

PLSC 541, Fall 2008
Baumgartner

Questions for week 4

Readings: Mayhew, McCubbins and Schwartz, Bender and Moe

Questions:

1. Mayhew's book is fundamentally based on his identification of "major" laws. How did he do that? Do you believe that he got it pretty much right?
2. What would have been an alternative way of identifying major laws, or could Mayhew have tested his propositions about how well government functions in divided and shared government with a different methodology? If so do you think the results would be substantially different?
3. How come no one did this book before Mayhew? Was it particularly hard to do? How long did it take? Could it have been done for a dissertation project, or is it too big for that?
4. Now that Mayhew's book is done, what dissertation-scope research projects could potentially stem from it? Describe a few research questions and sketch out *one* research approach.
5. McCubbins and Schwartz suggest that Congress need not oversee all agencies all the time. What do you think of their model and conclusions? As usual, I'd also like you to pay attention to their empirical evidence.
6. Bender and Moe present a very general model that they suggest should have broad applicability to policymaking institutions in many contexts. Explain the model. Would it be a good one to choose to attempt to implement in an empirical project of your own?