

BOOK REVIEWS

Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why. By Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth L. Leech. (Chicago University Press, 2009.)
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At least once a decade, it seems, a book pops up in the interest group subfield that provides a near comprehensive survey of the national group community, defines the contours of that community, and becomes the state of the art in theory and empirical research for that decade. We had Lester Milbrath in the 1960s, Carol Greenwald in the 1970s, Schlozman and Tierney in the 1980s, John Heinz and colleagues in the 1990s, and now Baumgartner, Berry, Hojnacki, Kimball, and Leech. Like Heinz et al., this is the culmination of a long and rigorous research program by a group of scholars from somewhat diverse backgrounds in the subfield. Jeffrey Berry brings his history of in-depth case-studies of the public interest and citizen groups that redefined group politics in the 1960s, and Marie Hojnacki and David Kimball bring their background in surveying and statistical modeling that taught us so much about group coalitions and how committees are lobbied. But more than anything *Lobbying and Policy Change* feels like the closing chapter of the research agenda Frank Baumgartner and Beth Leech opened with *Basic Interests* in 1998, and even, in Baumgartner's case, the punctuated equilibrium work he began with Bryan Jones (this book is as much a contribution to the policy literature as it is to interest groups).

Not that their book is a comprehensive look back at these works. Indeed, one criticism I have of it is that it lacks a sense of place in the literature. What holes, theoretical or empirical, does it fill, or what inconsistencies in past works are being corrected, or what new theory is proposed to reconcile contradictions of the past? This is never really explained. The major claim the authors do make, that previous interest group scholarship has largely overlooked the importance of the status quo in policy debates, is not really accurate. As far back as Schattschneider in 1951

and Lowi in 1969, what became the subgovernment literature was all about how the status quo endures, even in the face of opposition from other, younger groups. Most of us who work in the interest group literature have appreciated the truth of the saying that it is easier to support the status quo in a government of divided power than to move new policy threatening the interests that it advantages. Berry's own work on citizen groups emphasizes how these groups defined themselves as challengers to long-standing status quo policies. Finally, although I like the idea of the "friction model," they describe it surprisingly late in the book. I would like to have seen it introduced at the beginning so that all of the empirical evidence they present could be evaluated in terms of supporting that model. I would also like to have seen a clearer description of the mechanisms of that model so we would know how changes in rhetoric, changes in tactics, and changes in opposition might escalate pressure to the tipping-point where new policy abruptly shoves the old aside.

Ultimately, however, these are relatively minor criticisms, for this is a work of great significance that will, I suspect, have a long-lasting impact. Perhaps the book's greatest contribution is how it captures the scale of the contemporary interest group community, both in sheer group numbers and the range of articulated interests through extensive and wide-ranging interviews with lobbyists on well over a hundred issues. Their sample of groups is not truly comprehensive, but it is hard to imagine what more they and their army of graduate students could have done to cast a wider net. They should also be commended for drawing so much attention to the use of rhetoric to define and redefine issues, and the crucial role this plays in sustaining and changing policy debates. Schattschneider and Richard Smith (1984) emphasized this, but none have examined it so thoroughly. I am especially impressed with their analysis in Chapter 3 of how rhetoric often reduces the multidimensionality of issue definitions down to a simpler uni-dimensional, left-right, for-or-against the status quo, understanding. That, I think, is the book's biggest contribution. I also liked their exploration of

opposition and conflict from other interest groups in Chapter 4, especially their important finding that opposition often fails simply due to the indifference of powerful government gatekeepers who decide whether issues, and policies challenging the status quo, are even to be recognized as legitimate. This is something which has received too little attention. In Chapter 8 they find something else interesting regarding the timing of resource expenditure in advocacy campaigns, that defenders of the status quo tend to withhold committing resources until challengers make headway in their efforts. This is intuitive, but nobody has really shown it to be true.

Finally, they find in Chapter 10, and then again in Chapter 11, that resources matter, but the differences in the aggregate level of resources between challengers to the status quo and its defenders do not matter all that much when it comes to whether policy changes or not. Resources are used as a proxy for an interest group's political strength in many studies. Financial and other types of resources certainly are a type of political power, but what is interesting is that possessing more of it than one's competitor does not guarantee victory. Resources, they find, do make it more likely that an issue will become salient, will rise in importance, and in many ways, as they note, this is often the most important advocacy battle of all. For these and other reasons, and especially for its high quality research design and execution, this book will probably endure as one of the most important works in interest groups and public policy studies for the next decade.

Thomas T. Holyoke, *California State University,
Fresno*

Advice and Dissent: The Struggle to Shape the Federal Judiciary. By Sarah A. Binder and Forrest Maltzman. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009.)

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The modern era of visible conflict over judicial branch nominees has given new impetus to what was once intermittent study of the underlying politics of appointment. In *Advice and Dissent*, Binder and Maltzman make a noteworthy contribution to this reinvigorated research agenda by confronting the topic on multiple fronts, including revisitation of the origins of advice and consent, and blue slip, powers, analysis of the selection and confirmation of lower court judges, focus on the diverging goals leading to the expansion of the bench, and consid-

eration of the implications of appointment conflict on lower court capacity and legitimacy. Readers will come away from this text with a sense that the quandary of recent gridlock has been surrounded and at the same time will be impressed by the authors' effort to supplement empirical findings with illustrative events and contextual accounts of this historical transition.

Binder and Maltzman's collective expertise in the area of congressional institutions is most evident in their reconsideration of the norm of senatorial courtesy and evaluation of the origins of the blue slip. By digging into the archives, they highlight the path dependency and unintended consequences of institutional innovation. In terms of senatorial courtesy, anti-Federalist victories during the establishment of jurisdiction limits and boundaries for district courts potentially granted senators significant influence, but the authors also suggest that the accepted wisdom of early and consistently strong courtesy rights may have shaky foundations. The emergence of the blue slip procedure does not appear to stem from minority party strategies during divided government or long run goals to maintain control over the composition of the federal bench. Instead, by placing the beginning of the blue slip within the Wilson administration, a strong argument is made that this procedural reinforcement of senatorial courtesy rights was a function of the intraparty and agenda coordination goals.

The implications of these enduring institutions upon modern gridlock become apparent in quantitative analyses of selection and confirmation events for lower court judges. While traditional courtesy rights, between senators of executives of the same party, tend to abbreviate bargaining periods over vacancies, opposing party senators and judiciary chairmen now utilize the blue slip procedure to place constraints upon executive choice. Duration at the confirmation stage, then, is a function of divided control of the Senate when partisan opponents may continue to obstruct with blue slips and where growing party polarization poses a substantial obstacle to successful confirmation outcomes.

With these conclusions in hand, the authors reorient toward the consequences of appointment conflict on lower court capacity. Looking at the most recent omnibus bills authorizing new judgeships, Binder and Maltzman find interchamber disparities in the allocation of new vacancies. In the House of Representatives, the lack of advice and consent power contributes to a nonpartisan logroll distribution, with presidential party representation on the Judiciary Committee resulting in significantly greater numbers