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Legislative Studies Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb., 1998), 33-55.

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Thinking Globally or Acting Locally? Determinants of the GATT Vote in Congress

While there exist many influences on legislators' votes, the U.S. system of plurality districts should ensure that constituent interests weigh most heavily. However, in marked contrast both to theories of legislative influence and to representatives' own explanations for their votes, quantitative analysis of congressional roll-call voting has largely failed to show a significant relationship between constituent interests and congressional behavior. We examine the 1994 House and Senate votes on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in light of this incongruence between empirical research, anecdotal evidence and theoretical argument. Unlike previous studies, we compile data at the level of congressional districts. Our analysis pays special attention to the construction of competing economic models of constituent interest and welfare. Finally, our research supports the argument that congressional committees are pivotal in the legislative decision-making process. We assess the impact of committees on the GATT bill in terms of partisanship, personal ideology and constituent interests of committee members. Better data, a more precise research design, and introduction of committees allows a better assessment of this paradox of congressional voting.

There exists a curious contradiction in the United States' system of government. The public entrusts members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate with the welfare of the nation. Nevertheless, members of Congress are political actors whose disparate individual interests ensure frequent disagreement. Occasionally, the contradiction produces a pronounced dilemma over what is in the public good. Such a contradiction is especially true of legislation on international trade, where Congress has resorted to the use of the "fast-track" legislative process of delegating responsibility for trade negotiation to the executive branch while retaining authority to accept or to reject the completed product. Fast-tracking of legislation allows Congress to express its collective preferences over trade and trade liberalization

while minimizing the effects of divisive individual preferences for specific items of trade protection. The closed rule imposed under the fast-track procedure, limiting alterations of the legislation submitted by the president, provides researchers a clear picture of influences on roll-call voting.

In this paper, we examine the roll-call vote on the 1994 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) legislation in the U.S. House and Senate. We seek to answer the question, "What determines a member's vote?" Members of Congress represent constituencies with substantial geographic and demographic differences. Constituents from Congressman Oberstar's (D) Eighth District of Minnesota are likely to have different priorities for government than those citizens of Charles Rangel's (D) Fifteenth District of New York. Partisanship provides another possible predictor of vote choice. Democrats and Republicans in Congress, as members of parties, adhere to interpretations of national welfare that are distinct in many areas of policy and stable over time. For example, throughout the twentieth century, Republicans have been the party of free-trade, while Democrats traditionally take a more protectionist stance. Finally, there are differences of opinion among members of Congress that are idiosyncratic. Senator Clayton Pell's (D-Rhode Island) enduring interest in alien visitation, for example, appears attributable neither to constituent concerns nor party affiliation. Such personal preferences may account for much of the variation in roll-call voting among members of the same party with similar constituencies.

Most observers agree that of the potential determinants of congressional voting, constituent interest looms particularly large for several reasons (Asher and Weisberg 1978; Kingdon 1977; Mayhew 1974; Miller and Stokes 1963). Unlike their European counterparts, the ability of U.S. political parties to discipline legislators through sanction and reward is modest. Nor is possession of executive power directly linked to partisan loyalty (c.f. Bond and Fleisher 1990; Covington, Wrighton, and Kinney 1995). Likewise, ideological divides are relatively small. An electoral system of plurality districts ensures that moderate views predominate. Perhaps most important, constituent interests are closely linked to the longevity of a congressional career. Constituents' satisfaction with *their* representative's performance on their behalf has no equivalent in parliamentary systems (Parker and Davidson 1979). Even if individuals in Congress were to feel the tug of partisan loyalties or personal preferences, the need to seek reelection persuades them that looking out for the constituency is their principal, if not proximate, goal (Mayhew 1974).¹

Unfortunately, while this theoretical argument is persuasive, systematic evidence has eluded political researchers. Although traditional theories of representation, anecdotes, and the testimony of members of Congress support the idea that constituent welfare drives roll-call voting, few statistical analyses of roll-call data reflect the association (Carter 1993, 1995).² Partisanship, personal ideology, or both consistently outperform constituency interests as predictors of congressional voting behavior.

Despite this poor showing, we remain convinced that the theoretical association between constituency interest and congressional roll-call voting is sound. First, the constituent interest argument is more persuasive than its alternatives. If we are to reject the hypothesis that constituency matters, we must accept that partisanship has a strong influence on congressional behavior, or that there is little connection between the electorate and how members of Congress vote. A model of congressional behavior along these lines is inconsistent with analyses documenting the decline of partisanship in the electorate, as well as with the differences in the abilities of U.S. and European political parties to discipline their members. Second, quantitative analyses to date have relied on poor or misleading indicators of constituent interests and the economic concepts underlying those interests. Oddly enough, the use of state-level data for the House of Representatives, where frequent elections heighten the importance of constituent interests, biases against constituent interests, especially in larger states. Researchers have also failed to incorporate relevant economic theories of trade and trade protection into such analyses. Third, many analyses of congressional voting decisions fail to account for the complexity of the representative's vote choice. Members' partisanship and ideology are likely to reflect constituent preferences. It is not an accident, for example, that three Republicans (Cox, Dornan, and Rohrabacher) represent affluent, suburban and predominantly white Orange County, California while nearby Los Angeles elects Democrats. In the analysis below, we attempt to discern these nuances by the use of residuals from a regression of an independent variable identifying constituent interest on variables for ideology and partisanship.³

There is also reason to believe constituent interest may express itself behind the scenes. The presence or absence of direct benefits for a member's constituency may not determine a member's support for a bill, but this says little about whether the member will fight for their inclusion anyway. Constituent concerns may propel a member to seek modifications of a bill in committee while making decisions "on balance" in floor voting. Authors of legislation may distribute the

constituent problem for members by spreading the costs of legislation among many constituencies in order to build winning coalitions (Weingast 1979). We have chosen the GATT because the fast-track process makes it difficult for ordinary members of Congress to seek such benefits.

The above discussion suggests that the crucial stage of the legislative process is in committee. Competing theories of distribution (Shepsle and Weingast 1987) and information (Krehbiel 1987) assert that members of congressional committees may reap disproportionate benefits from legislation over which a given committee has jurisdiction (Fenno 1973). We produce a model that incorporates the view that committee members represent their own constituent interests in the crafting stage of the legislative process. Taken together, we believe these modifications constitute a renewed analytical approach to the determinants of roll-call voting.

In the coming pages we discuss relevant theory, detail our research design, the data, and specify a series of multivariate probit models that exemplify our arguments. Finally, we assess the results and present several conclusions.

Theory and Hypotheses

The fundamental difficulty for Congress in formulating trade policy is that it is a large, collective decision-making body; Congress is not an “it,” but a “they.” Members of Congress constitute a multitude of possible coalitions that could form and reform as the international negotiation process proceeds. The nation’s negotiating position might fluctuate in tandem with the fortunes of various coalitions in Congress. Negotiating in this manner with representatives of other nations would be difficult and might lead other nations to be reticent to engage in serious bargaining. The tendency for members to “look out for their own” might result in agreements that fail to provide the nation with maximal benefits.

Each member faces ideological, partisan, and constituent incentives that make it difficult for Congress to establish a singular basis for negotiation. Congress has thus delegated much of the work of formulating trade agreements to the executive branch, subject to ratification through the fast-track procedure. The use of a closed rule on the floor of the House and Senate provides the executive with the ability to bargain on behalf of Congress while retaining some advantages for itself that constitute a reward for its role in overcoming the congressional collective-action problem (Martin 1992a, 1992b, 1994).

The GATT

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is a useful piece of legislation to examine roll-call voting for several reasons. First, the legislation was long anticipated and widely followed by voters. A majority of U.S. citizens lack the expertise to be conversant with the details of most legislation. Still, it appears that many were aware of the relevant details of the GATT and possessed some opinion about it, particularly those it was most likely to affect. Second, many members of Congress perceived that the legislation had a potentially significant impact on the economy and, hence, on their districts. The potential impact was broad-based enough to make the legislation controversial, both on ideological and partisan grounds. Third, the GATT was *not* a “pork” bill. With no funds to allocate, administrative centers to establish, or bases to close, members’ interests were confined to the merits of the bill itself. The fast-track procedure under which the GATT was considered left little room for members to engage in behind-the-scenes modifications and “log-rolling.” Changes were made, but the fast-track procedure limited alterations to an outside agent, the executive branch. Informal committee markups in the House and Senate became, *de facto*, the mechanism through which all congressional efforts at modification of the legislation were funneled. Markups in committee reduced the ability of legislators to add confounding amendments and presented a unique opportunity for jurisdictional committee members to exercise their interests on the bill.

*Politics—Serving the Constituents:
Unionization, Unemployment, and Exports*

The very nature of our analysis highlights the importance of politics and political organizations in the realization of economic goals. If members of Congress are responding to constituency interests on trade legislation, it is likely that employment and organized labor issues weigh heavily on their vote. As they had a year earlier with the North American Free Trade Agreement, opponents of the GATT, mainly labor unions, decried the prospect of job losses. They argued that freer trade would result in transfer of industries and employment from the United States to countries with cheaper labor forces. Implicit in this argument was a rise in unemployment in congressional districts throughout the nation, but particularly in those areas dependent on certain manufacturing and textile industries marked for tariff reductions under GATT. Opponents warned individual legislators that a vote

for the GATT imperiled their chances for re-election. The opposition argued that GATT was most likely to affect members whose districts were already vulnerable due to the employment situation. At low levels of unemployment, the jobless represented a politically insignificant minority. Where unemployment was relatively high, the jobless represented a potential political force that could punish pro-GATT members in the 1994 elections. For incumbents seeking to deter strong challenges, the best strategy is to refrain from creating an issue on which their record stands in stark contrast to the interests of their constituents.

H₁: We expect that the likelihood of voting in favor of the GATT is inversely proportional to union membership and unemployment levels in the congressional district.

H₂: We expect members' previous support of the AFL-CIO to decrease the likelihood of their voting for the GATT.

Many congressional districts export products to other nations. Many view trade agreements as a vehicle by which, as tariffs fall and markets open abroad, the amount of exports and the number of jobs supporting them would increase. This rationale was the main argument of proponents of the GATT. Previous research (Conybeare 1991) has established this link empirically; voting for the McKinley Tariff was related inversely to the magnitude of exports in individual districts. Constituent interests involved in the export industry were likely to reward members of Congress who supported GATT.

H₃: We expect higher levels of exports in congressional districts to be related to congressional votes for the GATT.

Economics: Competing Theories of Trade Protection

Two competing interpretations of the incentives for trade protection exist in the economic literature. They differ mainly in their identification of an appropriate unit of analysis, yet they share an emphasis on the manner in which their implications vary for the member of Congress looking out for the interests of his or her constituents.

Heckscher and Ohlin (1991) note that the basic building blocks of an economy—labor, capital, and land—exist in different proportions in different countries. The combinations of the factors needed to produce goods and services efficiently varies little across economies. Under autarky, trade exists only domestically, and the relative scarcity of a factor within a national economy impacts its value. The goods

produced with these scarce factors are more expensive than they would be if international trade were allowed to exist. Goods made with abundant national resources are more competitive internationally. Countries should export goods that are intensive users of their abundant factors. In a seminal paper on the political implications of this argument, Stolper and Samuelson (1941) assert that trade liberalization damages holders of relatively scarce national factors. These political actors have a direct interest in lobbying political institutions for protection of their advantageous positions.

Our expectation for congressional behavior under Stolper-Samuelson is that representatives and senators will respond to the interests of the economic sectors they represent: members in districts and states where the scarce national factor (labor in the United States) is abundant have political incentives to respond to its desire for protection. The Stolper-Samuelson framework rationalizes organized labor's intense opposition to the GATT and individualized attention to members from districts and states with large labor populations. The Stolper-Samuelson framework leads us to the following hypothesis:

H₄: Representatives from districts in which labor is abundant relative to capital should be the most likely to vote against the GATT.

A more intuitive way to conceive of the hypothesis is to predict that regions traditionally known for their strong labor representation, such as the rust belt and the northeast, will contain districts least likely to support the GATT.

A second framework of incentives for protection comes from the Riccardian model (c.f. Alt and Chrystal 1983; Ethier 1988). Instead of factors, the Riccardian approach emphasizes the relative competitiveness of industries. As industries vary in competitiveness with their international counterparts, so too should they vary in their response to trade protection. Uncompetitive industrial sectors will lobby their representatives for protection. Highly competitive industrial sectors should seek trade liberalization. Again, the political implications run parallel to the argument above. Nationally protectionist industries that are locally abundant should be more successful in obtaining the support of their members of Congress than protectionist industries that represent a minority opinion in the district:

H₅: Representatives from districts in which import-competing industries predominate should be the most likely to vote against the GATT.

The Role of Committees

Songer, Underwood, and Dillon (1985) suggest that the study of legislative decision making should take into account the two-stage flow of information and deference to committee expertise. Given committees' "up-front" position in the legislative process, we believe that their work has important implications for the final product. The literature on congressional committees suggests either that committees serve Congress by allowing members to specialize in complex areas of policy in return for substantial control over legislation in that area (c.f. Krehbiel 1987, 1991) or that committees overcome some aspects of the collective goods problem by distributing the means to obtain benefits ("pork") without hopelessly clogging the legislative process (c.f. Weingast 1979). Whatever the motives of committees, recent analyses of congressional roll-call votes have renewed the call for an examination of committees' roles in the legislative process (Covington, Wrighton, and Kinney 1995); we echo this call in this paper.

The informational and distributional models differ in their predictions about the motives for committee specialization. The distributional argument emphasizes the opportunity for satisfying constituent interests, while the informational model suggests motives that are much more diffuse. Under the informational model, it is equally likely that committee specialization occurs because of ideological or partisan goals. Members may be driven to seek membership on committees by their ideological dispositions regarding committee jurisdictions, or because membership benefits partisan objectives. Cox and McCubbins (1993) find that while some party contingents on committees do diverge in terms of ideology, this is not the case for major committees such as Ways and Means. We suspect that the same is true of Finance in the Senate. The implication for the argument here is that differences between committee behavior and non-committee behavior are likely attributable to constituent concerns. We test this proposition by regressing the product of a dummy variable for committee membership in the relevant committees in the House and Senate and our constituent interest model. If either theory of committee specialization is correct, committee members are more likely to endorse the bill because of their increased control over the bill. Thus:

H₆: Representatives with membership on the committees of jurisdiction for GATT (Ways and Means in the House and Finance in the Senate) are more likely to vote for the GATT.

Competing Hypotheses: Other Independent Variables

To this point, we have described only alternatives for the constituency-related influences on a member's vote on the floor. In order to put these to the test, it is necessary to gauge their effects against competing influences that might also affect the vote choice of members of Congress. The seminal work of Kingdon (1977, 1989) serves as a useful guide for alternative explanations of congressional vote choice. Kingdon outlines a set of forces that act on the legislator in various ways. These forces may act either in concert or create a dissonance between objectives that makes decision making more difficult for the individual legislator. An individual legislator's party affiliation and personal ideology act as screens through which he or she filters information and predominate in the literature as vote determinants.

A number of studies examine the nature of party affiliation and support for trade legislation (c.f. Baldwin 1985; Coughlin 1985; McArthur and Marks 1988; Tosini and Tower 1987). In general, these studies find, as we mentioned earlier, that Republicans support free trade, while Democrats are more likely to support protectionist policies. The policy debate surrounding the merits of the GATT proposal reflected this distinction as well. The partisan nature of trade issues does not carry through to the chief executive, however. Both Republican and Democratic administrations have consistently sought trade liberalization throughout the post-war period, presenting a dilemma for both Democratic and Republican partisans in Congress. On the one hand, the Democratic party has a reputation for protecting labor. On the other, Democrats feel some pressure to support the policies of a Democratic president. For Republicans, free trade has been the traditional stance. Yet, there are also pressures to oppose major pieces of legislation submitted to Congress by a Democratic White House. Conflicting loyalties on trade legislation led to the formation of some unconventional coalitions prior to the vote on the GATT in Congress. President Clinton enlisted the aid of three former Republican presidents to assist him in obtaining passage for the bill. Traditional Democratic supporters such as unions argued vigorously against GATT. These conflicting loyalties should theoretically diminish the systematic influence of partisanship on the vote in Congress. Still, we accept the plausibility of a partisan distinction and acknowledge that in previous analyses of voting on trade, partisanship was shown to be a better predictor of outcomes than constituent variables. Our hypothesis is thus the same.

Competing Hypothesis 1: Republicans are more likely to vote for the GATT than are Democrats.

Similar to the argument for partisan effects is that for members' individual ideologies. Conservatives tend to favor *laissez faire* trade policies. Conversely, those who hold a more liberal ideology tend to favor regulation or management of international trade. We expect the GATT proposal to reflect these individual-level biases.

Competing Hypothesis 2: The more liberal an individual member (as measured by Americans For Democratic Action scores), the less likely that member is to support the GATT proposal.

A final and much-debated potential explanation for vote choice on the floor is the member's electoral margin (c.f. Jacobson 1987, 1992). The underlying argument is that members of Congress respond to their degree of success in their latest election. Those that consider themselves to be "marginal" or vulnerable to defeat might be more likely to respond to constituency concerns. Unfortunately, the directionality of the impact of marginal constituencies on trade policy is unclear. Many studies have examined electoral margin and have come to a wide variety of conclusions (c.f. Fiorina 1977). We speculate that those who consider themselves to be "safer" may be more prone to discount constituency concerns in favor of competing influences. Thus, a measure of electoral margin should account for some of the variance in roll-call votes. Such reasoning does not provide us with a directional hypothesis in relation to constituent interest. However, the same comfort level that allows representatives and senators to defy local concerns also allows them to chart a course independent of party, and to some extent, ideological constraints as well. Since the leadership of both parties supported passage of the GATT, our reasoning suggests that members from "safe" districts are more likely to be able to oppose the bill.⁴

Competing Hypothesis 3: We expect that those members with larger margins of victory in 1992 to be less likely to vote in favor of the GATT.

Data and Methodology

One of the major contributions of this project is the use of data aggregated by congressional district from counties rather than disaggregated from state-level data (a description of the data and data sources can be found in the Data Appendix). Previous research employs statewide economic and demographic variables, asserting that such indicators are sufficient to capture the effects of constituent interest

and that district-level data are extremely difficult to obtain. Since the postulated effects of constituent interest have yet to be demonstrated, attempts to improve data may be of use in discerning hypothesized relationships heretofore uncovered.

There are also substantial methodological grounds for pursuing the use of district-level data. In smaller states with homogeneous demographics, the use of state-level data may be adequate (especially in states with only one or two House districts). But in larger states, or states where there are substantial differences between communities, state-level indicators may reduce the overall variance in measures of constituent interest, thus diminishing the likelihood of detecting significant relationships. Of even greater concern is the prospect of systematic errors. In order to use state-level data to represent the economic and demographic characteristics of congressional districts, the researcher must assume that state-level proxy indicators are *unbiased*. Any effect of states must be random with respect to the districts themselves. Yet, there are important systematic biases introduced by state-level data. Seen from the state level, California, New York, Texas, and Florida are major population centers and the engines of the nation's economy. Nevertheless, within each of these states, the nature of the population and industrial production varies. Many of the citizens and the vast majority of territory is rural or suburban in nature. Employing state-level measures gives members of state congressional delegations the appearance that they represent relatively affluent, urban, or suburban districts when in fact they may not. Using state-level data, for example, we cannot distinguish differences between the seventh district of Texas Congressman Archer, fully contained within a single county (Harris) surrounding the metropolis of Houston, and Representative Bonilla's 23d district which consists of some twenty-nine counties and over one hundred fifty million acres of territory! The biasing effects are, of course, exacerbated by the large populations of these states. By themselves, the four largest states constitute almost one-third of all 435 House members. For this reason, we cannot determine whether previous analyses of the effects of constituent interests are correct or misleading. Predictors of roll-call voting fare poorly when analyses employ state-level data.

To rectify this problem, we aggregate data from the 3141 counties, boroughs, parishes, and census areas in the United States to the level of the 435 congressional districts. The U.S. Bureau of the Census identifies the correspondence between congressional districts and appropriate counties. Though the correspondence is not exact, about one in five counties straddle two or more congressional districts. For

about 8% of congressional districts (34), a single county contains two or more House districts. (Los Angeles County, California, with fifteen congressional districts, is a particularly severe example of this situation.) Nevertheless, the use of district data constitutes a significant improvement over state-level data. Some have argued that the tendency for counties and congressional districts to follow different boundaries reduces the accuracy of this approach. Still, such disparities are modest in relation to those that occur with the use of state-level data. For most states, this move from state-level data to district-level data constitutes an improvement in accuracy in the realm of one to two orders of magnitude.⁵

To determine whether our competing explanations for members' vote choices on the GATT agreement have the expected effects, we formulated and tested four models: one a "political" model, two "economic" models—Stolper-Samuelson and Riccardian variants, and finally a hybrid committee variant of the political model. All models attempt to capture the influence on vote choice of partisanship, ideology, and constituent interests. Differences between models lie in how we operationalize constituency interest: In the political model, we use the unemployment rate, the percentage of union membership, American Federation of Labor (AFL) scores and the percentage of production exported abroad. In the Stolper-Samuelson model, we use ratios of the factors of production. In the Riccardian model, we designate industrial sectors defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as either export oriented or import protective. In the committee variant of the political model, we add dummy variables for committee membership in the pivotal committees in the House and Senate.

As the dependent variable is the dichotomous vote choice, we employ a two-stage probit maximum likelihood estimation. We use AFL scores of representatives as one of our measures of constituent interest. Because these scores correlate strongly with our measures of party and ideology, we use residuals from an initial regression of party and Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) scores on the AFL scores rather than the AFL measure directly. Finally, we test our committee influence model with simple correlation analyses.

Findings and Analysis

Floor Voting

Tables 1 and 2 present the probit estimates for the effect of the political model and the Stolper-Samuelson economic model of determinants on vote choice for the GATT roll-call vote in the U.S.

House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, respectively. None of the variables for the Riccardian economic model proved significant and so the model is not included in the tables. The first reaction one might have is that the models perform much better in the Senate than in the House. On the surface, this is a somewhat counterintuitive result. We expected the constituent-specified models to perform much better in the House because of the shorter time period between elections and the well-documented concern of House members for the welfare of their constituents, particularly as it relates to reelection (Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1977). While initially surprised at this result, further reflection brought us to the conclusion that this result is not as counterintuitive as one might think. First, urban counties are likely to contain multiple congressional districts. While the use of county-level census data is an improvement over previous studies, urban counties probably confound the analysis to some extent by conflating determinants of congressional behavior in same-county districts. This, of course, is not a problem for analysis of the Senate.⁶ Second, the Senate's rules are much less constrained at the floor stage. There exists the possibility of unlimited debate and non-germane amendments. Although the fast-track procedure eliminated the effects amendments might have had on the GATT, we believe that constituent interests are more likely, as a matter of course, to come to the fore in an unregulated process such as floor debate in the Senate. Presumably, these influences are likely to be accommodated further "upstream" in the House process, most likely at the committee stage. We will examine this in more detail below.⁷

A reading of Table 1 reveals some interesting results on the House side of the GATT process. Looking at column (1), many of the constituent variables perform as expected in the model with conventional specifications of constituent interest. Loyalty to the AFL-CIO, unemployment levels in 1991, and a liberal ideology are all factors that decrease the likelihood that a House member would vote for the GATT agreement. Larger portions of the economy devoted to exports in a given district result in an increase in the likelihood of a member voting for the GATT. Although only significant at the .10 level, members' 1992 election results behave in the expected manner: the higher the percentage of the 1992 vote, the less likely members were to vote for the GATT. These three findings lead us to believe that the constituent influence hypothesis has some empirical relevance.

Two notable exceptions arise from the analysis. First, party is in the unhypothesized direction (coded 1 for Republicans).⁸ While counter to expectations, it may reflect the conflicting forces of partisanship within the House. Holding ideology and constituent interests constant,

TABLE 1
 Probit Coefficients for the House Member Vote Choice on GATT

Variable	Political Model	Economic Model
Constant	1.717 (.534)**	1.002 (.445)**
ADA 1993	-.007 (.004)**	-.005 (.003)*
PARTY	-.363 (.256)*	-.184 (.248)*
VOTE92	-.008 (.006)*	-.009 (.006)*
UNION	.010 (.005)*	
UNEMP91	-.116 (.034)**	
AFL	-.011 (.005)**	
EXPPCT	.020 (.013)*	
CAPITAL/LABOR		.006 (.005)*
LAND/LABOR		.002 (.004)
Number of Cases	432	432
McKelvey Pseudo R ²	0.09 ^a	0.03
Dhrymes Pseudo R ²	0.04	0.01
Log Likelihood	-263.71	-272.23
Likelihood Ratio	23.91**	6.87*
Percent Correctly Predicted	67.3	66.6
Null Percent:	66.4	66.4

* $p \leq .10$, two-tailed test.

** $p \leq .01$, two-tailed test.

^aAldrich and Nelson (1984, 57).

Democrats were more interested in bolstering the legislative record of a president from their own party than they were in maintaining a traditional opposition to free trade agreements. Republicans tended to oppose legislation from the opposition, rather than supporting a bill advancing long-held principles. The constrained nature of the House, and the undisciplined nature of the political parties in Congress, may also help to account for this finding. Second, and most curiously, unionization is in the unhypothesized direction. Unionization fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Though we are unable to provide a satisfactory theoretical rationale for the union result, we speculate that part of the lack of significance is due to low variance in this variable. Declining membership in unions has meant that, for most districts, union membership is low.⁹

Moving to column (2) of the first table, the Stolper-Samuelson specification fails to perform well at all. We are encouraged, however, by the finding that the capital factor ratio to land is related to vote choice in the hypothesized manner. At least one of two constituent economic interests as specified by the Stolper-Samuelson approach had an influence on the GATT vote in the House.

Moving to the Senate side of the legislative process, the models perform more effectively than in the House of Representatives. Again, we believe this to be the result of an atmosphere where senators feel less constrained by the process and where constituent interests are more likely to be reflected in floor voting. Beginning with the “political” model of column (1), we see that loyalty to the AFL-CIO reduces the probability that a senator voted for the GATT. The other indicators of constituent interest, 1991 unemployment, exports as a portion of the state’s economic output, and unionization do not substantiate the hypothesis that constituent interest influences roll-call voting. Party in the Senate behaves as expected; Republicans are free traders while Democrats are protectionist. We believe that the analysis reflects previous results regarding party (Baldwin 1985; Conybeare 1991; Coughlin 1985; McArthur and Marks 1988; Tosini and Tower 1987). In the Senate, where populous states have no advantage in representation, a few liberal senators supported GATT for constituency reasons, while a few conservative senators opposed GATT because of threats to their agricultural regions. Such a distribution appears to account for the positive coefficient for ideology in Table 2, column (1).

We are further encouraged by the results revealed in column (2) of Table 2.¹⁰ As in the House, as the capital to labor ratio increases in the state, so too does the likelihood of support for GATT. We view this as more evidence that constituent interests matter on the floor.

TABLE 2
 Probit Coefficients for the Senate Member Vote Choice on GATT

Variable	Political Model	Economic Model
Constant	-3.431 (1.47)**	-6.159 (2.01)***
ADA 1993	.014 (.009)*	.012 (.009)*
PARTY	1.047 (.579)**	-.184 (.248)*
PREV ELECTION	.029 (.019)*	-.009 (.006)*
UNION	.052 (.018)***	
UNEMP91	.055 (.124)	
AFL	-.046 (.015)***	
EXPPCT	.008 (.027)	
CAPITAL/LABOR		.006 (.005)*
LAND/LABOR		.002 (.004)
Number of Cases	99	99
McKelvey Pseudo R ²	0.43 ^a	0.03
Dhrymes Pseudo R ²	0.25	0.01
Log Likelihood	-41.10	-272.23
Likelihood Ratio	27.46***	6.87*
Percent Correctly Predicted	76.0	66.6
Null Percent:	83.8	66.4

* $p < .10$, two-tailed test.

** $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

*** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

^aAldrich and Nelson (1984, 57).

Committee Effects

We have asserted elsewhere in this paper that constituent interests are likely to arise in the work that committees do in crafting legislation. In light of the above comparison of House and Senate floor differences, committee membership can be a vehicle through which constituent interests influence legislation.

The GATT legislation went through informal markups in the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. While other committees did have some input into the process, it was in these two committees that the Congress was able to delineate the parameters under which the president would draft the legislation. We believe that a correlational analysis will be helpful in discerning the extent to which constituent interests affected the process at this crucial stage.

We first examine the effect of committee membership on vote choice. A dummy variable for committee membership is positive and highly significant ($p < .01$) when added to both House models, but is not in the Senate. Unfortunately, this might be due to a number of factors, including the partisan loyalties of members assigned to the Ways and Means Committee. To test the proposition that committee members are more likely to successfully represent constituent interests, we examine the correlation between vote choice and factor endowment ratios for members of the House Ways and Means Committee. The simple correlation of factor endowment ratios of capital/labor shows committee constituent interests are about ten times better at predicting roll-call votes than are the capital/labor ratios of floor member's districts (.0294 to .2981). The capital/labor ratio for committee members is significant ($p < .05$). The land/labor ratio remains insignificant with little correlation. The results suggest that committee membership matters, both for constituent interests and in terms of the leverage committee members have over shaping decisions on the floor. What our results cannot determine is whether the informational or distributional model better explains the power of committees. Since both models predict some degree of leeway in obtaining preferential outcomes for committee member's constituencies, only the presence of demonstrable committee influence without significant constituent benefits can discriminate one approach from another.

Conclusions

We present a series of models that continues the quest to delineate the nature of constituent interest representation in the Congress. We

saw by several specifications that the voting processes on the GATT legislation in 1994 reflected various aspects of constituent interest. We also identified differences between the House and Senate regarding the ability of constituent interests to affect floor voting.

Perhaps the most significant improvement that this paper makes over previous studies is that we took great care in bringing the data to the proper level of observation. Previous studies (most notably Conybeare and Zinkula 1994) have employed data from the state level when examining phenomena at the congressional district level. The result is variables with the incorrect amount of variance and congressional districts that look virtually identical within states. We know that the characteristics of congressional districts vary within states. Our use of congressional district data makes a significant contribution by incorporating these differences into a quantitative analysis.

The rewards of our analysis are that we are able to demonstrate some relationship between constituent interest and voting behavior in the U.S. Congress. Democratic theorists have believed for a long time that what makes plurality districts different from proportional representation is the relative importance of local concerns. Legislators elected from districts are supposed to care about the welfare of their districts. The challenge for quantitative assessments of this argument has been the lack of corroborating evidence for the theory. Our results are some of the first to substantiate the theoretical link.

Where does research go from here? We envision two paths that future research may follow. Clearly, one important step is to continue to refine our measures of data. We believe that better data, while not necessarily a guarantee of better results (in the sense that the coefficients fit our hypotheses), can go a long way toward a better understanding of how members of Congress decide to vote. A second path for future research is a concentration on the processes of Congress that occur “upstream” from the floor. Analysis of congressional behavior “upstream” points directly to the committee stage of the legislative process as a fertile field for research in the congressional voting arena. We also think researchers can place additional attention on analysis of what precisely constitutes constituent interest. We have provided some efforts in this direction by introducing in an explicit manner two models of economic incentives toward trade protectiveness.

In sum, better data and a closer inspection of the various stages of the legislative processes can provide us a better understanding of the process of voting in Congress. We believe that we have taken some steps, tentative as they may be, on that journey.

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APPENDIX

Data for the study come from several sources. The majority of data are available through U.S. Census publications in the form of CD-ROM. Census data sources and the variables extracted from each source are listed below. Additional census data were obtained through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research [ICPSR] from an electronic data file in SPSS format (#6425). Data for the roll-call votes themselves, as well as the margins for each Congressperson's most recent election, Americans for Democratic Action [ADA] and the American Federation of Labor [AFL] scores of congressional voting for the years 1993 and 1994 were obtained from the on-line service Legislate.

Variables from the census include:

103d Congressional District Geographic Entity File (1990) [ICPSR 6425]:

<u>USAGE</u>	<u>Census CODE</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>
reference	STFIPS	State FIPS Code (two digit)
reference	CD103	103 ^d Congressional District Numbers (two digit)
reference	COFIPS	County FIPS Code (three digit)

Note: These variables are used to aggregate county-level data to congressional districts or states.

USA Counties (1992):

<u>USAGE</u>	<u>Census CODE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
*(Factor)	BN01089D	Bank Deposits–Total, 1989
	BU21079D	Manufacturing Payroll, 1979
*(Factor)	MN90087D	Aggregate Money Income, 1987
*(Factor)	PI05087D	Dividends, Interest, and Rent, 1987
*(Factor)	PI10087D	Earnings, All Industries, 1987
(Indust.)	PI11087D	Farm Earnings, 1987 (BEA)
(Indust.)	EI22087D	Earnings in Agricultural Services, Forestry, Fisheries, and Other, 1987
(Indust.)	EI23087D	Earnings in Mining, 1987
(Indust.)	EI24087D	Earnings in Construction, 1987
(Indust.)	EI25087D	Earnings in Manufacturing, 1987
(Indust.)	EI36087D	Earnings in Transportation and Public Utilities, 1987
(Indust.)	EI37087D	Earnings in Wholesale Trade, 1987
(Indust.)	EI38087D	Earnings in Retail Trade, 1987

(Indust.)	EI40087D	Earnings in Financial, Insurance, and Real Estate, 1987
(Indust.)	EI41087D	Earnings in Services, 1987
(Indust.)	EI42087D	Earnings in Government, 1987

Note: The four wealth indicators (identified by an asterisk*) combine to form a single proxy for capital.

1987 Economic Censuses (1993):

<u>USAGE</u>	<u>Census CODE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
	SHIPMTS	Value of Total Shipments, 1989
	SHIPEXP	Value of Total Export-Related Shipments, 1989
[C&Z]	EXPPCTS	Total Export-related Shipments as % of Total Shipments, 1989

Note: State-level variables, district data are interpolated as discussed in the text.

City and County Data Book (1994):

<u>USAGE</u>	<u>Census CODE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
[C&Z]	Item 127	Civilian Labor Force Unemployment Rate, 1991 (BLS)
(Factor)	Item 130	Civilian Labor Force, 1990 (Census)
[C&Z]	Item 132	Civilian Labor Force, % Unemployed, 1990 (Census)
	Item 156	Farms, 1987
	Item 160	Value of Farm Products Sold, 1987
(Factor)	Item 162	Land in Farms—Total Acreage, 1987
	Item 169	Manufacturing Employees, 1987
[C&Z]	(Calculated)	Manufacturing Employees, % of Workforce [(Item 169/Item 130) x 100]

NOTES

A previous version of this paper was presented at the 54th Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 18–20, 1996. We wish to thank in particular Joyce Baker of the Iowa Social Science Institute for assistance with data acquisition. We wish to thank John Conybeare, Janet Box-Steffensmeier, and several anonymous reviewers for comments and suggestions. Finally, we wish to thank Peverill Squire for assistance in overcoming various problems performing the data analysis.

1. We agree with the argument of many students of Congress that constituency interest is only one of several influences on legislators (Kingdon 1989). We also believe with others that constituency interests should matter a great deal. The paradox is that quantitative analysis of voting behavior in Congress demonstrates little connection.

2. A notable exception to this is Bartels (1991, 1994) on support for the Reagan defense buildup of the early 1980s.

3. We do not directly address the issue of “shirking” that arises with the introduction of this procedure. Many have debated the merits of attempting to separate out the effects of a representative’s personal ideology from that of the constituency he or she serves. For a discussion of the implications and effects of “shirking” see Langbein (1995).

4. We are indebted to an anonymous reviewer for assisting us in clarifying competing hypothesis 3.

5. One reviewer suggested we substantiate the claim for the improved accuracy of our data by replicating our analysis using state-level variables. We believe an informal comparison with previously published studies using state-level variables is sufficient. As described in the discussion of the results, we find support for county constituency variables while previous studies show no support for similar constituency variables at the state level.

6. We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this point.

7. Reported pseudo R^2 's for Table 1 are not strong. While not encouraging, we focus here on reported significance. A reviewer suggested use of regional dummies. We found no significant regional effects in further analysis.

8. We rechecked coding of the party variable to verify that the results are not the product of coding error.

9. We thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

10. A correlation table is available from the authors upon request. We refrain from including the table here because of space considerations and because there is little of interest in the results. As expected, there is a strong correlation between party and ADA scores, but this relationship does not exceed normal standards for multicollinearity. No other variables correlate at even a modest level.

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