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STRUCTURE AND POLICY SHIFTS:
THE U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, 1862-1942

by

Nancy Sue Kursman

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

STRUCTURE AND POLICY CHANGE: THE U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, 1862-1942

NANCY SUE KURSMAN

Variations in institutional arrangements and policy agendas are an integral part of the policy-making process. This study seeks to analyze the effect of agenda structure on policy in terms of the relationship between the United States House Committee on Agriculture and farm policy over an eighty year period. Aspects of agenda structure include House reforms affecting the ability of Agriculture to appropriate and the establishment of formal, commodity subcommittees, affecting committee policy-making. It is argued that the structural changes are one, but not the only important factor in changing public policy.

Formal models and empirical literature in political science are used
to outline several predictions as to the outcomes under different agenda structures. To test the claim that changes in agenda structure facilitate policy shifts, one committee is studied over a period of time in which there are changes in its ability to control the agenda and in farm policy. Analysis was conducted on changes in both structure and policy.

The results indicate that structural change is indeed one component of policy shifts. The ability to appropriate enhanced members' incentives to increase agricultural appropriations, whereas when appropriations were recentralized farm members' strategy was to increase the number of committee meetings on farm problems. During the New Deal period the establishment of formal, commodity subcommittees helped to facilitate the formalization of the policy shifts begun in 1933. In general, the results are consistent with the expectations outlined in the dissertation. The results are in line with the empirical work which finds that structure influences policy outcomes, and the more formal literature which finds that there are theoretical reasons for expecting this to be so.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I
THEORETICAL RESULTS VS. THE REAL WORLD: THE PARADOX OF DISEQUILIBRIUM

Introduction

One of the oldest concerns of political science is the analysis of governmental institutions and their relationship to public policy. An institution defines a set of regularized patterns of behavior, such as rules and structural arrangements which are stable over time. The traditional approach to institutional analysis was to describe the formal aspects of institutional powers, organization, or functions. Over time, however, concern shifted from formalism per se to understanding the relationship between institutional structure and policy policy.

The general question guiding this body of research is: When does governmental structure make a difference for governmental action? This is important since institutional arrangements can affect both decision-making and the content of public policy. The effect of rules and structural arrangements is often not neutral; instead they often favor some interests over others and some policy outcomes over others. Thus, the question implicitly raises such normative issues as the extent of
representation and responsiveness in a democracy. Additionally, this question has been addressed empirically in terms of the relationship between the decision-making processes of congressional committees and public policy outcomes (See, for example, Fenno, 1966, 1973; and Ferejohn, 1974).

This thesis specifically focuses on whether the structure of the House Agriculture Committee matters for farm policy. Of course, it is important to note that from time to time the Senate, the Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee, and the President have been active participants in farm policy-making. However, in this analysis I have chosen to focus primarily on the House Agriculture Committee for both structural reasons (bills to raise revenue must originate in the House) and for political reasons (presidential involvement in farm policy is largely a post-New Deal phenomenon). Thus, although these additional actors are involved in agricultural policy-making, their participation for purposes of this analysis is secondary to that of the House Agriculture Committee.

Indeed, the Agriculture Committee, established in 1820, provides an excellent example of a committee with a long history and an important role in the development of agricultural policy in the United States. Since
1820 there have been several changes in Congress which influenced the committee's decision-making capacity as well as a shift in farm policy from a predominant emphasis on research and promotion to a major concern with commodity subsidies and food stamps. Before outlining the theoretical principles underpinning the analysis, a brief description is presented of the dominant historical and political trends which facilitated policy change.

**The Historical Context of the Analysis**

This analysis of the relationship between institutional structure and farm policy covers the period beginning in 1862 with the establishment of a Department of Agriculture and ending in 1942 following the entry of the United States into World War II. Over this period of time scientific and technological developments facilitated the transition of the United States from an agrarian to an industrial society. At the same time public policy shifted from an emphasis on business promotionalism and non-intervention in the economy to active intervention in nearly every facet of economic and political life.

The shifts in farm policy are examined in terms of the interaction between exogenous fluctuations in the economy and the endogenous
political arrangements in the House which influenced farm policy. The three major structural reforms in congressional structure which accompanied this shift in public policy include: (1) the 1880-1885 reforms to decentralize the appropriations process, (2) the 1920-1921 decision to recentralize appropriations, and (3) the emergence in 1933 of the New Deal policy agenda.

In 1860 the triumph of the Republican party created a new political alliance between the Western agrarian interests and the Eastern business, banking, and industrial interests.\(^1\) As monopolies and trusts safeguarded many business enterprises against competition, promotionalism began to yield to regulation of railroads and later other public utilities. Agrarian discontent in the late 1800's gave rise to a number of political movements, the most significant of which was Populism.\(^2\) The major event affecting the ability of the Agriculture Committee to influence farm policy during the 1880's was the 1880-1885 House reform to decentralize the appropriations system.

During the early part of the twentieth century federal regulation of economic power continued to expand in the areas of credit and commerce.\(^3\) Following World War I widespread concern over increasing governmental
spending and the national debt led to the second major event in agricultural policy-making - the 1920-1921 recentralization of the appropriations power in the Appropriations Committee.

The shock of the Great Depression pushed public policy beyond the traditional remedies to a comprehensive effort to stabilize the entire economy. Government intervention in the economy during the New Deal touched on many aspects of business and agriculture from credit to prices, including regulation of utilities and such social welfare programs as food stamps and social security legislation. The shift in farm policy to price supports and other rural subsidies which were inaugurated by Roosevelt were later incorporated into the congressional process by commodity subcommittees of the Agriculture Committee.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on theoretical concepts and ideas concerning structure and policy, the empirical background of one facet of congressional decision-making, and then gives a brief outline of the analysis and the organization of the dissertation.

Theoretical Foundations: The Paradox of Disequilibrium

Theoretical research on collective decision-making has long been
concerned with policy outputs under formal democratic decision arrangements. In the contemporary period, studies using formal logic and mathematics suggest that the fundamental tenets of democratic decision-making may be problematic, and may not yield stable political outcomes. Black (1948), reformulating what Condorcet and others had discovered earlier, argued that under most democratic voting schemes, no particular outcome will always be preferred above other alternatives. Arrow (1963) further refined this result with his General Possibility Theorem and showed that disequilibrium is not only possible, but can be expected under any voting scheme. The idea is that for any proposal (A), which is preferred by a majority, another alternative (B), supported by a different majority, will replace (A), and then another alternative (C) could replace (B), etc... The absence of an equilibrium solution (one decisive outcome) implies pervasive instability in the policy-making process.

One meaning of Arrow’s theorem is that under any voting system, cyclical outcomes can occur and thus the policy choice is indeterminate. Over the last twenty years scholars have analyzed the components of Arrow’s theorem by imposing constraints on the process by which
preferences are aggregated.\textsuperscript{5} Plott (1967) showed that equilibria are possible under rare conditions. Extensions of this issue by Kramer (1973), Mckelvey (1976), and others find that in general, voting cycles are ubiquitous and equilibria are indeed very rare and fragile creatures.

In general, the thrust of the last thirty years of social choice theory is that no particular outcome is likely under a democratic majority rule system. One implication of this is that either the fundamentals of democracy must be swept aside, another is that policy-makers will be subject to endless cycling among alternatives.

Yet empirical analyses show that many institutions with democratic features do allow decisions to be made. These decisions are not undemocratic nor do they cycle endlessly among policy alternatives. For example, studies of the congressional process focus on the complex web of procedures and structural arrangements which facilitate a relatively stable policy process.\textsuperscript{6} Research on congressional committees by Fenno (1966; 1973) Ferejohn (1974), and others shows a highly differentiated and stable decision-making process with incremental changes in policy.\textsuperscript{7} Indeed Clausen (1973:p. 231) argues that the key to understanding the congressional process lies in the fact that "continuity + stability =
Congress". Even Riker (1984: p.188) states:

...Our ordinary experience indicates, however, that there is some stability in political life. Issues persist and similar outcomes repeat themselves.

Yet historical analyses of the policy process during extraordinary periods have shown that at times there are large, non-incremental changes in the scope, direction, and nature of the policy produced (Brady, Cooper, and Hurley, 1977; Brady, 1978; 1982; and Jones, 1974).

One possible resolution to the paradox of empirical stability versus theoretical disequilibrium is suggested by Shepsle (1979) and Shepsle and Weingast (1981) in their research on the effect of institutional arrangements on majority rule. Shepsle (1979: p. 51) argues that "jurisdictional arrangements and rules of procedure (amendment control) create equilibrium". He argues that aspects of institutional structure such as a committee system, germaneness rules, and amendment control rules constrain the instability of majority rule and in so doing, create the stability we see in the political world.

What Shepsle suggests is that although disequilibrium may be a part of politics, it is not the only factor involved in policy-making, and not necessarily the most important one. Institutional arrangements indirectly
affect public policy by providing incentives or constraining the strategies individuals use in making collective decisions. Real-world institutional arrangements avoid disequilibrium and facilitate choice of one decisive outcome by effectively constraining individuals to choose one of several discrete alternatives.

The research on the effect of structure on policy suggests that a variety of institutional features may affect outcomes, including (but not limited to) voting arrangements, amendment rules, and the committee system. In this analysis I am concerned with one basic component of institutions -- agenda control processes -- and their relationship to policy outcomes. An agenda in this sense simply refers to a mechanism for ordering, adding, and deleting alternatives.

The literature on agendas by Romer and Rosenthal (1978), Plott and Levine (1977), Miller and Moe (1982), and others concentrates primarily on the fact that agendas are not created in a vacuum, rather, they are produced by individuals acting together or alone. This approach suggests that attributes of institutional rules and structure can constrain or enhance an agenda in predictable ways. One implication is that individuals may be able to influence which outcomes are selected simply by their ability to arrange
either the rules under which proposals are considered or even the order of the agenda itself. The concern here is with the possibility that a decision-maker may be able to lead the agenda to any alternative, regardless of the preferences of others. The basic point is that these structural arrangements make a difference in terms of the types of policy choices selected and who benefits.

In evaluating the effect of structure on outcomes it is first necessary to distinguish several characteristics of stability. First, in this analysis, stability refers to the general thrust of an area of public policy over time. Recent analyses of public policy and congressional decision-making (Clausen, 1974, Sinclair, 1981) have approached the issue of policy stability using a policy dimensional analysis. This approach emphasizes the substantive content of policy decisions by categorizing legislation into five different policy dimensions and then comparing these areas over a number of years.

This literature emphasizes the continuity of policy dimensions or areas over time as well as the stability of the policy positions of individual congressmen. Thus what is of interest here is whether the substantive content of the legislation associated with a particular dimension is the
same in each Congress and that the "ordering" of congressmen on a policy
dimension at one point in time will be highly similar to the "ordering" of
congressmen on the same dimension at a later date.

Second, stability refers to the maintenance of an existing situation.
This does not rule out the future potential for changing the status quo, but
simply says that attributes of institutional structure can constrain the
policy agenda in such a way as to maintain the overall direction of a policy
over a period of time.

Two institutional features which may affect policy outcomes include:
(1) leadership control over the policy agenda and (2) division of labor
arrangements and the congressional committee system. For example, in
many organized decision-making bodies the leadership has substantial
control of the policy agenda by virtue of its control over scarce resources.
In the United States House of Representatives the ability of the Rules
Committee to dominate and block such legislation as civil rights and school
desegregation has been widely discussed (See, for example, Cummings and
Peabody, 1969; and Robinson, 1963). As such, the ability of a powerful
minority to block the will of the majority has an important effect on which
issues will be addressed and which ones will be eliminated from the policy
agenda.

Similarly, there is the tendency for many decision-making bodies to institute various division of labor arrangements such as committee and subcommittee systems. These arrangements enable members to specialize and develop expertise in particular areas, and in so doing permit the institution to efficiently accommodate a large number of demands. In the House the ability of committee members to exploit, modify, or even to "pigeon-hole" controversial legislation has provided committee members with considerable power and autonomy over the substance of policy outcomes (See, for example, Davidson, 1977; and Oppenheimer, 1978). As such, although committee members must operate within the constraints of the House, the beliefs and values of those subgroups will have a significant effect on the type of solutions proposed.

For purposes of this analysis stability includes the gradual or incremental changes which do not alter the general direction of a policy, but instead function as small but necessary calibrations in the adaption of a policy to its environment. The central idea here is not to compare successive increments to a policy base, but to evaluate in broad strokes the central thrust of one area of policy over a long period of time in order to
discern when and how policy shifts.

If, as Shepsle argues, institutional arrangements create equilibrium, we should expect structure to constrain the policy agenda in particular ways and we should expect this agenda to vary with changes in congressional structure. This is not to say however, that structure is the only influence on policy or even that it is more important than other factors such as individual preferences or environmental pressures⁸. Nevertheless, for this analysis, and for a considerable body of theoretical and empirical research, structural variables are a key component in understanding how institutions work and what this means for public policy. Specifically, this study seeks to examine the relationship between various aspects of agenda structure and the effects on public policy.

Legislative Arrangements in a Natural Setting

As mentioned, most empirical analyses of legislatures and public policy do not find majorities cycling among various policy proposals, unable to make a decision. Instead, studies on such bodies as the United States Congress finds decisive majorities and a fairly stable policy process. Some of the most lucid and insightful analyses of congressional decision-making have examined the role of committees in the policy-making process.
Fenno’s (1966) analysis of the House Appropriations Committee from 1947 to 1961 is a landmark in the research on the congressional process. In this work he showed how committee members' deeply-rooted consensus on goals (e.g. serve the House, guard the Federal Treasury) and the high degree of subcommittee autonomy increased its power and prestige in the House. Fenno argued that the committee's high level of "integration" contributed to the stability of the appropriations process after 1920.

Fenno's subsequent analysis (1973) of the operation of six committees from 1955 to 1966 found that committees systematically differ from one another with respect to member goals, environmental constraints, strategic premises, decision-making processes, and decisions. He showed how members sought assignment to a committee in order to achieve particular goals. Committee members structured their committees in order to facilitate these goals as well as to satisfy the expectations of influential external groups that made up their environment. To accommodate their goals, members developed strategic premises upon which their decision-making processes were based.

In a similar vein, Ferejohn's (1974, p. 252) analysis of the Public Works Committees focused on the politics of the pork barrel. He found that the
policy benefits (public works projects) flowed from the structure of the committee and the "institutional distribution of influence" regardless of the distribution of need or demand. For example, members of the Public Works Committees and the Public Works Subcommittees of the Appropriations Committees received more new projects than nonmembers of either group. The reason why these members receive preferential treatment is because they control project authorizations and appropriations, rather than such criteria as "high demand" areas for water projects.

However, with these important exceptions, some of the contemporary research is descriptive, atheoretical, and static. Furthermore, recent literature is usually concerned with events which occurred during the post-World War II era.

Despite the richness and detail of much empirical research, the lack of a theoretical framework and diachronic time frame are important limitations. The atheoretical nature of many of the studies of the congressional process is limiting because they are primarily descriptive, rather than analytical. Lacking an organizational framework or model for analysis, it is difficult to assess how particular pieces of evidence are related to each other and thus to increase knowledge of the political
process.

The cross-sectional focus of many of these studies is limiting because generalizations based on them can too easily become time-bound. Consequently, their explanations decay in power over time. By describing only contemporary events, they produce static, rather than dynamic analyses, which with the passage of time become dated, historical literature.

These very basic, yet significant, limitations suggest the need for historical and theoretical analyses of the congressional process. Here, the primary concern is not with history as a series of events but rather history as a laboratory for testing theories. By explaining congressional change in different time periods one is able to build more general theories of legislative change. The concern with theory is not as simply a taxonomy but rather as providing a structure for a more complete explanation of empirical phenomena. By examining a system of propositions interrelated such that some may be derived from others one is able to increase knowledge of the political system.

The Strategy in This Analysis

The strategy in this analysis is to examine whether the structure of
the Agriculture Committee makes a difference for policy by examining institutional arrangements and farm policy from 1862 to 1942. This approach has the advantage of focusing attention on the relationship between changes in committee structure and changes in farm policy which occurred over time. The analysis focuses on both the exogenous environment and the endogenous arrangements of the Agriculture Committee in order to discover the relationship between structure and policy. In particular, attention is given to (1) the relationship between the demands of the exogenous environment and institutional arrangements, and (2) the relationship between congressional structure and policy outputs, particularly over periods of policy change.

Conceptually the exogenous factors affecting farm policy may be classified as the economic and political milieu within which the members of the Agriculture Committee operated and the endogenous factors as the institutional arrangements affecting committee policy-making. The economic milieu is viewed as operating on congressmen's policy preferences through the economics of the farm sector. For example, a low level of agricultural income in a farm member's district is related to his preferences for pro-farm legislation to raise farm prices.
The political milieu in which the congressmen acted is defined in terms of the political pressure exerted by farm lobby groups and turnover on the Agriculture Committee. That is, the effects of the farm economy generated agrarian discontent which is related to both the amount of political pressure generated and the electoral outcomes of congressional elections. Furthermore, it is assumed that these political and economic variables interact with each other.

The primary endogenous factor affecting farm policy in this study is that of agenda structure. Here, the structure of the agenda is considered as mentioned previously - as a tool to order, add, and delete alternatives from consideration by decision-makers. Although a considerable amount of formal theory has investigated the relationship between decision rules and agenda choices, this analysis does not rely on mathematical notation to express this linkage, rather, empirical analysis and historical examples are provided to illustrate this relationship.

Based on the formal research cited earlier and the historical accounts of congressional reforms over this period (Alexander, 1916; Morrow, 1969) the ability of the Agriculture Committee to control the farm agenda (i.e., have disproportionate influence over the content and funding of farm
programs) should vary over time in predictable ways. The expectation here is that the capability of the Agriculture Committee to both appropriate and authorize legislation provided substantial control over farm programs. Consequently, the incentive to members was to appropriate as much as possible for farm programs. Similarly, when the Agriculture Committee was no longer able to control the agenda for farm monies, it is expected that the incentive to members was to formulate new mechanisms to exert more control over the farm agenda. Finally, it is argued that the establishment of commodity subcommittees enabled committee members to formalize the shift in the farm agenda which began in 1933.

The Research Design and the Data

The research design is a time series analysis of the relationship between exogenous economic and political variables, endogenous institutional variables, and the effect on policy. In addition to the time series trends, a form of multivariate regression is used to assess the linkage between structure and policy. The data includes economic statistics on the farm sector, farm lobby groups established during the entire time period, and membership shifts on the Agriculture Committee. Information on the structure of the committee is extracted from the published hearings
of the United States House Committee on Agriculture and shifts in funding for farm programs are determined from agricultural appropriations data.

In sum, this analysis seeks to determine if the structure of the Agriculture Committee makes a difference for the nature and content of farm policy. While much formal work has suggested the ubiquity of disequilibrium in the policy process, empirical research indicates that some patterns of regularity and stability do occur in real-world institutions. One prominent school of thought suggests that institutional arrangements create the equilibrium we observe by constraining the decision-making process so as to limit the number of feasible alternatives. In this analysis empirical data is used to evaluate one aspect of this argument in order to determine the effect of one significant dimension of congressional structure on farm policy. The expectation is that these structural arrangements make a difference in terms of the policy decisions made and who benefits.

**The Organization of the Analysis**

Chapter Two presents the general assumption throughout the analysis that the state of the farm economy is closely associated with farm politics. That is, the economic status of farmers is directly related to their policy
preferences and this is manifested in demands on Congress. The farm
depressions of the late nineteenth century resulted in agricultural
discontent, which produced third party movements and the establishment of
the first farm organizations. For farm interests one familiar issue was
government regulation of railroads and other public utilities. However a
larger and more fundamental issue involved how to distribute the federal
largesse resulting from budget surpluses and low national debt.

Congress responded by instituting a decentralized appropriations
structure which allowed eight House committees, including Agriculture, to
both authorize legislation and appropriate funds. This change in the
appropriations process for members of the Agriculture Committee enhanced
their ability to increase funding for agriculture and expand the scope of
farm programs. My research indicates that agricultural appropriations did
increase at a higher rate than general expenditures and that these increases
are associated with the evolution of farm policy from an initial focus
limited to the distribution of free seeds to a more active role in
agricultural research and education programs.

Chapter Three shows how economic conditions and political pressure in
the farm sector combined to increase the activity of the Agriculture
Committee and to focus more attention on commodity concerns. After World War I ended the foreign demand for American foodstuffs declined, resulting in depressed farm prices and an increase in debt. Downturns in the farm sector for various commodities beginning in 1920 led to the establishment of a farm lobby in Washington.

When the appropriations process was recentralized in 1919–1920, the Appropriations Committee regained control over the farm budget and was able to both increase and decrease farm monies. The jurisdiction of the Agriculture Committee was reduced to control over only authorizations. The reform had an effect on the strategies and incentives available to the Agriculture Committee. The strategy for farm members was to devise new mechanisms to respond to farm interests and the incentive to Appropriations was to cut farm monies, not to increase them. The recentralization reform effectively removed the ability of farm members to respond to demands as they had done in previous years by simply increasing the farm budget. One way to accommodate these demands however, was to increase the number of committee meetings and to devote more activity to commodity concerns.

An analysis of agricultural appropriations for this period indicates that
Appropriations did cut United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requests more than Agriculture did when it controlled farm monies. The number of times in which the percent increases in farm monies exceeded those for the total budget was only one-half as much as in the previous period. The increases which do occur correspond to the transition of farm policy from the research and promotion programs of the late nineteenth–early twentieth century to the cooperative marketing programs of the 1920's.

Chapter Four shows how the effect of the Great Depression and farm agitation together with Roosevelt's new Democratic majority formalized the shift to commodity-based politics which had begun in the 1920's. The depression affected all commodities across-the-board, creating pressure to unite conflicting commodity interests. As the pressure to revive the economy mounted, the number of newly-founded farm lobby organizations increased over 42% between 1932 and 1942.

The election of Roosevelt in 1932 swept a new Democratic majority into the House and inaugurated an era of policy changes. The increase in turnover on Agriculture in 1933 corresponds precisely with the establishment of formal subcommittees and the New Deal shift to price
supports for commodities. During the late 1930's commodity subcommittees were formed to regularize the shift in farm policy which began in 1933. The significance of the shift in committee structure was that a commodity subcommittee system essentially parcelled out the farm agenda to members most interested in a commodity or issue, thereby ensuring that members would be able to formulate policy directly related to their districts' interests.

Agricultural appropriations reached an all-time peak in 1939 comprising approximately 18% of the total budget. The jump in appropriations is clearly associated with the shift in farm policy from cooperative marketing to price supports and such redistributive legislation as the Food Stamp and School Lunch programs.

Chapter Five summarizes the relationships between exogenous demands, institutional arrangements, and policy change outlined in Chapters Two through Four and briefly describes farm politics and policy from 1942-1962. In general, farm policy during this period was essentially a continuation of the basic programs and ideas of the New Deal.

A form of multiple regression is used to evaluate the effect of agenda processes on agricultural appropriations from 1880-1950. The results
indicate that various aspects of agenda structure are associated with shifts in the amounts appropriated for agriculture. During the period of decentralized appropriations (1880-1918) and the period of commodity subcommittees (1938-1950) the level of farm monies increases significantly and during the period immediately following the recentralization reform (1919-1937) the rate of growth of the farm budget is significant. In general, the results are consistent with empirical research which finds that structure influences policy outcomes, and the more formal literature which finds that there are theoretical reasons for expecting this to be so. We turn now to an examination of the role of the Agriculture Committee in farm politics and policy from 1862-1919.
NOTES


CHAPTER II

THE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE AND AGENDA CONTROL
THE POWER TO APPROPRIATE

Introduction

Over the last twenty years a considerable body of theoretical and experimental work has dealt with the effect of agenda structure on policy outcomes. The basic concern is that agendas are not neutral -- they favor particular proposals over others and thus particular interests over others.

One of the earliest examples of agenda control is given by Farquharson (1969) and concerns manipulation of choices in the Athenian assembly. Contemporary research by Plott and Levine (1978), McKeivey (1976), and others\(^1\) has shown that individuals with specialized agenda powers are able to construct an agenda that can lead the decision-making process to any alternative they desire.

Romer and Rosenthal (1978) extend this dynamic to the strategic relationship between a maximizing budget proposer and a group of citizens voting on a school budget referendum. The central idea is that if the voters do not pass the proposer's budget, funding reverts to the status quo (a lower and unacceptable reversion level). In effect the ability to offer a "take it or leave it" choice gives decision-makers considerable power over
the agenda and hence the budget. In general, the central thrust of this body of research indicates that the power to order the agenda has a significant effect on outcomes. Based on these results, the expectation in this analysis is that the power of the Agriculture Committee to order the agenda will have a significant effect on farm policy.

The period from 1865 to 1920 saw a large amount of economic growth, both business and governmental. Continuing westward expansion and industrial development generated demands to expand public services. To meet these demands, in 1880-1885 the House decentralized the appropriations process, granting seven committees with specialized interests, including Agriculture, the power to legislate and appropriate monies.

Based on the research cited earlier, it is anticipated that this reform enabled members of the Agriculture Committee to exert agenda control over their particular policy area. Decentralizing the appropriations system allowed the Agriculture Committee to both authorize legislation and appropriate monies for these programs. These dual powers were further enhanced because historically, appropriations bills have had privileged access to the House floor and have been protected with special
rules which forbid amendments by non-committee members. Hence, Agriculture members could exercise substantial discretion over which items would be included in their appropriations bills, and non-committee members were extremely limited in their ability to modify this legislation on the House floor. Thus, the overall effect of the reform was to give committee members the specialized agenda powers needed to set the agenda for farm policy. In short, Agriculture had significant control over both the content of farm policy and the level at which agricultural programs would be budgeted.

Given this type of power over the farm agenda, the expectation is that the incentive to members of Agriculture was to increase farm appropriations in order to provide more benefits for their constituents—farmers and agricultural interests. An analysis of farm appropriations indicates that Agriculture increased more than decreased farm programs. Agricultural monies rose dramatically during this period in comparison to the increases in the federal budget and in terms of Agriculture Committee reports and the final amount appropriated by the House.

The 1880-1920 Period - Economic Expansion and Governmental
Response: An Overview

The burst of industrial expansion after the Civil War affected many sectors of the economy. Entrepreneurial incentive enabled railroad construction to widen the domestic market, the tariff provided protection against foreign competition, and a process of mechanization and specialization in agriculture shifted the farm economy to a cash crop basis. ²

In the twenty years following the Civil War the American economy was transformed. Comparing the decade from 1850 to 1860 with the decade immediately following the Civil War, it is clear that the Civil War had contributed to the industrialization of the United States. The three major indicators of industrial production used by economic historians are pig-iron in tons, bituminous coal in tons, and railroad construction in miles. Between 1850 and 1860 pig-iron production increased 50%, bituminous coal production increased about 95%, while 20,000 miles of railroad were laid. In contrast the figures for 1865-1875 are pig-iron production increased over 100%, bituminous coal increased over 150% and over 40,000 miles of railroad were laid. This expansion of the American economy generated budget surpluses and lowered per capita national debt. In fact, from 1867
until 1894 the federal government ran budget surpluses each year, and in the process per capita national debt fell from $70.91 in 1867 to $17.80 in 1890.3

The periodic decline in farm prices from 1870 to 1900 gave rise to both farm organizations and political movements, including the Grangers, Farmers Alliances', and the Populist party.4 Gradually farmers shifted their strategy from social and educational policies to regulation of railroads and public utilities, and the provision of broader services for farm interests.5

By the early 1890's the Farmers Alliances' were superceded by the Populist party whose platform advocated legislation favorable to western agrarian and urban labor interests such as currency reform, a protective tariff, and anti-monopoly measures. The Democrats and Republicans were internally divided over the gold-silver issue, but after the Panic of 1893 both parties purged themselves of minority viewpoints.6 The Democrats absorbed the principles of Populism and the Republicans threw out a dissident faction headed by Senator Teller (R-CO). Brady (1982, p.346) argues:

...Thus the 1896 election pitted two polarized parties against each other in a contest to determine whether America's future would be industrial or agricultural. Issues reflecting
this decision polarized the nation.

The defeat of the Democrats (under Populist influence) in the election of 1896 marked the last time that a major party was dominated by farm interests. The progressive movement of the early 1900's was designed to appeal to farmers, but only as a component of a larger merger of middle-class, labor, and farm interests.

**Farm Policy**

During this period the primary orientation of agricultural policy concerned farmer education, crop research, and marketing regulation. In 1862 the Department of Agriculture (USDA) was created as a service agency and in the same year the Homestead Act and Land Grant College Act were passed (Rasmussen and Baker, 1972). The sporadic agrarian unrest of the late nineteenth century was followed by enactment of legislation favored by farmers. Examples of this legislation include the Hatch Act of 1887 which granted federal aid to encourage research at agricultural colleges and the elevation of the USDA to cabinet level status in 1889 which gave farmers a stronger claim on governmental monies.

By the turn of the century, the pace of farm legislation quickened. Demonstration work by the Agriculture Department after 1900 generated
the support of the agricultural colleges and local farm groups, and the
Smith-Lever Act of 1914 institutionalized this network by making the
county agent the basis of a federally-aided extension program (Baker, 1939).
Numerous regulatory programs were initiated which were intended in part
at least to assist farmers, including the Meat Inspection Act of 1890, the
Grain Standards Act of 1901, the Food and Drug Act of 1906, and the Federal
Warehouse Act of 1916. In 1916 also funds were provided to the states for
highway improvement and construction, and Congress created the system of
federal land banks which later became the basis for the present Farm Credit
Administration.

The Historical Setting

Exogenous influences: The Farm Economy and Farm Politics

The literature on agricultural politics and policy holds that the
condition of the farm economy determines farm politics. That is, each shift
in policy has been precluded by depressed farm prices and increased farm
debt. Anderson et al. (1984, p. 342) argue:

Though often characterized as a rugged individualist who
wants nothing more than to be left alone to "hoe his own roe",
the American farmer has not hesitated during the past century
to turn to the government for political redress of his economic
grievances. Whatever the specific cause of dissatisfaction -
low market prices, high railroad rates; insects and pests - economic insecurity, in the form of low or unstable income, has been behind most political demands. And, agrarian political discontent has tended to wax and wane with the decline and improvement in the economic fortune of the farmer.

In general, other authors have agreed (Talbot and Hadwiger, 1968; Fite, 1981; Christensen, 1937). Based on this research, the assertion here is that the status of the farm sector is directly related to the preferences of farmers and this is manifested in demands on Congress.

Agrarian discontent with credit stringency, high railroad rates, and gouging by middlemen surfaced with the decline of crop prices in the 1870's. The Granger movement was the first major revolt, advocating regulation of warehouses and railroads, control of monopolies, and expanded public services for agriculture. With the temporary improvement in farm prices the Granger's political strength declined, but the return of agricultural distress in the 1880's led to new political action in the form of the Farmers' Alliances.

The Alliances successes in the election of 1890 stimulated the development of a national third party, and in 1890 the Populist party emerged. Although the Populists polled over one million popular votes in 1892, they were absorbed into the Bryan-led Democrats and defeated in the
realignement of 1896. With the dawn of the twentieth century both the farm and industrial sectors of the economy expanded. The political strength of agrarian protest groups declined as the price and income situation of farmers improved. By the eve of America's entry into World War I, crop prices were continuing to increase and the country was preoccupied with events overseas.

Endogenous Influences: The Power to Appropriate

The expansion of the American economy in the late 1800's had produced budget surpluses and lowered per capita national debt. One of the fundamental issues before the Congress involved increasing the level of government service in order to meet the demands of a rapidly growing economy. However, in 1876 the House passed the Holman Rule (Rule 120) which gave the Appropriations Committee the ability to hold in check expansion of governmental activities by reducing the level of expenditures proposed in general appropriations bills.⁹

In the ensuing years the Appropriations Committee took its role as watchdog of the Treasury seriously by holding up substantive legislation and reducing executive budget requests. The legislative committees soon became dissatisfied with this arrangement, however, charging that
Appropriations had not funded programs sufficiently. The crux of the issue became the Appropriations Committee's failure to heed the spirit of the authorizing committees' bills, instead, reducing departmental monies. As a result, projects and services authorized by the legislative committees often went unfunded.

The members concern over this situation led in 1880-1885 to reforms which decentralized the appropriations system. These changes were characterized in the congressional debate as a "fight for power" among the committees as to who would be allowed to fund programs and the likely long-term budgetary effects. In sum, the government was running surpluses and dramatically reducing the national debt during the years (1880-1885) when House majorities were objecting to Appropriations' tight control over expenditures.

Ultimately the concern of both parties over the concentration of power in the Appropriations Committee led the House in 1879-1880 to adopt a major revision of its rules. Among the changes none generated more debate than the special rule giving the Agriculture and Commerce (rivers and harbors) Committees the right to handle appropriations legislation. Five other committees, including Post Office and Roads, the military
committees, and Indian Affairs also sought the right to appropriate, but only Agriculture and the Commerce Committees were favored. The bone of contention centered on Rule XI, Clause 7 giving Agriculture and Commerce “the same privileges in reporting bills and making appropriations ... as is accorded the Committee on Appropriations.” (C.R., 46th Cong.; 684).

Those in favor of decentralizing the appropriations process characterized the fight as a struggle for power. Mr. Calkins (R-IN) argued:

... The fact is, this is simply a fight for power... The ground of complaint among members is the immense power the Committee now wields in this House... Two hundred and seventy men in this House are under the guardianship of fifteen. (C.R. 46th Cong.; 690).

In addition to the arguments about the Appropriations Committee’s power, those favoring reform argued that the Committee held up substantive legislation by acting as a legislative bottleneck, thereby enhancing its power. One of the methods used was not allowing amendments to bills. As one member of the House recounted:

... I asked the gentleman in charge of one of the appropriations bills to put upon it an amendment that would not increase expenditures $70 a year. He said it was perfectly right. "Then put it on," said I. "I cannot." he said; "the Committee has not authorized it." "Then," said I, "let me submit it to the House." "Oh, no" was the reply, "we must stand by the report of the Committee." (Mr. Calkins: C.R., 46th Cong.; 696).
Members supporting the reform argued that the Appropriations Committee waited until late in the session to bring their bills out, thus discouraging serious consideration. Moreover, members argued that the Committee failed to fund their programs. Mr. Aiken (D-SC) argued that:

...under the present system of legislation it is practically impossible for the Committee on Appropriations to do justice to all the appropriations bills which come before it... I ask simple justice to the Agriculture Department. Some members of the Committee on Agriculture have gone through the Department, and they know what it wants and what it is entitled to, and that it asks for nothing that is not right and proper. (C.R., 46th Cong.; 684).

And Mr. Money (D-MS) argued:

...Sir, there is a higher statesmanship than consists merely in reducing expenditures. There is such a thing as understanding the necessities of a country which is increasing its population one and a quarter million every year - a country that demands something for its development rather than for the restriction of its service. (C.R., 46th Cong.; 711).

Opponents of the rule to allow committees other than Appropriations to fund programs argued that decentralizing the appropriations process would open the doors to the Treasury. The members opposing the reform were some of the most famous and powerful House members. Speaker Randall (D-PA) argued:
I know that it is a matter of history, as the records of Congress will show, that there has never been an instance in which each committee, as its separate department was reached, has not endeavored, in every method and by every means possible, to increase appropriations bills. (C.R., 45th Cong.; 687).

In the end, the only committees to receive the right to appropriate on their own were Agriculture and Commerce. However, the losers in the 46th House (1879-1880) were granted that privilege in the 49th House (1885-1887). In 1885, with a majority of the House favoring a fully decentralized appropriations process, a rules change was passed which granted five more legislative committees the right to appropriate. The new appropriations system thus consisted of eight committees which could fund programs, and it remained decentralized until 1920 when the rules were again revised.

Theoretical Motivations

The strategy in this analysis is to evaluate the overall relationship between exogenous economic effects, structural change, and farm policy. My goal is not to show a clear causal linkage between external variables and specific structural changes, but rather to note how the forces for structural change may at times vary with the state of the agricultural economy. For
example, when the farm economy is depressed pressure increases to change structure to accommodate pro-farm legislation; whereas when the farm economy is in good shape these pressures subside.

Under these conditions exogenous factors in the farm economy play a significant role in determining the nature of the demands on the farm agenda. However, not all pressures for structural reform emanate from the farm economy. For example, in 1919–1920 the huge national debt incurred in World War I and the large budget deficits of 1917–1919 produced a fiscal situation wherein a means of reducing the rate of growth of government expenditures was in order. A majority of the House voted to restructure the appropriations process which resulted in a decreased rate of government growth at a time when the economy was growing rapidly. In sum, while direct cause cannot be shown it is possible to indicate the general exogenous conditions under which structural changes are likely to occur.

The second area of concern is the relationship between structural changes and farm policy. The literature on agenda structure has found that the ability to control the agenda has an effect on the outcomes selected. For example, such structural characteristics as committee jurisdictions and rules of procedure affect the nature of the policy solution
proposed and the conditions under which it will be adopted. Here, the power of the committee as a gatekeeper (Denzau and Mackay, 1983) to develop which policy alternatives will (or will not) be considered has a significant effect on the nature of the policies on the legislative agenda, as does the committee's power under the closed rule to essentially be the monopoly supplier of proposed changes to the status quo. In the first case the committee can affect the agenda simply by virtue of its power to formulate legislation to be placed on the docket and in the second case the closed rule forbids non-committee members from amending the bill, thereby ensuring that only committee members will be able to formulate policy changes.

Based on this body of literature, it is anticipated that granting the Agriculture Committee the ability to appropriate monies for farm programs essentially gave committee members the specialized agenda powers necessary to set the agenda for farm policy. That is, the power to both appropriate and authorize legislation enabled the Agriculture Committee to have considerable control over the type of farm policies formulated and the level at which they would be funded. As a result, the incentive to members was to increase agricultural monies in order to provide benefits for their constituents.
One explanation for this outcome is that granting the Agriculture Committee the right to appropriate enabled members to exercise the appropriating incentive and thus to increase farm appropriations. Given their newly-acquired control over the farm agenda, the incentive to members of the Agriculture Committee was to enlarge the overall scope and coverage of farm programs in order to benefit their primary constituents -- farmers and farm interests.

The Empirical Setting

The Model

The model for the analysis involves the relationship between exogenous economic factors, congressional structure, and farm policy. The basic argument is that demands in the economy generate pressure for policy change which may produce shifts in policy preferences, institutional structures, and at times, policy changes. The model does not imply that structural changes necessarily produce policy changes or that structural factors are more important than political factors such as interest group pressure or partisanship. The goal is simply to portray in broad strokes one aspect of the linkage between structural change and public policy, and indicate that the members making the structural changes were aware of the
likely effects.

The Data

The major independent variables in this study include both economic (farm income, debt, and prices) and political (farm organizations and membership turnover on the Agriculture Committee) variables. In order to examine the relationship between the farm economy and agrarian discontent, data were collected on farm lobby organizations founded from 1865 to 1942.\footnote{Agrarian discontent is a variable which is assumed to be measured in terms of the annual number of farm lobbies established over the time period.}

Ideally, it would be desirable to have data on the farm lobby process itself, but this information is not readily available. However, one way to evaluate farmer discontent is by examining the development and orientation of the farm lobby. In particular, data on the origins and policy goals of these organizations gives insight into the linkage between the general thrust of farm politics and the policies advocated.

It can be shown that when there are downturns in the farm economy, farmers join organizations to lobby Congress to pass pro-farm legislation. This overall phenomena should be reflected in the number of farm groups
established with specific lobbying functions. To test this relationship, data were collected on farm lobbying organizations, including their founding date and policy orientation. Farm lobbies were selected because they represent one commonly recognized mechanism for expressing agrarian discontent with the current policy status quo. Discontent can also be viewed in terms of the formation of third party movements or protests, but beginning in the twentieth century lobbying by farm organizations became the predominant form of political expression.

Information on the membership of the Agriculture Committee was obtained from Garrison Nelson's "Congressional Committee Assignments, 1789-1946" and The Congressional Record. Turnover was defined as the number of new members as a percentage of the total membership of the Agriculture Committee.

The hearings of the United States House Committee on Agriculture provided the data on the structure and orientation of the committee. It should be pointed out that discovering the structure of the committee, in terms of the number and type of subcommittees, is not easy. No standard resource such as the Congressional Quarterly or the Congressional Directory lists subcommittees prior to 1959. Thus it was necessary to consult
several reference books in order to compile a listing of the hearings of the
Agriculture Committee and its subcommittees.

The hearings of the Agriculture Committee have been classified
according to their subject matter orientation. Hearings which dealt with a
single cash crop or a regionally-specific product were coded as
commodity-based. This definition points to the clear financial incentive
associated with the sale of a product (e.g. corn, tobacco, rice) in which a
substantial portion of the profits flow to the producers of that crop.
Hearings which dealt with a variety of non-marketable issues and services
were coded as operationally-based. This definition points to the fact that
there is no clear monetary relationship between any given issue (e.g. flood
control, credit, and research programs) and a particular product in that the
benefits are diffused among all farmers irregardless of production.
Hearings which dealt with both specific commodities and
operationally-based issues were coded as mixed.

The dependent variable in this study is policy change as measured
quantitatively by the amount of agricultural appropriations and
qualitatively by the primary thrust of USDA bureaus and programs. This
information was obtained from The Congressional Record and The United
States Statutes at Large. Appropriations data include USDA requests, appropriating committees' reports of funding, the House's floor action on the committee's report, and the final amount appropriated by Congress from 1880-1950.

Over the period from 1880-1942 the House passed an agricultural appropriations bill each year which detailed on a line-item basis agricultural programs and the expenditures associated with them. Thus, by using the appropriations bills it can be ascertained both when new programs were approved and when major increases in expenditures occurred. Additionally, by looking beneath the appropriations totals and examining the substantive content of the line items the central focus of farm policy over time can be assessed.

In order to distinguish policy shifts, the primary thrust of farm policy must be defined. Commodity and operationally-oriented programs were coded using the criteria described above for commodity and operationally-oriented hearings. Additionally, I have identified regulatory and redistributive aspects of farm programs. Programs such as Food Stamps, and the Rural Electrification Administration (the central function of which is to subsidize rural electric cooperatives) are defined as
redistributive; while programs such as the Food and Drug Administration, and the Bureau of Animal Industry (the major function of which is to inspect meat for diseases) are defined as regulatory.

**Expectations and Analysis**

In this section the expectations and results regarding the relationship between economic effects, structural change, and farm policy are laid out. The first area of concern is the linkage between economic effects and political pressure. The second area to be addressed is the linkage between structural change and policy shifts.

**The Linkage Between the Farm Economy and Farm Politics**

Based on the work cited earlier on the farm economy, the first question concerns the effect of the farm sector on farm politics. It is thought that when the farm economy is depressed (low prices and income, high debt), this generates political pressure to aid agriculture. Similarly, when the farm economy is in good shape, pressure subsides. During the mid 1870's, mid 1880's, and mid 1890's the prices of farm crops were relatively low, and these periods are anticipated to be associated with an increase in agricultural discontent. Figure 2.1 shows the average price per bushel, in cents, for three major grains - oats, corn, and wheat - from 1876 to 1904.
Figure 2.1 Grain Prices, 1876-1904


Notes: Prices are the December 1 per bushel amount.
Figure 2.1 shows that corn and wheat prices peaked in 1881 with corn at 63 cents per bushel and wheat at $1.20 per bushel. By 1886 the prices for corn, wheat, and oats had fallen to 32 cents and 65 cents, respectively. Similarly, the prices of these crops and for oats simultaneously dropped after 1890 and continued to decrease through 1895. For example, oat prices declined from 42 cents per bushel in 1890 to 18 cents in 1896.

As expected, these downturns in the farm economy were followed by farmers becoming more active in politics. Beginning with the Granger movement (1867), farmer dissatisfaction with the major parties' conservatism resulted in the establishment of the Greenback (1874), Populist (1890), and Anti-Monopoly (1892) parties.

The realignment of the 1890's reaffirmed the country's pro-industrial policies, and the return of agricultural prosperity after the turn of the century decreased the political strength of farm groups. In general, the data show that the rise of agrarian discontent is associated with downturns in the farm economy. Conversely, when the farm economy improves, farm pressure for aid to agriculture decreases.

The second area of concern is the relationship between congressional...
structure and policy change. My contention here is that the structure of the House makes a difference both in terms of the content of the decisions made and who benefits from them. The tenor of the debate concerning the reform of 1880 shows that the members themselves saw structural change as affecting decisions. Based on research by Shepsle (1979; 1981) on the effect of structure on policy, a number of testable hypotheses can be generated.

For farm congressmen the primary incentive in enacting the reform was to allow them to appropriate more money for agricultural programs which would benefit their constituents. It is anticipated that the Agriculture Committee, beginning in 1880, increased the number of dollars spent on farm programs. My reasoning here is that the House majority voted special powers to Agriculture and the other committees in order to avoid the Appropriations Committee's fiscal conservatism. Following the reform, Agriculture had a monopoly over farm appropriations and could enhance its influence in the House by expanding the number of recipients. Granting the Agriculture Committee the right to appropriate was the structural change which could allow members to exercise the appropriating incentive. Once this decentralized system was in place, members were more or less able to
set the agenda for farm policy by determining the level at which the
agricultural budget would be funded, albeit within the constraints imposed
by the House.

This effect should also be evident in the relationship between
committee action and House reaction to appropriations reports. What is
contemplated here is that during the period of special interest appropriating
committees, the Agriculture Committee increased the USDA budget rather
than decreased it, and the House was more inclined to increase rather than
decrease Agriculture's appropriations reports. My rationale for this is that
the agricultural budget will increase when Agriculture is exercising the
appropriating incentive because members will have monopoly control over
the farm agenda and the incentive is to appropriate more benefits for their
constituents. The House will be more likely to add to these reports than to
cut them because the structure of the appropriations system had been
approved by a majority of members. Thus in the era of decentralized
monopoly committees the majority of the House favored such an
arrangement -- a system from which they were expecting to benefit.

The expectation regarding House floor action on Agriculture Committee
reports is complicated because throughout its history the House has
accepted the committee report with little modification. There are several reasons for this situation. First, the floor is not a good place to take on a detailed appropriations bill because committee members have the expertise and generally non-committee members lack the expertise to win a debate on the specifics of appropriation legislation. Second, House rules both on the floor and in the Committee of the Whole favor the appropriating committee. Most importantly for this analysis, the decentralized appropriations structure had been approved by a majority of members, and thus the expectation is that House actions on committee reports should not greatly alter committee decisions. In general, it is expected that House action on appropriations bills did not make significant changes to Agriculture's decisions. At any rate, whatever changes are made should be in the direction of fewer cuts than increases. In this analysis the House's reaction to the total budget is included as a baseline for assessing the change made to agricultural appropriations.

In order to test the above mentioned relationships, USDA estimates, appropriations reports, and the House's floor action on appropriations bills were collected from 1880 to 1950. The years in which the United States was engaged in war were excluded from the analysis because of the
well-known effects of war time expenditures on budgets.

Appropriations Data

Prior to 1880 appropriations for farm programs were not listed in a separate line-item, but were included in the general expenditures for the government. Thus, it is not possible to obtain reliable data on appropriations for agriculture prior to 1880, and to compare these amounts to the monies appropriated following the structural change. However, each year since 1880 there has been an agricultural appropriations bill and a total appropriations bill passed. One way to analyze the effect of the structural change on farm policy is to compare the growth of the farm budget to the growth in the total budget after 1880. If Agriculture was exercising the appropriating incentive we would expect that the annual increase in monies for agriculture from 1880 up to the recentralization reform (1919-1920) should be higher than that for the total budget over the same period. In fact, this is a conservative test because about one-half of the total amount appropriated each year during this period was controlled by the other special interest committees who had the same incentive to increase appropriations as did Agriculture.

The prediction is that increases in agricultural monies will be higher
than average during a period of high increases. Thus what is anticipated is that agricultural appropriations will rise faster than the overall budget during the 1880–1920 period. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 show the average annual change in appropriations for both agriculture and the total budget for this period, thereby permitting comparison of the rate of the growth of farm appropriations relative to the overall rate of growth of the government.

Another way to evaluate the rate of growth in farm programs is by comparing the relative proportion of the federal budget allocated for farm programs over time. Figure 2.4 shows agricultural appropriations as a percent of the total budget from 1880–1920. Tables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 evaluate the increases and decreases in farm programs in terms of committee and floor reaction to USDA requests, and floor reaction to Agriculture's reports during this period. Table 2.1 analyzes these changes in terms of raises, cuts, or constants (no change). Tables 2.2 and 2.3 show the average annual change in USDA requests and committee reports, in terms of the mean and standard deviation units. Legislative appropriations requests are included to enable comparison to other committees and policy areas.
Figures 2.2 and 2.3 show that the annual percent increase for agriculture exceeds that for total appropriations twenty times from 1880–1920, whereas the increase for the total budget exceeds that for agriculture only six times during the same period. From 1881-1892 the increases for agriculture are greater than those for total appropriations eight out of nine times, and six times the increases exceed 10% with three of these being greater than 50%. Furthermore, when cuts are made with few exceptions the decreases in agricultural appropriations are less than the cuts made in the total budget.

Figures 2.2 and 2.3 indicate that from 1892–1903 the increases for agriculture and for the total budget move in tandem but from 1905–1915 the farm increases again exceed those for the total budget. Figure 2.4 shows that during the 1880–1918 period agricultural appropriations rise from .1% to 2% of the total budget. In terms of absolute and percent increases in budgets, from 1880–1919 agricultural appropriations rose from $0.25 million to $33.9 million (an increase of 135%) as compared to an increase in total appropriations from $216.46 million to $3,035 billion (an increase of 14%). Thus the results indicate that during the period of decentralized appropriations agricultural monies rose more strikingly than did total
Figure 2.2 Percent Change Over Previous Appropriations, 1880-1901

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.
Figure 2.3 Percent Change in Appropriations, 1902-1919

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.
Figure 2.4 USDA Appropriations as a Percent of Total Budget 1880-1920

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.
Table 2.1 shows agricultural monies both in terms of the Agriculture Committee's decision relative to USDA estimates and the House's decision relative to the committee's appropriation report. There are thirty-two separate agricultural appropriations bills in the 1888-1919 period, and of these fifteen times the Agriculture Committee cut the department request and thirteen times they raised it. Nine times the Agriculture Committee changed the request by greater than 10%, and of these seven times they raised the request and two times they cut it. Thus, in terms of annual changes and non-incremental (greater than 10%) appropriations, the Agriculture Committee increased the agriculture estimate more than they decreased it.

In general, Table 2.1 suggests that the House's reaction to the Agriculture Committee's appropriations reports during this period was basically favorable to the special interest appropriations system. From 1880-1919 the House reacted to the Agriculture reports by cutting the report six times, increasing it thirteen times, and thirteen times they made no change whatsoever. In terms of a simple count of cuts and raises the House raised reports twice as often as it cut them, and was five times as likely to either raise the report or accept it as submitted. Furthermore,
Table 2.1

Agricultural Appropriations: Increases and Decreases Over Previous Amount

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Agriculture Committee Reaction to USDA Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818-1919</td>
<td>18 cuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 raises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>House Reaction to Agricultural Appropriation Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1888-1919</td>
<td>6 cuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 raises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 constants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the Congressional Record.

Notes: This table presents the reactions to the appropriations requested by the previous decision-making body at two stages in the appropriations process. Cuts, raises, and constants were evaluated by comparing the USDA estimate to the committee's report to calculate the percent change (positive and negative), and repeating the same procedure for the report to the House bill. Positive percent change indicates a raise, negative percent change indicates a cut, and when the difference between two figures is less than .01, the reaction is coded as a constant (no change).
when the Agriculture Committee raised estimates in a non-incremental fashion (greater than 10% increase), the House further raised the committee's report or let it stand as submitted.

Table 2.2 shows the average annual change in requests for the Agriculture Committee from 1886-1916 when the Agriculture Committee had control over farm appropriations. When USDA requests were handled by Agriculture, they increased estimates by an average of 3.5%. Annual percent increase in requests ranged from 2% to 55% with the average approximating 17% with cuts ranging from 3% to 17% with the average approximating 5%.

Another way to measure the interaction between the House and the committees is by examining the average annual change made on the floor to committee reports. In Table 2.3 the House's reaction to the total budget is used as a baseline against which to compare changes in agricultural monies. House floor action on committee reports does not change the committee's decision significantly as shown by the low average change figures. However, the limited changes which do occur move in the predicted direction. From 1886-1916 the average annual change made by the House to Appropriations Committee reports was -8% but the change to Agriculture Committee reports was 38%. This suggests that the House's demand for
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Agriculture (1886-1916)</th>
<th>Appropriations (1886-1916)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(mean) (s.d.)</td>
<td>(mean) (s.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(change)</td>
<td>(change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886-1916</td>
<td>3.5  14.3</td>
<td>-3.5  2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.
Table 2.3

Average Annual Changes in Selected Committee Reports by the Whole House

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriations Committee Only*</th>
<th>Agriculture (1888-1916)**</th>
<th>Mixed (1888-1916)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years</strong></td>
<td><strong>Legislative</strong></td>
<td><strong>Agriculture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(mean) (s.d.)</td>
<td>(mean) (s.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(change)</td>
<td>(change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-1916</td>
<td>-.08 1.26</td>
<td>.38 1.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Notes: * Appropriations made by the Appropriations Committee
** Appropriations made by the Agriculture Committee
*** Appropriations made by all eight appropriating committees
additional funding was not totally satisfied even during the period of special interest monopoly committees.

Summary

The effect of agenda structure on policy was evaluated in terms of increases in farm appropriations made by farm congressmen on the Agriculture Committee. Agricultural appropriations set both compared to the increases in the total budget and in terms of Agriculture Committee reports and House floor action. When the Agriculture Committee monopolized the farm agenda they increased estimates more than they cut them, and when non-incremental changes were made raises outnumbered cuts three to one. Similarly, House floor action on agricultural appropriations shows more raises than cuts, to the extent of adding more on top of Agriculture's non-incremental increases. Increasing farm appropriations was one way members of the Agriculture Committee could satisfy exogenous demands to expand farm programs and at the same time build personal influence in the House.

Conclusion

It has been argued that the underlying cause of the 1880-1885 reform was the Appropriations Committee's failure to adequately fund the projects
authorized by the legislative committees. The debate over this reform shows the extent to which members objected to the cuts in departmental appropriations. When the House granted the special interest committees monopoly rights over particular policy jurisdictions they expected a rise in appropriations, and as we have seen for Agriculture, they got it.

These results are in line with a large body of literature which examines the effect of agenda structure on political outcomes. Based on this research the expectation was that the ability to authorize and appropriate monies for farm programs created a strategic incentive for members of the Agriculture Committee to construct an agenda favorable to farm interests. An analysis of farm appropriations indicated that the Agriculture Committee did indeed increase more than decrease farm programs. Furthermore, the House either accepted these changes or added even more to the Agriculture appropriations report.

Thus, the shift to a decentralized system that enabled the Agriculture Committee to appropriate was produced by pressures to fund programs more heavily, including farm programs. The result for the Agriculture Committee was monopoly control over farm programs in which the incentive to members was to fund agriculture at a higher level than in previous years.
NOTES


11. In order to obtain a complete listing of interest group development it would have been desirable to get information on the dissolution of these groups. However this data is not published and can only be ascertained when one group is superceded by another group. In this case both groups were coded as separate organizations.

Because no standard resource lists farm groups which are no longer in existence, the groups used in this analysis are a subset of the universe of farm lobby groups. However, that some of these groups are still operating is an indication of their staying power and continuing role in the policy process.
CHAPTER III

THE SHIFT IN POWER AND AGRICULTURE'S NEW AGENDA:
DEMANDS BUT NO CHIPS

Introduction

The Farm Depression and Legislative Response: 1920-1932

The general thrust of farm politics and policy over the period from 1920-1932 involved the development of cooperative marketing programs, the attempt to raise the prices of agricultural products through direct government action, and the expansion of farm credit facilities. The political climate throughout most of the 1920's was complacent, complimenting the prosperity of the business community.

Although the industrial sector was generally prosperous during these years, the situation in the farm economy was anything but quiescent. The farm depression which began in 1920 continued long after the manufacturing industries had revived. Harding, Coolidge ("the business of America is business"), and Hoover had no intention of changing the status quo, and offered little in the way of relief for agriculture. Government was expected to facilitate business and industrial expansion, but not to actively intervene in the economy to raise prices for farmers or aid consumers.¹

¹ In 1920 public reaction to Woodrow Wilson's foreign adventurism gave
the new Republican majority under President Harding a mandate for a "return to normalcy" and for retrenchment in government spending. The cost of fighting World War I had by 1919 generated a $13,370,638,000 deficit and a per capita national debt of $242.54. Public concern over rising expenditures and the huge national debt led the House in 1919-1920 to reform the budgetary process. In addition to giving the executive branch greater control over expenditures, appropriations authority was recentralized in the Appropriations Committee. The effect of this reform was to reduce the jurisdiction of the seven special interest monopoly committees and to re-establish the dominance of the Appropriations Committee over appropriations.

Based on the research cited previously on agenda structure, the contention here is that reforming the appropriations system had an effect on the legislative agenda. In particular, the recentralization reform essentially stripped agenda power from many members, including Agriculture. However the complexity of House procedures and processes can provide opportunities as well as constraints for individuals interested in advancing a particular agenda. Farm members who were no longer able to increase farm monies sought other institutional means to push through a
legislative program to benefit farmers confronting yet another farm crisis. Farm members who were no longer able to react to the demands of farm interests as they had in previous years embarked on a crusade to enact an agenda which used the power of government not to increase farm monies, but to raise farm prices directly.

The Historical Setting

**Exogenous Influences: The Farm Depression and Agrarian Discontent**

The advent of World War I ushered in a boom period for American agriculture.\(^2\) The Allies' need for foodstuffs and the requirements for American mobilization combined such that production and services expanded simultaneously with increases in agricultural prices and farm land. The higher farm prices encouraged farmers to increase acreage, borrow more heavily, and press for development of rural roads and services. However, in the autumn of 1920 the war boom ended, leaving farmers overextended in debt, taxation, and acreage. A weak export market, postwar deflation, and declining crop prices resulted in an agricultural depression.

Based on the results in Chapter Two and a considerable body of literature concerning the strong nexus between farm politics and the state of the farm economy, it is anticipated that the farm depression of 1920
would be followed by political pressure by farm groups. In terms of agrarian protests, two highly controversial legislative battles of the decade were the Farm Bloc and the McNary-Haugen movement. Since the efforts of these groups to aid agriculture were highly organized and occupied a large place in congressional discussions, these movements are presented first in some detail as general background for the linkage between the economy and agrarian discontent which occurred during this period. These protests are important because first, they point to the increasingly close relationship which was developing between the farm lobby and Congress, and second, they served as the forerunner of the shift in farm policies which emerged during the New Deal.

The Farm Bloc

The collapse of the agricultural boom in 1920 and the ensuing farm depression redirected farm strategy to concentrate on electing pro-farm congressmen and uniting them into a disciplined Farm Bloc. The establishment of the Washington-based headquarters of the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) in 1919 provided much of the driving force behind the Bloc. In fact, the Farm Bloc was formed on May 21, 1921 in the Washington office of Gray Silver, president of the AFBF. This group, which
was a "widely representative, bipartisan group of experienced and powerful Senate leaders" (Benedict, 1953: p. 181) represented in a basic sense an attempt to create a farm coalition to aid agriculture. A similar organizational structure was established in the House under the leadership of L. J. Dickinson (R-IA).

Both congressional blocs met often during 1921 and worked out a program of farm legislation in close cooperation with the AFBF. The Farm Bureau's role in maintaining bloc discipline on the floor was facilitated by the tabulation of local farm bureau referenda by congressional district which was then presented to members as a grass roots mandate on policy preferences. The Bloc also enjoyed the support of other major farm groups such as the Grange and the full endorsement of the Secretary of Agriculture.

The Harding Administration reacted negatively to the Bloc, depicting its program as "class-based legislation". The Bloc was a major headache for the congressional leadership because of the Bloc's large voting strength, bipartisan composition, and most importantly, a committee system which paralleled the policy issues currently before the congressional committees. Senator George Moses (R-NH) argued:

... For the first time in congressional history we have in
the Senate a bloc, frankly proclaimed as such and further distinguished as agricultural... the avowed purpose of this bloc is to secure legislation beneficial to the farmer. If this bloc is to endure,... the coalition must seek not only to enforce its demands upon the floor when the roll call is taken, but to seize control of the dominant party machinery, to make itself the dominant party, to select and arrange the membership of all congressional committees... It means that the membership and chairmanships of important committees shall be thrown open to political competition, with its attendant evil of logrolling. It means destruction of incentive for individual effort... in the committee room; it means in a word, chaos.\(^4\)

As the controversy over the Bloc raged on, many of the items on the Bloc's agenda were passed. Examples of successful Bloc legislation include The Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921, The Emergency Tariff of 1921, The Agricultural Credits Act of 1923, The Capper-Volstead Act of 1922 (which exempted agricultural cooperatives from antitrust laws), emergency seed grain loans in 1922, two amendments to the Farm Loan Act in 1922, and an amendment which established a farm representative on the Federal Reserve Board in 1923.

As most of the items on the Bloc's agenda were passed, its political strength declined. Additionally, sectional rivalries between the South and the West over tariff and credit policy divided farm groups and interfered with collective action. By 1924 the improvement in prices for particular
crops removed the primary incentive for the creation of agrarian alignment, and by 1924 the Farm Bloc faded into obscurity⁵.

In general, the significance of the Farm Bloc lies in the fact that it was the first time that farm congressmen had formally aligned to change farm policy. The dynamic behind their actions can be traced directly to exogenous factors in the farm economy. The agricultural depression of 1920 affected all commodities across-the-board, reducing inter-commodity factionalism and conflicts of interest. The broad-based nature of the stimulus helped to overcome one of the obstacles to efficient policy-making (weak and divided congressional parties) and also to coalesce farm interests behind one legislative program.

The McNary-Haugen Movement

By 1924 the prices of some farm products such as cotton were improving, but other crops such as wheat were still severely depressed. Agrarian leaders representing the depressed commodities began to search for programs to increase prices and make government aid directly available to farmers, their argument being that farmers were not receiving their fair share of the national income. The most popular proposal emphasized the idea of parity, or equality in the relative purchasing price of farm to city
dwellers using the base period 1909-1914 because of the favorable farm to industrial price relationship. In essence, the parity provision meant that if the market price for certain products fell below parity, the government would guarantee the parity level to the farmer. This plan was embodied in the five McNary-Haugen bills considered by Congress from 1924-1928.6

The McNary-Haugen movement was in a basic sense the second attempt by farm congressmen to recapture control over the farm agenda. The proposal attracted considerable attention among farmers and enjoyed the support of over two hundred farm organizations, including the AFBF and the Grange. Indeed, the Agriculture Committee received more than ten thousand endorsements for the proposal.

While historians and economists (Christensen, 1937; Black, 1927; Genung, 1954) have interpreted McNary-Haugen as a sectional issue, this overlooks the commodity-oriented nature of the alignment. That is, the measure was not simply North versus South but wheat and corn versus cotton, tobacco, and dairy farmers. In fact, the bill was not successfully passed by Congress until a majority of Southern cotton members joined with Northwest wheat and Midwest corn representatives.

The first McNary-Haugen bill was defeated in a clearly
commodity-based alignment of cotton and dairy congressmen opposing the measure versus supporters from the wheat-producing states of the Northwest. Supporters, realizing that they needed to broaden their ranks focused their attention on the corn belt representatives. The American Council of Agriculture, the Corn Belt Committee, and the Committee of Twenty-Two were formed to help press for the bill in the coming session of Congress. The revised bill failed to come to a vote in the House but by 1926 the drop in cotton prices led a few cotton representatives to join with wheat and corn members in support of the third version. The alignment on the third McNary-Haugen was similar to the first, namely bipartisan and commodity-based.

The McNary-Haugen lobby continued to push for additional support from cotton and tobacco members in the interim period before the beginning of the next session. Twice during the Sixty-Ninth Congress (1926-1928) the bill was passed by Congress only to be vetoed by Coolidge who argued that the measure involved price-fixing. The election in 1928 of Herbert Hoover ended action on McNary-Haugen. Hoover was adamantly opposed to the measure, preferring instead more traditional remedies such as the tariff and cooperative marketing programs. In sum, although farm members were
able to formulate a farm agenda, they were unable to get it enacted into law. Republican leaders at worst were openly hostile to farm aid and at best ignored the crusade, echoing Coolidge's sentiments "Well, farmers never have made money. I don't believe we can do much about it." 7

In general, the Farm Bloc and McNary-Haugen movements can be viewed as attempts to create a bipartisan coalition for pro-farm policies. These two movements are significant because, first, they illustrate the increasingly close relationship which emerged between farm groups and Congress, and second, they laid the groundwork for the changed attitude toward agriculture which assumed far more importance in the 1930's than it did in the 1920's. Indeed, Sundquist (1983:182) argues that the Farm Bloc and McNary-Haugen movement were the harbingers of the shift in agricultural policy which emerged with the New Deal.

The farm battles of the 1920's laid the foundation for the New Deal agricultural programs by giving farm organizations considerable experience in the politics of the legislative process, and by increasing the saliency of farm aid issues both among the general public and within Congress. Major policy changes do not come quickly or easily. These efforts show, perhaps better than earlier farm movements, the amount of organization required to
bring about a major policy change. Although McNary-Haugen did not achieve its immediate objective, it did bring into being a new influence in legislative matters that succeeding Congresses could not ignore.

**Endogenous Influences: Recentralization of the Appropriations Process**

With the end of World War I Americans favored retrenchment in government expenditures and a "back to normalcy" economy. In 1919-1921 the House responded to this mood by reforming the budgetary process. Recentralizing the Appropriations decisions in the Appropriations Committee was vital to gaining control of the federal budget. The Republican leadership first passed the Budget Act giving the executive greater control over estimates and expenditures and in June of 1920 turned to revising the appropriations process (H. R. 324). The debate on the reform was limited to two hours by a special rule from the Rules Committee; thus those speaking for and against the resolution were limited to the major figures in the House. Representative Good (R-IA) led off the debate by arguing that:

... The time has come when there should be some centralization of power in the legislative branch of the government to regulate expenditures ... the time has come when economy must be the watchword, and that watchword must be maintained by some central organization of this House.
I do not believe that eight great appropriating committees, which travel in different directions, to visualize the financial situation of this great Nation and to keep the expenses of the Government within the revenues. (C. R. 66th Cong.; 8109).

Good, chairman of the Appropriations Committee then argued that the Budget Act had been passed to reduce expenditure patterns and that:

... vain is a budget law, all in vain the legislation demanded by the American people for budgetary reform, if we only clear the executive departments and do not correct the evils existing in this House. (C. R. 66th Cong.; 8116).

He then offered his resignation as chairman of the Appropriations Committee if that would help pass the reform. He went on to argue that the present system was responsible for extravagance and waste:

... The right hand does not know what the left hand doeth ... Shall we not adopt a plan of conducting the biggest business in all the world along business lines, unmindful of the ambitions of men? (C. R. 66th Cong.; 8116-8118).

And Mr. Tincher (R-KS) also favored the resolution, stating later:

... Four or five good men can handle a little forty million dollar appropriation bill for the USDA, ... just as well, if not better, than the twenty-one [members of the Agriculture Committee] would have handled it, because every fellow of the twenty-one would want to have some little item in it that did not otherwise get in the bill. (C. R. 67th Cong.; 8116-8118).

A powerful coalition was formed to recentralize power in the
Appropriations Committee predicated on the assumption that this committee would not be as closely connected to the individual departments as the special interest committees had been, thus reducing expenditures.

Those opposing the resolution were led by Representatives Haugen (R-IA), chairman of the Agriculture Committee and Padgett (D-TN). They argued that the resolution would give far too much power to one committee.

Mr. Haugen argued:

> The question is, shall 35 members be given jurisdiction over appropriations instead of the 153 members that now have jurisdiction over them? ... That simply means that the membership of the House surrenders its jurisdiction and power over appropriations. (C.R. 66th Cong.; 8111).

He went on to argue that the Appropriations Committee was not sensitive to the needs of agriculture. This meant that they did not adequately fund his programs. He cited the overfunding of railroads compared to the underfunding of agriculture as an example:

> ... The $700,000,000 [to railroads] was not only cheerfully granted ... but rushed through with the greatest of ease. On the other hand we asked for the meager sum of $76,493.98 out of the $3,620,765.48 asked for in the interests of 6,000,000 farmers and 6,000,000 laborers tilling 6,000,000 farms, producing 3,000,000,000 bushels of corn and 5,600,000,000 bushels of cereals ... to feed not only our people but the people of the world. That was swept aside... (C. R. 66th Cong.; 8111).
Opponents of the reform complained that the members of the Appropriations Committee were already overworked and that the expansion to thirty-five members would leave only three members per subcommittee for each of the twelve appropriations bills (before the reform 188 members handled appropriations bills). Unlike 1880 and 1885 these arguments were not compelling and the resolution passed 200 to 117 with heavy Republican support. Interestingly, a majority of both Republicans and Democrats on the special interest committees voted for the reform. The pattern was mixed however, with the ranking members on Agriculture voting against the reform whereas the senior members on other appropriating committees voted to strip their own committees of appropriating power.

The rationale for the House's recentralization of power in Appropriations emanated from changes in the government's fiscal condition following World War I. The national debt incurred during the war and the large budget deficits of 1917-1919 created a fiscal situation wherein some retrenchment in governmental spending was in order. Under the decentralized appropriations system the members of the special interest committees had a monopoly over appropriations related to their interest. There were, for example, no members from urban districts on Agriculture,
and in at least three Houses each member of Commerce had at least one public works project in his district. Given these conditions, there is little constraint on committee members to reduce expenditures. Only under a system where all special interest committees are constrained would there be a possibility of reducing expenditures. Realizing that, and given the budget deficits, a majority voted to restructure the appropriations system. Recentralizing power in Appropriations meant a reduction in the number of members with control over appropriations and more importantly, Appropriations could reduce departmental requests thus decreasing the rate of growth of expenditures.

Theoretical Motivations

As in Chapter Two, the general relationship between exogenous economic effects, endogenous arrangements, and farm policy is evaluated in terms of agenda structure. However, the thrust of the previous chapter deals with the Agriculture Committee's control over the farm agenda, whereas this chapter is fundamentally concerned with Agriculture's lack of control over farm programs and the intra-committee mechanisms which emerged to deal with this legislative impotence.

The first area of concern is the relationship between exogenous
economic effects and farm politics. As mentioned previously, the analysis seeks to show that downturns in the farm economy are associated with the rise of agricultural discontent.

The second area of interest is the relationship between committee policy-making arrangements and farm policy. The recentralization of appropriations effectively reduced the ability of the Agriculture Committee to monopolize farm policy. Previously, Agriculture had been able to both authorize farm programs and control the level at which they would be funded. Now, the committee had to share control over the farm agenda with the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Agriculture. The Agriculture Committee was responsible for authorizing farm legislation, and the Appropriations Committee for funding these programs.

Based on the literature on agenda structure, it is anticipated that stripping Agriculture of the power to appropriate would influence farm policy. Control over the farm agenda no longer was monopolized by Agriculture, but was to be shared with members of the Appropriations Committee. The members of the Agriculture Committee prior to and following the reform are expected to respond to their constituents by promoting pro-farm legislation. However, members of the Appropriations
Committee could be constrained by interests other than expanding farm programs. Agenda power had shifted, both in terms of incentives and strategies.

In terms of farm programs the appropriating incentive had shifted to the Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on Agriculture. Although the Subcommittee on Agriculture specialized in farm issues, its members were also constrained by the overall goals of the full committee. Studies of the Appropriations Committee in the contemporary period (Fenno, 1966; 1973) found members to have a high degree of consensus on goals and norms, particularly with respect to zealously guarding the Treasury and standing by the report of the full committee. By cutting budget requests, Appropriations could increase its allocative power and its influence in the House. This orientation is supported by some members of the House who view budget cutting as one way to assert institutional independence of the executive branch and others who support reductions as a matter of personal philosophy. More importantly, by cutting requests Appropriations is able to keep resources scarce, which magnifies its allocative power and influence among non-committee members.

One implication of this is that the Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, although tied to specific interests by the ability to appropriate farm monies, could increase their influence by reducing departmental requests, thus decreasing the rate of growth of government. As a result, the incentive to the Subcommittee on Agriculture was to decrease farm appropriations, whereas the incentive to the Agriculture Committee when it controlled monies (1880–1919) was to increase them.

As an example of this process consider the congressional debate over the USDA appropriations bill for 1926. Discussion over an amendment offered by Agriculture to increase the appropriations for the USDA’s Bureau of Biological Survey by $100,000 brought opposition from members of Appropriations. Mr. Magee (R-PA) argued that the Appropriations Committee had already made “a very liberal appropriation” and if the amendment prevailed in the House expenditures would soon get out of control. He argued “If we were to proceed on that theory [acceptance of the amendment]... we should add not $100,000 but $4,500,000”. (C. R. 68th Cong.; 478). Mr. Hudspeth (D-TX), a member of Agriculture, objected to this interpretation, arguing “I disagree with the gentleman on that because the gentleman’s committee did not give an amount requested by the Secretary of Agriculture, $633,000”. (C. R. 68th Cong.; 478). This exchange suggests that the
incentive to Appropriations was to decrease departmental requests, while the incentive to Agriculture was to increase them.

In terms of strategy, the effect of the appropriations reform on Agriculture was to force members to rely on new mechanisms in order to respond to constituents' interests. Farm members were no longer able to react to the demands of farm interests as they had during the previous period by simply increasing farm monies. One way to respond to the lack of control over the level of farm appropriations was to try to control the content of the farm agenda. The result was a decade-long battle to respond to farm interests by enacting an agenda which used the power of the government not to expand existing farm programs, but to raise farm prices directly.

The Empirical Setting

Expectations and Analysis

The Linkage Between the Farm Economy and Farm Politics

This section concerns the expected relationship between exogenous pressures, congressional arrangements, and farm policy. The first item to be explored is the linkage between economic effects and farm pressures. In Chapter Two it was shown that the farm depressions of the late nineteenth
century were associated with the rise of farm movements and a shift in farm politics and policy. Thus, it is anticipated that the farm depression of 1920 would be related to an increase in agrarian discontent. Specifically, it is expected that when the farm economy is in bad shape, farmers will be dissatisfied and this will be manifested in increased demands on Congress. Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 show, respectively, farm prices, income, and debt over this period.

Figure 3.1 shows how the prices for several major commodities simultaneously declined following the end of World War I, creating a farm depression which affected all producers across-the-board. Figure 3.2 shows farm income declined from 1920 to 1932, creating a fiscal crisis for farmers. After peaking at $1,395 in 1919 average farm income fell to a low of $517 by 1921, a level not to be paralleled until 1931-1932.

Figure 3.3 shows the sharp increase in farm debt which peaked in 1921 and 1922. The gradual decline in individual farm debt over the decade represents the farm economy's slow readjustment to a new domestic situation. Land prices were declining in most areas, and farmers who had
Figure 3.1 Cash Receipts From Farm Marketings, 1912-1942

Figure 3.2 Average Farm Income
1910-1940

Figure 3.3 Farm Debt
1910-1940

Source: Historical Abstracts of the United States:
Colonial Times to 1970.
suffered severe financial reversals immediately following World War I were either eliminated through foreclosures or managed to refinance their short-term debt.

By 1928 the farm depression had eased for some products such as cotton, chicken, and eggs, but other crops such as grains were still low in price. Thus farm products, although not up to the 1910–1914 relationship with non-farm prices, were not as severely depressed as in 1921. In general, the data show that the decline in farm prices and income immediately following the war resulted in an initial downturn for the farm sector and a gradual readjustment of economic forces.

Figure 3.4 shows the number of farm lobby groups established from 1865–1919 and Figure 3.5 shows the number established from 1920–1945 by either a commodity or operational orientation. The period from 1865–1919 includes the initial year for which data are available on farm lobby groups up to the end of the decentralized appropriations system. The period from 1920–1945 covers the recentralization reform and concludes with the end of World War II.

As expected, the results in Figure 3.5 indicate that the farm depression
Figure 3.4 Establishment of Farm Lobby Groups, 1865-1915

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ORGANIZATIONS and THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GOVERNMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSIONS.

Notes: Commodity groups are defined as organizations concerned primarily with a single cash crop. Operational groups are defined as organizations concerned primarily with a variety of non-marketable products and services.
Figure 3.5 Establishment of Farm Lobby Groups, 1919-1944

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GOVERNMENTAL ADVISORY ORGANIZATIONS and THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ORGANIZATIONS.

Notes: *Commodity groups are defined as organizations concerned primarily with a single cash crop or regionally-specific product (e.g. cotton, tobacco).

**Operational groups are defined as organizations concerned primarily with a variety of non-marketable products and services (e.g. credit, conservation).
of 1920 was followed by an increase in the number of farm lobby groups. From 1919-1932 seventeen new farm lobby organizations were established. This is roughly the same number of groups as were established from 1865-1919 (Figure 3.4), but in one fourth the amount of time. Modern agricultural lobbying began during this period as shown by the growth of farm groups and the establishment of the Washington offices of such major organizations as the AFBF, the Grange, and the National Farmers' Organization. Examples of these groups include the American Agricultural Editors Association (1921), and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (1929).

These newly-founded groups had both commodity and operational orientations. Five of these lobby groups were commodity-based, whereas twelve others had an operational interest. The increase in the number of lobby groups established during this period was a response to the farm economy and an increasingly specialized farm agenda. In sum, the downturn in the farm sector in 1920 varies directly with the increase in the number of newly-established farm lobby groups.

The second expectation involves the relationship between political pressure for policy change and the Agriculture Committee's policy-making
process. It is postulated that pressure to aid agriculture would lead members to devote a large proportion of their attention to farm relief and this would have an effect on the committee's policy-making process.

Fenno's (1973) analysis of committees in the contemporary period showed how members used various decision-making strategies to facilitate their policy goals and to satisfy interested parties in the committee's policy-making environment. Assuming that members are usually interested in pursuing their objectives and their constituents' interests, the contention is that the farm depression affected the policy goals of Agriculture and generated political pressure in the committee's policy-making environment. The attempts by members to respond to these demands should be observable in the committee's policy-making arrangements. In short, political pressure on farm congressmen created strategic incentives to aid agriculture, and this was manifested by changes in the policy-making process.

Ideally it would be desirable to evaluate the committee's decision-making process directly by analyzing the nature of the mark-up sessions and the intra-committee votes. However, prior to 1973, information on committee roll calls during the mark-up session was not
available. It is possible, though, to obtain information on the preliminary stage of committee policy-making -- the congressional hearing. Hearings are used by committees not only as fact-finding instruments, they serve other functions including generating public support or opposition to a bill, allowing citizens to express their views on a subject, and investigating problems and issues.

The decision to hold a hearing is a crucial juncture in the policy-making process as rarely is a measure considered on the House floor without first being the focus of a committee hearing. The sanctity of the committee's decision is based on the presumption that the experts in committee have carefully examined the measure. Thus, an analysis of congressional committee hearings can provide a glimpse into the nature of the proposals being considered in committee during the initial phase of policy-making.

In general, the expectation is that the recentralization reform shifted Agriculture's monopoly control over its agenda to a position of shared agenda power, and this will have an effect on incentives, strategies, and outcomes. The prediction here is that increased demands on the Agriculture Committee will influence committee policy-making, specifically in terms
of the committee's hearings. Figure 3.6 shows the number of committee meetings per Congress from 1900-1930 in terms of a commodity or operational orientation. Appendix A describes the methodology used and Appendix B gives a complete listing of the committee and subcommittee meetings from 1888-1958.

The results in Figure 3.6 indicate that there was an increase in the number of hearings on different issues immediately following the farm depression. From 1920 to 1931 the committee met over 145 times, with over 55% of these meetings occurring between 1920 and 1924. As a basis for comparison, from 1888 to 1919 the committee met approximately 57 times, thus the number of meetings held during the later period increased dramatically in less than one half the amount of time. From 1888 to 1919 the average number of meetings per congress was 1.7 but from 1920 to 1932 the average was approximately 12.0 meetings per congress. Of the one 145 different hearings, roughly fifty concerned commodity-based subjects (e.g. sugar quotas, livestock processing, and cotton standards), eighty-five involved operationally-based issues (e.g. warehouse regulation, and loans to flood areas) and eleven concerned a mixture of both issues.
Figure 3.6 Number of
Hearings
1900–1930

Source: Compiled by the author based on hearings of the United States House Committee on Agriculture.

Notes: Commodity hearings are defined as concerned primarily with a single cash crop. Operational hearings are defined as concerned primarily with a variety of non-marketable products and services. Mixed hearings are concerned with both commodity and operational issues.
In general the results suggest that the Agriculture Committee attempted to deal with the increasing number of demands for pro-farm programs by increasing the number of hearings in general and on commodity-related issues in particular. The basic argument is that the increase in the number of hearings which began during the 1920's was an intra-committee reaction to the state of the farm agenda. Over the period from 1860-1915 the House grew from 243 to 435 members, an increase of approximately 89%. Moreover, the workload of Congress increased greatly (Brady, 1973; Cooper, 1975) which should have affected congressional policy-making and political outcomes. A natural outgrowth of this process would involve some type of institutional adaption in order to enable members to formulate policy efficiently and effectively. The expansion in the congressional workload combined with the farm depression encouraged farm members to respond to the demands emerging in Agriculture's policy-making environment.

Following the recentralization reform farm members were no longer able to react to the interests in their districts simply by increasing
appropriations. The previous committee arrangement was geared to a period in which members had a monopoly over appropriations and legislation related to their interest, and the scope of the farm agenda was much more limited. Faced with a farm crisis and decreased jurisdiction over farm policy, committee members attempted to respond to the demands by increasing the number of committee meetings on farm issues.

The Linkage Between Structural Change and Farm Policy

The third question concerns the effect of the recentralization reform on farm policy. When the House recentralized authority in the President and the Appropriations Committee the members expected a lower rate of growth in expenditures. The basic concern here is that the organization of the House and its committees makes a difference both in terms of the decisions made and who benefits. It is expected that during the post-reform period (1920-1942) the Appropriations Committee more often decreased than increased USDA estimates, and the House added more to the appropriations reports than during the period of special interest appropriating committees.
The thought is that during the period when Appropriations had control over farm monies, Appropriations should attempt to expand their power. Fenno (1966) showed how Appropriations retained power over the purse by cutting executive requests in the 1946-1964 period. By zealously guarding the public purse, the committee essentially acted as a legislative bottleneck, which helped to enhance the committee's power.

With regard to House action, Ferejohn (1973) showed that at times the House has been willing to take on the "appeals court" function, overruling the Appropriations Committee's reports and increasing the monies for public works programs. Although both Fenno (1966) and Ferejohn find the tendency for Appropriations to cut executive requests, they both note that the committee must also balance these cuts with non-committee members' demands for additional funding. For example, Ferejohn showed how non-committee members revolted on the House floor in 1955 against cuts by Appropriations in public works projects, which ultimately led to an increase in new project appropriations.

The relationship during the contemporary period between the budget-cutting Appropriations Committee and the additional-spending House
is an outgrowth of the appropriations system which began in 1920-1921, thus it would not be surprising to find similar behavior during the period of interest. As noted, the debates surrounding the reforms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggest the desire of members to fund their programs. Therefore, following the recentralization reform when the Appropriations Committee takes on the guardian of the purse function, it is postulated that they will be more likely to cut than to raise budget estimates; and at the same time when the House takes on the appeals court function they will be more likely to increase than to decrease appropriations reports in order to fund programs. Table 3.1 shows agricultural appropriations in terms of committee reaction to USDA requests and House reaction to appropriations reports. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show the average annual change in farm monies made by the appropriating committees and the House, respectively.

Table 3.1 shows that of the thirty-one separate agricultural appropriations in the 1920-1932 period, twenty-six times the Appropriations Committee cut the department's request and five times they raised it. Of the nine times they changed the request by greater than 10%,
Table 3.1

Agricultural Appropriations: Increases and Decreases Over Previous Amount

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Committee Reaction to USDA Request</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Appropriation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818-1919</td>
<td>18 cuts</td>
<td>14 raises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-1932</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 cuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 raise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

House Reaction to Agricultural Appropriation Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Committee Reaction to USDA Request</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Appropriation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868-1919</td>
<td>6 cuts</td>
<td>13 raises</td>
<td>13 constants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-1932</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 cuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 raises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the Congressional Record.

Notes: This table presents the reactions to the appropriations requested by the previous decision-making body at two stages in the appropriations process. Cuts, raises, and constants were evaluated by comparing the USDA estimate to the committee's report to calculate the percent change (positive and negative), and repeating the same procedure for the report to the House bill. Positive percent change indicates a raise, negative percent change indicates a cut, and when the difference between two figures is less than .01, the reaction is coded as a constant (no change).
Table 3.2

Average Annual Change in USDA Appropriations Requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Agriculture (1888-1916) (mean)</th>
<th>(s.d.)</th>
<th>Appropriations (1888-1916) (mean)</th>
<th>(s.d.)</th>
<th>Appropriations (1920-1948)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1886-1916</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-1948</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>-5.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.
Table 3.3

Average Annual Changes in Selected Committee Reports by the Whole House

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriations Committee Only*</th>
<th>Agriculture (1888-1916)**</th>
<th>Mixed Appropriations (1888-1916)***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriations (1920-1948)*</td>
<td>Appropriations (1920-1948)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Legislative (mean) (s.d.)</th>
<th>Agriculture (mean) (s.d.)</th>
<th>Total (mean) (s.d.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(change)</td>
<td>(change)</td>
<td>(change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-1916</td>
<td>-.08 1.26</td>
<td>.38 1.70</td>
<td>-.01 1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-1948</td>
<td>.08 .49</td>
<td>.45 6.04</td>
<td>.56 2.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Notes: * Appropriations made by the Appropriations Committee
** Appropriations made by the Agriculture Committee
*** Appropriations made by all eight appropriating committees
seven times they cut the request and twice they raised it. In contrast, during the 1888-1919 period there were thirty-two reactions to requests, and of these the Agriculture Committee raised the request fourteen times and cut it eighteen times. In terms of a simple count of cuts and raises Agriculture raised estimates more often than did Appropriations, and when non-incremental decisions were made raises outnumbered cuts three to one.

Table 3.2 shows the average annual change in USDA requests made by Agriculture and Appropriations from 1886-1948. The results indicate that when Agriculture handled farm appropriations they raised requests by an average of 3.5% whereas when Appropriations handled the requests they cut on the average about 3.3%. The cuts by Appropriations are in line with the decreases made in legislative appropriations over the entire period, which ranged from 3.5 to 5.2%. In sum, the results indicate that different appropriations structures produced different treatment of requests, and the difference is in the expected direction.

Table 3.1 and 3.3 show that although floor action on committee requests does not change the decision greatly in either period, in general the House added more to farm appropriations reports following the
recentralization reform. From 1920-1950 the House cut the Appropriations Committee's report for the USDA eight times and twenty-three times they raised it. Of the three times the House acted in non-incremental fashion twice they increased the report and once they cut it. In contrast, from 1888-1919 the House increased the Agriculture Committee's reports thirteen times and six times they cut them with no non-incremental changes in the report. Specifically, Table 3.3 shows that the House added an average of .325 to agricultural appropriations reported by Agriculture; whereas when the Appropriations Committee handled the report the House added an average of .425.

Overall, the rate of growth in the farm budget was slower than the rate of growth from 1880-1919. In contrast to the earlier period in which the annual percent increase in farm monies exceeded that for total appropriations 72% of the time, from 1920-1933 annual percent increases for agriculture exceeded those for the total budget only 35% of the time. In terms of the percent increase, from 1880-1919 the agricultural budget increased 134.6% whereas from 1920-1931 farm monies increased approximately 5.79%. In sum, following the reform the House was more
likely to increase farm monies than to decrease them.

Summary

In this chapter the effect of agenda structure on policy outcomes is evaluated in terms of the relationship between exogenous economic pressures, and endogenous congressional arrangements from 1920-1932. In 1920 the downturn in the farm economy produced low prices and income and increased farm debt. Farm strategy turned to organized pressure by lobby groups. The total number of farm lobby organizations jumped from seventeen in 1918 to thirty-eight by 1932, with over 55% being established during the 1920's.

Farm congressmen on the Agriculture Committee responded to the increase in demands and workload by increasing the number of hearings on both commodity and operational issues. However members were unable to translate the increased attention to farm problems to successful passage of their farm agenda. The effect of the shift in agenda control was clear. The reform eliminated Agriculture's ability to expand farm programs and the
incentive to Appropriations was not to increase farm monies, but to cut them.

Conclusion

It has been argued that the rationale behind the 1920 reform was the concern over rising expenditures and huge national debt. The congressional debate over the recentralization illustrates the members' desire to regain control over the budget. When the House recentralized appropriating power in the Appropriations Committee they expected the committee to reduce appropriations, and as we have seen for agriculture, budget estimates were cut.

These results are in line with the research on the effect of agenda structure on outcomes. Based on this work the expectation was that the shift in power created a strategic incentive for Appropriations to appropriate funds for farm programs in a manner favorable to its own interests, and for Agriculture to attempt to regain control of the farm agenda. An analysis of USDA requests indicated that Appropriations did indeed cut departmental estimates, in keeping with the House's expectation
of lower expenditures. Faced with a farm crisis and a reduced jurisdiction over farm policy, the Agriculture Committee attempted to respond to pressures by increasing the number of hearings on both commodity and operationally-oriented issues.

In sum, the shift to a recentralized appropriations system was the result of pressures to decrease expenditures, including those concerning farm programs. The outcome for Agriculture was shared control with Appropriations over the farm agenda and a stalemate for pro-farm forces. But as the traditional methods failed to aid the economy, disillusionment increased and the reluctance for government intervention gradually disappeared. The agrarian crusades of the 1920's, although initially unsuccessful, laid the groundwork for changes which were able to take hold in the next decade.
NOTES

1. Fainsod and Gordon, Government and the American Economy; Benedict, Farm Policies of the United States; Unger, These United States; and Sundquist, Dynamics of the Party System.
5. Some scholars (McCune, 1955) suggest that the Farm Bloc was still operating throughout the 1930's and 1940's. However, this argument views the existence of a "farm bloc" more in terms of a similar outlook on policy or shared ideological convictions. This analysis departs from that viewpoint by arguing that the Farm Bloc, in terms of a formal organization with regular meetings and an established committee system, operated between 1921 and 1924. Following the 67th Congress there was no attempt to weld farm congressmen into an organized bloc and plan legislative strategy.
1928. 18:405-427; Fite, American Farmers; Fite, American Farm Policy Since 1900; Orville H. Kile. The Farm Bureau Through Three Decades. (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1948); McConnell, The Decline of Agrarian Democracy; Shidler, Farm Crisis 1919-1923; Winters, Henry Cantrell Wallace as Secretary of Agriculture; Genung, The Agricultural Depression of 1921-1934; and Theodore Salutos. The American Farmer and the New Deal (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, 1982).


8. The Congressional Index uses the term "meeting" to refer generally to the first day of a series of hearings to be conducted by a committee or a subcommittee. Consequently, a committee or a subcommittee may actually "meet" more than once during the course of hearings than is reflected in the "one" which is added to its total for the number of hearings. Nevertheless, it provides a measure of the relative amount of activity by that body.
Chapter IV

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUBCOMMITTEES AND THE FARM AGENDA: THE FACILITATION OF POLICY CHANGE

Introduction

The general thrust of farm policy during the New Deal shifted from reliance on cooperative marketing programs and the tariff to government intervention in the farm economy through direct subsidies to farmers, production controls, and such redistributive policies as the Food Stamp and School Lunch programs.\(^1\) In 1932 Roosevelt defeated Hoover by a margin of over seven million votes and swept a new Democratic majority into Congress. The new congressmen viewed their victory as a mandate for policy change and proceeded to enact the president’s agenda for farm and industrial recovery.

Under Roosevelt’s leadership a new agenda for agriculture was begun, but it remained for farm members to integrate these programs into the congressional policy-making process. Based on the research concerning the relationship of agenda structure to political outcomes, it is expected that
the effect of the New Deal was to enable the Agriculture Committee to exercise a substantial degree of control over the farm agenda, and that this would have an effect on farm policy. Specifically, it is postulated that farm congressmen would attempt to establish policy-making arrangements which would regularize the new agenda — an agenda from which they expected to benefit.

The Great Depression and the New Deal for Agriculture: Overview

The collapse of the stock market in October, 1929 brought the entire economy down. The Great Depression which ensued was a human disaster of colossal proportions. Unlike the situation in 1920, both the industrial and agricultural sectors of the economy were severely depressed. Between 1929 and 1932 the prices of agricultural commodities fell approximately 63% as compared to a 20% decline in iron and steel prices. In fact, some farmers were already overextended in debt and taxation when the Depression hit, never having completely recovered from the crisis of 1920.

Over time the distortions of the Depression threatened the entire business system, which generated increased pressure for government
intervention to aid the economy. Roosevelt was elected in 1932 and in his inaugural address he set the tone for a “New Deal” which involved federal public works, increases in farm prices, improved relief measures, and tighter bank regulation. Much of the initial legislation emphasized the emergency nature of the situation involving recovery and relief programs. In general, Congress responded by giving the president almost everything he asked for without looking too closely at the cost or long-term impacts. But by the mid 1930’s, concern that the New Deal had stalled led the president to launch a new set of programs to weaken the power of big business, equalize opportunity, and increase economic security. The second New Deal saw legislation involving social security, labor unions, housing for the urban poor, farm price supports, rural electrification, and various surplus food programs. The new agenda revived the nation’s hope, and as the 1940’s approached the country began to turn away from domestic concerns to threatening events overseas.

Farm Policy

The New Deal farm policies constituted a fundamental shift in the role of government in the farm economy from limited intervention to active
participation through direct cash subsidies to farmers and control of production. In the early part of the New Deal the thrust of the legislation stressed the need to cope with the crisis caused by the depression. However by 1938 the focus shifted to long-term programs to strengthen agriculture's role in the economy. The New Deal for agriculture included such programs as expanded farm credit, supports, crop insurance, disaster relief, soil conservation, resettlement of the rural poor, rural electrification and food distribution.

One of the first major farm acts was the A.A.A. of 1933 (Agricultural Adjustment of Act of 1933) This legislation was designed as emergency relief to a distressed industry but by 1938 the second Agricultural Adjustment Act emphasized government's long-term role in maintaining agricultural income. The goal of the 1933 act was based upon the McNary-Haugen concept of "parity" which would re-establish:

... prices to farmers at a level that will give agricultural commodities a purchasing price with respect to articles farmers buy, equivalent to the purchasing power of agricultural commodities in the base period, August, 1909 - July, 1914.

The act emphasized production controls for the "basic commodities" -
wheat, cotton, corn, hogs, rice, tobacco, and milk in exchange for cash
benefit payments to farmers. Agricultural credit was expanded that same
year by the Emergency Farm Mortgage Act, the Farm Credit Act, and the
establishment of the Commodity Credit Corporation by executive order.

The new deal for agriculture was gaining acceptance when in 1936 the
Supreme Court declared that the processing tax of the A.A.A. was
unconstitutional. In order to maintain the continuity of aid, Congress
responded immediately by passing the Soil Conservation and Domestic
Allotment Act of 1936. This act continued the basic principles of the A.A.A. 
but emphasized soil conserving techniques to achieve production control.
The new legislation was designed to “promote the conservation... of
agricultural land resources... by providing for a permanent policy of
federal aid.”

The objective of the 1936 legislation differed from the previous act in
that it emphasized maintenance of farm income, instead of farm prices.
Instead of levying a tax on processors, funding for commodity subsidies was
to be appropriated by Congress. Although the act was acceptable as a
stopgap measure, it did not embody a long-term program for agriculture.
Shortly after its enactment Congress began to work on a more permanent plan to maintain farm income and control production which took the form of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (A.A.A. of 1938).

Additional legislation in 1937 and 1938 established a permanent program for regulating agricultural commodities and a variety of redistributive policies were initiated to improve the welfare of the rural and urban poor. The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1937 formalized the trend toward commodity-specific legislation by facilitating marketing agreements for milk, fruits, nuts, and vegetables between the USDA and each commodity's producers and processors. The next year Congress enacted the A.A.A. of 1938 which with successive amendments is the basis of current farm programs. This act outlined policy with regards to price subsidies, crop insurance, farm loans, marketing quotas, and the School Lunch and Food Stamp programs. Other redistributive policies attempted to eliminate rural poverty by encouraging home ownership and subsidizing rural electricity.

The Historical Setting

Exogenous Influences - The Farm Economy and Political Pressure
The Great Depression intensified tremendous demands already present in the farm economy and rekindled the issue of parity for agriculture by means of government support. Unlike the commodity-specific recessions of the mid-1920's the price collapse of 1929 not only affected both the industrial and farm sectors of the economy, it also affected all commodities across-the-board.6

The farm depression worsened considerably after 1930 as both foreign and domestic demand for agricultural commodities declined. The severe drop in prices made it difficult for many farmers to pay their debts. Foreclosures occurred at a rate of 39 per 1,000 farms as compared to a rate of 17 per 1,000 during the period from 1926–1930. The failure of farm relief schemes resulted in dramatic incidents – the Farmers' Holiday movement, the dumping of milk in protest of low prices, and the defiance of courts which ordered the sale of farms.

Endogenous influences – Congress and the New Deal

In the election of 1932 the underlying issue which had separated the parties was the question of whether the government would intervene directly in the economy. The Republicans had opposed governmental activity
while the Democrats, although not entirely committed behind one program favored active government involvement. In 1933 Roosevelt entered the White House with an overwhelming popular mandate and with large majorities in both houses of Congress. The Democrats' sweeping victory and the public's desire for policy change gave the president a free hand to try out novel approaches in the fight against depression.

Congress was called into special session March 9, 1933 and set upon a whirlwind legislative course dictated by the president. On the first day of that session the House in thirty-eight minutes, passed an emergency banking bill although some of the provisions had not yet been printed. Passage of the bill by the Senate was completed by the day's end. Throughout Roosevelt's first term congressional opposition was often nonexistent and his proposals were promptly enacted. In addition to extensive powers, Congress agreed to various legislative shortcuts to speed passage of his economic recovery program. However by 1938 a conservative coalition of Republicans and southern Democrats arose to oppose many New Deal domestic policies. During Roosevelt's second term the coalition successfully thwarted several social welfare measures but by the beginning
of the 1940's wartime issues were paramount.

Theoretical Motivations

The basic concern in this chapter is with the effect of agenda structure on policy outcomes as evaluated in terms of the relationship between exogenous economic effects, endogenous policy-making arrangements, and farm policy. While the second chapter deals with the Agriculture Committee's control over the farm agenda and Chapter Three illustrates the relationship between Agriculture's loss of agenda power and inability to enact its agenda, this chapter is primarily concerned with the mechanisms for incorporating the New Deal policy changes into the congressional agenda.

That is, the power to appropriate and authorize farm programs essentially gave committee members monopoly control over which programs would be funded and at what level. When Agriculture was stripped of its monopoly power, farm members attempted to influence agricultural programs by increasing the number of committee meetings and building support on the House floor. The structure of the farm agenda was significantly changed by Roosevelt's New Deal, but it remained for committee members to take advantage of the opportunities provided by
various institutional arrangements to incorporate these policy changes into the congressional decision-making system.

The first area of concern is the relationship between exogenous economic effects and farm politics. As mentioned previously, research on farm policy points to the linkage between these two variables. Based on this literature the analysis seeks to show that the rise of agrarian discontent varies directly with downturns in the farm economy. This relationship is anticipated to be especially strong during this period because of the severe effects of the Great Depression on the farm sector, and the fact that the farmer had not completely recovered from the farm recessions of the 1920's.

The second item of interest is the relationship between committee policy-making arrangements and farm policy. Contemporary research on Congress has shown that the committee system is a drawback to responsible parties because committee chairmen up until the 94th Congress were immunized by seniority, and as a result were "chieftains to be bargained with, not lieutenants to be commanded" (Huitt, 1961:342). Because change in committee membership is never complete and seldom
dramatic (Huit, 1954) committees have in general, a continuous life of their own. Under these conditions committees are normally stable in both membership and norms and as a result, committee norms and decision-making styles can be transmitted to the new members. One implication of this phenomena is that public policy decisions would tend to be incremental in nature.

However, research on realigning elections by Brady (1978) has shown that the effect of critical elections on the congressional parties is to decrease the stability of the committee system. This research has shown that during realignments committee stability and continuity are affected by a tremendous turnover in membership.

Specifically, realigning elections essentially reorganize the committee system so that the leadership is able to build united majorities for legislative programs. Based on this literature, it is expected that the increased turnover in the House in general, and on Agriculture in particular during this period would influence the legislative agenda, and in this case the farm agenda.

The gradual shift to price supports for commodities which was
initiated by the Farm Bloc and McNary-Haugen movement was regularized with the coming of the New Deal farm programs. Following Roosevelt's election in 1932 the farm agenda was at the forefront of programs to revive the economy. After years of struggling farm members interested in changing agricultural policy finally had access to the farm agenda. New farm congressmen came to Congress seeking to enact policy changes to aid agriculture. Once such changes were enacted, members had a vested interest in ensuring these benefits were maintained.

Given the linkage between agenda structure and policy, it is expected that this newly-acquired access to the farm agenda would have an effect on the members' incentives and strategies, and as a result, committee policy-making arrangements and farm policy. Specifically, farm members attempted to ensure that these policy changes would become a permanent part of the farm policy agenda by creating decision-making bodies with a constituency interest in promoting various commodity programs.

The Empirical Setting

Expectations and Analysis

The Linkage Between the Farm Economy and Farm Politics
This section involves the relationships between exogenous pressures, policy-making arrangements, and farm policy. The first question evaluates the relationship between economic downturns and farmer discontent. In Chapter Two and Three it was shown that the farm depressions of the late nineteenth century and the 1920’s were associated with the rise of farm movements. Based on the earlier argument, it is postulated here that the Great Depression would be linked to an increase in agrarian discontent. Specifically, when the farm economy is in a downward trend, farmers will be dissatisfied and this will be manifested by demands on Congress. Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 show, respectively, farm prices, income, and debt over this period.

Figure 3.1 (see Chapter Three) shows the severe decline in crop prices from the fairly high levels of the mid 1920’s. Corn prices fell from a high of eighty-five cents in 1927 to a low of thirty-two cents in 1932 while wheat prices declined from $1.05 to thirty-eight cents over the same period. Another way to evaluate these changes is to convert crop prices to an index in which the period from 1909-1914 = 100 (the parity ratio). Using this measure, farm prices reached their lowest point in 1932 at an index of
65, then increased sharply after 1933, peaking at 122 in 1937.

Figure 3.2 and 3.3 (see Chapter Three) show the decline in farm income and level of farm debt which accompanied the onset of the Depression. Average farm income dropped from a high of $945 in 1929 to a low of $304 by 1932. At the same time however, debt was also rising and net cash farm income did not reach the 1929 level until 1941. Figure 3.3 shows that total individual farm debt soared in 1929 to $4,731 million and did not decline to the 1912 level until 1935. By 1934-1935 the initial shock of the Depression had begun to wear off, with corresponding adjustments in prices, inventories, and production. Considerable amounts of indebtedness had been liquidated through adjustment, foreclosure, or repayment. In general, the data show that the farm economy declined with the onset of the Depression and began to recover around 1936.

As noted in Chapter Two, the intent in this analysis is to show how the pressures for policy change vary with the state of the farm economy. In particular, the number of farm organizations established with specific lobbying functions gives an indication of activity by farm interests to pass pro-farm legislation. Figure 3.4 (see Chapter Three) shows the number of
newly-founded farm lobby groups from 1920–1944 by either a commodity or
operational orientation.

Figure 3.4 shows that from 1934 to 1942 twenty-eight farm lobby
groups were established, which is approximately a 60% increase over the
number established from 1919 to 1932. The farm lobby mushroomed during
this period, largely in response to the economic situation. Examples of
these groups include The International Cotton Advisory Council (1939), The
Mailorder Association of Nurserymen (1934), and the Southeastern Peanut
Growers' Association (1937).

Also of interest is the increase in the number of commodity-oriented
groups, exceeding those with an operational outlook. From 1932 to 1942
seventeen new commodity lobbies were established, in contrast to the
eleven new operationally-oriented groups. Additionally, the number of
commodity lobbies founded during the New Deal period exceeds the number
founded during previous years. From 1865–1918 nine commodity groups
were established and from 1919 to 1932 five of these groups were created.

The increase in the number of farm lobby groups varies directly with
political pressure by farm groups on Congress. Irons (1982), Campbell
(1962), and others have argued that the first major farm bill of the New Deal, the A.A.A. of 1933 was the product of close cooperation between the Farm Bureau, Congress, and the administration. This literature suggests that during the early part of the New Deal (1933-1938) such general farm organizations as the Grange and the Farm Bureau were the primary farm lobby groups involved in farm policy-making. However, Figure 3.4 suggests that farmers' interests were not entirely served by these general purpose organizations, and hence the increase in the number of specialized pressure groups.

These data suggest that the dire situation in the farm economy provided a hospitable environment for political action as shown by the increase in the number of farm lobby groups. Unlike the commodity-specific downturns of the mid-1920's, the shock of 1929 affected all commodities across-the-board. The broad-based nature of the stimulus helped to reduce the inter-commodity antagonisms which usually divide the general farm organizations, and thus helped unite farm interests to lobby for policy change. In sum, the rise in the number of newly-founded farm lobbies varies directly with the downturn in the farm economy following the depression.
The Linkage Between Farm Pressure and Committee Policy-Making

The second question involves the relationship between political pressure and the policy-making processes of the Agriculture Committee. Turnover in Congress following the election of 1932 was quite high, and membership change on the Agriculture Committee increased. Brady (1978) showed how the turnover rates on House committees during this period were high enough to disturb committee continuity and that the new members were more partisan than the members they replaced. As a result committee continuity, which assures gradual change in leadership and norms, was drastically disrupted. In order to show the extreme nature of committee turnover during the New Deal era, membership lists were collected for the 66th to 77th (1919–1942) Houses for the Agriculture Committee. Turnover was computed as the number of new members as a proportion of the total committee membership. For example, in the 67th House the Agriculture Committee had twenty-one members, eleven of whom were new. The total turnover was thus 52%. Periods of high turnover are anticipated to be associated with disruptions in committee continuity; conversely periods of low turnover with sustained committee stability. Figure 4.1 shows
membership turnover for Agriculture over this period.

Membership turnover in the House following the election of 1932 was approximately 33%, as measured by the proportion of first-term representatives (Friedel, 1973). With first-term Democrats approximating 40% of the membership of the House, partisan gains were decidedly one-sided. Figure 4.1 shows that partisan turnover on the Agriculture Committee peaked in the 73rd Congress at 48%, the highest level since the 67th (Farm Bloc) Congress. From the 70th to the 73rd Houses the total turnover on Agriculture was approximately 85.2% (Brady, 1978).

The areas hardest hit by the Depression (Midwest and South) exhibited a particularly high rate of turnover in 1932. Whereas in previous years the four major agricultural regions (East, Midwest, South, and West) were represented on the committee, from 1931–1947 the membership reflected the major commodity brokers of the New Deal – the South (cotton, rice, and tobacco) and the Midwest (grains and livestock). As noted above, the organization of congressional committees has an impact on policy and who
Figure 4.1 Turnover Rate for the House Agriculture Committee 1920-1942

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in Garrison Nelson's "Congressional Committee Assignments, 1789-1946".

Notes: Turnover is defined as the number of new members per Congress as a percentage of the total membership of the Agriculture Committee.
benefits. Not surprisingly, the first commodities to receive cash subsidies under the A.A.A. included tobacco, cotton, rice, corn, wheat, and hogs.

The influx of new members paved the way for policy change by bringing in a group of new members who viewed the landslide as a mandate for enacting policy change. The debate over the A.A.A. of 1933 suggests that members were aware of their mandate, as Mr. Cox (D-GA) argued:

... We have been proceeding upon the theory that we are in the midst of economic war,... The country has been aroused, the President has electrified the people. The demand comes to us to support him. The organization of this House wants this rule [for the A.A.A.]. I am a good soldier and will vote for this rule and the bill, and trust that all others because of the circumstances, will do likewise. (C. R. 73rd Cong.; 670).

Members also appeared to be aware of the effect of turnover on policy change. During the same debate Mr. Hope (R-KS) commented that a similar measure in the previous session of Congress:

... had nothing like the scope of this one... I may also say that we have 160 members of the House who were not here when the other measure was considered. Also, almost half of the members of the Committee on Agriculture are new men. (C. R. 73rd Cong.; 682).

One implication of high turnover of committee membership is that the traditional forms of committee decision-making would be
disturbed. As a by-product, broad changes could replace the incrementalism which normally characterizes policy outputs. The argument is that the farm depression generated political pressure to aid the economy, and the new members elected in 1932 saw the election as a mandate for policy change. The high degree of turnover on the Agriculture Committee affected committee leadership and norms, as well as policy-making arrangements.

Research by Fenno (1966, 1973) and others has shown that subcommittees are essentially specialized decision-making bodies with their own set of goals, strategies, and decision-making systems as distinct from those of the full committee. One of the primary reasons for these structures is to satisfy the committee's basic internal need for effectiveness and efficiency in policy-making and thus facilitate accomplishment of members' policy goals.

Given that the primary purpose of a particular decision-making structure is to enable members to formulate policy solutions, the incentive for Agriculture Committee members interested in changing farm policy was to take advantage of these institutional arrangements
to facilitate policy changes from which they were expecting to benefit.

Given that a central component of the new farm agenda involved
subsides for particular commodities, one way farm members could
advance commodity-based policy was by establishing separate
policy-making structures -- subcommittees -- each of which would
have a vested interest in one commodity area.

The prediction here is that political pressure for policy change
would create strategic incentives for the new committee majority and
thereby affect both committee policy-making arrangements and the
political outcomes. Specifically, it is anticipated that members
interested in incorporating commodity programs into the farm agenda
would seek to structure the committee's policy-making arrangements
to facilitate this goal. As in Chapter Three, the unit of analysis is the
committee hearing. Figures 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 show the number of
committee and subcommittee meetings per Congress from 1888 (when
the first published hearing was held) to 1946 by either a commodity or
operational orientation.
Figure 4.2 Number of Full Committee Hearings 1868-1918

Source: Compiled by the author based on hearings of the United States Committee on Agriculture.

Notes: Commodity-oriented hearings are defined as primarily concerned with a single cash crop. Operationally-oriented hearings are defined as primarily concerned with a variety of non-marketable products and services.
Figure 4.3 Number of Subcommittee Hearings 1902-1918

Source: Compiled by the author based on hearings of the United States Committee on Agriculture.

Notes: Commodity-oriented hearings are defined as primarily concerned with a specific cash crop. Operationally-oriented hearings are defined as primarily concerned with a variety of non-marketable products and services.
Figure 4.4 Number of Full Committee Hearings 1920-1942

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the hearings of the United States Committee on Agriculture.

Notes: Commodity hearings are defined as concerned primarily with a single cash crop.
Operational hearings are defined as concerned primarily with a variety of non-marketable products and services.
Mixed hearings are concerned with both commodity and operational issues.
Figure 4.5 Number of Subcommittee Hearings, 1920-1942

Source: Compiled by the author based on hearings of the United States Committee on Agriculture.

Notes: Operational* hearings are defined as concerned primarily with a variety of non-marketable products and services. Commodity** hearings are defined as concerned primarily with a single cash crop or product.
Figures 4.4 and 4.5 suggest that the structure of the Agriculture Committee shifted in 1933 as measured by the surge in the number of hearings by formal subcommittees. From 1902-1916 subcommittees of the committee had existed primarily on an ad hoc basis. From 1917-1932 only the full committee held hearings and no subcommittees were formed. However, the shift in 1933 represents the evolution of a new committee structure based upon formal subcommittees. The incentive to the new committee majority in making the structural shift was to take advantage of committee policy-making arrangements to formalize the policy changes which began in 1933. From this point on, subcommittees became an important part of the policy-making process, rivaling the full committee meetings in terms of hearing activity.

A perusal of Appendix B shows the assortment of issues under review during the committee and subcommittee hearings. The variety of programs under review suggest that there was considerable fluidity and diversity in the subject matter of these hearings. This can be seen as a natural adjustment to the emergency nature of the situation and the fact that the establishment of subcommittees on a regular basis was a novel
experiment in committee policy-making.

The shift to a formal subcommittee structure was unique in that for the first time in the history of the committee the chairman regularly appointed other committee members to chair subcommittees. This is in sharp contrast to the situation from 1902-1916 in which eight of the ten subcommittees shown in Appendix B were chaired by the committee’s chairman.

In 1937 the first numbered subcommittees emerged, and the shift to a subcommittee arrangement was maintained in each succeeding Congress. During the 84th Congress (1955-1956) this process was fully formalized by the establishment of standing, permanent, subcommittees along the commodity and operational lines described by Jones (1962; 1963) in his seminal articles on the structure of the Agriculture Committee.

Not only did subcommittees emerge during this period but also the orientation of the hearings became increasingly dominated by commodity concerns. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 show that during this period the number of commodity-based hearings by the full committee and its subcommittees exceeds the number of operational hearings by these bodies. Additionally in
comparison with Figures 4.4 and 4.5 the results indicate that there were more commodity-based than operational hearings during the New Deal than at any time in previous years. In sum, the entire focus of committee policy-making shifted to a subcommittee arrangement which was oriented to specific commodities.

It has been argued that the increased amount of turnover on the Agriculture Committee affected committee continuity in terms of membership and policy-making. The newly-elected committee members came from districts in which farm income had markedly decreased during the Depression. Thus, farm members came to Congress ready to enact policy changes to aid the distressed commodities. The incentive to the new majority on the committee was to structure the committee to facilitate these policy changes by establishing formal subcommittees.

The establishment of the subcommittee system was important because it helped to satisfy the committee's internal need for effectiveness and efficiency in policy-making. This division of labor arrangement paved the way for a commodity coalition by essentially parcelling out the policy-making power to subcommittees whose memberships had vested
interests in specific policy areas. In sum, the increased turnover in membership disrupted committee stability and facilitated changes in committee policy-making arrangements.

The Linkage Between Subcommittees and Farm Policy

The third question concerns the relationship between committee policy-making arrangements and farm policy. The basic issue here is that the organization of congressional committees makes a difference both in terms of the decisions made and who benefits therefrom. Based on the literature concerning the effect of agenda structure on policy outcomes, the prediction here is that the establishment of subcommittees was the structural change which enabled committee members to exercise greater control over the farm agenda, and in particular the type of policy solutions formulated.

By encouraging specialization and expertise in various policy areas this system enabled subcommittee members to essentially function as gatekeepers (Denzau and Mackay, 1983) for the full committee. Here, subcommittees can control their portion of the agenda either by the type of bill the subcommittee decides to propose, or even whether or not they
choose to report any bill at all. The shift to a subcommittee system with commodity-based features essentially parcelled out the policy-making power to independent decision-making bodies that formulated policies for specific interests.

The aggregate result of a subcommittee system in which each group actively pursues its own interests would be to greatly augment the farm budget. Given this dynamic, it is anticipated that during the New Deal period farm appropriations will increase faster than in previous years. Figure 4.6 shows agricultural appropriations in terms of the committee report, House floor action, and the final amount enacted into law.

Another way to evaluate changes in farm monies is by analyzing agricultural appropriations as a percent of the total budget as shown by Figure 4.7. Finally, Table 4.1 shows agricultural appropriations in terms of the committee's reaction to USDA estimates and the House's reaction to committee reports from 1933-1950.

Figure 4.6 shows that the patterns for agricultural appropriations as passed by the three bodies are similar, increasing dramatically in association with the New Deal farm policies. From 1934-1937 agricultural
Figure 4.6 USDA Appropriations, 1920-1940

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.
Figure 4.7 USDA Appropriations
As a Percent of the
Total Budget

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.
Table 4.1

Agricultural Appropriations: Increases and Decreases
Over Previous Amount

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Appropriations Committee's Reaction to USDA Request</th>
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<tr>
<td>1933-1950</td>
<td>14 cuts</td>
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<td>4 raises</td>
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<tr>
<th>House Reaction to Agricultural Appropriation Report</th>
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<td>1933-1950</td>
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Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the Congressional Record.

Notes: This table presents the reactions to the appropriations requested by the previous decision-making body at two stages in the appropriations process. Cuts, raises, and constants were evaluated by comparing the USDA estimate to the committee's report to calculate the percent change (positive and negative), and repeating the same procedure for the report to the House bill. Positive percent change indicates a raise, negative percent change indicates a cut, and when the difference between two figures is less than .01, the reaction is coded as a constant (no change).
appropriations increased ten-fold, from approximately $61 million to over $628 million. The data show farm monies initially jumping to an all-time high and then leveling off at a new and higher level. Generally, these patterns for 1920-1940 appear to show two periods of stable or incremental growth in which farm monies which are separated by a number of years in which the amounts appropriated change dramatically. The first period of stable growth (1920-1932) shows monies rising from approximately $31 million to just over $215 million and the second period shows monies in the range of $745 million to $800 million. Dividing these two different levels of funding there is an obvious shift period in which the amounts appropriated jump from $62 million in 1934 to $745 million in 1938.

As mentioned previously, stability is defined here in terms of the overall thrust of a set of programs at a given point in time which can be maintained by various aspects of institutional structure. The results in Figure 4.6 suggest the gently rising changes in the two stable periods are associated with the continuation of the same type of policy. This is in sharp contrast to periods in which policy shifts (e.g. from research and
promotion to agricultural assistance through price supports) which is associated with a large increase in the amounts appropriated. The increases in agricultural monies outlined above suggest that the emergency nature of the situation required an initial step jump in funding, and later the ongoing legislative commitment to maintaining farm income entailed a higher baseline for farm policy.

A second way to evaluate changes in agricultural appropriations is in terms of the relative proportion of the federal budget which is devoted to farm programs. Figure 4.7 shows that farm monies rose significantly from 1934 to 1939 from below 3% to over 18% of the budget. The results show that the proportion of the federal budget devoted to farm programs peaked in 1939 immediately following passage of the A.A.A. of 1938.

Table 4.1 shows appropriations for agriculture in terms of the reaction by the Appropriations Committee to USDA requests and the House’s reaction to Appropriations reports of agricultural funding. From 1933-1950 the Appropriations Committee more frequently cut than raised the requests at a ratio of approximately three to one. This compares to a twelve to one ratio for the 1920’s. During the same period the House raised
the Appropriations Committee's reports eight times, cut them five times, and five times made little or no change.

In terms of a count of cuts and raises the House continued the pattern of the 1920's, i.e. to increase rather than to cut farm monies. Additionally, in terms of non-incremental (greater than 10%) change, the House was three times more likely to raise farm monies as contrasted with a single non-incremental raise made during the 1920's. The results indicate that the Appropriations Committee and the House continued to respond to farm appropriations as discussed in Chapter Three, but overall both groups were more willing to fund agriculture more liberally.

The data show that agricultural appropriations increased significantly during the New Deal period. These results are in line with a large body of historical and economic literature on that historic era which argues that the shift to deficit spending and massive social welfare programs transformed the nation by creating the modern welfare state. Taken on its face these increases appear to be inextricably linked to the New Deal and the bureaucratic growth which accompanied the Roosevelt presidency. The facile explanation implies a sort of "black-box" effect which stresses
exogenous influences or personal characteristics and ignores the policy-making arrangements in Congress which transformed the president's agenda into policy changes. However, the thesis of this study is that one way to understand these policy changes is to examine the manner in which institutional arrangements affect policy outcomes. Indeed, the major point here is that although Roosevelt's New Deal launched the new era in farm policy, the formalization of these programs into the congressional fabric was facilitated by structural changes in Congress.

The central argument in this section is that committee policy-making arrangements matter, and they are linked to the types of policy outputs produced. Roosevelt's election in 1932 is associated with the establishment of formal Agriculture Committee Subcommittees and price supports for commodities. However, Figure 4.6 shows that these changes were not associated with large increases in farm monies. In fact, the amount appropriated for agriculture actually declined in 1934 to approximately $62 million, not surpassing the 1932 (the height of the Depression) level until 1937.

The reason for the lack of increase in agricultural monies in 1933
was that the shift in policy was initiated by the executive during a crisis situation and financed as a loan. That is, the farm programs of 1933 were the product of a single event -- the Great Depression. Initially such programs as price supports and farm mortgage credits were developed as temporary responses to an emergency situation. The A.A.A. of 1933 was not formulated in congressional committee or by the leadership, rather, these farm programs were developed by such men as Harry Hopkins, George Peek, and others who were part of the presidential brain-trust (Irons, 1982).

The funding for the measure was not immediately appropriated by Congress, but instead was budgeted as advances from the Treasury as part of Roosevelt's New Deal. In short, although agricultural monies were increasing, this funding did not pass through the congressional appropriations system (as did the bulk of farm programs in the past) but instead was financed as loans by the executive against the national debt.

The above figures indicate that the major shift in farm monies occurred in 1939 when farm appropriations jumped to over $1.1 billion following passage of the A.A.A. of 1938. As mentioned earlier, the significance of this act is that it was designated as a permanent and comprehensive
program for the adjustment of agricultural production and the maintenance of farm income. The contention here is that the mechanism for this policy shift emanated from the policy-making structure of the Agriculture Committee.

The reasoning is that the early New Deal farm programs were more a product of executive leadership than congressional initiative. Presidential proposals were passed by Congress quickly and easily, as noted above in the example of the emergency banking bill in the beginning of the first session. As such, it is not surprising that presidential policies did not move through Agriculture, but instead were formulated and led by the Roosevelt. Because the early farm programs were the immediate response to an exogenous shock, congressional arrangements followed more slowly. But by the late 1930's the Agriculture Committee moved to incorporate the policy shifts begun by Roosevelt into the focus of the committee's decision-making arrangements.

Based on the research concerning the effect of agenda structure on outcomes, the incentive for farm members was to maintain control of the farm agenda by establishing subcommittees which would have
responsible for formulating commodity-specific legislation. Although it would be desirable to evaluate the committee's policy-making process directly, as mentioned previously, data on committee mark-ups and roll calls is unavailable prior to 1973. However, the committee hearings and the congressional debate over farm programs can give an idea as to the types of structures formulating policy and their relationship to the proposed programs.

Appendix B shows that by 1935 the committee and its subcommittees were meeting on a fairly regular basis to discuss various aspects of price support policy. Table 4.2 shows that in the 74th (1934-1935) House there were six meetings on commodities receiving price supports and in the 75th (1936-1937) House there were three meetings which dealt with aspects of this issue.

The results indicate that regular meetings concerning price support policy began during the late 1930's, declined during the war years, and became a permanent part of the committee's policy-making focus during the post-war period. The congressional debate over the major farm program of 1938 gives an indication of the dynamic behind this process.
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1. Subcommittee-Food Research</td>
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75th Congress (1936-1937)

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<td>4. Subcommittee-Dairy and Insurance*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobey</td>
<td>Kinzer</td>
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Notes: * A commodity receiving price supports

Source: Compiled by the author based on hearings of the United States Committee on Agriculture.
During the debate over the A.A.A. of 1938 members expressed concern over whether the dairy interests were to be included in the program. Mr. Black (D-MI) argued:

... the gentleman knows that the Committee on Agriculture was broken up into subcommittees to consider various phases of this bill. I happen to be on the subcommittee considering milk and dairying, and that is what I am protecting. (C. R. 75th Cong.; 1580).

The data suggest that commodity subcommittees were created to formulate the 1938 legislation, and members were aware that these structures enabled them to control their policy jurisdiction. The implication is that although the New Deal for agriculture began in 1933, the policy shifts were not regularized until 1938. The early New Deal farm programs were the initial reaction to the shock of the Great Depression; and commodity subcommittees were established during succeeding congresses to incorporate this policy shift into the regular policy process. By 1938, hearings by subcommittees over commodity concerns became a normal part of the committee's policy-making arrangements. In sum, the debate suggests that the formalization of the policy shift of 1933 was facilitated by the establishment of commodity-based subcommittees.
Summary

In this chapter the effect of agenda structure on policy outcomes is evaluated in terms of the relationship between economic pressures, congressional policy-making arrangements, and farm policy from 1933-1942. The effect of the Great Depression was to decrease farm income and prices and to increase farm debt. Farmers' dissatisfied with their economic situation turned to such radical groups as the Farmer's Holiday Movement and also created a number of specialized farm lobby organizations. The number of farm lobby groups established since 1865 increased from thirty-five in 1931 to sixty-five by 1942, with over 42% being established during the period from 1933-1942.

The new majority on the Agriculture Committee came to Congress ready to enact policy changes for agriculture. Roosevelt's New Deal for agriculture involved price supports, crop insurance, expanded farm credit, soil conservation, and various programs to aid the rural and urban poor. This new agenda through such mechanisms as price support subsidies directly benefitted farm members and their constituents.

To maintain an ongoing involvement with this agenda farm members
established formal subcommittees which had jurisdiction over particular commodities. This subcommittee system essentially parceled out the policy-making power to subcommittee members who had a vested interest in a particular commodity, thus paving the way for a commodity coalition. An analysis of farm appropriations during this period showed that the aggregate result of a subcommittee system with particularized benefits was to greatly increase the farm budget. The amount appropriated for farm programs during this period increased more than ten-fold, peaking shortly after legislation which institutionalized the shift in farm policy from cooperative marketing to price supports for particular commodities.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the establishment of formal, commodity subcommittees of the Agriculture Committee and the incorporation of the shift in farm policy which occurred during the New Deal period. The Great Depression was an exogenous shock to the farm economy which produced
demands for policy change. Farm group activity and the election of a new Democratic majority helped to transform these economic demands into policy shifts. The new members were eager to enact legislation to increase the prices of farm commodities, and organized the committee to further this objective.

The subcommittee system was useful because it provided a means to handle commodity demands on a regular basis. Members especially interested in a particular commodity obtained membership on that subcommittee and as a result, were intimately involved in formulating policy beneficial to their district's interests. Each subcommittee then developed programs to solve its commodity-specific problems. This arrangement is important because by allowing commodity members to formulate their own policies in specialized commodity subcommittees, reciprocity is fostered among potentially diverse interests. The establishment of formal subcommittees helped to facilitate the integration of commodity-based policy into the congressional system. Agricultural appropriations increased significantly during this period, peaking in 1939 following passage of the A.A.A. of 1938. This legislation forms the
foundation for current farm programs and essentially formalized the shift
to price supports for particular commodities which was begun in 1933.
NOTES


11. Irons, The New Deal Lawyers; McConnell, The Decline of Agrarian Democracy; Kile, The Farm Bureau Through Three Decades; Friedel,
Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal; Talbot and Hadwiger, American Farm Policy; and Fite,
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this analysis the basic concern has been to illustrate the linkage between institutional arrangements and public policy. Specifically, attention has been given to one basic component of institutions -- agenda control processes -- and the effect on public policy. The basic thrust of the thesis was to portray in broad strokes the overall relationship between exogenous pressures, congressional policy-making arrangements, and policy outcomes. The focus here directs attention to the manner in which policy-making arrangements facilitate the translation of political pressure to policy shifts. Indeed, the findings suggest that the ability of the Agriculture Committee to exercise substantial control over the farm agenda has measurable consequences for farm policy. In this chapter this relationship is evaluated over time with especial attention given to the different agenda structures and policy shifts. We begin with a brief summary of the major findings from Chapters Two through Four.
Summary of Major Findings

Chapter Two presents the general assumption throughout the analysis that the state of the farm economy significantly shapes farm politics. That is, downturns in the farm sector are directly related to the preferences of farmers and this is manifested in demands on Congress. The farm depressions of the late nineteenth century resulted in agrarian discontent, which led to such protest activities as the establishment of third party movements and the first farm organizations.

At the same time the overall issue facing the Congress involved how to distribute the federal largesse and expand public services. The reforms to decentralize the appropriations power occurred at a time when the government was running surpluses and reducing the national debt. In short, the structural change to encourage increased expenditures occurred when there was money to expend.

The decentralized system consisted of seven special interest committees, including Agriculture, who were allowed to handle both appropriations and authorizations legislation. The reform of 1860 enhanced the ability of members of Agriculture to increase the farm budget and
expand the scope of farm programs. An analysis of agricultural appropriat
ions indicated that farm monies increased at a faster rate than the total budget, and that these increases vary directly with the shift in farm policy to a focus on research and promotion programs.

Chapter Three shows how economic pressures and the recentralization of the appropriations process affected the policy-making process of the Agriculture Committee, and led to an increase in the number of committee meetings. In 1920 the downturn in the farm economy led to the creation of a loosely integrated farm lobby in Washington. As farm strategy turned to organized pressure by lobby groups, there was an increase of approximately 55% in the number of newly-founded farm lobby groups.

After the appropriations reform the Agriculture Committee was unable to accommodate demands as it had during previous years by simply increasing farm monies. Farm members response to the increased demands was reflected in the increasing the number of hearings on both commodity and operational issues. However, members were unable to translate their increased activity to successful passage of a commodity-oriented farm agenda. The reform had eliminated Agriculture's control over farm monies,
and the incentive to Appropriations was not to increase agricultural appropriations, but to cut them. Additionally, the Republican Administrations throughout the 1920's were hostile to the idea of government sponsored price supports for agriculture.

An analysis of agricultural appropriations indicated that Appropriations did indeed cut USDA requests in keeping with the House's expectation of lower expenditures. In contrast to the 1880-1919 period in which the annual increase in farm monies exceeded that for the total budget 72% of the time, annual increases for agriculture exceeded those for the total budget only 35% of the time from 1920-1933. Thus the rate of growth in farm appropriations had slowed in comparison with the heyday of special interest appropriating committees.

Chapter Four showed how political pressure generated by the Great Depression formalized the push for price supports which began during the 1920's. The Depression affected all commodities simultaneously, creating pressure which united diverse farm interests in support of policy change. The number of newly-founded farm lobby organizations increased over 42% during this period, a majority of which were concerned with
commodity-specific issues.

The new majority on the Agriculture Committee in 1933 who were elected with Roosevelt saw their election as a mandate for policy change and the shift to a subcommittee system helped to pave the way for these changes. The increase in turnover decreased committee stability, which had a direct effect on the continuity of committee norms and decision-making. The result was the establishment of formal subcommittees and by the late 1930's these structures were involved in formulating legislation which regularized the shift to price support programs. An analysis of agricultural appropriations indicated that farm monies rose significantly during this period, reaching their apex following the 1938 act.

Agenda Control and Policy Change From a Diachronic Perspective

This analysis has illustrated the linkage between structure and policy outcomes by pointing to the ways in which agenda structure has influenced farm policy over time. From near monopoly control with large increases in farm appropriations, the Agriculture Committee's agenda power was reduced to a system of shared access with corresponding cuts in farm monies. With the establishment of a formal subcommittee system during the New Deal
years, members were able to regularize the policy shifts begun in 1933.

Up to this point, the linkage between structure and policy has been evaluated cross-sectionally, with the focus of attention in each chapter being the primary agenda and policy shifts which occurred during each period. It is expected that these relationships should also be observable when evaluated over time. From this angle, these changes in agenda control and farm policy appear to resemble three distinct regimes, or agenda control systems.

To evaluate the impact of agenda structure on policy over time, agricultural appropriations were analyzed using piecewise dummy multiple regression with known joint points. This technique was used rather than other time series models such as multiple interrupted time series because the prediction here is that the changes in structure and policy outlined above appear to be essentially three different systems. During each time period one aspect of agenda structure has been identified and is expected to vary directly with the policy changes for that period. For example, it would be unnecessary to evaluate the coefficient for decentralized control during the period of recentralized appropriations. Thus, a model which identifies
period-specific slope and intercept parameters is more appropriate than a model which includes the effects of earlier estimates in the succeeding coefficients.

To correct for years of inflation and deflation, the total amount appropriated for agriculture was adjusted for the price deflator for each year from 1880-1950, excluding 1941-1945. Also, to be able to compare relative changes in appropriations over time, the absolute annual percent change in farm monies was computed over the entire time period. This is necessary because the amounts appropriated in the 1880's are not comparable to the changes in farm monies by the post-World War II era. For example, from 1880 to 1881 the farm budget more than doubled, but this represents a change of only $32,000; whereas from 1938-1939 the farm budget increased one and one-half times the amount for 1938, and this represents approximately $499 million. Evaluating the annual percent change for each year normalizes the figures and permits comparison of the relative change from any given year.

The time series was divided into three periods to evaluate the agenda structure-policy linkage during three different systems.
Period 1: 1880-1920 – monopoly control over the farm agenda in which the incentive to Agriculture was to increase farm monies.

Period 2: 1921-1937 – shared control over the farm agenda in which the incentive to Appropriations was to decrease farm monies.

Period 3: 1938-1950 – shared control over the farm agenda by commodity subcommittees in which the incentive to Agriculture was to maintain the New Deal policy benefits.

The expectation is that during the period of decentralized appropriations and the period of commodity subcommittees the intercept should be positive and significant. During the 1880-1920 period Agriculture had a monopoly over the farm agenda and the incentive was to expand farm programs, thus the expectation is that the level of the time series should be positive during this period. Similarly, during the New Deal period the establishment of commodity subcommittees enabled members to exercise substantial control over the farm agenda, and the incentive was to maintain policy benefits for those commodities. Thus the expectation is that the intercept and slope coefficients for this period should be positive and significant. During the 1920's the recentralization reform reduced the
committee's ability to control the farm agenda, and the incentive for Appropriations was to cut farm monies. Thus the expectation is that both coefficients for the 1921–1937 period should not be significantly different from zero.

The effect of agenda structure on policy was estimated with this equation:

\[ Y_t = b_1X_{1t} + b_2X_{2t} + b_3X_{3t} + b_4X_{4t} + b_5X_{5t} + b_6X_{6t} + e_t; \]

where \( Y_t \) = absolute annual percent change in agricultural appropriations;

\( X_1 \) = a dichotomous variable scored 1 for observations between 1880–1920 and 0 thereafter (intercept);

\( X_2 \) = a counter for years, from 1880–1920 (slope);

\( X_3 \) = a dichotomous variable scored 0 for observations between 1880–1919, 1 between 1921–1937 (intercept);
$x_4$ = a counter for years, from 1921-1937 (slope);

$x_5$ = a dicotomous variable scored 0 for observations between 1880-1937, and 1 between 1938-1950 (intercept);

$x_6$ = a counter for years, from 1938-1950 (slope).

Estimation of the model allows us to examine further the above prediction regarding the effect of agenda structure on policy. Specifically, the prediction is that the intercept for the 1880-1920 and the intercept and the slope coefficients for the New Deal period will be positive and significant and that neither of the coefficients for the 1921-1937 period will be significant. In order to interpret the coefficients directly, the overall intercept for the equation was suppressed.

Analysis

Estimation of the model with generalized least squares yielded the results shown in Table 5.1a. A first-order autoregressive model was used in which $Y = Xb + e$ and $e = pe(t-1) + u$ where $p$ is the autoregressive parameter rho and $u$ is a new independent disturbance. Rho was estimated with a least squares procedure, and to correct for autocorrelation the
estimates were obtained with a Cochrane-Orcutt type iterative procedure. 

As expected the intercepts for the 1880-1920 and the New Deal periods are both positive and significant although the slope coefficients are both negative and not significantly different from zero. The results suggest that the policy shifts of research and promotion during the 1880-1920 period and the 1938-1950 period of commodity subcommittees were accompanied by large jumps in agricultural appropriations.

Interestingly, the slope coefficient for the 1921-1937 period is positive and significant, which suggests that although the recentralization reform dampened the rate of growth in farm monies, the increase during this period is significant. This implies that the Farm Bloc and McNary-Haugen era, which did not initiate a new shift in farm policy, was associated with a significant level of growth in farm programs. These increases vary with the Republican administrations' attempts to deal with the farm crisis by expanding traditional remedies such as credit and marketing facilities.

An additional analysis was performed which included annual
Table 5.1a
Regression of Three Agenda Systems on Agricultural Appropriations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>t-ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1: Intercept for 1880-1920</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>2.66*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2: Slope for 1880-1920</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3: Intercept for 1921-1937</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4: Slope for 1921-1937</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>3.98*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X5: Intercept for 1938-1950</td>
<td>.437</td>
<td>2.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X6: Slope for 1938-1950</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R-Square = .39  
N = 65  
D-W = 1.97

* p < .05

Table 5.1b
Regression of Four Agenda Systems on Agricultural Appropriations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>t-ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1: Intercept for 1880-1886</td>
<td>.380</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2: Slope for 1880-1886</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>-.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3: Intercept for 1887-1920</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>2.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4: Slope for 1887-1920</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X5: Intercept for 1921-1937</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X6: Slope for 1921-1937</td>
<td>.521</td>
<td>3.96*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X7: Intercept for 1938-1950</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>2.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X8: Slope for 1938-1950</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>-1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R-Square = .39  
N = 65  
D-W = 1.94

* p < .05
agricultural appropriations for the years 1921-1937 and the 1938-1950 but
divided the 1860-1920 decentralized system into two periods: (1)
1860-1886 when only Agriculture and Commerce had the right to
appropriate, and (2) 1887-1920 when the system of special interest
appropriating committees became fully decentralized. As above, each of the
four systems was estimated with a period-specific intercept and a
period-specific slope coefficient.

The results for this analysis are given in Table 5.1 and generally
substantiate the results of the general model. Again, the intercept
coefficient for the New Deal period and the slope coefficient for the
recentralized period are both positive and significant. This suggests that
the policy shifts of the New Deal were a step jump above the level funded
during the previous era and that there was some steady and significant
growth in farm programs during the recentralized period.

However dividing the period of decentralized appropriations into two
different systems indicates that large changes in farm monies did not begin
immediately when Agriculture was granted the right to appropriate, but
instead occur during the period from 1887-1920. This is understandable
given that the reform in 1887 fully decentralized the appropriations process, giving seven special interest committees the right to both appropriate and authorize legislation. Under the fully decentralized appropriations system each of the special interest committees had a monopoly over appropriations related to their interest. Members of those committees self-selected themselves based largely on interests in their districts.

The aggregate result for appropriations was that there was little or no constraint on committee members to reduce expenditures. In essence, the decentralized appropriations system produced a situation in which each privileged committee scrambled to get as much money for its programs as possible, albeit within the constraints of the House. For example, since the members of Agriculture know that the Commerce and Naval Fortifications Committees will attempt to increase their own appropriations, Agriculture has an incentive to vote greater increases for agricultural programs. The results in Table 5.1 indicate that these increases are associated with a significant intercept movement of 2.28.

Figure 5.1 shows the change in agricultural appropriations in millions
Figure 5.1 USDA Appropriations 1880-1920

Source: Compiled by the author based on data made available in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.
of dollars over the entire time series. As noted, the amount appropriated
for agriculture climbs dramatically from approximately $26,000 in 1880 to
approximately $30 million by 1919. Thus by the end of that period farm
monies had increased over 1,153 times the amount appropriated in 1880.
Following the recentralization reform farm appropriations increased
steadily but at a slower rate, declining in 1931 as the farm depression
deepened. With the coming of the New Deal agricultural appropriations
increased significantly beginning in 1937 following legislation designed to
establish a permanent program for agricultural assistance, and again in
1939 following legislation to formalize the policy changes of the New Deal.
Thereafter, the amount appropriated for agriculture (after declining o
during World War II) remains at a higher level than previous years and
continues to increase.

In sum, the results indicate that there have been a number of structural
changes in Congress, and they have had an effect on agricultural policy.
These structural shifts clearly do not totally control or dominate but are
related to policy and related in different ways. During the period
1880-1920 the system of decentralized monopoly committees is associated
with a significant increase in expenditures and a surplus of money in the Treasury. From 1921-1937 the recentralization reform reduced the rate of growth in the budget but in agriculture because of exogenous factors, Congress attempted to increase farm monies to deal with the crisis in the agricultural sector. The New Deal for agriculture which began in 1933 was the result of a single event — the Great Depression. The dramatic increase in agricultural appropriations which occurred during this period is associated with the shift to a commodity subcommittee policy-making structure. In sum, both exogenous factors and endogenous structural changes affected farm policy, and these relationships vary over time.

Agricultural Policy 1945–1960

From 1945–1960 agricultural policy was essentially a continuation of the basic ideas and programs of the New Deal. The major programs of the Roosevelt era were expanded (e.g. soil conservation and rural rehabilitation) while some more controversial policies such as resettlement of the rural poor shifted to promotion of farm home mortgages (See Baldwin, 1968). For farm interests the primary issue following World War II was not whether to continue farm subsidies — but at what level. In general,
Democrats favored high, rigid price supports and Republicans favored lower, more flexible and market-oriented levels.\textsuperscript{4}

The structure of the Agriculture Committee remained decentralized along both commodity and operational subcommittee lines. Work by Jones (1961; 1962) analyzes Agriculture's subcommittee system during the 1950's. Essentially this research supports the contention in this analysis that the subcommittee structure was an important mechanism for enabling members to formulate policy beneficial to their districts interests. Jones also shows the manner in which various intra-committee mechanisms (e.g. omnibus bills) are developed in order to reach agreement on commodity programs.

A secondary issue during this period was the soon-to-be controversial food stamp program, which began to consume an increasingly larger portion of the USDA budget. With reapportionment reducing the number of rural districts in the House to a distinct minority, by the 1960's farm districts became increasingly unrepresentative of the majority of House districts. Work by Ferejohn (1984) and Ripley (1968) argues that the inclusion of such redistributive programs as Food Stamps in the agricultural appropriations
omnibus bills had an effect on the ability of farm members to ensure successful passage of the farm agenda on the House floor. Essentially, farm members saw the inclusion of food stamp funding in the agricultural appropriations bills as crucial to obtaining the support of Northern Democrats from urban areas. In sum, with minor modifications the shift in farm policy and structure which began during the New Deal continued through the post-war period and remains the foundation for farm policy-making today.

Epilogue

This study addresses the manner in which one important facet of congressional decision-making -- agenda structure -- over time influences policy change. Beginning with Woodrow Wilson's *Congressional Government* (1885) an implicit assumption regarding institutional arrangements and decision-making processes has been widely held by congressional scholars. Over the last decade this linkage has been formalized in the research of Ferejohn (1974), Shepsle (1978; Shepsle and Weingast, 1981) and others (Ostrom, 1980). Additional studies, although not in the social choice school have pointed to the importance of congressional structure on policy
decisions (Orfield, 1975; Cooper, 1975; 1978).

While considerable research examines these factors in the contemporary period, this analysis explores this relationship over time using a framework based on the social choice research of Kenneth Shepsle. Here, I have assumed that individuals will attempt to maximize their utility, but it is important to note that this thesis has assumed individual preferences, not shown which preferences were being maximized. Specifically, it is asserted that institutional arrangements have a significant role in producing policy outcomes by constraining or enhancing the shape of the policy agenda. The relationship between these factors is important for two reasons: (1) the normative considerations of democratic theory, and (2) the empirical research on congressional structure and public policy.

First, the relationship between institutional structure and public policy is significant because the effect of rules and structures is often not neutral; rather, favoring some interests over others and thus some policy outcomes over others. Indeed, the thrust of the social choice school of thought is that no particular outcome is likely under democratic majority
rule system. The absence of political equilibria means that the outcomes may depend in part on institutional structure or some sort of concentration of power (e.g. a dictator) which is in conflict with democratic ideals. The advantage given to individuals who are able to control the policy agenda means that political outcomes may not satisfy the democratic criteria of justice and representation in decision-making. Thus, a profoundly important question about structure and congressional outputs is whether these arrangements are capable of achieving such basic normative ideals as participation, liberty, and equality.

Second, in terms of the linkage between structure and policy, the recent reforms in the U.S. House have generated a large amount of scholarly output (see Dodd and Oppenheimer, 1978; 1981; 1985; and Mann and Ornstein, 1981 for a review) and controversy over the consequences of those structural changes. While we have a basic sense of the effects of the reforms which occurred during the 1970's, it is surprising that we know very little about the effects of other great changes in the congressional structure. Indeed, there are few explicit studies of the effects of such changes over time. The point is that if we are to both understand why
structural reforms occur and what effect they have on public policy it is necessary to examine the full range of congressional reforms.

A number of different questions to be investigated stand out. The reforms of 1880-1885 and 1919-1920 involved a number of different committees as well as the party leadership. How did these reforms affect the prerogatives of party and committee leaders? In turn, how did the 1910-1911 decision to strip the Speaker's powers affect the committees' decisions?

This research has made one small step in the direction of understanding the policy consequences of structural reforms by exploring the interaction between House structure and farm policy from 1862-1942. In general, the analysis suggests that when the economic climate is depressed, people will demand some type of policy change. Sometimes these demands are accommodated by changes in structure, sometimes by appropriating more money for public programs. These exogenous demands, structural shifts, and policy changes are all tied together, and they are linked in different ways over time.

Prior to the decentralized appropriations system the exogenous
conditions were such that the industrial capacity of the United States was rapidly expanding while the government was running surpluses and the public debt was low. The House responded to this situation by creating a decentralized appropriations system in which the incentive to members was to increase appropriations. The budget deficits and national debt which occurred following World War I generated demands for greater control over expenditures and retrenchment in government spending. Recentralizing the appropriations system was the House's answer to balancing the budget, and the incentive to Appropriations was to decrease expenditures. The policy changes of Roosevelt's New Deal were the product of the Great Depression and its effect on the American economy. The Agriculture Committee responded by creating commodity subcommittees to formalize the policy shifts initiated in 1933 and the incentive to members of the new majority was to fund programs at a higher level than in previous years. In sum, both exogenous factors and endogenous structural changes have influenced farm policy and the manner in which they are related has varied over time.

In general the unique contribution of this research lies in the explicit union of the principles of social choice theory to an empirical analysis of
the way agenda structure influences policy change. The overall results indicate that institutional arrangements are indeed one component of policy shifts, and that these structures make a difference in terms of the policy choices selected and who benefits.

More specifically, the analysis has pointed to the endogenous arrangements in Congress which facilitated the shift in farm policy during the late nineteenth century-early twentieth century, which included the so-called "golden age of agriculture" (Fite, 1964). While most of the literature on agricultural policy focuses on the technological and scientific advances which transformed agriculture from a subsistence to a cash crop economy, this study has sought to place these developments into a theoretical and historical perspective which explicitly addresses the unique role of government in advancing farm policy.

Additionally, this research has attempted to call attention to the crucial role of the 1920's farm protests in placing the concept of price supports for commodities on the legislative agenda long before the Roosevelt Revolution of the 1930's. The "sectional rivalries" which led to the demise of the Farm Bloc and McNary-Haugen movements were the first
steps in the drive to establish a fixed price ratio for farm commodities -- what later would be known (during the New Deal) as commodity price support legislation.

This research also illustrates the role that commodity subcommittees played in formalizing these policy shifts. Indeed, if we are able to understand one of the most significant policy revolutions of the twentieth century -- the New Deal -- it is essential to link these policy shifts to the legislative arrangements which facilitated them. While political scientists have long been concerned with various aspects of congressional committees in the post World War II era, this analysis traces the structure of one committee over time, and attempts to assess the linkages between committee and subcommittee structure and public policy. Future research might profitably be directed at uncovering the evolution of the subcommittee system for other congressional committees as well as investigating the dynamics among subcommittees and their relationship to policy outcomes.
NOTES


2. During World War II large changes in agricultural appropriations are observable (e.g. over $500 million) but for World War I the changes are marginal (e.g. $2 million).


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Appendix A - Information on Congressional Subcommittees

Obtaining data on the evolution of subcommittees is not an easy task. No single, comprehensive source lists this information. Consequently, the only way to collect this data is to refer to several reference books and the annual hearings of the appropriate committee.

From 1971 to the present, I used the Congressional Directory to obtain a listing of subcommittees and their members. However, the Directory's information on subcommittees ends in 1971, therefore I had to use the Congressional Staff Directory for the period from 1971 to 1957. Unfortunately, the Staff Directory ends in 1957, so I referred to the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Documents for the period covering 1957 to 1951. This is a reference book, however, which only indexes each published hearing by a reference number. After these reference numbers are collected, they must be matched with the respective number on microfilm. This must be repeated for each hearing in each Congress of interest. Because there are many hearings (by different committees) listed on each microfilm, I scanned the entire microfilm in order to find the beginning of the appropriate hearing. Only then could I obtain a listing of the name of the subcommittee, its members, and the subject matter of the hearing from the initial page of the hearing.

Unfortunately, not all U.S. government depository libraries have complete holdings of congressional hearings, therefore I resorted to another depository library, and another reference system. The next available reference book is the Congressional Information Service's Index to Congressional Committee Hearings, which covers the period from 1950 to 1934. The CIS Index references hearings in a manner similar to that of the Monthly Catalog. That is, annual listings of committee hearings by year and by committee, which must be located on microfiche from the index number. The microfiche card had to be inspected to find the beginning of each hearing, as there are often several hearings by
different committees on one card. However, this index ends in 1934, and I then had to refer to the Index of Congressional Committee Hearings by Greenwood, and the Shelflist of Congressional Committee Hearings Prior to 1935.

The Shelflist and the Index supplement cover the period from 1959-1930, the Shelflist being a later addendum to the Index. Both sources list congressional hearings, however, not all hearings have been cataloged and printed. In other words, not all hearings are indexed and available on microfiche. This is important because microfiche is the most commonly used medium, as very few libraries outside of Washington, D.C. carry the paper copy of the documents. Because these books list the hearings annually, I had to look through the entire listing to find the reference number for each hearing. Once these numbers have been obtained, they can be matched with the same number on the microfiche card, and the same procedure as outlined above was repeated. The information in the Shelflist is spotty however, as not all the hearings have been cataloged. As a result, the Shelflist does not give a complete listing of the pre-1935 hearings, and no reference book exists to locate these uncataloged hearings.

Luckily, I was able to work with some helpful people at the Houston Public Library, which has been a U.S. government depository library since 1895. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Blaine Davis of that facility, who located all the microfiche cards for the hearings prior to 1931 which the library had in stock. As no reference book whatsoever exists to find the appropriate index number, or even the appropriate year, I had to evaluate each microfiche card separately to discover the early subcommittee structure. In short, the collection of data on subcommittees is a difficult and time consuming task. Hopefully, in the future research services will catalog these earlier hearings, and modernize the current reference system, which at present poses innumerable obstacles to researchers interested in the origins and structure of congressional committees.
### Appendix B

Hearings by the Subcommittees and Full Committee of the United States Committee on Agriculture

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<thead>
<tr>
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Full Committee - Appropriations
Full Committee - Cattle tick
Full Committee - Reservoir and irrigation
Full Committee - Beer
Full Committee - Fruit fly
Full Committee - Cotton, standard grades
Full Committee - Postal roads
Full Committee - Iowa corn clubs
Full Committee - Nursery stock
Full Committee - Division of markets
Full Committee - Horticulture
Full Committee - National Old Trails Road
Full Committee - Vocational education
Full Committee - Cooperative land-mortgage banks
Subcommittee - Margarine
Subcommittee - Highways
Subcommittee - Commodity Futures

63rd
(1913-1915)
Full Committee - Lever Extension bill
Full Committee - Cattle, quarantine
Full Committee - Corn clubs
Full Committee - Cattle importation
Full Committee - Bureau of Animal Industry employees
Subcommittee - Cotton and grain standards
Subcommittee - Hog diseases

64th
(1915-1917)
Full Committee - Denatured alcohol
Full Committee - Consolidation forest lands
Full Committee - Appropriations
Full Committee - Warehouse and grain standards
Full Committee - Citrus diseases
Full Committee - Cattle

65th
(1917-1919)
Full Committee - Naval stores
Full Committee - Georgia experiment station
Full Committee - Federal dog tax, predatory animals
Full Committee - Conservation of food and feeds
Full Committee - Livestock diseases
Full Committee - Spring wheat
Full Committee - Seed grain and feed
Full Committee - Appropriations
Full Committee - Rural sanitation
Full Committee - Wheat prices
Full Committee - Food production and distribution

66th Full Committee - Extension Food Control Act
(1919-1921)

Full Committee - Cotton crop report, liquor exportation
Full Committee - Amendments to Food and Drug Act
Full Committee - Amendments to Warehouse Act
Full Committee - Agricultural conference
Full Committee - Poultry conference
Full Committee - Marketing farm products
Full Committee - Forestry
Full Committee - Sugar
Full Committee - Farm relief, meat industry
Full Committee - Livestock products
Full Committee - Sugar legislation
Full Committee - Loans for seeds
Full Committee - High cost of living
Full Committee - Grazing fees
Full Committee - Repeal war-time prohibition
Full Committee - Cotton seed
Full Committee - Cold storage
Full Committee - Commodity futures

67th Full Committee - Forest lands
(1921-1923)

Full Committee - Free seeds
Full Committee - Game sanctuary
Full Committee - Grades for spring wheat
Full Committee - Stabilizing farm products
Full Committee - House resolution on sugar bill
Full Committee - Transfer bureaus, seed purchases
Full Committee - Agricultural conference
Full Committee - Futures trading, grain
Full Committee - Meat packers
Full Committee - Wheat crop of 1917
Full Committee - Soldiers' Institute
Full Committee - Filled Milk
Full Committee - Forestry
Full Committee - Purchase of forest lands
Full Committee - Agricultural experiment stations
Full Committee - Warehouse bill
Full Committee - Use of aircraft
Full Committee - Cotton futures
Full Committee - Migratory birds
Full Committee - USDA recommendations
Full Committee - Lamborn sugar resolution
Full Committee - Packer amendments
Full Committee - Grain Futures Act
Full Committee - Purchase seed grain
Full Committee - Cotton standards
Full Committee - USDA salaries
Full Committee - Oleomargarine
Full Committee - Fertilizer
Full Committee - Naval stores
Full Committee - Slack packaging
Full Committee - Cold storage
Full Committee - Ex-servicemen

68th Full Committee - McNary-Haugen bill (1923-1925)

Full Committee - Diversification loan bill
Full Committee - Langley free seed bill
Full Committee - Arboretum
Full Committee - USDA bills
Full Committee - Packer Act Amendments
Full Committee - Reforestation
Full Committee - Forest lands
Full Committee - Seed quality and variety
Full Committee - Grazing fees
Full Committee - Agricultural relief
Full Committee - Swank Warehouse Bill
Full Committee - Haugen Slack Packaging Bill
Full Committee - Purnell Agricultural Experiment Station Bill
Full Committee - Ketcham Foreign Crop Marketing Bill
Full Committee - Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge
Full Committee - Swank Cotton Crop Reports Bill
Full Committee - Bureau of Dairying
Full Committee - Bread Bill
Full Committee - Norris-Sinclair Marketing Bill
Full Committee - Wheat prices, 1917-1919
Full Committee - Little Wheat Export Bill
Full Committee - Aswell Agricultural Extension Bill
Full Committee - New Mexico relief
Full Committee - Oklahoma relief
Full Committee - Migratory Bird Refuge Act
Full Committee - Alaska Game Act
Full Committee - Curtis-Aswell Cooperative Marketing Bill
Full Committee - Dam at Cass Lake, M.N.

69th
Full Committee - Cooperative Marketing Division
(1925-1927)
Full Committee - McNary-Woodruff Watersheds Bill
Full Committee - Prevent discrimination by boards of trade
Full Committee - Regulate importation of milk and cream
Full Committee - Tobacco statistics
Full Committee - Bread bill
Full Committee - Forest experiment stations
Full Committee - Miscellaneous farm bills
Full Committee - Produce merchants
Full Committee - Agricultural relief
Full Committee - National forests
Full Committee - National arboretum
Full Committee - Cass Lake
Full Committee - Migratory birds
Full Committee - Mandan experiment station
Full Committee - Plant and animal diseases
Full Committee - Watson sugar claim
70th Full Committee - Grain Standards Act Amendments (1927-1929)
Full Committee - Packer and Stockyards Act Amendments
Full Committee - Crop failure areas
Full Committee - Cotton standardization
Full Committee - Warehouse Act Amendments
Full Committee - Perishable farm commodities
Full Committee - Farm Products Research Bill of 1890
Full Committee - Beal nursery
Full Committee - Migratory bird refuge
Full Committee - Musk Oxen
Full Committee - Winter elk refuges
Full Committee - Washington lands
Full Committee - Alaska game laws
Full Committee - American Samoa experiment station
Full Committee - Oleomargarine
Full Committee - Flood relief, New York state
Full Committee - Food and Drug Act Amendments
Full Committee - County agents
Full Committee - Experiment station
Full Committee - Poultry
Full Committee - Agricultural extension work
Full Committee - USDA employees, wool standards
Full Committee - Agricultural relief
Full Committee - Crop prices predictions
Full Committee - European corn borer
Full Committee - Migratory Bird Refuge
Full Committee - Reforestation
Full Committee - Miscellaneous farm bills
Full Committee - Bollworm eradication
Full Committee - County agents
Full Committee - Amend 1884 Act for livestock
Full Committee - Game preserve
Full Committee - Regulating cotton exchanges
Full Committee - Grain Standards Act Amendments
Full Committee - Alaska-Hawaii farm programs
Full Committee - Grain Futures Act Amendments

71st Full Committee - Protein content of wheat
(1929-1931)

Full Committee - Fruit fly
Full Committee - Migratory Birds Act Amendments
Full Committee - Miscellaneous farm bills
Full Committee - Conservation of soil and wildlife
Full Committee - Perishable agricultural commodities
Full Committee - Loans to flood areas
Full Committee - Forest fire protection
Full Committee - Inspection, grades of canned goods
Full Committee - Regulate cotton exchanges
Full Committee - Drought and storm relief
Full Committee - American eagle protection
Full Committee - Control predatory animals
Full Committee - Standards for preserves
Full Committee - Agricultural Marketing Act
Full Committee - Cotton classification
Full Committee - Commodity exchanges
Full Committee - Cherries
Full Committee - Game commission
Full Committee - Cotton seed
Full Committee - National forest usage
Full Committee - Engineering experiment stations
Full Committee - Forest products
Full Committee - Agricultural waste products
Full Committee - Agricultural relief

72nd Full Committee - Program of farm organizations
(1931-1933)

Full Committee - Swank Agricultural Bill
Full Committee - Agricultural credits corporation
Full Committee - Commodity sales
Full Committee - Farm marketing program
Full Committee - Appeal by A.F.B.F. on marketing program
Full Committee - Agricultural Adjustment Program
Full Committee - Cotton distribution
Full Committee - Grasshopper control
Full Committee - Farm loans
Full Committee - Wheat distribution
Full Committee - Rehabilitation storm areas
Full Committee - Conservation wildlife
Full Committee - Livestock marketing
Subcommittee - National forests
Subcommittee - Dairy products
Subcommittee - Miscellaneous farm bills

73rd (1933-1934)
Full Committee - Growers' cooperative markets
Full Committee - Crop loans
Full Committee - Farm mortgage relief
Full Committee - Federal Farm Mortgage Corporation
Full Committee - Cattle
Full Committee - Sugar
Full Committee - Cattle under the A.A.A.
Full Committee - Sugar under the A.A.A.
Full Committee - Cotton Control Act
Full Committee - Grain exchanges
Subcommittee - Freemont National Forests
Subcommittee - Migratory bird stamp
Subcommittee - Processing taxes
Subcommittee - Packers and Stockyards Act Amendment
Subcommittee - Kerr Tobacco Act
Subcommittee - Farm products

74th (1935-1936)
Full Committee - Tobacco agreements
Full Committee - Rice program
Full Committee - Cotton Control Act Amendment
Full Committee - Cooperative extension work and research
Full Committee - Credit
Full Committee - Farm Credit Act of 1935
Full Committee - Regulation of commodity exchanges
Full Committee - Agricultural extension and experimentation
Full Committee - Farm mortgages
Full Committee - Farm Credit Act of 1937
Full Committee - Commodity exchanges
Subcommittee - National Food Research Commission
Subcommittee - Potatoes, A.A.A.
Subcommittee - Wheat losses
Subcommittee - Oleomargarine
Subcommittee - Forest lands

75th Full Committee - Surplus commodities
(1937-1938)
Full Committee - Farm credit
Full Committee - General farm legislation
Subcommittee - Tax refunds
Subcommittee - Federal Seed Act
Subcommittee - Federal Crop Insurance
Subcommittee - Sugar

76th Full Committee - Dairy products
(1939-1940)
Full Committee - Seed Act
Full Committee - Cotton crop reports
Full Committee - Sugar legislation
Full Committee - Rice
Full Committee - Farm Tenant Act
Full Committee - Farm credit
Full Committee - Marketing agreements
Full Committee - General farm program
Subcommittee - Packers and Stockyards Act Amendment
Subcommittee - Miscellaneous farm bills
Subcommittee - Miscellaneous farm bills

77th Full Committee - Relief agricultural producers
(1941-1942)
Full Committee - Parity loans
Full Committee - Rubber plants
Full Committee - Pulp wood
Full Committee - 4-H clubs
Full Committee - Farm Credit Act of 1941
Full Committee - Marketing farm commodities
Full Committee - Farm labor
Subcommittee - Peanut quotas

78th Full Committee - Cattle
(1943-1944)
  Full Committee - Fruit
  Full Committee - Forestry
  Full Committee - Agricultural conference
  Full Committee - Rural electrification
  Full Committee - Credit
  Full Committee - Oleomargarine
  Full Committee - Conservation
  Subcommittee - Farm Security Administration
  Subcommittee - Wool

79th Full Committee - Marketing orders and agreements
(1945-1946)
  Full Committee - Grain
  Full Committee - School Lunch Act
  Full Committee - Agricultural credit
  Full Committee - Nuts, foodstuffs
  Full Committee - Wool
  Full Committee - Agricultural Credit Act
  Full Committee - Credit
  Full Committee - Agricultural research
  Full Committee - Cooperative extension work
  Full Committee - Conservation wildlife
  Full Committee - Wildlife refuge
  Full Committee - Weather station
  Full Committee - Pesticides
  Subcommittee - Strawberries
  Subcommittee - Sugar
  Subcommittee - Cotton

80th Full Committee - Farm labor
(1947-1948)
  Full Committee - Federal meat inspection
  Full Committee - Potato and tomato diseases
  Full Committee - Farm credit
  Full Committee - Crop insurance
  Full Committee - Plant Quarantine Act Amendment
  Full Committee - Price support policy
Full Committee - Commissioner loans  
Full Committee - Farm machinery  
Full Committee - Rural rehabilitation funds  
Full Committee - Sugar Act of 1948  
Full Committee - Eradicate cattle disease  
Full Committee - Long range farm program  
Full Committee - Oleomargarine  
Full Committee - Wool  
Full Committee - Alcohol plants  
Full Committee - Foreign agricultural labor  
Subcommittee - Fur-bearing animals  
Subcommittee - Food shortages  
Subcommittee - Fertilizer  
Subcommittee - Pesticides  
Subcommittee - Extend production control acts  
Subcommittee - Long range farm policy - by region  
Subcommittee - Fertilizer surpluses  
Subcommittee - Tobacco  
Subcommittee - Cotton  
Subcommittee - Potato surpluses  

81st Full Committee - Federal agricultural research (1949-1950)  
Full Committee - Milk price supports  
Full Committee - Rice quotas  
Subcommittee - General farm program  
Subcommittee - Fertilizer and machinery  
Subcommittee - Agricultural Act of 1948  
Subcommittee - Farm labor  
Subcommittee - Pests  
Subcommittee - Federal land banks  
Subcommittee - Forest Service  
Subcommittee - Cotton  
Subcommittee - Forestry  
Subcommittee - Rural telephone  
Subcommittee - Miscellaneous farm bills  
Subcommittee - Arid lands  
Subcommittee - Potato quotas  
Subcommittee - Livestock diseases
82nd Full Committee – Credit, income
(1951–1952)
  Full Committee – Farm labor
  Full Committee – Impact of war on agriculture
  Full Committee – Beef prices
  Full Committee – Peanut quotas
  Full Committee – Sugar Act of 1948
  Full Committee – Cotton crop
  Full Committee – USDA reorganization
  Subcommittee – Fertilizer and machinery
  Subcommittee – Soil conservation
  Subcommittee – Forestry
83rd Full Committee – Wheat quotas
(1953–1954)
  Full Committee – Commodity Exchange Act
  Full Committee – Coffee
  Full Committee – Foreign Agricultural Service
  Full Committee – Research contracts
  Full Committee – Feed grain sales
  Full Committee – Wool program
  Full Committee – Miscellaneous farm bills
  Full Committee – Farm credit
  Full Committee – Long range farm program
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  Full Committee – Cotton
  Full Committee – Crop insurance
  Full Committee – Conservation and watersheds
  Full Committee – Drought policy
  Full Committee – Farm Credit Act of 1953
  Full Committee – Forestry
  Full Committee – Tobacco
  Full Committee – Extension Service consolidation
  Full Committee – Famine relief
  Full Committee – Amend 1949 act to include potatoes
  Subcommittee – Agricultural policy
  Subcommittee – Winterpeas
  Subcommittee – Corn
  Subcommittee – Dairy
Subcommittee - Livestock
Subcommittee - Fertilizer and machinery

84th (1955-1956)
Full Committee - General farm legislation
Full Committee - Great Plains conservation program
Full Committee - General farm legislation
Full Committee - Soil Bank Amendment
Subcommittee - Family farms
Subcommittee - Futures trading
Subcommittee - Dairy
Subcommittee - Conservation and credit
Subcommittee - Cotton
Subcommittee - Livestock and feed grains
Subcommittee - Wheat
Subcommittee - Tobacco
Subcommittee - Forestry
Subcommittee - USDA and crop insurance
Subcommittee - Pests
Subcommittee - Rice
Subcommittee - Equipment and labor

85th (1957-1958)
Full Committee - Alcohol
Full Committee - Extend P.L. 480
Full Committee - Family farms
Subcommittee - Consumers' study
Subcommittee - Livestock and feed grains
Subcommittee - USDA and crop insurance
Subcommittee - Tobacco
Subcommittee - Wheat
Subcommittee - Cotton
Subcommittee - Dairy
Subcommittee - Domestic marketing
Subcommittee - Conservation and credit
Subcommittee - Family farms
Subcommittee - Poultry
Subcommittee - Research and extension
Subcommittee - Rice
Subcommittee - Peanuts
Subcommittee - Equipment and labor
Subcommittee - Foreign agricultural relations
86th (1959-1960) Subcommittee - Cotton
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Subcommittee - Livestock and feed grains
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Subcommittee - Tobacco
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Subcommittee - Peanuts
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Subcommittee - USDA oversight and consumer relations
Subcommittee - Domestic marketing
Subcommittee - Equipment and labor
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