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THE ROOTS OF LEGISLATOR POPULARITY
IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

In both the United States and Great Britain, legislators are surprisingly popular despite the inefficacy of government policies and the worsening of economic conditions. The answer to this small puzzle lies in the determinants of legislative popularity. In this paper we show that legislative popularity in both countries is significantly related to constituency oriented activities such as handling constituents' problems, maintaining a high visibility in the constituency, defending the special interests of the district, and the like. We propose a three equation structural model which explains the formation of (1) name recognition, (2) the general expectation that the legislator is a dependable constituency man, and (3) the final assessment of the legislator's performance itself. The data we employ come from the 1978 CPS/NES Congressional Elections Study and from a 1979 British Election survey conducted by Gallup for our purposes.

WHAT MAKES LEGISLATORS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES POPULAR?

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One of the more interesting findings of modern survey research is that constituents hold their elected representatives in high regard even though when acting collectively those representatives are unsuccessful in solving major national problems which affect their constituents' welfare.¹ In the United States, for example, inflation rages on and the term "national energy policy" is but a modern equivalent of the Holy Grail. Similarly, in Great Britain, the economy stagnates and labor unrest continues apace. Yet in both countries electors give their legislators high marks. The 1978 CPS/NES Congressional Election Study reveals that 46 percent of the American electorate ranks their Representative's performance as "very good" or "good," and the ratio of favorable to unfavorable ratings is on the order of 11/1. British MPs do not fare quite so well; still, a survey commissioned immediately following the May 1979 elections reports 35 percent positive ratings, and a positive to negative ratio of 7/2. Even granting the substantial intercountry difference, citizens in these post-industrial democracies do indeed seem to like their representatives.

In and of themselves job ratings are not of critical interest. One could rate one's representative highly and cheerfully vote against him or her on grounds of policy disagreement, party loyalty or whatever. But a quick look at the data dispels such notions. As Table 1 shows,

ratings of representatives' job performance have a strong association with the vote. In the U.S. case those who rate their representative's performance as very good show a near certain probability of electoral support. The only surprise in the table is the relatively high level of support among those critical (a small number to be sure) of the representative's performance. The relationship between approval and voting for the incumbent Member of Parliament is about as strong as that for Congressmen though the range of support is displaced downward on the scale. The point, however, is simply that there is a strong -- even if slightly different -- relationship between incumbent job ratings and the vote in both countries.

[Table 1 here]

This paper explores the bases of the American and British electorates' ratings of their respective legislators. The similarities in the electoral systems of the two nations (i.e. geographically located single-member districts, plurality rule) lead us to suspect similar grounds for incumbent performance ratings in both countries. But our approach of course is flexible enough to permit intercountry differences to emerge. Our analysis goes beyond the existing literature in two respects: its comparative focus, and its exploitation of two new and highly appropriate data sets.

In November of 1978 the Center for Political Studies of the University of Michigan in cooperation with a committee of interested scholars carried out an extensive congressional election study. The survey included a number of new items designed to elicit voter reactions to incumbents -- name recognition, contacts, service,

TABLE 1
 INCUMBENT JOB RATINGS AND THE VOTE
 IN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN
 (ns in parenthesis)

	<u>United States</u>	<u>Great Britain</u>
Very Good	98 % (184)	63 % (200)
Good	90 (374)	53 (353)
Fair	65 (187)	43 (311)
Poor	25 (28)	25 (89)
Very Poor	43 (7)	14 (44)
Don't Know	71 (99)	36 (436)

Item: In general, how would you rate the job that your U.S. Representative (Member of Parliament) _____ has been doing -- very good, good, fair, poor or very poor?

appropriate activities, as well as information on the comparative issue and ideological positions of the congressional candidates. In the spring of 1979 we contracted with Social Surveys Limited (British Gallup) to include a number of these newer items on a survey following the May election. These two surveys, conducted only seven months apart and including highly comparable items constitute the data base for the analysis which follows. The exact wording of the new items used in this paper appears in the appendix.

Sources of Legislator Approval

Why should citizens rate their legislators highly?

The first answer which comes to mind is that suggested by classic democratic theory: a legislator earns the approval of his or her constituents by faithfully representing them in the legislature.² This suggestion has been out of fashion for some two decades now. In their seminal study of congressional representation Stokes and Miller reported data which seemed to indicate a dismally ignorant congressional electorate.³ Over half the voters had not heard or read anything about either candidate, only a "chemical trace" of citizens explained their votes by reference to legislative issues, etc. In all likelihood, however, such research has underestimated the knowledge and awareness of the legislative electorate. The basic problem lies in the use of a spontaneous name recall item as a filter for exploring citizens' perceptions of the candidates, i.e. only those who could recall the candidates' names were asked any further questions. In the 1978 study only 12 percent of the respondents could recall the names of both candidates, but 40 percent

could recognize the names of both. Furthermore, rather than wait for them to volunteer the information, the 1978 study invited citizens to provide a general appraisal of the incumbent's voting record; over 40 percent of them consented to do so.

Still, even if citizens know more about their representatives' policy positions and legislative activities than previously believed, there is fairly convincing evidence that such knowledge is not the basis of their favorable evaluations of those representatives. In an examination of citizen evaluations Parker and Davidson found that only a minute proportion of the citizenry offers policy or performance based reasons for their judgments.⁴ Rather, evaluations center on personal qualities and constituency service.

Such findings indicate that modern electorates are aware that traditional democratic theory does not provide a very accurate description of contemporary legislators' activities. In a world in which national governments participate actively in the social and economic realms two other familiar legislative roles now take on greater significance than previously.⁵ As the amount of money and services disbursed by national governments has grown, the expectation that legislators should procure an "appropriate" share of it for their districts also has grown. In earlier times such efforts were grouped under the heading of "pork barrel" politics, but the term is too narrow today. Suffice it to say that the modern legislator plays an important role as a broker or facilitator of national activities important to local social, economic and governmental interests. Probably legislators have happily embraced this expansion of a traditional role -- they publicize their efforts widely.⁶ That such efforts do not go unappreciated is reflected in the 1978 CPS study:

20 percent of the respondents claimed they could remember "something special" the incumbent had done for the district, a category of responses heavily colored by money-channelling activities. In the British sample 13 percent recalled some particularistic achievement of the MP, a surprisingly high figure given the relative powerlessness of the MP.

A second consequence of the growth of national governments is the increase in direct contacts between ordinary citizens and those governments. Whether attempting to take advantage of a particular program or trying to elude some particular set of requirements or regulations, citizens increasingly must deal with government bureaucracies. This trend has probably led to an expansion in another familiar role of legislators, that of the ombudsman, a champion of constituent interests against the decisions of national agencies. There are a variety of indicators suggestive of increasing activity of this kind, including the rapid expansion of congressional staffs, district office allotments, etc. In Great Britain as well there are pressures along these lines.⁷ Again, the expansion of the ombudsman role has probably been an electoral boon to legislators. In the 1978 CPS Study 15 percent of the respondents reported they had contacted their Representatives, about two-thirds of these to seek information or help with a problem. In Great Britain the data show that 8 percent of the respondents have written to their MP, and, as one might expect in a system with strong party discipline, few of these communications concerned a policy stand -- 80 percent of them requested information or help with a problem. We should add that in

both countries citizens who contacted their representatives were overwhelmingly satisfied with the response they received. About 75 percent of these respondents in the United Kingdom report good or "very good" response, and more than 90 percent of the American respondents gave the same ratings.

The multiplicity of roles modern legislators are expected to play is nicely illustrated by the responses to the following item: "Here is a list of some of the activities that occupy members of (Congress, Parliament) as part of their job. We want to know how you feel about the importance (MCs, MPs) should give these activities". The response categories (see appendix) summarize the lawmaking, pork barrel, ombudsman, oversight, and informational-educational activities of legislators. Responses appear in Table 2.

[Table 2 here]

If we treat lawmaking and oversight as the programmatic activity emphasized by classic democratic theory, we see that only about a third of Americans and a sixth of the British give pre-eminence to such activities.⁸ Perhaps most significantly, more than a quarter of the citizens in each country feel it most important simply that their legislator keep in touch about what the government (them?) is doing. The significance of these findings is that it is "easier" for legislators to earn approval as ombudsmen, pork barrelers, and information sources than as lawmakers. In matters of distributive politics modern legislatures tend to adopt universalistic procedures and allow legislators the opportunity to claim credit for that which everyone gets anyway.⁹ Similarly, all that is required to be a good ombudsman or a good information provider is to make the effort.

TABLE 2
CITIZEN PERCEPTIONS OF MOST IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

	<u>United States</u>	<u>Great Britain</u>
Ombudsman	12 %	19
Protecting Constituency or District Interests	16	26
Oversight	15	5
Information	31	24
Lawmaking (Debating and Voting)	20	11
All equal	5	10

Congressmen in particular have access to staffs who can handle most routine case work, and as for keeping in touch, both MPs and congressmen simply need to be willing to invest the time this entails. Activities such as these are noncontroversial. What fragmentary data we have, for example, indicate that most people are pleased with efforts in their behalf even if such efforts have no tangible impact. The effort itself matters. In contrast, lawmaking is inherently controversial; on most issues most legislators will make significant numbers of enemies no matter how conscientiously they do their job. Thus, any shift in popular expectations away from lawmaking to other roles should be expected to enhance the public's satisfaction with their representatives.

There are still other suggestions as to why modern legislators are so popular. Good government groups simply point to the communications that legislators shower on their constituents (57 percent of the British respondents and 76 percent of the Americans report some type of contact or communication from their representative). This explanation presumes that communication builds name recognition which in turn produces support. It is not a very subtle theory. In contrast, Fenno argues that the continuing efforts of congressmen to present themselves to their constituents should be viewed as attempts to build trust among those constituents, to develop expectations that the congressmen would be helpful even if the occasion has not yet arisen, and to promote beliefs that the congressmen is speaking for constituents even if they are not aware of all the details at all times.¹⁰

Indeed, the majority of respondents in both countries exhibited a belief that their representative would be helpful if they requested his or her aid. In the United Kingdom 56 percent said they expected their MP to be "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful" while in the United States the comparable statistic was 61 percent. Only 11 percent of the British respondents and 13 percent of those in the American sample expected their legislator to be "not very helpful".

To summarize, the relevant hypotheses about the basis of positive evaluations of modern legislators generally deny that these legislators are evaluated principally on policy grounds. Instead, such hypotheses claim that voters approve (1) familiar names, or (2) other more tangible, though nonprogrammatic activities such as district service and constituent assistance, and/or (3) trusted individuals who have contacted them and provided them with relevant information. The two sets of survey data we have enable us to examine in a reasonably direct way each of the major hypotheses. The variables and methods of analysis are the concern of the next section.

Measures and Methods

Each of the hypotheses discussed in the preceding section is represented by one or more items in our surveys (see appendix). One item asks about contacts and communications between incumbents and their constituents, both of a personal kind (meetings and talks with incumbents or their staff) and the more impersonal variety (mail, mass media). Another item inquires about the contacts constituents themselves initiate, whether to express opinions or request help. Constituents are asked whether they can remember anything special the

incumbent has done for the district -- a request which should bring to mind the representative's broker/facilitator role. There is an item in the American survey which inquires about the respondent's general perception of the incumbent's voting record. Even Fenno's concern with trust and expectations of accessibility is reflected in the aforementioned item which asks how helpful the incumbent would be if the citizen had a problem. In addition to the voting record item in the American survey, party identification provides some indication of programmatic agreement or disagreement with the Representative. The American survey also contains a variety of seven point scales on which the respondent is asked to place himself/herself and the congressional candidates, but these are not very useful because (1) retiring or unopposed incumbents are not placed on the scales, (2) a large number of respondents (typically about 1100) do not know each candidate's stand. Thus, any multivariate analysis which uses these items founders on missing data problems. Such items are not included on the British survey. Finally, the collective performance items of the parent legislative body is the subject of an item in both the American and British surveys.

One could simply include all the preceding items in an analysis of incumbent performance ratings; eventually, we will do this. But the analysis should be somewhat subtler. For example, proponents of the name recognition thesis claim that recognition is a function of the communications resources available to incumbents. We can examine this claim directly. Furthermore, trust in one's representative presumably arises from familiarity with him or her, previous observations of his or her performance, and perhaps party affiliation or policy agreement. Job performance ratings, finally,

should be functions of all the aforementioned factors, some of which may work directly, others only indirectly through name recognition and expectations of access.

Our analysis therefore focuses on three dependent variables: name recognition, expectations of access, and performance ratings. The purpose is to test for significant direct and indirect interactions between these variables, various types of constituency service and other relevant variables.¹¹ Given that each of these variables is dichotomous or ordinal, statistical problems arise if standard regression methods are employed. Therefore, we employ a maximum likelihood probit procedure for estimating the statistical models.¹²

The Recognition Equation

The CPS survey measures name recognition via the familiar feeling thermometer.¹³ A list of names is offered to the respondent who is asked to rate how warmly he or she feels about each person. The respondent is explicitly requested not to rate unfamiliar persons: "If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person. Just tell me and we'll move on to the next one."¹⁴ The incumbent is not identified as such, and the rating is elicited before any other questions about Congress are asked. More than 80 percent of the respondents rated the incumbent. These are scored 1; the remaining 20 percent are scored 0. Thus, we are trying to account for responses to an extremely skewed dependent variable. Table 3 (first column) presents an estimation of the name recognition equation.

[Table 3 here]

On the whole the estimates reveal a plausible picture.

TABLE 3
NAME RECOGNITION AND NAME RECALL

	United States Recognition	United States Recall	Great Britain Recall
Personal Contact	.57**	.28**	.45**
Impersonal Contact	1.08**	.72**	.65**
Secondhand Contact	.32**	.18*	.22**
Citizen-Initiated Contact	.65**	.18*	.07
Secondhand Citizen- Initiated Contact	.52**	.11*	.16
District Service	.57**	.18*	.48**
Voting Record	Satisfactory	.99**	.61**
	SW Satisfactory	.68**	.56**
	Neutral	.37**	.10
	Unsatisfactory	.73**	.69**
Year Elected	-.01*	.02**	.01**
Committee Chair	.05	.46**	-
Subcommittee Chair	.04	.16*	-
Government Position	-	-	.07
Independent	.06	-.15	-
No Party ID	-	-	-.24**
Same Party ID	.14	.12	.06
\hat{R}^2	.60	.34	.22
n	2,179	2,190	1,585

Citizens who have been contacted by the incumbent are significantly more likely to recognize his/her name than those not contacted.

Though the estimates appear to show that personal contacts are less important than less personal ones, this result is deceptive: nearly everyone personally contacted has also received a less personal contact (461 of 507). Thus, those personally contacted generally have a combined contact coefficient of 1.65 v. 1.08 for those not personally contacted. Citizen-initiated contacts also are statistically important, and other analyses not reported indicate that the nature of such contacts makes no difference. Finally, notice that the "ripple effects" of any kind of contact are statistically significant: the contacts experienced by a citizen's friends and relatives increase the probability that he recognizes the incumbent.

Impressions of an incumbent's voting record also bear a strong relation to name recognition. The omitted reference category is the group which has no impression. Relative to the unaware, both those satisfied and those dissatisfied are significantly more likely to recognize the incumbent's name. Although the finding is completely expected, there is some causal ambiguity about it: perhaps those contacted by the incumbent both recognize the name and form an impression of the voting record as a result of the content of the contact.

Somewhat surprisingly, the incumbent's formal position in Congress makes no difference for name recognition. On the other hand simple seniority does: the earlier a Congressman was elected the better known he/she is. Seniority and formal position are of course related, but no doubt seniority reflects the cumulative efforts of

incumbents in all areas -- contacts, service, voting etc. The other surprise among the measures of objective characteristics is the lack of importance of party ID for name recognition. *Ceteris Paribus*, whether or not a citizen shares the incumbent's party affiliation makes little difference in the probability of recognizing the latter's name.

We have no name recognition measure on the British survey (thermometers not being a standard part of British Gallup's repertoire), but there is a rough way of examining it through use of the name recall items. As mentioned, the latter underestimate the extent of awareness of legislative candidates,¹⁵ but perhaps the underestimate is across the board rather than systematic. If so, an estimated name recall equation should bear a "proportionate" resemblance to a name recognition equation. And if that is true for the United States, for which we have both measures, we would have some confidence that name recognition in Great Britain bears a similar resemblance to name recall there. The second and third columns of Table 3 contain such an analysis. In the second column we report the estimates of an American equation identical to the first except that name recall substitutes for name recognition as the dependent variable (correct recall equals 1, 0 otherwise). The third equation is analogous to the second except that it is estimated with the British data.

As a comparison of the first two columns shows, the equations are not as similar as one might wish. Contacts and voting record continue to have highly significant effects and the relative sizes of these coefficients are similar except for citizen initiated

contacts which appear rather weak in the recall equation. The two equations are also similar in that party affiliations appear unrelated to incumbent name recognition. There is a noteworthy difference between the recall and recognition equations, however, when it comes to formal position of the incumbent. So far as spontaneous name recall is concerned, formal position matters. And whether because of this or not we cannot say, the related seniority variable reverses sign between the two equations. We will not dwell on such differences except to note that the slippage between recognition and recall apparently has some systematic components.

The British recall equation resembles the American one in that personal, impersonal and secondhand contacts are significantly related to a higher probability of recalling the incumbent's name. So is recollection of some service the MP has performed for the district. And the puzzling finding of the American equation re-occurs: the more recent the MP's elections, the more likely are constituents to recall his name. There are some intercountry differences, however. One is that citizen initiated contacts show no relation to recall. Another is the apparent unimportance of positions in the national government. Still another is the presence in the British data of at least some degree of partisan effects: those choosing to identify with no party -- major or minor -- are significantly less likely to recall the MP's name.¹⁶ Possibly there is an analogous tendency in the American data, however, in the negative though insignificant coefficient attached to independents.

Of course, it is impossible to say what the equation would

look like if we had the less demanding name recognition variable. Nonetheless, the role of constituency-oriented activities in increasing the recall of British incumbents is quite impressive.

The Expectation of Access Equation

We have seen that name recognition relates in the expected manner to the obvious variables. By making use of their plentiful resources American incumbents can achieve a very high level of recognition. But to what end? Do votes follow directly from recognition as Ralph Nader, Common Cause and other such organizations appear to argue? Or is recognition merely an indicator -- and an imperfect one at that -- of other electoral factors? Certainly, high name recognition resulting from a sex scandal (former Utah Representative Allan Howe), Korean payoffs (former California Representative John McFall) the "wrong" position on a major policy issue (former Arkansas Representative Brooks Hays on school integration, former Iowa Senator Dick Clark on abortion, etc.) is something most incumbents would just as soon do without.

Names are recognized for a reason(s), even if voters may have difficulty remembering and/or articulating the reason(s). Fenno, for example, might argue that high name recognition usually indicates an incumbent who has "reached" a large proportion of his constituency. The mailings, the appearances -- all the myriad efforts to "present himself" to the district -- will produce high recognition, but the electoral payoff will be due more to the substance of the incumbent's

efforts. This would include the creation of trust, the formation of expectations that the incumbent is there to help if needed, and the reinforcement of beliefs that the incumbent is "of" the constituency.¹⁷

There is one item in both the CPS and British surveys which touches on such considerations. The item inquires how helpful the voter thinks the incumbent would be if the voter had a problem the incumbent could do something about. Of course, we would expect positive expectations to reflect actual experience, personal and second-hand, with the incumbent. In addition party and/or policy agreement might bear on expectations of incumbent receptivity to constituent problems. But if Fenno type arguments are accurate we would anticipate that positive expectations would result as well from the contacts that incumbents have with constituents and the name recognition resulting from those contacts. Table 4 contains the relevant analyses.

[Table 4 here]

The table offers a reasonable picture. The first two equations are estimated with the American data, one using name recognition, one using name recall. As seen, the estimates are virtually identical. Incumbent contacts, personal and secondhand, have an effect on constituent expectations over and above their effects through name recognition (name recall). The same is true for knowledge of any service the incumbent has performed for the district. Conversely, name recognition (recall) has effects on citizen expectations beyond the influences channeled through it (Table 3). Perceptions of the incumbent's voting record also have a direct effect on citizen expectation. Those approaching the record have confidence the incumbent

TABLE 4

EXPECTATIONS OF INCUMBENT HELPFULNESS (EIH),
UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN

	U.S. EIH with Recog.	U.S. EIH with Recall	G.B. EIH with Recall	
Personal Contact	.13*	.13*	.51**	
Impersonal Contact	.23**	.27**	.22**	
Secondhand Contact	.19**	.19**	-.07	
Citizen Initiated Contact	Very Satisfied	.96**	.95**	.99**
	SW Satisfied	-.27*	-.27*	-.30
	Not Satisfied	-1.33*	-1.38**	-1.25**
Secondhand Citizen- Initiated Contact	Satisfied	.45**	.45**	.94**
	SW Satisfied	.22	.21	.07
	Not Satisfied	-.91**	-.91**	-.63
District Service	.28**	.29**	.62**	
Name Recognition	.27**	-	-	
Name Recall	-	.12*	.05	
Independent	-.15	-.14	-	
No Party ID	-	-	.21	
Other Party ID	-	-	-.35†	
Same Party ID	.03	.03	.44**	
Voting Record	Approve	.92**	.92**	-
	SW Approve	.36**	.36**	-
	Neutral	-.29**	-.29**	-
	Disapprove	-.57**	-.57**	-
Year Elected	.00	.00	.00	
\hat{R}^2	.41	.41	.34	
rho	.46	.47	.36	
n	1,572	1,578	1,058	

** p < .01; * p < .05; † p < .10.

would be there in a pinch, while those faulting the record are significantly less likely to expect help than the 60 percent who have no knowledge of the voting record.

The most striking coefficients in the table, however, are those attached to the variables representing past services rendered by the incumbent. That expectations should reflect reality is not at all surprising, but the magnitude of the effects does make one sit up and take notice. Satisfied constituents are much more likely to have positive expectations about the incumbent than those having no personal experience. And if anything, the effects of unsatisfactory experiences are even stronger. We should point out too that constituents overwhelmingly report that the contacts they initiate with incumbents eventuate in satisfactory experiences: of 344 individuals in the American sample who initiated a contact, only 14 were "not satisfied," and only 19 "somewhat dissatisfied," while more than 200 were "very satisfied." All in all then, the Congressman's service activity contributes very positively to his image.

Two null findings deserve mention. First, though seniority has some influence (inconsistent) on name recognition and recall, it has no direct influence on constituents' expectations of access (presumably though, some indirect influence exists, since the longer a representative is in office, the more actual services he/she render, *ceteris paribus*). Second, sharing the incumbent's party affiliation has no relationship whatsoever to constituent perceptions that he/she would help with a personal problem. The information-service activities of the incumbent apparently are perceived in completely non-partisan

terms by the American electorate.¹⁸

Turning now to the British data, we see a picture similar to that just described except for one major particular: in Great Britain expectations of access are clearly related to party identification. Constituents who share the incumbent's affiliation are significantly more likely to expect that his/her help would be forthcoming if needed. Moreover, splinter party identifiers are marginally less likely to expect help from the incumbent than those who hold more standard party affiliations. Thus, when it comes to a non-ideological, non-programmatic legislative activity -- constituent assistance -- a major difference between the British and American cases emerges: party affiliations affect constituent expectations in Great Britain but not in the United States.

Of course, there are plausible reasons why party affiliations should affect the expectations of constituents in Great Britain more so than in the U.S. The party system is clearly stronger in the mother country, both in organizational terms, and as a factor which structures all aspects of the voting decision.¹⁹ Even so, the differences evident in Table 4 may arise from more mundane considerations. In Britain a majority of MP's hold their surgeries in local party headquarters. Thus, constituents who belong to opposing parties must bear the extra psychological cost of requesting assistance while physically on the enemy's "turf" so to speak.²⁰ American Congressmen in contrast generally have constituency offices distinct from party facilities, often in official government buildings.

Other than the effects of party identification the influences

on expectations of incumbent helpfulness in Great Britain are similar to those in the United States. Citizen initiated contacts are very important -- both personal and secondhand. But in contrast to the American case the positive impact of secondhand contacts appears comparable to that of personal ones, and the negative impact of secondhand contacts is statistically uncertain.²¹ Previous incumbent service to the district produces favorable expectations for the future. And finally, the variety of means MP's use to communicate with constituents contribute to favorable expectations, though name recall has no independent effect.

There are inter-country differences in the marginal distributions of variables, of course, but for the most part these are not so large as one might have anticipated. For example, as mentioned previously, 20 percent of the American sample remembers "something special" the Congressman has done for the district. The comparable figure in the British sample is 13 percent, lower, to be sure, but relatively high given the MP's lack of committee-based personal power. Similarly, 22 percent of the American sample reports some type of personal contact (met, heard in person, talked to member or staff). The (very) comparable figure in Great Britain is 18 percent. Perhaps the MP's disadvantage insofar as resources of office are concerned is counter-balanced by the smaller (geographically and numerically) districts. Or, it may be the case that backbench MP's have more time to meet with constituents.

Job Performance

Finally, we come back to the question with which we began this paper: why do citizen's rate their legislators so highly? Table 5 contains the estimates for the job performance equations. In order to maximize comparability we have estimated both equations with the name recall item. If the recognition item is substituted in the American equation, its value is .50 ($p < .01$), but the other coefficients and the overall performance of the equation are virtually unaffected (even less so than in Table 4, equation 1 and 2). Thus, in what follows we will at times refer to effects which occur through name recognition even though the equation using recall is the one reported.

[Table 5 here]

When combined with the relationships already estimated Table 5 summarizes a web of influences. In the American case appraisals of the incumbent's voting record have a strong impact on performance evaluations, both directly, and one should bear in mind, through name recognition and the formation of positive expectations about the incumbent's helpfulness, both of which relate very strongly to performance ratings. Somewhat less important but still showing direct as well as indirect influence on performance ratings are contacts and district service. Only one citizen-initiated contact coefficient remains significant in the performance rating equation. Thus, the effects of congressional service efforts appear to take place primarily through name recognition and/or the formation of positive expectations. All in all this congeries of direct and indirect effects is more consistent with the subtler ideas of Fenno than the simpler accusations of Common Cause.

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TABLE 5
INCUMBENT JOB RATINGS, UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN

	United States	Great Britain	
Name Recall (Recognition)	.07 (.50**)	.07	
Personal Contact	.15*	.15*	
Impersonal Contact	.23**	.18**	
Secondhand Contact	-	.08	
Citizen-Initiated Contacts	Very Satisfied	.23*	.37**
	SW Satisfied	.08	.11
	Not Satisfied	-.16	-.11
Secondhand Citizen-Initiated Contacts	Very Satisfied	.08	.40**
	SW Satisfied	-.11	-.34
	Not Satisfied	-.35†	-1.02**
District Service	.37**	.48**	
Voting Record	Approve	1.20**	-
	SW Approve	.35**	-
	Neutral	-.17*	-
	Disapprove	-1.05**	-
Expectation of Helpfulness	Very Helpful	1.70**	1.52**
	SW Helpful	.91**	.79**
	DK Helpful	.61**	.64**
	Depends	-	.78**
Carter or Callaghan Performance	Very Good	.41*	.67**
	Good	.05	.50**
	Fair	-.06	.34*
	Poor	-.04	.44**
	DK	.33	.29†
Congress or Parliament Performance	Very Good	1.11**	.32†
	Good	.60**	.35*
	Fair	.33**	.15
	Poor	.16	.03
	DK	.40**	.23†
Independent	.13	-	
No Party ID	-	.11	
Other Party ID	-	-.05	
Same Party ID	.09	.32**	
\hat{R}^2	.54	.40	
rho	.62	.53	
n	1,568	1,240	

Let us turn now to the question of collective responsibility and its impact on evaluations of individual members. Again, common party affiliation makes no difference; so far as evaluations of incumbents are concerned party identification must work only in roundabout ways if at all. Moreover, if we look at the embodiment of the party in power -- the President -- we see only a slight impact of his rating on member evaluations. The picture is somewhat more positive insofar as institutional performance is concerned: member evaluations do bear a significant relationship to institutional evaluations. Individuals do not completely escape the negative images produced by "running against Congress."²³

The British equation displays both similarities and contrasts when compared to the American. Contacts work in about the same way as in the American data, but there appears to be some difference in the direct importance of secondhand accounts of citizen initiated contacts. Perhaps something about the British social structure lends greater credence to word of mouth reports. On the other hand, expectations that the MP would help in a pinch are similarly and strongly related to performance in both countries. So is knowledge of "something special" the legislator has done for the district. This variable, in fact, has a statistically significant effect in every equation we have estimated. These cross national similarities (as well as those in Tables 3 and 4) are important in that they belie the conventional wisdom concerning the qualitative difference between MP's and MC's. The institutional contexts the legislators inhabit differ greatly, but the data indicate that constituent perceptions

and evaluations are considerably more similar than the differing contexts might suggest.²⁴

Similarities aside, we do see in Table 5 an expected type of dissimilarity -- that concerning the party responsibility of the members. In Britain partisanship structures incumbent performance ratings to a greater extent than in the United States. The coefficient of "Same Party ID" in Britain is highly significant and more than three times larger than the insignificant United States coefficient. Moreover, consider the relative impact of Jimmy Carter and James Callaghan evaluations on the ratings of their respective legislative party colleagues. The former matter hardly at all while the latter matter a good deal. The situation in contemporary Britain resembles an earlier era in the United States -- one analyzed by Tufte and Kernell -- an era in which Congressmen had a personal electoral incentive to see a President of their party perform well, or at least to present that appearance.²⁵ Our estimations are consistent with the argument that a large part of Carter's purported inability to lead Congress simply reflects contemporary Congressional perceptions that their electoral fates are virtually unconnected to his, common party affiliation or not.

Interestingly, however, judgments about the collective performance of Parliament appear relatively unimportant in Great Britain. There may be less here than meets the eye, however. In the United States ratings of Carter and Congress have little in common ($\gamma = .29$). As would one expect, though, Callaghan and Parliament ratings are considerably more inter-linked ($\gamma = .74$). Thus, in the British equation Callaghan ratings appear to incorporate both executive

and legislative performance evaluations whereas the two are legitimately independent variables in the American equation.

Conclusion

How then can an American or British legislator maintain his or her popularity? Though the answer varies somewhat between the two countries the similarities are striking and important. In both countries, legislators can insulate themselves from unfavorable national forces by attending district functions, regularly seeking publicity, diligently doing casework, and protecting the special interests of the constituency. These activities, of course, mean slightly different things in America and Great Britain. To a Congressman, doing casework means establishing district offices and diverting staff resources to constituent problems, whereas to an MP, doing casework means dealing personally with constituent problems. In the United States, protecting the district means working to secure projects and programs, whereas in Great Britain, protecting the constituency means intervening in government or bureaucratic decisions on behalf of the constituency by means of delegations, lobbying the minister and publicity.

While the institutional setting alters the exact method by which legislators protect their constituents, the logic underlying this behavior is the same in both countries. District or constituency-oriented activities are an uncontroversial means of securing a reliable base of local support. That legislators in both countries should do this is not surprising. Both MPs and Congressmen are elected under single-member, simple plurality rule: in each case they are their districts's unique representative. Furthermore, for a variety of

reasons both the MP and the Congressman have the opportunity to confer benefits on their constituents.²⁶ Thus legislators in both countries have a substantial incentive (traceable to the electoral system) to engage in the activities associated with protecting the constituency, and at least some capacity to do so.

In addition, the need for legislators on both sides of the Atlantic to insulate themselves from adverse national forces has grown in recent years. The failure of successive governments to resolve complex economic problems, and the fading attraction of the American New Deal and British class alignments, have made voters less loyal and less predictable. Increasingly legislators respond by attempting to construct personal constituencies capable of withstanding the vagaries of national issues and personalities.

While our estimations show that constituency work serves this buffer function in both countries, they show too that British MPs are more closely tied to voters' evaluations of the national parties and the government. Consequently, MPs are less successful in protecting themselves from adverse national swings. In the future, though, MPs may become more successful at insulating themselves from national forces if such trends as that towards increased cross party voting continue, or if institutional reforms such as the new committee system give MPs greater legislative independence and personal power. Such developments would make the British situation resemble the American one more than it presently does. In fact, to conclude on a speculative note, the British too, may contract the "American disease" of inchoate parties and incoherent politics.

FOOTNOTES

1. And in fact the collective institutions inhabited by those representatives are not held in nearly such high regard as the individual members. This disparity was identified by Richard Fenno in "If, as Ralph Nader Says, Congress is 'the Broken Branch,' How Come We Love Our Congressmen So Much?" in Congress in Change--Evolution and Reform, Norman J. Ornstein (ed.) (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), pp. 277-287.
2. Another variant of democratic theory -- the responsible parties school -- need not be considered. The disparity mentioned in the preceding footnote, together with the absence of a strong relationship between party ID and legislator ratings suggest that representatives are not being held collectively responsible for the output of the legislature. Such collective responsibility, of course, is the essence of the responsible parties school of thought.
3. Donald Stokes and Warren Miller, "Party Government and the Saliency of Congress," Public Opinion Quarterly 26 (1962):531-546.
4. Glenn Parker and Roger Davidson, "Why Do Americans Love Their Congressmen So Much More Than Their Congress?", Legislative Studies Quarterly (1979):58-62.

5. Morris P. Fiorina. "The Case of the Vanishing Marginals: The Bureaucracy Did It." American Political Science Review 71 (June 1977):177-181.
6. See the fascinating discussion of Congressional publicity efforts surrounding EDA and HUD water and sewer projects in Theodore Anagnoson, "Political Influence in the Distribution of Federal Grants." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977.
7. Interviews we have carried out with MPs whose districts fall within the sampling frame of our survey indicate a desire on the part of many for increased staff assistance. In addition, younger members are more interested in expansions of staff and other resources than are the more senior MPs.
8. Laurily Epstein and Kathleen Frankovic report that in a CBS Poll which asked respondents to choose between the two options of "helping people in his district who have problems with the government" or "working in Congress on bills of national interest," a comfortable majority opted for the former alternative. This majority point of view transcended party, ideological and various demographic groupings. See Laurily K. Epstein and Kathleen A. Frankovic, "Differences Between Voters and the Mass Electorate," paper prepared for presentation at the Conference on Voter Turnout, San Diego, California, May 16-19, 1979, Tables 9-12. For another interesting contrast between popular and member

expectations of congressmen using Obey Commission Data and the accompanying Harris Survey see Thomas Cavanagh, "The Two Arenas of Congress: Electoral and Institutional Incentives for Performance," 1978 APSA Paper, New York.

9. David Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 111-114.
10. Richard Fenno, Home Style: House Members in Their Districts (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978).
11. We do not try to sort out simultaneous relationships in this paper, but only to point out that significant interactions exist between the variables. We hope to be able to use data collected from our surveys of congressional offices and MPs as instruments in a simultaneous equation specification in future work.
12. The categorical nature of our dependent variables violates the assumptions of standard regression analysis. Specifically, heteroskedasticity results in biased estimates of the standard errors of the estimated coefficients. Various alternatives are available. The one chosen in this work is an n-chotomous probit procedure developed by McKelvey and Zanoina (1975). It is a generalization of ordinary probit based on the assumption that the dependent variable has at least ordinal characteristics. The procedure produces maximum likelihood parameter estimates as well

- as estimates of thresholds on the (unobserved) continuous dependent variable. Those thresholds are assumed to determine the correspondence between the observed discrete categories and a range of values on the underlying unobserved variable. Hypothesis testing is straightforward, but the goodness of fit measures are less so. In the tables we report \hat{R}^2 , an analogue to the familiar R^2 of standard regression analysis. The former is intended as an estimate of the latter, and is obtained by substituting the observed categorical values for the unobserved values and using an estimate of the residual sum of squares. The sampling distribution of \hat{R}^2 is unknown. A second statistic is the Spearman rank order correlation (ρ) between the actual and predicted values. The statistic is not very useful if there are many tie values among the observations being correlated. This condition is inevitable if one's dependent variable has only a small number of categories (e.g. 0,1), hence I do not report it for the dichotomous case. For further information see Richard McKelvey and William Zavoina, "A Statistical Model for the Analysis of Ordinal Level Dependent Variables," Journal of Mathematical Sociology 4 (1975):103-120.
13. The British survey does not include the feeling thermometer recognition measure. We do have the name recall item, however, which is discussed in the text and in note 13 below.
 14. From the interview protocol.

15. As mentioned earlier, 40 percent of the American sample recognizes the names of both candidates but only 12 percent recalls the names of both. If one looks only at races contested by incumbents, the figures are even more striking. Over 80 percent of the sample recognizes incumbent candidates names while only 34 percent recall those names. The comparable figures for challengers are 45 percent and 15 percent. One wonders how different the conventional wisdom might be had Stokes and Miller used name recognition rather than name recall as a filter in the 1958 study.
16. In the American sample all constituents fall into one of three classes: same party as incumbent, independent, opposite party from incumbent (50 percent, 16 percent, 34 percent respectively). In the British sample all constituents fall into the classes, same party as incumbent, no party ID indicated, opposite party from incumbent (38 percent, 18 percent, 42 percent respectively). (British Gallup does not probe the "no party" respondents in a manner parallel to the CPS probes in independents.) In some of what follows we will include an extra term in the British equations to represent any special effects of splinter party identification, e.g. nationalists.
17. Fenno, Homestyle, chapters
18. The reader should harbor no suspicions, incidentally, that this inter-country difference is an artifact of the presence in the

- American equations of the voting record variable. Even with that variable omitted partisan affiliations are insignificant in the American equations. In fact, the two are virtually independent. Surprising as it may seem, positive evaluations of the incumbent's voting record are not significantly more likely among his fellow partisans than among the opposition -- another telling commentary on the role of party in the American representative arena.
19. For a discussion of both past and present see Bruce E. Cain, The Politics of Disenchantment: Politicians, Parties and Voters in Great Britain, forthcoming, 1980.
20. About 2/3 of the MP's we interviewed conduct surgeries in local party headquarters. At a later stage of our research we will ascertain whether the perceptions of these representatives' constituents are more partisan than those of constituents of MP's who hold surgeries in neutral facilities.
21. Perhaps because of a small n. British constituents too view their contacts with incumbents as highly positive experiences, though not so much so as in the American sample. The distribution of responses across the categories "very satisfactory," "somewhat satisfactory," "not very satisfactory" and "not at all satisfactory" is 79, 34, 13, 14.

22. This is not to deny that good government groups are correct in identifying incumbent "perks" as an important electoral resource, but only to state that the process(es) by which perks generate votes appears more complicated than such groups intimate.
23. It remains true, however, that there is a great deal of slippage between member and institution ratings. Fenno's paradox (hate our legislature and love our legislator) is evident in both the American and British data. We will examine the individual-institutional disparity in a forthcoming paper "Legislators v. Legislatures: A Comparative Analysis of Fenno's Paradox."
24. In fact, a disinterested colleague of ours -- an econometrician -- innocently suggested that we pool the data, since both samples appeared to come from the same population. No doubt comparative specialists would blanch at such a suggestion, but aside from the party influences our colleague is correct.
25. Edward Tufte, "Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections," American Political Science Review 69 (1975):812-826.
Samuel Kernell, "Presidential Popularity and Negative Voting," American Political Science Review 71 (1977):44-66.
26. See Bruce E. Cain, John A. Ferejohn and Morris P. Fiorina
"The House is Not a Home: MP's and Their Constituents,"

forthcoming in Legislative Studies Quarterly, for a description of some of these opportunities for MPs. For Congressmen, see Morris P. Fiorina, Congress -- Keystone of the Washington Establishment (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), *passim*.

APPENDIX

Many of the variables employed in this paper were constructed from the following survey items newly designed for the 1978 NES/CPS Congressional Elections Study. These were modified in the obvious ways for use in Great Britain.

Contacts

There are many ways in which (U.S. Representatives, MPs) can have contact with the people from their districts. On this page are some of these ways. Think of _____ who has been the (U.S. Representative, MP) from this district. Have you come into contact with or learned anything about him/her through any of these ways? (Yes, no).

Met him/her.

Attended a meeting or gathering where he/she spoke.

Talked to a member of his/her staff or someone in his/her office.

Received something in the mail from him/her.

Read about him/her in a newspaper or magazine.

Heard him/her on the radio.

Saw him/her on TV.

Secondhand Contacts

Do you know of anyone, any of your family, friends, or people at work who have had some contact with (name of Representative or MP)?

Citizen Initiated Contacts

Have you (or anyone in your family living here) ever contacted (name of Representative or MP) or anyone in his/her office? If yes, was it to -

Express an opinion.

Seek information.

Seek help on a problem you had.

Did you get a response from your (Representative, MP) or his/her office?

How satisfied were you with the response: very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

Secondhand Citizen Initiated Contacts

Do you know anyone else who has contacted (name of Representative or MP) or anyone in his/her office? If yes, did this (person/group) get a response? If yes, was this (person/group) satisfied with the response?

Yes, satisfied.

Somewhat satisfied.

Somewhat dissatisfied.

No, not satisfied.

Expectation of Access

If you had another problem that (name of Representative or MP) could do something about, do you think that he/she would be very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not very helpful to you?

District Service

Do you happen to remember anything special that your

(U.S. Representative, MP) has done for this district or for the people in this district while he/she has been in (Congress, Parliament)?

Voting Record (U.S. only)

Now we would like to know how much you generally agree or disagree with the way (name of incumbent) has voted on bills that have come up in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington. Looking at this list would you say you agree, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree with the way he/she has voted on bills, or haven't you thought much about this?

Legislative Roles

Here is a list of some of the activities that occupy members of the (U.S. House, Parliament) as part of their job. We want to know how you feel about the importance (Representatives, MPs) should give these activities. I'll stop for a moment while you read this list, and then I'll ask you to rank the activities in order of importance.

U.S. - Helping people in the district who have personal problems with the government.

Making sure the district gets its fair share of government money and projects.

Keeping track of the way government agencies are carrying out laws passed by Congress.

Keeping in touch with the people about what the government is doing.

Working in Congress on bills concerning national issues.

G.B. - Helping people.

Protecting interests of constituency.

Keeping track of civil servants.

Keeping in touch.

Debating and voting.