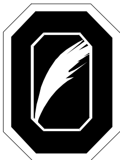
Parliaments and Legislatures Series

Congress Responds to the Twentieth Century

Edited by Sunil Ahuja and Robert Dewhirst



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To Julia and Nina

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Series Editor's Foreword

The editors of this collection offer students of Congress a dazzling array of studies of modern congressional politics. The book does not offer complex theoretical grounding of the analyses of crucial facets of congressional politics. Rather, these authors probe key features of congressional behavior with an eye to the evolution of Congress during the twentieth century. Straightforwardly, the contributors present the results of investigations of both internal and external factors influencing the development of Congress as a U.S. institution.

This collection of studies is, like Gaul, divided into three parts. In the first part, the authors focus on the changing nature of membership in Congress. The sheer population growth and increasing political complexity of congressional politics in the United States by the end of the twentieth century has profoundly affected the ways members represent their constituencies. Political competition has waned, so that sitting members of Congress enjoy enormous advantages over challengers in raising political "war chests" and, accordingly, the incumbent return rate in congressional elections is very high. Finally, the work of members of Congress has become far more professionalized than it was earlier in the century, so that modern congressional life is a combination of careerism, norms like seniority that affect patterns of influence, unprecedented growth and expertise in the congressional staffs, and myriad "informal" caucuses of members that aggregate them into special pleaders for economic, ideological, or regional interests.

Membership in Congress is a different matter today than it was at the beginning of the twentieth century. Congress has a more professionalized membership now, responding to the great complexities of the late twentieth century, embroiled both in electoral contexts that are less politically competitive than they were, and surrounded on the job in Washington and at home by career imperatives, professionalization of representative and staff, and at work in a world of special interests, party demands, and informal caucuses embracing issues of party, interest group, industry or business imperative, or regional cause.

In the second part of this collection, the authors pay attention to Congress as an organization, a highly stable institution. Here analyses are presented of the changing nature of political party leadership in the twentieth century, and the influences of procedural changes, committee power,

the congressional parties, and new circumstances of congressional decision making when the discussion ends and roll-call votes are taken to decide issues. Uncertain and shifting patterns of partisanship in the House and Senate have made for new challenges to party leaders. Procedurally, Congress has become a "sticky institution" in which rules of procedure, once put into place, become hard to change or abolish. Central to congressional policymaking are highly specialized and influential committees and subcommittees. Congressional decision making gravitates much more today around political party issues and party voting, and congressional voting is both more public today than it was at the beginning of the twentieth century and also more important to the future political prospects of members who still, as they say, "run scared," fearing the wrath of an unhappy constituency directed against unpopular congressional votes.

The third part of this collection concerns relationships between Congress and other institutions in the environment. The most prominent such external relation of Congress is the president of the United States. In addition, Congress and political interest groups are intimately intertwined. Clearly, as one author says, "during the twentieth century, the United States moved from a system of congressional government . . . to a system of presidential government with the president at the center of a high national policymaking process." Today, it is difficult to assay the role of Congress without taking that institution's relations with the president into account. Moreover, Congress is a highly permeable political institution, notably influenced by its external world of political interest groups and their spokespersons.

The lessons of this perceptive anthology concern change. Congress is very responsive to change in the environment surrounding it. In short, Congress does change. It has evolved into a much more professional, expert, politically alert institution than it was at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the same time, Congress is a highly stable institution. As one may say, "the more Congress changes, the more it stays the same." These chapters make congressional stability and change more understandable because they present congressional scholarship at its very best, and provide a showcase for the analysis of congressional change.

Samual C. Patterson

Preface

Congress occupies a central place in the U.S. political system. Its reach in the American society is vast and deep. Over time, the issues it has confronted have increased in both quantity and complexity. At the beginning, Congress dealt with a handful of matters, whereas today it has its hands in every imaginable aspect of life. It has attempted to meet these challenges and has changed throughout the course of its history, prodded by factors both external and internal to the institution. Our view therefore is that as society changed throughout the twentieth century, Congress responded to those changes.

This book is designed to take stock of Congress at the end of the twentieth century. The essays in this book analyze Congress as it evolved throughout the twentieth century. They cover the major "areas" in the study of Congress and were originally written for this book by leading experts in the respective areas. We hope the readers will take away a good bit from this book about Congress in the twentieth century. The chapters published herein provide a refreshing look at one of the most powerful legislatures in the world from a long-term and detached viewpoint, afforded by the passage of time.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all the authors who have contributed to this project. We are also grateful to Samuel C. Patterson, editor of the Parliaments and Legislatures Series of The Ohio State University Press, others at OSU Press, and the reviewers for accepting this project and providing the necessary guidance leading to its completion.

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Congress in the Twentieth Century

Sunil Ahuja and Robert Dewhirst

There are some widely accepted truisms about the U.S. Congress. It is one of the most powerful legislatures in the world. It is a dynamic body. It is one of the most widely studied and discussed public institutions in the United States. Indeed, with Britain's Parliament as its primary rival, the American Congress is perhaps the most examined legislative body in the world. As one could expect with such a major institution, it has had its share of admirers and critics. Moreover, like any complex major institution, Congress has evolved over time.

Congress occupies a central place in the U.S. political system, stemming largely from the policymaking, oversight, and advise-and-consent powers granted to it by the U.S. Constitution. Its reach in the American society is vast and deep. Over the years, the issues it confronts have increased in both quantity and in complexity. At the beginning, Congress dealt with a handful of matters, ranging from war and national security to commerce and economic growth. Today, Congress has its hands in every imaginable aspect of life, ranging from taxes to missile defense, from transportation to the environment, from health care to crime, from school lunch programs to the quality of education, to name a few. Prodded by new members and new constituencies, Congress has attempted to meet these challenges by changes in its committee structure, party leadership, rules and procedures, relations with the president, and the like.

The purpose of this book is to study and analyze Congress as it evolved throughout the twentieth century. Our view is that Congress has changed due to an array of external pressures and, like any dynamic institution, it has made the necessary internal changes to continue to flourish. Our guiding principle is that Congress changes in response to both external and internal factors. The environmental pressures in the form of the nation's

changing political, social, cultural, and economic landscape force Congress to respond with time-specific public policies. Internal pressures, such as members' electoral concerns and their drive for power and prestige within the institution, also force Congress to adapt with new modi operandi.[1]

With that in mind, our aim here is to answer questions about how the institution evolved throughout the century. What was Congress like at the beginning of the century? What was it like at the end? What factors contributed to congressional change? How did Congress respond to changing needs, emanating from both outside and inside the institution? Was Congress better off or worse off at the end of the century than it was at the start? In sum, how did Congress survive and prosper in the twentieth century? The essays presented in this book seek to answer these questions with a retrospective look at how Congress evolved throughout the twentieth century. These essays cover major "areas" in the study of Congress, such as representation, elections, parties, committees, leadership, relations with the White House, and so forth. The chapters published herein were written for this book by leading experts in the respective areas.

We hope the readers will take away a good bit from this book about Congress in the twentieth century. With little doubt, Congress at the end of the century was different in many ways from the Congress of a hundred years earlier. These refreshing essays make it possible for us to look at the most powerful legislative forum in the world from a long-term and detached viewpoint, afforded in part by the luxury of the passage of time.

General Impressions of Congress

Congress at the end of the twentieth century was vastly different from Congress at the beginning of the century. A number of congressional observers have provided notable assessments, based upon years of study, of Congress in the twentieth century. Here are some of the highlights of those observations.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Woodrow Wilson had made some astute statements about Congress, a number of which have been widely cited over the years. The Princeton University scholar tended to be critical of congressional floor actions and strongly impressed with the institution's standing committees. Writing in 1885, Wilson maintained that "Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition," asserted that congressional discussions tended to be "aimed at random," and complained that Congress lacked "a common mind, and if it had, has not the machinery for changing it." Conversely, Wilson eagerly pointed to the powers of the standing committees as the place where one could see "Congress at work." He cited "a score or two" of important standing committees as "too

numerous and too disconnected, to fight against."[2] So, not surprisingly, the future president viewed the chairs of these standing committees as the main power centers on Capitol Hill.

In 1901, in the preface to the fifteenth edition of his *Congressional Government,* Wilson wrote that many of his observations of fifteen years previously were still true. Some things, however, had changed. Recognizing the power of the leadership, he noted: "The power of the Speaker has of late years taken on new phases. He is now, more than ever, expected to guide and control the whole course of business in the House, if not alone, at any rate through the instrumentality of the small Committee on Rules, of which he is chairman. . . . The congressional caucus has fallen a little into the background."[3]

In 1947, Estes Kefauver, a member of Congress, and Jack Levin questioned whether Congress could meet the demands of an increasingly complex society and remain a powerful legislature as a protector of democracy. They answered: yes, it can. They discuss many reforms, including better relations with the executive, more responsible parties, fewer committees, limits on outside pressure groups, and the elimination of seniority, among others. In response to the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, they note that "the battle for modernizing Congress is merely beginning." They go on to observe that the "crux of the problem is adaptability to change. . . . To survive in an epochal twentieth century that quickens its pace with each passing year, Congress must prepare to meet and solve new and old issues at a faster pace."[4]

In 1965, a prominent scholar, Samuel Huntington, echoed similar concerns. In his seminal article "Congressional Responses to the Twentieth Century," Huntington bemoaned what he saw as the decline of congressional power and legislative functions, asserting that Congress had failed to evolve institutionally in response to changes in the American society it sought to represent. Indeed, when it legislated, Congress tended to follow presidents too much and public opinion too little. Overall, then, Congress tended either to fail to legislate altogether or, when it did act, legislated "too little and too late." Huntington maintained that three factors contributed to Congress relinquishing its dominant legislative position. He saw Congress as being too insulated from primary forces of social change, having power dispersed to too many domains to establish overall legislative priorities, and being too tied to oversight of the federal bureaucracy.[5]

In 1981, Norman Ornstein wrote that some things had changed in Congress since the publication of Huntington's essay, while other trends had continued. Congress had become less insulated; its power had dispersed even more. Although Congress was paying more attention to legislating, members also were devoting increased attention toward overseeing the bureaucracy.[6] Ornstein observed that "Congress today is more open, democratic, and responsive to the variegated social and political forces in

the country it represents than any other legislature in the world. It is now criticized, often justifiably, for being *too* responsive, particularly to single, narrow interests. But more frequently, Congress's actions or inactions represent the consensus—or lack thereof—in the country at large."[7]

By 1992, Allen Hertzke and Ronald Peters viewed Congress as at a crossroads as it approached century's end. They too saw Congress shaped by the American political culture. They note the cultural environment of the 1980s was increasingly pressuring members with a campaign finance arms race on one hand coupled with limits on their outside income and salary limitations restricting their professional activities on the other hand. But the major concern for these scholars was the need for campaign finance reform changes, which, they concede, would require incumbents to cast difficult votes and to reject putting their electoral interests above the public interest. In sum, Hertzke and Peters are cautiously optimistic about the future of Congress. For them, however, much depends on the American culture and what the American public demands, particularly in terms of necessary reforms, of Congress.[8]

These and many other assessments show the evolving contours of Congress in the twentieth century. The institution of Congress has been properly revered by many of its students, but also rightly criticized too. For better or for worse, the body changed throughout the century, primarily in response to the changing external environment. As the above assessments suggest, to the extent that Congress failed to change or resisted reform to fit the evolving society, it became less viable, unresponsive, and the subject of sharp criticism. The following section provides a brief account of the congressional changes in the twentieth century.

Milestones and Trends in the Twentieth-Century Congress

Congress underwent significant changes throughout the twentieth century. These changes came about due to both internal and external conditions. Changing issues, constituencies, and membership combined to help bring about reforms in the institution's structure, rules, and procedures, and in its ways of legislating. With a broad historic focus, we highlight in this segment the most significant turning points and trends in the evolution of the twentieth-century Congress.

Constitutionally, nothing changed in the twentieth century with reference to the House of Representatives. The constitutional design of electing House members to two-year terms by a direct vote of the people remained the same. However, the process of selecting senators underwent major reform. The Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1913, called for popular election, instead of appointment, of senators. This

meant that the senators, just like their counterparts in the House, would be directly accountable to their constituents and would campaign and attempt to win seats.

Inside the House, the early twentieth century recorded some significant events. The most notable struggles ensued between the new, progressive Republicans elected in the 1894 and 1896 elections, and the chamber's Republican leadership. Led by conservative Speaker Joseph "Uncle Joe" Cannon (R-IL), 1903–11, the majority leadership worked in autocratic ways, controlling committee assignments, floor procedures, and the agenda. Frustrated by their inability to advance their agenda, progressive Republicans joined Democrats in a revolt to severely curb the Speaker's powers. In the 61st Congress (1909–11), the House began its organization with new rules that eliminated the Speaker's power to appoint committees and removed the Speaker from the House Rules Committee while expanding that panel.[9]

After the Republicans lost control of the House in the 1910 election and Speaker Cannon was voted out of office, the new Democratic majority took steps to democratize the House by creating a Committee on Committees to appoint members to panels, and used the Democratic caucus to control the House agenda. Perhaps the most significant reform of this era was the establishment of the seniority system, giving members the right to a committee once they had been assigned to that panel and selecting chairs based upon their years of service on the panel. Overall, this change greatly enhanced the power of committee chairs, and took the control over committee assignments away from the Speaker. In the Senate, the only major reform of this period occurred in 1917, with the adoption of the legendary Rule 22. This rule provided for cloture votes that, if successful, allowed extra-large majorities to end filibusters, a practice increasingly used by senators to obstruct legislation.[10]

With the seniority system firmly in place, the reforms of the early 1900s ushered in the so-called Textbook Congress. The principle feature of the Textbook Congress was the dominance of committees in the legislative process. This meant that bills had to go through the appropriate standing committees. With members' seats on the panels protected, committees could thus win major changes to bills within their jurisdiction as a sort of "toll" paid to members to agree to approve the legislation. Another factor that bolstered the Textbook Congress was the growth in congressional careers. Around 1900, members of each chamber served an average of six years (three two-year terms for representatives and one six-year term for senators). By the end of the twentieth century, the average term for representatives was 9.8 years (almost five terms), while senators served an average of 13.2 years (just more than two terms).[11] The seniority system and long congressional careers allowed members to serve on committees for

lengthy periods, with some becoming committee chairs after sufficiently long service. The chairs then established their "baronies" on their panels, and frustrated the will of the party leaders. As Wilson had observed, the U.S. political system was "a government by the chairmen of the Standing Committees of Congress."[12] Parties and party leaders, with their diminished influence from the 1910 reforms that reduced the powers of the Speaker, had to take a backseat to the committees. The Textbook Congress would last from 1910s until the reforms of the 1970s.

The next major reform effort in the twentieth-century Congress came with the passage of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. Congress was forced to reorganize in response to an increasingly complex society. As the issues confronting Americans became more numerous and sophisticated, Congress found itself unable to cope with this complexity under the existing legislative structure. Thus, congressional committees were streamlined and reduced in number, and subcommittees were allowed to proliferate (although they were still largely under the control of the committee chairs). Additionally, increased reliance was placed on crucial roles played by congressional staffers. Although the act primarily authorized hiring committee staffers, in subsequent years the size of the personal staffs also grew. In 1947, the House had a total of 167 and the Senate a total of 232 committee staffers. In 1993, that number grew to 2,118 and 897, respectively. In 1947, personal staffers totaled 1,440 in the House and 590 in the Senate. In 1993, House personal staffers increased to a whopping total of 7,400 and Senate personal staffers to a total of 4,138.[13] Staffs were cut somewhat in the 1990s, after the Republican takeover of Congress.

The ascendancy in committee and personal staff and in other resources for members, such as trips home and franking privileges, coupled with members' "permanent" slots on committees, permitted members beginning in the 1960s to campaign and seek reelection on their own, without a great deal of assistance from parties. Until then, parties had been the central vehicles to electoral success. As in parliamentary democracies, candidates in the United States sought party nominations by running on issues important to their party faithful and attempted to win general elections on those issues. Parties played pivotal roles in recruiting candidates, in providing organizational help, and in financing campaigns. Once candidates began to campaign and were successful based upon developing "personal connections" with constituents back home, parties were deemed less important, and these trends that subsequently stimulated the so-called candidate-centered campaigns. With a growing array of resources, presence on committees of importance to their constituents, and control over the federal bureaucracy, members came to dominate their own electoral fate. These and other factors led to enormous advantages for incumbents of both parties in both chambers, and greatly undermined the potency of

challengers.[14] Starting in the 1960s, particularly in the House, the number of electorally “safe” seats (in which incumbents could be counted on to win with at least 55 percent of the popular vote) rose, resulting in the decline in competition in elections.[15]

With representatives and senators fending for themselves to win reelections, members began to be constantly in the campaign mode. Moreover, beginning with the 1958 elections, the House and Senate witnessed an influx of liberal members. Just like their predecessors in the 1896 and 1898 elections (although the previous winners were mostly Republicans and the latter victors were mostly Democrats), the new members would be frustrated by their inability to advance their agenda. Conservative Democrats from the southern states dominated the House and the Senate in the 1950s and 1960s. In the House, conservative representative George H. Mahon (D-TX) chaired the appropriations panel, William M. Colmer (D-MS) led the Rules committee, and Wilbur D. Mills (D-AR) headed the Ways and Means panel. The Senate was controlled by the “inner club” that included Senators Richard B. Russell (D-GA), Russell Long (D-LA), and Lyndon B. Johnson (D-TX). In both chambers, the new northern liberals regularly clashed with the old southern conservatives largely because the newcomers felt slighted and could not pursue their agenda, something they had to do to win reelection.

These tensions resulted first in the breakdown of camaraderie in Congress, and then in the reforms of the early to mid-1970s. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, both chambers were governed by a set of norms and folkways. These included apprenticeship, reciprocity, courtesy, and institutional loyalty, among others.[16] These norms implied conformity to a code of conduct. For example, junior members were not expected to participate in proposing bills or making speeches until they had attained some seniority; members were expected to be courteous toward each other, reciprocate in legislative activities, and be loyal to the institution. However, constant disagreements between senior and junior members or between northern liberals and southern conservatives, coupled with the desire on the part of the junior members to build their electoral bases, led to a growing breakdown of several of these norms and folkways starting in the 1970s. Later in the twentieth century, other factors, such as divided government and party unity, would contribute to exacerbate the clashes between parties and ideologies.

These conflicts led to another set of major reforms in the twentieth-century Congress, this time in the 1970s. In the House, the reforms, pushed mostly by liberals, were designed to democratize and open the institution. These changes affected the operation of the committees, subcommittees, parties, the office of the Speaker, and floor deliberations. In 1970, committee chairs began to lose power. Chairs could no longer block bills before their panel or refuse to hold meetings. Committees had to

adopt formal rules to govern their procedures and had to hold meetings in public. In 1971, the Democratic Caucus asked the Democratic Committee on Committees to no longer rely strictly on seniority in picking committee chairs. In 1973, the caucus adopted what soon was christened the "Subcommittee Bill of Rights." These changes required the committees to refer bills to their subcommittees, gave subcommittees jurisdiction over their agendas, and granted staff and other resources to the subcommittees. In 1974, the Speaker was authorized to select or remove a majority of panel members and was given power over bills (referrals and time limits) in committees. Other changes included recorded roll calls on the House floor, thanks to the advent of electronic voting, and an increase in resources (office support and travel) given to members.

After all was said and done, the "reform Congress" of the 1970s had initiated changes that led to some notable ramifications. Key consequences of these changes, realized during subsequent years known as the "postreform Congress," were: (1) an empowerment of subcommittees and therefore a loss of power of the committees; (2) a revival of the party caucuses and therefore the power of party leaders; and (3) an "openness" in the legislative process. These changes simultaneously centralized and decentralized power and responsibility on Capitol Hill. During the Textbook Congress, committees had been the center of power. With greater rights and resources shifted to subcommittees, power devolved to these panels in the postreform Congress.[17] With the acceptance of party caucuses in the agenda-setting and legislative processes, rank-and-file legislators found new avenues of influence in the institution. They would elect party leaders who campaigned on promises both to protect member rights and advance their agenda. Party leaders thus became directly accountable to their respective caucus members.[18] Increased power for leaders in the legislative process meant they could bypass the committees, once the most important rite in the passage of legislation and, with special rules, take bills directly to the chamber's floor.[19] Floor activity gradually increased, as did unity in partisan voting on both sides of the aisle.[20] So, in the postreform Congress, the power of committees waned, the influence of rank-and-file members and of party leaders waxed, and the legislative process became porous.

The last institutional milestone in the twentieth-century Congress came in 1994, when the Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives for the first time in forty years. Impatient and eager to rule after being in the minority four decades, the victorious Republicans made changes designed to enhance the power of their leadership, place impositions on committees, and provide stronger majority party control of floor proceedings. Among other changes, the Republicans gave the Speaker greater control over committee assignments and referral of legislation, limited committee assignments and chairmanships and streamlined the committees, and attempted to make

Congress more responsible in budgeting.[21] Increased power for the Speaker was a trend begun by the Democratic Congresses in the 1980s after the reforms of the 1970s, and continued by the new Republican majority in the 1990s. However, the Republicans imposed a number of restrictions (term limits on the Speaker, term limits on committee chairs, abolition of proxy voting, reduction in committee staffs, elimination of legislative service organizations, etc.) that the Democrats did not begin. The House became even more centralized under Republican rule than it had been under Democratic control.

The twentieth century ended with a markedly different Congress from the one at the start of the century. At the close of the century, Congress was more open, more diverse, and more representative than it had been at the beginning. On the one hand, end-of-century legislators surpassed their predecessors in willingness to respond to constituent requests, advance greater member and citizen participation in legislation, and be responsive to fellow members. On the other hand, incumbent electoral advantages, exorbitant campaign costs, the corrosive influence of interest groups, long congressional careers, increased partisanship, and a lack of civility in the body and respect for the institution were also notable institutional features at the close of the century.

Studying Congress in the Twentieth Century

The scholarly literature on Congress has a rich tradition. We maintain that of all the political institutions in the country, and indeed in the world, the U.S. Congress has arguably been studied the most and analyzed the best. Scholars have produced vast amounts of work designed to enhance our understanding of every aspect of Congress.

The earliest studies of Congress, toward the end of the nineteenth century, were of the descriptive variety. The focus and approach of the studies tended to be on describing Congress as it was. These works, not driven by theories, did not appear to propound any theories as a result. The best-known and most widely read examples of these are Wilson's examination of the legislative process and the role of Congress and congressional committees in the U.S. system of government: Lauros McConachie's study of committees, and Mary Follett's work on leadership in the House.[22]

Since then, however, two major approaches have dominated the study of Congress in the twentieth century: behavioralism and formal theory. Those scholars in the behavioralist tradition tend to analyze the behavior of individual members and attempt to generalize based upon available data. The behavioralist approach, therefore, is largely inductive. Those in the rational choice tradition tend to develop formal theories and then

examine whether or not the evidence fits those theories. Thus, the formal theory approach is mainly deductive. Although both of these approaches came to prominence in the second half of the century, some strains of behavioralism could be seen as early as the beginning of the century. An important avenue within behavioralism is roll call analyses. As early as 1902, Lawrence Lowell studied the roll calls of political parties in legislatures. Lowell's work was followed by Stuart Rice's and Herman Beyle's studies in the same area.[23]

As the "behavioral revolution" came to the fore in the 1950s, the discipline began to emphasize the "science" in political science. After a period of hibernation, roll call analyses reemerged, though now with a more scientific basis. Several pioneering studies were conducted during the 1950s and 1960s, including those by Julius Turner, David Truman, and David Mayhew.[24] The subject in each of these works was an analysis of party roll call floor votes in the House and Senate. In subsequent years, roll call analyses began to be more longitudinal than before and were performed more at the aggregate level than before. They were studied in terms of "policy areas" as well (i.e., analysis conducted based upon votes in economic policy area, social policy area, foreign policy area, etc.). For example, Aage Clausen examined members' votes from 1953 to 1964 in several policy areas and compared differences in voting across various domains.[25] Barbara Sinclair conducted a similar analysis with a much longer time span, from 1925 to 1978.[26] At the aggregate level, David Brady, Joseph Cooper, and Patricia Hurley published a study examining "party unity" in Congress.[27] While roll call studies lost some of their luster in the 1980s and 1990s, those published were methodologically more rigorous than those from previous decades. The height of the historic examination came in 1997 when Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal released their longitudinal study of roll calls in Congress since its creation.[28]

In addition to roll call analyses, two other research approaches were prominent in the behavioralist tradition: case studies and interview studies. Beginning in the 1950s, scholars began to emphasize empiricism in both of these approaches while also attempting to make some generalization as a result of these works. Most of the famous case studies have focused on congressional committees, leadership in the House and Senate, and the legislative process. Consider, for example, Richard Fenno's classic study of the workings inside the House Appropriations Committee or those of John Manley and Randall Strahan of the House Ways and Means Committee.[29] Fenno expanded his analysis to six committees in a subsequent book.[30] Either with a focus on a single case or multiple cases, case studies continued to be released on congressional leaders as well. (See the works on party leadership by Charles Jones, John Stewart, Robert Peabody, Cooper and Brady, and Frank Mackaman.)[31]

Case studies have also been the preferred approach of observers interested in watching the legislative process, or more specifically, how a bill becomes a law. Over the years, employing mostly single cases per book, Congress watchers have documented the passage of major pieces of legislation, and sought to generalize those findings in an attempt to explain how the institution works.[32] Others have employed multiple cases in a book, with the same goal in mind.[33] Case studies have been exceptionally suitable to the analyses of these topics (committees, leadership, and the legislative process) more than of others, as they are more amenable to qualitative than quantitative data.

Finally, interview and observation studies within the behavioralist tradition came to the forefront in the 1950s. Researchers began to interview legislators as well as observe their behavior. In this vein, Charles Clapp interviewed and examined members of Congress about how they saw their jobs; John Kingdon studied how they made voting decisions; Fenno traveled with them in their constituencies to observe how they dealt with and represented their constituents; Donald Matthews witnessed and discussed the norms and folkways of senators; and Sinclair observed and analyzed leadership transformations in the House and Senate.[34] These types of studies continued well into the 1990s and retained an important place in behavioralism.

The second major approach to the study of Congress, that involving formal theory, entered the legislative research arena in the 1950s. Social choice theorists began formulating theories about individual choices in institutions, and these became the basis of analyzing legislative behavior. In the 1950s and 1960s, Kenneth Arrow and Robin Farquharson proposed theories about voting, and Duncan Black about committees.[35] Although most of these theories were about institutions generally, most could be and were applied to legislative settings.

Some of the theories were more formal than others. In the informal range, Mayhew and Morris Fiorina capitalized on the rational behavior view of members of Congress and provided new perspectives on member behavior. With the goal of reelection as the primary motivating factor, these scholars argued that representatives and senators engaged in activities designed first and foremost to enhance their electoral prospects, and create institutions that foster that effort.[36] More formally, Fiorina, Kenneth Shepsle, and others proposed models of constituency influence on congressional voting, of panel assignments in Congress, and of the relationships between the preferences of members and institutional rules and procedures.[37] The focus of these studies was on chamber rules, resulting in the development of a "new institutionalism" approach popular in the 1980s and 1990s.

This new institutionalism approach viewed institutional arrangements as important because they structured individual choices. In this vein,

"equilibrium" theories, "agency" theories, and "delegation and control" theories were formulated to study congressional activity in many domains, including in the areas of voting, member relationships with institutional leaders, and member relationships with constituents.[38] In the 1980s, Shepsle and Barry Weingast and Keith Krehbiel made use of equilibrium and spatial models to analyze legislative choices on voting and other issues.[39] In the 1990s, David Rohde and Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins posited legislative leaders as agents of the rank and file, selected to resolve collective dilemmas and aid individual members.[40] Krehbiel and Roderick Kiewiet and McCubbins studied the relationships between congressional parties and committees in the context of delegation and control theories.[41] A number of important volumes produced during this period, most notably those of McCubbins and Terry Sullivan and Shepsle and Weingast, employed the new institutionalism approach to studying Congress.[42]

Finally, emanating from both the behavioralist and the rational choice perspectives, scholars in the 1990s increasingly published studies with a historic focus, by either using longitudinal data or by examining the origins of various aspects of Congress. For example, John Hibbing employed longitudinal data to study congressional careers, Sarah Binder and Steven Smith looked at the use of filibuster in the Senate, and Poole and Rosenthal analyzed voting behavior in Congress.[43] Studying the origins of institutions also became popular in the 1990s. In that regard, Binder examined partisanship and procedural rights and Elaine Swift studied the development of the early Senate.[44]

Several general conclusions highlighting the differences between the behavioralist and the rational choice approaches can be made. Those in the behavioralist tradition have tended to rely largely on sociological concepts, whereas those in the rational choice tradition have tended to base their assumptions on economic concepts. Behavioralists have focused primarily on individuals, whereas rational choice scholars began with institutions and then analyzed how institutional rules and procedures shaped individual choices. It is also possible to view the earliest works on Congress, mainly from the behavioralist perspective, to be "atheoretical," whereas the latter studies, both from behavioralist as well as rational choice approaches, as more immersed in "theory." These distinctions are no doubt subject to debate, but they generally fit the key characteristics of the two approaches.[45]

In This Book

The authors of the substantive chapters in this book trace the evolution of Congress as an institution throughout the twentieth century within each of ten crucial areas, paying special attention to the external and internal fac-

tors that caused the changes. Part 1 of this book focuses on Congress and its members. George Connor and Bruce Oppenheimer trace the significant evolution of representation throughout the century. New constituencies and new issues forced members to abandon the "old style" politics of personal contact with constituents for increasing reliance on the "new style" politics of mediated communication. In this regard, representation for senators changed dramatically with the passage of the Seventeenth Amendment. In addition, major expansion of the electorate in the century due to the entry of women and minorities led to a great deal of emphasis on descriptive representation.

James Campbell and Steve Jurek look at the evolution of congressional elections throughout the century. They chronicle a decline in competition in elections, a drop in seat changes between parties from election to election, and a reduction in the number of marginal contests. The authors look at such powerful factors as the widespread fund-raising advantages for incumbents and huge victories from prior elections that discourage challengers from running against them. In addition, they note that campaigns over the years increasingly employed newer and newer technologies. Campbell and Jurek wisely note some eye-opening ramifications of these trends, in particular a gradual reduction in the public's ability to hold its elected representatives accountable.

Last, what Susan Hammond calls the "informal congressional system" of careers, norms, staff, and caucuses evolved throughout the century in response to external factors and the changing needs of representatives and senators. A greatly increased workload for members and a growing need for specialized advice resulted in a massive growth of staffers on the Hill by the end of the century. Also, caucuses developed to supplement congressional committees and subcommittees. Congressional careers and norms changed throughout the century as well. Hammond perhaps best sums up the evolution of this informal system by asserting that "Congress is both a responsive and an adaptive institution."

Part 2 of the book features five chapters focusing on the evolution of Congress as an institution. Barbara Sinclair focuses on the nuance of the changing dimensions of leadership over time and notes the institutional contrasts between the two chambers. In the House, the century began with powerful Speakers, it progressed to the development of powerful standing committees, and culminated with strong parties. The Senate began the century with strong chamber leadership, though it was much less powerful than that in the House. During the rest of the century, Senate leaders practiced more of a brokerage role, whereas House leaders wielded more power.

Sarah Binder analyzes the evolution of chamber rules and procedures throughout the century. She untangles the morass of rules governing House and Senate activities to explain both how and why they were made and then

changed over the years. She labels the overall effects of such standing rules of operation as "pervasive," adding that they provide Congress with a "stickiness" as an institution. With rules essentially chamber-specific tools, Binder notes some similarities but primarily differences between the evolution of House and Senate rules.

Next, Christopher Deering looks at the ebb and flow of committee power in relation to chamber leadership on the one side and subcommittees on the other. Of particular note is the balance of power between committees and parties. From the early-century House revolt against Speaker Cannon through the growth of subcommittees in the 1970s, he traces the steady march of reforms throughout the century that affected the efficacy of committees. Deering states that in the twentieth century overall, activist agendas supported by homogeneous and contentious political parties tended to weaken standing committees in favor of rival (particularly majority) parties, thereby keeping decision making before the full chamber. Moreover, standing rules have tended to make House committees more powerful than their Senate counterparts, whose work can be more readily changed on the floor.

Patricia Hurley discusses and analyzes the many changes in the organization and operation of congressional political parties. Congressional parties at times endured stormy changes, spanning the revolt against Speaker Cannon at the beginning of the century to the rapid demise and departure of Speaker Newt Gingrich at the end. Hence, her attention is necessarily focused on the evolution of the discipline and strength of congressional parties throughout the century, with three particular periods in mind: the start of the century, the New Deal era, and the end of the century. In contrast, much of the rest of the century was characterized by blurred and crosscutting partisan differences, symbolized most strikingly by the birth and evolution of the GOP Conservative Coalition and conservative southern Democrats. As such, the strength of U. S. congressional political parties in the twentieth century tended to vary over time, depending largely upon the political setting affecting either members individually or the institution as a whole.

Last, John Hibbing traces the remarkable evolution in member decision making from early in the century when members cast only a few votes to later when they cast many votes. Moreover, what complicated matters later in the century is not only that members were called upon to vote often, but that they did so as they were constantly monitored by numerous groups, including constituents, interest groups, political parties, and such. Hibbing carefully observes the many political dangers threatening members as they vote so regularly and openly on complex and critical issues, ever fearful of any unintended consequences of their actions in such a potentially volatile environment.

Part 3 of this book focuses on relationships between Congress and pow-

erful outside interests. Karen Hoffman and Michael Mezey examine congressional relations with presidents in the century. They analyze the often-dramatic evolution of the relationship between Congress and the presidents toward greater powers, responsibilities, and attention given to the presidency throughout much of the twentieth century. This evolution of congressional-presidential relations occurred within the shifting political context of twentieth-century U.S. national politics.

Finally, Burdett Loomis analyzes congressional interaction with interest groups. Presidential influence on Capitol Hill in the twentieth century was rivaled by the collective efforts of organized interests. Loomis notes the growth in the number of interest groups and the changes in the types of and techniques employed by them throughout the century. He explains that groups rely not only upon access and information, but also upon electioneering to affect the agenda setting and the decision-making process of members.

Our concluding chapter elaborates upon what has been learned about the evolution of the institution over the past century. The chapter also assesses the status of Congress at the end of the twentieth century, and speculates about its evolution in the coming hundred years.

Notes

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14. See Gary C. Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections,* 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1996); Paul S. Herrnson, *Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington,* 3d ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2000). On the factors that have contributed to incumbency advantages, see also David R. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974); Morris P. Fiorina, *Congress: The Keystone of the Washington Establishment* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977).

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