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ALTERNATIVE ANALYSES OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN
URBAN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Alternative Analyses of Political Representation in

Urban Congressional Districts

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This dissertation critically examines the processes and outcomes of the representative-constituency relationship within urban congressional districts in the United States. In each of the dissertation's three essays, the project addresses the following claims: 1) studies of representation within a political jurisdiction may be more robustly addressed through analyses of a variety of tools that members use to foster relationships with their constituencies; 2) members who represent racial and ethnic minorities and other politically marginalized or vulnerable constituencies utilize a number of these tools of representation to develop and maintain relationships with their constituencies; and 3) the study of representation in the U.S. is intrinsically linked to conceptual and physical spatial elements that define the parameters of political behavior toward particular constituents or communities. The project incorporates data from a variety of sources including participant observation and interviews of congressional staff as well as congressional hearings, appropriations earmarks, and census data to substantiate both the overall claims as well as specific conclusions posed within each essay.

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Introduction

Hanna Pitkin, in her seminal work on representation, defined representation as “making present again” (1967, at 8). In the political context, the agent of representation is a member of society who assesses the interests and identity politics of his or her fellow members of society, considers them along with his or her own political perspectives, and takes stands on issues relative to these diverse interests. Indeed, the fundamental aspect of the representative-constituent relationship is the process by which the representative “re-presents” his or her constituent’s varied interests in a political institution. The dissertation presented addresses this broad subject in a manner tailored to study specific circumstances examining the methods which political representatives use to serve their diverse constituencies in bounded space.

The three articles that comprise this dissertation are disparate in content and design, but all address three main claims:

1) Studies of representation within a political jurisdiction may be more robustly addressed through analyses of a variety of tools – policy making, constituent services, and distributive politics – that members use to foster relationships with their constituencies;

2) Members who represent racial and ethnic minorities and politically marginalized or vulnerable constituencies – such as immigrants or economically-distressed individuals – utilize a number of these tools of representation to develop and maintain relationships with their constituencies; and

3) The study of representation in the U.S. is intrinsically linked to spatial elements (conceptual and physical) that define the parameters of political behavior toward particular constituents or communities.

Together, these three claims shape the present body of work as one which critically examines the processes and outcomes of the representative-constituency relationship within urban congressional districts in the United States.

The articles themselves address each of these claims from very different aspects, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze disparate sources of data through the lens of politics, geography, sociology, and racial and ethnic studies.

- The first article, “Political Representation in 3D: An Assessment of District Level Political Representation Using Rehfeld’s Schematic Conceptual Space,” adopts a three-dimensional schema of political representation put forth by political theorist Andrew Rehfeld (2009) to assess representational styles among members of Congress and their staff in six urban congressional districts.
- The second article, “Rockin’ the Suburbs?: An Examination into the Distribution of Appropriations Earmarks Among Urban and Suburban Municipalities,” probes the representative-constituent relationship via an intermediate geography—the municipality—to determine the influence that municipalities’ demographic and socioeconomic characteristics have with regard to the federal appropriations they receive.
- The third article, “A Tale of Two Issues: The Relationship between Congressional Oversight and Constituent Casework on Immigration and Foreclosure Prevention in Urban Congressional Districts,” investigates the outside influence that institutional

actions and non-actions can have on a representative-constituent relationship at the local level, particularly when addressing policy outcomes disproportionately affecting their communities.

Motivations for project

The impetus for this multifaceted project stems from a broader dialogue on the distribution of political power within a state and the behavior of its political actors. The study of political power and representation are inextricably linked. Nancy Schwartz referenced political scientist Heinz Eulau's work when she wrote "A society that does not explicitly theorize about power cannot explicitly theorize about representation" (Schwartz 1988, at 23). Much of the contentiousness of political power within a state falls along the fault lines of ingroups – who traditionally wield a large proportion of political and social power in a community – and outgroups – who tend to have less agency and power in comparison (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). In the American case, the ingroup-outgroup dichotomy often encompasses racial and ethnic divisions (Smith 1991; Haney-Lopez 1996; Jacobson 1998).

My primary goal in this project was to weave together a study of how political elites in the U.S. utilize political power with an examination of the treatment of individuals and groups who have traditionally held less agency in the political process. In my estimation, the most appropriate approach to this goal was through an analysis of political representation. Additionally, the selection of the geographic area studied, urban congressional districts, was specifically made in an attempt to more closely examine how members who represent these districts attempt to meet the needs of racial and ethnic

minorities, lower-income individuals, and immigrant populations, all of whom reside within these particular geographic spaces.

My interest does not end at this juncture, but permeates through how such styles of governance manifest themselves in the behavior of the governed. Representatives are posed with a myriad of choices regarding how they carry out their vast responsibilities. The nature of representatives' political behavior, and the broader representative-constituent relationship, lends itself to a study that examines this topic from multiple approaches. The following sections address the main claims of this dissertation in more detail, explaining how each article speaks to these claims.

Alternative analyses of methods of representation

Members are not one-dimensional voting creatures and, likewise, the process of representation does not revolve entirely around the legislative body. In fact, scholars of politics have identified several manners in which members can serve their constituents (Eulau and Karps 1977; Jewell 1983). Some of these other approaches include allocations of federal funds through earmarked appropriations and service to constituents on the local level through assistance with problems involving federal agencies. Members readily use not only policy stances – through bill sponsorship and roll call voting – but also other tools described to meet the needs of their constituencies and both gain and maintain their support.

One of my primary contentions throughout this project is that the process and outcomes of political representation within a given jurisdiction may be best understood through a robust examination into the various tools that members use to serve their

diverse constituencies. For example, minorities, and individuals of lower socioeconomic status, who frequently reside within major metropolitan areas, view the distributive and social worker aspects of a representative often greater than the policymaking aspect (Tate 2003; Griffin and Flavin 2010; Thomas 1992). Yet, frequently in empirical studies of representation, it is the representational tool of policymaking that is a primary focus. A handful of studies in recent years have taken a more nuanced approach to assessing how different methods of representation affect particular populations (for example, Grose 2011; Minta 2009), and my project fits squarely within this camp.

In the three articles presented, I scrutinize how members and their staff use methods of representation outside of the traditional policymaking realm to foster relationships with their constituencies.

- In the first article, the project is focused on explaining district level behavior through the lens of Rehfeld's novel three-dimensional schema. I use data from interviews, participant observation, and local newspaper articles to assess the strategies of members and their staff when conducting constituent services in the home district.
- The second article explores members' earmark distributions via an analysis of municipal categorizations, categories first organized by social demographer Myron Orfield (2002). Colloquially termed “bringing home the bacon,” earmarked federal appropriations for local public and private projects are commonly utilized by members as a way to both provide services to diverse constituencies and gain notoriety in the community for delivering needed resources.

- The third article returns to the home district, but specifically examines constituent casework related to two contentious contemporary issues: federally-backed mortgage modifications and immigration and naturalization processing. The article analyzes the behavior of members and staff in light of systemic failures in the oversight process that set the scope of remedies for aggrieved individuals and also the mood of political efficacy with regard to district staff.

Representation of vulnerable and historically marginalized constituencies

The current project seeks to reexamine how political elites respond to the needs of vulnerable and historically-marginalized populations. I argue that by focusing our attention as political scientists in the American case on acts of representation related solely to policymaking and reelection efforts, we undervalue other acts of representation that are, arguably equally important vehicles for providing goods and services to particular populations. Actions such as distributive and service oriented methods have been shown to garner support from racial and ethnic minorities as well as those with fewer financial means. Descriptive representation of historically-marginalized populations, particularly racial and ethnic minorities, has been discussed in the literature as a possible method for strengthening substantive political representation among individuals within these groups. The rationale for this stems from a sense of political trust that can be fostered between constituents at the outskirts and representatives who share certain significant attributes (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Grose 2011; Tate 2003), perhaps based on a linked fate between the parties (Dawson 1994).

The articles that follow return, in one form or another, to one point: assessing the process and outcomes of representation for traditionally marginalized and vulnerable populations.

- In the first article, I conduct an in-depth examination of the political behavior of members of Congress and their staff in six congressional districts, which vary in demographic and socioeconomic composition. The members and staff themselves reflect this diversity. Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses I conduct categorize the behavior of descriptive and other representatives in serving their diverse constituencies.
- The second article makes use of a suburban typology devised by social demographer Myron Orfield to probe the little researched disparities among suburbs in major metropolitan regions. With so much scholarly emphasis in the past 50 years placed on the city-suburb divide, scant attention has been paid to the political ramifications of shifting demographics among inner-ring suburbs, in which the majority of residents in or near poverty now reside (Allard and Roth 2010). The article examines how these at-risk suburbs, in conjunction with more affluent areas and central cities, fare in the distribution of earmarks to local public and private entities.
- The third article analyzes the relationship between congressional oversight in the legislative body and political behavior in congressional districts via casework on two policy issues that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations: federally-backed mortgage modification initiatives and immigration and naturalization processing. The analysis exposes a process by which congressional staff attempt to

secure remedies to their distressed constituents on issues of federal concern, even as the larger legislative body may not be able to produce systemic changes.

Spatial elements of political representation

The origins of connections in the American case between geography and representation span as far back as the founding. James Madison, in *Federalist 55* through *58* explained the rationale behind the proposed structure of the lower and upper chambers of the legislative body, justifying the manner through which each chamber would be able to account for the diverse interests within their jurisdictions. In the American case, several fault lines appear on even a surface inspection of this country's representative republic. Sometimes these divisions fall neatly on geographic boundaries. Congressional redistricting, a process by which political jurisdictions may shift following the results of the constitutionally-mandated decennial census, is one such example of a process by which negotiations by political elites can shape which groups are represented by whom. Yet, sometimes these divisions do not fall neatly along geographic boundaries. The issue of immigration, for example, has a presence within every metropolitan area in the U.S., and lines become blurred when legal and undocumented immigrants are intertwined within the same community, family, and household. Additionally, the politics of space and scale may dictate that representatives decide when to address concerns of local or national concern.

Various political theorists have taken different approaches to the relationship that political representation has with physical space, and the affect such constructions can have on constituencies. For instance, Nancy Schwartz's work (1988) constructed a bridge

between traditional liberal theories of representation and communitarian political theory via a “social individuality” on a part of groups within a self-determined political and social space. In discussions of historically-marginalized groups, Melissa Williams (1998) and Lani Guinier (1994) have asserted that relying on single-member geographic districts could not adequately provide for fair representation. However, not all studies of political representation fall within an assessment of physical boundaries. English philosopher Edmund Burke noted that like-minded beliefs between a representative and his constituency could “virtually” bind the entities together in conceptual political space. Regarding more dramatic proposals, Beitz (1989) and Rehfeld (2005) have both explored theories of random districting that would transcend geographic boundaries. Perhaps, then, it is fitting that Rehfeld later departed from physical boundaries in attempting to model the representative-constituent relationship, in which he ultimately settled on a three-dimensional conceptual space in which the relationship could operate.

Both conceptual and physical spatial elements are examined throughout these three articles within the context of the representative-constituent relationship.

- In the first article, I analyze qualitative and quantitative data regarding the district behavior of members and their staff to ascertain where their behaviors would be placed in Rehfeld’s categorical schema. In this conceptual space, the aims of member and staff actions are assessed alongside the source of judgment for the actions and the threat of electoral sanctions that may hang over the member.
- The second article examines the connections between spatial segregation of the past, municipality characteristics of the present, and political behavior of representatives charged with advancing a wide array of individual and group

interests. The article probes to what extent demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of municipalities, which are very much a product of their physical boundaries, determine the amount of federal earmarks for projects within these political spaces.

- In the third article, I examine the politics of scale, detailing the treatment of two distinct political issues at the national and local levels. The article examines the extent to which congressional staff at the local level make decisions regarding constituent services because of, or in spite of, limited progress on advancing solutions to these same issues within the larger legislative and executive institutions. The article also showcases the reality that the casework that congressional district staff address is necessarily tied to the boundaries of the district and the residents who reside within them.

In sum, the entire three-part project presented serves to further the dialogue on the nature of the representative-constituent relationship. It probes underdeveloped areas of this relationship, particularly as it affects constituents who have historically wielded less power in the political system in comparison to traditionally dominant groups. It also challenges scholars of politics and other social sciences to work toward a more holistic assessment of how individuals in positions of power utilize the tools at their disposal to deliver goods and services to those with less agency in a given political space.

**Political Representation in 3D:
An Assessment of District Level Political Representation
Using Rehfeld's Schematic Conceptual Space**

Abstract: This article uses empirical data to test the validity of a theoretical model of representation within U.S. congressional districts. I use as my basis political theorist Andrew Rehfeld's multidimensional typology of representation, which both problematizes and adds more complexity to the traditional trustee-delegate dichotomy. The current project takes into consideration the effects of non-legislative behavior as well as member and district characteristics, which are not explicitly included in Rehfeld's model. Using data from participant observation of district operations and constituent events, interviews with congressional staff, and analysis of local newspaper articles from case studies of six congressional districts in metropolitan areas, I determine that Rehfeld's model is adaptable to district-level political behavior, and find marginal support for hypotheses predicting the placement of members within the model based on seniority, district competitiveness, and minority descriptive status. I conclude the study by using both qualitative and quantitative data to assign each member to one of Rehfeld's typologies.

Introduction

In a 2009 article published in the *American Political Science Review*, political theorist Andrew Rehfeld set forth a typology of representation styles using three dimensions of political behavior (Rehfeld 2009). His argument was built on work by Jane Mansbridge, whose work on models of representation reconceptualized previous notions of the traditional delegate-trustee debate. Both theorists acknowledge that conventional

modes of framing representation as a trustee or delegate model have not provided the robustness in explanation to account for the reality of politics. Mansbridge put forth a structure called “gyroscopic representation” as one more satisfying to the realities of the political process, arguing that the actions of a member and his or her staff are motivated by a sense of personal trust between the member and constituent, and an internal compass to carry out actions that the member and staff perceive as for the good of the district and beyond. Rehfeld’s work expands upon this concept of gyroscopic representation, and he constructs a three dimensional model that takes into consideration 1) the aims of a member’s actions, 2) the source of judgment the member uses in decision making, and 3) the member’s responsiveness to electoral sanctions.

The present article probes Rehfeld’s model using empirical data from case studies of U.S. congressional districts. It seeks to test the flexibility of this model against the political realities of varied sources of political behavior as well as member and district characteristics. Specifically, while Rehfeld’s original model is framed around legislative decision making, the current article assesses political behavior related to district actions rather than legislation. Additionally, whereas Rehfeld’s model is silent in its consideration of member and district characteristics, the current article tests whether such variables as member seniority, district competitiveness, and racial and ethnic descriptive representation can predict a member’s placement within the conceptual space. The six congressional districts at the focus of this article are urban congressional districts in metropolitan areas of the east and west coasts of the U.S. The members who serve these districts represent racially and ethnically diverse constituencies, and both the members and the staff reflect this diversity themselves.

To assess district behavior regarding constituent services on the part of each member and his or her staff, the article synthesizes a variety of qualitative and quantitative data including original interviews of congressional staff, field notes from participant observation of staff and members' behavior at constituent events, local newspaper articles with regard to the district-based services of members and staff, and primary and general election data. Following an assessment of these data against Rehfeld's theoretical framework, the article synthesizes quantitative and qualitative data on each district by placing each member in the study within the political theorist's schematic conceptual space.

Background and significance

A common trend in the literature regarding empirical studies of political representation is the tendency to treat privilege a delegate model of representation, or some form therein. In a traditional delegate model of representation, a member's actions at T_2 have a direct relation to a constituency's vote choice at both T_1 and T_3 . Therefore, the member, seeking interest in reelection, is motivated to conduct his or her district service and legislative responsibilities with an eye and ear toward the instructions given by a majority of his or her constituency. This imparts a sense of what Pitkin (1967) described as a matter of substitution, or in her words: "people often need to ask others to perform some task for them which ordinarily they would perform for themselves" (134). Mansbridge's (2003) models of promissory and anticipatory representation are further variance of the delegate model.

In a trustee model of representation, the member serves as the guardian of the people's interests, and is the administrator of their political needs (Pitkin 1967; Burke 1790). However, unlike in delegate representation, the member acts by determining what is right and just using his or her internal judgment. Shapiro (2005) notes that the multidimensional concept of "virtue" within a trustee form of representation denotes that a member is both internally motivated toward action (rather than externally motivated such as through reelection) and that the member is self regulated by a sense of propriety.

Taking the trustee model one step further, Mansbridge (2003) explored the relationship between a member's actions and a constituency's behavior as being one modeled after the mechanisms of a gyroscope. At the heart of the model is the member as trustee, motivated by an internal compass. In this model, the member's accountability to the electorate has different priorities than in delegate representation: as long as a member's personal identification with his or her constituency remains, the constituency is bound to consistently reelect the member. Therefore, as the threat of electoral sanctions dissipate, political flexibility builds (Bianco 1994).

Rehfeld (2009) has discussed the bias of empirical studies toward a delegate based model, and has cautioned, "such a view ignores or presumes away the other more complicated question of what the ends of lawmaking should be, how to measure good deliberation, and other questions that make the trusteeship view of political representation a more plausible alternative, or at least one not to be summarily dismissed" (219). It is at this juncture where the current project lies.

Rehfeld's typology of representation models

In his recent work, Rehfeld (2009) has taken Mansbridge's conception of gyroscopic representation further, envisioning this form of representation operating in different dimensions. He, like Mansbridge, found that neither a delegate nor trustee model of representation was solely adequate in explaining the nature of members' relationships with their constituencies, but he also understood that the empirical realities of representation warranted a multifaceted schema that incorporated elements of these previous models. The typology he has constructed takes into account three dimensions of the act of representation: 1) the aim of the legislation (whether for the good of all or particular groups); 2) the source of the member's judgment (whether using his or her own internal compass or considering the judgment of others); and 3) the level of responsiveness to sanctions (particularly electoral sanctions) (Table 1.1).

Looking at the schema more closely, across the top we see two main groups of representatives: those who are less responsive to electoral sanctions and those who are more responsive to said sanctions. Rehfeld characterizes representatives who are less responsive to sanctions in their political behavior as being so "often because they believe that it is simply the right thing to do." Within each of these categories, however, members are further categorized by the source of judgment for their political actions: those who rely on their own judgment (in a pseudo-trustee or gyroscopic fashion) and those who depend on the judgment of others (such as in a delegate notion of representation). Rehfeld's classifications go even further, however, bifurcating these categories with classifications addressing the ultimate aims of representatives' political behavior. Republican aims are those which seek the good of the whole as the primary goal of the

Table 1.1 *Rehfeld's Three-Dimensional Schema of Representation*

	Less responsive to sanction		More responsive to sanction	
	Self-reliant judgment	Dependent judgment	Self-reliant judgment	Dependent judgment
Republican aims	<i>Burkean trustees</i> Those who seek the good of the whole by relying on their own judgment and are less responsive to sanctions (often because they believe that it is simply the right thing to do)	<i>Civil servants</i> Those who seek the good of the whole by relying on the judgment of others, but are less responsive to sanctions (often because they believe that it is simply the right thing to do)	<i>Madisonian lawmakers</i> Those who seek the good of the whole by relying on their own judgment and who are more responsive to sanction	<i>Anti-Federalists</i> Those who seek the good of the whole by relying on the judgment of others and who are more responsive to sanction
Pluralist aims	<i>Volunteers</i> Those who seek the good of a part (often that of their constituents) by relying on their own judgment and are less responsive to sanctions (often because they believe that it is simply the right thing to do)	<i>Ambassadors</i> Those who seek the good of a part (often that of their constituents) by relying on the judgment of others and are less responsive to sanctions (often because they believe that it is simply the right thing to do)	<i>Professionals</i> Those who seek the good of a part (often that of their constituents) by relying on their own judgment and who are more responsive to sanction	<i>Pared-down delegates</i> Those who seek the good of a part (often that of their own constituents) by relying on the judgment of others and who are more responsive to sanction

From Rehfeld, Andrew. 2009, "Representation Rethought: On Trustees, Delegates, and Gyroscopes in the Study of Political Representation and Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 103 (2):214-30, at 223.

political action (such as the good of the state), while pluralist aims are those which are directed at a segment of the population, such as a particular group or select geography.

The result is an eight-category classification which provides opportunity for both theoretical and empirical studies that test the merits of these models.

The schema Rehfeld has developed has taken into account the varied nature of representatives' interests and abilities to act on behalf of their constituents. While I would hesitate to state that his classifications fall neatly onto a gradated scale, they do take into consideration the different degrees to which members' actions may exhibit qualities of the traditional delegate or trustee. His "Burkean trustee" classification – a representative who seeks the good of the whole while relying on his or her own judgment and acting less responsive to sanction – may be the closest characterization in the schema to the traditional trustee representative. Similarly, the "pared-down delegate" – a representative who seeks the good of certain groups while relying on the judgment of others and acting more responsive to electoral sanction – is a characterization of what could be considered a typical delegate representative. However, the schema adds enormous complexity to the description of a representative's behavior. Indeed, his assessment possesses a real potential of assisting empirical studies with explaining a more nuanced reality of political representation, a reality which does indeed include behavior by members that may not consistently be motivated by external sanctions or the interests of constituents alone.

Empirically testing Rehfeld's model

Political scientists have identified two main roles as those that members of Congress primarily play in carrying out their responsibility to be responsive to the needs and concerns of their constituents: that of policy maker and social worker (Cain et al. 1987; Jewell 1983; Denzau and Munger 1986; Eulau and Wahlke 1978; Johannes and McAdams 1981; Kuklinski and Segura 1995; Johannes 1984; Serra and Moon 1994). In the role of policymaker, a member puts forth and negotiates positions on legislative

initiatives, navigating his or her own political preferences with policy preferences of his constituents, party politics, and institutional practices. In that of social worker, he or she assists individual constituents at the district level with practical concerns and problems concerning federal government services, and both conducts and attends meetings with constituents.¹ Empirical assessments of political representation often assess the policy maker component of a representative. A great number of studies on representation have focused on the assessment of this behavior, whether through process or goodness of member fit with the defined constituency (Miller and Stokes 1963; Jacobs and Shapiro 1994; Powell 1982; Burstein 2003; Weissberg 1978; Stimson et al. 1995; Swain 1993).

However, while attempting to underscore the need for different measurements of political representation, and critiquing empiricists for their overreliance on measurements stemming from delegate representation, Rehfeld himself falls into a more traditionalist mindset. He centers his model of representation on the member vote choice – a manner of assessing representation that has received the majority of attention in studies of political responsiveness. Yet, the act of representation itself encompasses more than simply the act of voting in a legislative body. It may be the default representational tool for members and scholars alike, but it should not be taken alone. In the strictest sense of the word, to “represent” means to stand on behalf of others in a setting, as a substitute or proxy. While the most common interpretation of such actions are “re-presentation” of others (i.e., constituents) within a legislative body, other acts of representation include acting as authorized agents in discussions about constituents’ concerns outside of the legislative body with public or private entities regarding the matters of constituents. Utilizing a

¹ Serra and Moon (1994) have also called this type of role an ombudsman for the manner in which the member (by him or herself or the work of staff) is somewhat of a mediator between federal agencies and individual constituents.

broader concept of representation can therefore encompass actions by members and staff which take place in the district on behalf of constituents, and can showcase the social worker role of a representative.

For instance, Fenno's analysis of members' home styles in their districts has shed much needed light on the inner workings of the connections members had with their constituencies on the local level. However, in his own work, Fenno noted that advances within political science needed to be made toward a better understanding of the linkage between home style and a Washington-based legislative career. Since *Home Style* (1978), Fenno's work has attempted to understand this linkage within various constituencies, more recently in *Going Home* (2003), which chronicles the home styles of four African-American representatives. Additionally, Christian Grose's recent work on African American members of Congress in the South has demonstrated that a more holistic examination of substantive representation warrants the inclusion of activities beyond roll-call voting (Grose 2011).

However, efforts by Eulau, Fenno, and others to direct other political scientists toward studies of representation that encompass both the representative's social worker and the role of policymaker have not been pursued as widely, possibly because of the field's push toward larger quantitative studies: a category in which vote assessment more naturally falls. Based on existing literature, it is unclear what assumptions empirical studies of representation focusing on legislative behavior have made regarding the relevancy of service within the district as an intervening factor (exceptions including Grose 2011; Canon 1999; Cain et al. 1987). However, the present study attempts to tackle this subject by revisiting traditional explanatory models of political representation and

treating the service and legislative actions of members and their staffs as somewhat independent components within the same mechanism.

Take for example studies of the service responsibilities of a representative. Fenno (1978) has described these responsibilities as a major component of a member's home style (which he admits is a description of presentation, not representation). The presentation of self – different in every district – enhances trust between a member and his constituency, which serves to strengthen chances of a successful reelection. In this sense, members' responsiveness to their constituencies is seen as a means to an end. Indeed, Mayhew (1974) and others have argued that a member's primary goal is to gain reelection, and therefore the public actions that a member takes in his or her duties as a member of Congress is a vehicle for reelection. While literature is inconclusive as to the *strength* of the link between a member's constituency service and the likelihood of reelection (Johannes and McAdams 1981; Serra and Moon 1994; Cain et al. 1987; Grant and Rudolph 2004), the perception nevertheless remains that the relationship does exist within the model, and that the correct model to be implemented is that of delegate representation.

Similarly, in studies that examine the policy responsiveness of representatives, the presumption again exists that a member at T_2 may not only be engaging in policy activities such as bill sponsorship and roll call voting to seek reelection by constituents at T_3 (a type of anticipatory representation), but also that the member is fulfilling his or her responsibilities as a delegate to the legislative body based on the will of a majority of constituents at T_1 . However, the assumption that members act as delegates for their representatives in both constituent services provided in the home district *and* in

legislative behavior creates a snag in the explanatory power of the delegate model. As Fenno (1978) notes, members who want to have both a policy influence and maintain reelection strength in the district using the strength of their home styles are the ones who feel the most conflicted in these dual roles. Because of the challenges faced, members may choose one over the other as a point of concentration. This is noted in an exchange a congressman had with Fenno in *Home Style*:

Fenno: "Sometimes it must be hard to connect what you do here [in the district] with what you do in Washington."

Congressman N: "Oh no....I do what I do here so I can do what I want to do there."
(199)

Congressman N is alluding to the political freedom he enjoys in his legislative activities, which he believes come as a direct byproduct of the representation of service his office has nurtured in the home district. While the expression of Congressman N's service responsibilities may be more akin to a delegate model of representation, the flexibility in his legislative activities do not fit the delegate model. The reverse can also occur. Fenno (1978) and Leal (2002) have found separately that as a member's career evolves from an expansionist to protectionist phase, he or she becomes less invested in the home constituencies and more invested in Washington activities. These examples demonstrate that a member's service-oriented and legislative behavior may not be simultaneously well served by the delegate model in that there is an inconsistent relationship between a member's behavior and the threat of electoral sanctions by his or her constituents. This inconsistency indicates that some aspects of representation may be better explained by another model of representation.

In addition to excluding methods of representation other than legislative vote choice, Rehfeld's model also does not include within it key considerations of member or

constituent characteristics that have been demonstrated to have an influence on the process of representation among public officials. One of the most important variables with regard to studies of responsiveness is seniority. Tenure in office has been demonstrated to significantly influence behavior at both the district and congressional level, offering opportunities for flexibility and independence on the part of members the longer they remain in office (Leal 2002). Additionally, due to the incumbency effect, members with more seniority generally have larger margins of victory over time and also are more apt to draw from more concentrated segments of their constituency for support than members in earlier stages of their careers.

A factor of a member's behavior may be rooted in the degree to which a member's demographic background is intertwined with that of substantial populations within his or her constituency. On this subject, Mansbridge (1999) has noted that "The primary function of representative democracy is to represent the substantive interests of the represented through both deliberation and aggregation" (630). Certain members may willingly undertake, or are perceived to undertake, their responsibilities to provide substantive representation to his or her constituents while translating the nuances of his/her shared experiences as a member of a historically marginalized racial or ethnic group. Previous works on descriptive representation,² looking predominantly at African Americans, have demonstrated that minority constituents' policy preferences within

²The definition of the term "descriptive representation" is not necessarily agreed upon by scholars who study it. Swain (1993) defines this term as "the statistical correspondence of the demographic characteristics of representatives with those of their constituents" (5). Mansbridge (1999), in a slight variation, defines descriptive representatives as "individuals who in their own backgrounds mirror some of the more frequent experiences and outward manifestations of belonging to the group" (628). For Dovi (2002), descriptive representatives have a specific role: "to increase the number of representatives for historically disadvantaged groups" (729). Generally, then, descriptive representation, and the representatives charged with carrying it out, connects substantive representation to the re-presenting of racial and ethnic minorities issues intrinsic to their historical disadvantages within politics.

minority majority districts have an influence on the policy agenda of the descriptive member (Gay 2007; Canon 1999). Works by Tate (2001), Bratton (2006), and Preuhs and Hero (2009) have found that African American and Latino constituents appear to be better represented on policy issues when they are represented in the legislature by members of their own racial or ethnic group. However, the ability of a descriptive member to read his or her constituency is no doubt facilitated by the “linked fate” (Dawson 1994) the member has with a large portion of individuals in his or her district. Fenno’s (1978) conversation with an African American member, Congressman F, illustrates this point: "When I vote my conscience as a black man, I necessarily represent the black community. I don't have any trouble knowing what the black community thinks or wants" (115).

The ties between a descriptive member and his or her constituency are built on a strong sense of trust, and it would appear that in the above circumstance and others like it, the model of representation is more gyroscopic in nature. The member is able to represent his district with a decreased sense of concern for sanctions from his constituency because his constituents identify with the beliefs and principles that motivate his decisions. However, such influence may be tempered by the percentage of the minority population within the district (Lublin 1999). Minority descriptive representatives who represent minority leaning (or influence) districts (as opposed to majority or supermajority minority districts) or whose districts have shifting core constituencies (Fenno 1978) may have disincentives to follow only the preferences of the group to which they racially or ethnically belong (Lublin 1999; LeVeaux and Garand 2003; Grose 2011). These factors may shape how members with more diverse

constituencies conduct their work on behalf of their constituents at home and in the legislature.

In examining other actions of political representation apart from traditional roll call votes, I contend that representation is not limited to one action in the legislative body, but is indeed more fluid, with members continuously engaging in activities to build and maintain trust of their constituencies. Additionally, this fluidity enables members (and their staff) to represent interests of their constituents not only in the legislative body, but also in negotiations with other branches of government as well. In the following sections, I attempt to demonstrate the added value home district activities hold in empirical tests of representation models as well as the value of testing alternative models outside of traditional delegate-trustee representation, as they may better satisfy the reality of actions on behalf of constituents in a given district. I employ both quantitative and qualitative data to better understand the *process* of representation at the district level and not simply *outcomes* as the use of only quantitative data may provide.

Research Design

This paper provides an application of Rehfeld's model to six urban congressional districts in the eastern and western portions of the U.S. A benefit of looking at districts in metropolitan areas in particular is that they highlight a growing phenomenon among congressional districts more broadly: the increase of districts with no racial or ethnic majority group. Particularly in the regions I examine, multiethnic and multiracial districts are becoming an increasing reality for members. Also, I chose to examine exclusively urban districts for purposes of this project to better isolate particular policies and issues

that tend to be common themes across metropolises, such as immigration, housing, and transit and infrastructure (See Halle 2003; Orfield 2002). The issues are commonly addressed by members of urban areas through legislative initiatives in the legislative body and also through casework and meetings with constituents at the district level. The geographic selection also allows me to focus on similar differences controlling for extraneous variables that may be present when comparing, for example, urban and rural districts.

Additionally, urban districts house a natural venue in which to conduct representation studies in order to examine alternative tools to roll call voting, tools which may be utilized more readily among populations within metropolitan areas. Indeed, as political scientists such as Fenno (1978) and others (Cain et al. 1987; LeVeaux and Garand 2003) have argued, representatives tend to approach their work differently depending on the characteristics of their constituencies. As Cain et al.'s (1987) and Tate's (2003) work has shown, particularly among constituents within majority-minority districts as well as constituents with lower socioeconomic status, the role of representative as social worker tends to be favored more than that of policymaker. Therefore, a focus on empirical studies that address policy responsiveness as a measure of representation may have a tendency to bias the results of responsiveness studies themselves by assuming a standard definition of representational structure and quality across diverse socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups. While models within policy responsiveness studies downplay or disregard the social worker component of a legislator's representational style, this component may in fact be the most efficient

method that a member may use to demonstrate that he or she is being responsive to the political needs and concerns of his or her constituents (Thomas 1992).

I acknowledge that the focus on urban congressional districts may result in outcomes that address only a particular portion of the population. However, the study can be altered by design to encompass the most salient factors to a given population in question. For instance, given that middle and upper class non-minorities tend to place more emphasis on the policy making aspect of a representative, the design could instead assess legislative rather than district level behavior.

Case selection

The districts selected have been designated as urban according to the U.S. Census Bureau, which defines “urban” as housing located within urbanized areas or urban clusters that consist of 1) core census block groups or blocks that have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and 2) surrounding census blocks that have an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). The congressional districts in this study are also located within major metropolitan metropolises in the U.S. The districts were selected to account for variability, including the racial and ethnic composition of the constituency as well as the race/ethnicity of the member. Of the members representing these districts, two are white, two are of Hispanic background, and two are African-American. Members E and F are female, and all others are male. As Table 1.2 shows of the three districts represented by racial or ethnic minority members of Congress, only two are traditional majority-minority districts, Members B and E. Member F had the least seniority in the House, while Member D had

Table 1.2 *Characteristics of Congressional Districts in Study*

	Race/ethnicity of member	Years in office	Gender	% White, non- Hispanic	% Hispanic	% Asian	% African American	% below poverty	% foreign born
District A	Hispanic	4	Male	30	49	7	11	16	41
District B	African American	22	Male	18	19	4	57	17	27
District C	White	14	Male	54	24	13	7	8	36
District D	White	28	Male	31	57	6	3	16	42
District E	Hispanic	18	Female	9	80	6	4	23	44
District F	African American	3	Female	14	48	12	22	20	31

Demographic statistics taken from U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey

the longest tenure. Member D also represents a majority Hispanic district as a white member. Member B is a white member representing a majority white constituency, Member A is a Hispanic representative whose constituency contains a plurality Hispanic constituency, and Member F's district contains a plurality Hispanic and African-American constituency. All districts contain relatively large foreign born populations, ranging from 27% to 44% of the total population, and all members are Democrats.

The cases included within this research design are representative of those within major metropolitan areas across the U.S. Member B and his district are characteristic of traditional majority-minority African American districts common to the Northeast, Rust Belt, and South. Member E's majority-minority Latino district possesses similar traits to such districts represented by a Latino in the Southwest and West. Member C's majority white working-to-middle class district is common of many congressional districts across the U.S. that encompass municipalities adjacent to central cities. Also, members A, D, and F, represent a growing phenomenon in urban areas' demographic plurality and migratory patterns. These areas are located within minority influence or majority minority districts in which political power is often divided among several racial and ethnic constituencies that have shifted considerably since immigration's 3rd wave of the 1960s.

As with any choices made, there are other paths not taken for better or worse. One of the potential limitations of the research design is the explanatory power of six congressional districts. However, I anticipate that the representative nature of the cases can account for the smaller number overall. Additionally, the members representing the selected districts are all Democrats. While Democrats are overwhelmingly more likely to

represent districts within major metropolitan areas, Republicans also do represent constituents in these regions. Existing literature on congressional district behavior provides no evidence that political party affiliation is an influential factor in the frequency or process of serving constituents on the local level. Nevertheless, I do acknowledge the potential for this exclusion on the outcomes.

Data and Measurement

Attempting to fit empirical evidence into a model such as Rehfeld's is difficult to accomplish succinctly because so many of the model's inner workings rely on personal and professional motivations and choices of which only the member and staff may be fully aware. For this reason, interviews with staff and participant observation of both staff and members in explaining the motivations for their actions to groups of constituencies are extremely beneficial in getting a more accurate measurement of the level of behavior. Additionally, since congressional staff conduct the bulk of constituent services on behalf of their member at the district level, it is most appropriate to interview district staff in a study such as this. The qualitative data utilized here are based on dozens of hours of participant observation in offices and at member-sponsored events for constituents in the home district and conversations with 26 district staff. Of these staff, 20 also participated in formal interviews. The collection of data took place from January 2009 to October 2010, although the interviews themselves took place throughout 2010.

The composition of a district office for each member of Congress varies considerably (Petersen 2008, 2005) and, indeed, in the six districts used as case studies for this paper, the composition of each office was quite varied. Generally, each office has a district director (sometimes distinguished from a chief of staff of the state operations,

although these jobs are often conducted by the same person). The office will also staff a director of constituent services, although in one office these duties were conducted by the district director, and in the other it was conducted by a senior case manager. The bulk of the district staff is comprised of numerous caseworkers (sometimes also called congressional aides). Special assistants and field workers often staff the member at local events, but in most of the offices I interviewed, these staff also performed casework. In order to get a robust view of constituent services conducted in the district for constituents, I interviewed the director of district operations, individuals who conducted the major responsibilities of constituent services director, and at least two caseworkers and/or special assistants in the office.³ However, throughout this article I will use the term “member” to refer to both the member as an individual person and as the head of a unit comprised of a myriad of offices and congressional staff. I find it imperative to underscore the identification of “member” as institutional unit because of the broad discretion district staff have in conducting the service oriented responsibilities of the institution, and the often little involvement the member as an individual actually has in conducting these service responsibilities (Salisbury and Shepsle 1981).

Questions asked in these interviews that are relevant to this paper are listed in Appendix A. While a handful of general questions were similar to all or most staff, such as professional background and duties in the district, most others were tailored to staff positions in the office in relation to constituent services and district operations. Some questions asked members to describe some of the more challenging cases or services they

³ However, among the districts included in these case studies, the number of locations of members’ offices in their respective districts ranged from one central office to 5 offices. In those with more than one office location, one office served as the hub, with the others frequently being staffed as part time satellite locations for residents in these other communities

have provided, and others asked about the information exchanges between the member and staff in the home district. Still others explored sentiments members may have expressed to staff about the relationship between constituent services and reelection.

I chose to supplement interview data with articles on each member from local papers covering the geographic area encompassing each district. The purpose of utilizing newspaper data on member activities within the district is to enhance the analysis with more events (in quantity and in policy scope) involving each member than were volunteered by district staff in each interview. A total of 14 newspapers were used to identify articles describing actions of the members within the home district in the time span encompassing the 110th Congress (January 2007 to December 2008). All newspapers were English language papers; eight were weeklies and six were dailies. Of the 428 articles mentioning any of the members in this study during this time span, 137 of those referenced actions of members within his or her district, which ranged from 8 (Member A) to 48 (Member C). Some articles noted quotes from staff as to specific aims or motivations of particular behaviors, while in other cases the researcher analyzed the text of each article for language providing references or context for the initiators of in-district actions and the scope and beneficiaries of such actions.

Interviews and local newspaper references to members' district activities were coded and analyzed using NVivo 8 software. Appendix B outlines the coding structure for these references in more detail. Briefly, interviews, participant observation notes, and newspaper articles regarding member's district activities were coded as to the target of the activity: whether it was aimed toward particular individuals or constituent groups within a member's district, the entirety of a member's district, or whether its primary aim

was beyond the district.⁴ The data were also coded for references to stated or implicit motivations of members and staff in their actions. Regarding certain actions, members or staff explicitly mentioned their personal or external motivations for their actions (such as because it was “the right thing to do” or that they acted on an issue because a fellow member brought it to their attention).⁵ Other actions were more subtle, such as if a member was invited to speak at an event by a constituent group. In situations such as these, the coding was based on the context of the conversation or the article as a whole. Data were also coded for type of district action, type of policy issue addressed (if applicable), and type of constituent involved.

On average, the congressional staff interviewed for this project were somewhat vague when asked direct questions about constituent services and reelections. Some were reluctant to answer the questions with any specifics, citing the strict House ethics demarcation between congressional and campaign activities (U.S. House of Representatives 2008). While others provided more specific information, the numbers of these references were not substantial enough to adequately use as a measurement of the

⁴ I acknowledge that Rehfeld intended for the “aims” component to encompass the spectrum of parochial-focused to nation-focused behavior. However, since the focus of this research design is on district level behavior, I note that even within a member’s seemingly parochial approach to his or her constituency (in comparison to that aimed at more national interests), this behavior can still yet be categorized as that which is aimed at specific constituencies or at the district as a whole.

⁵ To identify any patterns or groupings of external sources of judgment referenced by members or staff as to their district actions, a cluster analysis was conducted. In the coding phase of the project, a total of 8 external codes were created. For purposes of clarity in this analysis, a cluster analysis was run to identify particular themes among these variables. Results demonstrated 3 initial clusters: one related to actions motivated by government officials (including fellow state delegates, executive branch officials, as well as party leadership and colleagues, and local and state officials) ; one related to actions motivated by individual constituents; and the third grouping related to organized interests (including for-profit and non-profit organizations as well as community and religious groups) Motivations from local and state officials clustered somewhat apart from those related to federal government, and therefore these were treated separately, resulting in 4 main groupings of external motivations. However, the frequencies of such references were too low to include in any meaningful interpretation with regard to a pattern of each member’s external sources of judgment. Nevertheless, overall the cluster analysis demonstrates that distinctions among in external motivations do exist, and future work may explore the reasons for these distinctions and their effects.

reelection component of Rehfeld's model alone. Therefore, I constructed proxies for estimating the threat of electoral sanctions for each member using primary and general election data during each member's tenure in the House. First, the number of each member's opponents in the primary and general elections throughout the member's tenure in the U.S. House were obtained using U.S. House of Representatives general election data and primary election data from the applicable states' Secretary of State websites. Primary election data were used in addition to general election data given that in political jurisdictions where one party has traditionally been consistently successful, the primary election may be more strongly contested than the general election.⁶ For both primary and general elections, an average margin of victory was calculated.

Hypotheses

Beyond providing descriptive data of how each case within this study can be characterized in relation to Rehfeld's typology of representatives' behavior, the project also serves to link the typologies in the abstract to the "on the ground" reality of political practice. Indeed, a challenge posed by Rehfeld's model is the lack of specificity as to the influence of member or constituent characteristics as predictors of representatives' typologies. Testing hypotheses regarding the relationships between the models and key predictors of political behavior will help to assess where to place members within Rehfeld's schema.

⁶ I do acknowledge, however, the endogeneity of constituent services in relation to elections. It could be that the perception of electoral threat, no matter how small, motivates members to play up the service component of their representation style. Scholars over the years have debated the impact that constituent services actually have on election outcomes (Johannes and McAdams 1981; Serra and Moon 1994).

Seniority: In line with literature cited earlier in this text, the expectation holds that members with more seniority engage in behavior that is less reliant on the judgment of constituency groups and aimed more at specific components of their constituency, and are generally less concerned with electoral sanctions than those who are earlier on in their careers. I use later-career members here as my reference category, or those members in my sample who have 20 or more years of tenure in the House.

- H_1 = Members with 20 or more years of seniority as members in the House will be *more likely* to be motivated by their own internal judgments or those of their staff in conducting district level constituent services than those with less than 20 years of seniority.
- H_2 = Members with 20 or more years of seniority as members in the House will be *more likely* to aim their behaviors regarding district level constituent services toward specific components of their constituencies than those with less than 20 years of seniority.
- H_3 = Members with 20 or more years of seniority as members in the House will be *less likely* to demonstrate more concern for electoral sanctions as motivations for their district level constituent services than those with less than 20 years of seniority.

Electoral competitiveness: Additionally, due to members' interest in seeking reelection (Mayhew 1974) members who are in political jurisdictions that are more competitive are more likely to engage in behavior that is aimed at a broader constituent base and may base their actions on a wider array of sources within the constituency so as to enhance or maintain a solid base for electoral support. Therefore, it is expected that

members with lower primary and general election margin of victories will be more likely to exhibit behavior that is aimed at and is motivated by a broader constituency. I use as my reference category members who have had average margins of victory in either their primary or general election bids of below 50%. While a 49% margin of victory may seem relatively high to be categorized as a “competitive” district, it is important to keep in mind that the perceived threat of electoral sanctions is a relative concept, based on public opinion and demographic trends, among others.

- H_4 = Members who have won either their primary or general elections with an average margin of victory of 50% or less will be *more likely* to engage in behaviors that are aimed toward the entirety of their constituencies than those with an average margin of victory of more than 50%.
- H_5 = Members who have won either their primary or general elections with an average margin of victory of 50% or less will be *more likely* to engage in behavior based upon external motivations than those with an average margin of victory of more than 50%.

Members and constituencies of racial and ethnic minority groups: Metropolitan areas are home to racially and ethnically diverse constituent groups, although due to political gerrymandering of district boundaries, some congressional jurisdictions are drawn to encompass constituencies which are more homogeneous than others (Mann and Cain 2005). Although party affiliation can often act as the glue that binds disparate racial and ethnic groups together politically, the literature has shown that party affiliation when coupled with descriptive representation of a majority minority population lends itself particularly well to electoral security (Canon 1999; Lublin 1999). Therefore, the

expectation would be that racial or ethnic minority members who represent majority minority constituencies comprised of their own racial or ethnic group will be less responsive to electoral sanctions, and also will operate in a more “gyroscopic fashion” in that they will use their own internal judgments for what is good for the whole of their constituencies based upon their experiences as both public officials and members of a minority group.

- H_6 = Members who represent majority-minority districts and belong to the district’s majority racial or ethnic group (so-called “descriptive representatives”) will be *more likely* to be motivated by their own internal judgments in their district level constituent services than members who are not descriptive representatives.
- H_7 = Members who are descriptive representatives will be *less responsive* to electoral sanctions than members who are not descriptive representatives.

Methods

I first construct a crosstabulation of coded references for aims (republican and pluralist) and judgment (self-reliant and dependent) for each of the six districts. I also calculate an overall margin of victory from an average of the primary and general election margins of victory spanning the each member’s tenure in the House. For each district, I place aims and judgment references on a scale ranging from -1 to 1 by subtracting the inverse of the number of pluralist aims references (or dependent judgment references) from the number of republican aims references (or self-reliant judgment references).

To test each hypothesis presented, I use a series t-tests to assess the difference of means for the differentials in the three dichotomous variables constructed: late career member, competitive district, and descriptive member. In each variable, the reference category equals 1. Lastly, I use the differential scores for each district and combine them with the margin of victory percentage scale (ranging from 0 to 1) to construct a three-dimensional representation of each district's placement in Rehfeld's conceptual space. I follow this pictorial with a qualitative assessment of each district, combining descriptive analyses and results from hypotheses testing with qualitative data to assign each member's district to one of Rehfeld's categories within his typology (see Table 1.1, above).

Results

Turning first to a general characterization of behavior in the home district, Table 1.3 lists the proportion of references in each district related to the aims and sources of judgment as described in Rehfeld's model. Proportions of references are listed along with raw numbers, although readers should review the proportions for a better comparison among districts. The reason for this is due to the unstandardized nature of the raw numbers themselves, obtained from participant observation, newspaper articles, and interviews that varied in length and substance both within and between members and staff in each district. The proportions therefore represent a more standardized reflection of differences between districts.

A chi-square test revealed statistically significant differences among the districts ($\chi^2 = 2.22$, $df = 5$, $p > .001$) with regard to the aims of their district actions. Descriptively,

Table 1.3 *Percentages of References and Model Components*

	<u>District A</u>	<u>District B</u>	<u>District C</u>	<u>District D</u>	<u>District E</u>	<u>District F</u>
Aims***^a						
Pluralist Aims	43% (15)	53% (34)	43% (34)	76% (38)	74% (35)	62% (29)
Republican Aims	58% (21)	47% (30)	58% (46)	24% (12)	26% (12)	38% (18)
Differential (Republican - Pluralist)	.167	-.063	.150	-.488	-.489	-.234
Sources of Judgment**^b						
Self-Reliant Judgment	65% (24)	72% (34)	55% (44)	49% (37)	65% (26)	46% (10)
Dependent Judgment	35% (13)	28% (13)	45% (36)	51% (41)	35% (14)	54% (20)
Differential (Dependent - Self-Reliant)	-.297	-.447	-.100	.048	-.300	.086
Responsiveness to Sanctions						
Average Margin of Victory	65%	81%	65%	56%	69%	42%
Primary Election	75%	88%	95%	66%	80%	38%
General Election	56%	75%	34%	46%	57%	46%

Election results taken from state Secretary of State websites.

(Note: state-specific sources withheld to preserve anonymity of members in this study.)

Significance values for chi-square tests: *** $p > .001$ ** $p > .01$ * $p > .05$ (two-tailed)

^a $\chi^2 = 22.2, df 5, p > .001$

^b $\chi^2 = 15.679, df 5, p > .01$

more than half of the references by the members and staff of districts B, D, E and F regarding the aims of their district actions described an inclination toward pluralist aims, or those aims directed toward specific components of their constituencies. In this same table, the proportion of references noting sources of judgment for members and staff's district actions are also listed. A chi-square test revealed statistically significant differences among the districts ($\chi^2 = 15.679$, $df = 5$, $p > .01$) with regard to the sources of these actions. Districts D and F were the only two districts in which the majority of references by members and staff related to external sources of judgment as motivations for district actions.

Table 1.3 lists the average margins of victory for each member in both primary and general elections throughout his or her tenure in the House. The districts involved in these case studies are generally considered safe Democratic districts, and therefore the average margins of victory for either primary or general elections are relatively substantial. In districts where one party is generally dominant, the primary elections sometimes serve as the area of greater competition. The only district in the study where this seems to be the case is in Member F's district, who also is the member with the shortest tenure in the House. Member D has the highest average margin of victory in primary election bids among all members in the study, but he also has the lowest margin of victory in the general election among the members. A conclusion to be drawn from this scenario is that local Democratic parties and other Democratic-affiliated political groups have chosen to place their entire support behind one candidate so preserve resources for a more challenging general election.

Table 1.3 also shows the differential in proportions of references for aims and sources of judgment for each member's district. For the aims dimension, negative scores represent more pluralist aims overall, while for the sources of judgment dimension, negative scores represent self-reliant judgment. From the table, we can see that the member's and staff of districts D and E were most inclined to direct their district actions toward specific components of their constituency. Districts A and C favored a more republican approach toward district actions. Turning to sources of judgment, Member B and staff were most apt to rely on personal judgment as motivations for their district actions over external sources of judgment, followed by Districts E and A. Districts D and F only slightly favored the use of external judgment as motivations for staff and member actions, and the scores were close to parity.

Seniority

We now turn to an analysis of whether external characteristics can serve as predictors for members' placements within Rehfeld's schema. These findings are listed in Table 1.4. With regard to the seniority variable, Members B and D in the study were included in the late career member reference category. the predictor's performance indicates that in this particular sample, late career members did not perform any differently on each dimension than those members with less seniority. The findings offered no support for H₁ in that late career members were statistically no more likely than less senior members to use self-reliant judgment in conducting their political actions. Similarly, the evidence did not support H₂ in that late career members no more likely to direct their political behavior toward specific components of their constituencies than less

Table 1.4 *Model Components and Legislative Behavior Predictors*

	<u>Aims Differential</u>			<u>Judgment Differential</u>			<u>Margin of Victory</u>		
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>s</u>
<i>Seniority</i>									
Late Career Member (+20 years)	-.291	2	.324	-.211	2	.334	.69	2	.180
All others	-.102	4	.318	-.153	4	.185	.60	4	.122
<i>Electoral Competitiveness</i>									
Competitive District (50%+)	-.201	3	.336	.003** ^a	3	.095	.54	3	.113
All others	-.128	3	.333	-.348	3	.086	.71	3	.085
<i>Racial/Ethnic Characteristics</i>									
Minority Descriptive Member	-.276	2	.302	-.373 ^{†b}	2	.104	.75	2	.089
All others	-.109	4	.330	-.071	4	.169	.57	4	.108

Significance values for t-tests: *** $p > .001$ ** $p > .01$ * $p > .05$ †.10 (one-tailed)

^a $t = 4.773$, $df 4$, $p < .01$

^b $t = -2.695$, $df 4$, $p < .10$

senior members. Although the late career members' mean leaned more toward these pluralist aims than the other category, the difference between the means was not significant. Additionally, while the raw means for late term members indicated that they had higher margins of victory on average than less senior members, the differences of means were not significant. Thus the evidence failed to support H₃ as well.

Electoral competitiveness

The second set of hypotheses compared the behavior of members in more competitive versus less competitive districts. As a reminder, margin of victory is used in this study as a proxy for the relative threat of electoral sanctions. Members C, D, and F were included in this category. As can be expected, the more competitive districts had a margin of victory in primary and general elections combined of 54%, which was much lower than the less competitive districts (71%). However, the support for the two hypotheses regarding this predictor fluctuated. The findings did not provide statistically significant evidence for H₄ in that members in more competitive districts were no more likely to direct the aims of their political behavior to their broader constituency as a whole. However, support was found for H₅, which correctly predicted that members in competitive districts were indeed more likely to depend on external sources of judgment in their political behavior ($p < .05$, one-tailed).

Racial and Ethnic Characteristics

Due to the nature of minority descriptive representatives' relationships with their individual constituencies, the last set of hypotheses tested whether representatives of

these districts and their staff exhibited behavior different from those in the study who were not descriptive representatives. This category did not include plurality districts, i.e., those in which no racial or ethnic group constituted more than 50% of the population. Of the districts in the study, Members B and E were categorized as majority descriptive representatives, or representatives who have racial and ethnic identities that reflect that majority of residents in their districts. In line with H₆, the findings demonstrated that descriptive representatives were more likely to use self-reliant judgment in their actions than non-descriptive representatives ($p < .10$, one-tailed). Also, while descriptive members had much higher margins of victory than non-descriptive members in the study (75% to 57%), this difference was not significant, lending little support for H₇.

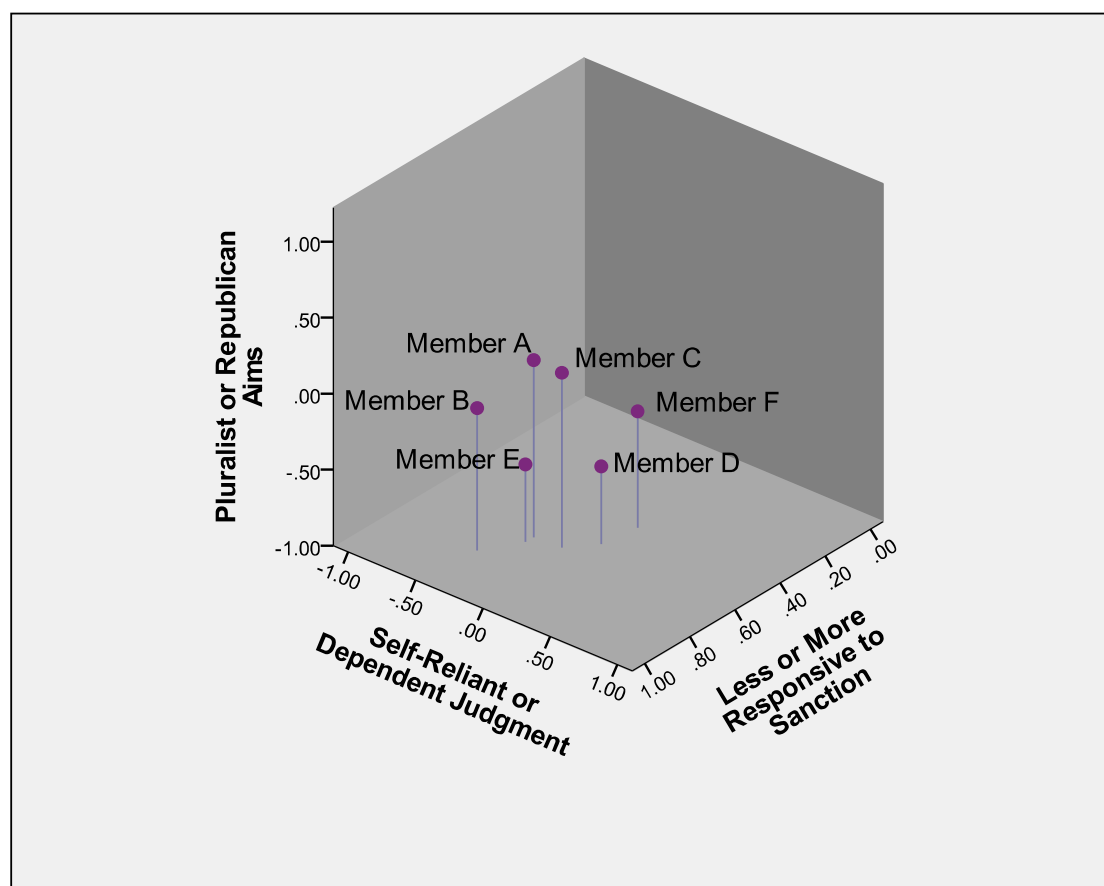
Assigning Cases to Typologies

Moving toward a more comprehensive analysis of behavior within this framework, Figure 1.1 serves to provide a visual representation of each member's location in Rehfeld's three-dimensional space. Members located in a lower space and more to the left can be considered more autonomous, while members located in a higher space and more to the right can be considered more dependent. From this figure, Members B and E are located in the most autonomous space, while Members D and F are located in more dependent space. Members A and C are located in positions somewhere in between.

The scatterplot demonstrates more fluidity in some respects than Rehfeld's own schema and the categories he describes within a 2-dimensional chart. From this visual representation, members' district behavior is showcased in a way that demonstrates more

room for interpretation than a categorical chart lends itself to being. However, assuming that the boundaries of Rehfeld's eight typologies (from Table 1.1) are not rigid, the typologies can still be utilized to characterize a member's (and district's) style of political representation as it pertains to district behavior. The following sections offer more descriptive analyses of each member's representation style using specific examples from the data gathered for this study. While these characterizations are useful to understand the cases within the study, I caution readers to keep in mind that the study only examines six cases. Therefore, any conclusions drawn from these analyses may be limited.

Figure 1.1 *Member's District Behavior in Rehfeld's Three-Dimensional Space*



Member A: The Burkean Trustee

The Burkean Trustee is generally characterized as a representative concerned with concerns beyond specifics within his or her own constituency, who is not threatened by electoral sanctions and who uses his own internal compass to act on behalf of constituents. Based on the motivations and actions of Member A and his staff, it is likely that Member A most closely fits this description. Member A is a Latino minority representative early in his career, whose constituency has a plurality Latino population. Previously in his political career, he was a local official and also a member of the state assembly. Member A's roots run deep in the communities contained within his district, and perhaps this is the primary reason why his behavior is more in line with a trustee form of representation. According to a constituent services director in Member A's district, staff shared information with the member about casework and other services occasionally in a given month—about once a week. When asked in follow-up questions who initiated the sharing of information, she responded, “It's kind of both. He'll call and he'll say, ‘How's it going? What's going on? Anything new?’ Or he'll call me and say, ‘I went to a briefing today and talked to whoever in D.C. was at the briefing.’” However, when probed with what, if any, aspects of constituency service the member expresses a preference for staff to prioritize, she responded, “Nothing in particular.... Because we kind of – he kind of knows what's going on, but we kind of keep it at a local level for us to know what's going on and then our district director. He knows, but he doesn't get a full 360 ...”

This sentiment of the member operating without seeking out specific information from constituents was echoed in a discussion about town hall meetings. When asked

whether the member had conducted any general town hall meetings in the past year, a director from Member A's district office stated, "He had considered it at one point; but when the whole debate with insurance and medical and all that and people getting attacked – he was like, 'No, I think I'll stay away from that.'" Additionally, in discussing the relationship between constituency services and his upcoming reelection bid, she noted that Member A was interested in the possibility of conducting an informational session in the summer with local leaders, but was careful to distinguish this proposed event from a town hall meeting. It appears that although the member has an eye and ear toward subgroups within his constituency, he is not compelled to know details, and can make decisions on behalf of the district without the use of these data.

As a unit, the member and staff prioritized the good of the whole district and beyond, and one of the places where this was vocalized was with regard to constituent casework. Casework is inherently specific in that the act in and of itself is linked to one constituent at a time on a particular issue (or related issues, such as Medicare and Social Security, which caseworkers report are casework issues in tandem). Therefore the aim of constituent casework is a pluralist aim, rather than one that can benefit the district as a whole. However, the *motivations*, derived from a personal sense of moral responsibility on the part of the staff, were aimed at the broader constituency.⁷ A longtime caseworker from Member A's office alluded this sense of moral duty to provide all constituents with a high degree of service as an extension of some sort of golden rule. She noted, "I can be sitting across from you, ... the roles can be reversed and I will want someone to extend that courtesy to me that's why... it's good to extend courtesy." The caseworker continued

⁷ I acknowledge that, here and elsewhere in the article, my assessment as to member and staff motivations are my own interpretations placed within the context of the interviews and observations.

by noting that she and other staff in the office try to go “above and beyond,” even if the case may not have a positive outcome. An example of going an extra step was described by the director of constituent services, who said that that the office prepares packets with information and application for naturalization, including a manila envelope and a return receipt to send to USCIS, and encourages constituents to come to the office so that staff can walk them through the naturalization process.⁸ A conclusion can be drawn here that staff are motivated to serve constituents not by a sense of sanctions per se, but because of a sense of virtuosity in the services they perform.

Members B and E: The Volunteers

Rehfeld characterizes The Volunteer type of representative as someone with a focus to improve the community based on how “he or she judges it would improve” and “out of dedication to the job, not for rewards that he or she will receive” (224). Members B and E are the two “true” descriptive representatives in the study in that they each possess racial and ethnic minority backgrounds and represent a constituency comprised of a majority of residents who share these backgrounds. They both have much longer tenures in the House than Member A; however, like member A, Members B and E also have longstanding political achievements in the communities in the district prior to serving in the House. Members B and E also have extensive experience in the private and non-profit sectors, and this experience may also factor into both members’ emphases on a more pluralistic approach to their actions within the district. For Members B and E, electoral sanctions were not an apparent concern. Member E’s district director stated

⁸ Staff from all districts did emphasize that they do not help individuals fill out government forms. As one caseworker from Member D’s office said, “We’re just human, and we don’t want to make a mistake and have it come back and bite us in the butt.”

directly that the upcoming election would not pose a problem, and Member B's district director noted that she and her staff really do not participate in the Member's reelection bids at all in their free time, unlike the "all hands on deck" mantra from some of the other districts in the study, notably Member C.

In contrast with operations in Member A's office, a director for Member B stated that the member was relatively involved in services provided within the district, particularly with regard to meetings on pertinent service topics. Similar to Member A's exchange of information, it appeared that Member B and his staff both initiated a sharing of information. The member's district director noted that when sharing information with the member, she tries to anticipate the issues or events he might ask about. "And I'm really good at it, too – of what he's going to need....I'm pretty sensitive to the community and the needs of the community and who the congressman may come in contact with; and the worst thing is for him to be confronted by someone who says, 'Well, your office knew,' and he doesn't know anything about it."

A director for Member B mentioned that the member will have meetings with individual constituents quite frequently, although she did not mention town hall meetings per se. She instead mentioned that they were very situation driven, from meetings about chromium levels in the soil, to a local church observance for Martin Luther King Day, to meetings about ways to help the victims of the Haitian earthquake, to annual health and wellness expos. Much more so than Member A, Member B's staff were very hands on within the community. As a director for Member B stated, sometimes the member says, "Look, I need to meet with members of my constituency to let them know what's going on on a face-to-face [basis]."

The district director for Member E noted that the member was also quite hands on when it came to planning and prioritizing constituent services for the upcoming calendar year. Each year, the district staff conduct a retreat where they perform yearly planning for the district, reevaluating services performed over the past year, and drafting new projects. The end result is a calendar year proposal that needs approval by the congresswoman. Although the schedule for the current calendar year already seemed quite packed, the district director noted, “The congresswoman wants to do more but there’s only so much you can do in a given year with the staff you have.”

Out of all districts examined, Member E’s district organization was by far the most structured. Unlike in most other districts, in which casework was performed by individuals who often wore dual hats as field assistants who would staff the member at local events, staff in Member E’s district were quite compartmentalized. Caseworkers handle solely casework in the office, allowing for field deputies to focus attention on the areas of the district to which they are assigned. The member and district director relied on these field deputies to obtain a sense of the needs of the greater community, in lieu of town halls, of which the district director said the member was “not a fan.” Field deputies instead worked with community leaders to conduct more intimate “house meetings” with selected constituents and the member.

Member B encouraged his staff to help anyone and everyone. His district director noted: “When someone comes to us with an issue, each person’s issue is important to him or her. So we try to ensure that we handle it in that same manner. Well, does everyone do that? Probably not. But is that the expectation? Yes.” A caseworker in the same office echoed this sentiment, noting that it was Member B’s expectation that his staff provide

the most help to all constituents within and outside the district: “Well, I mean, it comes down from the Congressman and it is more ... try to help everyone that comes in to our office and that’s just [the]... type of individual he is and how he deals with people so we always try to make the effort.”

Similarly, staff in Member E’s office expressed the sentiment that they considered it their moral obligation to treat their disparate constituent groups with respect. The casework manager explained, “We treat constituents very well for various reasons: because our work is in alignment with our personal values. We make the congresswoman look very good. But it’s not just about making the congresswoman look good.” He continued that it was also a matter of the satisfaction that staff gained from treating all constituents in a respectable way.

Member C: The Madisonian Lawmaker

For Rehfeld, the inspiration for the Madisonian Lawmaker typology was James Madison himself in his *Federalist* writings: a public official who sought to use his internal compass to decide what was in the best interest of a broader constituency, but who was also responsive to electoral sanctions. Member C himself expressed similar sentiments when he explained to constituents at a town hall meeting that he made his decisions based “what’s in the best interests of his constituents and what’s in the best interests of the country.” Member C, a lawyer by training and a former local public official, is a white male who represents a majority white constituency. The district has a poverty rate much lower than other districts in the study, and the member himself has been through much closer general elections throughout his tenure than other members.

The presence of an electoral threat was apparent in two particular town hall meetings, where supporters of the member's main Republican opponent in the upcoming general election made pointed statements at each event about their opposition to Member C's political viewpoints. Additionally, a constituent services director for Member C noted that while the member and his district staff shared information on a regular basis about the goings on within the district the member was clearly more concerned with his constituents' opinions on current legislative issues and more or less assumed that the casework was being performed adequately.

Of the districts examined, only Member C had conducted in-person town hall meetings in the past year. The district director claimed that the quantity of meetings the member conducted was one of the highest in the state as well as in the House of Representatives overall. A caseworker from Member C's district noted that the member conducts many public appearances around holidays as well as telephone town halls, and this is in addition to the twice annual listening tours (in-person town halls). She noted that the member sees that part of his job is "educating the people" about the legislative process in Washington and current federal policy issues.

A constituent services director for Member C stated that constituents will often ask at these events if the member was motivated to do this simply because it was an election year. She noted that she had to continuously explain, "The meeting is a service to the community that he does all the time and to provide information on federal agencies and laws that affect them." The district director for Member C noted that the member prides himself on constituent services. She and the member recognized that votes were important to obtain, but also as imperative was knowing that constituents' needs were

being served adequately by the member and staff. She was also keen to the consequences of not serving constituents to the best of their ability: “Could you imagine if people stood up [at events] and said ‘you didn’t help!’?...You don’t give up. You have to ask yourself [as a staffer]. ‘Did I exhaust every avenue?’”

This sentiment was portrayed most clearly by the range of casework staff in the district performed. Asked about more challenging types of cases she has handled, a caseworker of Member C said that issues with private health insurers are definitely more challenging. “They’re [insurance companies] not listening to people and their doctors, and they’re just denying people’s claims.” When asked a follow-up of whether this was even a member’s jurisdiction to work on these issues, she noted that technically this was out of a congressional office’s purview. However, the member and staff in the district concluded that because people sometimes are at their wits end with these private issues, “we’ll contact the [companies] with the constituents’ permission and respectfully request that the company review the case for the denial – most times the companies won’t.” Therefore, it seems that even though a positive resolution to the constituent’s case in these instances may not be successful, the member’s office finds it imperative to attempt to help the constituent. Another caseworker summed this sentiment up by stating about the nature of her work, “I feel that this is a ministry.”

Member D: The Ambassador

The Ambassador is characterized by Rehfeld as a member who follows the judgment of groups of constituents in determining his actions, yet who is motivated in his duties more by the service component of his position rather than by the threat of

sanctions. Although Member D's average margin of victory was smaller than most others in the sample, he is a seasoned veteran who has consistently won reelection in a demographically-changing district for more than a quarter century. Member D, a white male, represents what was once a majority white district when he was first elected more than 20 years ago. The district is now majority Latino. It is perhaps these shifting demographics that make him somewhat more reliant on the judgment of his constituents than some of the other members in the study.

In somewhat of a contrast to the exchanges of information through phone calls with the member that the previously discussed members used, Member D received a memo on a regular basis that detailed the types of casework, caseloads for staff, case outcomes, and details of other services recently provided to his constituency. The constituent services director for Member D stated that the member did not care to hold general events for constituents, such as in a town hall meeting format. Instead, he liked to meet with smaller groups on specific topics. The office organized advisory committees comprised of constituents in the district on particular issues, such as immigration, housing, and senior issues.

Similar to Member C's district, staff from Member D's district noted that over the past year or so they received an increasing number of requests for assistance with private bank foreclosures and loan modifications. Also like Member C, Member D's staff have crossed the traditional boundary of dealing with only federal-related casework and regularly contact lenders on behalf of constituents to seek loan modifications. One such event was devoted to this issue, in which the member cosponsored with local leaders a loan modification event for constituents in the region. Lenders and mortgage counselors

were on hand to assist constituents seeking modifications, standing in line for hours. It is estimated that at least 300 people attended this event. Yet, despite counselors and lenders being accessible at this event, Member D’s staff still encouraged constituents who approached them to contact their office for additional assistance in the process.

On a similar note, caseworkers relayed instances of private financial assistance organizations charging individuals exorbitant fees who sought assistance with refinancing of their mortgages, only to take their money and close their business without providing the assistance. One caseworker in this district expressed sorrow at the fact that the individuals would contact the member’s office for assistance for free assistance that they had wasted sometimes thousands of dollars attempting to obtain. The same seemed to be true for immigration-related issues, where attorneys would charge constituents for services they could obtain for free through the member’s office. A caseworker from Member D’s office expressed the stress that came with providing services to the general public: “[A] hard day here is...a really hard day because people take out their issues and problems and they will yell at you and say...whatever else they want to say to you because they have been pushed around and sent from place to place, and you have to maintain that level of compassion for their issue and professionalism.”

Member F: The Pared-Down Delegate

Rehfeld describes the “pared-down” delegate as a member who is sensitive to electoral sanctions and who is dependent on the judgment of constituents (although the degree to which such delegation is “authorized” is left up to interpretation). In Member F’s case, her actions and those of her staff are aimed more at specific components of her

constituency rather than at the constituency as a whole. Member F has brought both private and public sector experience into her tenure in the House. Of the members in this study, she has been the most politically vulnerable thus far in her short career. Therefore, the threat of electoral sanctions may loom larger for her than for most others in the study, with perhaps the exception of Member C. Additionally, the demographic diversity the member has in her district may encourage an approach to reach out separately to these segments of the population and secure each demographics' vote individually through both casework and other district activities. While Member F's district director stated that he was not at liberty to talk candidly about the nature of the conversations he had with the member about the relationship between constituent services and reelection efforts (because he did not want to discuss campaign issues on the district office phone line) he emphatically noted that this is something that he and the member continually discuss.

In her first term in office, Member F and staff were present at numerous events within the district, whether at NAACP forums, community events with Asian church groups, ceremonies involving local medical facilities, African-American, Asian, and Hispanic chambers of commerce meetings, or educational symposiums for at-risk youth. The district director stated that Congresswoman organizes a senior briefing luncheon each year, where all seniors in the district are invited to attend. This past year, 1,000 people were at the event, held at a community center in one of the cities within the district. He noted that event is essentially a large town hall meeting devoted to informing seniors on issues that affect them, and the Member prides herself on this activity. In another activity, Member F and staff joined efforts with an ethnic church community to

send thousands of pounds of disaster-relief supplies to the site of a natural disaster overseas that affected families and friends of this community.

Member F consistently has touted the work of her staff in providing constituent services to residents within her district. In a telephone town hall meeting, for instance, she specifically mentioned both generally and in response to particular questions that constituents should feel free to contact her district staff with any of their concerns. As with other members in the study, Member F's informational brochures also encouraged constituents to contact staff with their needs. However, as beneficial as such an exhortation may be with regard to providing constituent services and bringing back support for the member, such emphasis on discrete constituent services can have its pitfalls. For instance, in one conversation with the district director whether he saw his office as the last resort for constituents and whether that might impact the types of cases his office took on, he noted wryly, "We can't be everything to everyone." A caseworker expressed the sentiment that staff sometimes were spread too thin, having a responsibility to attend multiple functions on behalf of the member and maintain a high level of service with regard to casework. She also noted that the member has at times asked staff take on non-federal or out-of-district cases for individuals, and stated that this can add to the case flow issues the district already needs to address. However, the caseworker was adamant that staff have a duty to be constituents' advocates in any way or place they can and she can take pride in knowing that she and her colleagues do not short deliberately change constituents in that way.

Discussion and implications

Rehfeld's schematic conceptual space appears to possess the flexibility to accommodate non-legislative behavior in the parameters of its three dimensional construct. The dimensions of aims, sources of judgment, and responsiveness to electoral sanctions are elements of not only legislative behavior, but also of actions taken on behalf of constituents in the members' home districts. Likewise, while Rehfeld's original model did not explicitly take into account any variation with regard to member or district characteristics such as seniority, electoral competitiveness, and racial and ethnic characteristics of member and district, the quantitative findings lend limited support for the hypotheses presented regarding the relationship between these predictors and the models' three dimensions. Such findings complemented the trajectory of observations from the field and in-depth interviews with staff concerning their actions and those of their members on behalf of their constituents. Again, while the sample size of this data may limit conclusions drawn from the behavior of these selected predictors, the more holistic message to take from the data presented is the ability of Rehfeld's schema to incorporate observed data in a manner that adds a richness to empirical studies of political representation.

With regard to the hypotheses that were supported by the data, the finding that members within more competitive districts relied on external sources of judgment more so than those in less competitive districts pointed to evidence of a traditional delegate form of representation operating at some level. This gives some credence to previous studies of representation which prioritize the qualities of electoral and public opinion sensitivities in a representative. However, the reality in the American case is that

congressional districts are increasingly becoming less competitive, and therefore the future accuracy of a delegate form of representation as the appropriate model to use may continue to diminish. Nevertheless, it is apparent from this study that certain members still gravitate toward this style of responsiveness.

Secondly, the findings lend support for the prediction that minority descriptive representatives will be more likely than non-minority representatives to use their own internal compass when engaging in political behavior. This conclusion, which offers support for descriptive representation as gyroscopic in fashion, buttresses previous works demonstrating that racial trust between constituents and representatives from historically-marginalized groups is a critical component of the process and outcomes of representation (Tate 2003; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Grose 2011). The qualitative assessment of the members in the study, Members B and E, who were the two minority descriptive representatives, demonstrated characteristics that loaded up on the same typology in Rehfeld's schema (i.e., The Volunteer). I do not attribute this placement purely to subjective interpretation on the part of this researcher or to mere coincidence, but rather to a real underlying concept of the process of descriptive representation, one which manifests itself similarly in two congressional districts nearly 3,000 miles apart.

Apart from the small sample size, a couple of other reasons may exist for the varied performance of the predictors tested by the hypotheses. First, the predictors included in this study, as well as others, may not be the strongest ones in predicting where any given member will be placed in the three-dimensional space of representation. Additionally, while they may not be the strongest predictors alone for this placement, they may grow stronger in conjunction with other variables. Such is the nature of a

multidimensional process as regression analysis, and a similar concept could be playing out in these data. Future studies incorporating Rehfeld's model would benefit by devising sophisticated manners in which to assess such interactions of predictors and how they affect a member's placement in a three-dimensional space.

A second reason as to the varied results could stem from the incorporation of references by congressional staff in conjunction with member data. I firmly believe that a study of home district behavior must include a strong staff presence, in that staff often know more about the goings-on of the home district than the member (as is evident by some of the qualitative data presented). However, while staff may seek to follow their members' direction in some instances, in others – such as constituent casework – they may act much more autonomously. It is in these circumstances that staff may not act in line with how the member might act, given the member's particular characteristics, and this may skew the predictive nature of the variable. Future studies should be conscious of this possibility for differential outcomes in using staff-generated data to predict political behavior of members based on the member's personal or professional characteristics.

**Rockin' the Suburbs?:
An Examination into the Distribution of Appropriations
Earmarks Among Urban and Suburban Municipalities**

Abstract: This article examines political responsiveness of members of Congress through an examination into federal appropriations earmarks directed toward municipalities in major metropolitan areas of the U.S. The central question posed is to what extent these municipalities' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics influence the distribution of federal earmarks to public and private entities within their borders. The analysis uses Orfield's (2002) typology of urban and suburban municipalities to assess the relation between the social and economic needs of a municipality and the quantity, dollar value, and type of projects directed towards the location. Employing models that incorporate both institutional and demographic variables, I find that central cities receive the overwhelming majority of earmarks within a metropolis in both number and dollar value, but are not significantly more likely to receive larger individual earmarks. Among suburbs, inner-ring municipalities with high poverty and minority concentrations are more likely to receive an earmark in a given fiscal year cycle, but are no more likely to receive a larger number or dollar value of appropriations funds. More affluent suburbs are no more likely to receive an earmark or a larger number of earmarks in a given fiscal year than other suburbs, but are more likely to receive a larger dollar value of earmarks.

Introduction

In the process of conducting research in congressional districts across the U.S., I met a district director with a kind soul who spent the better part of a whole day driving

me through the member's disparate jurisdiction. In detail, he explained the history of the district and each of its several towns' demographics, including their various states of economic distress. Each of the district's several offices was located in a different town – an insistence by the member, who wanted to have a physical presence throughout the district. More than 3,000 miles away, another district member also strove to make a presence throughout his gerrymandered district. Sandwiched somewhere between the HVAC unit for the building and a women's restroom, one particular satellite office had no windows except for the one in the door out to the hallway. However, being in the city hall of one of the district's municipalities, the rent was *very* reasonable and provided a strategic avenue for both the distribution and gathering of information in one of the district's diverse communities.

The stories of elected officials and their staff striving to meet the demands of their diverse constituencies are not new, and neither are the aims of political scientists seeking to analyze this behavior. However, the opening anecdotes showcase a common theme among district members and their staff that is often given short shrift in the literature: the relationship between political responsiveness and spatial relations. In prioritizing policy responsiveness and the threat of electoral sanctions by voters, many studies of political representation place emphasis on the first-order level of analysis between an elected official and his or her constituents. This article seeks to build on this literature and probe a second-order level of analysis, examining the relationship elected officials have with their constituents through the municipalities in which they are located. In addition to serving their individual constituents directly, elected officials operate in a multi-tiered

fashion, in which they dispense goods and services to individual constituents through intermediate constituencies such as towns, cities, and community organizations.

The primary aim of this study seeks to understand in what ways the diverse demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of city and suburb municipalities have an effect on the distribution of federal earmarks to these jurisdictions. In this article, I examine the geographic space in which such intermediate constituencies are located – congressional districts and the municipalities within them– to analyze the strength of the relationship between the demands of a locality and the outcomes of distributive politics. I argue that studies of distributive politics can provide further insights into political behavior when their scope is not limited to federal geographic boundaries, as it is often the local geographic boundaries that both create and reify the demographic composition and socioeconomic conditions that affect constituents' daily lives.

This article utilizes demographic, congressional, and appropriations data from more than 1,000 local municipalities within 24 major metropolitan areas throughout the U.S. to test the significance of local geographic conditions on the distribution of appropriations earmarks to urban municipalities. I set forth an argument as to the necessity of examining differences among local municipalities, particularly in metropolitan areas, where the city-suburb dichotomy no longer reflects demographic and socioeconomic reality. In line with this argument, I utilize social demographer Myron Orfield's classification of urban communities (Orfield 2002) in a quantitative analysis of earmarks distributed to local governments, institutions of higher education, and non-governmental entities. I acknowledge the importance and significance of several institutional level factors which previous work has found to contribute to outcomes of

distributive politics. Therefore, while the focus of the analysis is on performance of geographic, demand-side factors in understanding patterns of appropriations distributions to urban municipalities, I incorporate both institutional (supply-side) and demand-side factors into the analysis.

Responsiveness studies: broadening the level of analysis

This inquiry begins with a reexamination of the traditional level of analyses used to assess an elected official's responsiveness to those constituencies and communities he or she represents in the legislative body. Empirical studies of political representation have commonly privileged individuals as constituents, focusing on a dyadic relationship between an individual or group of individuals and the representative. Classic examples of this work are Fenno's series of studies (Fenno 1978, 2003), which offer in-depth explorations into the district behavior of House representatives. Spatial discussions of towns and cities within each member's district are largely limited to the characteristics of residents within those municipalities. Research on congressional redistricting and the consequences of racial and political gerrymandering provides another avenue through which research in the field delves into geographic and spatial relationships (Canon 1999; Crespin 2006; Mann and Cain 2005). Yet, these studies also place priority on the individual-representative relationship and less emphasis on the mediating role of localities themselves. Studies analyzing congressional behavior with regard to distributive politics offer further evidence into how members may take not only the voting behavior but also the geographic characteristics of a constituency into consideration (Bickers and Stein 2004; Lee 2004; Grose 2011).

Studying individual representation through an analysis of municipalities allows for insight into how elected officials use municipal governments and local entities to respond to the interests of their constituents, and also contributes to a better understanding of the localized spatial dynamics in which political inequities among constituents may lie. The representative-constituent relationship in the U.S. and other countries with district-based, winner-take-all electoral systems is necessarily spatial in nature, compelling some theorists to arrive at creative arguments for recreating our political spaces (Beitz 1989; Rehfeld 2005). Simply put, understanding not only how constituents but also the municipalities which contain them interact with their elected officials in a political space adds further insight into the study of responsive politics.

Just as differences exist among individuals and individual constituent groups regarding both their demographic characteristics and political needs, so too do these differences exist among municipal constituents which contain them. No clearer are these differences evident than in urbanized areas. Metropolitan areas have morphed from being a place where a city and suburbs contentiously grasp for a tax base and outside funds into one where the suburbs compete among themselves for these prizes. Events of the 20th Century and beyond have both exacerbated these differences and also created and highlighted new distinctions among suburban communities themselves.

Beyond the city-suburb divide

Throughout the past half century, urban studies focused almost exclusively on the politics of the city or the city-suburb divide (Banfield and Wilson 1963; Dahl 1961; Halle 2003; Petersen 1981). Suburban communities were created originally by affluent city dwellers, beginning as far back as the 1800s (Judd and Swanstrom 2008), and by the mid-

1900s these areas became a goal of many middle class families (Jackson 1985). Indeed, the Depression Era in the United States marked a critical turning point for urban areas, with cities having to deal with loss of revenue from businesses and property taxes. The federal government up to this time had few opportunities or incentives to collaborate with city governments in providing assistance. States, saddled with their own economic issues, were unwilling or uninterested to assist their cities in this manner. However, where the states would not or could not provide economic assistance to their cities, agencies within the federal government reluctantly began to fill this void. The initiatives that Congress passed to assist states just prior to World War II marked the first substantial instance of the federal government outwardly noting the responsibility it had for keeping its economic engines afloat (Judd and Swanstrom 2008).

The explosive development of suburb communities in the post-War era helped to accelerate both the growth of the metropolitan area and the decline of inner cities, through both transportation initiatives (Jackson 1985) and real estate development. Through the GI Bill and opportunities for housing mortgage subsidies through federal housing authorities, veterans and others with middle incomes were able to afford new stand alone constructions in spacious communities removed from the chaos of city living. However, as has become abundantly clear in the decades since, however, the opportunities to achieve such an “American Dream” were hardly egalitarian in their availability. Many benefits of the GI Bill went almost exclusively to white veterans, leaving African American veterans unable to gain many of the opportunities that provided upward socioeconomic mobility, such as cash incentives for property ownership (Katznelson 2005). Restrictive covenants on residential properties prevailed legally until

the late 1940s, barring immigrants, Jews, and African Americans from obtaining the deeds to a large but untold proportion of available residential housing in suburban communities.¹ While restrictive covenants were summarily declared unconstitutional in *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948), the de facto residential segregation they had instilled in suburban communities had been already forged by that time.²

Additionally, despite federal programs designed to provide more opportunities for property ownership to lower income housing authorities, ethnic immigrants and African Americans in particular found it difficult to secure such funding. One of the main reasons for this was the willingness of federal authorities to condone the discriminatory lending practices prevalent in the private lending industry while also redlining areas for FHA loans in urban and suburban areas alike (Jackson 1985). This led to a much more rapid “flight” of white families from central cities than racial and ethnic minority residents.³ The results of urban transportation planning also dissuaded residents with fewer financial means from moving too far from the central city of a region.⁴ All of these housing and transportation decisions have had a continued effect in the stagnant upward mobility of minorities in urban areas.

¹ For example, Levittown homes had racial restrictions on not only the owners but also the tenants of these properties (Gans 1967).

² Real estate agents were also integral to perpetuating the deep spatial segregation, dissuading prospective white homeowners from properties in certain neighborhoods in cities and some suburban areas. Furthermore, real estate developers began increasing their production of common interest developments (more commonly referred to as “gated communities”) and worked with local governments to create zoning laws that restricted the types of housing and businesses that could be located within a community (Judd and Swanstrom 2008).

³ Indeed, some scholars of urban studies have railed against the trope of minority families “driving out” middle class white families from older, inner ring suburban communities, noting instead that as white families left for newer suburban communities further from central cities, minority families purchased homes in these older suburbs because property values and housing prices had decreased enough for them to make a reasonable offer (Orfield 2002; Judd and Swanstrom 2008).

⁴ For instance, local planners often prioritized transit to and from the suburbs via automobiles rather than investing in public transit, effectively marginalizing lower income individuals from outer-ring suburbs.

De jure and de facto residential segregation throughout metropolitan communities up to and following World War II has become a path dependent trajectory that continues to leave its mark, both spatially and socially (see Massey and Denton 1993). As land further away from central cities has become available for development, many residents with financial means have relocated to these areas, and businesses have followed suit in by placing some of the main job centers in a metropolitan area in suburban office parks. The residents who remain behind in older inner-ring suburbs with failing infrastructure and overcrowded schools are often lower to middle income families, particularly minorities and immigrants (Orfield 2002; Hanlon 2009). Additionally, revitalization projects in central cities have resulted in both an in-migration of affluent residents and an out-migration of those no longer able to afford housing in these areas.

Furthermore, the 2008 housing crisis exposed somewhat unsavory lending policies and practices, which disproportionately affected minority homeowners, and particularly African-Americans, in metropolitan areas and have been considered a result of persistent racial segregation (Rugh and Massey 2010). Since 2008, the number of poor residents in suburbs or metropolitan areas has surpassed the number within central cities (Allard and Roth 2010). In addition, the infrastructure of social services in these suburbs has not kept up with this explosive growth of poor residents within their borders, leaving residents increasingly physically and socially isolated (Allard and Roth 2010).

Social demographer Myron Orfield has been one of the first researchers to systematically examine social and economic differences among suburbs through his analysis of major American cities and surrounding suburbs, and has constructed a typology of municipalities based on socioeconomic and land use data (Orfield 2002).

This typology makes marked distinctions between inner-ring municipalities with higher poverty rates and lower property values, developing bedroom communities, and towns containing affluent job centers.⁵ In his analysis, Orfield incorporated revenue and expenditure data with socioeconomic data from municipalities from areas in the 25 most populous regions in the U.S. Specifically, the data, spanning the years 1993 to 1998, was comprised of a municipality's tax capacity, poverty levels, population density, age of infrastructure, population characteristics and both growth in population and in tax capacity within a five-year period. (See Appendix C for additional details.) The data from 4,606 incorporated and 135 unincorporated municipalities in the study were then analyzed using a K-means cluster procedure, resulting in six suburban categories. (Central cities were compiled as a separate cluster.)⁶

- (1) *At risk, segregated communities* contain low tax capacity and high municipal expenditures coupled with high concentrations of non-Asian minority children in public schools, high poverty rates, and older infrastructure.
- (2) *At risk, older communities* differ from at risk, segregated communities in that the poverty levels are much lower as are the concentrations of non-Asian minority children in public schools.

While these two “at-risk” communities share some common characteristics and are often geographically adjacent to one another—comprising inner-ring suburbs—racial tensions between residents in these two community types can sometimes come to fruition.

⁵ Since this period, other social scientists have devised their own typologies for municipalities in metropolitan areas, using similar methods of cluster analysis (Hanlon 2009; Hanlon et al. 2006). Their resulting typologies, while different, are related to Orfield's original categorization in that they are based on local economic and demographic data. I make use of Orfield's typology in this study as his categorization has been longer standing and the data and methods are readily available through the website for his GIS consulting firm, Ameregis (<http://www.ameregis.com>).

⁶ All descriptions are adapted from *American Metropolitcs* (Orfield 2002).

Additionally, the proportions of social service expenditures to revenue in some inner-ring suburbs are more similar to central cities than to other more affluent suburbs (Judd & Swanstrom 2008).

- (3) *At risk, lower density communities*, like the other “at risk” communities, have low tax capacity and slower tax capacity growth than more economically-advantaged areas. Often, these municipalities were not too long ago considered more rural than part of a metropolitan suburb. Because of older infrastructure, these communities are generally more affordable for middle class families, which in turn means more rapid population growth but disproportionately fewer municipal resources to accommodate this increase in residents.
- (4) *Bedroom, developing communities* contain much newer housing stock and an average growing tax capacity. This category is comprised of, as Orfield states, “the prototypical suburb.” However, because of dramatic population growth, these municipalities must strike a balancing act in terms of expenditures for infrastructure. Demographically, most have very high concentrations of white school populations.
- *Affluent job centers* (categorized by Orfield as two different categories: (5) *affluent* and (6) *very affluent*) are those communities with moderate population growth, very low poverty or minority populations, and high tax capacity, particularly due to a large concentration of office space. These municipalities are sometimes considered “edge cities,” and often contain office parks that house companies who may have moved their offices out of central cities. In actuality, some municipalities in these categories are not necessarily “job centers” per se but

are residential areas whose residents benefit from the neighboring job centers.

Consequently, traffic congestion in these areas can sometimes be an issue.

Orfield notes that anti-growth initiatives have had a strong presence in these areas.

Despite the wide documentation of central cities' political, social, and economic circumstances by social scientists over the past half century, the plight of suburban areas has been much less prevalent in the literature. Indeed, only truly since Orfield's work have social scientists begun to shift away from the perception of the suburb as an economically secure and politically and socially homogeneous geography. Notably, political scientists have not yet delved into the political ramifications of such a growing disparity among suburbs. A study of municipalities within urbanized areas provides an appropriate setting in which to examine both the representation of municipalities by members of Congress and how members' decisions affect residents within communities of varying characteristics. The political and socioeconomic climate for municipalities within urbanized areas shaped by nearly a century of events sets up a unique challenge to their representatives, particularly in terms of decisions concerning federal funding.

Earmarks at the local level

Member requests for earmarked appropriations funds are a widespread and commonly accepted practice among lawmakers at both the state and federal level. Commonly known as "pork," earmarks have gained a mixed reputation. Some view earmarks as necessary for local economic stability (Judd and Swanstrom 2008), while others view them as tools for political strategy (Evans 2004; Ferejohn 1974) or evidence of political pandering and an unnecessary use of federal funds. Members of Congress

have earmarked appropriations funding from varied agencies and departments (such as the Departments of Defense, Justice, and Health and Human Services) for different types of recipients (Bertelli and Grose 2009). For instance, earmarks related to defense are commonly directed to government installations and for-profit federal contractors.⁷ Non-profit organizations receive a large portion of earmarked appropriations funds for community development, among other projects, although these distributions have not been without their share of political controversy. Public and private institutions of higher education have increasingly received earmarked appropriations funds for social or scientific research projects that assist the immediate community or a broader national goal. However, these earmarks have been scrutinized for their prevalence and size (Balla et al. 2002).

Earmarks directed toward local projects – whether for cities, towns, counties, or public development corporations – are often used for public transportation and infrastructure, and public safety. In the author’s own discussions with congressional staff, staffers illustrated some specific items that municipalities request, such as new fire trucks and police training.⁸ Often, these earmarked federal funds may be sought by local government leaders to fill a financial void where a state is unable to help. The importance of federal appropriations earmarks to municipal interests was evident from an interview with one member’s staff. The staffer indicated that when the member invited mayors of the district’s municipalities to attend a meeting to discuss the next fiscal year’s

⁷ However, the direct distribution of earmarks to for-profit entities was eliminated in the 2010 fiscal year cycle by Democrats, who controlled the House of Representatives at the time. Recent reports have noted that for-profit defense contractors have since this time created or used non-profit entities to redirect funds back to these contractors. However, the time period of this study is prior to when the ban, and this practice, was implemented (Lipton and Nixon 2010).

⁸ Personal interview with congressional district staff member (name withheld by author), April 1, 2010.

appropriations requests, 35 out of the 37 mayors attended.⁹ Admittedly, discussions of earmarked appropriations funds within and outside of political science research are not without some question of wasteful spending and ulterior motives. However, they are nevertheless an important tool for members of Congress in demonstrating responsiveness toward their constituencies. Arguably, earmarks targeted toward constituents within a municipality, whether a town, city, or county itself, a non-profit organization, or another type of entity, have a direct or indirect benefit on residents within the municipality (Grose 2011, Ch. 6). Often, funds from earmarks distributed to local non-profit organizations can be targeted to specific community development or cultural initiatives, which have a trickle-town effect on the municipalities in terms of safety, reputation, and job creation.

Traditional predictors of earmark distribution

Previous research has identified a variety of factors found likely to determine the decisions of elected officials with regard to the federal funding they direct toward their districts and specific constituencies, and scholars often categorize these as “supply side” and “demand side” motivations (Lowry and Potoski 2004; Hird 1991; Lazarus 2010).

Supply side motivations relate to the institutional factors and member characteristics that may have an effect on the political calculations of a member.¹⁰ Studies of earmark

⁹ Personal interview with constituent services director (name withheld by author), March 30, 2010.

¹⁰ Interviews with staff of members who serve on the House Appropriations Committee substantiate some of these politically-motivated variables. For instance, one staffer from a district in an eastern U.S. metropolitan area noted that her member had a link on his official website with instructions on how to submit an appropriations request and information on eligibility. For this member, constituents’ appropriations requests were not merely side projects, but were in fact a routinized process. “We call it ‘bringing home the bacon,’” she stated. Personal interview with congressional district staff member (name withheld by author), April 1, 2010.

A senior staffer of another member in a western U.S. metropolitan area noted that in the redistricting following the 2000 Census, the member’s district gained a handful of municipalities containing Republican-leaning voters that had formerly been in a Republican member’s district. She noted

spending have differing explanations as to whether supply or demand motivations of the member carry more weight in the decision making process, with some stating that earmarks are used as a political tool to further a member's institutional goals (Evans 2004; Lee 2004), and others noting evidence that local geographic factors are also significant (Lazarus 2010; Rich 1989). Acknowledging the relative importance of both supply side and demand side factors in the literature, this study incorporates both types of motivations in its analysis. However, the primary hypotheses to be tested incorporate demand side factors as determinants of earmarks within urban and suburban municipalities.

Supply-side factors: One of the most overwhelming institutional-based supply side factors likely to have an effect on the funding decisions of a member is whether the member is a part of the majority party in Congress (for example, see Carsey and Rundquist 1999). However, the effect of party may be larger in the amount of earmarks to a member, but not necessarily in whether or not a member received an earmark (Balla et al. 2002). This provides some evidence for the charge that congressional leaders use earmarks as political IOUs (or "you-owe-me's") to rank and file members, regardless of party (Evans 2004).

Another predictor that has found some significance in the literature is whether the member is on his or her chamber's Appropriations Committee (for example, see Balla et al. 2002). Since this committee is specifically charged with appropriations, the likelihood that a member will use his or her position on this committee to direct appropriations

that the cities' officials were at first leery of working with the new member. However, when the member spoke with them about the process of submitting appropriations requests through her office for city improvements, they became more receptive and admitted that they had never discussed appropriations requests with their former member and were unaware that such funding was available to them. Personal interview with congressional district staff member (name withheld by author), July 27, 2010.

funds toward his or her political jurisdiction is quite high. Additionally, the number of cosponsors of an earmark has demonstrated to have a marginal effect on the dollar amount of an earmark, with the rationale being that both appropriations committee and party leaders can more easily use this as a heuristic to ascertain the localized importance of the earmark.

Demand-side factors: Demand-side factors with regard to earmarks have not been as widely researched as supply-side factors. However, some scholars have made concerted efforts to test the strength of these variables. For instance, Lazarus (2010) has used measures of economic need as well as geographic measures, finding that while the economic predictors were not significant, the geographic indicators were positive predictors of number and dollar value of a district's earmarks. Lowry and Potowski (2004) implement demographic measures of the constituency which they describe as "latent demands," or those not directly linked to organized interests.

One circumstance contributing to the relationship municipalities have with earmarked funds within their jurisdictions is what Shepsle and Weingast (1981) note is the "spillover effect," which applies to situations in which funds directed toward a particular jurisdiction or awardee have benefits to area jurisdictions as well.

Consequences of this effect have been seen in the number of interlocal agreements with regard to grant cost sharing, where the density of the metropolitan area has been highly correlated with the number of interlocal agreements. The spillover effect theory has also formed a basis for cooperative necessity and room for collective action of municipal metropolitan governments in the context of distributive politics (Bickers and Stein 2004). Conversely, this principle may be applied to municipalities and congressional districts,

particularly in situations where congressional districts share a municipality. The benefits of an earmark in one municipality may be able to be shared across districts, also providing multiple opportunities for credit claiming (Lee 1998; Lazarus 2009).

As noted in Orfield's typologies, municipalities possess varying needs based on their economic, physical, and social circumstances. Therefore, this study aims to determine whether the earmarks members direct toward local governments and entities within municipalities in their districts correlate with the physical and socioeconomic demands of the municipality itself, and to what extent other elements – whether related to institutional or member characteristics –also play a role.

Data

The current study uses data on earmarks in municipalities within urban congressional districts to address two main research questions. First, what are the most significant predictors of whether a municipality receives earmarked funds? Second, among the municipalities receiving earmarks in a given fiscal year, which predictors are significant in determining the number and dollar value of earmarks? To answer these questions, I employ appropriations, member, and demographic data from selected congressional districts in 24 major metropolitan areas in the 110th Congress (2007-2008).¹¹ Two main criteria existed for inclusion of these congressional districts in the study. 1) The congressional districts were at least 97% urban, using 2000 Census figures and the Census Bureau's definition of an urbanized area. This percentage was used as a

¹¹ I use data from Fiscal Year 2008 in this study for the reason that this was the first fiscal year that earmark data, with completed coding, was made available by OMB. By the end of this study, OMB had also made available fiscal year 2009 and 2010 earmarks, complete with final recipient information and awarded amounts. I intend to analyze these years in future analyses.

cutoff point to better isolate congressional districts in metropolitan areas from those which may also be comprised of more rural areas. Excluding more rural areas within the study was intended to act as a control on both population density and land area.¹² 2) The congressional districts had to be wholly situated within Orfield's *American Metropolitanities* study sites among major urbanized areas. The purpose for employing these criteria was to match municipalities within urban congressional districts with their typologies as designated by Orfield's cluster analysis. These criteria resulted in 107 congressional districts.

In total, the study includes 1,110 municipalities either wholly or partly within the 107 urban congressional districts as of the last redistricting in 2002. Gathering these data posed somewhat of an unpredicted challenge, as written information listing municipalities contained in each congressional district is not consistently available for all districts. Some House members' websites posted clear information as to which municipalities were contained in their congressional districts, in whole or in part. In other instances, however, such information was incomplete or vague (such as statements mentioning parts of certain counties within the district, without references to specific municipalities). In these cases, I used maps available online through the U.S. Census Bureau American Factfinder database to identify town and district borders. Unincorporated areas of counties and Census Designated Places (CDPs) were excluded from the analysis for the reason that state home rule laws vary in the manner in which they treat these areas for political and economic purposes. Additionally, Orfield's data on community typologies is primarily focused on incorporated municipalities. Therefore, for

¹² I am aware that placing these parameters on which congressional districts are included may affect the results and their generalizability to other regions. I discuss these consequences further in the conclusion section.

the sake of both consistency and accuracy, only incorporated municipalities were included in the study. In certain instances, particularly in New York State, unincorporated areas or CDPs had political and economic relationships within incorporated municipalities. Therefore, cases in which earmarks were distributed to these unincorporated areas were coded as belonging to the larger incorporated municipality. (A listing of metropolitan areas included in this study is located in Appendix C.)

The data on appropriations earmarks used in this study is derived from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for fiscal year 2008. OMB's earmarks database contains numerous categories regarding each earmark, including primary recipient, recipient's address, and amount distributed to the recipient.¹³ OMB categorizes recipients into seven categories: federal, state, or local government, for-profit or non-profit, and private or public institution of higher education.¹⁴ For this study, I analyzed three categories of recipients: local governments, non-profit organizations and institutions of public education, both public and private. The rationale for focusing attention on these particular earmarks stems from their localized distribution and reported purpose. Earmarked dollars directed toward local governments (whether the municipal or county level), non-profit entities, and colleges and universities are traditionally more likely to stay in the immediate area of the recipient as opposed to earmarks directed to federal and for-profit institutions. One of the primary reasons for this is because while the purpose of many directed appropriations funds to the former are for community-based health, infrastructure, cultural, and research purposes, the purpose of most federal and for-profit

¹³ These data provide a more detailed alternative to the commonly used "Pig Book" from Citizens Against Government Waste (CAGW), which discloses total amounts of earmarks but does not distinguish multiple recipients of an earmark.

¹⁴ Recipient type also included an "other" category, which is comprised mainly of earmarks to airports and other miscellaneous entities and was excluded from analysis.

earmarks are overwhelmingly for defense-related purposes. Although the initial recipient of defense earmarks may be a federal defense installation or defense contract headquarters within a metropolitan area, the final destination of the funding frequently resides elsewhere. OMB's data unfortunately does not include the final destination of this funding,¹⁵ and the agency is unable to ascertain whether this primary recipient of the funding contracts with or distributes funding to secondary recipients for the carrying out the intended goal of the earmark. However, preliminary review of these data suggest that such circumstances may be at work in the FY2008 appropriations earmarks. Preliminary analysis revealed that earmarked funds directed to federal and for-profit recipients in FY08 not only were much more likely to be directed toward defense purposes, but were also more likely to be sponsored by members outside a major metropolitan area. Additionally, I excluded recipients of state funding, as they were predominantly directed toward municipalities that served as state capitals. Since not all capitals of each state involved in the study were included in the urban congressional districts analyzed, these types of earmarks were excluded for consistency. Of those remaining earmarks, only those whose recipient address was located within a congressional district in this study were used for data analysis. Ultimately, 1,691 unique earmarks for fiscal year 2008 are analyzed in this study.¹⁶

¹⁵ The website housing these data explicitly states, "The recipient/beneficiary listed in the database may not represent the final recipient/beneficiary of a particular earmark." <http://earmarks.omb.gov/earmarks-public/>, last updated November 12, 2010.

¹⁶ With regard to analysis of earmarks distributed to local governments and non-profit organizations, all were included with two exceptions. The FY2008 earmark distributions included two earmarks to each of the cities hosting presidential conventions in 2008 (St. Paul, Minnesota and Denver, Colorado). The dollar amount of each earmark was more than 2 standard deviations above the mean, and coupled with the exceptional nature of these earmarks, these two cases were excluded from analysis.

Methods and hypotheses

The study uses three separate series of analyses to test the significance of municipality typology and other predictors with regard to earmark distribution. One core set of predictors are used, which are operationalized below. Each analysis is performed twice, first including the effect of central cities, and again isolating suburb municipalities. The unit of analysis is the individual municipality.

Likelihood of receiving earmark: The first analysis asks which predictors are the strongest in determining which municipalities within a metropolitan area are most likely to receive a federal appropriations earmark. Here, the dependent variable is dichotomous, representing whether or not any recipient within an urban municipality received an earmark designated to a local government, non-profit organization, or institution of higher education within its jurisdiction through fiscal year 2008 appropriations. I performed these analyses using logistic regression.

Total number of earmarks: Using the same set of predictors, the second analysis examines only those municipalities that received at least one earmark in the FY08 appropriations cycle. It probes which factors are most likely to predict the total number of earmarks distributed to a municipality in a metropolitan area. The dependent variable in this equation is the logged total number of earmarks for each municipality designated to a local government, non-profit organization, or institution of higher education within its jurisdiction through fiscal year 2008 appropriations.

Total dollar value of earmarks: Lastly, the third analysis seeks to identify those predictors most likely to predict the total dollar value of earmarks distributed to a municipality in a metropolitan area, and uses the same set of predictors as in the first two

analyses. As with the second analysis, this one also examines only those municipalities that received at least one earmark in the FY08 appropriations cycle. The dependent variable in this third equation is the logged total dollar amount of earmarks for each municipality designated to a local government, non-profit organization, or institution of higher education within its jurisdiction through fiscal year 2008 appropriations.

For the second and third analyses, I used a logged term since some values for major cities resulted in a long left-tailed distribution with large standard deviations. The latter two models were analyzed using OLS regression.

Key predictor: Municipality typology

Every municipality analyzed in this study was coded using the classification system as assigned by Orfield in his *American Metropolitics* project. I obtained the classification data on each community in the study through an analysis of maps available online from the website of Ameregis, a geographic information systems (GIS) consulting firm founded by Orfield. The classifications used in the current study modify Orfield's classifications with one respect: municipalities coded by Orfield as "affluent" or "very affluent" were combined into one "affluent" category. This decision stemmed from the relatively small number of "very affluent" municipalities and their general similarity to those categorized as affluent (i.e., further along the same continuum). Those municipalities reported by Orfield as having no available data were excluded from analysis. I constructed dummy variables for each category for use in each model's regression analysis.

As noted above, previous studies involving demand-side measures used variables relating to unemployment, racial characteristics of the population, and other items.

Orfield's study uses specific demographic and economic measures in his methods for typology of these communities (see Appendix C), and I contend that given this nuanced categorization, they serve as improved measures over a battery of economic and demographic variables. It is my concern that adding similar economic and demographic measures alongside these predictors would cause multicollinearity in the analysis, and therefore these categories alone represent a municipality's demographic composition and socioeconomic structure.

I expect that central cities and those suburban municipalities in which the financial status of governments as well as the residents within these municipalities are most at risk socioeconomically and structurally would be more likely to receive an earmark. I also expect that these communities will also be more likely to receive a greater total number and dollar value of earmarks than other types of communities in the study. Segregated and older communities in particular have aging infrastructure and socioeconomic issues similar to those in central cities, albeit on a smaller scale, and therefore a rationale exists for members of Congress to appropriate federal funds to address some of these concerns. Conversely, I anticipate that affluent municipalities, relevant to these at-risk financially distressed communities, would receive less total dollars in earmarks because their financial status as a community is more stable.

H_1 = Central cities will be more likely than suburbs to *receive an earmark* allocated to a public or private entity within their boundaries.

H_2 = Among suburbs, both at-risk segregated and older communities will be more likely than other suburban communities to *receive an earmark* allocated to a public or private entity within their boundaries.

H₃ = Central cities will be more likely to *receive a greater total number of earmarks* allocated to a public or private entity within their boundaries as compared to all types of suburbs.

H₄ = Among suburbs, both at-risk segregated and older communities will be more likely to *receive a greater total number of earmarks* allocated to a public or private entity within their boundaries as compared to all other types of suburbs.

H₅ = Central cities will be more likely to *receive a greater total dollar value of earmarks* allocated to a public or private entity within their boundaries as compared to all types of suburbs.

H₆ = Among suburbs, both at-risk segregated and at-risk older municipalities will be more likely to *receive a greater total dollar value of earmarks* allocated to a public or private entity within their boundaries as compared to all other types of suburbs.

H₇ = Among suburbs, affluent municipalities will be more likely to *receive a smaller dollar value of earmarks* allocated to a public or private entity within their boundaries as compared to at-risk segregated and at-risk older municipalities.

Other predictors

I use the other independent variables in each analysis as follows. Notes on the manner in which each variable is operationalized and its predicted behavior are explained below.

Party of member: Voters in urban areas tend to elect members of Congress who are Democrats. The sample in this study reflects this: nearly 82% of municipalities in the study were represented by Democrats, in whole or in part. However, the difference

among municipality categories as to the party of their representative was statistically significant, as an ANOVA analysis revealed (see Appendix D). For instance, 100% of the central cities are represented in whole or part by Democrats, but yet only 70% of bedroom and affluent communities were represented by a Democratic member.

Both models incorporated a political party indicator, coded as a dummy variable in which Democrat=1. The variable indicates whether or not the municipality was located in a congressional district represented by a member of the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives during the 110th Congress. During the 110th Congress, when appropriations earmarks for fiscal year 2008 were being determined, both the House and the Senate were controlled by the Democratic Party after regaining the chambers in the 2006 election. Additionally, research by Bickers and Stein (2000) has demonstrated the correlation between Democrat members' support for local community grants with regard to more low income needs such as housing and winterization projects. Given that metropolitan areas, particularly central cities and their at-risk inner ring suburbs, have larger economically distressed populations, we would expect these circumstances to increase the likelihood of party being a strong predictor in each model. *Prediction: positive relationship with each dependent variable.*

Appropriations committee membership: In each analysis, two indicators are used to encompass possible effects of Appropriations Committee memberships in both chambers. The first is a dummy variable which indicates whether the municipality is represented by a member who served on the House Appropriations Committee in the 110th Congress (1=member is on House Appropriations). The second is also a dummy variable, indicating whether or not a municipality is located in a state in which a senator

served on the Senate Appropriations Committee in the 110th Congress (1=member is on Senate Appropriations).

Based on previous literature, it is expected that members who serve on a chamber's Appropriations Committee will be more likely to direct earmarks more easily to recipients of their interest. I expect the same directional prediction for municipalities in states with senators on that chamber's appropriations committee, although I anticipate a stronger effect for House Appropriation Committee members due to 1) the House member's smaller jurisdiction and therefore larger credit-claiming payoff and 2) a senator's larger jurisdiction and therefore more responsibility to other regions outside of a metropolis. *Predictions: positive relationships with dependent variables.*

Population of municipality: In all models, population figures for 2006 were obtained for each municipality from the US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program. Population estimates were preferable in this study because unlike the decennial census, the figures were updated every year, allowing the use of figures adjusted for mid-decade population shifts, which reflected the period of time closest to fiscal year 2008. Additionally, other U.S. Census Bureau data, such as the American Community Survey, are only available for certain community sizes, whereas population estimates are based off of decennial census figures that are available for all municipalities in the country. The population figures were logged due to the large left-tailed distribution of the population in the sample resulting from a few very large cities in the data (e.g., New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago). Municipalities with larger populations within a metropolitan area tend to provide the most opportunities for jobs and social services and have larger transportation and infrastructure projects than their smaller surrounding communities.

Therefore, I anticipate that a strong positive relationship will exist in all analyses.

Prediction: positive correlation with dependent variables.

Number of congressional districts containing municipality: This predictor is a scale variable indicating the number of congressional districts that contain each municipality in whole or part (minimum = 1). I gathered these data using the same methods as identifying municipalities within congressional districts in this study, using both district information on House member websites and maps provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. This variable serves to probe whether the potential of a spillover effect has any bearing on whether the municipality receives an earmark.

At first glance this variable may seem to have a high positive correlation with population, and municipalities classified as central cities. Congressional districts must be of relatively equal size, (stemming from *Reynolds v. Sims* (1964)) and large cities often have populations exceeding the set size of districts in the House of Representatives, necessitating multiple districts. Cities are most likely to be divided into multiple congressional districts, boosting their opportunities for receipt of earmarked funds and the size of the earmarks as well. However, suburban municipalities with relatively smaller populations may be divided among area districts for reasons having little to do with sheer population and more with demographics and the political affiliations of voters in specific neighborhoods (Mann and Cain 2005). I argue that since municipalities within multiple congressional districts have multiple opportunities for earmark distribution to their communities, they are more likely to receive both a greater quantity and dollar value of earmarks than those municipalities represented by fewer congressional districts.

Prediction: positive relationship with dependent variable.

Region of country: A municipality's region of country was assigned based on the state in which the municipality or recipient was located. I followed the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 Economic Census designation of states to regions,¹⁷ resulting in four regions: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. Given that population shifts over the past decade and prior have lead to shifting demographics for states in Northern/Midwestern regions versus those in Sunbelt states, I consolidated the regions into these two categories to reflect these changes (1= Northern/Midwestern region).

Reflecting these shifting demographics among regions, Judd & Swanstrom (2008) have written that northern cities have had to decrease their budgets much more than those in the Sunbelt. Therefore, I expect that to compensate for this loss, municipalities in the Northeast and Midwest regions of the U.S. will be more likely to both receive earmarks and receive earmarks of larger amounts than those in the South and West, and this will be reflected in all models. *Prediction: positive relationship to dependent variables.*

County seat: Both models include a dummy predictor as to whether the municipality (serves as the county seat for local government. These data were obtained through information provided on each county's official website. Municipalities that serve as county seats tend to be more developed than other municipalities within their respective counties. Although all central cities within this study are county seats, not all county seats in the study are central cities. Local earmarks that may benefit the surrounding county may first be funneled to the government located in the county seat prior to final distribution. Therefore, I predict that in all models, municipalities that serve as county seats are more likely to receive an earmark and will receive more earmarks in

¹⁷ 2007 Economic Census: Regions and Sections, U.S. Census Bureau, (http://www.census.gov/econ/census07/www/geography/regions_and_divisions.html), last updated April 12, 2010.

terms of quantity and dollar value than those which are not county seats. *Prediction: positive relationship to dependent variable.*

Results

I will first turn to the first set of analyses, which were used to predict the conditions in which an urban municipality is likely to receive an earmark within its jurisdiction. The independent variables were entered into two blocks, which allowed for indicators of suburban community classifications to be isolated in the second block.¹⁸ Table 2.1 shows the results. The first model in the table looks at all municipalities in the data. The city variable is not included in this model because it is a perfect predictor of the data: all 26 municipalities coded as central cities received at least one earmark in fiscal year 2008. Because of the nature of this variable, the logistic model could not converge. Although the city variable could not be included in the logit regression analysis, and it is unknown how it would perform as an unbiased estimator in this equation alongside other variables, I conclude with caution that H_1 is likely to be true based on descriptive data, and that cities are indeed more likely to receive an earmark than suburb municipalities.

With regard to the other predictors in the model, only some perform as anticipated. The representative appropriations membership and party indicators, as well as county seat and logged population terms performed as predicted and were significant ($p < .05$, two-tailed), with the latter two variables being the strongest predictors. The variables addressing the number of districts containing a municipality and Senate Appropriations Committee membership were not significant. The region variable,

¹⁸ A backward stepwise process helped determine the predictors that were less helpful to each of the models.

Table 2.1: *Binary Logistic Regression of Urban Municipality Receiving Earmark in FY08 Appropriations Process*

	Without muni predictors	With muni predictors
Constant	-11.363*** (1.000)	-11.590*** (1.011)
Member on HR Appropriations	0.543** (.195)	0.564** (.197)
Senator on Appropriations	-0.086 (.185)	-0.105 (.188)
Democrat Rep	0.678** (.216)	0.529* (.227)
Northern/Midwestern Region	-0.485** (.181)	-0.426* (.198)
County Seat	1.580** (.465)	1.406** (.481)
Population	2.212** (.205)	2.268*** (.209)
# districts containing municipality	0.199 (.218)	0.241 (.220)
Segregated	-	0.666* (.303)
Older	-	-0.157 (.323)
Lower Density	-	-0.043 (.294)
Bedroom	-	-0.172 (.273)
N:	1110	1110
Wald χ^2 :	276.077*** <i>df</i> = 7	288.192*** <i>df</i> = 11
Wald χ^2 change (block):	-	12.126* <i>df</i> = 4
-2 Log likelihood:	918.306	906.18
Cox & Snell pseudo-R Square:	.225	.233
% correctly classified:	81.5	81.9

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

however, was negative and significant, indicating that, contrary to prediction, municipalities in the Southern and Western parts of the U.S. were more likely to receive an earmark than their counterparts in Northeast and Midwest regions.

In the second block, the categorical suburb variable was added to the model, resulting in a slight improvement in the model's prediction ability. The Wald statistic for this block was statistically significant, confirming the added value of this predictor to the model. The performances of the variables from the base model were unchanged. Looking at individual suburban categories, it appears that at-risk segregated suburbs – inner ring suburbs with aging infrastructure, low tax capacity, and high concentrations of both poverty and non-Asian minority residents are more likely than other suburbs to receive at least one earmark directed toward an in-town entity. This was the only statistically significant municipal indicator, and others were negative, but not significant. The findings lend partial support for H₂, in that at-risk segregated communities are indeed more likely to receive earmarks in comparison to more affluent communities, although at-risk, older communities were not any more likely to receive an earmark than other more affluent communities. The performance of other predictors in the model were generally as predicted, with Senate Appropriations Committee membership and multiple congressional districts being the only predictors not performing as anticipated. Taken as a whole, the results from these secondary predictors suggest that larger municipalities are those most likely to receive earmarks directed to entities within their borders, particularly if the municipalities also serve as the county seat and are represented by a majority member on the House Appropriations Committee.

The second set of analyses looks specifically at those municipalities which received federal appropriations earmarks in the 2008 fiscal year, examining predictors of the total number of earmarks distributed to each of these communities (Table 2.2). The same predictors from the first set of analyses were utilized in this analysis as well, both in the base model and second block of community typology predictors. Looking first at the model including all urban municipalities, central cities were much more likely to receive a greater number of earmarks than other urban municipalities, even when controlling for the relevant supply-side and demand-side variables. This lends evidence for H₃, which predicted that central cities were more likely than other urban districts to receive a larger total number of earmarks. Other predictors varied as to their performance. Municipalities serving as county seats were much more likely to receive a greater number of earmarks than those which were not. Of other demand side variables, the location of municipalities in northern regions of the country was not a significant predictor of the number of total earmarks received, but larger municipalities and those located in multiple congressional districts were indeed more likely to receive a higher number of earmarks. Interestingly, municipalities in which their state's senator served on the appropriations committee were likely to receive *fewer* earmarks, which was a contrast from predictions.

Turning attention to suburbs solely, the findings appear to give little evidence to support H₄, which predicted that at-risk segregated and at-risk older communities would be more likely to receive a greater total number of earmarks than their more affluent suburbs. In particular, while segregated suburbs were more likely to receive at least one earmark in comparison to other types of suburbs (Table 2.1), they were not any more likely to receive a greater number of them. However, older suburbs were significantly

Table 2.2: *OLS Regression of Total Number of Earmarks Distributed to Urban Municipalities in FY08 Appropriations*

	All urban munis	Suburbs only
Constant	-.484** (.175)	-.314* (.180)
Member on HR Appropriations	.035 (.034)	.044 (.037)
Senator on Appropriations	-.076* (.033)	-.091* (.036)
Democrat Rep	.073 (.041)	.094* (.044)
Northern/Midwestern Region	-.023 (.032)	-.018 (.037)
County Seat	.482*** (.056)	.494*** (.057)
Population	.132*** (.035)	.123** (.036)
# districts containing municipality	.039* (.016)	-.016 (.035)
City	.539*** (.081)	-
Segregated	-	-.102 (.060)
Older	-	-.163* (.069)
Lower Density	-	-.048 (.058)
Bedroom	-	-.081 (.056)
	R ² _{adj} : .713	.318
	N: 286	260
	df: 8	11

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

more likely to receive fewer earmarks than other urban suburbs. Looking at the performance of other predictors in the model, suburban municipalities were also likely to receive fewer earmarks if their state's senator was on the appropriations committee, an unlikely finding based on the evidence. However, being represented by a member of the majority party was indeed significant. Additionally, larger municipalities and those which also served as the county seat were much more likely to receive a greater number of earmarks.

The third set of analyses extends the previous models to total dollar value of earmarks in a municipality. Again, the analysis was limited to only those urban municipalities that received at least one earmark. In the first analysis, including both cities and suburbs, central cities were more likely to receive a greater total dollar amount of earmarks than suburban municipalities, lending evidence for support of H_5 . Among other predictors, municipalities with larger populations and those serving as county seats were strong predictors of a municipality's likelihood of receiving more total earmark dollars (Table 2.3). Surprisingly not a single one of the supply-side indicators was significant, which poses an interesting question as to whether cities speak for themselves by size and reputation alone, and therefore perhaps have less need for assistance from within the institution.

In examining total dollars earmarked to municipalities with regard to suburbs alone, segregated and older communities were somewhat more likely to receive a *smaller* total value of earmarks than other communities ($p = .051$, two-tailed). This runs directly contrary to predictions outlined in H_6 , in which these at-risk communities were projected to be more likely to receive more total dollars in comparison to more affluent

Table 2.3: *OLS Regression of Total Dollar Value of Earmarks Distributed to Urban Municipalities in FY08 Appropriations*

	All urban munis	Suburbs only
Constant	1.538*** (.316)	1.594*** (.308)
Member on HR Appropriations	.020 (.062)	.033 (.069)
Senator on Appropriations	-.069 (.060)	-.065 (.067)
Democrat Rep	.081 (.074)	.147 (.081)
Northern/Midwestern Region	-.103 (.058)	-.111 (.068)
County Seat	.671*** (.102)	.804*** (.106)
Population	.230*** (.063)	.248*** (.067)
# districts containing municipality	.011 (.028)	-.021 (.065)
City	.738*** (.147)	-
Segregated	-	-.218* (.111)
Older	-	-.250* (.127)
Lower Density	-	-.210 (.107)
Bedroom	-	-.074* (.010)
	R ² _{adj} : .583	.220
	N: 288	262
	df: 8	11

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

constituencies, based on the financial needs of the at-risk communities. In conjunction with the regression of suburbs from the previous set of analyses (see Table 2.2), it appears that at least for at-risk, older communities, fewer overall earmarked dollars may be a function of fewer total earmarks. However, this is not the case for at risk-segregated municipalities. While they are more likely than other urban municipalities to receive at least one earmark, and are no more likely to receive more earmarks than other suburbs, they are actually statistically *less* likely than affluent suburbs to receive a larger total amount of earmarked dollars.

Furthermore, the suburb-only analysis in Table 2.3 seems to refute H₇, which predicted that affluent municipalities would be significantly less likely to receive a large amount of total earmarked dollars. Based on the findings, with the most affluent municipality typology serving as the reference category, the coefficients of all other suburb typologies are negative, with all but the lower-density typology reported as statistically significant. The findings seem to indicate that although affluent communities may not be any more likely to receive an earmark, nor significantly more likely to receive a greater number of earmarks, they are more likely to receive a higher total dollar value of earmarks relative to less affluent municipalities.

Apart from the municipality indicators in this second model in Table 2.3, supply-side factors were also not significant predictors of greater total dollar values of earmarks to municipalities. As with previous analyses in the study, the strongest predictors for the amount of earmarked money designated to a municipality were its size and status as a county seat.

Table 2.4 lists the types of projects for which FY08 earmarked appropriations were distributed, by municipality typology.¹⁹ As has been predicted by the previous models, central cities received the lion's share of earmarks among all urban municipalities, as well as the largest per earmark average. Older communities received by far the fewest number of earmarks (30) and smallest average dollar value per earmark (\$385,000). Among other suburbs, lower density communities –outer-ring municipalities teetering on overextension of local services to its population – received the most earmarks, while bedroom suburbs – the typical middle and upper-middle class suburban community – received the largest dollar value per earmark. These descriptive data may shed some light on the disparity between at-risk communities and more affluent suburbs within metropolitan areas.

Central cities and affluent communities received the largest share of their earmarks through health-related programs, such as funding to local hospitals and non-profit community health centers. However, for all other types of municipalities, the largest percentages of earmarks received were devoted to public safety projects. Such projects include distributions to local governments for police and fire departments. They also include programs sponsored by community non-profit organizations targeting ex-offenders or at risk youth that have the specific purpose of assisting teens in avoiding

¹⁹ Each earmark included in Table 4 was assigned a primary policy issue based on the description and purpose of the earmark as provide through corresponding OMB data. While some scholars have coded distributive policy projects on the basis of authorizing federal agency (Bertelli and Grose 2009; Lazarus 2010), I conclude this may have a tendency to overgeneralize the purpose of the earmarks and muddle the data. Instead, I have based policy issue coding for this project on the codebook from the Policy Agendas Project written by Baumgartner and Jones and revised by Adler and Wilkerson (2006).[1] I made some minor alterations to better fit these data. First, I have coded earmarks for watershed projects, which are traditionally categorized with other public lands items, as infrastructure projects in these data in that a large proportion of these projects are directly related to such infrastructure issues as water supply to metropolitan areas. Secondly, a handful of earmarks concerning agriculture, environmental, and a few miscellaneous issues were coded as “other,” and this category was retained for purposes of categorical analysis.

Table 2.4: *Earmarks Distributed to Urban Municipalities in FY08 Appropriations, by Community Type and Policy Issue*

Type of Policy Issue	Central City	Segregated	Older	Lower Density	Bedroom	Affluent	N	Avg.
Health**	18.8% (189)	18.3% (25)	17.9% (7)	9.8% (23)	9.3% (14)	19.4% (13)	271	17%
Mean Amount^a	327.77	263.8	304.86	291.35	544.5	520.77		338.64
Labor	7.3% (73)	5.1% (7)	5.1% (2)	5.1% (12)	2.0% (3)	9.0% (6)	103	6%
Mean Amount	242.11	292.29	233.00	230.50	245.67	232.50		243.53
Education	17.2% (173)	14.6% (20)	5.1 % (2)	14.9% (21)	14.0% (21)	16.4% (11)	262	16.0%
Mean	263.30	1401.40	237.50	257.17	225.33	190.55		343.06
Transport & Infrastructure	11.1% (112)	13.1% (18)	10.3% (4)	13.6% (32)	17.3% (26)	6.0% (4)	196	12.0%
Mean Amount	1808.14	636.00	334.75	874.03	632.42	415.75		1333.5
Public Safety***	13.6% (137)	23.4% (32)	30.8% (12)	34.0% (80)	26.7% (40)	11.9% (8)	309	18.9%
Mean Amount	386.18	285.13	225.50	302.85	358.43	432.63		345.51
Social Welfare	7.0% (70)	5.1% (7)	.0% (0)	5.5% (13)	3.3% (5)	4.5% (3)	98	6.0%
Mean Amount	205.46	198.43	202.62	428.80	330.33	219.80		205.46
Housing	8.5% (85)	8.0% (11)	12.8% (5)	3.4% (8)	8.0% (12)	4.5% (3)	124	7.6%
Mean Amount	281.69	166.45	319.40	229.88	240.92	359.33		267.58
Defense	6.8% (68)	7.3% (10)	10.3% (4)	4.3% (10)	5.3% (8)	13.4% (9)	109	6.7%
Mean Amount	1711.10	1266.30	497.75	1074.30	966.25	663.89		1426.2
Science & Technology	4.8% (48)	.7% (1)	7.7% (3)	3.8% (9)	6.7% (10)	9.0% (6)	77	4.7%
Mean Amount	844.44	200.00	1435.33	565.11	863.60	635.50		812.65
Public Property	2.8% (28)	2.9% (4)	0% (0)	4.7% (11)	6.0% (9)	4.5% (3)	55	3.4%
Mean Amount	329.93	122.75	184.91	159.89	179.00	249.80		329.93
Miscellaneous^b	2.2% (22)	1.5% (2)	0% (0)	0.9% (2)	1.3% (2)	1.5% (1)	29	1.8%
Mean Amount	535.82	257.50	1204.00	2611.00	343.00	699.17		535.82
Totals	100% (1005)	100% (137)	100% (39)	100% (235)	100% (150)	100% (67)	166	
Mean	593.86	542.55	384.97	406.00	479.56	419.73		539.89

ANOVA F-test: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

^a Dollar amounts in thousands

^b Includes earmarks to projects such as agricultural and environmental research, and public memorials.

criminal actions. Among community types, health and public safety projects were the only categories that expressed statistically significant differences in distribution among groups.

Projects earmarked for defense related projects followed by transportation and infrastructure projects carried, on average, the highest price tag, and these earmarks tended to be awarded to cities, and lower-density and bedroom suburbs. Examples of defense projects are Federal Emergency Management Agency awards to local governments for terrorism readiness programs and defense technology research carried out at colleges and universities. Common transportation and infrastructure projects were distributed to local governments for streetscape improvements, transit authority rail and bus maintenance, and watershed improvement projects. Results of difference of means tests indicated a statistically significant difference of means among municipalities only among health and education-related earmarks. Examples of education projects include after-school programs sponsored by community non-profit organizations and literacy programs offered by local school districts.

Conclusion

From the analysis, it appears that within metropolitan areas, and congressional districts more specifically, size matters. Central cities are the “big winners” in the quest for earmarked appropriations funds. Based on their size and their political status in the region, these municipalities are most likely to receive the bulk of earmarks in an area in both number and dollar value. Among inner and outer ring suburbs, segregated suburbs were more likely to receive earmarked appropriations funds than other suburban

communities, but this likelihood did not translate to greater counts or dollar values of the earmarks themselves.

With regard to the distribution of earmarks to central cities, two scenarios seem to be at play. First, the real need of additional resources in central cities, which serve as the hub of metropolitan regions, is abundantly clear, and members of Congress are answering the call. What is less clear is in what proportion are members distributing earmarked federal funds to recipients in central cities because of the locality's status as a central city rather than of sheer need. The data analyzed here is of outcomes, not inputs. Therefore, this particular analysis does not assess, for example, which social service organizations from city and suburban municipalities in the New York metro area requested but did not receive earmarked funds, or even further, which organizations in from these areas were approached or sought out information on this process versus those who did not. Further analyses on this matter would likely incorporate additional measures of demand as well as measures of both successes and failures of earmark requests.

The performance of the at-risk inner ring communities was particularly striking. Based on previous literature, as well as on an assumption of distribution of goods and services based on need, I hypothesized that at-risk communities necessitated more funding by virtue of their lower tax base, failing infrastructure, and populations in greater need of social services and other community assistance than their more affluent neighboring suburbs. In fact, the analyses performed garnered marginal evidence to support only one of the hypotheses, in which at-risk, segregated municipalities were more likely to receive at least one earmark than other urban municipalities, central cities excluded. Perhaps the needs and concerns of smaller suburbs, and particularly those

deemed “at risk” either physically or socioeconomically may be more visible to their own representative, but perhaps may be drowned out by the demands of larger cities. This scenario, coupled with the decreased agency of individual representatives who are not in institutional positions of most benefit to the distribution of federal funds, poses serious challenges for suburbs in distress.

The findings on the likelihood, amount, and dollar value of earmarks, particularly with regard to suburb municipalities also recall debates within the literature about how members perceive and take advantage of their access to federal appropriations earmarks. The finding that at-risk, segregated suburbs were more likely to receive an earmark, yet no more likely to receive more earmarks in total amount or dollar value, seems to lend support to the theory that members use the distribution of earmarks as symbolic, rather than substantive, forms of representation. Griffin & Flavin (2009) found that racial and ethnic minority constituents were more likely than white constituents to place priority on a representative’s ability to bring back federal funds to the district. If members’ choices regarding earmark distributions are symbolic, then one could make the argument that members in this study are more likely to direct an earmark toward an at-risk, segregated community to pander to the racial and ethnic minority voters who are most likely to reside within these municipalities.

Additionally, if distributive politics were being conducted in a manner proportional to need within a municipality, we would expect to see a larger number and dollar value of earmarks directed toward inner ring suburbs in conjunction with recent demographic studies demonstrating that poverty is becoming more concentrated within these areas. However, not only is this not the case, but some of the results in this study

suggest that more affluent suburbs are more likely to receive *more* earmarked money in comparison. This finding would seem to represent yet another finding of political outcomes tipped toward groups and communities who are already in better positions to navigate political channels based on usual socioeconomic predictors (Schlozman et al. 2005; Verba et al. 1995).

With regard to the performance of other predictors, one of the interesting findings was the inconsistent performance of supply-side variables. For instance, representatives on the House Appropriations Committee seemed to have an impact on the likelihood of a municipality receiving an earmark, but not on either the number or total value of earmarks received. Senators appeared to help out urban municipalities in their state in terms of the number of earmarks distributed, but had no effect on the dollar amount. Municipalities in general appeared to reap more appropriations benefits if their representative was a member of the majority party in Congress. However, having such a representative was not a significant factor with regard to the dollar value of a recipient's individual earmark.

The results also show some evidence of the mechanisms leading to spillover theory effects in that certain variables testing for the relationship between potential or actual sponsors outside a primary representative's district were found to be significant in the number and dollar value of earmarks. Indeed, the number of House and Senate sponsors of an earmark from a state's delegation proved to be a strong predictor of the dollar value of individual earmarks in urban municipalities. However, these effects are not without potential drawbacks, particularly for at risk suburban municipalities. While area representatives and senators may understandably pour money into local governments

and other entities within the central city of a given metropolis with the intension that what benefits the larger city will have permeating benefits to area municipalities, the extent to which these benefits extend outward may be overestimated.

In several of the models, region of country served as a consistent and significant predictor, in which, contrary to predictions, municipalities in the Southern and Western portions of the U.S. were both more likely to receive earmarked funds, but were also more likely to receive earmarks of larger amounts than municipalities in the Northeast and Midwest regions. It was predicted that Northern communities' aging infrastructure and the decreased ability of local governments to generate sufficient revenue to address such issues, would provide the impetus for federal representatives to direct earmarks to these regions in greater number and amounts. However, the actual performance of this variable is reasonable when taking national demographic trends into consideration. Throughout the last decade, the U.S. population has been shifting from the North and East to the South and West. Indeed, the preliminary congressional apportionment calculations released by the U.S. Census in late 2010 indicated that Northern states had slower population growth than those in the Sunbelt region, resulting in a significant loss of congressional seats for Northern states. The growth of population in Sunbelt states, coupled with the increasing size of their congressional delegations represents a possible increase in the lion's share of earmarked appropriations funding to these burgeoning areas, to the detriment of older and stagnant Northern metropolises.²⁰

Lastly, I acknowledge that some of these findings on municipalities may be different if the scope of the research design were to include smaller metropolitan regions.

²⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, Apportionment Population and Number of Representatives, by State: 2010 Census, released at A New Portrait of America, First 2010 Census Results news conference, 12/21/2010.

This study includes data from the 24 largest metropolitan regions of the U.S., and therefore the findings may not be as easily generalizable to smaller regions in which the central city may be only as big as a large suburb of one of the major regions in this sample. Also, the differences in demographics and socioeconomic characteristics among central cities, inner ring suburbs, and suburbs on the outskirts of the region may be much smaller within less populated metropolitan regions, which could affect the outcomes of distributive politics in these areas. In future research, I intend to include additional regions to address these points.

**A Tale of Two Issues:
The Relationship between Congressional Oversight and Constituent Casework
on Immigration and Foreclosure Prevention in Urban Congressional Districts**

Abstract: Studies probing the relationship between congressional oversight of federal agencies' actions and constituent casework in the home district generally examine the extent to which casework itself is used by members as a motivation for oversight. This article departs from the traditional treatment of the oversight-casework relationship, exploring instead the influence that outcomes of congressional oversight have on the constituent casework process within district offices. I use data from congressional hearings and proposed legislation in the 110th and 111th Congresses (2007-2010) as well as qualitative data from six urban congressional districts gathered between 2009 and 2010 to assess the relationship between casework and oversight on immigration and foreclosure prevention policies. I conclude that when congressional oversight of agencies' actions is ineffective in generating positive outcomes among aggrieved constituents, members and staff will take the initiative to provide alternative remedies through casework on the district level. However, such casework actions are mediated by the avenues for remedies provided by agency programs and the priority of the policy issue in the legislative body.

Introduction

In conducting interviews of senior staff members within congressional district offices, a standard question asked whether they could recall any recent instances where staff in their office had handled constituent casework differently based on legislative activities or priorities on Capitol Hill. Some volunteered specific instances where current

or pending legislation ultimately had an effect on the work caseworkers conducted within their offices. Others were more general, noting that while they agreed there was a connection, they could not personally come up with any examples. However, one senior staff member insisted that a relationship did not exist. “The casework generally is very specific and does not have anything to do with current legislation.” Not only was the staffer’s answer out of step with those of her counterparts in other offices in the study, but the stark contrast in statements struck me, a budding political scientist, as that which warranted additional examination.

The aim of this article is to illustrate particular manners in which constituent casework conducted in the home district does indeed have a relationship to congressional activity in the legislative body. Specifically, this project examines the influence that the outcomes of congressional oversight over activities of federal agencies can have on the constituent casework process within district offices. I argue that when congressional oversight of agencies’ actions is not fruitful in creating positive change for aggrieved constituents, the outcomes (or lack thereof) affect members and staff at the district level who provide remedies to constituents through casework regarding the actions of these same agencies. However, such casework actions are mediated by the flexibility provided by agency programs themselves and the priority of the policy issue in the legislative body.

An examination into federal agency actions with regard to foreclosure prevention programs and immigration and naturalization services forms the basis for this study. Specifically, I use data on hearings and legislative proposals from 2007 to 2010 to frame the political context for a qualitative analysis of constituent casework from six

congressional districts in metropolitan areas. Districts in urban areas have long dealt with the concerns of the large proportion of immigrants within their districts. Additionally, the housing crisis revealed that homeowners in urban areas were particularly vulnerable to conditions contributing to the near collapse of the housing market. In striking a new utility with regard to casework, this article does not pose casework as an end in and of itself, nor as a conduit to future oversight by the member in the collective body, but instead as a method for providing representation to individuals when oversight over an agency's actions results in little more than the status quo for vulnerable constituents.

The article is structured in four main parts. First, I provide an overview of congressional oversight and constituent casework, underscoring the utilities, limits, and connections of both. Following this, I explain the state of federal home loan modification programs and immigration and naturalization policy in two separate sections, describing each issue's initiatives taken with regard to oversight and legislation as well as details on individual district casework processes. Lastly, the discussion section synthesizes these components to explain the systemic links between behavior in the collective body and home district, also drawing both contrasts and connections between the treatment of the two policy issues in these spheres.

Overview of congressional oversight

In a representative republic such as the United States, individuals delegate political authority first to elected officials, who are charged with re-representing their interests in a smaller political body (Pitkin 1967). The U.S. Constitution's framers built a federal structure in which the legislative branch would appoint officers of the executive

branch, who would, in turn, carry out the laws deemed necessary and proper by the legislature. Congressional oversight is a process involving not simply congressional members and leaders in bureaucratic agencies, but also their support staff and individuals outside of government (Kaiser et al. 2011). Oversight can be both formal and informal. Formal oversight traditionally comes in the form of congressional hearings by congressional committees and subcommittees. Cabinet officials, agency leaders, or coordinators of federal programs will often serve as witnesses. While oversight hearings may be used for committees to gain an overall sense of how an entire department or agency is performing, often members will often target their investigations to certain aspects of agency or program performance (Shipan 2005). Formal oversight is generally considered to place a burdensome cost on members, their staff, and witnesses involved, and has long been considered by some scholars to occur much less than it perhaps should in a republic (Ogul 1976; Foreman 1988; Lupia and McCubbins 1994). Yet, these same scholars do not necessarily argue that Congress has completely abdicated its authority to the executive branch. Scholars have also examined informal, more common manners of oversight such as member and committee staff communications with agency staff and leaders, as well as staff reviews of agency reports (many of which are mandated by statute). Aberbach (1990) has found that informal oversight occurs much more frequently than does formal oversight, but holds that due to its less conspicuous nature, scholars have erroneously underestimated the occurrence of oversight on the whole.

McCubbins and Schwartz (1984) famously distinguished particular oversight functions from each other, noting that some were more akin to police patrols, which required anticipatory effort and higher costs. Others were more reactionary, like fire

alarms pulled by third parties such as constituents and interest groups when they sensed federal agency missteps. In later works, Lupia and McCubbins (2000; 1994) modeled both processes of oversight, taking into account a range of decisions which could be made by actors both within and outside government. In the models they put forth, they offer the possibility that both forms of oversight may lead to results that are no better than the status quo for parties involved, understanding the full range of consequences that can occur with imperfect information among actors. In some circumstances where an agent is particularly uncooperative, diligent oversight and the lack of oversight may both lead to the same status quo outcome among executive and legislative political actors (Lupia and McCubbins 2000, 1998, 1994).

In examining the connection between motivations for representatives' pursuit of legislation versus oversight, Rosenthal (1981) found that institutional pressures alone are not enough to motivate legislators toward action, but sometimes are enough for them to prioritize a legislature's oversight process. Indeed, the priorities of the party in power dictate to a large extent a committee's oversight agenda. Circumstances outside of Congress also heavily affect what issues members examine through formal oversight. Among these are scandals, crises, or other issues salient to the public interest involving a particular policy (Scicchitano 1986; Aberbach 1990). Members' own electoral motivations may also provide the impetus to "get tough" on bureaucrats through congressional hearing participation, but may not be as large of a motivation as a simple willingness to engage in promoting good public policy (Evans 1994).

Oversight also provides members with another tool apart from legislation that they can use to advocate on behalf of individuals inadequately treated by a federal

agency's actions, and it is particularly useful in circumstances where the political agency of individuals may be limited. McCubbins and Schwartz (1984) foresaw this concern and attempted to address this issue by stating that through either casework issues (that became enveloped through an oversight process) or interest group representation, members who may not be as readily heard in the political process would nevertheless find an avenue for their concerns to be addressed through the oversight process. Years later, however, Aberbach (1990) returned to this issue briefly, noting that relying solely on third parties to provide more public exposure through intervention in the oversight process may in fact arise, but perhaps more frequently in situations where only articulate third parties or those with means are able to participate. Indeed, interest group literature is abundant with examinations of organized interests who center their missions upon representing the interests of underserved populations (Bishin 2009; Denzau and Munger 1986). However, some interests are much more diffuse and thus more difficult to represent in the political process through organized groups (Olson 1965), and groups who aim to speak for underserved populations may not take diversity of group opinions into public advocacy actions (Strolovitch 2007). Therefore, some populations may be better served in the legislative body through advocacy in the oversight process by members themselves (Minta 2009).

Overview of casework and its link to oversight

Constituent casework serves as an important avenue for elected officials to serve individuals within their political jurisdictions who have presented grievances. It has long been considered one of the core methods of an elected official's ability to demonstrate

responsiveness to his or her constituents (Eulau and Karps 1977; Johannes 1984; Fenno 1978). Traditionally, casework in a congressional office – sometimes used interchangeably with the umbrella term “constituent services” – involves a congressional staff’s involvement in the resolution of a constituent concern relating to a federal agency (Fiorina 1989). Staff, specifically those in the member’s district office, will contact a federal agency directly to attempt to resolve the constituent’s concern. While in many occasions, staff will resolve an issue favorably for a constituent (i.e., tracking down an unissued Social Security check or assistance with a lost passport), in many other instances staff serve to confirm for constituents that nothing can be done for them or that an agency’s decision is final.

The range of policy issues that staff address when performing casework is defined by service to their own constituents and the contextual demographic and geographic variables encompassing the district. Scholars examining casework within these parameters have looked at issues as diverse as immigration (Ortiz et al. 2004) and postal service concerns (Ogul 1976). As others (Cain et al. 1987; Fenno 1978; Johannes 1984, 1979; Jewell 1983) and this author have found, constituents also approach their members for assistance for issues with Social Security, Medicare, Veterans’ Affairs, and even the Transportation Security Administration.

Casework necessarily has a spatial dimension in that elected officials are encouraged to work on problems relating to their own constituents and on issues that are addressed by the level of government in which they operate. For instance, elected officials in the federal level are encouraged to refer constituents outside the jurisdictions which they serve through a principle known as congressional courtesy (U.S. House of

Representatives 2008). Additionally, constituents with issues concerning state or local actions are referred to the appropriate agencies at these levels of government.

The nature of casework necessitates that constituents approach their member voluntarily and request that a member look into an issue on their behalf, and congressional guidelines indicate that the constituent must provide written consent in order to do so (Petersen 2005). Therefore, although members and staff may conduct events and other means of encouraging constituents to seek them out for assistance, the onus is on the constituents themselves to participate. Given this participatory cost, as well as the political wherewithal needed to even consider approaching an elected official's office for assistance with a concern, the presumption is that traditional predictors of political participation would also apply to those who seek out casework (see Verba and Nie 1972; Verba et al. 1995). However, the literature tends to indicate that lower income individuals (Cain et al. 1987; Griffin and Flavin 2010) and women and minorities (Tate 2003; Richardson and Freeman 1995; Thomas 1992) are more likely to prefer members who place an emphasis on constituent service. Additionally, in both participant observations and conversations with congressional staff, I have found that minorities, immigrants, and lower income constituents request casework in high rates, and much of this may have to do with the plain fact that, as one district director stated, "they're the ones who need the help the most." Indeed, a staffer in another office surmised that those with more means were willing to do direct battle with the agency, or had enough means to hire an attorney to assist them.¹

¹ Ellickson and Whistler (2001) have found, however, that among state legislators, constituents from rural districts are more likely to request casework needs, while constituents from urban districts are more likely to seek out member's assistance with distributive politics, such as pork projects. The authors reason that this is due to urban constituents' wide support from and representation by key interest groups. It is

With regard to constituent concerns with entities ex parte government, such as private businesses, lawyers, and organizations, member participation in approaching these entities on behalf of their constituents is discouraged depending on the circumstances. For example, House rules caution that some actions members take on behalf of constituents may be viewed as “an official endorsement of a private enterprise, or as pressure to take action in order to please the Member, rather than based on the merits” (U.S. House of Representatives 2008, at 313). In these circumstances, members will rarely insert themselves into constituent grievances with parties outside government in the realm of casework, except perhaps in special circumstances such as mediation between two constituencies.² However, as I will describe later in this article, a number of congressional offices examined in this study have found it necessary to contact private entities directly as an integral part of the casework process.

Scholars have traditionally considered casework as having an important relationship to oversight, although the strength and nature of this relationship has been debated in the literature. Ogul (1976) categorized casework as a latent form of oversight in that it was a “secondary, consequential relationship” (166) that, while not constituting an overwhelming proportion of motivation for member’s oversight agendas, nevertheless was a substantial component. Similarly, others (Johannes 1984; 1979; Elling 1979) have noted that casework serves a motivation, albeit not necessarily a top tier one, for members to pursue legislative remedies in response to bureaucratic missteps. In the

important to note here, however, that I did not encounter, nor did staff report, any real concerted efforts by local or national interest groups in the casework process on the issues examined in this study.

² However, sometimes members and their staff will serve as mediators in disputes between parties. An example of this was described by a district director in a west coast member’s district office, whose staff worked for months on negotiations between constituents and a railroad company, in which constituents sought compensation for a derailment close to residents’ homes.

language of McCubbins and Schwartz (1984), casework as oversight is a form of fire alarm oversight – an alarm pulled by constituents who are aggrieved by an action of a federal agency. However, casework does not in and of itself have a reporting mechanism: it takes extra initiative on a part of curious members and diligent staff to integrate casework into the oversight process.

In the forthcoming analysis, I depart from existing literature concerning casework and oversight in that I neither force the argument that casework is used as a conduit for resolution of issues through the legislative body nor do I hold that casework is an end unto itself, with little connection to legislative efforts. Instead, I put forth the theory that constituent casework provides an essential mechanism for members and their staff to pursue remedial action when congressional oversight is ineffectual in leading to substantial improvement over aggrieved constituents' status quo positions, particularly when the legislative body prioritizes the policy issue at hand.

Data and Methods

To develop my argument, I use analysis of both casework and oversight involving activities of federal agencies regarding immigration and the home foreclosure prevention in major metropolitan areas. Immigration has been a continuous policy issue within urban communities, as urban areas have traditionally been the most prominent immigration gateways to the U.S. since at least the turn of the 20th Century. Not surprisingly, immigration comprises a substantial proportion of casework in major metropolitan areas. Additionally, data from the housing crisis over the past several years have revealed that homeowners in major metropolitan areas, and particularly minority homeowners, have

been disproportionately affected (Rugh and Massey 2010). Focusing on both immigration and home foreclosure policy issues within urban areas affords the opportunity to isolate how these policy issues play out among some of these issues' most relevant populations. Additionally, it allows for a juxtaposition of a longstanding policy stalemate with a much more recent policy problem. As mentioned above, several scholars have demonstrated that casework is more prevalent in jurisdictions with larger populations of racial and ethnic minorities and individuals of lower socioeconomic status, due in large part to the social services upon which they rely. Consequently, urban areas tend to have larger proportions of these populations and members in urban areas are likely to have more individuals seeking assistance from their representatives.

I begin a discussion of each policy issue by providing political context, offering an overview of key Congressional and administrative initiatives taken between 2007 and 2010 (110th and 111th Congresses). The time period is unique because it offers an opportunity to look into the recent four-year span in which a Democratic-led Congress has attempted to pursue both its legislative and oversight agenda in two vastly different presidential administrations. It also allows researchers to view the actions of both Congress and the administration regarding events up to and including the most significant financial crisis since the Great Depression. I provide data from 115 standing and special committee hearings on the topics of immigration and home foreclosure prevention conducted in the U.S. House of Representatives as well as related reports released by related federal entities with mandated oversight over specific foreclosure prevention programs initiated by federal agencies. Hearings were coded as relevant to each topic by the number of references to variations of words including “immigra*” or “foreclos*” in

each transcript and the amount of dispersion of these references throughout the transcript. In addition, I provide data on proposed legislation offered by members on committees conducting the hearings identified on the two issues. The rationale for providing figures on this proposed legislation for these specific members is two-fold. First, it helps to assess the use of legislation as a part of the systemic oversight process at critical junctures. Scholars of legislatures have previously found oversight activities and legislation to be along the same continuum, with legislation being the more visible manner of showing interest and action on a policy issue (Rosenthal 1981). Second, it seeks to capture any effects that more informal, behind-the-scenes modes of oversight may have on a member's decision to take legislative action.

For purposes of this study, I have chosen to assess only actions of House members because the district casework activity analyzed is that of members of the lower chamber. In some analyses, I separate all hearing and sponsored legislation data on each issue from that of members of the majority party in the chamber (in this case, the Democratic Party), in that party affiliation has been shown to be strong predictor in terms of oversight and legislative agenda within a committee (Deering and Smith 1997; Hall 1996; Scicchitano 1986). Sponsored legislation is coded as immigration or housing-crisis related in two stages: first through a word variation search of legislative text (similar to the housing transcript word search) and then through an overall search of Congressional Research Service summaries on each piece of legislation, provided by the Library of Congress's Thomas database.

To examine casework activities regarding these two issues, I use data from interviews and participant observation in six districts located in major metropolitan

regions of the U.S.³ The districts were selected to account for geographic location, race/ethnicity of member, gender of member, seniority of member, and demographic composition of the district. All members, however, are Democrats.⁴ Of the members representing these districts, two are white, two are of Hispanic background, and two are African-American. Two members are female. It should be noted that only one member in the study served on either the House Judiciary or Financial Services committees – those committees with primary jurisdiction on immigration and mortgage issues, respectively. Based on the casework data collected, it is the opinion of the author that this committee service did not bias the study. Three of the districts examined are located in the western U.S., while the other three are in the eastern portion of the country. For purposes of this article, I will refer to these regions as “west coast” and “east coast,” respectively. Each district’s demographics represented some of the highest foreign born, noncitizen populations, and foreclosure rates in their metropolitan areas as of 2010.

The district level data utilized here is based on dozens of hours of participant observation in offices and at member-sponsored events for constituents in the home district and conversations with 27 district staff. Of these staff, 21 also participated in formal interviews. The collection of data took place from January 2009 to November 2010. The bulk of the district staff is comprised of numerous caseworkers, (sometimes also called congressional aides), who – as their title indicates – perform the vast majority of casework in a congressional member’s office (Petersen 2008). Senior staff, such as the

³ Identifying characteristics of the districts are withheld to protect the privacy of congressional staff and their constituents.

⁴ I do acknowledge the potential for any bias in outcomes related to the lack of Republican members in the sample. However, existing literature on congressional district behavior provides no evidence that political party affiliation is an influential factor in the frequency or process of serving constituents on the local level. Additionally, Democrats are overwhelmingly more likely to represent districts within major metropolitan areas, although Republicans also do represent constituents in these regions.

district director, state chief of staff, or director of constituent services/outreach, may also have caseloads, particularly if the cases themselves are complex (such as involving multiple agencies). In each office, I interviewed at least one senior staff member and one caseworker. The caseworkers interviewed were ones who specialized in immigration casework, housing casework, or both. Questions asked in these interviews that are relevant to this paper are listed in Appendix A.

Housing crisis

The financial crisis in the U.S. became known to the general public with the fall of major investment banks such as Lehman Brothers and the near collapse of others in the fourth quarter of 2008. As details of these events unraveled, what had been investigated by both members of Congress and Bush Administration officials in prior months was now becoming more clear to the public at large: financial instruments such as mortgage-backed securities coupled with unscrupulous lending practices and poor consumer choices created a perfect storm for widespread financial collapse.

RealtyTrac⁵ reported that nationwide, foreclosure filings in 2007 grew 75% from 2006 figures (RealtyTrac 2008) and in 2008, filings soared again, increasing 81% from the previous year (RealtyTrac 2009). House values also rapidly declined during this time, and both these and the number of foreclosure filings continue to fluctuate as of this writing. Metropolitan areas have been particularly adversely affected by high foreclosure rates, and RealtyTrac reported that more than half of metropolitan areas in the nation continue to face increased foreclosure rates. In fact, many of the country's largest urban

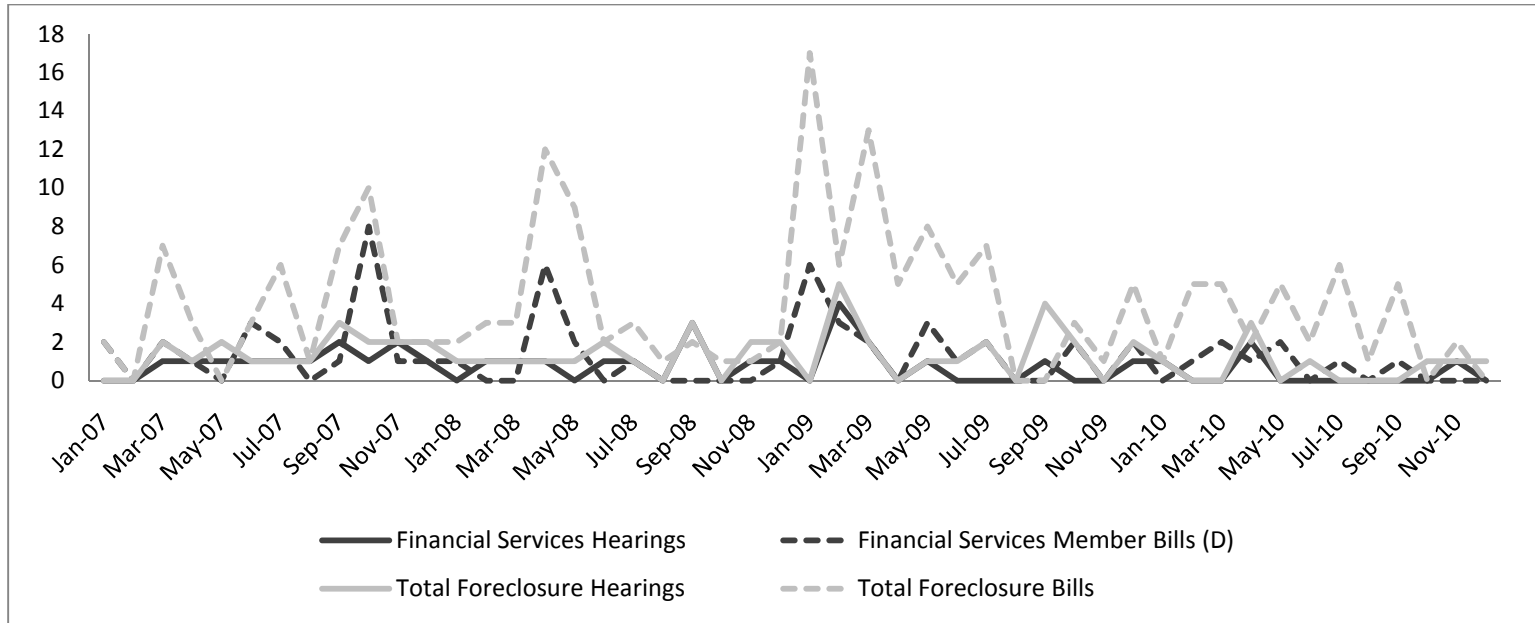
⁵ RealtyTrac, a national database of foreclosures, has served for several years as a definitive authority for U.S. foreclosure filings.

areas have only recently reported decreases in foreclosure rates for the first time in several years (RealtyTrac 2011).

Well prior to the events of 2008, members of Congress were addressing problems in the housing market that ultimately were the linchpin for the macroeconomic problems in the coming months and years. As Figure 3.1 demonstrates, as early as the start of the 110th Congress in February 2007, members of congressional committees – most prominently Financial Services – were holding hearings and proposing legislation to assess the ramifications of subprime lending and the increased foreclosure rate. By September 2008, the full Financial Services Committee or its subcommittees had held 20 hearings in the 110th Congress directly related to matters concerning the housing crisis and its causes and remedies. Committees addressed a number of core issues regarding the problem, including enhanced mortgage lender regulations to curb subprime mortgages, enhanced truth-in-lending requirements, promotion of financial literacy programs for (particularly first time) homebuyers, and regulations for loan modifications.

As Congress was performing investigative work on the matter through hearings and backchannels, executive and legislative entities were developing remedies for struggling homeowners. President Bush and senior cabinet officials created the HOPE NOW Alliance in the fall of 2007, designed to link homeowners on the brink of foreclosure with mortgage counselors and secondary market lenders to work on adjusting the terms of homeowners' mortgages. In addition, the HOPE for Homeowners program, initiated in the summer of 2008 as a part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, was another mechanism designed to assist struggling homeowners. This program

Figure 3.1: *Home mortgage and foreclosure-related hearings and proposed legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives, 110th and 111th Congresses (2007-2010)*



authorized HUD to insure eligible mortgages which were refinanced in accordance with requirements specified under the law.

One of the most significant pieces of legislation to address both the housing and broader financial crisis became the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (EESA), which was signed into law by President Bush in October 2008 and became the vehicle for the controversial Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP). At the beginning of the 111th Congress, the newly-elected Obama Administration sought to designate additional TARP funds to aid struggling homeowners. As one of his first major initiatives, newly-confirmed Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner designated a substantial proportion of TARP money to the Making Home Affordable (MHA) Program, billed as a comprehensive approach to assist homeowners at or on the brink of foreclosure. Two of the most notorious subprograms under MHA have been the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP), a \$50 billion Treasury Department investment designed to assist borrowers with loan modifications by giving servicers monetary incentives to renegotiate terms of the mortgages, and the Home Affordable Foreclosure Alternatives Program (HAFA), intended to assist at-risk homeowners to do not qualify for HAMP (Fannie Mae 2011). As the number of federally-backed programs available to qualifying homeowners grew, so did the number of entities created or redirected to monitor their progress. For example, in addition to Congress's own oversight responsibilities, the EESA required that TARP-related programs be monitored by a Secretary Inspector General (SIGTARP) as well as by a Congressional Oversight Panel comprised of members chosen by current congressional leaders. Both entities were tasked with

conducting their own investigations and intermittent reports to both Congress and the Department of the Treasury.

Less than a year after HAMP was initiated, signs were emerging from entities providing oversight of these remedial programs that the programs were having much less of a positive effect than had been designed or anticipated. One such HMA oversight hearing, in September 2009, revealed that some servicers reported enrollment in modification programs amounting to just 4% of their eligible borrowers, a statistic which Rep. Maxine Waters cited as “appalling” (Progress of the Making Home Affordable Program: What are the Outcomes for Homeowners and What are the Obstacles to Success 2009). A follow-up hearing in April 2010 further revealed that while servicers had made some progress in addressing members’ concerns about unemployed borrowers, they continued to underperform in extending permanent modifications to eligible mortgagees through HAMP (The Recently Announced Revisions to the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) 2010).

Additionally, by the end of 2010, two of TARP’s oversight entities, the Special Inspector General of TARP (SIGTARP) and the legislative-focused Congressional Oversight Panel, concluded that the HAMP program, among other foreclosure-prevention initiatives, was essentially ineffective in meeting its stated goals. In December 2010, the Congressional Oversight Panel released a report of the HAMP program, including a scathing critique of the Treasury Department for both failing to acknowledge and act upon the program’s numerous shortcomings (Congressional Oversight Panel 2010). SIGTARP’s quarterly report in January 2011 of HAMP was equally as abysmal, expressing frustration at Treasury’s “astonishing silence by refusing to provide an

estimate, goal, or projection of the total number of permanent modifications it expects to complete and maintain” (Special Inspector General 2011, at 11). Indeed, a newly-elected Republican-led House at the beginning of the 112th Congress has used findings of these oversight investigations to fuel its agenda, with one of its targets being the complete elimination of HAMP. To that end, Republican leaders of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, on the heels of a damning oversight hearing on the subject, cosponsored a bill to repeal HAMP (HAMP Repeal and Deficit Reduction Act of 2011).

The summation of these events spanning more than four years is one that demonstrates how even the most diligent efforts of oversight can lead to results that are effectively no better than if oversight had not taken place. This is not to minimize the thousands of homeowners who have entered into more permanent resolutions of their housing difficulties with their lenders. However, one has to also take into consideration the fraction of individuals who have benefited out of the millions of homeowners for which these programs have been intended. How may have these events affected the process of constituent service on this issue at the congressional district level?

Constituent services and the foreclosure crisis

An analysis of the behavior of members and staff in their home districts with regard to the foreclosure crisis offers a window into constituent services as not simply an end in and of itself, but a consequence of the unfruitful efforts of Congress and the Executive Branch collectively. In a 12-month period spanning 2010 alone, RealtyTrac indicated that the counties encompassing the six congressional districts examined in this

study accounted for nearly 200,000 foreclosures on residential properties. Other figures indicated that the west coast districts in the study examined averaged 40.35 foreclosures per 1,000 households in 2010, while those on the east coast averaged 19.58 foreclosures per 1,000 households (Patchwork Nation 2011). Although west coast districts examined averaged higher rates of foreclosure than those on the east coast, the foreclosure rates for the latter were among the highest in their respective metropolitan regions.

In discussing the prevalence of casework issues within the given members' districts, a question was posed to caseworkers as to what they considered the top three issues either they personally or the staff as a whole conducted in the past 12 months. Out of the six districts, staff in four of them rated "housing" a top three issue. However, in follow-up conversations with staff and observation at constituent events out in the field, it became evident that the traditional urban public housing issues were not the ones referred to with regard to current casework conducted, and that some offices were taking unconventional routes in handling this most recent class of requests for housing assistance.

The initial glimpse into the non-traditional avenues congressional offices took in addressing constituents' mortgage challenges came in a conversation with a caseworker for a member on the east coast, who casually mentioned mortgage modifications as one of the top casework issues she handled. The caseworker explained how casework on home foreclosures ballooned in the three years she began working for the congressman, which coincided with the beginning of the national foreclosure crisis. She noted that in the beginning of the crisis, the bulk of constituents who asked for assistance were individuals who, perhaps due to mortgage lenders' misrepresentations as well as their

own poor personal financial choices, did not fully understand their financial obligations and had little income to support their payments. However, she noted that as of early 2010, more middle class families began contacting the member's office to seek loan modifications because they lost their supposedly secure jobs. The constituents who experienced this lagged effect of the foreclosure crisis were often families who had been in their houses for 15 years or so.

A caseworker in a west coast office described her duties in her 1.5 years of employment with the member's district office as involving what appeared to be an alphabet soup of executive branch financial entities. "And my duties are IRS...and housing issues, like everything to do with the Department of Treasury, OCC, OTS, FDIC, [and] Federal Reserve." She commented on the tragedy of the housing crisis in her area of the country by noting that owning a home in that location was essentially "what everybody strives for," and for some, that plan ended up going horribly wrong. It was evident that the staffer was committed to helping constituents address unjust lending practices: "[Companies] prey on people that really don't know what to do.... and they are going to be foreclosed on and they are desperate so they go to this company that claims they can help get them a loan modification..." However, she was also measured in her view of some aspects of the crisis: "Everybody thinks it's...their right to retain their home when some people shouldn't have owned homes in the first place." Indeed, the staffer intimated that some constituents contacted the member's office not simply because they were at the end of their rope, but also because they had a cloudy understanding of the federally-endorsed remedies available to them, and saw their federal representative as a vehicle for access to direct monetary assistance. "Yeah, now is the

time where we see that [constituents contacting the member's office regarding foreclosure prevention] more prevalent than ever I think because [of] the HAMP money and the TARP money.”

Asked why the staff decided to take action on mortgage modification cases, the aforementioned east coast caseworker noted that the member's staff had accumulated some direct contacts with lenders (banks) and would send a privacy release on behalf of constituents. When asked whether it was technically out of the realm of congressional staff to pursue casework with private companies, she agreed that it was not the typical type of casework, but explained that when constituents were at their “wits end,” the office will try to help.⁶ “We'll contact the banks with the constituents' permission and respectfully request that the company review the case for the denial – most times the companies won't.” She added, “In some cases, it can make the difference in moving a constituent's file from the pile to on top of the appropriate person's desk.” Even though a caseworker from a member's office on the west coast noted that the office had been barraged with calls for loan modification assistance, she was surprised that the office hadn't gotten even more casework volume on this issue, particularly because of the unique intervention that the member's staff was able to offer. “[If only] people really knew what we could do for them, getting to banks because banks are just, I don't know if it's from the servicer or the investor, but they haven't been as – they haven't been so responsive sometimes.”

However, a senior staffer from another west coast member was more cautious in describing the effect that congressional offices could ultimately have on any one

⁶ As reported by members' staff, the authority that these congressional offices gain to work with private lenders is due to Congress's duty to oversee the activities of the Treasury Department, which includes authorization of TARP funding for home mortgage modifications, such as HAMP.

constituent's mortgage concerns. Although he acknowledged the inherent connection between the casework conducted by district staff and the intentions of legislation such as TARP, ("There's some direct relationship to what we do here"), he expressed frustration that constituents assume that members have some extra leverage with banks, which often they do not.

One caseworker from a west coast office explained the misinformation that constituents received, which ultimately hampered all parties' ability to remedy the situation:

“With the TARP money and with the HAMP program, a lot of banks tell their clients that you need to be in default on your loan so people will purposely not pay their mortgage and then a lot of times, I find that they will be foreclosed on because they have been delinquent for a couple of months....That is not true. They should not be telling them like that because then they will go into default, but they could be actually going to seek help with an attorney, these non-profit HUD-approved agencies, us, we want to keep them from going delinquent. We want to find out a plan.”

She went on to mention that in instances where they can no longer intervene, as in cases where legal foreclosure proceedings have already begun, their office will refer constituents to federally-authorized counselors, such as through the HOPE NOW Alliance.

A slightly different interpretation was taken by staff in another west coast office. In discussing when and how staff decide to take action on a constituent's request for modification assistance, one caseworker reported that the district had been instructed [by whom it was not clear] that staff could only handle these cases issues if the constituent homeowner had previously arranged loan counseling with a HUD certified counselors. The rationale for this, she explained, was to provide staff with a mechanism to adequately

monitor constituents' progress with the modification. Unlike the other west coast office, this member's office treaded more cautiously.

When asked whether members encouraged district staff to focus on particular issues with regard to constituent services provided in the field, most staff said that this rarely occurred, and that the nature of constituent services in a congressional district commands reactive responses. However, one caseworker noted that her member specifically instructed her staff earlier on in the crisis to devote more time to constituent services that addressed foreclosure prevention and information on mortgage counseling. Additionally, a senior staffer on the west coast noted that she wanted to be more aggressive regarding outreach to constituents in the form of more comprehensive events and not simply piecemeal approaches. Another senior staffer in this same office echoed this sentiment, stating that due to the volume of constituent requests for assistance, coupled with a diligent caseworker's burgeoning relationship with various lenders, it became clear that a larger event regarding this issue was necessary.

I had the opportunity to attend this very event, organized by the member's office in conjunction with local and state elected officials. The location, a public high school in the member's district, teemed with individuals carrying folders filled with paperwork. As the member and other area public officials spoke to at least 100 constituents in one room, another 300 or so people formed lengthy lines waiting to talk to lenders about possible modifications. A sense of confusion among attendees seemed to be present throughout the event, with some attendees expressing frustration to the member's staff that the time spent today gathering information and speaking to counselors and lenders could guarantee no lasting assistance for them. However, the member's caseworkers offered

their services to constituents on the spot, billing it as a mechanism for avoiding the lines and sense of futility that would come with speaking to a lender directly.

It is important to note, however, that not all district offices examined in this study took it upon themselves to directly work with mortgage lenders regarding loan modifications or other foreclosure-related issues. For example, a senior staffer for a member on the east coast was specifically questioned about types of issues on which staff could not provide direct assistance even though constituents frequently called the office regarding these issues. Mortgage and foreclosure-related issues were the first on her list. She noted that although her office did not handle those issues directly, her staff referred constituents to outside agencies and organizations that had been authorized by the federal government as mortgage counselors.

A caseworker from another east coast member's office explained that at the beginning of the housing crisis, staff struggled with how to help constituents with their mortgage problems. However, once the state government initiated a mortgage counseling program, he and other staff were relieved that they now had a definitive place to refer struggling homeowners. The sentiment in the office was that, as he noted, "banks are private companies and they really don't have any obligation to listen to why [they should] settle, you know what I mean?" On this issue, it appears the office tended to take the more conservative route with regard to casework, opting to concentrate on those issues with a more direct relationship to a federal agency.

However, even among those districts where loan modification assistance was not a top casework issue, members and their staff took it upon themselves to organize events such as the one described above. In discussions with staff from another west coast

member's office, caseworkers noted that they did not devote casework resources to mortgage and foreclosure-related housing, and like other east coast members' offices mentioned, they referred constituents to authorized mortgage counselors. However, this member's staff did co-sponsor a loan modification-related workshop at the height of the foreclosure crisis with another area federal representative, and staff reported that more than 500 people attended from throughout the region. The workshop provided attendees with a variety of general and personalized information, such as information on foreclosure prevention options, individual credit counseling from established credit counselors, and onsite assistance from mortgage lenders.

Immigration

Immigration has been a long-standing concern of members of Congress – and particularly those whose jurisdictions cover major gateways of immigration. Since the third major wave of immigration in the U.S., occurring after a major immigration overhaul in 1965, the percentage of foreign born persons in the country has soared to levels not seen since prior to the 1924 Immigration and Naturalization Act, which placed stringent levels on sending country quotas (Daniels 2004; Ngai 1999; Tichenor 2002). Since the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), which provided amnesty to certain undocumented immigrants and provided special protections to agricultural workers, the Immigration Act of 1990 and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) have been the most recent attempts at remedying both practical and political concerns with regard to the status of

undocumented immigrants, diversity of sending countries, and family unification priorities.

However, since IIRIRA, the number of foreign born persons residing in this country, documented or undocumented, has risen to a level that for many political entities triggers persistent calls for immigration and naturalization reform. Estimates from the 2007-2009 American Community Survey place the number of foreign born residents in the country at approximately 38 million (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). As of December 2010, The U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service (USCIS) reported nearly two million petitions pending (for naturalization, permanent residency, and other statuses combined), although admittedly the backlog has been significantly reduced as compared to 2008 (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service 2011). New petitions continue to rise, and members of Congress have held hearings on ways to address the lengthy backlog of naturalization petitions (Naturalization Delays: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions 2008). Additionally, although the federal government does not officially count undocumented immigrants within its borders, the Department of Homeland Security estimates that as of 2009, approximately 11 million were currently residing in the U.S., which represents approximately 30% of all immigrants (Bruno 2010).

Additionally, in the wake of the September 11th attacks—carried out by foreign born persons—lawmakers and political pundits alike began calling for a renewed effort to address immigration reform. From this point on, the subject has been couched not simply in the economic terms of the 20th Century, but also in the new 21st Century rhetoric of terrorism and border security. The issues with regard to immigration reform do not fall neatly down party lines, which add to the complexity of the issue and the challenges of

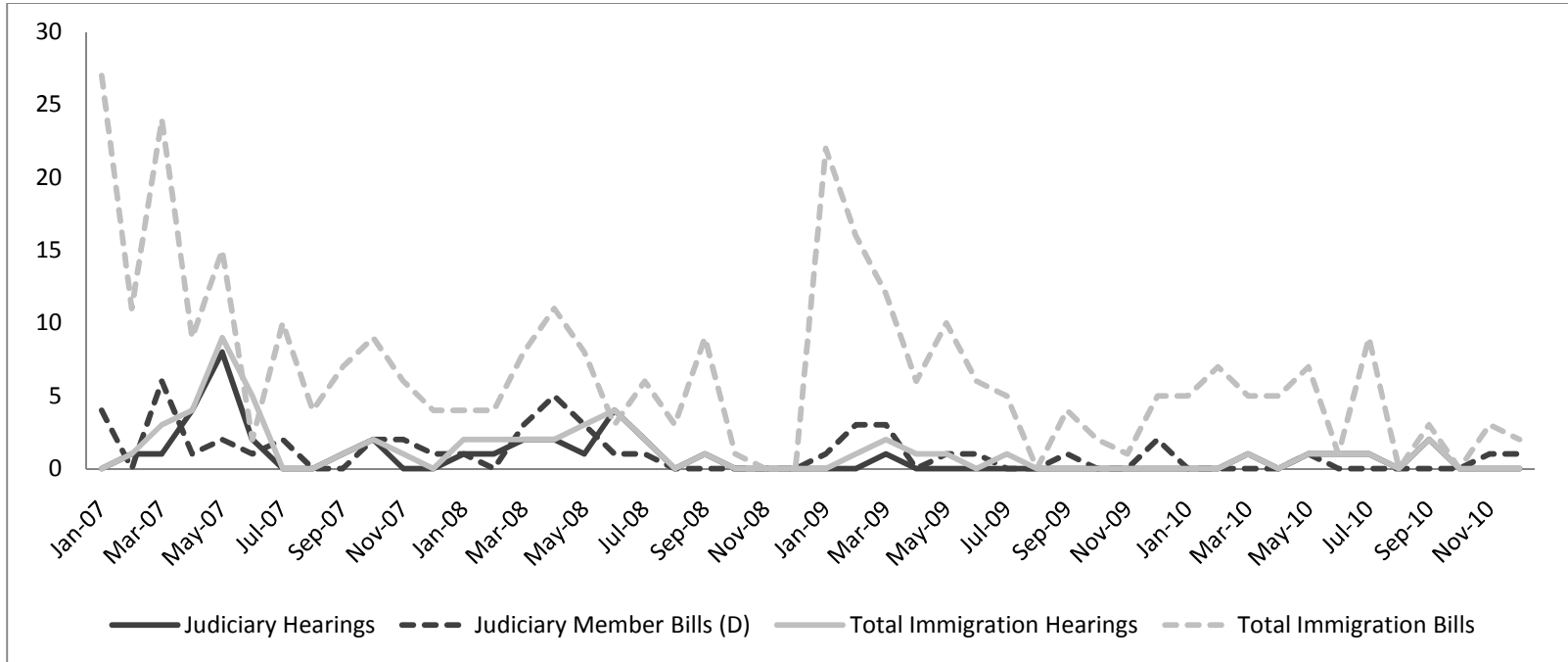
reform. Public officials who advocate more restrictive immigration policy measures highlight the need for border security, smaller yearly immigration quotas based largely on national economic need, elimination of illegal immigration, and harsh sanctions on employers who hire undocumented workers. Those who advocate for more generous measures may concede on labor restrictions (Fine and Tichenor 2009) and some border security measures, but seek avenues for citizenship for undocumented immigrants already in this country, quotas which prioritize family reunification, and a more streamlined naturalization process.

Not helpful to progress regarding immigration reform is overheated political rhetoric that— until increased concerns of drug cartel-related violence along the U.S.-Mexican border provided a stronger basis for the argument – could be characterized as a trope perpetuated for political posturing. While immigration reform is portrayed as a line of American defense against threats from assumedly Middle Eastern terrorist attacks, the face of the immigrant with regard to economic costs is still for most Americans an impoverished migrant from Latin America. That the subject of immigration is racialized is not a new phenomenon, for interest groups and public officials in the U.S. have used immigration as a political tool to perpetuate racial and ethnic strife for centuries (Jacobson 1998; Tichenor 2002; Junn 2008). However, its perpetuation leads to a political narrative wherein promoting the political and economic interests of immigrant *aliens* is seen as jeopardizing national security interests and penalizing native-born Americans as a whole (Newton 2008). The highly racialized and politically-charged issue has been relegated to the second tier of political agenda issues except at operative times in which other domestic issues do not abound.

In 2005 and 2006, the Bush Administration took major efforts in addressing immigration policy concerns by pushing for legislation that addressed both homeland security issues, perceived economic costs of non-citizen immigrant residents, and solutions to handle the growing numbers of undocumented immigrants living in the law's shadows. Bush, relatively moderate on immigration policy, was out of step with many of his Republican colleagues in the GOP-controlled House who favored strong policies on border security and the deportation of undocumented immigrants currently within the country. However, while the Republican-controlled House's bill failed to become law (Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act 2005), so did the more moderate proposals in the politically divided Senate, which among other items provided pathways to citizenship for undocumented immigrants (see Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act 2005).

Following the 109th Congress' failed attempt to pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation, the 2006 midterm elections resulted in a takeover by Democrats of both the House and Senate, providing some leverage for movement on the issue of immigration reform in the final two years of Bush's lame duck term. As Chart 3.2 clearly demonstrates, members of the House Judiciary Committee, which generally has primary jurisdiction over immigration issues, took advantage of what they saw as a political opportunity for more moderate reform. In 2007, the number of immigration-focused oversight hearings and proposed legislation by Democratic members of the House Judiciary Committee soared, and by the end of that year, the House Judiciary Committee and its subcommittees had conducted 19 hearings directly related to immigration policy, procedures, and reform. In May 2007 alone, the House Judiciary Committee's

Figure 3.2: *Immigration-related hearings and proposed legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives, 110th and 111th Congresses (2007-2010)*



Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law held a series of seven meetings devoted to various components of comprehensive immigration reform. Additionally, committee members, particularly those in the majority party, implored Department of Justice officials to reform the FBI's lengthy background check process, and USCIS officials to address the problem of understaffing, both of which significantly delayed immigrant's applications for months to years.

However, as the financial crisis unfolded in 2008, both hearings and sponsored legislation on immigration-related issues by committees and their members decreased dramatically, and by the fall, activity on the issue had all but ceased. The beginning of the Obama presidency and Democratic supermajorities in both the House and Senate only continued this trend. Admittedly, the top priorities of this new administration were addressing the country's deep financial concerns and developing comprehensive health care reform legislation. However, the difference in the number of immigration-related hearings conducted by the House Judiciary Committee or one of its subcommittees during the 111th Congress compared to the 110th is quite staggering (Chart 2). Additionally, sponsored legislation by majority House Judiciary Committee members dramatically dropped off after the compulsory surge of bills at the start of the new Congress.

Early on, members of the committee themselves admitted to a lapse in oversight responsibilities with regard to executive branch activities concerning immigration. In a September 2008 hearing on the alleged bias in hirings and performance of immigration judges, Rep. John Conyers, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, confessed:

“And I want to report to you that this is the first oversight hearing on what you gentlemen

have been supposed to have been doing for a long time. So a lot of the problem is that we in Congress haven't been doing our job. When the cat is away, the mice will play” (Executive Office for Immigration Review 2008, at 4). Yet, later in the hearing, he asserted that a lack of oversight should not be considered by the executive branch as a free pass: “It is our fault that we didn't oversight you. You can't call up and say, ‘Judiciary hasn't oversighted us in 8 years, and now they wonder why we are wandering all over the lot...’”(18). Indeed, during the entire 111th Congress, the House Judiciary Committee and its subcommittees held three hearings directly related to oversight of federal agencies with responsibilities in the immigration process and visa processing, all occurring in a three-month span: USCIS (March 2010), Department of Justice (May 2010), and the Executive Office for Immigration Review (June 2010).

With regard to the immigration-related hearings held by House committees between 2007 and 2010, is important to note that members rarely called into question decisions made by immigration officials, and in these instances focused on deportation proceedings more than decisions regarding legal immigration petitions. Questions regarding naturalization and visa application denials were rarely the subject of conversation in any of the hearings reviewed, although it is the more prevalent form of immigration. However, when House members did take USCIS officials to task for their actions, the concerns were most frequently about the agency’s slow case processing rates and failure to implement lasting technological advances to their case processing system. In a May 2010 hearing, it was evident that slow progress had been made. Members of the House Judiciary Committee’s immigration subcommittee commended the USCIS director for making inroads into the backlog of immigration and naturalization applications within

their agency, but faulted the agency for its antiquated and inefficient processing system, which was astonishingly still largely paper-based. However, both members and the USCIS director credited the progress made in the backlogs not to oversight, but rather to immigration fee increases imposed by the agency in 2007, largely motivated by its critical need to hire additional staff.⁷

Currently, it appears that the relationship between federal actions on *legal* immigration and congressional oversight, even by the less politically-deliberate House, is one of benign neglect. Its particular juxtaposition with the housing crisis showcases it as a second tier issue that is conveniently placed on the political backburner when more domestically relevant issues to native-born Americans, such as the economy and health care, set the political agenda. Indeed, although policy makers can and do make sophisticated arguments as to the interconnectedness of immigration policy to more “traditional” domestic priorities, such arguments have a tendency to be lost in sound bites. How is this reflected in casework activity with regard to constituents’ immigration issues at the local level? The following section addresses this question.

Constituent services and immigration

In all six urban congressional districts examined, immigration-related casework was a top-three issue, and for five out of six districts, caseworkers stated it was overwhelmingly the number one casework issue they handled. An African American caseworker, who was a life-long resident in the majority African American district, confessed that she was surprised when she first started working at the office at the

⁷ USCIS is largely a financially self-sustaining agency which receives minimal federal appropriations and conducts its operations primarily through service fees.

volume of immigration-related casework residents in the district generated. “And I said, ‘No, we don’t have many [immigrants] in this area.’ Please. I had no idea. Well, I found out that not only do we have a lot of immigrants, we have a lot of illegal immigrants and out at the county jail they have a lot.” The demographics of the districts examined are ripe for the high proportion of immigration-related casework requests that the offices receive. According to estimated figures from the 2007-2009 American Community Survey, foreign born residents in these districts comprised an average of 36% of the population, and nearly 60% of these residents were non-citizens. The immigration-related requests themselves, assessed from both participant observation and staff interviews, primarily deal with naturalization, adjustment of status, and visa applications.⁸

Based on conversations with staff, perceptions by constituents vary as to both the USCIS processing system and the agency congressional staff have in producing positive results. Staffers’ descriptions regarding their interactions with constituents seeking assistance on immigration-related casework specifically adds another layer of complexity due to the real or perceived presence of cultural differences. It appears up for interpretation how much of immigrant constituents’ actions and expectations can reasonably be attributed to cultural differences, and how much can be attributed to genuine frustration at U.S. immigration policy broadly and at the seemingly glacial pace of USCIS processing of applications.

⁸ A word about congressional staff and undocumented immigrants: Congressional staff have indicated that occasionally constituents will contact the office and identify themselves as undocumented. Staff note that undocumented immigrants will generally contact their office when they have been served a notice of deportation, and are therefore seeking assistance with this adverse action. All staff I interviewed stated in one way or another that they do not take any action with USCIS or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) if they are contacted by an undocumented immigrant who is a constituent within their district. They do note, however, that they consider this a formal legal proceeding in which, like other legal cases, they are instructed through House Ethics Rules to refrain from involvement.

For instance, after describing the persistent nature of some constituents on naturalization or visa processing questions, one caseworker from an east coast member confided that she sensed immigrant constituents could be “a little forceful in their requests.” This perception could, however, also be attributed to the frustration that constituents often face when a member or staff cannot deliver the most timely or positive outcome to their predicament, as the same caseworker noted in a follow-up conversation:

“We can’t expedite anything. We have to also wait. We’ll certainly put it in as a request, but it’s an inquiry. But it’s not going to be expedited just because they came into a congressional office... I just think that...they feel that because the office is here and they’re here as a citizen or a permanent resident, that it is the congressional office’s job to get the outcome that they request. But that’s not always a possibility, and that, I think is what’s difficult. I don’t know if that’s an ethnic thing or just a confusion or misconception from just every person.”

A senior staff member in the same office concurred in a separate conversation, but declined to attribute it to cultural differences: “...there’s so much going on with immigration; and they’re looking for so much – people are mostly looking for immigration reform, and that’s been a big hot topic.”

A caseworker in another east coast office echoed this sentiment. “[M]any might not have a good sense of how long the process really takes. They may feel that they can get ahead because they are contacting the congressman’s office.” She also agreed that the waiting game was an integral part of assisting a constituent with a case handled by USCIS, and stressed the inflexibility of the process. “Only in very rare occasions will the government expedite a case, like if someone’s mother is dying, and even then sometimes the government won’t allow it.” However, she herself, a seasoned veteran of immigration casework, nevertheless concluded that “government is very fair” in its handling of these issues.

The sentiment that the immigration process was “fair” was not necessarily shared among staff in other offices. A caseworker in a third east coast office suggested that agency staff dealing with immigration-related issues sometimes made decisions regarding constituents’ applications based on stereotypes or misperceptions, particularly regarding immigrants from developing countries. “I think some of them [constituents], it’s easier for them to get relatives here than it is for others, for example, Haitians, the African countries.” She relayed a situation in which a male constituent from a small village in an African country filed a visa petition for his mother to visit her family in the U.S. The mother was married, owned a business, and was enveloped in her local community, and it was thought that this satisfied Department of State policy that visitors on visas must demonstrate strong economic ties to their home country and that they will not become a public charge in the U.S. The caseworker noted that despite the son and mother’s numerous interviews with embassy officials (and hundreds of dollars spent on multiple filing fees), the mother’s application was denied at least three times. The caseworker concluded, “They just wanted to the kids and let her see the grandchildren; they could take pictures...But the grandmother wasn’t even able to get here. So you know there’s a lot of unfair things, as we know, that goes on.”

With regard to the slow pace of visa and immigration-related processing, a caseworker in an office on the west coast at times agreed with constituents’ frustrations about the drawn out process. “I have tons of cases that are just waiting for FBI background checks and name checks and they are just in my file....there’s nothing we can do. I mean every so often when the constituent calls or I see that, you know, they are calling every so often, I call them, okay they refresh and they send the same thing over

again.” She noted that some of her constituents’ cases have been pending on background checks for at least two years. Staff from several offices agreed that the background check portion of visa or naturalization applications were the most time-consuming part of the process, and this seemed to be attributed to both inefficient communication between USCIS and the FBI, and the FBI’s method of conducting background checks, particularly since the September 11th attacks. As the west coast caseworker stated, “if their name is familiar with any other even terrorist name or, they [FBI] are going to double check that and double check it and not let it pass until they are hundred percent sure, that’s what taking so long.”

Additionally, a caseworker in another office on the west coast noted that it was not uncommon for constituents to wait for months or years regarding an immigration-related application, only to be denied, in which the applicant would sometimes be required to submit a whole new application. Even the caseworker on the east coast who said that the process was “fair” showed some frustration at the system, noting that she felt she could never really close a case because one immigration issue seems to beget another. “It takes years to adjudicate one case [like naturalization or visa issues] and that’s why we need immigration reform.”

Ultimately, caseworkers’ interactions with constituents concerning immigration-related casework are frequently ones that are both helpful and sometimes brutally frank, and this approach appears to be derived from caseworkers’ own professional knowledge of the federal immigration system. One caseworker on the east coast described the structure of the conversations she frequently has with immigrants who have received an unfavorable decision from USCIS or the National Visa Center regarding their petitions,

encouraging constituents to put themselves in the shoes of the agency decision makers. She has found that in the course of these conversations, eventually the “light bulb comes on” for them. In these cases, where the caseworkers feel that nothing else can be done for the aggrieved constituents, her main concern is to ensure that they know the member’s office tried to help them the best they could.

On this note, despite the seemingly limited agency congressional staff had with USCIS, staff shared examples of ways in which they utilized their available institutional space to assist constituents on immigration casework to the best of their abilities. A senior staff member in one east coast office noted that although she and her colleagues were not allowed to fill out applications for constituents (although a state representative’s office was willing to perform that task), they assisted constituents in ensuring the application contained the appropriate documents and was sent out correctly.

“[W]e give them an entire packet of everything. We even give them a manila envelope so they can send it in. We even give them their certified-return receipt, so when they send it, and we have the address already preprinted on there on a label. Even something what we may think as simple, they have never heard of it sometimes.”

Particularly for immigrants who may have had very limited education in their home country, she encourages them to take initiative in the process. “I always tell them, ‘You need to be an advocate for yourself.’”

In more complex immigration situations, staff can serve as a necessary pathway for communication and advocacy. A caseworker on the west coast described a situation in which an incarcerated American of South Asian descent was scheduled for deportation and was to be sent to one of two countries: a European country, where he was born but left as an infant, and the South Asian country of his parent, where he had never been

before. The caseworker noted that she was in talks with USCIS officials to determine if he could be deported to a country where he had some semblance of social infrastructure.

In addition to case-by-base initiatives, congressional staff in several offices reported that they have held district-wide events to disseminate information regarding policy changes or general information on immigration policy. In 2007, when fees increased for immigration documents, an office on the east coast organized in-service meetings throughout the district to help constituents process their paperwork before the fees increased. In the last extension of 245I in 2002 – a provision which allows certain undocumented immigrants to adjust their status to legal permanent residents – a senior staff on the west coast noted that her office was very active in informing people about the deadline by which they needed to file. She explained that they also partnered with a local immigrants-rights organization to conduct a large informational workshop in the city’s convention center. In general, congressional staff in the urban districts I examined seemed to agree upon the unique nature of immigration-related casework. As a senior staffer stated, “[T]he immigrants that are here require much more assistance...in every step because it’s just not known, and ... they don’t know how to access services, or they’re afraid to access services.”

Although congressional staff most often expressed a general lack of wiggle room when dealing with USCIS staff, on limited occasions they were able to take matters into their own hands. For instance, a senior staff member in an east coast member’s office held an emergency conference call with caseworkers in all of the member’s district offices one afternoon to inform them of actions she had taken to report an unhelpful congressional liaison in a USCIS area office. A senior staffer in a west coast office stated

that her caseworkers have recommended policy changes to the member's senior legislative staff, most recently regarding state department staffing based on the slow turnaround time and lengthy process for visas that they experienced when assisting constituents.

Staff have also occasionally taken USCIS staff to task for failing to admonish third parties – and particularly immigration attorneys – regarding inaccurate or sloppy paperwork done on behalf of immigrants for applications that USCIS ultimately denies.⁹ A caseworker on the west coast relayed a story where she has taken USCIS staff to task for failing to hold the correct parties at fault. “I have argued with INS telling them, how can you, I mean if you see this paperwork coming from an attorney or coming from an individual that helped them fill out this paperwork and they filled it out wrong.” While she conceded that ultimately it was the petitioner's responsibility to ensure that the paperwork was filled out properly on their behalf, she expressed sympathy for vulnerable immigrants, some with limited English skills, who were then forced to pay hundreds of dollars more to USCIS to petition that the agency reopen their case.

On rare occasions, intervention from congressional staff have been able to redirect the normally rigid decisions of USCIS staff to an outcome more favorable to their constituents. A caseworker in an east coast office described two of these instances in which constituents reported that their naturalization interviews had gone badly after the immigration officers reportedly felt disrespected, due to what the caseworker assessed as cultural differences. In both situations, she was able to call the officers and clarified the differences. The constituents were able to get interviews immediately scheduled and both

⁹ In every congressional office, immigration attorneys were characterized as a scourge of the system, charging high fees to immigrants for naturalization or family visa assistance, only to refer them later to the congressional office where assistance is provided for free.

ended up becoming citizens. When asked what might have happened to these constituents had the caseworker not stepped in, she suspected that their requests for another interview would have probably been significantly delayed and given low priority.

Discussion

The experiences of congressional members and their staff do not neatly contrast with regard to the issues of home foreclosure prevention and immigration that deeply affect their constituents. However, the aim is not to demonstrate or force a contrast between the two, but to use each to tell a unique story about systemic approaches to addressing the problems of constituents in vulnerable situations. Holistically, it appears that when oversight is unhelpful in and of itself in driving positive systemic change, members and staff will attempt to address the needs of their most vulnerable constituents in an individualized and creative fashion. Ironically, the flexibility that congressional staff possess in the ways they address these issues through casework depends ultimately on the options available to them by the uncooperative agency. Additionally, while the outcomes of congressional oversight in and of themselves may not be directly fruitful, the gusto by which oversight over an agency's activity is pursued by the legislative body can have a positive effect on the interactions congressional staff have with affected constituents as well as staff's perceived effectiveness of their efforts.

Over the four-year span, the number of both investigative and oversight hearings on home mortgage issues and immigration policy were roughly equal (Table 3.1). However, the time-sensitive and crisis-like nature of foreclosures nationwide pushed Congress into an "all hands on deck" mode. Not only did this approach lead to sustained

hearings and legislative proposals on housing-related issues after details became more public in Fall 2008, but it caused a drop off in the pursuit of oversight and legislative agendas even by committees and their members without primary jurisdiction over the housing crisis. However, the forcefulness by which House committees, the Congressional Oversight Panel, and SIGTARP attempted to hold the Treasury Department's feet to the fire with regard to its various loan modification programs ultimately amounted to what Lupia and McCubbins' (1994) model designates as a status quo outcome. In effect, most constituents who are struggling homeowners have not fared much better even as a result of these diligent oversight efforts.

Table 3.1: *Immigration and Home Mortgage & Foreclosure-Related Hearings and Legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives, 110th and 111th Congresses (2007-2010)*

	<u>Mortgage & Home Foreclosure</u>				<u>Immigration</u>		
	<u>110th</u>	<u>111th</u>	<u>% change</u>		<u>110th</u>	<u>111th</u>	<u>% change</u>
All hearings	33	26	-21.2	All hearings	44	12	-72.7
Financial Services	22	13	-40.9	Judiciary	33	7	-78.8
Other	11	13	18.2	Other	10	5	-50
Proposed Legislation	145	120	-17.2	Proposed Legislation	185	136	-26.5
Sponsored by majority party	56	79	41.1	Sponsored by majority party	96	87	-9.4
Sponsored by Financial Services Committee members	84	104	23.8	Sponsored by Judiciary Committee members	133	104	-21.8
Reported out of committee and/or passed House	26	22	-15.4	Reported out of committee and/or passed House	19	7	-63.2
Became public law	4	3	-25	Became public law	1	2	100

Turning to casework in congressional district offices on this same issue, one might not know these programs were ineffectual. Caseworkers encouraged eligible constituents in spades to seek assistance on working out loan modifications with their lenders, either through third-party counselors or through the members' offices directly. Indeed, in half of the offices examined, caseworkers were willing to even step outside their traditional jurisdictions to contact private lenders directly on behalf of constituents. Far from assuming that they too would hit a brick wall with lenders, staff genuinely felt that they had a much higher likelihood of helping constituents save their homes than constituents could do alone. It is unclear at this stage, however, how much of that perception mimics reality. The last report from the Congressional Oversight Panel in 2010 indicated that some HAMP money has been used for loan modifications in which homeowners were ultimately unable to meet the terms of the modified loan as well. Time may tell how pervasive that scenario is for other struggling homeowners, with or without congressional staff assistance.

In looking at oversight of federal agencies' actions regarding the legal immigration process as well as constituent casework on the matter, a number of variables set this issue apart from those dealing with the housing issues described above. First, although the relevant committees and their members started out strong at the beginning of the 110th Congress, pursuing an active oversight and legislative agenda on immigration, the issue was dropped like a proverbial hot potato with the publicity of the housing crisis. Additionally, unlike the Treasury Department's menu of options which constituents may entertain in conjunction with and ex parte government, USCIS holds a virtual monopoly over the federal immigration process. Unfortunately, as with a restaurant whose

customers do little to complain about a horrible waiter, by providing sparse oversight over USCIS and visa-processing entities, committees and their members fail to put adequate pressure on the agency to improve the quality of their service.

Although more menu options do not necessarily guarantee greater success for constituents in vulnerable situations, they can increase the likelihood of success, which has an effect of providing more hope to both the affected and those who are trying to assist them. This is evident in the ways in which staff philosophically approach immigration and mortgage modification casework. Whereas staff dealing with foreclosure prevention issues were often encouraging in their interactions with struggling homeowners, they were much more measured when assisting individuals on immigration issues. They also expressed frustration themselves with the glacial pace of USCIS case processing and hoped the system could be improved. However, it appears that with regard to immigration casework, caseworkers attempt to find any wiggle room they can in a tightly sealed and relatively opaque process. Instead of operating outside of the traditional system, as some staff have reported with foreclosure prevention casework, staff work closely with constituents on immigration casework to help prevent USCIS – the only game in town – from finding any small fault with their petitions.

The findings also add to the literature on the function of government workers on the local level serving as street-level bureaucrats in the level of autonomy workers on the ground may have in implementing directives from a higher authority (Lipsky 1980, 2010). Congressional staff conduct the bulk of the hands-on work – essentially social work – to assist constituents in navigating adverse decisions by federal bureaucrats. To varying degrees, they use their discretion in handling complex matters for aggrieved

individuals (voters and non-voters alike) within their districts. However, even the most adept staffer in a district office will often reach a limit as to the discretion he or she can exert within a federal bureaucracy, whether due to lack of transparency from above, current political events, or even the ability of the staff's boss – the elected official – to effect change within Washington's political system. Adding another layer of complication, as I reveal in this study, is the attempt by some congressional staff to negotiate remedies for constituents in another establishment of which they are not even a part – that of private lending institutions. For staff in some offices within the study, that battle was one into which they were reluctant or even opposed to enter.

One final note: inasmuch as constituent casework described in this article is targeted at some of the country's more vulnerable populations, the process itself operates in a primary, more apparent face of political power (Bachrach and Baratz 1962). Casework, even for the most politically marginalized, can only occur when constituents voluntarily seek out assistance from their congressional representative. While constituents who pursue housing or immigration-related casework assistance through their member's office may not be successful in obtaining a positive resolution to their matter, they have at least been able to gain the motivation to pursue this method of remedy in the face of a highly bureaucratic state. However, for every aggrieved constituent that comes forward with his or her concern, there are many more who – whether for political, economic, or other unexpressed motives – will not do so. For this reason alone, it is imperative for elected officials to utilize channels such as oversight to address systemic flaws in the administration of public policy.

Appendix A
Selected interview questions for congressional staff

- What is your office's procedure for deciding whether to pursue a request for casework?
 - Does this procedure vary by federal agency or type of issue addressed?
 - (if yes) Could you elaborate?
 - Does this procedure vary by federal agency or type of issue addressed?
 - (if yes) Could you elaborate?
 - What about whether a request is from or related to an undocumented immigrant? How typically do you proceed?
- In the past year or so, have you found any particular casework issues more challenging to handle than others overall, or does it vary on more of a case by case basis?
 - (If some issues are more challenging than others, probe with): What issues have you found most challenging?
 - Could you give me a couple of examples of challenging cases you have had to handle?
- In the past year, have community organizations or local groups requested your assistance in casework or other constituent services on behalf of their members?
 - (If yes): I'm going to list for you types of organizations and groups. Please tell me if they have contacted your office in the past year to request assistance:
 - Religious organizations
 - Non-religious racial or ethnic based community organizations

- Small businesses or trade associations
 - Foreign officials (ambassadors, diplomats, etc.)
 - Local or state public officials
- (For all yes responses, probe with): Could you give me an example or anecdote about a type of case related to this kind of group?
- In the past year, how often has the Congressman/woman and/or other staff conducted town halls or other gatherings to meet with constituents or constituent groups?
 - Of these meetings how often has the Congressman/woman been able to be present at these gatherings?
 - Were they general information meetings or meetings on specific issues?
 - Could you describe for me what some of these meetings have looked like: What kinds of people are in attendance? What's the turnout? Where do these meetings take place?
 - Have constituents approached the congressman/women or staff with constituent service requests at these gatherings?
 - (If yes) How have you or other staff typically handled these circumstances?
- In a given month, how often do share information on constituent services with the Congressman/woman? You can answer *very often, occasionally, rarely, or never*.
 - Does he/she specifically request information on casework and other constituent services performed in the district, or does staff initiate this exchange of information?

- What sort of information do you share with the Congressman about constituent services in the district?
- In the past year, has the Congressman/woman expressed to any preference for district staff to focus their attention on particular types of constituent services?
 - (If yes) Which ones?
 - How about areas of the district or particular constituent populations?
(Probe)
- In the past year, have you had any interaction with the Washington office regarding an individual's case or other constituent services?
 - (If yes) Could you give me an example?
- First, besides serving as the Congressman's/woman's (caseworker/director of constituent services/district director), have you also been involved in another capacity with his/her reelection campaigns?
 - If so, what have you seen as some connections between reelections and constituent services?
- Has the member expressed to you any relationship he/she sees between constituent services and reelection bids?
 - (if yes) How does he/she see this relationship?
- Has he/she indicated how he/she would like to treat this issue during the next reelection bid?
 - (if yes) How would he/she like to treat this issue?

Appendix B

Coding Structure for Interview, Participant Observation, and Local Newspaper Data

Aims

Pluralist = Discussions or references by member or staff regarding actions or decisions by member or staff targeted at particular segments or groups of the districts' constituency.

Republican = Discussions or references by member or staff regarding actions or decisions by member or staff targeted at the constituency as a whole, without regard to segments or group's within the constituency, or at individuals or groups outside of the district's constituency.

Sources of Judgment

Member's self-reliant judgment = Discussions or references by member or staff specifying member's use of his or her own judgment as motivations for actions within the district.

Staff's self-reliant judgment = Discussions or references by staff specifying staff's use of their own judgment as motivations for actions within the district.

Note: Member and staff self-reliant judgment were combined for purposes of analysis to represent the self-reliant judgment and internal motivations of the district as a unit.

Federal dependent judgment = Discussions or references by member or staff specifying member or staff's use of interactions with federally elected officials (including rank and file members and party leadership in Congress) or representatives of federal agencies as motivations for actions within the district.

State or local dependent judgment = Discussions or references by member or staff specifying member or staff's use of interactions with state or local municipal officials as motivations for actions within the district.

Organized interests dependent judgment = Discussions or references by member or staff specifying member or staff's use of interactions with community or religiously-affiliated groups, non-profit organizations, or for-profit organized interests as motivations for actions within the district.

Individual constituents dependent judgment = Discussions or references by member or staff specifying member or staff's use of interactions with individual constituents as motivations for actions within the district.

Note: Federal, state and local, organized interests, and individual constituents' dependent judgment were combined for purposed of analysis to represent all dependent judgment and external motivations of the district as a unit.

Appendix C

Metropolitan Regions and *American Metropolitcs* Classification Criteria

Two main criteria existed for identifying municipalities for analysis within this study, and were initiated by an examination of municipalities in congressional districts in major metropolitan areas. 1) The congressional districts must contain at least a 97% urban population, using 2000 Census figures. 2) The congressional districts had to be wholly situated within Orfield's *American Metropolitcs* study sites among major urbanized areas. The following major metropolitan areas from 107 congressional districts, including a total of 1, 110 cities and surrounding suburbs, were included in this study:

Atlanta, Georgia	New York City, New York
Boston, Massachusetts	Newark, New Jersey
Chicago, Illinois	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Cleveland, Ohio	Phoenix, Arizona
Dallas, Texas	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Denver, Colorado	San Diego, California
Detroit, Michigan	San Francisco, California
Houston, Texas	San Jose, California
Los Angeles, California	Seattle, Washington
Miami, Florida	St. Louis, Missouri
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida
Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota	Washington, D.C.-MD-No. VA

Methodology for American Metropolitcs classifications:

Orfield's rigorous analysis of central cities and suburban municipalities is based on several demographic and economic factors, including the following data:

Population assessments

- Percentage of non-Asian minority elementary students
- Change in percentage points of non-Asian minority elementary students within the past decade

- Percent non-Asian minority by municipality
- Change in percentage points of non-Asian minorities by municipality within the past decade
- Population density
- Population growth in municipality within the past decade

Poverty assessments

- Percentage of elementary students eligible for free or reduced lunch
- Change in percentage points of elementary students eligible for free lunch within the past decade

Economic indicators within municipality

- Tax capacity per household
- Percentage change in tax capacity per household within the past decade
- Percentage of housing units affordable to a household with 50% of regional median income
- Total jobs per square mile
- Median household income

Infrastructure and development

- Square mile percentage of undeveloped land by census tract
- Housing development by census tract
- Average age of housing stock by census tract

Appendix D
Characteristics of Municipalities in Study

Received FY08 Earmark***	Central City %	Segregated %	Older%	Lower Density%	Bedroom%	Affluent%	N	Total %
No	0.0%	68.5%	85.3%	65.6%	77.5%	84.0%	824	74.2%
Yes	100.0%	31.5%	14.7%	34.4%	22.5%	16.0%	286	25.8%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1110	100.0%
Rep on HR Appropriations**								
No	53.8%	83.2%	78.0%	70.5%	81.5%	79.7%	866	78.0%
Yes	46.2%	16.8%	22.0%	29.5%	18.5%	20.3%	244	22.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1110	100.0%
Senator on S Appropriations**								
No	38.5%	23.4%	40.3%	26.8%	25.5%	26.7%	316	28.5%
Yes	61.5%	76.6%	59.7%	73.2%	74.5%	73.3%	794	71.5%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1110	100.0%
Democrat Rep***								
No	0.0%	1.6%	5.2%	20.1%	30.5%	29.4%	204	18.4%
Yes	100.0%	98.4%	94.8%	79.9%	69.5%	70.6%	906	81.6%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1110	100.0%
County Seat***								
No	0.0%	92.9%	99.5%	95.5%	98.3%	98.9%	1053	94.9%
Yes	100.0%	7.1%	0.5%	4.5%	1.7%	1.1%	57	5.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1110	100.0%
Region of Country***								
Northeast	19.2%	36.4%	59.2%	18.8%	31.5%	29.4%	376	33.9%
Midwest	26.9%	38.0%	37.7%	18.3%	44.0%	35.8%	388	35.0%
South	19.2%	9.8%	0.5%	29.9%	9.7%	18.2%	154	13.9%
West	34.6%	15.8%	2.6%	33.0%	14.8%	16.6%	192	17.3%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1110	100.0%
N=	26	184	191	224	298	187	1110	100.0%

ANOVA F-test: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

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