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ELECTORAL MARGINS, CONSTITUENCY INFLUENCE, and POLICY MODERATION: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

★

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For at least two decades legislative scholars have suspected that a representative's margin of victory affects his subsequent legislative behavior (MacRae, 1952, appears to have first proposed a hypothesis of this sort). One set of arguments holds that legislators elected by narrow margins pay closer attention to constituency interests than colleagues elected with plenty of votes to spare (MacRae, 1952). In the familiar role terminology that pervades legislative research, marginal representatives must act as delegates while safe representatives can act as trustees (Davidson, 1959: 126-133, makes an explicit argument to this effect, although his data are entirely attitudinal rather than behavioral). Another, distinct set of arguments holds that the dynamics of competition affect the positioning of a representa-

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tive on some issue or ideological continuum. For example, an oft-recurring hypothesis states that electoral competition moderates party politics, that parties take positions nearer each other in marginal districts than in safe districts (Huntington, 1950, characterizes this argument as the "traditional" theory).

Many researchers have published many studies on the subjects which comprise the title of this paper. Yet all of us know that we still can only say that we "suspect" the existence of relationships. For, the findings of state legislative studies are not replicated in congressional studies, and vice versa. Moreover, here and there legislative scholars draw positively contradictory conclusions. Of course, differences in study design and conceptualization make it difficult to compare studies. And given our rough measurement techniques, we seldom expect empirical relationships to appear with startling clarity. But all this aside, probably few would disagree that the study of electoral margins and legislative behavior is a very confused and confusing research area. Given this situation, we might simply throw up our hands and go off to study something else. But at least some of us consider the study of representative-constituency dynamics much too important to ignore. In continuing our research, however, simply to pile more data on a confused base would be foolish. Thus, we propose in this paper to take a close look at existing research, to cull out what seems solid and what seems shaky. Both logic and data are employed to serve this larger purpose.

We emphasize, though, that we do not intend to bore readers with a simple propositional inventory. Rather, we contend that very serious leaps in logic characterize several of the studies to be considered, and it is these inferential leaps which underlie much of the confusion in our subject matter. As an introduction to succeeding arguments consider the following two questions: Can a representative ever simultaneously satisfy the dictates of party and constituency? Can a representative ever simultaneously be a constituency extremist and a legislative moderate? Most would agree that plausible conditions exist under which both questions, stated this starkly, can be

answered positively. Interestingly, though, the confusion regarding the behavioral effects of electoral margins stems from negative answers to these questions.

THE MARGINALITY HYPOTHESIS

In a study of the 1931-1932, 1941, and 1951 sessions of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, MacRae (1952) first proposed and tested what we shall call the "marginality hypothesis." This hypothesis asserts that representatives who win elections by narrow margins are more solicitous of constituents' interests in their roll-call voting than are representatives who win by comfortable margins. MacRae concluded that his data confirmed the hypothesis. Quasi-replications are reported by Dye (1961) in a study of the 1958 Pennsylvania legislature, by Patterson (1961) in a study of the 1957 Wisconsin House, and by Pesonen (1963; for Democrats) in a study of the 1961 Massachusetts House. But both Shannon (1968: 159-163) Froman (1963: 114-115) report largely negative findings for congressional Democrats, with slightly stronger findings for Republicans.

To most of us, the marginality hypothesis appears quite reasonable. As Crane and Watts (1968: 87) comment,

> One plausible hypothesis is that legislators from more competitive districts will tend to be locally oriented because their re-election depends in large measure on their satisfying local demands. Legislators from competitive districts, knowing that their party label alone will not assure them of re-election, must be more concerned about the specific interests of their districts; but legislators from one-party districts are in less danger from the opposition and can concern themselves with a broader state interest.

Indeed, the marginality hypothesis is so well accepted that many undergraduate students probably learn it as part of the corpus of knowledge about the legislative process. For example, besides the Crane and Watts text, Keefe (1966: 43) states in a general discussion of state legislatures that,

> Legislators who are elected by close margins are more likely to be sensitive to constituency interests than are legislators who are elected by wide margins.

Imagine our surprise, then, when Miller (1970: 298, 304, 310) comes to such conclusions as these:

> Congressmen from marginal districts are much more likely to translate their policy preferences directly into roll call behavior than are Congressmen from the safe districts; and we shall note that translation results in much less policy agreement than exists between constituents and Congressmen in one-party districts.
>
> It is the marginal district Congressmen who virtually ignore what they think to be district preferences in favor of their personal attitudes on policy questions—and this by a spectacular margin.
>
> Legislative acts of Congressmen from competitive districts are associated almost exclusively with their own policy preferences rather than with their perceptions of district preferences. The behavior of Congressmen from safe districts reflects a more even balance between the two factors, but their perceptions of constituency policy positions are clearly more highly related to their roll call decisions than are their personal policy attitudes.

And there is no denying Miller's data. Evidently, something is amiss.

A first reaction, of course, is to note the differing focuses of the contradictory studies. The marginality hypothesis emerged from studies of state legislatures, whereas Miller examined voting behavior in the Congress. Still, is it reasonable that marginality should affect state legislators in a manner precisely opposite to the way it affects congressmen? We think not.

A second reaction is to note the differing designs of the conflicting studies. MacRae and those who followed him used a simple design. Representatives are classified into safe and competitive categories according to their margins of victory in the preceding election (typically 55% or 60%). Some index of party unity or regularity serves as the dependent variable. Then, one normally finds safe Democrats and Republicans voting as rock-ribbed partisans, but marginal representatives deviating to

cast some votes with the other party. Ergo, the latter must be looking to their tenuous electoral position by resisting the blandishments of the party and casting a vote with the constituency. Presumably, safe representatives have no such mundane worries.

In contrast, Miller classified congressmen into safe and marginal categories according to their subjective judgments about their electoral positions. Moreover, he attempted to measure the degree of constituency influence by correlating the average Guttman scale position (attitudes) of constituents with the Guttman scale position (roll call) of their representative in three issue areas. Most colleagues with whom we have discussed the matter express a preference for Miller's design. Our professional upbringing teaches us to opt for survey data where available and to regard Guttman scales as immeasurably superior to indices of party loyalty (although purists wince about computing averages of Guttman scale positions). On the other hand, few among us can overlook the small samples with which Miller worked (Miller and Stokes, 1969: 33-34). In fact, however, we are spared the necessity of accepting one set of research findings over another solely on the basis of prior confidence in data or techniques. For, as we will now proceed to show, Miller's study is the only one which has any bearing on the marginality hypothesis.

The crucial question is this: Where do researchers find any basis for assuming that loyalty to one's party necessarily implies disloyalty to one's constituency, or alternately, that loyalty to one's constituency implies disloyalty to one's party? This assumption has little basis, but it is absolutely necessary to link the data in the MacRae type of study with the conclusion that is drawn. Without it, the marginality hypothesis is a non sequitur.

To elaborate, the major problem with the marginality hypothesis is that the effects of electoral margin have not been separated adequately from other features of the district. In particular, one has the related findings that representatives from districts "atypical" of their party are less loyal than colleagues

from more typical districts, and that representatives from atypical districts tend to be marginal (MacRae, 1952; Dye, 1961; Patterson, 1961; Pesonen, 1963). Consider the possible serious implications of these facts using MacRae's study as an illustration.

MacRae defined "typical" Republican districts as those high in percent owner-occupied dwelling units and "typical" Democratic districts as those low in that measure. This seemed a reasonable procedure since the 1940 percentage of owner-occupied dwellings (OOD) does appear to discriminate fairly well between (1951) Republican and Democratic districts. Interestingly though, percent OOD discriminates even better between the safe Republican and safe Democratic seats, which constituted 65% of each party's seats. The bulk of the competitive seats fell in the intermediate range of percent OOD, the range not typical of either party. In effect, MacRae defines "typical" seats by reference to the characteristics of safe seats.[1]

It would seem that safe-seat legislators are likely to constitute the core of most legislative parties. Probably they hold the leadership posts and chair the committees. Even if a strict seniority rule is not followed in a particular legislature, legislative experience usually can be parlayed into influence. Furthermore, as in Massachusetts, safe-seat legislators probably are a majority in most legislative parties. What do these arguments suggest? Simply that the safe-seat legislators are likely to have a disproportionate influence in setting the party line: to a great extent they *are* the legislative party. But this fact has crucial implications, for if safe seat legislators come from similar constituencies, which was the case in Massachusetts and probably elsewhere, then, hypothetically, they can set the party line while voting nothing but their constituents' preferences. For those from safe, typical districts, constituency loyalty and party loyalty present no conflict. A highly significant but too-little-noticed finding is that 57% of Patterson's "mavericks" reported frequent district-party conflict, whereas only 23% of the regulars did (Patterson, 1961: 468).

When investigators remark that the minority of representatives who come from competitive, atypical districts deviate from party positions more than the majority from safe, typical districts, what are they actually showing? They are showing that Republicans from Republican districts vote Republican, while those from not-so-Republican districts do so less frequently. And similarly for Democrats. Where, in such an argument, does one find any basis for concluding that the safe-seat representatives are any more likely to slight their constituents than are competitive-seat representatives? So long as indices of party loyalty are employed as dependent variables one can assert nothing about the strength of constituency influence on different representatives without supporting knowledge of the extent to which their party and their constituency interests clash.

The most surprising aspect of the twenty-year history of the marginality hypothesis is that the arguments just used to attack it are familiar to most political scientists. Consider the following remarks of Jewell (1966: 91):

> If the members of a legislative party represent similar constituencies, the individual legislator is less likely to experience serious conflicts between the viewpoints of most of the legislators in his party and the views of dominant groups in his constituency. He is free from conflicting pressures and he finds it easy to go along when his party takes a stand on a bill . . .
>
> In those state legislatures where the party represents a wide diversity of constituency interests, there is no basis for high party cohesion.

And Mayhew (1966: 23) says it nicely:

> It may plausibly be assumed that a bloc of Congressmen subjected to coinciding party and constituency pressures will demonstrate greater unity than a bloc subjected to conflicting pressures from party and constituency.

Although the bits and pieces of our argument are scattered through the literature, students of constituency influence never seem to put them together or at least they have not considered the full implications for the conclusions they drew. One must

conclude that only Miller's research bears directly on the question of constituency influence on safe versus marginal representatives. Therefore, no contradiction now exists.

THE MYTH OF THE MODERATE MARGINAL REPRESENTATIVE

As we have seen, studies which employ party unity as a dependent variable do not justify any conclusions about the degree to which safe and marginal representatives follow their constituencies. But our criticism seems less relevant to a second hypothesis which grows out of these studies. This hypothesis concerns the effect of competitiveness on a representative's electoral strategy. Typically one finds marginal Democrats and Republicans breaking party lines to cast some votes with the opposition, whereas their safe counterparts maintain a solid partisan front. Thus, marginal representatives apparently take moderate, compromise positions, whereas safe representatives can afford the luxury of doctrinal purity.

In recent years the development of formal models of electoral competition has provided a theoretical basis for the afore-mentioned empirical findings. Downs (1957: ch. 8) argued that under certain conditions competing candidates would converge to the position of the median citizen in the electorate. And later developments in spatial modeling have emphasized (probably overemphasized) convergence even under conditions Downs thought might produce divergence (see, for example, Oredeshook 1970; McKelvey, 1972; McKelvey and Richelson, 1973). Building on Downsian arguments, Erikson (1971) hypothesizes that:

> (1) For a Republican Congressman: the more conservative he is, the more his vote margins will be reduced.
>
> (2) For a Democratic Congressman: the more liberal he is, the more his vote margins will be reduced.

Erikson finds that his argument holds for Republicans although the evidence is less clear for Democrats.

Thus, we have both theory and data which suggest that in competitive situations, representatives can and probably do maximize their vote by taking moderate, middle-of-the-road positions. But by no means is there universal agreement about this proposition. Huntington (1950), for one, contends that electoral competition produces policy extremism, not moderation. Huntington's "revised theory" suggests that the one-party districts produce "me-too" modal candidates, whereas competitive districts produce candidates with distinct positions aimed at different segments of the district.

In this section we will scrutinize some empirical studies which suggest hypotheses relating electoral margins to policy positions. Additionally, we will present data bearing directly on those hypotheses. Again we will argue that a serious confusion runs through this research area. Briefly, an assertion that competition produces moderation (or extremism) contains much ambiguity, for, moderate and extreme are highly relative characterizations. Does one mean moderate (extreme) relative to one's fellow officials, or relative to one's constituents? Typically empirical studies analyze data concerning the first relationship and make an inferential leap about the second. Unfortunately, a representative's position in the legislative arena in principle reveals little about his position in the constituency arena, and vice versa. The remainder of this section elaborates on this "two-arenas" theme.

Consider first the "revised theory" of Huntington. Taking exception to the prevailing view that the qualitative difference (i.e., policy spread) between political parties varies directly with the quantitative difference (i.e., vote disparity), Huntington proposed a new theory: the qualitative difference between the parties varies inversely with the quantitative difference (Huntington, 1950: 675):

> in some areas there will be two similar but unequally balanced parties and in other areas two equally balanced but dissimilar parties.

> In terms of an interest group analysis this means of course that instead of appealing to all groups the parties will limit their appeal to certain specific groups. They will attempt to win elections by mobilizing a high degree of support from a small number of interests rather than by mustering a relatively low degree of support from a large number of interests.

By and large, investigators have rejected the revised theory. But we would argue that most researchers have misinterpreted the theory. This rather immodest claim requires justification.

Table 1 illustrates the data which Huntington presented as the principal test of his theory. At first glance the theory appears quite accurate. As the quantitative difference between the parties increases, the qualitative difference (in parentheses) decreases (from 69.6 to 22.5). Nevertheless, as Shannon (1968: 166-170) points out, Huntington's theory is confirmed more by virtue of historical accident than descriptive potency.

It happens to be the case that many safe Democratic districts are rural, agrarian Southern districts, while many safe Republican districts are rural, agrarian Midwestern districts. But for historical factors, representatives from these districts might have found themselves in the same party; often they do in the form of the so-called conservative coalition. If Southern Democrats are not considered, the qualitative difference between the parties is 69.6 in marginal districts and 64.1 in safe districts—not particularly supportive of Huntington's theory.

TABLE 1

Test of Huntington's Revised Theory

Type of District	Average Republican Liberalism Index		Average Democratic Liberalism Index	Average Northern Democratic Liberalism Index
Marginal	20.3	(69.6)	89.9	89.9
Close	20.4	(60.4)	80.8	84.5
Close intermediate	17.7	(58.3)	76.0	85.0
Solid intermediate	13.8	(50.0)	63.8	76.4
Solid	22.2	(22.5)	44.7	86.3

SOURCE: Huntington (1950: 671).

Shannon (1968: 167) goes on to present his own data which he interprets as inconsistent with Huntington's theory. Froman (1963: 116-117) comes to a similar conclusion. Thus, in view of Shannon's criticism of Huntington's test and the additional conflicting evidence one might think that the revised theory should be discarded. The evidence, however, deserves a closer look.

A careful reading of Huntington's article reveals that the data thus far brought to bear on the revised theory (including Huntington's) are irrelevant to the truth or falsity of its central proposition. Why? Because Huntington's theory predicts party differences within constituencies, not between constituencies. Huntington's arguments imply that within a competitive congressional district the parties will be relatively farther apart than they will within a given safe district. Thus, the proper test of the revised theory would be to examine the policy differences *between congressmen and their opponents in marginal districts* and compare these with the differences *between congressmen and their opponents in safe districts.* Interestingly, one critic of Huntington considers this point but summarily rejects it. Stone writes (1965: note 34):

> That Democratic and Republican *candidates* from safe districts do not differ radically is an interesting but, by the procedures used here, not a researchable possibility. At any rate such a finding would not save the "two cultures" thesis.

We could not disagree more.

When researchers compare the average policy difference between marginal Republican and Democratic legislators with that between safe Republican and Democratic legislators they cannot say anything one way or the other about Huntington's thesis. Regrettably, legislative researchers tend to confuse two distinct policy arenas: that of the legislature and that of the constituency. For example, Erikson argues that representatives who stray far from the median of their districts will suffer at the polls. But he states his hypotheses in terms of absolute liberalism and conservatism, and measures these variables

relative to other representatives. Conceivably, a Republican who looks rather conservative in the House could look rather pink to his district. Similarly, MacRae (1952: 1054) remarks that

> Our data for Massachusetts do not reveal extremely sharp ideological divergences between the parties in "intermediate" districts; rather they show a tendency for the parties to approach one another more closely in those districts where there is a contest between parties.

Actually, MacRae's data show nothing of the kind. His data show that within the legislature, marginal Democrats and Republicans appear closer than do safe Democrats and Republicans. But the data say nothing at all about party distances *within marginal districts vis-à-vis those within safe districts.* A representative can be simultaneously a constituency extremeist and a legislative moderate, just the opposite, or an extremist or moderate in both arenas. One should examine one's hypotheses carefully to determine the arena to which they refer. Otherwise one may very well answer a question that was not asked.[2] As it turns out, Huntington's theory is more accurate than not if relevant data are examined. What are such data?

In their text Keefe and Ogul (1968: 318-319) cite a study in which Strain (1963) presents a surprising finding. Her data concern the voting behavior of representatives from marginal-switch (M-S) districts, i.e., marginal districts which underwent changes in party control between two Congresses. The average difference in conservative coalition support between the incumbents of the Eighty-sixth Congress, Second Session, and the Eighty-seventh Congress, First Session was 73%! "In almost every case the Democrat replacing a Republican or the Republican replacing a Democrat gave the constituency an entirely different 'brand' of representation on major policy questions" (Strain, 1963). If these data are reliable, they refute decisively the hypothesis that keen electoral competition results in identical parties. The seventeen distircts Strain studied clearly were not electing men who followed moderate, middle-of-the-road strategies.

Strain's method strikes us as perhaps the best available for

ascertaining the policy differences between two candidates within a given constituency. Granted, individuality is uncontrolled, the particular roll calls differ from Congress to Congress, and the overall political context changes. Still, short of going into each constituency and interviewing, cross-Congress comparisons of voting behavior in switch districts appear to be the best way of estimating within-constituency policy differences in those districts.

Happily, some recent elections have produced numerous M-S districts. We have gathered voting data on 42 such districts for the Eighty-eighth to Eighty-ninth Congresses, and 32 for the Eighty-ninth to Ninetieth Congresses.[3] If Huntington's critics are correct, the forty M-S Democrats who came into office with Lyndon Johnson did not create a large break with the Republicans they replaced. And Huntington's critics again would be correct if the 31 M-S Republicans elected in 1966 voted similarly to the Democrats they replaced. On the other hand, if Huntington is correct, Strain's finding should be replicated: the different representatives responded exclusively to the stronger constituency party (we assume, of course, that the victorious party in the preceding election constitutes the stronger constituency party). Let the reader decide.

Truly, the sheer magnitude of the voting shifts is staggering. On the average, the switch in parties from the Eighty-eighth to the Eighty-ninth Congresses was accompanied by a change of over 60% in support for the conservative coalition, and over 50% in support for a larger federal role. Of course, many will point out that the Eighty-eighth Congress was partly a Kennedy Congress, while the Eighty-ninth was a Johnson Congress. Additionally, an assassination and an aberrant election intervened between the two Congresses. But the findings for the Eighty-ninth to Ninetieth Congresses are basically the same.

Furthermore, consider the sixteen double M-S districts which were taken from the Republicans by the Democrats, and wrested back again by the Republicans. The data for these districts appear in Table 3.

Now, we pose the question, do the data in Tables 2 and 3

TABLE 2

Mean Changes in Voting Support for the Conservative Coalition and a Larger Federal Role in M-S Districts, Eighty-Eighth, Eighty-Ninth, and Ninetieth Congresses[4] (in percentages)

Congresses	Mean Change in CC Support		Mean Change in LFR Support			
Eighty-Eighth to Eighty-Ninth	60.5	(61.4)[a]	51.4	(51.2)	n=42	(37)
Eighty-Ninth to Ninetieth	54.7	(57.6)	40.1	(42.8)	n=32	(29)
All	58.0	(59.7)	46.5	(47.4)	n=74	(66)

SOURCE: **Congressional Quarterly Almanac** (1964, 1966, 1967).

a. Figures in parentheses are based only on those districts in which the replacement defeated the incumbent. In a few districts, the incumbents retired, or suffered primary defeats.

TABLE 3

Percentage Support for the Conservative Coalition and Larger Federal Role in Double M-S Districts, Eighty-Eighth, Eighty-Ninth, and Ninetieth Congresses

District[a]	CC Support			LFR Support		
	88	89	90	88	89	90
Colorado 2 (Boulder)	93	14	72	56	87	59
Illinois 19 (Rock Island)	81	14	57	33	83	59
Iowa 1 (Iowa City)	44	10	62	50	78	45
Iowa 4 (Southcentral)	67	18	90	39	73	23
Michigan 2 (Ann Arbor)	56	5	52	33	96	73
Michigan 11 (Upper Peninsula)	81	1	51	39	100	68
Nebraska 1 (Lincoln)	93	34	88	0	78	32
New Jersey 2 (Atlantic City)	67	1	70	67	100	59
North Dakota 2 (Western)	81	25	81	11	91	32
Ohio 1 (Cincinnati)	74	3	51	50	96	64
Ohio 3 (Dayton)	81	8	27	50	91	77
Ohio 10 (Southeastern)	85	34	92	22	73	23
Pennsylvania 19 (York)	89	14	94	22	91	23
Wisconsin 1 (Racine)	96	14	91	22	91	32
Wisconsin 6 (Sheboygan)	74	26	69	28	87	55
Wyoming AL	93	5	72	28	65	32

a. In parentheses we attempt to give some indication of the location of these districts within their respective states.

support the contention that representatives from marginal districts vote in moderate, middle-of-the-road fashion? Hardly. Instead we see a picture of "flip-flopping" representation. The representatives from these districts represent their part of the constituency and the devil take the other. Extremes replace extremes.

Of course, various explanations for the data can be proposed.[5] In the context of the present discussion, though, the data evidently are quite consistent with Huntington's revised theory. To be sure, we have not tested the theory completely, because we have no data on policy differences within safe districts. By definition, safe-switch districts are rare, so a measurement problem exists. But, consider the kind of world which would produce policy differences between candidates in safe districts greater than the reported differences between candidates in marginal districts. Such a world would find (1) flaming liberal Republicans running against the safe Southern Democrats, (2) rock-ribbed conservative Republicans running in the metropolitan Northern Democratic strongholds, (3) "radiclib" Democrats opposing safe Republicans in the heartland. Should one expect these phenomena to come to pass in sufficient numbers to beat the spreads reported in Table 2? The prospect is doubtful, to say the least.

Actually, one can use some rather weak data to measure directly the policy differences between candidates in safe distircts. Let us define a "safe-switch" district as one which shifts parties between two Congresses, but by a margin of more than 55%. There were eight such districts between the Eighty-eighth and Eighty-ninth Congresses, and twenty between the Eighty-ninth and Ninetieth Congresses. Classing such districts as "safe" presents conceptual difficulties, mainly because of the party switch, but also because eighteen of the twenty-eight districts were won by less than 60% of the vote. But, ignoring such difficulties, consider Table 4 and contrast it to Table 2.

In every case the average voting shift in the "safe-switch" districts falls short of the average shift in the M-S districts. According to Huntington, as the quantitative difference be-

TABLE 4

Mean Changes in Voting Support for the Conservative Coalition and a Larger Federal Role, in Safe-Switch Districts, Eighty-Eighth, Eighty-Ninth, and Ninetieth Congresses (in percentages)

Congresses	Mean Change in CC Support	Mean Change in LFR Support	
Eighty-Eighth to Eighty-Ninth	42.1	48.5	n=8
Eighty-Ninth to Ninetieth	42.4	32.8	n=20
All	42.3	37.3	n=28

SOURCE: **Congressional Quarterly Almanac** (1964, 1966, 1967).

tween the constituency parties increases, the qualitative difference decreases. Judging by Tables 2 and 4 and our argument of the preceding paragraph, Huntington appears to be correct for the Eighty-eighth to Ninetieth Congresses.

What, then, of findings to the effect that representatives from marginal districts are more moderate than their compatriots from safe districts? Upon consideration it is clear that such findings in no way conflict with Huntington's theory, nor with the data in Tables 2 and 3. For, "moderate relative to one's fellow legislators" does not logically imply "moderate relative to one's constituency." A marginal representative can be utterly loyal to one segment of his district and yet be more or less extreme (or equally so) than his fellow legislative partisans; depending, of course, on the position of his fellow partisans vis-à-vis the favored segment of his district.[6]

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have attempted to clarify a confusing set of substantive findings. As we attempted to show, the inferences made by some legislative researchers simply are not justified by the data they analyzed. In particular, we have serious qualms about the empirical validity of what we might term two "quasi-generalizations." The first is the marginality hypothesis (stated by Pesonen, 1963: 69): the less confident the representative is about his chances to be re-elected, the more he votes in

accordance with the interests of his constituency." Surprisingly enough, Miller's study is the only one which bears directly on the marginality hypothesis. And judging by that study the marginality hypothesis is wrong.

Second, we question the generalization that keen electoral competition leads candidates to adopt middle-of-the-road positions. Many researchers seem to assume that all constituencies mirror the policy space of legislatures in which they are represented. Consequently, researchers tend to extrapolate judgments of extremism or moderation beyond the arena in which such judgments legitimately were made. We argue that there is no necessary correlation between a representative's relative positions in the legislative arena and in the constituency arena. Like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the representative can be an extremist and a moderate simultaneously, depending on the background against which he is viewed. Irrespective of marginal representatives' policy positions *relative to fellow legislators*, existing data do not justify the conclusion that marginal representatives follow moderate or compromise voting strategies relative to their constituencies. In fact, congressional data seem to indicate the opposite. Judging by the huge shifts which occur when marginal seats change party control, marginal representatives show a definite proclivity for the extremes of constituency preference distributions.

Hopefully our arguments and data will stimulate (or irritate) others into further research efforts. To slip out of our role as "value-free" social scientists momentarily, we believe that the linkages between representatives and constituencies are critical for representative politics. And what we, as a discipline, reliably can say about those linkages is, quite frankly, disappointing.

NOTES

1. One should note that MacRae attempted to control for the common effects of atypicality and marginality, concluding that each had an independent impact. We would contest this conclusion, however, for MacRae encounters the usual problem in

attempting to control for the independent effects of two closely correlated variables; some cells are thinly populated, even empty. MacRae looked separately at Democrats and Republicans in three sessions–six cases. For the 1951 session even the general finding that deviation increases with atypicality and marginality is not supported by the data; therefore, we concentrate on the four cases of the 1931-1932 and 1941 sessions. For the Democrats in both sessions deviation is quite high in the atypical range of per cent OOD, but there exist *only* marginal districts in this range. That is, there are no safe and atypical districts with which to compare the marginal and atypical districts. In the more typically Democratic ranges of per cent OOD, the differences between the average deviation of representatives from marginal and safe districts are very small and in several cases inconsistent with the hypothesis. Similarly, for the Republicans in the two sessions the differences between the deviation percentages of safe and marginal representatives are slight and not always consistent with the hypothesis in the moderate to high ranges of per cent OOD (typical Republican), although impressive differences exist in the low range (atypical Republican). But, as MacRae admits, there is a problem with the latter comparisons. The measure of percent OOD "groups a few Republican high-status districts, such as Brookline, in the same classification with the solidly Democratic urban districts." Thus, at the only data points where marginality appears to have an important impact independent of atypicality, one might actually be viewing the differences between marginal Republicans from atypical districts and safe Republicans from what are actually typical districts. In view of these considerations we are unwilling to conclude, as MacRae did, "that the political contest in a constituency has a distinct effect, over and above the socio-economic characteristics." Still, we would credit MacRae with a determined attempt to sort out the effects of atypicality and marginality. Subsequent research has not addressed the question.

2. So far as we are able to ascertain, of those who have examined the link between party competition and policy moderation, only Miller is fully aware of the distinction drawn in the test. In his article, Miller (1970: 295, Table 10-1) presents data which show that within the Congress marginal Republicans and Democrats are closer in average roll-call position than are safe Republicans and Democrats in all three issue areas. But immediately thereafter, Miller (1970: 297, Table 10-3) shows that the candidates in marginal districts are much farther apart in average social welfare policy attitudes than are the candidates in safe districts. Still, two points should be noted. First, Miller's intradistrict comparisons are based on policy attitudes. Although Miller (1970: 296) characterizes attitudes as "first cousins to the roll call records," his own data raise questions about the correspondence. Second, Miller computes the average position of all Democratic candidates in safe districts and the average position of all Republican candidates in safe districts, then takes the difference of these averages. He follows the same procedure for the marginal districts, of course. The most proper datum is the mean of the absolute difference within each constituency, i.e., take the average after computing differences, rather than compute differences after taking the averages. See the data presented below in the text for illustration.

3. Data for these classifications are drawn from the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* (1964, 1966, 1967). Following the usual convention, marginal districts are those carried by less than 55% of the vote.

4. A relevant question concerns the possible effects of redistricting on the voting shifts reported in row 2 of Table 2. During the Eighty-ninth Congress there was extensive redistricting throughout the country in the wake of Wesberry versus Sanders. Thus, many of the districts comprising the data base for row 2 of the table underwent some boundary change between the Eighty-ninth and Ninetieth Congresses. We cannot say to what extent the voting shifts resulted from redistricting. Note, however, that the even greater voting changes for the Eighty-eighth to Eight-ninth Congresses are not so subject to the redistricting question. Moreover, John Ferejohn has compiled data extending from the Eighty-fourth to the Eighty-eighth Congresses which show similar large shifts, albeit with fewer cases.

5. We might mention that we first became aware of these data while seeking to test a hypothesis derived from a formal theory of constituency influence on legislative roll-call voting. That hypothesis predicted the existence of large shifts in marginal switch districts. The theoretical work is reported elsewhere (see Fiorina, forthcoming).

6. Along these lines, some readers might be curious whether any cross-district moderating influence was present in the two Congresses we studied. None was. In the Eighty-ninth Congress the forth M-S Northern Democrats we studied had average conservative coalition support scores and larger federal role support scores of 11% and 87% respectively. Comparable figures for the 163 non-M-S Northern Democrats were 12% and 89%.

Similarly, in the Ninetieth Congress, the 31 M-S Republicans studied had average conservative coalition and larger federal role scores of 72% and 44% respectively. Comparable scores for the 155 other Republicans were 69% and 44%. Thus, the M-S representatives averaged virtually the same positions as their non-M-S colleagues.

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