

Biographical Directory of The American Congress, 1774-1961 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 604.

72. Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112. Other instances of flagrant misbehavior are chronicled in Ben Perley Poore, *Perley's Reminiscences of Sixty Years in the National Metropolis* (Philadelphia: Hubbard, 1886), Vol. I, pp. 394-395; and William Plumer, *Memorandum of Proceedings in the United States Senate* (Everett Somerville Brown, ed.) (New York: Macmillan, 1923), pp. 269-276.

73. A report on decorum in the 19th Century House of Commons suggests that a corresponding toning down has taken place, although Commons was palpably a good bit less unruly to start with. Says an ecstatic commentator, "Like so much else that is good in the institutions of Parliament, the behaviour of the House has grown straight, or, like a river, purified itself as it flowed": Eric Taylor, *The House of Commons at Work* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1961), pp. 85-87. Anthony Barker says: "The close of the 19th Century has been described by Lord Campion as the ending of informality and the beginning of rigid government responsibility for policy in the procedures of the House of Commons": "The Most Important And Venerable Function": A Study of Commons Supply Procedure," *Political Studies* 13 (February, 1965): p. 45.

74. Perhaps secondary analysis comparing the four states (California, New Jersey, Tennessee, Ohio) in the Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan, and Ferguson study (*op. cit.*) will yield an acceptable test of the hypothesis. This study has good information on the diffusion of legislative norms; it is less strong on structural data, but these might be relatively easy to gather.

75. Parkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

76. The growth of political institutions does not play a particularly important part in the interpretation offered by W. W. Rostow in *The Stages of Economic Growth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), see, e.g., pp. 18-19, but these may afford at least as good support for his theory as some of the economic indicators he proposes.

RICHARD F. FENNO, JR.

CONGRESSMEN IN COMMITTEES

The following excerpt is drawn from several chapters of Richard F. Fenno, Jr.'s book Congressmen in Committees (1973). In this pathbreaking study of a half-dozen standing committees in the House of Representatives, Fenno discovered that committees differ importantly in their organizational goals, institutional autonomy, responsiveness to external environments, and success rates on the House floor. Fenno's analysis suggests how in-depth studies of committees (and presumably other legislative units) can enrich our understanding of Congress. Fenno is a professor of political science at the University of Rochester.

... We have begun our committee analysis by trying to find out what the individual members of each committee want for themselves from their present committee service. And we have found three quite different patterns, each of which gives special prominence to one of the three basic goals of House members. Furthermore, we found a remarkable consensus on goals among each committee's membership, a discovery that has persuaded us to ground our analysis here. Moreover, each of the three goals (and this was more fortuitous than planned) is the consensual one for two of our six committees. Appropriations and Ways and Means are populated mostly by influence-oriented members; Interior and Post Office are populated mostly by re-election-oriented members; Education and Labor and Foreign Affairs are populated mostly by policy-oriented members. Such modal characterizations are admittedly oversimplifications. But they do have sufficient validity to serve as a basis for predicting gross similarities and differences in committee behavior. Assuming that members will work in committee to achieve their stated goals, committees with similar goal patterns should display important similarities in behavior, and committees with different goal patterns should display important differences in behavior. More specifically, these similarities and differences should appear with respect to decision-making processes and decisions. But even such rudimentary predictions as these will hold only when "all other things are equal." And we know enough about committees to know that such a condition does not obtain. Most important, perhaps, we know that each committee works in a somewhat different environment. We need, therefore, to add this key variable to the analysis.

... The question now arises: how far do committee patterns that are based on members' goals correspond to committee patterns based on environmental constraints? That is, do committees whose members have similar goals operate in similar environments? The answer to both questions, we would now have to conclude is: "a little, but not much."

The two committees with distinctively influence-oriented members are also the two committees with the parent chamber as the most prominent environmental element. Similarly, the two committees whose members are re-election-oriented are also the two committees for which clientele groups are the most

prominent environmental element. This is what we mean by "a little." On the other hand, for each of these two pairs of committees, there are some marked dissimilarities in environment. The policy coalitions facing Ways and Means are more complex and more partisan than those facing Appropriations. And the policy coalitions facing Interior are more complex and more pluralistic than those facing Post Office. In terms of their environments, the influence-oriented and reelection-oriented committees are as much unlike as they are like one another.

The environments of the two policy-oriented committees have almost nothing in common. The policy coalitions facing Education and Labor are more complex than those confronting Foreign Affairs. The environment of Foreign Affairs most closely resembles that of Post Office in its monolithic character. And the environment of Education and Labor most nearly resembles that of Ways and Means in its partisan character. Overall, within each pair of committees, one committee seems to confront a distinctly more complex, more pluralistic policy coalition than the other. The policy environment of Ways and Means is more complex than that of Appropriations, that of Interior more complex than Post Office, and that of Education and Labor more complex than Foreign Affairs. As we move to describe committee behavior, we might expect it to be more difficult to predict the behavior of a committee operating in a complex environment than that of a committee, composed of members with the same goals, subject to a relatively simple set of constraints.

What seems most striking, in answering our earlier question, is the degree to which the environments of our pairs differ from one another. None of our three pairs, alike in member goals, is wholly alike with regard to the environment. We conclude, therefore, that the environmental variable is a largely *independent* one. It is not possible to predict the characteristics of a committee's environment by knowing only its members' goals. Nor is it possible to predict the goals simply by knowing the environment. Each variable can be expected to make an independent contribution in explaining a committee's behavior. And each must be investigated carefully. We do not mean there is no relationship between member goals and environmental constraints. The small degree of interconnection we have noted indicates that there are some linkages. And we would certainly expect that for any given committee, a change in one variable might produce a change in the other. But, clearly, each must be given independent weight throughout the analysis which follows.

... We have viewed the committee environment in terms of the influence outsiders have on committee members. But if one is searching for the antecedents of these external constraints, one finds that the subject of the policy and its associated characteristics must be given a central place. We have compared the relative prominence of four categories of interested outsiders. But we have found, again and again, that similarities and, more often, differences in their interest and prominence are related to the policy area itself. Our idea of "policy coalition" is intended to acknowledge the importance of policy subjects, without, at the same time, making them an independent variable of the analysis. Some readers will probably wish we had done just that—developed a classification of policy subjects and/or policy characteristics to serve as major independent variables. Those

who feel this way should be encouraged to try. There is nothing in this study to challenge and much to confirm Capitol Hill wisdom that committee differences are related to policy differences. From the foregoing analysis, one might suggest that such policy characteristics as their importance to the parent institution, their salience, and their fragmentation would be useful categories. But we have chosen to compare committees at one level removed from their policy subjects because to do so helps us to advance the argument we have been making. We have given special emphasis to the goals of committee members; it is more in keeping with that emphasis to consider the environment in terms of people actively applying constraints to the members. From this perspective, policy subjects become important primarily because of the outsiders that take an interest in them and, hence, in the committee. It is obviously necessary to know about policy characteristics in order to locate the crucially important outsiders. But it is the outsiders that interest us most in this analysis . . .

On every committee the members try to accommodate their personal goals to important environmental expectations and to embody this accommodation in broad, underlying guidelines for decision making. No two committees, it appears, will produce the same set of guiding premises. One explanation is, of course, that no two committees share the same set of member goals and the same set of environmental constraints. Another explanation might be that no two committees deal with the same area of policy. For, once again, we find differences among our variables related to differences in policy subject. In this chapter as in the previous one, however, we have conducted our analysis at one level removed from policy subjects. We have been interested, here, in the *perceptions* that each committee's members have of their policy area—on the assumption that members' behavior is based on members' perceptions of policy subjects and not on the objective characteristics of the policies themselves. At least we would argue this way until such time as a satisfactory categorization of policy subjects could be made from which one could deduce members' perceptions. For now, we might simply underscore the value of knowing: that Appropriations members perceive their subject matter to be nonideological, while Education and Labor members perceive their subject matter to be ideological; that Ways and Means members think of their business as freighted with consequences, while Post Office members think of their business as inconsequential; that Interior members view their policy area as specific and detailed, while Foreign Affairs members see theirs as general and vague. These differences in perceptions of subject matter help to account for differences in the decision-making processes of the committees. For example, the perceptions of subject matter held by Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Interior are more conducive to developing and sustaining expertise as a basis for decision making than are the perceptions held by the other three committees.

Despite the uniqueness of each committee's decision rules, two interesting patterns did emerge—interesting because both of them distinguish Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Interior on the one hand from Education and Labor, Foreign Affairs, and Post Office on the other. Each of the first three committees has achieved a consensus on its decision rules; each of the latter three committees

has not. Furthermore, the decision rules of the first three committees are all, in one way or another, oriented toward insuring success on the House floor; the decision rules of the latter three are not. By *floor success*, we mean to include both House members' reactions to the content of a committee's decisions and House members' reactions to the committee as a decision-making collectivity. Obviously, the explanation for the two patterns—in terms of members' goals, environmental constraints, and strategic problems—differs within and across the two clusters of committees. We have tried to supply committee-by-committee explanations as we went along.

It may be that the two patterns are related. The more a committee concerns itself about floor success, the more likely it is, perhaps, to come to agreement on an operative set of decision rules. Or, perhaps, the greater its agreement on decision rules, the more likely will a committee enjoy success on the floor. Or it may be that the two patterns are not connected at all. Starting with the observation, however, we can ask whether the three high-consensus, House-oriented committees will display different decision-making processes from those of the three low-consensus, non-House-oriented committees. . . .

We have tried to demonstrate . . . that each committee's internal decision-making processes are shaped by its members' goals, by the constraints placed upon the members by interested outside groups, and by the strategic premises that members adopt in order to accommodate their personal goals to environmental constraints. One overall comparative dimension suggested by the independent variables of the analysis involves the relative impact of the members themselves and of external groups on decision-making processes. We might think of the dimension as *decision-making autonomy*.⁵ The greater the relative influence of the members, the more autonomous the committee; the greater the relative influence of outside groups, the less autonomous the committee. Making only the grossest kinds of distinctions, it appears that Ways and Means, Appropriations, and Interior are more autonomous decisionmakers than Foreign Affairs, Education and Labor, and Post Office. That is, members of the first three committees have a more independent influence on their own decision-making processes than do the members of the second three. For Ways and Means, we might mention the restraints on partisanship and the leadership of Wilbur Mills; for Appropriations, there are the specialization and internal influence of its subcommittees; for Interior, there are its participatory democracy and the leadership of Wayne Aspinall. The sources of committee autonomy are not always the same, but the result—a marked degree of internal, member control of decision making—is the same. With the other three committees, it is the environmental impact on decision making that seems most noteworthy. For Foreign Affairs, it is executive domination; for Education and Labor, it is the permeation of partisan policy coalitions; for Post Office, it is clientele domination. The three more autonomous committees emphasize expertise in decision making more than the three less autonomous ones, suggesting that perception of subject matter is related to decision-making processes.

The clustering of committees with regard to decision-making autonomy parallels the clustering noted in the last chapter, based on some similarities and differences

in the committees' decision rules. Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Interior have, in common, and consensus on decision rules, a House-oriented set of decision rules, and decision-making autonomy. The three characteristics are probably closely interrelated. But the main thrust of our argument would be that the first two contribute to the third. When a committee's members agree on what they should do, they are more likely to be able to control their own decision making than when they cannot agree on what to do. When a committee's decision rules are oriented toward success (i.e., winning plus respect and confidence) on the House floor, the committee will have a greater desire to establish its operating independence than when its strategies are not especially concerned with floor success. House members, we recall, *want* their committees to be relatively autonomous, relatively expert decision makers. They are more likely, therefore, to follow and to respect committees that can demonstrate some political and intellectual independence of outside, non-House groups. Whether or not distinguishing the two clusters of committees will, in turn, help us to differentiate and explain committee decisions is a question we will keep in mind as we turn to a discussion of that subject. . . .

We have presented evidence to demonstrate that committee decisions do, indeed, follow those decision rules that each committee's members have devised to accommodate their personal goals to the constraints of their environment. That is, a committee's decisions are explainable in terms of its members' goals, the constraints of its environment, its decision strategies, and—to a lesser, refining degree, perhaps—by its decision-making processes. Enough evidence has been mustered, we hope, to lend strength to the line of argument we have pursued. We have not, of course, *proven* anything, for we have not tried very determinedly to muster a contrary body of evidence. Those who find themselves resisting our selective use of evidence are invited to provide counterexamples and to fashion another line of argument. We hope that what we have presented will seem worth that kind of further development and testing.

To the degree that a committee's decisions follow its decision rules, committee members and the most interested outside groups should be reasonably satisfied with committee performance. For those rules are, after all, an effort to accommodate the views of each. We have not found a measure of satisfaction that would allow us to describe and compare amounts of internal and/or external satisfaction. But we have detected varying degrees of it. For member satisfaction, a necessary condition would seem to be committee *activity*. No member goal can be achieved without some minimal level of activity. Post Office members' dissatisfaction arose because that Committee slipped below an acceptable level of activity; it "wasn't doing anything." Foreign Affairs has simmered with dissatisfaction because its members have felt they "weren't doing enough." Both would have been satisfied with increased activity. The other committees have been active. For Education and Labor members, indeed, their increased activity was the basis for their newly found satisfaction in the Powell years.

Members of our other three committees require an additional condition for their satisfaction. They feel the need to make an *independent* contribution to decision making. Especially, they want to feel a measure of independence relative to the executive branch—in both an institutional and a policy sense. They

want to preserve autonomous decision-making processes and they want to develop substantive expertise. When they do achieve such independence, they develop a psychological feeling of group identity, which further strengthens their independence. Ways and Means, Appropriations, and Interior members' satisfaction, then, seems to be based on both their *activity* and their *independence*. During the period studied, these three committees maintained a higher and steadier level of satisfaction with their own performance than did the three other committees.

It is hard to generalize about the conditions of satisfaction for the groups comprising the environment. Perhaps it is enough to remind ourselves, again, that individual committees face quite varied sets of environmental constraints. For two of our committees, the institutional constraints of the parent chamber are most important. House expectations call for a balance between autonomous and responsive decision making. And, so far, Ways and Means and Appropriations seem to have maintained a balance satisfactory to House leaders and House majorities. For the other four, the policy coalitions of their environments are more important. But dominance in those policy coalitions varies, so that the expectations confronting the four committees also vary. The executive-led coalition confronting Foreign Affairs wants legitimation plus assessments of political feasibility. The clientele-led coalitions facing Interior and Post Office want access to members plus sympathetic committee member spokesmen. The party-led coalitions facing Education and Labor want all these things plus a partisanship that will abet victory at the polls. How can we compare levels of satisfaction across such diverse expectations? Is the executive branch more satisfied with the legitimation it gets than clientele groups are with the spokesmanship they get? All we can say is that the leaders of each coalition do seem pretty well satisfied with the committees that interest them—the executive with Foreign Affairs, the postal employees with Post Office, all but the preservationist groups with Interior, the Democrats and Republicans with Education and Labor.

Looking across the six committees, some of the gross similarities and difference noted earlier do appear to carry through to their decisions. That is, Ways and Means, Appropriations, and Interior remain strikingly similar to one another and strikingly different from Education and Labor, Foreign Affairs, and Post Office. The three committees with a consensus on House-oriented decision rules do seem to be more successful on the House floor than the three committees whose decision rules are not House-oriented. Members of the same three, more autonomous committees express a greater overall satisfaction with their committee's decision processes and decisions than do the members of the three less autonomous committees with theirs. And from the autonomy and satisfaction of the first three flows a sense of corporate identity and corporate pride that is missing in the three less autonomous, less satisfied committees. On the other hand, the decisions of our three less autonomous committees seem to bring relatively greater satisfaction to interested and influential environmental groups than do the decisions of our three more autonomous committees. Education and Labor, Foreign Affairs, and Post Office are more permeable and, hence, relatively more responsive to the wishes of people outside the Congress than are Ways and Means, Appropriations, and Interior.

Utilizing these *relative* distinctions, we find two types of House committees. One type is identified by the House orientation of its decision rules, the autonomy of its decision-making processes, its emphasis on committee expertise, its success on the House floor, its members' sense of group identity, and the relatively higher ratio of member to nonmember satisfaction with its performance. The other type is identified by its extra-House-oriented decision rules, the permeability of its decision-making processes, the de-emphasis on committee expertise, its lack of success on the House floor, the absence of any feeling of group identification, and the relatively higher ratio of nonmember to member satisfaction with its performance.

Since no committee falls completely into one category or the other, we probably should think of these as "ideal types" toward which committees tend—a *corporate* type, on the one hand, and a *permeable* type, on the other. Committees of the corporate type tend to be more influential but less responsive than permeable committees. Permeable committees tend to be more responsive but less influential than corporate committees. Ways and Means, Appropriations and Interior come closest to the corporate type of committee. Education and Labor, Foreign Affairs, and Post Office come closest to the permeable type of committee. And, we might add, all Senate committees tend toward the permeable category. There are no corporate committees in the Senate.