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# U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration\*

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Despite a voluminous literature on the subject of representative-constituency relationships, one question central to that relationship remains underdeveloped. It is: what does an elected representative see when he or she sees a constituency? And, as a natural follow-up, what consequences do these perceptions have for his or her behavior? The key problem is that of perception. And the key assumption is that the constituency a representative reacts to is the constituency he or she sees. The corollary assumption is that the rest of us cannot understand the representative-constituency relationship until we can see the constituency through the eyes of the representative. These ideas are not new. They were first articulated for students of the United States Congress by Lewis Dexter.<sup>1</sup> Their importance has been widely acknowledged and frequently repeated ever since. But despite the acceptance and reiteration of Dexter's insights, we still have not developed much coherent knowledge about the perceptions members of Congress have of their constituencies.

A major reason for this neglect is that most of our research on the representative-constituency linkage gets conducted at the wrong end of that linkage. Our interest in the constituency relations of U.S. senators and representatives

has typically been a derivative interest, pursued for the light it sheds on some behavior — like roll call voting — in Washington. When we talk with our national legislators about their constituencies, we typically talk to them *in Washington* and, perforce, in the Washington context. But that is a context far removed from the one in which their constituency relationships are created, nurtured, and changed. And it is a context equally far removed from the one in which we might expect their perceptions of their constituencies to be shaped, sharpened or altered. Asking constituency-related questions on Capitol Hill, when the House member is far from the constituency itself, could well produce a distortion of perspective. Researchers might tend to conceive of a separation between the representative “here in Washington” and his or her constituency “back home,” whereas the representative may picture himself or herself as a part of the constituency — me *in* the constituency, rather than me *and* the constituency. As a research strategy, therefore, it makes some sense to study our representatives' perceptions of their constituencies while they are actually in their constituencies — at the constituency end of the linkage.<sup>2</sup>

Since the fall of 1970, I have been traveling with some members of the House of Representen-

\*My I.O.U.'s lie scattered all over the United States among my friends in and out of academia. They are too numerous to list here. But Theodore Anagnoson, Viktor Hofstetter, John Kingdon, and Herbert McClosky deserve special thanks. So do the Russell Sage Foundation and the University of Rochester for their financial help. A slightly different version of this article was delivered under the title “Congressmen in Their Constituencies: An Exploration,” at the American Political Science Association Convention in San Francisco, September, 1975. It is a part of a larger study, *Home Style: U.S. House Members in their Constituencies* (Boston: Little Brown, forthcoming).

<sup>1</sup>Dexter's seminal article was “The Representative and His District,” *Human Organization* 16 (Spring, 1957), 2–14. It will be found, revised and reprinted, along with other of Dexter's works carrying the same perspective in: Lewis Dexter, *The Sociology and Politics of Congress* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969).

<sup>2</sup>Political science studies conducted in congressional constituencies have been few and far between. The most helpful to me have been: *On Capitol Hill*, ed. John Bibby and Roger Davidson (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967); *On Capitol Hill*, ed. John Bibby and Roger Davidson (Chicago: Dryden, 1972); John Donovan, *Congressional Campaign: Maine Elects a Democrat* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1957); Charles Jones, “The Role of the Campaign in Congressional Politics,” in *The Electoral Process*, ed. Harmon Zeigler and Kent Jennings (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1966); John Kingdon, *Candidates for Office: Beliefs and Strategies* (New York: Random House, 1966); David Leuthold, *Electioneering in a Democracy* (New York: Wiley, 1968). And no one interested in this subject should miss Richard Harris's superb “How's It Look?,” *New Yorker*, April 8, 1967. The most recent study is: *The Making of Congressmen*, ed. Alan Clem (North Scituate: Duxbury, 1976).

tatives while they were in their districts, to see if I could figure out — by looking over their shoulders — what it is they see there. These expeditions, designed to continue through the 1976 elections, have been totally open-ended and exploratory. I have tried to observe and inquire into anything and everything the members do. Rather than assume that I already know what is interesting or what questions to ask, I have been prepared to find interesting questions emerging in the course of the experience. The same with data. The research method has been largely one of soaking and poking — or, just hanging around. This paper, therefore, conveys mostly an impressionistic feel for the subject — as befits the earliest stages of exploration and mapping.

As of June 1976, I had accompanied fourteen sitting House members, two House members-to-be and one House member-elect in their districts — for a minimum of two, a maximum of ten, and an average of five days each — sometimes at election time, sometimes not. In eleven cases I have accompanied the member on more than one trip; in six cases I have made only one trip. Since I am a stranger to each local context and to the constellation of people surrounding each member, my confidence in what I see and hear increases markedly when I can make similar observations at more than one point in time. In ten cases I have supplemented my trips to the district with a lengthy interview in Washington. In the district, I reconstruct my record from memory and from brief jottings, as soon after the event as is feasible. In Washington, I take mostly verbatim notes during the interview and commit them to tape immediately thereafter.

I have tried to find a variety of types of members and districts, but I make no pretense at having a group that can be called representative, much less a sample. The seventeen include nine Democrats and eight Republicans. Geographically, three come from two eastern states; six come from five midwestern states; three come from three southern states; five come from three far western states. Since I began, one has retired, one has been defeated and one has run for the Senate. There is some variation among them in terms of ideology, seniority, ethnicity, race, sex,<sup>3</sup> and in terms of safeness

<sup>3</sup>The group contains sixteen men and one woman. In the title of the paper and in the Introduction, I have deliberately employed the generic language "House member," "member of Congress," "Representative," and "his or her" to make it clear that I am talking about men and women. And I have tried to use the same language wherever the plural form appears in the paper. That is, I have tried to stop using the word

and diversity of district. But no claim is made that the group is ideally balanced in any of these respects.

### Perceptions of the Constituency

**The District: The Geographical Constituency.** What then do House members see when they see a constituency? One way they perceive it — the way most helpful to me so far — is as a nest of concentric circles. The largest of these circles represents the congressman's broadest view of his constituency. This is "the district" or "my district." It is the entity to which, from which, and in which he travels. It is the entity whose boundaries have been fixed by state legislative enactment or by court decision. It includes the entire population within those boundaries. Because it is a legal entity, we could refer to it as the legal constituency. It captures more of what the congressman has in mind when he conjures up "my district," however, if we label it the *geographical constituency*. We retain the idea that the district is a legally bounded space and emphasize that it is located in a particular place.

The Washington community is often described as a group of people all of whom come from somewhere else. The House of Representatives, by design, epitomizes this characteristic; and its members function with a heightened sense of their ties to place. There are, of course, constant reminders. The member's district is, after all, "the Tenth District of *California*." Inside the chamber, he is "the gentleman from *California*"; outside the chamber he is Representative X (D. *California*). So, it is not surprising that when you ask a congressman, "What kind of district do you have?," the answer often begins with, and always includes, a geographical, space-and-place, perception. Thus, the district is seen as "the largest in the state, twenty-eight counties in the southeastern corner" or "three layers of suburbs to the west of the city, a square with the northwest corner

"congressmen." In the body of the paper, however, I shall frequently and deliberately use "congressman" and "his" as generic terms. Stylistically, I find this a less clumsy form of the third person singular than "congressperson," followed always by "his or her." This usage has the additional special benefit, here, of camouflaging the one woman in the group. Where necessary, I have used pseudonyms for these seventeen members in the text.

<sup>4</sup>Additional evidence will be found in: Donald R. Matthews and James A. Stimson, *Yeas and Nays: Normal Decision Making in the U.S. House of Representatives* (New York: Wiley, 1975), pp. 28–31.

cut out." If the boundaries have been changed by a recent redistricting, the geography of "the new district" will be compared to that of "the old district."

If one essential aspect of "the geographical constituency" is seen as its location and boundaries, another is its particular internal make-up. And House members describe their districts' internal makeup using political science's most familiar demographic and political variables — socioeconomic structure, ideology, ethnicity, residential patterns, religion, partisanship, stability, diversity, etc. Every congressman, in his mind's eye, sees his geographical constituency in terms of some special configuration of such variables. For example,

Geographically, it covers the northern one-third of the state, from the border of (state X) to the border of (state Y), along the Z river — twenty-two counties. The basic industry is agriculture — but it's a diverse district. The city makes up one-third of the population. It is dominated by the state government and education. It's an independent minded constituency, with a strong attachment to the work ethic. A good percentage is composed of people whose families emigrated from Germany, Scandinavia and Czechoslovakia. I don't exactly know the figures, but over one-half the district is German. And this goes back to the work ethic. They are a hardworking, independent people. They have a strong thought of 'keeping the government off my back, we'll do all right here.' That's especially true of my out-counties.

Some internal configurations are more complex than others. But, even at the broadest level, no congressman sees, within his district's boundaries, an undifferentiated glob.<sup>4</sup> And we cannot talk about his relations with his "constituency" as if he did.

All of the demographic characteristics of the geographical constituency carry political implications. But as most Representatives make their first perceptual cut into "the district," political matters are usually left implicit. Sometimes, the question "what kind of district do you have?" turns up the answer "it's a Democratic district." But much more often, that comes later. It is as if they first want to sketch a prepolitical background against which they can later paint in the political refinements. We, of course, know — for many of the variables — just what those political refinements are likely to be. (Most political scientists would guess that the district just described is probably more Republican than Democratic — which it is.) There is no point to dwelling on the general political relevance of each variable. But one summary characterization does seem to have special usefulness as a background against

which to understand political perceptions and their consequences. And that characteristic is the relative homogeneity or heterogeneity of the district.

As the following examples suggest, members of Congress do think in terms of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of their districts — though they may not always use the words.

It's geographically compact. It's all suburban — no big city in the accepted sense of the word and no rural area. It's all white. There are very few blacks, maybe 2 per cent. Spanish surnamed make up about 10 per cent. Traditionally, it's been a district with a high percentage of home ownership. . . . Economically, it's above the national average in employment . . . the people of the district are employed. It's not that it's very high income. Oh, I suppose there are a few places of some wealth, but nothing very wealthy. And no great pockets of poverty either. And it's not dominated by any one industry. The X County segment has a lot of small, clean, technical industries. I consider it very homogeneous. By almost any standard, it's homogeneous.

This district is a microcosm of the nation. We are geographically southern and politically northern. We have agriculture — mostly soy beans and corn. We have big business — like Union Carbide and General Electric. And we have unions. We have a city and we have small towns. We have some of the worst poverty in the country in A County. And we have some very wealthy sections, though not large. We have wealth in the city and some wealthy towns. We have urban poverty and rural poverty. Just about the only thing we don't have is a good sized ghetto. Otherwise, everything you can have, we've got it right here.

Because it is a summary variable, the perceived homogeneity-heterogeneity characteristic is particularly hard to measure; and no metric is proposed here. Intuitively, both the number and the compatibility of significant interests within the district would seem to be involved. The greater the number of significant interests — as opposed to one dominant interest — the more likely it is that the district will be seen as heterogeneous. But if the several significant interests were viewed as having a single lowest common denominator and, therefore, quite compatible, the district might still be viewed as homogeneous. One indicator, therefore, might be the ease with which the congressman finds a lowest common denominator of interests for some large proportion of his geographical constituency. The basis for the denominator could be any of the prepolitical variables. We do not think of it, however, as a political characteristic — as the equivalent, for instance, of party registration or political safe-

ness.<sup>5</sup> The proportion of people in the district who have to be included would be a subjective judgment — “enough” so that the congressman saw his geographical constituency as more homogeneous than heterogeneous, or vice versa. All we can say is that the less actual or potential conflict he sees among district interests, the more likely he is to see his district as homogeneous. Another indicator might be the extent to which the geographical constituency is congruent with a natural community. Districts that are purely artificial (sometimes purely political) creations of districting practices, and which pay no attention to pre-existing communities of interest are more likely to be heterogeneous.<sup>6</sup> Pre-existing communities or natural communities are more likely to have such homogenizing ties as common sources of communication, common organizations, and common traditions.

#### The Supporters: The Re-election Constituency.

Within his geographical constituency, each congressman perceives a smaller, explicitly political constituency. It is composed of the people he thinks vote for him. And we shall refer to it as his *re-election constituency*. As he moves about the district, a House member continually draws the distinction between those who vote for him and those who do not. “I do well here”; “I run poorly here.” “This group supports me”; “this group does not.” By distinguishing supporters from nonsupporters, he articulates his baseline political perception.

House members seem to use two starting points — one cross sectional and the other longitudinal — in shaping this perception. First, by a process of inclusion and exclusion, they come to a rough approximation of the upper and lower ranges of the re-election constituency. That is to say, there are some votes a member believes he almost always gets; there are other votes he believes he almost never gets. One of the core elements of any such distinc-

tion is the perceived partisan component of the vote — party identification as revealed in registration or poll figures and party voting. “My district registers only 37 per cent Republican. They have no place else to go. My problem is, how can I get enough Democratic votes to win the general election.” Another element is the political tendencies of various demographic groupings.

My supporters are Democrats, farmers, labor — a DFL operation — with some academic types. . . . My opposition tends to be the main street hardware dealer. I look at that kind of guy in a stable town, where the newspaper runs the community — the typical school board member in the rural part of the district — that’s the kind of guy I’ll never get. At the opposite end of the scale is the country club set. I’ll sure as hell never get them, either.

Starting with people he sees, very generally, as his supporters, and leaving aside people he sees, equally generally, as his nonsupporters, each congressman fashions a view of the people who give him his victories at the polls.

The second starting point for thinking about the re-election constituency is the congressman’s idea of who voted for him “last time.” Starting with that perception, he adds or subtracts incrementally on the basis of changes that will have taken place (or could be made by him to take place) between “last time” and “next time.” It helps him to think about his re-election constituency this way because that is about the only certainty he operates with — he won last time. And the process by which his desire for re-election gets translated into his perception of a re-election constituency is filled with uncertainty. At least that is my strong impression. House members see re-election uncertainty where political scientists would fail to unearth a single objective indicator of it. For one thing, their perceptions of their supporters and nonsupporters are quite diffuse. They rarely feel certain just who did vote for them last time. And even if they do feel fairly sure about that, they may perceive population shifts that threaten established calculations. In the years of my travels, moreover, the threat of redistricting has added enormous uncertainty to the make-up of some re-election constituencies. In every district, too, there is the uncertainty which follows an unforeseen external event — recession, inflation, Watergate.

Of all the many sources of uncertainty, the most constant — and usually the greatest — involves the electoral challenger. For it is the challenger who holds the most potential for altering any calculation involving those who voted for the congressman “last time.” “This

<sup>5</sup>Marginal districts probably tend to be heterogeneous. Safe districts probably are both heterogeneous and homogeneous. On the relationship of electoral conditions to homogeneity and heterogeneity, I owe a lot to my conversations with Morris Fiorina. See his *Representatives, Roll Calls and Constituencies* (Boston: Lexington, 1974).

<sup>6</sup>On the usefulness of the distinction, see Donald Stokes and Warren Miller, “Party Government and the Saliency of Congress,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 26 (Winter, 1962), 531–546. In M. Barone, G. Ujifusa, and D. Matthews, *Almanac of American Politics* (Boston: Gambit, 1974), the authors often describe congressional districts as artificial and containing no natural community of interest. See for example, pages 86, 133, 146, 162, 376, 402, 419, 373, 616.

time's" challenger may have very different sources of political strength from "last time's" challenger. Often, one of the major off-year uncertainties is whether or not the last challenger will try again. While it is true that House members campaign all the time, "the campaign" can be said to start only when the challenger is known. At that point, a redefinition of the re-election constituency may have to take place. If the challenger is chosen by primary, for example, the congressman may inherit support from the loser.<sup>7</sup> A conservative southern Republican, waiting for the Democratic primary to determine whether his challenger would be a black or a white (both liberal), wondered about the shape of his re-election constituency.

It depends on my opponent. Last time, my opponent (a white moderate) and I split many groups. Many business people who might have supported me, split up. If I have a liberal opponent, all the business community will support me. . . . If the black man is my opponent, I should get more Democratic votes than I got before. He can't do any better there than the man I beat before. Except for a smattering of liberals and radicals around the colleges, I will do better than last time with the whites. . . . The black vote is 20 per cent and they vote right down the line Democratic. I have to concede the black vote. There's nothing I can do about it. . . . [But] against a white liberal, I would get some of the black vote.

The shaping of perceptions proceeds under conditions of considerable uncertainty.

**The Strongest Supporters: The Primary Constituency.** In thinking about their political condition, House members make distinctions within their re-election constituency — thus giving us a third, still smaller concentric circle. Having distinguished between their nonsupporters and their supporters, they further distinguish between their routine or temporary supporters and their very strongest supporters. Routine supporters only vote for them, often merely following party identification; but others will support them with a special degree of intensity. Temporary supporters back them as the best available alternative; but others will support them regardless of who the challenger may be. Within each re-election constituency are nested these "others" — a constituency perceived as "my strongest supporters," "my hard core support," "my loyalists," "my true believers,"

"my political base." We shall think of these people as the ones each congressman believes would provide his best line of electoral defense in a primary contest, and label them *the primary constituency*.<sup>8</sup> It will probably include the earliest of his supporters — those who recruited him and those who tendered identifiably strong support in his first campaign — thus, providing another reason for calculating on the basis of "last time." From its ranks will most likely come the bulk of his financial help and his volunteer workers. From its ranks will least likely come an electoral challenger.

A protected congressional seat is as much one protected from primary defeat as from general election defeat. And a primary constituency is something every congressman must have.

Everybody needs some group which is strongly for him — especially in a primary. You can win a primary with 25,000 zealots. . . . The most exquisite case I can give you was in the very early war years. I had very strong support from the anti-war people. They were my strongest supporters and they made up about 5 per cent of the district.

The primary constituency, I would guess, draws a special measure of a congressman's interest; and it should, therefore, draw a special measure of ours. But it is not easy to delineate — for us or for them. Asked to describe his "very strongest supporters," one member replied, "That's the hardest question anyone has to answer." The primary constituency is more subtly shaded than the re-election constituency, where voting provides an objective membership test. Loyalty is not the most predictable of political qualities. And all politicians resist drawing invidious distinctions among their various supporters, as if it were borrowing trouble to begin classifying people according to fidelity. House members who have worried about or fought a primary recently may find it somewhat easier. So, too may those with heterogeneous districts whose diverse elements invite differentiation. Despite some difficulty, most members — because it is politically prudent to do so — make some such distinction, in speech or in action or both. By talking to them and watching them, we can begin to understand what those distinctions are.

Here are two answers to the question, "who are your very strongest supporters?"

My strongest supporters are the working class — the blacks and labor, organized labor. And the

<sup>7</sup>See Donald B. Johnson and James R. Gibson, "The Divisive Primary Revisited: Party Activists in Iowa," *American Political Science Review* 68 (March, 1974), 67–77.

<sup>8</sup>The term is that of Leo Snowiss, "Congressional Recruitment and Representation," *American Political Science Review* 60 (September, 1966), 627–639.

people who were in my state legislative district, of course. The fifth ward is low-income, working class and is my base of support. I grew up there; I have my law office there; and I still live there. The white businessmen who are supporting me now are late converts – very late. They support me as the least of two evils. They are not a strong base of support. They know it and I know it.

I have a circle of strong labor supporters and another circle of strong business supporters. . . . They will 'fight, bleed and die' for me, but in different ways. Labor gives you the manpower and the workers up front. You need them just as much as you need the guy with the two-acre yard to hold a lawn party to raise money. The labor guy loses a day's pay on election day. The business guy gets his nice lawn tramped over and chewed up. Each makes a commitment to you in his own way. You need them both.

Each description reveals the working politician's penchant for inclusive thinking. Each tells us something about a primary constituency, but each leaves plenty of room for added refinements.

The best way to make such refinements is to observe the congressman as he comes in contact with the various elements of his re-election constituency. Both he and they act in ways that help delineate the "very strongest supporters." For example, the author of the second comment above drew a standing ovation when he was introduced at the Labor Temple. During his speech, he spoke directly to individuals in the audience. "Kenny, it's good to see you here. Ben, you be sure and keep in touch." Afterward, he lingered for an hour drinking beer and eating salami. At a businessman's annual Christmas luncheon the next day, he received neither an introduction nor applause when the main speaker acknowledged his presence, saying, "I see our congressman is here; and I use the term 'our' loosely." This congressman's "circle of strong labor supporters" appears to be larger than his "circle of strong business supporters." And the congressman, for his part, seemed much more at home with the first group than he did with the second.

Like other observers of American politics, I have found this idea of "at homeness" a useful one in helping me to map the relationship between politicians and constituents<sup>9</sup> – in this

case the perception of a primary constituency. House members sometimes talk in this language about the groups they encounter.

I was born on the flat plains, and I feel a lot better in the plains area than in the mountain country. I don't know why it is. As much as I like Al [whom we had just lunched with in a mountain town], I'm still not comfortable with him. I'm no cowboy. But when I'm out there on that flat land with those ranchers and wheat farmers, standing around trading insults and jibes and telling stories, I feel better. That's the place where I click.

It is also the place where he wins elections – his primary constituency. "That's my strong area. I won by a big margin and offset my losses. If I win next time, that's where I'll win it – on the plains." Obviously, there is no one-to-one relationship between the groups with whom a congressman acts and feels most at home and his primary constituency. But it does provide a pretty good unobtrusive clue.<sup>10</sup> So I found myself fashioning a highly subjective "at homeness index" to rank the degree to which each congressman seems to have support from and rapport with each group.

I recall, for example, watching a man whose constituency is dominantly Jewish participating in an afternoon installation-of-officers ceremony at a Young Men's Hebrew Association attended by about forty civic leaders of the local community. He drank some spiked punch, began the festivities by saying, "I'm probably the first tipsy installation officer you ever had," told an emotional story about his own dependence on the Jewish "Y," and traded banter with his friends in the audience throughout the proceedings. That evening as we prepared to meet with yet another and much larger (Democratic party) group, I asked where we were going. He said, "We're going to a shitty restaurant to have a shitty meal with a shitty organization and have a shitty time." And he did – from high to low on the "at homeness index." On the way home, after the meal, he talked about the group.

Ethnically, most of them are with me. But I don't always support the party candidate, and they can't stand that. . . . This group and half the other party groups in the district are against me. But they don't want to be against me too strongly for fear I might go into a primary and

<sup>9</sup>For example, Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President: 1960* (New York: Atheneum, 1961), pp. 276–278; Marshall Frady, *Wallace* (New York: New American Library, 1969), pp. 2–4, 38–39; Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President: 1972* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), pp. 147, 414–415, 456–457.

<sup>10</sup>On recent trips, wherever possible, I have also asked each congressman at the end of my visit, to rank order the events of the visit in terms of their "political importance" to him and in terms of the degree to which he felt "at home" or "comfortable" in each situation.

beat them. So self-preservation wins out. . . .  
They know they can't beat me.

Both groups are Jewish. The evening group was a part of his re-election constituency, but not his primary constituency. The afternoon group was a part of both.

### The Intimates: The Personal Constituency.

Within the primary constituency, each member perceives still a fourth, and final, concentric circle. These are the few individuals whose relationship with him is so personal and so intimate that their relevance to him cannot be captured by their inclusion in any description of "very strongest supporters." In some cases they are his closest political advisers and confidants. In other cases, they are people from whom he draws emotional sustenance for his political work. We shall think of these people as his *personal constituency*.

One Sunday afternoon, I sat in the living room of a congressman's chief district staff assistant watching an NFL football game — with the congressman, the district aide, the state assemblyman from the congressman's home county, and the district attorney of the same county. Between plays, at halftime and over beer and cheese, the four friends discussed every aspect of the congressman's campaign, listened to and commented on his taped radio spots, analyzed several newspaper reports, discussed local and national personalities, relived old political campaigns and hijinks, discussed their respective political ambitions. Ostensibly they were watching the football game; actually the congressman was exchanging political advice, information, and perspectives with three of his six or seven oldest and closest political associates.

Another congressman begins his weekends at home by having a Saturday morning 7:30 coffee and doughnut breakfast in a cafe on the main street of his home town with a small group of old friends from the Rotary Club. The morning I was there, the congressman, a retired bank manager, a hardware store owner, a high school science teacher, a retired judge, and a past president of the city council gossiped and joked about local matters — the county historian, the library, the board of education, the churches and their lawns — for an hour. "I guess you can see what an institution this is," he said as we left. "You have no idea how invaluable these meetings are for me. They keep me in touch with my home base. If you don't keep your home base, you don't have anything."

The personal constituency is, doubtless, the most idiosyncratic of the several constituencies. Not all members will open it up to the outside observer. Nine of the seventeen did, however; and in doing so, he usually revealed a side of his personality not seen by the rest of his constituencies. "I'm really very reserved, and I don't feel at home with most groups — only with five or six friends," said the congressman after the football game. The relationship probably has both political and emotional dimensions. But beyond that, it is hard to generalize, except to say that the personal constituency needs to be identified if our understanding of the congressman's view of his constituency is to be complete.

In sum, my impression is that House members perceive four constituencies — geographical, re-election, primary, and personal — each one nesting within the previous one.

### Political Support and Home Style

What, then, do these perceptions have to do with a House member's behavior? Our conventional paraphrase of this question would read: what do these perceptions have to do with behavior at the other end of the line — in Washington? But the concern that disciplines the perceptions we have been talking about is neither first nor foremost a Washington-oriented concern. It is a concern for political support at home. It is a concern for the scope of that support — which decreases as one moves from the geographical to the personal constituency. It is a concern for the stability of that support — which increases as one moves from the geographical to the personal constituency. And it ultimately issues in a concern for manipulating scopes and intensities in order to win and hold a sufficient amount of support to win elections. Representatives, and prospective representatives, think about their constituencies because they seek support there. They want to get nominated and elected, then renominated and re-elected. For most members of Congress most of the time, this electoral goal is primary. It is the prerequisite for a congressional career and, hence, for the pursuit of other goals. And the electoral goal is achieved — first and last — not in Washington but at home.

Of course, House members do many things in Washington that affect their electoral support at home.<sup>11</sup> Political scientists interpret a

<sup>11</sup>Two of the best studies ever on the point are David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), and John Kingdon, *Congressmen's Voting Decisions* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).



great deal of their behavior in Washington in exactly that way — particularly their roll-call votes. Obviously, a congressman's perception of his several constituencies will affect such things as his roll-call voting, and we could, if we wished, study the effect. Indeed, that is the very direction in which our conditioned research reflexes would normally carry this investigation. But my experience has turned me in another — though not, as we shall see an unrelated — direction. I have been watching House members work to maintain or enlarge their political support at home, by going to the district and doing things there.

Our Washington-centered research has caused us systematically to underestimate the proportion of their working time House members spend in their districts. As a result, we have also underestimated its perceived importance to them. In all our studies of congressional time allocation, time spent outside of Washington is left out of the analysis. So, we end up analyzing "the average work week of a congressman" by comparing the amounts of time he spends in committee work, on the floor, doing research, handling constituent problems — but all of it in Washington.<sup>12</sup> Nine of my members whose appointment and travel records I have checked carefully for the year 1973 — a nonelection year — averaged 28 trips to the district and spent an average of 101 working (not traveling) days in their districts that year. A survey conducted in 419 House offices covering 1973, indicates that the average number of trips home (not counting recesses) was 35 and the number of days spent in the district during 1973 (counting recesses) was 138.<sup>13</sup> No fewer than 131, nearly one-third, of the 419 members went home to their districts *every single week-end*. Obviously, the direct personal cultivation

of their various constituencies takes a great deal of their time; and they must think it is worth it in terms of winning and holding political support. If it is worth *their* time to go home so much, it is worth *our* time to take a commensurate degree of interest in what they do there and why.

As they cultivate their constituencies, House members display what I shall call their *home style*. When they discuss the importance of what they are doing, they are discussing the importance of *home style* to the achievement of their electoral goal. At this stage of the research, the surest generalization one can make about home style is that there are as many varieties as there are members of Congress. "Each of us has his own formula — a truth that is true for him," said one. It will take a good deal more immersion and cogitation before I can improve upon that summary comment. At this point, however, three ingredients of home style appear to be worth looking at. They are: first, the congressman's allocation of his personal resources and those of his office; second, the congressman's presentation of self; and third, the congressman's explanation of his Washington activity. Every congressman allocates, presents, and explains. The amalgam of these three activities for any given representative constitutes (for now, at least) his home style. His home style, we expect, will be affected by his perception of his four constituencies.

#### Home Style: Allocation of Resources

Every representative must make a basic decision with regard to his home style: "How much and what kinds of attention shall I pay to home?" Or to put it another way: "Of all the resources available with which to help me do my job, which kinds and how much of each do I want to allocate directly to activity in the district?" There are, of course, many ways to allocate one's resources so that they affect the district. Our concern is with *resources allocated directly to the district*. Of these, we propose to look first, at the congressman's *time* and second, at the congressman's *staff*. The congressman's decision about how much time he should spend physically at home and his decision about how much of his staff he should place physically in the district are decisions which give shape to his home style.

Of all the resources available to the House member, the scarcest and most precious one, which dwarfs all others in posing critical allocative dilemmas, is his time. Time is at once what

<sup>12</sup>The basic research was done by John Saloma, and is reported in his *Congress and the New Politics* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969), Chapter 6; in Donald Tacheron and Morris Udall, *The Job of the Congressman* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1966), pp. 280–288; and in *Guide to the Congress of the United States* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1971), pp. 532ff. But no one has expanded Saloma's work. A pioneer work, which would have given us a wider perspective, but which seems to have been neglected is Dorothy H. Cronheim, "Congressmen and Their Communication Practices" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, Department of Political Science, 1957).

<sup>13</sup>These surveys will be described in the next section of the paper. We shall not, however, again use the figures on total number of days spent in the district. They seem less reliable than the others, when checked against the few cases in which I have the complete record. Also, it should be noted that the number of cases for which the total number of days was collected was 401.

the member has least of and what he has the most control over. When a congressman divides up his time, he decides by that act what kind of congressman he wants to be. He must divide his time in Washington. He must divide his time at home. The decision we are concerned with here is the division of his time between Washington and home. When he is doing something at home, he must give up doing some things in Washington, and vice versa. So he chooses and he trades off; and congressmen make different allocative choices and different allocative trades. In this section, we shall focus on the frequency with which various congressmen returned to their districts in 1973.

"This is a business, and like any business you have to make time and motion studies," said one member. "All we have is time and ourselves, so we have to calculate carefully to use our time productively." It is not true, of course, that "all" the congressman has is time and himself. The office carries with it a large number of ancillary resources — a staff, office space, office expense allowances, free mailing privileges, personal expense allowances, etc. — all of which draw attention when the advantages of incumbency are detailed. Each congressman chooses how he will utilize these resources. The most important of these choices are choices about how to use his staff. And among the key choices about staff is how to allocate them between Washington and the district. In this section we shall focus particularly on one indicator of that decision — the percentage of his total expenditures on staff salaries allocated by him to the salaries of his district staff.<sup>14</sup>

The information on trips home and staff allocation was collected on Capitol Hill in June 1974. Six students, each of whom had just finished working for four months, full-time in a congressman's office, conducted a survey by

visiting each member's office and talking to his or her administrative assistant or personal secretary. The question about trips home usually produced an educated estimate.<sup>15</sup> The questions about staff yielded more precise answers. Each student presented the Clerk of the House's *Report* for 1973, with its list of each representative's staff members and their salaries; and the respondents simply designated which staff members were located in the district. A briefer, follow-up survey was conducted by four students with similar "Hill experience" in May 1975. This survey added to the store of information on those 1973 members who were still in Congress.<sup>16</sup> For 1973, it should be noted, each member was allowed a maximum of sixteen staff members and a maximum payroll of \$203,000. And for the two-year period 1973–1974 (the 93rd Congress) each member was reimbursed for thirty-six round trips to his district. Members were not, of course, required to use any of these allowances to the maximum.

On the matter of trips home, there is evidence of personal attentiveness to the district and of variation in that attentiveness. The average number of 1973 trips per member was thirty-five, and the median was thirty. The range went from a low of four trips to a high of three hundred and sixty-five.<sup>17</sup> One can ask: "for which kinds of House members is their frequent physical presence in the district an important part of their home style and for which kinds is it less so?" At this early stage, we can present only a few suggestive relationships. In order to do so, we have categorized the frequency of trips home into *low* (less than 24), *medium* (24–42), and *high* (more than 42). The categories are based on the responses to the question and to the appearance of reasonable cutting points in the data.<sup>18</sup> These

<sup>15</sup>See footnote 18.

<sup>16</sup>The 1974 interviewers were Larry Fishkin, Nancy Hapeman, Bruce Pollock, Kenneth Sankin, Fred Schwartz, and Jacob Weinstein. The 1975 interviewers were Joel Beckman, Joanne Doroshov, Arthur Kreeger, and Susan Weiner. Sandra Bloch, Fishkin, Hapeman, and Schwartz helped with the analysis. During the later stages of the analysis, I have leaned particularly heavily on Viktor Hofstetter.

<sup>17</sup>There were eleven members who went home every night — eight from Maryland, two from Virginia, and one from Pennsylvania. In computing averages, they were coded as ninety-eight trips (more than anyone else) rather than as 365, so as to minimize distortion. Also, so as to minimize distortion, caused by these cases, we have used the *median* number of trips in the analysis of this section rather than the average number of trips.

<sup>18</sup>The most common replies were "every week," "once a month," "twice a month," "every other

<sup>14</sup>Other kinds of data were collected which might also be useful as an indication of district staff strength. Three of them correlated very highly with the indicator being used, so that it does not appear we are missing much by relying on one indicator. The measure we are using in the article — per cent of staff expenditures allocated to district staff — showed a correlation of .861 with number of people on the district staff, of .907 with the per cent of total staff members allocated to the district, and of .974 with the dollar amounts spent on district staff. Also recorded were the rank, in the total staff hierarchy, of the highest paid person on the district staff, as another indicator of district staff allocation practices. That indicator has not been used in the article, but it might be noted that the range is from first (i.e., the highest paid district staffer is the highest paid of all the congressman's staffers) to more than ninth (anything above nine was not recorded).

categories have been cross-tabulated with a number of variables that should be expected to correlate with the frequency of home visits.

One standard supposition would be that representatives in electoral jeopardy will decide to spend more of their time at home than will representatives whose seats are well protected. As a generalization, however, this supposition receives no confirmation when our conventional measures of electoral safeness are used. As Table 1 shows, the frequency of trips home does not increase as electoral margins decrease. Indeed, there is just not much of a relationship at all.<sup>19</sup> It might be noted, in this connection, that objective measures of marginality have not fared particularly well in producing consistent findings whenever they have been used.<sup>20</sup> My own experience leads me to believe that only *subjective* measures of electoral safety are valid. House members feel more uncertainty about re-election than is captured by any arbitrary electoral margin figures. Furthermore, uncertainty about their primary election situation is totally untouched by such figures. The point is that subjective assessments of electoral safeness might be more strongly correlated with trips home.

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week," "between once and twice a month," "three or four times a month," etc. Congressmen placed in the "low" category were those whose staffers were unwilling to go as high as "twice a month." Congressmen whose trips were reported as "once a week" or more fell into the "high" category. But some respondents said "every week except for a few" or "every week, but maybe he missed one or two here or there." So, we decided to try to capture that sense by including in the "high" category people who were reported to have made somewhat less than fifty-two trips. (Doubtless, those who said they went home every week missed a few too.) Since a sizeable group had forty trips and none had forty-one or forty-two, the cut was made at that point, which made 43+ the "high category." The middle category were those who remained — people who went home at least twice a month (twenty-four trips) but not as often as forty-three times in 1973.

<sup>19</sup>The frequency of 1973 home visits does not bear any relationship to whether the member's electoral margin declined, increased, or remained the same between 1972 and 1974.

<sup>20</sup>See Fiorina, *Representatives, Roll Calls and Constituencies*, Chapter One. For an analysis of why House members ought to worry, see Robert Erikson, "A Reappraisal of Competition for Congressional Office: How Careers Begin and End," paper presented at Conference on Mathematical Models of Congress, Aspen, Colorado, 1974. The one piece of research which dovetails best with my research is Warren Miller, "Majority Rule and the Representative System of Government" in *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems*, ed. Erik Allardt and Yrjo Littunen (Helsinki, 1964), Chapter 10. Miller uses subjective marginality as the measure of competitiveness and relates it to the policy attitudes of the congressman and his re-election constituency.

A related hunch would be that the longer a congressman is in office, the less time he will spend at home. Part of the argument here overlaps with the previous one — the longer in office, the more secure the seat. But the more important part of the reasoning would be that with seniority comes increased influence and responsibility in the House and, hence, the need to spend more time in Washington. These suppositions are supported by our data — but not as strongly and as consistently as we had imagined would be the case. A simple correlation between terms of service and number of trips home shows that as seniority increases, home visits decrease — as we would expect. But the correlation coefficient (Pearson's  $r$ ) is an exceedingly weak  $-.235$ . When the data are grouped, however, the nature and strength of the relationship becomes clearer.

Table 2 pictures the relationship between the three categories of personal attentiveness and three levels of seniority. The summary statistics continue to be unimpressive, because for the middle levels of seniority no allocative pattern is evident. But looking at the lowest and highest levels of seniority, it is clear that the frequency of home visits is much greater for the low seniority group than it is for the high seniority group. The relationship between length of service and trips home, we conclude, is not a consistent, linear relationship. But for those at the beginning of their House careers and those farthest along in their House careers, their longevity is likely to be one determinant of their decisions on time allocation. Congressional newcomers appear to be more single-minded in pursuing of the electoral goal than are the veterans of the institution.

A third reasonable guess would be that the more time-consuming and expensive it is to get to his district, the less frequently a congressman will make the trip. Leaving money aside (but recalling that for 1973–1974, each member was provided with a "floor" of thirty-six trips), we would expect to find that as distance from Washington increases, the number of trips home decreases. It is not easy to get a measure of distance that captures each member's travelling time. For now, we shall use region as a surrogate for distance, on the theory that if any relationship is present, it will show up in a regional breakdown. And it does. Table 3 indicates that the members nearest Washington, D.C. (East) spend a good deal more time at home than do the members who live farthest away from the Capitol (Far West). The less of his Washington time a member has to give up in order to get home, the more likely he is to go

Table 1. Trips Home and Electoral Margin

Election Margin (1972)	Frequency of Trips Home (1973)			Total
	Low (0-23)	Medium (24-42)	High (43+)	
Less than 55%	21 (29%)	28 (38%)	24 (33%)	73 (100%)
55-60%	18 (32%)	18 (32%)	20 (36%)	56 (100%)
61-65%	22 (27%)	17 (20%)	44 (53%)	83 (100%)
More than 65%	68 (33%)	66 (32%)	73 (35%)	207 (100%)
	129	129	161	419

Note: Gamma = -.03

home — at least at the extremes of distance. If distance is a factor for the other three regional groups, it does not show up here. Our guess is that the distance is a far more problematical factor in those cases. We shall, however, return to the regional variable shortly.

A persistent dilemma facing every member of Congress involves the division of time between work and family. And one of its earliest manifestations comes with the family decision whether to remain at home or move to Washington. If (for whatever reason) the family

decides to remain in the district, we would expect the House member to go home more often than if the family moves to Washington. Table 4 shows that this is very much the case.<sup>21</sup> Five times the percentage of representatives whose families remain at home fall into the high category of trips home as do represen-

<sup>21</sup>The number of cases is lower here than for the other parts of the analysis because the data were collected in 1975 — after a number of the 1973 congressmen were no longer available for questioning.

Table 2. Trips Home and Seniority

Seniority	Frequency of Trips Home			Total
	Low (0-23)	Medium (24-42)	High (43+)	
Low (1-3 terms)	34 (22%)	44 (28%)	78 (50%)	156 (100%)
Medium (4-7 terms)	43 (28%)	59 (38%)	52 (34%)	154 (100%)
High (8+ terms)	52 (48%)	26 (24%)	31 (28%)	189 (100%)
	129	129	161	419
Mean seniority	7.0 terms	5.0 terms	4.7 terms	

Note: Gamma = -.30

Table 3. Trips Home and Region

Region	Frequency of Trips Home			Total
	Low (0-23)	Medium (24-42)	High (43+)	
East	5 ( 5%)	20 (20%)	76 (75%)	101 (100%)
South	36 (35%)	32 (30%)	36 (35%)	104 (100%)
Border	9 (26%)	10 (29%)	16 (45%)	35 (100%)
Midwest	29 (28%)	47 (44%)	30 (28%)	106 (100%)
Far West	50 (69%)	20 (27%)	3 ( 4%)	73 (100%)
	129	129	161	419

Regions:

*East:* Conn., Me., Mass., N.H., N.J., N.Y., Pa., R.I., Vt.

*South:* Ala., Ark., Fla., Ga., La., Miss., N.C., S.C., Tenn., Texas, Va.

*Border:* Del., Ky., Md., Mo., Okla., W.Va.

*Midwest:* Ill., Ind., Iowa, Kans., Mich., Minn., Neb., N.D., Ohio, S.D., Wisc.

*Far West:* Alaska, Ariz., Calif., Colo., Hawaii., Idaho, Mont., Nev., N.M., Oregon, Utah, Wash., Wyo.

Table 4. Trips Home and Family Residence

Family Residence	Frequency of Trips Home			Total
	Low (0-23)	Medium (24-42)	High (43+)	
Washington area	87 (41%)	89 (42%)	37 (17%)	213 (100%)
District	3 (4%)	6 (8%)	69 (88%)	78 (100%)
Unmarried	5 (14%)	12 (32%)	20 (54%)	37 (100%)
	95	107	126	328

tatives whose families are in Washington – 88 per cent to 17 per cent. To put the finding somewhat differently, the average number of 1973 trips for members with families in Washington was twenty-seven, for members with families in the district it was fifty-two, and for unmarried members it was forty-four trips. Whether family decisions produce the home style or whether a home style decision produces the family decision remains an unanswered question. Either process seems perfectly plausible. It is clear, however, that some decisions about home style are family-related decisions.

To sum up, a House member's decision on how to allocate his time between home and Washington is affected: (1) by his seniority, if it is very low or very high; (2) by the distance from Washington to home, if that distance is very long or very short; and (3) by the place where his family is located, whether his family moves to Washington or remains in the district. A congressman's electoral margin, objectively measured, has little effect on his time allocations. How, if at all, these factors are interrelated, and how strongly each factor contributes to the allocative pattern are matters for later analysis.

Members of Congress also decide what kind of staff presence they wish to establish in the district. Here, too, we find great variation. On the percentage of total staff expenditure allocated to district staff, the range, in 1973, went from 0 to 81 per cent. We might think that a member who decides to give a special degree of personal attention to "home" would also de-

cide to give a special degree of staff attentiveness to "home." But the relationship between the two allocative decisions does not appear to be strong. Using percentage of total staff expenditure on district staff (as we shall throughout this section) as the measure of district staff strength, we find a very weak correlation (Pearson's  $r = .20$ ) between a congressman's decision on that matter and the number of trips he takes home. Table 5 clusters and cross-tabulates the two allocative decisions. For our measure of district staff strength we have divided the percentage of expenditures on district staff into thirds. The lowest third ranges from 0-22.7 per cent; the middle third ranges from 22.8-33.5 per cent; the highest third ranges from 33.6-81 per cent. The cross-tabulation also shows a pretty weak overall relationship. For now, therefore, we shall treat the two decisions as if they were made independently of one another and, hence, are deserving of separate examination.

What kinds of members, then, emphasize the value of a large district staff operation? Once again, it turns out, they are not members in special electoral trouble. Table 6 displays the total lack of any discernible impact of electoral situation (objectively measured) on district staff strength. Nor, as indicated in Table 7, does seniority make any difference in staff allocative decisions. That it does not adds strength to the idea that the relationship between seniority and home visits discovered earlier is accounted for – as we have suggested – by career-and-goal factors rather than by electoral factors.

Table 5. Trips Home and District Staff Expenditures

District Staff Expenditures	Frequency of Trips Home			Total
	Low (0-23)	Medium (24-42)	High (43+)	
Lowest 1/3	53 (39%)	42 (31%)	40 (30%)	135 (100%)
Middle 1/3	42 (30%)	55 (40%)	41 (30%)	138 (100%)
Highest 1/3	31 (23%)	32 (23%)	75 (54%)	138 (100%)
	126	129	156	411

Note: Gamma = .28

Table 6. District Staff Expenditures and Electoral Margin

Electoral Margin 1972	District Staff Expenditures (1973)			Total
	Lowest 1/3	Middle 1/3	Highest 1/3	
Less than 55%	20 (27%)	28 (38%)	26 (35%)	74 (100%)
55-60%	20 (36%)	20 (36%)	16 (28%)	56 (100%)
61-65%	24 (29%)	29 (35%)	29 (35%)	82 (100%)
More than 65%	72 (36%)	61 (30%)	68 (34%)	201 (100%)
	136	138	139	413

Note: Gamma =  $-.04$ 

Table 7. District Staff Expenditures and Seniority

Seniority	District Staff Expenditures			Total
	Lowest 1/3	Middle 1/3	Highest 1/3	
Low (1-3 terms)	44 (29%)	54 (35%)	56 (36%)	155 (100%)
Medium (4-7 terms)	44 (29%)	56 (37%)	51 (34%)	151 (100%)
High (8+ terms)	47 (44%)	28 (26%)	32 (30%)	107 (100%)
	136	138	139	413

Note: Gamma =  $-.13$ 

Table 8. District Staff Expenditures and Family Residence

Family Residence	District Staff Expenditures			Total
	Lowest 1/3	Middle 1/3	Highest 1/3	
Washington area	85 (40%)	77 (37%)	48 (23%)	210 (100%)
District	21 (28%)	17 (23%)	37 (49%)	75 (100%)
Unmarried	8 (22%)	10 (28%)	18 (50%)	36 (100%)
	114	104	103	321

The other variables discussed earlier — family residence and distance — do not have the obvious implications for staff allocation that they have for the member's own time dilemmas. It might be that if his family is in the district, and if he plans to be home a lot, a congressman might decide to have a big district staff operation to work with him there. That supposition receives some support in Table 8. Another possibility is that members might decide to use a strong district staff to compensate for their lack of personal attention via trips home. However, this idea is not supported in Table 8, nor in Table 9, which seeks to uncover regional and distance patternings of district staffs. Representatives who live nearest to Washington (East) and who tend to go home the most do tend to have large district staffs. But representatives who live farthest away and tend to go home the least show only a slight tendency to compensate by allocating heavy expenditures to their district staffs.

Table 9, however, does reveal some regional allocation patterns that did not appear when we looked for regional patterns in home visits.

Region, it appears, captures a good deal more than distance, particularly in relation to staff allocations. The southern and border regions emerge with distinctive patternings here. To a marked degree, House members from these two areas eschew large staff operations in their districts. Scanning our two regional tabulations (Tables 3 and 9), we note that every region save the Midwest reveals a noteworthy pattern of resource allocation. In the East we find high frequency of home visits and large district staffs; in the Far West, we find a low frequency of home visits; in the southern and border regions, we find small district staffs. Again, the two types of allocative decisions appear to be quite distinct and independent. Region, we tentatively conclude, has a substantial affect on home style.

But regions are composites of several states; and while regional regularities often reflect state regularities, they can also hide them. Both situations have occurred in this instance. Figure 1 displays state-by-state allocation patterns — of personal and district staff attentiveness. For each state delegation, we have computed the

Table 9. District Staff Expenditures and Region

Region	District Staff Expenditures			Total
	Lowest 1/3	Middle 1/3	Highest 1/3	
East	16 (16%)	31 (31%)	52 (53%)	99 (100%)
South	47 (46%)	36 (35%)	19 (19%)	102 (100%)
Border	18 (55%)	8 (24%)	7 (21%)	33 (100%)
Midwest	39 (37%)	34 (32%)	33 (31%)	106 (100%)
Far West	16 (22%)	29 (40%)	28 (38%)	73 (100%)
	136	138	139	413

## Regions:

*East:* Conn., Maine, Mass., N.H., N.J., N.Y., Pa., R.I., Vt.

*South:* Ala., Ark., Fla., Ga., La., Miss., N.C., S.C., Tenn., Texas, Va.

*Border:* Del., Ky., Md., Mo., Okla., W.Va.

*Midwest:* Ill., Ind., Iowa, Kans., Mich., Minn., Neb., N.D., Ohio, S.D., Wis.

*Far West:* Alaska, Ariz., Calif., Colo., Hawaii, Idaho, Mont., Nev., N.M., Oregon, Utah, Wash., Wyo.

mean number of trips home made by its members in 1973; and we have divided the state delegations into those whose averages fell above and below the median number of trips for all House members, i.e., 30 trips. Also, for each state delegation, we computed an average of the percentage of staff expenditures allocated to the district staff by its members; and we have divided the state delegations into those whose averages fell above and below the median percentage for all House members, i.e., 29 per cent. The result is a crude fourfold classification of states according to their combined personal and staff resource allocations to "home." The underlined states fall strongly into their particular patterns; the others display weaker tendencies. Each state is identified, also, by its regional classification.

There are, as Figure 1 shows, distinctive state allocative patterns. Some were foreshadowed in the regional patterns discussed earlier. For example, the eastern states cluster in the high-trips home category; and the far western states cluster in the low-trips home category. Southern and border states cluster in the weak-district staff category. Other state patterns, however, appear here for the first time. The large number of states clustering in the low-trips-home/small-district-staff category, for example were totally obscured in our regional data.

Explanations for these various state clusters are more difficult; and only a few guesses can be made here. The sharp separation between eastern and far western states in trips home is doubtless a function of distance. And — it now appears more strongly — some far western state representatives do compensate for the infrequency of their home visits by maintaining a relatively large staff presence in the district. Yet if California members invest heavily in this

compensatory allocative strategy,<sup>22</sup> why don't the members from Washington and Oregon do likewise?

The decision of most southern and border state representatives to spend relatively little on their district staff operations may be explainable by a tradition of nonbureaucratized, highly personalized politics in those areas. Northerners may be accustomed to coping with bureaucrats — legislative or otherwise — whereas southern and border state residents would expect to deal directly with the elective officeholder. Yet, in terms of the amount of personal attentiveness to their districts, southern delegations vary widely. At first glance, that variation seems to be related to distance — with states in the near South receiving more attention than states in the far South. But the marked difference among, say, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama would seem to require a more complex explanation. And, speaking of complexity, the similar disposition of resources by the unexpected mix of delegations in the low-trips-home/small-district-staff category (in the lower right hand corner of Figure 1) defies even an explanatory guess at this stage of our study.

The allocative elements of home style vary across regions and among states within regions. The relevance of state delegations to patterns of resource allocation at home will come as no surprise to students of Congress. For there is virtually no aspect, formal or informal, of the legislative process on Capitol Hill that has not already revealed the importance of the state

<sup>22</sup>An excellent study of district staff operations in California, containing many stimulating comments on the general subject is: John D. Macartney, "Political Staffing: A View From the District" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, Department of Political Science, 1975).

		Personal Attentiveness	
District Staff Attentiveness		Above the Median in Trips Home	Below the Median in Trips Home
Above the Median in District Staff Expenditures		<i>Connecticut (E)</i>	<i>California (FW)</i>
		<i>Massachusetts (E)</i>	Colorado (FW)
		<i>New York (E)</i>	Hawaii (FW)
		<i>Tennessee (S)</i>	Idaho (FW)
		Illinois (MW)	Iowa (MW)
		Maine (E)	Kansas (MW)
		New Hampshire (E)	New Mexico (FW)
		Pennsylvania (E)	Wyoming (FW)
		Rhode Island (E)	
		South Carolina (S)	
	Vermont (E)		
Below the Median in District Staff Expenditures		<i>Kentucky (B)</i>	<i>Alabama (S)</i>
		<i>Maryland (B)</i>	<i>Arizona (FW)</i>
		<i>North Carolina (S)</i>	<i>Florida (S)</i>
		<i>Virginia (S)</i>	<i>Louisiana (S)</i>
		<i>West Virginia (B)</i>	<i>Minnesota (MW)</i>
		Delaware (B)	<i>Oklahoma (B)</i>
		Indiana (MW)	<i>Oregon (FW)</i>
		Montana (FW)	<i>Washington (FW)</i>
		Ohio (MW)	<i>Wisconsin (MW)</i>
			Arkansas (S)
			Michigan (MW)
			Nebraska (MW)
			South Dakota (MW)
			Texas (S)
		Utah (FW)	

*N.B.* States which fall five trips or more above or below the median *and* whose district staff expenditures fall 5 per cent or more above or below the median are *italicized*. States not listed fall on the median in one or both instances. Regional classifications are in parentheses.

Figure 1. Allocation Patterns: By State

delegation.<sup>23</sup> How much that importance is the product of extensive communication among delegation members and how much the product of similar expectations emanating from similar districts, has not been definitively answered. Nor can it be here. All we can say is that both are probably involved. State delegation members probably talk to one another about their allocative practices and follow one another's example and advice. Also, certain expectations and traditions probably develop within states, or sections of states, so that members feel constrained to make resource allocations that are not too far out of line with those expectations.

<sup>23</sup>For example, Aage Clausen, *How Congressmen Decide: A Policy Focus* (New York: St. Martin's, 1973); Barbara Deckard, "State Party Delegations in the U.S. House of Representatives: A Study in Group Cohesion," *Journal of Politics*, 34 (February, 1972), 199-222; John Ferejohn, *Pork Barrel Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974); John Kessel, "The Washington Congressional Delegation," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 8 (February, 1964), 1-21; Matthews and Stimson, *Yeas and Nays*.

The ambiguity of this discussion raises one of the broadest questions concerning home style. Is a congressman's home style something he chooses and then imposes upon his district or is it something that is imposed upon him by the kind of district he represents? We shall worry that question and work our way toward an answer as we proceed. At this point it appears that either or both patterns can hold: for, while state regularities testify to district influences on home style, some states display no regularities; and all states display enough idiosyncratic behavior to testify to the presence of individual choice.

Home style is, then, partly a matter of place — i.e., it is affected by the nature of the congressman's geographical constituency. That constituency is, after all, the closest thing to a "given" in his nest of perceptions. But home style is also partly a matter of individual choice. And in this respect, it can be affected by his perception of his other three constituencies. That, indeed, is what we expect to find as we move to discuss the other elements of home style.



### Home Style: Presentation of Self

Most House members spend a substantial proportion of their working time "at home." Even those we placed in the "low frequency" category return to their districts more often than we would have guessed — over half of them go home more than once (but less than twice) a month.<sup>24</sup> What, then, do they do there? Much of what they do is captured by Erving Goffman's idea of *the presentation of self*.<sup>25</sup> That is, they place themselves in "the immediate physical presence" of others and then "make a presentation of themselves to others." A description of all the settings in which I have watched members of Congress making such presentations or "performances" as Goffman calls them, would triple the size of this article. But, surely, I have logged — during my thirty visits and ninety-three days in seventeen districts — nearly every circumstance concocted by the mind of man for bringing one person into the "immediate physical presence" of another.

In all such encounters, says Goffman, the performer will seek to control the response of others to him by expressing himself in ways that leave the correct impressions of himself with others. His expressions will be of two sorts — "the expression that he gives and the expression that he gives off." The first is mostly verbal; the second is mostly nonverbal. Goffman is particularly interested in the second kind of expression — "the more theatrical and contextual kind" — because he believes that the performer is more likely to be judged by others according to the nonverbal than the verbal elements of his presentation of self. Those who must do the judging, Goffman says, will think that the verbal expressions are more controllable and manipulable by the performer; and they will, therefore, read his nonverbal "signs" as a check, on the reliability of his verbal "signs." Basic to this reasoning is the idea that, of necessity, every presentation has a largely "promissory character" to it. Those who listen to and watch the presentation cannot be sure what the relationship between them and the performer really is. So the relationship must be sustained, on the part of those watching, by inference. They "must accept the individual on faith." In this process of acceptance, they will rely heavily on the inferences they draw from

his nonverbal expressions — the expressions "given off."

Goffman does not talk about politicians; but politicians know what Goffman is talking about. Goffman's dramaturgical analogues are appropriate to politics because politicians, like actors, perform before audiences and are legitimized by their audiences. The response politicians seek from others is *political support*. And the impressions they try to foster are those that will engender political support. House member politicians believe that a great deal of their support is won by the kind of individual self they present to others, i.e., to their constituents. More than most people, they believe that they can manipulate their "presentation of self." And more than most other people, they consciously try to manipulate it. Certainly, they believe that what they say, their verbal expression, is an integral part of their "self." But, like Goffman, they place special emphasis on the nonverbal, "contextual" aspects of their presentation. At least, the nonverbal elements must be consistent with the verbal ones. At most, the expressions "given off" will become the basis on which they are judged. Like Goffman, members of Congress are willing to emphasize the latter because, with him, they believe that their constituents will more readily discount what they say than how they say it or how they act in the context in which they say it. In the member's own language, constituents want to judge you "as a person." The comment I have heard most often from the constituents of my representatives is: "He's a good man," or "She's a good woman," unembossed by qualifiers of any sort. Constituents, say House members, want to "size you up" or "get the feel of you" "as a person," or "as a human being." And the largest part of what members mean when they say "as a person" is what Goffman means by "expressions given off."

So members of Congress go home to present themselves "as a person" — and to win the accolade, "He's a good man," "She's a good woman." With Goffman, they know there is a "promissory character" to the presentation. And their object is to present themselves "as a person" in such a way that the inferences drawn by those watching will be supportive ones. The representative's word for these supportive inferences is *trust*. It is a word they use a great deal. If a constituent trusts a House member, the constituent says something like: "I am willing to put myself in your hands temporarily; I know you will have opportunities to hurt me — though I may not know when

<sup>24</sup>Fifty-six per cent, or 72 or 129.

<sup>25</sup>Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959). The language I have quoted appears in the Introduction and Conclusion.

those opportunities occur; I assume that you will not hurt me and I'm not going to worry about your doing so until it is proven beyond any doubt that you have betrayed that trust." The ultimate response members of Congress seek is political support; but the instrumental response they seek is trust. The presentation of self — what is "given" in words and "given off" as a person — will be calculated to win trust. "If people like you and trust you as an individual," members often say, "they will vote for you." So trust becomes central to the congressman-constituent relationship. Constituents, for their part — as Goffman would emphasize — must rely on trust. They must "accept on faith" that the congressman is what he says he is and will do what he says he will do. House members, for their part, are quite happy to emphasize trust. It helps to allay the uncertainties they feel about their support relationship with their various constituencies. If they are uncertain about how to work for support directly, they can always work indirectly to win a degree of personal trust that will increase the likelihood of support, or decrease the likelihood of opposition.

Trust is, however, a fragile relationship. It is not an overnight or a one-time thing. It is hard to win; and it must be constantly renewed and rewon. So it takes an enormous amount of time to build and maintain constituent trust. That is what House members believe. That is why they spend so much of their working time at home. Much of what I have observed in my travels can be explained as a continuous and continuing effort to win (for new members) and to maintain (for old members) the trust of their various constituencies. Most of the communication I have heard and seen is not overtly political at all. It is, rather, part of a ceaseless effort to reinforce the underpinnings of trust in the congressman or congresswoman "as a person." Viewed from this perspective, the archetypical constituent question is not "what have you done for me lately" but "how have you looked to me lately." House members, then, make a strategic calculation that helps us understand why they go home so much. Presentation of self enhances trust; enhancing trust takes time; therefore, presentation of self takes time.

Of the "contextual," "expressions given off" in the effort to win and hold constituent trust, three seem particularly ubiquitous. First, the congressman conveys to his constituents a sense of his *qualification*. Contextually and verbally, he gives them the impression that "I am qualified to hold the office of United States

Representative." "I understand the job and I have the experience necessary to do a good job." "I can hold my own — or better — in any competition inside the House." All members try to convey their qualifications. But it is particularly crucial that any nonincumbent convey this sense of being "qualified." For him, it is the threshold impression — without which he will not be taken seriously as a candidate for Congress. Qualification will not ensure trust, but it is at least a precondition.

Second, the congressman conveys a sense of *identification* with his constituents. Contextually and verbally he gives them the impression that "I am one of you." "I think the way you do and I care about the same things you do." "You can trust me because we are like one another." The third is a sense of *empathy* conveyed by the congressman to his constituents. Contextually and verbally, he gives them the impression that "I understand your situation and I care about it." "I can put myself in your shoes." "You can trust me because — although I am not one of you — I understand you." Qualification, identification, and empathy are all helpful in the building of constituent trust. To a large degree, these three impressions are conveyed by the very fact of regular personal contact at home. That is, "I prove to you that I am qualified," or "I prove to you that I am one of you," or "I prove to you that I understand you" by coming around frequently "to let you see me, to see you, and to meet with you." Contrariwise, "if I failed to come home to see and be seen, to talk and be talked to, then you would have some reason to worry about trusting me." Thus do decisions about the allocation of resources affect the frequency of and opportunity for the presentation of self.

Once he is home, what kind of a presentation does he make there? How does he decide what presentation to make? How does he allocate his time among his perceived constituencies? How does he present himself to these various constituencies? What proportion of competence, identification, or empathy (or other expressions) does he "give off"? In short, what kinds of home styles are presented; and how do they differ among House members? I shall work toward an answer to these questions by discussing the styles of two representatives.

#### **Presentation of Self: A Person-to-Person Style.**

While it is probably true that the range of appropriate home styles in any given district is large, it is also probably true that in many geographical constituencies there are distinct limits to that range. Congressman A believes

there is a good "fit" between his kind of district and his kind of home style. He thinks of his geographical constituency as a collection of counties in a particular section of his state — as southern, rural, and conservative. And he believes that certain presentations of self would not be acceptable there. "I remember once," he told a small group at dinner before a college lecture,

when I was sitting in the House gallery with a constituent listening to Congressman Dan Flood speak on the floor. Dan is a liberal from Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. He is a former Shakespearian actor and his wife is a former opera singer. Dan was wearing a purple shirt and a white suit; and he was sporting his little waxed moustache. My constituent turned to me and asked "what chance do you think a man like that would have of getting elected in our district?" And I said, "exactly the same chance as I would have of getting elected in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania."

The expressions "given off" by a former actor with a purple shirt, a white suit, and a waxed moustache would be suicidal in Congressman A's district. Indeed, two days earlier as we got out of the car in one of his county seats, Congressman A said apprehensively, "see my brown shirt? This will be the first time that these people have ever seen me in anything but a white shirt." Brown — possibly; purple — never.

Congressman A sees his geographical constituency as a homogeneous, natural community. And he thinks of himself as totally at one with that community — a microcosm of it. Three generations of his family have lived there and served as its leaders and officeholders. He himself held two elective offices within the district before running for Congress. He has been steeped in the area he represents.

I should write a book about this district — starting with the Indians. It's a very historic district and a very cohesive district — except for Omega County. Nobody knows it like I do.

One thing that ties the district together is the dominance of the textile industry and the dependence of the people of the district — employer and employee — on the textile industry. . . . If I were hostile to the textile industry, it would be fatal. But that could never happen because I feel so close to the textile industry.

I represent a district in which my constituents and I have total mutual confidence, respect and trust — 95 per cent, nearly 100 per cent.

Congressman A feels a deep sense of identification with his constituents. It is this sense of identification that he conveys — verbally and

nonverbally — when he presents himself to them.

"In my state," he says, "only a person-to-person campaign will work." So, when he goes home, he "beats the bushes," and "ploughs the ground," in search of face-to-face contact with the people of his district. From county to county, town to town, up and down main street, in and out of county courthouses, through places of business, into homes and back yards, over country roads and into country stores, from early morning till late at night: ("Anyone who hears a knock on the door after 11:00 p.m. knows it's me") he "mixes and mingles" conveying the impression that he is one of them. In each encounter, he reaches (if the other person does not provide it) for some link between himself and the person he is talking with — and between that person and some other person. There is no conversation that does not involve an elaboration of an interpersonal web and of the ties that bind its members one to the other. In the forefront, always, are ties of family: Congressman A possesses an encyclopedic memory for the names and faces, dates and places of family relations, and for the life-cycle events of family — birth, marriage, moving, sickness, and death. His memory and his interest serve him equally well in finding other common ground — be it rivers, plants and trees, farms, crops and businesses, hunting, fishing and football, land, buildings and automobiles, home, church, and country. He devours the district's history; on one trip he was absorbed in a county history and genealogy, on another the memoirs of U. S. Grant. He continually files, sorts, arranges and rearranges his catalogues of linkages — person-to-person, place to place, event to event, time to time.

The Congressman muses a lot about the keys to success in person to person relationships.

Do you remember Miss Sharp back in the post office? She had never met me before, but she called me Sam. That's the way people think of me. No person will ever vote against you if he's on a first name basis with you. Did you know that?

When I'm campaigning I sometimes stop in a country store and buy some salmon and crackers and share them with everyone there — and buy more if need be. Do you know that a man who eats salmon and crackers with you will vote for you? And if a man takes a bite of your chewing tobacco — or better still if he gives you a bite of his chewing tobacco — he'll not only vote for you, he'll fight for you.

People feel they can talk to me. When they are talking, they feel that I'm listening to what

they have to say. Some people have the ability to make others feel that way and some don't. They feel that if they come to me with a problem, I'll do everything I can to help them.

The expression he tries to give off in all his person to person dealings is that he knows them, that they know him "as a person," that they are all part of the same community, and that his constituents, therefore, have every reason to make favorable inferences about him. "They know me," he says, "and they trust me."

Since he perceives his geographical constituency as a group of counties, it is natural to find him conveying this sense of identification in terms of counties. In three different counties — none of them his place of residence — he verbalized his relationship with the people who lived there as follows: Chatting with a group of businessmen riding to lunch after a meeting with the officials of Alpha County on water and sewer problems, he said,

Did you know that an Alpha County man saved my grandfather's life in the Civil War? In the battle of Williamsville, my grandfather was badly wounded and Lieutenant Henry from Henryville picked him up and carried him off the field — just a bloody uniform with pieces of bone sticking out. An orderly stopped him and said, 'What are you doing carrying that corpse?' Lieutenant Henry said, 'That's no corpse; that's Captain McDonough; and so long as there's a spark of life in him, I'm going to try to save him.' He did and my grandfather lived. My roots go deep in Alpha County.

Giving an after dinner speech to the Women's Business and Professional Club of Beta County, he said,

I feel as much at home in Beta County as I do anyplace on earth. I can't begin to describe to you the frustrations I feel when I see these crazy social experiments (in Washington). . . . These frustrations would make me a nervous wreck or worse if I could not come back home to be with you, my friends and neighbors, my supporters and my constituents. I come home to refresh my spirit and renew my strength, here in the heart of our district, where my family's roots go deep. To me, this truly is 'holy ground.'

Speaking to a sesquicentennial celebration in adjacent Gamma County, he began,

I have never recognized the artificial boundaries that separate our two counties. I have felt as much at home in Gamma County — our county — among my friends and neighbors as if I had been born here, raised here, and lived here every day of my life.

Later that evening, he reflected on his appearance at the sesquicentennial, which he ranked as the most important event of my four-day visit. "When Marvin introduced me today and said that there weren't five people out there, out of 4000, who didn't know me, he was probably right. And those who don't know me think they do."

His repeated use of the term "at home" suggests that Congressman A perceives the people whom he meets as his primary constituency. When asked to describe "his very strongest supporters," he explained: "My strongest supporters are the people who know me and whom I have known and with whom I have communicated over the years . . . in my oldest counties, that means 30–40 years." He does not perceive his primary constituency in demographic terms but in terms of personal contacts. In a district seen as homogeneous there are few benchmarks for differentiation. And the one clear benchmark — race — is one he never mentions in public and only rarely in private. His primary constituents are the rural and small town whites who know him (or feel that they know him) personally. He seems to be, as he was once introduced, "equally at home with blue denim and blue serge, with rich folks and po' folks" — so long as the blue denim is nonunion. Standing around in a dusty, brown field swapping hunting jokes with a group of blue-collar friends and sitting in an antique-filled livingroom talking business with the president of a textile company rank equally high on his "at homeness" index. His primary constituency, as may be the case in homogeneous districts, is quite amorphous — as demographically amorphous as V. O. Key's classic "friends and neighbors" victory pattern. But it is sizeable enough and intense enough to have protected Congressman A, for a considerable number of terms, from any serious primary challenge.

Congressman A does not come home a lot, falling into our low-frequency category (0–23) of trips home. He spent eighty working days there in 1973. When he does, he spends most of his time where it is strategically profitable (and personally comfortable) — with his primary constituency. There, he reinforces his ties to the group of greatest importance to him in his traditionally one-party district. He explained, for example, why he took time out of a crowded Washington work week to fly home to the installation of officers of a Boy Scout Council.

I wanted to make it because of who they were. They were Boy Scout leaders from six of my

counties — the men who make scouting here a viable movement. They have given me some of my strongest support since I have been in politics. And they have never asked anything of me but to give them good government. So when they ask, I sure don't want to pass up the opportunity to meet with 90–100 of them. I knew about 90 per cent of them. And the other 10 per cent I know now. Some of those I hadn't met were sons of men I had known.

The scout leaders, of course, want more from him than “good government.” They want his time and his personal attention. And he, believing these to be the essence of his home style, happily obliges.

When he mentioned that he had also left Washington once to speak at a high school graduation, I asked whether a high paid staff assistant in the district might relieve him of some of these obligations. (Some members in my group have just such an assistant who attends meetings “in the name of the congressman” when he cannot come.) Congressman A answered,

It wouldn't work. People want to see the congressman — me. At the high school commencement exercises, I could have sent the most scholarly person I could find, to make a more erudite, comprehensive and scholarly exposition than I made. If I had done so, the people there wouldn't have enjoyed one bit of anything he said. And they would never have forgiven me for not being there.

He has a small district staff — three people, one full-time office, and one-half time office — and when he is home, he is as apt to pick up someone's personal problems and jot them down on the back of an envelope as he tours around as he is to find out about these problems from his district aides. Congressman A, at home, is a virtual one-man band. His home style is one of the hardest to delegate to others; and he has no inclination to do so.

He allocates relatively little of his time to his larger re-election constituency. Omega County, singled out earlier as out of the district's mold, is not rural, is populated heavily by out-of-staters, and has experienced rapid population growth. Congressman A admits he does not feel “at home” there. Yet he still gets a sizeable percentage of Omega County's votes — on grounds of party identification. He explained why he didn't spend time among these re-election constituents.

It is so heterogeneous, disorganized, and full of factions. . . . I don't spend very much time there. Some of my good friends criticize me and say I neglect it unduly. And they have a point. But I can get 50 per cent of the vote without campaigning there at all; and I couldn't

get more than 75 per cent if I campaigned there all the time. If I did that, I would probably lose more votes than I gained, because I would become identified with one of the factions, and half the people would hate me. On top of that, I would lose a lot of my support elsewhere in the district by neglecting it. It's just not worth it.

There is another reason besides time costs and political benefits. It is that Congressman A's home style is totally inappropriate for Omega County, and he avoids the personal unpleasantness that would be involved in trying to campaign there. Strategically, Congressman A will accept any increment of support he can get beyond his primary constituency. (“The black people who know me know that I will help them with their problems.”) But he allocates very little of his time to the effort.

Congressman A's presentation of self places very little emphasis on articulating issues. The Congressman's own abilities and inclinations run to cultivating personal, face-to-face relationships with individuals. The greater the social, psychological, and physical distance between himself and others, the less he is at home, regardless of the situation. And he was clearly least “at home” at a college, in a lecture-plus-question-and-answer format. He accepts invitations of this sort to discuss issues. But he does nothing to generate such engagements; nor does he go out of his way to raise issues in his dealings with others at home. On the single occasion when he broke this pattern, he tested out his potentially controversial position with his primary constituents (i.e., the American Legion post in his home town), found it to be acceptable, and articulated it often thereafter. Congressman A's home style does, however, take place *within an issue context*. There is widespread agreement in the district, and very strong agreement within his primary constituency, on the major issues of race, foreign aid, government spending and social conservatism. The district voted for George Wallace in 1968. Thus while Congressman A's home style is apparently issueless, it may depend for its very success on an underlying issue consensus.

There are, therefore, strategic reasons as well as personal reasons for Congressman A not to focus heavily on specific issues. To do so would be unnecessary and potentially divisive. Congressman A is protective of his existing constituency relations and will not want to risk alienating any of his support by introducing or escalating controversy of any kind. He is a stabilizer, a maintainer. And so, when asked to speak formally, he often responds with com-

munitarian homilies. "I believe if ever there was a promised land, that land is America; and if ever there was a chosen people, those people are Americans." "If a man isn't proud of his heritage, he won't leave a heritage to be proud of. And that goes for his family, his community and his country." These utterances are not the secret of his success. But they do testify, again, to his continuing efforts to articulate a sense of community, to construct and reconstruct a web of enduring personal relationships and to present himself as totally a part of that web. If he gets into electoral difficulty, Congressman A will resort not to a discussion of "the issues," but to an increased reliance on his person-to-person home style. And, so long as his strategic perceptions are accurate, he will remain a congressman.

**Presentation of Self: An Issue-Oriented Style.** If Congressman B's geographical constituency places any constraints on an appropriate home style, he is not very aware of them. He sees his district as heterogeneous.

It is three worlds; three very different worlds. . . . It has a city — which is an urban disaster. It has suburbs — the fastest growing part of the district. . . . It has a rural area which is a place unto itself.

We spent all afternoon talking to the Teamsters in the city; and then we went to a cocktail party in a wealthy suburb. That's the kind of culture shock I get all the time in this district — bam! bam! bam!

The "three worlds" are not just different. They are also socially and psychologically separated from one another.

Actually the people in the three worlds don't know the others are even in the district. They are three separate worlds. In the city, they call it the city district; in the rural area, they call it their district. And both of them are shocked when they are told that they each make up only one-quarter of the district.

The other half are the suburbs — which are, themselves very disparate. A few suburbs are linked to the city; most are not. Some are blue collar; others are affluent. Some are WASP; others are ethnic. The district is, then, perceived not only as diverse and artificial, but as segmented as well. The possibilities for an acceptable presentation of self would seem to be limitless.

Congressman B's past associations in the district do not incline him toward a style peculiar to any one of "the three worlds." His district ties are not deep; he is a young man who went to college, worked and got his

political feet wet outside his district and his state. Nor are the ties strong; he grew up in a suburb in which he probably feels less "at home" ("We lost that stupid, friggin' town by 1000 votes last time.") than anywhere in the district. When he first thought about running, he knew nothing about the district. "I can remember sitting in the livingroom here, in 1963, looking at the map of the district, and saying to myself, 'X? Y? I didn't know there was a town called X in this district. Is there a town called Y?' I didn't know anything about the district." Furthermore, he didn't know any people there. "We started completely from scratch. I was about as little known in the district as anyone could be. In the city, I knew exactly two people. In the largest suburb, I didn't know a single person." He has (unlike Congressman A) absolutely no sense that "only a person like myself" can win in his district. Indeed, he thinks the opponent he first defeated was better suited to the district and should have won the election. "If I were he, I'd have beaten me." In terms of a geographical constituency and an individual's immersion in it, it is hard to imagine two more different perceptions of me-in-the-constituency than those of Congressman A and Congressman B.

Congressman B has not been in office very long. Not only did he begin from scratch, but he has been scratching ever since. He lost his first race for Congress; he succeeded in his second; and he now represents an objectively (and subjectively) marginal district. His entire career has been spent reaching out for political support. As he has gone about identifying and building first a primary and then a re-election constituency, he has simultaneously been evolving a political "self" and methods of presenting that "self" to them.

His earliest campaign promises were promises about the allocation of resources. He pledged to return to the district every week and to open three district offices, one in each of the "three worlds." These commitments about home style were contextually appropriate, if not contextually determined. For a candidate who neither knew nor was known in the district, pledges of attentiveness would seem almost mandatory. Furthermore, they allowed him to differentiate his proposed style from that of the incumbent — who was not very visible in the district and who operated one office there staffed by two people. Also, these pledges allowed him to embroider his belief that "a sense of distance has developed between the people and the government," necessitating efforts to "humanize" the relationship. And finally, his pledges gave him a lowest common

denominator appeal based on style to a district with palpably diverse substantive interests. In 1973, Congressman B made thirty trips home, spent 109 working days there, operated three district offices and assigned one-half of his total staff of fourteen to the district. Promises have turned into style. "We have given the impression of being hardworking — of having a magic carpet, of being all over the place. It's been backbreaking, but it's the impression of being accessible."

Congressman B's actual presentation of self, i.e., what he does when he goes home, has evolved out of his personal interests and talents. He was propelled into active politics by his opposition to the Vietnam War. And his political impulses have been strongly issue-based ever since. He is severely critical of most of what has gone on in American public life for the last ten years. And he espouses a series of programmatic remedies — mostly governmental — for our social ills. He is contemptuous of "old line" politicians who are uninterested in issues and who campaign "by putting on their straw hats and going to barbecues." Riding to a meeting at which he was to address one of his aging town committees, he shouted, "We don't want any old pols or town committees. Give me housewives who have never been in politics before." Whereupon, he rehearsed the opening lines of "the speech I'd like to give" to the town committee. "It will be a stirring speech. 'My fellow political hacks. We are gathered together to find every possible way to avoid talking about the issues.'" This comment, together with his running mimicry of the "old pols," exemplifies what Goffman calls a performance in the "back region," i.e., behind the scenes where the individual's behavior is sharply differentiated from, and serves to accent, his presentation of self to the audience in the "front region."<sup>26</sup>

Congressman B presents himself in the "front region," i.e., in public, as a practitioner of an open, issue-based, and participatory politics. It was his antiwar stand particularly, and his issue-orientation generally that attracted the largest element of his primary constituency. These were the antiwar activists — young housewives, graduate students, and professionals — who created, staffed, and manned the large volunteer organization that became his political backbone. In the end, his volunteers

became skilled in the campaign arts — organizing, coordinating, polling, canvassing, targeting, mailing, fund raising, scheduling, advancing, leafleting — even "bumper-stickering." "We organized and ran a campaign the likes of which people in this district had never seen. Neither party had done anything like it." Lacking a natural community to tie into and lacking any widespread personal appeal (or basis for such), Congressman B turned to the only alternative basis for building support — an organization. The "strongest supporters" in his organization did not support him because they knew him or had had any previous connection with him. The bond was agreement on the central issues and on the importance of emphasizing the issues. That agreement was the only "qualification" for the office that mattered to them. Within this group, the sense of identification between candidate and supporters was nearly total. He was "one of them." They trusted him. And they, with some trade union help (especially financial), gave him a victory in his initial primary.

In reaching for broader electoral support, Congressman B has been guided, in addition to his commitment to "the issues," by a personal penchant for talking about them. That is, he is an exceptionally verbal person; and he has evolved a suitably verbal home style. He places special emphasis on articulating, explaining, discussing, and debating issues. In each campaign (whether he be challenger or incumbent) he has pressed for debates with his opponent; and his assessment of his opponents focuses on their issue positions and their verbal facility. ("He's very conservative and, I understand, more articulate than the last guy. I felt sorry for him; he was so slow.")

In his first two campaigns the main vehicle for presenting himself to his prospective election-re-election constituency was "the coffee." He would sit in a living room or a yard, morning, afternoon, and evening (sometimes as often as eight or ten times each day) with one or two dozen people, stating his issue positions, answering their questions, and engaging in give and take. At the verbal level, the subject was substantive problems. But Congressman B knew that expressions "given off" were equally important.

People don't make up their minds on the basis of reading all our position papers. We have twenty-six of them, because some people are interested. But most people get a gut feeling about the kind of human being they want to represent them.

Thus, his display of substantive knowledge and his mental agility at "the coffees" would help

<sup>26</sup>Goffman, Chapter 3, especially p. 128. Often comments made in the "back regions" provide clues for "at homeness" estimates. "We're having breakfast tomorrow with a businessman's group. They're really a bunch of hoodlums."

convey the impression that "as a human being" he was qualified for the office. And, not relying wholly on these expressions given off, he would remind his listeners, "No congressman can represent his people unless he's quick on his feet, because you have to deal with 434 other people — each of whom got there by being quick on his feet." Coffees were by no means the only way Congressman B presented himself. But it was his preferred method. "The coffees are a spectacular success. They are at the heart of the campaign." Strategically, they were particularly successful in the suburban swing area of the district. But he tried them everywhere — even in the city, where they were probably least appropriate.

Once in office, he evolved a natural extension of the campaign coffee — a new vehicle which allowed him to emphasize, still, his accessibility, his openness and his commitment to rational dialogue. It is "the open meeting," held twice a year, in every city and town in the district — nearly 200 in each session of Congress. Each postal patron gets an invitation to "come and 'have at' your congressman." And, before groups of 4 to 300, in town halls, schools, and community centers, he articulates the issues in a question and answer format. The exchanges are informative and wide-ranging; they are punctuated with enthusiasm and wit. The open meetings, like the coffees, allow Congressman B to play to his personal strengths — his issue interests and his verbal agility. In the coffees, he was concerned with conveying threshold impressions of qualification, and his knowledge and status reinforce that impression in the open meetings. But in the open meetings, he is reaching for some deeper underpinnings of constituent trust. He does this with a presentation of self that combines identification and empathy. "I am not exactly one of you," he seems to tell them, "but we have a lot in common, and I feel a lot like you do." He expresses this feeling in two ways.

One expression "given" and "given off" in the open meetings is the sense that the give-and-take format requires a special kind of congressman and a special kind of constituency and involves them, therefore, in a special kind of relationship. In each meeting I attended, his opening remarks included two such expressions.

One of the first pieces of advice I got from a senior member of my party was: 'Send out lots of newsletters, but don't mention any issues. The next thing you know, they'll want to know how you vote.' Well, I don't believe that.

My colleagues in Congress told me that the questionnaires I sent you were too long and too complicated and that you would never answer

it. Well, 5000 have been filled out and returned already — before we've even sent them all out.

At the same time that he exhibits his own ability to tackle any question, explain any vote, and debate any difference of opinion, he massages the egos of his constituents by indicating how intelligent, aware, and concerned they are to engage with him in this new, open, rational style of politics. At the conclusion of an emotional debate with a group of right-to-lifers, whose views he steadfastly opposed, he summed up: "I don't want to pat myself on the back, but there aren't too many congressmen who would do what I am doing here today. Most of them dig a hole and crawl in. I respect your opinions and I hope you will respect mine." The "pat on the back" is for *them* as well as him. And the expression "given off" is that of a special stylistic relationship. From that relationship, he hopes, will flow an increasing measure of constituent trust.

A second, related, expression "given off" is the sense that Congressman B, though he is a politician, is more like his constituents than he is like other politicians. It is not easy for him to convey such an impression, because the only thing his potential re-election constituents know about him is that he is a politician. They do not know him from any prior involvement in a community life. So he works very hard to bind himself to his constituents by disassociating himself from "the government" and disavowing his politician's status. He presents himself as an antipolitician, giving off the feeling that, "I'm just as fed up with government and the people who run it as you are." Since he is a congressman-politician, he is unrelentingly harsh in his criticism of Congress and his fellow legislators.

As you know, I'm one of the greatest critics of Congress. It's an outrageous and outmoded institution.

All Congress has ever done since I've been in Congress is pass the buck to the president and then blame him for what goes wrong... Congress is gutless beyond my power to describe to you.

Most members of Congress think that most people are clods... Most of the guys down there are out of touch with their districts... We aren't living in the 1930s anymore. Of course some members of Congress are... I could never understand the lack of congressional sensitivity to the problems of the elderly. There are so many of them there.

A politician seeking to convey the impression that he is not a politician, Congressman B hopes to build constituent trust by inviting them to blend their cynicism with his.



The presentation of self — an accessible, issue-oriented, communicative antipolitician — at the open meetings is a lowest common denominator presentation. It can win support in each of “the three worlds” without losing support in any. For it is the style, not the issue content that counts most in the re-election constituency. Congressman B is completely comfortable in the setting. “That was fun,” he says after each open meeting. And, occasionally, “it’s more fun when there’s some hostility.” But it is the format more than the audience that makes him feel really “at home.” He is not a person-to-person campaigner. “Two of my friends in Congress hold office hours and see people one at a time. That would be a horribly inefficient use of my time. I can see fifty at once. Besides, they don’t want to get involved in a give and take.” He, on the other hand, keeps his distance from the personal problems of his constituents, inviting them to talk with the staff members who accompany him to the open meetings. Of course, he meets people face-to-face — all the time. But he does not know or seek out much about them as individuals, not much that would build anything more than a strictly political connection. An aptitude for names and faces, a facility with tidbits of personal information and small talk, an easy informality in face-to-face relations — these are not his natural personal strengths. But they are not the keys to his success with his re-election constituency. He has evolved a home style that does not call for person-to-person abilities in large supply.

The open meetings remain the centerpiece of his home style. “They are the most extraordinary thing we’ve ever done, and the most important.” He sees them as vehicles which help him reach out to and expand his re-election constituency. For he remains a builder instead of a stabilizer in his constituency relations.

Politically, these open meetings are pure gold. Fifty may come, but everybody in town gets an invitation. . . . I do know that none of our loyalists come to the meetings. They know the meetings are nonpartisan. Maybe one or two of them will show up, but mostly they are new faces.

They have given him entree into the least supportive, rural areas of his district, where he recruits support and neutralizes the more intense opposition. At first, he says, “in some of these towns they didn’t know what to say to a Democrat. They probably hadn’t met one except for people who fixed their toilets.” Yet at the open meetings, “we’ve had better turnouts, proportionately, in the rural area.” “And

we get a lot of letters from people there who say they disagree with us but respect our honesty and independence.” In time — but only in time — interest and respect may turn into the supportive inferences that connote trust.

But as Congressman B spends more and more of his time at home cultivating an expanding re-election constituency, his oldest and strongest supporters have felt neglected. So Congressman B has a more complex strategic problem, in terms of allocating his time, than Congressman A.

When we began, we had the true believers working their hearts out. It was just like a family. But the more you gain in voters, and the more you broaden your constituency, the more the family feels hurt. Our true believers keep asking me, “Why don’t you drink with us?” “Why don’t you talk to me personally anymore?” I have to keep talking to them about the need to build a larger majority. I have to keep telling them that politics is not exclusive; it is inclusive. It is not something that can be done in the living room.

The true believers are not threatening a total loss of support; but declining enthusiasm would present a serious support problem. One way Congressman B may deal with the problem is to come home more, so that he can give the necessary time to the true believers. He does come home more than Congressman A, perhaps partly because his strategic problems at home require it. Still, Congressman B emphasizes identifying and building support beyond the primary constituency in “the three worlds.” And he finds the open meetings the most effective (and most comfortable) vehicle for him. “What more could anyone ask,” he says, “than to have the congressman come to their town personally?” His primary constituents do ask something more. And, so long as he gives it to them, he will remain a congressman.

**Presentation of Self: Constituency Constraints and Constituency Careers.** Our description of the person-to-person and the issue-oriented styles is exemplary, not exhaustive.<sup>27</sup> Speculatively, however, presentation of self would

<sup>27</sup>The two styles are the most common among my group. They may be the most common among all representatives. In his study of representation, Paul Peterson uses two very similar analytical categories, “particularistic representation” (person-to-person) and “universalistic representation” (issue-oriented) Paul Peterson, “Forms of Representation: Participation of the Poor in the Community Action Program,” *American Political Science Review*, 64 (June, 1970), 491–501. Other styles will be elaborated in a later, lengthier study, of which this paper is a part.

seem to be explainable by three kinds of factors – *contextual, personal, and strategic*.

Contextually, a representative thinks about his constituency relations in terms of me-in-the-constituency. That perception predates his service in Washington and cannot be understood by drawing inferences from his Washington behavior. Part of the content of that perception involves a sense of fit – a good fit as in the case of Congressman A, a nonfit as in the case of Congressman B, and a bad fit as in the case of one congressman (not in my group) who refers to his district as “outer Mongolia.” A congressman’s sense of fit will, in turn, be affected by whether he sees the district as homogeneous or heterogeneous. Good fits are more likely in homogeneous districts. But the reverse side of the coin is that home styles are more likely to be imposed upon the congressman in homogeneous districts. If Congressman A did not represent his district, someone who performed similarly at home probably would. In a heterogeneous district – Congressman B’s case – home style is much more a matter of individual choice, and is more likely to be imposed by the congressman on his district. Thus, upon further analysis of the state-by-state resource allocation data, we would expect to find the most idiosyncratic patterns appearing in the most heterogeneous districts. Homogeneous districts, in sum, impose more stylistic constraints on a congressman than do heterogeneous districts.

A second contextual impact on the presentation of self, however, may produce contrary tendencies. Once a congressman has imposed a particular presentational style upon his district, his successors may feel constrained to continue that style. That is, a congressman’s home style may be influenced by the previous congressman’s home style. Congressman B deliberately chose a style that contrasted with his predecessor’s in order to help develop an identifiable political self. It is equally plausible (and it happened in my group) that expectations about style could be so strongly implanted in the district by a predecessor, that the new congressman dare not change. Similarly, a choice of home style by imitation or by contrast can occur with reference to a neighboring congressman – if the congressman choosing a style has reason to believe that some of his constituents are likely to compare him to that neighbor. Regardless of district make-up, then, under certain conditions one congressman’s style may be shaped by the style of another congressman, past or present.

From the cases of representatives A and B, it seems clear that the presentation of self is

also shaped by each individual’s inclinations and talents. Every congressman has some latitude in deciding how to present himself “as a person.” That is not to say that House members *like* to do all the things they do at home. More members than I would have expected described themselves as “shy,” “reserved,” or “not an extrovert.” But they go home and present themselves anyway. And they try to do what they are most comfortable doing and try not to do that which they are most uncomfortable doing. Congressman A seeks out person-to-person relationships, but does not encourage issue-oriented meetings. Congressman B seeks out issue-oriented meetings, but does not encourage person-to-person relationships. Experience, interest, abilities – all the personal attributes of a congressman’s self – help shape his presentation of that self to others.

Strategically, each congressman must decide how he will allocate his time when he is at home. And it is of some help to think of this strategic problem in terms of his perceived constituencies. From our two cases, we might generalize that a man in a homogeneous district will spend most of his time with his primary constituency. Homogeneous districts are most likely to be perceived as protected in the general election, so that the strategic problem is to hold sufficient primary constituency support to ward off a primary challenger. By the same token, the primary constituency in a homogeneous district is probably more amorphous and less easily defined than it is in a heterogeneous district. Thus a concentration of effort in the primary constituency does not mean that any less time will be required to cultivate it.

By contrast, in a district perceived to be both heterogeneous and electorally unprotected, the congressman will spend relatively more time in his re-election constituency. But he faces a problem of balance. He will play “the politics of inclusion” by spending time expanding his re-election constituency, partly on the assumption that his strongest supporters have no inclination to go elsewhere. Yet he cannot neglect the primary constituency unduly, since their loyalty and intensity of commitment are necessary to sustain a predictably difficult election campaign. He may, of course, be able to allocate resources other than his time, i.e., votes, to keep his primary constituency content.<sup>28</sup> But there is every evidence from my

<sup>28</sup>See Morris Fiorina, “Electoral Margins, Constituency Influence and Policy Moderation: A Critical Assessment,” *American Politics Quarterly*, 1 (October, 1973), 479–498.

experience that the congressman's strongest supporters are more – not less – demanding of the congressman's time than his other constituencies.

A strategic problem in allocating time, alluded to briefly in discussing Congressman B, involves the presentation of self to one's strongest opponents – to the people each congressman believes he “will never get.” House members handle the problem differently. But most of them will accept (and some will solicit) opportunities to present themselves before unfriendly constituents. The strategic hope is that displaying themselves “as a person” may reduce the intensity of the opposition, thus neutralizing their effect within the district. Intense opposition is what every congressman wants least of. Any time spent cooling the ardor of the opposition is time usefully spent, for it may mean less intense support for the challenger. Functionally, the same accents used in presenting one's self to supporters apply to a presentation to opponents – the emphasis on qualification, the effort at identification, the projection of empathy. In other words, the process of allaying hostility differs little from the process of building trust. That makes it easier for House members to allocate some time – probably minor – to a strategy of neutralization.

Students of Congress are accustomed to thinking about a congressman's *career in the House* – his early adjustments, his rise in seniority, his placement on the ladders of committee and party, the accumulation of his responsibilities, the fluctuations of his personal “Dow Jones Average.” But House members also pursue a *career in the constituency*. Congressman B's evolution from “scratch” to a concern with his primary constituency or a concern with his re-election constituency gives evidence of such a constituency career. He was as much a newcomer in the district as newcomers are (or were) purported to be in the House. He had to work out an appropriate home style there just the way each new House member adapts to the House as an institution. Congressman B has been, and is, in the expansionist phase of his career, continually reaching out for increments of support. Congressman A, by comparison, is in a more protectionist phase of his constituency career. He believes that he has, over a considerable period of time, won the trust of his constituents (i.e., his primary constituents). He is working mainly to reinforce that trust; to protect the support he already has. Congressman B does not talk about constituent trust; he never says, “my constituents trust me.” His presentation of self is designed to build trust, but, as we have said, it takes time.

The idea of a career in the constituency helps to highlight an important fact about the congressman as an elective politician. As any textbook treatment of incumbency tells us, the congressman is a particularly long-lived political species. He has been making or will make presentations of self to his constituents *for a long time*. And they have been looking at or will look at him “as a person” for a long time. Relative to politicians with briefer constituency careers – like presidents – a congressman's political support will depend especially heavily upon his presentation of self. That, of course, is precisely what House members themselves tell us whenever we have asked. They tell us that their “personal record and standing” or their “personalities” are more important in explaining their election than “issues” or “party identification.”<sup>29</sup> They tell us, in other words, that their home style – especially their presentation of self – is the most important determinant of their political support. The idea of a lengthy constituency career helps us understand why this might be true. For it makes home style into a durable, consistent long term factor in congressional electoral politics. In any congressional electoral analyses patterned after our presidential electoral analyses, home style may have to be elevated to a scholarly status heretofore reserved only for party identification and issue voting.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup>See Stokes and Miller, “Party Government,” p. 542; and Charles S. Bullock, III, “Candidate Perceptions of Causes of Election Outcome,” paper delivered at American Political Science Association Convention, New Orleans, 1973, Tables 7, 8. In his analysis of ten congressional campaigns in 1962, David Leuthold found that “probably more than half the appeals (of the candidates) . . . were based on the qualities of the candidate or his opponent.” Leuthold, *Electioneering in a Democracy*, p. 113. He believes that voters are looking for ability, concern, and similarity to themselves. That – in the somewhat different words, qualification, empathy, and identification – is what my representatives think the voters want. See Leuthold, pp. 23–24.

<sup>30</sup>The first people to view congressional incumbency, in the light of SRC analyses, as a long-term force were Robert Arseneau and Raymond Wolfinger, “Voting Behavior in Congressional Elections,” paper delivered at American Political Science Association Convention, New Orleans, 1973. Observations consistent with those here, made in different contexts are David Mayhew's emphasis on “the expected incumbent differential” and Charles Jones's conclusion that House campaigns are less likely to be “issue-oriented” than “image-oriented” and “issue-involved.” Home style contributes to the congressman's “incumbent differential” and to his “image.” Mayhew, *The Electoral Connection*; Jones, “The Role of the Campaign in Congressional Politics.” From an election analysis perspective Walter Dean Burnham has recently emphasized the “office specific” nature of elections and the need to develop ways of looking at congressional

### Home Style: Explanation of Washington Activity

When members of Congress are at home, they do something that is closely allied with, yet separable from, the presentation of self to their constituencies. They explain what they have done in Washington. For some House members, their Washington activities are central to their presentation of self. One congressman, for example, routinely began every speech before every district group as follows:

I have represented this district for the last twenty years. And I come to you to ask for a two-year renewal of my contract. I'm running because I have a twenty-year investment in my job and because I think you, as my constituents, have an investment in my seniority. In a body as large as the House of Representatives with 435 elected, coequal members, there has to be a structure if we're ever going to get anything done. And it takes a long time to learn that structure, to learn who has the power and to learn where to grease the skids to get something done. I think I know the structure and the people in the House better than any newcomer could. And I believe I can accomplish things for you that no newcomer could.

He wants his constituents to see him "as a person" in terms of his importance in Washington. By contrast, neither Congressman A nor Congressman B makes his Washington activity central to his presentation of self. But whether or not his behavior in Washington is central to his presentation of self, every House member spends some time at home explaining and justifying his Washington behavior to his various constituencies. He tells them what he has done and why. What he says, how he says it, and to whom can be viewed as a distinctive aspect of his home style.

The objective of every congressman's explanations — our usage of *explanation* incorporates the idea of *justification* as well — is political support. And just as a congressman chooses, subject to constraints, a presentational style, so too does he choose, subject to constraints, an explanatory style. When most people think of explaining what goes on in Washington to constituents, they think of explaining votes. But we should conceptualize the activities subject to explanation more broadly than that. A House member will explain any part of his

activity in Washington if he thinks that part of his activity is relevant to the winning and holding of support at home. Just what kinds of behavior he thinks his various constituencies want or need to have explained to them is an empirical matter; but one which bulks especially large among my representatives is their effectiveness (or lack of it) inside the House on behalf of their constituencies. Often this explanation of one's internal influence also entails a more general explanation of the workings of Congress.

In the case of our Congressman A, for example, press reports that he had lost a committee assignment of importance to the district because of his lack of power within the House, posed a major explanatory problem.

Nothing is more damaging to a congressman in his district than to have his constituents believe that he doesn't have the power to get something he wants of that nature. . . . It might have been the only issue in the next campaign. . . . That would have been all that was needed — and only that — to defeat me. . . . No one in the world would believe my explanation, so I had to try for the next vacancy on the committee and I had to win. [Which he did, before the next election.]

For Congressman A, that is, explaining his internal House influence (or lack of it) might be more crucial to protecting his home support than explaining his votes. "I worked my head off to get that building," he said, as we drove by a new federal building in one of his county seats. "The people here were fixing to run someone against me if I hadn't produced it. People think you just have to wave a magic wand to get an appropriation, when most of it is just standing in line waiting your turn." Obviously, such an explanation of "how Congress really works" would not have satisfied his constituents in that county. So he had to produce.

The range of possible activities requiring a home explanation extends well beyond voting. Still, voting is the Washington activity we most easily recognize; and we can make most of our comments in that context. From John Kingdon's splendid discussion of "explaining,"<sup>31</sup> we know that, at the time they decide to vote, House members are very aware that they may be called upon to explain their vote to some of their constituents. Moreover, says Kingdon, the anticipated need to explain influences their decision on how to vote. They may cast a certain vote only if and when they are con-

elections that are not simply imitative of what we have done for presidential elections. Walter Dean Burnham, "Insulation and Responsiveness in Congressional Elections," *Political Science Quarterly*, 90 (Fall, 1975), 411-435.

<sup>31</sup>Kingdon, *Congressmen's Voting Decisions*, pp. 46-53.

vinced that they have a satisfactory explanation in hand. Or they may cast a certain vote because it is the vote least likely to require an explanation. Kingdon is interested in finding out why members of Congress vote the way they do. But along the way, he helps make the case for finding out why members of Congress explain the way they do. For, if the anticipated need to explain has the effect on voting that Kingdon suggests — i.e., if it makes voting more complicated and more difficult than it otherwise would be — then the act of explaining must be as problematical for House members as the act of voting. House members believe that they can win and lose constituent support through their explanations as well as through their votes. To them, therefore, voting and explaining are interrelated aspects of a single strategic problem. If that is the way House members see it, then it might be useful for political scientists to look at it that way, too — and to spend a little less of our time explaining votes and a little more of our time explaining *explanations*.

Members are, of course, called upon to vote much more often than they are called upon to explain. That is, they are never called upon to explain all their votes. Their uncertainty about which votes they will have to explain, however, leads them to prepare explanations for more votes than they need to, the need being enforced on them by dissatisfied constituents and, primarily, by the electoral challenger. The challenger, particularly, controls the explanatory agenda — or, better, tries to do so. All the uncertainty that the challenger produces for the perception of constituency, the challenger also brings to the problem of explanation.

Representatives will strike different postures regarding the need to explain. Some will explain their votes only when they feel hard pressed by constituents and/or challenger to do so. They will follow the congressional adage that “if you have to explain, you’re in trouble.” And their explanatory practices, if not their voting practices, will be calculated to keep them out of trouble. Other members bend over backward to explain every vote that any constituent might construe as controversial — sometimes well in advance of the vote. It is our hunch that the more issue-oriented a congressman’s presentation of self, the more voluminous will be his explanations. Our Congressman B, for example, produces a heavy volume of explanation. “We have explained every difficult vote. Anyone who gives a twit about how I vote has the opportunity to know it. We have explained our votes on all the toughies.” Given his presentational style, it is

hard to see him adopting any other explanatory style. In both cases, the content of what he says is less important than the fact that he says it — i.e., than his style.

I shall resist the temptation to spell out all the possible relationships between the presentational and explanatory aspects of home style. But it seems obvious that they exist. We would, at the least, expect to find a “strain toward compatibility” operating between the two. And we would expect to find the presentation of self — as the centerpiece of home style — to be the more controlling aspect in the relationship. We would further expect both aspects of home style to be influenced by the same constituency constraints. For example, we would expect the broadest perception of me-in-the-constituency — the sense of fit the congressman has with his various constituencies — to underlie the choice of explanatory styles, just as it underlies the choice of presentational styles. A good illustration of this latter point lies outside my particular group of House members. It lies, instead, in the explanation of their historic impeachment vote by two members of the House Judiciary Committee.

In the face of extraordinary constituency interest, two Judiciary Committee Republicans took to statewide television and radio to explain their upcoming vote in favor of impeaching their own party’s president. Representative Lawrence Hogan of Maryland cast his explanation heavily in terms of voting his individual conscience against the acknowledged wishes of many prospective constituencies — primary and re-election — in his announced try for the Maryland governorship. To accent his act of conscience, he acknowledged the grave risks to his career.

I know that many of my friends, in and out of Congress, will be very displeased with me. I know that some of my financial contributors (who have staunchly supported Richard Nixon and me) will no longer support me. I know that some of my long-time campaign workers will no longer campaign for me. But to those who were my campaign workers back in my first campaign, I want to remind you of something. Remember, I was running for Congress as a Republican in an area that was registered 3–1 Democratic, and in an effort to convince Democrats that they should vote for me, a Republican, I quoted John F. Kennedy who said: ‘Sometimes party loyalty demands too much.’ Remember that?

Well, those words have been coming back to haunt me in recent weeks. Clearly, this is an occasion when ‘party loyalty demands too much.’ To base this decision on politics would not only violate my own conscience, but would

also be a breach of my own oath of office to uphold the Constitution of the United States. This vote may result not only in defeat in my campaign for governor of Maryland, but may end my future political career. But that pales into insignificance when weighted against my historic duty to vote as my conscience dictates.<sup>32</sup>

Representative William Cohen cast his explanation in terms of voting as the people of his state of Maine would vote if they were in his shoes. He did not say they were pressuring him to vote, but that he and they, as members of the same community, thought alike on fundamental matters.

I have tried to put all of these events into the context of a political system that I know well, that of the state of Maine. I have asked myself some questions.

What if the governor of Maine ordered his aides to keep a list of those people who supported his opponents? What if he tried to have the state treasurer's department conduct audits of those who voiced dissent? What if he ordered that state police to investigate those who were critical of his policies or speeches? What if he asked aides to lie before legislative committees and judicial bodies? What if he approved of burglaries in order to smear and destroy a man's credibility? What if he obtained information that was to be presented to a grand jury for the purpose of helping his advisors design a strategy for defense?

What would the people of Maine say? You and I both know that the people of Maine would not stand for such a situation, for it is inconsistent with our principles and our constitutional system of government.<sup>33</sup>

Hogan and Cohen offered their listeners very different kinds of explanations for the same vote. It is our hunch that underlying the difference in their explanatory styles are different perceptions of me-in-the-constituency. Cohen sees himself, we would guess, as part of a fairly homogeneous re-election-plus-primary constituency. He identifies strongly with it; and he has a comfortable sense of fit with this broad constituency. That being so, he would neither perceive nor explain his vote in terms that set his conscience against theirs. His explanation was, therefore, communitarian. "I am one of you, and the issue is our conscience as a community." Hogan, we would guess, perceives his geographical constituency to be heterogeneous, and has no strong sense of fit with

any large or differentiable element of it. Almost surely he feels uncertainty about his prospective statewide constituency; but it seems that he feels uncertainty, even, about his relationships with the primary constituency in his district. It is hard, therefore, for him to find any communitarian bases for explanation. His explanation was individualistic. "I am following my conscience and disregarding the opinions of my constituents."

Neither explanation is inherently "better" than the other. Each had an element of strategic calculation to it. That is, each man chose his words deliberately; and, presumably, neither wanted to lose the next election by virtue of his explanation. That being the case, the acceptability of the two explanations by the Maryland and Maine constituencies becomes a question of some moment. We lack sufficient information to assess the actual impact of the two explanations on each man's political support. But we can try a more general answer. To the degree that Maryland voters already perceived Hogan to be "a man of conscience," and to the degree that Maine voters already perceived Cohen to be "one of us," their explanations probably would have been accepted. On the other hand, to the degree that Maryland voters had already come to view Hogan as a self-serving opportunist, and to the degree that Maine voters had already come to view Cohen as a spineless follower of the herd, their explanations probably would not have been accepted. That is, the credibility of any given explanation probably depends less on the content of the explanation itself than on its compatibility with some previously established perception of the explainer "as a person." "Issues" said one member, "are not as important as the treatment of issues."

Their reasoning goes something like this: There probably are, in every district, one or two issues on which the congressman is constrained in his voting by the views of his re-election constituency. (Whether he *feels* constrained — which depends on whether or not he agrees with those constituent views — is beside the point.) But on the vast majority of votes, a congressman can do as he wishes — provided only that he can, if and when he needs to, explain his vote to the satisfaction of interested constituents. The ability to get his explanations accepted at home is, then, the essential underpinning of his voting leeway in Washington. Thus the question arises, how can the congressman act so as to increase the likelihood that his explanations will be accepted at home. And the answer the House members give is: he can win and hold constituent trust. The more your

<sup>32</sup>*Congressional Record*, Daily Edition, July 23, 1974, H6962–H6963.

<sup>33</sup>*Congressional Record*, Daily Edition, August 1, 1974, E5209–E5210.

various constituencies trust you, House members reason, the less likely they are to require an explanation of your votes and the more likely they are to accept your explanation when they do require it. The winning of trust, we have said earlier, depends largely on the presentation of self. Presentation of self, then, not only helps win votes at election time; it also makes voting in Washington easier. So Congressmen make a strategic calculation. Presentation of self enhances trust; trust enhances the acceptability of explanations; the acceptability of explanations enhances voting leeway; therefore, presentation of self enhances voting leeway.

When I asked Congressman C if he wasn't more liberal than his district, he said:

Hell, yes, but don't quote me on that. It's the biggest part of my problem — to keep people from thinking I'm a radical liberal. How do you explain to a group of Polish Catholics why you voted to abolish the House Internal Security Committee or why you voted against a bill to keep Jane Fonda from going to North Vietnam? How do you explain that? You can't.

When queried, later, on a TV interview to comment on his opponent's charge that he was "ten times more radical than George McGovern," Congressman C answered in terms of identification and trust. He said simply, "if he means by that that I'm some kind of wild-eyed radical, people around here know me better than that." Later still, he mused out loud about how he managed this problem.

It's a weird thing how you get a district to the point where you can vote the way you want to without getting scalped for doing it. I guess you do it in two ways. You come back here a lot and let people see you, so they get a feel for you. And, secondly, I go out of my way to disagree with people on specific issues. That way, they know you aren't trying to snow them. And when you vote against their views, they'll say, 'Well, he's got his reasons.' They'll trust you. I think that's it. If they trust you, you can vote the way you want to and it won't hurt.

A pair of examples from two different types of districts will illustrate variations on this theme.

Congressman D perceives his urban, predominantly black district to be homogeneous. His re-election constituency is "the whole black community"; and his primary constituency consists of the civic-minded, middle-class activists who have organized black politics in his city. As tends to be the case in homogeneous districts, the line between his re-election and his primary constituencies is not sharp. Congressman D, who was born, raised, and employed in

his district, sees himself as a microcosm of both groups. Voting in Congress, therefore, is rarely problematical for him. "I don't have any trouble knowing what the black community thinks or wants. . . . I don't have any trouble voting. When I vote my conscience as a black man, I vote right for the district." Though he does not feel constrained, he, of course, is. "If I voted against civil rights legislation, my people would probably ask me why I did that. But I never would do it." On one occasion when it might have looked to them as though he had, he explained and they were satisfied.

When I come home, I go to the church groups and tell them what's been going on in Washington and explain to them why I voted as I did. For instance, I explained to them that I voted against the Voting Rights Bill (1970) because it was a fraud. Nixon wanted to get the fifty-seven Registrars working in the South out of there. After they heard me on the Voting Rights Bill, they went home mad. I know my people will agree with me.

Congressman D falls in the "medium frequency" category in trips home, having made thirty such trips in 1973. "I meet with church groups and other groups; and I let people see me just to let them know I haven't lost touch with them." The "other group" with which he meets most frequently (once a month formally and more often informally) is his district's political organization — "my political lifeline." "The more people see me working for them in our organization, the more popular I become, the more they trust me and are proud of me." From this presentation of self comes, then, the essential condition for his voting leeway in Washington.

The fact is that I have the freedom to do almost anything I want to do in Congress and it won't affect me a bit back home. My constituents don't know how I vote, but they know *me* and they trust me. . . . They say to themselves, 'Everything we know about him tells us he's up there doing a good job for us.' It's a blind faith type of thing.

Congressman E describes his district as "heterogeneous — one-third urban, one-third suburban, one-third rural." His primary constituency is the rural area, where three generations of his family have lived. At the very moment we turned off a four-lane highway onto a back road on our way to a small town fair, he said,

It must be terrible to be without roots, without a place to call home. I have a profound sense of identification with these rural people. My wife still worries about me a little bit in this respect — that I'm too much of a country boy. But life's too short to play a role or strike a pose.

This will be fun. I'm really going to enjoy myself.

Not only is he clearly most "at home" in the rural part of the district, but it casts a strategically disproportionate 40 per cent of his party's primary vote. "If these city people (in my party) with their slick city ways think they could go out to Mrs. O'Leary's cow pasture and get the farmers to throw out the local boy, they're crazy." His presentation of self is skewed toward his primary constituency. During his 35 trips and 100 working days at home in 1973, his scheduled appearances were allocated as follows: 41 in the urban area, 38 in the suburban area and 70 (or about 50 per cent) in the rural one-third of the district. His accessibility — especially to his primary constituency — is the essence of his presentational style and, hence, he believes, the basis for constituent trust.

Sometimes I do my talking to the same people over and over again. But they talk to others and they speak favorably about me. They tell others that 'old George' is always available and accessible. And I get a reputation in that way. That's how I succeed in this kind of district. People think of me as a nice guy, one of the boys, and they make presumptions in my favor because I'm a nice guy.

It is sometimes argued that representatives from heterogeneous districts enjoy a special degree of voting leeway because no single constituency interest controls their electoral future. Congressman E makes this argument. When asked if any single vote could defeat him in his district, he replied, "No, not in my district. It's too diverse, not all urban ghetto or Idaho potato farmers. That gives me a chance to balance interests in my votes. There really aren't any dominant interests." The crucial extra ingredient in the argument — one usually left out — is this: The congressman must be able to explain his voting pattern to his constituencies and have that explanation accepted. And this is especially true as regards his primary constituency. Congressman E commented,

If I want to vote for an urban program, I can do it, and the people in the rural area will say, 'He does have an urban constituency and he has to help them, too.' And they will still vote for me so long as they think I'm a nice fella. But if I had no urban constituents — if I had all countryside — and I voted for an urban program, people in the rural areas would say, 'He's running for governor, he's forgotten who his friends are.' The same is true in the urban area. They know I'm a country boy and that I

have a lot of rural area. So they say, 'He gives us a vote once in a while; he's probably all right.'

Congressman E is not unconstrained. He would, he admits, lose his primary constituency if he voted consistently for urban programs.<sup>34</sup> He will also lose his primary constituency if they stop trusting him as "a nice fella" and no longer make "presumptions in my favor" when he explains his few urban votes. If we are to understand a congressman's voting patterns in Washington, it seems that we must also understand his presentational and explanatory patterns at home.

As a final note, two general patterns of explanation deserve mention. One I had expected to find but have not, and one I had not expected to find but have. Both invite further research. In view of the commonly held notion that elective politicians "talk out of both sides of their mouths" (which Goffman discusses in terms of performances before "segregated audiences"),<sup>35</sup> I had expected to find members of Congress explaining their activity somewhat differently to their various constituencies. The likelihood seemed especially strong in heterogeneous districts, where the opportunity and temptation would be greatest. But I have found little trace of such explanatory chameleons in my travels. The House members I observed give the same explanations for their Washington activity before people who disagree with them as before people who agree with them — before nonsupporters as well as supporters, from one end to the other in the most segmented of districts. The lack of this kind of demagoguery, and the patient doggedness with which members explained their activities to unsympathetic audiences surprised me. I do not mean they went out of their way to find disagreement (though such a practice is of central importance to the presentation of self in some cases — such as Congressman C). I only mean that when disagreement was present, members offered the same explanation for their vote that they offered under all other conditions. Their presentation of self may vary from group to group in the sense that the basis for demonstrating

<sup>34</sup>Kindgon's respondents told him that they could explain one vote that went contrary to constituent expectations, but not "a string of votes." Kindgon, pp. 41–42.

<sup>35</sup>Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, pp. 136ff. A possible pattern of explanation requiring further research is that members explain their activities in different policy areas to distinctive groups in the constituency. See Clausen, *How Congressmen Decide*, especially his discussion of a special foreign policy constituency on pp. 225–226.



identification or empathy will have to differ from group to group. As they reach out to each group in a manner appropriate to that group, they may take on some local coloration; and they may tailor their subject matter to fit the interests of their audience. However, they rarely alter their explanations of their Washington activity in the process.

An explanatory pattern I had not expected to find was the degree to which the congressman at home explains his Washington activity by disassociating it from the activity of his colleagues and of Congress as a whole. I had assumed that home styles would be highly individualized. And I should not have been surprised, therefore, when I heard every one of my seventeen members introduced at home as "the best congressman in the United States." But I was not prepared to find each of them polishing this individual reputation at the expense of the institutional reputation of the Congress.<sup>36</sup> In explaining what he was doing in Washington, every one of my House members took the opportunity to portray himself as "different from the others" — the others being "the old chairmen," "the inexperienced newcomers," "the tools of organized labor," "the tools of big business," "the fiscally irresponsible liberals," "the short-sighted conservatives," "the ineffective leadership," "the obstructionist minority," "those who put selfish concerns before country," and so on. The diversity of the House provides every member with plenty of collegial villains to flay before supportive constituents at home. Individual members do not take responsibility for the performance of Congress; rather each portrays himself as a fighter against its manifest shortcomings. Their willingness, at some point, to stand and defend their votes contrasts sharply with their disposition to run and hide when a defense of Congress is called for. Congress is not "we"; it is "they." And members of Congress run *for* Congress by running *against* Congress. Thus, individual explanations carry with them a heavy dosage of critical commentary on Congress.

### Conclusion: Political Support, Home Style, and Representation

"A congressman has two constituencies," Speaker Sam Rayburn once said. "He has his

constituents at home and he has his colleagues here in the House. To serve his constituents at home, he must serve his colleagues here in the House." For over twenty years, political scientists have been researching the "two constituencies." Following the thrust of Rayburn's comment, we have given lopsided attention to the collegial constituency on Capitol Hill. And we have neglected the constituency at home. Knowing less than we might about one of the two constituencies, we cannot know all that we should about the linkage between them. This paper argues for opening up the home constituency to more political science investigation than it has received. It suggests that students of Congress pay more attention to "home" as a research focus and a research site. No one can say what we might learn if the suggestion were heeded. But a few speculations will serve as a conclusion to this exploratory effort.

For one thing, it appears that a congressman's constituency is more complicated than our normal treatment of it in our literature suggests. We have not, of course, obtained a constituent's-eye view of the constituency, having tried to keep the congressman's perceptions as our sole vantage point. But from that vantage point alone, it seems that we must be more precise about what we mean by "his (or her) constituents." If we are going to continue to talk in the language of role orientations — in which the "trustee's" votes are not determined by his constituents, and in which the "delegate" does follow the wishes of his constituents — we shall have to know just which "constituents" we (and he) are talking about. If we are going to continue to do survey research — in which we match the attitudes of the congressman with the attitudes of his constituents, or with his perceptions of the attitudes of his constituents — we shall, again, have to know just what "constituents" we (and he) are talking about. The abstraction "his (or her) constituents" is only slightly more useful as an analytical variable than the abstraction "the people." It may be that the distinctions attempted here are not the most useful ways of dividing up the home constituency for analytical purposes. But the days when our literature acknowledges the complexities of politics on Capitol Hill while accepting the most simplistic surrogates for political reality at home — those days ought to be numbered.

While this article has not dwelled directly on the topic of representation, our exploration has implications for the family of questions, both descriptive and normative, raised by studies of representation. For people studying the conditions of electoral accountability, this study has

<sup>36</sup>See also, Richard F. Fenno, "If, as Ralph Nader Says, Congress is 'The Broken Branch,' How Come We Love Our Congressmen So Much?", paper presented to Time, Inc. Symposium, Boston, Massachusetts, December, 1972, and reprinted in *Congress in Change*, ed. Norman Ornstein (New York: Praeger, 1975).

something to say about the electoral accountability of members of Congress. They are not among Kenneth Prewitt's "volunteerists."<sup>37</sup> House members work hard to get the job and work hard to keep it. In the course of that effort, they expend a great deal of time and effort keeping in touch with their various constituencies at home. Furthermore, they feel much more uncertain, insecure, and vulnerable electorally than our objective measures reveal. When a congressman describes his seat as "safe," he implicitly adds: "because, and so long as, I work actively to keep it so." And many a House retirement decision is made in anticipation of electoral difficulty. Surely, then, some of the necessary conditions for electoral accountability are present in Congress as they are not in certain other representative bodies in this country. But the existence of such conditions does not, by itself, tell us whether House members are as responsive to constituent desires as democratic theory may require. Our study can provide, however, some perspectives with which to pursue this normative inquiry.

For example, it appears that members of Congress feel a good bit more accountable — and, hence, I would guess, are more responsible — to some constituents than to others. House members feel more accountable to some constituents than to others because the support of some constituents is more important to them than the support of others. Thus, the process by which people become and remain representatives is closely related to their activity while they are representatives. In a representative democracy, the process is electoral; and the central problem for the representative is that of winning and holding voter support. From the viewpoint of this paper, problems of representation and problems of support are inseparable. It is precisely because a congressman's right to represent depends on his cultivation of electoral support that he develops such a complex and discriminating set of perceptions about his constituents. In a representative democracy, the representative learns who his, or her, various constituencies are by campaigning for support among them. The one deficiency in Hanna Pitkin's splendid book is the undifferentiated, uncomplicated idea of the constituency which she employs in her study of representation.<sup>38</sup>

And her monolithic view of "the constituency" remains viable only because she separates the process of running for office from the problems of representation. The traditional view of representation is somewhat more static and structural than the process-oriented view one gets by focusing on the cultivation of constituent support. To the congressman, the very word "political" connotes the ongoing problem of support. A "political vote" is one calculated to win (or to avoid losing) support. A "politically unwise move" is one that will lose support, etc. Focusing on the problem of support keeps the dynamism and the politics in the subject of representation. If politics is about "who gets what, when, and how," then the politics of representative democracy is about "who supports whom, when, and how — and how much." And, "what do various constituencies get in return for their support?"

A more inclusive, process-oriented view of representation has the effect of making it less exclusively a policy-centered subject. Traditionally, representation has been treated mostly as a structural relationship in which the congruence between the policy preferences of the represented and the policy decisions of the representative is the measure of good representation. The question we normally ask is: "How well does Representative X represent his or her district?" And we answer the question by matching and calibrating substantive policy agreement. But our view here is that there is an intertwining question: "How does Representative X carry his or her district?" To answer that question, we shall need to consider more than policy preferences and policy agreements. We shall need to consider the more encompassing subject of home style and the constituent trust generated by home style. We shall need to entertain the possibility that constituents may want good access as much as good policy from their representative. They may want "a good man" or "a good woman" whom they judge on the basis of home style and whom they trust to be a good representative in terms of policy. Indeed, the growing political science literature on voter behavior in congressional elections contains both evidence and speculation — usually under the rubric of the rising pro-incumbent vote — that voters are looking increasingly to just such candidate-centered bases for tendering electoral support.<sup>39</sup> The point is not that

<sup>37</sup>Kenneth Prewitt, "Political Ambitions, Volunteerism and Electoral Accountability," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (March, 1970), 5–17.

<sup>38</sup>Hanna F. Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972). Pitkin recognizes the complexity of constituencies — see p.

220 of her book — but she does not incorporate the idea into her analysis.

<sup>39</sup>Alan Abramowitz, "Name Familiarity, Reputation and the Incumbency Effect in a Congressional

policy preferences are not a crucial basis for the representational relationship. They are. The point is that we should not start our studies of representation by assuming they are the *only* basis for a representational relationship. They are not.

This last comment may be as valid normatively as it is empirically. What reason is there to believe that a relationship based on policy is superior to one based on home style — of which policy is, at most, only a part — as a normative standard for representative democracy? It may be objected that a search for support that stresses stylistic compatibilities between the representative and the represented easily degenerates into pure image-selling. And, of course, it may. But the search for support that emphasizes policy compatibilities between the representative and the represented easily degenerates into pure position-taking. It is, perhaps, the signal contribution of David Mayhew's elegant essay to make exactly this point.<sup>40</sup> Position taking is just as misleading to constituents and as manipulative of their desires as image selling. Both representational bases, we conclude, may take a corrupt form. Appearing to do something about policy without a serious intention of, or demonstrable capacity for, doing so is no less a corruption of the representative relationship, no less an impediment to accountability and responsiveness than is the feigning of a personal relationship without a serious intention of establishing one. They are equally corrupt, equally demagogic. They are substitutes for any real effort to help make a viable public policy or to establish genuine two-way communication and trust. At the least, normative theory ought to take account of both policy and extra-policy standards of good

representation, and acknowledge their respective corruptions.

Our concentration on and our preference for the policy aspects of representation carries a related implication. For a people who profess an attachment to representative democracy, we have always seemed curiously uncomfortable when our representatives devote themselves to contact with their constituents. We tend to denigrate the home part of the representational process as mere "errand-running" or "fence-mending" and to assume that it takes the representative away from that which he, or she, really should be doing, i.e., making public policy in Washington. As one small example, we have always criticized, out of hand, the "Tuesday to Thursday Club" of House members who go home for long weekends — on the assumption, presumably, that going home was *ipso facto* bad. But we never inquired into what they did at home or what the consequences (other than their obvious dereliction of duty) of their home activity might have been. Predictably, the home activities described in this paper will be regarded, by some, as further evidence that members of Congress spend too little of their time "on the job." But this paper asks that we entertain the alternate view that the Washington and the home activities can be mutually supportive. Time spent at home can be time spent developing leeway for activity undertaken in Washington. And it may be that leeway in Washington should be more valued than the sheer number of contact hours spent there. It may be, then, that the congressman's effectiveness in Washington is vitally influenced by the pattern of support he has developed at home and by the allocational, presentational, and explanatory styles he displays there. To put the point most strongly, perhaps we cannot understand his Washington activity without first understanding his perception of his constituencies and the home style he uses to cultivate their support.

No matter how supportive of one another their Washington and home activities may be, House members still face constant tension between them. Members cannot be in two places at once. They cannot achieve legislative competence and maintain constituency contact, both to an optimal degree. The tension is not likely to abate. The legislative workload and the demand for legislative expertise are growing. And the problems of maintaining meaningful contact with their several constituencies — which may make different demands upon them — are also growing. Years ago, House members returned home for months at a time to live with their supportive constituencies, soak up the

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Election," *The Western Political Science Quarterly*, 28 (December, 1975), 668–684; Albert Cover, "One Good Term Deserves Another: The Advantage of Incumbency in Congressional Elections," paper delivered at American Political Science Association Convention, Chicago, September 1976; John Ferejohn, "On the Decline of Competition in Congressional Elections," *American Political Science Review*, 71 (March, 1977), 166–176; Morris Fiorina, "The Case of the Vanishing Marginals: The Bureaucracy Did It," *American Political Science Review*, 71 (March, 1977), 177–181; Raymond Wolfinger and Robert Arseneau, "Voting Behavior in Congressional Elections." See also Edward N. Muller, "The Representation of Citizens by Political Authorities: Consequences for Regime Support," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (December, 1970), 1149–1166, esp. p. 1157; Glenn R. Parker and Roger H. Davidson, "Bases of Public Assessments of Government Performance: The Content of Congressional Evaluations," unpublished paper, University of California at Santa Barbara.

<sup>40</sup>Mayhew, *The Electoral Connection*.

home atmosphere, absorb local problems at first hand. Today, they race home for a day, a weekend, a week at a time. The citizen demand for access, for communication, for the establishment of trust is as great as ever. The political necessity and the representational desirability of going home is as great as ever. So members of Congress go home. But the quality of their contact has deteriorated. It is harder to sustain a genuine two-way relationship — of a policy or an extra-policy sort — than it once was. They worry about it and as they do, the strain and frustration of the job increases. Many cope; others retire. Indeed, retirements from the House appear to be increasing. Political scientists do not know exactly why.<sup>41</sup> But the research reported in this article points to the possibility that an inability or an unwillingness to improve the quality of the home relationship may be a contributing factor. Those who cannot stand the heat of the home relationship may be getting out of the House kitchen. If so, people prepared to be more attentive to home are likely to replace them. Thus, our focus on home activity may help us understand some changing characteristics of House members.

Our professional neglect of the home relationship has probably contributed to a more general neglect of the representational side of Congress's institutional capabilities. At least it does seem to be the case that the more one focuses on the home activities of its members, the more one comes to appreciate the representative strengths and possibilities of Congress. Congress *is* the most representative of our national political institutions.<sup>42</sup> It mirrors much of our national diversity, and its members maintain contact with a variety of constituencies at home. While its representative strengths surely contribute to its deserved reputation as our slow institution, the same representative strengths give it the potential for acquiring a reputation as our fair institution. In

a period of our national life when citizen sacrifice will be called for, what we shall be needing from our political institutions are not quick decisions, but fair decisions. Some of the recent internal congressional reforms have increased the potential for both representativeness and fairness. They have increased the equality of representation by distributing influence more broadly inside Congress. They have increased the visibility of representation by opening up congressional proceedings to public view. This is by no means all that is needed. But it is enough to place an added obligation on the members of Congress to educate their constituencies in the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the institution. Members should participate in consensus building in Washington; they should accept some responsibility for the collective performance of Congress; and they should explain to their constituents what an institution that is both collective and fair requires of its individual members.

The evidence of this study indicates that members have the leeway to educate their constituents if they have the will to do so. The evidence of this study also shows that they may not have that will. Instead, they often seek support and trust for themselves by encouraging a lack of support and trust in the Congress. By refusing to accept responsibility for an institutional performance, they simultaneously abdicate their responsibility to educate their constituents in the work of the institution. Instead of criticizing House members for going home so much, we should criticize them for any failure to put their leeway to a constructive purpose — during the legislative process in Washington and during the explanatory process at home. The trust of his, or her, supportive constituents should be viewed by a House member as his, or her, working capital — not just to be hoarded for individual benefit but to be drawn on, occasionally, for the benefit of the institution. So long as House members explain themselves but not the institution, they help sustain (wittingly or unwittingly) the gap between a 10 per cent approval level for Congress and a 90 per cent re-election record for themselves. If this imbalance seems unhealthy for both Congress and the Republic, we have yet another justification for an increased scholarly attentiveness to our House members at home.

<sup>41</sup>See Stephen Frantzich, "Congressional De-Recruitment: A New Look at Turnover in House Membership," unpublished paper, Hamilton College, 1975.

<sup>42</sup>The argument of the last paragraphs is more fully contained in Richard Fenno, "Strengthening a Congressional Strength," paper presented at a conference on "The Role of Congress" sponsored by Time, Inc., Washington, 1975, reprinted in *Congress Reconsidered*, ed. Lawrence Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer (New York: Praeger, 1977).