DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91125

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF
FEDERAL OUTLAYS

R. Michael Alvarez

Jason Saving

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Abstract

The literature on the organization of the United States Congress has been dominated by "distributive" and "informational" theory. One important source of disagreement between these two theories is their characterization of whether individual legislators can engage in pork-barrel activities. Here we provide evidence which indicates that the pork-barrel is alive and well in the contemporary United States Congress. We focus on whether members of power and constituency committees can direct disproportionate federal expenditures to their districts. Finding strong and systematic evidence of pork-barrel activities by committee members provides empirical support for distributive theories of legislative organization.

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1   Introduction

Much has been written in recent years about the legislative organization of the United States Congress. Mayhew (1974:81-82) summarized a consensus among political scientists when he wrote that "the organization of Congress meets remarkably well the electoral needs of its members. To put it another way, if a group of planners sat down and tried to design a pair of American national assemblies with the goal of serving members' electoral needs year in and year out, they would be hard pressed to improve on what exists." That is to say, the Congress is organized with precisely the structure most desired by its members.

While virtually all previous work has accepted this intuition, there is a remarkable lack of agreement on the precise nature of this structure. Distributive theorists assert that legislators seek to maximize their probabilities of reelection through the acquisition of federal funding, and that Congress is organized to facilitate this acquisition (Shepsle and Weingast 1984). Informational theorists, on the other hand, assert that legislators seek to make informed decisions through the acquisition of expertise, and that Congress is organized to promote this acquisition and thwart distributive activities (Krehbiel 1991:7). If the Congress is characterized by distributive theory, then, legislators will affect the geographic distribution of federal outlays through political influence. But if the Congress is characterized by informational theory, legislators will be either unwilling or unable to exercise such influence.

In testing the distributive theories, it has proven difficult to acquire data on federal spending at the congressional district level. These data limitations have pushed empiricists to examine the related issue of universalism in legislatures. In general, theorists have found that legislators motivated by distributive concerns would form collective logrolls

and then give unanimous approval to those logrolls (Collie 1988a, 1988b; Fiorina 1981; Niou and Ordeshook 1985; Shepsle and Weingast 1981; Weingast, Shepsle and Johnson 1981). Using readily available information on recorded votes, empiricists have failed to find evidence of universalism, and this failure has led previous work to question the relevance of distributive motivations in legislatures (Stein and Bickers 1994). However, it is important to note that the presence of distributive motivations in Congress would not by itself imply universalism. Thus, while previous work has rendered a verdict on many of the extensions to distributive theory, it has not refuted the hypothesis that distributive motivations affect government spending.

In this paper, we examine the extent to which legislators are able to affect the composition of federal spending across districts. We provide a systematic examination of the effects of committee membership on federal outlays to congressional districts in the 101st Congress (1989-1990), both in terms of total new outlays and in terms of functional policy areas of new outlays. We do this with a newly available dataset of federal outlays to congressional districts, a dataset which goes much further than past approaches to mapping federal outlays to specific congressional districts.[1] We find considerable evidence that congressional committees and politics play a major role in the allocations of federal benefits across congressional districts. In our conclusion we argue that this provides support to distributive models of congressional organization.

2 Committees and the Pork Barrel

The institution most often discussed in legislative organization is the Congressional committee. As Fenno pointed out, "committee membership, in other words, is not an end in itself for the individuals. Each member of each committee wants his committee service to bring him some benefit in terms of goals he holds as an individual congressman. And he will act on his committee in ways calculated to achieve such goals" (Fenno 1973, p. 1). So, to the extent that reelection figures as a prominent goal for members (Mayhew 1974), committee membership will be used for electoral ends.

In an important work of distributive theory on the structure of Congress, Weingast and Marshall (1988) begin with the assumption that each reelection-minded legislator wishes to obtain distributive benefits for his constituency but confronts a congress whose members are indifferent to his welfare. Clearly, there are gains from trade which can be extracted in this situation in the form of a legislative logroll. Weingast and Marshall demonstrate that the committee system of Congress is one institutional solution to the collective problem of extracting these gains from trade. Then, to test these assertions, Weingast and Marshall discuss some evidence about the operation of committees in the contemporary Congress: that members self-select onto committees; that members are so-called "preference outliers"; and last, that "committee members receive the disproportionate share of the benefits from programs within their jurisdictions" (p. 149). Evidence exists in the literature in support of each assertion.[2]

Krehbiel (1991) has offered an informational framework which challenges much of Weingast and Marshall (1988). He begins with the assumption that committees exist to reduce the amount of uncertainty legislators have about the ramifications of public policies rather than to facilitate the acquisition of distributive benefits. To buttress his theoretical critiques of the distributive framework, Krehbiel provides provocative counter-evidence against some of the assertions of Weingast and Marshall. Specifically, he argues strongly against the self-selection and "preference outlier" assertions (Krehbiel 1990, 1991; but see Hall and Grofman 1990). But Krehbiel does not test the assertion that committee membership permits legislators to obtain distributive benefits. So to the extent that the distribution of federal benefits is influenced by committee membership, important evidence in support of the distributive model and against the informational model would be provided.[3]

2.1 Measuring the Pork Barrel

Substantial disagreements exist among empirical studies concerning distributive politics. In analyses of some domains of federal political-economic activities thought to be conducive to distributive politics, like rivers and harbors expenditures (Ferejohn 1974), science projects (Wilson 1989), defense (Goss 1972), and federal grants programs (Arnold 1979; Friedland and Wong 1983; Holcombe and Zardkoohi 1981; Plott 1968; Rich 1989; Rundquist and Ferejohn 1975; Strom 1975), authors have found evidence of pork-barrel spending. Some studies have also looked at the effects of distributive benefits on electoral outcomes, with some success (Alvarez and Schousen 1993; Feldman and Jondrow 1984; Mebane 1992). But there have been studies which have not found empirical support for political manipulations of distributive benefits (Anagnoson 1980; Chernick 1979; Gist and Hill 1984; Rundquist 1978; Rundquist and Griffith 1976). However, we argue that much of the empirical controversy can be traced to three problems with the empirical operationalization of distributive benefits.

One important question in the empirical controversy concerns the basic operationalization that constitutes a distributive benefit. ¿From a theoretical perspective, distributive benefits represent federal spending obtained through the use of political influence. One obvious method for determining distributive benefits is to calculate the amount by which each district's receipts exceed those of the average district. If legislators consider only political influence in the allocation of federal spending, the degree to which a district's spending exceeds the average across districts might be an appropriate measure of distributive benefits. If legislators place any value on economic efficiency, however, it seems reasonable to suppose that the distribution of federal spending would reflect the merit of each district if legislators had no incentive to pork-barrel. In this case, the appropriate measure of distributive benefits is the extent to which a district's spending exceeds the level it deserves. That is, both the influence of a legislator and the merit of his district affect expenditures, and the omission of district merit would bias empirical results in a negative direction.

The second issue concerns the means by which spending is implemented. In general, legislatures allocate funds through either specific projects or general formulae. Most previous work suggests that pork-barreling will occur with projects but not with formulae (Stein and Bickers 1994; for a contrary view, see Weingast and Moran 1983). If formulae programs are not susceptible to distributive motivations, aggregation of formulae with projects would also bias empirical results in a negative direction. Whether or not this is the case, institutional factors are likely to exert differential effects on project and formulae spending. Therefore, a failure to separate these types of spending from each other would bias empirical results in an unknown direction.

A third problem is the distinction between previous outlays and new outlays. Much of the funding that the government spends in a given year was authorized in previous sessions of Congress, and there is no reason to believe that current legislators influenced legislation in years during which they were not members. If we were to look only at total outlays, or continuing outlays initiated earlier, we might be biasing our results toward the null hypothesis that politicians do not influence federal outlays to congressional districts. For example, if we were to examine total outlays in a particular district in 1990 for some program, the total moneys allocated would be the sum of the continuing awards still in existence as well as new funds being awarded that year. If this program had been in existence since 1983, and had been allocating funds to this district since then, the awards granted in earlier years might have been influenced by other congressional incumbents, or the same incumbent in a different situation. Therefore, in this example, we would run the risk of demonstrating the null hypothesis, even if the current incumbent were working very successfully to win the new awards in 1990.

2.2 Member Motivations and the Pork Barrel

There are several theoretical questions that relate to the legislators themselves. The first concerns the extent to which representatives are motivated to obtain distributive benefits. In general, previous work in the distributive framework assumes that legislators are vote-maximizers who fulfill this goal through the acquisition of distributive benefits. However, there is abundant evidence that legislators value personal goals as well as votes.[4] While it seems clear that legislators seek reelection, previous work has erred in equating the desire for reelection with the maximization of votes. Legislators who consistently defeat their opponents by large margins are likely to achieve reelection whether or not they seek distributive benefits for their constituents. For this reason, we believe that legislators will not exhibit uniformly high levels of effort with regard to pork-barreling. Under the assumption that legislators care most about pork when their electoral margins are low, congressmen from marginal districts will devote a great deal of their time to the acquisition of distributive benefits, while legislators from "safe" seats will devote less time toward this end.

Another question concerns the extent to which the constituents of a representative will reward distributive benefits with votes. It is uniformly assumed in the literature that

distributive benefits will increase the popularity of a representative. However, there is a significant amount of anecdotal evidence that some voters dislike distributive benefits. Niou and Ordeshook (1985) address this concern with the observation that, in a situation where all other legislators are engaged in pork-barrel spending, it would be foolish for a district to elect someone philosophically opposed to pork-barreling. After all, such an individual cannot end the collective logroll, so the only means by which he can lower the total amount of distributive benefits approved by the congress is to abolish his district's share of the logroll. While this argument is powerful at a theoretical level, it ignores the possibility of national tides and should in any event be tested rather than assumed.

Thus, there have been important measurement and specification problems in much of the earlier research on distributive politics. While we cannot in this paper say that we have resolved all of these empirical problems, we do believe that the empirical work in the next two sections of this paper takes a step in the correct direction. In the next section, we discuss the data we employ in our preliminary analyses, as well as the general specification of our model of distributive benefits.

2.3   The Empirical Model

As stated earlier, the simple measurement of distributive benefits across congressional districts has bedeviled much of the earlier work in this area. There have been few systematic examinations of distributive politics largely since there has been no widespread attempt to amass the huge quantity of data required to look closely at the distribution of federal outlays and expenditures at the district level. Instead, researchers have relied upon case study approaches which examine pork-barrel politics in certain programmatic areas (i.e., rivers and harbors [Ferejohn 1974]) or which look at more general aggregated measures in certain years (Alvarez and Schousen 1993; Feldman and Jondrow 1984). However, due to the collection of the U.S. Domestic Assistance Programs Database (Bickers and Stein 1993), scholars now have access to an amazing data resource which breaks many of these constraints. Not only does this data collection currently span a number of years (1983-1990), it also contains program-level aggregation of federal outlays to the congressional district.

In this paper, we use the U.S. Domestic Assistance Programs Database for the years 1989 and 1990. We choose this time period for three reasons. The first is that it spans only one election cycle, so we do not have to take into consideration possible reciprocal causation between some of the political variables we employ in the model and the outlays to districts.[5] The second is that we plan this paper to be a preliminary analysis; given the massive quantity of data in the U.S. Domestic Assistance Programs Database, dealing with two years of data was a large computational problem. Third, being the most recent years in the series, much of the data we needed to collect in addition to the federal outlays data was easily accessible.

More specifically, though, we focus only on what we call *new* outlays to the district. First we need to discuss *new* outlays as they are defined in the U.S. Domestic Assistance Programs Database. A new outlay in this data does not mean that a new program has been initiated; it means that it has only been reported with in the past year as the beginning of a new award, and it gives the amount of money which the government has announced as being allocated for the congressional district.[6] We focus only on new outlays in the remainder of this paper since we believe that new outlays would be most influenced by contemporary politicians.[7] For this simple reason alone, we feel that our empirical work using this new source of data should be a vast improvement over earlier studies.

Additionally, we make an effort to model both the "merit-based" and political processes which might be at work in influencing the distribution of new outlays across congressional districts. First, this means trying to specify the non-political determinants of outlays to congressional districts. To do so, we turned to the U.S. Census, which reports demographic aggregates at the congressional district level for all districts following the redistrictings of the early 1980's. In the models we report in this paper, we focus on six of these demographic aggregates: % Blue Collar Workers in the district, % Farmers in the district, District Median Family Income, % Home Owners in the district, % Senior Citizens in the district, and % of the population living in urban areas. These particular demographic attributes were chosen since they account for all of the sorts of non-political formulaic factors which would influence new outlays to congressional districts available in the U.S. Census.

Then, for the political determinants of new outlays we turned to data in *Politics in America*, various years. From there, we obtained data on each member of Congress during 1989 and 1990.[8] There are a number of factors which might allow some members of Congress to obtain benefits for their districts better than their rivals. One of these factors is seniority in Congress, which we measure simply by the date when the member first entered the U.S. House. Quite simply, the more senior a member is, the better able he or she should be to play the pork-barrel game in the House. Another factor is partisanship, with the majority party's members possibly being better able to obtain new outlays for their constituents than Republicans. We include a dummy variable coded 1 in our models for Democrats, and coded 0 for Republicans.

Next, we have three electoral variables in the model which we must mention. They reflect our concern with modeling the possible political demands for distributive benefits which might arise from constituents. First, it might be true that some constituencies are more interested in distributive benefits than others; we model this possibility by including a variable measuring the percentage of voters in the district who supported Bush in 1988. This is a rough measure of the district's ideology, which we feel may express the district's propensity to desire pork. The second electoral variable is simply the incumbent member's electoral vote total in 1988. The purpose of this variable is to see if more electorally vulnerable members dip more readily into the pork barrel than safer members of the House. The third variable is the amount of donations from PAC's

the member received in the 1988 election. Our hypothesis here follows some recent work, which has indicated that members supported by PAC's seem to be more likely to pursue the pork than other members (e.g. Mebane 1993).

Of course, one of the most important institutional perks a member can possess is committee membership. Accordingly, most of the rest of the discussion in this paper will revolve around committee members and their ability to obtain benefits for their districts. Here we confine our examination to members of two distinct types of committees in the U.S. House: prestige committees (Appropriations, Budget, Rules, and Ways and Means) and constituency committees (Agriculture, Armed Services, Interior, Merchant Marine, Public Works, Science, Small Business, and Veterans' Affairs). The distinction between prestige and constituency committees is discussed fully in Smith and Deering (1990): We include dummy variables in our models for membership on each of these committees (1 if a member, 0 if not). The remaining committees are excluded from our analysis (policy and unrequested committees) since there is little reason to suspect that members will desire membership on those committees to obtain distributive benefits for their district (Smith and Deering 1990).

The committee membership variables provide the important tests for the distributive model. Since distributive theory predicts that members seek committee positions to reap the possible gains from trade in the legislative arena, we expect that members of constituency and possibly prestige committees will obtain more distributive benefits for their districts than non-members. It is this positive effect of committee membership which we will examine closely in our empirical models in the next section.

3   The Political Economy of the Pork Barrel

The first set of models which we discuss are presented in Table 1. Here we estimate three regression models; the first model has total new outlays, the second has total new project grants, and the third has total new formula grants as their respective dependent variables. Project grants are defined as "allocations, using discretionary methods of project selection, for fixed periods on specific projects or for the delivery of specific services" while formula grants are defined as "allocations . . . in accordance with a distribution formula prescribed by law or administrative rule" (Bickers and Stein 1993, p. 9). We present models using both grant variables since we believe that the former should be the most susceptible to political influences (being discretionary), while the latter should not be very susceptible to politics.[9]

In Table 1, we first begin with the political influence variables.[10] While both seniority and previous electoral vote are correctly signed across the three equations (the earlier a member arrived, the more tenure, and the more outlays; the higher the past Vote, the lower the outlays), neither reaches statistical significance. The PAC receipts variable, also, is not significant. However, the partisan variable is correctly signed, indicating that Democrats do seem to obtain more from the pork barrel than do Republicans. This is

only statistically significant in the total outlays model, but it does near significance in the new formula grants model. Last, the measure of district demand for pork, the percentage who voted for Bush in the 1988 election, is also correctly signed in each equation: the higher Bush's percentage of the vote in 1988, the lower was the level of new outlays, new project grants, and new formula grants in succeeding years. This effect is significant in the first two models, and we interpret this to mean that districts which are liberal desire, and receive, more outlays than conservative districts.

Next to the meat of our discussion — whether membership on the prestige and constituency committees of the U.S. House matters for distributive politics. As we discussed earlier, there is some contention about the röle of committees in the contemporary House, and therefore it is important that we take some time discussing these results. In Table 1, we have grouped the prestige and constituency committees together; the prestige committees appear first, followed by the constituency committees. And our results are quite interesting. Beginning with the prestige committees, one clear result jumps out of the table: the importance of membership on the Ways and Means committee. Membership on this committee has a positive and significant impact in each model. Interestingly, the effect of Ways and Means membership is greater for new formula grants than it is for new project grants, which is counter to our expectation than political manipulation should be greater for projects than for formulaic spending programs. That Ways and Means members seem to obtain so much distributive goodies is not an altogether surprising result, given that this committee controls a large part of the "power of the purse." Notice that membership on the other power committees does not have the same systematic effects; if anything, membership on Appropriations and Budget committees seems to influence positively both new project and new total outlays, but not to the same extent that Ways and Means membership does.

Now we turn to the constituency committees. If there is pork barreling going on in the U.S. House, this is where we might expect to find it happening. As far as a set of these committees are concerned, distributive politics is alive and well in the contemporary U.S. House.

Four committees stand out in these models as being places where members seem to be obtaining the most new outlays: Armed Services, Interior, Small Business, and Veterans' Affairs. Of these, perhaps the most surprising is that the Armed Services members seem successful in obtaining new awards for their district. This is surprising, since defense outlays are not included in the U.S. Domestic Assistance Programs Database. That members of the other committees are successful, though, comes as little surprise, since these are committees with jurisdictions over programs which directly would benefit their constituents. Also, we are quite surprised to find that there is some variance in the influence of committee membership across project and formulaic program initiations. The effect of being on the Armed Services, Interior, and Small Business committees is roughly twice the magnitude on formula grants as on project grants. We had expected to find that little, if any political influences on formula grants would exist, since by definition they are programs which are not discretionary. It would appear that House

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members have managed to find ways to influence these non-discretionary programs from their positions on these committees.

The null findings, also, are quite surprising. That members of the Agriculture, Merchant Marine, Public Works, and Science committees do not seem able to obtain more new outlays than members off those important constituency committees runs counter to past research. Especially puzzling are the results for Agriculture and Public Works, both of which would be considered classic pork barreling committees in past research. We have two possible accounts for these findings. One is that, after controlling for membership on other committees, other sources of political influence, and non-political influences on the flows of new outlays to congressional districts, perhaps membership on these committees is not all that it is cracked up to be. The other explanation is more satisfying, however: perhaps the nature of the committees, their power over programs, or their membership, has changed dramatically in recent years so as to make these committees not as successful in obtaining more new outlays for their own districts as they were in the past. Both accounts require more research.

One problem with these models, though, is that the measures we use are highly aggregated. The measure of total new outlays, for example, contains moneys allocated to income security programs, employment programs, and programs aimed at improving the business climates in local areas. Thus, while committee members may actually influence the flow of new outlays in certain programs under their jurisdiction, they may be unable or unwilling to influence the flows of other outlays under the jurisdictions of other committees. If this were true, looking only at aggregated expenditures might mask considerable evidence of distributive politics being played in specific programs.

One of the most interesting aspects of the U.S. Domestic Assistance Programs Database, moreover, is that it allows us to disaggregate new outlays into a number of specific program categories, which we can then link directly to committee jurisdictions. Following the results in Table 1, we have looked at five committees and new outlays disaggregated to program types. First, following up on the results regarding the Ways and Means Committee, we looked at the effects of membership on this important prestige committee for new total outlays, new project grants, and new formula grants across twelve program types: agriculture, business and commerce, disaster relief, education, employment and training, energy, environmental quality, health, income security and social services, natural resources, science and technology, and transportation. The regression model here is identical to that discussed earlier, except here the only committee dummy variable is for Ways and Means membership. For the sake of space, we report only the coefficients on the Ways and Means dummy variable, and denote the statistical significance of each coefficient.[11] These are reported in Table 2.

It is clear in Table 2 that there are some program types which Ways and Means members appear able to influence relative to the other members of the House: agriculture, business and commerce, employment and training, energy, and environmental quality. Unlike the general result in Table 1 that the constituency committees seemed more

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influential on formulaic grants than on project grants, here it looks like the Ways and Means members are more influential on project grants than formula grants, especially in these particular policy areas. But, in the other policy areas, most of the coefficients cannot be distinguished from zero. These are very interesting results, since the Ways and Means committee is not normally thought of as a committee from which members engage in the trafficking of distributive benefits. In fact Fenno found in *Congressmen in Committees* that Ways and Means members valued their committee positions first for influence and prestige, second for policy interests, and last for reelection concerns. It is clear that some change in Ways and Means member interests must have occurred in the intervening years since Fenno's study.

The other four committees we examined are all constituency committees — Interior, Science, Space and Technology, Small Business, and Veterans' Affairs. We looked at these specific committees for two reasons. First, from the results in Table 1 they looked to be ones which members in the contemporary House might be using for obtaining distributive benefits for their districts. Second, they are also committees with jurisdictions which closely resemble some of the policy areas in the U.S. Domestic Assistance Programs Database — natural resources (Interior), science (Science, Space and Technology), business and commerce (Small Business), and employment, labor and training (Veterans' Affairs). Accordingly, we estimated models with total new outlays for each of these four program types. The independent variables are identical to those discussed above, again with the exception that here we include only one committee dummy variable on the right-hand side of each model; the committee which we believe matches the program type. The results of these regressions are in Table 3.

Importantly, it is obvious that membership on each of these committees does lead to a higher level of total outlays in each respective program type. All of the coefficients on the committee membership dummy variables are positive, and three are statistically significant. The coefficient for membership on the Veterans' Affairs committee in the employment, labor and training model is positive, but is only slightly greater than the estimated standard error. Yet we can conclude that membership on these committees has a positive and in most cases significant impact on the flow of new outlays in specific types of programs to the districts of members. We have also shown similar results for most of these committees (and a few others not examined here) in terms of total new outlays, new project grants and new formula grants. Additionally, we have shown that membership on prestige committees also has a positive and often strong influence on new flows of federal outlays to congressional districts.

4 Discussion

Our empirical results for the 101st Congress have interesting implications for students of Congress and of policy making. First, and most important, it does look as if, even under the serious constraints imposed by the new budgeting procedures of the 1970s and 1980s and the looming budget deficits, members still find ways to funnel federal moneys

to their constituents at home. In the political economy of the pork barrel, three results were prominent: that more new outlays tend to go to more liberal districts; that more new outlays tend to go to Democratic members; and that more new outlays tend to go to members of prestige and constituency committees. Two null results are also worth reiteration. One was that member electoral safety seemed to matter little in our models, with members from more electorally marginal districts obtaining roughly the same level of new outlays as safe members. The other was that PAC contributions did not lead members to seek more pork; but this conclusion clearly needs more study (e.g. Mebane 1993). Thus, the pork barrel is alive and well, even after many changes to the process of budgeting in recent years.

A second conclusion relates to the project-formula distinction. In contrast to conventional wisdom, we find evidence that formulaic spending is significantly impacted by pork-barreling. In fact, distributive motivations appear to have a greater impact on formulaic spending than project spending. A direct explanation for this phenomenon is that formulae are composed by legislators in committees. Therefore, they write into law formulae which will benefit their district even though the funds will often be allocated by "independent" agencies. An indirect explanation relates to Congress' ability to oversee executive agencies; in situations where the precise geographical destination of federal spending is left to the agency, bureaucrats might reward influential members in exchange for lax supervision. We suspect that both of these factors play a role in the "formula pork-barrel."

It should be noted that the House does not by itself determine the spatial distribution of federal outlays in the United States. Federal spending decisions are the result of a complex game involving a number of actors, including the House, the Senate and the President (Wright 1973; Crain and Tollison 1977). The relative importance of institutional factors in the House render it uniquely suited to empirical analysis, and the relatively small size of House districts suggests that House members face uniquely powerful incentives to use their institutional positions to affect the spatial distribution of federal outlays. However, future work can and should examine the extent to which institutions other than the House affect federal outlay decisions.

Our results have important implications for the distributive and informational theories of legislative organization. Since we have seen a lot of evidence in our results which indicates that some committees are trafficking in distributive benefits, it cannot be the case that all committees, all of the time, are pure and simple providers of information about the potential effects of policies to the House floor (e.g. Krehbiel 1991). But neither did we find massive quantities of evidence to indicate that all important committees in the House are pure providers of pork to their members. In fact, we have evidence which lends support to both sides, which calls for theoretical models to explain which committees might be more prone to distributive and which to informational politics.

Finally, our work seems to indicate that some important changes have taken place in the U.S. House since the classic studies of committees and pork-barreling. That members

of the Ways and Means committee seem to receive more distributive benefits than most of their colleagues does not mesh with the classic notion of this committee as a "prestige" committee — a place where safe members go because they want merely to be important members of Congress. This finding, and many of the other findings presented above, calls for further examination.

Table 1: Total New Outlays, New Projects, and New Grants, 1989-1990

Independent Variables	New Outlays	New Project Grants	New Formula Grants
Constant	25.4**	26.6**	27.1**
	.78	.91	2.17
Seniority	-.0009	.0002	-.009
	.005	.006	.01
Previous Vote	-.003	-.004	.0009
	.003	.003	.007
PAC Receipts 88	.00000	.00000	-.00000
	.00000	.00000	.00000
Democrats	.16**	.08	.19
	.09	.10	.24
Bush Vote 88	-.01**	-.02**	-.01
	.004	.005	.01
Appropriations	.14	.20*	-.15
	.12	.14	.32
Budget	.19*	.17	-.03
	.13	.15	.35
Rules	-.05	.33*	-.32
	.21	.24	.57
Ways and Means	.30**	.25*	.54*
	.14	.16	.38
Agriculture	-.13	-.37**	-.12
	.14	.16	.38
Armed Services	.22**	.35**	.39
	.12	.14	.32
Interior	.33**	.45**	1.11**
	.13	.16	.37
Merchant Marine	-.03	.10	.05
	.12	.14	.35
Public Works	.004	-.10	.003
	.12	.13	.32
Science	.04	.12	.03
	.12	.14	.33
Small Business	.21**	.29**	.64**
	.12	.14	.33
Veterans	.19*	.40**	.42
	.14	.17	.39
% Blue Collar	-.09**	-.12**	-.14**
	.007	.009	.02
% Farmers	-.06**	-.06**	-.09**
	.02	.02	.05
Median Family Inc.	-.0001**	-.0001**	-.0001**
	.00001	.00001	.00004
% Home Owners	-.003**	-.003**	-.006
	.005	.005	.01
% Senior Citizens	-.05**	-.07**	-.11**
	.01	.01	.03
% Urban	-.02**	-.02**	-.02**
	.003	.003	.008
1989 Dummy	-.25**	-.13**	-1.39**
	.07	.08	.19
Adjusted R^2	.26	.29	.14
Mean (SE of Reg.)	17.1 (.98)	15.9 (1.14)	14.5 (2.72)

Note: The dependent variable in each model is logged. Entries are regression coefficients, with their standard errors below. * p=.05 (one-tailed), and ** p=.01 (one-tailed).

Table 2: Ways and Means Members and New Outlays by Program Type, 1989-1990

Program Type	New Outlays	New Project Grants	New Formula Grants
Agriculture	.67*	.77**	.23
Business and Commerce	.34*	.55**	-.01
Disaster Relief	-.18	.05	.03
Education	.19*	.02	.20
Employment and Training	.72**	.46*	.72*
Energy	.63**	.45	.22
Environmental Quality	.76*	.72	1.06*
Health	.23	-.03	.71**
Income Sec. and Soc. Services	.32*	.15	.07
Natural Resources	.32	.32	.49
Science and Technology	-.48*	-.48**	—
Transportation	-.09	.16	.14

Note: Entries are regression coefficients on a dummy variable indicating membership on the Ways and Means Committee, with their standard errors below. * $p=.05$ (one-tailed), and ** $p=.01$ level (one-tailed). (The regressions from which these results were obtained are available from the authors, and are virtually identical in their specification to those reported in Table 1.)

Table 3: Total New Outlays for Natural Resources, Science, and Small Business 1989-1990

Independent Variables	New Outlays Nat. Res.	New Outlays Science	New Outlays Small Business	New Outlays Employ. and Train.
Constant	26.7**	31.2**	21.7**	32.3**
	2.34	1.63	1.53	2.44
Seniority	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.03**
	.01	.01	.009	.01
Previous Vote	-.0002	-.01**	-.005	-.007
	.008	.006	.005	.009
PAC Receipts 88	.00000	.000001**	-.00000	.00000
	.00000	.000000	.00000	.00000
Democrats	.27	-.20	.16	.12
	.26	.18	.17	.27
Bush Vote 88	-.02*	-.02**	-.02**	-.05**
	.01	.009	.008	.01
Interior	.93**			
	.38			
Science		.58**		
		.23		
Small Business			.37*	
			.23	
Veterans' Affairs				.44
				.42
% Blue Collar	-.16**	-.18**	-.07**	-.18**
	.02	.02	.01	.02
% Farmers	-.19**	-.17**	-.03	-.03
	.05	.03	.03	.05
Median Family Inc.	-.0001**	-.0001**	-.0001**	-.0002**
	.00004	.00003	.00003	.00005
% Home Owners	.02*	-.02**	.02**	-.01
	.01	.009	.009	.01
% Senior Citizens	-.09**	-.10**	-.05**	-.18**
	.03	.02	.02	.03
% Urban	-.04**	-.04**	-.01**	-.02**
	.008	.006	.005	.009
1989 Dummy	-3.71**	-.40**	-1.36**	-.49**
	.21	.14	.14	.22
Adjusted R^2	.31	.23	.13	.16
Mean (SE of Reg.)	11.8 (3.02)	12.8 (2.10)	14.1 (1.98)	11.7 (3.17)

Note: The dependent variable in each model is logged. Entries are regression coefficients, with their standard errors below. * $p=.05$ (one-tailed), and ** $p=.01$ (one-tailed).

Endnotes

[1]For additional discussion of the measurement problems in past research on pork-barrel expenditures to congressional districts, see Alvarez and Schousen (1993), Feldman and Jondrow (1983) and Mebane (1993).

[2]For the first assertion, the standard references are Fenno (1973), Rohde and Shepsle (1973), and Shepsle (1975, 1978). For the assertion that members of committees are "preference outliers" see Fenno (1973). For the assertion that members of committees receive a disproportionate share of benefits see Arnold (1979) on major projects, Cohen and Noll (1991) on high technology benefits, Ferejohn (1974) on public works projects, and Weingast and Moran (1983) on the Federal Trade Commission.

[3]Krehbiel realizes the importance of this point. In his conclusion he argues that "the proper inference from our findings is that legislators care about distributional and informational benefits. However, due to preeminent positions on uncertainty in the policy environment and majoritarianism in procedural choice, legislators are more severely constrained in obtaining distributional benefits than is suggested in most theoretical research" (p. 260). Still, our argument holds — to the extent that we can show that committee membership matters in the flow of federal outlays to districts, we are providing important evidence in support of distributive models of congressional organization.

[4]Fenno [1973], for example, enumerates no less than five motivational forces for legislators.

[5]We are currently working on such a model, however. As will soon be discussed, there are reasons to believe that distributive benefits to a district will be influenced by the political preferences and electoral actions of a member's constituents; and that distributive benefits will also influence that member's standing in his or her district. This suggests reciprocal causation, a factor which has not been taken into consideration in the empirical studies we have discussed.

[6]Bickers and Stein describe a new award as follows: "what distinguishes a new award from a continuing award is that the former is reported only at the time a given project commences and immediately follows the announcement of the grant" (1993, p. 17).

[7]Another point to make in passing is that by focusing only on new awards we are removing from the data all awards which were reported as only being aggregated to the county level. While the U.S. Domestic Assistance Programs Database does include these expenditures extrapolated to the district level, they make no attempt to divulge whether they are new or continuing awards at the district level.

[8]There were a series of congressional districts which we excluded from the analysis. Typically, the incumbents were removed from office, or left office, during this particular cycle. The districts are CA 15, FL 18, NJ 1, NJ 12, MS 5, TX 12 and TX 18.

[9]We have not separated true discretionary spending from true entitlement outlays. Interestingly, by focusing only on new outlays we have eliminated most entitlement outlays a priori. For, many if not most of the major entitlement programs (like social security or AFDC) are often reported as outlays to a county, and not by specific outlay, due to the high numbers of specific outlays. Bickers and Stein (1993) used a coding rule which makes no attempt to determine whether an outlay aggregated to the county level was a new outlay; for any outlay which we cannot assign to a new or existing outlay, we eliminated it from our analysis. So, most entitlement outlays will not be included in the results we report here. Since entitlements reflect ongoing financial commitments by the federal government to individuals, we believe they should not be programs prone to pork barrel activities.

[10]Also, we must note that the outlays variables in all of our models are in logs. If a district is recorded as receiving no new outlays in the year, we recode that district as having the minimum dollar amount of new outlays in that year. Second, we include a dummy variable for 1989 to control for the possibility

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of differential intercepts across these two years.

[11]The regression results are available from the authors upon request.

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