covariate.

4.2 Repeat Mobilizers on Supreme Court Nominations

We next define the mobilization side of our study. As a starting point, we use the data from Cameron and Kastellec (2023, ch. 5), which in turn builds upon Cameron et al. (2020). There the authors used searches of newspaper coverage to create a census of groups that mobilized on any nomination between 1930 and 2020. The data reveal that 369 unique groups mobilized in this period.

We define a group as a *repeat mobilizer* if it mobilized on two or more separate nominations between 1930 and 2020. We exclude groups that mobilized on only a single nomination—“one-shot” mobilizers—because a lone appearance cannot be distinguished from idiosyncratic, event-specific mobilization, whereas mobilizing across multiple nominations demonstrates a sustained commitment to nomination politics as a venue. Of the 369 unique groups that

¹³In addition, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) merged in 1955; we treat them as a single organization throughout, categorizing pre-1955 involvement by either group under the AFL-CIO.

mobilized in this period, 113 qualify as repeat mobilizers.¹⁴ Throughout the analysis, “mobilization” refers to repeat mobilization: the outcome we model is a repeat mobilizer’s first mobilization. Importantly, not all of the 113 groups will enter our study, as we explain in the next subsection.

4.3 Constructing the Risk Set for Entry into Nominations

Our theory concerns *entry*: whether and when a group active before the Court through amicus participation extends into nomination politics. We therefore construct a “risk set” of groups that potentially could move from lobbying the Court directly via amicus briefs to seeking to influence the composition of the Court via mobilization on nominees.

We begin with the 1,046 amicus groups that meet the 5-case threshold, as discussed above. By definition, these groups fall into three mutually exclusive categories: (a) they never become repeat mobilizers—either never mobilizing at all, or mobilizing at only a single nomination; (b) they *first* mobilize on a nominee *before* they become an amicus group—that is, before they filed their first amicus brief in any Supreme Court case; or (c) they *first* mobilize *after* they filed their first brief.¹⁵ Of the 1,046 groups, 67 are repeat mobilizers: 47 first mobilized after their first brief (category (c)) and 20 first mobilized before it (category (b)); the remaining 979 either never mobilized (category (a)), or mobilized only once, and hence are not repeat mobilizers.

We treat any group that meets the amicus threshold—and that had not yet mobilized when it filed its first brief—as a “potential mobilizer.” The decision whether to shift from potential to actual mobilizer—“entry” into nomination politics—is the main outcome of interest in our study. As such, from this point forward, we exclude the 20 groups who mobilized first

¹⁴Of these 113 groups, 7 first mobilized after 2010. They are repeat mobilizers on the full 1930–2020 record and are counted among the 113, but because the amicus data end in 2012, their first mobilizations fall outside the window our covariates can cover; they therefore cannot enter the estimation sample (defined more precisely in Section 5), which runs through the 2010 Kagan nomination.

¹⁵We use the first brief as the demarcation point, even though the threshold for inclusion in the amicus population is 5 cases. Why not restrict category (c) to groups that first mobilize after their *fifth* case? The reason is that eligibility must be defined identically for mobilizers and non-mobilizers: a rule tethered to the mobilization event is undefined for the groups in (a), which never mobilize and thus have no mobilization date against which to time the fifth case. Anchoring on the first brief keeps the risk set observable for every group.

before becoming an amicus group from our analysis.

We construct a discrete-time risk set in which the unit of analysis is the group–nomination: for each potential mobilizer and each Supreme Court nomination from 1930 through 2010, we record whether that group mobilized on that nomination for the first time. A group is “at risk” of entry once it has filed its first amicus brief, and it leaves the risk set once it first mobilizes; groups that never mobilize remain as censored observations.¹⁶

Thus, our outcome variable is constructed as follows. For each group that enters, we code the nomination at which it first enters as “1” and all prior nominations at which it was at risk as “0”; groups that never enter take the value “0” for every nomination they are in the risk set. Recall that groups that mobilized on exactly one nomination (45) are excluded before the risk set is formed. These 978 at-risk amicus groups (1,046 – 20 reverse-sequence – 45 one-shot – 3 whose first case was argued after the last nomination = 978) comprise the risk set; this is the population whose entry decisions we model, which yields 13,337 group–nomination observations across 50 nominations. Note that the 46 repeat mobilizers that are not in the set of amicus groups do not enter the risk set; while their mobilization is, of course, interesting, it is outside of our theoretical scope, since we are specifically testing the shift of venue from amicus participation to mobilization.¹⁷

Essentially, one can think of this as an unbalanced panel, since groups enter at different points and either leave upon first mobilization or remain, censored, through the end of the window. Also note that we are *not* modeling the probability of mobilization for any given nominee—this is an interesting and related, but distinct, quantity of interest.

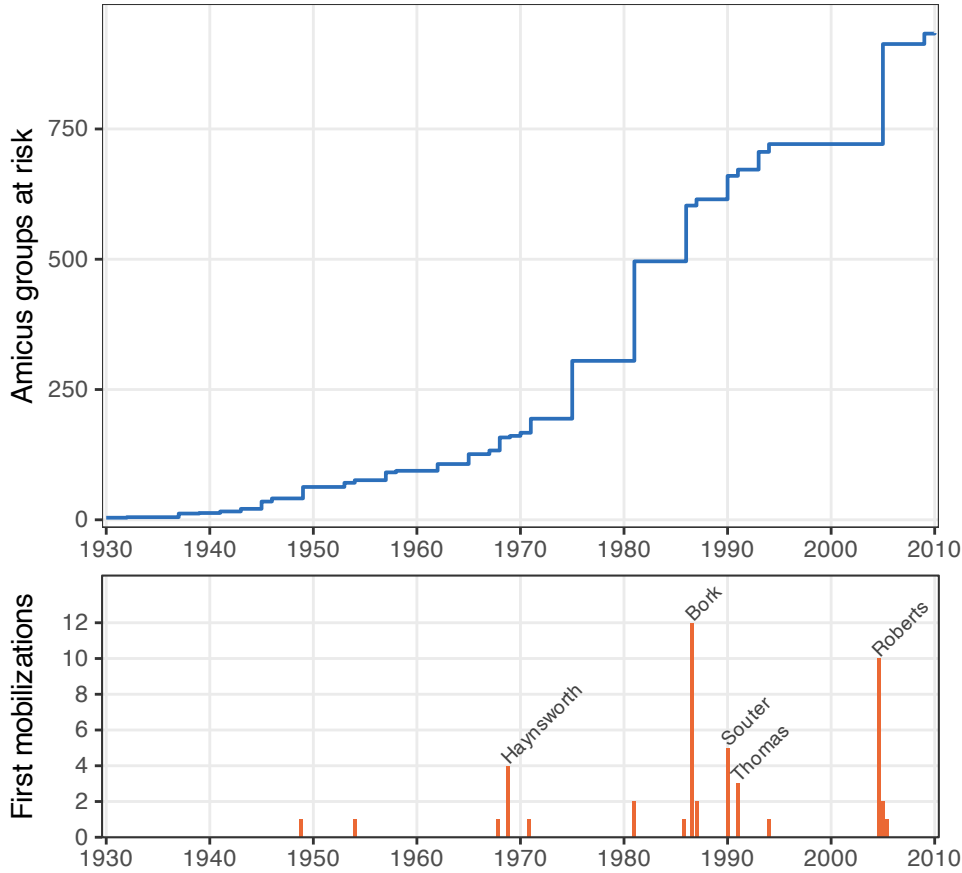


Figure 1: The risk set over time. The top panel depicts the number of amicus groups in the risk set between 1930 and 2010, while the bottom panel depicts the timing of entry into mobilization among the 47 repeat mobilizers who first mobilized after their first brief. The labeled nominees had the five highest numbers of entrants.

4.4 Visualizing the Risk Set

Figure 1 visualizes the risk set. The top panel depicts the number of amicus groups in the risk set between 1930 and 2010, while the bottom panel depicts the timing of entry into mobilization among the 47 repeat mobilizers who first mobilized after their first brief—category (c) in the taxonomy introduced above. (We label the nominees with the five highest numbers of entrants.) Consistent with the broader timeline of interest group involvement in American politics, we can see that both the number of amicus groups and the incidence of

¹⁶The amicus data do not record *filing* dates. We therefore use the date the case was argued, since a brief must be filed before argument: a group is at risk at a nomination once its first amicus case was argued before that nomination was announced. The rule is conservative—a group is counted as at risk only once it has demonstrably filed. Exit is measured by the date of the nomination, which is consequential when several nominations fall in the same year: a group that mobilizes in July exits then and is not treated as an at-risk non-mobilizer at a nomination announced in October.

¹⁷These 46 groups are listed in Appendix Table A-1.

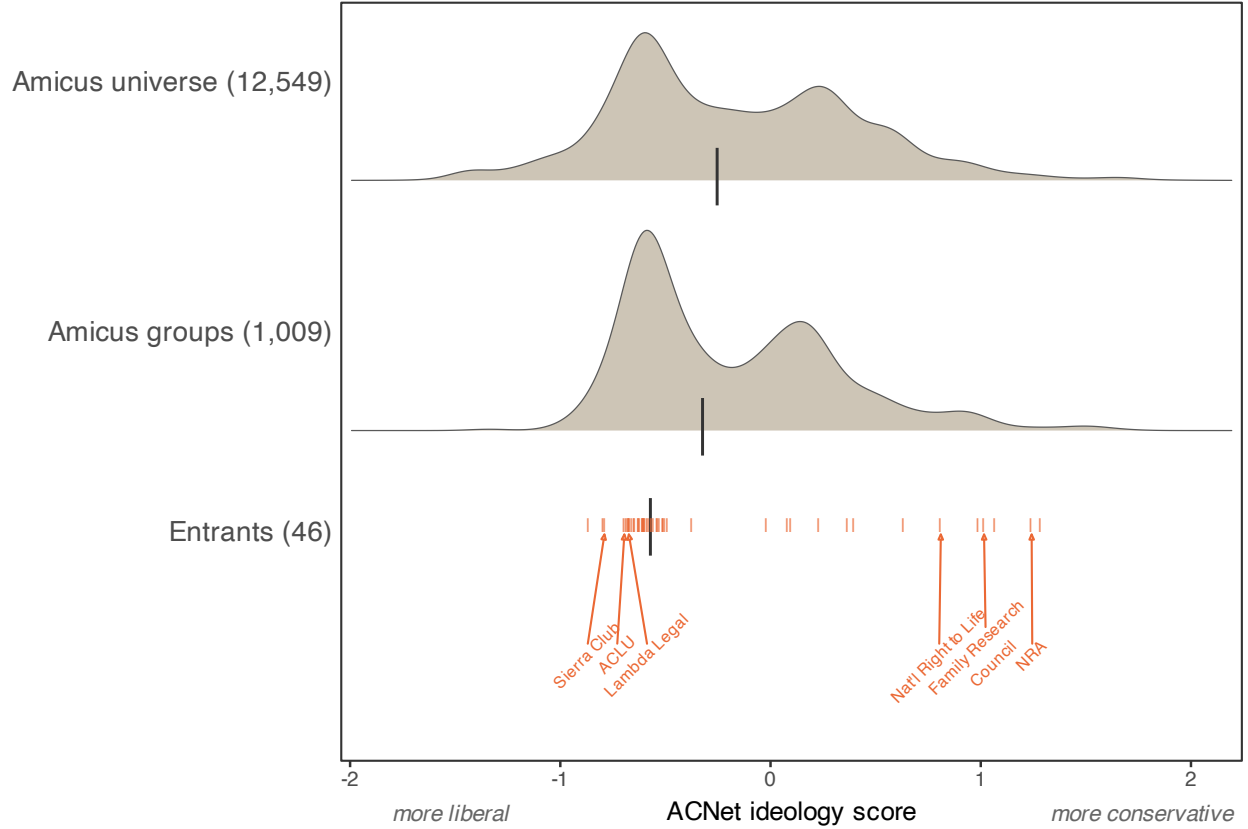


Figure 2: The ideological distribution of amicus groups at three stages of sample construction. Each row shows the distribution of ACNet ideology scores for a successively narrower population: the amicus universe, the amicus groups that provide the basis for the risk set (those meeting the 5-or-more-cases threshold after consolidation and government exclusion), and the entrants (the repeat mobilizers who first mobilized after their first brief). The bottom row shows the 46 scored entrants as individual points, with selected groups labeled for orientation. Vertical lines denote medians.

first mobilization grew markedly beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

4.5 The Ideology of Interest Groups

The ideology of interest groups plays a key role in our theoretical expectations and empirical tests. As we noted above, the innovation of Abi-Hassan et al. (2023) allows us to visualize the distribution of most groups that joined an amicus brief between 1917 and 2012. We can then compare the distribution at different levels of the data filtering described above.

Figure 2 sequentially depicts distributions of the ACNet scores for three sets of interest groups. The top graph shows a density plot of the full universe of amicus groups (all three graphs exclude groups that do not have an ACNet score). The middle graph shows the

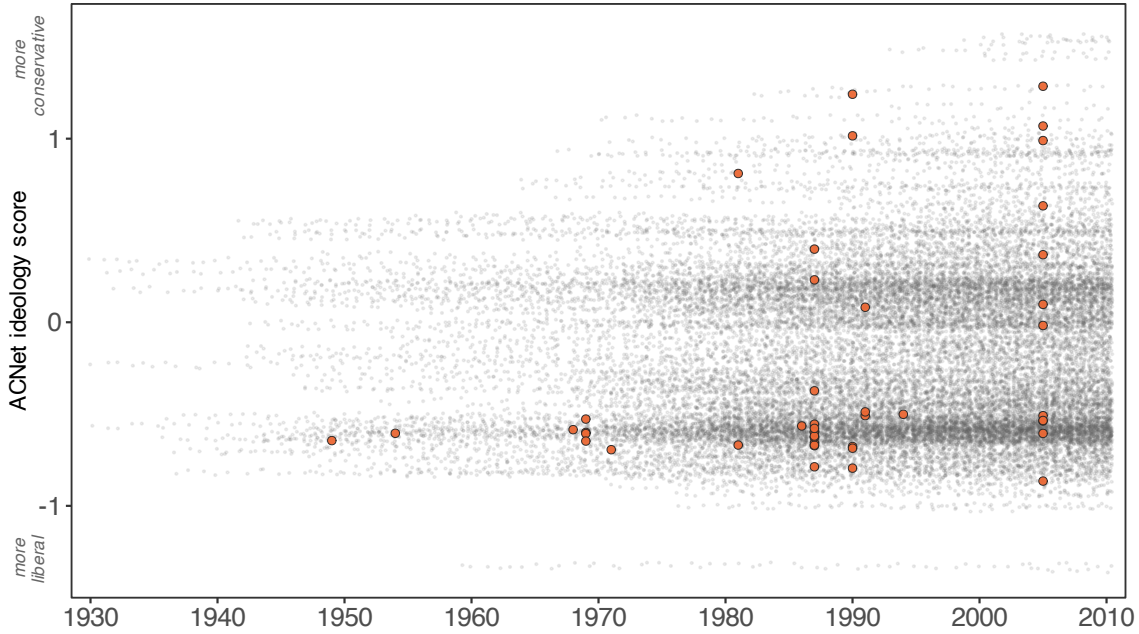


Figure 3: The distribution of ideology among amicus groups in the risk set and entrants over time. Each grey point depicts the ACNet score for an interest group in the risk set, for every year it is in the risk set. The solid (orange) points depict the ideology of entrants, at the point in time in which they leave the risk set by mobilizing.

density among the amicus groups that provide the basis for the risk set. Finally, the bottom plot depicts the ideal points of each of the 46 entrants with ACNet scores that emerged from the risk set and mobilized on a Supreme Court nominee between 1930 and 2010. For each plot, the vertical line depicts the median ACNet score from a given distribution.

Several interesting patterns emerge from a comparison of the three distributions. First, all skew to the more liberal side of the spectrum; this is not surprising, given that the liberal legal movement developed much earlier than the conservative legal movement (Teles 2008). At the same time, conservative groups are present in every set; among the entrants, we see well known conservative groups like the National Rifle Association and the National Right to Life Committee. Finally, the universe and the amicus groups have similar distributions—the shape among the amicus groups closely tracks the overall universe, with somewhat less density in the extremes. The entrants, however, are noticeably more liberal than either: their median sits well to the left of the pool from which they are drawn, and the conservative side thins to a sparse tail.

Figure 3 shifts to a temporal perspective on the changing distribution of ideology among the interest groups in the risk set. Each grey point depicts the ACNet score for an interest group in the risk set, for every year it is in the risk set. The solid (orange) points depict the ideology of entrants, at the point in time in which they leave the risk set by mobilizing. Three broad patterns stand out. First, consistent with the growth of interest groups in both judicial politics and American politics, the graph is rather sparse until the 1970s. Second, we see the overall liberal skew we saw in Figure 2 is more prominent in the earlier portion of the time series. More conservative groups entered the risk set in significant numbers only beginning in the late 1970s and 1980s; in addition, until 1980 all of the entrants came from the liberal side of the distribution. Third, even after conservative groups become a substantial presence in the risk set, entrants continue to come disproportionately from the liberal side: only a handful of entries after 1980 sit above the pool’s center.

4.6 Social Movements

Our theory predicts that entry into mobilization should be more likely when a group is part of, or can be broadly encompassed by, a social movement that is broadly salient at any given point in time. To associate each amicus group in the risk set with relevant social movement activity, we proceed in three steps. First we identify standard social movements in our study period. Second, we derive a measure of annual activity for each of the movements. Third, we associate each amicus with a relevant social movement (including “none” if that is appropriate). This process allows the creation of a measure of recent social movement activity keyed to each specific potential mobilizer in the data.

To identify social movements, we began with standard lists of social movements in the 20th century, in particular those in Amenta et al. (2009) and Amenta, Caren and Stobaugh (2012). We then made a few modifications to make the list more compatible with our context of judicial politics. This resulted in a list of 33 social movements.

Like most scholars of social movements, we rely on newspaper coverage to measure social movement activity. For each social movement, we devised a set of search terms corresponding

Table 1: The 33 analyzed social movements and their total New York Times story counts, 1930–2020 (raw counts, before within-movement standardization), ordered by total.

Social movement	Stories
Civil liberties	72,865
Anti-alcohol (temperance)	52,324
Environmental	39,866
Labor	35,951
Civil Rights: Black	22,670
Civil Rights: Jewish	21,904
Anti-communism	18,994
Abortion rights	13,061
Government reform	12,410
Immigrant/immigration	10,337
Anti-abortion	9,628
Gun control	8,627
Gay rights	8,465
Children's protection	6,401
Property rights	5,896
Antiwar	5,138
Women's Rights	4,770
Nativist/White Supremacist	3,524
Consumer	3,514
Animal protection/rights	2,891
Farmers	2,514
Old age/seniors rights	2,114
Civil Rights: Native Americans	1,896
Gun owners	1,562
Prison reform	1,426
Christian right	1,220
Anti-smoking	1,190
Veterans	849
Civil Rights: Disability	704
HIV/AIDS	605
Anti-decency	603
Welfare Rights	580
Civil Rights: Hispanic	242

to each movement (see Table A-2). Using these terms, we searched *The New York Times* via ProQuest TDM Studio, counting for each year from 1930 to 2020 the number of stories in which at least one of a movement's terms appeared. We use the annual counts of stories as a proxy of activity in a social movement in that year. Table 1 depicts the 33 social movements and the total number of stories each movement appears in across the 1930-2020 period.

Importantly, these raw counts reflect not only the intensity of the movements but also the efficacy of the search terms in identifying stories. This means comparisons *across* social movements are somewhat fraught. Because our purpose is to capture surges and slumps in the demand for political activism for specific individual groups, we normalize the raw counts for each social movement, creating z-scores. (We use the full 1930 to 2020 window to do this, even though the mobilization data we use runs only to 2010, so that each movement's score is measured against its own long-run average rather than a truncated one at 2010.)

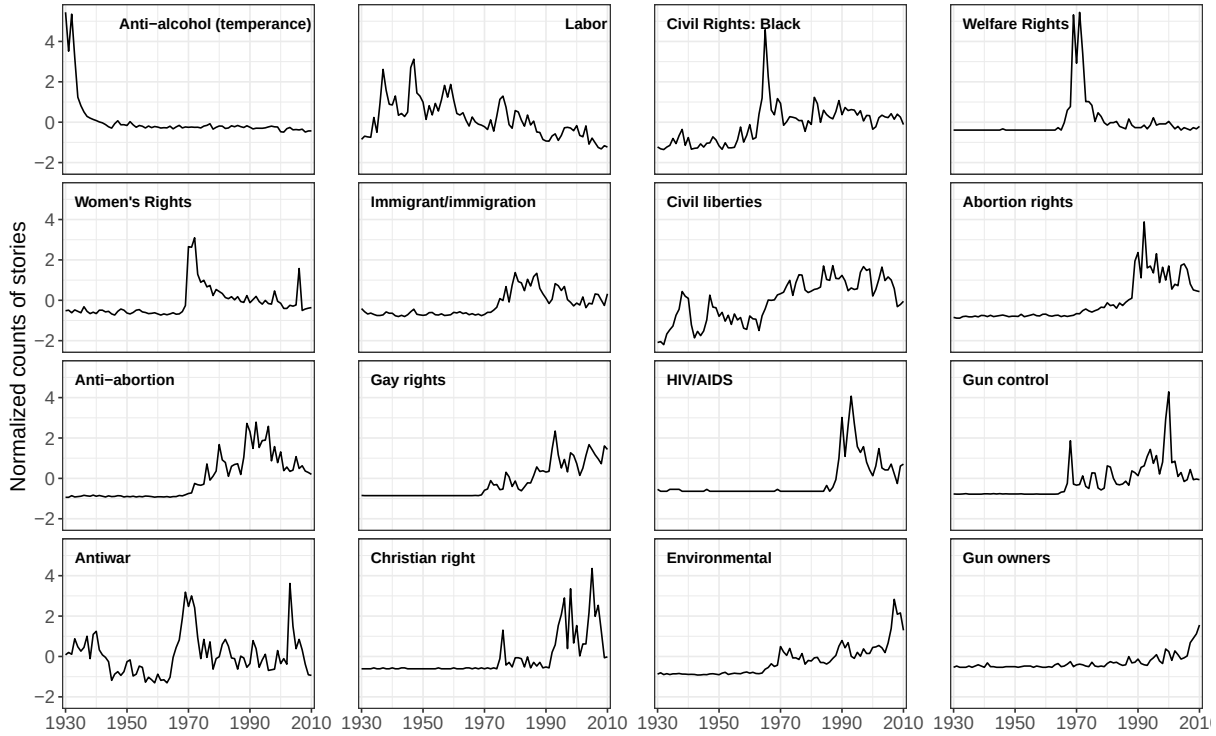


Figure 4: Standardized activity in 16 prominent social movements affecting Supreme Court amici, 1930–2010. Each panel shows within-movement standardized (z-scored) New York Times story counts, for 16 of the more prominent social movements in our data.

Hence, the average level of activity for a social movement is normalized to zero, and a level of activity one standard deviation above the mean yields a score of 1.

Figure 4 displays the standardized annual scores for 16 of the more prominent social movements. We order the facets by the year in which each movement’s activity peaked within the window, so that movements arranged left-to-right and top-to-bottom trace the rough historical sequence of movement salience. The graph shows substantial face validity. For example, the first panel depicts the anti-alcohol temperance movement, which sensibly peaked during Prohibition. Further along the grid, the abortion-rights panel shows the issue rising as a social movement after *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and cresting in the early 1990s. Finally, we see the emergence of gun control and gun rights as salient social movements towards the end of the period.

The final step is to assign each amicus group to its relevant social movement. We classify all 1,046 amicus groups using a large language model. The model sees only descriptive infor-

	Prediction	Covariate(s)
H1	Groups affiliated with a social movement are more likely to enter than unaffiliated groups	Social movement affiliation
H2	Entry is more likely when the social movement a group is affiliated with is more salient	Social movement salience
H3	Entry is more likely among groups ideologically distant from the nominee than among groups close to it	Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee conservatism
H4	Groups for which the cost of entering the new venue is lower are more likely to enter	Amicus activity (log briefs)
H5	Entry becomes less likely as more of the support near a group’s position has already been claimed by earlier entrants	Not testable with our data
H6	Entry is more likely among ideologically extreme groups than among ideological moderates	Group conservatism, linear and squared

Table 2: Hypotheses from Section 2.2 and the covariates used to test them.

mation about each organization—its name, founding year, location, and subject categories from reference sources—and never anything drawn from the group’s amicus record, so that a group’s movement label cannot be a function of the brief activity we are trying to explain. Each group is classified five times and assigned its majority label. Importantly, some groups do not correspond to *any* of the social movements; these include trade associations, religious denominations, and health charities. We treat such groups as unaffiliated, and Section 5.2 describes how affiliation and movement salience enter the models. (Appendix A.4 gives full details on the LLM procedure, and Table A-4 lists the movement assigned to each entrant.)

5 Results

We now turn to analyzing our data and testing our theoretical predictions. For reference, Table 2 lists the hypotheses and the covariate to which each corresponds.

5.1 Unit of Analysis and Panel Structure

As described above, the estimation sample is organized as a discrete-time risk set in which the unit of observation is the group–nomination pair. A group enters the risk set at the first nomination announced after its first amicus case was argued, remains at risk at each subsequent nomination, and exits upon its first mobilization. Groups that never mobilize remain at risk through the end of the observation window.

Because the quantity of interest is *entry*—the transition from amicus-only activity into nomination politics—a group contributes no observations after its first mobilization, and repeat mobilizations play no role in estimation. The panel is unbalanced by construction: the pool grows as successive cohorts file their first briefs, so early nominations place a few dozen groups at risk while later ones place several hundred.

5.2 Covariates

In this subsection we describe how we operationalize the key covariates. For each one, we attempt to connect the measurement to the theoretical concept of interest, subject to various constraints imposed by the structure of the data.

Group ideology A key covariate is the ideology of the group and its relationship to the nominee. We use each group’s ACNet score, with higher values indicating a more conservative group. Because our theory predicts that extremity in either direction increases entry, we enter the score both linearly and squared.

Nominee ideology and party of the president For the nominee’s ideological position we use the NSP perceived-ideology score, a continuous ideal point estimated from newspaper editorials’ characterizations of each nominee, with higher values indicating a more conservative nominee (Cameron and Park 2009, Cameron, Kastellec and Park 2013). Essentially, this score places each nominee in NOMINATE space. We also measure whether a nominee was appointed by a Republican or Democratic president, and include Republican appointee as an indicator in some models.

Hypothesis 3 concerns the ideological distance between a group and the nominee. Because ACNet scores and NSP scores are on different scales, we cannot compute that distance directly. We instead test the hypothesis by interacting group conservatism with nominee conservatism: under Hypothesis 3, the relationship between group conservatism and entry should become more negative as the nominee becomes more conservative, so the predicted sign on the interaction is negative. (The appendix reports a coarser version that interacts group conservatism with the party of the appointing president.)

Social movement environment To capture the social movement environment, we use two measures. The first is an indicator for whether a group is affiliated with a social movement at all.¹⁸ The second, defined for affiliated groups, is the salience of that movement in the four years preceding the nomination: we average the standardized annual counts from the *New York Times* introduced above across that window. Recall that standardizing within movement means the measure captures how salient a movement was *relative to its own history* rather than its coverage volume relative to other movements, so that a movement receiving consistently modest attention can still register a period of unusual prominence. We separate the two terms because movement salience is undefined for groups with no affiliation; a single continuous term would conflate the difference between affiliated and unaffiliated groups with variation in movement intensity among the affiliated. Unaffiliated groups are assigned a salience of zero, so the continuous term contributes nothing to their linear predictor and the indicator carries the difference between affiliated and unaffiliated groups.

Amicus activity As a proxy for both institutional capacity and the propensity to shift into nominations, we measure amicus activity among the amicus groups at a given point in time. Specifically, we measure the number of Supreme Court merits cases on which a group filed or joined an amicus brief in the four years preceding the year of the nomination. The moving window makes the measure capacity *at the moment of decision* rather than accumulated history.

The ideology of prior entrants Finally, while the ideology of prior entrants plays a large role in the theory, for several practical reasons we do *not* include it in our main analyses. The reasons for this are subtle, and hence we explicate them here.

Recall from Section 2.2 that the theory makes two predictions that turn on prior entry. First, entry becomes less likely as more of the support near a group’s position has already

¹⁸44 groups in the estimation sample are affiliated with movements that do not have sufficient newspaper coverage to estimate their salience over time; we therefore code these groups as unaffiliated. As it turns out, none of them entered nomination politics (0 of 44); column 9 of Appendix Table A-8 re-estimates Model (2) excluding them.

been claimed by groups that entered earlier. Second, entry is more likely among ideologically extreme groups than among ideological moderates.

The latter prediction can be tested directly by simply using the squared measure of group ideology that is described above. However, we cannot test Hypothesis 5 directly. Doing so would require knowing how many engaged citizens sit near a group’s position and how many of them already support another group. We observe neither, since either would require placing engaged citizens on the same ideological scale as the groups. (Our social movement measures proxy the salience of an issue, but they capture intensity, not location: a surge in movement activity tells us that engaged citizens exist, but *not* where they sit.)

We can, of course, measure the ideology of prior entrants, and the relationship of that distribution to would-be entrants. But ideological density alone is not sufficient to serve as a test of Hypothesis 5—more density near a group’s ideal point may mean *either* that prior groups have claimed most of the attractive region of the spectrum *or* that engaged citizen support in that region is unusually high. Again, without a measure of the latter, Hypothesis 5 cannot be tested with our data.

There is also a design issue that precludes including a measure of density of entered groups in our main specifications. The ideological distribution of entered groups is a function of the very outcome we are studying; in any given nomination, a measure of density captures the prior entries of a group’s ideological neighbors, and, according to the theory, the prior entrants responded to the same local demand as an ideologically similar would-be entrant. Thus, including density as a covariate would plausibly introduce a spatially lagged outcome that is correlated with the error term.

Nevertheless, in the interest of thoroughness, Appendix B.4 describes a measure of density and reports the results of our core models with its inclusion; the headline results are essentially unchanged; the one coefficient that moves is the linear term in group conservatism under fixed effects, for reasons the appendix explains.

Covariate	Level	N	Min	Mean	Median	Max	SD
Group conservatism	group	943	-1.35	-0.19	-0.31	1.55	0.48
Social movement affiliation	group	943	—	0.40	—	—	—
Amicus activity	observation	12,828	0.00	1.63	1.00	43.00	2.83
Social movement salience (among affiliated groups)	observation	5,005	-1.67	0.15	0.04	3.45	0.69
Nominee conservatism	nominee	50	-0.50	0.09	0.13	0.72	0.42
Nominee is Republican	nominee	50	—	0.54	—	—	—

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for the estimation sample (943 groups, 12,828 amicus–nomination observations, 50 nominations). Amicus activity is strongly right-skewed (raw briefs: min 0, p25 0, median 1, p75 2, p95 6, max 43); this skew motivates the $\log(1 + \text{briefs})$ transform used in the entry models.

Summary of Descriptive Statistics Table 3 depicts a summary of descriptive statistics for each of the covariates. We order the covariate by level (e.g., whether it is measured at the observation or group level).

5.3 Estimation Strategy

Given the data structure—a binary transition observed at irregularly spaced discrete time points—a discrete-time survival estimator is more appropriate than a cross-sectional binary model. Rather than asking whether a group mobilizes within some fixed window, the model estimates the per-nomination hazard of first entry, using both the timing of the groups that enter and the full exposure of the vast majority that never do. The risk set changes at each nomination as new groups become eligible, which a cross-sectional model cannot accommodate.

Accordingly, we estimate a discrete-time hazard model with a complementary log-log (cloglog) link, using the following functional form:

$$\log[-\log(1 - h_{it})] = \alpha_t + \mathbf{x}'_{it}\boldsymbol{\beta} \quad (1)$$

where $h_{it} = \Pr(Y_{it} = 1 \mid Y_{is} = 0 \forall s < t)$ is the hazard that group i enters nomination politics for the first time at nomination t , conditional on not having done so at any earlier nomination. The cloglog link fits our data structure well, as it is the grouped-duration analogue of the continuous-time proportional hazards model, so $\exp(\beta)$ carries a hazard-ratio interpretation

(Prentice and Gloeckler 1978, Jenkins 1995); also unlike the logistic link, it is asymmetric, approaching zero slowly and one quickly.¹⁹

The α_t are nomination fixed effects, absorbing everything specific to a given nomination, such as its political salience, the partisan configuration of the Senate, the controversy surrounding the nominee, and the overall scale of the mobilization it provoked. Nominations differ enormously on these dimensions, and such differences are a likely source of variation in whether *any* group mobilizes. In the fixed-effects specifications, the coefficients on group-level covariates are identified entirely from within-nomination comparisons: holding fixed the mobilization environment of a given nomination, which organizational characteristics distinguish groups that enter from those that do not? Nominee-level attributes vary only across nominations and are therefore absorbed by the fixed effects.

The fixed-effects models are our primary specifications, since they hold constant the mobilization environment of a given nomination. Given that our design rests on selection on observables, this is the tightest identification the data allow. However, the nominations at which no group entered contribute no information to the covariate coefficients: of the 50 nominations in the estimation sample, only 15 saw at least one first mobilization, so the identifying sample is the 7,231 observations at those nominations rather than the full 12,828.

Accordingly, we report specifications both with and without the nomination fixed effects, with the latter replacing α_t with a common intercept. While offering less tight identification because they are susceptible to across-nomination confounding, the models without fixed effects use the full sample and recover the nominee-level main effects that the fixed effects absorb—most importantly the effect of nominee conservatism.

Finally, all models we present below account for non-independence with respect to both interest groups and nominations, as standard errors are computed with the two-way cluster-robust variance estimator of Cameron, Gelbach and Miller (2011). Both dependencies are present by construction: a group’s unobserved propensity to enter is persistent across the

¹⁹See Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (2004, pp. 73–74) and Agresti (2013, §7.1).

nominations at which it is at risk, and groups observed at the same nomination face a common shock that the fixed effects absorb in expectation but not in variance. Clustering on the group matters for a further reason: several years contain more than one nomination, and because our covariates are measured annually, a group at risk at two nominations in the same year contributes two observations with identical covariate values. Treating those as independent decisions would understate the uncertainty in our estimates.²⁰

In addition, the number of nominations (as opposed to total observations) is small, and some coefficients are identified from only a handful of them. We therefore supplement the analytic standard errors with a wild cluster score bootstrap over nominations for every coefficient in the main specifications (Cameron, Gelbach and Miller 2008, Kline and Santos 2012, MacKinnon and Webb 2017). Because the bootstrap yields p -values rather than standard errors, Table 5 reports the analytic two-way cluster-robust standard errors, and Appendix Table A-12 reproduces the same models with the bootstrap p -value beneath each coefficient. As it turns out, the bootstrap does not change whether any coefficient we discuss below is significant at conventional levels, although, unsurprisingly, for several coefficients the uncertainty around them increases considerably.²¹

5.4 Bivariate Regressions

Before turning to the full models, we report bivariate regressions in Table 4. Our goal here is mainly descriptive, and hence we omit any fixed effects. Because amicus activity is heavily right-skewed—the median group filed 1 brief in the four-year window, the 95th percentile 6, and the maximum 43—from this point forward we operationalize amicus activity as $\log(1 + \text{briefs})$.

Four of the six bivariate coefficients—which fall into three broad categories—are statisti-

²⁰In the fixed-effects specifications, the estimator produces non-positive variances for a small number of the nomination indicators, because event clustering is near-collinear with the nomination fixed effects. Because these are nuisance parameters and the covariate sub-block is well behaved, we retain the two-way estimator for the reported coefficients.

²¹It does change one result outside the main specifications: the coarser party-conditional interaction (Group conservatism $\times$ Republican appointee) in Appendix Table A-8, columns 2–3, is analytically significant but its bootstrap p -values are 0.137 and 0.089 (Appendix Table A-13). We discuss this term in Section 5.5.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Group conservatism	-0.275 (0.493)	—	—	—	—	—
Social movement affiliation	—	2.008 (0.281)	—	—	—	—
Social movement salience (among affiliated groups)	—	—	0.052 (0.220)	—	—	—
Amicus activity (log)	—	—	—	1.126 (0.196)	—	—
Nominee conservatism	—	—	—	—	1.718 (0.741)	—
Nominee is Republican	—	—	—	—	—	1.921 (0.662)
<i>N</i>	12,828	12,828	5,005	12,828	12,828	12,828

Table 4: *Bivariate regressions. Each column is a separate discrete-time complementary log-log hazard model of first entry. Standard errors, in parentheses, are two-way cluster-robust, clustered on both group and nomination. Social movement salience is defined only for movement-affiliated groups, so column (3) is fit on that subsample and its *N* is correspondingly smaller.*

cally significant. First, groups with a social movement affiliation are more likely to enter the nominations venue compared to unaffiliated groups. Second, increased amicus activity in the run-up to a nomination is correlated with a much higher likelihood of entry. Third, both nominee conservatism and Republican nominees (which obviously are highly correlated) are also associated with higher propensity to enter. Here, it is important to note that this is potentially artifactual due to the fact that a) entry really begins in earnest around 1970 (recall Figure 1), and b) Republican presidents made all but 4 nominations to the Court between 1969 and 2010. (We return to the importance of this data limitation when we interpret the full models.)

Turning to the other covariates, the conservatism of a group (as opposed to the nominee) is associated with a decreased likelihood of entry, meaning more liberal groups are more likely to enter—but it is estimated quite noisily and not statistically significant. Likewise, we find that increased social movement salience among affiliated groups is associated with an increased chance of entry, but this is also not significant.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Amicus activity (log)	0.976 (0.178)	1.002 (0.180)	0.967 (0.187)	1.037 (0.193)	0.972 (0.191)
Social movement affiliation	2.12 (0.42)	1.85 (0.38)	2.11 (0.42)	1.86 (0.39)	2.12 (0.41)
Social movement salience	-0.10 (0.29)	-0.10 (0.27)	-0.11 (0.29)	-0.09 (0.23)	-0.11 (0.26)
Group conservatism	0.58 (0.37)	0.36 (0.24)	0.09 (0.71)	0.31 (0.29)	-0.11 (0.62)
Group conservatism ²	—	1.19 (0.36)	—	1.06 (0.33)	—
Nominee conservatism	—	—	—	—	1.98 (0.71)
Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee conservatism	—	—	0.94 (1.29)	—	1.27 (0.87)
Nomination fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,828
Effective N	7,231	7,231	7,231	—	—
Log-likelihood	-223.5	-219.8	-223.3	-264.1	-260.9

Table 5: Full regression models of entry into nominations. Column key: (1) nomination fixed effects, Group conservatism (linear); (2) + Group conservatism² (primary specification); (3) + Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee conservatism; (4) no fixed effects, Group conservatism²; (5) no fixed effects, Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee conservatism with the Nominee conservatism main effect. Notes: Discrete-time cloglog hazard of first entry; coefficient over its two-way (group + nomination) cluster-robust SE in parentheses.

5.5 Full Regression Models

Before turning to our full regression models, which are presented in Table 5, a few notes about the data and models. First, the first three models in Table 5 include nomination fixed effects, while the last two models do not. Hence, variables that do not vary within nomination (mainly, nominee ideology) do not enter directly into the fixed effects models as main effects. Second, Models (3) and (5) test Hypothesis 3 by interacting group conservatism with nominee conservatism, as described in Section 5.2; interpreting these interactions requires some care. Finally, in this section we focus solely on the sign and uncertainty of the coefficients; in Section 5.6, we turn to substantive significance by displaying predicted probabilities.

Before discussing each model in detail, we note that three results hold across every column of Table 5. First, recent amicus activity increases the likelihood of entry (Hypothesis 4), with a coefficient that is stable across the models. Second, groups affiliated with a social movement

are far more likely to enter nomination politics than unaffiliated groups (Hypothesis 1): the coefficient is large, stable across specifications, and estimated precisely. At the same time, among affiliated groups, there is no statistically significant boost from higher movement salience; the coefficient is small in every column and never distinguishable from zero. The data thus do not support Hypothesis 2. None of these results depends on the inclusion of fixed effects, the functional form of group ideology, or the presence of the nominee interaction terms.

The results pertaining to ideology are more conditional, and hence we walk through the relevant results in each model more carefully. First, Model (1) enters group conservatism linearly; it is positive but estimated imprecisely.

Model (2) adds a quadratic term for group conservatism, which directly tests Hypothesis 6 by capturing possible non-linear effects among more extreme groups (in either direction), compared to more moderate groups. The coefficient on Group conservatism² is positive and significant, consistent with entry rising with distance from the ideological center, *ceteris paribus*. The shape of that relationship turns out not to be symmetric—we display this below in Section 5.6. The main effect on group conservatism varies across the models but is never statistically significant.

Model (3) adds an interaction between group conservatism and nominee conservatism, which is our test of Hypothesis 3. Recall from Section 5.2 that the hypothesis predicts a negative interaction: as nominees become more conservative, more liberal groups should become relatively more likely to enter. The main effect on group conservatism is now the slope for a nominee with an NSP score of zero (i.e., a very moderate nominee); it is small and not statistically significant. The interaction is positive, meaning that as nominees become more conservative, the slope on group conservatism steepens, so conservative groups become relatively *more* likely to enter. This is the opposite of what Hypothesis 3 predicts, but it is not statistically different from zero.²² We note this test of a distance effect is underpow-

²²Interacting group conservatism with the party of the appointing president instead of nominee conservatism, a coarser version of the same test, gives the same sign. The party interaction is analytically significant

ered: overall, entry occurs at only 15 nominations, with only 3 of those being Democratic appointees.

Models (4) and (5) omit the nomination fixed effects, which allows variation *across* nominations to inform the estimates. Model (4) includes the same covariates as Model (2); the quadratic in group conservatism is essentially unchanged. Model (5) includes the same covariates as Model (3), but without fixed effects we can also include nominee conservatism as a main effect. That main effect is positive and, by its analytic standard error, significant: more conservative nominees draw more entry, which is consistent with a risk set dominated by liberal groups. Even so, we do not conclude causality here; nominee conservatism is confounded with time, since most post-1970 nominees are conservative and most entry occurs after 1970. The interaction is essentially the same as in Model (3) and again falls short of significance.

In summary, there are three robust results. First, recent amicus activity increases the likelihood of entry. Second, amicus groups that are affiliated with a *social movement* are more likely to enter nomination politics than non-affiliated groups. Finally, entry rises with distance from the ideological center. The rise appears on both sides under every functional form we examine (Appendix Figure A-3), though on the liberal side a spline places the peak at moderate distance from the center rather than in the tail. The two sides are indistinguishable at moderate distance from the center and diverge in the tails, where the conservative side is higher. Hypothesis 3, by contrast, finds no support, subject to the power and direction caveats discussed above. We now turn to conveying the substantive significance of these effects.

5.6 Predicted Probabilities

We now turn to exploring the substantive significance of the effects documented in Section 5.5. Because cloglog coefficients are difficult to interpret substantively, we convert the

(an analytic p -value of <0.001 with nomination fixed effects) but is identified from only 3 Democratic-appointee nominations with any entry, and a single nomination, Breyer (57%), carries the largest share of its score variance. Under a wild cluster bootstrap over nominations, its p -value attenuates to 0.137 (0.089 without fixed effects, against an analytic <0.001). See Appendix Tables A-8 and A-13.

estimates from Model (2) in Table 5 into predicted probabilities. Using 2,000 simulations from the two-way cluster-robust covariance matrix, we calculate the “average predictive effect” of each key covariate on the probability of entry (Gelman and Pardoe 2007). The advantage of this approach, compared to evaluating predicted probabilities at pre-specified values of the other predictors, is that it incorporates the empirical distribution of the data directly into the predictions. Specifically, at discrete levels of a given covariate, we calculate the probability of entry for every observation, using each observation’s observed values on all other covariates and its nomination’s estimated fixed effect, and then average the resulting predicted probabilities across observations. Because nominations at which no group entered contribute no information under fixed effects, we average over the 7,231 observations at the 15 nominations with at least one entry. Because the procedure is simulation-based, it also allows for the construction of uncertainty intervals; we report 95% intervals from the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles of the simulated margins. Because entry is rare, throughout this section we express predicted probabilities, and changes in them, as first mobilizations per 100 group-nominations.

We begin with Figure 5, which shows the change in the average predicted probability of entry associated with a change in each of the main covariates. We allow social movement affiliation to move from zero to one, with movement salience held at zero in both cases, since salience is zero by construction for unaffiliated groups. Salience and amicus activity move from the 25th to the 75th percentile of their distributions. Group ideology requires a different approach: because its relationship to entry is U-shaped (as we show below in Figure 7), a move between two percentiles would cross the bottom of the curve and net the two sides against each other. We therefore anchor at the nadir of the quadratic in Model (2)—the ACNet score at which predicted entry is lowest, -0.159 on the group conservatism scale—and separately move outward to the liberal and conservative tails of the observed distribution (the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles).

Figure 5 shows that moving a group from unaffiliated to affiliated with a social movement

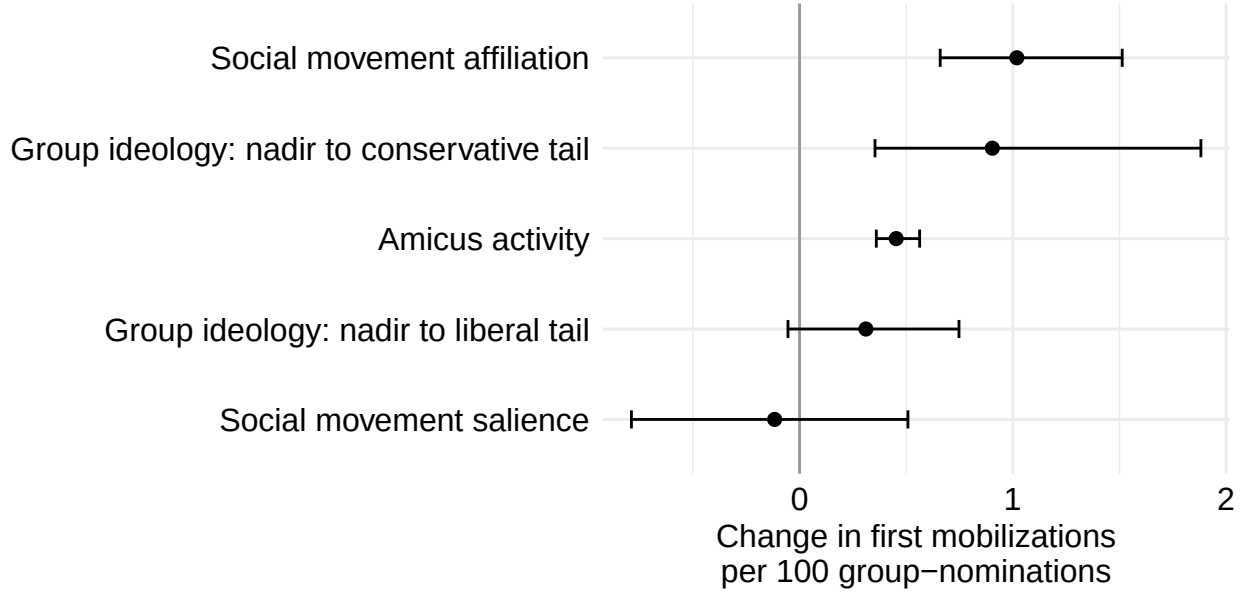


Figure 5: Changes in the predicted probability of first mobilization. Average predictive comparisons from Model (2) of Table 5, with 95% confidence intervals. Social movement affiliation moves from zero to one with movement salience held at zero in both cases, since salience is zero by construction for unaffiliated groups. The ideology contrasts move group conservatism from the nadir of the quadratic (-0.159) to the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles of its observed distribution. Salience moves from the 25th to the 75th percentile among affiliated groups; amicus activity from the 25th to the 75th percentile of briefs, a change from zero to two.

raises the probability of entry at a given nomination by +1.02 per 100 group-nominations, from a baseline of 0.20. Moving from the nadir of the ideology curve to the conservative tail raises it by +0.90, and moving amicus activity from the 25th to the 75th percentile raises it by +0.45. Each of these three intervals excludes zero. The move from the nadir to the liberal tail (+0.31) is smaller in point estimate and its interval narrowly includes zero; we return to the comparison of the two sides below. The change from higher movement salience (-0.12) is small and imprecise, matching the null coefficient in Table 5.

Next, Figure 6 depicts the average predictive effect of amicus activity on the probability of entry, across the full observed range of briefs filed in the four-year window. Because amicus activity enters the model as $\log(1 + \text{briefs})$, the curve is steepest at low counts and flattens as activity rises: the move from zero briefs to two, the interquartile range in the data, raises the predicted probability by +0.45, and most groups sit in this part of the curve. Beyond

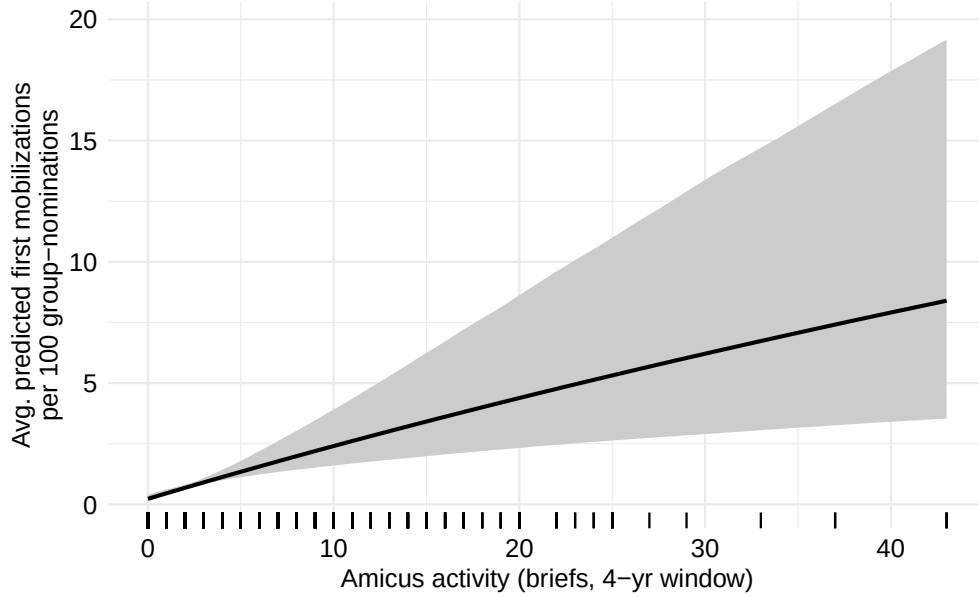


Figure 6: Predicted probability of first mobilization across amicus activity, from Model (2) of Table 5. Amicus activity enters the model as $\log(1 + \text{briefs})$; the horizontal axis displays raw brief counts over their full observed range, from zero to 43. Shaded bands depict 95% confidence intervals.

that range the curve continues to rise, but each additional brief adds less, and the simulation interval widens. The pattern is consistent with the capacity interpretation of Hypothesis 4: what matters is having a working legal operation at all, not the marginal brief once one exists.

Finally, Figure 7 shows how the probability of entry varies across the range of group conservatism. The rug underneath the x-axis depicts the ideal point of each of the amicus groups in the estimation sample. Because the far tails on each side are thinly populated, we plot the prediction curve only across the central 95% of this distribution. The figure makes clear the U-shaped effect of ideology that Model (2) implies: predicted entry is lowest at -0.159 and rises toward both tails. The conservative side appears to rise more steeply, but under the quadratic the two sides are constrained to rise symmetrically about the nadir; the visible difference reflects only that the plotted range extends farther from the nadir on the conservative side, together with the curvature of the link. The figure therefore cannot tell us whether the data share the quadratic's shape. Appendix Figure A-3 relaxes that restriction, fitting the same model with a spline and with binned indicators for group con-

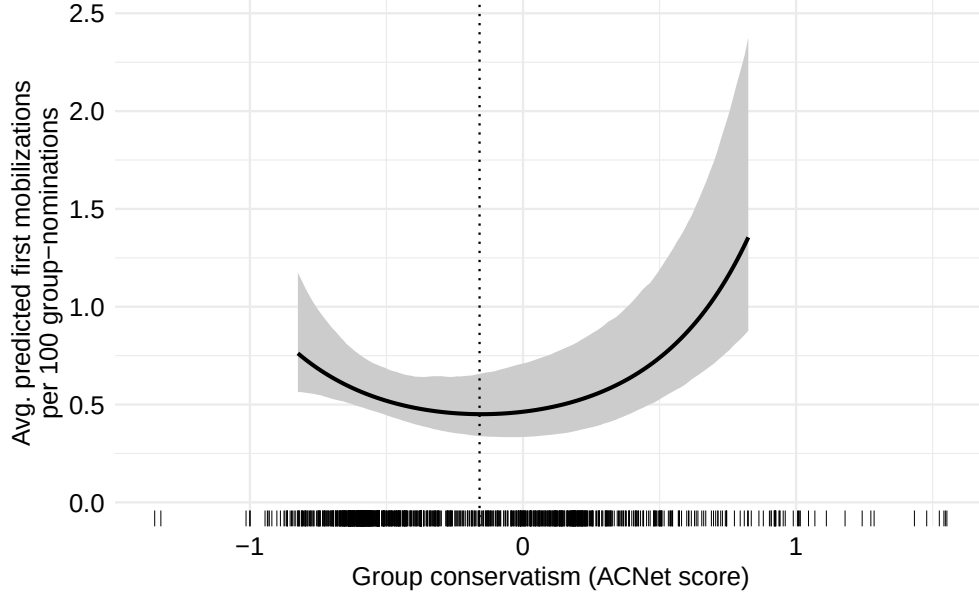


Figure 7: Predicted probability of first mobilization across group ideology, from Model (2) of Table 5. Margins are computed over the 7,231 observations at nominations with at least one entry, since nominations without entries contribute no information under fixed effects. The rug underneath the x-axis depicts the ideal point of each of the amicus groups in the estimation sample. Shaded bands are 95% confidence intervals from 2,000 draws of the coefficient vector using the two-way cluster-robust covariance matrix. The curve is drawn over the central 95% of observed group scores. The dotted line marks the nadir of the curve.

servatism. Three patterns emerge. First, the rise on the conservative side appears under every functional form. Second, the rise on the liberal side also appears under every form, though the spline places its peak at moderate distance from the center and declines toward the sparsely populated liberal tail. Third, at moderate distances from the center the two sides are indistinguishable (binned contrast $+0.06$ per 100 group-nominations, 95% interval $[-0.62, +0.59]$), while in the tails the conservative side is higher (-1.10 , $[-3.33, -0.03]$). (To be clear, the asymmetry is not a prediction of the theory; it arises from the data, and it rests on the small number of groups in the conservative tail, as the rug makes clear.) Overall, the evidence is consistent with entry rising with distance from the ideological center, more robustly on the conservative side than on the liberal one.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

Over the last half century, organized activists rang down the curtain on the era of sleepy nominations and quiet confirmations. In its place they built a new world of fierce conflict over nominees selected expressly as policy champions, and a large, polarized ecology of groups to wage it (Cameron and Kastellec 2023). In this paper we studied one of the principal routes by which that ecology was assembled: the decisions of established judicial lobbyists to add nomination politics to their repertoire.

To understand those decisions, we adapted a theory of interest group ecologies (Choi and Cameron 2026) to the problem of venue entry by existing organizations. In the theory, group leaders seek support rather than profit, and engaged citizens support groups for the satisfaction of backing a cause they favor. An organization enters a new venue when the engaged support within its ideological reach, net of what nearby groups have already claimed, covers the cost of acting there. We then followed every frequent *amicus curiae* across every Supreme Court nomination from 1930 to 2010, comparing the few groups that entered nomination politics with the many that could have but did not.

Three findings stand out, and each maps onto a distinct part of the theory. First, on the demand side, groups affiliated with a social movement were far more likely to enter than groups without one. Trade associations, professional societies, and religious denominations can be large and well funded, yet their members did not join to back an agenda, and they rarely made the move. Second, on the supply side, groups with recent *amicus* activity were more likely to enter. Lawyers who read opinions for a living, monitor the docket, and already have the ear of reporters and Senate staff face a small marginal cost in analyzing a nominee’s record. What seems to matter is having a working legal operation at all, rather than the marginal brief. Third, and most distinctively, entry was more likely among ideologically extreme groups than among moderates, as the theory predicts when the center has already been claimed.

Two predictions fared less well. Among movement-affiliated groups, surges in a move-

ment's salience did not detectably raise the chance of entry; movements may matter by creating durable constituencies rather than by producing short-run bursts of entry, though our newspaper-based measure of salience is coarse and our power to detect a within-movement effect is limited. Nor did groups enter more readily against nominees ideologically distant from them. This test rests on only 15 nominations with any entry, 3 of them by Democratic presidents, and is thus underpowered.

From individual decisions to the ecology

These findings are about individual decisions, but they also bear on the shape of the ecology those decisions produced. If the center of the ideological spectrum is claimed first and entry thereafter comes from the wings, then the polarization of the modern nomination ecology is partly a product of the entry process itself, and not simply a reaction to increasingly ideological nominees. The theory also suggests why that ecology is likely to endure. Because incumbents claim the support near them, the configuration of groups formed in one era constrains entry in the next. We have not tested this implication directly, and it is a natural target for future work.

Our analysis covers only one pathway into appointment politics, and the others deserve study on their own terms. Some mass-membership organizations built for electoral politics carried that capacity directly into confirmation fights, and a small number of organizations were founded expressly to fight over nominations—for example, the Judicial Crisis Network (formerly the Judicial Confirmation Network) on the conservative side and Demand Justice on the liberal side. Neither route offers a natural set of potential entrants of the kind the frequent amici provide, which is why we set them aside here. Nor could we test the theory's most direct prediction, that entry falls as nearby support is claimed. Doing so would require placing engaged citizens on the same ideological scale as the groups. Such bridging is difficult, but it is the natural next step for testing the theory's competition mechanism.

The unheavenly chorus

What broader lessons might be drawn from this case? In the 1950s and 1960s, American political scientists confronted the uncomfortable fact that participation by organized groups had largely displaced participation by individuals, at least in the halls of power (Dahl 1961). Interest group pluralism answered that groups represent individuals, so government by the groups need not betray government by the people. E. E. Schattschneider’s reply is famous: “the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent” (Schattschneider 1960, 35). Later scholars have documented how thoroughly the organized interest universe remains an unheavenly chorus, both in who is organized at all (Schlozman and Tierney 1986, Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012) and in whom organizations speak for once they exist (Strolovitch 2007). Nor does the multiplicity of venues correct the imbalance: the same business interests that dominate legislative lobbying dominate administrative lobbying at least as heavily, so that access to a second venue reinforces rather than offsets the biases of the first (Boehmke, Gailmard and Patty 2013).

Without denying the importance of class bias, the world of nomination activism highlights a different distortion: *systemic ideological bias*. Our results suggest that the groups most likely to enter this domain are those anchored in movement constituencies and located toward the ideological wings, while the moderate center of the organized world is already spoken for or stays out. What happens when a political domain is populated disproportionately by highly motivated, organized, and relatively extreme groups, with scant representation of unorganized moderates? Do opposed extremists simply bargain to moderate outcomes? Or does something else occur?

Supreme Court appointments present this dilemma in an unusually stark form. In congressional politics, activists and organized interests may press parties to nominate relatively extreme candidates, but at the end of the day voters, not activists, decide who wins. No such opportunity is available to ordinary citizens regarding who ascends to the Court. The leverage points for democratic readjustment are few, and the opportunities for influence by

organized activists are many. There are limits, of course: even activists need supporters, members, and donors, and the presidents who choose nominees and the senators who confirm them must ultimately face the electorate. Still, appointment politics stands at some distance from the ordinary checks of electoral accountability.

To recognize this conundrum is not to impugn the motives of the leaders, members, and funders who built the new world of appointment politics. The founders of the National Women's Law Center saw themselves as acting on behalf of the women's movement, and the leaders of groups on the other side of the spectrum no doubt believe just as deeply in their cause. Nonetheless, one may well wonder: is the unheavenly chorus of organized appointment activists, however well intentioned its members, the choir Americans would choose for themselves, if they could?

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Appendices

A Data description

A.1 Data construction and entry paths for amicus group and mobilizers

Figure A-1 depicts the construction of the data across the multiple steps of filtering. Table A-1 lists all 113 repeat mobilizers, grouped by whether they filed amicus briefs before or after first mobilizing and by whether they meet the 5-case threshold, showing that only the groups that filed briefs in 5 or more cases before mobilizing (Section 1) enter the risk set.

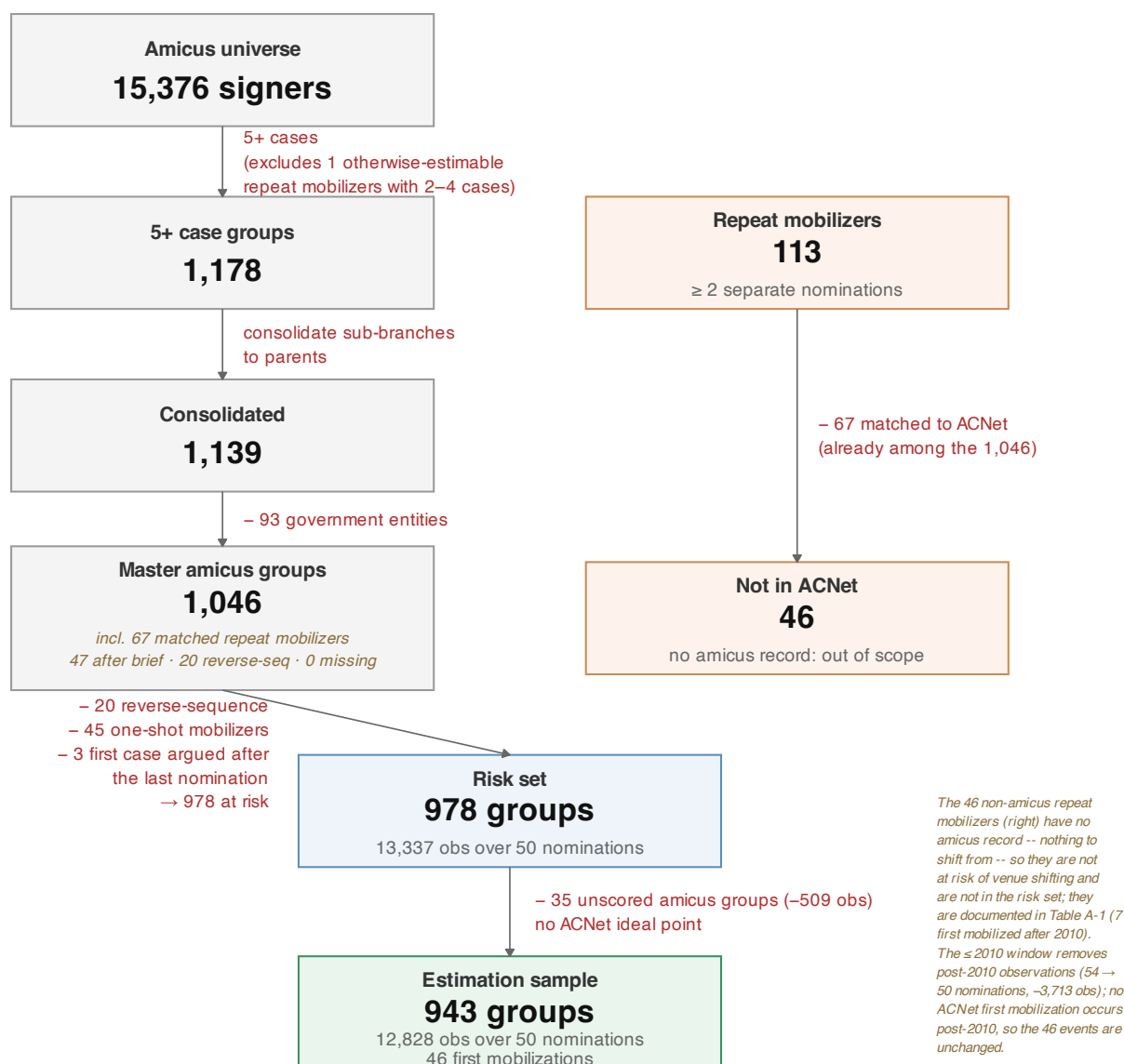


Figure A-1: Construction of the sample for analysis.

1. In the models — 5+ amicus cases, filed before mobilizing	
ACLU (1937–1971)	National Association of Evangelicals (1981–1987)
Alliance Defending Freedom (2004–2005)	National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (1996–2005)
Alliance for Justice (1984–1987)	National Association of Manufacturers (1948–2005)
American Association of University Women (1971–1987)	National Association of Women Lawyers (1936–1991)
American Center for Law and Justice (1994–2005)	National Bar Association (1948–1969)
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (1968–1987)	National Clergy Council (2004–2005)
American Federation of Teachers (1950–1987)	National Council of La Raza (1976–1991)
American Jewish Congress (1947–1969)	National Education Association (1964–1969)
Americans United for Life (1971–2005)	National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (1980–1990)
Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (1971–2005)	National Lawyers Guild (1940–1949)
Americans for Democratic Action (1952–1955)	National Rifle Association (1982–1990)
Catholics for a Free Choice (1980–2005)	National Right to Life Committee (1971–1981)
Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America (1956–1991)	National Wildlife Federation (1978–1990)
Common Cause, Inc. (1971–1987)	National Women’s Law Center (1980–1987)
Family Research Council, Inc. (1989–1990)	People for the American Way (1985–1986)
Focus on the Family (1989–2005)	Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc. (1965–1987)
Fraternal Order of Police (1977–2005)	Prison Fellowship Ministries (1989–2005)
Hispanic National Bar Association (1983–1994)	Public Citizen Foundation (1974–1987)
Human Rights Campaign (1989–2005)	Sierra Club (1969–1987)
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (1985–1990)	United Automobile Workers (1966–1968)
Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (1969–1987)	United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (1944–1969)
League of United Latin American Citizens (1971–1987)	Washington Legal Foundation (1978–1987)
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (1972–1987)	<i>American Family Association Center for Law and Policy (1989–2005)</i>
NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation (1980–1981)	
2. Excluded (reverse-sequence) — 5+ cases, mobilized before filing	
AFL-CIO (1936–1930)	Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (1988–1969)
American Airlines (1972–1968)	NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (1967–1930)
American Trial Lawyers Association (1966–1965)	National Conference of Black Lawyers (1969–1969)
Center for Reproductive Rights (1994–1993)	National Organization for Women Foundation (1971–1970)
Concerned Women for America (1985–1981)	National Urban League (1969–1967)
Eagle Forum Education and Legal Defense Fund (2000–1987)	National Women’s Political Caucus (1974–1971)
Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention (2000–1987)	New York City Bar Association (1975–1970)
Feminist Majority Foundation (1993–1990)	New York State Bar Association (1946–1932)
International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (1939–1937)	Southern Christian Leadership Conference (1974–1967)
Knights of Columbus (1989–1987)	United Mine Workers of America (1936–1930)
3. Excluded (below threshold) — 2–4 cases, filed before mobilizing	
American Conservative Union (1978–1987)	Traditional Values Coalition (1994–2005)
4. Excluded (reverse-sequence) — 2–4 cases, mobilized before filing	
American Life League (1988–1987)	Free Congress Foundation (1993–1986)
Committee for Justice (2010–2005)	National Council of Churches (1981–1970)
Congress of Racial Equality (1994–1967)	
5. Excluded (below threshold) — 1 amicus case	
Association of the Bar of the City of New York (1946–1932)	<i>Center for Judicial Studies (1984–1986)</i>
Conservative Caucus (1997–1981)	<i>Ethics and Public Policy Center (2005–2005)</i>
Log Cabin Republicans (2003–1987)	<i>Federalist Society (1995–1986)</i>
6. Excluded (no amicus history) — never filed a brief	
<i>American Values Advocacy Group (NA–2005)</i>	<i>Liberty Lobby (NA–1965)</i>
<i>Anti-Saloon League (NA–1930)</i>	<i>March for Life (NA–1981)</i>
<i>Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence (NA–2009)</i>	<i>Moral Majority (NA–1981)</i>
<i>Center for American Progress (NA–2005)</i>	<i>MoveOn.org (NA–2005)</i>
<i>Coalition for America (NA–1987)</i>	<i>National Coalition for Disability Rights (NA–2005)</i>
<i>Coalition for Constitutional Values (NA–2009)</i>	<i>National Committee of Black Churchmen (NA–1969)</i>
<i>Federation of Women Lawyers (NA–1986)</i>	<i>Operation Rescue (NA–2005)</i>
<i>Fidelis (NA–2005)</i>	<i>Progress for America (NA–2005)</i>
<i>Heritage Foundation (NA–1987)</i>	<i>Republican National Coalition for Life (NA–2005)</i>
<i>John Birch Society (NA–1968)</i>	<i>Ripon Society (NA–1970)</i>
<i>Judicial Confirmation Network (NA–2005)</i>	<i>Socialist Party (NA–1930)</i>
<i>Judicial Selection Project (NA–1987)</i>	<i>Women’s Legal Defense Fund (NA–1981)</i>
<i>Lawyers Committee on Supreme Court Nominations (NA–1968)</i>	<i>Young Republicans (NA–1954)</i>
7. Excluded (window) — repeat mobilizers whose first mobilization is after 2010	
<i>America First Policies (NA–2018)</i>	<i>Demand Progress (NA–2017)</i>
<i>Americans for Prosperity (NA–2017)</i>	<i>Faith and Freedom Coalition (NA–2017)</i>
<i>CREDO (NA–2016)</i>	<i>Susan B. Anthony List (NA–2017)</i>
<i>Demand Justice (NA–2018)</i>	

Italic = no ACNet ideal point (unscored); roman = scored. Entries show (year the first amicus case was argued – year of first mobilization). Sequence is determined by date: a group is reverse-sequence if it first mobilized before its first amicus case was argued, so entries with the same two years can fall in either group. Section 1 (roman) is the estimated sample. Canonical parents’ first-case dates recovered from sub-branches. Unlike sections 1–4, Section 5 (1 amicus case) is not split by mobilization sequence and contains both filed-first and reverse-sequence groups. All 113 groups are repeat mobilizers (2+ separate nominations, full record). Section 7 holds the 7 whose first mobilization is after 2010: they remain repeat mobilizers but are excluded from ESTIMATION by the ≤ 2010 window, not reclassified out of the count.

Table A-1: Entry paths of the 113 repeat mobilizers, by amicus threshold and mobilization sequence. All are repeat mobilizers (2+ separate nominations); the sections give why each is in or out of the estimated sample. Section 7 lists the 7 excluded from estimation by the ≤ 2010 window (first mobilization after 2010).

A.2 Social movements

Table A-2 lists the full set of social movements and the ProQuest search terms used to measure each. Table A-4 reports the social movement assigned to each of the 47 entrants—the ProQuest series each group is scored under in the risk set. Figure A-2 plots the raw annual *New York Times* story counts for every analyzed movement series over 1930–2020. Table A-3 reports the coverage of each newspaper series—mean stories per year, zero-count years, and peak—and identifies the series dropped as too sparse to standardize.

Social movement	ProQuest search terms
Abortion rights	Pro-choice, right to choose, abortion rights, reproductive rights, pro-abortion
Animal protection /rights	animal rights, animal cruelty
Anti-abortion	Right to life, pro-life, anti-abortion
Anti-alcohol (temperance)	Prohibition, temperance, anti-alcohol, anti-saloon
Anti-communism	anti-communist, Red Scare, loyalty oath
Anti-decency	anti-pornography, anti-obscenity, decency movement, obscenity law
Anti-smoking	anti-smoking, tobacco ban
Antiwar	antiwar movement, antiwar protest, pacifism, draft dodger
Children's protection	Children's rights, child rights, child labor
Christian right	Christian right, Christian conservative
Civil liberties	Civil liberties, free speech, freedom of the press, separation of church and state, First Amendment, freedom of religion, right to privacy
Civil Rights: Black	Negro rights, Black rights, African-American rights, civil rights movement, civil rights activist, black liberation, anti-lynching, voting rights
Civil Rights: Disability	Disability rights, handicap rights, disability discrimination, reasonable accommodation
Civil Rights: Hispanic	Hispanic rights, latino rights, Hispanic discrimination, latino discrimination, chicano movement, mexican american rights, Brown Berets, grape boycott, farm worker movement
Civil Rights: Jewish	Anti-semitism, anti-semitic, anti-jewish discrimination
Civil Rights: Native Americans	Native American rights, American Indian rights, Native American protests, indigenous rights, Red Power, Wounded Knee, Alcatraz occupation, Standing Rock
Consumer	consumer movement, consumerism
Environmental	environmental movement, anti-pollution, clean air, clean water, clean energy, conservation movement, climate change, global warming
Farmers	farm movement, farmers movement, farmers union, farmers strike, farm crisis
Gay rights	Gay rights, homosexual rights, gay protest, gay activist, lesbian rights, gay liberation, LGB movement, LGBT movement
Government reform	government reform, good government, campaign finance reform, government accountability, government ethics, open government, whistleblower protection
Gun control	gun control, handgun control, assault rifle ban
Gun owners	gun rights, second amendment rights, keep and bear arms
HIV/AIDS	AIDS protest, AIDS activism, AIDS activist, AIDS movement, HIV protest, HIV activism
Immigrant/immigration	Dream Act, DACA, pathway to citizenship, anti-immigrant, anti-immigration, illegal aliens, undocumented aliens, border wall, immigration restriction, immigration quota, deportation drive
Labor	labor unions, labor movement
Nativist/White Supremacist	Nativist, white supremacy
Old age/seniors rights	Senior rights, age discrimination, old age pension, pension movement, old age security
Prison reform	prison reform, prisoner rights
Property rights	property rights, Sagebrush Rebellion, regulatory takings, takings clause
Veterans	veterans rights, veterans movement, bonus march, bonus army, veterans bonus
Welfare Rights	welfare rights, right to welfare
Women's Rights	women's rights, women's movement, women's liberation, feminist movement

The 33 social movement series, adapted from Table 1 of Amenta, Caren, and Stobaugh (2012). Search terms are reproduced verbatim from the list used to measure each series. A *New York Times* story counts once for a series if any listed phrase appears at a leading word boundary (case-insensitive).

Table A-2: The full list of 33 candidate social movements, with the ProQuest search terms used to measure each.

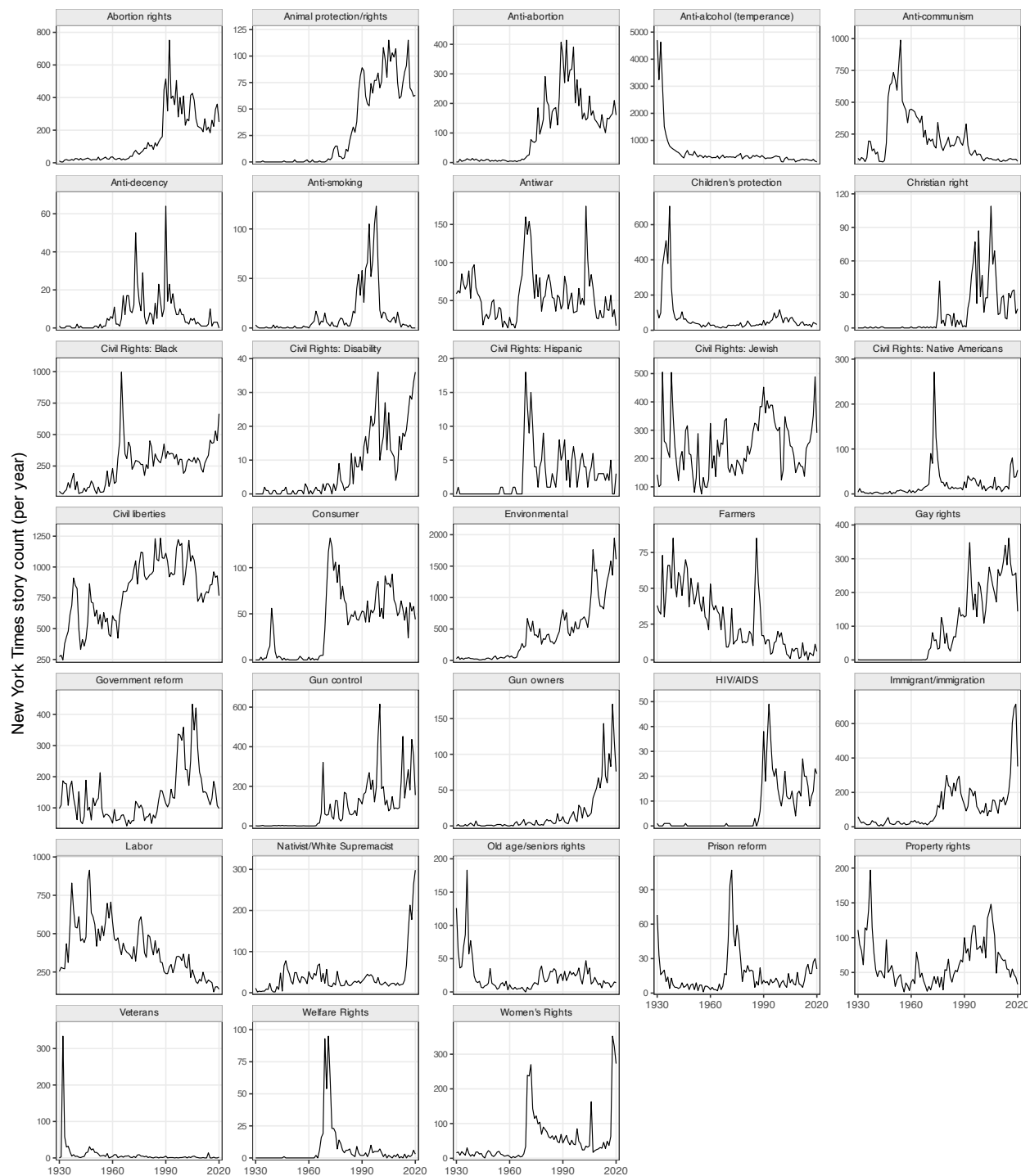


Figure A-2: Raw annual counts of New York Times stories mentioning each of the 33 analyzed social-movement series, 1930–2020. Unlike the standardized data shown in Figure 4, the plots depict unstandardized story counts over the full salience window.

Social movement	Mean/yr	Zero-yrs	First	Last	Peak	Peak yr
Civil liberties	800.7	0	1930	2020	1234	1987
Anti-alcohol (temperance)	575.0	0	1930	2020	4702	1930
Environmental	438.1	0	1930	2020	1945	2019
Labor	395.1	0	1930	2020	914	1947
Civil Rights: Black	249.1	0	1930	2020	996	1965
Civil Rights: Jewish	240.7	0	1930	2020	505	1933
Anti-communism	208.7	0	1930	2020	988	1954
Abortion rights	143.5	0	1930	2020	752	1992
Government reform	136.4	0	1930	2020	433	2005
Immigrant/immigration	113.6	0	1930	2020	713	2019
Anti-abortion	105.8	0	1930	2020	414	1992
Gun control	94.8	17	1930	2020	615	2000
Gay rights	93.0	37	1930	2020	361	2015
Children's protection	70.3	0	1930	2020	705	1937
Property rights	64.8	0	1930	2020	197	1937
Antiwar	56.5	0	1930	2020	174	2003
Women's Rights	52.4	0	1930	2020	352	2018
Nativist/White Supremacist	38.7	0	1930	2020	298	2020
Consumer	38.6	17	1933	2020	132	1972
Animal protection/rights	31.8	33	1934	2020	115	2005
Farmers	27.6	1	1930	2020	85	1939
Old age/seniors rights	23.2	1	1930	2020	183	1936
Civil Rights: Native Americans	20.8	3	1930	2020	271	1973
Gun owners	17.2	14	1931	2020	170	2018
Prison reform	15.7	0	1930	2020	107	1972
Christian right	13.4	32	1934	2020	109	2005
Anti-smoking	13.1	23	1930	2017	123	1998
Veterans	9.3	16	1931	2020	334	1932
Civil Rights: Disability	7.7	20	1935	2020	36	1999
HIV/AIDS	6.6	49	1930	2020	49	1993
Anti-decency	6.6	17	1930	2019	64	1990
Welfare Rights	6.4	39	1946	2020	95	1971
Civil Rights: Hispanic	2.7	35	1931	2020	18	1969
Civil Rights: Asian-American [†]	0.8	64	1959	2019	26	1969

Table A-3: Coverage of the 34 movement-salience series counted, 1930–2020: mean New York Times stories per year, number of zero-count years, first and last nonzero year, and peak value and year. Raw story counts, before within-movement standardization. † Dropped from the analyzed taxonomy as non-viable—its movement-specific terms are too rare to sustain a standardized series—leaving 33 analyzed; its groups score at the no-movement baseline.

Interest group	Assigned social movement
Alliance For Justice	(none)
Americans For Democratic Action	(none)
Chamber Of Commerce Of The United States Of America	(none)
National Association Of Evangelicals	(none)
National Association Of Manufacturers	(none)
National Bar Association	(none)
National Clergy Council	(none)
Washington Legal Foundation	(none)
Catholics For A Free Choice	Abortion rights
NARAL Pro-choice America Foundation	Abortion rights
Planned Parenthood Federation Of America Inc	Abortion rights
American Center For Law And Justice	Anti-abortion
Americans United For Life	Anti-abortion
National Right To Life Committee	Anti-abortion
American Family Association Center For Law And Policy	Christian right
Family Research Council Inc	Christian right
Focus On The Family	Christian right
Lawyers Committee For Civil Rights Under Law	Civil Rights: Black
Hispanic National Bar Association	Civil Rights: Hispanic
League Of United Latin American Citizens	Civil Rights: Hispanic
Mexican American Legal Defense And Educational Fund	Civil Rights: Hispanic
National Association Of Latino Elected And Appointed Officials	Civil Rights: Hispanic
National Council Of La Raza	Civil Rights: Hispanic
American Jewish Congress	Civil Rights: Jewish
ACLU	Civil liberties
Alliance Defending Freedom	Civil liberties
Americans United For The Separation Of Church And State	Civil liberties
National Lawyers Guild	Civil liberties
People For The American Way	Civil liberties
Public Citizen Foundation	Consumer
National Wildlife Federation	Environmental
Sierra Club	Environmental
Human Rights Campaign	Gay rights
Lambda Legal Defense And Education Fund	Gay rights
National Gay And Lesbian Task Force	Gay rights
Common Cause Inc	Government reform
National Rifle Association	Gun owners
American Federation Of State County And Municipal Employees	Labor
American Federation Of Teachers	Labor
Fraternal Order Of Police	Labor
National Education Association	Labor
United Automobile Workers	Labor
United Electrical, Radio And Machine Workers Of America	Labor
Prison Fellowship Ministries	Prison reform
American Association Of University Women	Women's Rights
National Association Of Women Lawyers	Women's Rights
National Women's Law Center	Women's Rights

The 47 category-(c) entrants: repeat mobilizers that filed at least five amicus briefs before first mobilizing, with first mobilization no later than 2010. 8 entrants carry no movement assignment (shown as "(none)"). Each entrant's movement is the ProQuest series it is scored under; assignments follow the movement taxonomy (Appendix A.4).

Table A-4: The 47 category-(c) entrants and their assigned social movements.

A.3 Entrant dates

Table A-5 provides information on the entrants from the risk set, including their date of mobilization, which nominee they first mobilized on, the year of the case in which they first filed an amicus brief, and the amount of time they spent in the risk pool.

Group	1st brief	Entry Year	Entry nominee	Years at risk
National Lawyers Guild	1939	1949	Clark	10
Americans for Democratic Action	1953	1955	Harlan	2
United Automobile Workers	1965	1968	Fortas	3
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America	1944	1969	Haynsworth	25
American Jewish Congress	1947	1969	Haynsworth	22
National Bar Association	1947	1969	Haynsworth	22
National Education Association	1963	1969	Haynsworth	6
ACLU	1936	1971	Powell	35
National Right to Life Committee	1972	1981	O'Connor	9
NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation	1979	1981	O'Connor	2
People for the American Way	1985	1986	Rehnquist	1
Alliance for Justice	1984	1987	Bork	3
National Association of Evangelicals	1981	1987	Bork	6
Public Citizen Foundation	1974	1987	Bork	13
American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees	1967	1987	Bork	20
American Federation of Teachers	1949	1987	Bork	38
National Women's Law Center	1979	1987	Bork	8
American Association of University Women	1972	1987	Bork	15
Planned Parenthood Federation of America Inc	1964	1987	Bork	23
Common Cause Inc	1971	1987	Bork	16
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law	1969	1987	Bork	18
Washington Legal Foundation	1978	1987	Bork	9
Sierra Club	1969	1987	Bork	18
League of United Latin American Citizens	1970	1987	Kennedy	17
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund	1972	1987	Kennedy	15
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund	1984	1990	Souter	6
National Rifle Association	1982	1990	Souter	8
National Wildlife Federation	1977	1990	Souter	13
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force	1979	1990	Souter	11
Family Research Council Inc	1988	1990	Souter	2
National Council of La Raza	1975	1991	Thomas	16
Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America	1955	1991	Thomas	36
National Association of Women Lawyers	1935	1991	Thomas	56
Hispanic National Bar Association	1982	1994	Breyer	12
American Center for Law and Justice	1993	2005	John Roberts	12
Americans United for the Separation of Church and State	1970	2005	John Roberts	35
Focus on the Family	1988	2005	John Roberts	17
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials	1996	2005	John Roberts	9
National Association of Manufacturers	1947	2005	John Roberts	58
Prison Fellowship Ministries	1989	2005	John Roberts	16
National Clergy Council	2003	2005	John Roberts	2
Catholics for a Free Choice	1979	2005	John Roberts	26
Human Rights Campaign	1988	2005	John Roberts	17
Alliance Defending Freedom	2003	2005	Miers	2
Americans United for Life	1972	2005	Alito	33
Fraternal Order of Police	1977	2005	Alito	28

Table A-5: Dates for the 46 estimation entrants. Table A-4 lists 47 category-(c) entrants; one (the American Family Association's Center for Law and Policy) lacks an ACNet score and so is absent from the 46-entrant estimation sample shown here.

A.4 Recoding the Social-Movement Variable

Each of the 1,046 master amicus groups is assigned one social-movement label, which links the group to a press-salience series (Section 4.6).²³ The labels used before this recode were not coded organization by organization: they were derived from the Washington Representatives Study (WRS) category field through a crosswalk, and the manual pass that followed largely transcribed the WRS category rather than judging each organization. Review of those labels found substantive errors—the National Right to Life Committee, a single-issue anti-abortion litigator, did not carry the anti-abortion code—and mechanical artifacts, among them join collisions that mislabeled groups as business organizations. Separately, the earlier specification entered movement as a single salience variable in which unaffiliated groups took a sentinel value, conflating affiliation with salience; the entry model now separates the two (Section 5.2). We therefore replaced the original labels with a fresh classification of a structured dossier by a large language model (LLM). The original labels are not an input to the classifier, although the WRS category field from which they were derived is one of the dossier’s descriptive fields, with its ideological suffix removed (Section A.4.1); the only hand input on top of the model output is the adjudication layer (Section A.4.6). *The entire pipeline was designed and executed blind to the entry model; no estimate informed the taxonomy, the prompt, the labels, or the corrections. This appendix references none.*

A.4.1 Dossier construction and the endogeneity exclusion

The classifier sees one dossier per group, built only from descriptive attributes: proper name and aliases (from the amicus-network, WRS, and Encyclopedia of Associations name fields), founding year, location, the Encyclopedia of Associations subject and keyword fields, and the WRS category with its ideological-direction suffix *stripped*. The suffix is removed because retaining it caused the model to anchor on the ideological tag rather than the organization’s substance.

Deliberately *excluded* is every field derived from the amicus-brief record: brief and case counts, issue areas, case captions, co-signing network position, and any activity or eligibility measure. This is an endogeneity guard. The label enters the entry model alongside amicus activity and brief-based eligibility; were the label a function of a group’s brief record, it would be endogenous to those covariates. Restricting the dossier to who the organization *is*—never what it filed—keeps the movement label exogenous to the amicus-activity measures.

A.4.2 Taxonomy: 33 codes

The coding taxonomy comprises **33 movement and policy categories**. Its measurement backbone is the movement-series set of Section 4.6: the Amenta et al. (2009), Amenta, Caren and Stobaugh (2012) baseline plus five series we appended (Civil Rights: Asian-American, property rights, abortion rights, immigration, and Tea Party / populism). Relative to that set, the coding taxonomy makes four adjustments, each aligned to what the press series can actually measure:

²³The classifier was run on 1,047 records—the master before its final consolidation. A truncated-name duplicate (AMER) was afterward folded into the ACLU, leaving the 1,046 analyzed groups; the flip-rate and majority-resolution statistics reported below are over the 1,047 classified records.

- **Removed (3)** — the ideological-direction labels *General conservative*, *Progressive*, and *Democratic Party–Left*. These name ideological *directions*, not movements, and had become catch-alls for flat multi-issue ideological organizations; such organizations now carry no movement affiliation. Their series are left orphaned (no code maps to them).
- **Retired (1)** — *Civil Rights: Other*, whose press series is a narrow anti-Islamic / Islamic-discrimination measure, too sparse and too late-emerging to standardize; its groups are reassigned.
- **Added (2)** — *Government reform* (government integrity, anti-corruption, accountability; voting rights carved out to the civil-rights series) and *Anti-decency* (the anti-obscenity movement, distinct from the Christian right), each a coherent bloc with no prior home.
- **Dropped (2)** — *Tea Party / populism*, whose series dates only from 2009 and so cannot measure the construct across the window (and which no amicus group carried), and *Civil Rights: Asian-American*, whose movement-specific terms are too rare in the *Times* to sustain a standardized series (Table A-3); groups on both fall to the no-movement baseline.

Three of the five movements appended to the Amenta baseline are *retained* as codes; they are not new to this recode. The two *added* codes are the only genuinely new categories. Net: $37 - 3 - 1 + 2 - 2 = 33$.

A.4.3 Four-way output

Each group receives exactly one of four outcomes.

1. **A movement code** (one of the 33): the organization is on the side of a coded movement and that movement is its dominant strand.
2. **uncovered_movement**: the organization advances a cause (or a constituency’s public-interest claims) whose movement has *no code* in the taxonomy—e.g. international human rights, drug policy, fair housing, or a counter-movement.
3. **none_apply**: the organization is organized around a business, professional, occupational, or institutional interest, or is a flat multi-issue ideological shop with no dominant cause.
4. **not_determinable**: the dossier is too thin to cite any signal.

Only the first outcome links to a series; the three non-movement outcomes (**uncovered_movement**, **none_apply**, **not_determinable**) receive the sentinel no-movement value (−3) and fall into the reference category with no movement score.

A.4.4 The classification prompt

The released prompt states the dominant-strand rule, the religious and ideology guards, and the operational test separating `uncovered_movement` from `none_apply`. It adds four systematic rules on top of the locked 33-code vocabulary:

1. **Directional side rule.** A movement code applies only to organizations on that movement’s side. A group organized to *oppose* a movement does not take that movement’s code: if the opposing position is itself coded it takes its own code (gun-control vs. gun-owners; pro-life vs. pro-choice); otherwise it is a counter-movement → `uncovered_movement`, never the opposed code.
2. **Domestic violence → Women’s Rights.**
3. **Counter-movement → uncovered_movement** (not `none_apply`): opposing a movement is still cause advancement.
4. **Commit vs. abstain.** Assign a specific code on any citable signal; reserve `not_determinable` for genuinely uninformative dossiers.

A.4.5 Cross-model corroboration

As an external check on the taxonomy and its boundaries—*not* for constructing the labels—the same task was run on two frontier models under the same prompt; they gave identical labels to 955 of the 1,047 records (91.2%). This corroborates that the code definitions are stable across models. The production labels come solely from the 5-run majority of the model described in Section A.4.6.

A.4.6 Procedure and reliability

Each of the 1,047 records was classified from a structured dossier (Section A.4.1) holding only descriptive attributes: the organization’s name and aliases, founding year and location, the Encyclopedia of Associations subject and keyword fields, and the WRS category with its ideological suffix removed. No field derived from the amicus-brief record—brief or case counts, issue areas, captions, co-signing network position, or the amicus-network ideal points—entered a dossier, so the ideology measure cannot leak into the movement labels; the amicus-network name appears only as an alias identifying the organization. The classifier was the open-weights model `Qwen2.5-72B-Instruct`, served through DeepInfra’s hosted API at temperature 0. Each record was classified in 5 independent runs, and a label was assigned only when at least 3 runs agreed on it; a record without such a majority was hand-coded rather than resolved by plurality. A separate adjudication layer then applied written face-validity corrections on top of the model output, which is never edited: each correction records the raw label, the corrected label, and the reason, and all were made before any estimation. On reliability, 112 of the 5,230 single-run labels for the 1,046 majority-resolved records (2.1%) differ from the majority label. At the record level, 966 records received the same label on every run and 81 (7.7%) differed on at least one; these were prioritized for hand review, and 1 of them had no majority and was hand-coded. Hand adjudication changed 18 labels in all: 15 unanimous model labels, 2 split-vote labels, and the 1 no-majority record.

The corrections cover progressive-religious and heterodox organizations, the reassignment of members of the retired *Civil Rights: Other* code, 2 out-of-vocabulary model emissions, and the no-majority record. Hosted inference is not bit-reproducible even at temperature 0, so re-issuing the model calls need not return identical labels; the reproducible artifacts are the saved per-run outputs and the adjudication file, from which every label used in the analysis is regenerated deterministically. In estimation, a group is coded as affiliated with a social movement when its final label is a movement with a newspaper salience series; groups labeled `none_apply`, `not_determinable`, or `uncovered_movement`—the last affiliated with a movement that lacks a usable series—form the reference category (see footnote 18).

A.4.7 Known limitations

- **General civil-rights coalitions sit in the reference category.** The taxonomy, following Amenta et al. (2009), codes civil rights *by racial group* and provides no general-civil-rights series; broad, multi-racial civil-rights coalitions (the Leadership Conference, the Lawyers’ Committees, the fair-housing organizations) therefore take `uncovered_movement` and enter the reference category despite being genuine civil-rights movements.
- **Hosted nondeterminism.** Hosted inference is not bit-exact even at temperature 0, which produces run-to-run disagreement: a record-level disagreement rate of 7.7% (the single-run rate is reported in Section A.4.6), mitigated by the 5-run majority vote.

This pipeline was built blind to the entry model; no estimate informed the taxonomy, the prompt, the labels, or the corrections.

B Robustness and additional tests

This section collects robustness checks on the main results of Section 5: an alternative treatment of movement salience (B.1), the functional form of amicus activity, a set of specification and sample checks, the mobilizer-density construct that the main specifications omit (B.4), the functional form of group ideology (Figure A-3), and the wild cluster bootstrap p -values for every main-table coefficient (Table A-12).

B.1 Movement counts with movement fixed effects

Our primary specification standardizes each movement’s newspaper series on its own 1930–2020 mean and standard deviation. For late-emergent movements, that mean is pulled down by decades of structural pre-existence zeros, so the resulting z -score partly reflects how far into existence a movement is rather than its salience relative to its own active-period norm. As a robustness check, we instead enter the raw movement count (windowed identically to the z -score) and absorb each series’ level with *movement* fixed effects, so the salience slope is a purely within-movement deviation. The groups with no movement form a “None” reference level, so the estimation sample is unchanged. Table A-6 reports both a raw-count and a $\log(1 + \text{count})$ version against the primary z -score. The raw-count coefficient is a per-story effect in count units, pooled across a roughly 300-fold range of movement scales—from about 800 stories a year for Civil liberties to roughly 2.7 for Civil Rights: Hispanic—so one

Movement-salience measure	Coefficient (SE)	z	p
Per-series z -score (<i>primary</i> ; -3 sentinel, <i>has_movement dummy</i>)	-0.104 (0.293)	-0.35	0.72
Movement count, raw (<i>movement FE</i>)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.65	0.52
$\log(1 + \text{count})$ (<i>movement FE</i> ; <i>lead</i>)	0.049 (0.362)	0.14	0.89

All three fits use the identical estimation sample (12,828 observations, 943 groups, 46 events, 50 nominee strata; two-way group-and-nominee clustered standard errors). The robustness fits replace the z -scored score with the movement count (windowed identically, mean over the nomination year and the four prior years) and replace the *has_movement* dummy with movement fixed effects; the 566 sentinel groups with no movement form the “None” reference level, so the sample is unchanged. Movement fixed effects absorb each series’ level, making the count slope a within-movement deviation. 14 of 29 movement levels contain zero entry events and are mechanically separated by the fixed effects (large negative dummy coefficients and “fitted probabilities 0/1” warnings are expected, not a fitting failure); the count slope is therefore identified off only 38 events across 15 event-bearing movements. This is low powered: the specification can detect a large within-movement salience effect but not a small one, so a null here is uninformative rather than corroborating—read the standard errors, not just the point estimate.

Table A-6: Movement-salience effect under the primary per-series z -score and under raw / $\log(1+x)$ movement counts with movement fixed effects (robustness). The primary specification is unchanged.

additional story means something very different across movements and its magnitude is *not* comparable to the other two columns; we report it only for completeness. The $\log(1 + \text{count})$ version, which we prefer because it renders the slope a scale-free within-movement semi-elasticity and absorbs the structural zeros, is the interpretable robustness estimate, and it closely tracks the primary z -score—both indistinguishable from zero. We stress that this specification is low powered: with entry identified off 46 events, only 38 of which fall in movement-affiliated groups spread across 15 movements, and with movement fixed effects mechanically separating the 14 movements that see no entry, it can detect a large within-movement salience effect but not a small one. The agreement across specifications should therefore be read as the result being insensitive to the standardization choice, not as an independent confirmation of a null.

B.2 Amicus functional form

Table A-7 reproduces the five specifications of Table 5 with amicus activity entered as a raw count of briefs rather than as $\log(1 + \text{briefs})$. The log form fits better in every column and is the form used throughout the main text; the coefficients on the remaining covariates are substantively unchanged under either form.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Amicus activity	0.088 (0.017)	0.094 (0.016)	0.087 (0.018)	0.097 (0.014)	0.087 (0.018)
Social movement affiliation	2.12 (0.42)	1.83 (0.37)	2.11 (0.42)	1.85 (0.38)	2.10 (0.42)
Social movement salience	0.07 (0.30)	0.05 (0.29)	0.06 (0.30)	0.04 (0.22)	0.05 (0.25)
Group conservatism	0.57 (0.38)	0.38 (0.24)	0.10 (0.74)	0.35 (0.27)	-0.07 (0.63)
Group conservatism ²	—	1.13 (0.36)	—	1.05 (0.31)	—
Nominee conservatism	—	—	—	—	2.03 (0.71)‡
Group conservatism × Nominee conservatism	—	—	0.89 (1.28)	—	1.13 (0.87)
Nomination fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,828
Effective <i>N</i>	7,231	7,231	7,231	—	—
Log-likelihood	-231.4	-227.8	-231.2	-272.6	-268.7

Table A-7: Entry models with amicus activity in raw briefs (linear-form disclosure). Column key: (1) nomination fixed effects, Group conservatism (linear); (2) + Group conservatism² (primary specification); (3) + Group conservatism × Nominee conservatism; (4) no fixed effects, Group conservatism²; (5) no fixed effects, Group conservatism × Nominee conservatism with the Nominee conservatism main effect. Notes: Discrete-time cloglog hazard of first entry; coefficient over its two-way (group + nomination) cluster-robust SE in parentheses; no stars. Identical to Table 5 except that **Amicus activity enters linearly (raw briefs)** rather than as $\log(1 + \text{briefs})$. This is the linear-form disclosure: the log form fits better in every column (Table 5); no substantive conclusion depends on the amicus form. Sample and marker conventions as in the main table.

B.3 Miscellaneous checks

Table A-8 collects specification- and sample-robustness checks on the entry model: a nested decomposition separating the party step from the within-party ideology slope (column 1); the party-conditional specifications interacting group conservatism with the party of the appointing president, with and without nomination fixed effects (columns 2–3), whose party interaction, identified from only 3 Democratic-appointee nominations with any entry, attenuates under the nomination wild cluster bootstrap from analytic p -values of <0.001 and <0.001 to 0.137 and 0.089 (Table A-13); and two alternative amicus functional forms—a quadratic and a natural cubic spline in raw briefs (columns 4–5). The remaining columns exclude the highest-event nomination (Bork) from the continuous-ideology specification (column 6), and refit the model on the movement-affiliated subsample with and without nomination fixed effects (columns 7–8). Column 9 re-estimates Model (2) after dropping the 44 groups affiliated with movements that lack a usable newspaper series, so that the reference category contains no movement-affiliated groups; the affiliation coefficient is essentially unchanged, and its nomination wild cluster bootstrap p -value is <0.001 (Table A-13).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Group conservatism	-1.31 (0.41)	-1.32 (0.33)	-1.73 (0.52)	-0.05 (0.72)	-0.06 (0.71)	-0.19 (0.75)	0.55 (0.66)	0.35 (0.52)	0.34 (0.25)
Nominee conservatism	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.81 (0.64)	—
Nominee is Republican	—	—	2.87 (0.68)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Social movement affiliation	2.11 (0.41)	2.11 (0.41)	2.12 (0.41)	2.13 (0.42)	2.13 (0.41)	2.33 (0.52)	—	—	1.76 (0.39)
Social movement salience	-0.10 (0.29)	-0.11 (0.29)	-0.12 (0.26)	-0.15 (0.32)	-0.18 (0.31)	0.03 (0.27)	-0.13 (0.29)	-0.12 (0.26)	-0.10 (0.27)
Amicus activity (log)	0.968 (0.185)	0.967 (0.178)	0.985 (0.199)	—	—	0.787 (0.176)	0.900 (0.202)	0.915 (0.202)	1.003 (0.179)
Amicus activity (linear)	—	—	—	0.300 (0.131)	—	—	—	—	—
Group conservatism × Nominee is Republican	1.95 (0.48)	1.96 (0.41)	2.37 (0.57)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Group conservatism × Nominee conservatism	—	—	—	1.23 (1.18)	1.22 (1.20)	2.05 (1.33)	0.39 (1.43)	0.75 (0.94)	—
Group conservatism × Nominee conservatism (within party)	-0.17 (1.93)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Group conservatism ²	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.23 (0.37)
Amicus activity ²	—	—	—	-0.008 (0.006)	—	—	—	—	—
Amicus activity spline (basis 1)	—	—	—	—	4.645 (1.739)	—	—	—	—
Amicus activity spline (basis 2)	—	—	—	—	3.249 (1.729)	—	—	—	—
Amicus activity spline (basis 3)	—	—	—	—	0.140 (4.033)	—	—	—	—
Nomination fixed effects	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,264	5,005	5,005	12,375
Groups	943	943	943	943	943	943	377	377	899
Events	46	46	46	46	46	34	38	38	46
Nominations	50	50	50	50	50	49	50	50	50
Effective <i>N</i>	7,231	7,231	—	7,231	7,231	6,667	2,771	—	6,961
Log-likelihood	-223.0	-223.0	-258.4	-224.7	-223.0	-174.9	-174.1	-202.7	-219.2

Table A-8: *Robustness specifications.* Column key: (1) nested: party step + within-party slope (Nominee conservatism residualized on party); (2) party-conditional Group conservatism × Nominee is Republican, fixed effects; (3) the same without fixed effects (with the Nominee-is-Republican main effect); (4) + Amicus activity²; (5) Amicus activity as a natural cubic spline (3 df); (6) continuous-ideology spec, Bork nomination excluded; (7) movement-affiliated subsample; (8) as (7) without fixed effects; (9) Model (2) of Table 5 excluding groups affiliated with a movement that has no usable newspaper salience series. Notes: Discrete-time cloglog hazard of first entry; coefficient over its two-way (group + nomination) cluster-robust SE in parentheses; no stars. Sample: ACNet-scored estimation set (12,828 obs, 943 groups, 46 events, 50 nominations) except (6), Bork excluded (12,264 obs, 34 events, 49 nominations), and (7), (8), movement-affiliated subsample (5,005 obs, 377 groups, 38 events), where Social movement affiliation is constant and drops, and (9), uncovered-movement groups excluded (12,375 obs, 899 groups, 46 events). Amicus activity enters as log(1 + briefs) except in the amicus functional-form checks, columns (4) and (5), which retain raw briefs (linear + quadratic, and a natural spline). Effective *N* (observations in event-bearing strata) is defined only under nomination fixed effects; the columns without them are marked “—”.

B.4 Mobilizer density

Hypothesis 5 concerns the support already claimed by earlier entrants near a group’s position. Section 5.2 explains why we do not include a measure of it in the main specifications; here we describe the measure we constructed, and report what happens when it is included.

Construction. The incumbent pool consists of the 66 groups that mobilized at two or more nominations over 1930–2020, are matched to an ACNet-scored amicus group, and mobilized at least once within our window: the 46 entrants from the risk set together with the 20 groups that mobilized before filing their first brief. For a focal group at a nomination in year t , mobilizer density is the number of pool members whose first mobilization came at a nomination in an earlier calendar year and whose ACNet score lies within a bandwidth δ of the focal group’s. The adopted bandwidth, $\delta = 0.2555$, is the pooled within-cluster standard deviation of ACNet scores when groups are split at the trough of the score distribution; it was fixed before the entry models were estimated and has not been recomputed since. In the estimation sample the measure has a mean of 14.6 and ranges from 0 to 47; its correlation with group conservatism is -0.66 .

Identification. That correlation is the problem. Table A-9 shows that under nomination fixed effects, density is close to a step function of group conservatism within each nomination: holding the nomination fixed, the incumbents are fixed, so a group’s density is determined by where its score falls relative to them. The variable therefore carries little information beyond group ideology itself, and any coefficient on it is identified from the residual variation in how the incumbents happen to be spaced.

Results. Table A-10 adds density at the adopted bandwidth to each of the five main specifications. The headline results—amicus activity, movement affiliation, the null on salience, and the curvature in group conservatism—are essentially unchanged. The one coefficient that moves is the linear term in group conservatism under fixed effects, which becomes significant in columns (1) and (2); this is the collinearity just described, not new information about ideology. Density itself is positive and significant in two of the three fixed-effects columns, and null without fixed effects. Table A-11 shows that this pattern is not robust to the bandwidth: without fixed effects the coefficient is indistinguishable from zero at every one of the 18 bandwidths we examine, and with fixed effects it is unstable in sign—negative at the narrowest and widest bandwidths and positive in between—reaching conventional significance at 3 of 18 (0 positive, 3 negative). That is the pattern expected when the variable is a within-stratum function of group ideology rather than a separate effect, and it is why the main specifications omit it.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Group conservatism	1.19 (0.43)	0.71 (0.26)	—	0.36 (0.24)
Group conservatism ²	—	1.16 (0.41)	—	1.19 (0.36)
Mobilizer density	0.032 (0.012)	0.021 (0.012)	−0.002 (0.012)	—
Amicus activity (log)	0.995 (0.175)	1.007 (0.179)	0.980 (0.185)	1.002 (0.180)
Social movement affiliation	2.03 (0.40)	1.79 (0.39)	1.92 (0.40)	1.85 (0.38)
Social movement salience	−0.10 (0.30)	−0.11 (0.28)	−0.09 (0.30)	−0.10 (0.27)
Nomination fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,828
Effective N	7,231	7,231	7,231	7,231
Log-likelihood	−222.1	−219.1	−225.0	−219.8

Table A-9: Mobilizer density and Group conservatism: collinearity under fixed effects. Column key: (1) Group conservatism (linear) with mobilizer density; (2) + Group conservatism²; (3) mobilizer density with Group conservatism removed; (4) Group conservatism terms with mobilizer density removed. Notes: Collinearity diagnostic for mobilizer density under nomination fixed effects; two-way (group + nomination) cluster-robust SE in parentheses. Mobilizer density and Group conservatism are built from the same ACNet ideal points; their observation-level correlation is -0.66 . Density is positive and significant only when Group conservatism is dropped (column 3), and including density roughly halves the linear Group-conservatism coefficient (column 1 vs. column 4), so under fixed effects the two cannot be separately interpreted. All columns: 12,828 observations, 943 groups, 46 events, 50 nominations. Amicus activity enters as $\log(1 + \text{briefs})$.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Amicus activity (log)	0.995 (0.175)	1.007 (0.179)	0.982 (0.183)	1.036 (0.194)	0.974 (0.194)
Social movement affiliation	2.03 (0.40)	1.79 (0.39)	2.00 (0.39)	1.86 (0.39)	2.11 (0.40)
Social movement salience	-0.10 (0.30)	-0.11 (0.28)	-0.11 (0.29)	-0.09 (0.22)	-0.12 (0.26)
Mobilizer density	0.032 (0.012)	0.021 (0.012)	0.034 (0.011)	-0.002 (0.014)	0.005 (0.017)
Group conservatism	1.19 (0.43)	0.71 (0.26)	0.57 (0.86)	0.28 (0.39)	-0.03 (0.82)
Group conservatism ²	—	1.16 (0.41)	—	1.06 (0.32)	—
Nominee conservatism	—	—	—	—	1.99 (0.71)
Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee conservatism	—	—	1.27 (1.39)	—	1.27 (0.88)
Nomination fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,828	12,828
Effective N	7,231	7,231	7,231	—	—
Log-likelihood	-222.1	-219.1	-221.7	-264.1	-260.8

Table A-10: Entry models with mobilizer density included. Column key: (1) nomination fixed effects, Group conservatism (linear); (2) + Group conservatism²; (3) + Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee conservatism; (4) no fixed effects, Group conservatism²; (5) no fixed effects, Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee conservatism with the Nominee conservatism main effect. Notes: Discrete-time cloglog hazard of first entry; coefficient over its two-way (group + nomination) cluster-robust SE in parentheses. Identical to Table 5 except that mobilizer density, at the adopted bandwidth $\delta = 0.2555$, is added to every column.

Bandwidth δ	No fixed effects coef. (SE)	Fixed effects coef. (SE)
0.0500	−0.018 (0.021)	−0.008 (0.026)
0.1000	0.000 (0.012)	0.015 (0.016)
0.1500	0.001 (0.011)	0.020 (0.012)
0.2000	0.001 (0.012)	0.023 (0.012)
0.2500	−0.002 (0.014)	0.021 (0.013)
0.2555	−0.002 (0.014)	0.021 (0.012)
0.3000	−0.005 (0.015)	0.017 (0.011)
0.3500	−0.008 (0.014)	0.009 (0.011)
0.4000	−0.009 (0.014)	0.007 (0.011)
0.4840	−0.012 (0.014)	0.000 (0.012)
0.5000	−0.012 (0.014)	0.000 (0.012)
0.6000	−0.014 (0.015)	−0.005 (0.013)
0.7000	−0.015 (0.016)	−0.004 (0.015)
0.8000	−0.017 (0.015)	−0.019 (0.022)
0.9000	−0.018 (0.014)	−0.031 (0.020)
1.0000	−0.018 (0.014)	−0.029 (0.013)
1.1000	−0.017 (0.014)	−0.026 (0.011)
1.2000	−0.019 (0.014)	−0.051 (0.011)

Table A-11: Sensitivity of the mobilizer-density coefficient to the incumbent-pool bandwidth δ (proximity window $|\text{acnet}_{\text{incumbent}} - \text{acnet}_{\text{focal}}| \leq \delta$ on the ACNet scale). Each cell is the density coefficient over its two-way (group + nomination) cluster-robust SE from a refit at that δ (no fixed effects: Model (4) plus density; fixed effects: Model (2) plus density); the adopted bandwidth $\delta = 0.2555$ is in bold. Without fixed effects the coefficient is indistinguishable from zero at every bandwidth ($p < .05$ at 0 of 18; $p = 0.884$ at the adopted bandwidth). With nomination fixed effects it is unstable in sign—negative at the narrowest and widest bandwidths and positive in between—and reaches conventional significance at 3 of 18 bandwidths (0 positive, 3 negative; $p = 0.079$ at the adopted bandwidth), the pattern expected when density is a within-stratum function of Group conservatism (Table A-9) rather than a separate effect.

B.5 Functional form of group conservatism

Model (2) enters group conservatism as a quadratic, which constrains predicted entry to rise symmetrically about its minimum. Figure A-3 checks that shape against two forms that do not impose it, holding the rest of Model (2) fixed: a natural cubic spline with 4 degrees of freedom and 5 binned indicators for group conservatism, with the bin containing the nadir as reference. The bins hold 24, 9, 4, 2, and 7 events from liberal to conservative, so the reference bin in particular is imprecisely estimated. Section 5.6 discusses what the figure shows; the binned contrasts cited there are $+0.06$ $[-0.62, +0.59]$ between the two moderate bins and -1.10 $[-3.33, -0.03]$ between the two outer bins.

B.6 Wild cluster bootstrap over nominations

The two-way cluster-robust standard errors reported in the main text rely on asymptotics in the number of clusters, and our data have only 50 nominations, of which 15 contain an entry. With so few clusters, cluster-robust standard errors can understate uncertainty, and the problem is most acute for coefficients whose identifying variation is concentrated in a handful of nominations (Cameron, Gelbach and Miller 2008, MacKinnon and Webb 2017). We therefore recompute the p -value of every coefficient in Table 5 with a wild cluster score bootstrap over nominations (Kline and Santos 2012): the model is refit with the coefficient constrained to zero, each nomination’s contribution to the score is multiplied by a random sign, and the test statistic is recomputed; the p -value is the share of 19,999 such draws whose statistic exceeds the observed one. The procedure is implemented in R and was validated cell by cell against Stata’s `boottest` (Roodman et al. 2019).

Table A-12 reproduces the five main specifications with the bootstrap p -value beneath each coefficient. The bootstrap attenuates every coefficient that is significant on its analytic standard error—amicus activity and the curvature in group conservatism most of all—but none of them crosses conventional thresholds. The lettered notes mark the terms whose identifying variation comes from fewer than three effective nominations and name the nomination carrying the largest share; amicus activity rests heavily on the Bork nomination in every column, and the curvature term on Souter. Table A-13 applies the same bootstrap to the party-conditional specifications of Table A-8 and to the affiliation coefficient in its column 9. There the bootstrap does change a result: the interaction between group conservatism and Republican appointee, analytically significant with and without fixed effects, has bootstrap p -values of 0.137 and 0.089. It is identified from only 3 Democratic-appointee nominations with an entrant, which is exactly the situation the bootstrap is designed to expose.

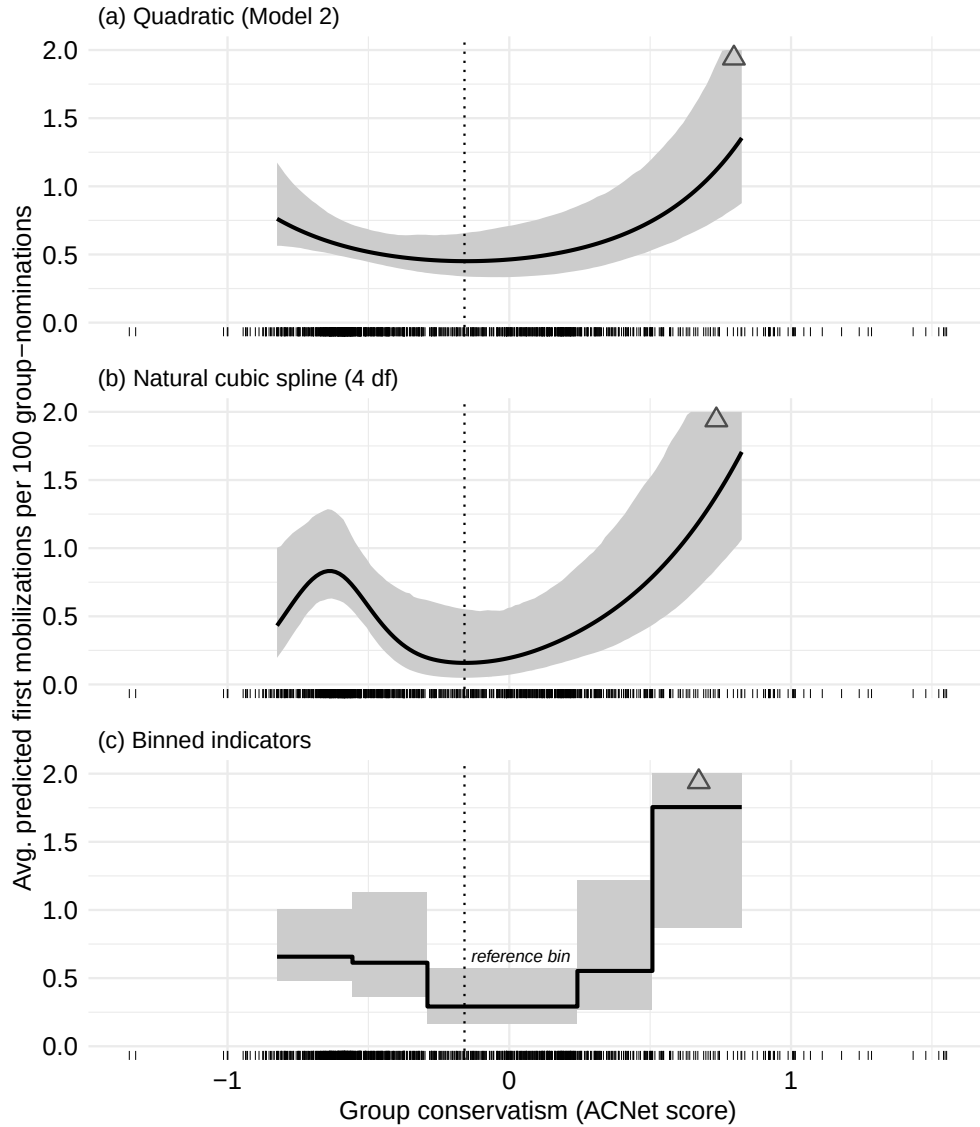


Figure A-3: Average predicted first mobilizations per 100 group-nominations by group conservatism under three functional forms, one per panel, with the rest of Model (2) held fixed. Panel (a) reproduces the quadratic curve of Model (2) and its 95% interval from Figure 7. Panels (b) and (c) check that shape against forms that do not impose it: (b) a natural cubic spline with 4 degrees of freedom and (c) 5 binned indicators, drawn as steps, with the bin containing the nadir as reference (labelled). All panels share the same axes and are drawn over the central 95% of observed group scores. Shaded regions are 95% simulation intervals, the dotted line marks the nadir of the quadratic curve, and the rug depicts the ideal point of each group in the estimation sample. The vertical axis is capped at 2.0 per 100 group-nominations, and an open marker flags an interval that exceeds the cap: the top-bin interval in (c) extends to 3.88 and the spline interval at the conservative end in (b) to 2.92; the quadratic interval in (a) appears in full in Figure 7.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Amicus activity (log)	0.976 (0.178) [0.024] ^a	1.002 (0.180) [0.021] ^b	0.967 (0.187) [0.024] ^c	1.037 (0.193) [0.020] ^d	0.972 (0.191) [0.023] ^e
Social movement affiliation	2.12 (0.42) [<0.001]	1.85 (0.38) [<0.001]	2.11 (0.42) [<0.001]	1.86 (0.39) [<0.001]	2.12 (0.41) [<0.001]
Social movement salience	−0.10 (0.29) [0.727]	−0.10 (0.27) [0.704]	−0.11 (0.29) [0.710]	−0.09 (0.23) [0.676]	−0.11 (0.26) [0.662]
Group conservatism	0.58 (0.37) [0.174]	0.36 (0.24) [0.129]	0.09 (0.71) [0.903]	0.31 (0.29) [0.285]	−0.11 (0.62) [0.872]
Group conservatism ²	—	1.19 (0.36) [0.036] ^f	—	1.06 (0.33) [0.044] ^g	—
Nominee conservatism	—	—	—	—	1.98 (0.71) [0.045]
Group conservatism × Nominee conservatism	—	—	0.94 (1.29) [0.486]	—	1.27 (0.87) [0.177]
Nomination fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

^a Effective clusters 1.8; top cluster Bork (72%). ^b Effective clusters 1.9; top cluster Bork (71%). ^c Effective clusters 1.8; top cluster Bork (72%). ^d Effective clusters 1.8; top cluster Bork (72%). ^e Effective clusters 1.8; top cluster Bork (72%). ^f Effective clusters 2.4; top cluster Souter (61%). ^g Effective clusters 2.5; top cluster Souter (59%).

Table A-12: Wild cluster bootstrap p -values for every coefficient in Table 5; columns replicate that table. For each coefficient: the estimate; its two-way (group + nomination) cluster-robust SE in parentheses; and, in brackets, the p -value from a restricted-score (null-imposed) wild cluster score bootstrap over nominations with 19,999 Rademacher replications. The bootstrap follows Kline and Santos (2012); it is implemented in R and was validated cell by cell against Stata’s `boottest` (Roodman et al. 2019). Lettered notes mark terms with fewer than three effective clusters, $(\sum c_g)^2 / \sum c_g^2$, and name the nomination carrying the largest share of the score variance.

Term	Analytic p	Bootstrap p	Eff. clusters	Top cluster
Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee is Republican, appendix col. (2)	<0.001	0.137	2.7	57%
Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee is Republican, appendix col. (3)	<0.001	0.089	4.4	35%
Group conservatism (main effect), appendix col. (3)	<0.001	0.095	2.9	49%
Social movement affiliation, appendix col. (9)	<0.001	<0.001	5.6	25%

Table A-13: Restricted-score wild cluster bootstrap over nominations (19999 Rademacher replications) for selected terms in the appendix-only specifications of Appendix Table A-8: the party-conditional (Group conservatism $\times$ Nominee is Republican) terms in columns (2) (fixed effects) and (3) (no fixed effects), which are identified from a small number of nominations; and social movement affiliation in column (9), which excludes uncovered-movement groups. Analytic p from the two-way (group + nomination) cluster-robust SE; effective clusters is $(\sum c_g)^2 / \sum c_g^2$.