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Book Notes

Deliberative Choices: Debating Public Policy in Congress, Gary Mucciaroni and Paul J. Quirk, The University of Chicago Press, 2006, ISBN 0226544079, \$20.00, paper, 296 pages.

“I know not how a representative assembly can more usefully employ itself than in talk, when the subject of talk is the great public interests of the country, and every sentence of it represents the opinion either of some important body of persons in the nation, or of an individual in whom some such body have reposed their confidence,” wrote John Stuart Mill in his *Considerations on Representative Government*. Such sentiments regarding the importance of deliberation to the concept of representation and the function of legislative bodies are frequently repeated. The validity and value of deliberation in these contexts also appears predicated upon an assumption that the ideas and interests presented in debate will be honest and informative. In their book *Deliberative Choices: Debating Public Policy in Congress*, Gary Mucciaroni and Paul J. Quirk question this assumption by systematically analyzing congressional debates surrounding three major policy initiatives of the 1990s: the welfare reform movement, efforts to repeal the estate tax, and the deregulation of the communications industry.

The analysis focuses upon floor debate in both houses of Congress, using the text of the *Congressional Record* as the primary data source. Each of the policy efforts listed above is decomposed into a set of primary issue debates based upon *effect claims*. In the debate over welfare reform for example, proponents claimed that welfare often caused dependency, that it provided an incentive for out-of-wedlock births, and that restrictions on eligibility would provide recipients incentives to seek work. Opponents rebutted these claims and asserted that restricting benefits would endanger many child welfare recipients. The validity of effect claims, rebuttals, and occasional concessions are weighed against independent sources of information (expert opinions, findings of independent research, etc.) in order to determine the extent to which they are supported. Policy debates are then given scores regarding the extent to which they are (un)informative.

The authors argue that two primary concerns shape the effect claims made by members of Congress. Competing desires to make *forceful* and *credible* arguments are often in tension with one another as representatives and senators craft floor statements. A number of factors are hypothesized to affect rhetorical strategies in light of these concerns. Scholars interested in the partisan, interest group, and institutional elements shaping debate in Congress will find the case studies in this book intriguing. While the authors admit that the scope of their analysis is limited in comparison to the broader deliberative context, their systematic analyses of three policy debates provide rich contextual insight into the informational accuracy and validity of legislative rhetoric on the floors of the U.S. House and Senate. Findings of the study are unlikely to surprise readers, but the clarity of depth of analysis will undoubtedly be appreciated by students of legislative communication and representation.

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Executive Orders and the Modern Presidency: Legislating from the Oval Office, Adam L. Warner, Lynne Rienner Publications, 2006, ISBN 1558264017, \$49.95, cloth, 175 pages.

In recent years, scholars have greatly advanced the understanding of the chief executive's use of unilateral legislative powers. In *Executive Orders and the Modern Presidency: Legislating from the Oval Office*, Adam L. Warner advances this body of knowledge by conducting the first systematic empirical analysis of all executive orders issued from 1936 thru 2001 (39). Warner's analysis examines the degree that modern presidents have been active and strategic in using executive orders to establish policy (1). Theoretically, he addresses the question from a traditional rational-choice perspective based on the propositions of Kenneth R. Mayer's *With the Stroke of a Pen* (2001) and William G. Howell's *Power Without Persuasion* (2003) and "the five-tenants of unilateral theory" (1-3; 12-24). Although Warner does address the need to advance a general theory of executive legislative behavior, the thrust of this academic contribution is found in the empirical chapters.

Warner begins by focusing his study on the assumptions of previous scholars that identify executive orders as a strategic policy tool in the hands of the chief executive (1). Because previous scholars have only examined the strategic nature of executive orders via the analysis of samples of executive orders, Warner moves the debate forward by content analyzing all executive orders issued during the modern era (2). Such methodological differences result in Warner challenging previous scholarly claims that presidential power has increased significantly due to the use of executive orders (2). Such arguments and propositions are examined empirically in chapters 2-5.

Chapter 2 presents the reader with an exploration of the functions and purposes executive orders have served during the modern era. Warner presents three taxonomies of executive order functions derived via the content analysis: symbolic, routine, and policy (37). Warner utilizes descriptive statistical analysis to explore the differences in executive order activity and functions across administrations (39-40), as well as party (45). Warner then explores the purpose of executive orders regarding how they amend previous orders. Here Warner examines the frequency of orders that completely or partially, revoke or supersede orders executed by preceding presidents (48-50). This chapter represents the most general and comprehensive overview of how presidents utilize executive orders to date.

Chapters 3 and 4 address specific conditions regarding executive order activity. Chapter 3 discusses how factors affecting the policy making environment may influence the variance or executive order activity. Environmental factors such as divided government (64), scandal (67), tenure (71), and policy domains (76) are explored as possible influences via descriptive, empirical analysis.

Chapter 4 is another descriptive, empirical investigation of the measures presidents take to "safeguard" the duration and implementation of executive orders. Warner explores the degree to which each administration has included sources of authority and legitimacy in crafting individual orders (90-104). He also explores the congressional responses to executive orders such as floor debate and actual statutory modification (111-120). Warner concludes in Chapter 5 with a discussion of the current administration's executive order activity as it compares to the trends observed in the descriptive analyses in chapters 2-4.

Spanning all presidencies from Franklin D. Roosevelt thru Bill Clinton, Warner's content analysis of all 5,392 executive orders is a major empirical contribution to presidential and legislative studies. The exhaustive nature of the content analysis leaves the reader anticipating further systematic statistical analysis uniting the vast amount of descriptive information presented in the book. The general understanding of executive legislative activity presented by Warner should certainly stimulate further exhaustive empirical analyses that will more clearly tease out the causal mechanisms behind the general trends discussed in this work.

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Exporting Congress? The Influence of the U.S. Congress on World Legislatures, edited by Timothy J. Power and Nicol C. Rae, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006, ISBN 0822959216, \$24.95, paper, 248 pages.

Power and Rae, in their essay contribution to this volume, "Legislative Diffusion: Can the U.S. Congress Be a Source," ask "to what extent is the U.S. Congress a model for other legislatures around the world?" The authors introduce a new term, *legislative diffusion*, which is a concept meant to merge congressional studies and comparative legislative studies. Legislative diffusion occurs when scholars identify characteristics of the U.S. Congress (e.g. bicameralism, weak political parties, legislatively weak executive) in other legislatures throughout the world; in other words, when scholars can identify characteristics of a transformative legislative branch. Various authors in this volume treat diffusion as being an uncoordinated decision-making process in an effort to imitate the U.S. Congress; however, Scott Morgenstern, Amie Kreppel, and Pippa Norris examine how domestic factors (e.g. culture, designs of mediating institutions) influence legislative design.

Power and Rae do not hypothesize specific diffusion outcomes or hypothesize why this diffusion or lack thereof occurs; instead, Power and Rae "left the influence of the U.S. Congress on world legislatures as an open-ended question," making this volume an inductive, first attempt to explain the legislative and structural influence of the American legislative model. As a result, the authors find that a number of *cluster* variables influence diffusion: history, culture, tradition, degree of presidentialism, degree of federalism, type of electoral system, and the strength of political parties. In conclusion, Power and Rae argue that "our review of permissive and causal variables shows that legislative diffusion, like all forms of diffusion, is contingent, conditional, and unpredictable. Research on legislative diffusion is still in its infancy, so we are not yet in a position to advance predictive or explanatory models," as this volume is a theory building exercise in *legislative diffusion* (12).

The various authors examine many different types of governing models in an effort to explain congressional legislative diffusion, such as: parliaments in Canada and the United Kingdom, presidential systems in Latin America, and various Eastern European legislatures. In these studies, the authors find more evidence of barriers to U.S. Congress diffusion due to existing regimes, political party and electoral structure, and culture. Of these variables, most serve to prevent diffusion of congressional structure. Power and Rae, in their concluding essay "Barriers and Carriers: Legislative Diffusion and the Selective Imitation of Congress," argue that "the major barriers to 'exporting Congress' to other democracies consist primarily of the macro-institutional environment (parliamentarianism as opposed to presidentialism; federalism versus centralization; legislative powers of the executive); political culture or tradition; the party system; the electoral system; geographical distance; and resources available to individual legislators, especially pay and staff" (186). Despite the adoption of presidential systems through out Latin America, these countries grant the executive too much authority over budgetary powers for their legislature to mirror the U.S. Congress.

Despite these institutional, cultural, and extra-institutional barriers, parliamentary systems (e.g. Germany, Britain, Canada) have placed greater emphasis on public hearings and investigative committee reports "because adoption of these practices has perfectly suited the increasing inclination of the public and legislators to question government and seek accountability for its decisions" (192). Despite the diffusion of the committee hearing apparatus throughout parliamentary systems, there still remain weak legislative branches, which "in most advanced democracies is a legacy of the rise of mass political parties" (193).

The editors fall back on domestic forces, such as district design, executive branch power, and political party strength to explain legislative behavior and institutional design, which indicates that Polsby's (1975) distinction between transformative and arena legislatures is still important today, and legislative diffusion is currently in a state of "selective imitation" (195).

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Fight Club Politics: How Partisanship is Poisoning the House of Representatives, Juliet Eilperin, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006, ISBN 0742551180, \$19.95, cloth, 176 pages.

“Both sides openly acknowledge that politics in the House has become more about strategy than policy” (5). With this understatement, the author opens this engrossing account of our inurbane “People’s House.” *Fight Club Politics: How Partisanship Is Poisoning the House of Representatives* is a slender, yet, useful look at this lack of comity in the modern-day House of Representatives. The latest addition in the Hoover Studies in Politics, Economics, and Society, *Fight Club Politics* could not be read at a more timely point in our political chronology.

The author, Juliet Eilperin, was well-positioned for such a writing project. A reporter covering the House from 1994 to 2004, she wrote for the *States News Service* and *Roll Call* newspaper until 1998, thereafter writing for the *Washington Post*. Given enormous interviewing privileges by past and current members of the House comprising all spans of seniority, *Fight Club Politics* is propelled by this first-hand narrative covering her years observing the House, which also, obviously, happened to coincide with the biggest partisan realignment in the House in forty years.

What *Fight Club Politics* describes and explains is true to its title: working relations within the House of Representatives have been disastrous for some time. Eilperin gives eyewitness accounts of such calamities and attempts to point to the origins and solutions to these vices of our representative democracy. In looking for examples of such polarization, partisanship, and incivility, Eilperin’s examples are overwhelming in number and seriousness: redistricting (in regards to which one member of the majority starkly said, “We saw our opportunities and we took them. Is this the way it ought to work? Of course not” [89].), closed rules, extended floor votes, powerful leadership PACs, committee shenanigans, and the egregious dearth of friendship and respect are all explained in adequate detail. These issues are placed within three broad frameworks of institutional realignment, the institutional social fabric, and legislating. More specific events and issues, such as the Indiana 8th controversy, Speaker Wright’s “new” legislative day, accusations of ethics violations by both parties, the canceling of bipartisan retreats and caucuses due to the lack of interest, Clinton’s impeachment, the 1999 chaplain controversy, and the committee consequences of Speaker-centralized leadership, are also given due attention.

Fight Club Politics is ideal for undergraduates but will not offer any new information to seasoned and recent political observers. Nevertheless the narrative (though repetitive at times) is sound and the anecdotes are extremely useful in obtaining retrospective comments from important participants who may or may not shoulder much of the blame for the last twelve years of bitterness. While giving more attention to the Republican majority in the House since 1994 and pointing out where their later actions came to diverge from their earlier rhetoric, Eilperin does a nice job of not writing ahistorically but tries to point out actions and behaviors, and most importantly, perceptions, on both sides of the aisle that started, continued, and accentuated this uncivil boxing match.

Fight Club Politics does not attempt to provide as much depth as Barbara Sinclair’s *Party Wars* or any of the other new publications on polarization in Congress. Nevertheless, it does fit nicely (especially in analyzing the trajectory of many then-new Republicans and then-sitting Democrats) in comparison and juxtaposition with older works by other journalists like *The Freshmen* by Linda Killian and *Storming the Gates* by Dan Balz and Ron Brownstein.

As mentioned at the beginning, this work was finished at the right time. Eilperin wonders if this tit-for-tat seesaw match between political parties will continue, or if things would change if voters permitted a transformation of control in the House. The voters did recently grant such permission, and, as one columnist pointed out in discussing this very work (George Will, “How Speaker Pelosi Could Restore Congressional Values,” *Newsweek*, 12/4/06), the goals of the new majority and of those who despise scorched-earth tactics in the Congress now coincide. In contrast, Rep. Dingell has said that “When we get done we’re not going back to the fair way of doing things. Democrats will say [to Republicans] you did it, now you bastards enjoy it” (127). It remains to be seen who was more prescient.

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Political Parties Matter: Realignment and the Return of Partisan Voting, Jeffrey M. Stonecash, Lynne Rienner Publications, 2006, ISBN 1588263940, \$19.95, paper, 175 pages.

The political science literature has established that people's attachment to political parties, in the modern era, has been on the decline. Evidence of this includes the rise in split-ticket voting, the increase in the number of voters who call themselves independents, and the candidate-centered politics and elections that we now have. However, since the 1990s, this trend of people moving away from political parties has appeared to reverse itself. We currently have no explanations as to how party identification could decrease for so long and then suddenly increase, Stonecash asserts, and he posits such an explanation. His argument in a nutshell is that parties have undergone long term secular realignment and that this process prompted electoral reactions that gave the impression that partisanship was declining in importance (14).

Stonecash says that the cause of this gradual realignment is that each of the major political parties had groups and regions within it which disagreed with each other. The tensions between these groups and regions led to conflict that caused realignment, as these regions and groups shifted their partisan loyalties. Stonecash argues that during this transition period of realignment, it appeared that people were moving away from political parties because of the increase in the number of people calling themselves "independents". Stonecash asserts that as people transition from one party to another they first call themselves independents, making it appear that parties are less important. This has resulted in a gradual resorting of the electorate and parties have again become important as people complete their move from one party to another (128). Stonecash avers that "the renewed partisanship we are witnessing now is a reflection of this gradual realignment and the greater differences in party bases" (17).

How, then, does Stonecash go about supporting this argument? In chapter 2, he investigates the changes in the composition of the Democratic and Republican parties. The Democratic Party has acquired more urban people, more non-white people, and has lost the South, while the Republicans have become more conservative and anti-government over time, for which Stonecash provides evidence in chapter 3. He then uses this framework of gradual, secular realignment to analyze three important indicators of partisanship: the rise and decline of split ticket outcomes in House districts (chapter 5), ticket-splitting (chapter 6), and independents (chapter 7).

This book is most useful for scholars of political parties. A strength of Stonecash's analysis is that he uses both aggregate level data and individual level data to make his points. A weakness of his analysis is that so much data is presented in each chapter that it becomes overwhelming. As a result, the connections are not always clearly drawn between his data and his analysis and what he is trying to find evidence of. Stonecash thoroughly examines trends through time but evidence of causation is often hard to disentangle.

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Self-Financed Candidates in Congressional Elections Jennifer A. Steen, The University of Michigan Press, 2006, ISBN 047206903-9, \$21.95, paper, 198 pages.

Although the subject has drawn the interest of many political observers, candidates for public office with the personal wealth to finance their own campaigns and their effects on the American political system have been woefully understudied in the political science literature to date. In *Self-Financed Candidates in Congressional Elections*, Jennifer Steen excellently fills this dearth in research with a superb account of the true ramifications of the presence of self-financed candidates for the American political system, and in the process dispels many myths that have come to be believed by many in the political community.

Of course, one of the most common criticisms with respect to self-financed candidates is that these candidates have the ability to severely outspend opponents and essentially buy their way to victory. However, Steen demonstrates that this criticism is not entirely compatible with reality. First of all, more often than not, self-financers use their money not to severely outspend opponents but to lessen the monetary advantage that their opponents carry over them (chapter 4). Additionally, contrary to the expectations of this criticism, victory rates of candidates who finance large portions of their campaigns are no greater than candidates who provide little to no monetary resources to their own campaign (16). Furthermore, as Steen accurately exhibits in chapter 4, self-financing dollars are far less effective at garnering votes than money raised by candidates from voters and interest groups. Thus, it is readily apparent that candidates cannot simply buy elections with their own wealth.

With this said, Steen does find that the prospect of facing candidates with the ability to use their own wealth in a campaign has caused potential candidates to forego running in primaries (chapter 3). This effect is particularly strong in primaries in open seat elections where the anticipated primary self-financing spending of a candidate was found to statistically significantly reduce the number of experienced opponents a candidate faces in his or her own primary (72).

Finally, Steen exemplarily clarifies some common misunderstandings with respect to the actions of self-financed candidates should they reach office. For instance, one of the common claims of candidates who self-finance large portions of their own campaigns is that they cannot be "bought off" by special interest groups. Thus, these candidates will be unresponsive to these interest groups once they reach office, which will allow them to be more responsive to the electorate when making decisions. However, Steen finds that, first of all, House representatives who self-financed their first campaigns very rarely self-financed subsequent efforts, and in fact raised money from the same contributors they promised they would not in their initial campaigns for public office (chapter 5). Furthermore, self-financed candidates also were found to take part in campaigning activities that were less interactive with their constituents (chapter 5). Thus, one must wonder whether self-financed candidates are really more responsive to the needs of their constituents when they forego many opportunities in campaigns to collect valuable information from constituents that they could use once in office.

Steen's work is a very important contribution to the political science literature and a must read not only for political science scholars interested in the effects of money on elections but also for candidates for public office, as it provides practical lessons that should be used in candidates' campaigns. Namely, Steen's work shows that qualified candidates should not be scared off by wealthy candidates, because self-financing is not necessarily as effective in winning elections as some political analysts would argue. For the sake of the American political system, it is important that qualified candidates learn from the lessons in this book so that the American public can have the range of options they deserve in choosing representatives for public office.

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The Broken Branch: How Congress is Failing America and How to Get it Back on Track, Thomas Mann & Norman J. Ornstein, Oxford University Press, 2006, ISBN 9780195174465, \$20.80, cloth, 288 pages.

Tom Mann and Norm Ornstein, friends for over forty years and Congress watchers for almost forty years, have joined to write a critique of the contemporary Congress that is in effect a panegyric to a Congress they love and feel they have lost. That Congress is the one for which the framers aimed, a deliberative body of the whole nation in which the discordant interests of which the republic is comprised are woven into a fabric of compromise that enables the country to proceed clumsily on its way with a modicum of rationality and a minimum of incivility. It is the Congress in which bipartisanship is sometimes possible, and partisan divisions are professional and not personal. It is the Congress that takes seriously its institutional role in the political system. It is the Congress that produced our great legislators, from Clay to Rayburn and Russell, as well as our greatest legislation, from Clay's compromises to the Marshall Plan and the Civil Rights revolution. That Congress was still in view when the two authors came to Washington as Congressional Fellows in the late 1960s, but it has sunk from view today. Their careers as Washington observers and advisors have been spent observing and analyzing the decline of the institution they love.

This book offers a readable narrative of the history of the Congress. The historical eras and individual episodes they chronicle will be familiar to the readers of this review. Those seeking a concise and analytical retelling of the history of the Congress may find this account quite useful for classroom adoption. The authors are, however, not aiming at the members of the Legislative Studies Section as their target audience. They clearly hope to influence public discourse and to promote an end to the degradation of the Congress.

Mann and Ornstein's historical narrative is accurate, interesting, and unsurprising. Three questions remain to be asked about it. First, is the Congress whose loss they lament real or is it a chimera? Second, who is to blame for what has happened to it? Third, what is to be done about it?

With respect to the first question, the complexity of their historical account raises an obvious question. They trace the evolution of the Congress from the framers' intent to its current perversion, demonstrating along the way that the Congress has taken differing institutional configurations across American history as a result of broader forces shaping the political system and the effects of individual leaders. The Congress of Clay was different from that of Reed and Cannon, and both were different from the Congress of Rayburn. The reforms of the early 1970s created a new and different incarnation, which began the rebuilding process the results of which we see today. The authors believe that underneath this historical detritus there lies a firm substructure grounded in an enduring constitutional design. Their characterization of that design could be made more explicit.

Second, who really is at fault? The candidates appear to be nobody, that is, impersonal forces shaping the political system now and during previous eras; the Democrats, because institutional abuse first reared its head on their watch; or the Republicans, who have been the more recent culprits. While Mann and Ornstein pay their respects to each of these assailants, in the end their answer is pretty clear: it's the Republicans. Further excavation of this proposition is needed and is likely to occur, and will encounter interesting questions about whether the Republicans were simply good and naïve legislators gone bad (David Dreier), bad legislators to begin with (Tom Delay), or the result of a party culture too beholden to corporate and other special interests and the ideological imprecations of people who should be kept as far away from government and policy as republican principles will allow.

What is to be done? A partial remedy is at hand, for among the most severe criticisms the authors make is the supine posture congressional Republicans have taken toward the Bush administration. That part of the problem is, for the time being, solved. The authors admit that they have no golden prescription for reform, and that it will take time and fortune for the Congress to dig itself out from the whole that it has dug. They have worked with both Democratic and Republican members in the past to push for institutional reform, most recently in working with a group of Democrats to propose new ways of doing business (or recovering some old ways of doing business). Drawing on this and other sources, they suggest a number of steps. When they wrote this book the authors had no reason to assume that the Democrats would take power in the 110th Congress. Now, the Democrats have a chance to match their metal to their mouths, to see if they can more faithfully adhere to the ideals they espoused while in the minority than their Republican counterparts have done over the past twelve years. Tom and Norm will be watching.

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The Logic of Pre-Electoral Coalition Formation, Sona Nadenichek Golder, The Ohio State University Press, 2006, ISBN 0814210295, \$49.95, cloth, 209 pages.

Sona Nodaenichek Golder's work, *The Logic of Pre-Electoral Coalition Formation*, is best summarized as a multi-method comparative piece that addresses the broad question of discerning under what conditions electoral coalitions form. Golder notes that the literature overwhelmingly focuses on governmental coalitions and largely neglects pre-electoral coalitions; the author correctly points out that these coalitions "have a considerable impact on election outcomes, government composition, and policies" (2).

Following the introduction, the book proceeds with a detailed discussion of the operationalization of pre-electoral coalitions. Chapter three draws forth two testable hypotheses from the existing body of literature. The Disproportionality Hypothesis argues that systemic or institutional factors are more likely to determine pre-electoral coalition formation, while the Signaling Hypothesis argues that elites signal to the electorate governmental competence and future structure through pre-electoral coalitions. Chapter three also tests these hypotheses utilizing a "...pooled analysis of pre-electoral coalitions in 23 parliamentary democracies from 1946-2002" (36). Golder finds in favor of the Disproportionality Hypothesis, yet cautions against ruling out the Signaling Hypothesis on this analysis alone.

Chapter four sets up a theoretical model of pre-electoral coalition formation using a rational choice approach that models the costs and benefits for political elites in forming these coalitions. Golder's theoretical model yields two possible equilibrium outcomes that provide testable questions. Chapter five, using a qualitative approach, tests the theoretical model provided in the earlier chapter on two cases: Fifth Republic France and post-1987 South Korea. Among other findings, Golder concludes that ideological compatibility is important to pre-electoral coalition formation, as well as benefits of actual office distribution. Chapter six empirically tests the theoretical model provided in chapter four using data from 20 parliaments from 1946 to 1998. Golder finds that pre-electoral coalitions are likely to form when the expected coalition is large, partners are of similar size, the party system is polarized, and electoral institutions are disproportional.

Chapter seven links pre-electoral coalitions to concrete outcomes in government. Golder concludes that pre-electoral coalitions "affect who gets into government, how long it takes to form a government, and how ideologically compatible the government is" (136). Chapter eight does a nice job of synthesizing the findings within the work and providing direction for future research.

Generally speaking this book is worthy of praise on multiple fronts. First, the author is methodologically thoughtful and anticipates potential criticisms as they develop for the reader. For example, in chapter two, Golder justifies the operationalization of pre-electoral coalitions, yet provides a thorough treatment of the potential weaknesses of this operationalization, providing the reader with a more in-depth and nuanced possibility for further treatments of this critical variable. A second reason to commend this work is found in its multi-method approach. Golder employs statistical analysis, rational choice modeling, and qualitative techniques. All approaches point to the conclusions drawn by the author and make it difficult to argue with Golder's findings. A third reason to compliment this work is the transparency embraced by the author. Golder makes the data and computer code used to conduct this research available at www.fsu.edu/~polisci/people/faculty/sgolder.htm for both replication purposes and further research. This commendable work is recommended for those both topically and methodologically interested.

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Where Women Run: Gender and Party in the American States, Kira Sanbonmatsu, University of Michigan Press, 2006, ISBN 0472099345, \$70.00, cloth, 264 pages.

The literature on the linkage between descriptive and substantive representation of women has often neglected the relationship between party organizations and female candidates. While it is accepted that if 'women run, women win,' it remains relatively unclear how and/or why women may choose to seek elected office. Kira Sanbonmatsu attempts to address our lack of knowledge concerning how women emerge as candidates for state legislative office by examining the relationship between party organizations and gender. There appears to be wide variation among the number of women in state legislatures, making the question of how and why women decide to run even more intriguing. Furthermore, the author begs the question of whether or not the current proportion of women elected officials will remain relatively stable given the lack of women candidates. Sanbonmatsu notes, in particular, that the dynamic relationship between gender and office-holding is essential to explaining the absence of women candidates.

One of the interesting facets of this study is the ambitious multi-method approach undertaken by the author. She includes in-depth case studies of "party recruitment practices and the status of women candidates in six states that represent a diverse range of party activities" (11). These case studies also include analysis of the success of women candidates in state legislative elections. To these case studies she adds a mail survey of state party leaders and another mail survey of state legislative leaders in all 50 states. She also conducts a survey of state legislative candidates from Ohio in 2002. Finally, she performs a time series analysis of women's representation in all 50 states from 1973 to 2003 to help in assessing variation among the states in terms of party organization and practices.

Sanbonmatsu found that party leaders, overall, remain suspect of the electability of women to the state legislature, and while in some cases being a woman may give the candidate an advantage, these benefits are often "contingent" on a variety of other factors (184). In addition, it is clear that leaders often think that the type of district matters to the electability of women candidates. Another interesting and counterintuitive finding is that as party organization increases within a state, the extent to which women are elected seems to decrease. The author credits not only doubts concerning electability but also more selective gatekeeping processes (185). The gender of a candidate continues to be at issue when selecting candidates; however, the author notes that parties are not, and have not in the case of women, been the only pathway into candidacy.

While the findings of this study are compelling and "call into question the underlying assumptions of existing theories about parties and women's representation" (183), the extent to which party organization influences the recruitment of women seems to raise the most questions about the activities and the types of candidates parties will recruit. Organization and differences between candidates under different party organization systems warrant more attention (198-199) and need to be further explored.

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