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THE IMAGES OF INCUMBENTS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Incumbents in single member, simple plurality systems strive to develop name recognition and positive images of themselves. We propose to analyze the images that constituents in Great Britain and the United States have of their MPs and Congressmen and to measure the impact which incumbent activities have on those images. We also examine the normative expectations that constituents in both countries have of their representatives and how these expectations shape their evaluations.

The data for this study comes from matching elite and voter surveys in Great Britain and the United States. Our results can be summarized as follows: 1) a large percentage of constituents in both countries believe that casework and protecting district interests are the most important functions of the representative; 2) those from working class, less well educated backgrounds are more inclined to prefer a service role for their representative than a policy role; 3) the evaluations that constituents have of their representatives reflects the importance of constituency service in their priorities as well; and 4) that representatives who undertake high levels of constituency service have better constituent images than other representatives.

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The aphorism "it doesn't matter what they say about you as long as they spell your name correctly" explains an important aspect of legislator behavior -- the quest for name recognition -- but being known per se is not enough for most incumbents. A highly salient negative image can be more troublesome than a less salient positive image. In the worst case, it may bring a strong electoral challenge, but at the very least, there can be other adverse consequences. For instance, US Congressmen with image problems may have difficulty raising funds or finding campaign volunteers while British MPs with image problems may find that they have caused serious morale problems in the local party or provoked a fight over their re-election. Consequently, representatives who want to stay in office must try to create positive images of themselves. Fenno calls the activities that produce these images the representative's home style (Fenno, 1978).

While Fenno conceived of home style as an incumbent's unique, individualized response to his district and the natural inclinations of his personality, it is equally apparent that the public shares certain stylized perceptions of representatives and their responsibilities,

including expectations about what representatives should be doing in office. These expectations derive in part from common wisdom about how a country's legislative system works, but also from a constituent's class, ethnic, age and social-economic background. To the extent that role expectations differ in various districts, representatives will have to mold their homestyles accordingly.

If representatives are successful in meeting these expectations, their images will benefit and their electoral bases will be more secure. Conversely, not meeting constituent expectations can adversely affect their images and weaken their electoral bases. This paper will explore the expectations and images that constituents in Great Britain and the United States have of their representatives, and the relationship between what incumbents actually do and how their constituents perceive them.

THE ROLE EXPECTATIONS OF CONGRESSMEN AND MPS

One of the classic normative questions in political science concerns what representatives should do in office. In the framework of political theory, a representative's duties are determined by the theorist's overall conception of the state's responsibilities. Thus, the Benthamite representative makes laws that maximize the greatest happiness for the greatest number, the Lockean representative legislates in order to eliminate the inconveniences of property and personal insecurity in the state of nature, the Hegelian representative represents one of the major interests in civil society, and so on

(Bentham, *The Constitutional Code*, p. 160; Locke, *The Second Treatise*, p. 84-91; Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 193-208).

Legislative duties in the real world do not always match so logically with the state's responsibilities, partly because they often evolve informally and unintentionally. Part of the representative's job in contemporary British and American government has a direct constitutional source, but other tasks seem to have developed as increasingly customary demands that constituents place upon their Congressmen and MPs. Since representatives often find it advantageous to encourage these demands, new responsibilities can evolve in unforeseen ways from the gradual discovery by representatives and their constituents of their complementary interests.

If the importance assigned to various tasks can affect the way representatives are evaluated, then it is useful to know how constituents in Great Britain and the U.S. rank these responsibilities. However, asking a comparable question that is also sensitive to important differences in the American and British political systems is no simple matter. The 1978 CPS survey of American voters showed respondents a list of "activities that occupy members of the U.S. House of Representatives as part of their job" and asked them to "rank the activities in order of importance." We followed the same procedure to the greatest extent possible in a study we conducted with Gallup in May 1979, but we felt that it was necessary to make some changes in the wording of the alternatives British respondents were asked to rank.¹ A comparison of the two lists is shown below:

United States

1. Helping people in the district who have personal problems with the government
2. Making sure the district gets its fair share of government money and projects
3. Keeping track of the way government agencies are carrying out laws passed by Congress
4. Keeping in touch with the people about what the government is doing
5. Working in Congress on bills concerning national issues

United Kingdom

1. Helping people in the constituency who have personal problems with the government
2. Protecting the interests of the constituency
3. Keeping track of civil servants
4. Keeping in touch with the people about what the government is doing
5. Debating and voting in Parliament

In cross-national survey work, the interests of comparability frequently conflict with those of sensitivity to inter-country differences, and this is nowhere more evident than in the third response. Members of Parliament have not traditionally had access to civil servants, nor have committees in Parliament had the power to subpoena and investigate that Congressional committees enjoy (Butt, 1967; Beloff and Peele, 1980, chapter 4). Members can, of course, question a minister who is responsible for a particular department of the civil service, but for the most part investigations of administrative abuse are handled by the national Ombudsman (Gregory and Hutchesson, 1975). However, these differences should not be exaggerated since it is also true that MPs have retained their right to

refer such cases directly to the Ombudsman and can use the threat of adverse publicity and hostile questions in the House as well as their informal contacts with ministers to put pressure on offending bureaucrats (Chester and Bowring, 1962; Cain and Ritchie, 1982; Norton, 1982). So while keeping track of agencies has more meaning in the context of the American system than keeping track of civil servants does in that of the British, it seemed to us sufficiently meaningful in the latter to warrant inclusion.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Table 1 shows the distribution of responses in both countries to the question "which of these activities is the most important." To ease the burden of discussion, the first activity on the list will be called "helping people," the second will be called "protecting the district," the third will be called "oversight," the fourth will be called "keeping in touch," and the fifth will be called "policy." The American respondents ranked these activities in the order: keeping in touch, policy, protecting the district, oversight and helping people. The British respondents ranked the alternatives in the order: protecting the district, keeping in touch, helping people, policy and oversight. One obvious and important difference between the rankings in the two countries, as expected, is that oversight was not rated as highly by the British respondents as it was by the Americans. The former rated its importance a distant last while the latter rated it a close fourth. Thus, it is reassuring to see that what is expected of

TABLE 1
ROLE OF REPRESENTATIVE

	United States	United Kingdom
Helping People	11% (254)	19% (387)
Protecting District	15% (355)	26% (524)
Oversight	15% (350)	4% (88)
Keeping in Touch	30% (683)	24% (477)
Policy	19% (440)	11% (227)
Don't Know or All or None	10% (222)	16% (328)
	2304	2031

representatives in both countries reflects to some degree objective differences in how the two political systems work.

Institutional differences may also account for the lesser importance of the policy role in Great Britain. The virtual irrelevance of the backbench MP to the policy-making process has been the subject of much academic and journalistic discussion (Hanson and Crick, 1970; Walkland and Ryle, 1977; Richards, 1972; Barker and Rush, 1970). The individual MP cannot change legislation in committee and until recently has been severely constrained by the norms of party discipline (Jackson, 1968; Norton, 1975, 1980). Much of the discussion about Parliamentary reform in the sixties and seventies centered on the question of how to give individual Members a more meaningful role in legislation. By contrast, Congressmen have far more power over legislation. In recent years, backbench British MPs have tried to get more policy making responsibility while American Congressmen appear to be trying to avoid policy responsibility, especially in controversial areas. Indeed, some have argued that Congressmen have accentuated their casework and pork barreling roles because they entail less risk than staking out positions on policies (Fiorina, 1977). There is then the irony that the Congressmen have a more meaningful policy role but wish that they did not, while backbench MPs do not but wish that they did.

A second contrast between the British and American samples is that the category of helping people with personal problems was ranked higher by the British constituents than by the American. The "social worker"

role, as some call it, was ranked by nearly a fifth of the British sample as the single most important activity undertaken by an M.P. In fact, 40 percent of the British sample ranked helping people who have personal problems with the government as one of the top two most important activities an MP undertakes. This may seem surprising since there has been far more attention to the casework responsibilities of Congressmen than MPs and to the growth of their staff resources to accommodate -- and in some sense, promote -- this demand (Fenno, 1978; Fiorina, 1977; Mayhew, 1974; Macartney, 1975; Cranor and Westphal, 1978; Parker, 1979; Parker and Davidson, 1979; Frantzich, 1979; Johannes, 1978; Yiannakis, 1981).

For the same reason, it is also surprising that protecting the interests of the constituency was rated as highly as it was by the British respondents. To be sure, since both systems employ single member, simple plurality districts, representatives in both countries have distinctive territorial interests to defend. Still, the weaker party system and the power of the committees would seem to make this role more meaningful in the U.S. than in the U.K. In the American context, securing projects and money for the district is the traditional pork barreling function of the Congressmen, a function that would seem altogether absent in Great Britain. However, almost all of the MPs we interviewed in our study mentioned many specific things they did for their constituencies such as leading a campaign to prevent the closing of a local hospital, urging the government to have a road constructed, helping raise funds for the local football team, helping

to organize a job fair in areas of high unemployment, to mention just a few. Moreover, the discovery that British constituents think that protecting the interests of the local constituency is very important is consistent with previous evidence that selection committees value a candidate with a feel for local concerns (Ranney, 1965, p. 114-117).

Judging from the responses in our two samples, constituents in both countries also assign considerable importance to keeping in touch. Partly, this reflects the preceding point that constituents want their representatives to have a good sense of their districts' particular concerns. However, it may also be related to whether people think that their representatives should be trustees or delegates. Delegates are representatives who tailor their positions to those who elect them: trustees represent the interests of their constituents by exercising their judgment as to what is best for their constituents (Pitkin, 1978). There is some suggestion in the US data that the keeping in touch function and the delegate role might be connected. Those who thought that keeping in touch was most important in the U.S. were more inclined to prefer the delegate to trustee role: 64 percent of those who said that keeping in touch was the most important function of the representative also said they believed that the representative should be a delegate while 25 percent of them said that the representative should be a trustee whereas 51 percent of those who said that policy-making was most important favored the delegate role while 33 percent favored the trustee role. Unfortunately, we lack comparable data in

the British sample so we cannot say whether there is any relationship there as well.

DIFFERING VIEWS OF REPRESENTATION

Not only were there significant cross-national differences in the rankings of alternative legislator activities, but there were also significant differences across groups in both countries. In particular, there are observable educational, class, ethnic and party variations in the expectations that British and U.S. constituents have of their representatives. Tables 2 and 3 show the rankings of the role importance items by different groups in the population. The numbers represent the percentage of those in each group who believe that a given role is the most important one that a representative has. Since the bivariate percentages may themselves be spurious, the inferences we draw are based on a multivariate model found in Appendix A.

[Insert Tables 2 and 3 here]

The first thing these tables show is that the differences in group rankings were somewhat more pronounced in the U.S. than in the British data. There were clear variations in the absolute percentages who thought that a given role was most important, but there were few differences in the rankings across the various groups in Britain. By contrast, there were marked differences in group rankings as well as in the absolute percentages in the U.S. sample.

TABLE 2
RANKINGS OF REPRESENTATIVES ROLE BY GROUPS IN UNITED STATES

Representative Role	GROUPS					
	All	Union	College	< High School	Black	Age < 21
In Touch	33% (1)	32% (1)	27% (2)	36% (1)	27% (1)	42% (1)
Policy	21% (2)	20% (3)	40% (1)	17% (3)	13% (5)	15% (3)
District	17% (3)	20% (2)	10% (4)	19% (2)	26% (2)	18% (2)
Oversight	17%	17% (4)	14% (3)	16% (4)	14% (4)	12% (5)
Help People	12% (5)	11% (5)	9% (5)	12% (5)	20% (3)	13% (4)

Representative Role	GROUPS					
	Age > 65	Middle Class	Working Class	Democrats	Republicans	Independent
In Touch	22% (2)	31% (1)	34% (1)	31% (1)	33% (1)	35% (1)
Policy	18% (3)	27% (2)	16% (4)	18% (3)	24% (2)	19% (2)
District	16% (5)	14% (4)	20% (2)	21% (2)	17% (4)	14% (5)
Oversight	27% (1)	18% (3)	16% (3)	16% (4)	18% (3)	18% (3)
Help People	17% (4)	10% (5)	14% (5)	14% (5)	8% (5)	14% (4)

TABLE 3

RANKINGS OF REPRESENTATIVES ROLE BY GROUPS IN UNITED KINGDOM

Representative Role	GROUPS					
	All	Union	Left School < 14	Completed Education at 19 + up	Working Class	Middle Class
District	31% (1)	30% (1)	31% (2)	34% (1)	30% (1)	32% (1)
In Touch	28% (2)	28% (2)	33% (1)	18% (3)	29% (2)	27% (2)
Help People	22% (3)	19% (3)	23% (3)	13% (4)	26% (3)	20% (3)
Policy	14% (4)	18% (4)	9% (4)	32% (2)	10% (4)	17% (4)
Oversight	5% (5)	5% (5)	4% (5)	3% (5)	5% (5)	4% (5)

Representative Role	GROUPS			Liberal
	< 20	> 65	Conservative	
District	21% (30)	26% (2)	34% (1)	37% (1)
In Touch	36% (1)	28% (1)	24% (2)	21% (2)
Help People	24% (2)	26% (3)	20% (3)	19% (3)
Policy	12% (4)	9% (5)	16% (4)	18% (4)
Oversight	7% (5)	11% (4)	5% (5)	5% (5)

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Another general observation is that if we distinguish the policy item from the helping people, keeping in touch and protecting district interests items, better educated, middle class individuals in both countries favored a more policy-oriented role for their representatives while less well educated, working class individuals favored a more service-oriented role. The education effect was particularly striking. In the U.S., 40 percent of the college educated respondents thought that the policy role was the Congressman's most important function whereas only 17 percent of those with less than a high school education thought so. The former ranked policy number one while the latter ranked it third behind keeping in touch and protecting the interests of the district. The effect was equally strong in Great Britain. Those who left school at the age of 14 or less ranked policy fourth with 9 percent: those who stayed in school beyond the age of 18 ranked policy a close second with 32 percent. The relationship between education and preferring a policy role remained significant in both countries in the multivariate equation (see Appendix A). At the same time, the least well educated individuals in both countries ranked keeping in touch first and protecting the interests of the district second. Helping people, which most closely proxies the casework role, was also more heavily favored by this group, although its ranking did not change in either instance.

Although the relationships are somewhat harder to see in the bivariate tables than in the multivariate equation, class was also significantly related to the ranking of policy and service functions.

Characteristically, the rankings of the working and middle class groups were identical in the British data, but the percentages varied somewhat. Ten percent of the working class individuals indicated that policy was the most important role of the MP whereas 17 percent of the middle class individuals felt this way. Conversely, 26 percent of the working class in the sample felt that helping people was the most important role whereas 20 percent of the middle class said so. Controlling for the other variables did not weaken this relationship, as the multivariate equation shows. As with education, the U.S. data show both a percentage and ranking difference: the middle class respondents placed policy second at 27 percent while the working class respondents ranked it fourth at 16 percent.

Very much related to class and educational differences in the U.S. is the importance of race. Black respondents ordered activities very differently from the rest of the population: they ranked policy as the least important activity and ranked protecting the interests of the district and helping people as second and third respectively. In fact, as a group, they placed a higher priority on helping people than any other group in the sample both in terms of the percentage who rated it as most important and in the rank order they assigned to it. To some extent, of course, this racial difference merely reflects the educational and class biases observed earlier, but the fact remains that even when other variables were controlled for in the multivariate equation, racial differences in representational priorities remained.

These educational, class and racial differences are not altogether surprising. Political scientists have long known that there were related differences in citizen knowledge about the issues, participation and interest in politics (Campbell et al, 1960). One major study of participation in America found that although the better educated, higher income individuals were more likely to participate in all ways (i.e. voting, particularized contact, community participation and campaign activity), the gap in participation was smallest with respect to what they called "particularized contact," or casework (Verba and Nie, 1972, p. 132).

The finding of a class, educational and racial preference for casework service calls to mind Fenno's contention that a representative's home style will be influenced by the kind of district he represents (Fenno, 1978). The choice of an issue home style as opposed to a more service or district home style will be shaped in part by the expectations that constituents have of what is most important. This is not to say that incumbents can not shape the expectations of their constituents, but it does mean that a representative who wants to be issue oriented in a working class, low education district may receive less reward from his constituents than someone who adopts an issue orientation in a middle class, high education district.

Differences in the priorities of groups other than class, education and race are less significant and need be noted only briefly. Age differences were stronger in the U.S. than in the U.K. Younger constituents in both countries seemed more inclined to think that

keeping in touch was important. Older constituents, by contrast, thought that helping people and oversight were more important. Union membership mattered more in Great Britain, with union members in both countries emphasizing policy more and helping people less. Finally, there were some scattered party effects worth noting. Liberals emphasized protecting the interests of the district more than those from other parties, which is consistent with the "parish pump politics" image they projected in the sixties and seventies. Conservatives placed somewhat greater emphasis on policy, although the difference weakened when all the other socio-economic variables were controlled for. In the U.S., Republicans tended to place less emphasis on the helping people role, but otherwise there were no real party distinctions.

REPRESENTATIVES AND PARTY RESPONSIBILITY

Another expectation that is crucial to the way that constituents view their representatives is the extent to which Congressmen or MPs are expected to adhere to the party line when voting on legislation rather than exercise their own judgment. There is reason to expect a priori that there should be differences in the attitudes of the British and American publics on this question. The post-war British party system has until recently been characterized by high levels of party discipline, particularly when compared to the U.S. Support in the President's party in the House ranged from 72 percent in 1953-54 to 61 percent in 1977-78 (Fiorina, 1980, p. 38). By comparison, the

percentage of divisions in Parliament witnessing any dissenting votes in Great Britain has ranged from .5 percent in 1964-66 to 28 percent in 1974-79 (Norton, 1980, p. 428). As the data suggests, the situation in Great Britain has changed in recent years: backbench rebellions have increased to such an extent that traditional notions about motions of confidence and the customs surrounding resignations have had to be altered considerably (Norton, 1978; Schwartz, 1980). But if backbenchers are rebelling more, the question is whether their constituents condone such independence from the parties?

The 1978 CPS and 1979 Gallup studies included questions that explored this question. Respondents were asked to say whether they thought a representative should "support the position their parties take when something comes up for a vote, or should they make up their own minds regardless of how their parties want them to vote." The three alternatives they were asked to choose from were "support the party," "it depends," and "make up their own minds." Table 4 shows the whole sample responses in both countries.

[Insert Table 4 here]

As the data indicate, there are significant and predictable cross-national differences to the responses to these questions, although not as large as one might suppose. The British respondents were less inclined to say that representatives should make up their own mind and more inclined to say that the representatives should support their party. This is consistent with the observation that the British party

TABLE 4
PARTY OR CONSCIENCE

	United States	United Kingdom
Support Party	17% (399)	22% (453)
Depends	8% (195)	18% (362)
Make Up Own Mind	69% (1580)	54% (1087)
Don't Know	6% (130)	6% (129)
n	2304	2031

system is more disciplined than the American. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents in both countries said that representatives should make up their own minds, which suggests a surprising lack of support for Parliamentary discipline among the British public. Clearly, the unpopularity of recent governments, the trend away from the two major parties and towards the Liberals, Nationalists and SDP, and the growing unhappiness of voters, journalists and academics with the British political system is reflected in the British respondents' desire to see their representatives act independently. Thus, the new patterns of backbench rebellion appear to be consistent with public role expectations.

Breaking the "party or conscience" question down by groups reveals that there are some important differences in both samples. Once again, education is a significant variable, although the effect is not the same in both countries as it was for the role expectations question. Eighty percent of the college educated individuals in the U.S. said that representatives should make up their own minds whereas 68 percent of those with less than a high school education said so. This relationship persists even after controlling for other variables (see Appendix A). On the other hand, better educated individuals in Britain were more likely to say that the representative should support the party position or that it depends. This probably reflects the fact that the better educated British respondents were torn between their understanding of how the British parliamentary system should operate and their alienation from the actual workings of the party system.

[Insert Tables 5 and 6 here]

One might expect class differences to be more significant in Great Britain, especially in the light of Drucker's contention that loyalty is crucial to the working class, Labour ethos (Drucker, 1979).

However, the evidence for that hypothesis is small and statistically insignificant, and in any case, is stronger among Democrats in the United States than it is among Labourites in Britain. (See Table A.3 in Appendix A.)

All in all, group differences were greater in the American than the British data, and in general, crossnational differences were greater than group differences within each country. What then can we say about the expectations that British and American constituents have of their representatives? First, it is apparent that they expect them to play an active part in their districts and constituencies. While there were important educational and class differences in both countries, even the most educated and middle class individuals expect their representatives to be accessible, do casework and further the interests of their districts. Secondly, while there were important crossnational differences in the degree of party loyalty constituents expected from their representatives, a majority in both countries preferred their representatives to make up their own minds and not simply follow the lead of the parties.

TABLE 5

PARTY OR CONSCIENCE BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS -- UNITED STATES

	<u>All</u>	<u>Union</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>< High School</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>≤ 21</u>	<u>Male</u>
Support Party	18%	18%	11%	22%	22%	31%	21%
Depends	9%	8%	9%	10%	10%	8%	10%
Own Mind	73%	74%	80%	68%	68%	61%	69%

	<u>> 65</u>	<u>Middle Class</u>	<u>Working Class</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independents</u>
Support Party	16%	16%	21%	21%	17%	18%
Depends	12%	8%	10%	10%	8%	8%
Own Mind	72%	76%	69%	69%	75%	74%

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TABLE 6

PARTY OR CONSCIENCE BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS -- UNITED KINGDOM

	<u>All</u>	<u>Union</u>	<u>Left School ≤ 14</u>	<u>Completed School ≥ 19</u>	<u>Working Class</u>	<u>Middle Class</u>
Support Party	24%	27%	25%	24%	25%	22%
Depends	19%	17%	15%	27%	19%	19%
Own Mind	57%	56%	60%	49%	56%	59%

	<u>≤ 20</u>	<u>≥ 65</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Male</u>
Support Party	28%	23%	24%	27%	19%	26%
Depends	14%	19%	22%	16%	16%	19%
Own Mind	58%	58%	54%	56%	65%	55%

THE IMAGES OF INCUMBENTS

Incumbents who wish to make their positions more secure need to to develop favorable images for themselves among their voters. However, as with name recognition, incumbent images can be more easily developed in certain types of political systems and with certain voters than others. Given important differences between the more disciplined and nationalized British party system and the less disciplined and individualized American party system, we might legitimately wonder whether MPs can be as successful at developing positive images of themselves as Congressmen and whether their home styles will have as much impact upon their constituents.

We can find some evidence on this point in a question that asked British and American constituents whether there was anything in particular that they liked about their incumbents. Table 7 breaks these responses down by country and party. The data clearly show that Congressmen have been more successful than their parliamentary counterparts in developing positive images of themselves in their constituents' eyes. Whereas 43 percent of the U.S. sample claimed that they could say what they liked about the incumbent, only 25 percent of the British sample said so. On the face of it then, it might appear that systemic differences do matter. However, a closer look raises some questions.

[Insert Table 7 here]

TABLE 7
LIKES-DISLIKES -- MARGINALS (RUNNING INCUMBENTS)

	United States			United Kingdom			
	<u>All</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>
Like Anything in Particular	43% (878)	41% (516)	47% (362)	25% (438)	20% (206)	27% (172)	56% (31)
Do Not	57% (1151)	59% (736)	53% (415)	75% (1329)	80% (834)	73% (465)	44% (24)
Dislikes Something in Particular	11% (226)	11% (134)	12% (92)	13% (226)	12% (124)	16.5% (105)	14.5% (8)
Do Not	89% (1803)	89% (1118)	88% (685)	87% (1541)	88% (916)	83.5% (532)	86.5% (47)

To begin with, while American respondents were more able to say what they liked about their representatives, the British respondents were more able to say what they disliked about their representatives. This is curious since systemic differences ought to affect negative images as much as positive ones. Moreover, the asymmetry between negative and positive responses was not evident for those with Liberal incumbents since 56 percent of those with Liberal incumbents were able to say what they liked about their representatives. Perhaps, this can be explained by the fact that the "parish pump" tactics of the Liberal party succeeded in making their candidates more visible to their constituents. On the other hand, the reluctance of constituents with Conservative and Labour MPs to say something nice about their representatives may reflect the public's general dissatisfaction with the parties that have governed them in the post war period. Is there any way that these two explanations can be distinguished?

One possibility is to look at the content of the images themselves. If indeed the comparative inability of the British respondents to say something positive about their representatives is generated by their alienation with the party system in Great Britain, then we might expect what they say about their incumbents to reflect this in some way. We see in Table 8 that fifteen percent of the positive references in the U.S. sample dealt with the incumbent's party or policy views as compared to only 1 percent of the British positive references. At the same time, 33 percent of the negative references in the British sample fell into the party/policy category as compared to

25 percent in the U.S. sample. It is possible therefore that had this poll been taken in happier times, British constituents might have made more positive party/policy references and fewer negative ones, and that this might have increased the number of positive references.

[Insert Table 8 here]

Table 8 also reveals some interesting data on another point; namely, the relative risklessness of a constituency strategy as compared to a policy strategy. The aggregate ratios of positive to negative references for the party/policy category were lower than those for the constituency attentiveness and personal characteristics categories. In other words, people were more likely to think of something bad to say in the policy/party category than in the other two, which means that if incumbents can control the way that their constituents see them, they run fewer risks by emphasizing their personality and constituency service than by touting their views on policies (Parker and Davidson, 1979). The implications of this are presumably not lost on incumbents.

We speculated earlier that the role expectations constituents have of their representatives can constrain the choice of home style. A corollary to that idea is that role expectations may also constitute a frame of reference for constituents if the way that constituents evaluate their incumbents is influenced by the role that they think that their representatives should be playing. Thus, people who believe that the policy making role of the representative is most important may

TABLE 8
A COMPARISON OF OPEN-ENDED EVALUATIONS
IN GREAT BRITAIN AND UNITED STATES

	<u>United States</u>		<u>United Kingdom</u>	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Constituency Attentiveness	32% (245)	11% (21)	42% (182)	15% (34)
Personal/General	45% (344)	59% (115)	53% (229)	44% (98)
Party/Policy	15% (111)	25% (49)	1% (4)	33% (73)
Other	8% (62)	5% (9)	4% (16)	8% (17)
n	762	194	431	222

be more inclined to evaluate their incumbents in terms of their policy positions, and people who think that the casework role of the representative is more important may be more inclined to evaluate their incumbents in terms of their casework activity. Table 9 is an attempt to test this hypothesis by looking at the relationship between responses to the role expectation question and those to the open-ended likes and dislikes questions.

[Insert Table 9 here]

We would expect those who think that the policy role is most important to refer more frequently to the policies of the incumbent than those who think that casework is the most important. Conversely, those who think that the casework role is most important should refer more frequently to the incumbent's casework activities than those who think that the policy role is most important. Similar predictions can be made for those who rank policy or casework last, policy or casework in the top two, and so on.

This pattern is more clearly seen in the British data than in the U.S. United States constituents who thought that the policy role was most important were more likely to mention the incumbent's policy stands positively than were those who thought that casework was most important, but the same is not true for negative mentions of policies. The contrast is somewhat sharper when we compare instances where policy was ranked first or in the top two and casework was ranked last or in the bottom two with instances where casework was ranked first or in the

TABLE 9a
EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATIONS OF INCUMBENTS

	POLICY REFERENCES		CONSTITUENCY REFERENCES	
	Likes	Dislikes	Likes	Dislikes
Policy Most Important	9%	14%	37%	6%
Casework Most Important	1%	14%	30%	21%
Policy Ranked in Top 2 and Casework Ranked in Bottom 2	7%	12%	35%	9%
Casework Ranked in Top 2 and Policy Ranked in Bottom 2	4%	9%	33%	14%
Policy Ranked First and Casework Ranked Last	8%	5%	41%	10%
Casework Ranked First and Policy Ranked Last	0%	0%	31%	25%

TABLE 9b

EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATIONS OF INCUMBENTS

	UNITED KINGDOM			
	Policy References		Constituency References	
	Likes	Dislikes	Likes	Dislikes
Policy Most Important	---	46%	28%	7%
Casework Most Important	---	40%	45%	13%
Policy Ranked in Top 2 and Casework Ranked in Bottom 2	---	61%	35%	10%
Casework Ranked in Top 2 and Policy Ranked in Bottom 2	---	32%	48%	17%
Policy Ranked First and Casework Ranked Last	---	64%	20%	9%
Casework Ranked First and Policy Ranked Last	---	38%	52%	8%

20b

21

top two and policy was ranked last or in the bottom two. In both sets of comparisons, when the policy-making role was ranked more highly, negative and positive references to the policy stands of the incumbent increased. Conversely, we would expect the number of constituency references to increase when the casework role was more highly ranked, but this seems to be true only for negative references in the U.S.

The relationships more clearly conform to our expectations in the British data. Since there were too few positive references to the policy stands of the incumbent MPs to analyze, our attention must be restricted to negative policy references. There, policy references increased considerably when the policy making role was ranked most highly and decreased when casework was ranked most highly. At the same time, constituency references tended to increase when the casework role was rated highest and decreased when the policy making role was rated highest, especially in the positive reference category.

Hence, there is evidence of a correlation between what people thought was the most important aspect of a representative's job and their evaluations of the incumbent. This means that the basis of how representatives are judged will vary to some degree with the role that their constituents think they should be playing, which returns us to the point that certain activities will be more rewarded or punished in some kinds of districts as opposed to others.

INCUMBENT ACTIVITIES AND INCUMBENT IMAGES

It is Fenno's contention that U.S. Congressmen present themselves to their constituents in a manner that is consistent with the makeup of their districts and their personalities. The incumbent's "presentation," or image, is based on what he or she says or does in the course of meeting and dealing with district residents. Thus, incumbents can to some degree control the images that constituents have of them by their choice of activities. Those who wish to establish or improve their images will try to increase the number of favorable contacts they have their constituents -- more personal visits, high staff visibility, aggressive casework solicitation, mailings, TV appearances, weekly columns in the local newspaper and the like.

To say that incumbents have some control over their images through their activities is not to say that they have total control. The ease of getting a message through to constituents will be determined by their education, class and inherent political interest. Better educated, middle class and highly active individuals will more quickly assimilate the incumbent's message than less well educated, working class and politically indifferent ones. Moreover, the kind of appeal that succeeds with those who assimilate information quickly may be less appropriate to other constituents. For instance, we saw earlier that middle class, higher educated whites tended to favor policy-oriented representation whereas working class, lower educated minorities preferred service-oriented representation. Even more fundamentally, the message the incumbents try to convey to their constituents will be

colored by their partisan predispositions. So the incumbent's control over how he or she is evaluated is by no means complete.

Even so, the question arises, "To what extent do incumbent activities affect the tendency of constituents to form positive or negative images of them?" This issue can be explored in two ways. The first is simply to see whether those voters who report that they have had contact with the incumbent in various ways are more likely to say something positive or negative about him or her. This is displayed in Table 10 and in equations A.4 and A.5 in the Appendix. Both the bivariate and multivariate data show that many of these variables are in fact related to the formation of incumbent images. Contacts with the incumbent clearly make a difference in both countries, particularly the personal and citizen-initiated contacts. Whereas 43 percent of all the respondents in the U.S. sample and 25 percent of those in the British could mention something that they liked about the incumbent, 80 percent of those in the U.S. who had personally met the incumbent in the U.S. and 55 percent in the U.K. were able to do so. Similarly knowing someone else who personally had met the incumbent and contacting the incumbent for help also significantly increased the percentage of those who could say what they liked or disliked about their incumbent. In both countries, passive contact -- seeing the representative on TV, hearing him on radio, getting mail from him -- seems to be a somewhat less effective means of raising incumbent salience to constituents.

[Insert Table 10 here]

In addition to the effects of incumbent contacts, other variables seem to be related as well. As one might reasonably expect, college educated individuals were more likely to form images of their incumbent than those without a college degree. Younger people were less able to say what they liked and disliked about the incumbent than older people. Partisanship also affected the way constituents saw their representatives, and the general level of attention individuals paid to politics and campaigns mattered quite apart from these other effects.

However, one might wonder whether the respondents' self-reported contact might not be biased by their favorable or unfavorable impression of the incumbent. If respondents like their incumbents, then they might be more likely to get in contact with them. Of course, this would not explain why the dislikes item also increases with incumbent contact, but the probability of simultaneous causation cannot be casually dismissed. A second way to look at the relation between incumbent activity and images, which gets around the issue of a potentially biased contact response, is to see whether the probability of being able to say what the constituent likes or dislikes about the incumbent is in any way related to measures of incumbent activity.

Tables 11 and 12 display the percent who could say what they liked and disliked about an incumbent as a function of various types of incumbent activity. In the U.S. data, soliciting cases, personal attention by the Member of Congress to casework and having a large casework staff seemed to heighten the salience of the incumbent considerably.

TABLE 10

ABILITY TO SAY WHAT RESPONDENT LIKES/DISLIKES
ABOUT INCUMBENT BY CONTACT ITEMS AND OTHER VARIABLES

	<u>United States</u>		<u>United Kingdom</u>	
	Likes	Dislikes	Likes	Dislikes
All	43%	11%	25%	13%
Personal Contact	80%	21%	55%	24%
Passive Contact	54%	14%	36%	16%
Citizen-Initiated Contact	78%	24%	55%	24%
Secondhand Contacts	72%	19%	51%	18%
Secondhand Citizen-Initiated Contacts	72%	21%	62%	15%
High School/Left School (U.S.) $15 \leq X \leq 18$	39%	10%	22%	13%
College/In School (U.S.) ≥ 21 (U.K.)	54%	20%	30%	15%
Low Attention	36%	6%	18%	5%
High Attention	59%	21%	30%	17%
≤ 21	23%	7%	5%	6%
Same Party as Incumbent	52%	10%	33%	8%

Publicizing cases and handling state and local cases did not. In Great Britain, all of the constituency activities increased the incumbent's salience, but especially surgeries, an effort to publicize cases and taking on local cases. Apparently, what works best for incumbents in one country does not necessarily work best in another.

[Insert Tables 11 and 12 here]

Apart from the relationship between specific incumbent activities and the ability to form images of the incumbent, we can also look at the relationship between a general measure of constituency aggressiveness and likes/dislikes.² Here too we see that those who reside in districts where the incumbents undertake high levels of constituency work were more likely to be able to say something positive about the incumbent in both countries. Curiously, however, there is a significant difference between the two countries in the relationship between constituency activity and negative images of the incumbent. In Great Britain, incumbents who put forward a great deal of effort are rewarded by a lower probability that constituents will have anything bad to say about them, but in the U.S., it increases the negative as well as positive mentions.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have looked at the expectations and images that constituents have of their representatives in the United States and

TABLE 11

RELATION BETWEEN ACTIVITIES AND ABILITY TO MENTION SOMETHING ABOUT INCUMBENT

	<u>United States</u>	
	Likes	Dislikes
Solicit Cases on TV, Radio, Newspapers	61%	18%
No Effort or by Newsletters Only	42%	11%
Personal Attention by MC to Casework	61%	21%
None	40%	6%
Publicizes Cases	45%	10%
Does not Publicize	43%	11%
Handles Local Cases	39%	9%
Does Not Handle Local Cases	45%	13%
Caseworkers \geq 8	47%	13%
Caseworkers = 0	11%	11%
Highest General Index Score	45%	15%
Lowest General Index Score	39%	9%

TABLE 12

RELATION BETWEEN ACTIVITIES AND ABILITY TO MENTION SOMETHING ABOUT INCUMBENT

	<u>United Kingdom</u>	
	Likes	Dislikes
Seeks Out Cases	27%	12%
Does Not Seek Out Cases	22%	14%
Surgeries > 2 a Month	38%	13%
Surgeries ≤ 2 a Month	21%	12%
Effort to Publicize Cases	28%	11%
No Effort	16%	16%
Act on all Cases	27%	12%
Does Not Act on all Cases	23%	14%
Responsible for Local Cases	28%	14%
Not Responsible	16%	11%
Highest General Index Score	48%	16%
Lowest General Index Score	21%	14%

Great Britain. We have seen that constituents in both countries expect a strong district orientation and a surprising degree of independence from their representatives. There also appear to be clear class, educational and racial differences in these role expectations, and we speculated that this may mean that representatives in different districts are rewarded for different things. The effect of contact with the incumbent upon constituent evaluations is quite strong in both countries. Clearly, engaging in various forms of constituency activities is one way to create a favorable image among constituents.

FOOTNOTES

1. The CPS 1978 congressional study sampled in 108 districts. We were able to secure interviews with staff in 102 out of the 108 districts.

The Gallup study samples 133 districts. During 1978 and 1979, we interviewed 146 MPs and agents, including some MPs and agents in the same constituencies and some in constituencies not sampled by Gallup. In this article, we have excluded agent interviews in constituencies in which we interviewed the MPs, the newly elected, and those outside the original Gallup sample. This gives us 101 observations: 69 MPs and 32 agents. There is an obvious asymmetry between interviewing the AAs in the United States case and the MP in the British case that must be considered when making comparisons across these two data sets. For instance, it would not be valid to compare attitudes across the two samples since you would not be able to say what was cross-national in origin and what could be attributed to differences in the position of staff and representatives. On the other hand, most of the activity variables can be compared since there is less reason to expect a systematic response bias between staff and the representative on a question such as the number of cases processed per week.

2. Several methods of aggregating -- factor analytic, Guttman scaling, and simple additive -- were tested and reported in an earlier

paper, "Constituency Component: A Comparison of Casework in Great Britain and the United States," (forthcoming, Comparative Political Studies). Here we employ the simple additive measure.

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APPENDIX A.1
CORRELATES OF ROLE IMPORTANCE -- UNITED STATES

	Keeping Track of Civil Servants	Protect District	Helping People	Keeping in Touch	Policy
Union	.059 (.078)	.105† (.076)	-.099 (.086)	-.055 (.068)	.000 (.076)
Age	.010* (.002)	-.003 (.002)	.004* (.002)	-.011* (.001)	.004* (.002)
High School	-.076 (.091)	-.143* (.088)	-.067 (.096)	.002 (.081)	.330* (.098)
Some College	.016 (.111)	-.328* (.113)	-.280* (.126)	-.038 (.099)	.578* (.114)
College	-.227* (.120)	-.526* (.126)	-.245* (.131)	-.211* (.105)	.987* (.115)
Male	-.057 (.069)	-.076 (.069)	-.011 (.076)	-.020 (.061)	.150* (.066)
Middle Class	.109† (.074)	-.053 (.074)	.051 (.082)	-.102† (.065)	.108† (.072)
Same Party as Incumbent	-.006 (.071)	.031 (.071)	.062 (.078)	-.038 (.062)	-.015 (.068)
Democrat	-.112† (.083)	.198* (.083)	-.00 (.08)	-.049 (.072)	-.004 (.080)
Republican	-.070 (.093)	.203* (.096)	-.22* (.11)	.023 (.082)	-.005 (.088)
Black	-.079 (.128)	.246* (.112)	.23* (.12)	-.210* (.111)	-.173† (.131)
Constant	-1.31	-.78	-1.19	.18	-1.5
R ²	.04	.06	.04	.05	.12
X ²	38	54	29	53	133

* p < .05

† p < .10

APPENDIX A.2

CORRELATES OF ROLE IMPORTANCE -- UNITED KINGDOM

	Keeping Track of Civil Servants	Protect Constituency	Helping People	Keeping in Touch	Policy
Union	-.122 (.123)	.001 (.075)	-.129† (.080)	.062 (.076)	.149* (.088)
Left School ≤ 14	.27† (.21)	-.104 (.105)	.277* (.124)	.308* (.116)	-.542* (.112)
Middle Class	-.09 (.11)	-.052 (.068)	-.126* (.072)	.067 (.070)	.203* (.085)
Age ≤ 20	-.262* (.128)	-.110† (.073)	-.032 (.077)	.198* (.072)	.019 (.088)
Male	.242* (.109)	.020 (.067)	-.097† (.071)	-.128* (.069)	.205* (.081)
Conservative	-.082 (.161)	.083 (.102)	-.085 (.109)	-.150† (.104)	.251* (.127)
Labour	-.114 (.145)	-.176* (.094)	.069 (.098)	.104 (.093)	.054 (.120)
Liberal	-.171 (.207)	.219* (.122)	-.023 (.134)	-.332* (.132)	.212† (.151)
Same Party as Incumbent	-.048 (.125)	.062 (.076)	.096† (.080)	-.079 (.078)	-.087 (.094)
Constant	-1.76	-.37	-.88	-.84	-1.01
R ²	.04	.02	.03	.04	.08
χ ²	14	22	24	39	63

* p < .05

† p < .10

APPENDIX A.3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CORRELATES OF PARTY VERSUS CONSCIENCE QUESTION

	United States	United Kingdom
Union	.11† (.07)	-.038 (.064)
Age	.004* (.001)	-.053 (.062)
High School	.076 (.077)	-----
Some College	.160* (.096)	-----
College	.325* (.103)	-----
Male	.214* (.060)	-.081† (.057)
Middle Class	.133* (.064)	.075† (.059)
Same Party as Incumbent	-.058 (.061)	-.097 (.064)
Democrat/Labour	-.167* (.071)	-.105† (.079)
Republican/Conservative	-.056 (.083)	-.086 (.087)
Black	.014 (.099)	-----
Left School at ≤ 14	-----	.187* (.089)
Liberal	-----	.126 (.110)
Constant	.503	.637
R ²	.04	.015
χ ²	52	21

* p < .05

† p < .10

APPENDIX A.4

PROBIT OF LIKES AND DISLIKES IN UNITED KINGDOM

	Likes			Dislikes		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Middle Class	-.16* (.08)	-.09 (.07)	-.09 (.07)	.05 (.09)	.06 (.08)	.07 (.08)
Year Elected	.016* (.005)	---	---	-.009* (.005)	---	---
Personal Contact	.79* (.09)	---	---	.51* (.11)	---	---
Passive Contact	.67* (.08)	---	---	.28* (.09)	---	---
Citizen-Initiated Contact	.40* (.13)	---	---	.30* (.14)	---	---
Secondhand Contact	.39* (.11)	---	---	.15 (.13)	---	---
Secondhand Citizen-Initiated Contact	.43* (.17)	---	---	-.33* (.19)	---	---
Same Party as Incumbent	.33* (.08)	.42* (.07)	.45* (.07)	-.61* (.09)	-.50* (.09)	-.50* (.09)
No Party ID	.12 (.11)	.02 (.10)	.02 (.10)	-.55* (.13)	-.53* (.12)	-.54* (.12)
Attention Index	.01 (.02)	.06* (.02)	.065* (.02)	.06* (.03)	.09* (.03)	.08* (.02)
School \geq 21	.03 (.16)	.19 (.14)	.22+ (.14)	-.15 (.18)	.05 (.17)	.09 (.17)
School = 19	-.20 (.31)	-.15 (.26)	-.11 (.26)	-.48 (.41)	.04 (.30)	.07 (.30)
Index of Activity	---	.11* (.02)	---	---	-.08* (.04)	---
15 \leq School \leq 18	-.16* (.10)	-.06 (.08)	-.05 (.09)	.02 (.11)	.08 (.10)	.08 (.11)
Ministerial Position	.005 (.093)	-.02 (.08)	-.003 (.08)	-.09 (.11)	-.02 (.10)	-.07 (.10)

APPENDIX A.4
(continued)

	Likes			Dislikes		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
21 \leq Age \leq 29	.00 (.14)	-.07 (.12)	-.05 (.13)	.09 (.15)	.03 (.14)	.04 (.14)
30 \leq Age \leq 55	.18 (.12)	.19* (.10)	.22* (.10)	.04 (.13)	.10 (.12)	.12 (.12)
55 \leq Age	.36* (.13)	.34* (.11)	.36* (.12)	-.01 (.15)	.01 (.14)	-.002 (.14)
Seek Out Cases	---	---	-.06 (.09)	---	---	.03 (.10)
Surgeries > 2 a Month	---	---	.49* (.08)	---	---	.08 (.10)
Responsible for Local Cases	---	---	.16* (.07)	---	---	.19 (.09)
Effort to Publicize	---	---	.02 (.09)	---	---	-.36* (.10)
Constant	-1.36	-2.72	-1.36	-.70	-1.22	-1.23
\hat{R}^2	.12	.33	.10	.16	.09	.11
Chi-Square	126	358	101	110	63	78
Percent Correctly Predicted	75%	79%	75%	87%	87%	87%

* p < .05
 ** p < .01
 + p < .10

APPENDIX A.5

PROBIT OF LIKES AND DISLIKES IN UNITED STATES

	Likes			Dislikes		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Age	.010*	.010*	.010*	.005*	.007*	.007*
	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.003)	(.002)	(.003)
Year Elected	.002	---	---	-.002	---	---
	(.006)			(.007)		
Personal Contact	.696*	---	---	.230*	---	---
	(.090)			(.102)		
Passive Contact	1.04*	---	---	.230*	---	---
	(.09)			(.125)		
Citizen-Initiated Contact	.37*	---	---	.27*	---	---
	(.11)			(.11)		
Secondhand Contact	.42*	---	---	.02	---	---
	(.08)			(.11)		
Secondhand Citizen-Initiated Contact	.21*	---	---	.23*	---	---
	(.09)			(.10)		
Same Party as Incumbent	.32*	.30*	.31*	-.32*	-.33*	-.33*
	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.09)	(.09)	(.09)
Independent	-.14	-.16+	-.17*	-.32*	-.26*	-.30*
	(.11)	(.09)	(.10)	(.14)	(.14)	(.14)
High School	-.16*	.11+	.10	.29*	.39*	.39*
	(.09)	(.08)	(.08)	(.12)	(.12)	(.12)
Some College	-.14	.20*	.20*	.49*	.65*	.66*
	(.11)	(.10)	(.10)	(.14)	(.14)	(.14)
College	-.05	.33*	.32*	.53*	.69*	.69*
	(.12)	(.11)	(.11)	(.14)	(.14)	(.15)
Index	---	.17*	---	---	.19*	---
		(.05)			(.06)	
Middle Class	.06	.14*	.14*	-.007	.04	.04
	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.090)	(.08)	(.09)

APPENDIX A.5

(continued)

	Likes			Dislikes		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
High Attention	.54*	.73*	.72*	.61*	.63*	.62*
	(.12)	(.09)	(.09)	(.17)	(.12)	(.12)
Medium Attention	.48*	.42*	.43*	.37*	.32*	.33*
	(.11)	(.07)	(.07)	(.17)	(.11)	(.11)
Low Attention	.30*	---	---	.17	---	---
	(.12)			(.18)		
Chair	-.03	-.10	.01	.09	-.09	.03
	(.17)	(.20)	(.08)	(.20)	(.27)	(.27)
Subcommittee Chair	.06	.17*	.31*	.15+	.22*	.16+
	(.08)	(.07)	(.07)	(.11)	(.10)	(.10)
Number of Caseworkers	---	---	.02	---	---	.04*
			(.02)			(.02)
Solicit on TV, Radio, Newspapers	---	---	.39*	---	---	.23+
			(.13)			(.16)
Handle Local Cases	---	---	-.20	---	---	-.24*
			(.07)			(.09)
Personal Attention	---	---	.13*	---	---	.28*
			(.08)			(.10)
Publicizes Cases	---	---	.10+	---	---	-.05
			(.08)			(.12)
Constant	-2.46	-1.37	-1.33	-2.29	-2.29	-2.36
\hat{R}^2	.47	.17	.18	.22	.17	.19
Chi-Square	676	376	224	168	116	130
Percent Correctly Predicted	75%	64%	65%	88%	89%	89%

* p < .05

** p < .01

+ p < .10