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# THE AMERICAN REVIEW OF POLITICS

Volume 20

Fall, 1999

John Green, The University of Akron  
Special Issue Editor

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*Issue Domains, Conflict, and Committee Outliers:  
Evidence from the House and Senate Appropriation Committees*

Bryan W. Marshall and Brandon C. Prins

Informational theories (Gilligan and Krehbiel 1987; 1990; Krehbiel 1990; 1991) assert the legislature has an incentive to ensure that enacted policies do not diverge from what is preferred by the chamber median. And, according to their empirical investigations, little evidence exists indicating a systematic bias in the relationship between committees and the floor. Other scholars (Hall and Grofman 1990; Rohde 1995a; Maltzman and Smith 1995; Hall 1996; Maltzman 1997), however, contest both the theoretical foundations of informational theory and the methods employed to test its predictions. Not only have they demonstrated committee bias, but they also maintain that systematic differences across issues and committees should exist. Drawing on this latter work, we argue that member decision making depends considerably on the relevant principal-agent relationship(s) invoked by the issues in debate.

Indeed, we find that both the degree of conflict and whether it is partisan varies systematically across issue areas on Appropriations legislation in both the House and Senate. That is, Appropriations subcommittee bills that target parochial interests generate less conflict overall than subcommittee bills that address nationally salient issues that directly affect party interests. Plus, the more parochial-oriented bills also demonstrate considerably less partisan voting than other types of funding measures. We further find that the level of bias in the committee-floor relationship is conditional on the types of issues dealt with by the different subcommittee measures. Significantly greater bias tends to occur on distributive legislation, such as the Military Construction, Agriculture, and Transportation funding bills. We conclude that without controlling for issues, we may miss systematic differences in member decision making that could lead us to draw spurious inferences regarding the representativeness of congressional committees.

### Introduction

To achieve their goals, members of Congress must find a way to balance the competing interests of multiple principals, competing interests which vary across policy issues and the legislative context in which members make decisions (Fenno 1973). Recent models of legislative behavior, however, have opted for more parsimonious theoretical explanations, largely ignoring the multidimensional setting of congressional institutions. For example, Krehbiel's (1991) informational theory asserts that the chamber

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structures the division of labor system so that committees will specialize and share information, thus minimizing the extent to which enacted policies diverge from the preferences of the chamber majority. Distributive rationales have posited that the differentiated jurisdictions of congressional committees provide members with the means to achieve gains from trade in policy areas that are disproportionately important to their constituents (Mayhew 1974; Ferejohn 1974; Fiorina 1981; Shepsle and Weingast 1981; Weingast and Marshall 1988; Adler and Lapinski 1997). Still others maintain that the majority party can effectively usurp the institutional powers of the committee system in order to facilitate the achievement of collective goals for members of the party (Cox and McCubbins 1993).

We contend, as have others, that specific issue domains profoundly affect member decision making (Hinckley 1985; Hall and Grofman 1990; Hall and Evans 1990; Rohde 1995b; Hurwitz, Moiles, and Rohde 1997). We argue that systematic differences should exist in member decision making depending on the relevant principal-agent relationship invoked by the issues in debate. We draw upon the work of Rohde (1995a, 1995b), Hall and Grofman (1990), Hall (1996), and Maltzman (1995; 1997) to develop a conditional theory of congressional decision making sensitive to variation across policy issues. To be sure, our empirical findings do not justify revising the conventional wisdom on committee composition nor do they set out to overturn neo-institutional claims. However, we do contend that our results have important implications for the study of committees specifically, and for understanding legislative organization more generally.

To address these theoretical considerations, we use the House and Senate Appropriations Committees as lenses, breaking down policy issues into the thirteen subcommittee jurisdictions, to view how different issues interact with the multiple principal-agent relationships affecting floor decisions. Our empirical results suggest that previous methods using general ideological scores or even jurisdiction-specific indices are rather blunt instruments (and perhaps misleading) to study committees. In particular, our analysis uncovers systematic differences in member decision making and in committee responsiveness between bills affecting narrow parochial interests and those that affect broad national policy areas. We conclude, then, that an issue-oriented approach further refines methods to detect committee bias.<sup>1</sup>

We begin this article by summarizing some of the predictions and findings in the literature regarding committee behavior and the role committees play in the legislature. We then develop our own expectations regarding the effects of different issues on member decision making and committee responsiveness. In particular, we argue that Appropriations bills with nationally salient issues will be more likely to invoke partisan conflict, but

less likely to generate committee bias, than Appropriations bills with parochial interests. In the following section, we briefly elaborate on our data and methods, and present the results of our empirical analysis. Our findings indicate significant differences in both partisan conflict and committee-floor divergence across separate Appropriations funding measures. We conclude with some thoughts about extending our research, and address the significance of controlling for variation across policy issues in future committee studies.

### Issue Dimensions and the Committee Outlier Controversy

The committee outlier debate represents one of the central empirical hypotheses that differentiates competing theories of legislative organization. Krehbiel's informational theory makes explicit claims about the nature of committee memberships and their informational role in the legislature. Gilligan and Krehbiel (1987) and Krehbiel (1990; 1991) have asserted that homogeneous committees are less informative and therefore less useful to the chamber for assessing policy outcomes than are heterogeneous committees.<sup>2</sup> From an informational perspective, the legislature has an incentive to ensure that committees are not composed of preference outliers (Krehbiel 1990, 160). In addition, the chamber trades procedural advantage, in the form of protective rules, for committee efforts to specialize and share information. The expectation from Krehbiel's theory is that enacted policies will not diverge systematically from the preferences of the chamber median.

Empirical findings regarding the Appropriations Committee seem to support Krehbiel's contention. Time and time again, research suggests that the Appropriations Committee is not composed of preference outliers and that its behavior tends to conform to the interests of the larger body (e.g., Davidson 1981; White 1989; Krehbiel 1990, 155; Krehbiel 1991, 128-131; Maltzman 1995, 666-669). Krehbiel (1991, 130), for example, found that the House Appropriations Committee appeared to be a "microcosm" of the full chamber. Other studies support the claim that committees, such as Appropriations whose policies tend to be broad in scope, are expected to be representative of the floor (e.g., Hall and Grofman 1990). These null findings suggest that no difference exists between the preferences of the committee and those of the floor. However, if no difference exists between member preferences, then by extension, no systematic differences should be apparent in committee behavior. Krehbiel's empirical results were based on committee-specific ratings and general ideology voting indices.<sup>3</sup> But, accepting the results of Krehbiel and other scholars as valid, that no difference exists



between the committee and floor, committee members should also vote similarly to the floor, issue by issue.

In contrast, scholars like Rohde (1995b), Maltzman and Smith (1995), and Maltzman (1995; 1997) maintain that committee behavior is conditional on the types of issues at hand. In fact, fundamental to Rohde's (1991) partisan theory is the proposition that only certain policies will be important to party interests. According to the conditional party theory, member decision making in the legislature will reflect partisan divisions in the electorate on divisive policy issues (Aldrich and Rohde 1996). Moreover, even classical distributive models predict that differences in committee behavior will be found depending upon the precise issues involved (Ferejohn 1974; Ray 1980; Adler and Lapinski 1997). For example, Adler and Lapinski (1997) show that particular district characteristics are systematically associated with committees that hold relevant jurisdictions. The argument we find the most compelling, then, is one that is sensitive to the policy issues in debate. In the case of Appropriations bills, some issues tend to emphasize targeted benefits and generalized costs and they may be linked to a distributive domain where conflict (if it exists at all) is not partisan in nature. Alternatively, other appropriations policies provide widely dispersed benefits. These measures tend to divide the electoral coalitions of the two major parties within congressional districts and therefore they will be linked to a party relevant domain where conflict is predominately partisan in nature.

### Expectations

The power of the appropriations committees and member motivations for serving on these committees are based on the committees' role in the distribution of pork and on the accommodation of member and nonmember interests (Fenno 1966). In the prereform era, the regional split in the Democratic party, the nature of the congressional agenda, and the monopolization of information by committees, helped create a bipartisan appropriations process that tended to accommodate chamber interests (Fenno 1966; 1973; White 1989). However, as both the membership and the legislative agenda of Congress changed, so too did the appropriations process. Not only were the parties growing increasingly divergent in their policy preferences, but fiscal problems created a congressional agenda largely devoted to budget cutbacks (Rohde 1991; Davidson 1992; Deering and Smith 1997; Ripley 1985; Sinclair 1982). And cutback politics, according to Davidson (1992), tends to create an ideologically charged legislative atmosphere. With the growing nationalization of the two major parties, this ideologically turbulent

environment began to break increasingly along partisan lines (Rohde 1992; Wright 1997).

The increased preference homogeneity within the parties, then, coupled with the zero-sum fiscal environment, suggests that the political parties increasingly find their interests in distribution at odds with one another. And, majority-party Appropriations Committee members appear to be more inclined toward accommodating the interests of their party rather than the interests of the full chamber (Shepsle and Weingast 1981). As a result of these well documented changes, we expect our data to confirm that partisan conflict on appropriations legislation has increased over time.

**Proposition 1:** *The level of partisan conflict on floor votes will increase in both the House and Senate on appropriations legislation from the 96th to the 104th Congresses.*

There exist, though, differences across appropriations bills in the distribution of federal largesse. Moreover, appropriations legislation tends to parcel out interests into 13 distinct parts, each of which unequally affects congressional districts and the political parties more generally. We hypothesize, then, that systematic differences in floor conflict will exist between narrowly targeted spending policies (e.g., distributive<sup>4</sup> policies) and broad spending programs that affect a much larger national constituency. The narrow appropriations bills tend to be important to particular regions or groups within a subset of congressional districts, while the broad ones tend to be more relevant to the national interests and electoral strength of the two parties. Hence, we expect to find partisan conflict to be lowest for legislation affecting narrow constituency interests. In contrast, major policy areas that increasingly affect the collective interests of the chamber and the two political parties will witness greater levels of conflict and partisanship.

**Proposition 2:** *The level of partisan conflict on floor votes will be lowest on appropriations bills that tend to provide benefits to narrow interests.*

**Proposition 3:** *When conflict on floor votes does arise on appropriations legislation, subcommittee bills that tend to handle broad, nationally salient programs will demonstrate the highest level of partisan conflict.*

Differences in conflict are systematic and predictable because members of Congress are more likely to respond to particular principals (e.g.,

political parties) when issues most relevant to the partisan division within members' districts are in debate. Just as some members of Congress may be inclined to respond to party on nationally salient issues, they may be inclined to respond to the demands of their local constituencies on other issues (see Adler and Lapinski 1997). Presumably, then, different patterns of committee-floor conflict will emerge across issues because of the relevance and influence of different principals. Indeed, we expect committees to perform as agents of the chamber on certain issues, but not on others. Specifically, we hypothesize that the Appropriations Committee should be more representative of the chamber on spending bills that affect broad, nationally salient interests and less representative of the chamber on spending bills that affect more confined constituencies.

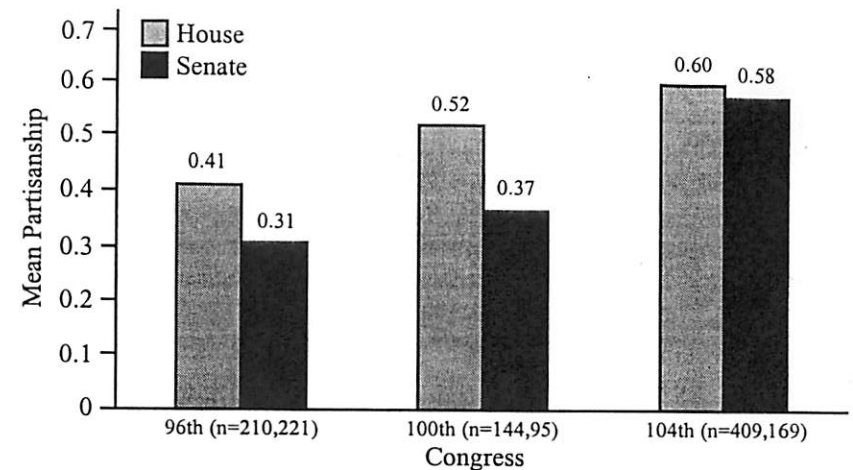
**Proposition 4:** *The differences in voting behavior between Appropriations members and the full chamber will tend to be greater on funding measures that provide benefits to narrow constituency interests.*

#### Policy Issues, Conflict, and Committee Outliers

Of specific interest here is how both conflict and partisanship vary across different issues resulting from different principal-agent relationships to which members of Congress respond in decision making.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, some policies elicit greater conflict than others. Appropriations, by funding popular programs, tend to mitigate intense partisan conflict to a greater extent than authorizing legislation. However, evidence indicates that the incidence of party voting in general has increased substantially across both chambers in the post-reform era (Rohde 1992; Smith 1989; Cox and McCubbins 1993). Despite its historically bipartisan decision rules, appropriations has not been immune to this trend (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; Aldrich and Rohde 1996). We find that the degree of partisan conflict on appropriations legislation in both chambers has increased from the 96th to the 104th Congresses. As Figure 1 shows, the average level of partisanship in the House jumps nearly 50 percent over this time period, and it increases a remarkable 87 percent in the Senate on appropriations floor decisions.<sup>6</sup>

The trend we find in appropriations legislation is consistent with that of other scholars who find increasing partisanship resulting from fiscal deficit concerns and a budget process that allies appropriations policies more closely with party leadership (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; Strahan 1990; Thurber 1992; Davidson 1992; Wright 1997). While the appropriations committees historically have tended to think in terms of constituency service

**Figure 1. Partisan Conflict on House and Senate Appropriations Bills, 96th, 100th, and 104th Congresses**



(and still do to some extent), appropriators were frequently expected to support party priorities as the leadership became increasingly centralized and as the federal budget came to dominate the legislative agenda. Our evidence then, confirms previous findings that partisan conflict on appropriations legislation in the postreform era has risen noticeably in both chambers (Bach 1986).

#### Policy Issues: Sources of Variation in Conflict Across Appropriations Bills

White (1989), however, observed that considerable variation in partisan conflict exists across funding bills in the House. In all likelihood, a significant amount of information is lost by not controlling for specific issues within appropriations legislation. Indeed, scholars risk drawing spurious inferences regarding the committee's behavior on these decisions by not giving greater concern to the multidimensional nature of appropriations legislation. Our analysis, on the other hand, attempts to control for the different issues addressed by the 13 regular appropriations bills in order to isolate the factors affecting conflict on the floor.

We draw upon both Deering and Smith's (1997) and Cox and McCubbins' (1993) committee typologies in order to categorize the 13 appropriations subcommittee bills. First, to the extent that the funding programs overlapped with the jurisdictions of the authorizing committees,

were able to categorize the subcommittee bills according to their committee type.<sup>7</sup> Then, we looked at the major programs funded in each subcommittee bill to further discriminate their placement in one of the three categories. For instance, we categorized each subcommittee bill based on the concentration of particularistic constituency versus broad national policy issues that are usually contained in the funding measures.<sup>8</sup> If particular subcommittee bills were problematic using these criteria, we categorized the bill after carefully reading the historical summaries of the major issues dealt with in each appropriations bill.<sup>9</sup> For example, the agriculture spending bill has very targeted expenditures, and it generally does not invoke a nationally salient issue dimension. The Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary bills, on the other hand, clearly invoke multiple nationally salient policy dimensions. In our categorization, then, the former would fall into a parochial group while the later would be placed in the national-policy group (see Appendix).<sup>10</sup>

Table 1 demonstrates that the *level* of conflict varies significantly across the three issue categories. For example, in the House, Table 1 shows that the percentage of consensual votes is twice as high for spending bills in the parochial category than it is for the bills in the national policy category. Consensual votes are defined as those involving majorities greater than 90 percent of the voting body. In the Senate, a similar relationship exists. The percentage of consensual votes in the parochial category (26%) is two times

**Table 1. Distribution of Consensual Votes Across Policy Areas, House and Senate, 96th, 100th, and 104th Congresses**

	Subcommittee Bill Type	Frequency of Votes	Percent Consensual
Senate	Parochial	65	26.0
	National	157	13.0
	Mixed	163	21.0
	Total	385	—
House	Parochial	101	24.8
	National	305	7.5
	Mixed	264	14.8
	Total	670	—

Note: Votes from omnibus, supplemental, and other are not included in our bill-type categorization. Column three represents the percent of votes in each bill type that are consensual. Consensual votes are defined as those having majorities greater than 90 percent. The difference between the national and parochial categories with regards to the number of consensual votes is statistically significant for both the House and Senate. Senate:  $\chi^2 = 5.290$  ( $p = .021$ ). House:  $\chi^2 = 21.56$  ( $p = .000$ ).

greater than the percentage of consensual votes (13%) in the national category. Chi-squared tests confirm that the differences between national-policy and parochial-policy categories are statistically significant for both chambers.

The evidence from Table 1 supports our expectations regarding the effects of different issue domains on member decision making. Consensual decision making occurs disproportionately on appropriations bills that target programs to specific constituencies. By selecting out consensual votes, we observe that conflict in appropriations decision making seems to differ across issues, and that conflict is systematically related to these dimensions. This illustrates two potential, yet related, pitfalls: (1) By selecting on conflictual votes or using measures that do, scholars tend to focus disproportionately on a subset of policies that may or may not be reflective of the committee's legislative agenda. (2) By not controlling for policies, scholars may make faulty inferences about committee behavior. The level of conflict is simply not invariant across issues.

In addition, we find that the *type* of conflict as measured by mean partisanship is not equal across appropriations issues. Member behavior is conditioned on the relevance of issues to particular principals, principals such as the political parties or targeted constituencies within the districts of individual members. Partisan conflict, as we have argued, will be more likely on spending bills that evoke the national interests of the political parties. In contrast, partisan conflict will be less likely on spending bills that target narrow constituency interests.

For the House, Figure 2 displays the mean partisanship on parochial, national, and mixed policy categories of appropriations bills from the 96th through 104th Congress. While the trend in partisanship increases in all three of the categories, its overall level and the rate of increase is greatest on the national funding category. For example, the level of mean partisanship on the national category of spending bills starts at .37 in the 96th Congress and climbs to .60 by the 104th Congress. In contrast, the mean level of partisanship on parochial bills goes from .26 during the 96th Congress to only .42 by the 104th Congress. More importantly, mean partisanship on national funding bills is significantly greater than mean partisanship on parochial bills for each congress.<sup>11</sup> This supports our contention that conflict differs systematically across issues. By not controlling for policy issues (e.g., Figure 1), one would get a different picture of partisanship on appropriations bills. Controlling for issues allows us to discriminate certain patterns in member behavior that emerge as a result of the association between issues and particular principals.



Figure 2. House Mean Partisanship Controlling for Fund Measure Type, 96th, 100th, and 104th Congresses (Conflictual Votes Only)

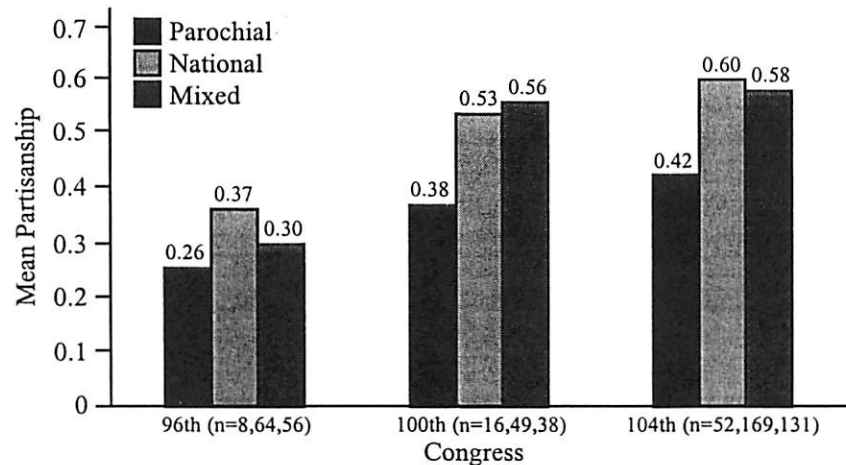
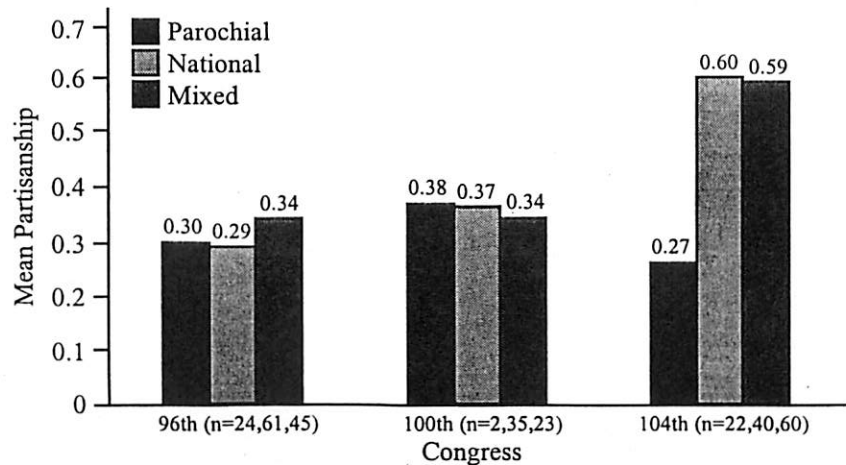


Figure 3. Senate Mean Partisanship Controlling for Fund Measure Type, 96th, 100th, and 104th Congresses (Conflictual Votes Only)



Partisan conflict in Figure 3 shows that the funding categories in the Senate have a somewhat different trend than the one found in the House. Partisanship remained muted on nearly all funding legislation during both the 96th and 100th Congresses. This is consistent with Rohde (1992, 34) who reasoned that the Senate often responds to electoral conditions somewhat later than its House counterpart. While partisanship increased overall, the differences in conflict between national and parochial measures are not statistically significant for either of these two congresses. However, when the large increase in partisan conflict occurs in the Senate during the 104th Congress, the aggregate measure depicted in Figure 1 masks the substantial variation clearly present across the different categories. In fact, mean partisanship on parochial bills drops significantly from the 100th to the 104th Congress, .38 to .27. In contrast, the level of partisan conflict increased dramatically on national and mixed funding categories over the same time period.

#### Policy Issues: Sources of Variation in Committee-Floor Divergence

Controlling for policy issues also has implications for measuring and assessing committee-floor differences. We agree with Maltzman and Smith (1995) that the important distinction is not necessarily between committees, rather it is between the issues dealt with by each. In Table 2, we find evidence that systematic bias exists in both chambers between the voting behavior of Appropriations Committee members and those on the floor.<sup>12</sup> Our results in Table 2 parallel those of Maltzman and Smith (1995) who also find the House Appropriations Committee to be an outlier committee. However, despite the aggregate result, there is no *a priori* reason to assume that the committee will be different from the floor across different issue dimensions. In fact, Maltzman and Smith (1995, 264) found that, with respect to the House Appropriations Committee, greater bias tends to occur on distributive legislation; no difference was found on social policy.

Our evidence supports the contention that the Appropriations Committee members in both chambers vote significantly differently than their counterparts on the floor.<sup>13</sup> In addition, we find that the voting bias on distributive legislation is significantly different from the bias found on national policy. In both the House and Senate, the divergence score between committee and floor voting behavior on parochial policy is significantly larger than that found on national funding bills. So, not only do members vote in committee substantially differently than the floor, but, controlling for specific appropriations issues, we also demonstrate that systematically

**Table 2. Divergence Between Appropriations Committee and Floor, House and Senate, 96th, 100th, and 104th Congresses**

	House	Senate	Maltzman and Smith
Full Committee	.11** (N=583)	.09** (N=312)	.11* (N=346)
Parochial Bills	.14** (N=76)	.11** (N=48)	—
National Bills	.09** (N=282)	.08** (N=136)	—
Mixed Bills	.11** (N=225)	.09** (N=128)	—

Note: Similar to Maltzman and Smith (1995), only conflictual votes were used (i.e., votes with majorities less than 90%). \*\*p < .01 \*p < .05

greater bias exists on targeted parochial legislation than on legislation addressing more nationally-based issues.<sup>14</sup>

We also find that the empirical patterns in voting behavior show greater similarity than dissimilarity between the chambers. Still, differences between the chambers emerge in the empirical analysis, and these findings warrant further attention here. For example, on national and mixed policy issues, the proportion of consensual votes was substantially greater in the Senate than in the House (see Table 1). Moreover, although the patterns of significant voting bias were consistent across issues in both chambers, the Senate committee was always characterized by less bias relative to the House committee (see Table 2).

The variation that does exist in the findings, we argue, can be explained by important institutional differences. In the House, party leaders are better able to utilize institutional procedures to build and maintain partisan coalitions while the institutional structure in the Senate is geared toward consensus building (Fenno 1966). By promoting the broad participation of individual senators, the frequency of partisan cleavage and the extent that committees can operate independently of the floor tends to be dampened (Rohde 1992; Baker 1995; Deering and Smith 1997). Accordingly, party and committee leaders in the Senate are more likely to accommodate the interests of the membership, making conflict and bias—at least with respect to the committee member's voting behavior—less likely as compared to the House. Nevertheless, the consistent patterns found between the chambers are the most telling, and they seem to dispute the claims made in other studies that the Appropriations Committee is not an outlier. Moreover, our results

indicate that different policy issues do in fact matter for assessing committee performance. Without controlling for issues, we may miss systematic differences in member decision making that could lead us to draw spurious inferences regarding the representativeness of congressional committees.

### Concluding Remarks and Future Extensions

Congress, according to Shepsle and Weingast (1995, 23), “is a multifaceted organization, one that is unlikely to be understood in terms of a single principle.” Indeed, the role of the committee system in Congress cannot be properly understood without a theoretical approach that incorporates members with multiple goals, multiple constituencies, and a policy space that is multidimensional (see Maltzman and Smith 1995, 254).<sup>15</sup> Rohde also has argued for a focus on issue domains. “The link between domains and the categories of committees,” he wrote, “is through the types of issues and the way they relate to the motivations of legislators and voters” (1995a, 7).

We find that both the relative degree and kind of conflict varies systematically across appropriations policy areas in the House and Senate over time. In addition, we find systematic differences between committee and floor behavior across issues for the Appropriations Committee in both chambers. We argue that the variation in conflict as well as the differences between committee and floor behavior across issues reflects the different principal-agent relationships that shape member decision making. Without sensitizing our analysis across policy issues, we lose information that is theoretically important to understanding congressional behavior.

Grouping committees into “policy types” is a very blunt method to test different theoretical perspectives about how committees respond to different principals. Indeed, we show that variation across issues within a single committee may be as important as variation across committees. To be sure, we appreciate the fact that even separate funding measures contain multiple policy dimensions. Therefore, in the future, we plan to break down issues further and to make committee comparisons across even more refined policy areas. Instead of focusing on variation in behavior across committees, our future analysis would center on variation in committee behavior across specific issues. If member behavior depends on the extent that certain policy domains invoke the relevance of particular principal-agent relationships over others, then studying committee behavior across these domains seems essential to understanding the internal and external forces that shape member behavior.



**Appendix**  
**Distribution of Votes on House and Senate**  
**Appropriations Subcommittee Bills**

Subcommittee Bill	Senate: Frequency of Votes	Senate: Percent of All Votes	House: Frequency of Votes	House: Percent of All Votes	Sub- committee Bill Type
Agriculture	30	5.1	34	3.9	Parochial
Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary	32	5.5	70	8.0	National
Defense	44	7.5	52	6.0	Mixed
D.C.	23	3.9	29	3.3	National
Energy and Water	35	6.0	49	5.6	Mixed
Foreign Operations	43	7.4	82	9.4	National
Interior	25	4.3	66	7.6	National
Labor, Health & Human Services, Education	34	5.8	58	6.7	National
Legislative Branch	11	1.9	48	5.5	Mixed
Military Construction	15	2.6	24	2.8	Parochial
Transportation	20	3.4	43	4.9	Parochial
Treasury, Postal Service, & General Government	25	4.3	46	5.3	Mixed
V.A., H.U.D., & Independent Agencies	48	8.2	69	7.9	Mixed
Omnibus	73	12.5	68	7.8	—
Supplemental	110	18.9	73	8.4	—
Other	15	2.6	60	6.9	—
Total	583	100	871	100	

Note: Votes are from the 96th, 100th, and 104th congresses.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Indeed, we recognize this is not a novel approach to the study of committees or member behavior, but it remains an approach worth pursuing (see Fenno 1966; 1973).

<sup>2</sup>This is in sharp contrast to Bianco's (1998) informational argument that suggests committees do not have to be median-centered and heterogeneous to be informative.

<sup>3</sup>We defer to others who have commented extensively about the potential inferential problems related to this type of data (Hall and Grofman 1990; VanDoren 1990; Snyder 1992; Jackson and Kingdon 1992; Marshall, Prins, and Rohde 1997).

<sup>4</sup>The spending policies we distinguish here are characterized as pork-barrel or highly distributive policies. Typically these include legislation that concentrates benefits in specific geographic areas and spreads the cost through general taxation (Shepsle and Weingast 1981).

<sup>5</sup>The following analysis uses roll-call votes to evaluate conflict and consensus within the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. We do recognize, though, the inherent limitations of such data. Not only do roll-call votes represent an imperfect indicator of member preferences, they also are endogenous to the legislative environment some extent (Shepsle and Weingast 1995). Nonetheless, roll-call votes do provide an accurate picture of member floor behavior. Furthermore, according to Maltzman and Smith (1995, 258), "reliance on the roll-call record leads us to understate the genuine level of disagreement between committees, parties, and the parent chamber. Thus, when statistically significant differences are found between committee, parties, and the parent chamber, we can be reasonably confident that the differences were not caused by strategic voting."

<sup>6</sup>Partisanship in Figures 1-3 was measured as the average difference between the absolute value of the proportion of Democratic ayes and the proportion of Republican ayes.

<sup>7</sup>Deering and Smith (1997), for example, labeled their categories policy, constituency, and mixed.

<sup>8</sup>We recognize that the funding jurisdictions of the 13 spending bills do not correspond identically to the jurisdictions of the authorizing committees. Indeed, some of the funding bills fund multiple federal departments (e.g., Commerce, Justice, and State). To categorize these funding measures, we relied on appropriations reports provided by *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* (CQ 1997) for information on the major funding issues dealt with under each subcommittee bill.

<sup>9</sup>The Interior appropriations bill, for instance, traditionally has been considered a constituency-related bill. Recently, however, national environmental policy and funding for the National Endowment for the Arts both have transformed this measure into one with broad concerns for both political parties. Because the major issues dealt with tend to be broader in scope, we placed this bill in the national-policy category. Another subcommittee jurisdiction difficult to categorize was the District of Columbia. District of Columbia appropriations target money to the District, but it is of special concern to the Black Caucus in Congress and to national organizations concerned with minority issues because it represents how a predominately black urban population will be governed. District of Columbia funding bills were placed in the national-policy category, as well.

<sup>10</sup>The 13 Appropriations bills are categorized as follows: 1) Parochial: Agriculture, Military Construction, and Transportation; 2) National-Policy: Labor, Commerce Justice & State, District of Columbia, Foreign Operations, and Interior; 3) Mixed: Energy and Water, V.A. HUD, Treasury, Legislative Branch, and Defense.

<sup>11</sup>Chi-squared tests confirm that these differences in the House are statistically significant for each of the three Congresses. For the Senate, however, the difference between the mean level of partisanship for the national and parochial categories is only significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) during the 104th Congress.

<sup>12</sup>The divergence variable for Table 2 was calculated from the absolute difference between the proportion of committee members voting aye and the proportion of the floor voting aye and averaged across votes. The divergence variable restricts the range of possible values from zero to one and therefore does not indicate the direction in which the committee votes relative to the floor. The mean measure is not problematic for our purposes because we are primarily concerned with assessing committee-floor voting behavior. In contrast, when trying to assess relative differences in preferences explicitly,

scholars have employed various forms of median tests (Groseclose 1994; Londregan and Snyder 1994).

<sup>13</sup>Differences between the committee and the chamber have non-trivial consequences for the passage of public policies. Indeed, we have found that the Senate Appropriations Committee can (and often does) vote cohesively to roll the position of a floor majority (see Marshall, Prins, and Rohde 1999).

<sup>14</sup>In a standard OLS regression, the value of the constant was significantly different from zero for both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Furthermore, when breaking down the Appropriations Committees into the three categories, the divergence score for parochial bills was significantly greater than that for the national bills.

<sup>15</sup>In the words of Forrest Maltzman (1995, 655), "instead of representing a single set of interests, committees are said to attempt to balance their parochial interests with the interests of the chamber and their party caucuses."

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