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AN ANALYSIS OF THE FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE APPROPRIATIONS

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Appropriations politics in Congress concerning the Department of Agriculture and the Federal Extension Service were described for a period covering the years from 1960 to 1975. Analyses indicated that Congressional Committee decisions were affected by the degree of unity within the committees, external support, and confidence shown in the agency. The analyses confirm the contention that the Department of Agriculture and Extension Service have strong and effective clientele groups.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the budgetary and appropriations process for the Federal Extension Service. This analysis covers appropriations over the fiscal years to include 1960 to 1975.

Since a budget is a quantitative expression of an organization's goals and objectives, it behooves us to first look at the enabling legislation. Agricultural extension work was first established by the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914. This legislation authorizes the Department of Agriculture to give, through the Land-Grant Colleges, instruction and practical demonstration in agriculture and home economics and related subjects and to encourage the application of such information by means of demonstrations, publications, and other means to persons not attending or resident in the colleges. Extension educational work was also authorized under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 and the Rural Development Act of 1972.

Consistent with the legislation, the role of the Extension Service is to help people identify and solve their farm, home, and community problems through use of research findings of the Department of Agriculture, the State Land-Grant Colleges, and other programs administered by the Department of Agriculture.

The Federal Extension Service has three major functions:

1. Serves as liaison between the Department of Agriculture and the state extension services, provides program leadership and assistance to the states in the conduct of extension work.
2. Administers federal laws authorizing extension work and coordinates the work among the states.
3. Provides leadership for the educational phases of all programs under the jurisdiction of the Department.

METHOD

The method of analysis used in this paper to examine the data relevant to the budgeting of expenditures in the Extension Service generally follows the same procedure used by Fenn (1966) in his examination of other agencies. He analyzed the flow of decision making from the House Committee on Appropriations, to the House floor, to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, to the Senate floor, and to the conference committee. This paper considers the additional variable of the Extension Service appropriation as it relates to the Department of Agriculture appropriation.

Data were largely collected in the same manner as Fenn (1966) used in his analysis of other agencies. Budget estimates were found in the Annual Senate Document, *Appropriations, Budget Estimates, Etc.* The House Appropriations Committee report was located in the Congressional Series titled *House*

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Miscellaneous Reports on Public Bills. The whole House and Senate Appropriations Committee decision was taken from the Congressional Series titled *Senate Miscellaneous Reports on Public Bills*. A combination of checking the Congressional Record against the conference committee report resulted in a verified Senate decision.

EXECUTIVE BUDGET ANALYSIS

The executive branch of the federal government has the responsibility of preparing and submitting the budget to the legislative branch. In the Extension Service this process starts when the federal administrator of the Extension Service meets with the Extension Committee on Policy to determine the needs and priorities which will be included in the administration request. The Extension Committee on Policy consists of all of the Directors of the State Extension Services. The estimates obtained as a result of these conferences are submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture who in turn fits them into his total budget request to the Office of Management and Budget (O.M.B.).

The Office of Management and Budget examines the Department request in view of its effect upon national fiscal policy. The national fiscal policy has been developed by coordination of the O.M.B., Council of Economic Advisors, and the Treasury Department and approved by the President. After completion of the executive budgeting process the President submits his total budget to Congress (Burkhead).

The second phase of the budgetary process is legislative. In practice it has been the prerogative of the House, or more specifically, the House Committee on Appropriations to initiate appropriation legislation. However, it is not unusual for the Senate to begin consideration of the same subject before the House bill is complete (Ott & Ott). In any case, the legislative branch is so organized that awesome power is concentrated in the various subcommittees of the appropriations committee of both houses. The major influences on budget expenditures are exerted by the House subcommittees (Fenno, 1966). Reconciliation of the House and Senate bills is accomplished through a conference committee where conflicting viewpoints are resolved. The bill, if signed by the President, then becomes law.

HOUSE BUDGET ANALYSIS

When the House receives the President's budget, the budget is immediately referred to the Appropriations Committee which generally refers the budget of the Department of Agriculture to the Appropriations Subcommittee for Agriculture-Environmental and Consumer Protection. This committee in 1975 consisted of eleven members with Congressman Jamie L. Whitten serving as Chairman.

The Chairman receives written justification from the Secretary and holds hearings on the budget requests. Not only must the Secretary appear but various administrators within the department also provide information to the committee. In the specific case of the Extension Service, the Administrator of the agency would be called upon to justify the requested appropriations. Administrators in the Department of Agriculture have

apparently learned that their requests will be scaled down at each point of review in the budgetary process. Therefore, they have built up or "padded" the original figures with the clear expectation that estimates will be cut (Wildavsky).

However, because of its unique relationship, the Extension Service sometimes appeared to be an orphan within the Department of Agriculture. Perhaps this was because the Extension Service did not have a true line of authority within the department. Directors of State Extension Services function under a memorandum of understanding where they are selected by the Land-Grant Institutions to administer the Extension Service under joint funding status. Because of this arrangement the Secretary may find it tempting to reduce that area of the budget when external constraints are placed upon him. This factor may be why the Administrator of the Extension Service has traditionally tried to establish congressional contacts on behalf of his area of responsibility.

Members of the appropriations committee invariably are under considerable pressure from specialized publics (Wildavsky). In the case of the Extension Service the groups with the most leverage include the Farm Bureau, the Land-Grant Institutions, and the Extension Committee on Policy. With offices and staff in each state and most counties, the agency has an enormous capacity for rallying support for its programs.

The Chairmen of the House Appropriations Committee during the period of this study, Clarence Cannon and George Mahan, generally functioned by consensus. Each supported the budget reduction philosophy through their committee and on the floor. In effect, the subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee functioned as autonomous units although the full committee chairman sits *ex officio* on all subcommittees (Fenno, 1973).

Congressman Whitten, the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, dominated the subcommittee with an expertise based upon experience and longevity. He displayed confidence in the department but was by no means a rubber stamp. It was almost a certainty that if he was not for a program or a budgetary increase, it would not be approved by his committee. He also had pet projects about which he would sometimes question witnesses. In summary, he had tremendous influence and a reputation for successful bargaining with the Senate in the conference committee.

As indicated in Table 1, the committee reduced the Department of Agriculture budget estimate in each of the years from 1960 to 1975. This pattern, however, did not characterize the Extension Service funding estimate. As described in Table 2, the agency estimate was actually increased in over 25 percent of the decisions. This seems to bear out the contention that the Extension Service has more influence with the Congress than with the Department of Agriculture. An examination of Tables 3 and 4 reveals that nearly 87 percent of the committee budget decisions in terms of dollars are within 5 percent of the Extension Service estimate, whereas less than 75 percent of the Department decisions fall within the 5 percent range. Further, while 26.6 percent of the decisions for Extension were increases, none of the decisions for the Department indicated increases.

Experience indicates, as shown in Table 5, that the Extension Service may well expect an increase in their appropriation over the prior year with 14 out of 15 years showing an increase. An analysis of Table 6 reveals that the credibility of the Extension Service again seems to fare better than the Department of Agriculture which actually experienced a decrease over the

prior year's appropriation in 4 of the 15 years. An examination of the frequency distribution in Table 7 also reveals that in the majority of Extension decisions there was no more than 10 percent change over the previous year's appropriations. From an analysis of Table 8, no such statement could be made concerning the Department.

An analysis of the yearly decisions reveals important variables which affect the decisions. Fenno (1966) identifies three such variables. "One is the complexion of party control of Congress and the Presidency. A second variable is the existence or the non-existence of an economy mood. A third variable is the direction imparted by the executive branch" (p. 358). An examination of Figures 1 and 2 reveals that both the agency and the department fared better under the Republican Presidency. This interpretation may be misleading because of economic conditions in the 1970's which dictated greater federal expenditures. Another factor affecting the Department of Agriculture budget in the 1970's was the ballooning of the Food Stamp Program.

SENATE BUDGET ANALYSIS

As has been pointed out earlier, the appropriation bill is forwarded to the Senate after the House decision. There it is referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee, the most specialized of the Senate Committees. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Agriculture-Environmental and Consumer Protection had thirteen members in 1975 and was chaired by Senator Gale W. McGee. The Senate Committee tended to serve as an appeal body to consider items that were changed by the House. Generally this resulted in increased appropriations (Wildavsky).

The Senate Appropriations Committee, because of the nature of the appeal process, tended to examine smaller segments of the budget requests than the House. Indeed, much of their attention was directed toward a "reclamer" that had been prepared by the agencies. For these reasons the Senate Committee appears to be more liberal than the House Committee (Fenno, 1966).

Senate Committee decisions, as reflected in Tables 9 and 10, show that an agency should not have been surprised if its estimates were reduced. In the case of the Department of Agriculture, decisions to increase or decrease were approximately equal over the fifteen year period whereas the Extension Service had a decrease in only 20 percent of the decisions. Thus, as revealed in Tables 11 and 12, it is evident that the Senate has been the body in which agencies may expect some relief on appeal.

It appears that the Senate is subject to a great deal of outside pressure to increase appropriations over the House decisions. The analysis confirms the contention that the Extension Service and the Department of Agriculture have clientele groups which are frequently successful in selling their programs to the Senate. Figure 3 depicts the yearly movements of the Senate and House Committee decisions on Extension Service Appropriations. While the Senate Committee decisions resulted in higher appropriations than the House, the movements are generally in the same direction. When comparing whole House decisions and whole Senate decisions it is evident, as revealed in Tables 13 and 14, that the House Committee has met the expectations of the main body better than its counterpart.

CONCLUSION

The evidence does indicate that the Extension Service maintained its relative portion of the Department of Agriculture budget by acquiring an increase in each year of analysis. However, the Department of Agriculture budget appears to have been increasing at a decreasing rate. A comparison of the rate of national inflation to the percentage increase in the Extension Service appropriation shows that the Extension Service budget has decreased in purchasing power in 5 of the 15 years.

As stated in the beginning of this paper, one objective was to compare appropriations of the Extension Service with the Department of Agriculture. As Figure 4 shows, percentage increases for the Extension Service have been relatively constant while the appropriations for the Department of Agriculture have fluctuated from year to year.

In summary, while this analysis was made in terms of incrementalism, it is by no means clear that this procedure provides an adequate explanation of the decision making process. This procedure, by the aggregate total of the Department, can not explain or even reveal fluctuations of internal programs. It is also a fact that large items in the Department of Agriculture budget fall within categories of mandatory expenditures and, thus, are beyond the scope of incremental strategy. A different conclusion may be reached, however, for the Extension Service. As evidenced in prior years, Congress does have the authority and the willingness to make discretionary decisions concerning appropriations for the Extension Service.

Table 3
Appropriations as a Percentage of Estimates: Magnitude of Increases and Decreases, Federal Extension Service from 1960 to 1975

Percent of Estimates Received	Number of Decisions	Percent of Decisions
110.0-114.9		
105.0-109.9	1	6.6
100.1-104.9	3	20.0
100	2	13.3
95.0-99.9	8	53.3
90.0-94.9	1	6.6
Total	15	99.8*

Table 4
Appropriations as a Percentage of Estimates: Magnitude of Increases and Decreases, Department of Agriculture from 1960 to 1975

Percent of Estimates Received	Number of Decisions	Percent of Decisions
105.0-109.9	0	0
100.1-104.9	0	0
100	0	0
95.0-99.9	11	73.3
90.0-94.9	2	13.3
85.0-89.9	1	6.6
80.0-84.9	0	0
75.0-74.9	1	6.6
Total	15	99.8*

Table 5
Appropriations as Related to Previous Year's Appropriation: House Appropriations Committee Decision, Federal Extension Service from 1960 to 1975

Committee Decision	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
1. Increase over last year's appropriation	14	93.3
2. Same as last year's appropriation	—	—
3. Decrease below last year's appropriation	1	6.6
Total	15	99.9*

Table 6
Appropriations as Related to Previous Year's Appropriation: House Appropriations Committee Decision, Department of Agriculture from 1960 to 1975

Committee Decision	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
1. Increase over last year's appropriation	11	73.3
2. Same as last year's appropriation	—	—
3. Decrease below last year's appropriation	4	26.6
Total	15	99.9*

*Due to rounding.

Table 7
Appropriations as Related to Previous Year's Appropriation:
House Appropriations Committee Decision,
Federal Extension Service
from 1960 to 1975

Percentage Increase	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
20.1-30.0	1	6.6
10.1-20.0	1	6.6
0.1-10.0	12	80.0
0	—	—
-0.1-10.0	1	6.6
Total	15	99.8*

Table 8
Appropriations as Related to Previous Year's Appropriation:
House Appropriations Committee Decisions,
Department of Agriculture
from 1960 to 1975

Percentage Increase	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
60.1-70.0	1	6.6
50.1-60.0	—	—
40.1-50.0	1	6.6
30.1-40.0	—	—
20.1-30.0	2	13.3
10.0-20.0	2	13.3
0.1-10.0	5	33.3
0	—	—
-0.1-10.0	1	6.6
-10.1-20.0	1	6.6
-20.1-30.0	1	6.6
over-30.1	1	6.6
Total	15	99.8*

*Due to rounding.

Figure 2
Appropriations as a Percentage of Estimates: House
Appropriations Committee Decisions, Department
of Agriculture from 1960 to 1975

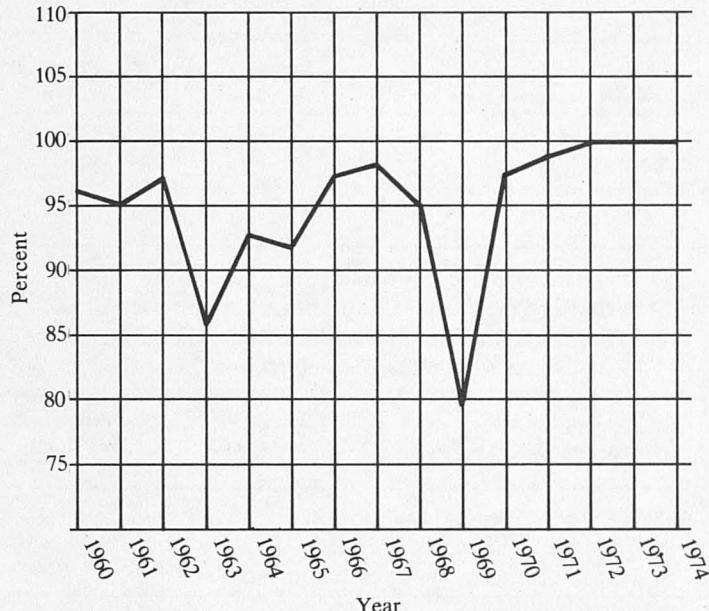


Table 9
Appropriations as Related to Estimates: Decisions of
Senate Appropriations Committee, Federal
Extension Service from 1960 to 1975

Committee Decision	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
1. Increase over budget estimate	11 (4)**	73.3 (26.7)**
2. Same as budget estimates	1 (2)	6.6 (13.3)
3. Decrease below budget estimate	3 (9)	20.0 (60.0)
Total	15	99.9*

Figure 1
Appropriations as a Percentage of Estimates: House
Appropriations Committee Decisions, Federal
Extension Service from 1960 to 1975

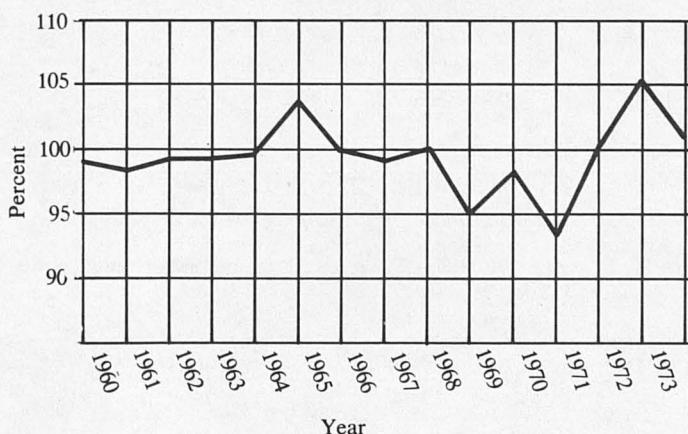


Table 10
Appropriations as Related to Estimates: Decisions of
Senate Appropriations Committee, Department
of Agriculture from 1960 to 1975

Committee Decision	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
1. Increase over budget estimates	8 (0)**	53.3 (0)**
2. Same as budget estimates	0 (0)	0 (0)
3. Decrease below budget estimate	7 (15)	46.6 (100)
Total	15	99.9*

*Due to rounding.

**House Appropriations Committee

Table 11
Decisions of the Senate Committee on Appropriations as Compared with Final House Decisions: Federal Extension Service from 1960 to 1975

Senate Committee Decision	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
1. Increase over House figure	14	93.3
2. Same as House figure	1	6.6
3. Decrease below House figure	0	0
Total	15	99.9*

Table 12
Decisions of the Senate Committee on Appropriations as Compared with Final House Decisions: Department of Agriculture from 1960 to 1975

Senate Committee Decision	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
1. Increase over House figure	14	93.3
2. Same as House figure	0	0
3. Decrease below House figure	1	6.6
Total	15	99.9*

*Due to rounding.

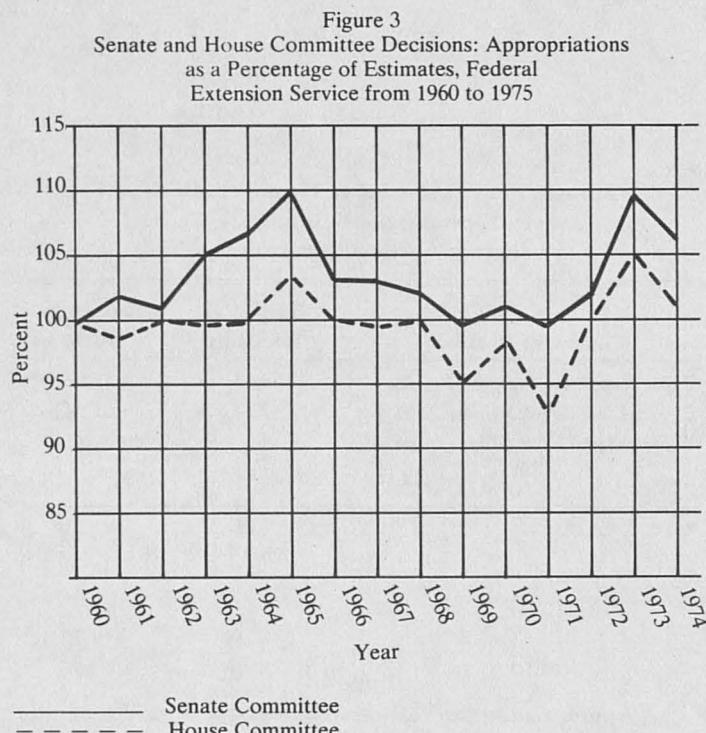


Table 14
Senate Action on Senate Appropriations Committee Recommendations: Federal Extension Service from 1960 to 1975

Senate Action	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
Accept committee recommendation	11	73.3
Decrease committee recommendation	1	6.6
Increase committee recommendation	3	20.0
Total	15	99.9*

*Due to rounding.

Figure 4
Percentage Increase in Federal Extension Appropriation as Compared to Percentage Increase in Appropriation for the Department of Agriculture from 1960 to 1975

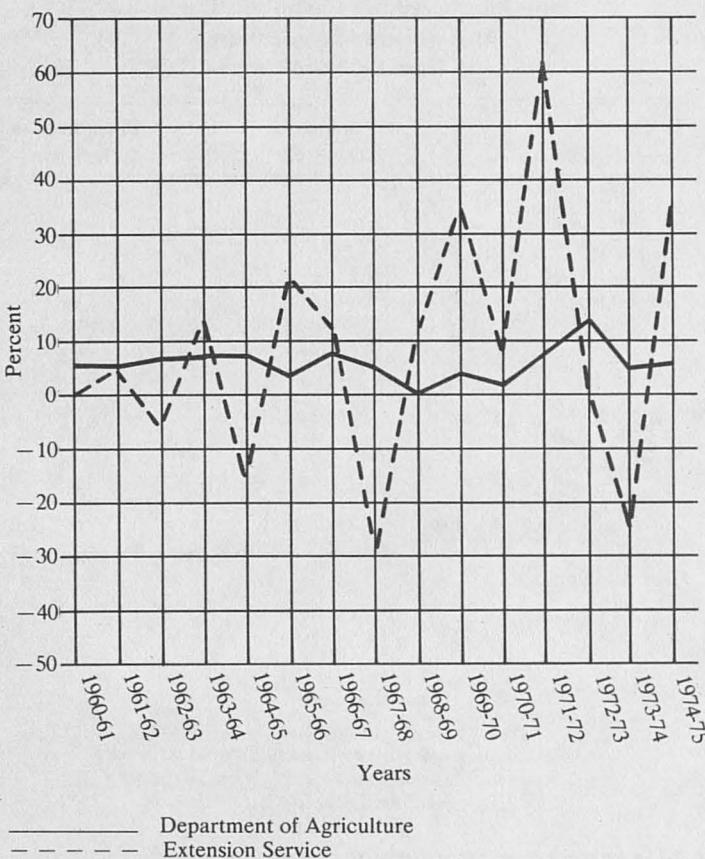


Table 13
House Action on Appropriations Committee Recommendations: Federal Extension Service from 1960 to 1975

House Action	Number of Decisions	Percentage of Decisions
Accept committee recommendation	15	100
Decrease committee recommendation	0	0
Increase committee recommendation	0	0
Total	15	100

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