From Lost to Found
The Miller-Stokes Book Manuscript and its Implications for Democratic Theory

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The Miller-Stokes Representation Study

Source Data:

• Survey of 1958 Congressional candidates in districts where ANES sampled citizens.
• 90% response rate among candidates (!).
• Survey responses on Members’ policy attitudes, roll calls, perceptions of district attitudes, conceptions of their role, district characteristics, and much else. No one before had had both legislators and constituents.
• Nothing else like it, and probably never will be again.
Best remembered findings

- Incumbents’ roll calls correlated best with mean district attitudes on civil rights, pretty well on social welfare, and very little on foreign policy (M-S in APSR 1963: 50 years ago last month).
- Only about half the mass sample claimed to have heard something about the incumbent; less than a third about the challenger. A little less than half the voters (never mind the abstainers) conceded that they had heard nothing about either one (M-S in POQ 1962).
- Contrary to Downs, competitive districts tend to have more extreme candidates (M in Allardt and Littunen 1964).
- Moreover, they do not “trim” toward the constituency opinion. To the contrary, they rely more on their own views.
Probably the most famous unpublished book in the profession. Prentice-Hall had already signed up.

Miller (1999) notes that in the 1960s, Stokes wrote *Political Change in Britain* with David Butler; Miller constructed ICPSR. The book was put aside.

Later, Miller moved to Arizona and Stokes became a Princeton dean.


Few had seen anything of their work on the book.
The Book Manuscript: Current Status

- Thanks to Ruth Jones’ excavation of the boxes in her basement, everything extant seems to have been recovered:
- Part 2: Six draft chapters (numbered 1-5, 8) by Miller in 1995, revised from 1964, covering most of the remaining chapters of Stokes’ outline. (There is also a 1994 draft of his Chapter 1.)
REPRESENTATION IN CONGRESS

Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes

PART ONE: INTRODUCTORY

Chapter 1. Focus
Chapter 2. Models of Representation
Chapter 3. Design

PART TWO: THE LEGISLATIVE ARENA

Chapter 4. Party and Area Patterns of Attitude
Chapter 5. Paths of Representation
Chapter 6. Recruitment and Career
Chapter 7. Political Competition and Majority Rule
Chapter 8. Influence Norms
Chapter 9. Influence of the Administration
Chapter 10. Communications

PART THREE: THE ELECTORAL ARENA

Chapter 11. Orientations to the Constituency
Chapter 12. The Primary and Campaign
Chapter 13. The Electoral Act
Chapter 14. Effects in the Representation System

PART FOUR: CONCLUSION

Chapter 15. Representation in America
Analysis is mostly correlational
(but they correct for measurement error in the 1966 version)

TABLE 3

Congressional Policy Attitudes and Perception in Relation to Constituency Policy Demands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Welfare</th>
<th>Congressional Attitudes X District Attitudes</th>
<th>Congressional Perceptions X district Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent Congressmen</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-incumbent Candidates</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign Policy</th>
<th>Congressional Attitudes X District Attitudes</th>
<th>Congressional Perceptions X district Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent Congressmen</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-incumbent Candidates</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Rights</th>
<th>Congressional Attitudes X District Attitudes</th>
<th>Congressional Perceptions X district Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent Congressmen</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-incumbent Candidates</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does $r = .57$ look like?

Table I-3-4

Agreement of Constituency Attitudes and Congressional Roll Call Behavior on Dimension of Civil Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency Attitude</th>
<th>Pro</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Con</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation $= .57$

\(^a\)The terms "pro," "medium," and "con" are intended to indicate only a relative position, as the text has observed.
The Miller-Stokes Diamond: D, A, P, and R
What’s new in the manuscript?

• Previous three articles are largely incorporated; Stokes 1969 memo says that he also planned to include in chap. 14 his work on nationalization of electoral forces.

• It’s fair to say that the big results are mostly in print.

• Here’s what’s new, especially relative to the 1962 classic, Wahlke et al., *The Legislative System*:

• Delegate vs. trustee: Suggest may vary by issue dimension (Stokes chap. 2). Reminiscent of J. William Fulbright’s views. This is spelled out beyond Miller 1964.
More news: variance in “Burkeanism”
(chap. 6 = Miller chap. 1)

• Empirically, civil rights more like delegate: P has larger beta weight than A in predicting R.
• Social welfare more like trustee: A has larger beta weight than P.
• Incumbents correlate better with their own party than with the district, especially on social welfare.
• Incumbents in safe districts **really** correlate well with their partisans (chap. 9 = Miller chap. 3).
• In latter case, a random draw from the majority suits almost everyone well—more on this later.)
Other News: Burke was right
(chapters 8, 11 = Miller chapters 4, 5)

- Members are a majority Burkean in their own views; about 75% are either that or delegates.
- These self-characterizations are not self-delusions. They have empirical bite:
  - Burkeans do act disproportionately like Burkeans, especially on social welfare (A more influential than P in predicting R). They know district opinion less well and work less hard at learning it.
  - Non-Burkeans generally also fit their (opposite) role. Some work hard at different ways to learn district opinion (mail, press, personal contacts), though those effects appear small.
Still more news: Elections

- Electoral competition and party control of nominations matter.
- “Self-Starters” run in competitive primaries and emphasize issues more, including foreign policy (which their survey constituents are also interested in!); “Party Recruits” do neither (chap. 7 = Miller chap. 2).
- Some Members with delegate views from (apparently) machine districts sound bored and frustrated (Miller chap. 8).
- Many other such seemingly minor but suggestive remarks throughout.
What was planned but not done
(apart from minor stuff—e.g., histograms of Member opinions)

- Stokes 1969 memo talks about returning to the book. He proposes that they examine how to compute reduced forms when causation is simultaneous.

- He also suggests that they employ “simultaneous equation methods” for the diamond, using lagged Congressional “behavior” as an instrument for A that doesn’t affect P. (Lagged R? But that won’t work—need lagged A and P.)

- Hard to do and little understood among political scientists in 1969; we understood only “hierarchical models” (Cnudde and McCrone 1966; but see Hill and Hurley 1999).
The Missing Final Chapter

• We have nothing from this grand summary statement.

• Stokes 1969 memo says that it should include, after a summary of preceding chapters:
  1. “an explanatory argument as to why some of the structural parameters should have been as we have observed them”
  2. a discussion of latent issues not part of the three measured dimensions
  3. “a more general consideration of the normative issues surrounding representation in contemporary America”
Theories of Representation

• The British Levellers and Radicals via Jefferson to the U.S. Progressives: The tradition we celebrate on the Fourth of July.

• This tradition gets read back all the way to Athens, often quite inaccurately (on this point, see Saxonhouse 1996—and Aristotle).

• Tory tradition (cf. Schumpeter).

• Socialist/Fabian party democracy (Beer 1965). Cf. the Tom Hayden’s Port Huron Statement from 50 years ago.

• Pluralist theory—see below.
Implications of Miller-Stokes

- The conventional theory of responsible party government doesn’t work very well in the U.S. (and not elsewhere either—Miller et al. 1999, especially Pierce 1999).
- Nor do the Radicals: Citizens don’t know and don’t care; parties are often far from their partisans (e.g., the GOP in this period).
- Party ID, group memberships, and myopic retrospections predict voting; issue positions (measured before the parties tell their partisans what to think) don’t predict much at all.
- Representation has to be about something else: Let’s give the Levellers, Jefferson, and the spatial model a well-earned internment. They are the phlogiston theory.
Current Topics Not Treated
(or not treated beyond parentheticals)

• Not much about parties in the Miller chapters, and only a little about party government in the Stokes chapters. How are Democrats doing vs. Republicans?

• Selection models of representation (Fearon; Mansbridge). Stokes does suggest that “selection is a poor match for sanctions” in enforcing party discipline, but that’s another issue.)

• Comparisons with random selection of (informed?) partisans from the district (cf. Achen 1977; Lauderdale 2013).
Other Omissions

• Statistical frameworks for representation other than the Diamond: How would responsible party government be assessed, e.g. (Weissberg 1978)?
• Should areal representatives reflect intra-party dimensional variance, for example?
• All the correlational work needs checking with regression models to ensure that the substantive findings hold.
• As the Stokes 1969 memo notes, the book is also thin on the main 20\textsuperscript{th} century framework for legislative behavior, namely pluralism, in which group memberships matter more than issue preferences.
Other Kinds of Representation

• Descriptive: Does social class matter (Carnes)?
• Virtual: Who represents the black Idahoan?
• Case work: An example from Taiwan.
• Party minorities generally: Who represents them? Virtual representation by their party’s winners in other districts?
• Note that the problem does not entirely disappear in PR systems; hence quotas for women and others.
• In general, too little discussion in subsequent U.S. work of parallel studies elsewhere (e.g., Converse and Pierce 1986; Miller et al. 1999).
An Agenda for Representation Studies

• Specialization won’t work on this topic:
  – Keep talking to theorists.
  – Stop talking only to Americanists and only about America.

• Give dimensional congruence a furlough?

• Why do voters turf out the Democratic Member of Congress when they think the Democratic president has messed up?
  – A clue to how they think representation should work?
Stylized Inferences

• Many Members of Congress are very different from their average constituents’ views on the key political issues of the time.

• The voters don’t care.

• Appears to be true cross-nationally.

• Downs is wrong at least in this: competition doesn’t moderate candidates.

• Instead, it drives them deeper into their parties’ typical views.

• “Control of leaders by ordinary people” is as accurate as divine right of kings. We need to think harder.
Where Does that Leave Representation?

• Suppose we took *The American Voter* seriously (yes, irony noted): Votes are PID + short-term forces.

• Then on average, Democratic districts would elect Democrats, and similarly for the GOP (and they do).

• Members of Congress would look like a random draw from politically engaged members of their constituency party. (Do they, in detail?)

• So there would be mild correlations between what partisans think and what their representatives think (bigger when there is high regional variation, as with civil rights), as there is, but not for the reasons imagined in conventional theories of democratic control or in the doctrine of responsible party government.
Qualifications

• Some exceptions for exceptional issues, though not all of these are edifying examples.

• Some exceptions for large short-term forces—in the extreme, realignments. (But not because these induce higher correlations between issue preferences and representatives—cf. Mayhew and Achen/Bartels, forthcoming.)

• In sum, and to a good approximation, representation is not about policy preferences (though they get carried along to some degree by what representation IS about).

• So what IS it about?
Pluralism again

• If “a human being is by nature a political animal,” what kind of animal is that?
• We can consult what Arlene and I used to teach together about groups: Gumplovicz, William Graham Sumner, Bentley, Herring, Truman, Latham (and Kinder and Kam lately), along with many others. One finds:
• A human being is an animal that lives in herds, dislikes opposing herds, and is good at explaining why his/her own herd is morally right.
• Parties are a herd of herds; people who pay attention know which super-herd would welcome them.
• THAT is representation, not issue congruence (cf. African-Americans and evangelicals).
What about Democracy then?
Joint work with Larry Bartels

- No real input into policy process from ordinary people. (But really, we knew that.)
- Parties (group coalitions) make policy; within broad limits, they do what they want (e.g., Suez; the second Iraq War).
- They are free to organize, and (in most democracies) they rotate in office. Both of those are different from autocracies, and that’s what’s good about democracy.
- Elections prevent egregious violations of social norms, such as murdering a kitten on the White House lawn.
- Those things are all the representation that the voters can manage, given how little they know.
- How test? First, individual-level data.
- But we will also need to study representatives.
Hence a Role for the Miller-Stokes Dataset

• There is still nothing better than the Miller-Stokes dataset for studying Members of Congress.
• The Constitutionally-guaranteed youngest members of the elite sample in 1958 would be 80 years old now. Only a handful from the sample can still be alive. They could be contacted.
• There are lots of demographic and electoral data in the data file: The elite respondents could easily be de-anonymized and put into a broader electoral and personal context. (Original interviews are apparently lost in Willow Run.)
• Bartels and Gilens have recent important statements (on class differences in representation); there are many others.
• Miller-Stokes has more detailed data; Nick Carnes has already used it in related ways.
In sum

• The Miller-Stokes study was, and remains, one of the most important studies in the history of political science. My admiration is deep.

• The data remain not nearly fully exploited, and the study seems certain to have additional theoretical impacts more than half a century after its creation.