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Challenging Parties, Changing Parliaments: Women and Elected Office in Contemporary Western Europe, Miki Caul Kittilson, The Ohio State University Press, 2006, ISBN 081425148X, \$24.95, paper, 240 pages.

Miki Caul Kittilson offers scholars of both women and politics and political parties new insights into the opportunity structures available to female parliamentarians in Western European democracies. Considering the important gatekeeping role of parties, she provides a satisfying answer to the question: Why do some political parties provide greater opportunities to advance women candidates for parliament while others do not?

The answer is not simple but implicates nuances of party structure, social forces outside of the party and parliamentary institution, and strategically placed women among the party elite to influence the upward mobility of women in parliamentary systems. In short, both exogenous and endogenous factors are required to spur on women's representation and party change. She establishes that party-list, proportional representation systems are most conducive to women's representation, with women voters and women as leaders of their party being powerful simultaneous forces.

Employing multiple methods, Kittilson gathers an impressive array of data to answer her central question. Her analysis offers a more dynamic, time-sensitive explanation than has previously been offered in cross-sectional and cross-national research. She analyzes 50 political parties in ten countries and also provides detailed case studies of Great Britain, Germany and Finland. Acknowledging the limitations of her sample of Western European post-industrial democracies, Kittilson nonetheless provides new insights in opportunity structure theory. The nuances of the opportunity structure vary with the presence of women in the party hierarchy, the party ideology, the degree of centralization in the party, and the extent of permeability or factionalization of the parties. Specifically, she finds that less centralized and more factionalized parties lead to greater gains for women.

Focusing on the role of party quotas, Kittilson asks why some parties change their rules and become early adopters of policies to increase the representation of women. Kittilson finds that female party leaders play a key initial role in encouraging the adoption of party quotas. Her event history analysis points to a sequence of influences to explain why and when parties adopt quotas. Women who establish themselves in the highest ranks of the party elite tend to increase the likelihood of adoption of quotas through their advocacy. In turn, entrepreneurial parties and leftist parties appear to be most sympathetic to the advocacy of these women. Other parties, whether motivated by symbolism or electoral imperatives, are likely to follow suit as a contagion effect takes hold.

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Common Ground: Committee Politics in the U. S. House of Representatives, John Baughman, Stanford University Press, 2006, ISBN 0804754160, \$50, cloth/paper, 253 pages.

In this ambitious book and project, John Baughman seeks to identify the conditions under which House committees choose to cooperate with other committees in the presence of cloudy issue jurisdictions. The overlapping of issue jurisdictions is a central feature of the modern U.S. House. Hence, a study such as this about what committees do (cooperate or fight) in the gray jurisdictional areas and why, is indeed a timely one.

The introductory chapter serves to enlighten the reader to the topic and take issue with the conventional wisdom that turf wars between rival committees abound. Chapter 2 discusses the mechanics of committee interaction and how they might change after major reforms. The author introduces his theoretical framework of Transaction Cost Economics in Chapter 3. This theory "...suggests that when committees consider whether to compromise over shared legislation, they face costs in measuring the value of the turf and in enforcing an agreement, which might scuttle the deal" (5). There are also costs in fighting a committee turf war. In sum, the theory amounts to a cost-benefit analysis from the standpoint of committees. Chapter 3 traces the evolution of the House committee system from the 1940s until the late twentieth century, showing the increased propensity of committee interaction. In Chapter 4, the author argues that committees making policy together often form reciprocal relationships based on certain conditions. Chapter 5 highlights coalition-building activities of committees on major legislation. Chapter 6 demonstrates that the costs of cooperation can be reduced through overlapping committee memberships and staff interaction. In chapter 7, the author profiles the efforts of central party leaders to induce cooperation between committees. Chapter 8 looks at alternative explanations of committee behavior and finds the Transaction Costs Economics framework to be the most effective explanation.

The strengths of the book are many. First, Baughman adeptly merges theoretical discussion and quotes from interviews with systematic, quantitative evidence. This style makes the material interesting and persuasive. Second, the theoretical focus on explanations of cooperation as well as conflict is a significant step forward in the committee jurisdictions literature. In forming his framework, the author eschews being confined to one of the three major explanations of congressional organization (distributive, informational, partisan). Instead, he comes up with a conditional framework where all three explanations can matter, depending on issue area salience (readers will see familiarity with Forrest Maltzman's excellent work *Competing Principals*).

As with any book, there are shortcomings. First, and at the risk of sounding like a parochial Americanist, the early references to IR literature are awkward and appear out of left field. The book started as a dissertation; I am guessing that one of Baughman's dissertation advisors was from IR. Second, Baughman overstates the newness of his argument about committee cooperation and policymaking. While conflict and turf wars are more sexy topics for researchers than cooperation on more mundane matters, scholars have not completely ignored the latter. John Hardin's 1996 *Journal of Politics* article (212) and much public policy literature holds up the possibility of cooperation in order to forge significant policy change. Indeed, the very health care jurisdictions paper by Baumgartner, Jones and MacLead that Baughman criticizes (21) acknowledges that overlapping jurisdictions can also lead to cooperation and policy innovation, but that in health care a threshold of jurisdictional complexity is crossed resulting in a quagmire. My own work on omnibus legislation demonstrates that much significant legislation in the health care policy area that bogged down in jurisdictional battles was later added to budget reconciliation bills by party leaders.

Still, the strengths of the book definitely outweigh the minor shortcomings. Legislative scholars, students of institutional development, and even issue network scholars from public policy should all read this book. It is a strong work that will be cited in the literature for many years to come.

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Freshman Orientation: House Style and Home Style, Ed Sidlow, CQ Press, 2006, ISBN 193311665X, \$29.95, paper, 172 pages.

Freshman Orientation presents the story of Michigan Republican Joe Schwarz as he sought and gained election to an open seat in the House of Representatives during the 2004 election and the two-year journey that followed. Professor Sidlow captivates the reader in novel like manner by personalizing every aspect of the Schwarz journey from personal introductions to Schwarz's staff, to the trials and tribulations of seeking election and re-election. Although lacking rigorous academic analysis, this descriptive work serves as a wonderful and easy to read introduction to the life of a United States Congressman and the challenges today's politicians face, ranging from election battles and fundraising, to issues of public policy in the district and on Capitol Hill, as well as the administrative challenges of organizing the congressional enterprise.

Professor Sidlow begins by introducing the reader to Michigan's 7th Congressional District, establishing the setting for the impending political battle. Sidlow then takes the reader along for the ride as he follows Dr. Schwarz through the crowded and challenging Republican primary, and then onto the less competitive general election. Along the way, Sidlow is careful and detailed in introducing the reader to the various characters involved in the journey from primary and general election opponents to the campaign workers and office staffers. Following the election story, Sidlow then presents the forgotten challenges "freshman" Congressman must face.

Once Dr. Schwarz is Congressman Schwarz, the reader is exposed to the various challenges of setting up a political enterprise – on The Hill and at home in the district. Beginning with staffing the Hill office, finding housing in D.C., formal freshman orientation to Congress, finding office space in the home district, and ending with the hiring and firing of district staff, Sidlow leaves no step in the journey unturned. Examples range from the Hill office battle with moldy walls, to the questionable reliability of district staffers. Finally, substantive political behavior is also a primary topic.

The reader is allowed into staff meetings to understand the types of goals and pursuits of primary emphasis to members of Congress and their staffs. In the sense the reader is the "fly on the wall" during discussion of what representation will mean to the Schwarz team, what committee assignments are favorable and why, as well as preparing and executing public policy battles. Sometimes a lone wolf challenging leadership and other times the consummate Republican, the reader lives the various ups and downs of the Schwarz freshman term. Unfortunately this captivatingly personal story ends with Schwarz's loss in the 2006 Republican primary.

Although *Freshman Orientation* serves as a fascinating introduction to political life, the work lacks a thorough link to political science. Throughout the work Sidlow utilizes instances of behavior by Congressman Schwarz to generalize regarding the behavior of members or freshman members throughout the institution. Although in many cases, this study would walk in-step with existing empirical research, Sidlow fails to clearly frame the Schwarz story within our existing understanding of congressional elections and behavior.

In general, *Freshman Orientation: House Style and Home Style* presents a fascinating introduction to the real life challenges faced by newly elected members of Congress. This book is perfect for undergraduates, especially for introductory congressional courses or Congress simulations. Unlike traditional political science, the easy to read and personal style of the work draws the reader into the story. Sidlow provides a brief introduction to congressional elections, congressional organization, and life of a politician or staffer on the Hill that is perfect for introducing students to the real world of national and local politics.

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Parliament in British Politics, Philip Norton, Palgrave Macmillon, 2005, ISBN 1-4039-0667-X, Paper, 260 pages, Index.

In this book, Philip Norton has provided the long-awaited follow-up to his 1993 examination of the British Parliament, *What is Parliament?* He offers insight concerning the effects of the institutional reforms and evolution wrought over the last decade. His book differs from many others on the British Parliament in that it is not restricted to a discussion of the House of Commons, but rather, addresses the role of both Houses, Lords and Commons, in parliamentary activity. In doing so, he utilizes a two-fold approach, one which addresses the relationship between each of the two Houses and the Government, and one which addresses the relationship between each of the two Houses and the people. This book would serve as an excellent text for the study of both the British Parliament and comparative legislatures. The chapters are self-contained and can be utilized as guides for understanding the myriad aspects of legislative politics. This book is a necessary addition to the library of any legislative politics scholar.

In the opening chapters of the text, Norton provides an overview of legislative systems, their power, and their function. He then addresses the unique history and constitutional environment of the House of Commons and House of Lords. This overview provides scholars with a basis for understanding legislatures in general and the Westminster model in particular. Norton proceeds to discuss the policymaking process within the British government throughout Part I. This includes not only the creation and approval of legislation, but the relationships between the government, the Commons, and the Lords. While Parliament is considered a policy-influencing body, as are nearly all other legislatures outside of the United States, its power and resources have steadily increased over time. While these chapters certainly indicate that Parliament has an influence on policy, it is also clear that the government has the upper hand, both in agenda-setting and in the institutional constraints on Parliament. It would appear that while Parliament's impact is minimal, it is more often the House of Lords that is able to influence policy rather than the House of Commons. The House of Commons is most often bound by the majority party, while the increasing diversity in the House of Lords makes it a more likely House for dissent. Ultimately, however, the Commons can veto any amendments of the Lords, and so, even that power is weakened. Norton does demonstrate that Parliamentary scrutiny of the government's policy has increased both prior to implementation and through both formal and informal oversight. To conclude his discussion of the policy-making process, Norton also discusses the impact of the European Union on Parliamentary action.

In Part II, Norton examines the representative nature of the Parliament. He first discusses the history, the different types of representation and how well the British Parliament measures in terms of representation. He then discusses the various means that members use in order to meet constituent demands and the increasing use of time that members in the House of Commons devote to their constituency work. In the final chapters, Norton addresses impact of interest groups and other voices on the Commons and the Lords, as well as a discussion of the members' increasing role of educator and information source. Finally, Norton concludes with a discussion of "Whither Parliament?" and finds that while Parliament could certainly matter more, it does in fact matter, and more so than is popularly realized.

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Platypus and Parliament: The Australian Senate in Theory and Practice, Stanley Bach, Department of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600 Australia, 2003, ISBN 0642712913, paper, \$29.95, 387 pages.

The Australian Senate is an institution apart from other upper house legislatures. It serves as a body both within parliament and outside of it. Its powers are limited; however, as Bach explains, certain constitutional provisions enable the Senate to slow the efficiency of the government party. These constitutional provisions give the Senate the power to support or reject spending bills, and thus, when the Senate is controlled by the Opposition or by a Coalition, which is likely in modern Australian politics, the Senate may effectively stop the government in its tracks.

Bach does an excellent job of discussing the constitutional design, the electoral and party systems, and thus, effectively explaining the theoretical dilemma, before addressing the very real crisis that emerged as a result of Senate power in 1974. In seeking to find a solution to such crises as that which emerged in 1974, Bach examines the original intent and expectations of the constitutional authors, as well as the political realities of modern politics. The Senate in Australia stands as a House of Review, and as one which gives power to the less populous states. In the former case, it is similar to the British House of Lords, and in the latter, to the United States Senate. The power to stop spending measures of the government increases its power in both respects, and makes it a greater force than the Upper House in the Westminster model. In addition, modern political trends have shown an increase in third party representation in the Senate. This indicates that the Senate may also serve as a more ideologically, as well as geographically, representative body. The results are difficult to judge, while, as Bach points out, no crisis similar to that of 1974-1975 has again emerged, calls for reform and constitutional amendment have been debated.

Bach argues that to amend the provision which grants the Senate power to support or stop spending bills would not only remove the power of the less populous states, it would also remove any effect the Senate may have as a House of Review. Rather, the Senate serves as a balance to majority politics, one that is singularly Australian. The Senate clearly serves as a brake on majoritarian politics, and in doing so, it balances the power of the majority party by requiring the government party to deal the opposition in on important policies. As it requires two electoral cycles for a majority to be overturned in the Senate, it is unlikely that the government party will be without significant challenge as it seeks to govern the nation. As Bach points out, the Australian system is not, nor does he argue that it should be, a system of checks and balances like that in the United States; however, it also does not allow for an efficient government program like that of the Westminster model. The Australian Senate is indeed a platypus, a hybrid of the two systems, and yet, unique unto itself.

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The K Street Gang: The Rise and Fall of the Republican Machine, Matthew Continetti, Doubleday Books, 2006, ISBN 038551672X, \$14.95, cloth, 273 pages.

In *The K Street Gang: The Rise and Fall of the Republican Machine*, Michael Continetti enters a long-standing debate in the political science community on the American interest group system with a revealing descriptive study of the corruptive influence of interest group money on both the lobbyists that the interest groups use to gain influence within the institutions of government and the government officials themselves. More specifically, Continetti focuses on how the greed of conservative lobbyists and Republican governmental officials transformed them from true believers in the conservative ideology of a limited federal government into vessels for federal government expansion during Republican control of Congress, and thus, destroyed the values upon which the Republican revolution of 1994 that resulted in the takeover of both houses of Congress was built.

Continetti effectively shows how lobbyists like Jack Abramoff came to power after the Republican takeover of Congress due to their inside influence with congressional Republicans like, most notably, Tom DeLay. These lobbyists then went on to use this influence to advance the causes of the interest groups who paid large sums of money for their services. For instance, Continetti demonstrates how Abramoff was able to convince legislators to devote a great deal of time and effort on likely trivial legislation to limit U.S. federal government involvement in the Marianas islands, a region notable for its poor working conditions, through the use of "lavish junkets" to the region to court legislators to construct the legislation and columnists to speak out in favor of the legislation (Chapter 3). In fact, in many cases, lobbyists like Abramoff were able to write legislation themselves that contained benefits on behalf of their interest group clients that legislators would in turn introduce unaltered in Congress, a finding that is likely particularly troubling to those concerned that interest groups have far too much influence in governmental affairs.

However, Continetti's discussion of the depths of hypocrisy and corruption that certain conservative lobbyists went to in order to satisfy their insatiable appetite for money is where the book shines. For instance, Continetti discusses how Christian Coalition lobbyist Ralph Reed forsook his previous commitment to anti-gambling values by using statements from some of his religious right allies in order to defeat legislation detrimental to Indian gaming interests, and in the process, assist the very Indian gaming establishments that Reed had spoken out vehemently against in the past (145-151).

Particularly intriguing is Continetti's discussion of the schemes that Abramoff and his partner in crime, former Tom DeLay press secretary Michael Scanlon, used to extract money from clients. According to Continetti, Abramoff and Scanlon developed a scheme, in which Abramoff would tell his clients that certain political consulting services that Abramoff himself could not provide were necessary for success in Washington and would convince his clients that Scanlon was the best at providing these benefits (161). In turn, Scanlon would charge exorbitant amounts of money for very simple almost unnecessary services, such as advising clients to state their name and what office they are running for (167). Scanlon split the profits between Abramoff and himself without ever letting the clients know that they were business partners. However, while the corruption that occurred in this scheme should be troublesome enough, the unremorseful way in which the two discussed their schemes was downright appalling. In their e-mail discussions with each other, Abramoff and Scanlon referred to their clients very condescendingly (i.e. calling them "monkeys," "morons," and "troglodytes" among other things) and greedily celebrated each opportunity to extract more money from a client. On one occasion, Scanlon wrote to Abramoff in reference to a client, "I want all their MONEY!!!" (176).

Continetti's research does provide a powerful cautionary tale about the lobbying environment in the United States and how it can lead its members and those government officials it seeks to influence down a path of corruption. With this said, due to the fact that Continetti only looks at the lobbying of a few prominent conservative lobbyists during the era after the Republican takeover in 1994, it is very difficult to derive substantive conclusions on what occurred that caused lobbyists like Abramoff to stray down the corruptive path. Continetti seems to argue in his conclusion that the big government environment corrupted conservative lobbyists and legislators and a more limited government, in which pork barrel spending is controlled and legislators' terms are limited, is the answer to the problem of corruption in government (Epilogue). However, lobbying throughout history needs to be more extensively studied before arriving at the merits of a plan like Continetti describes here. With this said, Continetti's intentions in writing this book were not necessarily to write the definitive word on lobbying in the United States, but instead to provide evidence of how the lobbying environment, as it exists in the United States today, can cause lobbyists and legislators to be corrupted. In demonstrating what can happen to lobbyists and legislators exposed to the incentives for greed, his book in large part is a rousing success.

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