Congress
• In today’s lecture I want to give you a brief overview of how to think about the US. Congress
• The lecture covers: 1) the environment of the Congress-essentially the constitutional context of Congress and the policy outputs of the body, 2) the most basic inputs to the Congress, 3) the internal organization of the Congress and the ways in which congress performs its duties
• Along the way I shall try to use examples not just from the Congress but from other organizations so that you can see how concepts can be applied broadly

Congress
I. Separation of powers
– Congress shares with the President and the Courts the task of governing in many countries the power of the government is centralized with different institutions serving different functions
  • In Britain the House of Commons contains the executive the legislative and the judicial branches in one body
  • Ministries or bureaucracies are there to carry out the wishes of the government irrespective of preferences-Labour or Tory
– Congress then must interact with both those branches in a context where each holds the other at arms length while working with them
  • Budgets have to be passed but the Congress can not just be a rubber stamp for the executive’s wishes
  • Court opinions have to be respected but monies can be withheld to indicate displeasure with opinions

Congress
• An organization’s environment both constrains the organization and shapes its character and development thus:
  – Organizations which exist in free market situations behave differently than do organizations in non-free market situations
  – Governmental organizations have environments which constrain its actions in fundamental ways and the most significant constraints and shapers of governmental organizations are in democratic countries constitutions
• The primary features of the constitution which affect the U.S. Congress are as follows

Congress
• Each branch has powers that it alone can dispense or delegate and in conjunction these interactions constitute checks and balances
  – These checks and balances make the American form of government slower and less responsive—harder to turn opinion into law (Burkean)

II. Federalism
– The American system of government has different governments within the same geographic region and the governments have separate and concurrent powers
  • California and the federal government both tax citizens but the federal government has the military while California has responsibility for schools
Congress

- Federalism affects the Congress in that every state gets equal representation in the Senate which advantages little states
  - From the convention and the Connecticut compromise through slavery to the present this has affected public policy
- Every state/region will represent its local interests and the political parties will reflect this division rather than integrate it.
  - List systems like Germany, Israel can solve these problems by having the party control policy and nominations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>congress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- These democratic values assure that congress is hard to lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- They also assure that leading will entail consulting and negotiating as well as trying to find where the votes will come from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leaders have almost no sanctions over members who do not go along</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All these points are in contrast to parliamentary systems where leaders do have sanctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Money for campaigns, nominations, position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In sum, all of the characteristics of the constitutional environment constrain the Congress making it hard for quixotic or important policies to pass – note the irony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congress

- Federalist systems like Switzerland make arriving at a consensus harder because each cultural region is represented and has a say or a veto over major policy areas
  - The South’s veto of slavery and civil rights legislation is a classic example |
  - The conservative coalition is another
- III. Democratic values
  - Representatives are elected by citizens and thus each representative must be treated in fundamental ways as equal to other representatives
    - Equal pay |
    - Equal staff |
    - Same furniture and so on

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>congress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The constitutional environment yields among others the following two specific inputs to the Congress:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The electorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The electorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The congress is elected by citizens and thus representatives attain their power not by their achievements nor status but solely via their certification as winners of a plurality of the electorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In the process of getting elected by citizens members must by the nature of the system deal with:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Political parties, pressure groups, the president and bureaucrats among others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
congress

• Political parties no matter how weak play a role in members election plans if only because large portions of the public identify with the parties, however in addition they:
  – Partially fund elections
  – Provide some workers
  – Can set policy positions that help or hurt members reelection chances
  – Affect members internal careers
  – Affect how districts are drawn every ten years and so on
• Interest groups play a role in every election and reelection attempt:
  – Funding, rating performance, providing workers, exacting policy positions, demanding access

congress

• The executive as input means that Congress must deal with the executive branch
  – The president has become the chief legislator
  – Head of state
  – Commander in chief
  – Head bureaucrat-chief executive office
• All of these give the president an informational advantage over Congress and assure that Congress must deal with the executive in all the roles designated above
• The Congress shares power with the president in meeting the demands of democratic government

congress

• Pressure groups choose candidates to support in every congressional race in the country
• They also run adds, organize citizens and otherwise try to affect how members of congress perceive and vote on issues
• They are ubiquitous and have grown in number especially single issue and ideological groups
• The president affect members election chances in that the positions taken, money spent etc. can help or hurt a candidates election chances
• Bureaucrats also affect election chances because if policies are not administered members election prospects are affected

Congress

• The Congress is expected to:
  – Adjust policies to contemporary needs
  – Maintain social harmony
• take on all of the hard and thus controversial issues and do so while:
  – Assuring that opposition viewpoints can continue to disagree and work to build a majority
  – Only political organizations have this problem in universities, businesses and other organizations once the executive makes a decision it is over-relatively
The congress has a lot of leeway in determining how to achieve these ends
  Pass laws, budgets, hold hearings, investigate issues, issue proclamations and so on.
congress

- All these ends have to be achieved in a complicated manner where the congress expresses the cacophony of the myriad interests in the country
- Decides in a complicated process where they share government with the other branches especially the president
- Compared to the president congress does not look quick on its collective 1170 feet

congress

- In order to translate the inputs into policy and harmony outputs the Congress like any other organization has to organize itself by creating the following:
  - Division of labor
  - Integrative mechanism to put together what the labor pulls apart
  - Motivating mechanisms
- Universities for example have responded overtime to changes in their environments by creating:
  - Division of labor –departments
  - Integrative mechanism—administration
  - Motivation—money prestige

congress

- In an oil company what are the division of labor, the integrative mechanisms and the motivators?
- Division of labor mechanisms provide the information for the organization but tend to pull things apart as each division feels it is most important thus, an integrative mechanism to pull together what dividing labor pulls apart
- Finally organizations need to be able to motivate its members to do their jobs well
- In Congress the division of labor and the integrative mechanism are performed by

congress

- Division of labor – the committees which are both sources of information and have distributional consequences
- Integrative mechanism—the political parties which have to take the diverse interest and preferences of members and pull them together into coherent policies (pass and provide social harmony)
- Motivation – this is hardest to understand since you can not pay anyone any more than any other member
congress

- The result is that the congress has a rich interior life where insider baseball is dominant
- Members lead double lives—important in congress as a policy expert which is or can be unimportant at home in the district
- This helps account for why there are so many lobbyists in Washington
- The inability to pay members or to indicate too much status helps make congress a hard place to understand

congress

- The internal organization of Congress and the rules which govern its behavior are important determinants of policy outcomes (see the present rules debates in the Congress)
- The role of parties and committees in the policy process is an important research area in contemporary political science and when we turn to policy I will cover these issues more thoroughly
- It is sufficient for our purposes today to say that the Congress is internally set up through its division of labor, integrative mechanisms and member motivation to meet the challenges set for it by our system