

POLI 100B: CONGRESS

CLASS NOTES – 31 January 2008 (5:00 – 6:20PM)

III. Morris Fiorina's "Keystone" Argument – *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*

A. Introduction: Influence of Fiorina's book – Things have changed.

B. Democrats 1946-2006: Seats vs. Votes

1. Note that Total Vote Percentages does not translate *linearly* into House Seats – *Explain the Trend Line*.
2. Note the outlier elections.

C. Republicans 1946-2006: Seats vs. Votes

1. Note steady decline of Republican Nationwide Percentage – 1994 – 2000.
2. Note the outlier elections.

D. Mayhew Graph – 1972

1. Define Marginal District – 50 – 55%
2. Note that *below 50%* are *Republican Incumbents*
3. Bimodal Distribution
4. Safe Seat Democrats

E. Mayhew Graph – 1948

1. Unimodal Distribution (Congress after 1946 big Republican win)
2. Note the *Solid South*

F. Mayhew Graph – 1960

1. Unimodal Distribution (Year Kennedy elected President in very close election)

2. Note the *Solid South*
3. Note the “bunching-up” of the Republicans

G. Presidential Coattails – Popular Democratic President With 10% Coattails

Unimodal Distribution

1. Popular President pulls big majority of his party into the House
2. Importance of *Mandate* – *Coattails register national shifts in opinion!*

H. Presidential Coattails – Popular Democratic President With 10% Coattails

Bimodal Distribution

1. In contrast, with mostly safe Representatives, popular President cannot switch that many seats.
2. *Effect on President’s leverage in Congress!*

I. Mayhew Graph – 1988

1. **Fiorina’s Book came out in 1977!**
2. More recent elections – Still bimodal in 1988

J. Mayhew Graph – 1992

1. Clinton-Bush-Perot Presidential Election
2. *More Marginal Districts BUT* No coattails – Democrats gained only 7 Seats

K. Mayhew Graph – 2000 (needs to be fixed)

1. Bush-Gore Presidential Election
2. Some (very little) bimodality – No coattails – Democrats gain 1 seat!

L. Fraction of Marginal Districts 1946 – 1998

1. Another look at the Issue of the “Vanishing Marginals”

2. Fraction declined 1960 – 1984 – during period that Fiorina wrote about.
3. Fraction turned up after 1984 but **BIG VARIANCE**

M. House Incumbency Advantage

1. Incumbency Advantage clearly increased after 1960 – the culprit that Fiorina fingered for the cause of the “Vanishing Marginals.”
2. Sophomore Surge – Increase in vote percentage from first election to second election (technically, the average).
3. Retirement Slump – Average change of party’s percentage in the district from last election of retiring incumbent to percentage garnered by retiring incumbent’s party’s candidate.
4. The two measures both change sharply after 1960 (graph ends in 1990!).
5. **Jacobson Graph Figure 3.3 – through 2000! Seems to have leveled off around 6%.**
6. **Jacobson Graph Figure 3.4 – House candidates receiving more than 60% of the vote – Incumbents keep trending upward but Open Seat Winners are flat.**

N. Senate Incumbency Advantage

1. Changes are not as dramatic
2. I’m sure if graph was extended there would not be much there
3. Jacobson Graph Figure 3.1 – Success rates of Senate and House incumbents running for reelection! NOTE COX-KATZ – ANTICIPATORY RETIREMENT may be a factor here.

O. Congressional Staff

1. Note huge jump after WWII then leveling off
2. The big rise was just before *Keystone* came out in 1977
3. This can be Hill staff + District Office Staff

P. Committee Staff

- a. Committee staff story the same as overall staff

Q. Pages in the Federal Register

1. Published by General Services Administration. Contains updates of the rules, regulations, and legal notices emanating from the executive branch.
2. *It rose sharply during the period right before Fiorina wrote his book!*

R. Trips Home to the District – Jacobson Table 3.3 – ON YOUR NICKLE!

S. Election Year Congressional Mailings – Jacobson Figure 3.6 – ON YOUR NICKLE!! Note the lack of more recent data!

T. Local/National Components (OFF YEAR) Midterm House Elections –

Coefficients from Regressing the *Current District House Vote* on the past House vote and the past Presidential Vote – $CDHV = b_0 + b_1*PHV + b_2*PPV$

U. Local/National Components (ON YEAR) Presidential Year House Elections

1. Local Component (Casework Style – personal electoral insulation) begins to decline in the 1970s.
2. **EVERYONE USED THE CASEWORK STYLE** by the 1970s –
Flattening out of Staff curves by the late 1970s! **AND MONEY.....**

V. Campaign Expenditures all Congressional Elections – House and Senate, aggregate totals

W. Soft Money in Congressional Elections

IV. Summary: Fiorina's *Keystone* Book and What has Changed since 1977

A. Summary:

1. The Marginal Districts (define) disappeared between 1960 – 1980 – *important for Presidential Coattails!!*
2. 1960 Mayhew Graph – No “Notch”
3. 1972 Mayhew Graph – “Notch” evident
4. Graph from Cox-Katz shows that the trend Fiorina identifies ends just around the time he wrote his book.
5. Fiorina rejected a **Redistricting** explanation (One-Person-One-Vote decisions) **SEE BELOW**
6. Fiorina thought it was **an increase in the Incumbency Advantage – It coincides almost perfectly with the disappearance of the Marginal Districts**
7. Why did the incumbency advantage increase? **THE CASEWORK STYLE** – comment – *old style* but more and more members began using it after 1964.
8. The tremendous growth of the government in the 1960s and 1970s created many more opportunities (Medicare, EPA, OSHA, Medicaid, Social Security, Veterans, etc.) for members to assist their constituents!
9. Things change again – 1980 – 2002. Why?? Everyone now uses the Casework Style (look at recent Houston *Chronicle*) coverage of Representative Jackson-Lee – explicitly criticized her for *not doing enough casework for her constituents!!!!*

10. Fiorina – THE MONEY DID IT!!!

11. Fiorina – Politicians care more about policy now (California quote) –

POLARIZATION

12. Cox and Katz – **The Redistricting Really Did Do it!! (Also, rational expectations – More on this later!)**

IV. The Importance of Redistricting

A. **Hypothetical State to be Redistricted –**

1. Region A: Central City with 1 million people all of whom vote

Democratic

2. Region B: A Suburban Ring of .5 million people all of whom vote

Republican

3. Region C: A Rural area of 1.5 million people all of whom vote Republican

4. **Draw boundaries for 6 Congressional districts which best advantages your political party. Each district must contain exactly 500,000 voters.**

B. **First Republican Plan – Pie Slices – 6 districts 2-1 Republican majorities**

C. **Second Republican Plan – 2 Democratic Districts 100% Democrat;**

4 Republican Districts all 100% Republican.

D. **Democratic Plan – 3 Democratic Districts 2-1 Democrat; 3**

Republican Districts all 100% Republican.