**Richard Fenno’s Theoretical Framework**

*Congressmen in Committees*

**Member Goals**
- Reelection
- Good public policy
- Power & prestige

**Environmental Constraints**
- Party leaders
- Other members of the House
- Client groups
- President
- Executive branch

**Strategic Premises**
(Decision rules)
- Universalism
- Partisanship

**Decision-making Processes**

**Reelection**
- Agriculture
- Armed Services
- Resources
- Veterans’ Affairs
- Transportation and Infrastructure
  - Coast Guard & Maritime
  - Economic Development, Public Buildings & Emergency mgmt
  - Highways, Transit, Pipelines
  - Railroads
  - Water Resources & Environment

**Congress: The Electoral Connection**
(David Mayhew)

- Imagine MC’s as “single-minded seekers of reelection”
  - How would they behave?
  - This is the sort of question that economists ask
  - They imagine an artificial world & analyze it

- Theories simplify reality with the goal of identifying key features to explain the real world

**Good Public Policy**
- International Relations
- Education and the Workforce
- Judiciary
  - Commercial & Administrative Law
  - Courts, the Internet & Intellectual Property
  - Crime, Terrorism & Homeland Security
  - Immigration, Border Security & Claims
  - The Constitution

**Power**
- Appropriations
- Ways and Means
- Rules
- Energy and Commerce
  - Commerce, Trade & Consumer Protection
  - Energy & Air Quality
  - Environment & Hazardous Materials
  - Health
  - Telecommunications & the Internet

**Think of MC’s as “Marginal”**

- Marginal vs. Safe seats
- **Objectively** marginal or safe
  - Margin of victory in last election
  - Party ratios in district (Gerrymandering)
  - Scandal, age, redistricting?

- **Subjectively** marginal or safe
  - Everyone knows someone who has unexpectedly lost
  - The bar exam?
Think of MC’s as “Marginal”

– Everyone knows someone who has unexpectedly lost

Paul Wellstone defeats Rudy Boschwitz, Minnesota, 1990

Three Activities of MC’s

• Advertising
  – Local news, newsletters, etc.
  – We vote for people we recognize

• Position-taking
  – Statements, speeches, resolutions, votes
  – Pleasing positions matter most, not results

• Credit claiming
  – Dams, buildings, parks, military bases, etc.
  – Must be “particularized”
  – Claim must be connected to committee

Activities are Universal, not zero-sum

• Advertising
  – National publicity goes to chairs & leaders
  – Local publicity even distributed
  – Casework, newsletters, local news, etc.

• Position taking
  – Payoff is for position taken, not outcome
  – “Vote for me, I’m a loser”?

• Credit claiming
  – Distributive benefits (including some pork)
  – Norm of universalism

What should MC’s do about National Issues?

• Influence national tides?
  – Economy, gas prices, war
  – Is MC’s claim believable?

• Focus on local tides?
  – Bringing home the bacon
  – Constituency service (ombuds role)
  – Serve major district interests (Agriculture, oil, LA’s TV & Movie industry, NY Wall Street)

Advertising & credit claiming

• 19 of 65 bills (29%) that passed both houses Jan-Aug 2012 attached names to federal buildings
  

• Robert C. Byrd put his name on:
  – More than 50 federal buildings
  – 32 educational centers/schools
  – Robert C. Byrd Appalachian Highway System, Appalachia, West Virginia
  – Development Highway System in West Virginia
  – Robert C. Byrd Bridge, crosses the Ohio River between Marietta, Ohio and Point Pleasant, West Virginia
  – Robert C. Byrd Bridge, crosses the Ohio River between Gallipolis, Ohio and Point Pleasant, West Virginia
  – Robert C. Byrd Drive, West Virginia Routes 16 and 19 between Logan and Gallipolis, West Virginia
  – Robert C. Byrd Bridge, crosses the Ohio River between Huntington, West Virginia and Chesapeake, Ohio
  – Robert C. Byrd Bridge, Ohio County, West Virginia
  – Robert C. Byrd Drive, West Virginia Routes 16 and 19 between Beckley and Sophia, West Virginia
  – Robert C. Byrd Expressway, United States Route 22 near Weirton, West Virginia
  – Robert C. Byrd Freeway, United States Route 119 between Williamson and Charlotte, West Virginia
  – Robert C. Byrd Bridge, crosses the Ohio River between Williamstown, West Virginia and New Richmond, Ohio

Consequences

• Position taking alone is sufficient for most constituents

• Particularism in solutions

• Delay on non-particularized bills

• If no benefit from position-taking or credit-claiming, then little congressional interest

• Symbolism is a common outcome
Solutions: Centralize power to achieve collective goods

• Power to the President
• Power to party leaders
• Power to committee chairs
• Power & prestige to the “work horses”

Costs and Benefits of Policies

• Distribution of costs and benefits
  – MC’s think in terms of groups and geographic areas
• Widely distributed costs are less noticeable than concentrated costs
  – Income taxes vs. User-fee for national forests
• Widely distributed benefits are taken for granted; concentrated benefits are valued more
  – Clean air vs. College loan programs

Aspects of Costs and Benefits

• Intensity of feeling associated with new costs & benefits is asymmetric
  – New costs/taxes yield far more anger
  – New benefits are appreciated, but don’t win much thanks
• Costs & benefits are assessed relatively
  – Adding $5 to a theater ticket may hurt more than $500 to a car
  – National forest user fee

Arnold’s Logic of Congress

• Arnold builds on Mayhew’s work
  – Rational choice assumptions, but realistic
• Policy attributes play a major role
  – Timing or “order” of the policy effect
    • Smoking v. CAFE standards
  – Result: Fights over whether to make costs obvious to voters
• Timing of implementation plays a role
  – Benefits sooner; costs later

Strategy of Costs and Benefits

• Result: MC’s often fight to change distribution of costs and benefits
  – Spread costs widely to make a bill more likely to pass
  – Concentrate benefits on a target group
    • Mayhew’s “Credit claiming”
    • Pork barrel legislation
• To resist legislation, do the opposite
  – Target costs narrowly on powerful interests, etc.

Group Organization

• Integration of groups influences how costs & benefits are perceived
  – Proximity of members
  – Organization
  – Intra-group communications
    • Students vs. old folks (AARP)
• Instigators & policy entrepreneurs
  – Organize groups to win attention to their demands
Voter Reactions

- Prospective vs. Retrospective
  - Prospective voting is based on policy positions
    - Pro-life, anti-immigration, how to negotiate with Iran
    - Mayhew’s “position-taking”
  - Retrospective voting is based on outcomes
    - Unemployment is rising or falling
    - Iran War?
    - How well Obama’s Affordable Care Act works

Indiana’s Religious Freedom Act

- Attentive publics are easy to identify & serve
  - They have organizations & lobbyists
- Inattentive people are harder to judge
  - They may continue to ignore an issue
  - Or they may become interested after the decisions are made
  - An instigator or event may draw the public’s attention to the issue
  - e.g., Indiana’s “Religious Freedom Restoration” Act, 2015

Are MC’s Actions Traceable?

- Procedures may be prevent voters from tracing bad things to MC’s actions
  - An up or down vote on abortion funding is traceable
  - A vote to adjourn rather than address an issue is not
- Other procedures
  - Chair’s mark
  - Conference committees
  - Omnibus bills
  - King-of-the-Hill voting

Coalition Leaders’ Strategies

- Persuasion
  - Activate or change preferences of legislators, attentive publics or the inattentive public
    - e.g., Mobilize supporters in the public
  - Actual persuasion of legislators is uncommon

- Procedure
  - Change MC’s calculations by procedural means
  - Make action traceable or hide it
  - Make decisions in secret

- Modification
  - Amend bill to pass it or kill it
  - Change costs & benefits, timing, etc.
  - Tie the bill to another with “Logrolling”
Mayhew vs. Arnold

• Mayhew proposed a world of single-minded seekers or reelection

• Arnold shows us that even in that world, MC’s can pursue their own preferences
  – Some policies do not have early order costs
  – Costs can be spread widely to hide them
  – Procedure can render actions untraceable

• Arnold’s model is dynamic: it explains change