**Selected 521 Article/Book Summaries**

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Ansolebehere et al/ Why is there so little money in US politics

Campaign contributions are a consumption good, rather than a way to buy political benefits. Campaign fundraising is widely viewed as a market for public policy. But why is there so little money in politics given the potential return on the investment? It may be because campaign contributions are not an investment. There is little to no connection between contributions and legislative behavior. It makes more sense to see campaign contributions as a form of consumption/participation. Private citizens invest very little—it like charitable giving. CEOs give less to politics than to charities. Proportion of campaign contributions to GDP has not increased in past century, suggesting campaign finance issues are not increasing in size. Competitiveness of the race has a larger determinate on campaign contributions than income of district, although income has an affect. On the margin, candidates raise more from individuals than from corporations. This mutes the effect of interest groups/corporations.

Arnold/Logic of congressional action

Really short summary, for those suffering from acute ADD:

The imperatives of the electoral quest explain why legislators sometimes serve concentrated interests and sometimes general interests

The logic of congressional action plays out in four steps:

1) Citizens establish policy preferences based on policy proposals and their anticipated effects.
2) Citizens choose candidates based on their policy positions
3) Legislators choose among policy proposals based on citizens’ potential preferences and the likelihood that constituents will incorporate their preferences into choosing between congressional candidates
4) Coalition leaders adopt strategies for enacting policy preferences based on the likely actions of legislators, which in turn depends on the likely future actions of voters

Medium-long summary, for those suffering from mild ADD:

Laying the groundwork

In choosing how to vote, legislators are partly manipulated by coalition leaders, partly by the anticipated actions of voters, and are partly free agents. Assumption: legislators’ principal interest is in re-election. Legislators first evaluate whether an alternative contributes significantly more to their chances for reelection. If yes, they choose it. If not, they choose based on other criteria: ideology, loyalty to President, or whatever.
Policy preferences
Citizens can control legislators’ decisions if those legislators anticipate and respond to their **potential preferences**. Legislators have freedom to choose when they calculate no electoral advantage to be gained from supporting or opposing a policy. Legislators must estimate 1) the potential policy preferences of their constituents, and 2) the likelihood that constituents will incorporate their preferences into choosing between congressional candidates.

Citizens’ policy preferences depend on the policy’s incidence of costs and benefits and the causal chain linking a policy to its intended effects.

**Costs are of three types: general, group, and geographic**
Probability that a citizen will notice a policy’s effect depends on
1) its magnitude
2) its timing (early-order effects more likely to be noticed)
3) the proximity of other affected people (those who live or work together discover common interests more easily)
4) the availability of an instigator to reveal the citizen’s stake in the matter (e.g. Ralph Nader’s consumer advocacy)

Citizens’ preferences are determined not only by the economic costs or benefits they receive, but on their conceptions of the public interest.

**Policy preferences and elections**
Citizens’ policy judgments may affect their votes in at least 4 ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis of choice</th>
<th>Policy positions</th>
<th>Policy effects</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Object of choice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parties</strong></td>
<td><strong>Candidates</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Party position rule</td>
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Voters using policy effects as basis engage in **retrospective voting**; those using policy positions engage in prospective voting.

**Party performance rule**: citizens reward or punish party in power (i.e. holding Presidency) according to the effects of its policies. Takes little info and demands the most in performance. Strong evidence that many citizens use this rule.

**Incumbent performance rule**: noticing improvement or deterioration in some condition important to her, citizen searches for government’s role in that change, and then the contribution of her representative to the relevant government action. Requires more info about specific candidates, plus knowledge of the causal chain linking policy to effects. No evidence for or against citizens’ use of this rule.

**Party position rule**: citizen identifies party offering best package of policy positions and supports candidates of that party. Some evidence that citizens use this rule.

**Candidate position rule**: citizens compare candidates positions on issues and choose the candidates with the best positions. Some evidence that citizens use this rule.
**Traceability of effects**: extent to which they can be traced to a governmental action and then to a politician. Traceable effects require perceptible effect, an identifiable government action, and a legislator’s visible contribution.

Attentive publics (interest groups, well-informed citizens) make known their policy preferences, in contrast to **inattentive publics** (everyone else).

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*Legislators are concerned about inattentive publics being transformed into attentive publics.*

This is easier when a program’s effects are easily traceable and when the costs or benefits are large.

In considering whether inattentive publics might give them trouble, legislators consider whether the vote could be used to incite inattentive publics, and whether there’s a potential challenger likely to so use it. In cases where the chances are low, legislators can ignore inattentive publics entirely and vote only according to the preferences of attentive publics.

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Impact of legislators’ fear of retrospective voting:

1) creation of policies that are politically infeasible because they place large, direct, early-order costs on constituents

2) search for alternative policies that achieve same ends without political risk, by spreading costs more widely, less directly, or farther into the future

3) creation of politically attractive policies that deliver clear benefits to constituents

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**Strategies for coalition leaders**

Coalition leaders seeking to enact their policy preferences can use legislators’ electoral needs in three ways:

1) **Use persuasion** to change the policy preferences of legislators, attentive publics, and inattentive publics.
   - Often effective to draw a linkage to another popular policy, e.g. defense, economic growth, or equity; or to an unpopular policy, e.g. tying national health insurance to socialism.
   - Often very difficult to employ.

2) **Use legislative rules and procedures** to alter legislators’ calculations.
   - Strategies include a) strengthening or breaking traceability chain, for instance by delegating authority for making unpleasant decisions to the President, an agency, or whoever; b) making decisions in secret, where an individual legislator’s vote cannot be seen.
   - Most useful when imposing costs on attentive or inattentive publics.

3) **Modify the proposal**.
   - For instance, disperse costs more widely, compensate the losers, make costs as invisible as possible (e.g. by using tax code instead of making general fund outlays), or change the group or geographic benefits.
   - Most useful for acquiring the support of particular legislators or groups.
Legislators serve general interests only if the program’s costs or benefits are salient to many citizens, and if coalition leaders use procedures encouraging traceability for general effects rather than group or geographic effects.

**Applying the theory: economic policy**

For explicit economic policy (e.g. wage and price controls, minimum wage laws), legislators pay more attention to economic than noneconomic features; for derivative economic policy (policies having economic impact, but with another main purpose, e.g. a $5b college loan program), the opposite is true.

Overall, Congress has been about as fiscally responsible as Presidents since WWII. Budgets were balanced between ’46 and ’61, because people believed in balanced budgets; because Presidents proposed balanced budgets; because House Appropriations was a careful watchdog of the Treasury; and because procedures made it hard to get a roll-call vote on a proposed amendment.

Fiscal activism (and deficits) born with Revenue Act of 1964. The Kennedy and then the Johnson administration convinced business leaders of advisability of tax cuts, and convinced conservative budget chairmen that the alternative to tax cuts was spending increases at the start of the next recession.

For next several years, economy did great, and legislators were not punished for voting for larger deficits.

When economy began to overheat in ’67, President Johnson proposed a tax increase. Congress demanded spending cuts in addition, and used procedural strategies to adopt such cuts. Government then ran 12 straight deficits averaging 10% from ’70 to ‘81. Congress was nevertheless a bulwark against still-greater deficit creation. Mechanisms included procedures and disposition of the Appropriations committee, and frequency of votes on explicit economic policy (which led them to consider the macroeconomic consequences more explicitly).

In ’82, Reagan sought, and Congress approved, more than $30b in spending cuts. Major strategy was to combine all into a single bill and label it the President’s economic package. Democrats voted for it because it would be a non-issue if it succeeded, and they could run against it if it failed.

Facing huge deficits in mid-80s, Congress tied its own hands with Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, which mandated automatic across-the-board cuts if Congress couldn’t agree on specific cuts. This allowed Congress to vote for economic prudence without having to reduce specific group and geographic benefits.

**Applying the theory: energy policy**

When OPEC imposed an oil embargo on US in ’73, Congress responded by creating a system to allocate scarce petroleum across regions. But this worsened shortages. Ford proposed removal of all price controls, but Congress instead rolled back prices 12% to avoid higher prices being traced to them. In ’79, Carter sought to decontrol prices, using automatic lapse of price controls as the mechanism, and sweetening pot with a windfall profits tax on producers.

With gasoline hard to come by starting in ‘74, and public supportive of a system of rationing coupons, Congress advised the President to draft a rationing plan, but couldn’t agree itself on the
details on that plan because of the costs it would impose. Congress then voted to require the President to conceive a plan requiring a 2/3 Congressional vote to overturn. This broke the traceability chain. Similar twists and turns in the regulation and then deregulation of natural gas. On the flip side, legislators like research and conservation programs because they deliver clear group and geographic benefits while imposing only general costs on the public.

**Implications for citizen control of government**

The party performance and party position rules in voting don’t give citizens much control over government action, because citizens are increasingly independent of party, and legislators do everything they can to focus attention on themselves rather than their party teams. Use of the incumbent performance or candidate position rule gives some control since legislators will identify issues that may be used to rouse inattentive publics and vote accordingly. These mechanisms operate also to affect the agenda for decision-making in addition to the decisions themselves. This agenda-setting effect may be stronger than the decision-making effect. The model of citizen control is an auditing model. Legislators are typically free to do whatever, but may be punished if caught violating the policy preferences of inattentive publics.

✓ **Cameron and McCarty/ Models of Vetos and Veto bargaining**

Study of veto bargaining has a long history but there is much left to be done, both empirically and in theory, in institutional analysis. Current models are somewhat limited as to their information assumptions and preferences. Multibill bargaining and signaling need additional modeling work. More also needs to be done to include electoral politics and public opinion. Assumptions tested: complete or incomplete information, repeat play (reputation, learning and dynamics: veto threats) bargaining over multiple bills. Vetos as symptom of uncertainty, or of “blame game” in electoral politics.

✓ **Canes-Wrone et al/ out of step, out of office: electoral accountability and house members voting**

Likelihood of reelection decreases as official increase support for their party (measured through share of votes case with party). Voters are ignorant of members policy actions. Some evidence has suggested that ideological shirking by members is correlated with electoral defeat, but the literature is inconclusive about if voting affects elections. In increase in votes towards the extreme of party→ decrease in holding safe seat. This is about roll call votes. Incumbents share of votes at election decreases with more votes to extreme of party. This effect is comparable to that of candidate quality. Probability of reelection decreases with increase in votes at extreme of party. This means that there is some accountability for house-member actions. This does not mean that voters are knowledgeable, but only that they may take cues for informed elites.
Coffin/ The Ways of A Judge: Reflections from the Federal Appellate Bench

This book describes court cases from the judge’s point of view (Coffin sits on a federal court of appeals).

The job of the judge before argument is to understand threshold issues of jurisdiction and procedure; understand facts, contentions and law; scent weaknesses; develop a sense of policy issues implicated in the cases; consider ancillary decisions to be made (should the decisions be narrow or broad, have dicta, be prompt, etc). The judge must also id tasks for law clerks (clerks check facts and law, write question, and bench briefs summarizing their understanding of the case, before possibly writing a decision).

At argument the judges begin to get a sense of each other's views if the strengths, weaknesses and their biases and values. Effective arguments requires advocates to sense the court’s level of comprehension early; controlled flexibility in responding to judge’s questions; a sense of policy (ability to state a neutral principle); disciplined earnestness; and an instinct for the jugular. A lawyer who argues well will not lose a good case.

The judges then conference. Conferences are often a debate about where lines in the law should be drawn. Conferences are held without rules, staff or minutes, so judges can say what they think. The chief judge assigns opinion writing responsibilities. Once the decision is made, it may be issued by order. Short orders just announce the result and the rule compelling it. Memorandum and order provides slightly more information for the reasoning behind the decision, but is still quite short. Finally, for cases of important to the development of the law, an opinion may be written, although it may not be published (i.e. it may only be disclosed to the parties, but cannot be cited in other cases).

If an opinion is to be written, the responsible judge should immerse himself in the facts of the case under there develops a feel for the terrain; verify the procedural framework of the appeal; exploration of issues beyond the briefs; state the opposing contention as fairly as possible; and articulate the policy sense behind the position taken in the opinion.

Collegiality is an important past of being an appeals court judge (who sit in panels of 3 and sometimes more)

Erickson et al, “Public Opinion” in Macro polity

Major theme of the book: The operation of the macro-political system produces a more sophisticated and intelligent response than we would expect from what we know about the individuals who compose it.

*We see radical discontinuity between the impressions and conclusions reached from the study of individuals and aggregates. Both sets of facts are simultaneously true.

*The implications that flow and the inferences one draws cannot both be correct, although the simple facts are. The book is devoted to drawing the right inferences for the right level of analysis, which they recognize is a matter of perspective

*How can members of congress believe that constituents are largely uninformed about their behavior and still fear for their political lives from a bad vote? They fear because they have seen others lose elections when they could not defend their public positions.

*Elections are won and lost at the aggregate and the aggregate moves at the margin. A few % doing this or that systematically produce big aggregate effects.

*Ordinary Americans draw only loose connections between issues. They come to each issue policy controversy anew, w/o concern for what they believe about other controversies
**This lack of connection suggests and electorate in which every issue is a fn only of the facts and context of the times. In such an electorate, thinking about change over time would be pointless. There would be nth general worth observing. But this is not true.**

**Associations of issues with one another over time are quite predictable and pretty high.**

**High associations w/in bundles of issues suggest that sth stable underlies them:**

**Public-policy mood.** It is orderly and predictable, moving through time in response to the events of politics

*Which of the views is correct, individual disorder or aggregate order? EM&S build a portrait of orderly aggregate behavior in this book w/o challenging the consensus that individual behavior involves large elements of caprice and disorder.***

**How individuals interact w/ parties, candidates, and events over time are answered w/the aggregate, orderly view.*

Chapter 1. A Model of the Macro Polity

*When they study elites, their subject is the institution rather than the individual, or the composite acts of the nat’l gov’t rather than its specific institutions.*

*Statistical analysis: series of dynamic time-series equations.*

*Why did explanations like party id, policy positions, and ideology escape macro-level attention?*

**These political aggregates were thought to be constants rather than variables (Campbell et al, The American Voter: people rarely changed party attachments; Converse 1964: policy positions considered fixed and changes attributed to “doorstep opinion”)

**Databases of party id, liberalism-conservatism, and views on any issue did not exist w/ sufficiently regular measurement to form a time-series.*

*The voter and the electorate:*

**Early literature depicted the American voter as a political fool. More recent studies have resurrected the voter’s reputation (Popkin 1991). The problem of low info remains**

**In line w/evidence, election results explained as voter responses to vestigial party identifications, or promises of bread &circuses, or emotional appeals. Only part of story**

**To understand the pol behavior of the electorate is not to understand the pol behavior of the typical voter.**

**The Electorate at the macro level: the more informed, thoughtful, and attentive citizens contribute disproportionately to the aggregate movement. When indiv are disorderly or constant over time, their attributes contribute trivially to the movement of the whole.**

-To understand macro electorates: focus on movement over time: movement is orderly, is responsive to real political events, and sends message that politicians ignore at their peril

-2 limitations of the argument: (1) informed voters might be too low in #s to have impact; (2) circumstances could exist where the errors of uninformed voters do not cancel out but represent the systematic response to some erroneous signal.

-However, this is not what they find. Rather, they find extraordinary sophistication.*
*Political Dynamics: “macro” connotes their level of analysis throughout: focus on systemic relationships bet citizens and gov’ts

*Components of the model: Micro and Macro.
  **Macro-level understandings differ from micro-level understandings for 2 classes of reasons: (1) some political behavior is social –groups of pple interacting w/one another do things; (2) design of research that is appropriate for the two differs.
  **A substantial limitation of micro knowledge is that it is not easily integrated.

* Citizens act in 4 capacities:
  (1) Evaluation: of competence, of level of control of events, and of the extent to which there is policy agreement, that is, selected policies are in line w/ citizens’ preferred policies;
  (2) Identification (macropartisanship);
  (3) Policy Preferences: as consumers of gov’t (citizens are rational, but have different preferences), preferences are over more or less gov’t, and preferences vary across pple, issues and time: policy mood = citizen demand for more or less gov’t;
  (4) Choice: citizen choice becomes election outcome when aggregated, movement over time follows movements in macropartisanship, elections signal the evolution of public preferences.

* Politicians.
  **Dual state: they govern and they seek election and reelection. They are policymakers but are required to have an eye on the next election. Reelection motive is normal, may be dominant, but is not exclusive.
  **Policy Choice: Individual politicians will often hold views that are =/= form their constituencies. To the politician, all elections are gambles. Those that survivcie do so because they are good at it.
  **Politicians as teams: politicians’ behavior not so unstructured. They also choose to be members of teams that we call political parties. In the absence of info about indiv politicians, citizens will make inferences about Individuals from the info they possess about parties.

Ch.2 Presidential Approval
• Polling orgs: collecting data on how American citizens believe the pdt has been handling his job. Political scientists use this data to understand what accounts for pdtial Approval rating.
• E,M&S conclude that the pdt’s approval can comprise more or less than what is imputed by those who follow the numbers. Assumed that the responses meant exactly what the question asked. The subject was the president and no one else.
• 2 things that (they claim) call into question their tidy interpretation of approval:
  o Ordinary citizens do not share in the sharp distinctions drawn by professional observers, and even “the president” is a fuzzy concept that may refer to =/= things
  o Diffuse attitudes get expressed in response to precise questions: a citizen upset by garbage collection may choose to express his/her frustration on “the president”.
• How skilled an indiv is in handling his job should have little conseq to retaining that person in the job at reelection time.
• Approval as a more diffuse barometer >>> more general consequences: generalization to the president’s party.

Ch.3 Expectations & Political Response: The Character of Intelligence of the Acan Electorate

• Voters respond in terms of their expectations of the future level of prosperity
• Expectations efficiently weigh retrospective and prospective knowledge of the economy.
• This strikes some observers as preposterous, yet it hardly seems surprising when we notice that the public constitutes the economy >>> when making pol judgements, pple don’t discard the info they use when they make econ judgments: they use it to make sense of the political world.
• Understanding that expectations lie at the core of political evaluations forces a new view of the political economy. It suggests a serious reconsideration of the role that info, & info production, plays in the polity.
  o Potential for political actors to manipulate economic and political outcomes.
    ▪ This does not occur.
  o Because the electorate is farsighted rather than myopic, it is less easily fooled by the kinds of short-term fiscal or monetary strategies that supposedly give rise to political business cycles of the sort where presidents heat the economy for short-term pol. Gain
• Although evidence of an impressive economic intelligence on the part of the US electorate, emphasis on the fact that this result depends on the power of aggregation.
• As individuals, voters show no strong talent for economic forecasting
• One reason to offer praise for the indiv qualities of American voters: the electorate’s choice of economic signal to guide its political judgments, which suggests richer possibilities in the political system than are often assumed

• Is it just economic expectations?
  o E,M&S show that economic expectations are formed as predicted from the rational expectations theory… but have they observed the only case in which citizens are forward looking in their behavior? Or is the formation of beliefs about the future economy simply the best empirical way to get at the phenomenon? They believe it is the latter.
  o They posit that rational expectations will be apparent in politics whenever the future differs from the present and whenever it is possible through informed speculation to have some purchase on that future.
• Approval varies. But it is stationary in the long view.
• Partisanship will turn out to be related to approval, capturing its fast dynamics and holding them in a more permanent reservoir toward the parties.

Ch. 4 Macropartisanship: The Permanent Memory of Party Performance

• Macropartisanship is the agent of memory that carries past experiences of the electorate into the future.
• Partisanship (standard views) is either a matter of stable personal identity or it shifts constantly to reflect the politics of the moment.
• Post WW2 view was that there was a fixed equilibrium value around which party politics revolves. But the fundamental picture is different
• Politicians cannot reliably expect that the overall distrib of party loyalties will home in on any particular value.
• The best guess is not a system-level constant, but instead the current Eqbm Macropartisanship.
• It takes sustained good or bad times to cause small shifts (5 to 10%) of the public. So in ordinary times politicians can reasonably expect that the current level of eqbm macropartisanship will be stable for the foreseeable future.
• Macropartisanship is the summing up of the parties’ performance, and is only as predictable as is the success and failure of American gov’ts

Ch. 5 Decomposing Partisan Change
• What can we learn by looking at distinctions between different sorts of Americans? black/white, S/N, young/old, male/female?
• Age: age and generational replacement plays a role in the evolution of the electorate, but in looking at change during Reagan era favoring the Republicans, or the change favoring the Democrats in 1952-1980, the generational phenomenon does not account for the bulk of the change. Main dynamics are due to surviving individuals changing their partisan dispositions.
• N/S: Some of the transformation is generational, but movement toward the GOP in white south occurred in addition to, rather in place of, reactions to the macro politics of the era.
• Men/Women: Rep/Dem. This change arose independent of the ebbs and flows of part fortunes.
• Blacks/Whites: exception that proves the rule. African Americans remained almost impervious to the fluctuations in the parties’ fortunes.
• Crux of the issue is whether or not the macro and longitudinal story is fundamentally altered by knowledge of micro distinctions. Response in general is in the negative. To find one subgroup where the response was sharper is not a convincing denial that it did not happen everywhere.

Ch. 6 Public Opinion / Policy Mood
• The public has relatively stable preferences for more or less gov’t
• These preferences move over time in a coherent fashion
• Much of their movement can be explained:
  o High inflation >>> mood for conservatism
  o High unemployment >>> mood for liberalism
• We already knew that economic performance influences the evaluations of the competence of political actors. Now we know that citizen preferences move toward the left or right as a fn of economic performance, differentiating between employment and price stability

Ch. 7 Elections
• Even when elections are not predictable much in advance, results can be explained in terms of certain fundamental laws of politics: (a) the economy matters, (b) popularity helps the cause of the popular candidate, (c) macropartisanship matters, (d) policy mood matters.
Both economic and political explanations of the vote may be of equal validity.

Positive story for democratic accountability. When votes are counted at aggregate level, and the partisan verdict determined, the public holds its leaders accountable both in terms of managing the economy and other aspects of governing. But also in terms of the public’s demand for future policy change, measured by mood.

With elections determined by the electorate’s aggregate policy choices, politicians have reasons to anticipate public preferences and enact the desired policy changes before they feel the voters’ rage at the polls.

Ch. 8 Public Opinion and Policy Making

How does public policy respond to public opinion?

Policy: sum total of laws and regulations regarding a particular set of issues. Concept is highly cumulative, the result of a long stream of decisions over time. Policy = cumulation of policy Δ

Question of measurement of policy and policy Δ is tricky. They use congressional rating scales, roll-call outcomes, for presidential preferences: presidential support within party.

Simple model (that posits policy activity as a simple and direct fn of public opinion): public opinion (policy mood) influences public policy, producing about 1/5 of a point Δ in the overall policy activity of the federal government.

More complex model (as a proxy for composition of gov’t, they average across institutions: % of D in the 2 houses, P dummy, % of liberals in the court): both composition and opinion are important for policy making.
  - Each % pt of democratic or liberal composition produces nearly a full point (0.88) of policy.
  - A unit of pub opinion Δ produces a rational anticipation response of over 1/3 of a pt in policy activity

Historical dynamic: figure 8.5 shows that policy reflects timing and range of public opinion Δ

Conclusions. Democratic Performance and The Macro Polity

Democratic theory comes in a strong and a weak version

Strong version requires a highly attentive citizenry, the weak version holds that it is sufficient that democratic institutions survive with the occasional electoral replacement of ruling elites.

E, M&S do not claim to find great political wisdom where there is non.

Rather, they point to the collective intelligence that emerges when the voices of the public are pooled into an aggregate unit.

The political system rewards and punishes individuals, generating the charged forces that hold politicians and the public in dynamic attraction to one another.
✅ Fiorina/Culture War

Most of the country is moderate and tolerant and not at war over morality, religion, sexuality. Journalists in search of audience attracting conflict, and scholars and politicos who feed them are exaggerating or full of crap. Political class is more polarized, not the people—the need to make a choice between them makes the public look polarized. Elections are very close because the public is moderate and the choices are not, not because the public is polarized—party members are more polarized, but many are independents. The public is not polarized on abortion, ppl will compromise. American public would accept more compromise on abortion, but political environment doesn’t allow that. Gender gap is not from abortion, but from issues related to force/violence/war and issues related to the care of the aged/sick/poor. Wm have not moved to dems, men have moved to rep. (there is a bias of saliency- feminists make journalists and politicos perceive a difference that is not in the public, and rhetoric of interest groups…). National opinions on abortion don’t change, but on gays is changing rapidly. Public thinks gay “relations” are wrong, but not criminal—there is a clear divide on gay marriage, but not backlash after Lawrence—political benefits of supporting amendment may be non-existant.

✅ Gilens/why Americans hate welfare

Short Summary

Welfare bashing by politicians is common because it strikes a chord with the American public, and such bashing is not unique to any one political party.

Welfare defined: cash benefits paid to the working-age, able-bodied poor.

Conclusion of article: Americans’ attitudes toward welfare are not understood correctly. Americans do not oppose welfare. They may, however, be unhappy with the current welfare system.

Public opposition to welfare is largely defined by the perception that most welfare recipients are not interested in working to support themselves. Also, the public thinks that most welfare recipients are black and that blacks do not subscribe to the American work ethic. This is because of racial stereotyping, primarily by the news media.

Long Summary

- “Racial stereotypes play a central role in generating opposition to welfare [welfare is “cash or cash-like assistance for the able-bodied, working-age poor” – page 4] in America. In particular, the centuries-old stereotype of blacks as lazy remains credible for large numbers of white Americans. This stereotype grew out of, and was used to defend slavery, and it has been perpetuated over the years by the continuing economic disparities between black and white Americans. In a culture in which economic failure is often attributed to lack of effort, blacks’ economic problems themselves reinforce the stereotype of laziness. And over the past decades this problem has been exacerbated by the emergence of a highly visible black urban underclass that has exerted an inordinate influence over popular images of blacks, even though it constitutes only a small fraction of African Americans. Finally…the stereotype of blacks as lazy has been reinforced by biased [print and television news] coverage of both black people and poor people in the popular press” (3). “Whites oppose welfare not because they think it primarily benefits
blacks, but because they think it benefits blacks who prefer to live off the government rather than work. Yet programs such as job training and Head Start, which are just as strongly associated with African Americans as is welfare, are overwhelmingly popular because they are viewed as helping the deserving poor to better support themselves....most Americans do want to help those poor people...who are genuinely trying to make it on their own” (4).

- The source of Americans “unhappiness” with the current welfare system is “not the principle of government support for the needy, but the perception that most people currently receiving welfare are undeserving” (2). “While no one factor can fully account for the public’s opposition to welfare, the most important single component is this widespread belief that most welfare recipients would rather sit home and collect benefits than work hard to support themselves”; in other words, it is viewed as “a program that rewards the undeserving poor…that most people who receive welfare are black...that blacks are less committed to the work ethic than are other Americans” (2-3).

- America at the turn of the century is among the richest societies to ever exist; yet in the midst of this wealth live many who suffer material deprivation. One out of every five children is living in poverty – a proportion that is higher now than it was thirty years ago (ix).

- My focus is what Americans think about the poor. “I care about the public’s attitudes toward welfare and poverty because I believe that these attitudes have shaped (and continue to shape) government antipoverty policy” (ix). “…Americans oppose welfare …they hold cynical views of welfare recipients…their thinking about poverty and welfare is permeated by their beliefs about blacks” (x). Americans are thought to oppose welfare for a few reasons:

  1. because the welfare state [“the broad array of government programs to assist individuals – including pensions, medical care, education, housing, unemployment insurance, and antipoverty programs” – page 4] is viewed as “a European invention, thoroughly at odds with Americans’ preferences for small government, personal freedom, and individual responsibility” (1).

  2. “And of the many aspects of the welfare state, the ‘welfare’ itself – that is, cash benefits paid to the working-age, able-bodied poor – conflicts most flagrantly with Americans’ beliefs that individuals should take responsibility for their own betterment and not rely on the government for support (1).

  3. “As economic growth slows down, middle-class Americans have increasingly resented paying taxes to support the able-bodied poor” (1).

- The author explains, though, that these assumptions are wrong, because Americans are “committed to helping the poor – they donate their own time and money to charitable causes, they want their government to do more to help the poor, and they consistently express a willingness to pay higher taxes to help poor people and welfare recipients obtain better wages, better housing, medical care, child care, education, and job training” (x). “Individualism – that is, a commitment to the values of hard work and individual responsibility – has long been an important element of American culture. But most Americans temper their commitment to individualism with the understanding that people cannot always support themselves, and most believe that when individuals are in need the government has a responsibility to help” (5). “Americans express a stable, coherent, and complex set of preferences toward antipoverty policy – preferences that reflect a balance between the desire to help the deserving poor and a concern with undermining their work ethic or rewarding those who prefer government support to self-support” (8). We don’t want to create “work disincentives” that would sap the work ethic of recipients; the perception of “welfare abuse...[and] welfare recipients’ dishonesty and freeloding is at the core of Americans’ conviction that welfare spending should be cut” (59, 65). Instead, The “combination of support for welfare in principle and cynicism toward current welfare recipients” reveals how the American public’s views are “a complex amalgam of competing, though not incompatible, considerations” (63, x).
“Since the mid-1960s, poverty and race have been closely linked in the public mind. Where ‘the poor’ once conjured up images of southern European or Irish immigrants, or of white dust-bowl farmers, urban blacks now dominate our perceptions of poverty. The most salient contemporary images of the poor – the homeless beggar, the welfare queen, the teenage ghetto gang member, the heroin addict shooting up in an abandoned building – are strongly associated with minorities in both the mass media and the public imagination. Although most city dwellers are neither poor nor black, discussions of ‘urban policy’ or ‘how to help America’s cities’ are taken to mean ‘what should we do about poor black neighborhoods’ and the crime and poverty with which they are associated” (67-68). Blacks comprise only 27% of all poor Americans and only 36% of welfare recipients, but “Americans substantially overestimate the percentage of blacks among the poor” (68). Surveys have shown that about half of non-Hispanic white Americans rate blacks (and Hispanics) as lazy, but Americans tend to associate blacks with poverty and welfare.

On the News Media and the Racialization of Poverty:

- In terms of poverty literature, “black poverty was ignored by white society throughout most of American history” (103). Until mid-1960s, the dominant image of poverty was the white rural poor of the Appalachian coal fields. Popular images of poverty changed dramatically in the mid-1960s as a result of: 1) the widespread migration of rural southern blacks to northern cities during the 1940s and ’50s; 2) changing racial composition of AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), the most conspicuous program to aid the poor, so that blacks went from 14% in 1936 to about ½ in mid-’60s; 3) civil rights movement and urban riots of 1964-68: the civil rights movement at this time changed focus from the fight for legal equality to the battle for economic equality, thereby focusing public attention on the problem of black poverty, and the urban riots consisted of poor blacks making their presence known. The urban riots are often seen as marking “a dramatic chapter in American race relations” and “ushering in a new era of antiblack racism” (110). “The racialization of public images of the poor occurred fairly suddenly and dramatically between 1965 and 1967” (105).

- To assess changes in new media portrayals of poverty from 1950 to 1992 in Time, Newsweek, and US News and World Report, he reviewed all poverty related stories carried by those magazines. African Americans have dominated news media images of the poor (and thus been significantly overrepresented) since the late 1960s. In particular, pictures of blacks have been used to illustrate stories about waste, inefficiency or abuse of welfare, while poor whites are depicted in stories with more neutral descriptions of antipoverty programs and sympathetic stories about economic downturns (117). About 20% of American adults claim to read one of these 3 magazines.

- TV is the dominant source of news for 70% of Americans. Tapes of pre-1968 newscasts aren’t available, and it would take too long to watch all newscasts post-1968, so he chose a few years (1968; 1982-83, when magazine images of poverty contained the lowest proportion of blacks for the entire study period, as a result of economic slump which led to sympathetic depictions of the whites as the poor; and 1988-92, a more recent period that contained a high proportion of blacks
in newsmagazine stories on poverty). TV newscasts follow the same pattern as magazines: blacks are overrepresented as “the poor”; “the complexion of poverty in TV news shifts over time as events draw attention to more sympathetic and less / sympathetic subgroups of the poor” (131-32). (Surprising fact: “Only 6 percent of all poor Americans are blacks living in urban ghettos,” page 132).

- Gilens goes on to explain the psychology behind how examples (esp. visual images) shape readers’/viewers’ perceptions. It’s hard to measure how the proportion of black Americans pictures in news stories shapes the public’s perception of the racial composition of the poor, but many surveys show that all over the US (even in states with small black populations), Americans (regardless of their level of education) believe that about 50% of all poor Americans are black.

- He questioned photo editors at several magazines and realized that – in spite of empirical evidence showing that journalists are in fact liberal and tend to blame racism on whites – they engage in “subconscious stereotyping” when selecting photos that lead to the overrepresentation of the poor as black and “reflect the cultural stereotypes of blacks as lazy and poor blacks as more responsible for their plight than are poor whites” (150).

- The public attitudes that result from the distorted media portrayals of blacks is especially important because “in a democracy, public attitudes also matter because citizens’ preferences can influence government policy” (174). For example, US states “with more conservative populations adopt more conservative policies, and for the country as a whole, changes in public preferences are more often than not followed by congruent changes in government policy. Of course many factors other than public opinion also shape government decision making, and popular desires are only partially reflected in public policy. Nevertheless, across a range of issues, from military spending to anticrime policy to the welfare state, the activities of government appear to correspond in some substantial measure to the public’s preferences” (174). So that, “negative racial attitudes, and in particular, cynicism toward the work ethic of poor blacks, is at the core of popular opposition to welfare” (175).

- Bottom line: “Government policies do less to reduce poverty in America than in almost any other industrialized nation…In twelve of these countries, government policies reduce the poverty rate by 60 to 80 percent. That is, of those who would be poor based on their market income alone, government programs life between 60 percent and 80 percent out of poverty…In the United States, which stands alone at the bottom of this ladder, poverty is reduced by only 29 percent as a consequence of government taxes and transfers” (204). “As long as blacks and other minorities remain disproportionately poor, it is unlikely that antipoverty policy can ever be divorced from racial politics” (215). “…when hard times come, the public will not turn its back on the poor, but will support even more strongly the expansion of government antipoverty efforts. Yet the history of the American welfare state suggests that government will likely fail to respond in a meaningful way to the growing needs of the poor; if so, the blame will lie in a failure of political leadership, not in a lack of concern for the poor among the American people” (216).

✔ Himelfarb/Catastrophic politics

Chapter 1 Summary

The United States is unique among other Western democracies in its policy to have mandated health coverage and other social programs for the elderly, namely Medicare and Social Security respectively. Since participation is virtually universal and all participants are required to actively contribute to the system, both Medicare and Social Security have a “degree of legitimacy and public acceptance,” according to the author.
Social Security has remained strong and committed to its goals of providing assistance to the elderly for these reasons:

1) Decisions at the beginning were made for the Social Security Administration independent of political legislative bodies
2) The decision to change the system from a trust fund based system to pay as you go.
3) Expansion of coverage and benefits to previously uncovered groups
4) Economic growth.

Medicare was established in 1965 in large part modeled after Social Security (SS), although not exactly the same. Part A of Medicare, which covers hospital insurance, was structured similar to Social Security with universal participation and funding by those younger though payroll taxes. Part B covering physician expenses differed from SS. Participants paid a premium equal to 50% of physician costs (lowered to 25% in 1981) and the federal government covered the remainder of the expenses from general revenues.

By late 1970, increased inflation and a staggering economy caused SS payments to increase while the revenue decreased. Soaring healthcare costs affected the Medicare program as well. Reagan was forced to pay immediate attention to this matter and appointed Alan Greenspan to chair a bipartisan commission to propose recommendations. The outcomes of commission included a freeze of benefits for six months and taxing half of the SS benefits of those who made more that $25,000 or $32,000 for couples. Medicare costs rose from 2.5 billion in 1967 to over $70 billion in 1985. The problems stemmed from the design which had little control over the reimbursement to physicians and hospitals. As costs went up, so did requests from these parties. By the mid 80s, the federal government froze reimbursements as a cost containment measure.

Increasingly, seniors were also becoming more powerful as a group during the 80s. Real family income increased and poverty rates decreased among seniors in large part due to home ownership and the success of Social Security and Medicare. Senior power also increased through the ballot box and through elderly based interest groups. The elderly accounted for 18 percent of those who voted while only making up 12 percent of the population. By 1988, the AARP had over 28 million members and budget of $145 million with 18 registered lobbyists. It follows that the percentage of the federal budget spent on the elderly increased throughout the 80s in large part to the aforementioned reasons. By the end of the 80s, it was the growing deficits that curbed spending on the elderly, not political backlash or a reassessment of priorities.

Medicare did not cover every expense though, in fact, many “gaps” existed which caused extensive financial pressures among a number of elderly. These gaps include:

- 60 day limit on hospital coverage
- Lifetime limits on hospital stays
- No coverage for prescription drugs, eye exams, nor dental coverage
- No coverage for long term care

In fact, Medicare only covered skilled nursing facilities which only accounted for roughly 2 percent of all nursing home use in 1984.
In response to these gaps, many seniors held “Medigap” plans which paid all coinsurance costs associated with physician visits and hospital stays. In addition, many paid Medicare deductibles and paid for hospital stays 365 days beyond the Medicare cutoff. A few plans paid for prescription drug benefits and virtually none paid for long term care, i.e. nursing homes. About half of those who participated in these plans did so on their own initiative while the other half participated in employee sponsored Medigap plans.

A number of legislators denounced these supplemental plans for a variety of reasons:

- Up to 40 percent of the costs of the plans went to administration where only 3 percent of Medicare costs went to administration
- Continued fraud and abuse in marketing of the plans to the elderly, which are easily confused by the convoluted insurance plans
- Low income seniors could not afford this additional coverage

While nursing home and prescription drug costs were of importance to the elderly, the most daunting catastrophic health expenses incurred were that of chronic illness. While Medigap plans covered some of these expenses, healthcare costs were rising which in effect drove up premiums for these plans. In addition, the federal government paid for some long term care through Medicaid for the low income elderly. However, in order to qualify, seniors would have to lose everything they had acquired in their lifetime (money and assets). Growing pressure from seniors and lawmakers made the mid 80s the ideal time for discussion of federally funded catastrophic health insurance for the elderly.

Chapter 2 – Catastrophic Politics

This chapter looks at the evolution of the MCCA from the efforts of Otis Bowen to its “Christmas tree” expansion by Congressional leaders. Otis Bowen was the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under Pres. Reagan. He was an outspoken proponent of expanding Medicare coverage for catastrophic health expenses that stemmed with his wife death due to bone cancer. Before he become Sec. of HHS, he was chosen by Reagan in 1982 to head the Advisory Council on Social Security to examine Medicare and used it as a way to expand Medicare to cover acute hospital care. He and the council proposed to expand Medicare Part A to cover all costs for unlimited acute hospital stays by instituting daily co-insurance and added an out of pocket limit on costs for physician services. The White House chose him because he was popular among Democrats and Republicans and would be easily confirmed and was thought to be loyal to the administration.

Along with Bowen’s personal lobbying, the White House thought the issue would “soften the President’s image among the elderly” who where an important voting bloc (p. 19). And the White House wanted to preempt congressional action on the issue since some lawmakers were planning to introduce catastrophic care legislation. However, learning of Reagan’s support for expanding Medicare, conservatives and the insurance industry attacked Bowen’s plans as a disruption to the Medigap industry. Thus, Reagan backtracked and ordered Bowen to conduct a study of the issue.

Conservatives hoped that Bowen’s study would produce a number of “market-oriented” approaches to achieve Bowen’s ends and would allow Reagan to choose a policy to his liking. But Bowen sought to use the study to push his own plan, which extended Medicare protection to
acute hospital and physician costs that were over $2,000 yearly and paying for it with a $4.92 flat monthly premium on all Medicare recipients.

Administration conservatives (e.g. Atty. Gen. Ed Meese, Council of Econ. Advisors Chair Beryl Sprinkel, and OMB Dir. James Miller attacked Bowen’s proposal as it 1. “sought to replace a competently functioning private market with a gov’t monopoly” 2. the costs of such a program would likely to rise to the point where even increased premiums couldn’t pay for the program. 3. “conservatives feared that the Democratic Congress and elderly lobby groups would use Bowen’s plan to get more items which would result into a “legislative Christmas tree.”” (three reasons on pg. 21) Fearing the administration was going to kill his proposal, Bowen immediately announced it a news conference. The White House could not prevent the news conference b/c it would create an uproar by the press. Legislators responded with a number of versions of catastrophic legislation. With media pressure and Congressional action, there was enormous pressure for the President to endorse Bowen’s plan.

Administration conservatives sought to provide their own market-based approach, but were unable to. Representatives of the insurance industry rejected the notion of providing catastrophic care b/c it was simply not profitable to do so.

Three developments occurred that forced Reagan to support the legislation. The Democrats regained control of the Senate, Iran Contra was unfolding, and Reagan’s health was questioned as he recovered slowly from prostate surgery. Catastrophic care was an issue that could shift focus away from the administration’s problems.

Reagan’s endorsement put the issue on the political agenda, but the proposal remained “a simple, budget-neutral, limited expansion of Medicare.” As soon as Reagan endorsed the Bowen plan, congressional Democrats criticized it. Ironically, the same plan had universal praise from Democrats and elderly lobbying groups before. The criticism launched focused on the fact that Reagan’s plan did not include Medicare coverage for long-term care. At that time, lobby groups (e.g. AARP) were launching a grassroots effort coined “Long-Term Care ’88“.

At this time during the 100th Congress, Rep. Claude Pepper (known for his support of elderly issues – HUGE advocate for the elderly) pushed HR 3436, which sought to est. long-term home care benefit who needed assistance with two or more activities of daily living (bathing, eating, dressing, etc…..) The program would be financed by limiting the $43,800 income payroll cap on the 1.45% Medicare payroll tax. The controversy of this bill stemmed from 1. legislators believed that it would put more costs on younger people. 2. the costs of the program would swamp the revenue. 3. internal politics, Rep. Rostenkowski (chair of Ways and Means) and Dingel (Chair on Energy and Commerce) thought Pepper was overstepping their authority. After Pepper’s bill was defeated, Pepper threatened to make his bill an amendment to the catastrophic care bill, which would bring a veto.

Rep. Pete Stark and Bill Gardison pushed their own plan that helped pay for hospital and physician costs, expended coverage for care in skilled nursing facilities and would be financed through taxation of the subsidized portion of Medicare benefits. His delighted advocates for the elderly. Yet, Stark and Gradison in response to intense lobbying by elderly groups, expanded their program even more. Lloyd Bentsen, chair of the Senate Finance Committee introduced similar legislation. Continued pressure from the elderly and supporters led this bill to become “the textbook example of Christmas tree legislation. (p. 28)” Coverage for respite care, mammograms, protection against spousal impoverishment caused by illness as well as a prescription drug coverage.
Prescription drug coverage is highlighted since it was added despite the fact that there was no accurate data concerning how much such a program would cost. Representatives were apprehensive but elderly organization lobbied House Speaker Jim Wright who sought to “put a Democratic stamp on a Reagan initiative (p.30).” Henry Waxman drafted a prescription drug bill and inserted it into the Energy and Commerce Dept.’s bill with Wright’s backing. Sen. Bentsen still remained an obstacle to the prescription drug bill so the AARP negotiated a deal. Bentsen would support the amendment if “it was phased in deficit-neutral w/ revenues more than sufficient to cover costs” and if the benefit be scaled back to “constitute truly catastrophic coverage not just a routine benefit (p. 30).”

At this point, Bowen now is pushing for a veto if any legislation contained a drug benefit and Reagan endorsed this position accusing House Democrats of “tripling the costs of the Bowen plan …and threaten[ing] the solvency of the entire Medicare trust fun (p.30).” Despite veto threats, the White House was continued to be weakened by the coverage of the Iran Contra scandal and did not have the leverage to pick a fight with Congress.

The White House negotiated with Bentsen and struck a deal. “The out-of-pocket limit on hospital and physician expenses was created from 1700 to 1850 yearly and,…was to be increased each year so that no more than 7% of beneficiaries exceeded the cap (p.31).” This ensured that the benefits of this bill would be for catastrophic purposes, since it benefits were limited to those with the highest out of pocket medical expenses. But the AARP and congressional advocates supported the compromise b/c it got its prized prescription drug coverage. The inclusion of the prescription drug coverage (as an amendment) increased the bill’s five-year cost from $13 billion to $30 billion.

Key Points (or at least I think so):
1. The importance of Otis Bowen’s ability as a policy entrepreneur to get the issue on the agenda and get Presidential support.
2. The political developments that weakened the White House’s politically (i.e. Iran-Contra).
3. The factors that led to Reagan’s endorsement was the pressure by the Dems, lack of an alternative, and political events that hampered its ability to work with Congress.
4. The influence of the AARP and advocates for the elderly such as Claude Pepper.
5. The ballooning of the cost of the bill as more and more programs were added. The whole concept of Christmas tree legislation.
Summary for Chapter 3 of *Catastrophic Politics*

- **Success of the Bowen plan set parameters for financing:**
  1. **deficit-neutral** (i.e. paid for by a mechanism specified in the bill rather than out of general revenues)
     - time of high budget deficits made necessary
  2. **shouldered solely by beneficiaries** (seniors)
     - Reagan would have vetoed a new general tax

- **Highly progressive (i.e. based on ability to pay) financing scheme adopted early.**
  1. Allowed financing w/o unduly burdening poor
  2. Unprecedented in Medicare financing, and one of the bill’s most significant provisions

- **Senior groups (AARP, Nat’l Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare) argued against progressive financing, but AARP ultimately supported financing mechanism**
  1. Reasons for AARP support: liberal leadership who believed that the program’s benefits outweighed its costs, and polls showing strong support from members

- **Final plan funded program 2/3 by supplemental tax on middle/high-income seniors, and 1/3 from flat monthly fee paid by all Medicare recipients.**
  1. Supplemental tax calculated as 15% (rising to 28% by 1993) of income tax liability up to a maximum of $800 per person. Flat fee of $4 (rising to $10.50) per person
  2. Highest-income 30% of seniors would be worse off, a first
  3. In order to build up fund, most costs paid for up front, with benefits coming later

**Chapter 4**

This chapter looks at the decisions of rank and file members of Congress to pass the MCCA.

MCCA seems to be an example of entrepreneurial politics where “society as a whole or some large part of it benefits from a policy that imposes substantial costs on some small identifiable segment of society.” (p.43)

The big question is why members of Congress vote for a bill that was being paid for by imposing redistributive costs (higher supplementary premiums) on the more wealthy elderly and did they understand its political implications.

Members discussed in depth the financing mechanisms but the political environment was totally in favor of passing the bill that no one considered it something horrendous. 3 factors are extremely important: 1. members wanted to avoid voting on the Pepper bill so they focused on passing the MCCA 2. political elites supported the bill (i.e. Reagan and the AARP) 3. public opinion polls indicated strong support.
Floor debate focused on three areas: the bill’s benefits, its costs, and how it was going to be paid for.

Benefits debate:
Opponents of the MCCA said that the bill did not focus on long-term care
Supporters touted all the benefits the elderly were going to get, esp. prescription drug provisions.

Costs debate:
Opponents feared that the costs would overrun the benefits esp. regarding prescription drugs, which would force Congress to raise taxes or dip into general revenue.
Supporters stated that the MCCA was deficit neutral and would be self-financed.

Finance debate:
This was the most controversial. Supporters stated that the “elderly Americans with the ability to pay should contribute more to sustain Medicare.” (48) It totals 60% of total costs will be supported by 40% of the higher income beneficiaries. However, supporters of the MCCA did not harp on the redistributive aspects of MCCA.
However, the implication is that the higher income beneficiaries would be paying more than what they would actually receive in Medicare benefits.
Opponents such as Don Nickles called this an “income redistribution scheme” and other likened it to a tax increase on the elderly. (p. 49)

The bill was opposed by the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, which was a 4.5 million member strong interest group. This group organized a huge campaign to lobby Congress to oppose the MCCA. While this opposition group gave Congress some second thoughts, the political environment was strongly in favor of passing the MCCA. (see the 3 factors above)

The media did not put a lot of coverage into the financing of the MCCA, but it was swayed by the huge coalition led by the AARP in support of the bill. Even the AARP was critical of the bill, but they couched the criticism in articles that ended up supporting the MCCA.

In the end, the House passed the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage act of 1988 by a vote of 302-127. The conference report passed by a vote of 328 to 72. And the senate supported both its own version and the conference report by a vote of 86

Chapter 5 – Senior Citizen Opinion After Passage of the MCCA

“If viewed in the context of a simple political model where individuals are assumed to behave as self-interested actors, the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 should have been popular legislation.” (61)
Because more than 60 percent of the elderly (65+) were due to receive benefits in excess of their costs, it is surprising that over a period of approximately 1 year after the passage of the MCCA, support for the program dropped dramatically among all income levels.

Total support for the legislation at the time of passage was 91% (May 1988), which plummeted to only 40% support in August 1989, accompanied by an increase in total opposition to the program, from 6% at the time of passage to 37% total opposition in August 1989.

IMPACT OF INCOME (Table 5.2)

Presumably, the low-income elderly would be most supportive of the program because they were the most likely group to receive benefits in excess of their costs. On the contrary, support among the lowest income elderly dropped from 70% support in Dec. 1998 to 47% support in August 1989. Income, as a variable, had very little impact on support for the program, in spite of the supplemental premium that would be absorbed by moderate or high-income elderly.

IMPACT OF KNOWLEDGE OF PROGRAM (Table 5.4)

Among those respondents who rated themselves highly familiar with the program, it seems that familiarity breeds contempt – the more the elderly knew (or, more importantly, believed they knew) about the program, the less likely they were to support it.

“Even among low-income elderly rating themselves familiar with the program, the margin of support dropped by 56 percentage points during the survey period (Dec 88-Aug 89), a decline identical to that occurring among all familiar elderly.” (64)

Generally, knowledge of the specific aspects of the program were low among the elderly, but the minority with a relatively high degree of knowledge were more likely to oppose the program than their less-informed peers. Among varying income groups (Table 5.5), the relationship is the same, with similar sharp drops of support during the survey period (indicated by the “difference” column of each table).

ACTUAL v. SELF-ASSESSED KNOWLEDGE (Table 5.6)

Table 5.6 indicates that the majority of the elderly were unfamiliar with many of the key features of the MCCA. The elderly were most familiar with the following specifics of the program:

- 58% cap physician charges
- 54% $4 monthly premium paid by all
- 49% one deductible maximum per year

and, notably, they were least familiar with the following aspects:

- 12% Couple with $30,000 income would not pay maximum premium
- 18% Financed by elderly only
- 19% Doesn’t cover AIDS
- 19% Doesn’t cover physician charges beyond those approved
It is difficult to explain the nonsupport of the low-income elderly, especially those familiar with the program. It seems counterintuitive that they would not support a program from which they stand to benefit more than any other group while maintaining only the lowest benefits.

Himelfarb suggests that the answer lies in the misperceptions held by the low-income elderly with respect to the costs and benefits of the legislation.

Income has little to do with knowledge/perceptions.

SUPPLEMENTAL PREMIUM

Misunderstanding of the supplemental premium and perceived impacts to individuals appears to be a driving force behind the loss of support. Low income persons apparently did not understand that they would be highly unlikely to fall into the category of persons who have to pay the supplemental premium. The costs of this program are progressive, but that message did not resonate with the lowest-income elderly, who perceived that their own costs would increase substantially, thereby withdrawing their support. This also explains why the most favored reform was a decrease of the supplemental premium paired with an increase to the basic premium. (Table 5.8)

DUPLICATIVE BENEFITS

Due to the complex, public-private web that is health care and health insurance, many elderly were confused and believed they already possessed coverage that included the benefits associated with MCCA. In actuality, this may or may not have been true, but the widespread perception among the elderly was that MCCA was a duplicate of coverage they already had, and therefore, an unnecessary additional cost. Between December 1988 and Feb-Mar 1989, there was a 30 point drop in support for the program among persons who had or believed they had coverage of the MCCA benefits through other insurance. (Table 5.9)

CONCLUSION

In the end, the hypothesis holds: The elderly acted as self-interested individuals. While we would expect them to support a program that would benefit them more than it would cost them, the interference of misperceptions about the program meant that they acted in their perceived self-interest based on wrong information, which accounts for the drop in support so rapidly after the MCCA was passed.

APPENDIX

The most useful point in the appendix is that when respondents who were misperceiving terms like “supplemental premium,” they likely responded more harshly or in a way that skews their true preferences as a result of the emotional stimulus of various words. In a reformatted equation, misperceptions about the program account for the most significant drop in support among the elderly.
Key Points:

Income had little impact on support for the program.

Income had little impact on awareness/knowledge of the program.

Familiarity bred contempt: the more they knew (or thought they knew), the less the elderly supported the MCCA.

Generally, familiarity with the program specifics was low, leading to misperceptions about the impact of the program to individuals and, ultimately, a drop in support for a program that should have been successful.

Chapter 6 – Repeal of the MCCA

This chapter discusses the causes of increasing opposition to the MCCA, particularly among senior citizens. It argues that continuing confusion about the program’s funding, coupled with the MCCA architects’ inability to explain the redistributive properties of the program, ultimately led to the repeal of the MCCA.

- There were 2 sources of opposition among senior citizens: 1. the affluent elderly (a minority) who complained about their disproportionate assumption of the cost burden; and 2. the confused majority who mistakenly believed that they would also be subject to a very high premium.

- Program supporters initially tried educational outreaches to allay the confusion and anger of both groups. These efforts did not work and may have angered seniors even more, as some viewed these “educational outreaches” as exercises in deception.

- Several explanations for the escalating anger and opposition to MCCA exist:
  - The program, which was supposed to protect seniors in “catastrophies” did not cover long-term care. Still, MCCA architects argued that the act did provide many essential benefits. The opposition, then, arose not because MCCA would have been ineffectual, but simply because senior citizens failed to see the many (lesser) benefits they would gain.
  - The National Committee sabotaged the MCCA by spreading rumors and misinformation to seniors. In doing so, it capitalized on the fact that MCCA’s funding derives exclusively from seniors. The National Committee sent mass mailings with sensationalist wordings such as “1989 INCOME TAXES FOR MILLIONS OF SENIORS WILL INCREASE BY UP TO $1,600,000 ($800.00 FOR SINGLES) – IT’S A TAX ON SENIORS ONLY AND MUST BE STOPPED” (77). These mailings prompted countless phone calls and letters by seniors to legislators calling for a repeal of the MCCA.
  - The design of the program was such that it imposed premiums immediately yet only phased in the benefits gradually over a 5-year period. The program’s failure to deliver benefits immediately made it politically vulnerable.
  - During the MCCA debates, legislators had argued that Medigap premiums would decline as a result of the MCCA. As it turned out, however, Medigap premiums
actually rose (due to external factors such as rising cost of medical care). This unfulfilled promise created additional mistrust among seniors towards the MCCA.

- MCCA advocates failed to address clearly and honestly the redistributive implications of the program’s financing, leading to confusion. Before enactment, the MCCA had been advertised as a program beneficial to all seniors. The unequal cost burden caused affluent seniors to feel cheated by the system and voiced their strong opposition. Lower-income seniors became confused as to why a group of fellow senior citizens opposed a plan intended to help them all and thus began mistrusting the MCCA. Amidst the growing tension, legislators backpedaled. They no longer touted the MCCA as a program beneficial to all, but rather as an act “primarily designed to help those elderly who did not have additional insurance and whose income was just high enough to keep them from Medicaid eligibility” (81).

- To justify the high supplemental premiums the MCCA imposed on high-income elderly, program supporters began to publicize the generous government subsidies Medicare recipients were already receiving. Senator Bentson noted, “Try to find me a comparable buy for that one, with the intensity of coverage, the depth of coverage, the expanse of coverage, and buy it on the market for that” (82). The idea, simply, was to demonstrate that even with the MCCA, affluent elderly still enjoyed a net gain from the Medicare program.

- Despite the anger among senior citizens, the element of redistribution was praised on the editorial pages of the NYT and the Washington Post as well as throughout the media.

- Legislators were unable to agree on measures to save the MCCA. The primary problem was deciding on the program’s funding mechanism. Proposals ranged from increasing the general population’s Medicare tax to instituting a regressive financing structure. As calls to repeal MCCA mounted and legislators were deadlocked, “MCCA architects abandoned their efforts to save all or most of the program’s benefits” (90).

- On October 7, 1989, the Senate voted to repeal the MCCA’s supplemental premium. The common sentiment among supporters of MCCA, as well as the media, was that “a vocal minority of seniors, coupled with congressional cowardice, have ruined it for the truly needy” (84).

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 was a significant departure from past social insurance policy-making b/c of 2 main things:

1) For the first time in history, benefits were entirely funded by the beneficiaries and involved open redistribution among the low-income and affluent members.

2) Unlike other social insurance policy, benefits did not exceed the costs for all participants.
For the American Association of Retired Persons, the decision to support MCCA was largely pragmatic. Members wanted the benefits attached the legislation (specifically, prescription drugs and skilled nursing facilities).

For the congressional architects of MCCA, their interest was deeper. They wanted to establish a precedent for policy-making during at time of resource scarcity. The liberal architects wanted to pave a way for future expansion of federal aid to the elderly (ex., long-term care). The conservative architects saw it as a model to apply to other deficit-reduction efforts (ex., Medicare A trust fund).

However, after its passage, MCCA came under attack by a relatively affluent minority who didn’t want to pay premiums that exceeded their benefits. The elderly majority who were to benefit were confused and failed to understand how the program can be personally beneficial. They, in turn, refused to come to its defense and actually advocated for its repeal.

**Two major effects** came out of this:

1. Emerging consensus for a federal long-term-care program evaporated primarily b/c of the disagreements over financing. When the Pepper Commission (bipartisan) convened in 1989-90 to formulate a blueprint for long-term care, many could not agree on the financing, and *no one* dare call on the elderly to pay for more than a small fraction of the program’s cost.
2. Congress had “a renewed awareness and heightened sensitivity” to the perceived political power of the elderly. Congress allowed many changes in the 1990 budget agreement on Medicare that were favorable to the elderly.

The MCCA repeal left significant numbers of seniors still liable for costs connected to extended hospital stays and physician services. Also, political pressure to reduce the federal deficit and examine Social Security and Medicare (in 1995, both programs were projected to account for 1/3 of the federal budget expenditures and more than 60% of entitlement spending), made lawmakers revisit potentially controversial policy options like MCCA.

**Two lessons** came from this:

1. Programs that involve overt income redistribution among large numbers of individuals may fail to obtain public support if the beneficiaries don’t perceive the need for the program or if there isn’t widespread perception that some crisis requires public action. “Americans will support non-incremental change in their health-care system only if they are persuaded that a health-care ‘crisis’ actually exists.”
2. Debate over the distribution of costs in social-insurance programs also took root from MCCA. One perspective holds that the MCCA repeal demonstrates the political necessity of financing future programs more broadly or inter-generationally. To be politically viable, costs need to be dispersed throughout society without the elderly shouldering more of the burden. After the MCCA repeal, AARP lobbied for improved health-care coverage for seniors only as part of a larger effort to establish a national health insurance program for all Americans. AARP became part of the Health Care Reform Project (comprised of 30 groups) that took a public-education effort aimed at
persuading Americans that a crisis existed in the nation’s health-care system and that only comprehensive reform could alleviate it.

A second perspective points to the need to be clear and candid about issues concerning the financing of social-insurance programs. Few among the elderly knew of the significant subsidies received by beneficiaries through Medicare A and B. If efforts to redistribute resources among beneficiaries are to be successful, the issues must be confronted explicitly and in a public manner. “Proposals that fail to address the subsidy issue in a forthright and comprehensible manner might follow the course of MCCA, with the affluent elderly bitterly protesting that they have been unfairly singled out to pay a disproportionate share of their costs, while those with lower incomes fail to grasp the more positive implications of such reforms for them personally.”

The public’s anxiety about the federal deficit has brought about a new willingness to consider reforms in Social Security and Medicare. Social-insurance programs have grown too large to be considered off-limits to future deficit-reduction efforts. As Medicare’s costs have continued to grow, it’s not surprising that the program remains a central target of efforts to trim federal expenditures and raise revenues.

Although MCCA was a huge disaster, it provided lawmakers with an improved understanding of the constraints inherent in social-insurance policy-making in the current political environment.

Kingdon/ Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policy

Governmental Agendas are explained by:
- Problems
- Politics, and
- Visible participants

Public policy making can be considered to be a set of processes, including
1) the setting of the agenda, itself affected by,
   - inexorable march of problems pressing on the system
   - process of gradual accumulation of knowledge and perspectives among the specialists in a given policy area
   - political processes
2) the specification of alternatives from which a choice is to be made
3) an authoritative choice among those specified alternatives
4) the implementation of the decision

Participants on the Inside of Government affect policy based on:
1) the importance of each participant
2) the ways each is important (whether affects agendas, alternatives, or both)
3) the resources available to each participant
• The Administration (president, presidential staff, or political appointees in departments and bureaus) figures very prominently in agenda setting although they can’t determine the policy alternatives or the final outcome
• Civil servants and bureaucrats figure less prominently than one would expect. (The role and focus is more on implementation). Their advantages are in longevity, expertise, and their relationships with people in Congress and interest groups.
• Congress was judged important in 91% of interviews. They are the driving reason behind modifications, trade-offs in proposing legislation. Their importance lies in their legal authority, publicity resources, and blended (versus) detailed information presentations. This is done to please constituents, to improve their own status on the Hill, and to shape public policy.
• Congressional staff is recognized for their contribution to policy, but their role is diminished in it being Congress and the President that must ratify policy.

**Government Outsiders**

Interest Groups – Some affect the agenda and some affect the alternatives. They both promote and attempt to block gov’t action (more important). Resources include – electoral advantage or (geographical spread), ability to bind the economy, cohesion Academics, Researchers, and Consultants - perhaps affecting alternatives more then the agenda, can discuss long term affects of policy

Media – media attention affects constituent’s attention and thus affects legislator’s attention. However, they often give attention to the current topic rather than setting the agenda. Some impact may come through public opinion influenced by the media.

Public Opinion – It does not affect the agenda to the degree that people think. Rather people tend to clamor around an issue once experts, professionals, have set it

**Processes:**
Alternatives that actually receive serious consideration stem from:
• Alternatives generated and narrowed in the policy stream
• Relatively hidden participants, specialists in the particular policy area

Multiple causations are generally responsible for bringing an item to the forefront of the agenda. This is largely because of the fragmentation of the system

Processes to agenda setting in the Federal Government:
• Problem recognition (and the question of why some problems capture attention)
• Formation & refining of policy proposals
• Politics

One must also recognize that there is a policy community of specialists – bureaucrats, folk in planning and evaluation and budget offices, Hill staffers, academics, interests groups,
researchers. They are also affected by swings of national moods, public opinion, election results, and changes in administration – with each potentially acting as an impetus or a constraint.

Problems:
This chapter focuses on how government officials focus on one problem versus another. Problems are brought to attention through various mechanisms:

- Indicators – assess magnitude of and change in a problem
- Focusing Events – includes disasters, crises, personal experience, etc – but need preexisting perceptions to reinforce
- Feedback – gives info on current performance, indicates a failure to meet stated goals, or suggests unanticipated consequences

Budgets are a special problem. They act as a constraint to expensive proposals

As example, National Health Care illustrates attention to solutions before problems. In 1979 both a bill in the Senate Finance Committee and recommendations from the Carter Administration brought forth a problem that “everyone knew was out there all along.”

Problem recognition is not enough to bring a problem to the agenda. Solutions also come from politicians trying to make a mark, bureaucrats expanding programs, value changes, interest group pressure, or other expressions of preference. Kingdon maintains that it is a conceptual and political accomplishment to get people to see new problems or to get them to see old problems in a new way. Advocacy for a particular policy happens because of promotion of personal interests, values, to shape public policy, or they are “policy groupies”

Policies that survive tend to be:
- Technically Feasible
- Value acceptability within the policy community
- Tolerable cost
- Anticipate Public Acquiescence
- Reasonable Chance for Receptivity among elected decision makers

The Political Stream is composed of public moods, pressure group campaigns, election results, partisan or ideological distributions in Congress, and changes in administration.

Mass mood does not necessarily reside in the general public, rather it is perceived in the attitudes of more active sectors of the public. This mass mood then shapes governmental agendas by promoting items of concern to the masses and inhibiting those items, which do not. Turnover and jurisdictional boundaries have a powerful affect on agendas. Together these can force some subjects high on the agenda and make it virtually impossible for other items to come to government attention.
Consensus building in the political arena is in contrast to consensus building among policy specialists. It is the bargaining process versus persuasion.

**Policy windows** – they open infrequently, and they do not stay open for long. Bargaining only comes into play when an item is hot – otherwise advocates hold to extremes. These windows also exist in the perception of the policy advocates. They are opened by the appearance of compelling problems or by happenings in the political stream. Agendas are set in the problems (political streams) and alternatives are generated in the policy stream.

**Coupling**, or proposals linked with political exigencies, and alternatives introduced when agendas change. Agenda items that hook them onto the problem of the moment or push them at a time that seems irrelevant. Solutions become joined to problems as both are joined to favorable political forces. Policy entrepreneurs, who advocate alternatives, keep proposals waiting open windows. These windows open according to schedules (budget cycles) or unpredictably (disaster/accident). An item is more likely to rise on the agenda if the problem, proposal, and political receptivity are coupled together.

Events do not proceed neatly in stages, steps, or phases. Instead, independent streams flow through the system all at once, each with a life of its own and equal with one another, become coupled when a window opens. Alternatives must be advocated for a long time before a short-run opportunity presents itself on an agenda.

However, the processes are not completely random. Processes within each stream limit randomness. Some couplings are more likely than others, and finally, there are various limits that provide a basic structure within which the participants must move.

**Chapter 10: Some Further Reflections**

This update in the third edition that adds three new case studies to demonstrate the theories set forth in the book:

- Reagan Budget in 1981 – (210)
- Tax Reform Act of 1986 – (213)
- Health Care Reform during the Clinton Administration in 1993 – (217)

**Krehbiel/ Pivotal politics**

**Chapter One: Basics**

- objective: to create a basic theory that incorporates president and congressional decision making
  - Gridlock
    - general definition: persistent inability to enact major legislation when majorities on Capitol Hill and/or the president seem to prefer such enactments to the status quo
    - parties and partisans- hypothetical causes of gridlock, not the defining characteristics
- Institutional cause of gridlock- separation of powers
- Underlying phenomenon of gridlock is not necessarily a bad thing
- Rule: gridlock is common but not constant

- Coalitions
  - Winning coalitions are bipartisan and greater than minimum-majority sized

- Basic Terms
  - Deductive positive theory v. empirical generalizations

- Basic Theories or Schools of Thought
  No existing theory or school of thought provides a precise explanation for the basics facts of gridlock, coalition size and variations
  (See page 10 for Table 1.1)
  1. Responsible party gov’t (Schattschneider 1942, APSA 1950)
     a. Gridlock is rare
     b. Coalitions are equal to size of minority party
  2. Conditional party gov’t (Rohde, Aldrich 1995)
     a. Condition for party strength is stated in terms of legislators’ preferences
     b. Gridlock is rare
     c. Coalitions are majority-party sized and partisan
  3. Divided v. Unified gov’t
     a. Gridlock comes from divided gov’t
     b. Coalitions in unified gov’t will be majority-sized and partisan
  4. Median Voter Theory (Black 1958)
     a. Equilibrium at median member’s ideal point
     b. Gridlock never occurs unless legislative median is constant
     c. Winning coalitions are bipartisan
  5. Majoritarian Chaos (Plott 1967)
     a. Majority rule is unpredictable and chaotic
     b. No gridlock b/c under all circumstances and status quo policy can be defeated
     c. Coalitions are small and bipartisan
     a. Equilibrium are instances of gridlock
     b. Bipartisan coalitions
  7. Divide-the-Dollar Game (Baron, Frerjohn)
     a. Non-cooperative game theory
     b. Gridlock never occurs
     c. Coalitions are small and often minimum-majority sized
  8. Reduced Form Theories
     a. Economic theories of regulation
        i. Gov’t is unitary optimizing agent
        ii. Gov’t responsiveness, not gridlock is the central characteristic of the theory
     b. Downsian Electoral Party Competition
        i. Gridlock rarely occurs
        ii. Divided government never occurs
        iii. Coalition sizes are majority-party sized and partisan
iv. not a lawmaking theory per say b/c lawmaking is really a way to gain office

c. Balancing Theory
   i. voters in electorate gain utility from desired balance in the gov’t
   ii. gridlock does not occur
   iii. winning coalitions are small, except in cases of large inter-election swings

Theories predict all gridlock or no gridlock. Most theories are silent on the size and make-up of coalitions.

Chapter Two: A Theory
- improved theory of lawmaking must account for gridlock and coalitions
- Assumptions
  o Policy Space
    ▪ policy space is unidimensional
    ▪ continuum where liberal policies on the left, moderate policies in center and conservative policies on the right
    ▪ status quo point, q, reflects existing policy, outcome from prior period of decision making
  o Players and preferences
    ▪ Lawmakers- president and n legislators in a unicameral legislature
    ▪ each player has an ideal point that gives the greatest benefit of all known points
    ▪ (Does this account for perfect knowledge of all potential policies or are these only proposed policies? This relates to agenda setting…)
  o Procedures
    ▪ Capacity of politicians to enact policies are tempered by two supermajoritarian procedures:
      • executive veto
      • Senate’s filibuster procedure
  o Pivots
    ▪ pivot: a person or a thing on or around which something turns or depends
    ▪ filibuster pivot – ideal point f
    ▪ veto pivot – ideal point v, legislator for whom ideal point and all ideal points on his right make up exactly or just more than 2/3 of legislature (president on liberal side)
    ▪ president – ideal point p, for a liberal president, legislator for whom his ideal point and all ideal points to his left make up exactly or just more than 3/5 of legislature
  o Sequence of play
    1. median voter chooses any bill (b) in the policy space or by accepting exogenous status quo (q) ; this operates under an open rule
    2. filibuster pivot (f) decides whether or not to mount a filibuster or whether to let the game proceed to the next stage
    3. president decides whether to sign or to veto the bill
4. if president vetoes the bill, the veto pivot decides whether to sustain or override the veto
   o Behavior
     ▪ Players are assumed to adopt strategies that maximize their utility
     ▪ An equilibrium is an optimal bill, b* which is a function of the exogenous status quo
   o Equilibrium and Gridlock
     ▪ Gridlock: absence of policy change in equilibrium in spite of the existence of a legislative majority that favors change
     ▪ Cases where a pivotal player chooses the status quo over the proposed policy are cases of gridlock
     ▪ if q = m, then gridlock is the equilibrium
   o Parties
     ▪ No special assumptions made about the ability of political parties to shape individual lawmakers’ decisions
     ▪ results are amenable to party-related interpretations
     ▪ pivotal theory explains the central tendency of gridlock

- Results
  o Possible outcomes:
    1. full convergence to legislative median
    2. partial convergence to legislative median
    3. gridlock – no change in status quo
  o Full convergence
    ▪ Occurs when status quo is extreme compared to preferences of actors
  o Partial convergence
    ▪ Occurs when status quo lies in interval II (see page 35 for chart)
    ▪ Policies that filibuster and everyone to the left prefers to m, proposal is to make the filibuster pivot indifferent between b and q
      - (Why would a legislator who is indifferent between the status quo and a new policy choose the new policy? Can this be explained by other theories of Congressional action? Do legislators want to be seen taking action more than supporting the status quo even if the status quo is functioning fine?)
      - does not elicit a filibuster; does not elicit a veto
      - new policy is closer to median voter than the status quo
      - agenda setter is the median voter; open rule
      - agenda setter is not an appropriate word b/c anyone may filibuster, anyone may invoke cloture or override a presidential veto
  o Gridlock
    ▪ no convergence
  o Summary
    ▪ When status quo policies are moderate, cloture and veto procedures prohibit further convergence to centrally located policies
    ▪ status quo is an exogenous parameter in the theory
    ▪ theory is multistage but not repeated, so static
• Is this chart saying that Reagan and Bush presidencies were equally as conservative as the Clinton administration? (page 41)
• Presidential honeymoons are simply old Congressional equilibria instead of deference to a new political leader

- Conclusions
  • breaking gridlock requires that the status quo lies outside the gridlock interval, defined by the president, filibuster, and veto pivots in theory
  • when gridlock is broken, it is broken by large, bipartisan coalitions – not by minimal majority or homogenous majority-party coalition
  • helps rationalize the surprise of unified government gridlock

Chapter Three: Gridlock
- A Revisionist view of divided government and gridlock
  • evidence for Mayhew’s claim is supported by a regression equation that captures predictions about the opposite of gridlock, “important legislation” as a function of unified versus divided control and several other variables
  • Mayhew no effect finding doesn’t account for variation in legislative productivity or degrees of gridlock
  • “Start of term” – important exogenous component in theory of pivotal politics
    ▪ variable can be refined to reflect inter-election preference changes
    ▪ 1 for first two years of term, 0 otherwise (What about re-election or some exogenous factor such as war?)

  • Activist Mood
    ▪ Mayhew’s mood variable is a proxy for preferences as public preferences become more amenable to high degrees of governmental activity, government will become more active
    ▪ Krehbiel operationalized mood to better cover a longer time period
      • change in domestic policy mood is coded as continuous rather than dichotomous
      • change in activist mood is coded 1 for 1961-1976 and 0 otherwise

- Reassessment of legislative productivity
  • dependent variables – changes in legislative productivity
    ▪ major enactments by Congress t minus the number of major enactments in Congress t-1
    ▪ change in landmark enactments \( \frac{1}{2} \) robustness check
    ▪ change in ordinary enactments
  • independent variables
    ▪ change in the width of the gridlock interval – preference changes (inter-election swings as a proxy)
    ▪ contraction or expansion of the gridlock interval
      • midterm elections – presidential ideal point is constant, Congress and filibuster move away from president, expansion of gridlock
      • presidential reelection – president’s ideal point is fixed, contraction
• change in the party of the president – contraction of gridlock
• indeterminacies – ad hoc rule for Kennedy and Clinton b/c they coincided with small Republican gains (gridlock change = 0)

- Hypotheses
  1. Changes in the width of the gridlock interval are negatively associated with legislative productivity.
  2. Controlling for the width of the gridlock interval, the effect of moods will be negligible
     a. This sets K apart from Mayhew b/c Mayhew contends that the change in activist mood account for changes in productivity.
     b. Moods are not irrelevant but rather are translated in governmental preferences (exogenous in the theory) via elections.
  3. Controlling for gridlock, the effect of government regime on legislative productivity should not be significantly different from zero.
     a. Convention wisdom holds that unified government will facilitate legislation.

- Findings
  o Change in the width of the gridlock interval accounts for considerable variation in legislative productivity and is statistically significant.
  o Confirms Mayhew’s theory, no difference between unified and divided government’s ability to pass important legislation.
     • When one takes the gridlock interval into account, the government regime has no effect on important legislation.
  o Mood hypothesis is not instructive in understanding the change in productivity

- Conclusions
  o theory accounts for variation in legislative productivity in classes of important and landmark laws, but does not fare well with “ordinary” laws
  2. public moods are not a main cause of legislative productivity across all classes of laws
  3. predictable and significant gov’t-regime effects are rare but not non-existent

- Caveats and Conclusions
  o implicitly assumes that party choice is a proxy for preferences
  o treats House and Senate the same even though the Senate has a supermajoritarian cloture provision
  o does not measure president’s preferences

Chapter Four: Coalition Sizes
- reexamination of the margins of victory tested by the median voter, two party theory by the pivotal politics theory
- exogenous shocks:
  1. election induced
  2. status quo induced- may happen at any time period, may be caused by new information
- Median voter theory
coalitions – near minimum-majority
- legislators separated into almost equal coalitions on either side of the status quo

- Party gov’t
- coalitions will be as large as majority party and completely partisan
- K’s objection: supermajority can release some votes and pick up some opposition votes for free
- (In a strong party government though, why wouldn’t the majority party retain as many votes as possible? This must be different for House and Senate.)

- Pivotal Politics Theory
- presidential regimes: a regime change is not a shift from divided to unified government but rather a change in the party occupying the White House
  - (Seemingly this gives an accurate picture of the president’s power but what is the difference when there is a presidential regime change and the Congress stays fairly stable or when the president remains the same but the Congress shifts?)
- noncentrist status quo is a necessary and sufficient condition for policy change
  - given the presence of the nonmedian pivot, coalitions should be at least 3/5, greater than minimum-majority size

- supermajoritarian politics dominate the enactment of major laws
- variations in coalition size
  1. smaller after party of the president changes than during intrapresidential regime periods
  2. smaller in the House than in the Senate after such regime shifts
  3. smaller in the Senate after its cloture reform of 1975 than before

- pivotal politics theory links congressional rules and presidential regimes to coalition sizes

Chapter Five: Filibuster Pivots
- Rule 22 estbl. 1917
- cloture procedure for ending extended debate and bringing vote
  - 1975 – change from 2/3 majority to 3/5 majority to end a filibuster
- successful filibuster preserves the status quo
- prospect of a filibuster makes the filibuster pivot pivotal instead of the median voter
- few politicians hold “true” or “principled” views on cloture itself; votes for cloture are more about the particular legislation
- this chapter is not seeking to explain the myths about the filibuster or make a normative claim; seeking to discover if the filibuster pivots exploit their special status in order to alter policies relative to what they would be in a strictly simple-majority legislature
- Switcher analysis
  - changes in behavior are most likely among decision makers who are between two policies or nearly indifferent
    - (much like Zallers idea that the median voter is the most likely to defect or be affected by salient issues)
  - switching constrains party leaders; leaders buy, trade, seek indifferent colleagues because the costs are low
- Data
  - cloture comes on a variety of political issues
cloture motions fail more often than not
unit of analysis: senator switch opportunities on successive cloture motions
modicum of consistency in vote pairs is underscored by central tendencies in margins of success or failure, relative to historically variable cloture-invoking threshold
distance from f – absolute difference between senator’s and filibuster pivot’s preferences

- Hypotheses
  1. coefficient for f-quartile should be positive; proximity to f is associated with a higher probability of switching
  (I’m not really sure why we would expect that those closest to the filibuster pivot would be most likely to flip-flop on successive cloture motions.
Point of clarification needed on why the Senate would have multiple cloture motions, especially if the first one passed.)
  2. coefficient for f-quartile should be greater than for f-adjacent moderates
  3. coefficient for f-quartile should be significantly greater than for f-adjacent extremists
  (How does this break down for particular issues?)
- filibuster pivots and their spatially close colleagues often attract disproportionate attention of legislative leaders, making it appear as if the pivotal politics theory captures an important aspect of lawmaking

Chapter Six: Veto Pivots
- veto enhances the president’s relevance in lawmaking; lawmakers modify behavior according to the reality of the veto
- Vote pairs
  1. precursor pairs – switching opportunities on vetoed bills arise prior to the veto itself
  2. broad-band pairs – opportunities that occur between initial (preconference) passage and override votes, votes are distant in time and space
  3. showdown pairs – opportunities occur between the last, prepresidential, postconference congressional vote and immediately post-presidential vote switching is coded 1 if senator’s vote differs across items and 0 otherwise
- switching is less common in divided than unified government
  o 11.9% (divided) v. 24.2% (unified)
- Democrats are more disciplined than Republicans but not b/c of divided government
  o (How then can the author claim that party is not important?)
- prominence of the veto pivot is bolstered
- real world politicians tend to target, lobby, persuade, and influence precisely those legislators who the theory predicts should be – legislators on or near the veto pivot

Chapter Seven: Presidential Power
- dependent variable: attraction, switching to president’s position in the second of two votes, conditional on having voted against the president in the first vote
- dependent variable: retention, not switching away from the president after voting for the president in the first vote of the pair
- supporter/opponent refer to the preferences regarding the veto, not supporters/opponents of the president
- *(What is the connection of having voted for a bill in the first place and attraction/retention)*
- presidential power = attraction – (1-retention)
  - presidential success rate for convincing former non-supporters is one in four
  - probability that presidents’ supporters support the president in second vote on veto = .895
  - in the pivotal quintiles, expect a net swing of 1 in 8 legislators
- presidents in divided government have a net power measure of .130, while presidents in unified government have a net power measure of .085
  - there is clearly a difference between divided and unified government here
- Conclusions
  - post-war presidents don’t exert positive influence over individual legislators in the veto arena
  - selection bias is a concern – maybe presidents choose bills to veto on which they know they will prevail
- *It seems like the threat of a veto is almost as important as the actual veto. Why isn’t this tested?*

Chapter Eight: Party Government
- heterogeneity in party confounds predictive ability
- partisan bias for presidential power within the critical veto-pivot, it’s about one and a half votes
- party bias for president greater in the House than Senate
- party basis for presidential power is greatest in the post reform Congress
- for all veto pairs in the postwar period president overall derive a comparative advantage in attracting and retaining Congresspeople of their own party, within the veto-pivot range of the ideological spectrum
- cross party differences in attraction and retention success rates exist
- Conclusions
  - party effects exist on both the attraction and retention sides of the voting ledger – this is above and beyond the pivotal politics theory
  - findings don’t fit well with recent arguments about the resurgence of majority party strength in Congress
  - outcome consequential tensions that arise in US lawmaking are due to politicians who straightforwardly and individualistically express their preferences within and across two branches of gov’t in supermajority settings

Chapter Nine: Partisanship or Pivots?
- Theory omissions
  1. political parties- players are autonomous and individualistic
  2. multidimensionality
  3. agenda setting
4. dynamic process
- See chapter for application to budget case
- When legislators gravitate away from the preferences of their electoral constituents and toward an off-center president, the electoral consequence tends to be negative (voted out of office)
  o Reelection-seeking candidates should try to distance themselves from their president
  o *When should party candidates shy away from popular president?*
- For budgets pivotal politics theory performs reasonably well as interpretive, if not predictive device

**Chapter Ten: Conclusions**
- Parties may matter but they do not need to be incorporated into a good theory of US lawmaking
- Gridlock has positive and normative angles
  o Gridlock occurs regularly because of moderate status quo policies, supermajority procedures, and heterogeneous preferences
  o Occurs in unified as well as divided gov’t b/c most basic rules of US lawmaking are identical in these two situations
  o Cost of gridlock – by making it difficult to change the status quo, frustrate majorities within gov’t who want change
  o Benefit of gridlock - actors outside of gov’t prefer a known and stable policy
- Presidents vary in their degree of influence over legislators
- Behavior and outcomes in complex process of lawmaking can be explained by simple formal model
  o Strengths of theory
    ▪ Ability to account for stylized facts and variation
- Four steps of theory focused on preferences, procedures, pivots and the status quo (see pg. 235)

✓ **Neely/ how courts govern America**

Chapter 1:
Federal appellate judge writing book about the courts. There are 4 areas of law in American jurisprudence- criminal (crimes), civil (private disputes), administrative (agency actions) and constitutional. Constitutional law concerns the economy, social structure and political process. It is through constitutional law that courts govern America by limiting power of people and the state. Constitutional law is only thing that courts do that legislature cannot easily change. US constitution is short and vague, leaving lots of room for interpretation. Judges are not elected (at the federal level), so not politically accountable, and frequently give no notice that change in law will occur. In the US, there are people who like courts because they like what courts do, and people who do not like courts. Courts do not have a universal philosophy (they change their principals over time). Constitutional law is really about institutions and the way that they interact with other institutions, but the courts speak in the language of individuals (because they are deciding cases). Appelate judges really make policy without necessary knowing that they are doing so, and certainly without the policy analysis skills and resources. In any system
of government there are 2 systems: the myth system (the way that people want to think it works—voters have power, etc) and the operational system (how the system really works—corruption, vote buying, shirking, etc). These systems interact— the myth system creates a standard, but this is simply aspirational for the operational system. The court’s duty is the bring the operational system closer to the myth system. Participatory democracy has limits— it is often unable to achieve things that the public approves of, and that the court can achieve. Courts need to be concerned with their legitimacy in their action: some cases are easy, but others require substitution of judicial judgement for political judgement (which is sometimes viewed as illegitimate/activist). Judges are talking in a code understandable to lawyers—they want to preserve sense that myth is operating while making policy judgements on more practical grounds. There are some cases where courts are the best institution to resolve the problem—economic questions are one such area (he asserts that there are always right and wrong answers, which can be provided by experts).

✓Patashnik/ After the interest group prevails
Laws with diffused benefits can pass, but generally run into trouble after passage. Normally interest group theory can’t explain bills that serve the general interest at the expense of special interests. Ex. Deregulation, tax reform.
To pass General interest legislation requires:
1. link to a salient public issues
   a. understandable issue
2. framed to encourage responsiveness to more diffuse interests
   a. legislature sheltered from blame (avoid recorded vote)
3. advocates must neutralize opposition
   a. buy off opposition
Threats to policy sustainability
1. policy reversal
2. undermine spirit of reform
Harder to stop something (prevent something from happening in the future) rather than start something from sustainability perspective. Policy makers cannot commit. Political preferences change. Instability occurs because of collective action problems in diverse groups, focus shifts to other uses. Information costs can be reduced through use of symbols and watchdogs. Both are weaker after passage. Policy reform is an ongoing dynamic process.
Sustainability is promoted by:
1. institution change- this increases transaction costs and decreases likelihood of future change.
2. policy feedback- create constituency who will be active (ex. SSI).
3 examples
1. tax reform-1986 tax reform resulted in simplified tax code, but rise of new policy issues allowed for amendments which have increased complexity. The reform was not sustainable because no dedicated consitiency. Taxes are not salient. Did not change structure to build in special interests.
2. agricultural subsidy reform-FAIR act reduced incentives to hold land idel. Buy off farmers in short run for passage. Reversal of economic outlook lead to a policy reversal. The reform failed to increase the transaction costs of key groups.
3. airline deregulation- reform ended institution that regulated airlines. Policy survived despite criticism. Airlines had invested in change, so did not want reversal. Political timing/environment matters.
Conclusions: Reform must change relationship between interest groups and the power source to survive. Compensation schemes may not be enough.

Rosenberg/ The hollow hope

Introduction/Overview
Central question of the book: Under which conditions can courts produce political and social change? How effective were the courts in producing social change under Roe v. Wade and Brown v. Board of Education.

Dynamic Court – powerful, vigorous, and potent proponents of change. Under this theory, courts have the power and influence to effect social change.

Constrained Court – weak, powerless, and ineffective for change. Under this theory, courts do not have the power nor the influence to effect social change.

Which view is right? The books uses Roe and Brown to apply both theories through empirical tests to determine which is correct.

Types of Influence the court can exercise:
1) Judicial effects – direct outcome of judicial decisions and examines whether the change required by the courts was made.
2) Extra-judicial effects – courts do more than simply change behavior in the short run, they produce significant social reform by inspiring individuals to act or persuading them to change opinions. Very important for the Dynamic Court.

Chapter 1: The Dynamic Court and the Constrained Court

Constrained Court
The Constrained Court view maintains that courts will not be able to effect social change for three reasons: limited nature of constitutional rights, lack of judicial independence, and the judiciary’s lack of powers of implementation and inability to develop appropriate policies.

Detailed description of the three constraints which limit judicial impact on social reform (directly from the book):

Constraint 1: The bounded nature of constitutional rights prevents courts from hearing or effectively acting on many significant social reform claims, and lessens the chances of popular mobilization.
- Not all social reform goals can be presented in the name of constitutional rights
• Social reformed must argue for the establishment of a new right or the extension of an existing right
• To claim a right in court is to accept the procedures and obligations of the legal system
• Technical nature of court can denude issues of emotional, widespread appeal

**Constraint 2:** The judiciary lacks the necessary independence from the other branches of the government to produce significant social reform.

- Appointment process limits independence
- Congress can overturn decisions
- Congress can change legal structure
- Executive has unusual access to the courts (Solicitor General)

**Constraint 3:** Courts lack the tools to readily develop appropriate policies and implement decisions ordering social reform.

- In order for orders to be carried out, political elites must support them and act to implement them.
- Courts do not have the advantages of a Weberian bureaucracy which says that important components are hierarchical command structure, clear agenda, little or no discretion at lower levels, stated procedures, etc. Courts can no initiate law suits and about “above politics” which limits their ability to cut deals, etc.
- Opportunities for delay exist in courts
- Significant social reform requires large expenditures: judges can not order other branches to spend funds
- No expertise or specialization exists and no long term planning or consideration of costs.

**Dynamic Court**

The Dynamic Court view holds that courts can be effective producers of social change. It holds that courts are not as limited by the Constrained View as one would think and can be more effective than other branches in producing reform.

**Advantages of the Court under the Dynamic View**

- Independence – judges are electorally unaccountable and free to act at any time, they fulfill a constitutional mandate, judges are forced to be objective by the nature of the position
- Catalysts – their neutral position allows courts to teach people about the meaning of their constitutional obligations; court decision can change opinions, news media, and initiate action; nudge to start the reform process.
- Evolving procedures – courts demonstrated ability to evolve new mechanisms and procedure to cope with the complexity of social reform litigation; i.e. special masters, monitoring commissions, active engagement of the judge.
Conditions for Court Efficacy
In order for the court to be effective in producing social change, it must *overcome each of the three constraints and at least one of the following must happen*:

Condition 1: Courts may effectively produce significant social reform when other actors offer positive incentives to induce compliance

Condition 2: Courts may produce social reform when other actors impose costs to induce compliance

Condition 3: Courts may produce social reform when judicial decision can be implemented by the market

Condition 4: Courts may produce social reform by providing leverage, or a shield, cover, or excuse for persons crucial to implementation who are willing to act.

There is a nice summary of all three constraints and the four conditions which illustrated how courts can effect social reform on page 36.

Chapter 2: Bound for Glory? Brown and the Civil Rights Revolution

Education
*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* held that state-enforced segregation of public schools was unconstitutional and ordered that it be ended throughout the United States with all deliberate speed. The court also reaffirmed this decision in a variety of cases from 1954 through 1971, and for many of those years it was the only branch of the federal government that acted.


Results of Court, Congressional, and Executive Action
- Border States and D.C. – Brown had major impact at reducing segregation
- Southern States – Brown had little to no impact at reducing segregation, only until the congressional and executive branches acted in 1964 did any change occur.

Voting – Through a variety of decisions, the court upheld the constitutional right to vote for Black citizens. It continually struck down decision of state legislatures to prohibit Blacks from voting. Congress passed the voting rights act in 1965. Again, the Congress and the executive are responsible for the major change for voting, not the courts.
Transportation – Desegregation was not the result of the courts, but directly linked with the 1964 Civil Right Act and the Interstate Commerce Commission’s ruling in 1961 expanding rights to Blacks to travel.

Accommodations and Public Places – Again, it appears that Court action on behalf of Blacks challenging segregation was ineffective in ending that segregation. Only when Congress legislated (1964 Act) did change occur.

Housing – Same as above, some court action with very little impact. Congressional actions have been the primary source of change.

CONCLUSION – The court’s decisions have had little to no effect on social reform. Only when Congress acted, did change occur.

Chapter 3: Constraints, Conditions, and the Courts

Overcome the 1st Constraint: Civil rights leaders were able to do so by building precedent for change.
Overcome the 2nd Constraint: before Brown, court had elite support; after Brown, court did not.

First Decade After Brown
For the courts to effectively produce social change, they must overcome Constraint III, which necessitated the active support of the elites. Did this happen? NO

- Executive – Little support until Johnson, 1964 Civil Rights Act
- State Leaders – Southern states passed pro-segregation laws, attack NAACP, voting restrictions
- Congress – introduced many bills curbing courts’ powers
- Private Groups – KKK influences, American Bar Association
- Local Reaction and Resistance – cultural biases, intensity of feelings toward blacks

Structural Constraints of the Courts
- Decisions were not appropriate solutions
- Overlooked political realities necessary for implementation
- Inherent delay in system
- Discretion in lower courts not consistent with Supreme Court
- No structure to cases brought before the court

Post 1964 Years
Congress – Voting Rights Acts, ESEA, Civil Rights Acts
Executive – began prosecuting school districts who still segregated, holding money
Social and Cultural changes – public support changed
Court Orders and Incentives – incentives were offered for compliance with civil rights act
Financial Inducements – courts could hold up federal funds to school districts
Business Inducements – desire of southern business community to lure businesses to the south and realization of the strong economic influence of the Black community

Courts served as a cover for elected officials allow them to do what is right and using the court as a cover for responsibility (Condition IV).

**Chapter 4: Planting the Seeds of Progress**

If the Dynamic View of the courts hold, then they must also pressure other to act, sparking change. These extra-judicial effects are a necessary component to the Dynamic View of the courts.
Key question: to what extent is the congressional and executive action a product of court action? In order for the courts to follow the Dynamic View, they must have had some influence over: salience of civil rights as an issue, action and attitudes of the political elites, of white Americans, and black Americans. This chapter explores this issue and finds that the court had little to no extra-judicial influence.

**Salience** – no evidence for change in newspaper reporting following Brown, no changes in Textbooks
**Elites** – students of legislation credit the introduction of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Acts to electoral concerns and impending violence, not Court decisions; federal action under Title VI was inspired by violence, not court action; lastly, much time passed between Brown and actions by the Congress and President to curb segregation.
**Whites** – Supreme Court could have influence white Americans through the press but we have previously argued that the press coverage of civil rights has been minimal, so that is unlikely. Most Americans do not understand the court either.
**Blacks** – There is no evidence that the Court helped spark any of the following: Montgomery Bus Boycott, Little Rock Frustration, Sit-Ins and Demonstrations, The Freedom Ride, Growth of Black Groups, nor influenced any addition funds to the groups.

Some evidence that Brown hardened groups who support segregation.

**Chapter 5: The Current of History**

So, if the courts were really not effective in producing social change, what forces did?
- Economic Changes and Effects – businesses wanted black dollars, strengthening black organizations
- Electoral Demands – need for black votes
- International demands – Cold War Rhetoric, segregation was a blemish on American society
- Population shifts – blacks moving from rural to urban ares
- Increase in mass communication
Chapter 6: Transforming Women’s Lives? The Courts and Abortion

Roe v. Wade was the key case in abortion rights. Other cases dealt with issues such as parental consent, federal funding, and procedural requirements set forth by the state before abortions could be performed. Under Roe, the Court found that a pregnant woman has a fundamental right of privacy in deciding whether or not to bear a child. The state lacked compelling interest to deny an abortion in the first trimester. For the second trimester, the state’s important and legitimate interest in the health of the mother becomes compelling, at which the state could regulate the abortion procedure to the extent that the regulation reasonably relates to the preservation and protection of maternal health. During the third trimester, the Court found a compelling state interest in preserving the life of the fetus.

Legal Abortions in the U.S. – the largest increases occur before Roe. Because abortions continue to rise after Roe (although at a lower rate than before) the court had some influence on the decisions.

Constraint I – Reformers were able to win in court because the right they were asking for was within the realm of precedent and acceptable legal discourse.
Constraint II – States began changing laws prior to the Roe decision.
Post Roe decision – Congress acts to limit abortions, state legislature move to limit decisions, anti-abortion activists grow, thus making it more difficult to implement the decision and upholding Constraint III.

Hospitals were a large barrier to implementation. Most did not offer abortions and those who did mainly limited them to first trimester operations. Increasing percentage of medical schools did not teach abortions.

How is it then that Roe was implemented? Through a market mechanism. Condition III was present allowing Roe to be implemented through “clinics” not hospitals.

ConCLUSION – Unlike in civil rights, the Roe decision was somewhat effective in producing social change but only because it was able to overcome Constraints I and II coupled with Condition III presence. Constraint III is not overcome thereby limiting the ultimate effectiveness of the Court with Roe.

Chapter 7: Liberating Women? The Court and Women’s Rights

Court Action – in the 1970s, the Court struck down many gender based distinctions.
Congressional Action – after a slow start, both the Congress and Executive acted to prohibit gender based discrimination.

Rosenberg concludes that Court action contributed little to eliminated discrimination against women. Cases were argued and won but, litigants aside, little was accomplished. Most students trace the change explicitly associated with congressional and executive action.
Why is this the case?
- Violence still persists against women regardless of court action
- Women have less leisure time and are still politically underrepresented
- Women face economic constraints, poverty, divorce, etc. Courts need one of the conditions in order to make this change.
- Biased laws still exist
- Interpretation of laws are still biased
- Impossible to control litigation (same problem experienced in civil rights cases)
- No incentives for implantation nor cost associated with non-implementation exist

Chapter 8: The Court as a Catalyst?

If the Court has not been successful in producing judicial effects upon abortion and women’s right, then are there extra-judicial effects to be found?
According to the Dynamic View of the Court, extra-judicial effects would be present and would point to changes in public opinion, elite leadership change, etc. Roseburg argues that these area did not, but not because of the Court decision.

Salience – no increase in press coverage of abortion or women’s rights; no increase in coverage in elite magazines or literature
Political Leaders – increase in political leadership on abortion and women’s right predated the court decision
Public Opinion – no rapid or large change in public opinion in support or additional rights after the Court’s action; change occurred at a faster pace before Roe
Women’s Movement – the women’s movement was moving at full blast before the Court decision, granted there was growth in membership, but this easily could have been attributed to the strength of the movement at the time, and not the Court decision.

CONCLUSION – No evidence to support claim that extra-judicial effects are present; therefore, the Dynamic Court view is on weak ground.

Chapter 9: The Tide of History

Then, what caused the growth in the women’s movement, the expansion of women’s and abortion rights?
- Economic Effects – WWII radically changed the job market, women went to work; women began earning more money
- Decreasing Fertility – less children were born allowing women more time to enter the workforce
- Education – more women graduating from high school, college, and graduate school
- Inclusion of sex in the 1964 Civil Rights Act – Title VII
- Battle for abortion rights laws
• Public Opinion – shifted in favor of women working and support for abortion
• Legislative Reform – states began revising laws removing legislative barriers to women and ending gender discrimination
• Communication of women became better

Chapter 12: Conclusion: The Fly-Paper Court

This chapter sums up the book. It’s a quick read and a good way to summarize the key points in the book, especially the weaknesses of the Dynamic View.

Rosenberg sums his claim as “the Constrained Court is the more accurate: US courts can almost never be effective producers of significant social reform. At best they can second the social reform acts of other branches.” Social reform groups spend too much time and resources using the judicial system to achieve their goals. Thus they forego other options (like lobbying, etc.) where they could be much more effective than just relying on the court to issue a (favorable) decision which is limited by the three constraints and the lack of conditions.

✔ Rosenstone and Hansen/ Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America

Abstract: This book undertakes to explain the puzzle of political participation in America: the 30-year decline in levels of participation. The authors offer and test a novel theory that explains these processes not only through attributes of individual citizens, as the research has done so far, but mainly by focusing on patterns of mobilization. Their theory explains who votes, when people vote, and why they participate as they do. People vote because they have the resources to bear the costs and because they have the interests and identities to appreciate the benefits. Yet this is only half of the story. People turn out to vote because somebody mobilizes them to participate. More than half of the drop in participation can be accounted for only by looking at the political world people confront, and not just at the people themselves. By examining changes in the mobilization activities of parties, campaigns, interest groups, and social movement, the authors complete the puzzle. They conclude that the implication of their analysis is that the "blame" for declining voter turnout rests as much on political leaders as on the citizens themselves.

Ch. 1: Introduction: The Puzzle of Participation in American Politics

■ The puzzle of political participation in American (Brody's puzzle):
  □ Why has turnout declined since the 60s despite increasing levels of education?
  □ Why has citizen contact risen since the 60s despite decreasing sense of political efficacy?
■ The questions of the book: Who participates, when do they participate, and why do they participate, as they do and when they do?
■ Definition of political participation: action directed explicitly toward influencing the distribution of social goods and social values.
Two elements to the argument:
- Personal – people participate not so much because of who they are but because of the political choices and incentives that they are offered.
- Political – strategic mobilization: political leaders, in their struggle for political advantage, mobilize ordinary citizens into American politics. Their strategic decisions shape the who, when, and why, of participation.
  - The argument: citizens participation in elections and government both because they go to politics and because politics comes to them. The key to understanding who takes part and who does not, when they take part and why the do no, is mobilization.
  - So far the research focused only on the resources, interests, identifications, and beliefs of individual citizens.

Ch. 2: The Political Logic of Political Participation

Political participation arises from the interaction of citizens and political mobilizers.

Individual influences on political participation (The personal dimension):
- People participate in politics when they get valuable benefits that are worth the costs of taking part.
- Costs and Resources - the price of participation is some combination of money, time, skill, knowledge, and self-confidence (personal resources). Implications:
  - The wealthy participate more than the poor do. When resources are limited, politics is a luxury (especially if benefits are low).
  - The more educated are more likely to take part in politics than the less educated.
  - People with a sense of political efficacy are more likely to be active (efficacy: a sense of personal competence in one's ability to understand politics and to participate in politics (internal efficacy), as well as a sense that one's political activities can influence what the government actually does (external efficacy).
  - The costs of activism affect different people in different ways, depending on resources.
- Rewards, interests, and beliefs – people participate because they get something out of it.
  - Wilson's typology of forms of rewards: material benefits (tangible rewards); solidary benefits (intangible rewards from social interaction, status, friendship, etc.); and purposive benefits (intrinsic rewards such as sense of satisfaction).
  - The new distinction: collective rewards (benefits every member of a particular place or group, whether they participated or not; mostly material) and selective rewards (benefit only those who participate; all three types above).
  - People find the combination of benefits worthwhile or not depending on their interests, preferences, identifications, and beliefs.
  - People who have a direct stake in political outcomes are more likely to participate than people who do not have a direct interest; anticipate greater material rewards.
  - People who strongly prefer one political outcome to another are more likely to participate than those with weaker preferences; heightens the values of material & solidary rewards.
  - People who identify closely with political contenders (psychological attachment) are more likely to participate; increases the intrinsic (purposive) rewards.
  - Some people hold beliefs and preferences that motivate their participation internally (e.g. socialization to a sense of citizen duty).
Resources and benefits explain why some participate and others don't: because of their resources, some people can better afford politics; because of their interests, preferences, identifications, and beliefs, some people get more benefit from politics than others.

- Political influence and participations: strategic mobilization (the political dimension)
  - The personal dimension can explain who but isn't sufficient to explain when. For that one must turn to the political circumstances that change over time.
  - Two paradoxes:
    - The "paradox of participation in politics": the result of the election will be the same whether I participate or not. Voting is irrational: it consumes resources but achieves no results that wouldn't be achieved otherwise.
    - The paradox of "rational ignorance": for the same reason political learning is also irrational. Citizens have few incentives to inform themselves about politics.
  - Thus, the question of when people involve themselves in politics can't be addressed solely within the context of individuals motives and behaviors.

- The social nature of political life:
  - Social networks create solidary rewards and bestow them, selectively, on those who act in the common interest. They play a key role in overcoming the paradoxes.
  - They address rational ignorance by providing information and rewarding contributions of information.
  - They address the paradox of participation by conveying expectations, reward those who comply with the expectation, and even enforce them.
  - Social networks make political action possible, but still not probable, since most people's friends, families, and co-workers don't really know much about politics.
  - Candidates, party officials, interest groups, and activists know exactly what is on the political agenda and exactly how it affects people. Citizens' involvement is an important political resource for them, and they endeavor to deploy it by mobilization.

- Political mobilization:
  - Definition: the process by which candidates, parties, activists, and groups induce other people to participate.
  - Two types of mobilization: direct and indirect.
    - Direct mobilization: creates the opportunity for citizens to participate; leaders help citizens overcome the paradoxes by subsidizing political information and costs of activism.
    - Indirect mobilization: social networks convert direct mobilization into indirect mobilization. Political leaders use them to reduce costs and increase benefits (they exploit citizens' ongoing obligations to their friends/families).

- The strategy of political mobilization:
  - Mobilization isn't the real goal, leaders use it to achieve other ends; mobilization is just one strategy. Target their efforts on particular people and time them for particular occasions.
  - Targeting mobilization: there are four kinds of citizens that leaders are most eager to contact: people they already know; people who are centrally positioned in social networks; people whose actions are most effective at producing political outcomes; and people who are likely to respond by participating. From these observations follow certain predictions on who is more likely to be mobilized, and thus, to participate (e.g. the wealthy, the educated, and the partisan are more likely to be targeted). These efforts exacerbate class biases in political participations.
- Timing mobilization: the strategy of mobilization will be used only if people are likely to act and action is likely to yield outcomes. People participate more when salient issues top the agenda; when other concerns don't demand their attention; when important decisions are pending; when outcomes are closely contested; and when decision makers depend on the evaluations of the public.

**Ch. 3: Participation in American Politics, 1952-1990**

- The data sets used in the research.
- The nature of political participation:
  - In both electoral politics and governmental politics, participants come disproportionately from the most advantaged sectors of society: wealthy, well-educated, white Americans.
  - Aside from voting, most participants in American politics join only one or two activities: contribute money, work for candidates, write letters, attend meeting of local govt.
  - There is very little overlap: only 1% took part in all 4 campaign activities (influenced others' votes, worked on a campaign, contributed money, and attended political rallies).
    - Participation in governmental politics is only a bit more concentrated.
  - Relatively limited continuity: the people who participate change from year to year.
    - Voter turnout is relatively stable/habitual, but it's the exception.
    - Only 1 participant in 3 participates regularly; over two thirds take part sporadically.
  - One reason for the lack of continuity in who participates: lack of continuity in who is mobilized to take part (78% were contacted only in 56' elections' or 60' but not in both).
- Trends in citizen participation:
  - Electoral politics, 1952-1990:
    - 30-year decline in voter turnout in national elections, starting in the 60s.
    - Between 1952-1990, voter participation fell among whites but rose among blacks.
    - By the end of the 80s, the percentage of people that worked for a political party was just about half what it was two decades earlier.
    - Participation in other activities, thought, had a pattern: financial contribution to campaigns remained steady and attempts to influence others increased.
    - Thus, there are no uniform increases/declines, though there are some similarities.
    - Hypotheses: participation varies with the resources of the electorate, the engagement of the interests of the electorate, and the opportunities presented by the political system.
  - Governmental politics, 1973-1990:
    - Unlike electoral politics, here the story is short-term fluctuations, not long-term (i.e. people can participate in government almost any time, unlike elections).
    - Public participation in all three activities designed to influence national and local public policies (writing a letter, attending a meeting, signing a petition) declined over the last 17 years.
    - Participation in local government declined steadily since mid-70s, while at the national level it declined in the 70s, revived in the early 80s, and then fell again in late 80s.
    - Public participation in governmental politics showed a definite annual cylicity ("seasonality"): the participation in these three activities were consistently higher in the summer than in the winter; peaks in June-July.
- Conclusions:
Citizen participation in American politics is extensive but hardly universal. In any given presidential election about half of the eligible population turns out to vote; and in any given year about a sixth of the population writes a letter to Congress.

Citizen participation is episodic; not limited to hard-core activist who take part in everything all the time.

Citizen participation is dominated by the most advantaged, but the degree of bias differs across political activities and over time.

Citizen participation changes from election to election, year to year, month to month.

**Ch. 4: Participation in Governmental Politics**

- The chapter starts testing the theory looking at three activities designed to influence the decisions of govt.: writing to a representative, attending a meeting, and signing a petition.
- Data from late 1973 to the end of 1990.
- Individual causes of governmental participation:
  - Personal Resources: promote participation both for what they allow and for what they indicate. People with more resources participate more than people will less resources.
    - Personal reason: can more easily meet the costs (e.g. educated have the knowledge, the English speaking have the language skills, the efficacious have self-confidence).
    - Political reason: people with ample resources have friends and associates who expose them to political information and reward their participation.
  - Social involvement: involvement in social life encourages participation; involvement in the workplace and in organizations enhances the exposure to leaders' mobilization efforts. Integration in these networks also creates selective social incentives for participation.
  - Yet, individual attributed don’t change fast enough to account for much of the variation.
- Systematic causes of governmental participation:
  - Mobilization by political leaders: all types of politicians mobilize – parties, members of Congress, and the President. Leaders attempt to win elections and to enact policies, and in the process they inform citizens about the issue at stake and the courses of action that might be most effective to produce the outcomes they want.
    - Members of Congress mobilize electoral support in three distinct ways (Mayhew): by advertising (making their name known), by position taking, and by credit claiming.
    - Two of the most prominent activities are use of franked mail and issue activism.
    - The president's strategy of "going public," appealing directly to the people.
    - Presidential efforts to stimulate citizens to pressure Congress are usually successful. Yet people don't just respond to the office, otherwise the variations between presidents wouldn't make sense. Reagan's efforts were especially successful.
  - Mobilization around issues (qualitative evidence): In both the local and national levels, leaders mobilize citizens' around especially salient issues (e.g. education and taxes at the local level; on the national level - Watergate, periods of economic hardship, and the mobilization of the elderly regarding social security cuts in mid-80s). It's easier for leaders to gather support in conditions of widespread anger or anxiety over some issue.
  - Mobilization around political opportunities: participation in governmental politics occurs at strategically important moments.
    - The seasonal rhythm of congressional activity accounts for a substantial portion of the difference between citizen's participation in the summer and the winter, since in the summer bills come to the floor.
Conclusion:
- The theory outlined in ch. 2 can account very well for participation in govt. politics:
  - Interests and social positions distinguish who participates - educated, efficacious, and socially involved. Yet, this is only half the story.
  - Strategic opportunities distinguish times when large numbers of people participate in governmental politics - salient issues, near decisions. That's the other half of the story.
- The findings can help clarify the sources of the trends of citizen activism in governmental politics over the last two decades:
  - The general downturn of citizen participation in all three kinds of activities has a common cause: the decline of citizen involvement in organizations, clubs, and political parties. Participation in associational activity declined and that weakened an important link in the process by which citizens are moved to participate in government.
  - Citizen participation rises and falls according to issue salience: (1) citizen participation in local politics fell rapidly from the mid-70s, as the baby boom generation graduated from high school, and parents lost much of the incentive to participate in meetings at the local level. (2) Participation at the national level peaked and declined once in the 70s and again in the 80s. The first is the Watergate era and the latter the controversy over Reagan's attempts to dismantle the federal govt., which drove public involvement.
  - Seasonal variation in participation has also a common source: people write letters, attend meetings, and sign petitions in early summer because that is when public institutions conduct most of their business.

Ch. 5: Participation in Electoral Politics
- This chapter deals with the personal determinants of participation in elections (the political determinants are discussed in the next chapter).
- Four kinds of participation in elections: voting, attempting to influence the votes of others, contributing money, and working for a campaign.
- Method: probit analysis.
- Resources: education, income, experience, and political efficacy sustain political activism.
  - Education has a greater impact on voter turnout than on any other form of electoral participation, largely because of the bureaucratic barriers of voter registration.
  - Education has a slightly greater impact than income, except on contributions.
  - Experience - as people grow older their involvement in American politics deepens.
    - The evidence supports the life-experience explanation – as people grow older they accumulate information, skills, and attachments that help them overcome the costs of involvement – and rejects the life-cycle and the generational explanations.
- Civic responsibility – not an important factor:
  - Strong feelings of civic duty make a small impact on the probability of voting in presidential elections, but have no effect on other forms of participation in elections.
  - American's sense of their duty to participate remained fairly constant between 1960-1980, counter to the trend of voter turnout (it then dropped in the 80s, along with turnout).
- Confidence in government – reject the view that declining participation casts a vote of no confidence in the political system.
  - The trend of public confidence does parallel the downward trend of public involvement.
  - Yet neither feelings of trust in government nor beliefs about government responsiveness have any effect on the likelihood that citizens will vote or participate otherwise.
Evaluations of parties and candidates: evidence that the electorates' declining sense of a stake in election outcomes has contributed to its disengagement from electoral politics.

- Citizens who identify strongly with the political parties (party ID), who view their favorite party very positively, who care deeply about who wins, and who prefer their favorite candidate strongly, all take greater part in electoral politics than people who feel otherwise. The more people see benefits from involvement, the more they participate.

Social involvement:
- People who are well integrated into their communities (e.g. live their longer, attend religious services, work out of home) are more likely to vote in national elections than those whose social networks are weaker.
- Social integration has a much more modest impact on other forms of election participation.

**Ch. 6: Mobilization and Participation in Electoral Politics**

- The bottom line of the chapter: people participate in electoral politics because someone encourages or inspires them to take part. Electoral mobilization is the central feature of electoral politics.
- The question: what are the means by which political leaders induce people to participate?

**Mobilization by parties:**
- Typically, before elections every 1 of 4 Americans will be contacted by one of the parties.
- Targeting mobilization: the evidence supports the claim that parties concentrate their mobilization efforts on those who are most likely to support them (reinforce partisans or try to sway the undecided; not opponents), on people who are centrally located within social networks, and on those who are most likely to respond, that is, those who are most likely to participate in the first place (i.e. the well educated, the wealthy and the elderly).
- Timing mobilization: parties are most likely to mobilize when elections are closely contested, and also, citizens in districts with the most competitive race for the House and in states in which the governor is up for election.
- The impact:
  - When parties make the effort, the people they contact are far more likely to participate in electoral politics (voting, persuading, contributing & working in campaign).
  - Mobilization by political parties doesn't do much to change people's perceptions of the relative costs and benefits of participation in electoral politics. Barely a tenth of the total impact that party mobilization has on electoral participation stems from its effect on people's perceptions about the candidates, parties, and elections.
  - The rest of the impact comes from two processes:
    1. Party mobilization subsidizes the costs of participation (e.g. information).
    2. Mobilization increases the benefits of participation (i.e. selective social incentives), by presenting the requests for assistance through people to whom it is difficult to say 'no.' People participate not because parties ask them, but because people they know and respect ask them.

**Mobilization by electoral campaigns:**
- Activities of other campaigns (candidates for national, state, and local offices), interest groups, and the media who pursue their own election agenda.
- Accounts for the differences in voter participation between presidential and midterm election years. In the former, the above are much more involved.
They also increase their involvement in competitive presidential election. When elections are close people are 3% more likely to vote (8% more likely to try to persuade others). Individuals' perceptions of the competitiveness of elections also affect their involvement.

Gubernatorial campaigns: to shield them from the effects of national politics, 17 states rescheduled their gubernatorial elections out of presidential years (between 1952 and 1988). The result it that fewer Americans were exposed to contested gubernatorial elections in presidential years and this significantly affects voter turnout.

Senatorial and Congressional Campaigns: competitions for votes in these races boost citizen involvement in midterm election years.

Presidential primary campaigns: the analysis supports the belief that the expansion of the presidential primary system to include more voters, has not increased but suppressed citizen involvement in the presidential national elections. Unlike the gubernatorial and congressional elections, the primaries take place few months before and exhaust resources.

Mobilization by social movements: the tremendous impact of the civil rights movement – mobilized both blacks and whites to vote and to contribute money, but mobilized only whites to work for political parties (i.e. the response of the white opposition).

The legal organization:

- The legal requirement impose additional costs on participation, especially for people who lack the required resources.
- The effects of Jim Crow elections laws in the South.
- The impact of registration requirements nationwide:
  - With the adoption of these laws, voter turnout in the North dropped by 17% from 1896 to 1916; continues to suppress voter participation.
  - The greatest effect on turnout: the closing date (the last date state's allow registration).
  - Early closing dates have the greatest effect on people who are least likely to vote anyway.
- Legal requirement only look "neutral" – they burden mainly the least advantaged (i.e. minorities, poor, and uneducated). The reason is twofold: makes it more difficult for them to participate (higher costs) and lowers the chances that leaders will try to mobilize them.

Conclusion:

- Mobilization, in all its forms, causes people to take part in electoral politics. Two reasons:
  - Subsidizes the cost of electoral participation.
  - Occasions social contacts that provide additional benefits for electoral participation.
- Political mobilizers target and time their efforts strategically.

Ch. 7: Solving the Puzzle of Participation in Electoral Politics

- Comparison of the contributions of the two sets of explanations – personal and political – to the solution of one of the puzzles: 30-year of declining participation in American politics.
- The question: how much of the decline (11.3% between 60s and 80s) can be attributed to changing resources, changing evaluations of parties/candidates, changing degrees of involvement in communities, and changing patterns of electoral mobilization.
- The method: "transformed" the respondents from the 60s (60', 64' and 68' NES) by adjusting their characteristics to their counterparts in the 80s (80', 84' and 88'). For each variable they computed how much more or less likely members of the 1960s electorate would have been to participate in elections had they been like members of the 1980s electorate.
- The results (p. 215):
Had the effects of better education and the emancipating effects of liberalized election laws not occurred, the decline in turnout would have been even more severe—15.9%.

The personal attributes of Americans – their resources, involvement, identifications, and beliefs - explain less than half of the decline (7.2% all together): a younger electorate (2.7%), weakened attachment to and evaluations of the parties and their candidates (1.7), weakened social involvement (1.4%), declining feeling of efficacy (1.4%).

The decline in mobilization by candidates, parties, campaigns, interests groups, and social movements accounts for more than half (8.7%) of the decline in electoral participation since the 60s.

The implication: the "blame" for declining voter turnout rests as much on political leaders as on the citizens themselves.

Black voter turnout: the authors use the same technique to explain the rise and decline of turnout among blacks.

Between 1968 and 1972, black turnout increased by 34.8% because of an easing of voter registration laws (15.8%), increases in personal resources (8.6%), increase in mobilization (6.6%), strengthened attachment to and evaluations of parties and candidates (4.8%), and increase in feeling of efficacy (0.3%).

Between that period and the 1980s black turnout decreased by 12.8%, mainly because of a decline in mobilization (6.2%) and a decline in voter registration efforts around the Voting Rights Act (5.2%). Overall, mobilization accounts for nearly 2/3 of the drop.

Decline in other forms of involvement:

The declines in working for a political party (1.9%) and contribution money (2.6%) were almost entirely caused by decreases in mobilization (1.2% and 2.5% respectively).

Overall, then, for all three kinds of citizen involvement in elections, changes in the personal characteristics and political outlooks of the individuals explain at best only half of the drop. It's not the citizens that failed, but if anything, the political system failed them.

Ch. 8: Conclusion: The Scope and Bias of Political Participation

Summery of the argument: pp. 228-229.

The logic of mobilization can also account for the differences in political participation between the U.S. and Europe, between the 19th and 20th centuries.

The explanation for the tipping of the balance of political participation in America for more participation in government and less in elections:

Political, economic, and social changes occurred; face-to-face contact with parties and campaign organizations is a thing of the past. Candidates speak directly to the electorate through new campaign technologies, bypassing political and social institutions.

At the same time, more and more interest groups muster public pressures on local, state and national governments.

Taken together, the political, economic, and social changes wounded campaign organizations and gave them incentives to persuade rather than to mobilize, while the same changes promoted interest groups and encouraged them to mobilize.

Both processes are the product of the strategic choices of political leaders.

Political participation tells us more about a political system than about its citizens. It indicates a society in which people have the resources to bear the costs of participation; it indicates a society in which people have enough interests at stake in political decisions to seek the
benefits of participation; it indicates a society in which the leaders have incentives to involve the people.

- **Political equality:**
  - In all forms of political participation, the pattern of class inequality is unbroken. The 30-year decline in involvement in politics yielded a politically engaged class that is not only growing smaller and smaller but also less and less representative of the American polity.
  - The greater the number of participants in political activities, the greater the equality in political participation. Another reason why increasing overall participation levels is good.
  - Mobilization doesn’t solve the income, education, and age biases in participation, because politicians mobilize the advantaged citizens (i.e. those who are already the most likely to respond and participate). Thus, class differences in mobilization typically aggravate rather than mitigate the effects of class difference in political resources. The inequality is cumulative.
  - Yet given the right set of incentives, the patterns of mobilization can change and ameliorate inequality.

- **Democratic government** provides few incentives for leaders to attend to the needs of people who neither affect the achievement of their policy goals nor influence the perpetuation of their tenure in office: the active contribute directly to their goals; the inactive offer only the possibility that they might someday rise up against rulers who neglect them.

✓ Zaller/The nature and origins of Mass Opinion

**summary**

**Chapter One: Introduction: The Fragmented State of Opinion Research**

The book shows how information from the media and other elite discourse combines with pre-existing values and disposition to form public attitudes and voting patterns. The theory that the book presents can be applied to all substantive topics, as well as various contexts (elections at different levels of the government, responses to questionnaires, etc.). Four ideas underpin this integration.

1. Citizens vary in the amount of attention that pay to political news coverage.
2. The better-informed people are, the better they are able to critically evaluate events presented in the news media.
3. People’s opinions are not well formed; they are constructed in response to a specific stimulus.
4. These opinions do not consider all the relevant facts about the issue, only those that appear most salient to the question at hand.

Although the book borrows from psychological theory and methodology, it uses different terminology and emphasizes social rather than cognitive processes. It also only concerns itself with the formation of political opinions, rather than general information processing.
Chapter Two: Information, Predispositions, and Opinion

Opinion is formed by using information to “paint the picture” and predisposition to draw conclusion about it. Public opinion is formed through various levels of information, varying degree of reception and understanding of this information, and varying political values among the citizenry.

Information and Elite Discourse

Most information people receive about current events is second-hand. Political elites, those who devote their careers to politics & public affairs, provide most of this information. The information is never an objective, full account of the events. It is usually simple, vivid, and selective. Some stereotypes, or frames of references are well-established cultural beliefs, while others are newly created. Based on the one-sidedness of the coverage, can the public choose sides or does it follow a predetermined course? When there is an elite consensus and single-sided coverage, the public support for the elite’s opinion increases for people who follow the coverage closely. When there is a more fragmented coverage, the public becomes polarized, typically along ideological lines. Public understanding of information is often colored by how the facts are presented. The elites often provide cues to the public to help it incorporate the new information into existing frame of reference.

Mass Attitudes to Elite Discourse

Level of attentiveness to politics varies greatly, while most members of the public are ignorant of current events, a minority is remarkably well informed. Factual survey questions about politicians’ names and basic structure and operation of the government can gauge the level of political awareness. The information measured in this test must be factual and neutral, unlike most of the information individuals are exposed to. Political awareness in this sense means being expose to a message, retaining, and understanding what is being said. Most of the population internalizes little information about current events and it retains this information for only a short amount of time. Thus, political awareness has a high degree of variance around a low mean.

There is a strong positive correlation between people who are generally knowledgeable about politics (politically aware) and those who know about any particular issue. This correlation is stronger than that between knowledge about any particular issue and people who have a high stake in its outcome. This effect explains why moderately aware persons are more likely to support an incumbent than those who have no information and those who know about the relevant voting record of the incumbent and his/her platform. The effect of political awareness is thus non-linear. There are several other complications. Often there is more than one message being conveyed simultaneously, with varying degrees of effectiveness. The effect of political awareness may vary depending on the message (sometimes increasing susceptibility to a certain side and sometimes decreasing it).

Political Predisposition
Political predispositions are inherent values, interests, and experiences that determine how they incorporate new information. Predispositions filter the information into individuals’ political preferences. Predispositions are not in the short term (the relevant time frame of this model) affected by elite discourse. Political values, one type of predispositions, are among the most important determinants of mass opinion, once individuals have sufficient information to understand which value is relevant to a particular situation. Values are typically associated with a particular dimension or issue while ideology organizes many values into a “left-right” system. In the absence of information about a specific value, it is sometimes possible to track changes in public opinion by tracking changes in related values that are a part of a larger, consistent, ideology.

**What is an Opinion?**

Responses to opinion surveys are highly sensitive to seemingly trivial details such as the framing and order of the questions (a phenomenon known as “the response effect”). Responses to questions that are repeated over time exhibits instability that appears to be partially random. The fact that these responses vary depending on the wording of the questions raises the possibility that opinions may be constructed in response to the questions. These opinions are then highly sensitive to the issues that the questions make salient. The model offered in the book proposes that survey responses are a function of immediately accessible “considerations” whose saliency to the issue at hand is determined by the information received from elite discourse. Because different considerations are recalled at different times, responses may be unstable over time and systemic changes can be induced through variations in the questions’ order and wording. High level of political awareness increases the capacity of individual opinion formation and ability to reject information that is in conflict with individual predisposition, and thus is correlated with higher response stability. In general, individual “average” their opinion based on a number of discrete bits of internalized information, the size of which depend on their level of awareness and contextual factors relating to the questionnaire itself.

**Chapter Three: How Citizens Acquire Information and Convert it into Public Opinion**

**Some Definitions**

Consideration is a reason that compels an individual to choose one side of an issue or another. It includes a belief about an issue and an evaluation of that belief. Persuasive messages provide information that favors a particular point of view. They may be rational or emotional. Cueing messages provide the context or the interest of the entity that is presenting the message.

**The Model**

1. *Reception Axiom: the greater a person’s level of cognitive engagement (political awareness) with an issue, the more likely s/he is to be exposed to and comprehend—in a word, to receive—political messages concerning that issue.* Political interest, rather than
awareness, is a poor predictor of opinion stability, although it is a good predictor of voter turnout. Political awareness is defined as a general, ongoing awareness, which may be received from any source.

2. **Resistance Axiom:** people tend to resist arguments that are inconsistent with their political predispositions, but they do so only to the extent that they possess the contextual information necessary to perceive a relationship between the message and their predispositions. This information is typically carried out in cueing messages. Higher political awareness is therefore correlated positively with ability to resist incompatible, although maybe persuasive, messages. This is particularly true when the context and implications of a question is only clear to those who are highly aware (issues such as social security or race relations are ones in which almost everyone, regardless of political awareness, is familiar with). This result assumes that people cannot exercise independent judgment and correctly evaluate messages “in a vacuum”.

3. **Accessibility Axiom:** the more recently a consideration has been called to mind or thought about, the less time it takes to retrieve that consideration or related considerations from memory and bring them to the “top of the head” for use, and vice versa.

4. **Response Axiom:** individuals answer survey questions by averaging across the consideration that are immediately salient or accessible to them. This axiom implies that different people may use different consideration to respond to the same questions. The attitudes revealed in a survey are not stable, complete “true preferences”. They are more of a snapshot, or opinion statements, that are the outcome of a process by which people receive new information, integrate it (or reject it), and then sample it for a response to a survey question. This model is therefore called the **Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model**.

**Chapter Four: Coming to Terms with Response Instability**

**The 1987 Pilot Study**

The NES pilot study used two different methods of questioning respondents. One asked them immediately *after* they answered a question what considerations they had thought of when they answered the question. With the second method, the surveyor asked the respondents, *before they could answer the question*, what ideas they are thinking of as they are constructing their responses. There are three major caveats that may undermine this study. First, small sample size (only 100 completed responses). Secondly, politically unaware respondents dropped out of the survey at higher than average rates and are therefore underrepresented. Finally, there was only a one-month break between the two rounds of questioning, so response stability may be higher than expected.

**First Deductions from the Model**

A major assumption of the analysis of the survey was that the respondents were exposed to moderately intense (neither headline nor obscure) & stable level of information that includes both sides of the issues. Based on the first and second axioms, it is expected that most people will internalize conflicting messages about any given issue (Ambivalence Deduction, D1).
Based on the survey data, 42% of the respondents who participated in the survey that used the first method exhibited some level of ambiguity, while 75% of the respondents who experienced the second method did so. D2 states that people who mentioned more liberal considerations that conservatives ones in the open ended part of the survey will, on average, choose the liberal response in the closed-ended part, and vice versa. The results show that for the first method, the correlation is 0.8, while for the second it is 0.51. The second result, while lower, is still significant and is a stronger indication of D2 because it more genuinely capture all the considerations people are thinking without the pressure of having to justify a previous response.

Response Instability

D3 states that variability, or instability, is to be expected based on the fact that people internalize conflicting messages, and do not necessarily recall a representative sample of them when answering a survey question. This assumes that media flow remains balanced. In that case, D4 proposes that there will be a large amount of chance variation around a stable central tendency. More politically aware people will exhibit less chance variability around their responses over time because they are better able to understand the context of each message and therefore critically evaluate incoming information and reject that which is inconsistent with their own beliefs (D5). Consequently, their internalized considerations will be more homogeneous with their values (D6) and this will stabilize their responses over time (D7). D8 states that attitude stability should be stronger when there is a sharp partisan divide on an issue (thus providing more cues). For issues that are very well publicized and understood, the variability is expected to decrease (D9). Similarly, individuals who are involved in an issue should have more stable attitudes towards it (D10). The chance variation that individuals with low level of awareness exhibit does not mean that they are more likely to change their core beliefs in the long run, as long as the media environment remains stable (D11). D12 claims that when individuals change the overall directions of their remarks during the open-ended part of the survey their closed-ended responses should change as well. D13 states that people who mentioned considerations that are more homogeneous should exhibit higher response stability. All these deductions were supported by the survey responses. Unlike the current prevailing thought that response instability results from simple measurement error and should therefore be disregarded, this model emphasizes that it is an integral part of the way people process and recall information.

Chapter Five: Making it Up as You Go Along

Response Effects

Question wording and order affects responses in systemic and predictable ways. Axiom 3 can explain this effect, because the questions may bring to the forefront different considerations depending on their wording (D14). People who are more ambivalent about an issue will be affected more strongly by this effect (D15). Salience effects reaffirm A3 and A4, D16-18.
“Priming” as a Type of Salience Effect

Saliency changes not only the responses to a particular question but also the relationship people draw between issues (anti-communists were more likely to support Reagan during the Iran-Contra affair, whereas before it hit the media his approval was better predicted by people’s opinion on social welfare policy). The same effect can be observed through question framing. Therefore, the information that the question makes salient directly influences the opinions that people report (D19). Making ideological identification salient makes people’s subsequent responses more consistent with that ideology (D20).

Effects of Thought on the Reliability of Attitude Reports

Political awareness only enhances response stability only if it reflects long-term and stable involvement. More politically aware people filter the incoming messages and therefore are less centrists than less aware peoples in their attitude reports (D21). Although non-aware people’s underlying attitudes may also be non-centrist, they are unable to translate it into consistent survey responses. As was predicted by Axiom A3, more extreme attitudes are also reported more quickly (D22). The second method of the 1987 NES survey, which allows people to recall more considerations, is expected to be more reliable over time and to be more consistent with positions on related issues (D23, 24). Both of D23 and D24 were disproved by survey data, especially for the less aware population. The second method showed less stability over time than the first. An explanation for this discrepancy is that the “stop and think” method is not the normal process by which people recall information, and may thus be unrepresentative of the attitudes people normally use to choose a response. Since less politically aware people are more likely to use feelings to choose a position, while the stop and think method encourages them to use more rational considerations, their response was not reflective of their “normal” response. Highly politically aware people behaved in a way consistent with D23 and D24, however.

Chapter Six: the Mainstream and Polarization Effects

Mainstream Effect

This effect occurs when an overwhelming majority of persuasive messages are on one side of the issue and there are no cueing messages to explain the ideological implications of this side. D25 asserts that more highly aware people will express more support for this policy. Conversely, Correlation should be weak if elite discourse does not reach a consensus on the issue.

The Polarization Effect

When political elites disagree about an issue, and the media coverage is balanced, higher awareness will generally mean that support for a particular issue will depend on ideological identification and result in partisan split, while lower awareness will be correlated with less consistency.
More politically aware individuals are better able to organize their beliefs on a wide range of issues into a coherent ideology (D27, D28).

Chapter Seven: Basic Processes of “Attitude Change”

Since fully formed attitudes do not exist according to the RAS model, attitude change implies a shift in the balance of positive and negative considerations rather than the wholesale substitution of one coherent attitude for another. This process is best described as permanent alterations in long-term response probabilities in the RAS terminology. However, the term attitude change will be used as shorthand since it is less cumbersome.

Modeling Attitude Change

There are two routes by which attitude change may occur. First, recent events may highlight the salience of preexisting liberal or conservative considerations. The second route involves exposure to, and acceptance of, new considerations, which may tip the balance in people’s minds. Messages that dominant media discourse are called dominant message, while those in the minority are called countervailing messages. Change in response probability is the difference between the probability that an individual will choose a particular position in time 2 and the same probability in time 1.

New messages may be resisted through three mechanisms:

1. Partisan Resistance: if a person can perceive that the context of the message opposes his/her predispositions, s/he is more likely to reject it.
2. Inertial Resistance: if an individual already possess a large amount of considerations on a given issue, the effect of new information will be negligible.
3. Countervalent Resistance: new countervalent messages may cancel out new dominant messages.

In general, more people that are more politically aware will exhibit higher levels of each type of resistance. People may either resist by refusing to internalize an incompatible message or by counteracting its effects through countervalent and inertial considerations.

A Reception-Acceptance Model of Attitude Change

A simple equation calculates the probability of opinion change as that of the probability that a message had been received times the probability that a message was accepted given that it was received. This model does not account for existing considerations and any countervailing messages. Based on earlier finding, political awareness is positively correlated with reception and negatively correlated with uncritical acceptance. This implies that people in the middle range of awareness are the most likely to change their attitudes based on new considerations (nonmonotonic function) if they contradict their predisposition. The shape of a curve, which may be positive, negative, or non-monotonic, varies depending
on the level of intensity of the message (how difficult it is to be received). Higher awareness is associated with higher reception of a difficult to receive message.

A Statistical Model of Attitude Change

A logistical function is used to describe the relationship between political awareness and probability of reception based on goodness of fit of empirical data. An assumption of the model is that predispositions do not affect the reception of a message, only its acceptance. This is not strictly true, but is not sufficiently widespread enough to invalidate the model. The reception acceptance model measures the conversion rates among the unconverted members of a particular ideological group, rather than the absolute magnitudes of the opinion change among these groups. THIS SECTION IS VERY TECHNICAL, I’M OMMITTING MOST OF THE STATISTICAL DETAILS!

Chapter Eight: Tests of the One-Message Model

Characteristic Patterns of Attitude Change

The level of intensity of a message determines the extent of its penetration across a population possessing varying levels of attentiveness. The higher the level of preexisting knowledge or interest about the issue, the better able people are to absorb new information about it. Thus intensity depends on the extent of coverage and the public’s interest in the message. In general, highly intense messages produce change across people with varying levels of awareness, while low intensity messages affect only those that are highly aware. High level of familiarity with an issue, on the other hand, results in larger attitude change among people that are less aware.

Attitude formation refers to a situation when an issue is new and there is little prior knowledge or established predispositions even among politically aware individuals. When an issue is unfamiliar, there is a monotonic change with the most aware liberals the most supportive of a liberal issue, and vice versa. If it is a liberal issue presented to a conservative group, the response is nonmonotonic. Attitude formation for new issues is most likely to occur among highly aware people. Low intensity messages will also predominantly affect the attitudes of highly aware people.

Age and Resistance to Change

Older individuals are expected to be more resistant to new ideas. In fact, age is only a factor if older people were exposed to a different elite/partisan consensus than the young.

Chapter Nine: Two-sided Information Flows

Two-sided information flows consist of both a dominant message pushing much of public opinion in one direction, and a less intense, countervalent message that partly counteracts the effects of the dominant message (i.e. Though Reagan looked bad amid Iran-Contra, there were still Republican senators who backed him up, perhaps preventing public opinion from moving as far as it might have.)
Citizens are exposed to two communication flows, one on each side of the issue. These opposing communications may have different effects in different segments of the population, depending on the relative intensity of the messages.

The chapter builds a model to deal with these flows and shows that public opinion can be understood as a response to the relative intensity and stability of opposing flows of liberal and conservative communication. He uses the Vietnam War as the main reference point.

**Ebb and Flow of Support for the War:**
Zaller asserts that the quantity of pro-war stories in selected major news outlets prevailed for the first five years until 1970, when anti-war stories become more common. Additionally, the quantity of stories written (based on the *New York Times* as the representative of all media outlets) increased at a steady rate throughout the six-year period. Graphs of this are on page 187.

**Main point of chapter:** Public attitudes on major issues change in response to changes in the relative intensities of competing streams of political communications, as filtered through the reception-acceptance process.

**A Two-message Model of Attitude Change:**
He creates a formula for dealing with two-sided information, incorporating into the same formula accessibility to pro- and anti-war considerations in the denominator. See formula, bottom of page 194. THIS SECTION IS VERY TECHNICAL – IF YOU’RE INTO THE MATH, CHECK IT OUT.

**Data and results:**
- In the acceptance function, the effects of both ideology and awareness appear to increase markedly from the period in which there was a mainstream elite consensus (1964) to the period in which the war provoked elite disagreement (1966-1970)
- Results support his argument in that the effects of values and awareness on political attitudes are not automatic but depend on elite cues for activation.
- The biggest antiwar shift in liberal opinion occurred after Richard Nixon took over the presidency in 1969. With the war effort being let by a Republican rather than a Democrat, many doves found it easier to oppose the war.
- Uninformed hawks and doves both act similarly as do moderate hawks and doves. Those most aware behave very differently – hawks one way, doves another.

**Implications:**
Results advance our understanding of the dynamics of opinion in changes in many ways:
- Evidence of the existence of countervalent resistance (highly aware doves from 1964-66)
  This is clear because the countervalent message was becoming more intense at a time when the dominant message was also becoming more intense, creating converts in different parts of the public.
- Attitude change in response to a two-sided message can take different forms at different points in time
- Mass belief systems form and change over time in response to a complex stimulus.
• Results of this chapter support the claim that public attitudes toward major issues are a response to the relative intensity of competing political communications on those issues. The degree of mass ideological polarization on an issue reflects the relative intensity of the opposing information flows.

Chapter Ten: Information flow and electoral choice

Aim of chapter: to test if political campaigns operate in the same fashion as ongoing campaigns, where political elites seek to persuade a public that varies in its political awareness and predispositions.

He considers this in four types of elections: US House, US Senate, general presidential and presidential primary. Of special interest is how candidates oppose the dominant message of incumbants.

Inertial resistance to incumbent-dominated house campaigns

In recent decades, incumbents have done more to polish their images as constituent-servers, especially through sending out newsletters and speaking at functions. Such activities reach mainly the politically aware.

The politically aware are also better capable of resisting appeals of the dominant campaign, especially if their ideology predisposes them to do as such. This is because they are attracted to strong countervalent information, such as the opponent’s campaign.

The reception function includes the following variables: political awareness, intensity of media coverage, incumbent’s spending, challenger’s spending, seniority and seniority x challenger’s spending. The acceptance function includes the following variables: political awareness, strength of party attachment, inertia and challenger’s spending.

Key points with these variables: Inertia (the mass of considerations that cause voters to lean toward their party and that the incumbent campaign must overcome to win over partisans) is statistically significant but its effect is only moderately large. There is a significant negative coefficient on awareness in the acceptance function. Seniority has the effect of working in the incumbent’s favor, but only in lightly contested races.

Countervalent and partisan resistance to incumbent-dominated house campaigns:

This section examines the effects of campaigns on people’s evaluations of both incumbents and challengers in house races at the level of positive and negative views of the candidates; it also looks closely at one district.

A logistic regression analysis indicates that candidate considerations are the most important determinant of House voting. Highly aware incumbent-party partisans do not resist pro-incumbent communications. There is a strong nonmonotonic relationship between political awareness and net candidate considerations for partisans who are not members of the incumbent’s party. Highly aware non-incumbent-party partisans are more resistant to the predominantly pro-incumbent message than are moderately aware non-incumbent-party partisans, as might be expected. Highly aware non-incumbent party partisans resist the dominant pro-incumbent message because the challengers are visible to the highly aware. Highly aware
non-incumbent party partisans do more than resist the incumbent – they acquire countervailing information that enables them to positively support the challenger.

Inertial and countervalent resistance to the dominant incumbent campaign is more common among those who are more politically aware. Countervalent resistance appears to be the most important source or resistance to dominant political campaigns.

With the House and Senate, the most important source of resistance to dominant campaigns is countervalent information carried within the overall stream of political information.

**Presidential Primaries**

Awareness-induced resistance to dominant political campaigns is not automatic; it depends on access to alternative communications. In later stages of an examined campaign (1984 primary) most aware Democrats are most resistant to change – this is when a two-sided information flow and some development of inertial considerations came about.

**Chapter Eleven: Evaluating the model and looking toward future research**

This chapter assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the RAS model. He provides a thorough review of his argument, then presents 4 self-critiques.

*The Basic argument restated:*

FOR A FABULOUS, GENERAL REVIEW OF THE ENTIRE BOOK, READ PAGES 266 AND 277. It doesn’t get more succinct than that.

**Self-critique 1: Who leads whom?**

In his argument, he assumes that elite communications shape mass opinion rather than vice versa. This is because 1) the elite stimulus to mass attitude change really was either mainly or wholly exogenous and 2) even when politicians pursue certain policies because of perceived public pressure, it is often the anticipation of that pressure, rather than the actual pressure, that is critical.

**Self-critique 2: the basic axioms.**

- Criticism of axiom 1 (Reception): Different people are exposed to the same message and yet receive quite different messages from it, based on their prior knowledge.
- Criticism of axiom 2 (Resistance): How can we be sure that it is possession of relevant contextual information, rather than something else, that explains the greater critical resistance of more aware persons? No direct evidence was presented throughout his argument on this point.
- Criticism of axiom 3 (Accessibility): The most defensible of the four. Limited criticism would consider the effects of mood, social context and other recent activities.
- Criticism of axiom 4 (Response): The most contestable of the four. It allows people to favor one or the other side of an issue, but not to take positions that are more or less strong, or more or less extreme.
Self critiques 3 and 4: models of the reception-acceptance process

Criticisms here fit under two rubrics:

- **Rubric 1 (general theoretical issues):** A lack of appropriate data has made him unable to fully explore the position that a change in the balance of positive and negative considerations accounts for attitude change, not a conversion experience. A large oversimplification in the RAS model is that individuals never think for themselves, relying only on external communication reaching to them.

- **Rubric 2 (methodological issues):** Two message models are statistically cumbersome, impose data requirements that can rarely be met, and fail to yield clear predictions about what will happen in a given situation. Also, his results are fragile ones, with large standard errors for coefficients and the need to constrain parameters in models. The necessity of using small groups to get an overall sample leads to statistical imprecision.

Extensions of the RAS model:

The RAS model might be well-applied to study of information dissemination and reception in low-income countries, especially those in which authoritarian regimes regulate information flows. He applies the model to examples like Soviet Union support for the Afghan war, Nazi Germany and Brazil, he finds it to be a very helpful lens.

Axioms and Numbered Deductions in The Nature and Origin of Mass Opinion

Axioms

A1. **Reception Axiom.** The greater a person’s level of cognitive engagement with an issue, the more likely she is to be exposed to and comprehend political messages concerning the issue.

A2. **Resistance axiom.** People tend to resist arguments that are inconsistent with their political predispositions, but do so only to the extent that they possess the contextual information necessary to perceive a relationship between the message and their predispositions.

A3. **Accessibility axiom.** The more recently a consideration has been called to mind or thought about, the less time it takes to retrieve that consideration or related consideration from memory and bring them to the top of the head for use.

A4. **Response axiom.** Individuals answer survey questions by averaging across the considerations that are immediately salient or accessible to them.

Deductions

D1. **Ambivalence deduction.** In an environment that carries roughly evenly balanced communications on both sides of an issue, people are likely to internalize many contradictory messages on that issue. (59)
D2. The more open-ended remarks favoring a given position a survey respondent offers, the more likely she is to take that position. (62)

D3. There will be a fair amount of variability in people’s responses to survey questions. (64)

D4. Because top of mind considerations vary over time, there will be a fair amount of pure randomness around a central stable tendency. (64)

D5. Better-informed persons are likely to possess the cueing mechanisms necessary to reject communications inconsistent with their values. (65)

D6. Better-informed persons will more likely form opinions that are homogenously consistent with their values. (65)

D7. Greater homogeneity will lead over time to greater response stability. (65)

D8. Attitude stability should be greater on issues over which the partisan elite divide sharply and clearly, and vice versa. (67)

D9. When the degree of public attentiveness to an issue is high, attitude statements on that issue will exhibit less variability than on issues that are more abstract or remote. (68)

D10. Individuals who care more about issues will pay more attention to them and hence express less chance variability in their attitude statements about these issues. (68)

D11. People’s responses to particular questions may vary stochastically, but their equilibrium points should be stable as long as their environment remains stable. (69)

D12. Changes in the directional thrust of a person’s open-ended remarks about a subject will be associated with changes in the thrust of their closed-ended remarks.

D13. People who volunteer an equal number of open-ended remarks on both sides of an issue will give stable responses only as often as chance alone would predict, i.e. 50% (71)

D14. Different question orders will bring different considerations to the tops of people’s minds, increasing the chance they will affect responses. (77)

D15. People who are deeply ambivalent on an issue will be most affected by artificial changes in question order. (77)

D16-D18. Because the most immediate considerations have a disproportionate effect on a person’s responses, the
--race of the interviewer
--existence of reference groups (e.g. presence of a Catholic priest before interview)
--priming effects of recently-seen TV news
will affect responses (79)
D19. Priming effects are explained by the assumption that people have multiple opinions on a single subject, and which one(s) inform a given response depends on salience. (84)

D20. Respondents with a strong ideological orientation that has recently been made apparent to them will more likely rely on that orientation in delivering responses, making their responses more strongly correlated with their ideology and also more ideologically consistent with each other. (85)

D21. More politically aware persons will be more extreme in their attitude reports because increases in political awareness bring increases in critical capacity and hence in the internal consistency of one’s considerations. (85)

D22. Greater political awareness will lead to both to quicker responses and more extreme views. Hence there will be a correlation between speed of response and extremity of views expressed. (86)

D23-24. Stability of responses over time and strength of correlation between responses and related attitudes are expected to be higher among respondents forced to stop and think about their responses than among those answering questions in the normal fashion. (86)

D25. The greater a person’s level of political awareness, the more mainstream communications the person will internalize, and hence the greater her support for the mainstream policy. (98)

D26 (wronged coded as D25). Correlations between awareness and support for a policy will be strongest when elite consensus is strongest. (99)

D27-28. The empirical facts of attitude consistency across issues, and the tendency of that consistency to become stronger with increases in awareness, are both explained by the RAS model. (114)

Numbering of deductions ceases after p. 114

✅Who Deliberates? Mass Media in Modern Democracy/Page
Benjamin I. Page

Deliberation is essential to democracy, but because there are 280 million people in the US it may be difficult for us all to put our two-cents in- so by division of labor we use the media and professional communicators- to help out the deliberation process.

Common criticism of the media is that the mainstream does not provide enough political information- defenders say this doesn’t matter because most people are more interested in entertainment (where have you gone J. Lo?) and those who want more political information can seek it elsewhere (no NPR nerds here or anything) So political information is available, not everyone has to pay attention, and political opinion will eventually trickle down to ordinary citizens.
The criticism that the media may be ideologically biased can be dismissed, as long as there is competition and diversity within the media. He speculates that most will be able to pick up cues indicating the media’s slant.

Information is a public good—terribly hard to exclude people from getting information. The market for information can fail in two ways: through government control of information, and through the duopoly of the two parties (so the argument is usually framed either with only two sides, or if the parties agree, the issue may not get to the public). Also the professional communicators are not at all like Joe Schmoe, (they are a lot more educated, make a lot more educated, and are more likely to live in NYC or DC)- so they often have very divergent values.

Three Case Studies

- The New York Times Goes to War With Iraq

The Persian Gulf conflict had a long build-up allowing for a long period of debate. While the set-up of the Times, (op-editorials, letters to the editors) would have the appearance of an “open debate” or at least of presenting a range of opinions, the Times in fact continuously presented the mainstream, and never actually gave space to alternative or dissenting opinions.

The editorials, columnists, guest columnists are all selected or sought out, and the number of letters to the editor allow the Times the ability to be highly selective with the message it prints. **In print together, the messages may appear diverse, but the opinions actually represent a very narrow segment of opinion, centering around the Times position.**

To a Times reader (around the time of the Persian Gulf build-up) the editorial and op-ed pages would have looked like they were presenting a range of ideas—however the diversity of ideas was deceptively limited. (He quantifies the message, by adding up all the dovish and hawkish messages- points out that there were no Iraqi scholarly voices, nor did anyone mention the effect that the sanctions would have on Iraqi children). **So the Times did not simply pass opinions along, but had the ability (consciously or unconsciously) to shape and articulate policy views.**

Assigning the Blame for the Los Angeles Riots

After the Rodney King riots in LA in April of 1992, (chief Bush spokesman) Fitzwater suggested that the liberal social programs of the 1960s and 1970s caused the riots. Most public figures, media commentaries and editorials and the general public dismissed the idea quickly.

This case shows that white house communications can be rejected. (The ability to reject official communication is essential in our society, where the media relies so heavily on official statements and government sources)

**Persuasiveness of a President depends on their popularity, and on a supportive elite consensus.** (Here there was no such support)

This case highlights some themes of the book:

1. The great speed of communications
2. The central role of officials and other professional communicators (Ordinary citizens had absolutely no input in this debate)
3. Distinctive editorial positions (while conservative papers did not support the Bush position, they were brief in the coverage, or presented other more positive stories on Bush)

4. The tendency of editorial stands to spill into other news stories. (most papers criticizing the statement also presented stories portraying the social programs in a positive light)

5. The active role of certain elite media in defining issues, influencing others’ stands, and shaping debate. (The power that the Post, Times and WSJ have in shaping debate is worrisome- especially if they all agree with each other and are out of touch with the general public)

Zoe Baird, Nannies and Talk Radio

Initially, the nomination of Baird for (first woman) Attorney General was well received, but (which proved important later on) she did not have one unified constituency willing to back her up if she were to get into trouble.

When it came out that she had hired illegal aliens to take care of her children (and sometimes use the husband as her driver), and only paid the SS tax when nominated, the politicians, media elite and other professional communicators, did not think it would hinder her appointment, nor did they see the crime as much more than jaywalking.

Important to this case is that the media did report the crime when reporting about her hearings- so the public was able to get the full and undisputed details. Though the media and political elite was complacent, in America (outside of the elite), the public was outraged and spontaneously vocalizing their anger through Talk Radio. As calls poured in to Congressmen, and Senators, they began to shift their line of questioning, and within a few days her name was withdrawn from the nomination.

Clearly the elite was way out of touch with the average American- but the public was able to get their point across- and their voice was finally heard. What are the conditions necessary for this?

1. On some significant matter, officials and media elites hold in common, and act upon, preferences, beliefs, and/or values that are quite different form those of most ordinary citizens.

2. A large segment of the population becomes aware that the elites are acting in this way.

3. Channels exist by which members of the public can express outrage.

Okay, to wrap up (MAIN THEMES):

1. Public deliberation is highly mediated, primarily by professional communicators

2. Different media outlets tend to take distinctive political stands

3. Political points of view are not confined to editorial and op-ed pages but pervade news stories as well.

   a. By controlling prominence of a story

   b. By soliciting, selecting and shaping quotations around which a story is built

   c. By choosing which facts to report

   d. By framing the meaning of news stories

   e. By using overtly evaluative words and stories

4. Certain media outlets actively work to shape political discourse to their own purposes

5. The mainstream news media is often out of touch with the values of ordinary citizens
6. A populist uprising can sometimes use other communications channels

Despite focusing on these bad parts of the media, Page seems optimistic that in the end there is enough diversity out there, and alternate forms of communication, so adequate deliberation is possible.

✓ Governing with the News- Timothy Cook

The Political News Media

“The news is a coproduction of sources (usually officials) and journalists, but that sources cannot simply snap their fingers and make news in their own terms. Instead, not only is the news a reworking of official actions, events and statements with production values in mind. These production values favor particular kinds of news and information over others, and thereby end up endowing the news with a particular politics”- 114

The news media is similar to the 3 branches of government in that it is partially dependent and partially independent form the other branches. But he argues that the media fits more with two other political institutions: the political parties and the interest group system.

Bias and Impact

Three kinds of bias:

- **Political Bias**: Derived from individual or collective political preferences of newspersons
- **Situational Bias**: A political actor engages in particular behaviors that are better or worse suited for coverage
- **Structural Bias**: Political actors receive better coverage by meeting the demands of the medium, including the search for timely, clear-cut, easily described vivid, colorful, colorful stories

“The process of newsmaking is a negotiation of newsworthiness.” Sources may make themselves available, but journalists determine what makes suitable news.

**Negotiation occurs on several levels:**

- battle over the forums in which interactions occur
- interactions within those forums
- negotiation when the parties reshape ideas after the interaction

**Official News**- Because of the newsbeat system (where there’s a regular reporter at the White House, Pentagon, etc.) the administration’s policy tends to be over-represented.

**Unofficial activists** can only become newsworthy under certain circumstances

- by intersecting with and established newsbeat
- by disruptive news (protests)
- by accidental news (journalists may turn to sources they don’t usually use)
- Via the human interest story or angle
• The trend towards crafting more interesting stories (like the human interest angles) tends to lead to greater bias (you have to sell the story, plus what is interesting enough to cover)
• Journalists like a story with a good and bad guy (congress vs. pres. Dems vs. Republicans

✓ Jacobson /The Politics of Congressional Elections

Intro
Goals: explain what goes on in Congress and how it is connected to other aspects of American political life. To use careful examination of complex, multifaceted business of electing Congress to understand why politicians have found it so difficult to develop measured solutions to pressing national problems

The Context
Chpt. sets out the legal and institutional context in which congressional elections take place
Congressional campaigns are largely candidate centered.
House members: popularly elected, “close to the people”
Senate members: more insulated from momentary shifts in public mood
Gerrymandering: drawing district lines to maximize the number of seats a party can win. A 1986 Supreme Court case (Thornburg v. Gingles) ruled that legisl lines not discriminate against racial minorities.
Decision was interpreted as requiring districts to be designed such that minorities comprised a majority of voters wherever residence patterns make this possible.
States are odd electoral units: the largest 9 states are home to 51% of the popltn but elect only 18% of the Senate; the smallest 26 states control 52% of the Senate but hold only 18% of the popltn. This bias generally has favored the party that is in the minority nationally.
Decline of parties’ power: Party’s organization influence on congressional campaigns varies but is typically feeble.
Important to remember that rules and institutions mentioned above are consciously created and shaped by political people to help them achieve their goals. Framework reflects values and preferences among politically active people and changes as these values and preferences change.
Social and political context/ heterogeneity contributes to the idiosyncrasy of congressional elections.
Factors include: geographical size, popltn, economic base, income, communications, ethnicity, age, and political habits

Congressional Candidates
From 1950s-80s, importance of indiv candidates expanded while party labels and national issues declined.
Advantages of incumbency is more limited than many expect but still is an important factor b/c many incumbents consistently win. The electoral value of incumbency increased sharply during 60s.
“Vanishing marginals”: idea that with more voters, get fewer incumbents with “marginal” seats.
“Marginal” seats: those taken with narrow margins of victory and thought to be at heightened risk for future losses. 61% of House incumbents in 1966 won in excess of 60%, 73% in 1968-82, and 83% in 1984-88 ➔ rise of importance of incumbency
But wider voting margins does not ensure greater security. Voter margins could increase w/o making incumbents significantly safer b/c electorates became more volatile (swing votes) and idiosyncratic across districts
Sources of incumbency advantage:
Institutional characteristics – party give a lot of leeway, have a lot of official resources (staff, travel $, franking privilege = sending mail for “official business” for free) to pursue reelection
Voters are less loyal to parties during 60s-70s. **But** a less partisan electorate is more fickle; vote is less stable from election to election. A wide margin in one election is less guarantee of success in next election.

Incumbents can perform Constituency Service: create needs and then reap rewards of spending time catering to them. This creates great opportunities for building credit with constituents. Also casework is non-partisan. **But** amount of time in district has little effect on vote margins. 

B/c more candidate-centered, shifted locus of competition to district and incumbent have to assume more responsibility for winning reelection. 

Value of incumbency also depends on kind of opposition they face. Need to scare off challengers = value of incumbency lies not in what it provides to the incumbent, but how it affects the thinking of opponents and their potential supporters. If can convince formidable opponents that she is invincible, very likely to avoid serious challenge and stay invincible. This is important b/c impact of the opposition’s level of mobilization has grown. 

Money: how well nonincumbents do is directly related to how much campaign money they raise and spend. Incumbents can generally raise as much money as they need, but their relationship to money is opposite of challenger = the larger their expected vote, the less they raise and spend. They only spend a lot if they feel challenged - shows desperation. 

Challengers need LOTS of money – at least $500,000 if want a 1/10 chance of winning.$400, 000 is threshold for plausible challenge, but only 15% of challengers cross that threshold. Money for nonincumbents buys the attention and recognition that incumbents already enjoy at the outset of the campaign. 

**Incumbents most effective electoral strategy is to discourage serious opposition**, and the most effective way to do this is to show signs of electoral vulnerability. Weak showing in one election can bring stronger opposition in next. Need to win in way that minimizes future opposition. 

Once have career in district, have phases: **expansionist phase**: building up base of supporters; **protectionist phase**: maintain support, but no longer add to it. 

Best time to run as challenger is during an open seat. Why challengers run if incumbency is such a big hurdle: naivete, want attention to get elected later, stories of some actually winning inspires others, promote ideological beliefs, want to advertise themselves in their professions.

**Congressional Campaigns**

Congressional campaigns = more candidate centered. PACs have become major players. 

House: grounded in their experience in the district, visit and learn about constituents 

Senate: have to deal with larger and more diverse constituencies scattered over wider areas 

Key is to communicate with voters. 2 resources needed – Money and Organization 

**Money**: private indiv contribute greatest share of campaign money, PACs are second-most important source. Business PACs grown in numbers and total contributions. Corporate/business PACs are opportunistic – give to Demos when they were in power and shifted later to Repubs. Ave contribution: $51,000 

Party money – limited to $5,000 direct per candidate per election, but provide other resources through money spent on behalf of candidates (which is permissible under FECA). Can give unlimited amounts. 

Mad amounts given by Repub party – up to 3 million per candidate 

Supreme Court case (Buckley v. Valeo) eliminated limits to how much of own money candidates can spend. Advantage to wealthy, of course. 

**Organization**: 2 groups of activities common to campaigns – Mass media advertising (more spend, more recognized) and personal campaigning (personal contact with potential voters) 

Challenger’s campaign – find vulnerable points to attack incumbent (PACs are important for this) while convincing people of own virtues 

Incumbent’s campaign – inspire trust, emphasize accessibility, preempt attacks on personal vulnerability, stress experience and seniority
Open Seat campaign – attract ambitious politicians and better-qualified candidates, but have the best chance of winning b/c no incumbent
Senate campaign – lot more competitive and close race b/c attract more $, formidable challengers, use more media, activities in WA more conspicuous
Generally, Congress face more electoral uncertainty (volatile voters, stronger opposition), but lots of incumbents remain in office

Congressional Voters
Although level of education (factor most strongly linked to participation) has gone up, fewer people are voting.
Better educated, wealthier, higher-status, older people over-represented in electorate
The higher the turnout, the closer the election
Partisanship = most important influence on indiv’s voting decisions, despite decline in 60s and 70s.
Rooted in practical aspects – like results of certain party’s candidates, Party ID can change in response to political exp.
Information is key: people don’t vote for people they know nothing about. Incumbents have this advantage. But familiarity does not always breed favorable responses. B/c know incumbents more, can have more bad things to say about them. But usually positive stuff.
Voters twice as likely to have contact with incumbents than challengers. Senate has smaller advantage here, but they attract more media while House control their own press (hence, they usually get more favorable press review)
For challengers, greater spending produces greater familiarity among voters. Incumbents gain comparatively little benefit from campaign expenditures. Bigger payoffs to challengers.
2 findings from research: 1) Voters are not attracted to incumbency per se – more important are very favorable public images they acquire. 2) little difference in patterns for House and Senate
Incumbents get lots of favorable reactions. Although personal criteria predominate positive comments, political criteria now predominate negative comments. Made them more vulnerable.
Winning challengers have projected positive image of their own while persuading voters that incumbents had liabilities that outweigh their assets. Successful challengers had more contact with community, better name recognition, and spent more money on campaign.

National Politics and Congressional Elections
Chpt deals with how national politics affect congressional elections.
Aggregate outcome of congressional elections gives a speculative sense of what is on the public mind
Widely believed that economic conditions and presidential politics shaped electoral prospects of congressional candidates.
Coattail effects: notion that successful candidates on top will pull some of their party’s candidates into office with them. But coattail contributions have been erratic and usually modest in recent elections.
An important decision in running is whether it has been a good year for person’s party. The same things that politicians believe influence congressional voters also guide the strategic decisions of potential candidates and contributors. This means that when partisan outlook is gloomy, smart challengers wait for a better day.
Campaign contributors also respond to election year expectations.
Generally, political strategies of congressional elites are responsive to national forces and help to translate them into aggregate election results.
Smart politicians take advantage of favorable national tides and avoid contrary currents. But quality of challenger is more important. What candidates do with national issues at local level is crucial.
National conditions create problems or opportunities for congressional candidates, but how they are handled or exploited is more important than ever before.
What it takes to change makeup of House: potent issues combined with vigorous challenges
As seen with Senate, aggregate election results are sensitive to small changes in voting behavior, and hence, to national or local conditions that influence voters. Presidential coattails and other national forces have different aggregate effects in different election years b/c the distribution and size of the vote for a party’s congressional candidates determine wins and losses.

Elections and the Politics of Congress
Chpt. looks at how congressional elections influence the behavior of elected leaders and hence, the success/ failure of politics. How members win and hold office affects both the internal organization of the houses and the kind of legislations they produce.
Congress’s performance as an institution has a profound effect on how and how well we are governed. Tension b/w indiv electoral pursuits (to get reelected) and behavior required for Congress to function effectively is seen in congressional parties. Parties are primary devices for organizing collective action. Party leader understand that members keep their jobs by pleasing voters, not congressional parties. Their job is to promote policies that members can support to enhance their own local reputations as well as their party’s image.
Repubs have done a better job in centralizing authority to their party leaders. Newt Gingrich was very powerful. B/c everyone wants credit for something/ anything at all, have lots of subcommittees. But fragmenting authority erodes party’s ability to make coherent national policy.
In 1994, Repubs consolidated the committee system by abolishing committees, reducing subcommittees, and slashing staff. B/c want to do favors for specific groups, have lots of policies that produce particularized benefits, like “pork” where resources are spread very thinly across the nation.
Policies also tend to serve the organized, more active, vocal. 1970s Congressional reforms opened congressional activities to greater public scrutiny and actions became more visible. Growth of PACs has transformed congressional lobbying. All these developments reduced members’ political maneuverability. Immobility and symbolism (taking symbolic positions on issues) also characterize congress.
In spite of all this, congress can do good. 3 conditions needed: 1) issue must be salient to large segment of poplt, 2) legis leaders must frame decision such that there is no opportunity to modify the policy to serve narrower interests, 3) most powerful potential opponents need to be bought off with special concessions or side deals
Arnold’s point in his book (listen up!): All effective techniques of presidents, party leaders, and other policy leaders for building legislative coalitions recognize electoral necessity. Congressional fates are decided locally, so members are most attentive to the local impact of national policies.
Budgeting is where indiv electoral incentives and collective party and institutional imperatives clash most repeatedly and visibly. Each member has a separate interest in providing programs that please supports w/o worrying about the collective impact on the budget of all of them doing the same thing. But aggregate result is too much spending. Congress came to rely on presidential power to impound (refuse to spend) some of the funds authorized and appropriated by congress. Members could still claim credit for enacting programs, but they could avoid the embarrassment of having to present the bill to the public. Can say “sorry, tried, but president impounded programs”.
Nixon’s abuse of impoundment resulted in 1974 Congressional Budget and Control Act that put presidential impounding authority under control of congress. However, the new process made it easier for the president to impose his own budget policies as Reagan did.
Reagan’s crazy econ theories and defense build-up combined with Demos’ spending programs and tax breaks created massive deficits. In 1985, adopted Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act that required Congress to achieve a balanced budget by 1991 by meeting series of yearly deficit targets. Didn’t happen until 1998 when Clinton was in office. But Demos suffered at the beginning when they had to cut spending programs and increase taxes. Now budget politics turned to partisan battles over what to do with the surplus.
✅ Bureaucracy by Wilson (Part I, II, & III)

The Gist: The book asserts that the reason bureaucracies run with inefficiency and arbitrariness has nothing to do with the limitations or inadequacies of individual bureaucrats and everything to do with the constitutional regime and political context of which they are a part.

Part 1: Organizations
Chapter 1 Armies, Prisons, Schools
Behavior of government agencies as a bureaucracy is not a simple, uniform phenomenon. Looking at the different experiences found in armies, prisons, schools, those with apparently similar objectives, rules, and resources have different outcomes, and those same institutions that previously failed can evolve to have improved outcomes without a change in these factors. Studying the goals, resources, and structures to an agency cannot always help in explaining outcomes. E.g. the greatest differences in the achievement between private and public schools were accounted for by school-level variables, e.g. incidence of fights, secure and fair environment, not resources.

Top down v. bottom up view: Circumstances under which top-down view is warranted: a) when progress toward the goals of an agency can be reliably measured by its top officials, these are ‘production organizations’, e.g. Social Security Administration and b) when an interest group closely monitors the work of the agency and reports its judgments in a persuasive manner for the legislature, "client politics", e.g. Old Civil Aeronautics Board.

Many failures of reorganization have resulted from having looked at the agency from the top down. Looking at bureaucracies from the bottom up, you can better assess the extent to which their management systems and administrative arrangements are well or poorly suited to the tasks the agencies actually perform.

Chapter 2 Organization Matters
Economists have extended their interest in the firm to include government agencies, but only with a conventional view. That is, bureaucrats as individual utility maximizing actors, akin to profits, they seek rewards in terms of salary, rank, or power and bureaucrats’ behavior is determined by a variety of preferences and under a set of market or political constraints.

There are two errors in the “Only People Matter” individualistic view: First, people are the products of their organizational position role. Second, you have to give man some measure of authority before his personal qualities can be transformed into effective influence, and so his effectiveness likely depends on the manner in which others are organized around him.

Organization is a "system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons”. The most important thing to know is how that coordination is accomplished. There is no one best way of organizing.

There are three organizational challenges: First challenge: to perform its critical task. Critical task are defined as behaviors, which if successfully performed by key organizational members, should enable the organization to manage its critical environmental problem. Author refers to tasks, not goals while recognizing that tasks cannot be defined completely without regard to goals and that they are related but in a way that is often complex and uncertain. Second challenge: agreement about and widespread endorsement of the way the critical task was defined. When that definition is widely accepted and endorsed, the organization has a sense of mission. Third challenge: acquire sufficient freedoms of action and external political support.
permit it to redefine its tasks it saw best and to infuse that definition with a sense of mission.
Need autonomy.
Organizational culture is a distinctive way of viewing and reacting to the bureaucratic world, it
shapes whatever discretionary authority operators may have.
The further managers are from the day-to-day world the agency, the more their lives are not
shaped by the tasks the operators are performing or the goals the agency is serving but by the
constraints placed on that agency by its political environment.
Government Executives spend much more of their time and energy on handling, face to face,
external constituencies than do business executives.
Gov. executives are preoccupied with maintaining their agencies in a complex, conflict-ridden,
and unpredictable political environment & about retaining control over their turf.
Middle-level government managers are immersed in the effort to cope with the myriad
constraints that this environment has imposed on their agencies.
Government executives must spend so much time coping with their agencies' external
environment that they have relatively little time to shape its internal life.
Tasks of a government agency are more likely than those of a firm to be determined by factors
other than the executive.
Goals are inherently unclear because reasonable people will differ as to the meaning of their
qualitative description, e.g. meaning of such words as “well-being”. And if they should agree on
the meaning of one goal, they will disagree as to what other goals should be sacrificed to attain
them.

Part II Operators

Chapter 3 Circumstances

Operator: a person who does the work that justifies the existence of the organization.
A clear goal is an "operational goal" if the goals are sufficiently clear that reasonable people can
agree on what they mean. Most goals are not operational.
When the agencies have vague, inconsistent goals, what the workers do will be shaped by the
circumstances they encounter at the job, the beliefs and experiences they bring to the job, the
external pressures on the job.
Social Security Administration (SSA) has operational goals and it is able logically and free
politically to define most of its general tasks. However, its goal of aiding disabled persons are
much more complex because the law is ambiguous as to what constitutes a disability. As a result,
there has been more controversy about how the SSA defines its task of helping the disabled than
about its task of helping the elderly.
When goals are vague, circumstances become more important.
Situational imperatives may seem to have their greatest effect on how operators define their tasks
when the organization must deal with an uncooperative or threatening clients face-to-face, e.g.
police officers- central imperative is to stay alive and unharmed and so control becomes the
defining focus of the operator’s energies. Tasks defined by situational imperatives leads to the
development of an organizational culture that emphasizes caution.
Heads of government often ignore these situational factors.
Effective executives not only understand situational imperatives but also provide a way of
handling them which reconciles the operators' desire for survival with the executive’s desire for
effectiveness.
In some organizations, tasks are defined more by available technology and prior experiences than by a clear understanding of what kinds of tasks are appropriate (i.e. you do what you can do and what you know).

Peer expectations can serve organizational needs.

Those who argue that the behavior of an organization is nothing more than the sum of the behaviors of its rationally self-interested members cannot account for an army at war. What does matter are the rewards soldier receives from other soldiers: group solidarity & honor are important.

An organization that exposes its members to mortal dangers does a poor job of managing small-group cohesion; those groups will start to define tasks independently of the organization. Peer expectations are both a source of motivation and a force defining what are acceptable and unacceptable tasks.

Peer expectations not only affect how hard people work at their jobs, they can affect what they decide the job is.

**Conclusion:** There are great differences in how the work of government agencies actually gets defined. When tasks can be inferred freely and unambiguously from the stated goals of a government agency, tasks can be defined the agency's executive and, given proper leadership, can become the basis of a strong organizational culture. When goals are relatively unambiguous but the agency lacks the political freedom to convert those goals into tasks, formation of a suitable culture becomes harder. When the goals are too vague or ambiguous to permit then to become a ready basis of task definition, tasks often will be shaped not by executive preferences but by the incentive the operators. Government executives have limited influence over subordinates because the incentives controlled by managers are weak and hard to manipulate. Thus, in a public bureaucracy tasks of its key operators are likely to be defined by naturally occurring rather than by agency-supplied incentives. Among these naturally occurring incentives are the imperatives of the situation and the expectations of peers. These incentives emerge from within the organization. A skillful executive sometimes shapes them in ways that lead the workers to define their tasks as the executive wishes, workers may bring to the organization predispositions, attitudes, and preferences that will make them responsive to incentives over which the organization has relatively little control.

**CHAPTER 4 Beliefs**

The fear that the attitudes of bureaucrats will determine how they define and perform tasks is not couched in evidence that behavior is explained by attitudes. Our behavior toward an object will be influenced not by our evaluation of it but by the rewards and penalties associated with alternative courses of action.

However, personal beliefs can have a large effect on how tasks are defined when the role to be played is not highly specified by laws, rules, and circumstances and when the operator playing that role receives relatively weak rewards from the organization itself.

When such operators play a role that is weakly defined, they will tend to play it in ways consistent with these predispositions.

Prior Experiences: If a new agency has ambiguous goals, the employees' prior experiences will influence how its tasks get defined.

Professional norms: In a bureaucracy, professionals are those employees who receive some significant portion of their incentives from organized groups of fellow practitioners located
outside the agency. The way such a person defines his or her task may reflect more the standards of the external reference group than the preferences of the internal management.

Political Ideology: ideology can influence the behavior of the staff. Attitudes are most likely to influence the performance of weakly defined roles, especially when the attitudes are reinforced by other incentives. Such as in a new agency and when policies are vaguely defined.

Bureaucratic Personality: common for goal displacement: a process where instrumental values become terminal values: can make people become risk averse. Studies show that as a group the civil servants did not turn out to be conformist or cautious, revealed a personality disposition that on the whole was idealistic and strongly oriented toward achievement.

**Conclusion:** Prior experiences and professional norms certainly influence the behavior of rank-file bureaucrats. Experience, professionalism, and ideology are likely to have their greatest influence when laws, rules, and circumstances do not precisely define operator tasks. New agencies offered opportunities for personal beliefs to shape tasks simply because they were new. There has been a developing progressives confidence that good people define tasks in the right way, the "right way" is a matter of some dispute to different views. It is important, therefore, to assess the extent to which professional norms withstand external pressure by outside interest groups.

**CHAPTER 5 Interests**

Concern: tasks are not defined by situations, norms, experiences, directives, ideology, but by group interests. However, examples show interests do not have "stronghold" on agencies. Federal Maritime Commission (FMC), the agency had its tasks defined by the imperatives of the situation.

Influence of outside interests an agency will depend on the way those interests are arrayed in the agency's environment. It can confronted by 1) a dominant interest group favoring its goals, "client politics"; 2) a dominant interest group hostile to its goals, "entrepreneurial politics", 3) two or more rival interest groups in conflict over its goals, "interest group politics" and 4) no important interest group, "Majoritarian politics". The extent to which the tasks of operators are shaped by the pressures of external interests will vary depending on which of the political environments surround the agency.

**Client politics** occurs when most or all of the benefits of a program go to some single, reasonably small interest but most or all of the costs will be borne by a large number people. Because the recipients' benefits are large, they have an incentive to organize and press for the law; since the costs to those who pay them are low and perhaps hidden, they have no incentive to organize to oppose the law. A client agency will have to struggle mightily to avoid having its work influenced by the single, organized group with which it must deal on a daily basis.

**Entrepreneurial politics** occur when the costs are heavily concentrated belt the benefits are spread over many if not all people: affected group has a strong incentive to oppose the proposed law. Recipients have little incentive to press for its enactments. This is difficult, yet it does occur, e.g. formation of the National Highway Traffic Safety administration (1966) is an example. The keys to its creation was the work of a skilled policy entrepreneur (Ralph Nader), & the scandal that embarrassed his industry opponents. An agency created as the result of entrepreneurial politics is in a precarious position: since it was born out of an attack on the interests it is now supposed to regulate. It must worry that the social movements that created
their tasks may desert the fledgling agency because of shifting interests, leaving it to confront a hostile interest group alone and unprotected.

*Interest group politics:* agency will be neither the tool nor the victim of outside interest if it is the object of offsetting pressures from rival interest groups. Pattern of interest-group politics occurs when the program of the agency produced both high per-capita costs and high per-capita benefits. Both the likely beneficiaries and the likely cost-payers have a strong incentive to organize and press their competing claims. Operators in agencies confronting interest-group politics might seem to easy time of it: somebody out there is likely to be their ally but also is likely to criticized. E.g. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration rarely can please both industry and labor.

*Majoritarian politics* occur when agencies operate in an environment in which no important interest group is continuously active. Widely distributed benefits and impose /widely distributed costs. Because the benefits have a low per-capita value, no one organizes to seek them; because the costs have a low per-capita value, no one organizes to avoid them, e.g. passage of the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890.

Chapter 6 Culture

**Organizational Culture:** persistent, patterned way of thinking about the central tasks of and human relationships within an organization, e.g. 'corporate culture'.

Organizational culture admittedly is a vague concept ( & it’s been hard to empirically tested), but it is real.

Agency’s culture is produced in part by predispositions of members, the technology of the organization, the situational imperatives with which the agency must cope tend to give to the organization a distinctive way of seeing and responding to the world.

Since every organization has a culture, every organization will be poorly adapted to perform tasks that are not defined as part of that culture.

When an organization has a culture that is widely shared and warmly endorsed by operators and managers alike, we say the organization has a sense of mission.

When agency goals are vague, it will hard to convey to operators a simple and vivid understanding of what they are supposed to do.

Thus tasks will get defined in ways over which administrators have only limited control, with the result that the definition adopted by the operators may be one that the executive does not intend and may not desire.

*Imprinting:* during the formative experience of the organization, a founder imposes his or her will on the first generation of operators in a that profoundly affects succeeding generations.

Costs of org. culture: 1) tasks that are not part of the culture will not be attended to with the same energy resources as are devoted to tasks that are part of it, 2) organizations in which two or more cultures struggle for supremacy will experience serious conflict, and 3) organizations will resist taking on new tasks that seem incompatible with its dominant culture.

**Conclusion:** Great of advantage mission is that it permits the head of the agency to be more confident that operators will act in particular cases in ways that the head would have acted had he or she been there. Advantages of a clear sense of mission are purchased at a cost. Tasks that are not defined as central to the mission are often performed poorly or starved for resources, subordinate cultures may develop but promotional opportunities for members of these cultures may be so restricted that the ablest members will avoid assignment to these subunits because service in them is Not Career-Enhancing. Strong sense of mission can blind the organization to
changed environmental circumstances so new opportunities and challenges are met with routinized rather than adaptive behavior.

Chapter 7: Constraints

Many of the popular stereotypes about government agencies and their members are either questionable or incomplete. But the common characteristics are the constraints public agencies face that tend to make their management more difficult than in business.

**Constraints:** 1) government agencies cannot lawfully retain and devote to the private benefit of their members the earnings of the organization, 2) cannot allocate the factors of production in accordance with the preferences of the organization's administrators, and (3) must serve goals not of the organization's own choosing. As a result, government management tends to be driven by the constraints on the organization, not the tasks of the organization. Whereas business management focuses on the "bottom line" (that is, profits), government management focuses on the (top line" that is, constraints).

**Revenues and incentives:** no agency may keep any surplus Revenues fiscal rules agencies do not have a material Incentive to economized.

**Acquiring and Using the Factors of Production:** Complexities in hiring, purchasing, contracting, and budgeting often are said to be the result of the “bureaucracy’s love of red tape" but these rules have been imposed on the agencies by external actors, chiefly the legislature. They are not bureaucratic rules but political.

**Constraints at Work:** The Case of the Postal Service: the goal of "fairness" underlies almost every phase of the procurement process, it is much easier to justify the decision if it can be shown that the decision was "fairly" made on the basis of 'objective" criteria. The extent to which managers are constraint-oriented will vary depending on how easily observed and readily evaluated are the agency's efforts to attain its stated goals. The greater the costs of noncompliance, the more important the constraint

Contextual Goals are descriptions of desired states of affairs other than the one the agency was brought into being to create. These other goals defined the context within which the primary goals can be sought. E.g. Administrative Procedure Act (APA), passed in 1946, requires most federal agencies to observe certain standards of procedural fairness. The existence of so many contextual goals and political constraints has several consequences for the management of public agencies. **First,** managers have a strong incentive to worry more about constraints than tasks, to worry more about processes than outcomes. **Second,** multiplicity of constraints on an agency enhances the power of potential interveners in the agency. **Third,** equity is more important than efficiency in the management of many government agencies.

**Fourth,** the existence of many contextual goals, like the existence of constraints on the use of resources, tends to make managers more risk averse. **Fifth,** standard operating procedures (SOPs) are developed in each agency to reduce the chance that an important contextual goal or constraint is not violated. **Sixth,** public agencies will have more managers than private ones per- s forming similar tasks. **Finally,** the more contextual goals and constraints that must be served, the more discretionary authority in an agency is pushed upward to the top.

**Public versus Private Management:** What distinguishes public from private organizations is neither their size nor their desire to "plan" their environments but rather the rules under which they acquire and use capital and labor.

E.g. In 1971, the Post Office Department was transformed into the United States Postal Service (USPS), a semiautonomous Government corporation. Acquiring greater autonomy increased the
ability of the Postal Service to acquire, allocate, and control the factors of production. It began to adopt corporate-style management practices, a tightened organizational structure, and an effort to decentralize some decisions to local managers. However it was only quasi-autonomous and still powerfully constrained, e.g. it could not end service on Saturday to save money b/c unions opposed that.

CHAPTER 8 People
The Personnel System begun 1883 with the passage of the Pendleton Act, it has three goals: 1) to hire public employees on the basis of merit rather than political connections, 2) to manage these employees effectively, and 3) to treat equal employees equally.

With the elimination of the Professional and Administrative Career Examination (PACE), entry-level administrators were recruited in three ways. First, job-specific tests were written for certain occupations. Second, government agencies were allowed to appoint people to professional jobs directly, without tests. Third, agencies filled managerial or specialist jobs by internal promotion. New selection procedure became reliant on Individual Achievement Record and the college grade-point average as predictors of job performance (they are moderately effective)

Most government promotions reflect seniority rather than performance.

There is little evidence that either the bonus or merit-pay system has had much effect on agency behavior. Very little money was involved and the pay differential between ordinary and outstanding performers very small.

These difficulties in linking pay to performance are exacerbated by the fact that most employees and managers, though they sometimes approve of merit pay in principle, tend to dislike it in practice.

Public employees want to minimize managerial authority over compensation plans (so they don’t want promotions based on a managerial evaluation of their performance). Many managers also dislike certain aspects of performance-based compensation partly b/c it means making hard to defend distinctions among many people with whom they must continue work. Part of the resistance to merit-pay may also reflect simple inertia.

Costly behavior tends to be rare behavior, and so not many employees are the object of adverse actions. Fewer than two-tenths of 1 percent were fired.

The Navy Demonstration Project at China Lake, where GS categories were grouped into broad pay levels to allow for flexibility in salary, promotion, and reassignment, allowed hiring of the best people but to recruit & keep them paychecks became larger so it was effective (better people were retained) but also expensive.

Bureaucratization versus Professionalization: choice between a bureaucratized and a professionalized service. The former consists of a set of rules that specify who are to be hired, how they are to be managed, and what they are to do; the latter consists of rules that specify who are to be hired but that leave great discretion to the members of the occupation, or to their immediate supervisors, to decide what they are to do and how they are to be managed.

Conclusion: The people who work for government will always want the freedom to do their work without excessive constraints but they will resist efforts to evaluate and reward them on the basis of that work. As the tasks become more complex, workers will want more freedom; as the constraints multiply, they will be less and less trusting of their managers (who are in charge of enforcing the constraints) or of the political process(that has created the constraints). When bureaucrats become defensive about or hostile to the pressures them, politicians and interest groups confuse their defensiveness with timidity and their hostility with subversion, and so are
tempted to engage bureaucrat-bashing: deriding bureaucrats as narrow-minded, self-serving incompetent drudges. Managers are caught in the middle between workers and politicians.'

Chapter 9: Compliance
Managers are supposed to coordinate the work of operators in order to attain organizational goals. For managers to do this properly the goals must be known, the work must contribute to their attainment, and the resources of the managers must sufficient to produce the needed coordination. These conditions rarely are met.
If you believe that all bureaucrats are wholly self-interested individuals desirous only of maximizing their own welfare, much of the work that is done should never happen.
Principal-agent models: addresses the question of how a principal arrange the incentives confronting an agent that the latter does what the former desires.
When employees do not exert themselves to achieve the goals of the organization they are “shirking”. The problem of shirking irises when those actions cannot be observed. The problem of shirking is in principle even greater in a government agency. Not only do many employees work out of sight of their bosses, often they produce nothing that can be measured after the fact.
The difficulties of avoiding shirking in a government agency go well beyond the problems of meeting the prescriptions of the standard principle-agent theory.
Output of an agency may not only be unobservable, it may be unknowable.
Bureaucrats have preferences. Among them is the desire to do the job and nonmaterial rewards. Three kinds of such rewards: 1) a sense of duty and purpose, 2) the status that derives from individual recognition and personal power, and 3) the associational benefits that come from being part of an organization hat is highly regarded by its members or by society at large.
From a managerial point of view, agencies differ in two main respects: 1) can the activities of their operators be observed? And 2) can the results of those activities be observed?
Production organization: both outputs and outcomes can be observed;
Procedural organization: agencies in which outputs but not outcomes can be observed;
Craft organization: agencies in which outcomes but not outputs can be observed;
Coping organization: Agencies in which neither outputs nor outcomes can be observed.
In many government bureaus: Work that produces measurable outcomes tends to drive out work that produces unmeasurable outcomes.
In government agencies, especially those that are procedural or coping organizations, there are powerful pressures to convert equity into equality; that is, to make rewards equally available to all rather than equally available to the -most talented.
Managers in public agencies have only a few incentives with which to induce operators to comply with agency rules, and the use of these incentives is highly constrained.
Conclusion: People matter, but organization matters more, and tasks matter most of all.