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HOME STYLE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation is a replication study of the pioneering work of Richard F. Fenno's *Home Style*, originally published in 1978. In that study, Fenno observed the behavior of members of the House of Representatives when interacting with constituents in their home districts. This work gave congressional scholars new concepts that have since become part of the discipline's lexicon, including concentric circles of a constituency, constituency careers, and running for Congress by running against Congress.

But few scholars have continued this ethnographic research tradition, what Fenno calls "soaking and poking." It has been nearly 40 years since the publication of *Home Style*, so naturally we might wonder what has changed in that time. If someone traveled with members in their districts today, what differences and what similarities would he find compared to Fenno's study?

The findings presented here are based on time spent with seven sitting members of the House as they traveled about their districts in 2013 and 2014. Some of Fenno's conclusions are remarkably stable over time, particularly the importance of member fit with the district as well as the personal touch that gives each member a unique home

style. But American politics today is characterized by partisanship in a way that it was not in the 1970s, and some, but not all, representatives base their presentational style on partisan expressions meant to foster a bond between constituents and representative. In addition, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 is a particularly polarizing issue, especially for Republican members.

Overall, the research presented here shows the need for additional ethnographic research of members in their districts in order for congressional scholars to better understand how the concepts presented in *Home Style* have evolved since the 1970s.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all those who helped make it possible. If you are reading this, odds are you are one of them ($p < .05$).

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Chapter 1: Home Style in the 21st Century

Introduction

The basic question of this study is about how contemporary members of the House of Representatives present themselves to their constituents. The way that a member presents himself depends on how he perceives his constituency and what he believes that constituency expects from him. This is the central finding in *Home Style* ([1978] 2003b)¹, the groundbreaking work in which congressional scholar Richard Fenno tackles such perceptual questions of representation. Fenno focused on two key questions: what do elected representatives see when they look at a constituency, and what consequences do these perceptions have for their behavior ([1978] 2003b: xxvii)? The goal of the present project is to revisit these questions in a modern context, replicate Fenno's study to the extent possible, and determine what changes, if any, characterize representative-constituent relationships today compared to 40 years ago.

Home Style was published in the same time period as a number of other major works on the American Congress, among those Mayhew's *Congress: The Electoral Connection* ([1974] 2004), which depicts members as "single-minded seekers of re-election." Mayhew's work is based on a period of fieldwork in Washington and focuses on institutional factors such as committee work and a party system that makes it easy for members to claim credit and advertise their Washington activities to their constituencies, all of which helps them secure future electoral victories. There was also John Kingdon's *Congressmen's Voting Decisions* ([1973] 1989), which is somewhat akin to *Home Style*

¹ Of course, Fenno would be the first to point out that his work is heavily influenced by the concept of "presentation of self" proposed by the sociologist Erving Goffman (1959).

in that Kingdon takes seriously the need to immerse oneself in the perspective of the legislator, albeit from the Washington side of things. Indeed, Kingdon dedicates an entire chapter to members' perspectives of their constituencies and how those perceptions influence voting decisions. But Kingdon's work is based on standard interview techniques in Washington offices and so does not include a district-level perspective. Then there was Morris Fiorina's *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment* ([1977] 1989) which demonstrates the importance of constituent service and includes fieldwork in two congressional districts. But Fiorina concludes that the relationship between members, constituents and the federal bureaucracy creates a vicious cycle that leads to insufficient turnover in the ranks of Congress, a deficiency that Fiorina argues has a negative impact on American democracy.

Fenno, by contrast, does not subscribe to this "iron triangle" perspective. Instead, he paints a much more optimistic picture of representative-constituent relations, one that evolves over time and is built on trust.² This view of Congress is, in fact, along the lines of what was envisioned by the Framers of the Constitution: a House of Representatives designed so as to ensure that representatives would not lose touch with their constituents and that members would, by electoral necessity, maintain good relations with their districts (Madison 1788).³ It therefore makes sense that Fenno finds that members spend a great deal of time working to maintain constituent relations. He calls our attention to the amount of effort that members put into these relationships, and if there is one key

² Fenno presents several anecdotes about those who lose or fail to win constituent trust and the consequences of such failure. In one example, a candidate was all but booed off the stage at a debate because of some inarticulate comments ([1978] 2003b: 57). Fenno also describes a pair of members who lost touch with their districts over time and eventually lost their seats ([1978] 2003b: 186-189, 194-197). These stories support the notion that there are institutional mechanisms in place that filter out or remove those representatives who do not connect with their constituencies.

³ Particularly *Federalist* 52 and *Federalist* 57, which most pertain to the House of Representatives.

message behind Fenno's work it is that scholars should critically examine these district-level activities by going to the districts themselves. But there are other contributions from *Home Style* that make it a classic in the literature on Congress.

As Hibbing points out in the foreword to the Longman Classics edition of *Home Style*, *Home Style* introduced concepts that have since become part of the lexicon for congressional scholars such as "soaking and poking," "concentric constituencies," and "constituency careers," (2003: x). Soaking and poking refers to Fenno's methodology of ethnographic research. By venturing to the districts and "looking over the shoulders" of members of Congress, Fenno learned to see constituencies as the members see them. This is the part of representation that cannot be measured by policy congruency and cannot be found in Washington. Fenno found that all members worry about their fit with their districts no matter how many elections they have won in the past or how great their margins. Consequently, members spend a great deal of time and effort presenting themselves to constituents in order to maintain the bonds that provide electoral security.

Another major finding from *Home Style* is that members of Congress see their constituents as parts of different subgroups, which Fenno describes as concentric circles, each one nested inside the next. This model added depth and complexity to the concept of a constituency, which had previously been seen as undifferentiated and relatively homogenous. At the broadest level there is the geographic constituency, which consists of all those people living in the district. Below that is the re-election constituency, which is all of the constituent groups that the member counts on to vote for him in elections. Inside of the re-election constituency is the primary constituency, the group of voters who not only support the member but are willing to work for his re-election by making phone

calls, ringing doorbells and doing other vital and necessary campaign work. The final and smallest circle is the personal constituency, the group of friends, family and confidants whom the member turns to for counsel on the most difficult decisions. According to Fenno, presentations made by the member to these various constituencies do not change in content, but they do vary in terms of importance.

A member has a finite amount of time, especially considering that a significant chunk of that time is spent in Washington. He, therefore, has to use his time wisely. Finding a way to interact with everyone in the geographic constituency would be too time-consuming, if not impossible, so the member focuses on the other subgroups. The re-election constituency is more important than the geographic constituency because it includes those voters that the member expects to vote for him. The re-election constituency must be maintained by paying attention to its key issues and spending time with its members, such as by visiting churches and factories or by marching in parades. One of Fenno's subjects even liked to buy salmon and crackers to share with folks in country stores, saying that anyone who eats salmon and crackers with him will vote for him ([1978] 2003b: 64). These are the kinds of activities that let the member show his supporters that he is still there for them and that he has not forgotten to whom he owes his office.

The primary constituency needs even more attention than the re-election constituency. These are the constituents who are deeply invested in the member's career, so much so that they work to sustain that career every two years at election time. A member might attend conferences or award dinners held by such groups, or the member might invite leaders of the primary constituency to events that he hosts. Above all, the

member cannot let the primary constituency think that they are losing touch. If the member is perceived to be getting 'too big for his britches,' he could lose their support and have a major problem on his hands. Then there is the personal constituency, the only subgroup for which time and attention constraints are not a factor because these are the people that the member chooses to spend time with regardless of the commitments of office, whether it is at dinner, playing cards or some other form of relaxation. This is the group of people that the member can be frank with and ask for advice on the most difficult of political matters.

Fenno also notes that there are two distinct phases of a member's constituency career, expansionist and protectionist. By comparing recently elected members to veterans, Fenno found differences in constituent-relationship strategies that only become apparent over time. When a member is first starting out, even before his first election to Congress, the candidate must seek out supportive constituencies. Without this base of support, the candidate will never make it to Congress. Once elected, new members will continue to seek out new supportive constituencies and try to add them to the re-election or primary constituencies, but only for a short amount of time. Within the first few terms in office the member stops searching for new supporters and enters the protectionist phase of his constituency career. It is at this stage that the member is confident that he has put together a winning coalition for the foreseeable future and focuses on maintaining those relationships instead of seeking additional supporters. Sometimes a member might be forced back into the expansionist phase if the original coalition falls apart, as might happen through a redistricting that removes vital supporters from the district. In such instances the member is forced to find new supporters or risk suffering electoral defeat.

Fenno also found that members run for Congress by running against Congress. In his words, “In explaining what he was doing in Washington, every one of the eighteen House members took the opportunity to picture himself as different from, and better than, most of his fellow members of Congress,” ([1978] 2003b: 164). In short, bashing the rest of Congress is a good strategy for the individual member. This insight still informs our understanding of Congress today, and it helps explain why incumbents continue to win re-election at high rates at the same time that Congress as a whole suffers from very low approval ratings (a.k.a. the Fenno paradox). It is also important to note that Fenno was surprised that members were so willing to disparage Congress when conventional wisdom says that members seek to protect the integrity of the institution.

The sum total of the member’s activities in the district with these various constituencies creates a home style that is a unique combination of the member’s personality and the character of the district itself. These styles can have many different elements, but three particular elements are always found: presentation of qualifications for office; identification with the district (‘I am one of you’); and empathy (‘I see the world as you do and understand your point of view’; Fenno [1978] 2003b: 57-60).

Yet as Hibbing states, despite the widespread praise for *Home Style* few scholars have chosen to emulate Fenno’s methodology (2003: x-xiii). No doubt, part of the reason is the time-intensive and grueling nature of ethnographic research. As Jewell describes it, “Fenno’s research technique for *Home Style* has been criticized because it is difficult to replicate, but there do not appear to be any short cuts available for gaining information and insights into representation in the districts,” (1983: 330).

There are, of course, some notable exceptions such as Lee and Openheimer's *Sizing Up the Senate* (1999), which delves into the inequalities that stem from the fact that all states have two US Senators regardless of differences in population. Their analysis focuses on the unequal allocation of federal dollars per capita, but a large portion of their study is dedicated to Fenno's question of member perception: "How do senators themselves see the expectations the constituents have of them? Do they believe that constituency size affects these expectations?" (Lee and Openheimer 1999: 49). To answer these questions, Lee and Openheimer ask senators about the choices they make in allocating their time, how their particular state compares with those of other senators, and the demands constituents place on them. Lee and Openheimer find that senators from small states make a greater effort to maintain ties with their constituents than senators from large states do because small-state senators *believe* they must do so in order to meet the greater access demands that their constituents place on them. In short, Lee and Oppenheimer show that in sparsely populated states, senators need to think about personal connections to the same extent as Fenno's House members in *Home Style*.

There is also Reeher's *First Person Political* (2006), which truly takes the perceptual question to heart as the author presents the stories and experiences of running for office and serving in state legislatures from the point of view of state representatives and assembly members from New York, Connecticut and Vermont. Reeher explores the world of the legislator and shows that despite negative stereotypes, most of his subjects are good, civic-minded people with a long history of community involvement prior to winning office who do their best in a difficult job. Reeher argues that the decision to run for office is never undertaken lightly, that once elected each member faces many difficult

choices, and that eventually the personal costs of the job force many members to retire after a relatively short amount of service. In sum, Reeher dispels the myth of the corrupt, career-politician by taking the time to talk to actual elected officials.

Another work similar to *Home Style* is Swain's *Black Faces, Black Interests* ([1993] 2006). Swain was a student of Fenno's so it is natural that she would use his soaking and poking methodology in her examination of the representation of black interests in the House. Swain's comprehensive study of various types of black representatives – those in historically black districts, newly created black majority districts, racially heterogeneous districts, white majority districts, and a handful of districts with white representatives but sizeable black populations – concludes that matching skin color of House members and constituents is not as important towards the representation of African American interests as is policy congruency. Instead, Swain concludes that the key is for black voters to be represented by liberal Democrats, whose policies, as a group, tend towards the redistribution of wealth and social welfare.

And, of course, Fenno himself wrote a series of books that continued his ethnographic studies, including ones focusing on Southern House members (2000), African American House members (2003a), US senators (1996), and a career retrospective highlighting various aspects of his district travels over the years (2007). Some of these later works by Fenno will be referenced at length, particularly in chapter 4, as they pertain to this paper.

Despite these contributions there is still a need for additional ethnographic research in the districts. As Fiorina and Rohde write, "For the scope and depth of Fenno's analysis to be expanded the efforts of more analysts clearly will be necessary,"

(1989: 10). Fenno left detailed notes on how he conducts his research ([1978] 2003b: 249-296), which suggests that he intended for others to verify, or at least re-examine and question, his findings. It has been nearly 40 years since the publication of *Home Style*, which means it is time to go out there and do a little “soaking and poking” to see what will be found today.

The present study is both confirmatory and exploratory research. According to Gerring (2001), confirmatory research seeks to prove or disprove some preexisting hypothesis whereas exploratory research is more open-ended and often develops new theories,⁴ and though these methods are ideally used separately, Gerring also notes that in practice there is almost always overlap between the two (239). Additionally, when considered in conjunction with Fenno’s work, this project utilizes what King, Keohane and Verba (2010) call triangulation of data sources, which means to train different data on the same problem, the general idea being the more data the better (122).

My original project goal was to attempt to replicate (or confirm) Fenno’s results using his methods. But not all of Fenno’s findings are confirmed here. For example, I uncovered only limited use of the concentric circles perspective. This is not to say that this key finding from *Home Style* is incorrect or no longer used by members, but merely that the evidence presented here is insufficient to be truly confirmatory. This is likely due to the fact that much of Fenno’s research was conducted during campaign season whereas much of my research was not. The smaller sample size of this project (7) compared to what Fenno had (18) is another possible explanation. To be sure, subjects showed some evidence that they perceive their constituencies in terms of concentric

⁴ In fact, Gerring cites Fenno’s *Home Style* as an exemplar of exploratory research.

circles, but the number of such observations would not have been enough to discern a pattern without already having Fenno's concept as a template.

This project also became exploratory with each new subject, perspective and idea that popped up along the way. I dare say that soaking and poking as a methodology is, by its very nature, exploratory. For example, in chapter 2 I update Fenno's concept of members running for Congress by running against Congress ([1978] 2003b: 162-168) by illustrating a modern spin on that strategy in which the member disparages the opposite party instead of the institution as a whole. Thus, some amount of exploration is inevitable.

In sum, additional research on members in their districts will benefit the discipline, but that requires researchers interested in learning about this setting and willing to spend the time, money and energy to go to the districts. The following is my humble contribution to this field of inquiry.

Project Questions

The most basic question guiding this project is what has changed in the 40 years since *Home Style*? Fenno knew that his work would be a reflection of the times that he witnessed: "[*Home Style*] is about the early to mid-1970s only," ([1978] 2003b: xxix). He goes on to say that national trends of that era probably affected how members related to their constituencies and that, naturally, different behavior might characterize member-constituent interactions in a different period. Because our society is constantly evolving and encountering new political issues it is reasonable to assume that there have been changes in representative-constituent relations.

So what changes might we anticipate? First, the populations of the districts are greater than they were in Fenno's time. More constituents should make it is harder for a representative to form the kind of personal relationships that Fenno describes. How might the modern representative tackle this problem? Second, the issues and the political context of today are different from the 1970s. Since the beginning of the 21st century there have been several major developments that did not exist in the 1970s: the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing war on terrorism; the election of the first black president in American history; a major overhaul of the American healthcare system. But will a modern study find that members of Congress simply have a different set of issues that drive the dialogue between representatives and constituencies compared to the 1970s, or have there been deeper, more fundamental changes?

One such change that might be expected is the intensity of partisanship as compared to 40 years ago. There is very little mention of partisanship in *Home Style*, and, in fact, nowhere in the text do any of Fenno's subjects go out of his way to state his party affiliation to constituents. But in today's highly partisan political atmosphere, it is a good bet that there will be far more evidence of partisanship.

The quality and depth of Fenno's writings also make it possible to make comparisons between some of his subjects and some of those in this study. This will be the focus of chapter 4 where I compare three members who shared the same geographic constituency over time, two others who represent majority-minority districts, and finally two members who, for different reasons, found themselves near the end of their constituency careers at the time of observation. Making such comparisons will illustrate the similarities and differences between today's members and those of yesteryear.

Research Design

This is a qualitative research project. Although qualitative research is, perhaps, endangered in the field of American politics, I believe it still has a place in the discipline. Such studies can move the field in new conceptual directions in ways that will not happen from number-crunching alone. This project, in particular, must be qualitative because the total number of subjects is seven, which is not enough to perform quantitative analysis even if it were so desired. The choice of qualitative analysis is also correct because representation is about connections between members and constituents, and a qualitative approach would obfuscate the human aspect of the job.

Fenno spent seven years collecting data on 18 members from districts all over the United States, and it seems that he made the rules up as he went along. Fortunately for those who would follow in his footsteps he left detailed notes on how to conduct this kind of research. His nearly 50-page appendix to *Home Style* ([1978] 2003b: 249-296) includes everything from his participation request letter to methods of data collection to advice on how to avoid spending the day in your hotel room instead of in the field with the member. Some of his suggestions are less practical or applicable to this project, so I followed his guidelines when it made sense and improvised when necessary. Nevertheless, Fenno's notes were an invaluable resource, especially at the beginning of the project.

In total, the present project includes seven sitting members of the House of Representatives over a one and a half year time period. The first step in each case was gaining access to the member. Sometimes this meant cold-calling, other times it meant calling in a favor or using the name of a mutual friend to open the door. Of these, cold-

calling is the least successful method, but it did produce two excellent subjects who contributed much to this project.

After securing a member's participation, the next task was to schedule one or more visits. These visits varied from one district to another. In the case of the representative whose district is the furthest away this meant coordinating a three day visit during a busy period on the member's district calendar. This is the same way that Fenno scheduled his trips. But several of my subjects represent districts much closer than that, and so I was able to schedule individual dates with them. This allowed for greater freedom in selecting visits than Fenno had.

Once a visit was scheduled, it was simply a matter of showing up and observing. As Fenno writes, "Go where you are driven; take what you are given; and, when in doubt, be quiet," ([1978] 2003b: 264). This is good advice. Often members will fill a silent moment with their thoughts and reflections on whatever event we are headed to or coming from. Events varied from one district to another. Town hall meetings were the most common type with four of the seven subjects attending at least one during my visits, sometimes more. Also common were community roundtables, which are similar to town hall meetings except that they focus on a single topic whereas town halls generally cover many topics of interest to the given constituency. Other events occur in places where you would hardly expect a member of the House to turn up: a high-tech solar panel manufacturing facility, a distillery, a chicken farm. Incidentally, you also wind up at a few rubber-chicken dinners that the members themselves can't wait to leave just as soon as they have put in the requisite amount of face time.

The next matter is data collection, or more specifically, recording observations.

Here, Fenno's notes again provide valuable guidance:

...my technique was to take mental notes, transcribe them briefly when I got the chance during the day, and then to spend two, three, four hours in the evening recording everything I could remember about the day's activities and about the member's comments. I did this in the same notebook. Besides writing the data, I wrote down my reactions to what I had seen and heard, all the additional questions that had come to mind, all the analytical ideas that had occurred to me, illuminating comparisons between members – a running commentary on the data. I reread my notes whenever I got the chance to jog my memory and add items I had forgotten (Fenno [1978] 2003b: 281-2).

The key insight here is to take brief notes on a pad during the day and to spend however much time is necessary that night and on subsequent occasions writing down as much detail as you can remember. But here too there is room for improvement, particularly where modern technology is concerned. Although I did use a pocket-size notebook for on-the-go note-taking, I found it much easier and more efficient to use a laptop for the majority of my nighttime transcription of the day's events. I also added the use of a pocket-size tape-recorder, not to tape my subjects but to dictate notes on the fly, which proved most useful for quick reminders about some bit of information that I wanted to write about later. The tape-recorder also came in handy for dictating notes during long drives home. With all of these tools combined I wound up with pages of type-written notes after each visit. For each subject I kept a separate document that I would add onto after every day in his or her district. In some cases this led to well over 20 pages of single-spaced, type-written notes per member, and in no case less than a dozen pages.

Whenever possible I scheduled follow-up visits so as to observe the member at two different points in time. "The argument here is that drop-in/drop-out observation – however episodic and brief – can provide some diagnostic tracings of political careers

and some suggestions about their distinguishing characteristics,” (Fenno 1996: 72). For four of my subjects this meant two or more visits separated over the course of a few months or even a year or longer. The remaining three subjects were, for various reasons, only available for a single visit, one lasting one day, another lasting two days, and the final one lasting three days. In the end, I wound up with over 100 pages of type-written notes on seven members from 31 days of fieldwork over the course of a year and a half. Follow-up interviews were also scheduled as needed.

As a final methodological note, I would echo Fenno’s sentiments on the importance of professionalism ([1978] 2003b: 260). For this type of research that means presenting oneself as a professional scholar who will not hurt a participant’s career or reputation by publishing damaging material. At the very least that means the use of pseudonyms to protect their identities, but it also means little things like excusing oneself from certain meetings upon the request of the member or his staff and, in general, following any ground rules that they set. The goal is to make sure that the member walks away with a positive experience. Otherwise, the next researcher to come along may find the door slammed in his face, and that will prevent other scholars from conducting this kind of research.

Basis for Selecting Subjects

Although Fenno admits that he did not have a specific set of criteria for choosing his subjects, he does stress the need to balance one’s sample ([1978] 2003b: 253). Despite his effort at balance, a close reading of *Home Style* indicates that his subjects disproportionately come from suburban districts. The rest is a smattering of rural and

urban districts, although Fenno spends more time analyzing the rural members than the urban ones. Similarly, Fenno's sample has a disproportionate number of first term members, six of 18, and 12 of the 18 are members in their first, second or third terms. Fenno does not indicate the Ratio of Democrats to Republicans in his sample, but it can be assumed to be reasonably close to even.

Balance was harder for me to achieve because I only had seven subjects compared to Fenno's 18, but every effort was made. This sample includes four Democrats and three Republicans; three members from cities, one from the suburbs, one from a rural area, and two whose districts include a mix of suburban and rural communities. Tenure in office was also a consideration, with two members in their first terms and one each in his or her third, eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh terms, respectively. Comparing these demographics to those of Fenno's sample, it can be said that the present study pays more attention to urban members and members with a greater amount of seniority.

Although it is tempting to call the seven members presented here "typical," according to Gerring (2007: 97-100) it is more accurate to say that these subjects (or cases) are diverse, because collectively the group represents many different traits found within the population of House members. These subjects also fall into the categories of most-similar and most-different cases. Comparisons of two African American members and two retiring members in chapter 4 are most-similar cases because they are, "two cases that are apparently quite similar, and yet demonstrate surprisingly different outcomes," (Gerring 2007: 131). Likewise, comparisons of three Republican members in chapter 3 and three members who at different times represented the same geographic

constituency in chapter 4 are of the most-different category because despite obvious differences, the subjects in these cases demonstrate remarkably similar behaviors.

A “Representative” Sample

The subjects of this study will be described in detail in the ensuing chapters. However, the reader might benefit from brief descriptions here at the beginning. It should be noted that some of the biographical details of the members and the characteristics of their districts are referenced from *The Almanac of American Politics 2014* by Barone and McCutcheon (2013). However, in the interest of protecting the anonymity of my subjects, no page numbers will be referenced. To do so would make it too easy to determine their identities. Any other identifying information such as the name of the state where a district is located will be omitted, except in one case where excluding certain details about a particular district was unavoidable.

Representative 1 (D) is a freshman member who, at the time that I met him, was still in his first year in the House. Described as a rising star (Barone and McCutcheon 2013) in his state’s political scene, Representative 1 easily won both the Democratic Primary and the general election to replace a retiring member. Over two dozen languages are spoken in this diverse district, yet Representative 1 only speaks English. He pokes fun at this limitation by joking that he is technically bilingual, his two languages being English and a regional dialect named after the city his district is in. This is one of the ways that he communicates to his constituents, ‘I am one of you.’ His district contains large Russian, Chinese and Caribbean populations, but the largest demographic is African American

(Barone and McCutcheon 2013). Representative 1 is black and the heart of his district is a black community that he grew up in and previously represented in the state legislature. This is the part of the district he calls home, where he knows everybody and everybody knows him.

As a new member with a diverse district, Representative 1 engages in classic expansionist behavior in parts of his district where he is not well known. This includes community roundtables in key areas, and visits to schools and senior centers. But even more important than those visits is his annual State of the District Address. This is an event that he carried over from his time in the state legislature, and it attracts upwards of 1,000 constituents. In a small but diverse district this is a smart way for Representative 1 to gather his primary constituents, his strongest supporters, from every corner of the district in one place and recap his accomplishments from the past year. The Address also showcases his talent for public speaking; even in a room with 1,000 constituents he has the ability to make people feel as though he is talking to them one-on-one. This is a surprisingly rare ability amongst elected officials.

Representative 1 tends to define himself in contrast to Republicans and their policies, for example, by calling out the Tea Party faction of the Republican Party for the government shutdown in October 2013 or for cutting funding to the USPS in the lame duck session in 2006 just before the Democrats took control of both houses of Congress. Representative 1 also likes to express his support for President Obama and his policies, a move that always garners applause in this heavily Democratic district.

Representative 2 (D) is a veteran member and a definite policy wonk. Her pet issues include gun control, preserving the American dream of homeownership in her district, and women's issues in general. She is often more comfortable dealing with statistics and policy options than with people, and so she uses these issues as a way to connect with her constituents. In other words, issue advocacy is Representative 2's way of demonstrating her interest in her constituents' interests. As such, Representative 2 relies heavily on events such as a community roundtable on housing or a Women's History Month celebration as a medium in which to interact with constituents.

Out of any member that I traveled with, Representative 2 is the least comfortable in a crowd, particularly in unstructured, non-policy-based events such as a constituent breakfast, a grand opening for a new district office, and in one case even at her own fundraiser. Whereas most elected officials will work the crowd in any of these settings, Representative 2 hardly ever glad-hands the public and in fact often spends her time at these events with a handful of her most trusted associates, her personal constituency, often including other elected officials. These are missed opportunities to mingle with constituents.

Her inclination towards this hands-off style leads Representative 2 to rely heavily on the press. For that reason, a rally against gun violence or her district office grand opening is almost less important than the amount of press coverage these events get. For example, Representative 2 worried that a particular roundtable she held was not worth the effort until she found out about a favorable write-up in a local newspaper.

Part of this is a problem of redistricting. After 2012, Representative 2's district changed and added some unfamiliar territory. Reaching out to these communities is

particularly challenging to her because her policy-heavy style sometimes makes her seem aloof. But in the parts of her district where she is well known she comes off as a much different person. As her comfort level and level of familiarity with her constituents increases she becomes more personable. This helps to explain how she has enjoyed electoral success over a number of decades.

Representative 3 (R) is a soft-spoken man who calls himself an “Eisenhower Republican” and describes his district as educated and largely suburban with some rural parts. He is fiscally conservative but often socially liberal. Representative 3 proudly tells constituents that he has returned \$271,000 of his office's operating budget over the past five years. He knows this does not solve the country's problems, but it is his way of taking budget problems seriously. Representative 3 also likes to tout his bipartisan work and often cites examples of legislation that he co-sponsors with Democrats. In short, Representative 3 is a moderate, and his moderate stances have drawn Tea Party challengers in recent primary elections (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). But he easily won those elections, proving that his moderate style fits well with his district.

Representative 3 held a party leadership position in his state legislature before running for Congress. In defining the difference between himself and his colleagues in the state legislature, Representative 3 says that many of those legislators kept other jobs and treated the legislature as part-time work. He sees his level of commitment as the key to his success in the state legislature and to winning a seat in Congress.

Representative 3 has a set of issues that he likes to talk to constituents about, including foreign policy, economic growth, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care

Act and pancreatic cancer research. But unlike Representative 2, Representative 3 is not a policy wonk and does not use these issues as a medium to connect with constituents. Instead, these are Representative 3's go-to issues, part of his standard stump speech and a reflection of what he believes is of paramount concern to his constituents.

The issues of economic growth and the Affordable Care Act are inexorably linked; when Representative 3 starts talking about one of them he winds up talking about the other. He says that seven in 10 new jobs are created by small businesses, and, therefore, his problem with the Affordable Care Act is that he sees it as a tax that prevents small businesses from growing. As I will explain in chapter 3, this is a major concern for all of my Republican subjects and their constituents in general.

Representative 4 (D) is a very friendly woman, young and unassuming. Her office is small with modest decorations, which matches her unostentatious personality. If you were to pass her on the street you would not guess that she is a member of Congress.

A former member of her state's legislature, Representative 4 won an open seat Democratic Primary in a city and district where winning the Democratic Primary is tantamount to winning the general election. The open seat was created by the surprising retirement of a long-serving incumbent. As will be explained in detail in chapter 4, this changing of the guard symbolizes more than just a change from one generation to another but from one ethnic majority to another in this particular geographic constituency. In short, this district has seen an increase in its Asian population over the past two decades and a relative decline in its Jewish population. After generations in which a candidate

had to be Jewish in order to win this district, Representative 4's election proves that this is no longer the case.

Representative 4 is very good at person-to-person interactions, probably the best I have seen. Some elected officials are clearly introverts trying their best to make their way in an extroverted job. Others come off as trying too hard, but with Representative 4 there is no pretension. She is easy to talk to and conveys the impression that she is happy to see each constituent she meets. I would say that she really knows how to work a crowd, but for her it does not look like work at all. Even in a large crowd it is as if she is talking to each person one-on-one. She is at ease in any setting, a natural, not pushy, not haughty, and with no sense of entitlement. She is calm and interested in showing her constituents that she appreciates their participation at events and their feedback on the issues at hand.

Representative 5 (D) is unique amongst subjects in this study as the only one who did not hold a local or state elected office before becoming a member of Congress (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). He is also the only retiring member in the study. Personality-wise, he is both outgoing and reserved at the same time. Wherever we went he did not want people making a fuss over him or stopping what they were doing, but at the same time he wanted to be approachable to whomever he met. Constituents described him to me as “the best in constituent relations” and “very approachable.” Representative 5 also stresses his background as a scientist to constituents as a way of distinguishing himself from other politicians, and emphasizes the importance of technological advancement and innovation, seeing them as critically important to rebuilding the economy.

Representative 5 announced his retirement two months before he joined this study. Although he might very well have had a case of senioritis by the time I traveled with him, the way he acted, spoke and comported himself were all befitting an incumbent seeking re-election. At every event he was as much in full-constituent-outreach-mode as any of my other subjects. Several constituents thanked him for his years of service and all he has done for them, and some even asked him to reconsider retirement. Conversely, two constituents offered him jobs after he leaves office. One was kidding but the other seemed quite serious.

Why did this man decide to retire? This question will be explored in chapter 4, but part of the answer lies in this comment from Representative 5, “No one in Washington has a can-do spirit anymore and that's the problem.” This frustration with the political climate in Washington coupled with the fact that his party seems destined to remain in the minority for the next several years seem to be a key reasons why this veteran Democrat decided to retire.

Representative 6 (R) is a conscientious man who calls his style of representation “relational politics,” which to him means building personal relationships with individual constituents, groups and other elected officials. His style is all about trust, and to foster this trust, Representative 6 hosts regular breakfasts in which he invites particular constituencies and local elected officials. These are excellent informational sessions, and Representative 6 believes he can get more done in an hour with these people than he could all day working with lobbyists.

A large part of his district is farmland, but manufacturing is also well represented, and the city areas have all different types of industries, making this district quite diverse economically (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). It is also a fairly religious district, as evidenced by prayer before meals at some, but not all, events.

Like most of the other subjects in this study, Representative 6 is a former member of his state legislature. A series of tough elections in that chamber later served him well when a House seat opened up. As a result, he had networks of volunteers, campaign staff and consultants ready to go; he was prepared to run for Congress in a way that he would not have been had it not been for tough state legislative contests.

Representative 6's district includes three counties, two of which he receives strong support from and a third that contains cities full of Democrats who never vote for him no matter what he does. By contrast, Representative 6's strongest support comes from conservative Republicans. When a constituent asked him why I had come to this particular district, Representative 6 answered, "Because he wanted to see a real conservative!" Accordingly, Representative 6 is pro-life, pro-gun and against amnesty in immigration reform. Yet he also has an impressive bipartisan record of compromise. He prides himself on being a subcommittee chairman who knows how to work with Democrats on his committee and in the Senate. This appears to be a rare approach in today's House.

Representative 7 (R) is from a southern, rural district. It is a church-going community where conservative positions are prerequisites for holding office. When asked if any single vote in Congress could sink him, Representative 7 chuckled, "yes, absolutely." A

vote in favor of abortion or gun control could cost him his seat. He also said that a vote against agriculture would be disastrous because of the number of farmers in district, but he, of course, would never take such a vote against the best interest of a large number of his constituents. Representative 7 also adds that he has always maintained the position that abortion is acceptable in the case of incest, rape or to save the life of the mother, demonstrating that even his stance on such a core conservative position as abortion is subject to qualifiers. Barone and McCutcheon (2013) also note that Representative 7 will, on occasion, break with his party on important issues.

Being religious is a prerequisite for being the representative in this district. Anyone who is not religious or is not comfortable demonstrating that religiosity would be at odds with many of the district's constituents. Praying before meals and attending church services are mandatory activities and, indeed, our travels together included an evening church service and prayer before most meals.

This district never fully recovered from the recession that began in 2008. As such, job growth and job retention are of paramount concern to Representative 7 and his constituents. This leads Representative 7 to focus on two major impediments to economic stability, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulation of the coal industry and the healthcare requirements of the Affordable Care Act. As Representative 7 sees it, EPA regulations on coal production and the federally mandated Affordable Care Act both have a negative impact on the economy at a time when the people of his district can least afford it. Accordingly, regulations that prevent the opening of new coal plants or that might force the closure of existing plants are a major concern. Likewise, the

Affordable Care Act is perceived as a disincentive to hiring new employees because of the cost of providing healthcare.

Although this pool of subjects is as diverse as it can be under the circumstances, it must be understood that the findings presented in this paper are about constituent relations with members of the House of Representatives in the early 2010s. Both Gerring (2004: 345) and George and Bennett (2005: 32) warn that when presenting a case study the researcher must be as specific as possible about what the study is broadly applicable to. This is exactly what Fenno does in his introduction to *Home Style* when he writes that “[*Home Style*] is about the early to mid-1970s only,” ([1978] 2003b: xxix). Likewise, this study is about members of the US House of Representatives as they exist in the present day. These subjects can be expected to be reasonably similar to other representatives serving today that I did not meet. It can also be assumed that they are generally similar to other members that served over the past few years and those future members who have not yet won office but will do so in the next few years. These are the boundaries of this study.

Outline of Dissertation

In the following chapters I will present my findings. Chapter 2 is about partisanship as an aspect of modern constituent relations that did not exist in the 1970s. Some of today’s members largely define themselves in contrast to the opposite party. In this type of presentational style, representatives describe how they have won victories over the other party, and explain how the other party is to blame for policy losses or for stifling the member’s good ideas. This updates Fenno’s concept of members running for Congress

by running against Congress ([1978] 2003b: 168). Instead, today's incumbent has the option of running against *the other party* in Congress. Yet not all members choose a partisan persona. Some members cannot use such a style because it is not appropriate in every district. Other members simply do not like to sling mud at the other party even when it is a viable option.

Chapter 3 is about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. Despite the differences in expressions of partisanship amongst my Republican subjects (as will be explained in chapter 2), the Affordable Care Act stands alone as an issue that encourages all Republican members to stand united in one position. These Republican members and their constituents see Obamacare as an economic hindrance that prevents new job creation and may even result in job losses as small businesses look for ways to avoid paying what they see as a new tax. This is a particularly salient concern in communities where the consequences of the economic recession of 2008 are still felt. The call for Obamacare reform, therefore, will likely be a unifying issue for the Republican Party in the 2016 election cycle.

Finally, chapter 4 will present a series of three comparisons between subjects in this study and members previously studied by Fenno and described in his various books. The first set of comparisons features three members from the same geographic constituency, two as described by Fenno and the third as a member of this study. This allows for changes within a single geographic constituency to be traced over the course of more than 40 years. The second comparison is between two African American members from different geographic constituencies but relatively similar circumstances. In this case, surface comparisons give way to differences between the two that reflect the

changing roles of African American members between the 1970s and today. The third comparison is between two retiring members and illustrates the different reasons why an incumbent representative chooses voluntary retirement from the House.

Chapter 2: Partisan Personas of the Modern Representative

Introduction

It has been nearly 40 years since Fenno completed the field work that led him to write *Home Style*. Since then the levels of partisanship that pervade the American political discourse have increased dramatically. The literature generally depicts an all-time low in partisanship in the 1960s and 1970s followed by a steady increase beginning in the 1980s and continuing to the present day. For example, looking at presidential elections, Bartels (2000) argues in favor of the general trend that partisan voting decreased in the 1960s and 1970s but rebounded in the 1980s and 1990s. Bartels also finds some evidence that the increase has carried over into the House.

Writing in the early 1970s, Mayhew says that House party leaders at that time generally took a laissez-faire approach towards the rank-and-file members on most votes: “Party leaders are chosen not to be program salesmen or vote mobilizers, but to be brokers, favor-doers, agenda-setters, and protectors of established institutional routines. Party ‘pressure’ to vote one way or another is minimal,” ([1974] 2004: 100). This hands-off approach is a far cry from what exists today. But Rohde’s (1991) conditional party government theory posits that the low levels of partisanship in Congress in the middle 20th century were to be expected as a consequence of low levels of intra-party policy agreement when the Democratic Party had many Southern conservatives in its conference. Rohde further argues that electoral shifts in the 1950s and 1960s led to changes in House rules during the early 1970s that gave more power to liberal Democrats, particularly by shifting power from committee chairs to subcommittee chairs.

Combined with a mass defection of the Solid South from the Democrats to the Republicans following the Civil Rights Movement, the conditional party government theory also says that an increase in partisan conflict in the House would be expected as the parties grew internally homogenous in the 1970s. Fenno might have seen the very beginning of this trend during the course of his fieldwork, but not the heights of partisanship in Congress in the 1980s, 1990s and into the present. Jacobson (2009) points to the 1998 impeachment of President Bill Clinton as proof of growing polarization in Congress: “The attempt of the Republican Congress to impeach and remove Bill Clinton from the presidency epitomized the sharp partisan divisions that now split the Congress and thus provides an ideal case study of congressional responses to increasingly partisan constituencies,” (255). Jacobson also points to the debate over the Iraq War during the 2006 midterm elections as another example of the increasing partisan rift between congressional Democrats, Republicans, and their respective constituencies (257-8). Others blame much of the current partisan divide in Congress on the Republican Party, arguing that in recent decades Republicans have veered much farther to the right than the Democratic Party has moved to the left (Hacker and Pierson 2006; Mann and Ornstein 2012).

Turning towards partisanship in the electorate, Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina argue that partisan identity is not particularly important to voters compared to the level of constituent service provided by members: “On the matter of party affiliation, constituents evaluate members of their own party more favorably, but the effect of party does not dominate the evaluations constituents form,” and, “Constituent approval has relatively little partisan basis in the United States... In great part, approval of congressmen...stems

from their personal efforts to enhance their visibility and provide services to their constituents,” (1987: 160, 205). Similarly, Wattenberg (1996) presents trends in split-ticket voting and decreasing numbers of Americans who identify with one of the two major parties as evidence that partisanship amongst average Americans did indeed decline in the middle 20th century and remained low through the early 1990s.

But many others counter that partisanship in the electorate has indeed been on the rise for several decades. For example, Zaller (1992) argues that elite opinion leads mass opinion, meaning that when citizens see a constant stream of policy disputes in Congress between conservatives and liberals the American public winds up following the lead of elites and mirrors their partisan positions. Similarly, Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) argue that increased polarization between the two parties in the 1980s made it easy for voters to discern each party’s partisan identity and then choose sides. Likewise, Hetherington (2001) writes, “Consistent with most theories of public opinion, these mass-level changes have resulted from changes in elite behavior. Greater ideological polarization in Congress has clarified public perceptions of party ideology, which has produced a more partisan electorate,” (629). However, Abramowitz (2010) argues that polarization is actually greatest amongst the most active and informed voters, and political elites only become polarized as they respond to the demands of those voters. The well-informed voters then mobilize others at election time and increase the number of polarized voters. One implication of these various perspectives is that voters who shun traditional partisan cleavages might feel especially turned off by partisan politics, and thus may tend to stay away from the polls on Election Day.

Whether or not the story of partisan polarization is simply one of steady decrease in the middle 20th century until the early 1970s and then a story of steady increase thereafter is not universally accepted wisdom. Cox and Poole (2002) argue that from 1877 to 1999, party influence in the House has been much stronger than is commonly believed in the American politics literature. They contend that throughout this period parties have successfully forced rank-and-file members to vote the party-line on the roll call votes of greatest importance to the party. Conversely, Fiorina says that “the evidence for resurgence of party is problematic, at best...widely held beliefs about party resurgence rest more on impression than on systematic analysis,” (2002: 97). Fiorina further argues that the party literature suffers from a lack of conceptual clarity and would benefit from dropping the tripartite view of party in government, party in the electorate and party as organization in favor of a cohesive vision. In an opinion that perhaps encapsulates the problem of partisanship in modern American politics, Poole and Rosenthal write:

...at nearly every level of the political system, American politics has been polarized in ways that do not well represent the interests of middle-of-the-road voters. For better or worse, constituencies are generally fought over by two opposing coalitions, liberal and conservative, each with relatively extreme views. The middle-of-the-road voter is thus not a member of a silent majority desiring some radical social change, but a moderate individual seeking to avoid the wide swings in policy engendered by our political system (1984: 1061).

This sentiment echoes Bafumi and Heron’s (2010) argument that when a seat changes hands from one party to the other a Democrat extremist is simply replaced with a Republican extremist, or vice versa, which means that moderate voters rarely get representatives with moderate views. Fiorina, Abrams and Pope (2010) make nearly the same argument, saying that while political elites in America are deeply divided, average

American citizens are not. From this perspective, the problem is not that most Americans subscribe to one of two extreme political philosophies but that their options on Election Day are limited to two extreme parties.

Partisanship in the Modern Era

The question is, which perspective is right? Examining the actions of members in their districts in modern times might shed some light on this question. Even if there is no single “right” perspective, the following discussion explores these themes of partisanship and the give-and-take that exists between representatives and their constituents.

This chapter focuses on partisanship as expressed by members of Congress, which some argue is pervasive (Eilperin 2006; Draper 2012; but see Mayhew 2005, 2011 for a counterargument⁵). The goal of this chapter is to offer a better understanding of the dynamics of modern representative-constituent relationships with respect to the representatives’ use of partisanship. To put the question simply, do modern representatives routinely bash the opposite party when interacting with constituents? If so, that would be a noticeable difference from Fenno’s original study. In fact, a close reading of *Home Style* shows almost no mention of partisanship at all. As Jacobson notes, “For most members Fenno watched, issues, policy and partisanship were not prominent objects of discussion with constituents and were not used to elicit support,” (2009: 97).

⁵ Mayhew (2011) argues that over time, periods of increased partisanship in government are an aberration, not the norm, and naturally correct themselves. Mayhew (2005) also argues that although we might expect an adversarial relationship between the president and Congress in times of divided party government, in reality that expectation is not borne out by recent American history.

One of the issues that some of Fenno's subjects had to deal with was Watergate, a scandal that if it occurred today would be prime fodder for politicians and late night pundits alike. Although Fenno notes that some of his subjects addressed the topic of Watergate, none of them are reported to have made it a prominent part of their presentations to constituents. In other cases, some of Fenno's subjects talked about defeating a member of the other party to win their seats. But that is as partisan as it gets. Fenno never quotes any member addressing constituents and pinning the problems of government on the other party.

But the nature of the House has changed since Fenno's fieldwork in the 1970s. As described above, Rohde (1991) convincingly argues that changes to House rules in the 1970s combined with increased intra-party homogeneity are the genesis of the partisanship that we see in the House today. Other institutional factors such as majority rule, which eliminates any need for bipartisan compromises, and the size of the chamber, which allows members of one party to easily avoid members of the other party, also help to explain the "distinctively partisan" nature of the House (Baker 2008: 80).

For these reasons, it is reasonable to expect to find the use of partisan rhetoric to be much more prevalent today than it was in the 1970s. If partisanship is out of control then representatives must regularly use such sentiments to "elicit support" from constituents. But in my travels I have seen both abundant partisan criticisms from some members as well as the conspicuous absence of them from others. Partisanship is much more prevalent today than it was in the 1970s, but it is not omnipresent either. It all depends on which member you observe.

Whether or not to attack the other party is a choice about the presentation of self that modern representatives must make and it depends on two factors. The first is whether or not it is contextually appropriate for a particular member to express such sentiments. For example, a Democratic representative from a heavily Democratic district in a metropolitan city can get away with attacking the Republican Party in a way that a Democrat from a moderate suburban district cannot. For these latter members, choosing a partisan persona risks alienating a significant number of voters, and so such a home style cannot be adopted.

If the member is not constrained by the voters in his district then the matter of the member's personal inclination comes into play. This is the second factor. Just because representatives *can* choose a partisan persona does not mean that they *will* do so. Out of the seven subjects in this study, five represent districts where a partisan presentation of self would be contextually appropriate. Out of those five, three have adopted such personas and two have not. The difference is that the latter two members simply do not have a taste for partisan mudslinging. Instead, they downplay the perceived differences between the parties and often do not acknowledge them at all.

As a side note, it is also possible that there are districts where it is inappropriate to adopt a partisan persona but the elected representative chooses to do so anyway. I have not encountered any such member in my travels, possibly due to the small sample size of this project or perhaps because members by and large are cautious and avoid such needlessly risky behavior. It is also possible that members who assume a contextually inappropriate persona do not last long in office and are therefore hard to find.

My analysis begins with those members who choose to criticize and attack members of the other party on a regular basis. These members represent districts that are solidly controlled by one party or the other, Democratic districts in the case of Representative 1 and Representative 2 and Republican in the case of Representative 7 (their numbers indicating who joined the study first, second, third, etc.). My observation of these members leads me to an amended version of Fenno's original insight: in today's political climate some members of Congress run for Congress by running against *the other party* in Congress. Following that is a description of members who cannot use partisan rhetoric because they are constrained by their districts: Republican Representative 3 and Democratic Representative 5. Finally, there are those members that are not constrained yet choose not to adopt a partisan presentational style: Representative 4, whose district is solidly Democratic, and Representative 6, whose district is solidly Republican.

Members Who Embrace Partisanship

Fenno found that members of Congress run for Congress by running against Congress ([1978] 2003b: 168), which means that individual members will disparage the rest of Congress to make themselves look better. But this adage must be updated to reflect partisanship in the modern era. Instead, today's representatives will sometimes run for Congress by running against *the other party* in Congress. The difference is that instead of arguing that other members of Congress are unqualified, the modern representative has the option to argue that members of the other party are openly hostile to the best interests

of the home constituency. From this perspective, it becomes imperative that the district's voters send the incumbent back to Washington to fight against such partisans.

While traveling with Representative 7 through his rural, conservative district in a strongly Republican state, I watched him respond to a question that came up time and again from multiple constituents: why can't Republicans and Democrats in Washington work together like they do in this state? Representative 7's standard response:

Seeking bipartisanship in Washington is an admirable goal but there are deep philosophical differences between Republicans and Democrats in Washington. There are fundamental philosophical differences between Republicans and people like Nancy Pelosi. It's almost impossible to find common ground, middle-of-the-road solutions.

A similar thought came from Representative 2, who represents a district in a solidly Democratic city, at a roundtable discussion on mortgage reform: "We have a huge divide between the Democratic approach and the Republican approach. The Republican approach is a 'jump off the cliff and hope the private sector is there' approach." The words "jump off the cliff" reveal that as far as Representative 2 is concerned the Republican Party's approach is suicide.

The above statements are tantamount to saying that Republicans are from Mars and Democrats are from Venus. These members see fundamental, insurmountable differences between the two parties and not much common ground to build on. If a member believes that his constituents share this perspective then he has every reason to adopt a partisan persona as a key part of his presentation of self. It is a shared perspective that links the representative and the constituency. Accordingly, these members frequently blame the other party for problems in government, including both specific policies as well as general grievances. This section illustrates how partisan

rhetoric is used by those members who choose to make it a part of their home style, Representative 1, Representative 2 and Representative 7:

- Representative 1 is a first term Democrat from a heavily Democratic, urban district. He is African American, a former member of his state's legislature and a community leader even before his time in office. His district is majority black, but it also contains significant numbers of Hispanic, Asian and other ethnic minorities, which helps to explain the overall strong Democratic tendency of the district (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). Therefore, it is not surprising that Representative 1 uses the most partisan rhetoric out of any subject in this study. In this district, attacking the Republican Party is contextually appropriate and easy to do. And it works. Representative 1 never fails to win applause and approval from his constituents for bashing Republicans and their policies.
- Representative 2 is a veteran Democrat with over 10 terms in the House and comes from the same city as Representative 1. Her district, however, is much different from Representative 1's district. It is an affluent district, with the typical resident being wealthy, white and a college graduate. Although such demographics might have been fertile ground for a Republican in generations past, Representative 2's district is solidly Democratic because the social conservatism of the modern Republican Party does not appeal to the district's voters (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). Representative 2 does not rely on partisan rhetoric quite as often as Representative 1 (although she easily could), but when she does use it she successfully portrays the Republican Party as the

source of many problems in our government. That sentiment resonates with her constituents.

- Representative 7 is a Republican from a rural, conservative district in a strongly Republican southern state. On paper his district contains a surprising number of registered Democrats, but many of those voters are what we might call Republicans in Democrats clothing. They register as Democrats because the Democratic Party was the party of the South in the Civil War, but in practice they tend to vote for the most conservative candidate, as evidenced by the district's strong support for John McCain in 2008 and Mitt Romney in 2012 (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). Representative 7's go-to stump speech includes criticisms of President Obama's energy policy and healthcare policy, as well as criticism of then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the way she conducted the Affordable Care Act debate in the House. These criticisms always meet with approval from his constituents.

The underlying assumption made by these representatives is that the constituencies that they present themselves to are receptive to criticisms of the other party. From there, the criticisms can take any number of forms because the variety of situations in which a member might choose to lay blame at the feet of the other party is virtually unlimited. For example, while giving a speech to a local chamber of commerce, Democratic Representative 2 offered this thought on the Republican Party's lack of action on immigration reform:

I tried to pass a bill that would grant American citizenship to 16 immigrants who lost loved ones in the 9/11 attacks, but the Republicans blocked it. If they won't

pass this bill that only applies to 16 people, people directly tied to the losses of 9/11, then I don't know what hope there is of passing major immigration reform!

Sometimes representatives are very specific about who in the other party is causing the nation's problems. In a radio interview in late September 2013, Representative 1 blasted the "Tea Party fringe of the Republican Party" for threatening a government shutdown.⁶ He specifically blamed Senator Ted Cruz, an out spoken Tea Partyist, for waging a personal war against the Affordable Care Act. House Speaker John Boehner is also a favorite target of Representative 1.

For Republican Representative 7, President Obama and Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi are frequent targets for criticism, especially for their roles in passing the Affordable Care Act. Representative 7 blames Pelosi in particular for not allowing any amendments during the floor debate on that bill and he considers this to be one of the most important contributing moments in recent years fostering the overall lack of bipartisanship in the House. But the Affordable Care Act and Republican opposition to it are too broad of a topic to address here. They will be the focus of the next chapter.

Representative 7 is also highly critical of President Obama's energy policy and he calls attention to it whenever he can. In one instance at a town hall meeting an irate constituent unhappy with waste in government spending asked Representative 7, "Why not shut down the EPA?" Representative 7 framed his response in partisan terms saying that the problem with the EPA is that the Obama Administration overzealously sets unreasonably high environmental standards:

The president is trying too hard to make energy reform and clean energy the centerpiece of his platform because he wants to be seen as the world leader on the issue. But the United States does not have to take a backseat to any country in the

⁶ That government shutdown actually came to pass a week later in October, 2013.

world because we are the world leader in clean air and clean water policy and action.

Representative 7 believes that President Obama wants global energy reform to be his legacy and that the president therefore sets draconian environmental standards. This is especially frustrating because coal production is a major industry in Representative 7's district. As Representative 7 travels from town to town he tells people that current EPA regulations prevent the opening of new coal production facilities and future regulations will force the closure of existing plants. He and his constituents agree that it would be devastating to eliminate these jobs at a time when the state's economy is shaky at best. Because there is such agreement between representative and constituency, it makes sense for Representative 7 to call out the Democratic president as the source of the district's problems.

Sometimes partisan criticisms are leveled against the other party in general instead of against a specific member. Perhaps the most generalized criticism of the other party in the course of my field work came at a fundraiser gala where Representative 2 told 150 of her strongest supporters:

At one point I argued on the House floor that Democratic policies work and Republican Party policies don't. I was booed and jeered down by the Republicans. But a think tank came to my defense and did a study that showed, yes, indeed Democratic policies work. That's because Democratic policies put people first.

The implication, of course, is that Republican policies do not put people first. More to the point, this statement has no specific mention of any Republican; it is a condemnation of the party as a whole. The gathering of supporters clapped and cheered, showing their approval for Representative 2's story. Throughout the rest of her speech Representative

2's achievements and failures were framed in the context of a struggle against the Republican Party. Victories were won despite Republican objections. Failures were because Republicans blocked her good ideas in one fashion or another.

Representatives also like to highlight their victories over the other party, lest constituents think they are ineffective. Such victories highlight the importance of returning the incumbent to Washington. In one instance, speaking before an audience of 1,000 constituents at his annual State of the District Address, Representative 1 devoted the vast majority of his hour-long speech to highlighting partisan conflicts that he helped to win. As a prime example, Representative 1 spoke of proudly standing with President Obama and Senate Democrats in defense of the Affordable Care Act. This drew great applause from the audience.

The speech also included a video presentation highlighting Representative 1's first year in Congress with clips from TV interviews, local news stories and speeches given on the floor of the House. Topics included the 2013 federal government shutdown, the Affordable Care Act, gun violence, and aid for victims of 2012's Superstorm Sandy. Every clip followed a certain motif wherein Republicans support a particular policy, Representative 1 takes a stance against that policy, and a short time later the matter is resolved in favor of Representative 1 and the Democrats. For example, Representative 1 was shown arguing on the House floor for federal aid to rebuild homes in the wake of the destruction caused by Superstorm Sandy in October 2012, an issue that affects many of his constituents. The video then states that six hours after Representative 1's comments, House Republicans yielded and allowed the bill to pass. Of course, this video clip, and several others in the presentation, suggests that Representative 1 accomplished this feat

on his own without acknowledging other factors going on behind the scenes. Perhaps some constituents pick up on this subtlety while others believe he won the battle singlehanded. Either way, the message is that Representative 1 wins battles against the Republican Party on behalf of his constituents.

In each of these cases, the constituents whom the representatives present themselves to show their approval for the condemnation of the other party by cheering and applauding. This teaches the representatives that such statements win approval. It also forges a bond between the representative and the constituency; they are united in their mutual disdain for the other party and its policies (for more on the subject, see Bianco 1994; Parker 1989; Lauermann 2014). Such bonds are important if the member intends to hold office for a number of terms. But this style only works if the district's voters hold the other party in such low regard. If they do not, then it is pointless to make such partisan attacks a key component of one's presentational style. The next section examines two members whose districts are much more moderate. For these members, a strong partisan persona is contextually inappropriate.

The Non-Partisans: Type 1

Representative 1, Representative 2 and Representative 7 have presentational styles that rely heavily on attacking the opposite party. This type of style allows the representative to define himself in contrast to the other party. But not all members base so much of their personas on partisan identities. Some hardly mention the other party at all. This section describes two such members, Representative 3 (R) and Representative 5 (D). The lack of partisan rhetoric from these members is a reflection of how these representatives

perceive their districts. They do not see the kind of one-party dominance characteristic of the districts of Representative 1, Representative 2 and Representative 7. Instead, Representative 3 and Representative 5 see much more moderate districts, which give them a disincentive to present themselves as partisans.

Representative 3

I first witnessed a moderate presentational style while traveling with Representative 3, whose district is Republican-leaning, but only modestly so (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). Representative 3 describes himself as a moderately conservative, mainstream, “Eisenhower Republican” who votes with his party most of the time. He perceives his district to be a fairly even mix of Democrats and Republicans, which means it makes sense that he presents himself as much more of a moderate than Representative 1, Representative 2 or Representative 7. As such, bipartisanship is a watchword for Representative 3 in the way he presents himself to his constituents, and for the most part this strategy pays off.

When addressing constituents, Representative 3 likes to highlight his bipartisan efforts in the House by discussing several bills that he co-sponsors with Democrats. He also proudly tells people that he was one of 87 Republicans who voted to reopen the government after the shutdown in October, 2013. When a local print journalist asked his opinion of a Democratic colleague in a neighboring district Representative 3 said, “He and I have different philosophical views but he is a good congressman and I respect him.” When asked about the lack of socialization between members of opposite parties in Washington Representative 3 said that he will have a drink with any of his House

colleagues after work, Democrat or Republican (a sentiment that runs contrary to Eilperin 2006).

Most of the time this style works for Representative 3, but it can result in connection problems with some of his more conservative constituents. For example, at a town hall meeting Representative 3's standard stump speech about overhauling the Affordable Care Act, his committee work and his record of bipartisanship did not impress an audience that turned around and called on Representative 3 to impeach President Obama. Over the course of the next hour, four different individuals and several applauding onlookers passionately called on Representative 3 to support a movement within the House to impeach the president on the grounds that he exceeded his constitutional authority in the realm of foreign policy and with the Affordable Care Act. Representative 3 listened patiently, avoided direct confrontation with anyone, and simply told each person in turn, "I would prefer to see this issue settled by the courts because it is a constitutional issue of separation of powers." This is not what these constituents wanted to hear, and they could easily accuse Representative 3 of avoiding the question. But in this setting, a noncommittal response is the smartest thing that Representative 3 can do. His moderate constituents would be at odds with him if he went on record as supporting impeachment.⁷

This same town hall meeting also featured a contentious debate about the DREAM Act, an immigration reform bill that would offer a path to citizenship for

⁷ Modern representatives must be careful in these types of situations for fear that an audience member might be recording one's comments on any number of small, electronic devices with the intent of posting something damaging on the internet. Such people are referred to as "trackers," and a staff member for one of my subjects explained at length the need to be on the lookout for this type of set up, going so far as to say that trackers have killed town hall meetings. An instance of this phenomenon happened to Senator George Allen of Virginia in 2006. His "macaca" comments, which were caught on video at a public event, are generally believed to have cost him re-election that year.

children not born in America but who have lived here all of their lives. Several people in the audience expressed outrage that such legislation would even be considered. One constituent in particular belabored his point that all illegal immigrants, even children, should be deported forthwith, end of story. He tried three times to pin Representative 3 down and get him to say that he would oppose the DREAM Act. This xenophobic point of view was met with anger from another audience member, a middle school teacher who described immigrant children as the hardest working students he has ever seen. Caught in the middle of this, Representative 3 simply thanked each man for his comments, said that he has not made a decision and that he will continue to weigh the options. With political landmines all around him, treading carefully is Representative 3's best move.

The exchange between these two men illustrates why Representative 3 cannot use a partisan persona even if he wanted to. To do so would alienate the moderate voices in his constituency. Representative 3 must therefore walk the line on issues like the DREAM Act as best he can. He has three options: support a path to citizenship, oppose it, or remain publicly neutral for as long as possible. His best bet is to remain neutral because choosing either of the other positions would offend at least some part of his constituency. Ultimately, if he is forced to vote on this issue he will need to weigh his own opinion of what is the best policy against how much flack he is willing to take from whichever segment of his constituency he might offend in the process. Representative 3's only guarantee in this situation is that no matter what he chooses some of his constituents will not be happy with him.

In short, Representative 3 is a moderate. His style lends itself to a balanced district, though it sometimes leaves him vulnerable to attacks from the rightwing of his

own party. In fact, Representative 3 has been challenged by Tea Party candidates in his last three primary elections (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). But Representative 3 won those elections, proving that his moderate style fits well with his district.

Representative 5

Another member whose presentation of self lacks partisan criticisms is Democratic Representative 5. Though Representative 5 has held his seat for eight terms, his district is not as solidly Democratic as those of Representative 1 and Representative 2. With a population that is nearly 60% white, Representative 5's district does not have as much ethnic diversity as Representative 1's district, nor is it as affluent and over-educated as Representative 2's district (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). Although this district could be considered safe for Democrats, Representative 5's perceptions might be affected by two close elections from the beginning of his political career, both of which he barely won. Redistricting in 2002 gave him a more favorable district, but nonetheless he barely fought off a tough Republican challenger in 2010 when he won by just 7%, a rather narrow margin for an incumbent with more than 10 years on the job (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). Like Representative 3, Representative 5 adopts a moderate persona.

One example of Representative 5's non-partisan persona comes from an occasion on which he addressed an audience of approximately 50 employees at the offices of a light-emitting diode (LED) manufacturing company. When an employee of the company asked about partisanship in Congress, Representative 5 said, "Political debates in Congress are not full of anger. They may be unproductive but they are not uncivil. Partisanship is not as great as it is portrayed." This is a prime example of how

Representative 5 perceives partisanship in the House and how he presents himself to his constituents. He prefers to be seen as a moderate as opposed to a partisan, and so his account of partisanship in Congress is very different from what Representative 1, Representative 2 or Representative 7 would say.

The closest that Representative 5 came to pinning blame on the Republican Party came when we visited a solar panel technology company. The company's CEO, an affable man that Representative 5 has known for years, took the member aside at one point and asked him for the inside scoop on what is going on in Washington.

Representative 5's response:

No one in Washington has a can-do spirit anymore and that's the problem. That's the problem! You look back at the history of this country two centuries ago and anything could be accomplished. Nowadays, people have a 'we can't afford to do that' attitude in Washington. People in Washington act as though the country has no future, and if you act that way long enough eventually you won't have a future.

For Representative 5, it is the lack of action in Washington that frustrates him. While addressing the LED manufacturing company employees, he again lamented the lack of a "can-do" attitude in Washington and added that the 2013 sequester of the federal government was "the stupidest thing we could have done." This could be seen as a partisan criticism if you assume that constituents can read between the lines (and many scholars tell us they cannot: Miller and Stokes 1963; Converse 1964; Kinder 1983; Luskin 1987; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). But whether or not constituents make that connection, Representative 5 certainly did not connect the dots to pin the blame on the Republican Party. Neither when speaking to these employees nor when answering the solar power company's CEO's question did Representative 5 directly condemn the Republican Party. By comparison it is not hard to imagine Representative 1 in the same

situation saying that it is the fault of the Republican Party that nothing gets done, or naming Speaker Boehner or some other prominent Republican as the source of the problem. Likewise, Representative 2 might well have said that the 2013 sequester was a Republican “jump off a cliff” strategy just as she did about the mortgage reform debate. But Representative 5 said nothing of the sort.

Representative 5’s lamentations reflect a man who is frustrated by the system rather than one who is angry with the opposite party: “The problem in Washington right now is we are not doing anything. This Congress is even less productive than the previous one, which was considered one of the least productive Congresses of all time.” His inability to effect change as a member of the House drove him to run for the US Senate in 2013 to fill a vacancy in his state. But Representative 5 did not win that special election, and six months afterwards he announced he would not seek re-election to the House in 2014. More will be said about Representative 5 and his decision to retire in chapter 4. For the record, based on the warmth with which constituents greeted Representative 5 and his obvious devotion to constituent relations, there is no doubt that he would have easily won another term and probably several more had he decided to stay in Congress.

At the time that I traveled with him, Representative 5 had already publically announced his retirement, which means he had eliminated any electoral incentive that in the past might have prevented him from disparaging his Republican colleagues. With no future elections to worry about he was free to say things that he otherwise would not. If he had always secretly wanted to cry foul of the Republican Party and its policies then his last year in office was the time to do so. But that did not happen. Removing the electoral

incentive did not lead Representative 5 to adopt a partisan presentational style. Instead, the conclusion must be that a district full of relatively moderate voters naturally elects a relatively moderate representative, and Representative 5's presentation of self is a reflection of the moderate makeup of his district. A strong partisan probably could not win this district. Future research with Representative 5's successor would be a good way to test this hypothesis.

The Non-Partisans: Type 2

Representative 3 and Representative 5 do not present themselves as strong partisans compared to the presentational styles of Representative 1, Representative 2 and Representative 7. The latter group of members comes from districts where it makes sense for the member to adopt a partisan persona because one party dominates the district. Representative 3 and Representative 5 do not perceive that type of partisan imbalance. It therefore makes sense that they choose a moderate style that does not attack the opposite party because they do not want to alienate independent voters or voters registered with the other party. It is also likely that a moderate district naturally chooses a moderate representative. Explaining the styles of these two groups of representatives is relatively straightforward.

But what about members who have an incentive to choose a partisan presentational style but do not do so? I encountered two such members, Representative 4 (D) and Representative 6 (R), both of whom represent districts where a strong partisan identity would make sense, yet neither chooses that style. Representative 4 is a Democrat from the same city as Representative 1 and Representative 2. All of their districts are

dominated by Democratic voters, which means a strong partisan presentational style makes as much sense for Representative 4 as it does for Representative 1 or Representative 2. Likewise, Representative 6 has as much reason to present himself as a strong Republican partisan as Representative 7 does because both represent conservative districts dominated by Republican voters. But these two members, Representative 4 and Representative 6, choose not to present themselves as partisans simply as a matter of personal preference even though the option to do so is open to them.

Representative 4

When I first met Representative 4 she was in her first term in the House just like Representative 1, both representing heavily Democratic districts in the same city (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). Yet Representative 4 offers no criticisms of her Republican colleagues the way that Representative 1 does. For example, at a re-election kickoff event in March 2014, Representative 4 did not mention the Republican Party at all. Not one word about Republicans. The people at this event were 60 of her strongest supporters, the type of people that Fenno calls the primary constituency. These are the people that Representative 4 relies on to circulate nominating petitions to get her name on the ballot, knock on doors and make phone calls to registered voters on her behalf. This context is similar to Representative 2's fundraiser described above in which that member made sure to highlight the differences between herself and Republicans to her supporters. Likewise, Representative 4's job at the campaign rally was to inspire her supporters to work hard for her re-election. She could have said anything she wanted to do this, so

what she chooses to say reveals what she thinks her constituents want to hear as well as the image that she wants to project.

Representative 4's lack of partisan commentary says that she sees no need to attack the Republican Party. Because she represents a Democratic district in the same city as the districts of Representative 1 and Representative 2, and because constituents in those districts respond well to criticisms of the Republican Party, it is reasonable to assume that Representative 4 could attack Republicans at will and expect to receive cheers and applause from her constituents just as Representative 1 and Representative 2 do. Likewise, the explanation for her lack of partisanship cannot be the same as that for Representative 3 and Representative 5 who do not perceive their districts to be dominated by one party.

Since Representative 4 is not contextually constrained by the makeup of her district her non-partisan approach is by choice. Instead, she chooses a presentational style that leans towards bipartisanship yet in some ways is neither partisan nor bipartisan. She is bipartisan to the extent that she prefers to find common ground solutions to the country's problems, as when she says:

It is important to focus on bipartisan endeavors whenever possible.... Legislation is not created in a vacuum, and it is imperative to approach the other side of the aisle. A bill that I sponsored, which became law last year, that makes the desecration of cemeteries a violation of religious freedom received support from both Republicans and Democrats.

But despite Representative 4's comments on the importance of bipartisanship she does not stress her bipartisan credentials to constituents the way that Representative 3 does. In fact, Representative 4 co-sponsored a bill with Representative 3 in 2013, but Representative 4 never mentioned it to constituents on any occasion that I witnessed. By

comparison, Representative 3 touted that bill and stressed its bipartisan nature to various constituents on several occasions. Perhaps Representative 4 simply needs to learn how to claim credit for her bipartisan credentials. But since she served in her state's legislature prior to being elected to Congress and is, therefore, no political novice, it is unlikely that she does not know how to claim credit when she wants it. Instead, Representative 4 appears to prefer to leave partisan considerations out of the conversation altogether.

In general, Representative 4 is a very positive person. The only time she had anything negative to say about Congress in any fashion was at her re-election kickoff event when she said that she is "standing up to dysfunction" in Congress. This is hardly an indictment of the Republican Party. Rather, it is what Fenno's original study tells us to expect: a member running for Congress by running against Congress ([1978] 2003b: 168). It would seem that 40 years later this is still a viable message for the right incumbent.

Representative 6

The other type 2 moderate in this study is Representative 6, a man who, when asked by a constituent why I had chosen him as a subject, said, "Because he wanted to see a real conservative!" His district is composed of three counties in a northeastern state, two of which give him strong support at the polls. The third is home to a heavily Democratic city in which Representative 6 estimates he gets less than 20% of the vote in any given election. Despite this, his district is safe for a conservative Republican. When asked if one vote in Washington could end his career, Representative 6 said:

Yes! If I voted for gun control, that would do it. People here feel very strongly about their guns. They're also pro-life and against amnesty in immigration

reform. If I voted against those I'd lose. But I believe in these things like the majority of the people here do. If I didn't I wouldn't run. Not here.

In fact, in the 2010 redistricting his state's Republican Party took away some of the electorally secure Representative 6's Republican territory and replaced it with Democratic areas in order to prop up a weaker Republican incumbent in a neighboring district. Representative 6 can absorb that kind of loss, and although he laments losing those voters he is confident in his ability to win future elections in his newly configured district.

With a safe district it would make sense for Representative 6 to adopt a partisan persona and attack Democrats and their policies, but he does not. Instead, he says that Republicans and Democrats can debate the issues and disagree without getting nasty. On one occasion he dismissed a suggestion from a constituent about impeaching President Obama saying that you can disagree with the president's policies without being disrespectful of the man or the institution, or making false accusations that the president was not born in the United States. On another occasion, Representative 6 passed up an opportunity to attack the Democratic Party while speaking before 800 constituents at a furniture manufacturing company's employee luncheon. He kept his remarks brief, thanking the owners for inviting him and praising them for their part in a recent Supreme Court victory over a stipulation in the Affordable Care Act that would have forced the company to provide forms of contraception contrary to the religious beliefs held by the company's owners and many of their employees.⁸ Representative 6 could have

⁸ See Graves 2014 for a full discussion. In short, the company objected to the Affordable Care Act's "contraceptive coverage mandate" that required employers to cover emergency contraception and sterilization procedures. The company's owners successfully argued that this was a violation of their First Amendment right to freedom of religion under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

expounded on the law, criticizing it, President Obama and the Democrats in Congress who passed it just as Representative 7 would surely do, but that is not Representative 6's style.

Representative 6 even makes an effort to reach out to his city-dwelling Democrats even though he sees little hope of winning them over at the polls: "I reach out to everyone, but Democratic loyalists in cities never vote for me in large numbers." By "Democratic loyalists" he means unionists, environmentalists, and pro-choice voters. So why does Representative 6 do this outreach if there is no electoral gain to be had for it? "Because they're my constituents. I'm their representative. It's my job." He sees it as a moral imperative to represent these voters even if they will not vote for him on Election Day (see Miller and Stokes 1963 who make a similar argument).

This effort extends almost to a fault. Representative 6 has reached out to environmentalists who attack him in the local press because of his support for an oil pipeline project proposed to run under his district. He supports the project because the people who live along the proposed path of the pipeline support it. Representative 6 has kept the local environmentalist groups involved in the discussion despite their negative characterizations of him. He takes their meeting requests and even invited them on a fact-finding bus tour of the proposed pipeline route. His bipartisan efforts have been rewarded with continued derision and criticism. One editorial cartoon printed two months after the bus tour depicted Representative 6 clutching fists full of dollars while riding atop an oil pipeline. Nonetheless, he continues to reach out to these constituents.

Representative 6 also prides himself on his bipartisan work as a subcommittee chairman. His subcommittee had an impressive 17 bills signed into law by the end of

October in the 2014 calendar year. When asked about it he said, “There’s no big secret to what I do. You just have to be willing to compromise and put your ego aside a little bit. Some people just can’t do that.” In practical terms, this means listening to suggestions from Senate Democrats and Democrats on his subcommittee to find out what they need to pass a bill. Of course, as a subcommittee chair, Representative 6 has more to gain from bipartisan cooperation than most rank-and-file members do.

Representative 6’s bipartisanship is impressive, especially considering that his district lends itself to a partisan presentational style. If he used partisan rhetoric as part of his home style he would probably benefit from it. He simply chooses not to.

Conclusion

Modern representatives face a choice about whether to present themselves as strong partisans to their constituents. This decision is based on a combination of the partisan makeup of the district as well as the personal inclination of the representative. There are those members whose districts respond well to partisan rhetoric and who choose to make that a part of their presentational style. In this study that includes Representative 1 (D), Representative 2 (D) and Representative 7 (R). They present strong partisan images of themselves to their constituencies by decrying the actions and policies of the opposite party. In doing so, they present themselves as noble pugilists fighting the good fight against an opposition party that does not understand the needs of each member’s home constituency.

Thus, in the right context, partisan criticisms are an easy way to connect with one's constituents. It also has the benefit of making a complex institution easier for the

layman to understand by describing Congress in terms of a simple and familiar narrative: good versus bad, one party versus the other. But when members make such statements they perpetuate the atmosphere of partisanship in American politics.⁹ If partisanship has indeed made modern politics less civil, then each such statement only makes matters worse. Why would members do this?

Perhaps an individual member does not perceive how his or her statements contribute to the larger problem just as an individual SUV owner does not see how his car contributes to environmental pollution. It is also possible that the individual member understands that he is contributing to the problem but feels it necessary to use such rhetoric anyway. That being said, it should not be construed that Representative 1, Representative 2 or Representative 7 present themselves as partisans merely as a cynical calculation meant to score points with constituents. They each appear to have genuine disdain for the opposite party's policies and in some cases for specific individuals in the opposite party. Where that disdain ends and embellishment begins is hard to say, especially since embellishment might increase when constituents' cheers and applause act as a form of positive reinforcement egging the representative on.

But a strong partisan persona is not appropriate in every district. The suburban districts of Representative 3 (R) and Representative 5 (D) do not lend themselves to this type of presentational style. Although both of these districts could be characterized as leaning towards one party or the other, they are not dominated by one party or the other as is the case for the other districts presented in this chapter, nor do their representatives

⁹ Such statements also denigrate the House as an institution. Fenno was surprised when he found that members who run for Congress by running against Congress are so willing to disparage the House, thus violating the assumption that members seek to maintain the reputation of the institution ([1978] 2003b: 167-8). Perhaps it is less surprising today after decades of partisan mudslinging and perpetually abysmal approval ratings for Congress as a whole.

perceive these districts that way. Not surprisingly, Representative 3 and Representative 5 are amongst the members in this study who use the least partisan rhetoric. They are constrained by the perception that the residents of their districts would reject a partisan persona. It also makes sense that moderate districts naturally select moderate representatives. Hardliner partisans would not last long in these districts because they would offend large numbers of voters with strident liberalism or conservatism.

Then there are members such as Representative 4 (D) and Representative 6 (R) who represent constituencies that lean strongly towards one party or the other and therefore partisan attacks would seem to make sense. Yet neither of these representatives takes that tack. Instead, Representative 4 seems to avoid any mentions of partisan divides, and Representative 6 actually reaches out to Democrats and liberals in his district even though he has very little chance of reaping electoral benefits from those efforts. These members are not constrained by their districts but by their own personalities. They simply prefer not to make partisan attacks on the other party.

Consideration should be given to the redistricting processes at work in each of the states that these members represent. Perhaps some of these subjects enjoy safe seats solely through gerrymandering? Amongst this group of legislators, that does not appear to be the case. Representative 1, Representative 2 and Representative 4 all come from a city that is dominated by Democratic voters, and so little can be done through redistricting to alter that fact. Representative 3 and Representative 5 come from a state that employs a bipartisan commission on redistricting that over the last several decades has fostered a mostly equitable split between Democratic and Republican House districts (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). It is a Democratic leaning state, although presently its

congressional delegation is split 50/50. It is also a state that was twice won by President Obama yet it in the same time span has twice elected a Republican governor.

Representative 6's state was controlled by Republicans in 2010, and so congressional districts were carved up to suit the needs of incumbent Republicans, though for Representative 6 that actually meant ceding some Republican voters to another, weaker incumbent in a neighboring district (Barone and McCutcheon 2013). Finally, Representative 7 comes from a state dominated by Republicans. It would be hard to gerrymander this state in a way that does not favor the Republican Party. All of this means that while decisions made in state capitols may sometimes have an effect on the partisan composition of a given district, that does not appear to be the case for these seven subjects. In some cities and in some states the map is going to come out red or blue no matter which way you slice it. In other places gerrymandering may play a larger contributing role in determining what type of partisan presentational style is appropriate.

This chapter has sketched a broad overview of partisan presentational styles by modern members of the House. In the next chapter, a single policy, the Affordable Care Act, will be shown to be a unique issue that cuts across these different styles and encourages all Republicans, though not all Democrats, to adopt the same position despite differences in their partisan personas.

Chapter 3: Republicans and the Affordable Care Act

Introduction

The previous chapter describes differences in partisanship and members' presentational styles in the modern House of Representatives as expressed by this subject group of seven sitting House Members. Chapter 2 also introduces three categories of partisan classification based on two simple questions: does the member's constituency respond positively to partisanship; if yes, does the member choose to use such expressions as part of his or her home style? If the constituency is roughly balanced between Democrats and Republicans, the member is constrained and cannot present himself as a strong partisan for fear of alienating constituencies. If the district favors one party over the other then the member is free to present himself as a partisan by frequently criticizing the other party, but even when free to use that style not all members choose to do so. Some members are simply not comfortable with that kind of presentational style and even pride themselves on their ability to work across the aisle. This chapter will examine a unique issue that cuts across these classifications and encourages, perhaps even forces, all of my Republican subjects to adopt the same position despite their differences in partisan presentation, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, more commonly known and hereafter referred to as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare.

The Affordable Care Act was the culmination of years of debate over healthcare reform in the United States. Healthcare reform was a pivotal issue in the 2008 presidential election with virtually all Democratic and Republican candidates acknowledging the need for it. For decades, deficiencies in the American healthcare

system grew more apparent, foremost among them the fact that many Americans were uninsured and thus medically and financially vulnerable in the event of a sudden illness. There was also the general concern that privatized healthcare means that patients would always come second to profit margins.

Despite these concerns and a number of policy proposals floated in the 1970s, the American healthcare system did not change much from the time of the creation of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965 until the passage of the Affordable Care Act 45 years later, with the exception of Medicare Part D during the George W. Bush Administration. The need for healthcare reform was apparent by the early 1990s. In 1992, President George H.W. Bush proposed the Comprehensive Health Reform Act, and one year later, newly elected President Bill Clinton proposed the American Health Security Act of 1993, which in turn was countered by an alternative from congressional Republicans called the Health Equality and Access Reform Today (HEART) Act. But the Bush plan died when he was defeated by Clinton in 1992, the Clinton plan faced massive opposition from a coalition of insurers, corporations and small business groups and ultimately never came up for a vote, and the HEART Act died in the Senate (Quadango 2014: 37-41).

The need for healthcare reform remained a national issue and grew in intensity, finally becoming a major issue in the 2008 presidential election. Whoever won the presidency would have to deal with the situation, and upon taking office in 2009, President Barak Obama made healthcare reform his top priority. The most liberal members of the Democratic Party, both in Congress and in the American public, preferred a single-payer, government run healthcare option as exists in many industrialized, western countries. Because the Democrats won large majorities on

Obama's coattails in both the House and the Senate in 2008, progressives had good reason to be optimistic of reaching this goal. Unfortunately, the majority in the Senate was not filibuster-proof, which would eventually prove fatal to the single-payer option.

Although members of both parties recognized the need for healthcare reform, Rigby, Clark and Pelika (2014) argue that Democratic ideas dominated both the proposal stage and the final legislation to the virtual exclusion of all Republican input. In fact, one of the Republican subjects in this study, Representative 7, calls the passage of the Affordable Care Act one of the major sources of partisanship in the House today. Before long, congressional Republicans began to withdraw their support and eventually left the Democrats to pass a healthcare reform bill without any Republican votes. Soon the Tea Party formed with opposition to Obamacare as its main rallying point, and Republicans and conservatives in and outside of government have since tried everything they can think of to block or stall implementation of the Affordable Care Act, especially at the state level (McDonough 2014).

But it was intraparty conflict within the Democratic Party, not Republican opposition, which ultimately limited what Democrats would be able to accomplish with healthcare reform (Rigby, Clark and Pelika 2014: 60). White (2011) argues that the healthcare bill had to be watered-down in order to secure the critical votes of moderate Democrats, particularly Blue Dog Democrats who represent borderline districts and states. Beaussier (2012) takes the argument a step further, saying that the Affordable Care Act is actually a centrist compromise and the partisan debate around it was more of a reflection of the acrimony in Congress over legislative rules and procedures than about the policy itself:

In order to pass, the reform had to move to the right, downplaying cost control to secure the support of moderate Democrats and the main stakeholders. In that sense, the bill passed in 2010 is truly moderate and cannot be understood as a government takeover of health care, despite conservatives' rhetoric. It mirrors experiments that have been passed in Massachusetts under a Republican governor and reflects a consistent centrist consensus among Washington elites on a model for reform. But a political climate of harsh partisanship in Congress prevented any public agreement between the two parties. The intensity of this partisanship may have less to do with contempt for the bill than with the new rules of the legislative games (773).¹⁰

The three Republican subjects in this study all expressed opposition to the Affordable Care Act despite their differences in presentational styles. In my field work this stands out as the only issue that encouraged members of one party to take a uniform stance. As described in the previous chapter, these members are:

- Representative 3 (R), who is constrained by a constituency that includes a significant number of Democrats and moderates. He could not adopt a strong partisan identity even if he wanted to.
- Representative 6 (R), who has a solidly Republican district and could present himself as a partisan, but he chooses not to out of personal preference.
- Representative 7 (R), who has a solidly Republican district and is comfortable presenting himself as a partisan. He most commonly does this by criticizing President Barack Obama, Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi, the Affordable Care Act and the Obama Administration's energy policy.

Despite the sharp differences in the amounts of partisan expressions that these members give off to constituents, which the previous chapter argues leads to very distinct

¹⁰ See also Oberlander 2014 who argues that despite making strides in the right direction, the Affordable Care Act is seriously flawed because it relies on market forces just as the American healthcare system always has, which means that profits still come before patients.

presentational styles, each of these representatives made opposition to the Affordable Care Act a part of his presentational style in 2014.

The Affordable Care Act is also the only policy that all three of these Republicans spoke to constituents about during my travels. The only other topic that came up with all of the Republican members is foreign policy, but very generally and not specific to any single foreign policy matter. Collectively, these representatives engaged their constituents in discussions of US policy in Iran, Syria, Russia, China, North Korea, the Ukraine and the Middle East, both in general with respect to Al Qaeda and ISIS in particular. But there was no overarching theme to these discussions other than that these Republicans and many of their constituents think the Obama Administration has mishandled each of these situations in one way or another.

Opposition to the Affordable Care Act is, therefore, unique because it came up so often in my travels with Republican representatives and their constituents. The fact that all three of these Republican had a lot to say about this policy shows that there are some issues that encourage members to stand along party lines despite their differences in partisan presentation. All three of these Republicans criticized the policy for economic reasons and for the way the law was shepherded through Congress by President Obama and then-House Speaker Pelosi. And it is not a one-sided conversation. Multiple constituents questioned each of these Republicans – Representative 3, Representative 6 and Representative 7 – about the Affordable Care Act, either to ask when and if the policy will be repealed or to tell their personal stories of how the policy has hurt them. Indeed, the economic consequences of the policy are especially salient to constituents. Representative 7's district, in particular, includes several small towns that have not fully

recovered from the economic recession that began in 2008. For such constituencies, the health of local small businesses is a source of great concern.

Keep in mind, however, that these Republican representatives are not simply bending to the will of their constituents. They genuinely believe the Affordable Care Act is bad policy. Later in this chapter I will address the question of whether these members are insulated from a national backlash against the healthcare law (i.e. Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina's 1987 "personal vote" argument). For now, suffice it to say that opposition to Obamacare appears to be an instance of complete agreement between these three Republican representatives and their constituents, and it is reasonable to assume that the situation is similar for other Republican House members. As such, it ought to be a unifying issue going into the 2016 presidential election as something that Republicans can agree on and build a national platform around.

Explaining the Democratic Absence

Before proceeding with further analysis of Republican objections it is necessary to explain the lack of commentary on the Affordable Care Act from the four Democratic subjects in this study. Their silence is particularly conspicuous considering that a major reason for unified Republican opposition to the law is the perceived Democratic dominance of how it was crafted (Frakes 2012; Rigby, Clark and Pelika 2014), particularly given the Democrats' ability to set the agenda in 2009 and 2010 (Beaussier 2012 in particular, but also Rohde 1991; Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005).¹¹ In 2010, the Democrats proudly owned the issue of healthcare reform. Less than four years later,

¹¹ See also Halpin and Harbage 2010 who argue that the Democrats might have gotten even more of their agenda into the Affordable Care Act, specifically the individual mandate, if not for institutional barriers in the US Senate.

these Democratic subjects said almost nothing about it. Three of the four – Representative 1, Representative 2 and Representative 4 – mentioned the healthcare law only once while the fourth Democrat, Representative 5, did not mention it in any way, shape or form.

Representative 1 briefly touched on the Affordable Care Act at his 2014 State of the District Address as an example of how he stands with President Obama on issues important to his district. Although his constituents cheered at this, Representative 1 was not, in fact, a member of Congress when the bill was passed, and therefore this comment can be interpreted as an attempt to gain easy applause in a heavily Democratic district. Representative 1 is also African American, as is his district majority black, so it makes sense that he would accentuate anything that he does to support President Obama.

Representative 2 only mentioned the Affordable Care Act once while accepting the 2014 endorsement of a local gay and lesbian Democratic organization. In this case, Representative 2 used the healthcare law to take a potshot at the Republican Party quipping, “[Last week] the Republicans tried to repeal the Affordable Care Act for the 100th time!” This was an exaggeration as the actual number of House votes for repeal under Republican leadership at that time was 45 (McDonough 2014), but what Representative 2 was really trying to do was drive home the idea that House Republicans “block a lot of legislation.” It is also worth mentioning that this joke garnered much laughter from the crowd, one of the few times that Representative 2 managed such a feat during my time with her.

Representative 1 and Representative 2 made these mentions of the Affordable Care Act to illustrate to constituents that they share a common perspective of whom they

support (President Obama) and whom they oppose (the Republican Party). It is a way for a representative to say to constituents, ‘you and I see things the same way.’ These comments were not, however, part of a serious dialogue with constituents about the Affordable Care Act. In fact, in all of my travels only once did a constituent ask one of these Democratic subjects about the healthcare law. That happened to Representative 4 at a Congress on Your Corner event at a local library. In this case, a small business owner argued that the Affordable Care Act adds a burdensome expense that hurts his business, which is actually the primary Republican argument against the healthcare law. In response, Representative 4 explained the problem with the old system before the Affordable Care Act existed:

The government winds up paying for people who go to the emergency rooms for routine medical care, which is what Obamacare is meant to address. Either way, the taxpayer winds up paying for the healthcare of poor Americans who do not have health insurance. There will be short-term economic consequences with the new healthcare law, but I believe that in the long run it will be a major improvement for people and for the economy.

Representative 4’s explanation is as good an argument in favor of the Affordable Care Act as a Democrat can offer, but the constituent was not swayed. The two of them cordially went back and forth over it for a while before finally agreeing to disagree. In any case, this remains the only substantive commentary on the healthcare law that I heard in a combined two dozen public events with these four Democratic subjects.

Why so little commentary? This is the policy that Democrats fought long and hard for throughout the 2008 presidential campaign and the first two years of the Obama Administration. You would think it would come up more often. One answer is that the fight for Obamacare was so controversial within the Democratic Party (Jacobs and

Skocpol 2010; Bradley and Chen 2014; Cook 2013; Kriner and Reeves 2014; Sonfield and Pollack 2013) that battle-scarred Democratic representatives simply do not want to talk to constituents about it if they do not have to because it risks igniting old debates, as happened to Representative 4. As Halpin and Harbage write, “Unlike the Republicans, who remained unified in their opposition, the Democrats split. Ideological divisions between progressive and more moderate Democrats made progress in Congress difficult, despite majority-party status,” (201: 1121). Therefore, unless a Democratic representative is sure that he is in a crowd that wholeheartedly approves of the Affordable Care Act, the prudent choice might simply be to let sleeping dogs lie and not say anything about it. Another possible explanation is that by the time this study began in 2013 the Democrats had already declared victory on healthcare reform and it was no longer a pressing issue that needed to be discussed at every town hall meeting.

Regardless of the explanation, this may all change in the coming years if the Republican Party maintains control of both houses of Congress and wins the presidency in 2016. If that happens, the country will be thrown back into a national debate on the future of healthcare, and Democrats will not be able to sit on the sidelines. But for now, it is only the Republican representatives that have an incentive to talk about the Affordable Care Act. Their battle against Obamacare has only just begun.

Differences in Economic Philosophy

The most common complaint that the Republican members had with the Affordable Care Act is that it is bad for small businesses and therefore bad policy at a time when the American economy continues to stumble. All three of these subjects share this

perspective despite their differences in partisan presentational style, and their commentary on the subject is amazingly similar from one member to the next. The first subject is Representative 3, the man who cannot use partisanship as a part of his presentation of self because his constituency is not dominantly Republican. As he sees it, “The economy is the principal issue on the minds of the American people. No doubt about it.” And when Representative 3 talks about the economy he speaks in terms of small businesses and their needs. Addressing constituents at a town hall meeting, he said:

Small businesses need to be allowed to grow and I don’t think that the Affordable Care Act allows them to. I oppose taxes that make it hard for small businesses to grow. I’d like to see more money stay with the taxpayer, at least as far as it can help small businesses and the economy in general.

First, it is important to note that Representative 3 calls the Affordable Care Act a tax, as did all three Republican subjects. Second, linking the Affordable Care Act to the economy is second-nature to Representative 3. This was part of his go-to speech that I observed him use on three occasions, once while addressing a veteran’s group, another time during an interview with a local newspaper reporter, and finally at the town hall meeting mentioned above. At each of these events, Representative 3’s aim was to explain to constituents what issues he perceives to be important to his district and ultimately what he stands for. Highlighting the negative economic impact of the Affordable Care Act was always at the top of a short list. For example, on several occasions he told constituents some version of the following:

The Congressional Budget Office says that 2.3 million equivalent jobs in terms of hours lost will be lost over the next 10 years as a result of the Affordable Care Act. Seven in 10 new jobs in America are created by small businesses, which means that the Affordable Care Act is bad for small businesses. It creates a disincentive to hire new employees because they need to pay more for health coverage for those employees.

The other Republican subjects in this study agree that the Affordable Care Act hinders job growth. Representative 6, the man who avoids a strong partisan presentational style due to personal preference, argues that the Affordable Care Act “takes away full-time jobs and creates an incentive for the employer to hire part-time workers who do not need to be covered. Or when you add the healthcare costs to a small business’ expenses they stop hiring new workers altogether.” Representative 6 expounded on this idea at a meet-and-greet with Hispanic Republicans in a dominantly Democratic county, arguing, just as Representative 3 does, that the Affordable Care Act is essentially a tax:

We [the United States] have the highest corporate tax rate in the world – 35%. And Obamacare added new taxes. And [this state] has the highest corporate tax rate out of the 50 states, so if you’re a business in [this state] you’re paying the highest tax rate in the world!

This statement was met with great applause from the crowd, which shows the level of agreement between Representative 6 and his constituents on this issue.

In another instance while on a tour bus winding its way through his district, Representative 6 spoke of a meeting he had just days before with a group of small business owners who are members of the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB), a conservative lobbying organization that caters to small businesses. “The NFIB meeting was mostly about Obamacare and how these businesses, very small businesses, can’t afford it.” He continued:

The meeting was held in a sawmill and sawdust blew on everyone every time the wind kicked up. They had a general mood of frustration, not just about healthcare but about everything. They see America going in the wrong direction both here and overseas. They feel as though there is nothing they can do about it. And nothing *can* be done until January 2017 at the earliest because it would take

[Republican] control of both houses of Congress plus the presidency to overturn the Affordable Care Act.

From this comment we see that the healthcare law and its consequences are but one aspect of a larger problem that Representative 6's constituents have with the federal government under President Obama. It is a large part of the conversation, but there is more bothering these constituents than just Obamacare. Perhaps because the healthcare law bears the president's name it has become a symbolic lightning rod that draws more than its fair share of criticism. But if these constituents have a "general mood of frustration...about everything" and they believe that "America is going in the wrong direction both here and overseas," that speaks to a larger disconnect than healthcare policy alone. These constituents might not be happy until such time as they once again have a Republican president. But such speculation is beyond the scope of this study.

Talk about the poor state of the economy was perhaps most prevalent during my time with Representative 7, the Republican for whom strong criticism of Democrats is a basic part of his presentational style. Typical comments from Representative 7 include, "Obama has created uncertainty in the economy with the Affordable Care Act and his energy policy," and, "People are frustrated that the economy is still so sluggish." Of this latter comment, everywhere Representative 7 went constituents agreed.

As we traveled through the eastern part of his large, rural district, Representative 7 listened to his constituents' concerns about the economy, offering his perspectives and taking note of what people said to him. For example, at lunch with the leaders of a local chamber of commerce, Representative 7 asked the chamber members to gauge the general mood of their town. Are people optimistic? Are they depressed? The head of

the chamber answered that people are not quite depressed but they are very cautious where the economy is concerned. Another man chimed in, saying that people spend their money on the bare necessities because the last few years have taught them not to spend frivolously. These are real, valid concerns, and they lead Republican representatives to see Obamacare first and foremost as an economic deterrent.

Representative 7's district is home to many jobs in the coal industry, and so he always mentions energy policy along with the Affordable Care Act as the two most prominent sources of economic insecurity facing his constituency. Representative 7 sees these two policies as the cornerstones of the Obama presidency, and as such a certain ring of frustration often enters his voice when he talks about the president's unwavering support for these policies. On several occasions, Representative 7 told constituents some version of the following:

The Obama Administration came into office with two primary goals. One was healthcare reform and the other was energy policy reform. Both are a hindrance to economic growth, and it's a bad time to stifle economic growth considering that we are coming out of a recession. Many people would say that we are not fully out of that recession.

Representative 7 said these words almost verbatim at three different town hall meetings as well as in a pair of TV and radio interviews (mass broadcasts) and at a fundraiser with a small group of close supporters. Because he uses the same message in different settings with different types of constituents (in these cases, re-election, geographic and primary constituencies, respectively) it is safe to say that opposition to the Affordable Care Act is something Representative 7 truly believes in. If, instead, he were merely pandering to each given audience, he might be expected to tailor his message from one group of constituents to the next, but I observed no such variation. Moreover, Representative 7 is

a 20-year veteran of the House who has earned the trust of his constituency. Though he is a soft-spoken man, every constituent group that I observed him interact with demonstrated warmth and respect towards Representative 7. In other words, he does not *need* to pander to constituents by decrying the Affordable Care Act, so the fact that he makes this a major part of his presentational style in 2014 says that this is an important issue to him. It is also clearly an important issue to his constituents. Constant worry over the state of the economy seemed to be everywhere and in every community in his district. It is a problem that Representative 7 cannot ignore, especially when so many constituents are telling him the same thing.

Each of these three Republican representatives – Representative 3, Representative 6, and Representative 7 – believes that the Affordable Care Act is a detriment to job growth in an already beleaguered economy. They all view the healthcare law as a thinly veiled tax that creates a disincentive for small business owners to hire new employees in order to avoid paying additional healthcare costs. The constituents that these Republican representatives see around their districts echo this belief with stories from their own lives. When the topic of the Affordable Care Act comes up at a town hall meeting it is common for several constituents to chime in all at once, sometimes even shouting over each other and their representative, about how the law has negatively affected them. Some of these constituent anecdotes fail to draw a direct line from Obamacare to the economic problems they suffer from, but constituents at town hall meetings, unlike political scientists, do not need to show a causal relationship between X and Y. It is enough that they *believe* that the healthcare law has taken away jobs and hurts their local economies (Lauermann 2014: 37-8). These constituents believe it to be so, and so they act on that

belief in the form of vocal opposition to the Affordable Care Act. When Republican representatives hear such stories that comport with their own perceptions of the impact of the healthcare law, what logical conclusion could they draw other than to continue opposing the Affordable Care Act?

Problems with the Process

Of course, the economic complaint was not the only issue. The other major problem that these Republican subjects have with the Affordable Care Act is the way in which Democratic leaders shepherded the bill through Congress. Democratic dominance of the process has left House Republicans with a bad taste in their mouths and has increased partisan tensions. For example, when discussing the process with constituents, Representative 7 says that he is dismayed that no amendments were allowed to the healthcare bill, calling it, “a complete disregard for the legislative process,” and saying that it reflects poorly on President Obama and Speaker Pelosi.

Similarly, Representative 3 commented at several public events that after the initial passage of the bill, the president acted unilaterally to alter the Affordable Care Act by granting exemptions and extensions without consulting Congress.¹² He argues that, in doing so, President Obama claimed powers not designated to the executive in the Constitution and thereby infringed upon the authority granted to Congress. This is the closest that Representative 3 came to making a truly partisan statement in my travels with him. When asked by constituents if such actions were grounds for impeachment,

¹² Dolgin and Dietrich (2011: 75-76) argue that this was actually an attempted concession on President Obama’s part after numerous court challenges and threats from Republican controlled states to not fund the provisions of the Affordable Care Act, as well as a reaction to the Republican takeover of the House in the 2010 midterm elections.

Representative 3 said only that as a constitutional matter he would prefer to see it handled by the courts. This answer was meant to sidestep a nasty debate with a handful of activists who are dead-set on impeachment. It is an extreme position that Representative 3 does not see from his overall constituency, and so it is a debate that he cannot win and therefore avoids.

When expounding on the Affordable Care Act, Representative 7 refers to the law as a major source of partisanship in the House, saying that the lack of an amendment process hurt a lot of feelings on the Republican side of the aisle. This is a sentiment that he shared during a quiet moment in a hotel lobby and later with constituents at two town hall meetings, which suggests that it is something he truly believes and not mere rhetoric. There have, of course, been other divisive issues in the modern era (the 2003 Iraq War, for example), but from Representative 7's perspective the debate over the Affordable Care Act is a major contributing factor to the frosty relationship between Congressional Republicans and Democrats. Because it happened so recently it is likely a salient issue in the minds of Republican members, especially those who first arrived in the House in the 2010 Republican landslide.

Representative 6 did not have much to say about President Obama or Speaker Pelosi and their roles in the passage of the Affordable Care Act, which fits with his chosen nonpartisan presentational style. But at lunch with a handful of close constituents he commented that if the Republican Party could win the Senate in the upcoming 2014 elections then both houses could pass a bill to repeal Obamacare: "We wouldn't have enough votes to override a presidential veto, but at least then the president would have to go on record with a veto of the bill." When asked how forcing President Obama to veto a

repeal bill would help the Republican Party, Representative 6 said that it would show the country the stark difference between the Affordable Care Act's top-down, government-run takeover of the healthcare system and a free-market, Republican alternative.¹³

Constituents, for their part, do not seem upset over the process. They only speak of the consequences and the impacts that they perceive the Affordable Care Act to have on their lives. This makes sense since the actions of House Democrats and the president described by Representative 3 and Representative 7 approach a level of 'inside baseball' that the average person does not know about and probably does not care about.

Logically, constituents would not be angered by the lack of amendments except to the extent that their representative explains to them what the lack of amendments means, as Representative 7 did on a couple of occasions. Therefore, objections over the way in which the Affordable Care Act was passed are really just from the members themselves as opposed to the economic aspect, which is objectionable to representatives and constituents alike. As for the impact that the process had on the members, it certainly seems to have increased the level of partisan animosity in the House just as Representative 7 suggests.

Personal Votes?

This analysis might lead one to wonder if these three Republican representatives are bending to the will of their constituents, opposing the Affordable Care Act because of the

¹³ Challenges to the claim that the Affordable Care Act is a government takeover of healthcare include Jacobs and Skocpol (2010) and Beaussier (2012) who point out that the federal law is similar to Massachusetts' state healthcare law signed into law by Republican Governor Mitt Romney in 2006. Quadango (2014) notes that the Nixon Administration first introduced the idea of employer mandates in the 1970s and that Congressional Republicans introduced the individual mandate in 1993 as an alternative to President Clinton's Health Security Act. Meanwhile, White (2011) argues that the Affordable Care Act is a watered-down, centrist bill crafted to secure the votes of moderate Democrats in both the House and Senate.

strong economic objections from Republican voters in their districts and nationwide. In short, do these Republican representatives oppose Obamacare because they feel they have no choice? The work of Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina says that modern representatives should not be so vulnerable to national trends: “Representatives elected with a substantial personal vote are better suited to survive the ebbs and flows of electoral tides set in motion by reactions to national conditions and national party leaders,” (1987: 197). Previously, citizens’ vote choice was believed to be largely based on party affiliation for one reason or another, as in the sociological model (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet [1948] 1968; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954) or the Michigan school (Campbell et al [1960] 1976; Miller and Stokes 1963; Converse 1964). But the Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina argument is that a smart incumbent can weather any storm, regardless of party affiliation, with the use of strong constituent services, which minimizes the effect of voter backlash against the national party. The question here is whether these three Republican subjects are trying to “survive the ebbs and flows” of a backlash against the Affordable Care Act.

The answer is no. The key difference from the personal vote argument is that these Republican subjects do not need to insulate themselves from the issue at hand. These men genuinely dislike the Affordable Care Act on principle, just as their constituents do. In fact, in all of my travels, dissatisfaction over the healthcare law was the only matter of agreement shared by all of these Republican representatives and the vast majority of their constituents, and the level of agreement was strong indeed. That being said, if one of these Republican members wanted to support the Affordable Care Act it is possible that he might survive the political fallout thanks to his personal brand.

It is hard to say and impossible to know. Representative 3, the member whose district includes a large number of Democrats and independents, would be the one most likely to be able to weather the ensuing electoral backlash from Republican constituents. But, again, there is no hint that any of these three Republican members *want* to support the Affordable Care Act in any way.

Moving Forward

Ultimately the question is what these Republican representatives would like to do about the Affordable Care Act. According to Representative 7 there are three options: 1) repeal Obamacare and do not replace it with a new healthcare law, essentially bringing the American healthcare system back to the way it was before 2010; 2) repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act with a new healthcare law, one which would stress free market solutions over government intervention; or 3) attempt to amend Obamacare to make it more palatable to conservative Representatives and their voters.

Unfortunately for Republican representatives, all of these options are far from ideal. The repeal options would require the president's acquiescence, and it is unlikely that President Obama would eliminate his eponymous, signature piece of legislation. In addition, the repeal-only option would leave millions of Americans uninsured as they were before healthcare reform, which might anger affected constituents and cost Republicans in future elections. The third option, amending the Affordable Care Act, would only be viable if the proposed changes garnered bipartisan support. That might be tricky with some Republicans dead-set on repeal and Senate Democrats holding the trump card of a filibuster. This option would also require President Obama's signature,

and since the president has thus far chosen to fix problems with the Affordable Care Act with Executive Orders it is likely that is how he will proceed for the remainder of his presidency instead of opening up negotiations with Congress, barring some extraordinary circumstance.

Looking a little further down the road, a Republican presidential victory in 2016 might lead to repeal and replacement or to other measures meant to declaw the healthcare law such as reduced funding for its provisions, reduced financing requirements, reduced coverage, and loosening of benefit requirements for employers (Oberlander 2014: 439). Yet even with a Republican president, a second round of healthcare reform might be as lengthy and contentious as the first round was (Ario and Jacobs 2012). Representative 6 is keenly aware of that fact and views repealing Obamacare as a long-term process. In October 2014, just a week before the midterm elections and with Republicans poised to gain a majority in the Senate for the first time in eight years, Representative 6 stressed the need to offer realistic expectations to constituents clamoring for reform. At lunch amongst a handful of political allies, Representative 6 criticized Republican Senator Ted Cruz and the Tea Party wing of the Republican Party for claiming that repealing the Affordable Care Act would be as simple as winning the Senate:

It's a process of winning both houses and then winning the presidency in 2016. Then we can repeal the Affordable Care Act in 2017. But we need to educate voters that it is a two-step process and not have these false expectations that will quickly be dashed when we [Republicans] cannot repeal the healthcare law next year.

The Republicans did indeed win the Senate in 2014, and, as Representative 6 suggested, House Republicans moved quickly to pass a repeal and replace bill that would force a presidential veto. In February 2015, the House passed H.R. 596, which would repeal the

Affordable Care Act in its entirety. All three of the Republicans described in this chapter voted for the bill, as did most of their Republican House colleagues. In fact, the vote was almost completely along party lines.¹⁴ But the bill did not move in the Senate despite the newly elected Republican majority in that chamber. As Representative 6 might say, it is an ongoing process.

Although H.R. 596 wound up being a one-house bill, its content tells us what Republicans want. Most notably, Section 3 of the bill outlines a set of conservative principles that might be used to create a new healthcare reform bill. The very first principle out of a dozen listed is to “foster economic growth and private sector job creation,” which is clearly a nod to the economic concerns that are so prevalent in the three Republican districts in this study. Other principles in the bill include eliminating wasteful spending in healthcare, prohibitions on abortions and the goal of limiting the expansion of entitlement programs, a reference to the Republicans perspective that the Affordable Care Act is a “government takeover” of healthcare.

Yet H.R. 596 does not explicate how these principles would be codified into law other than to say the various committees of jurisdiction in the House would be charged with producing bills to mete these principles. Combined with the lack of movement in the Senate, H.R. 596 appears to be little more than a symbolic gesture (Mayhew [1974] 2004). Accordingly, any true hope of altering or eliminating the Affordable Care Act will require a Republican president and/or a major change of tactics on the part of Republican legislators. In short, they will likely need to make compromises.

¹⁴ Out of 245 Republicans, 239 voted in favor of H.R. 596 along with three no’s and three abstentions. No Democrats voted in favor of the bill; 183 Democrats voted against it and three abstained. If this is the beginning of a second round of debate on healthcare reform, this vote indicates that it will fall along partisan lines just as it did in the previous round.

Conclusion

The Affordable Care Act is the closest thing to a unifying policy that I encountered in my travels, but only in terms of Republican opposition to the law. All three Republican subjects, Representative 3, Representative 6 and Representative 7, and a great many of their constituents, expressed their opposition and sometimes outright disdain for the new healthcare law. The majority of these complaints fall into two categories: differences in economic philosophy and complaints about the way healthcare reform happened.

Republicans believe that the Affordable Care Act creates a disincentive for small businesses to hire new employees because employers do not want to pay healthcare costs as required under the new law. All three Republican representatives are firm in this belief, and their constituents echo these concerns. Some of these constituencies have not recovered from the economic crisis that began in 2008. Consequently, job growth is of paramount concern for their Republican representatives. From their perspective, anything that helps to create or maintain jobs is good and anything that stifles job growth is bad. Under this outlook, the Affordable Care Act is decidedly bad.

The other major problem that these Republican representatives have with the Affordable Care Act is the way it was ushered through the House by President Obama and Speaker Pelosi. Representative 3 complained that President Obama unilaterally granted extensions and exemptions to the Affordable Care Act through Executive Orders as opposed to consulting Congress, and Representative 7 called Speaker Pelosi's refusal to allow amendments to the Affordable Care Act "a complete disregard for the legislative process." These complaints are about the Democratic leadership more than they are

about the Affordable Care Act itself. In this respect the healthcare law has increased the levels of partisanship that pervade the modern House.

The economic objections are part of a difference of philosophies about what is best for the American people whereas the complaints about President Obama and Speaker Pelosi are about the process. The philosophical differences are the source of partisanship; they are part of a deep divide that separates conservative members from liberal members. The complaints about the process are the manifestation of partisanship, specifically about how Democrats treated Republicans during the healthcare debate. Fundamentally, Republicans and Democrats have different ideas and beliefs about healthcare and economic policies, but the Democrats were in power with majorities just large enough to pass the Affordable Care Act in 2010 without help from Republicans (Cox and McCubbins 1993; Frakes 2012; Rigby, Clark and Pelika 2014). As a result, Republicans are naturally unhappy with the resulting policy and the process that led to it.

For these reasons, these Republicans are eager to repeal and replace Obamacare. But the prospects for doing so are not good at present, primarily because President Obama can veto any repeal bill that comes to his desk. A Republican presidential victory in 2016 appears to be a necessary prerequisite for any real repeal movement (as opposed to the largely symbolic H.R. 596), but there is no guarantee that the next president will be Republican. And even if the Republicans win the White House and retain both houses of Congress, they would not be able to work towards repeal until early 2017 by which time the Affordable Care Act might be too entrenched to simply walk away from. As people come to understand its benefits the healthcare law might gain a critical mass of acceptance (Jones et al 2014; Jacobs and Mettler 2011). There is already evidence that

some key stakeholders including insurers and medical providers have chosen to try to make the Affordable Care Act work for them instead of fighting it (Ario and Jacobs 2012). If enough people come around, Obamacare might simply become a fact of life as have past entitlement programs including Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security (Haeder and Weimer 2015).

The most practical solution might be for Republicans to attempt to amend the Affordable Care Act to address some of their concerns. Such changes to the law would likely be relatively minor as opposed to the type of wholesale change that repeal would bring. Amendments would also require bipartisan support, something that is in rare supply these days, especially where healthcare reform is concerned. But perhaps compromise is not completely out of the question. For example, both Representative 6 and Representative 7 said that any new Republican-sponsored healthcare law would need to cover Americans with pre-existing conditions and allow dependent children to remain on their parents' insurance until age 26 just as the Affordable Care Act does. If both parties can agree on these needs then there is at least some common ground to work from. Republicans could then turn to the principles listed in H.R. 596 and selectively push for amendments that might have a chance at bipartisan support, such as helping patients keep their existing health plans, or the nebulous goal of reducing wasteful spending in healthcare. Depending on the specifics, Democrats could conceivably be enticed to support such amendments. After all, who doesn't want to eliminate wasteful spending? While such modest changes might be possible, larger goals such as eliminating the employer mandate seem all but impossible.

For now, this is all speculation. There is no guarantee that Democratic leaders would entertain any of these amendments to Obamacare, but neither is it certain that they would dismiss the matter out of hand. Nor is it guaranteed that amendments must wait until the next president in 2017. With one year left in his presidency, President Obama might be willing to trade amendments to the Affordable Care Act for something else he wants to accomplish before he leaves office. Speculation aside though, it appears for the moment that changes to the Affordable Care Act are far from imminent.

Chapter 4: Comparisons & Member Fit

Introduction

The previous two chapters describe partisanship as an aspect of modern constituent relations that did not exist 40 years ago. Indeed, Fenno's ([1978] 2003b) text makes virtually no mention of partisanship. But this project is not just about differences with Fenno's work. There are, in fact, many similarities between the actions of members in the 1970s as described by Fenno and the behavior that I witnessed from my subjects in 2013 and 2014. In this chapter, I will explore the importance of member fit with the district, a concept that Fenno stresses in his work and which remains vitally important 40 years later.

Fenno develops the concept of member fit in *Home Style* and uses it as one of the dominant themes in that book and much of his subsequent work. Throughout, Fenno stresses that good fit is essential to staying in office while bad fit leaves a representative in a precarious position that sometimes results in electoral defeat. But as Fenno shows, good fit is not always easy to achieve and some members struggle with it more than others. It is perhaps even harder today than it was in the 1970s because, as Jacobson notes, "The personal connection so important to Fenno's subjects is no doubt harder to cultivate now that districts contain 50 percent more constituents than when he did his research, but members continue to try," (2009: 98). The attempt to make these connections by whatever means available is well documented, whether through constituency service (King 1991; Fiorina [1977] 1989), casework (Yiannakis 1981; Serra & Moon 1994), allocations to the district (Stein & Bickers 1994), and most importantly

by earning constituent trust in general (Parker 1989; Bianco 1994; Sigelman, Sigelman & Walkosz 1992).

The argument in this chapter is that the importance of fit with the district and the amount of energy that members devote to achieving that fit have not changed in the past 40 years. To illustrate these points I explore a series of comparisons between members of my sample and selected subjects from Fenno's works *Home Style* ([1978] 2003b), *Going Home* (2003a) and *Congressional Travels* (2007).¹⁵ Throughout this discussion I pay particular attention to each member's fit with his or her district. In almost every case the fit is good, although each member takes a different route to achieve it.

From the beginning of this project it seemed logical to make comparisons between my subjects and Fenno's. The only question was which members to compare. Without question one of my goals was to meet a particular representative from New York City, the person that I call Representative 4. Fenno traveled with the two representatives who previously held this seat, one in the 1970s (Fenno [1978] 2003b; Fenno 2007) and the other in the 1990s (Fenno 2007). Later, as the project progressed, other comparisons presented themselves: two African American members from majority-minority districts; two retiring members. Conscious of the fact that comparisons over vast periods of time and between two researchers might be difficult, I set to work.

Descriptive & Substantive Representation

In addition to member fit with his or her district, the comparisons in this chapter cover aspects of representational theory, particularly the debate over descriptive and substantive

¹⁵ *Going Home* (2003a) and *Congressional Travels* (2007) are, respectively, excellent sources of additional information on Fenno's subjects Congressman F and Congressman O, both of whom Fenno first introduced in *Home Style* ([1978] 2003b).

representation. The most popular starting point for this debate is Pitkin's (1967) definitions of these two terms. According to Pitkin, descriptive representation means that the representative and the represented share a defining trait such as an African American representing African Americans, a woman representing women, etc. The assumption of descriptive representation is that when representative and constituency share defining traits they will also share common backgrounds and experiences, which will result in common policy preferences. Then there is substantive representation, which envisions the possibility that a representative can act in the best interest of the constituency even if the representative comes from a different background and does not share common traits and experiences with those he represents.

Pitkin (1967) also defines two other forms of representation, formalistic and symbolic. Formalistic representation refers to the institutional arrangements that allow a representative to represent a larger group, and as a paradigm it is primarily concerned with the source of legitimacy of the representative and his accountability to those who select him. Symbolic representation is about the meaning behind the actions of a representative. Symbolic representation will be touched on in this chapter, primarily as it relates to descriptive representation and substantive representation. Indeed, these three forms of representation tend to overlap each other from one scholar's interpretation to the next. Under the right circumstances, either a descriptive representative or a substantive representative can offer symbolic representation to his constituency, for example, by attending a rally or other event that holds special meaning to the constituency.

Although this chapter explores aspects of descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation as they pertain to select Asian American, Jewish American, and African

American constituencies, the chapter is not meant to be a definitive treatise on the subject. As such, these various concepts of representation will be applied to ethnic and racial groups only, though much of the literature can also be applied to gender politics.

The central question to the debate is whether a minority group needs a descriptive representative in order to be well-represented in government or if the group's policy concerns can be adequately addressed through substantive representation by a non-member of the group. One basic question along this line of thought is whether African Americans are best served by black representatives or if a white member can do just as good of a job. Tate (2003), for example, stresses the importance of descriptive representation, and to a lesser extent, symbolic representation. She argues that black members do a better job of representing the concerns of African Americans in Congress because black representatives push harder on key legislative issues and win more of those fights than white representatives. Tate also argues that African Americans *believe* they receive better representation from black members, which is a form of symbolic representation. Similarly, Canon (1999) argues, "The race of the representative has important implications for the type of representation that is provided to a district with a significant number of black constituents," (244-5), saying that white representatives tend to focus on nonracial issues whereas black representatives are better at balancing the needs of black constituents and white constituents. Such arguments support descriptive representation.

A prominent counterargument comes from Swain ([1993] 2006) who argues in favor of substantive representation, primarily based on the idea that there is a limit to how far descriptive representation can carry the African American community. She argues

that white representatives can represent black interests as long as they are Democrats because Democrats, regardless of skin color, tend to support the same policies that black communities support. This is known as policy congruency. Swain then takes the argument a step further saying that one additional majority-black district does not significantly increase black representation in Congress, but creating that district might inadvertently hurt black representation by removing black constituencies from neighboring districts, thus eliminating any need for representatives in those districts to consider black interests.

Then there is Fenno (2003a), who blends descriptive and symbolic representation into something he calls “active symbolic representation” (36). He introduces this concept when describing his Congressman F, a black representative in a black-majority district. Fenno argues that Congressman F gave his constituents descriptive representation the day he took office, but to define the importance of this man’s role as merely descriptive misses most of the picture. Active symbolic representation, as Fenno defines it, means being a role model and an ideal that other members of the group can emulate. This is what Congressman F did for his constituency that no white representative ever could, no matter how well-intentioned or how much policy congruency he might offer. More will be said about Fenno’s Congressman F later in this chapter.

Other perspectives on the descriptive/substantive representation debate are more nuanced and do not prescribe one over the other in all instances. For example, Mansbridge (1999) argues that descriptive representation is not always best. Instead, she says that descriptive representation is appropriate based on context, as when a subordinate group needs a voice to present an issue to a dominant group that does not

understand that issue (1999: 643). In Mansbridge's terminology, the issue is as yet "uncrystallized" in the minds of the dominant group. In such cases, a descriptive representative is needed who can educate the dominant group. But Mansbridge also warns that in other cases "the descriptive characteristics of a representative can lull voters into thinking their substantive interests are being represented even when this is not the case," (1999: 640). In other words, loyalty to someone who shares descriptive characteristics can blind a minority group to a situation in which they are not receiving policy congruency from their member. Reacting to this possibility, Griffin and Flavin (2007) run an empirical test of Mansbridge's hypothesis and find that descriptive representation does not cause black voters to be blindly loyal to black representatives.¹⁶

There is also debate about whether a marginalized group has universal interests shared by all members of the group or if there might be various policy preferences held by different subgroups. Preuhs and Hero (2011) argue that black and Latino representatives rely on racial cues that are imperceptible to any representative not of the same race, including both whites and other out-group minorities. In their words, "It matters that blacks represent blacks and Latinos represent Latinos since black and Latino representatives rely on different cues for policy advocacy," (2011: 169). According to this argument, simply electing Democrats as Swain ([1993] 2006) suggests would not work because not just any liberal representative will do. By Preuhs and Hero's standard, a representative needs the understanding that comes with descriptive representation, not just substantive policy congruency. But this argument implies that there is something

¹⁶ Griffin and Flavin (2007) do, however, find that black descriptive representation increases the information gap between blacks and whites because white voters represented by black members tend to acquire even more knowledge about their black representatives than black voters do. Griffin and Flavin also find evidence that black voters expect less policy congruency from their black representatives than they do for white members.

distinctly black or Latino, something essential that makes all members of a group the same, and not everyone shares that perspective. Dovi (2002), for example, argues that there are distinct subgroups within any marginalized group, and she suggests that we measure how good descriptive representatives are by how well they represent the interests of undesirable subgroups within the marginalized constituency. In her words, “Class, sexuality, drug use, geographic location, relationships to welfare, criminal records, and religion are all possible markers of dispossessed subgroups,” (2002: 739). The idea is that a black representative, for example, does not necessarily represent the interests of those black constituents who fall into one of these marginalized subgroups, which runs counter to any essentialist argument. In fact, one could argue that each of Dovi’s subgroups needs its own descriptive representative in Congress, but there are few representatives serving today who fall outside prescribed norms of sexuality and religion, to say nothing of those with a history of drug use, welfare or criminal records.

Debates about descriptive and substantive representation are not the focus of this chapter, but they are a part of it. Having set the stage with this background we may now proceed to the comparisons.

Congressman O, Congressman X & Representative 4

There is a certain district in the New York City borough of Queens that from 1962 to 2013 had only two different representatives in the House, Fenno’s Congressman O (1962-1983) and one of Fenno’s later subjects whom I will refer to here as Congressman

X (1983-2013).¹⁷ Congressman O served until his death in 1983, and his successor, Congressman X, announced his retirement from the House in March 2012 after 29 years in office. This cleared a path for a new representative, and that person turned out to be Representative 4. With this new member in office I saw an opportunity to continue the work that Fenno began in this district.

Fenno writes that he was “mindful of the need for caution” when making comparisons between two representatives whom he met 20 years apart (2007: 157), which, of course, means that I must be cautious about my comparisons in this chapter. Nonetheless, this is an unprecedented chance for research on members of the House from a particular geographic constituency over time. The quality and the depth of Fenno’s research make comparisons possible, yet no one has followed up on his line of inquiry in this manner until now.

Obviously, the geographic boundaries of the district have changed since 1962. Throughout Congressman O’s 20 years in office the district was entirely within the borough of Queens (Fenno 2007: 133). Later, Congressman X won the all-Queens district in 1983 in a special election, but it became Queens-plus when two neighboring Long Island counties were added after the 1992 redistricting (Fenno 2007: 163). According to Fenno’s account, it was a defining moment in Congressman X’s career. He had always been an old-school liberal in the mold of Congressman O because that type of ideology was appropriate for the all-Queens district, but Congressman X had to evolve in order to fit the relative conservatism of his new Long Island constituency. Despite some initial growing pains, Congressman X eventually absorbed the new part of his district and

¹⁷ Fenno first introduced the man I call Congressman X in *Congressional Travels* (2007). He is the only one of Fenno’s subjects presented in this chapter that did not originally appear in *Home Style*. Together, he and Congressman O are described in chapters seven and eight of *Congressional Travels*.

held it without significant challenge in subsequent elections. He was later returned to a mostly-Queens district following a 2002 redistricting that took away one of his two Long Island counties (Fenno 2007: 178).

Today, the district is once again all-Queens as it had been in Congressman O's time. Despite all of the changes to the district lines there are some neighborhoods in Queens that from 1962 to 2013 only ever knew Congressman O and Congressman X as their representatives. Now that district and those neighborhoods belong to Representative 4. How is she similar to her predecessors and how is she different? What can we learn about the evolution of this district by examining her emerging role in it? I will explore these questions in two phases. The first is an examination of the dramatic change in the district's ethnic demographics as reflected by Representative 4 compared to her two predecessors. The second comparison is about similarities in constituency outreach; despite the passage of time and a major ethnic shift in the district's population, the ingredients to successful constituent outreach in this district have not changed much in 40 years.

A Changing Ethnic Landscape

Fenno writes that Congressman O and Congressman X were "very much alike by virtue of a common ethnicity, a common place, a common base of partisan support, and a common philosophy," (2007: 184). Representative 4 is similar to her two predecessors in all of these respects except for ethnicity. Representative 4 is of Asian descent whereas Congressman O and Congressman X were both Jewish. This difference encapsulates how this district has changed in the past two decades.

According to Fenno, anyone who wanted to win this seat during Congressman O or Congressman X's times had to be Jewish. It was a simple matter of connecting with the district's dominant ethnicity. In the 1970s, Congressman O told Fenno that his strongest support came from "middle upper Jewish" constituents (2007: 134), who comprised an estimated 55% of the district (2007: 130). More than 20 years later, one of Congressman X's staffers commented that the district's Jewish constituents, whether politically liberal or conservative, "...will always vote for a Jew. Their finger would fall off if they voted for someone other than a Jew," (2007: 162). Congressman X's staffer also cited internal poll numbers showing that 85% of the district's Jewish population votes for Congressman X. This suggests that the district's Jewish voters wanted a House member who shared their ethnicity, i.e. someone who offered descriptive representation (Pitkin 1967).

In the 1970s, Congressman O believed that he was "in tune with the issue-oriented people of the district" because both he and they were Jewish and liberal (Fenno 2007:132). But he wondered whether that would always be the case: "What worries me is not that I will neglect my district and lose it....What worries me is that the district will change. How long will that take? I don't know—maybe 10, maybe not for 20 years," (Fenno 2007: 155). Congressman O knew that changing demographics could change his electoral fortunes. If he stayed in office long enough, he might eventually find that he no longer fit with his district. But Congressman O did not live long enough for this to happen. He died in office in 1983.

Congressman O witnessed a surge in the Hispanic population of his district, but by the late 1990s it was actually a growing Chinese immigrant population that supplanted

the district's long-standing Jewish majority. When comparing his district in 1998 to the one he inherited from Congressman O, Congressman X said, "It's less Jewish and much, much more Asian," (Fenno 2007: 183). On the same trip, Fenno wrote that he could see "15 storefronts, all Chinese," from his hotel room window, and Congressman X mused that an influx of 100,000 Chinese residents had turned that part of the district into Chinatown (2007: 181). Today, the Asian influence is even more pronounced, and so it is not surprising that the new representative is Asian American. It is as much a prerequisite today as being Jewish was in generations past.

The fight to succeed Congressman X illustrates the change. The 2012 Democratic Primary for Congressman X's seat was a hotly contested four-way race with three quality candidates including two state assembly members and one city council member. One of those candidates was Jewish and, based on Fenno's reports, in the past that man would surely have won. But Representative 4 won the primary with 51% of the vote, signaling a tide change. The Jewish contender garnered only 28% of the vote in his second place finish. To be Jewish is no longer to offer descriptive representation to this district.

This election also raises the question of whether Congressman X's retirement was because he feared the time had come, just as Congressman O had speculated, when the district was no longer Jewish enough for the incumbent Jewish candidate to win. To answer that question I contacted Congressman X and put it to him rather bluntly. His response:

That's a good guess, but no. I could've done this for another 10 years. The district was solidly mine and I had good relationships with all of the Asian leaders. I probably know the issues important to Asian Americans better than some of those voters know themselves. In a way, I was the first Asian American MC in [that district]. But I knew we [Democrats] were going to be out of power for at least six years, maybe more. That means no committee chairmanships and

less of a chance to accomplish my goals. I was 70 years old and I could go out on top while I still had time to enjoy life. My only opponent for the 2012 primary had just dropped out of the race. There was no Republican challenger so no one could say I was backing away from a fight. I could go out on top.

Clearly, Congressman X did not share Congressman O's fear of losing the district over time. This difference confirms Fenno's portraits of the two men. Fenno describes Congressman O as shy and awkward, an introvert who never really took to the handshaking aspect of constituent relations. In articulating his opinion of grassroots campaigning, Congressman O said, "When my staff wants me to hand out shopping bags on every f—ing street corner in Queens ... I resist. I have to calculate the benefits of everything I do against the danger to my sanity and my personal lifestyle," (2007: 145). For Congressman O, losing a significant part of his core constituency would have meant a daunting task of building a new one. But Congressman X was, in Fenno's words, a "gregarious local boy" who basked in the challenge of literally walking into hostile Republican territory on Long Island after the 1992 redistricting and introducing himself to his new constituents. The prospect of winning over a new constituency did not bother him then and it did not bother him in 2012.

Congressman X also shared an inside look at Representative 4's victory over her opponents in the 2012 primary, saying that the Queens County Democratic Party boss saw this as a chance to elect the first Asian American representative in his state's history. (Of course, a more cynical interpretation would be that the party leaders saw which way the wind was blowing, that the only Asian American candidate in a largely Asian district would probably win, and decided to get on board before the train left the station.) Congressman X also commented that by 2012 he had known Representative 4 for 10

years and he had always been impressed by her. Thus, Representative 4 sailed to victory with party support and Congressman X's public endorsement.

A Descriptive Representative?

Representative 4 offers her Asian American constituents descriptive representation, the importance of which has been argued by many (Pitkin 1967; Tate 2003; Fenno 2003a; Canon 1999; Dovi 2002; Mansbridge 1999; Preuhs & Hero 2011). Congressman X also acknowledged the importance of descriptive representation for his Asian constituents. In an interview shortly before his retirement he said, "I can't imagine how the Asian community would feel to have its own congressperson, especially a congresswoman from their community." Indeed, Representative 4's ethnicity grants her celebrity status in the eyes of her Asian American constituents. Local Asian print and television reporters flock to her from one district event to another. They always stop her to ask for an interview, even if only for a few minutes, about whatever event she is at: her campaign kickoff in 2014, a vigil commemorating a Bangladeshi factory collapse, a state liquor authority information session for business owners, etc. It is common to see her do several such interviews at the end of any given public event. English speaking journalists attend these events and interview her as well, but with the Asian reporters there is an air of reverence towards Representative 4. Here, to her Asian constituents, she is a rock star. The only other member in this study who enjoys such status is African American Representative 1 amongst his black constituents. I will have more to say on him later in this chapter.

The question, then, is whether or not Representative 4 sees herself in that role, as a representative particularly in tune with Asian Americans by virtue of her ethnicity.

When asked about it, she said she is proud that the nearly 12% of her city's population that is Asian "has a representative who looks like them," but beyond that she expressed no policy goals or agenda that she strives to meet in Congress on behalf of those citizens. She added, "I hope to inspire not only Asian Americans but any minority group to run for elected office."

These comments suggest that Representative 4 does not think in terms of descriptive representation. Instead, she speaks in generalities as when she said, "I believe that I have a responsibility to all of my constituents, and I do my best to exemplify their needs." That's an answer that few people would be able to criticize, but it also lacks any sense of conviction. For comparison, consider an exchange I had with a member in another district. On that occasion this particular Republican proudly told me about all of the constituent outreach he does in a heavily Democratic county that he always loses by a roughly 80/20 margin. Why, I asked, does he make such an effort for people who won't vote for him? His answer: "Because they're my constituents. I'm their representative. It's my job." That response speaks to a sense of conviction that Representative 4's response lacks. To be fair, Congressman X offered an alternative explanation for Representative 4's coolness about the importance of her Asian heritage saying, "She downplays herself. She's not one to brag." If that is the case then Representative 4 is simply being modest.

Perhaps Representative 4 will find her voice as a descriptive representative of Asian Americans as she gains more experience. Indeed, the Republican member referenced above had spent nearly two decades in the House at the time that I met him, compared to Representative 4 who had not yet been there two years. Regardless of her

approach to representing Asian Americans, Representative 4 fits well with her constituency. She is comfortable in all situations and settings, and she appears to be as much ‘a natural’ at politicking as anyone that I traveled with. Her celebrity status in the Asian American community gives her a type of constituency connection that most representatives can only dream about, and every indication is that she is as beloved in her constituency as Congressman O and Congressman X were as described by Fenno.

Similarities in Constituent Outreach

Congressman O and Congressman X both viewed their Queens district as a series of neighborhoods. They knew that their constituents did not think of themselves as residents of Queens in general and certainly not as part of a congressional district (Fenno 2007: 133, 158). Instead, Queens residents identify with particular neighborhoods such as Astoria, Jackson Heights, Jamaica or Rockaway. For that reason, Congressman O and Congressman X both understood the need to reach out to each individual community in their districts, and they both used town hall meetings to do that.

Town hall meetings are an important way of establishing and maintaining relationships with constituents. In 1974, Congressman O told Fenno that he holds town hall meetings throughout the district: “They are the most successful thing we do. We send out 15,000 invitations. Only 150 come. But the others know I am there. I try to identify each community [so] each meeting has a different flavor,” (2007: 147).

Representative 4 also sees her constituency as a series of neighborhoods and she employs a similar strategy in order to reach each one:

I have two district offices but I always say that people in Queens tend to think of themselves as being part of a neighborhood, not a congressional district. People

from neighborhoods other than where my district offices are might feel underserved. That's why I hold "Congress on Your Corner" events, to reach those neighborhoods.

These words spoken by Congressman O and Representative 4 were uttered nearly 40 years apart in time, but they express a common understanding of this district.

Congressman O was well into the protectionist phase of his constituency career when Fenno met him, but for someone in the expansionist phase town hall meetings are even more important. For example, Congressman X used town hall meetings to build constituency connections and get his name out when he suddenly found himself thrown back into the expansionist phase of his constituency career following the 1992 redistricting. Congressman X said, "We did two rounds of town meetings on Long Island....We felt we had to because people did not know who I was," whereas in Queens, "I didn't have to have town meetings. *It was my home*. I was always around talking to people. *I was the local guy*," (italics in original; Fenno 2007: 175).

Today, Representative 4 may be the 'local gal' in her part of Queens, but no doubt there are some constituents who still think Congressman X is their representative. Representative 4's former state assembly district makes up only one-sixth of her congressional district, and Congressman X represented some parts of the district for 30 years. It is important that Representative 4 lets voters know there has been a change by hosting town hall meetings and Congress on Your Corner events. As to whether or not she worries that her constituents do not know she replaced Congressman X:

I don't worry. I am honored to be [Congressman X's] successor. There will always be those in a constituency who are less involved than others. I try my best to make sure that the events I host are geographically diverse, that way I can engage all areas of my district. We can always do more outreach.

Outreach events, then, are an important tool for Representative 4 in terms of reaching every neighborhood as well as connecting with people who simply do not know her yet. But she is not reinventing the wheel as she does this. She follows a path laid out by her predecessors in Congressman O, who saw town hall meetings as an important way to service each of the many neighborhoods in his district, and Congressman X, who used them to introduce himself to communities where he was not known. The public events that Representative 4 hosts are meant to accomplish both of these goals, proving that while demographics have changed, constituent relation strategies in this district have not.

Representative 1 & Congressman F

At the beginning of this project I knew I wanted to make comparisons between Congressman O, Congressman X and Representative 4, but I also knew there would be other opportunities for comparisons. The next is between two African American members, the person whom I call Representative 1 and Fenno's Congressman F. Unlike my first set of comparisons, these two members do not share the same geographic constituency and, in fact, come from different states. Fenno himself wrote a comparative study of four African American members, including Congressman F, called *Going Home* (2003a) based on his many years of field research. The comparison below is not as comprehensive nor is it meant to be. Nonetheless, there is a comparison to be made here between Congressman F and Representative 1.

At first glance the two men share many similarities. Both men were born and raised in the communities that they would one day represent, and they were both practicing lawyers before entering politics. Their districts are similar: urban, northern,

majority-black, and so heavily packed with Democratic voters that the only real contest is the primary. Their districts also share a remarkably similar set of concerns as evidenced by the nearly identical subject matter that their public speeches to constituents most often contain:

Congressman F: Drug Use, Education, Healthcare, Housing, Poverty, Welfare

Representative 1: Education, Gun Violence, Healthcare, Housing, Poverty, Welfare

The only real difference between these lists is that Congressman F spoke about drugs in his community (Fenno [1978] 2003b: 118) whereas Representative 1 speaks about gun violence. It is striking that so many of these issues remain a struggle for urban, black communities after 40 years.¹⁸

But different times and differing circumstances have produced two very different representatives and home styles. These differences include their re-election constituencies, the presence or lack of party support in their first primaries, and the way in which each man relates to his constituents. Although these representatives share obvious similarities on the surface, a closer look reveals the differences.

Significant Proportions: Two-Thirds vs. One-Half

The differences begin with the re-election constituencies, which for Congressman F was simply “the black community,” whereas Representative 1 cultivates a broader coalition. Congressman F saw himself as a microcosm of the black community having grown up,

¹⁸ Fenno reports that Congressman F’s successor made speeches to her constituency about nearly the same set of issues in the late 1990s (2003a: 220).

lived in and worked there all his life. There was no aspect of the black experience that he could not relate to, and so he saw himself as completely in-tune with that constituency.

In describing how he believes black constituents see him, Congressman F said, “They know that I’m a black man standing up for the black man,” (Fenno [1978] 2003b: 120), and “When I vote my conscience as a black man, I necessarily represent the black community. I don’t have any trouble knowing what the black community thinks or wants,” (Fenno [1978] 2003b: 115). Fenno added:

[Congressman F] is sensitive to all the common experiences and common aspirations that bind black people one to the other. The term he uses, always, is “the black community.” And he works every chance he gets to deepen the sense of community among blacks, (Fenno [1978] 2003b: 115).

Congressman F’s statement was spoken in 1970 before much of the literature on descriptive representation was written but it could have been a textbook definition of the term for that time (but see more recent, scholarly perspectives from Tate 2003; Tate 2014; Canon 1999; Mansbridge 1999; Whitby 1997). Congressman F, then, was one of the first descriptive representatives in the post-Civil Rights Era.

Representative 1’s situation is different because he cannot rely on the electoral support of his African American constituents alone. Like Congressman F, Representative 1 grew up in and lived in in his district all his life prior to his election to Congress. But unlike Congressman F, Representative 1 is not a microcosm of his district because his district is far too diverse for anyone to make that claim (Barone and McCutcheon). His State of the District Addresses, two of which I attended, are veritable cornucopia of cultures and ethnicities. True, Representative 1’s district is majority black but only by the narrowest of margins at 51%. The other 49% is a mix of white, Hispanic, Asian and a

handful of other ethnicities. Two dozen languages are spoken in his district. With such diversity, no one could claim to be a microcosm of the entire district. It is more accurate to say that Representative 1 is a microcosm of the African American community in the particular part of the district that he grew up in. Likewise, he only offers descriptive representation to the 51% of his constituents who are black. However, because it is a liberal district in a liberal city, it is fair to say that Representative 1 offers his constituency substantive representation by virtue of his votes and views regardless of skin color (Swain [1993] 2006).

By comparison, Congressman F's district was two-thirds black and one-third white, and he believed that he could not win if the black population fell below 55%¹⁹ (Fenno [1978] 2003b: 115). Fenno also writes that Congressman F worried about the 1972 redistricting and how it might affect his electoral future (2003a: 19-20). In actuality, Congressman F need not have worried because incumbents in adjacent district did everything they could to dump black voters out of their districts and into his. As a result, the proportion of black voters in his district rose to 70% in 1972 and he didn't even have to fight to get them (Fenno 2003a: 20).

With a two-thirds African American constituency, Congressman F could stake his political fortunes on the black vote alone. He, of course, was cordial to his white constituents, handling their casework and accepting whatever electoral support they gave him, but he never entered an election dependent on white votes to win (Fenno 2003a: 50-3). Congressman F knew that even if every single white voter in the district voted against

¹⁹ Congressman F's supposition is supported by Lublin (1997) who argues that a House district that is 55% black has an 86% chance of electing a black representative, but the numbers drop quickly as the percentage of black voters drops. Lublin et al (2009) further argue that most black MCs come from black-majority or black-plus-Hispanic-majority districts, thus illustrating the continued importance of majority-minority districts and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

him he would still win on the strength of the black vote. He was secure in that strategy because of his fit with his black constituency. But with only a 51% black district, Representative 1 cannot rely on the same strategy even if he wanted to.

Representative 1, therefore, needs to court electoral support from all corners of his district. This was evident in a lunchtime visit to a senior center full of Asian, Hispanic and Jewish constituents. Quite literally there was not a black face in sight. It is hard to imagine Congressman F going out of his way to court these voters, but Representative 1 did so with aplomb, touring the center with its chief administrator and eagerly pressing the flesh. We visited every room, politely interrupting games of chess, ping pong and scrabble. We even stopped into the TV room and ever so briefly interrupted the viewing of a daytime soap opera, a risky proposition, indeed!

In another, less frantic event, Representative 1 held a community roundtable in a predominantly Jewish part of his district to get to know that community's leaders. For this event, Representative 1 needed the local state assemblyman who is much more familiar with this neighborhood to help set up the roundtable and facilitate introductions. It was a morning in late September just past Rosh Hashanah, so Representative 1 opened the meeting by wishing everyone a happy new year to show his understanding of Jewish culture. He told the audience that he has made two trips to Israel, one when he was in the state legislature and one after he was elected to Congress. He said, "The US must do all it can for Israel's safety and security. The number one thing right now in Congress is to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons."

When Representative 1, a black man, makes this kind of statement to a room full of white, Jewish constituents, he is, in effect, saying 'Even though I don't look like you I

can put myself in your shoes and understand your concerns.’ He offers substantive representation, assuring these constituents that although he comes from a different background and ethnicity he can nonetheless conduct the business of government on their behalf as they would if they were in his place²⁰ (Swain [1993] 2006; Thernstrom & Thernstrom 1997). Therefore, Representative 1 offers descriptive representation to his black constituents and substantive representation to his Jewish constituents.

Representative 1 made a connection with his new Jewish constituents that day despite ethnic differences and the fact that he has never lived in this particular community. He reached out to show these voters that he understands their issues and that he can represent their interests, and based on the applause he received at the end of the event he succeeded. It is also worth noting that Representative 1 hired two staff members who worked for this community’s previous representative because of their knowledge of the community and, in no small part, because they speak the local language, Russian.²¹

The key distinction between Representative 1 and Congressman F is that Representative 1 needs to forge a relationship with a much broader constituency than Congressman F ever had to. Congressman F never had to look beyond the black community for electoral support. For Representative 1, neglecting his non-black constituents would leave him vulnerable to a primary challenger.

²⁰ Swain ([1993] 2006) argues that black representatives do an excellent job of representing white constituents as long as both the representative and the constituency share a common political ideology.

²¹ Swain ([1993] 2006) describes a similar tactic used by African American representatives Mike Espy, Alan Wheat and Robin Tallon who each hired both black and white staffers in order to show that they were in touch with all of their different racial constituencies.

Differences in Relationship to the Local Democratic Party

Another important difference between Congressman F and Representative 1 is the relationship between the representatives and their local Democratic Parties.

Congressman F spent the first few years of his career fighting with his local party bosses whereas Representative 1 has enjoyed nothing but support from his local party. Not long after taking office, Congressman F found himself embroiled in a nasty power struggle with his party bosses because they did not want to cede any of their organizational power or party leadership positions to the black community despite its growing importance in local elections (Fenno 2003a: 37-41). This relationship became so icy that Congressman F founded his own political organization to elect both black and white candidates from both the Democratic and Republican parties to local office, saying, “If you cross the street, that will teach the Democratic Party respect,” (Fenno 2003a: 39). In addition, Congressman F attributed his all-important first primary victory in 1968, at least in part, to the fact that the local Democratic Party backed an African American candidate who was hopelessly out of touch with the black community:

He was a black man who was popular with the white community. And the reason was that he was always criticizing the black community. He would tell them just what they wanted to hear – that black people were hoodlums and bums and all that sort of thing (Fenno [1978] 2003b: 115-6).

To be fair, Fenno notes that Congressman F also defeated the most black-oriented candidate in the 1968 primary and says that Congressman F, “emerged as a political centrist and a political unifier,” within the black community (2003a: 26). Winning over his local party leaders, however, would take considerably more time.

Representative 1 faced the exact opposite scenario. Upon announcing he would run for an open congressional seat Representative 1 quickly gained the support of his local Democratic Party. A large part of the explanation for this difference is the passage of time. In 1968, Congressman F was the first representative of a newly minted majority-minority district created under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which means his seat was previously held by a white representative. Local party leaders were no doubt unused to this and the concept of sharing power with a marginalized group. In contrast, Representative 1 replaced a retiring African American incumbent who had served in the House for 30 years, which means the election of a new African American representative would not be shocking but rather easily predictable. No new power-sharing arrangements need be constructed or negotiated with the local Democratic Party because any such arrangements would have been made decades ago.

It is also worth noting that Congressman F wound up representing his community for a total of 30 years before he retired (Fenno 2003a: 178), further indicating how well he fit with his constituency. Meanwhile, his successor enjoyed a much better relationship with her local Democratic Party (Fenno 2003a: 234) just as Representative 1 does with his local party today. This further suggests that the passage of time has indeed smoothed out tensions that local parties had sharing institutional power in the immediate aftermath of the Civil Rights Era.

Appropriate Styles

Fenno writes that Congressman F was not given to a person-to-person style nor did his constituents expect such a style: “Congressman F’s idea that people are and want to be

proud of him calls for a dignified, exemplary presentational style more than for an intimate or familiar one,” ([1978] 2003b: 120). In other words, Congressman F’s constituents idolized him. This is not something that Congressman F sought but rather had thrust upon him. In Fenno’s words:

Given its historic significance, [the city’s] black citizens could hardly wait to elect their first member of Congress. And once elected, he became, instantly, a topmost political leader of the black community and a symbol of newfound black power. His constituents tendered to him their trust, it seemed, almost before he did anything. For most House members, constituent trust is theirs to gain and is the object of much effort. For [Congressman F], trust was quickly given, and it quickly became his to lose (2003a: 29).

Congressman F was a symbol because he was a black kid who made it all the way to the halls of Congress where he wielded real power. To his constituents he was larger than life, and to be so means to be more a symbol than a man. Such status naturally creates distance between the idol and those who idolize him.

This is not to say that a reserved style was forced upon Congressman F. If anything, he was lucky that this presentational style matched his personality. A lawyer by trade, Congressman F’s entrance into politics in 1968 was facilitated by his brother, the mayor of the city in which his congressional district existed. He also benefitted from a newly drawn majority-minority district tailor-made for a black candidate (Fenno 2003a: 14-6). Most representatives have to work their way up in politics beginning with local or state offices, an experience that teaches them how to glad-hand constituents. Having never developed the ability to schmooze the public, and seeing no real need to do so, Congressman F avoided interactions with individual constituents as much as he could (Fenno 2003a: 45). For example, he eschewed office hours in favor of formal speeches in front of large audiences. Seven of the 12 events that Fenno observed Congressman F

at were such speeches, and on five of the nine days Fenno spent in that district such a speech was the only event on Congressman F's schedule ([1978] 2003b: 118). To be sure, Representative 1 also gives formal speeches before large groups of constituents. The difference is that he also does many other small events, and the large groups that he addresses are not just black constituencies but a veritable rainbow coalition of ethnicities.

Thus, both by necessity and personal preference, Congressman F maintained a certain distance between himself and his constituents. Representative 1 is the polar opposite. First, he has prior experience as a state legislator before coming to Congress, experience that is no doubt useful now as he negotiates a much larger geographic constituency. But more than that, Representative 1 relishes in pressing the flesh. The lunchtime senior center event described above is a good example. Another would be a town hall meeting Representative 1 hosted in the black part of his district. This is his base, his primary constituency, the people he has known for years and whom he would turn to in a moment of electoral need. In Representative 1's words, "This is home."

But compared to Congressman F there is a marked difference in the way Representative 1 interacts with his black constituents and how they, in kind, treat him. Instead of reverence and formality, Representative 1 and his constituents share friendly barbs. For example, during the town hall meeting in the black part of his district Representative 1 explained in detail an ongoing and complex lease renewal negotiation between the United States Postal Service and the man who owns the building that the local post office is located in, the goal being to save the post office. After hearing all of the details it was clear that the negotiations were not going well and that there was a good chance the post office would be forced to close. The crowd was stunned. Some people

were dejected, others angry. At the moment when the tension in the room seemed greatest, a large and affable blind man with a seeing eye dog broke the silence by shouting out, “So, you gonna fix that?” Everyone in the room, including Representative 1, enjoyed a good laugh at that comment, showing that as much as these people respect him he is still a mortal with whom they can joke. It is hard to imagine that type of joshing between Congressman F and his constituents. You can’t pal around with someone you idolize.

Representative 1’s black constituents do not expect him to be a mythical figure. If anything, they would be insulted if he attempted to keep them at a distance. He is certainly respected by this constituency and elevated to the status of local hero just as Congressman F was by his black constituents, but the expectations that come with that status are different for each man. Congressman F was a legend in his community because of his office, his legal work during the Civil Rights Movement, and the rare success story that he personified. But times and circumstances have changed. While there are still relatively few African Americans in Congress, there are more now than there were 40 years ago, and there have been others in the intervening years. Representative 1 may be an inspirational figure, but such role models are no longer rare. To illustrate the point consider President Obama. He is the first black president of the United States and there is a certain reverence that comes with that. But would we expect the same legendary status to apply to, say, the third or fourth black president 40 years from now?

Representative 1, therefore, needs to be approachable because that is what his core constituents expect from him. He also needs to be outgoing because he is at the beginning of his constituency career and much of his district is unfamiliar to him. He

needs to engage in classic expansionist behavior in order to enlarge his re-election constituency because he cannot rely solely on the strength of the black community to win elections as Congressman F did. Fortunately for Representative 1, his fit with his district, both in unfamiliar parts and the neighborhood he grew up in, appears to be quite good.

Time to Leave: Representative 5 & Congressman L

Sometimes representatives choose to voluntarily leave the House, either as a calculated gamble to seek higher office or to pursue opportunities in the private sector (Rohde 1979; Hall and Van Houweling 1995) or because of growing dissatisfaction with the job, usually due to inability to achieve their institutional goals (Hibbing 1982; Moore and Hibbing 1998; Theriault 1998). In my travels I encountered Representative 5, a long-serving representative who had recently announced that he would not seek re-election to the House. Publicly, Representative 5 simply said it was time to move on, but as explained below there is more nuance to his story.

The mere fact that Representative 5 was poised to leave Congress gave me pause. Would it be worth visiting a member who might very well be mentally checked out of the job and/or in the process of closing down his constituent operations? I decided to proceed if for no other reason than to see the difference between someone in the end-stage of his constituency career compared to those of my subjects just at the beginning. It would also give me the chance to compare Representative 5 to the one retiring veteran member in *Home Style*, Congressman L, whom Fenno describes as someone very much ready to leave office. To my surprise, Representative 5 still had great enthusiasm for constituent relations, which, by comparison, is the polar opposite of Congressman L.

Congressman L was the victim of redistricting, an event that can drastically alter the fit between representative and constituency. That need not always be the case, but it was for Congressman L. He faced redistricting twice, survived the first time but capitulated after the second. Congressman L's original district was completely within a city, a place where he felt comfortable and in tune with the people he represented. Had his district stayed that way he might have had a longer House career. But his city's dwindling population led to a redistricting that added some surrounding suburbs to the district, and Congressman L was, by his own admission, uncomfortable dealing with his new suburbanites (Fenno [1978] 2003b: 187). Fenno further writes that "Fatalism had replaced that intense concern about re-election that animates so many members of Congress," and Congressman L's own thoughts on the matter included, "I don't care if I lose," "I want it only on my own terms," and, "I don't know how much longer I can take it," ([1978] 2003b: 187-8). This sounds like a man with one foot out the door.

Congressman L managed to absorb his new suburban territory, but later he suffered a second, massive redistricting that he described as "outrageous" and "the last straw." He elaborated, "I could have won...But it would have meant shoe leathering the district, block by block. And I just didn't want to do that," (Fenno [1978] 2003b: 188). In short, Congressman L did not want to re-enter the expansionist phase of his constituency career, and if that meant leaving the House, so be it.

These redistrictings also led to a growing lack of ideological fit between Congressman L and his district, and he knew it. In between the two redistrictings, he commented to Fenno, "I came in as a strong liberal and have ended being more conservative. I didn't change... I used to be representative of the district. I don't know if

I am now,” ([1978] 2003b: 187). This echoes Congressman O’s comment that he might someday lose his district if it changed around him (see above). For Congressman O this was just a fear, but for Congressman L it actually happened. Congressman L’s comment is also reminiscent of something that a Republican representative from a semi-rural district said to me. When commenting on his conservative stances on gun control, immigration reform and abortion, this subject said that he and his constituency share the same views on all of these issues: “If I didn’t, I wouldn’t run. Not here.” Clearly, the ideological fit between representative and constituency is important to members. They can tell if they fit well, and when that fit deteriorates a representative worries about whether he can continue to represent the constituency.

This portrait of Congressman L was my context for retiring members when I met Representative 5, so naturally I expected him to be of a similar mindset. But Representative 5 turned out to be the exact opposite of Congressman L. He showed no outward signs of slowing down. I only traveled with him for one day, but it was as full a schedule as that of any other member I encountered.

A frenetic energy filled the air as we rushed from one event to the next, toured every site, trying to stay on schedule but perpetually running behind. The day began promptly at 8:15am at a local elementary school followed by visits to a pair of local businesses and capped off with a trip to a senior center. The problem was that Representative 5 wanted to give time to each and every person who approached him at each meeting, from CEO to rank-and-file worker, from school principal to kindergartner. Thus, even after doing routine tours of each of these facilities, Representative 5 made time to see the new wing of the elementary school, to watch a company slideshow and eat

bagels with the board members of the first small business and to take questions from a group of 50 employees at the second small business. He could have easily cut any of these activities but he did not. In fact, he genuinely seemed to enjoy himself at every event. By the time we made it to the final event on the schedule, the senior center, we were too late. We had missed lunchtime, and seniors are apparently notorious for eating and running. Representative 5, nonetheless, expressed his apologies for arriving late to the center's administrator, presented him with an American flag that had flown over the Capitol and promised to come back on another day. To top it off, as soon as the final meeting was over, Representative 5 rushed off to hop a train back to Washington.

After seeing Representative 5 in action certain questions arise. Why is this man leaving office when he still has such obvious enthusiasm for the job? Why does a man who no longer needs to worry about re-election schedule so many district meetings? This schedule befits someone trying to stay in office, not someone ready to leave.

Clearly, Representative 5 is not burned out by the rigors of maintaining his constituency as Congressman L was. Nor has he lost interest in the Washington aspect of the job. When asked about what issues he would like to pursue before leaving office, Representative 5 said, "I always keep several irons in the fire. I'm always ready with issues and legislation that I would like to bring forward but the trick is to wait until the moment is right." This indicates that there are still things Representative 5 would have liked to accomplish.

If anything, it is frustration over his inability to accomplish goals in the House (Moore and Hibbing 1998) that led Representative 5 to retire. Speaking to the workforce at one of the local businesses he said:

I want you to know that I'm not retiring out of anger or frustration. I've been in office for eight terms...and it just seemed the right time. The problem in Washington right now is we are not doing anything. This Congress is even less productive than the previous one, which was considered one of the least productive Congresses of all time, because the dominant mentality is we shouldn't do much. They [the Republican leadership] set the schedule that way because that is what they believe.

Speaking a little more bluntly during a private moment with a trusted, long-time

acquaintance, Representative 5 said:

No one in Washington has a can-do spirit anymore and that's the problem. That's the problem! You look back at the history of this country for two centuries and anything could be accomplished. Nowadays, people have a 'we can't afford to do that' attitude in Washington. They act as though the country has no future, and if you act that way long enough eventually you won't have a future.

It is likely that Representative 5 had been losing his patience with the climate in the House for some time, but he was not ready to simply leave public office either. In the summer of 2013, before he announced his retirement from the House, Representative 5 ran in a special election to fill a vacant US Senate seat created by the death of a long-time incumbent in his state. Fenno (1996; 2007) has written about members who gamble on leaving a secure House seat when a Senate seat opens up either because they believe they would have a greater impact in the upper chamber, because they see it as the natural evolution of their political careers, or even because they simply prefer to run once every six years instead of every other year.²² Rohde (1979) sees the move as a matter of

²² Specifically, Fenno writes about his travels with representatives David McIntosh and Lindsey Graham in chapters 9, 10 and 11 of *Congressional Travels* (2007). Fenno describes McIntosh as a rising star in the freshman class of 1994 and one of Newt Gingrich's hand-picked leaders of that group. But McIntosh miscalculated and made an ill-fated run for the Senate. Graham, on the other hand, is described as someone who occasionally upset his party leaders but nonetheless connected well with his constituents and made a bid for the Senate at just the right time. In *Senators on the Campaign Trail* (1996), Fenno details the careers of Dan Quayle, Paul Tsongas, Bill Cohen, David Pryor, John Culver, Tom Harkin and Wyche Fowler, all of whom successfully made the jump from the House to the Senate. Quayle, in particular, is described as seeing the move to the Senate as the natural evolution of his electoral career.

ambition. Representative 5 most likely saw the Senate as a place where he could be more efficacious because individual senators have more power than individual representatives. Alternatively, he might have reasoned that one does not pass up a chance to run for the Senate when the opportunity arises, regardless of the odds of winning. But in the end, Representative 5 did not win the special election and six months later he announced that he would not seek re-election to the House. He now works in the private sector.

Nothing that Representative 5 said to me or in any of his public statements indicates that losing the Senate race was a “last straw” event as the second redistricting had been for Congressman L. But the fact that Representative 5 announced his retirement from the House just six months after finishing a distant third place in the special election suggests that he was not willing to wait for another opportunity to present himself. Faced with the prospect of remaining in the House minority (what Theriault 1998 calls a “career ceiling”) as the Democratic Party appears destined to be for at least the next few electoral cycles and possibly longer, Representative 5 decided to retire. But the fact that he ran for the open Senate seat means he wanted it and he could see himself remaining in elected office, just in a different position where, hopefully, he could get more done.

The motivations for retiring are quite different for Congressman L and Representative 5. For Congressman L, the problem was fatigue, dwindling enthusiasm for constituent relations, and an increasing lack of fit with his constituency. His comments show that he knew he was losing touch with his district, and he, more than any other member presented in this chapter, suffered from a lack of fit. In that sense, his is a cautionary tale for other representatives. Faced with a drastic redistricting, he decided it

was no longer worth the time and effort it would take to win re-election. If he couldn't have the job on his own terms he didn't want it at all. For Representative 5, lack of energy or enthusiasm is not an issue. Every indication is that he left office still very much in touch with the people of his district and that he would have won another term, and probably several more, had he chosen to stay. No, for Representative 5 the problem is not the fit with his district but his fit with the current mood in Washington. His comments bespeak a man frustrated by a dominant philosophy that government is the problem, not the solution. Facing the prospect of many years stuck in the House minority, Representative 5 decided to retire from public office and pursue other interests. In this case, the gridlock in Washington has led a popular and competent representative to choose early retirement.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a series of comparisons between subjects in this study and some of Fenno's original subjects from the 1970s. While such comparisons call for caution on the part of the researcher, the goal has nevertheless been to illustrate some of the similarities and differences between members then and now. As Fenno showed us a generation ago, there are as many home styles as there are House districts, and even seemingly similar members often take different paths to achieving fit with their constituencies. But no matter the path, fit with the constituency remains a critical element for today's representatives.

This chapter's exploration began with a comparison of Congressman O, Congressman X and Representative 4, all of whom have shared a geographic

constituency over the past 50 years. The borders of that district have changed over time, most notably in the 1992 redistricting, which added parts of Long Island to what had previously been an all-Queens district, but some aspects have remained the same.

Common traits shared by Congressman O, Congressman X and Representative 4 include party affiliation (Democrat), a liberal political philosophy, an understanding of their district as a series of neighborhoods, each of which needs to be tended to, and similar methods of constituent outreach based on that understanding. But these members also have their differences, the most notable of which is that Congressman O and Congressman X were Jewish whereas Representative 4 is Asian American. This reflects the changing ethnic makeup of the district.

Studying this district over time reveals the incremental change beginning with Congressman O's fear in the 1970s that someday he would no longer fit with his district, to Congressman X's commentary in the 1990s that the district's Asian population was steadily increasing, and culminating in the election of an Asian American representative in the person of Representative 4. As Congressman O predicted in the mid-1970s, demographic changes did indeed play a factor over time, resulting in a representative who reflects the district's new dominant ethnicity. In this district, Asian is the new Jewish. Continued study of Representative 4 will be necessary to continue following this geographic constituency. Will she represent her district for decades as her predecessors did? If so, what challenges will she encounter and what victories will she achieve? If not, what will be the catalyst that takes her out of office and who will replace her? If that change were to happen today the next representative would likely also be Asian

American, but if it is in 10 or 20 years from now, who knows what the next representative will look like?

The next set of comparisons was between Fenno's Congressman F and Representative 1. They are both African Americans representing majority black districts that they grew up in. But many factors distinguish them, including the proportion of their district that is black, their personal temperaments, the way in which their constituents perceive and treat them, their relationships to their local Democratic Parties, and the 40 years of time in between Fenno's field work in the 1970s and mine in the past two years.

Congressman F only ever needed to rely on the support of the black community to win elections, and because he fit so well with that constituency he never had to worry about job security. Likewise, Representative 1 fits well with his constituency, but he does so by embracing all of his constituencies, black, white and every shade in-between. His efforts befit a first term member in the expansionist phase of his constituency career seeking to build and solidify relationships, and because he works so hard at it he has no problem of fit with his constituents of any ethnicity. Thus, by actively reaching beyond the black community he has cultivated an electoral strength that for Congressman F might have been a political liability. Representative 1 is also an exemplar of both descriptive representation (to his black constituents) and substantive representation (to at least his Jewish constituents and possibly others) and further study of other modern black members with diverse districts is advisable. Both Congressman F and Representative 1 enjoy the status of local celebrity in their districts, but for Congressman F that status was tempered with a dignified distance between representative and constituent.

Representative 1, a first termmer at the time that I met him, needs to press the flesh and introduce himself to as many constituents as possible. He is also a very personable man who enjoys one-on-one constituent interactions, something that Congressman F strenuously avoided. The two men also have different relationships to their local Democratic Parties, with Congressman F butting heads with his party leaders at every turn in a struggle to advance the interests and standing of the black community, whereas Representative 1 has enjoyed party support from the moment he announced his candidacy. These differences are no doubt affected by the passage of time. However much distance remains between a truly egalitarian society and where we are today, the difference in the way these two representatives are treated by their local parties proves that significant progress has been made since the mid-1960s. Despite all of these differences, both Congressman F and Representative 1 achieved good fit with their constituencies, even if they took dramatically different routes to achieve that fit.

The final comparison between Congressman L and Representative 5 shows that there are also different paths to the voluntary end of a House career. Congressman L suffered from a kind of fatigue. By Fenno's account he grew frustrated over time as he could see the fit between himself and his constituency slowly eroding. That frustration was exacerbated by two redistrictings that were forced upon him and added new constituents that he had trouble relating to. Faced with the prospect of re-entering the expansionist phase of his career, he chose to walk away. Representative 5 is completely different. His problem is with the climate in Congress. Faced with the prospect of a Republican controlled House for years to come and having failed to win election to the Senate, Representative 5 decided to move on to other pursuits outside of elected office.

But by no means was he burnt out from constituent relations as Congressman L was.

Representative 5 maintained his fit with his constituency right up to the end, and there is no reason to doubt that he would have easily won future elections had he chosen to stay.

Congressman L's redistricting problem also brings us back to Congressman O and Congressman X. Congressman O worried that he might lose his district if it changed around him, which is exactly what happened to Congressman L. Congressman O died in office before that ever became an issue for him, but had he lived long enough it is reasonable to assume he would have faced the same radical redistricting that his successor Congressman X faced in 1992. Would Congressman O have been able to make the necessary adjustments in order to win in this new district as Congressman X did? Based on Fenno's descriptions of the two men that proposition is questionable at best. Congressman O's shy, reserved nature would not have lent itself to this task. He might have capitulated as Congressman L did, or in the extreme case he might have lost at the polls in that new district, a fate that any proud man, as most politicians seem to be, would prefer to avoid. What separates someone like Congressman L from someone like Congressman X? Why does one retire while the other chooses to stay and fight? Further study of members facing such redistrictings might reveal these answers.

Chapter 5: Concluding Thoughts

“I view public service as a loan which I must constantly repay.” ~ Representative 2

“In politics, no one is entitled.” ~ Representative 7

This dissertation has made the argument that ethnographic research with Members of the House can play a vital role in furthering our understanding of representation and constituent relations. This style of work was pioneered by Richard Fenno and has been carried on by a handful of others, but much remains to be done and discovered. As Hibbing (2003: x-xiii) has pointed out, this will require researchers willing to do this kind of work.

Another argument made in this project is that although this type of research can be difficult and demanding, it is not impossible to do. The time and money required are significant, but not prohibitive. Likewise, the members themselves are often more open to participation than you might expect. True, not every elected official is going to open the door to an outside observer, but many of them will. Some are former teachers who appreciate the scholarly need to better understand the role of the representative. Others find it flattering, perhaps even ego-satisfying, that a researcher would pick them as subjects, especially if the researcher has to travel a significant distance to make it so. Motivations aside, the subjects in this study share a common belief that there is a big difference between what members do in Washington and what they do at home in their districts. They are willing and often times eager to share their knowledge as experts as long as we are willing to ask.

That being said, the basic question of this project is about changes in representative-constituent relations since the time of Fenno's original field work in the 1970s. What is different and what is the same? Chapter 2 presents partisanship as the biggest change in the modern representative's home style. It is a stylistic option that was not present in the 1970s. But as partisanship has increased in the past few decades, the partisan persona has emerged as a viable presentational style for the right member in the right district. This style is suited to members whose districts heavily favor one party over the other. In that circumstance a member has little to lose by criticizing the out-party at every turn. And such criticisms should not be construed as merely pandering to constituents. The representatives who use this type of persona seem to genuinely dislike, perhaps even disdain, the other party.

But partisan personas are not one-size-fits-all. Some members are not in a position to adopt that style even if they wanted to because their districts are not dominated by one party. Likewise, there are some members who simply choose not to accentuate partisan differences even if their constituencies would likely respond well to such criticisms. This is a personal choice on the part of these members, and it makes them, perhaps, the most interesting subjects in this study because they buck the trend that we expect to see in modern American politics.

The limited number of subjects in this study leaves the possibility for other types of partisan personas yet to be discovered. It is possible that there are some members who choose a partisan presentational style even though they represent marginal districts. This seems unlikely given that such a style would be needlessly risky, but the possibility exists nonetheless. It is also possible that there are representatives who display even stronger

partisan styles than the members included in this study, Tea Party Republicans, for example. None of the subjects in this study identify with that movement, and so Tea Partiers would make interesting subjects in future research.

Chapter 3 moves beyond the range of partisan presentational styles and describes the Affordable Care Act as a policy that encourages all three Republicans in this study to adopt the same position despite their otherwise different home styles. It is a unique issue that cuts across the various partisan presentational styles. The Republican arguments against the Affordable Care Act are: 1) it is an economic deterrent; 2) it is a disincentive for small businesses to hire new employees; and 3) it is bad for small businesses in general and in turn is bad for local economies, especially in communities still reeling from the economic downturn that began in 2008. This is what Republican representatives hear from their constituents at town hall meetings and other events. These complaints match the representatives' perceptions of how the healthcare law works and whom it hurts. It is no wonder that Republican members show their opposition to the Affordable Care Act at every turn.

Meanwhile, the Democratic members in this study for the most part stayed silent on the Affordable Care Act. Collectively, these four subjects had almost nothing to say on the matter. This is likely because of the divisive struggles that happened within the Democratic Party leading up to Obamacare. Battle-scarred Democrats seem content to leave well-enough alone and not bring up an issue that could very well lead to arguments with constituents.

But the future of the Affordable Care Act is far from guaranteed. If the Republican Party finds itself in control of the presidency and both Houses of Congress,

which it very well might in January of 2017, a new round of healthcare reform aimed at sweeping away Obamacare is the probable first order of business. The prime targets would be elimination of the individual and employer mandates, though exactly what else would be in a Republican healthcare bill is unclear at this time. On the other hand, if Democrats maintain the presidency in the next election cycle or win back one of the two houses of Congress, the Affordable Care Act should manage to avoid any serious legislative challenge. Eventually, it would become a fact of life in America just like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

Chapter 4 moves away from the discussion of partisanship and focuses on a series of comparisons between subjects in this study and some of Fenno's subjects. This was the most tempting exercise in this project and could have easily included further comparisons. The first comparison between my Representative 4 and Fenno's Congressman O and Congressman X is about a geographic constituency over a period of more than 40 years. Fenno first studied Congressman O in the 1970s and later returned to meet Congressman O's successor, Congressman X, in the 1990s. Fenno documented similarities between the two men, most notably their partisan base of support and their ethnic heritage. Today, that district belongs to Representative 4. The biggest difference is in the ethnicity of the new representative. After generations in which only a Jewish candidate could win this district, Representative 4 symbolizes a change in the ethnic makeup of the district's population. This change is something that Congressman O speculated about in the 1970s, and something that Congressman X saw happening around him in the 1990s. Yet all three of these representatives take similar paths to constituent relations that reflect a common understanding of the district, each seeing it as a collection

of neighborhoods, each of which needs to be tended, and not as a single unit with a common character that pervades the district. This comparison demonstrates the benefit of continued study of the same geographic constituency over long periods of time and creates the possibility of further study of this particular district, either with Representative 4 as her constituency career evolves or with her successor at some future date.

The next comparison in chapter 4 is about two African American members in two separate, urban, majority-black districts, Congressman F from the 1970s and Representative 1 from the present. Although the two men have some commonalities in their pasts there are actually many differences. Congressman F staked his political fortunes on the strength of the black vote in his district, and representing the interests of that community was always his top priority. Alternatively, Representative 1, while in tune with the needs of his black constituents, reaches out to a much broader constituency than Congressman F ever did. This difference in constituent outreach is necessary because Representative 1's district is majority-black by only the slimmest of margins (51%) whereas Congressman F's district was two-thirds black and even increased to 70% following the 1970 redistricting. Representative 1's district is much more ethnically diverse, which necessitates extra constituent outreach, or what Fenno calls expansionist behavior, especially for a first term member. There is also a marked difference in how constituents treat Congressman F and Representative 1. By Fenno's account, Congressman F's constituents idolized him from the day he took office. Combined with Congressman F's own reserved personality, this led to a respectful distance between Congressman F and his constituents. Representative 1 is much more outgoing and enjoys

pressing the flesh. He walks amongst his constituents with an ease that Congressman F never did. Representative 1 is respected by his constituents, no doubt, but they also treat him as a mortal and not as a legend. This likely reflects the passage of time and what it means to be an African American representative today as opposed to 40 years ago. In that earlier time period, Congressman F was part of a revolutionary generation of political leaders who brought unprecedented levels of black representation to Congress after the Civil Rights Movement. Today, Representative 1's district has been previously held by African American representatives for decades, and though it pains me to write that it is not as big of a deal as it was 40 years ago, it simply does not appear to be as big of a deal as it was 40 years ago.

Finally, there is the comparison of Congressman L and Representative 5, two men who had reached the end of their time in Congress. For Congressman L, the problem was about the growing lack of fit with his district. A pair of damaging redistrictings cost him his seat. The first redistricting transformed his district from an urban one that he felt at home in to a mix of urban and suburban territory, and he had trouble adapting to his new constituency. A second redistricting changed his district even more and Congressman L was not prepared to "shoe leather" the new district in order to win it. Faced with the prospect of being catapulted fully back into the expansionist phase of his constituency career, Congressman L decided to retire from the House. But Representative 5's story is very different. Unlike Congressman L, Representative 5 did not retire because of redistricting or because he had lost touch with his constituency in some other way. Every indication is that Representative 5 still enjoyed the work of constituent relations and that he maintained strong support from his constituents right up until the day he left office.

Had he decided to stay in Congress he probably would have continued to win re-election for the foreseeable future. Instead, Representative 5's frustration is with the Washington aspect of the job. He sees the current Congress as one that does not accomplish anything, one that seeks to limit the reach of government's influence instead of using it to spearhead social, economic and technological innovation. Unable to change that philosophy of government on his own, and unable to move to another position in government where he might have more influence, Representative 5 chose to retire and pursue a career in the private sector.

The other theme of chapter 4 is about the importance of member fit with the district. These members fit with their districts, though they have different ways of achieving that fit. The one member who suffers from a lack of fit is Congressman L, and therefore it is not surprising that he wound up retiring rather than trying to force a square peg into a round hole. Representative 5 also suffers from a lack of fit, but in his case it is lack of fit with Washington politics and not with his constituency.

Future Research

If this study has been about the utility of continuing the ethnographic study of members of the House then its closing must be about further ways to continue that study.

Several avenues of further research suggest themselves. First, study of additional members would tell us more about the range of home styles that exist today. Fenno's original study documents a range four types (his Congressman A, Congressman B, Congressman C and Congressman D) that cover a spectrum from personal to policy wonk and those in-between. This study found some evidence of such styles, such as

Representative 6's relational politics and Representative 2's obvious wonkishness. But the limited number of subjects in this study is not enough to say anything about whether these styles continue to represent a spectrum. Likewise, additional studies would tell us more about the partisan presentational styles documented here.

Further research on Representative 1 and Representative 4 is also recommended. They are each at the beginning of their House careers. If they are anything like their predecessors, they will be in these positions for decades to come. Will Representative 1 continue to be a rising star in local politics, perhaps running for higher office when the opportunity presents itself? Will Representative 4's Asian constituency remain the dominant bloc in her district, or will future ethnic shifts change the political landscape in that district? What might happen to either of these representatives in the event that the 2022 redistricting should drastically alter their districts?

There is also the need for additional research focusing on female House members. Fenno's original study included only one woman, and for simplicity's sake he refers to her in *Home Style* using male pronouns. This study included two female representatives. Although not discussed here, they both promote women's issues in a way that their male counterparts do not. A more in-depth look at how these issues factor into constituent relations for female representatives is advisable.

Finally, the quotes from the beginning of this chapter from Representative 2 and Representative 7 show us what a good representative can be. They are not the only subjects in this study who expressed such thoughts, but they were the pithiest. Too often the public sees elected officials who have abused their power or become embroiled in scandal. It becomes easy to forget that there are many other people in government who

are dedicated public servants who do the best job that they can, often under difficult circumstances. They do not feel entitled to their seats, and they know that they must continue to work on behalf of their constituents. The seven subjects who participated in this study, each in their own way, strive to uphold those ideals. It is a difference of beliefs, philosophies and constituencies that creates a diverse, and often conflicting, pool of members in the US House of Representatives.

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