

Settings, Institutions, Campaigns, and the Vote A Book Prospectus  
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I am preparing a manuscript (a revision of my dissertation) on House and Senate elections, with a special focus on identifying institutional differences and tracing their impact on campaign dynamics and voter choice. The main point of this manuscript can be easily summarized: House and Senate campaigns and elections share many features, in the makeup of the electoral districts, in the forces underlying campaign spending, and in the way that voters learn about and vote for candidates. It is a mistake, I argue, to examine the House and Senate separately. Instead, House and Senate elections should be studied together, with institutional differences explicitly modeled and tested. The substantive gains from this strategy are large. Rather than appealing to a laundry list of House/Senate differences as possible causes of differences in House/Senate elections, I can isolate and test a wealth of hypotheses about House and Senate elections. This leapfrogs the current Congressional elections literature, which often focuses solely on the House or the Senate, yet makes few systematic attempts to compare them. Instead, I develop

A project that starts, as mine did, with Senate and House voting has to contend with the amount and content of what voters learn from campaigns. But to consider campaign learning, we are led to earlier questions about candidates: what are the relative levels of candidate spending and quality of the candidates whom the voters are asked to compare? And that in turn leads us to ask at an even earlier stage how and why House and Senate campaigns vary across political settings. We know that states differ from congressional districts, as sets, yet there is also substantial variation within each set, to a point where some congressional districts look like states and some states look like congressional districts. These overlaps allow me to compare institutional versus other accounts of electoral differences (i.e., if diversity causes more competitive elections, then this effect should be evident in diverse House districts as well as states). Therefore, my manuscript proceeds in a straightforward, sequential fashion, moving from comparisons of settings and institutional makeup; to campaign spending, campaign activity, and candidate quality; and finally to voter learning and choice. These comparisons are made using a variety of data from 1980-1990. At all points, I focus in on the central question: to what degree are observed differences between the House and Senate "institutional" differences, and to what degree are differences due to other factors. I think this structure provides a natural and compelling flow to the argument.

I make contributions in many areas. I show that congressional districts are not more heterogeneous than states, and, relatedly, that heterogeneity has nothing to do with the greater competitiveness in Senate campaigns. I can point to the specific ways that congressional districts differ from states, and the ways that they are the same, and the impact these differences have on candidate strategies. I am able to show that voter learning and choice in the House and Senate is remarkably similar. The apparent difference in the weights that voters attach to various considerations (e.g., Senate voters are more likely to consider policy and ideology; House voters consider casework and candidate contacts) is illusory. In fact, voters apply a similar decision rule in the House and Senate, but voting is critically affected by information flow. Thus, the different output (voting choice) is more a function of differential inputs (greater information flow, on average, in Senate elections) than it is a function of some different type of decision rule.

The primary audience for this manuscript would be students of American politics specializing in campaigns and elections. Since I discuss variations in district diversity, media markets, campaign spending, candidate quality, voter learning, and voter choice, I think the appeal could be broader across the American subfield. The book would also interest comparativists, since I discuss methodology for comparing elections across diverse settings and different institutions. The book would be appropriate for advanced undergraduate courses on campaigning, elections, or Congress, and for graduate courses on electoral behavior or Congress.

In the rest of this memo, I provide a topical outline of the proposed manuscript and a plan for modifying the current manuscript, in large part the dissertation, into a book. I summarize the sections in the dissertation, as well as changes that I expect to make in order to strengthen the argument, make the text more readable, and broaden the manuscript's audience. In general, the dissertation is heavily methodological in focus; to be a successful book, it needs to be refocused on the substantive gains that are made via my approach. In addition, I expect to add a chapter covering six case studies. I have already collected campaign content data for Senate and House elections held in the six states with single member House districts. These cases provide a direct test of institutional differences --- in these states, the political setting is held constant (Senators and House members run from the same "district"). As such, these cases provide a different and unique look at the questions I raise in this volume. In addition, they provide a different methodological flavor to the manuscript, complementing the quantitative analyses.

The book would tentatively follow the chapter listing outlined

below, developing the argument first descriptively, then moving to broad, systematic tests, and finally turning to a case study analysis to provide depth and texture to the theme. You will notice that there are three major decisions to make regarding the text. First: do I add the 1990 data from the Senate Election Study to the chapters on voting? Second: do I add case study materials (necessitating a new chapter at the end)? And third, do I split the current chapter six in two? Should you decide to send it out to reviewers, I would be very interested in their reactions to these questions, as well as to the text as a whole.

## Chapter Summaries

### I.Chapters One and Two, Introduction and Theory:

In the first chapter, I provide a brief overview of the manuscript, its place in the development of our understanding of elections, and pose the questions to be examined in the book. In the second chapter, I argue why House and Senate elections should be analyzed in a common (pooled) framework as well as over time, placing this work in contrast to much of the extant Congressional elections literature. I also lay out the logic behind my multi-stage approach, showing how a complete understanding of the electoral process must include institutional arrangements, political settings, candidates and campaigns, and finally voter learning and choice. I treat each of these in sufficient detail here, so that the reader will be already comfortable with my language in the latter chapters.

The basic approach of these is already in place. The language needs to be changed to play down the methodological angle -- pooling House and Senate in order to reveal institutional differences -- and to play up the substantive contributions of the book.

### 2.Chapters Three and Four, Settings and Campaigns:

These are both descriptive chapters, asking the degree to which the Senate and House are "really" different on a series of measures of the political setting (district heterogeneity or diversity, the nature of state and congressional district media markets, and partisan balance) and campaign features (candidate quality, campaign spending, campaign intensity). The analysis in this section is purposely direct and uncomplicated, relying mostly on graphical and tabular presentations. I want to encourage the reader to think of variations within institutions as well as across institutions, since that forms the centerpiece of the quantitative analysis which follows. I develop a number of measures for district diversity and media market efficiency. Since these will of interest to many scholars, but are not critical to understanding the substance of the

argument, I will place measurement concerns in an appendix.

In these chapters, I will add a set of archetypal cases -- states that look like congressional districts, congressional districts that look like states -- and trace these cases through the rest of the manuscript. Since the existence of overlaps between House and Senate campaign settings is a key finding of the book, tracing a set of archetypal cases is an effective way to illustrate the points I make. It will make the text more enjoyable to read, because I can blend in anecdotes and real life examples. More importantly, these illustrative examples will allow the reader to place the theoretical argument on a more accessible plane. Many of the empirical results in the later chapters emerge from large scale estimations across all states, congressional districts, over a decade. The use of illustrative cases both strengthens the argument because it convinces those readers who may be leery of statistics, it replicates the statistical results among a subset of important cases, and it adds a qualitative feel to the data analysis.

### 3. Chapter Five, From Setting to Campaign:

This chapter flows naturally from Three and Four, asking whether variations in settings can be used to explain variations in campaigns. This allows me to test a number of hypothesized causes of the typically more intense Senate campaign, including state size, heterogeneity, partisan balance, and media market efficiency. In addition, the pooled analyses allow me to isolate the ways in which institutional differences appear to matter in campaigns, and the ways in which they do not. I will strengthen some of the analysis in this section from its presentation in the thesis, improving the campaign spending models originally developed in the dissertation. In particular, I want to add analyses of open seat races and simplify the discussion and presentation of the two-stage models of campaign spending. There is a brief methodological interlude in the thesis dealing with campaign intensity that is inappropriate for a book and will be removed.

### 4. Chapter Six and Seven, Voter Information and Choice:

In this chapter, I move to the final stage of the electoral process, voter learning and choice. This chapter follows the organization of previous chapters: first, I present a series of comparisons of House and Senate voters, looking at their levels of information about candidates and their expectations of the House and Senate as representative institutions. I show that voter recall and recognition of Senate candidates is indisputably higher than House candidates. Other potential sources of institutional differences, however, are not evident, such as different job expectations,

incumbent evaluations, or mixture and content of likes and dislikes felt about the candidates. This leads to the hypothesis that a single decision rule might be used by House and Senate voters, but that the inputs to that decision, information flow in the campaign (as revealed by recognition and recall), differs across the two institutions. In the final section to this chapter, I show empirically that this is, in fact, the case. Extending and generalizing from Gary Jacobson's model of candidate choice, I show that voters employ the same rules for choosing House and Senate candidates to support. I allow for institutional differences across a series of models and across a series of progressively discriminating tests, but institutional differences fail to emerge. Voting in the House and Senate, it seems, is a single decision making process.

This chapter is the strongest in the text, serving as a capstone to the material that came before. For this reason, I will make substantial changes from its current thesis format. First, I am estimating other voting models under the pooled framework. Because I argue that information is the key difference between House and Senate election, I am extending incumbent defection models proposed by Zaller (1992, 1993) that explicitly incorporate single and dual information flows. I am presenting a paper at the 1994 Midwest Political Science Conference dealing with this issue. Second, because there is a wealth of material in this chapter, the presentation will be improved by dividing the current form into two sections; the first being a descriptive comparison of House and Senate voters, the second being a causal analysis of House and Senate voting. This also mirrors the structure of earlier chapters.

#### 5. Chapter Eight, Six Illustrative Cases:

This chapter would be the major original addition to the manuscript. I have already collected campaign content data (frequency of mentions of the candidates, issue mentions, candidate personality mentions) for six states with one House district (Alaska, North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Delaware, and Vermont). Where in other portions of the analysis I held a whole series of sources of variation constant in the structural analyses, these cases comprise a natural experiment: with political setting held constant, only the institution varies. I will compare campaign themes, candidate strategies, and the results in House and Senate contests in these states from 1982 through 1988. I believe that this addition strengthens the manuscript in several ways. It provides a completely different methodological approach to the question. It will allow the reader to "get inside" a few cases, thus providing a highly intuitive and accessible treatments of the issues in the volume. Finally, I think this will be an enjoyable chapter to read. I have found that previous case studies in Senate books (e.g. in the books

by Westlye, 1991 and Abramowitz and Segal, 1992) lend a flair of realism and substantive grounding to their otherwise more general and statistical treatment of elections.

## 6. Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Here I close by recapitulating briefly the motivation behind the text and reviewing the major results. I end with a discursion on the perils and promise of cross institutional comparison, summarizing what I think are the problems that may be solved by comparative analysis and what problems may be more difficult to resolve. ??

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